

## Joint Faith Leaders' Statement:



## Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry

We, the undersigned representatives of various Churches and Muslim communities across Queensland, express our profound concern about the Queensland Government's intention to abolish the recently established Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry.

This independent inquiry is a vital public platform for listening to and recording stories; collating evidence to shine a light on our past; educating and fostering understanding about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories; and, making informed recommendations.

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Before abolishing this independent Inquiry, we believe the new State Government needs to first clarify to all Queenslanders:

- What it will implement in its place to achieve the above important outcomes within the same timelines, noting the advanced age and physical frailty of many Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander Inquiry contributors?

- How all Queenslanders will be able to heal and move forward together — with dignity and respect — and understand our shared history in all its challenges and richness?

As people of a faith that is grounded in a story, we believe that an understanding of Queensland's shared story is essential for us to be a cohesive, respectful, and inclusive State.

Truth-telling and listening are at the heart of a healed, reconciled community.

In the midst of the tragic impacts of displacement, dispossession, the forcible removal of children and policies of assimilation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, there are also stories of appreciation, reconciliation and triumph in adversity. All these stories need to continue to be heard.

We honour both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and non-Indigenous Queenslanders who have bravely and sincerely shared their experiences in the Inquiry so far.

We support *both* the government's announcement that it will address education and home ownership, as well as the work of the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry — these can easily happen side by side. Listening to the truth in a trauma-informed and culturally appropriate way as a path to a healthier and more cohesive Queensland *and* delivering practical solutions in other critical areas are not mutually exclusive.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures have endured much, and many faith-based organisations are historically complicit in this suffering, including in the way Churches have collaborated with

the State. In signing this statement, we especially advocate for the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queensland elders to be meaningfully heard, and for their stories to be recorded and recognised.

We believe that Queensland remains ready to hear the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and that in the sharing of their stories that a more compassionate and resilient Queensland will emerge.

The path to reconciliation is long, requiring sustained effort and commitment from all sectors of society, including the government.

We stand ready to assist the government in any way we can to keep on the path to reconciliation.

Together, we can work towards a future where the truth is heard and acknowledged, and a path to justice and reconciliation is proudly paved for all Queenslanders.

**Anglican Church Southern Queensland**

Archbishop Jeremy Greaves  
Bishop Cameron Venables

**Anglican Diocese of North Queensland**

Bishop Keith Joseph

**Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane**

Archbishop Mark Coleridge,  
Bishop Tim Norton

**Catholic Diocese of Cairns**

Bishop Jo Caddy AM

**Catholic Diocese of Townsville**

Bishop Tim Harris

**Council of Imams Queensland**

Imam Akram Baksh

**Queensland Muslim Inc**

Habib Jamal

**Lutheran District of Queensland**

Bishop Mark Vainikka

**Salvation Army, Queensland Division**

Major Mark Everitt

**Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod**

The Rev'd Bruce Moore, Moderator

**Greek Orthodox Diocese of Brisbane**

Bishop Bartholomew of Brisbane