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**Choice and Affordability Fund Work Plan  
2020 – 2021**

**The Association of Independent Schools of NSW**

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## **Summary of work plan**

The activities proposed under the Choice and Affordability Fund are necessary to support independent schools address the national priorities of the fund. This work plan has been developed in consultation with relevant schools. Projects and activities include distributed funds provided directly to schools and centralised programs to best support schools. While these activities complement AISNSW core services, the projects are clearly demarcated. The programs go well beyond the normal provision of AISNSW services; the significant project costs of these activities mean they can only be delivered through the additional resources provided under the Choice and Affordability Fund. AISNSW will contribute additional funds for specific project costs where necessary to enhance the impact of the programs and ensure their integrity.

All independent schools represented by the AISNSW Non-Government Representative Body (NGRB) will have the opportunity to access program activities including targeted professional learning opportunities for boards, principals, teachers and staff, tailored consultancy support, specially developed tools, and high-quality resources informed by strong research. Distributed funds will be available to schools through specific grants programs and under each of the four centralised programs.

AISNSW will undertake the following activities to support the national priorities of the Choice and Affordability Fund:

### **Priority A – Choice and affordability of schools**

- **Affordability and Choice Program**

The Affordability and Choice program will support schools to develop sustainable business models and financial governance practices that will maintain and/or improve affordability and choice for parents by helping schools transition to a different funding level. Grants will be distributed to schools to review financial operations and subsidise travel necessary to support regional and remote schools.

### **Priority B - Transition assistance**

- **Regional Transition Assistance Grants**

To best support represented schools transition to the Direct Measure of Income (DMI) funding arrangements, AISNSW will provide transition assistance funding directly to the identified regional schools eligible for quarantined Regional Transition Assistance based on the nationally agreed criteria.

- **National Adjustment Assistance Fund**

Funding and support will be provided for schools that would have been eligible to receive support through the former National Adjustment Assistance Fund.

- **Additional Transition Assistance**

AISNSW will allocate further transition assistance funding to schools requiring support to transition to the DMI funding arrangements who meet agreed criteria.

### **Priority C - Special circumstances funding**

- **Special Circumstances Funding**

AISNSW will distribute grants directly to schools requiring short term emergency assistance when unexpected circumstances or events cause severe and temporary financial difficulty. AISNSW will also provide special circumstances funding to schools in response to priority areas or natural disaster, including drought and bushfire, by establishing specific grant programs.

### **Priority D - Strengthening outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools and students**

- **Indigenous Program – The Waratah Project**

The Waratah Project will support participating schools to develop and implement strategies to improve literacy, numeracy and other academic outcomes of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, including initiatives to support wellbeing and strengthen relationships with the students' families and communities. Grants will be distributed to schools participating in the program. AISNSW will also contribute up to \$100,000 each year to support the participation of schools in addition to those eligible under the Choice and Affordability Fund.

- **School Industry Partnerships Program**

The School Industry Partnerships program will create opportunities for teachers to participate in an immersive experience within a business or industry related to their area of teaching, strengthening their knowledge and skills to improve outcomes for students and their school.

### **Priority E - Student wellbeing and support**

- **Student Wellbeing Program**

The Student Wellbeing program will build capacity in schools to develop and sustain multi-level supports to enhance safe, supportive and respectful learning environments. Consultants will work with schools to support students exhibiting problematic and challenging behaviour as well as the promotion of positive, whole school approaches to wellbeing.

AISNSW notes there is significant benefit by state and territory AISs collaborating with each other by sharing program outcomes and impacts.

