

# SPECIAL ASSISTANCE SCHOOL CARINITY EDUCATION SOUTHSIDE

Sunnybank, QLD



## SNAPSHOT

**Principal:** Leann Faint  
**Founded:** 1997 (moved to current location in 2002)  
**Caters for:** Vulnerable young women, years 7 to 12  
**Enrolments:** 118 (maximum capacity: 125)  
**Staff:** 26.9FTE  
**Hours:** 9am to 3pm

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Remove barriers  
to education,  
don't create  
them.

Leann Faint, Principal

## VISION

Sunnybank is a residential suburb 12 km south of Brisbane developed in the late 1950s. In a quiet suburban street, Carinity Education Southside provides education for vulnerable young women with complex trauma. The school is located on a small site, and uses this limitation wisely, repurposing spaces for specific needs and creating calm areas for students.

Approximately 30 to 40 per cent of students identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Carinity's vision is to build a strong sense of community where young women have a second chance at education, their needs are met, and they feel safe and valued. A key part of the school's vision is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is nurtured and honoured, creating a sense of connection and belonging.

## IMPRESSIONS

All students have a history of long-term disengagement from school before arriving at Carinity. Many students have a history of sexual abuse, domestic violence, or experience of the justice system. Some students currently live in residential care. Respected Torres Strait Islander, Aunty Adelaide has been an Indigenous youth and family support worker at Carinity for 18 years and is like the archetypal mother, spreading

her welcome, love, care, culture and support to everyone who enters the school gate. Aunty Adelaide's mother, Elder Aunty Joan has worked in the Carinity kitchen for 15 years and the family-like feel in the school provides the safety and connection the students need.

Carinity staff feel they make a positive difference every day. Their work is collaborative and innovative, creating new opportunities and programs for young women experiencing barriers to education so they feel a sense of hope; that they are being given a second chance.

In 2014, the Search Light Early Learning Centre moved to the new purpose-built 'Numberlee Kunerra Learning Place' on the Carinity Education Southside campus. The community partnership between Search Light and the school has provided Carinity young mums with access to specialised family support and education, which can continue upon leaving school when they move into further education or employment.

## WRAP-AROUND CARE

Years 7 to 10 have approximately 15 students in each class, though numbers increase for years 11 and 12. Every student has an individual plan and the school uses the 'My Mind Star' individualised case-management tool to co-create goals with students, looking beyond academic outcomes.



There is a strong team approach with all teachers and staff trained inhouse in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention to help students regulate their behaviour and work in positive ways. The support team consists of an Indigenous youth and family support worker, a chaplain, attendance officer and youth therapeutic and wellness lead who together work with teachers and youth workers in the classroom to provide students with whatever assistance is required. This can range from organising career advice, access to counselling and mental health services, to basic needs such as clothes, toiletries, medication, transport cards, Medicare cards, Health Care Cards and birth certificates. They also link Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to support groups. Breakfast and a hot lunch for students and staff are provided daily.

## UNIQUE PROGRAMS

When young women enrol at Carinity, they may have been disengaged from school for one or two years. Students commence in the multi-age Transition Program and can stay in that class as long as necessary before entering their year level class. This program was developed to allow a gentle return to school, facilitate learning of organisation skills, and welcome new students into the community. The program allows staff to assess each student's academic, social and emotional needs to determine learning and support needs.

Many students gravitate towards hospitality and visual arts courses or enrol in the school's TAFE programs and school-based traineeships. They may also enrol in apprenticeships or TAFE courses not covered by the school's offerings. These courses range from Certificate I to Diploma level and contribute points toward the Queensland Certificate of Education.

As many students identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, Carinity programs encourage connection to culture. Programs also emphasise project-based learning, creativity and expanding natural gifts. Yarning and sewing circles, camps, excursions and arts-based activities such as theatre, dance and music form the creative backdrop, connecting young people to their community and local Elders.

Every Friday, years 10, 11 and 12 go off site to volunteer in community organisations. This contribution adds to Certificate II competencies and gives students the feeling of 'giving back'. Holiday programs keep students connected to school, so they are more likely to return after the break. They might engage in tie dying, cooking, or simply eating a meal together and learning life skills such as setting a table. For some students, these are new experiences.