

# SPIRITUAL SUPPORT AND INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

2023–2025







QUT acknowledges the Turrbal and Yugara, as the First Nations owners of the lands where QUT now stands. We pay respect to their Elders, lores, customs and creation spirits. We recognise that these lands have always been places of teaching, research and learning. QUT acknowledges the important role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people play within the QUT community.





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# Foreword from the Vice-Chancellor

Queensland University of Technology (QUT) is committed to diversity and inclusion and strives to ensure that our University is a welcoming and inclusive place to study and work for all students and staff.

The QUT Spiritual Support and Inclusion Action Plan (SSIAP) renews our commitment to diversity and inclusion and encourages us to continually strive to improve our University's services, culture, and facilities so that QUT students and staff from different faith, spiritual beliefs, and traditions, including those with no religious affiliation can reach their full potential.

The SSIAP aligns with our commitment to upholding the Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) and Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act) along with our values within the Connections strategy including, Curiosity, Integrity, and Inclusiveness. This plan is another example of our commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goal 16 as it relates to inclusive institutions. We are committed to expanding the diversity of our community of staff and students.

QUT has a wealth of resources and expertise to drive forward with an Action Plan, that encompasses a wide range of areas and disciplines, ensuring that greater inclusion is embedded across the entire University.

I am pleased to endorse QUT's Spiritual Support and Inclusion Action Plan and encourage the whole University community to work together to ensure that QUT is leading the way in inclusion for all.

## **Professor Margaret Sheil AO**

Vice-Chancellor and President  
Queensland University  
of Technology





# Executive Sponsor Message

The Spiritual Support and Inclusion Action Plan is essential to capture QUT's re-launch of the chaplaincy service as it was previously provided by external bodies, namely the ecumenical group of traditional Christian denominations.

With the appointment of the QUT Chaplaincy Manager positioned within the Student Services department, the Chaplaincy service is a particularly important expression of support in the broader Student Services and Wellbeing portfolio.

QUT Chaplaincy aims to create a model of support that aligns with other wellbeing initiatives and University priorities to support students and the wider QUT community. Supporting students and staff from diverse cultures, faith, spiritual beliefs, and traditions, including those with no religious affiliation, is vital to extending QUT's real-world experience and inclusive values. The Spiritual Support and Inclusion Action Plan has been created with this ideology at the forefront.

## **Professor Mark Harvey**

Vice-President  
(Business Development)  
Queensland University  
of Technology







# Strategic Context

The Spiritual Support and Inclusion Action Plan strategically aligns with *Connections: QUT Strategy 2023-2027*, and is underpinned by various existing QUT policies. The following values and priorities outlined in *Connections* will be upheld through implementation of the Spiritual Support and Inclusion Action Plan:



## VALUES

**Curiosity, Integrity, Inclusiveness.** We aim to build a positive culture of curiosity and harmony for students and staff with open minds to engage in clear, open, and respectful conversations and learnings that provide appreciation, acceptance, and tolerance of different perspectives.



## CONNECTING PEOPLE AND PURPOSE

**To live our organisational culture and values.** We aim to provide resources, programs, events, and initiatives to connect people with one another, building a positive community, and align aspirations to a sense of purpose.



## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

**QUT seeks to embed principles of health and wellbeing in our curricula and promote health and wellbeing for our staff and students.** We aim to promote spiritual wellbeing that will provide a positive impact for our staff and students that engage with the service.



## INCLUSION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

**We are committed to expanding the diversity of our community of staff and students.** We aim to create safe and inclusive spaces for all who have culturally diverse, spiritual, and religious belief systems.



## QUT IN 2027

**QUT will be a lively, welcoming, culturally diverse community, embedding a global outlook into QUT's academic activities and building our international connectivity. This will enhance the prominence of Brisbane and Queensland as a welcoming destination for real-world education and research excellence.** We aim to be a leading support service that values and welcomes students from culturally and religiously diverse backgrounds.