## **Summary of budget**

*Proposed breakdown of budget for the activities to be undertaken (2021 figures updated September 2021)*

Priority	Activities/Initiatives	Expenditure type	Choice and Affordability funding	
			2020	2021
a)	Affordability and Choice Program	Centralised	\$720,000	\$500,000
		Distributed	\$100,000	\$280,000
b)	Regional Transition Assistance Grants Program	Centralised	-	-
		Distributed	-	-
	National Adjustment Assistance Fund Grants Program	Centralised	-	-
		Distributed	\$500,000	\$25,000
	Additional Transition Assistance Grants Program	Centralised	-	-
		Distributed	\$1,000,000	
c)	Special Circumstances Funding	Centralised	-	-
		Distributed	\$500,000	\$2,500,000
d)	Indigenous Education Program – The Waratah Project	Centralised	\$280,000	\$490,000
		Distributed	\$960,000	\$960,000
	School Industry Partnerships Program	Centralised	\$330,000	\$605,000
		Distributed	-	\$150,000
e)	Student Wellbeing Program	Centralised	\$600,000	\$1,336,500
		Distributed	-	\$235,000
Administrative costs			\$251,719	\$260,277
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$5,241,719</b>	<b>\$7,341,777</b>

## **10 year expenditure profile**

Choice and Affordability funds will be expended to best meet the needs of independent schools transitioning to the Direct Measure of Income (DMI) Capacity to Contribute model. Accordingly, a portion of 2020 and 2021 funding will be deferred.

<b>NGRB's estimated funding allocation advised by DESE*</b>					
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total	\$12,585,940	\$13,013,862	\$13,456,334	\$13,913,850	\$14,386,920

<b>AISNSW deferred expenditure profile</b>					
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total	\$5,241,719	\$7,341,777	\$10,228,180	\$12,229,856	\$14,060,670

\*Note: the amounts for 2021 to 2029 are estimates only and will be revised annually

<b>NGRB's estimated funding allocation advised by DESE*</b>					
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Total	\$14,876,076	\$15,381,862	\$15,904,844	\$16,445,610	\$17,004,760

<b>AISNSW deferred expenditure profile</b>					
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Total	\$15,402,734	\$17,256,426	\$19,622,144	\$22,500,298	\$23,086,254

Initiative/activity: **Affordability and Choice Program**

Relevant national/local priority: (a) *Choice and Affordability of Schools*

**Description:** The Affordability and Choice Program will assist schools to maintain ongoing financial viability and support parent choice and opportunity. The program will seek to enhance strategic financial governance for schools and school boards, underpinned by the continued development of sound financial management practices in schools. The program will be implemented in two related streams: Financial Governance and Financial Management.

### **Financial Governance Stream**

The Financial Governance Stream includes three components: a governance improvement tool, masterclasses in strategic financial governance and specialist financial management support.

#### **Governance improvement tool**

Informed by international research on school governance and a large-scale data collection project, AISNSW will deliver a best-practice governance tool for boards to reflect on their current work (including their financial oversight) and to identify ways they might further enhance that work.

AISNSW will partner with the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) to develop and conduct data collection, maintain the database, and design a best-practice governance tool.

#### **Masterclasses in strategic financial governance**

Four two-day masterclasses in strategic financial governance will be held, using case study examples, simulations and strategic problem solving. Each class will attract 24 participants enabling 192 members of NSW school boards to take part in the program over two years.

#### **Specialised financial management support**

A Financial Management Advisory Unit will be formed to provide advice and assist schools strengthen their financial viability and therefore their affordability. In 2020 and 2021 the Advisory Unit will support schools transitioning to a lower funding level. In future years, the program will be widened to advise all schools transitioning to an adjusted funding level.

The provision of assistance grants to some schools through the Distributed Grant Program may include a condition to seek analysis and support from the Financial Management Advisory Unit.

### **Financial Management Stream**

The Financial Management Stream includes development of resources, travel subsidies to attend professional learning events, subsidised professional learning courses, and grants to schools to undertake financial health checks.

