

Non-Government Reform Support Annual Report

2021

**The Association of Independent Schools of the
Northern Territory**

Executive Summary

The Non-Government Reform Support Fund (NGRSF) has enabled the Association of Independent Schools of the Northern Territory to provide support to Independent Schools across the Northern Territory in the priorities identified in the National Reform Agenda. AISNT supports 23 Non-Government Independent Schools through the NGRSF. Independent Schools are located across the Northern Territory with 35% located in outer regional (Darwin); 26% located in remote (Alice Springs) and 39% located in very remote areas, all in Indigenous communities. 11 of our schools are Majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Schools (MATSIS) and are all located in remote and very remote areas. Three new Independent Aboriginal Community Schools attained registration as Non-Government Schools during 2021.

The operations of AISNT continued to be challenged by the restrictions imposed due to COVID19. Throughout 2021, AISNT worked collaboratively with the Northern Territory Department of Education and Catholic Education Northern Territory ensuring aligned approaches in supporting schools through COVID19. Many planned school site visits, specifically to remote and very remote Aboriginal Community schools had to be changed to an online format. These included – whole staff presentations; small group presentation/consultations with Education Officers; and one on one consultations with Education Officers.

Progress against your strategic plan

The AISNT Teaching and Learning Coordinator continued to work with schools on better understanding the NCCD, specifically in good data collection practices; the requirements of the NCCD; using the data to inform individual student Educational Adjustment Plans; using the INSPIRE software platform to enter data and use as a resource in planning adjustments for students. This was achieved through workshops, one with the Christian Schools system; two through site visits and many online workshops, specifically for schools located in remote and very remote areas of the Northern Territory. There was a higher level of engagement by teachers and support staff with the INSPIRE platform, with the Teaching and Learning Coordinator providing both online and onsite support and advice.

All Member Schools participated in the NAPLAN Online assessment, even with the challenges of Low Bandwidth. The AISNT Teaching and Learning Coordinator provided support to schools. This was achieved through online workshops/consultations and site visits prior to the NAPLAN Online assessment and during the practice week. Two AISNT staff provided onsite support to two remote schools during the NAPLAN Online assessment week. The AISNT Teaching Learning Coordinator worked closely with the NAPLAN Online team from the Northern Territory Department of Education to support Member Schools who did not have the appropriate devices.

Somerset Education were contracted to consult and provide financial management advice to schools. Somerset Education worked with a number of schools in assessing their financial practices and sustainability. Some schools are continuing to work with Somerset Education on an ongoing basis, utilising the Somerset Education Schools Financial Survey. AISNT provided advice and support to three new Independent Aboriginal Community schools seeking registration as Non-Government Schools. The schools received registration during 2021. This support included advise and consultation on governance structures; developing a constitution; recurrent funding and developing business plans and budgets. Two potential new Independent schools are seeking registration as Non-Government Schools to open in 2022. AISNT provided support to these potential schools with the application process and advice.

AISNT continued to input into the review of the Northern Territory Education Act. This was a cross-sectoral process that included representatives from each of the schooling sectors (i.e.: Government, Catholic and Independent). AISNT represented Member Schools throughout the year at consultation meetings. AISNT also provided submissions throughout the year addressing proposed changes to the Act.

In 2021, AISNT employed a Director of Indigenous Education and Workforce Development. The Director worked closely with Member schools, with a focus on the remote and very remote Aboriginal Community Schools to develop a cultural competency framework; develop plans of action to improve attendance; to develop a strategy for upskilling the Aboriginal workforce in schools and provide advice and support for school leaders and teachers in the development and implementation of culturally appropriate learning programs with a focus on engagement. This was achieved through site visits; workshops/consultation with teachers, school leaders and support staff; provision of professional development opportunities; consultation with tertiary education providers mapping out opportunities for upskilling of Aboriginal support staff and assistant teachers, with a focus on attaining relevant qualifications.

AISNT continued to work with both national and local committees on furthering the Unique Student Identifier (USI) initiative. AISNT participated in consultation meetings regarding the legal and technical aspects involved in the implementation of the USI, with a particular focus on the issues and concerns of Member Schools.

Relationship with your state and territory government

AISNT has continued to work closely with the Northern Territory Department of Education and the Northern Territory Government.

