



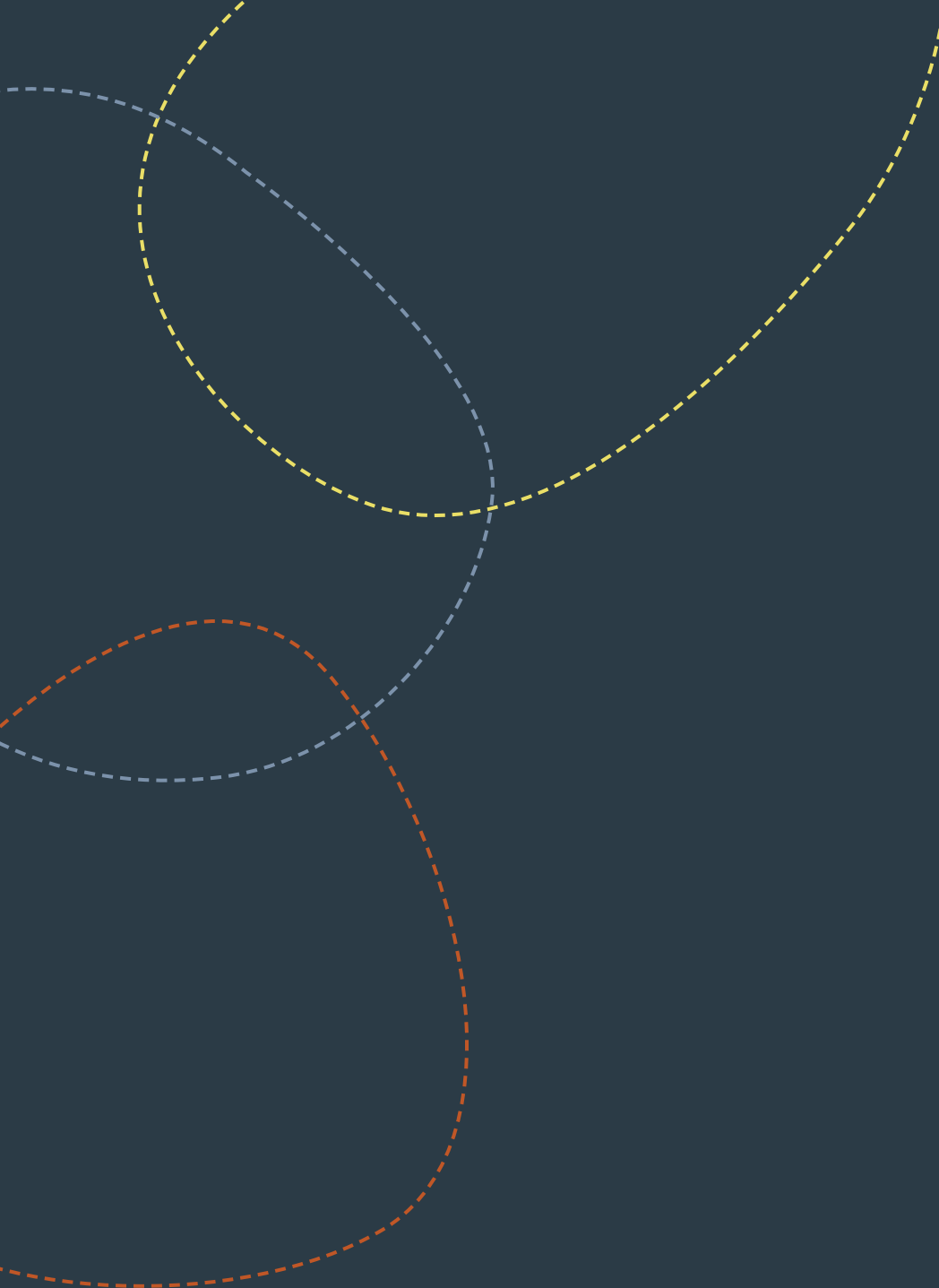
**Education Ministers
Meeting**



NATSIEC
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Education Corporation

Partnership Agreement

Education Ministers and the
National Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander Education
Corporation (NATSIEC)



The Parties acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and Elders past and present.