#### **Resource development**

AISNSW will develop key resources to support all represented schools better manage their finances:

- i. Standard chart of accounts for MYOB and XERO platforms to assist schools with better record keeping that aligns with Australian Government Department of Education Financial Questionnaire requirements.
- ii. Long Term Strategic Cash Flow Modelling Tool to assist schools develop a comprehensive future view of their school’s sustainability.
- iii. Interactive Financial Viability Tool to be accessed from the AISNSW website.
- iv. Online learning module on Financial Governance to assist Board members understand the challenges of a lower funding environment.

AISNSW will survey schools to determine additional areas where support is required.

### **Professional development**

AISNSW will deliver face to face professional development sessions on financial acumen for principals and board members, construction of school buildings, negotiating and understanding contracts and using the AISNSW Long Term Strategic Cash Flow Modelling Tool. A Business Managers Symposium will also be held. Eligible participants will be offered course subsidies for professional learning of up to 100 per cent.

In addition, AISNSW will support school business managers to attend Focussed Accounting courses delivered in partnership with CPA Australia by partially subsidising the cost.

### **Travel subsidies**

Travel subsidies will be made available to support regional schools meet additional travel costs involved in accessing Sydney-based training programs.

### **Financial health checks**

An external audit and assurance company will be engaged to assist schools improve their transparency and accountability through a focus on their record-keeping, data quality and financial management policies and procedures. A comprehensive report will be provided highlighting areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. The auditors will undertake a six-month follow-up review of the effectiveness of implementation. School participation will be by application. Grants will be provided directly to schools to review their financial operations, at no cost to the school.

The provision of assistance grants to some schools through the Distributed Grant Program may include a condition to participate in this process.

<b>Indicative budget</b>	<b>Expected outcomes</b>	<b>Indicators of success</b>
\$1,600,000	<b>Financial Governance Stream</b>	
	<b>Governance improvement tool</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A comprehensive governance database enables AISNSW to better target its professional learning services to school boards, especially</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature review published.</li> <li>• Data collection undertaken.</li> </ul>



Indicative budget	Expected outcomes	Indicators of success
	<p>in relation to finance and affordability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A best-practice governance tool provides a self-assessment framework to improve the quality of school governance, especially in relation to financial governance and school affordability.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and release of the best-practice school governance improvement tool.</li> <li>• At least 20 schools use the best-practice governance tool to improve their school governance practices.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Masterclasses in strategic financial governance</b></p> <p>Increased knowledge of how strategic financial governance contributes to financial viability and greater affordability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 190 participants complete the masterclasses.</li> <li>• At least 50% of masterclass participants will be from schools in regional areas.</li> <li>• 75% of masterclass participants will report increased knowledge of how strategic financial governance contributes to financial viability and greater affordability.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Specialised financial management support</b></p> <p>Schools transitioning to a lower funding level will receive expert analysis and recommendations to strengthen financial government, financial management practices and affordability specific to each school's circumstances.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Advisory Unit provides direct support to at least 50% of eligible schools as they transition to an adjusted funding level.</li> <li>• At least 75% of schools that receive support from the Advisory Unit report that the support helps them to improve financial sustainability and/or affordability.</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Management Stream</b>		
	<p><b>Resource development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources that need to integrate with school accounting systems will be accessible to those most widely used by small schools (MYOB and Xero)</li> <li>• Tools will help schools' model various scenarios and aid financial decision making.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A standard chart of accounts that can be used in MYOB and Xero developed.</li> <li>• At least 20 schools download the standard chart of accounts.</li> <li>• Long-Term Strategic Cash Flow Modelling (LTSCFM) tool developed.</li> <li>• At least 20 schools download the LTSCFM.</li> </ul>

