



# School Improvement Unit Report

## Tolga State School Executive Summary



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Tolga State School from 14 to 16 March 2016. It provides an evaluation of the school's performance against the nine domains of the [National School Improvement Tool](#). It also recommends improvement strategies for the school to consider in consultation with its regional office and school community.

The review and report were completed by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU). For more information about the SIU and the new reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the Department of Education and Training (DET) [website](#).

## 1.2 School context

<b>Location:</b>	Main Street, Tolga
<b>Education region:</b>	Far North Queensland region
<b>The school opened in:</b>	1895
<b>Year levels:</b>	Prep to Year 6
<b>Current school enrolment:</b>	374
<b>Indigenous enrolments:</b>	11.5 per cent
<b>Students with disability enrolments:</b>	1.9 per cent
<b>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</b>	1002
<b>Year principal appointed:</b>	2013
<b>Number of teachers:</b>	22.38 (full-time equivalent)
<b>Nearby schools:</b>	Atherton State School, Atherton State High School, Kairi State School, Walkamin State School, St Joseph's School (Atherton), Jubilee Christian College Atherton.
<b>Significant community partnerships:</b>	Lions Club Tolga, Atherton Police, Atherton Fire Station, Atherton Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS), Country Women's Association, Tinaroo Environmental Centre, Grandparents' Day, Purple power walk for cancer, Hedley Constructions.
<b>Unique school programs:</b>	Choir - Masonic Anzac service, Atherton Christmas Carnival, Concert for one of the senior facilities, Eisteddfod, Australia and New Zealand Army Corps (Anzac) morning tea for the seniors, Choric speakers



### 1.3 Review methodology

The review was conducted by a team of three reviewers.

The review consisted of:

- a pre-review audit of the school's performance data and other school information
- consultation with the school's Assistant Regional Director
- a school visit of three days
- interviews with staff member, students, parents and community representatives, including:
  - Principal
  - Deputy principal
  - Head of Curriculum (HOC)
  - Master teacher
  - Guidance officer
  - Business Service Manager (BSM)
  - 18 teachers
  - 14 teacher aides
  - 12 parents
  - 45 students
  - Three members of the school facilities staff
  - Three members of the Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) executive
  - Two community members
  - Member for Dalrymple
  - Principal Atherton State School and Tinaroo Outdoor Education Centre, deputy principal Atherton State High School.

### 1.4 Review team

Peter Doyle	Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Monica Halbert	Peer reviewer
Christine Tom	External reviewer



## 2. Executive summary

### 2.1 Key findings

- The school has a strong reputation within the community.

The school's reputation for strong academic outcomes and a smaller supportive environment has led to continuing enrolment growth. Students are calm and classrooms and playgrounds are orderly.

- There is a lack of clarity of the specific roles of members of the school's leadership team.

The roles and responsibilities of the extended leadership team are yet to be explored, implemented and communicated. Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are published in the Staff Manual and are yet to be updated. The school leadership team has identified the issues to be addressed and are working through the regional process of systems leadership.

- School leaders and staff members outline a need for the school to maintain a sustained focus on the identified priority areas.

Members of the school community express a desire for a more collaborative approach to the development and communication of the school's identified improvement agenda based on data and research.

- Members of the school community express a desire for greater consultation and collaboration in building and maintaining mutually respectful partnerships to inform the school's strategic direction and policy development.

The opinion about the way in which members of the wider school community can engage meaningfully with the school is varied.

- There is a well-documented, clearly articulated and effectively managed process of interventions established by the support team for students identified as requiring additional support.

The support team provides guidance to the teachers of students with additional needs. A process has been established to enable teachers to refer individual students for assessment and allocation of additional support. This team and their processes are well respected by teachers and seen as an asset to the school.



## 2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Investigate the engagement of an independent facilitator to support the design of a deliberate and comprehensive strategy, to action the parent and community engagement framework and health and wellbeing framework.
- Clearly communicate the school improvement agenda to all staff members and the wider parent body.
- Develop a specific role description for key staff members through participation in systems leadership.
- Incorporate challenging curriculum activities into the Explicit Instruction (EI) process, including Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) to engage and extend students, especially the higher ability students.