



Indigenous Education Action Plan Draft

2010–2014

For public comment

MCEECDYA

Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood
Development and Youth Affairs

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	
Preface	2
Overview	3
Policy environment	4
Consultation	5
Terminology	5
Format	6
2. NATIONAL COLLABORATION	
Readiness for school	7
Engagement and connections	9
Attendance	11
Literacy and numeracy	13
Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development	15
Pathways to real post-school options	17
3. JURISDICTIONAL PRIORITIES	
New South Wales	19
Victoria	21
Queensland	23
South Australia	25
Western Australia	27
Tasmania	29
Northern Territory	31
Australian Capital Territory	33
4. TRACKING PROGRESS AND BUILDING ON WHAT WORKS	
Overview	35
Annual report	35
National clearinghouse on what works	35
Data improvement	36
Evaluation of the Indigenous Education Action Plan	36

1. INTRODUCTION

Preface

Governments across Australia have agreed to take urgent action to close the gap between the life outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. To drive action, the Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers have agreed through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to six ambitious targets:

- close the life expectancy gap within a generation;
- halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade;
- ensure all Indigenous four year olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education within five years (by 2013);
- halve the gap for Indigenous students in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade (by 2018);
- at least halve the gap in Indigenous Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates by 2020; and
- halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade (by 2018).

Achieving these targets will require significant effort and collaboration by governments, their agencies, communities and the corporate and philanthropic sectors. Targets have been built into funding agreements between the Australian Government and State and Territory Governments and non-government education providers as part of national arrangements.

Governments, through COAG and the National Indigenous Reform Agreement, have committed to ensuring better connections across six strategic 'building blocks': early childhood; schooling; health; economic participation; healthy homes; safe communities; and governance and leadership.

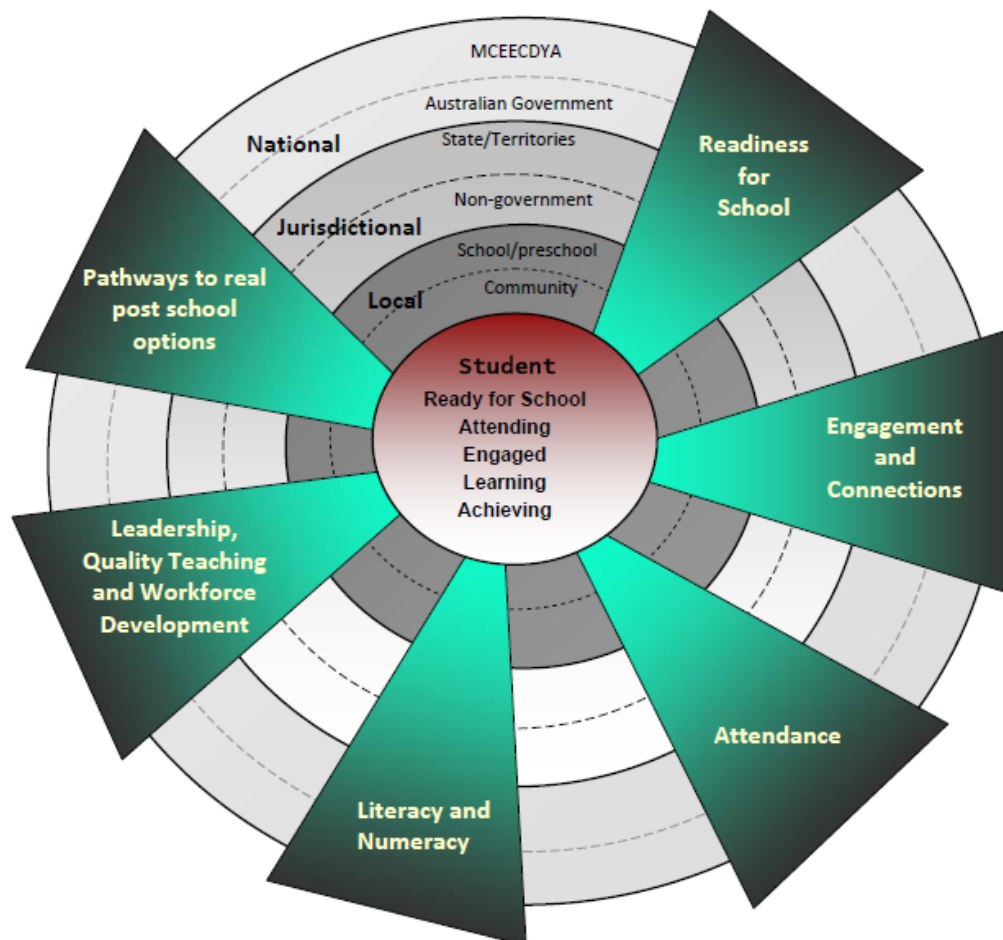
Members of the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) have portfolio responsibilities associated with early childhood development and schooling and for services to assist students to make successful transitions to training, further studies or employment. MCEECDYA wants all Australian children to have a high-quality, world-standard education to equip them for life in the 21st century.

Overview of the Indigenous Education Action Plan

The Indigenous Education Action Plan 2010–14 (the Plan) outlines how MCEECDYA Ministers will work together to achieve the closing the gap targets. Non-government education providers have agreed to join with governments to achieve these targets and progress the actions outlined in this Plan.

The Plan identifies national, jurisdictional and local action in six priority domains that evidence shows will contribute to improved outcomes in Indigenous education. These priorities will guide effort over the next four years. The following diagram provides a conceptual overview of the Plan.

Figure 1: Conceptual overview of Indigenous Education Action Plan



The Plan builds on commitments by governments through COAG to introduce substantial structural and innovative reforms in early childhood education and schooling as outlined in national partnership agreements between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories. These reforms are designed to improve outcomes for all Australian students by increasing access to quality early childhood education, improving literacy and numeracy achievement, addressing disadvantage in low socio-economic status school communities, improving teacher quality and increasing the number of young people attaining a Year 12 or equivalent qualification.

The Plan also builds upon *Australian Directions in Indigenous Education 2005–2008 (Australian Directions)*, which focused national effort in improving Indigenous student outcomes.¹ It is informed by an evaluation of *Australian Directions* undertaken by prominent Indigenous academics from across Australia.²

As it is action at the local level that will make the most difference in closing the gap in educational outcomes, Ministers have agreed in this Plan to identify a key group of schools called 'focus schools', some of which have been identified as sites for specific action under national reforms. It is through monitoring and taking action in focus schools that Ministers will be assured that the benefits of national reforms are reaching Indigenous students and that resources are used effectively to support the closing the gap targets. Focus schools will begin implementing actions outlined in the Plan during 2010, with outstanding actions established as part of school planning processes for the 2011 academic year.

In implementing the actions in this Plan, government and non-government providers will follow the six principles for the delivery of programs and services to Indigenous Australians agreed under the National Indigenous Reform Agreement:

- *Priority principle:* Programs and services contribute to closing the gap by meeting targets endorsed by COAG while being appropriate to local community needs.
- *Indigenous engagement principle:* Engagement with Indigenous parents, students and communities is central to the design and delivery of programs and services.
- *Sustainability principle:* Programs and services are directed and resourced over an adequate period of time to meet COAG targets.
- *Access principle:* Programs and services are physically and culturally accessible to Indigenous people recognising the diversity of urban, regional and remote needs.
- *Integration principle:* There will be better collaboration between and within governments at all levels and their agencies to effectively coordinate programs and services.
- *Accountability principle:* Programs and services will have regular and transparent performance monitoring, review and evaluation.

Policy environment

In 2009, there were over 150 000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students in Australia representing just over four per cent of the student population. Around 86 per cent of Indigenous students are enrolled in government schools and 14 per cent in non-government schools. While Indigenous students can represent up to 100 per cent of enrolments in remote and community-based schools, the majority attend regional and urban schools where most of their peers are non-Indigenous. About 14 per cent of Indigenous students attend schools in remote areas.