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT — EDUCATION MINISTERS AND THE NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EDUCATION CORPORATION (NATSIEC)

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT TO IMPROVE EDUCATION OUTCOMES

Preamble

All Australian Education Ministers are committed to closing the gap in educational outcomes, and delivering an education system that supports young Australians of all backgrounds to achieve their full educational potential.

Education has the power to transform lives. It supports young people to realise their potential by providing the skills needed to participate in the economy and in society and contributes to every aspect of their wellbeing.

The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration sets a joint vision for a world class education system that encourages and supports every student to be the very best they can be, no matter where they live or what kind of learning challenges they may face.

Education Ministers and NATSIEC acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and knowledges are fundamental to shaping and improving education systems and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and students. This will support self-determination to significantly improve education and life outcomes.

This Partnership Agreement (Agreement) extends on the vision outlined in the Mparntwe Declaration. It arises from a commitment — through the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the National Agreement) — to a fundamentally new way of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Education Ministers recognise the beneficial role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak organisations and this Agreement formalises a mechanism that will enable Ministers and NATSIEC to work in partnership to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' outcomes and opportunities through education.

Central to efforts to improve outcomes through this partnership is embedding the Priority Reforms from the National Agreement.

This Agreement aims to reflect that the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will be considered in decisions made about education delivery in Australia, consistent with the principle articulated in the National Agreement '*When Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a genuine say in the design and delivery of services that affect them, better life outcomes are achieved*' (clause 6, page 2). The partnership through this Agreement will be given effect through engagement in the Education Ministers Meeting (EMM) and through other forums, as appropriate.

This partnership will build on, not displace, existing partnership arrangements within jurisdictions.

The National Agreement identifies strong partnership elements that should be a feature of policy partnership agreements made under that National Agreement. This Agreement, while not a policy partnership under the auspices of the Joint Council on Closing the Gap, incorporates the identified strong partnership elements.

Purpose

1. The purpose of this Agreement is to establish an enduring mechanism for the Parties to develop a joined-up approach to improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education outcomes.
2. This Agreement will ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and aspirations, represented by NATSIEC as the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, are considered in education policy decisions, not just policies targeted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and students.
3. This Agreement will allow NATSIEC to engage at all levels of EMM to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education needs and aspirations are appropriately considered in, and inform, decisions made by Ministers.

Objectives

4. The objectives of the Agreement are to:
 - a. Realise a more joined-up approach between all governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives to address lifecycle education outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and students, enabling all children and students to thrive and achieve their learning potential.
 - b. Support efforts to implement the National Agreement including meeting targets for the Priority Reform areas and socio-economic outcomes, with a focus on community led solutions.

Parties

5. The Parties to the Agreement are Education Ministers and NATSIEC.

Scope

6. The Parties to the Agreement will operate in line with the *EMM Operating Protocols*.
7. This Agreement will be complementary to, but will not displace, existing Policy Partnerships, state-based partnership agreements, or individual partnership agreements with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies.
8. The Parties also acknowledge that there are existing mechanisms under the National Agreement that will complement and contribute to the education outcomes contemplated by this Agreement, such as the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership. They also acknowledge the intrinsic partnership role of SNAICC – National Voice for Our Children (SNAICC) as the national community-controlled peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood education, care and development, and the complementary intersection between the roles of NATSIEC and SNAICC.
9. This Agreement aims to transform the way in which Governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and embedding the Priority Reforms in education.
10. Noting the interrelated nature of several socio-economic outcomes, this Agreement will focus on issues and actions that will deliver progress in education outcomes. The relevant Closing the Gap outcomes are:
 - a. Outcome 3: Children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years.
 - b. Outcome 4: Children thrive in their early years.
 - c. Outcome 5: Students achieve their full learning potential.
 - d. Outcome 6: Students reach their full potential through further education pathways.
 - e. Outcome 7: Youth are engaged in employment or education.
 - f. Outcome 14: People enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing.
 - g. Outcome 16: Cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing.

