



## Media Release

Tuesday 27 August 2024

### **Celebrating Blak Excellence**

Townsville Catholic Education's Emerging Leaders Incentive Scheme is pleased to announce the upcoming Blak Excellence Lunch, taking place this Thursday 29 August at Rydges Southbank Townsville.

This special event is an aspirational afternoon for Townsville Catholic Education's graduating First Nations Year 12 students. The event will be followed by the Year 12 Graduation Liturgy rite of passage at the Sacred Heart Cathedral. Over 120 students are expected to attend these events, which will feature inspiring keynote speakers who are the epitome of successful First Nations people in various chosen fields. It is also a chance to celebrate the achievements of our First Nations students.

Tammi Webber, Townsville Catholic Education's Learning & Teaching Adviser- First Nations, and Emerging Leaders Project Lead, emphasised the significance of this event and why it is important to have such platforms for our First Nations students.

She stated, "We believe 'you can't be what you can't see'. By exposing our students to exceptional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are successfully walking in two worlds, we hope to inspire and empower them to reach their full potential and success."

"The main message that our Year 12 graduates can take away from this event is that they are Blak Excellence, they are our future Elders, and the keepers of our culture. Not only surviving but thriving in a modern world!"

The keynote speakers for Blak Excellence are Stan Grant, a renowned journalist and Thomas Mayo, a respected community leader and advocate for youth empowerment. The event will also have Tristan Nelliman-Adams as MC, who has been a great support in previous years.

The Emerging Leaders Incentive Scheme has witnessed incredible success since its commencement, with over 4,260 students invested in attending school regularly, achieving academic growth, and increasing their personal engagement levels within their school and communities.

Townsville Catholic Education is dedicated to First Nations Education and is committed to providing access to culture, role models, and truth-telling within schools. Blak Excellence is a testament to this commitment and is a great platform to celebrate the achievements of our First Nations students.

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## About the Emerging Leaders Incentive Scheme

*The Emerging Leaders Incentive Scheme is a unique initiative that supports the educational engagement and success of First Nations students in Townsville Catholic Education schools. It includes a range of incentive initiatives designed to improve educational outcomes for First Nations students, including cultural workshops, mentorship programs, and leadership development opportunities.*

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### Event details:

Date: Thursday 29 August 2024

Time: 12.30pm for a 1.00pm start

Location: Rydges Southbank Townsville

### Keynote speakers:

<p><b>Stan Grant</b></p> 	<p>Stan Grant is a trailblazing First Nations journalist, with a career spanning four decades and over seventy countries. He is a renowned author, filmmaker, and moral philosopher, and has won numerous prestigious awards for his reporting and writing. Stan is a passionate advocate for social justice and strives to promote unity and understanding through his work.</p>
<p><b>Thomas Mayo</b></p> 	<p>Thomas Mayo is a Kaurareg and Kalkalgal Torres Strait Islander man living in Darwin and Assistant National Secretary of the MUA. He has played a key role in development of the Uluru Statement and is a signatory. He has written award-winning books and remains involved in advocacy, policy development, and community support for Indigenous peoples.</p>

*\*Blak is a term which is used to distinguish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity from skin colour. It is also an expression of self-determination.*

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