Indigenous students have made some gains in recent years, especially in English literacy and numeracy and retention to Year 12. Many Indigenous students succeed at school and go on to join the increasing numbers of Indigenous Australians who are undertaking further study: there are around 70 000 Indigenous people in vocational education and training and 9 000 at university. Other Indigenous students move straight from school into employment.

However, significant gaps remain between the educational outcomes of Indigenous students and other students. This is clear on all indicators including participation in early childhood education, literacy and numeracy, attendance, retention, and post-school transitions. This gap limits the career prospects and life choices of Indigenous students and perpetuates intergenerational disadvantage. [National trajectories to achieve the closing the gap targets are under development and will be included in a future draft of this Plan.]

¹ *Australian Directions in Indigenous Education 2005–2008*, Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 2006

² The review was led by Professor Peter Buckskin PSM, FACE Dean and Head of School, David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education and Research, University of South Australia. The findings of the review are outlined in 'Review of *Australian Directions in Indigenous Education 2005-2008*', which can be downloaded at <http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/mceecdya/>

Consultation

Extensive consultation with stakeholders in the government, non-government and community sectors was undertaken by Indigenous academics for the review of *Australian Directions*.

This Plan was informed by the review and developed by a national working group of senior officials, many of whom are Indigenous Australians. An initial draft of the Plan was circulated to Indigenous education consultative bodies and a number of leading Indigenous educators for preliminary comment prior to public release. The purpose of this draft is to seek comment from a wider range of stakeholders to inform the development of the final version. Ministers see this consultation process as an important part of their commitment to involve Indigenous Australians, educators and other stakeholders in the development of policy that will assist governments to close the gap in Indigenous student outcomes.

Comment is invited by 28 February 2010. A response form is available at the MCEECDYA website at www.mceecdya.edu.au. It should be forwarded to the MCEECDYA Secretariat by:

- email (preferred): enquiries@mceecdya.edu.au
- fax: (03) 9639 1790
- post: IEAP Consultation, Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, PO Box 202, Carlton South, Victoria 3053.

Terminology

- The term 'Indigenous' as used in this Plan refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.
- The term 'education providers' refers to government and non-government early childhood education and schooling sectors in each State and Territory.
- The term 'focus schools' refers to those schools with Indigenous students with the greatest need and where effort should be focused to make the greatest difference. The identification of 'focus schools' will be undertaken in a three tier process and reviewed annually:
 - (1) *75 per cent of Indigenous enrolments in each state or territory* - Potential 'focus schools' have been identified as the number of primary schools which cover 75 per cent of Indigenous primary school enrolments in each State or Territory. The 75 per cent cut is based on a ranking of the schools by Indigenous primary school enrolments in descending order and marking the point of a minimum of 75 per cent of enrolments. This cut will produce the list of potential focus schools for each State and Territory.
 - (2) *Overlay of NAPLAN results* - The 2008 National Assessment Program-Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results are held by education providers. This stage involves identifying the 'potential focus schools' with 25 per cent or more of Indigenous students below the minimum national standard in any one of the reading, writing and numeracy domains.
 - (3) *Special cases: adding or removing schools on the proposed list* – In determining the final list of focus schools, education providers and the Australian Government will reconcile and agree on 'anomalous schools' to be excluded from or included in the list of focus schools.

In the first instance, primary schools are to be targeted as 'focus schools' so that effort is concentrated in the early years of learning. However, education providers in all jurisdictions and sectors could extend activities at their own discretion to include secondary schools, particularly those that have focus primary schools in their feeder areas and are identified under the Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership and/or the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership.

Format

This Plan is made up of four chapters:

1. *Introduction*: providing context and an overview of the Plan.
2. *National collaboration*: detailing a suite of agreed outcomes, targets, performance indicators and actions as the foundation of collaborative effort across Australian education providers to close the gap in Indigenous student outcomes.
3. *Jurisdictional priorities*: summarising each jurisdiction's own priorities as identified by each State and Territory government and major non-government provider representatives. These priorities give further perspective on how national collaborative action and jurisdictional priorities will complement each other to close the gap.
4. *Tracking progress and building on what works*: an important function of the Plan is to provide Ministers with information on how education providers are progressing in achieving closing the gap targets. This chapter provides an overview of what information will be provided to Ministers and highlights opportunities for sharing research and good practice across education providers and with the public.

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2. NATIONAL COLLABORATION

Readiness for school

Participation in culturally inclusive, high quality early childhood development and education programs can assist Indigenous children to get the best start in life. These programs:

- promote early engagement with learning;
- provide a strong foundation for future educational achievement;³
- encourage the social, physical and mental development of children from birth; and
- support children in their transition to school.

Recent research indicates that Indigenous children start school at a significant disadvantage. Nineteen per cent of Indigenous students were rated as 'far below age level' in academic performance and 39 per cent were 'somewhat below age'.⁴ In 2005, only 46 per cent of Indigenous four year olds participated in preschool.

For the first time Indigenous families, communities and educators have available a comprehensive picture of how their children are developing before they reach school. The Australian Early Development Index provides information on children's physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills, communication skills and general knowledge. This will be an invaluable tool to assist providers of early childhood education and schooling.

Outcomes

- Better connections across the six building blocks agreed under the National Indigenous Reform Agreement, including with health and community services.
- Increasing number of Indigenous students performing at equivalent or better rates to other students in on-entry assessment.

Targets

- Increased proportions of Indigenous children participating in quality early childhood education and development and child care services.
- All Indigenous children in 'focus schools' will be equipped with the basic skills for life and learning (i.e. the five developmental domains as identified in the Australian Early Development Index: physical health, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills, and communication skills and general knowledge).

Performance indicator

- The proportion of Indigenous children (by geographic location as identified by the Australian Standard Geographical Classification) who are enrolled in (and attending, where possible to measure) a preschool program.

³ Children who attend preschool for more than a year show a statistically significant performance advantage in later school achievement than those without preschool attendance. OECD, 2004 - *Results from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)*.

⁴ West Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey 2006 and preliminary findings from trial sites of the AEDI.

National collaborative action

1. MCEECDYA will support the development of a National Early Years Workforce Strategy for consideration by COAG in 2010. This Strategy will address the skills and capacity of the current and future Indigenous and non-Indigenous children's workforce including the early childhood educational and care sector in rural and remote areas.
2. MCEECDYA will support the use of the Early Years Learning Framework in all early childhood settings to ensure family and community engagement from the outset of a child's education. The Framework also supports the cultural competence of early childhood educators in developing and delivering programs for young children. An Educators' Guide, which is being developed to support educators in their use of the Framework, will have a strong Indigenous component.
3. MCEECDYA will reference, synthesise and report on longitudinal studies into Indigenous early childhood education in the annual report on the Indigenous Education Action Plan 2010–14. Research will consider integrated approaches for children aged 0–8 years, examining barriers to and enablers of success and curricula and resources that provide skill development in the foundations for learning.

Systemic and school-level action

4. Education providers will work with focus schools as early as possible in 2010 to:
 - analyse data, where available, from the Australian Early Development Index to identify priorities for community-based early childhood development; and
 - develop outreach strategies to connect with early childhood education and care, health, welfare and community services at both local and system levels.
5. Education providers will by June 2010 commence measures to ensure that universal access to early childhood education is available in all focus schools by 2013.
6. Focus schools will in 2010 identify what strategies can be implemented to address readiness for school and commence implementation as early as possible. Strategies and resources will be identified in school plans or other public documents.
7. Education providers will develop an on-entry assessment program to assess students' literacy and numeracy skills. This will help in identifying students at educational risk and implementing early intervention strategies.

Engagement and connections

Schools and preschools that work in partnership with families and communities can better support the education of Indigenous children. These partnerships can establish a collective commitment to hold high expectations of Indigenous children and young people. Evidence shows that children who are expected to achieve at school and who have high expectations of themselves are more likely to succeed.