Indicative budget	Expected outcomes	Indicators of success
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Governance module for school board members will improve their financial literacy.</li> </ul> <p>Survey results will inform how AISNSW:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops additional resources for schools to assist them with future financial management decisions.</li> <li>• Selects and prepares the most useful professional learning opportunities for principals and business managers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Governance module for school board members developed.</li> <li>• At least 50 board members complete the Financial Governance module for school board members.</li> <li>• Survey distributed to the target group of schools with a response rate of over 50%.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Travel subsidies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barriers to accessing Sydney based training will be eased for regional schools that would otherwise be unable to attend.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 50 schools receive travel subsidies to attend face to face training in Sydney.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Professional development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved financial literacy of executive level decision makers.</li> <li>• Those responsible for large capital works projects will have the requisite practical knowledge to oversee projects and understand the risks.</li> <li>• Increased contractual knowledge of school business managers and principals.</li> <li>• Business Managers learn more about current and emerging topics that span the business world and the educational world.</li> <li>• Improved school reporting and record-keeping.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 schools participate in half day course Financial Acumen for Principals and Board Members.</li> <li>• 30 schools participate in two-day course Construction of School Buildings – Practical Considerations.</li> <li>• 20 schools participate in one-day course, Negotiating Contracts.</li> <li>• 20 schools participate in one-day course, Contracts for Non-Legal Professionals.</li> <li>• 20 schools participate in one-day workshop on long-term budgeting, using the Long-Term Strategic Cash Flow Modelling tool.</li> <li>• 30 schools participate in two-day Business Managers Symposium.</li> <li>• 30 schools participate in subsidised courses that AISNSW will offer in partnership with CPA Australia.</li> </ul>

Indicative budget	Expected outcomes	Indicators of success
	<p><b>Financial health checks</b></p> <p>Schools improve financial management practices by implementing recommendations from external auditors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The financial management of 10 schools are independently reviewed each year.</li> </ul>

Initiative/activity: **Regional Transition Assistance**

Relevant national/local priority: (b) *Transition assistance*

### **Regional Transition Assistance Grants**

To best support represented schools transition to the DMI funding arrangements, AISNSW will provide transition assistance funding directly to identified regional schools eligible for quarantined Regional Transition Assistance based on the nationally agreed criteria. AISNSW will continue to use the nationally agreed criteria as a threshold for eligibility.

As a condition of receiving funding, AISNSW will require schools to undertake a financial health check and develop a financial sustainability plan through participation in the Affordability and Choice Program. Funds will be allocated to eligible schools upon consideration of the following principles:

- annual growth rates of funding, CTC score point change and loss of funding analysis
- school size and enrolment profile (community impact)
- special circumstances such as the impact of bushfire, drought or other relevant circumstances impacting capacity of schools to raise additional funds.

As DMI will not directly impact the funding these schools receive until 2022, Choice and Affordability funding in 2020 and 2021 will be deferred and distributed to identified regional schools from 2022. Regional transition assistance grants provided in 2022 will supplement Australian Government recurrent funding to keep funding for schools at/near 2021 levels which will provide time for schools to implement internal changes to transition to the DMI funding arrangements. AISNSW may provide transition assistance to some or all of these schools in 2020 and/or 2021 through direct grant programs established to address short term need.

An application process will be established and communicated to schools, setting out the criteria. AISNSW will conduct a transparent assessment process, confirming that schools meet the publicly available criteria. The amount of funding per school will be determined based on need.

Initiative/activity: **National Adjustment Assistance Fund**

Relevant national/local priority: (b) *Transition assistance*

### **National Adjustment Assistance Fund Transition Assistance Grants**

Support will be provided for schools that would have been eligible to receive support through the former National Adjustment Assistance Fund. Funding in 2020 and 2021 will be deferred and distributed to most identified schools from 2022. Where appropriate, AISNSW may begin distributing grants to some schools in 2020 and/or 2021.

A process and criteria for assessing school need will be established. The AISNSW assessment process will be transparent, and funding allocated based on need.

Initiative/activity: **Additional Transition Assistance Grants**

Relevant national/local priority: (b) *Transition assistance*

### **Additional Transition Assistance Grants**

AISNSW will allocate further transition assistance funding to schools requiring support to transition to the Direct Measure of Income determination of Capacity to Contribute who meet agreed criteria. An indicative budget of \$1 million will be allocated in 2020 and a further \$1 million in 2021.