Roles and responsibilities

11. All Parties are jointly responsible for promoting a more joined-up approach aimed at improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educational opportunities and outcomes.
12. The government Parties will:
 - a. Create or maintain mechanisms within their jurisdiction that will ensure there is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education representative(s) or partner organisation that is eligible to become a member of NATSIEC (such as an independent elected or community-controlled body or incorporated Indigenous Education Consultative Body (IECB)).
 - b. Provide an ongoing financial commitment to NATSIEC to allow NATSIEC to resource an internal secretariat to support its engagement with EMM and fulfilment of obligations under this Agreement. This funding is to be settled through EMM cost sharing processes.
 - c. Ensure that items being presented to EMM or its supporting committees are shared with NATSIEC to seek the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples during their development, agreement and implementation and with sufficient time to allow NATSIEC to engage appropriately to inform policy design. This includes the agencies and companies that report to EMM.
 - d. Facilitate NATSIEC to effectively engage with EMM and all sub-committees, through the EMM Secretariat and sub-committee Secretariats, including ensuring NATSIEC receives invitations and papers to meetings.
 - e. Consider how NATSIEC's advice can be implemented in their jurisdiction, including through policy design or more direct action.
 - f. Share data with NATSIEC representatives, where government is the owner of that data and privacy or other requirements allow, to inform shared decision-making.
13. NATSIEC will:
 - a. Proactively bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, their expertise, and their lived experiences to the deliberations of EMM and its subcommittees.
 - b. Liaise and consult across its membership and with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education stakeholders across the early childhood, school and post school education sectors, such as SNAICC and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principals Association (NATSIPA).
 - c. Engage with the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peaks in the development of significant policy positions for government decisions, in recognition of the impact education has on Closing the Gap outcomes.
 - d. Engage with SNAICC on matters affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the early years, including particularly matters impacting educational outcomes.
 - e. Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations to inform them of their concerns and how they might be addressed through education policy reforms.
 - f. Be bound by a confidentiality agreement aligned to this agreement when attending EMM or party to EMM material.

- g. In accordance with the remit of EMM, focus on matters of national or cross-jurisdictional significance, complementing state-based engagement from the state/territory based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education partners.
- h. Be able to elect to have a support person (for Co-Chairs attending meetings) and may elect a proxy (from within the NATSIEC membership).

Term

- 14. The Agreement comes into effect on the date of signing and continues for an initial period until 2031, consistent with the National Agreement. The Agreement will be reviewed after 2 years (or earlier by agreement), and then regularly at three-year intervals, with a view to being extended or renewed to drive ongoing progress. The process for this review will be established by the Parties.

Amendment

- 15. The Agreement can be amended at any time by written agreement of the Parties.

Partnership Principles

- 16. The Agreement will enable:
 - a. NATSIEC to engage at all levels of EMM to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education needs and aspirations are appropriately considered, consistent with the principle “nothing about us without us”.
 - b. NATSIEC to contribute strategically to EMM, Australian Education Senior Officials Committee (AESOC), Schools Policy Group (SPG) and Early Childhood Policy Group (ECPG) priorities and can propose items for the AESOC or EMM Chair’s consideration as experts in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.
- 17. The Agreement upholds EMM Members’ (Education Ministers) authority and decision-making accountability and ensures that NATSIEC can contribute to the decision-making process in a productive, meaningful and transparent way.
- 18. This Agreement between Education Ministers and NATSIEC is guided by the following principles:
 - a. Voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Parties hold as much weight as the governments.
 - b. Transparency in decision-making, where matters for decision are in terms that are easily understood by all Parties and where there is enough information and time to understand the implications of the decision.
 - c. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives can speak without fear of reprisals or repercussions.
 - d. Self-determination is supported, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lived experience is understood and respected.
 - e. Funding for programs and services aligns with jointly agreed community priorities, noting governments retain responsibility for funding decisions.
 - f. Existing partnership arrangements within State and Territory boundaries remain valuable and are not being replaced by this Agreement.

Data sharing

19. Priority Reform 4 of the National Agreement requires that data is available for the purposes of decision making. Parties should endeavour to share available data to ensure clear understanding of context, to make evidence-based recommendations and to gauge progress toward the targets.