A sense of cultural identity, and the active recognition and validation of Indigenous cultures by schools, is critical to student wellbeing and success at school. There are strong links between wellbeing and learning outcomes.

The involvement of Indigenous Australians in educational decision-making and the participation of Indigenous education workers or community members in classrooms also have a positive impact on educational outcomes.

Outcomes

- Indigenous students are attending and progressing through school.
- Active school and community partnership arrangements in place within schools with Indigenous student enrolments.
- Increased Indigenous presence on school boards and in education advisory roles.

Targets

- School-community partnership agreements in place with all schools with significant Indigenous enrolments by the end of 2011.
- Increased retention rates for Indigenous students.
- Increased grade progression ratios for Indigenous students.
- Increased number of Indigenous students with personalised learning plans in place.

Performance indicators

- Number and proportion of school-community partnership agreements in place.
- Retention rates for Indigenous students.
- Grade progression ratios for Indigenous students.
- Number of Indigenous students with personalised learning plans in place.

National collaborative action

8. MCEECDYA will seek support from the Australian Health Ministers' Conference and Community and Disability Services Ministers' Conference to strengthen connections between schools and health, welfare and community services at local and systemic levels.
9. Governments commit to maintaining appropriate advisory arrangements to ensure Indigenous perspectives can be considered when developing policy and programs.
10. As part of a National Strategy for Indigenous Languages, a study will be commissioned into the feasibility of a national panel of experts framing the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and considering how out-of-school schemes might work.
11. The Australian Government and education providers will work together to develop options to assist Indigenous students in regional and remote areas to access high quality secondary schooling while retaining links with their communities.

Systemic and school-level action

12. Education providers will work with focus schools in 2010 to identify and commence implementation of outreach strategies to connect with early childhood education, health, welfare and community services at both local and system levels.
13. Focus schools will commence negotiating a formal school and community partnership agreement between the school, families and Indigenous community in 2010 that sets out the respective responsibilities of each party and the ways in which they will work together to create a culture of high expectations for Indigenous children and support improvements in their engagement, wellbeing and educational outcomes.
14. Focus schools will commence establishing Indigenous family forums in 2010 through school and community partnership agreements, with terms of reference and operating guidelines jointly developed by schools, staff and families.
15. Schools will involve Indigenous families, teachers and Indigenous education workers in the development of personalised learning plans for all Indigenous students from the first year of formal schooling to Year 10 to support improved educational outcomes. Issues relating to health and wellbeing that impact on education will be addressed by this process through the cooperation of health services with the assistance of education providers.
16. Education providers will review the role of Indigenous education workers to maximise their ability to work in partnerships with Indigenous students, their parents and teachers to improve educational outcomes.
17. Education providers will strengthen school accountability and reporting to families and the community on Indigenous student outcomes.

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Attendance

Evidence shows that attending school and engaging with learning is fundamentally important in helping young Australians to learn successfully and acquire the skills they need for life.

Successful learning cannot be built on irregular attendance at school. There is evidence to suggest that above a minimum necessary level of attendance, the more young Indigenous Australians attend school the greater their success in learning.

In 2007, Indigenous attendance rates in government primary schools were around 87 per cent, compared to 93 per cent for non-Indigenous students. In secondary school, attendance rates were around 78 per cent for Indigenous students and 89 per cent for non-Indigenous students.

To succeed in this area, education providers need to develop a better understanding of the complex factors influencing attendance and gather improved data on attendance. With this information, and a better picture of what strategies are working, education providers will be in a stronger position to implement effective and sustainable measures to support the regular attendance of Indigenous students.

Outcomes

- Increased attendance rates for Indigenous students, culminating in them being at or better than those for other students.
- Enrolment to population ratios for Indigenous Australians equivalent to those for other Australians.

Target

- Increased attendance rates of Indigenous students to align with non-Indigenous student attendance rates.
- All compulsory-aged Indigenous students enrolled in school.

Performance indicators

- Attendance rates of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in school.
- Enrolment to population ratio of Indigenous Australians compared to other Australians.
- Indigenous enrolments at school.

National collaborative action

18. MCEECDYA will dedicate National Project Funds in 2010 to further develop a better evidence base of what works in improving Indigenous student attendance.
19. MCEECDYA will initiate work to establish mechanisms for tracking individual students (enrolment and attendance) from at least the first year of compulsory schooling to post-school education and training.
20. The Australian, Western Australian, South Australian and Northern Territory governments will continue working with non-government providers to develop strategies to better record enrolment and attendance of highly mobile students from remote communities.

Systemic and school-level action

21. Each education system will have an evidence-based attendance strategy in place by June 2010.
22. Focus schools will:
- commence developing an evidence-based attendance strategy in 2010 in consultation with parents and the Indigenous community, which includes targets for improved attendance;
 - publish their attendance strategy in 2011;
 - evaluate and monitor the success of their attendance strategy; and
 - report annually on progress towards meeting their targets.

The strategy and resources will be identified in school plans or other public documents.

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Literacy and numeracy

Evidence shows that mastering the basics of English literacy and numeracy is a foundation for lifelong learning, economic participation and effective citizenship. Investing in the basics for young Australians, including during early childhood learning, is one of the most important and effective ways of ensuring that individuals can achieve their potential.

Educators must be supported to use the most appropriate teaching strategies and resources that meet the needs of the students they work with.

Governments are working together to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes by:

- Implementing a culturally inclusive and relevant national curriculum.
- Supporting teachers to improve their teaching of literacy and numeracy, including through implementing whole-of-school approaches to teaching literacy and numeracy and the better use of data and diagnostic instruments through the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership.
- Piloting new approaches to teaching literacy and numeracy to Indigenous students and sharing the evidence from these pilots.
- Lifting transparency of outcomes at the school level.

The following actions complement these reforms.

Outcome

- Increasing proportions of Indigenous students reaching the national minimum standard or better in NAPLAN tests.

Targets

- By 2018, the gaps in reading, writing and numeracy between Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students will be halved.
- Increased Indigenous participation rates in NAPLAN.

Performance indicators

- Proportion of Indigenous students at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in NAPLAN testing.
- Number and proportion of Indigenous students participating in NAPLAN.

National collaborative action

23. The Australian Government will work with education providers to develop and maintain a national database of effective, evidence-based literacy and numeracy strategies to support the sharing of best practice.
24. The Australian Government and education providers will work together to support access to family literacy and numeracy programs for Indigenous Australians and target participation of Indigenous families in intensive support playgroups.

Systemic and school-level action

25. Focus schools will by January 2011 have in place a whole-of-school approach to the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy which:
- in literacy, in the first three years of school (and beyond if necessary), uses an integrated approach to reading that teaches phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary knowledge and text comprehension;
 - in numeracy, provides intensive, scaffolded, structured and age-relevant teaching to accelerate learning, with continuity of approach for both teachers and students; and
 - in both literacy and numeracy, uses data to monitor individual student performance and drive whole-of-school improvement.
26. Teachers and education workers in focus schools will participate in appropriate professional learning by January 2011 to support a whole-of-school approach to the teaching of literacy and numeracy and use of data on student performance to drive whole-of-school improvement.

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Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

It is important that all Indigenous students are taught by high quality teachers in schools led by excellent principals.

The 2007 *Staff in Australia's Schools* survey found that 31 per cent of early career primary teachers and 40 per cent of early career secondary teachers felt their pre-service education was of no help in preparing them to teach students from Indigenous backgrounds.

Consistent with this evidence, a recent study of around 4 500 Australian teachers found that more than a quarter wanted more professional development to help them to better assist Indigenous students. In 2007, only one per cent of teaching staff in government schools were Indigenous.

Evidence shows that teacher quality is the single greatest in-school influence on student engagement and achievement. Educational leadership by principals is central to establishing and maintaining cultures of learning that are inclusive of Indigenous students and enable and celebrate their academic success.

Outcomes

- Increased appointment of high performing principals and teachers to hard-to staff schools, which will lead to students with poorer outcomes being taught by the best teachers.
- Focused in-service professional development of principals and teachers to increase their cultural competency and equip them with specific teaching strategies to successfully teach and lead improvements in the learning outcomes of Indigenous students.