The allocation of Additional Transition Assistance Grants will be based on similar criteria and principles to those used to determine funding for regional transition assistance schools. An application process will be established and communicated to schools, setting out the criteria. A transparent AISNSW assessment process will be conducted, confirming schools that meet the publicly available criteria. The amount of funding per school will be based on need.

Initiative/activity: **Special circumstances funding**

Relevant national/local priority: (c) *Special Circumstances funding*

### **Special Circumstances Funding**

The disbursement of Special Circumstances Funding is dependent upon the specific context and situation of each school. As such, AISNSW will distribute grants directly to schools requiring short term emergency assistance when unexpected circumstances or events cause severe and temporary financial difficulty. In accordance with the set criteria outlined in the CAF Guidelines, schools must only receive short term emergency assistance schools if their situation is:

- unexpected
  - Could not have been reasonably foreseen.
- causing severe financial difficulty
  - Where a school faces a real prospect of having to cease a large part of its educational activities or significantly lower its educational services.
- short term
  - Schools should be able to overcome their financial difficulty and resume operations and must provide a five-year business and recovery plan.
- a special need
  - Schools have exhausted all other options to remedy the financial situation of the school.

Should the need arise for short term emergency assistance, AISNSW will assess the application in accordance with the criteria identified above.

AISNSW will also provide Special Circumstances funding to schools in response to priority areas or natural disaster, including drought and bushfire, through establishing specific grant programs. Such programs might also address unexpected and urgent impact of events such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Initiative/activity:	<b>Indigenous Program – The Waratah Project</b>
Relevant national/local priority:	<i>d) Strengthening outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools and students</i>

**Description:** The Waratah Project supports participating schools develop and implement strategies that will improve the literacy, numeracy and other academic outcomes of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, including initiatives to support student wellbeing and strengthen relationships with families and communities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The project’s goals are underpinned by priorities of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015 and align with the national priority of the Choice and Affordability Fund to strengthen outcomes for educationally disadvantaged schools and students.

The design and implementation of the Waratah Project will be informed by external evaluation findings and recommendations by the Jumbunna Institute at the University of Technology Sydney (Jumbunna) of a previous pilot project.

Using a proven ‘hub and spoke’ model, five networks of schools will be established, each with a designated hub school in the lead (24 participating schools in total). These networks will allow participants to learn from and with each other, leveraging opportunities for professional learning and collaboration. Participating schools will consist of boarding and day schools with a significant number of enrolled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Centralised expenditure will be used to provide tailored professional learning, advice, and support, as well as project management and capacity to support implementation. Jumbunna will be contracted as an academic partner to provide external evaluation services as well as project monitoring and reporting support.

Distributed funding will be provided, through individual agreements with each participating school, to implement tailored strategies and initiatives appropriate to the needs of each school community in line with project aims. AISNSW will contribute up to \$100,000 each year to support the participation of schools in addition to those eligible under the Choice and Affordability Fund.

Indicative budget	Expected outcomes	Indicators of success
\$2,690,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An increase in student academic and other outcomes.</li> <li>Schools have increased capacity to use a range of methods and data sources to demonstrate students’ progress towards academic and other outcomes.</li> <li>School leaders implement effective strategies to enable cultural</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First round of grant funds distributed to participating schools in 2020 through a formal agreement between AISNSW and each participating school.</li> <li>24 schools participate in the Waratah Project using a culturally responsive school improvement outcomes framework co-designed by participating schools and</li> </ul>