# Action Plan Commitments

**The commitments outlined in this action plan align with the following QUT *Manual of Policies and Procedures* (MOPP):**

- A/8.4 Equal Opportunity and Diversity
- A/8.7 Cultural diversity and anti-racism
- B/8.1 QUT Staff Code of Conduct.

All students and staff should experience a sense of belonging which arises from an inclusive learning and working environment which respects diversity. Therefore, learning experiences, on-campus services and administrative procedures for students, as well as career development and management practices for staff, will be fair. (MOPP A/8.4.5)

The University's community engagement activities will reflect its civic responsibility and be inclusive of culturally and socially diverse communities. (MOPP A/8.4.6)

QUT will take all reasonable steps to provide and support a culturally diverse and inclusive work, study and research environment. A culturally diverse community is characterised by a wide range of traditions, languages, beliefs, values, ideas and practices. Consistent with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and with Australian law, the University will make every effort to ensure staff and students are aware of their rights to have their cultural identity respected and to be free of discrimination. (MOPP A/8.7.4)

## Other relevant commitments

**The Spiritual Support and Inclusion Action Plan will also be underpinned by relevant legislation and best practice guidelines that include the following:**

- The World Health Organization and the UN Charter for Human Rights state that spirituality must be considered a factor of health and wellbeing.
- Principles for promoting and protecting the human rights of international students (Principle 5: Celebrating the cultural and religious diversity of international students)
- Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF Domain 2: Learning environment):
  - 2.3 Wellbeing and Safety - encompass a series of general and specific facets of a provider's operations that are aimed at the promotion of safety and wellbeing.
- ESOS Act (National Code, Standard 6) - a registered provider must assist students to adjust to study and life in Australia, including through the provision of an age and culturally appropriate orientation program that includes information about:
  - student support services available to students in the transition to life and study in a new environment.



# Priority Areas







## Priority Area 1: Inclusive Culture

Item	Action	Key results and outcomes	Responsible area	Related documents
1.1	Collaborate to develop an approach to raising the awareness of diverse faith communities at QUT, including communications and engagement activities to students and staff.	Raise the profile and feelings of inclusiveness towards students and staff of diverse faith and religious beliefs.	QUT Chaplaincy	
1.2	Develop a Religious and Cultural Diversity calendar through consultation with stakeholders—ensure it recognises significant celebration and memorial dates of QUT's diverse faith and religious communities.	Publish the calendar on HiQ and Digital Workplace and develop explanatory comms to direct staff and students to it where this may be a useful resource. For example—event planning and student lifecycle.	QUT Chaplaincy	Appendix 1 - Religious and Cultural Diversity Calendar
1.3	Communication of support and acknowledgement towards students and staff of diverse beliefs by QUT senior leaders.	Vice-Chancellor's weekly staff email occasionally recognises significant faith and religious community celebrations dates through simple statements: <i>"This weekend marks the start of Ramadan, the most auspicious month on the Islamic calendar. During Ramadan Muslims around the world fast from sunrise to sunset. I recognise and support members of the Islamic community, especially our Muslim staff and students. QUT continues to create an empowering and inclusive environment for our diverse community"</i> . Similar messages for Merry Christmas, Happy Diwali, Happy Hanukkah.	QUT Chaplaincy Office of the Vice-Chancellor	Drafted yearly schedule for the Office of the Vice-Chancellor to consider
1.4	Events and communication campaigns are implemented that reflect the needs and interests of faith and religious community and reflect and celebrate QUT's diversity.	Consultation with student and staff religious groups regarding their desires to celebrate their faith in an open forum to increase understanding and participation in diverse cultural events.	QUT Chaplaincy Student Religious Groups Staff Faith Network Student Guild Student Engagement	