Targets

- Increase in professional development hours on Indigenous education and cultural competence training undertaken by principals and teachers.
- Increase in the number of Indigenous teachers and principals.

Performance indicators

- Number of professional development hours on Indigenous education and cultural competence training undertaken by principals and teachers.
- Number of Indigenous teachers and principals.

National collaborative action

27. MCEECDYA will develop a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Educator Workforce Strategy to assist education providers to make progress towards an equitable ratio of Indigenous staff to students. The Strategy will support aspiring Indigenous education leaders, include initiatives to attract more Indigenous Australians into the education workforce and bureaucracies and provide pathways through the workforce. The Strategy will also help to recognise and clarify the role of Indigenous education workers and support their professional development and career aspirations.
28. MCEECDYA has agreed to the development and implementation of a national curriculum by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority that will include Indigenous perspectives to ensure that all young Australians have the opportunity to learn about, acknowledge and value the cultures of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.
29. Education providers in Northern and Central Australia will work more closely together to provide professional learning for staff and to share staff and resources where mutually beneficial. Providers will work with the Australian Government to establish a five year coordinated approach to support sustained improvement in Indigenous and non-Indigenous contexts.
30. MCEECDYA will consult with the higher education sector to develop and introduce core components on good practice in Indigenous education and the teaching of Indigenous students in all pre-service teacher education courses across Australia.
31. Education providers will consult with teacher registration boards to ensure that completion of core components on good practice in Indigenous education and the teaching of Indigenous students in pre-service teacher education courses are a condition of registration. Where teachers completed their pre-service training before these requirements were introduced, education providers will ensure the provision of appropriate professional learning.
32. MCEECDYA will ensure that requirements for teachers to have knowledge and understanding of the learning needs of Indigenous students are included in the forthcoming National Teacher Professional Standards Framework (Standards for Teachers and School Leaders).
33. MCEECDYA will consult with the higher education sector to establish a coalition of universities, based on the New Zealand model, to provide evidence-based culturally authenticated research that can directly inform classroom pedagogy.
34. The Australian Government and education providers will provide access to high quality, highly effective professional learning and research for current and aspiring school leaders. This will include setting up a national entity, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, to oversee and facilitate the delivery of national flagship programs. Professional learning programs will begin in 2010.

Systemic and school-level action

35. Every principal of a focus school will within two years be required to participate in a leadership program to assist them to lead improvement in the learning outcomes of Indigenous students.
36. Education providers will deliver professional learning to teachers to ensure high levels of cultural competency to inform the best teaching strategies for Indigenous students.
37. Education providers will give priority to focus schools when attracting or placing high performing leaders and teachers.
38. Principals of schools in disadvantaged areas will have the flexibility to tailor operations to meet the needs of the local Indigenous community. This might include extending operating hours and providing onsite or co-located services such as health care, after hours study support, sporting programs, child care and parent support programs. Principals might also partner with other schools to share resources and facilities, develop joint initiatives and provide peer mentoring and support.

Pathways to real post-school options

The evidence shows that young Australians who do not complete Year 12 or equivalent are less likely to have the same opportunities as those who do.

Successful education is the means to employment and economic independence and can form the basis for intergenerational change by providing individuals with the skills to participate fully in society and work and determine their own futures.

The incidence of unemployment among 20–24 year olds who have not completed upper secondary education or its equivalent is more than double those who have.⁵ Labour market participation is central to achieving positive outcomes for individuals and their families in terms of social and economic engagement.

In 2008, only 47 per cent of Indigenous students continued their schooling from years 7/8 through to Year 12, compared to 76 per cent of non-Indigenous students. In 2006, approximately 46 per cent of the Indigenous 19-year-old population had obtained a Year 12 or equivalent Certificate II qualification, compared to approximately 80 per cent of the non-Indigenous 19-year-old population.⁶

Outcome

- Improved progression rates for Indigenous students to further education, skills and professional occupations.

Target

- At least halve the gap in Indigenous Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates by 2020.

Performance indicator

- The proportion of young Indigenous people aged 20–24 who have attained Year 12 or a Certificate II or above.

National collaborative action

39. MCEECDYA will seek advice from Indigenous education consultative bodies, the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council, Universities Australia and other strategic stakeholders to increase the number of Indigenous students who make a successful transition to university in conjunction with new national reforms to increase Indigenous participation in higher education.
40. MCEECDYA will request that the Ministerial Council on Tertiary Education and Employment develop a companion document to the Indigenous Education Action Plan that outlines actions to close the gap in training, university and employment outcomes. This companion document would improve links between the school sector and the training, tertiary education and employment services sectors.

⁵ Sweet R 2006, 'Education, Training and Employment in an International Perspective'. Paper presented at New Transitions: Challenges Facing Australia's Youth, 18 August 2006; Handshake EA 2004, 'Some Simple Analytics of School Quality'. National Bureau of Economic Research, Massachusetts.

⁶ ABS 2006 Census of Population and Housing.

Systemic and school-level action

41. Secondary schools will provide innovative and tailored learning opportunities, mentoring and targeted case management strategies to increase the retention of Indigenous students to Year 12.
42. Secondary schools will provide pathways and improved access to school-based accredited training, including traineeships and apprenticeships, for Indigenous students in years 10-12.
43. Secondary schools will provide case management for Indigenous students undertaking school-based traineeships and link them to employment services.
44. Secondary schools will provide access to career services for Indigenous students and their families to support informed career and study choices.
45. Secondary schools will maximise opportunities for Indigenous students under School Business Community Partnerships to extend learning beyond the classroom, increase student engagement, deepen learning experiences and improve educational outcomes.
46. Education providers will maximise opportunities offered for Indigenous young people under Youth Connections, which provides case management, flexible schooling options and support to encourage young people who have left school early to reconnect with education.
47. Education providers will strengthen partnerships between schools, VET providers, universities and Indigenous communities to broaden the horizons and post-school options of Indigenous students.

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3. JURISDICTIONAL PRIORITIES

[This Chapter is included in the Plan for information only. Stakeholders are not required to comment. The chapter will be refined in the next version to improve consistency and presentation.]

NEW SOUTH WALES

The overarching priorities in New South Wales are to improve outcomes for all Aboriginal students including providing targeted support for students not meeting national minimum standards in literacy and numeracy; incorporating a focus on bridging the gap in outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in planning, target setting and reporting; and ensuring that professional development for principals and teachers addresses quality teaching and relevant and responsive curriculum which build and maintain relations that engage Aboriginal parents, Elders, local Aboriginal education consultative groups and organisations as partners in education.

Under the Quality Teaching National Partnership, 50 centres of excellence will begin operation in NSW in 2010. Thirty-five of these will be in government schools and 15 in non-government schools. These centres will develop, demonstrate and share practices in high quality teaching leading to improved outcomes for students. The National Partnership will also see the implementation of the Highly Accomplished Teacher Scheme in government and non-government schools.

Priorities across the domains

Readiness for school

- Provide priority of access to children from disadvantaged backgrounds, in particular Aboriginal children, in the 100 preschools operated by the Department of Education and Training. The preschools are located in government schools and provide children with a high quality early childhood education experience to support their readiness for formal schooling.
- Implement the pilot project *Building Stronger Connections*. This project commenced in 2009 in 22 schools across NSW to increase the number of Aboriginal children attending government preschools in communities where there are high numbers of Aboriginal children but low numbers of enrolments.