Indicative budget	Expected outcomes	Indicators of success
	<p>responsiveness at a whole school level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools are better equipped to authentically engage parents and community in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students’ education.</li> <li>• Enhanced skills and knowledge of schools to lead the development and implementation of Personal Learning Processes to meet Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students’ educational and wellbeing outcomes.</li> <li>• Teachers demonstrate a greater awareness of culturally inclusive approaches to inform the development of quality learning for and engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through evidence-based pedagogy.</li> <li>• Participating schools are more able to identify and address challenges to and opportunities for successful quality teaching and support quality learning for Aboriginal students through access to experienced and collaborative support.</li> <li>• Opportunities for professional collaboration between schools to come together to network and share their learning.</li> </ul>	<p>academic partner, Jumbunna Institute as a basis for engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of participating schools will engage in and contribute to hub and spoke activities, including collecting baseline data, tracking progress towards identified priorities and identified professional learning.</li> <li>• 100% of participating schools will engage in required monitoring and evaluation activities.</li> <li>• Final Evaluation Report will show that participating schools reported among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ improved academic outcomes</li> <li>○ increased aspiration and expectations for further education and future employment</li> <li>○ strengthened connection to and pride in indigenous culture and heritage</li> <li>○ positive and successful transitions into the school environment</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A suite of interactive resources developed to disseminate Waratah Project evaluation findings and made available to all NSW independent schools.</li> </ul>

Initiative/activity:	<b>School Industry Partnerships Program</b>
Relevant national/local priority:	<i>d) Strengthening outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools and students</i>

**Description:** AISNSW will broker and facilitate online and face-to-face collaborations between teachers and industry experts to help enable teachers to be best placed to design learning experiences for students that are innovative, engaging and reflect contemporary practices. Teachers will be supported to strengthen their knowledge and skills through engagement with business and industry, to improve outcomes for their school. While all represented independent schools will have access to the School Industry Partnerships Program, the program will prioritise low-SES, regional, rural and remote schools.

Central to the program is the opportunity for teachers to participate in an immersive experience within a business or industry related to their area of teaching. Throughout these experiences, AISNSW will work with teachers and industry experts to create teaching and learning artefacts which can be used in their school and shared for the benefit of the wider sector.

Centralised expenditure will be used to work alongside individual schools, teachers, and industry to provide tailored support for developing and sustaining partnerships.

Distributed funding will be provided to individual schools to cover teacher release and subsidise travel costs for teachers in regional, rural or remote areas on NSW.

Indicative budget	Expected outcomes	Indicators of success
\$1,085,000	<p>Teachers have a deep understanding of the contemporary skills and practices of their related industry and feel better equipped to enhance the development of student knowledge and skills by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designing and facilitating real-world learning opportunities for students.</li> <li>• Aligning pedagogical content knowledge and curriculum content knowledge with real-world learning.</li> </ul> <p>The enhanced alignment between curriculum content and real-world knowledge will support schools to improve student outcomes by</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 20 school/industry partnerships are established.</li> <li>• Learning artefacts are developed by participating teachers and industry partners, and disseminated.</li> <li>• Case studies are published to showcase successful partnerships with the wider school sector.</li> <li>• At least 75% of participating teachers report:                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a deeper understanding of the contemporary skills and practices of their chosen industry</li> <li>○ greater confidence in aligning curriculum content and pedagogical</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



<b>Indicative budget</b>	<b>Expected outcomes</b>	<b>Indicators of success</b>
	<p>increasing student engagement in education.</p> <p>Teachers developing deeper understanding of the world of work and feeling more confident supporting students in their career paths.</p> <p>Learning from the partnerships will be shared broadly for the benefit of other teachers.</p>	<p>practices with contemporary, real-world practices and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ making changes to their learning design because of the industry partnership.</li> <li>○ improvement in student outcomes because of the industry partnership.</li> <li>○ greater confidence in supporting students in their career pathway because of the industry partnership.</li> </ul>

Initiative/activity: **Student Wellbeing Program**

Relevant national/ local priority: *e) Student wellbeing and support*

**Description:** Schools are central to student wellbeing; the support they provide can enhance academic and social-emotional outcomes. To foster safe, supportive and respectful learning environments, AISNSW will build capacity in schools to develop and sustain multi-level supports. The Student Wellbeing Program enhances safe, supportive and respectful learning environments through two project streams: Behaviour Support & Student Engagement and Whole School Wellbeing.