The Teaching and Learning Coordinator and the Director of Indigenous Education and Workforce Development continue to network and meet with staff in the Northern Territory Department of Education. The Director of Indigenous Education and Workforce Development was on a committee advising on the Northern Territory Education Engagement Strategy (2022-2031), with a focus on student engagement and improved educational outcomes. The Teaching and Learning Coordinator continues to liaise with the Student Services division and the NAPLAN Online team of the Northern Territory Department of Education. Two AISNT staff sit on the Northern Territory Board of Studies.

The Executive Director and the Deputy Director are members of various high level advisory committees. These include but are not limited to:

- Quarterly meeting the Minister for Education, the Hon Lauren Moss MP;
- Meetings with the Chief Executive and representatives of the Northern Territory Department of Education, Ms Karen Weston;
- The Non-Government Schools Ministerial Advisory Committee, which has representatives from the Non-Government Schools sector;
- The Board of Studies; and
- The Key Stakeholder Group for the Early Years Education and Compliance.:

AISNT contributes to the reporting on the Bilateral Agreement.

AISNT's relationship with the Northern Territory Government and the Northern Territory Department of Education is very positive and respectful with regular cross-sectoral engagement, collaboration and consultation occurring on matters effecting schooling in the Northern Territory. AISNT are invited to have input and be consulted on new initiatives.

Project Report

Include here a general statement that provides a response to the following: -

COVID19 continued to provide challenges in 2021, with government policy and restrictions requiring changes to the way in which the activities in the workplan were conducted. Our greatest challenge was working with our remote and very remote schools, particularly due to the impact of community lockdowns. Many of our activities moved to an online platform. This was often challenging for schools with poor connectivity. However, much was achieved through the projects, both ongoing projects and new initiatives implemented in 2021.

Quality Assurance and Support for the NCCD:

The Teaching and Learning Coordinator, in collaboration with Catholic Education and SPA, continued to rollout the INSPIRE platform to Member Schools. 70% of Independent Schools have embraced the platform. This data collection platform has simplified the data collection process for teachers and support staff, allows teachers and support staff to collectively develop and implement Educational Adjustment Plans (EAP's) and assess the goals within the plan, making adjustments as necessary. Teachers and support staff are reporting that they have a better understanding of the NCCD requirements, including the data that needs to be collected as evidence of adjustments. The interaction at workshops/forums and consultations has resulted in an ongoing network of teachers and support staff, sharing their experiences, resources and advice. Teachers and support staff are reporting a better understanding of the adjustment levels and are more confident in attributing an adjustment level to students.

Implementation and Delivery of NAPLAN Online:

AISNT continued to be proactive in the NAPLAN Online Working Group. The Teaching and Learning Coordinator regularly engaged with the NAPLAN Online team in at the Northern Territory Department of Education. All Independent Schools participated in NAPLAN Online in 2021, despite some issues for Low Bandwidth schools. The Teaching and Learning Coordinator regularly consulted and informed schools of the NAPLAN Online process, providing onsite support to individual schools ensuring schools were NAPLAN Online ready. Teachers and support staff reported a good understanding of NAPLAN Online procedures.

Enhancing the National Evidence Base:

AISNT continued to participate in consultation committees regarding the introduction and implementation of the Unique Student Identifier.

Schools' Quality Improvement:

The AISNT Teaching and Learning Coordinator and the Director of Indigenous Education and Workforce Development continued to work with school leaders, teachers and support staff, building capacity to ensure students have a quality schooling experience. The AISNT Teaching and Learning Coordinator continued to provide coaching and mentoring to teachers on effective pedagogy (i.e.: Universal Design for Learning); programming to cater for the needs of students in their classrooms; using the Australian Curriculum; effective assessment and reporting strategies. Teachers reported continuing engagement with the strategies and welcomed classroom observations and feedback.

The Director of Indigenous Education and Workforce Development work closely with remote and very remote Aboriginal Community Schools to develop a cultural competency framework; deliver appropriate professional development sessions on working with remote and very remote Aboriginal students; identifying obstacles to attendance and engagement and working with schools to develop student engagement plans; consulting with Aboriginal staff on pathways to attaining qualifications and liaising with tertiary providers on providing programs. COVID19 government policy and restrictions impeded progress on some of these goals, as lockdowns prevented site visits and poor connectivity made it difficult to conduct workshops, forums and consultations online. COVID19 restrictions also impacted heavily on school attendance. Future work will occur on working with these schools on engagement strategie