Engagement and connections

- Work in partnership and renegotiate the partnership agreement with the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc (NSW *AECG) as the peak community advisory body on Aboriginal education and training in NSW.
- Deliver culturally inclusive and responsive curriculum and/or programs that reflect a whole-of-government community focus and support communities to better engage in education to improve literacy, numeracy and attendance outcomes.
- Develop a personalised learning plan for all Aboriginal students in conjunction with students, parents and/or caregivers and teachers (including Aboriginal school personnel) that focuses on the student's spiritual, cultural and personal wellbeing and is intellectually demanding.
- Engage in genuine partnerships with Aboriginal parents, community members and particularly the NSW *AECG in developing school plans.
- Implement the *Schools in Partnership* Initiative, the *Kids Excel* and *Youth Excel* programs and Aboriginal student scholarships (initiatives within the NSW State Plan – *Two Ways Together*).
- Implement culturally inclusive curriculum and studies programs by embedding Aboriginal knowledge, cultural values and practices within curriculum frameworks and the delivery of education and training.
- Develop an Aboriginal Languages in Education Five Year Plan, which encompasses a policy on Aboriginal languages in education.

Attendance

- Develop effective programs to assist Aboriginal students at key transition points in their schooling.
- Establish a working group on Aboriginal student attendance to monitor new attendance procedures affecting Aboriginal students and their families and communities, advise of any changes to achieve the intent of the legislation and advise the Minister on new initiatives to improve attendance rates.
- Implement *Keep them Safe*, the NSW Government's action plan to better protect children at risk.

Literacy and numeracy

- Provide resources to focus on language, literacy and numeracy development for Aboriginal students in their first years of schooling.
- Continue to implement a wide range of initiatives to support improved outcomes in literacy and numeracy, including tutorial assistance for students in years 4, 6, 8 and 10 who are not meeting minimum national standards in reading and numeracy.
- Develop strong and effective schools plans based on performance data.

Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

- Provide Aboriginal education and cultural immersion programs for leaders and teachers. As part of these programs, 100 schools will engage in strengthening their relationships with local Aboriginal communities to build their knowledge of Aboriginal Australian histories, cultures and contemporary issues in Aboriginal education.
- Develop and trial an induction program for teachers to develop their understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal Australian histories, cultures and contemporary issues in Aboriginal education.
- Continue to provide materials and programs to support school leaders in disadvantaged Aboriginal, rural/remote and challenging government schools, including on-line courses and web-based learning resources.
- Implement professional learning programs to develop the leadership capacity and career aspirations of Aboriginal principals, teachers and Aboriginal education workers.
- Implement the *Aboriginal Human Resource Development Plan 2009-2011* to improve employment and career advancement opportunities for Aboriginal staff.
- Increase the number of Aboriginal people entering teaching through offering scholarships and providing pathways for Aboriginal education officers and Aboriginal school administrative and support staff. Up to 80 new scholarships will be provided each year for Aboriginal people who wish to pursue a career in teaching.
- In the Catholic school sector, Aboriginal education officers will promote and support the career development of Aboriginal employees. The Independent school sector will provide traineeships for Aboriginal school staff.

Pathways to real post-school options

- Ensure Aboriginal students access, participate in and complete VET programs in schools.
- Increase the number of Aboriginal students participating in and completing pre-vocational courses, traineeships, apprenticeships, cadetships and work placements.

VICTORIA

The Victorian Government works in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) to improve educational outcomes for Koorie young people. The Government has a number of plans and strategies aimed at improving the educational outcomes and general wellbeing of Indigenous young people, including:

- The Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework
- *Wannik: Learning Together–Journey to our Future*, the Government's Education Strategy for Koorie Students
- *Dardee Boorai: The Victorian Charter of Safety and Wellbeing for Aboriginal Children and Young People*
- *Victorian Plan for Aboriginal Children and Young People (2010-2020)*

The Government is developing an Aboriginal Early Years Strategy to achieve the optimal health, development, learning and wellbeing of Aboriginal children and their families.

Independent Schools Victoria supports schools in the development of strategies and initiatives to enable and improve the engagement, retention and academic success of Indigenous students in Independent schools. It also supports the continuing development of teachers and school leaders as they work towards meeting the specific needs of Indigenous students and their families within their school communities.

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) has several strategies to support the successful educational outcomes of Indigenous children in the early years and maximise readiness for school. It has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with VAEAI and participates in the Victorian strategies noted above.

Priorities across the domains

Readiness for school

Since January 2009, up to 10 hours of kindergarten have been available free for all three and four-year-old Aboriginal children.

In 2009 the Victorian Government implemented the *Transition: A Positive Start to School* initiative designed to assist schools and early childhood services to improve the experiences of all children starting school.

The CECV has developed a clear framework to support a successful transition to school using the *Best Start* model and has initiated links with community organisations, councils and early years service providers to enhance transition processes and establish effective practices.

Engagement and connections

Key actions under the *Wannik* Strategy include:

- Governance arrangements that include community input at all levels of decision-making and the production of resources for schools to assist with cultural awareness.
- Increased participation in the *What Works* program and the establishment of student leadership programs and scholarships to support high performing Koorie students to remain in education.

The CECV has representation on VAEAI's Committee of Management and has begun work on a cultural awareness and training kit to be circulated to all schools. In addition, eight primary and three secondary Inquiry Units of Work have been developed, implemented and evaluated in collaboration with VAEAI and education personnel from the local Aboriginal community. The units embed Aboriginal perspectives into common topics studied in schools.

Attendance

Key actions under the *Wannik* Strategy to improve attendance include the development of individual education plans for every Koorie student; sports and arts-based engagement programs; and the expansion of Koorie-specific versions of the *It's Not OK to Be Away* attendance strategy at a regional level.

The CECV uses annual surveys to closely monitor school attendance and works closely with families, community and schools to address concerns and design pathways for Indigenous students to remain engaged at school. This is further supported by a mentor program established in 2005.

Literacy and numeracy

Key actions under the *Wannik* Strategy include the employment of additional literacy and numeracy specialists in schools with high concentrations of Koorie students; *Wannik* tutorial assistance schemes for primary and secondary students achieving below expected standards; and homework clubs across the State.

The CECV has employed literacy coaches to work closely with Indigenous students who have additional learning needs and monitors and assists all students who are identified by NAPLAN data as being 'at educational risk'.

Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

Key actions under the *Wannik* Strategy include the expansion and redesign of the Koorie support workforce, increased funding to expand coverage of the *Dare to Lead* program; scholarships for Indigenous people wishing to undertake a teaching degree; and the establishment of the Aboriginal Teachers Network.

Key actions within the Independent sector include the establishment of a network of Independent school educators; the employment of an Indigenous education advisor to work across the sector; and the provision of continuing professional learning opportunities for teachers and school leaders.

Key strategies for the CECV include an annual residential professional learning program for Koorie education workers; a Memorandum of Understanding to implement the *Dare to Lead* program; bursaries for students currently completing Year 12 and planning to undertake a teaching degree; pathways scholarships for Koorie education workers to enable them to undertake university courses; and the employment of a life/academic coach to support students and Koorie education workers in their studies.

Pathways to real post-school options

Key actions under the *Wannik* Strategy include the establishment of four new Koorie pathways schools to assist disengaged Koorie students return to education; expansion of the *Managed Individual Pathways* program into Year 8 and Year 9; full implementation of the students-at-risk mapping tool, and employment of additional Koorie-specific youth transition support workers.

Within the Independent sector, there is collaboration with Victorian universities to develop pathways for Indigenous students and teachers.

The CECV annually supports the involvement of twenty students in Year 10 in the *Foundations for Young Australians Worlds of Work* program. It has also developed processes to support students into real post-school options through the establishment of a transition support group for their senior years at school.

QUEENSLAND

The *Closing the Gap Education Strategy* is the overarching strategy on Indigenous education in Queensland state schools. Under the strategy, priority service areas are foundation learning with a focus on literacy and numeracy; health and physical activity as a precondition to learning; transition to employment; and culture and enterprise. The strategy aims to complement 'mainstream' education and training initiatives, with targeted local and regional interventions that evidence and experience indicate will improve attendance, retention and attainment outcomes for Indigenous students. The strategy will help schools create an environment of high expectations and promotes the priority that 'Every Day, in every classroom, every student is learning and achieving'.