AISNSW will provide multifaceted support, coordinated across a network of AISNSW consultants with expertise in wellbeing, behaviour, and mental health. These consultants will work with schools in response to any vulnerable or at-risk students, as well as in the promotion of positive, whole school approaches to wellbeing.

### **Behaviour Support & Student Engagement Stream**

Problematic and challenging behaviour, if not resolved early, can escalate, and result in risk of harm to the student initiating the behaviour and other students and/or staff, and often reduces student engagement in education. Based on the widespread evidence that safe, supportive and respectful learning environments for students and teachers are best realised by addressing the individual, classroom and whole school levels, this project will focus on each tier to support schools deliver positive behaviour support to improve student engagement. Centralised program expenditure will be used to deliver:

- ***Individual student support***

AISNSW will develop a professional learning series of online microlearning modules that provide best practice strategies for school executives, teachers and specialist staff to support students with additional behavioural needs.

AISNSW consultants will advise schools on the management of behavioural issues that may arise due to a student's disability, social or emotional development, mental health difficulties, school refusal, or a combination of the above. Schools will be assisted to address the needs of students who may require additional planning, support and adjustments to safeguard the success of their school experience.

- ***Classroom management processes and practices***

Classroom teachers will be supported to enhance their classroom management. This will include a focus on practical strategies to prevent and reduce problem behaviours whilst maximising academic engagement. The initiative will prioritise early career teachers.

- ***Whole school Positive Behaviour Interventions and Support (PBIS)***

AISNSW will work with individual schools to implement Positive Behaviour Interventions and Support (PBIS), a proactive school-wide approach that seeks to establish a positive learning culture where appropriate behaviour supports ensure that the school becomes an affirmative learning environment for all students.

AISNSW consultants will be available to schools throughout the project to develop practical school structures to facilitate student wellbeing.

AISNSW will establish collaborative partnerships with academic experts to facilitate systematic and rigorous implementation at each tier.

To support the explicit professional learning delivered at each tier, schools will have access to a collection of curated resources to be housed on a dedicated portal including:

- video illustrations of practice-behaviour management and engagement strategies being implemented;
- case studies demonstrating the application of evidence-based strategies across a variety of learning environments;
- proformas to assist schools to plan, implement, and evaluate behaviour support;
- podcasts sharing experiences of leaders and teachers creating supportive learning environments;
- downloadable data collection tools and templates to provide schools with meaningful information to monitor student safety and wellbeing.

All represented schools will have access to the behaviour support and student engagement stream.

Distributed funding will be provided as grants to schools to provide teacher release.

### **Whole School Wellbeing Stream**

#### **AISNSW Student Wellbeing pilot project**

Using an evidence-based assessment tool to consider their specific needs and individual contexts, a cohort of 12-15 schools will be supported to build their capacity to undertake a whole-school approach to student wellbeing which will result in strong procedural foundations, upskilled teachers and students whose social and emotional learning competencies are developed and their protective factors<sup>1</sup> enhanced. By supporting and enhancing protective factors, children and young people may be less vulnerable to mental health issues. The project will support schools to focus on key protective factors relevant to their context and apply evidence-based strategies, initiatives and methods to improve these.

This project uses a customised consultancy model, where AISNSW specialist consultants provide ongoing support to school-based teams to co-design innovative, evidence-based whole-school wellbeing approaches. This is augmented by explicit professional learning (face-to-face and online) targeted at wellbeing leaders, other school staff and parents/carers, along with opportunities to connect with other schools involved in the project through networked learning communities.

Key academics will form part of the project as both critical friends to AISNSW consultants and to provide expert input at project network meetings.

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<sup>1</sup> Protective factors are assets that support student resilience and maintain wellbeing such as the individual student, family circumstances, the school setting, connections, social and emotional learning, and supportive environments.

