



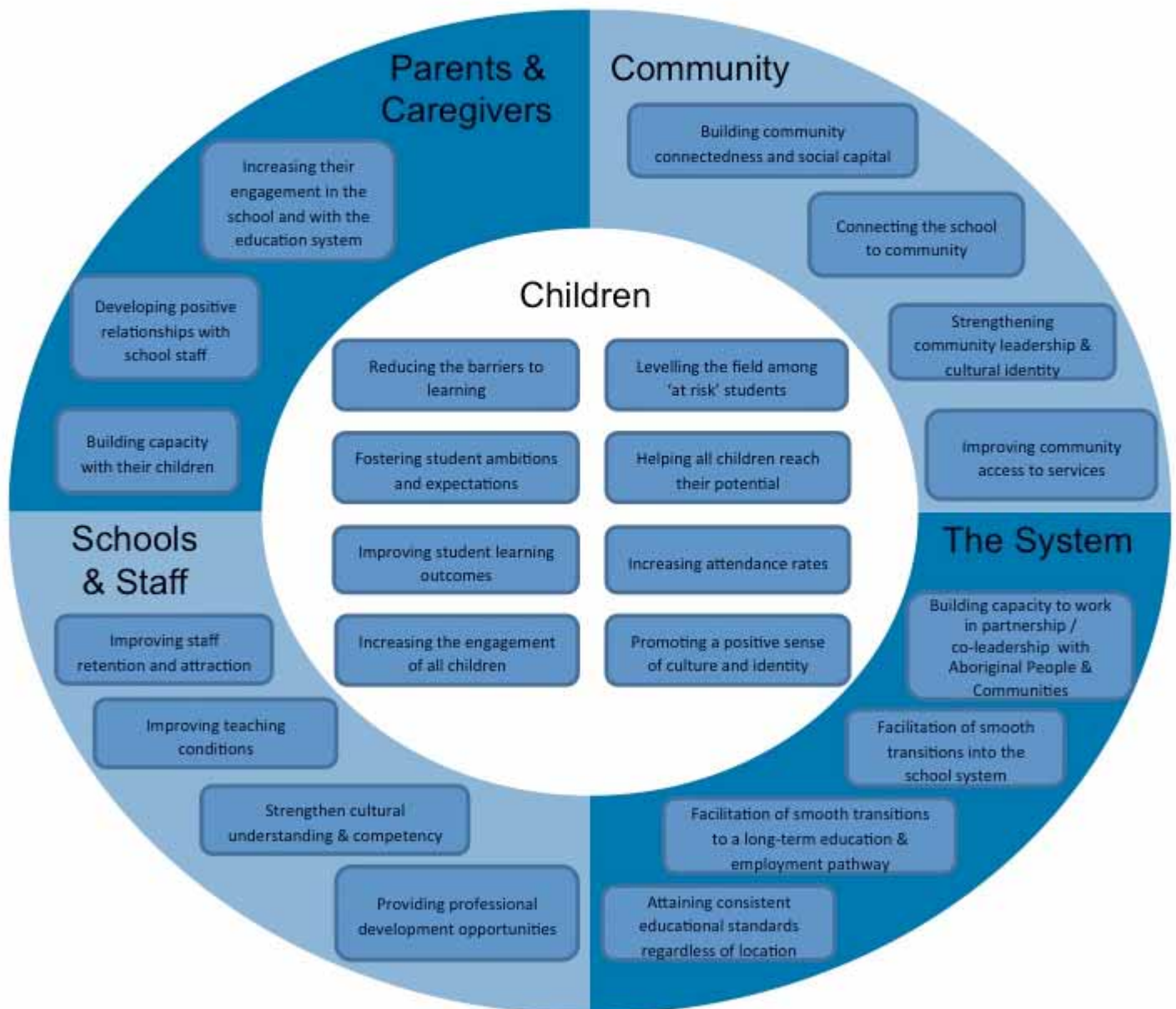
Education &
Communities

Connected Communities Strategy



The following diagram has been adapted from the *Final Report for the Extended Service School Models project*.

It illustrates the long term objectives of the *Connected Communities* strategy for the students, parents and caregivers, community, schools and staff and the system.



Commonwealth, c. b. Adapted from "Final Report for the Extended Service School Models project".

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES STRATEGY

A new approach is needed if we are to address the educational and social disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal children and young people living in a number of complex and disadvantaged communities throughout NSW.

In October 2011 the Department of Education and Communities commenced a consultation process with communities and stakeholder groups to develop a strategy to improve outcomes for children and young people in these schools and communities. The *Connected Communities* strategy is a result of this work.

Overview - *Connected Communities* strategy

The strategy positions schools as community hubs. It broadens the influence of the community and school leadership, to play a role in the delivery of key services and in supporting children and young people from birth through school into further training, study and employment.

