Cultural Awareness in Schools
The Student Experience

Rationale
- The belief that the acquisition of global awareness and an understanding of the diversity and value of other cultures and societies is an integral part of education
- There is a wealth of experience and innovation regarding cultural awareness spread throughout our colleges, high schools and primary schools, many of which have been involved in the international program for over twenty years.

- It has become increasingly important given the cultural diversity of our nation that this experience is shared.

- The sharing of culturally aware educational practice and pedagogy is also important if we are to maintain the standards of educational excellence that continue to attract large numbers of international students to Australia.
Increasing numbers of students both domestic and international are investing in an international educational experience in order to prepare themselves to live and work in the global society and economy.

Cultural awareness is essential to effective participation and acceptance in a globally interdependent world.

Culturally aware schools draw on material from a range of different cultures and national and ethical backgrounds, promote cross-cultural understanding and multiculturalism, and actively nurture students to develop the skills and knowledge to operate effectively in the global workplace environment.
• It is a major challenge for schools to develop and implement a curriculum that addresses global rather than local or national priorities, which avoids depending on prior knowledge of local or national provenance and where all students share equal opportunities for achievement in a learning environment inclusive of cultural and national diversity.

• The opportunities for synergy between cultural awareness and community engagement clearly exist in multiple dimensions within a school context. It is within the capacity of schools to make a significant cultural contribution to their neighbouring communities through explicit teaching, community participation and cultural awareness capacity-building programs.

• By fostering international community engagement, schools are well placed to influence the social and cultural responsiveness of future community leaders and participants.
- A school that is culturally aware is one where:
  - Teachers and students learn from each other
  - There is a high level of differentiation with regard to curriculum, teaching strategies, support and resources in order to meet the needs of all students whether international, offshore or local
  - There is a level of interaction between students which generates acceptance and inclusivity
  - The curriculum and school community shows evidence of constant review of professional practice
  - The use of culturally inclusive teaching practices and the accessing of teaching and learning resources which reflect international and cultural diversity are ensured
  - The environment offers students high quality courses with international and cultural relevance.