An annual project evaluation will provide objective and timely feedback about the implementation and impact of the project over time and create a knowledge base to disseminate the learnings to the wider education sector.

### Whole School Wellbeing resources and professional learning

The program will further raise awareness of evidenced-based student wellbeing approaches and protective factors with a range of schools through a series of state-wide offerings including no-charge regional and metropolitan workshops, access to online resources and a wellbeing conference with subsidised registration. All represented schools will have access to the Whole School Wellbeing resources and professional learning offerings.

Indicative budget	Expected outcomes	Indicators of success
\$2,171,500	<b>Behaviour Support &amp; Student Engagement Stream</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthened expertise and confidence of school leaders, teachers and specialist staff to prevent ongoing and escalating problem student behaviours to improve engagement and student educational achievement.</li> <li>Increased application of evidence-based behaviour management strategies leading to long term improvements.</li> <li>Improved safety and wellbeing for students and staff due to long term decrease in challenging or disruptive behaviour.</li> <li>environments created that foster positive student engagement leading to improved learning outcomes due to increased instructional time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of a project specific web portal containing evidence-based positive behaviour resources, information and proformas.</li> <li>At least 200 participants will access the online professional learning modules and associated resources focused on supporting students with challenging behaviours.</li> <li>At least 200 participants will engage in school-based professional learning focused on evidence-based classroom management strategies.</li> <li>At least 25% of represented schools will access school-based support to create safe, supportive, and respectful learning environments.</li> <li>At least 1000 instances of teachers accessing downloadable resources from a dedicated portal.</li> </ul>
	<b>Whole School Wellbeing Stream</b>	
<p><b>AISNSW Student Wellbeing pilot project</b></p> <p>Participating schools will examine, develop and sustain whole-school wellbeing approaches that enhance safe, supportive and respectful environments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development and dissemination of online learning modules and podcasts covering key aspects of wellbeing to support improved wellbeing outcomes in independent schools.</li> <li>At least 12 schools participate in the pilot project, receiving ongoing</li> </ul>	

Indicative budget	Expected outcomes	Indicators of success
	<p>Students and parents/carers will experience safe, supportive, and respectful school environments, and have greater understanding of the protective factors that contribute to wellbeing.</p> <p>Schools will experience stronger alignment between the principles of wellbeing and whole school procedures.</p> <p>School staff will experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater awareness of the protective factors that contribute to safe, supportive and respectful environments.</li> <li>• Enhanced ability to authentically embed evidence-based student wellbeing practices into teaching and learning.</li> </ul>	<p>consultancy support (face-to-face, online and/or phone) and opportunities to participate in two network days and a sharing symposium.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 80% of participating schools successfully use the assessment tool to audit their approaches to wellbeing and identify whole-school wellbeing priorities to be addressed.</li> <li>• At least 85% of participants report increased capacity to engage in proactive wellbeing.</li> <li>• 100% of participants report a greater awareness of the range of protective factors for student wellbeing.</li> <li>• At least 95% of wellbeing leaders involved in the project report feeling greater confidence in their ability to perform the role.</li> <li>• 90% of participating schools indicate they intend to communicate whole-school wellbeing approaches to parents/carers.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Wellbeing resources and professional learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools will have increased access to evidence-based wellbeing resources for educators, students and parents/carers.</li> <li>• School educators will develop greater awareness of the protective factors that contribute to safe, supportive, and respectful environments by participating in face to face professional learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project specific webpage containing evidence-based wellbeing resources, information and a curated list of useful external resources developed.</li> <li>• At least 100 educators engage in one-day Student Wellbeing Conference.</li> <li>• Delivery of half-day professional learning workshops for school leaders and teachers focused on whole-school wellbeing and protective factors (six regional, two metro).</li> <li>• At least 80% of workshop and conference participants report a greater awareness of the protective factors that contribute to safe, supportive and respectful environments.</li> </ul>