The strategy has been informed by advice from the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG), a broad consultation process with key stakeholders and research about extended service schools and place-based approaches to service delivery and community development.

The *Connected Communities* strategy will be co-designed with each community based on information from a comprehensive community profile including input from the community concerning the current strengths within the community and the community's vision and aspirations.

This strategy complements a number of other reforms in education including:

- *Local Schools Local Decisions* which is enabling much greater authority and flexibility for principals to make decisions about how best to use the schools resources to improve teaching and learning outcomes
- *Early Action for Success* which emphasises high level instructional leadership in schools to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes in our most poorly performing schools
- *Every Student Every School* which provides a comprehensive range of reforms to strengthen learning and support in every school in NSW including for students with disability and learning difficulties.

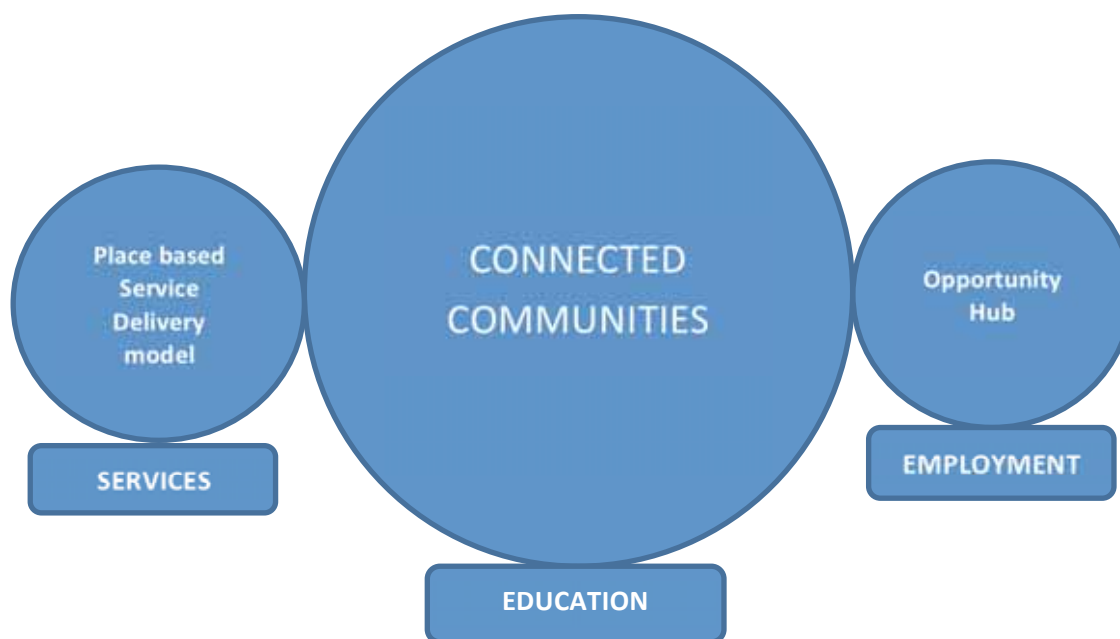
Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs

The *Connected Communities strategy* is also designed to complement the work of the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs.

The strategy addresses each of the key issues raised by community during the Ministerial Taskforce consultation:

- There is a need for greater Aboriginal community engagement in schools, including the employment of Elders and Aboriginal staff
- Early childhood education is critical in improving Aboriginal education outcomes
- Embed and celebrate Aboriginal culture in schools
- Build cultural understanding amongst teachers and link Aboriginal education outcomes to teacher performance

- Enhance supports for Aboriginal children, including tutoring and homework support
- Improve the management of non-attendance and consider alternative options to address high suspension rates
- Support continuity of learning for Aboriginal children by supporting successful transition from pre-school to primary school, to secondary school and then tertiary education and training.



Key features

The *Connected Communities* strategy has a number of key features including:

- Cultural awareness (*Connecting to Country*) delivered locally for all staff
- Teaching Aboriginal language and culture
- Additional school executive position – Leader: Community Partnerships
- Early years focus through to further learning and employment
- Personalised learning plans for all students
- Schools as a hub for service delivery
- Early intervention and prevention focus
- Partnership and co-leadership with the Aboriginal Community
- Partnership with a University and a TAFE Institute

The strategy would be strengthened by linking with an opportunity hub and/or place based service delivery model, however it is not reliant on these approaches.

Key deliverables

To facilitate a rigorous evaluation of the *Connected Communities* strategy, an evaluation framework will be in place from the outset. This framework will include milestones, targets, key data and measures, and a collection and reporting schedule, as well as a proposed methodology for the data analysis.