Project title	Project description and activities	Expected outcomes/ Overall achievements Achieved or Not achieved	Indicators of success Add the target % achieved	List any additional or variations of Activities undertaken/Achieved outcomes
<p>1. Quality Assurance and Support for NCCD data collection</p> <p>Bilateral Reform Direction B: Continued implementation of National Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) with a focus on moderation and quality control measures.</p> <p>Work with each of the Independent Schools to Implement the INSPIRE program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide two face-to-face workshops for relevant school staff. This will include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. understanding NCCD, II. legislative requirements, III. moderation, IV. record keeping and reporting, V. Use of the INSPIRE program. • Work with individual schools/systems as requested to provide support, assistance and advice in regard to NCCD. • Contextualise and offer workshops and assistance to schools using the ESA guidelines for the categorisation of students under the four NCCD levels of adjustment with a view to improved quality assurance. • Provide professional development for teachers and other relevant school staff on the use of INSPIRE. 	<p>School and system leaders and staff will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and adhere to the legislative requirements of the NCCD. Achieved • Understand and apply the levels of adjustment for students with disabilities using the NCCD adjustments. Achieved • Make informed decisions on the categorisation of students using the NCCD levels of adjustment. Achieved • Keep up to date data on students to comply with the requirements of NCCD. Achieved • Understand how to use the INSPIRE Program to inform the NCCD and also to inform decision making for individual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% of workshop participants report better understanding of the NCCD 100% Achieved • 50% of schools report improvements in data collection practices within their schools 100% Achieved • 100% of NT Independent Schools will have access to up-to-date information and timely assistance in understanding their requirements in regard to NCCD. 70% Achieved 	<p>Two presentations by Teaching and Learning Coordinator to system forums.</p> <p>Two NCCD information workshop sessions arranged by Education Officer, included professional conversations on levels of adjustments and collection of evidence.</p> <p>An NCCD moderation working group was organised by Teaching and Learning Coordinator and met in Darwin.</p> <p>INSPIRE workshops arranged by Teaching and Learning Coordinator, included Zoom consultations with individual Indigenous Community Schools located in very remote areas; face-to-</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clear and relevant communications on NCCD. <p>There is no significant change to this project.</p>	<p>student's learning plans.</p> <p>Achieved</p>		<p>face training sessions in outer regional schools located in Darwin and remote schools located in Alice Springs.</p>

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<p>2. Assisting in the implementation and delivery of NAPLAN online</p> <p>Bilateral Reform Direction A: Implementation of NAPLAN Online</p> <p>This project is a continuation of the previous work program we have undertaken in this area of reform.</p>	<p>This project is a continuation of the NT combined Plan for the implementation of NAPLAN Online that is managed by a Tri-Sectoral Committee.</p> <p>AISNT will work closely with individual schools and systems to provide support, assistance and advice in regard to the readiness and implementation of NAPLAN Online.</p> <p>AISNT will work closely with the National bodies including ACARA and ESA as well as the NT Minister and Department of Education to assist schools in the transfer to NAPLAN Online. This will include the provision of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. accurate and timely Information. II. professional development for individual schools, groups of schools and at general meetings. II. assisting individual schools with implementation. <p>There is no significant change to this project.</p>	<p>School and system leaders and staff should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know and adhere to the timelines related to the implementation of NAPLAN Online. Achieved • Understand and abide by their responsibilities in regard to the implementation of NAPLAN Online. Achieved • Ensure their readiness for the implementation of NAPLAN Online. Achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of schools will be prepared to undertake NAPLAN online as per the agreed schedule. 100% Achieved • 100% of Independent Schools will have access to up-to-date information and timely assistance in understanding their requirements for the introduction of NAPLAN Online. 100% Achieved 	<p>Two AISNT staff attended a remote schools to assist with the implementation of the NAPLAN Online program during the week of testing.</p> <p>The Teaching and Learning Coordinator provided on the ground support to two very remote schools during the preparation for NAPLAN Online, ensuring school readiness for participation.</p> <p>The Teaching and Learning Coordinator regularly liaised with the Northern Territory Department of Education NAPLAN Online team, ensuring the latest information was communicated to schools.</p>