Priorities across the domains

Readiness for school

- Increase the participation rate for Indigenous children across the State by providing universal access to kindergarten.
- Establish children and family centres to increase Indigenous participation in early childhood education across urban, regional and remote settings.
- Provide quality pre-prep opportunities for three-and-a-half to four-and-a-half-year-old children living in Cape York and Torres Strait communities and other Aboriginal communities.
- Implement *Foundations for Success: Guidelines for an early learning program in Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities*, establishment of a professional learning community, new resources and purpose-designed facilities.

Engagement and connections

- Link families and schools to promote and support positive relationships between Indigenous communities, students and school staff.
- Improve relationships with parents and communities through effective school strategies to address Indigenous education issues.
- Develop engagement strategies to encourage parental involvement in students' literacy and numeracy learning.

Attendance

- Provide support to students transitioning from the primary phase of schooling in their home communities to secondary schooling in large metropolitan or urban areas.
- Continue to deliver the *Every Day Counts* initiative aimed at improving learning outcomes of students and develop targeted strategies to address Indigenous student attendance issues.

Literacy and numeracy

- Support highly mobile Indigenous students to stay in one school for longer periods to improve achievement in literacy and numeracy.
- Provide targeted support to students whose first language is not Standard Australian English.
- Support numeracy intervention by assisting schools to recognise Indigenous student learning needs and raise numeracy education outcomes for Indigenous students.
- Implement a whole-school approach for improving literacy and numeracy programs involving partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families.

Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

- Embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across all areas of school practice, giving all students access to a balanced educational curriculum.
- Provide literacy and numeracy professional development to strengthen teaching performance in State schools.
- Implement the *Remote Area Teaching Education Program* community-based teacher education program.
- Develop and strengthen the capacity of school leadership in the education of Indigenous students.

Pathways to real post-school options

- Build the knowledge foundation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island students to shape and form achievable aspirations.
- Provide scholarships to assist aspiring teachers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent to complete their degrees and make a difference in education.

Web links of interest

Closing the Gap Strategy:

<http://education.qld.gov.au/schools/indigenous/pdfs/closing-gap.pdf>

Children and Family Centres:

<http://education.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/pdfs/fact-sheet-children-and-family-centres.pdf>

ESL Bandscales:

<http://education.qld.gov.au/students/evaluation/monitoring/bandscales/speaking/index.html>

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SOUTH AUSTRALIA

South Australia's Strategic Plan 2007 contains overarching education and early childhood development priorities and actions and includes specific targets for Indigenous learning and employment. Education providers in South Australia are also guided by the directions of the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools *Indigenous Education Policy* and the Department of Education and Children's Services (DES) *Aboriginal Strategy 2005–2010*.

Priorities across the domains

Readiness for school

- Use of the Early Years Learning Framework.
- Eligibility of Aboriginal children for early entry to preschool education from the age of three years.
- Establishment of Aboriginal children and family centres in four locations in South Australia under the Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership.

Engagement and connections

- Regular communication with Aboriginal parents/caregivers about their child's progress and needs. (Catholic Education SA)
- Case management and monitoring the progress of Indigenous students with learning needs. (CE SA)
- Employment of Aboriginal community education officers in schools and regional offices to increase community engagement in education and focus on Aboriginal student learning inclusion and wellbeing programs. Community engagement embraces Aboriginal communities, non-government organisations, government agencies and local business. (DECS)
- Introduction of Aboriginal rapid response teams under the Low SES School Communities National Partnership to support and facilitate community-based crisis intervention and support services for individual students and their families in four South Australian regions. (DECS)

Attendance

- Attendance data will be collected centrally for all Indigenous students R-12 in terms 1, 2 and 3 with monitoring and follow up with families by Indigenous education officers through home visits or school-based meetings. (CE SA)
- Targeted intervention will be undertaken by schools and regional support services using data on enrolment, attendance, academic achievement and behaviour management of Aboriginal students and on the movement of students between schools obtained from the web-based Indigenous Integrated Support System. (DECS)

Literacy and numeracy

- An R-12 student support consultant will monitor student progress, provide case management, support the development of individualised programs, promote best practice strategies and facilitate Indigenous student review meetings with schools, parents/caregivers and students. (CE SA)
- Literacy and numeracy specialists will be appointed to provide school staff with access to expert support and coaching through the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership. (CE SA; DECS)
- Coaching and mentoring support will be provided to school leadership to support a whole school change philosophy through the Low SES School Communities National Partnership. (CE SA)

- Tailored mentoring support will be provided through a community partnership model for individual Aboriginal students in years 5–9 who are not reaching their full potential and may be about to disengage from school through the Aboriginal Student Mentoring Program in the Low SES Schools Communities National Partnership. (DECS).

Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

- Primary and secondary curriculum consultants will provide professional learning opportunities for staff and promote the teaching of Indigenous studies and the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives across the curriculum. (CE SA)
- Mentoring support will be provided to Indigenous secondary students in their transition to tertiary education and to past students studying teaching at university. (CE SA)
- Two Indigenous education officers will be employed to play an important role in curriculum development, cultural support, family liaison, and attendance and student review meetings. (CE SA)
- Diagnostic reviews will be undertaken of identified schools within the Low SES School Communities National Partnership and targeted focus schools will provide coaching and mentoring support to school leadership to support whole school improvement. (DECS)
- Targets for improved Aboriginal child and student outcomes will be included in school plans to increase reporting and accountability requirements of site leaders. (DECS)

Pathways to real post-school options

- A project officer will support the *Choices for Indigenous Secondary Students* program for students in years 8–12 that helps students to develop a positive sense of identity and self-esteem, supports the setting of personal and educational goals and helps build community. (CE SA)
- Indigenous secondary students will receive individual case management. (CE SA)
- All secondary Aboriginal enrolments will be monitored particularly at transition points through the Aboriginal education secondary strategy, *Keeping Them On Track*. (DECS)
- Partnerships will be built between Aboriginal communities, educational providers, industry and organisations using the *WORKABOUT Centre* model. (DECS)
- Outcomes will be tracked and support programs provided as necessary for all Aboriginal young people in the Southern region as apart of a research program and pilot post-school destination survey under the Youth Attainment and Transitions National Partnership. (DECS)

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Western Australia is addressing the educational outcomes of Indigenous students using a coordinated and targeted approach across mainstream and Indigenous-specific programs and strategies. Western Australian implementation plans for national partnership agreements include a focus on Indigenous students, disadvantaged schools, students not meeting minimum standards in literacy and numeracy and students whose first language is not Standard Australian English. Targeted support will provide flexibility, incentives and additional resources to identified schools under the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership and the Low SES School Communities National Partnership.

Western Australia has established a cross sectoral governance group to facilitate the planning and implementation of the national partnerships. The group will focus on strategies linking government and non-government school sectors to maintain a strategic approach and reduce duplication of effort.

A five year plan has been developed for government schools in Western Australia [link to website to be inserted when available]. The plan is aligned with COAG targets and directions. The priority areas are readiness for formal schooling; attendance; literacy and numeracy; and attainment of a Year 12 certificate or Certificate II qualifications. Clear performance indicators and strategies have been developed across the priority areas. The plan is based on the premise that high expectations for improvement should be built into planning and program delivery. Working in partnership with other agencies and industry will be essential in addressing the complex issues that can act as barriers to learning. Improved outcomes will be achieved through a better connection between families, caregivers, communities and schools, quality leaders and effective teaching.

Priorities across the domains

The Government, Independent and Catholic school sectors support the priorities for each domain and, wherever possible, will encourage and support schools to incorporate these into their whole school planning processes.

Readiness for school

Target: Improve access to early childhood programs and increase the proportion of Indigenous children identified as ready for formal schooling by 2014.

- Implement early intervention strategies to improve the early learning and on-entry readiness of children.
- Provide assistance to parents and/or caregivers to help them engage in their children's early learning and development.
- Increase kindergarten and pre-primary access at the local school.
- Work with other agencies at the local level to provide integrated support for children.