## Priority Area 2: Services and Amenities

Item	Action	Key results and outcomes	Responsible area	Related documents
2.1	Provide Spiritual Support and Pastoral Care when sought by students and staff.	An integrated Chaplaincy service offering within Student Services with bookable appointments available. The service should remain scalable to include chaplains of different faiths where there is a demonstrable need/interest.	Student Services QUT Chaplaincy	
2.2	Provide designated safe spaces for students and staff to engage in spiritual, faith and religious dialogue and practices. These spaces would also be the place to access spiritual support from a chaplain or other appropriate resource.	Consultation between Estate Planning and Student Services about the identification and refurbishment of centrally located spaces for spiritual services (including prayer rooms) at both campuses. Disability and Accessibility Services to be consulted around accessibility for refurbishment works and to go beyond compliance to best practice.	QUT Chaplaincy Staff Faith Network Estate Planning Disability and Accessibility Services	







## Priority Area 3: Community and Connections

Item	Action	Key results and outcomes	Responsible area	Related documents
3.1	Launch a QUT Staff Faith Network to connect the different faith and religious staff communities on campus.	The network will offer a forum for staff to celebrate diversity, network, collaborate, share experiences and to represent their communities in university business via QUT Chaplaincy.	QUT Chaplaincy	
3.2	Connect individual students of diverse faith and religious beliefs into relevant student communities to enhance their spiritual wellbeing.	QUT Chaplaincy to be an accessible and welcoming service for all students and have connections with diverse faith groups across QUT and externally where appropriate. These connections will enable effective referrals and potential events on campus.	QUT Chaplaincy	
3.3	Provide opportunities for staff and students across the university to learn about faith and religious beliefs and become active agents in the creation of an inclusive culture.	Actively run short form CHAT programs (Cultural Hearing Asking Telling) in conjunction with an external not-for-profit organisation. This will enable participants to gain skills and confidence to listen and engage with people who are different to them.	QUT Chaplaincy SU Australia (external not-for-profit)	Appendix 2 - CHAT Guidelines for Dialogue
3.4	Facilitate expressions of diverse faith and religious beliefs in chaplaincy spaces by working with student religious groups and assessing needs.	Sourcing speakers, facilitators, musicians where appropriate and ensuring spaces remain inviting to students with no religious affiliation. A clear calendar of events for chaplaincy spaces to be established—for example: Friday prayers, Chapel Service, Quiet Meditation.	QUT Chaplaincy External providers where required	Chaplaincy space calendar
3.5	Provide connection points to a supportive QUT community through events that support students in need (e.g. hunger, social).	Run weekly Brekkie Clubs, Toastie Thursdays and other events where food is provided for free. The goal will be to promote wellbeing by connecting students with support services, including chaplaincy.	QUT Chaplaincy External partners Student Services	
3.6	Develop strong connections with diverse faith and religious based external organisations (churches, mosques, temples, synagogues etc.) and relevant not-for-profits.	Stakeholder list with evidence of regular contact so that practical and spiritual support can be provided where required.	QUT Chaplaincy External organisations where appropriate	





## Priority Area 4: Research, Innovation and Development

Item	Action	Key results and outcomes	Responsible area	Related documents
4.1	Build a culture that fosters research into faith and religious issues and supports students and staff undertaking research in these areas.	Identify existing research being undertaken on faith and religion across the university. Launch a 'Diverse Faith and Religious Beliefs Research Forum' to enhance network of researchers at QUT, and with partner institutions.	QUT Chaplaincy	
4.2	Consider the creation of an institutional 'home' for these researchers in a research centre or cluster that would enhance interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation, and allow for access to research funding, professional development opportunities, seminars, and HDR supervision.	Increase in research and potential funding or grants. Developing resources to support researchers seeking to pursue faith and religious-focused research.	QUT Chaplaincy	
4.3	Embedding support for faith and religious research explicitly within University-level frameworks and strategies.	QUT will become a leading university in providing a holistic approach to developing faith, religious and spiritual initiatives to support its diverse community and promote the QUT brand with partners and external stakeholders.	QUT Chaplaincy	