Reporting

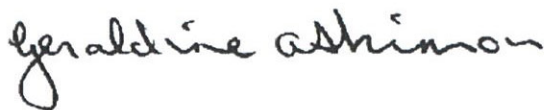
20. EMM and NATSIEC may wish to provide advice on decisions they have taken to the governance mechanisms established under the National Agreement, in particular Joint Council and the Partnership Working Group. Any such reports could include:
 - a. Decisions EMM has made, particularly those that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
 - b. Actions being taken to implement recommendations.
 - c. Progress against the objectives of this Agreement.
 - d. Progress against any relevant Priority Reforms and socio-economic targets in the National Agreement.
 - e. Any other updates.

Resourcing

21. In accordance with Clause 33 of the National Agreement and the Principles from the Co-Design outcomes reported to Ministers at the 27 February 2023 EMM, the Parties acknowledge that NATSIEC needs to be provided with adequate and ongoing financial support to enable them to engage as equal partners.
22. Financial support to enable engagement under this Agreement will be separate to any other funding to NATSIEC to support their operation, or for other project-based arrangements as this is a distinct activity not covered by existing funding sources.
23. Resourcing for additional activities of the Agreement will be negotiated and agreed by the Parties as they arise during the life of the Agreement. This includes the commissioning of any reports or expert evidence.

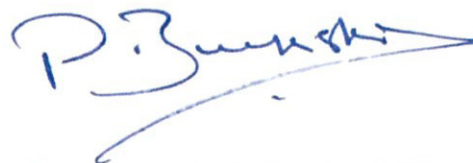
Schedule A: Parties to the Agreement

Signed for and on behalf of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation (NATSIEC)



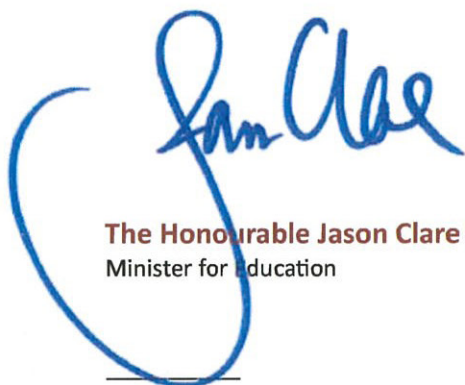
Aunty Geraldine Atkinson
Co-Chair, NATSIEC

Signed for and on behalf of the
Commonwealth of Australia by



Professor Peter Buckskin PSM FACE
Co-Chair, NATSIEC

Signed for and on behalf of the
State of New South Wales by



The Honourable Jason Clare MP
Minister for Education

Signed for and on behalf of the
State of Victoria by



The Honourable Prudence Car MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education and Early Learning
Minister for Western Sydney

Signed for and on behalf of the
Northern Territory by

The Honourable Ben Carroll MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC

Signed for and on behalf of the
State of Western Australia by

The Honourable Jo Hersey MLA
Minister for Education and Training
Minister for Early Education
Minister for Public Service

Signed for and on behalf of the
State of Queensland by

The Honourable Dr Tony Buti MLA
Minister for Education;
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests

The Honourable John-Paul Langbroek MP
Minister for Education and the Arts

Schedule A: Parties to the Agreement

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Deputy Premier

Minister for Education

Minister for Medical Research

Signed for and on behalf of the
State of Western Australia by

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Deputy Premier

Minister for Education and Early Learning

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Northern Territory by

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Minister for Education

Signed for and on behalf of the
State of Queensland by

The Honourable Dr Tony Buti MLA

Minister for Education; Aboriginal Affairs; Citizenship and
Multicultural Interests

The Honourable Dianne Farmer MP

Minister for Education

Minister for Youth Justice

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Deputy Premier

Minister for Education and Early Learning

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Deputy Premier

Minister for Education

Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC

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The Honourable Jo Hersey MLA