Engagement and connections

Target: Increase the number and proportion of school and community partnership agreements in place by 2014.

- Develop formal partnership agreements in targeted schools.
- Focus Indigenous education staff in schools to more effectively connect families, caregivers, communities and schools.
- Develop personalised learning plans for Indigenous students in consultation with parents and/or caregivers.
- Incorporate objectives and targets for improvement in all school plans and communicate information effectively to the Indigenous community.

Attendance

Target: Improve the attendance rates for Indigenous students to 90 per cent for kindergarten, pre-primary and primary students and 80 per cent for secondary students by 2014.

- Implement a state wide attendance strategy that provides direct services to schools and families.
- Implement school level strategies, including a case management approach, to address issues relating to attendance.
- Establish and expand partnership programs with other agencies to support improved student attendance.

Literacy and numeracy

Target: Reduce by 25 per cent the literacy and numeracy achievement gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 by 2014 (based on NAPLAN).

- Focus resources and effort on improving literacy and numeracy outcomes with particular attention to the early years of schooling.
- Provide individualised tuition for students not meeting minimum literacy and numeracy standards.
- Implement strategies to assist teachers in meeting the literacy and numeracy needs of Indigenous students, with a focus on schools where significant numbers of Indigenous students are not meeting minimum standards.
- Provide targeted support for students whose first language is not Standard Australian English.

Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

Target: Increase access to professional learning on cultural competence and specific teaching and leadership strategies to improve the outcomes of Indigenous students.

- Provide targeted support for students whose first language is not Standard Australian English.
- Improve incentives to attract high performing teachers and leaders to disadvantaged Indigenous, rural/remote and hard-to-staff schools.
- Implement quality leadership programs to increase principals' capacity to improve the learning outcomes of Indigenous students.
- Provide professional learning and support to teachers with a focus on increasing cultural competency and applying effective teaching strategies for Indigenous students.
- Implement a career action plan for Indigenous staff.

Pathways to real post-school options

Target: Increase the number and proportion of Indigenous students in Year 12 successfully completing a Year 12 certificate or Certificate II by 2014.

- Increase access to school-based accredited training for Indigenous students in years 10-12.
- Provide targeted case management strategies, engagement programs and flexible schooling options for secondary students.
- Provide career development services to support informed career and study choices.
- Strengthen partnerships between schools, training providers, universities, industry and other government agencies.

TASMANIA

Priorities across the domains

Readiness for school

- Initiatives implemented to achieve universal access to early childhood education.
- Data from Kindergarten Check and Performance Indicators for Primary Schools analysed to ensure focussed attention on Aboriginal early learners.
- AEDI data analysed to identify priorities for community-based early childhood development.
- Networks developed to connect to community, health and welfare services.
- Partnerships and relationships developed to ensure high participation of Aboriginal children and families in early years programs and child and family centres.
- Early Years Learning Framework used as a basis for program and service delivery.

Engagement and connections

- All focus schools negotiate partnerships within school improvement plans between school, parents/caregivers and community by 2015. These will describe the responsibilities of each party and identify ways of working together based on a culture of high expectations. They will support improvements in student engagement, wellbeing and educational outcomes.
- Schools involve Aboriginal parents in the development of personalised learning plans for Aboriginal students from Prep to Year 10.
- Schools establish Aboriginal parent forums to inform their work and contribute to Learning Services strategies.
- Schools with Aboriginal students performing below national minimum standards develop specific strategies on community engagement as part of their School Improvement Plan.

Attendance

- School-based Aboriginal student attendance strategies developed in all focus schools in consultation with parents and community.
- Success of strategies monitored and evaluated and results reported annually to school communities through school improvement plans.

Literacy and numeracy

- Aboriginal students performing below national minimum standards are targeted through State and COAG initiatives (including but not limited to 'Raising the Bar, Closing the Gap' and the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership).
- Aboriginal students who are achieving above national minimum standards are supported to higher levels of achievement through their personalised learning plans.
- Data utilised to monitor individual performance and drive whole-of-school improvement.

Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

- Principals from all focus schools participate within two years in a leadership program such as *Dare to Lead* or the *Stronger, Smarter Leadership* Program.
- Aboriginal education priorities included in leadership training for all principals.
- Principals and school leaders create school cultures that hold high expectations of Aboriginal students and value and foster social inclusion.
- Schools share facilities and resources and develop joint initiatives to improve leadership in Aboriginal education.
- Professional pathways built for Aboriginal staff wishing to pursue a teaching career or leadership position.

- All teaching staff participate in professional learning aimed at improving cultural competency.
- Support provided to all schools to develop culturally inclusive curriculum, including the study of Tasmanian Aboriginal culture and history.

Pathways to real post-school options

- Schools provide innovative and individually tailored learning opportunities, mentoring and case management strategies to increase retention of Aboriginal students to Year 12.
- Case management to include mentoring and linking of Aboriginal school-based traineeships to employment services.
- Schools provide career development resources for Aboriginal students and their families to support informed career and study choices.
- Schools maximise opportunities for Aboriginal students under the Youth Attainment and Transitions National Partnership.
- Schools strengthen partnerships with colleges, The Tasmanian Academy, Polytechnic and Skills Institute, the University of Tasmania and the community to broaden post Year 10 options for Aboriginal students.

Implementation

The above priorities are proposed as part of the development of a Tasmanian Strategy for Closing the Gap on Aboriginal Education Outcomes. The strategy will be based closely on the priorities and actions of the Indigenous Education Action Plan 2010–2014 and will be implemented in consultation with schools and the Aboriginal community in early 2010.

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NORTHERN TERRITORY

The Northern Territory has released a three year strategic plan for education and training for the period to 2012. While this plan sets out objectives for the whole of the Territory, the education of Indigenous students, the engagement of Indigenous families and communities and the policy emphasis on evidence-based planning for improvement in remote and very remote schools sets Indigenous education as core agency business.

Priority targets around student enrolment and attendance, improving literacy and numeracy standards, the recruitment and retention of high quality teachers and the development of local Indigenous staff are at the heart of planning for the implementation of national partnership agreements. An integrated implementation plan focussed on whole school improvement has been developed in partnership with non-government schools and will be managed cross sectorally.

A package of measures announced in May 2009 has set a five year program of development focussing on the creation of 20 towns in the largest Indigenous communities as hub service centres for their region. Each town will have a plan for the development of quality education in each location starting from an understanding of the opportunities for transition from school to training and employment and backwards mapping from there across the years of schooling and into early childhood education and care.

Priorities across the domains

Readiness for school

Target: Ensure that by 2013 every child has access to an affordable, quality early childhood education program in the year before full-time schooling, for 15 hours per week, 40 weeks per year, taught by a four-year degree-qualified early childhood teacher, in a range of settings.

- Engage communities in the use of AEDI data to develop and implement local early childhood strategies.
- Develop place-based options for delivery of quality preschool programs.
- Establish Indigenous focussed child and family centres delivering integrated models of learning, care, parenting and health promotion.
- Support Indigenous families to engage in early learning and parenting support programs through the *Families as First Teachers* initiative.
- Expand mobile preschool provision to an additional six new sites.

Engagement and connections

Target: All target schools will have a school community agreement and a school improvement plan in place by October 2011.

- Ensure that school improvement plans and innovative and flexible school operational arrangements engage families and communities in the life of the school.
- Support Indigenous school staff and school leaders to develop partnerships with Indigenous students and parents to improve education outcomes.
- Publish school attendance and education performance on DET website and make student profiles accessible to parents.
- Pilot extended service models giving community access to school facilities for additional training, cultural and recreation programs.
- Develop an early family engagement and transition to school strategy through the *Families as First Teachers* initiative.
- Develop a parent and community perception tool acknowledging diverse parent and community groups.

Attendance

Target: At least 80 per cent attendance in very remote and 90 per cent in remote and provincial schools by 2012. By 2015, attendance rates of Indigenous students will equal those of non-Indigenous students.