# Appendices





# Appendix 1 – Religious and Cultural Diversity Calendar

## Religious and Cultural Diversity Calendar 2023

**QUT**  
the university  
for the real world

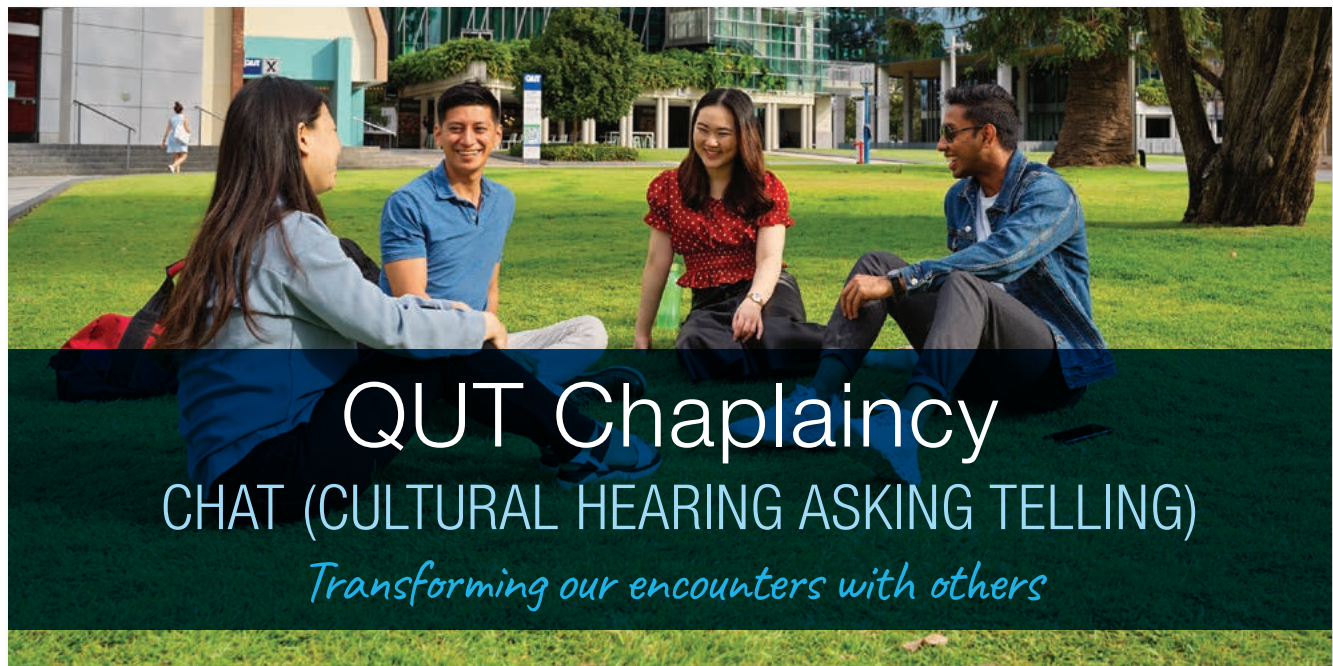
JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
<b>5</b> Birth of Guru Gobind Singh Ji <b>7</b> Christmas (Orthodox) <b>7-9</b> Mahayana New Year <b>22</b> Lunar New Year <b>26</b> Australia Day	<b>13</b> Anniversary of National Apology Day <b>15</b> Parinirvana Day <b>22</b> Ash Wednesday <b>22</b> Lent <b>27</b> Lent (Orthodox)	<b>6</b> Magha Puja <b>7</b> Purim <b>8</b> Holi (Festival of Colours) <b>16</b> National Close the Gap Day <b>20-26</b> Harmony Week <b>21</b> International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination <b>23</b> Ramadan (until 21 Apr) <b>30</b> Rama Navami	<b>2</b> Palm Sunday <b>5-13</b> Passover <b>6</b> Hanuman Jayanti <b>6-8</b> Theravada New Year <b>7</b> Good Friday <b>9</b> Easter Sunday <b>14</b> Palm Sunday (Orthodox) <b>14</b> Good Friday (Orthodox) <b>14</b> Baisakhi or Vaisakhi <b>16</b> Easter Sunday (Orthodox) <b>18</b> Yom HaShoah <b>22</b> Eid al-Fitr <b>25</b> ANZAC Day	<b>5</b> Vesak Day or Buddha Day <b>18</b> Ascension Day <b>21</b> World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development <b>26</b> National Sorry Day <b>27</b> Shavuot <b>27-3</b> National Reconciliation Week <b>28</b> Pentecost	<b>3</b> Mabo Day <b>16</b> Martyrdom (Shahidi) of Guru Arjan Dev Sahib <b>20</b> World Refugee Day <b>26</b> The Hajj (until 2 Jul) <b>28</b> Eid al-Adha
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
<b>1</b> Coming of the Light <b>2-9</b> NAIDOC Week <b>3</b> Asalha Puja (Dhamma) Day <b>19</b> Al Hijra Islamic New Year <b>28</b> Ashura	<b>4</b> National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Children's Day <b>9</b> International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples <b>15</b> Assumption of Mary (Catholic) <b>25</b> Australian South Sea Islanders National Recognition Day <b>30</b> Raksha Bandhan	<b>6</b> Krishna Janmashtami <b>12</b> Nayrouz Coptic New Year <b>15-17</b> Rosh Hashanah - Jewish New Year <b>25</b> Yom Kippur <b>26</b> Mawlid al-Nabi – Birth of Prophet Muhammad <b>29</b> Moon Festival <b>30</b> Sukkot (until 6 Oct)	<b>8</b> Simchat Torah <b>20</b> Inauguration (Gurgadi) of Guru Granth Sahib <b>24</b> Vijay Dashami (Dussehra)	<b>11</b> Remembrance Day <b>12</b> Bandi Chhor Divas <b>12</b> Deepavali (also known as Diwali) Festival of Lights <b>24</b> Martyrdom (Shahidi) of Guru Tegh Bahadur <b>27</b> Birth of Guru Nanak Dev Sahib	<b>3</b> First Sunday of Advent <b>8-15</b> Chanukah <b>21</b> Martyrdom (Shahidi) of Older Sahibzade <b>25</b> Christmas Day <b>26</b> Martyrdom (Shahidi) of Younger Sahibzade
CULTURAL	ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER	CHRISTIAN	ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN	ISLAM	JEWISH
				HINDU	BUDDHIST
					SIKH

