# Local Community Engagement through Co-design—Spinifex State College—video transcript

0.00

[Trauma warning] Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this video contains images and voices of people who may have passed away.

0.10

[Text on screen] In 2021, the Queensland Department of Education began a co-design pilot to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students.

0.17

13 Queensland schools took part in the initial pilot. Here is the story of how Spinifex State College opened their gates to the community through co-design.

0.25

[Will Blackley] From my heart and spirit to your heart and spirit. I welcome you to Kalkadoon country.

0.32

[Text on screen] When Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a genuine say in the design and delivery of policies, programs and services that affect them, better life outcomes are achieved.

National Agreement on Closing the Gap 2020.

0.40

[Will Blackley] This is Kalkadoon country. This is Kalkatunga country. Our history didn't start, you know, 230 odd years ago, it's been here forever and I think it's something that the whole community, the whole country should embrace.

0.53

[Leon Proud] For 50 years of Indigenous Education, we obviously haven't got it right, and the data continues to show that.

1.00

[Pricilla Holborn] We're talking about systemic reform with the department and a system that was built not with us in mind.

We need to do things differently and that's what Co-design enables.

1.10

[Melissa Eggmolesse] For a principal to come down and ask Community what they want for our kids is the biggest thing that I've seen in schooling life for a long time.

1.18

[Valerie Craigie] I felt like it had value. I felt like this time...this is the best...this is the best thing that's happened in all the time that I've been coming and being involved in the school.

1.29

[Text on screen] Local Community Engagement Through Co-design Spinifex State College

1.33

[Phil Sweeney] Spinifex State College is the only state high school in Mount Isa, and we have 1000 students in our school and approximately 360 of those students are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Well, Co-design was a really welcome concept that came to us because our motto is, Sharing Knowledge and Creating Futures. It's about being open. It's about, you know, being transparent and welcoming people in. And most importantly, it's about listening to your community.

The first step in the process is really getting an understanding of what Co-design really is and what it means to form a local community education body at your school and how that interacts with the region and the department. We were provided with an educational consultant in Justin Butler who is a Kalkadoon man himself.

2.22

[Justin Butler] Being from this place and you know my grandmother's country to build the rapport and develop relationships very fast and quickly through that connection to country and families and language, certainly helps with this process.

2.37

[Phil Sweeney] He went out there and did the work with our local community in consultation with the school, and organised an authentic consultation.

2.46

[Justin Butler] So that was done through numerous avenues. The Murri Grapevine was pretty much the main one. People would just talk and that yarn just carries. And that's something that our people do really well.

2.56

[Phil Sweeney] Parents of the school, community leaders within the school, of course our Indigenous Elders within Mount Isa and really, getting a broad range of agencies, everybody who works with our school.

3.08

[Justin Butler] And the questions were, you know... Why is engagement with the College and the Community important and what's working well? And what would you like to see strengthened?

3.16

[Valerie Craigie] It was really good because it had just about every different group of Aboriginal mob here that come because that's how important education is to everybody. So the community was represented.

3.29

[Justin Butler] When people are positioned as, as experts of their own story, the conversations flow and they feel empowered to speak up because they know the story. They know the ins and outs of it. They know the details of it.

3.40

[Phil Sweeney] While Justin was doing that, I was preparing myself and my leadership team to put on our listening ears and truly listen.

3.53

[Justin Butler] So, part of this process, the principal was required to collate the information from the consultation and be accountable to that.

4.00

[Phil Sweeney] Myself and my Head of Senior Schooling sat down with our community education counsellors as well as our district support person to listen to that feedback. And that feedback is not always easy to listen to, but it's really worthwhile, because then we start to appreciate what people are thinking. Then it was my opportunity to provide a principal address to the same consultation group, which was about 60 people and I did that the next day.

4.28

[Valerie Craigie] That was very pleasing to have a principal stand there and to be able to, you know, talking the way that he was talking and the absolute... you know he’d been excited about what's possible with our Indigenous perspectives in the school.

4.42

[Melissa Eggmolesse] He's empowering our mob to make choices for their kids. He's giving us the empowerment back, you know what I mean, for us to empower our kids.

4.49

[Phil Sweeney] And I think the things that I was challenged with, was to be a little bit more out of my comfort zone to be a bit more vulnerable at times, but to also know that by embracing the process, you can create so many more opportunities for your school

and for your students right across the whole school.

5.13

[Text on screen] Forming a Local Community Education Body (LCEB)

5.13

[Justin Butler] There was a request put out to form membership to the first ever Spinifex State College Local Community Education Body, and that's acronymed to LCEB.

5.23

[Phil Sweeney] The LCEB provides me with a window into our community, and you know a window into the, into the world that they want to create for their students... that maybe we weren't hearing or seeing before. And so, it's just it's just gold to us, really.

5.40

[Valerie Craigie] It's exciting because you know we have an input. We're the experts in our, with our language and our culture and everything to do about us.

5.49

[Will Blackley] For our people, we're sort of always brought in at the end to sign something off. But to be able to be consulted at the very beginning and develop something together is something really special.

6.00

[Phil Sweeney] It's very early days yet, but there's so many little green shoots you know happening already for us.

6.05

[Valerie Craigie] They're going to help us revitalise this language. We're going to teach it to everybody like we want to.

6.10

[Phil Sweeney] We're looking at trying to, you know get some skills around what language programs look like in schools. What [are] the sort of training perspectives that we need to do and how we can actually bring local people into our school to enrich our school with language.

6.26

[Valerie Craigie] There's no value big enough for that... having our language which is... it's the core of us. It's our... it's the heart and soul of us as Kalkadoon people.

6.37

[Leon Proud] We have to involve Aboriginal [and] Torres Strait Islander people who are experts in their communities. They know their local context, they know their local histories and they know what best works for their people on the ground, their students, and why would we not involve them from the very word -Go- to develop the strategies to improve student outcomes.

7.06

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters of Australia, and pay respect to all Elders - past, present and emerging.

7.15

End.