- Schools and communities to create attendance plans and coordinate a whole-of-community approach to address student absenteeism.
- Develop policy and guidelines for addressing and recording student absenteeism and templates and examples of school and school/community attendance plans.
- Develop a *Pathway to Referral* that outlines the steps that all schools need to take in addressing student absenteeism.
- Establish penalties and rewards to assist schools and communities to improve enrolment and attendance.
- Expand student engagement programs such as the Clontarf Academy for middle and senior year students.

Literacy and numeracy

Target: By 2018, the gaps in reading, writing and numeracy between Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students will be halved.

- Establish explicit literacy and numeracy component in school improvement plans.
- Increase Indigenous participation in NAPLAN.
- Achieve a 9 per cent increase in the proportion of Indigenous students at or above national minimum standards in NAPLAN.
- Encourage parents to participate in adult literacy classes and take part in activities with children to support early literacy and numeracy development.
- Manage and maintain data systems to monitor individual student performance and drive whole school improvement in literacy and numeracy.

Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

Targets: All school staff trained in cross cultural competency; Improved staff retention rates.

- Establish an Institute for School Leadership, Learning and Development to coordinate the delivery of Territory wide professional development including cross-cultural competency for all school staff.
- Implement a Capability Framework to support staff performance and development.
- Introduce new approaches to screen, attract, recruit, induct, retain, reward and support high quality staff in remote and very remote schools.
- Work with other jurisdictions to develop a Remote Indigenous School Leader and Teaching Service.
- Undertake research to identify the critical capacities and attributes of an effective school leader in very remote Indigenous school communities.
- Provide school-based and regionalised support for teachers and school leaders in literacy, numeracy and English as a Second Language including though coaching and mentoring.

Pathways to real post-school options

Target: Indigenous young people make a successful transition from school to work and further study.

- Implement a Jobs Guarantee for all students completing the NTCET.
- Achieve a 27.9 per cent Indigenous qualification attainment rate at Year 12 or equivalent by 2020 and a 20 per cent VETiS qualification completion rate.
- Establish partnerships with employer bodies and employers to provide employment and training opportunities for Indigenous graduates in remote areas.
- Offer a two year post school service guarantee to provide support to graduates in training and employment.
- Link VETiS programs to real employment opportunities in the community.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Priorities across the domains

Readiness for school

Key strategy: Universal access to preschool

Timeline: Commenced 2009 for full implementation by 2013

- Increase public preschool hours from 12 to 15 hours per week. Priority of access is being given to eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from low socio-economic background.

Engagement and connections

Key strategy: Schools and community partnership agreements

Timeline: Commenced August 2008 for full implementation by 2013

- Support clusters of government schools to develop partnership agreements with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Key strategy: Partnership with health support services

Timeline: Annually

- Provide general health checks for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in government preschools.

Attendance

Key strategy: Develop achievable attendance targets for each sector of schooling to increase attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Timeline: 2010, Preschool to Year 6; 2011, Years 7–12

- Introduce guidelines for the development of actions plans across each sector of schooling to ensure that the attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are commensurate with those of all students.

Literacy and numeracy

Key strategy: Provide an inclusive program to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait students to advance their reading skills

Timeline: Trialled in Semester 2, 2009 for full implementation in 2010.

- Introduce *Proud and Positive (You can Read)* in selected schools and with selected students from Kindergarten to Year 4 in partnership with parents and caregivers.

Key strategy: Support successful transition from primary to high school

Timeline: Full implementation Semester 2, 2009

- Appoint transition officers for literacy and numeracy to work in selected schools.

Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

Key strategy: Establish collegiate group of leaders of focus schools

Timeline: Semester 1, 2010

- Promote focus schools as a collegiate group of education leaders in Indigenous education.

Key strategy: Define cultural competencies for the ACT

Timeline: Develop in Semester 1, 2010 for implementation in Semester 2, 2010

- Develop a training program for all staff to ensure understanding of cultural competencies.

Key strategy: Promote practitioner based inquiry to support Indigenous education

Timeline: Trialled in 2009 in schools from primary to secondary education for implementation in self-selected schools ongoing from 2010

- Provide action research workshops to support improved outcomes in Indigenous education.

Pathways to real post-school options

Key strategy: Promote retention to senior years of schooling

Timeline: Ten scholarships to be provided at the beginning of 2010

- Introduce a scholarship program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in years 11 and 12.

Key strategy: Broaden post-school options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Timeline: Semester 2, 2009

- Implement a Student Aspirations Program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from years 5 to 12.

Key strategy: Increase employment and higher education opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Timeline: Three scholarships to be provided at the beginning of 2010

- Introduce a scholarship program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students completing Year 12 to study at university.

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4. TRACKING PROGRESS AND BUILDING ON WHAT WORKS

Overview

The Indigenous Education Action Plan 2010–2014 will contribute to the delivery of the COAG targets. It is part of a long-term approach to closing the gap between the educational outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

It is important that progress against these targets is clearly tracked and that governments, education providers and Indigenous Australians work together to better understand how the targets can be achieved.

Through the Plan, education providers have committed to improved transparency. Providers have also agreed to work together with Indigenous Australians and the Australian Government to better analyse and share information and success in order to accelerate the pace of change. There are four key ways in which this will be done:

- Production of a detailed annual report
- Collaboration on a national online clearinghouse of information
- Improving the quality and use of data
- Evaluating the impact of the Plan

Annual report

An annual national report will be produced for MCEECDYA within 12 months of the end of the calendar year. The report will be published on the MCEECDYA website. The report will present:

- A national picture of Indigenous education focusing on the closing the gap targets, agreed national performance indicators and other relevant national data.
- A summary from each jurisdiction on progress against the trajectories for the closing the gaps targets and against the actions set out in this Plan. Jurisdictions will identify focus school sites for the reporting year and summarise the progress made in each of these sites against the six priority domains.
- An evaluation of the impact of the additional resources and actions in the six domains to inform the evidence base of what works in improving outcomes for Indigenous students.
- An in-depth analysis of cohorts of Indigenous students, tracking progress prior to school and through school, in order to develop a greater understanding about successes and challenges associated with the actions in this Plan.
- A report from each Indigenous Education Consultative Body on the progress of the Plan.
- Good practice and relevant research undertaken by government and non-government education providers over the reporting year.

Every effort will be made to minimise the reporting workload of stakeholders. Wherever possible existing data sources and reporting arrangements agreed through national agreements and partnerships will be used for the annual report.

National clearinghouse on what works

Under the National Indigenous Reform Agreement, governments have agreed to work together to develop a single national online repository of reliable evidence on a broad range of topics related to improving the outcomes of Indigenous people. The Closing the Gap Clearinghouse will contain information on good practice and success factors to improve coordination of future research and provide policy makers and program managers with an evidence base for achieving the closing the gaps targets. This clearing house will support the *What Works* project in advising schools on evidence-based strategies.

Data improvement

Commitments made under a number of national agreements and national partnerships involve cooperation in improving the quality of national data sets. Improvements will be progressed in the areas of early childhood education, student identification and transitions from school to further education and training. In addition, school staff will be better supported to collect quality data and analyse and use data to inform strategies and actions.

Making progress with this work is a high priority for the Productivity Data Development Group established by MCEECDYA and MCTEE to provide advice to ministerial councils on cross-sectoral education and training issues.

Evaluation of the Indigenous Education Action Plan

In late 2013, MCEECDYA will evaluate the Plan to inform the development of a new action plan for 2015–2019. The evaluation will provide an assessment of the impact of the Plan on Indigenous educational outcomes and also on policies and processes. The evaluation will include input from a range of relevant stakeholders but will specifically seek input from Indigenous Australians. The evaluation will be presented to MCEECDYA no later than 1 July 2014.

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Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs
ACN 007 342 421
PO Box 202
Carlton South Vic 3053

Tel: (03) 9639 0588

Fax: (03) 9639 1790

Email: enquiries@mceecdya.edu.au

Website: <http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/mceecdya/>

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