Produced by QUT Chaplaincy. Religions based on 2021 Census data. <https://qutvirtual4.qut.edu.au/group/student/health-and-wellbeing/chaplaincy>  
 QUT acknowledge the Turrbal and Yugara, as the First Nations owners of the lands where QUT now stands.  
 These dates are representative of the diversity of our community. Many religious holy days begin at sundown the day before the date.

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## Appendix 2 – CHAT Guidelines for Dialogue



### GUIDELINES FOR DIALOGUE

Learning to explore faith in healthy ways is an important skill for life. These simple guidelines ensure a safe place for people to talk faith, make friends and change lives.

#### LISTEN

to what everyone  
has to say

#### DO NOT TELL OTHERS WHAT THEY BELIEVE,

but let them tell you

#### DO NOT JUDGE PEOPLE

here by what some people of  
their faith or community do

#### ACKNOWLEDGE SIMILARITIES

and differences between  
our faiths

#### SPEAK POSITIVELY

of your faith, rather  
than negatively about  
other people's

#### BE HONEST

in what you say

#### DO NOT FORCE PEOPLE

to agree with  
your views

#### DO NOT TREAT SOMEONE AS A SPOKESPERSON

for their faith or culture

#### MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO GET ALONG WITH EVERYONE

regardless of their faith, gender,  
ethnicity or age

#### RESPECT OTHER PEOPLE,

even if you disagree with  
their views

*Special thanks to SU Australia for permission to use these guidelines*





Spiritual Support and Inclusion Action Plan  
developed by:  
QUT Chaplaincy

QUT | Chaplaincy  
2 George Street  
Brisbane QLD 4000  
Australia

chaplain@qut.edu.au  
**qut.edu.au**

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