Minister for Education and Training

Minister for Early Education

Minister for Public Service

Signed for and on behalf of the
State of Queensland by

The Honourable Sabine Winton MLA

Minister for Education; Early Childhood; Preventative
Health; Wheatbelt

The Honourable John-Paul Langbroek MP

Minister for Education and the Arts

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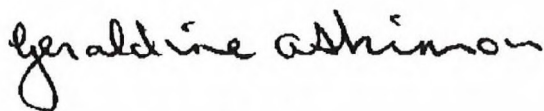
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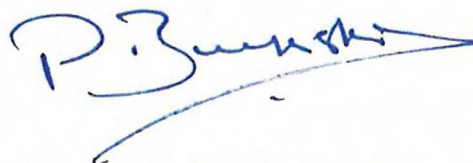
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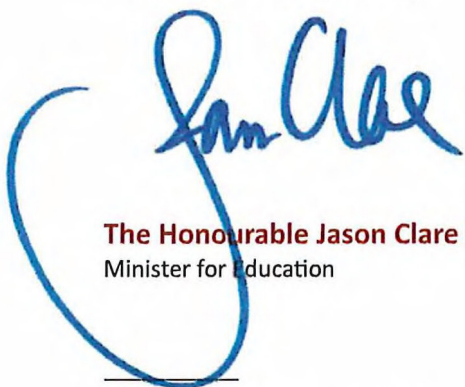
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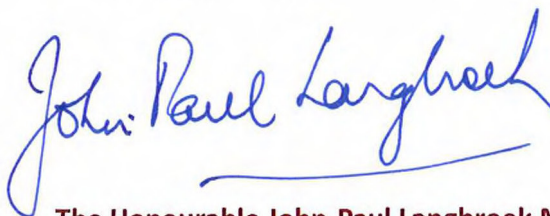
Signed for and on behalf of the
Northern Territory by

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Minister for Education
Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC

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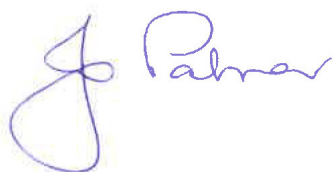
Signed for and on behalf of the
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Minister for Education;
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests

The Honourable John-Paul Langbroek MP
Minister for Education and the Arts

Signed for and on behalf of the
State of Tasmania by



The Honourable Jo Palmer MLC

Minister for Education
Minister for Disability Services
Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence

Signed for and on behalf of the
State of South Australia by

The Honourable Blair Boyer MP

Minister for Education, Training and Skills

Signed for and on behalf of the
Australian Capital Territory by

Yvette Berry MLA

Deputy Chief Minister
Minister for Education and Youth Affairs
Minister for Early Childhood Development

Signed for and on behalf of the
State of Tasmania by

The Honourable Joanne Palmer MLC

Minister for Education
Minister for Disability Services
Minister for Women and the Prevention of family
Violence

Signed for and on behalf of the
State of South Australia by

The Honourable Blair Boyer MP

Minister for Education, Training and Skills

Signed for and on behalf of the
Australian Capital Territory by

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'Y' followed by a series of loops and a final flourish.

Yvette Berry MLA

Deputy Chief Minister
Minister for Education and Early Childhood
Minister for Homes and New Suburbs
Minister for Sport and Recreation

Signed for and on behalf of the
State of Tasmania by

Signed for and on behalf of the
Australian Capital Territory by

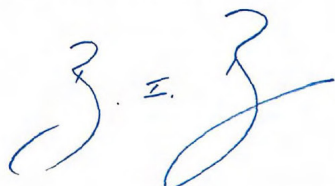
The Honourable Joanne Palmer MLC

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Minister for Women and the Prevention of family
Violence

Yvette Berry MLA

Deputy Chief Minister
Minister for Education and Early Childhood
Minister for Homes and New Suburbs
Minister for Sport and Recreation

Signed for and on behalf of the
State of South Australia by

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'B. Boyer', with a stylized flourish at the end.

The Honourable Blair Boyer MP

Minister for Education, Training and Skills

Schedule B: Parties supporting the Agreement

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Ingrey', with a large loop at the end.

Raymond Ingrey

President, NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group

Uncle Lionel Bamblett

General Manager, Victorian Aboriginal Education
Association Incorporated

Christine Thyer

Chief Executive Officer, South Australian Aboriginal
Education and Training Consultative Council

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Association Incorporated

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Thyer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Christine Thyer

Chief Executive Officer, South Australian Aboriginal
Education and Training Consultative Council