The key deliverables are:

- Aboriginal children are increasingly developmentally ready to benefit from schooling - in their physical health, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills and communication.

- Aboriginal families and community members are actively engaged in the school.
- Attendance rates for Aboriginal students are equal to the state average.
- Aboriginal students are increasingly achieving at or above national minimum standards and overall levels of literacy and numeracy achievement are improving.
- Aboriginal students are staying at school until Year 12 (or equivalent training).
- Aboriginal students are transitioning from school into post school training and employment.
- Aboriginal parents and carers report that service delivery from the school site is flexible and responsive to their needs.
- Aboriginal students and communities report that the school values their identity, culture, goals and aspirations.
- Staff report that professional learning opportunities build their capacity to personalise their teaching to meet the learning needs of all students in their class.
- Staff report that professional learning opportunities build their cultural understandings and connections with the community.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

The strategy will be implemented in up to 15 NSW public schools.

The successful implementation of the strategy is dependent on:

- Effective leadership
- Good governance, and
- Genuine community partnerships.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Executive Director, Connected Communities

Leadership for the strategy will be provided by an Executive Director for Connected Communities.

The Executive Director will report to the Director-General of Education and Communities.

The Executive Director will be responsible for:

- Merit selecting the Executive Principals
- Delivering the key accountabilities of the *Connected Communities* strategy in all 15 schools
- Ensuring the integrity of cultural knowledge and information is accurately communicated and upheld
- Supporting and respecting community healing processes
- Working in partnership with the AECG to run consultation processes in each community and develop in partnership with the local community, a tailored *Connected Communities* model to address local needs and aspirations
- Developing an individual profile of each community, identifying the community's, financial, cultural, social, human and physical dimensions, the educational data, the demographics and current government (including Commonwealth) and non-government services and programs
- Building community ownership of and support for the strategy
- Brokering education services as required on behalf of the schools
- Brokering government and non-government services on behalf of the communities

- Brokering and strengthening employment opportunities for students transitioning from school
- Monitoring and reporting to Government and communities on progress in delivering the *Connected Communities* strategy.

The Executive Director will also be responsible for managing contentious issues related to *Connected Communities* schools to ensure the efficient and prompt resolution of issues of educational, industrial, legal and political significance and ensuring the efficient and effective management of the day to day operations of all schools.

Executive Principals

Executive Principals will be appointed for five years. They will be appointed three months before they take up their positions in schools. During this time they will:

- Contribute local contextual information to the community profile through discussions with the community
- Work with the Executive Director and the local Aboriginal community to articulate the aspirations and vision for the future including the core goals
- Develop a plan for the delivery of the local vision, including a plan for the delivery of education and care from birth to employment
- Participate in professional learning opportunities including *Connecting to Country*
- Select staff.

Each Executive Principal will appoint:

- A leader, Community Partnerships which will be an additional school executive position for an Aboriginal person to assist with the links with the community and act as a cultural mentor to the Executive Principal and staff, and
- A community member endorsed by the community to teach Aboriginal languages and culture.

