Innovate Session
Partnering for Innovative Change

This strand focuses on meaningful partnerships for impact innovations that can be created and explored not only within and across educational systems but also without, including external organisations and corporations, in the local and global communities.

UNLEASHING LEADERS TO DRIVE SYSTEM, SCHOOL AND STUDENT OUTCOMES – A PARTNERSHIP STORY

Catholic Education Services, Diocese of Cairns is a small regional Catholic education office in Far North Queensland, Australia, servicing twenty nine Catholic schools and 11000 students. We are an education system in our third year of massive reform moving from a culture of compliance and inspection to a new culture of co-responsibility and subsidiarity relentlessly focused on wellbeing and learning for all students. In 2015, we entered into a partnership with Queensland Educational Leadership Institute (QELi), enabling our participation in the Executive Development for Educational Leaders With the Catholic Sector Program, as a seminal strategy in our reform process. QELi is a not for profit company established in 2010 to build school leadership capacity and foster educational reform by developing leaders to improve schools.

This impact of this partnership and our ongoing participation in this program, has reverberated across our entire reform process, influencing system and school structures, educational reform strategies and partnerships and individual capacities. As a result our schools and classrooms are changing. Our national and international education networks have multiplied and we are constantly learning, framing and reframing our reform processes.

Our partnership story will focus on why we partnered, how the partnership is different and what we did. We will provide quantitative and qualitative data, including case studies as evidence of impact. The ‘so what’ and ‘what next’ will be explored from both an education system perspective and the perspective of a professional learning provider.

The importance of a shared vision of leadership and collaboration supported by high impact, evidence based professional learning and a focus on program design and evaluation underpin our work together. Critical elements include an embedded Catholic focus, system and school leaders learning together, practical research, a study tour, learning with and from international educational thought leaders and national and international networking.

Sustaining and continuing to grow the energy of our school and system leaders requires a long term commitment, both financially and philosophically. A similar long term commitment from QELi to maintaining the unique components and quality of the program and an ongoing willingness to co-collaboration is also essential.

This way of working together is a prototype which has had significant impact and can now be incorporated into other partnerships and learning programs. The ultimate outcome has been reform and re-energising for both Cairns Education system and QELi.