

## Case study four, 2008: Justice pathways project, Brisbane

***Justice pathways open for Indigenous students***

This is the fourth in a series of case studies of projects that received Indigenous Lighthouse Grant funding in 2008. Indigenous Lighthouse Grants recognise best practice and encourage innovation in Queensland.

These grants aim to shine a light on exemplars of good practice in Indigenous education, training and arts by fostering innovation and collaboration across those areas – with a view to improving cultural awareness, and outcomes of Indigenous students.

The grants also provide a vehicle for celebrating the successes of Queensland's 'clever, skilled and creative' Indigenous students.

A new training project is leading Indigenous students towards careers within Queensland's justice and communities sector.

The Justice Pathways Project is an initiative of Education Queensland in partnership with Brisbane North Institute of TAFE and the Queensland Police Service, which received Indigenous Lighthouse Grant funding.

Indigenous students undertaking senior phase studies - Years 10, 11 and 12 - can work towards a Certificate III Business Administration (Legal).

The project also aims to increase the retention rates of Indigenous students at school and increase the number of Indigenous students articulating to tertiary education.

While the Queensland Police Service employs the third-highest proportion of Indigenous people in the Queensland public service, there is still a significant need for Indigenous representation in policing, justice and community work.

Phil Barrett, Queensland Police Service Recruiting Section manager and an Inspector of Police has been involved in the project from its inception.

'Education Queensland identified the potential to increase the number of Indigenous students studying Legal Studies through the creation of the Justice Pathways Project which is specifically tailored to offer Indigenous high school students with a seamless

pathway into the QPS and other frontline justice careers,' Inspector Barrett said.

'As well as trying to engage and retain Indigenous students at school, the pilot program has the potential to break down barriers between Indigenous families and police. It's about fostering good relationships.

Education Queensland, in joint cooperation with Brisbane North Institute of TAFE, has developed an e-learning (online product) and also provided interested students with the opportunity to attend a two-day 'frontline justice careers taster' in August 2008.

The Police Service hosted the taster program at the Zillmere Police Citizens Youth Club and at the Police Academy at Oxley. The program gave students an insight into a range of frontline justice careers and the opportunity to meet with Indigenous role models, Elders and police personnel.



A riot squad demonstration in the taster program.

## Indigenous Education and Training Futures

Indigenous  
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clever • skilled • creative

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Judi Buckley, Education Queensland program manager for the Pathways project said the project had made significant progress.

'Twelve months ago this program began as an informal discussion between the three key partners — Education Queensland, Brisbane North Institute of TAFE and the Queensland Police Service.

'An advisory group was formed, and additional funding accessed to develop and deliver student-focused practical workshops. The course focuses on practical applications and cultural implications.

'We're negotiating pathways to future employment with QPS, the courts, Corrective Services and Legal Aid. We are also working towards offering further TAFE or university qualifications.'

Project officer Maree Murray has seen the response from the students 'on the ground' liaising with QPS, TAFE and the schools.

'Some of these students had become disengaged and bored at school. This course is not as formal as school — for one day a week they can get out of their normal routine for some practical, hands-on experience and check out some real work experiences,' Ms Murray said.

'The project gives them a goal and entry into hundreds of different areas of work and study. We've spoken with universities too and achieving through the Pathways course will be another feather in the cap of these students — it puts them ahead if they want to go even further with their studies.'



Jamie Reilly (centre) and friends completing a practical task.

For more information: [www.deta.qld.gov.au/indigenous](http://www.deta.qld.gov.au/indigenous)  
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Jamie Reilly, an Indigenous student from Bracken Ridge State High School, enjoyed participating in the course.

'I've really enjoyed meeting other Indigenous kids and I like the way that the project is set out. It's not boring work — the activities and excursions make it easy to learn,' he said.

'I've realised there are more things you can do (in justice) than being a police officer.

'As an Indigenous young person I think this course is a great idea. With more Indigenous people in the police force and educated, we can change the way people think.'

Bracken Ridge State High School community education counsellor Melissa Scott said the course improved students' choices.

'It's a great opportunity for these students. By passing, they can gain eight credits towards their QCE (Queensland Certificate of Education) and there are opportunities to go where no teenagers can usually go — like experiencing the Police Headquarters Call Centre, where they can see what really happens.'

Phil Barrett said there was state wide interest in the Pathways project.

'If the pilot program is successful we'll continue to work in partnership with Education Queensland to provide greater access to the program across the state,' Inspector Barrett said.

'There is huge potential for Indigenous students interested in the careers available in the QPS — and after discussions with the two Indigenous students on the advisory board, we feel very positive about the possibilities of an ongoing program.'