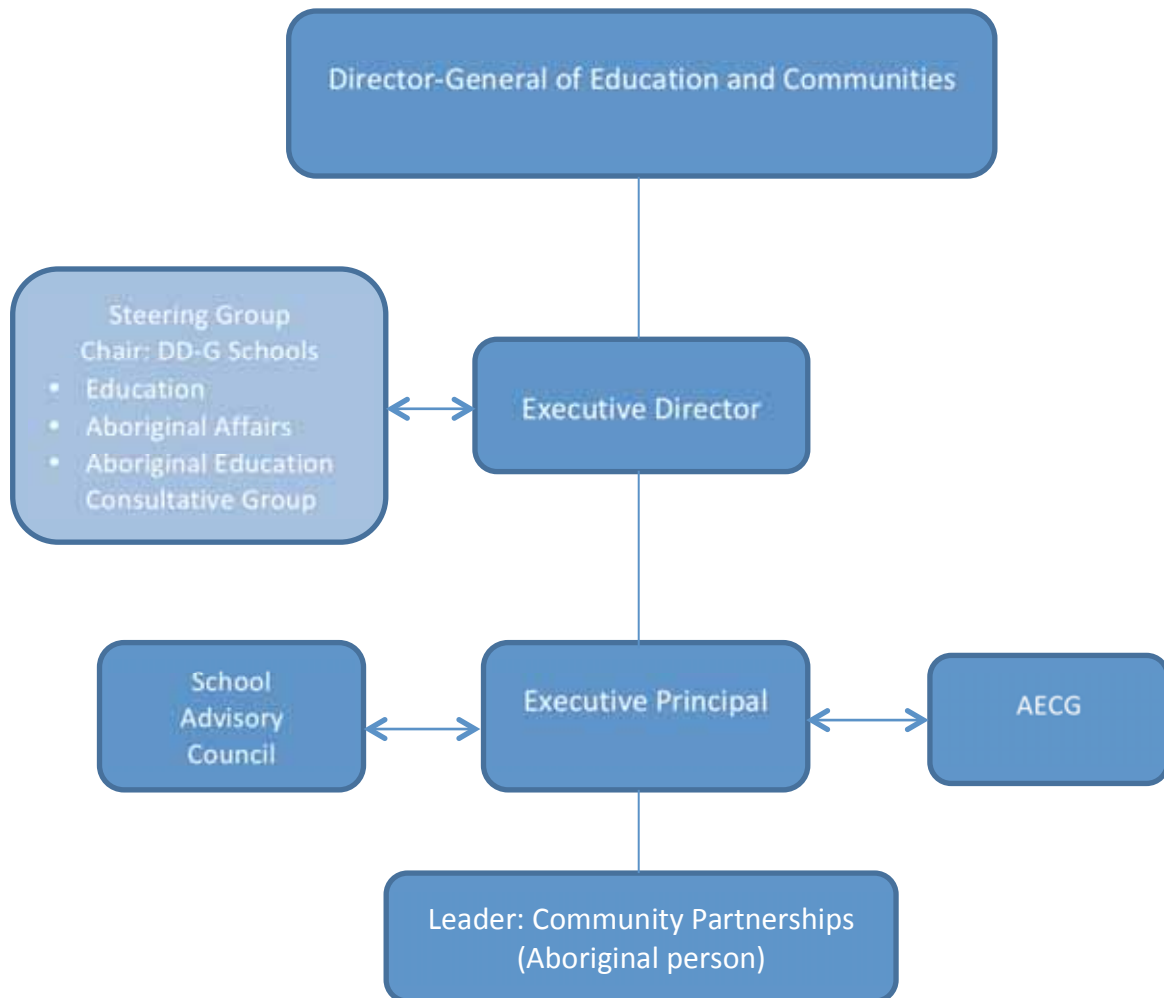
The Executive Principals will lead and manage their schools and report to the Community and to the Executive Director on the progress and achievement of the key deliverables of the *Connected Communities* strategy.

They will also, for example:

- Provide innovative and inclusive leadership based on trust and respect
- Work in partnership with the local Aboriginal community to improve outcomes
- Improve teaching practices and learning outcomes
- Take action to reduce the barriers to learning
- Maintain effective relationships with staff, families, community groups, business, special interest groups and government and non-government agencies
- Ensure the effective targeting and management of all resources
- Exercise sound judgement in the management and resolution of emergent and contentious issues

GOOD GOVERNANCE

The following diagram provides an overview of the governance structure for *Connected Communities*.



The Executive Director will report to the Director-General of Education and Communities.

School Advisory Council

Each school will establish a School Advisory Council to provide advice to support the delivery of quality education and training to meet the needs and expectations of the students and the school community. The Council will include:

- The Executive Principal
- Leader, Community partnerships
- Teacher of Aboriginal languages and culture
- Staff representatives

- Student representatives
- Parent / carer representatives
- Local AECG president (or regional if no local)
- Local Aboriginal Elders or key community members
- Partner government agency representatives
- Partner non-government organisations, such as Aboriginal Medical Service
- Chamber of Commerce or local business representative.

Local AECG

Executive Principals will:

- Establish a partnership agreement with the local AECG (renewed annually)
- Report on school achievements to the AECG including student learning outcomes.

GENUINE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Schools participating in the *Connected Communities* strategy will work in partnership with their local communities. They will actively listen to community and co-lead the strategy with community.

TARGETED SCHOOLS

The following schools and communities will be invited to participate in the Connected Communities strategy:

- Boggabilla Central School
- Toomelah Public School
- Wilcannia Central School
- Walgett Community School
- Bourke Public School
- Bourke High School
- Moree East Public School
- Moree Secondary College
- Coonamble High School
- Coonamble Public School
- Taree Public School
- Taree High School
- Brewarrina Central School
- Menindee Central School
- Hillvue Public School

Where there is more than one school servicing the same community an Executive Principal may be employed to lead more than one site.

STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

1. Appoint the Executive Director (July 2012)
2. Conduct information sessions with each community
3. Appoint Executive Principals (October 2012)
4. Develop comprehensive community profiles
5. Executive Principals in partnership with the AECG conduct community workshops to:

- develop local contextual information to add to the community profile
 - articulate the aspirations and vision for the future including the core goals
 - develop a plan for the delivery of the local vision, including a plan for the delivery of education and care from birth to employment
6. Executive Principals select staff
 7. Renew partnership agreement with local AECG
 8. Establish School Advisory Councils.

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