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<p>3. Improving governance Bilateral reform direction B:</p> <p>Improving governance through training and resource support.</p>	<p>AISNT will provide the following assistance to schools through workshops and meetings as well as the provision of timely advice and response to requests for information and assistance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AISNT will provide individual schools and systems with support, assistance and advice in regard to improving school governance. • AISNT will provide individual schools and systems with support, assistance and advice in regard to improving school financial management processes. • AISNT will work with consultants to provide governance sessions and school financial management through forums. • AISNT will play an instrumental role in providing advice to both levels of Government in regard to legislation, regulations and policies in regard to school governance and financial 	<p>School and system leaders and governing bodies should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and implement the governance structure, roles and compliance requirements for their school. Achieved • Understand and show evidence, as required, that their school is complying with the requirements of registration. Achieved • Understand the financial responsibility and demonstrate that they meet the compliance requirements in regard to government funding. Achieved • Have in place an appropriate constitution, company documents or rule book by which they are governed. Achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% of schools provided with professional learning and/or advice/support indicate improvements to governance arrangements 100% Achieved • 75% of schools provided with assistance/support/advice and/or professional learning/training in regard to financial management procedures and processes, report improvement in practice. 100% Achieved • 100% of NT Independent Schools will have access to up-to-date information and timely assistance in understanding their requirements in regard to Governance and Financial Management. 100% Achieved 	<p>Somerset Education was contracted to work with schools to assess their financial viability and sustainability.</p> <p>Schools individually engaged Somerset Education and are utilising the Schools Financial Survey and using the data to adjust/develop long term financial plans, which are used to develop long term business plans and budget.</p> <p>The Brown Collective presented at a Good Governance workshop at the AISNT General Meeting.</p> <p>Findlaysons presented at the AISNT General Meeting, giving a legal perspective/advice on the impact of COVID19</p>

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	<p>requirements. This will include consultation on the review of the NT Education Act. This is ongoing from 2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AISNT will provide advice, assistance and support to new schools in setting up their governance structures including their constitutions and business plans. <p>AISNT will provide assistance to schools in relation to registration requirements including providing panel members for assessments.</p> <p>There is no significant change to this project.</p>			<p>government policy and restrictions may have on workplace law.</p>

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<p>4. Enhancing the National Evidence Base.</p> <p>Bilateral Reform Direction C(i): Enhancing the National Evidence Base</p> <p>This project is a continuation of the previous work program we have undertaken in this area of reform.</p>	<p>AISNT will work with the departments of the other sectors of education in the NT and with the Australian Government Department of Education to further the work on the enhancement of a national evidence base to support improved understanding of student progression.</p> <p>This work will be inter-sectorial in nature and therefore dependent on the cooperation and timing of the other sectors and departments involved.</p> <p>AISNT will work closely with the Independent schools in our sector to assist them in forwarding this work.</p> <p>AISNT will also provide on the spot advice and information for schools across the range of modalities available to us including phone, email, website, communiques, face to face discussions, workshops and through AISNT meetings.</p> <p>There is no significant change to this project.</p>	<p>School and system leaders and staff should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that work will be undertaken across all sectors and jurisdictions to implement a national unique student identifier for all students in Australian schools. Achieved • Work with the AISNT to contribute to the implementation of the national unique student identifiers. Achieved • Understand the relevance and importance of the introduction of the national unique student identifiers to improve knowledge and understanding of student progression which improves the national evidence base. Achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of school principals in NT Independent schools understand that there is a commitment to developing national unique student identifiers. 100% Achieved • 100% of NT Independent schools take part in the process to develop national unique student identifiers. 0% Achieved • 100% of NT Independent schools understand the significance of creating national unique student identifiers in improving the knowledge and understanding of student progression to improve the national evidence base. 100% Achieved 	

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<p>5. Schools' Quality Improvement</p> <p>Bilateral Reform Direction B: Support teachers through a system of coaching and mentoring to build teacher and school leader capability to ensure students have quality teachers.</p>	<p>The unique circumstances in the NT are well recognised through significant research and documentation. The Australian Government states this in their Quality Schools' Literature. AISNT has a significant number of Indigenous Schools and Indigenous students across all school. Indigenous students make up approximately 30% of the AISNT member schools' enrolment.</p> <p>Provide professional development and training for school and system leaders and teachers and other school staff with an emphasis on the National and NT priorities on Quality Improvement including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with schools and Communities to identify the specific obstacles to attendance and engagement and develop school specific plans to improve attendance and engagement. • Development and implementation of a Cultural Competency Plan 	<p>School and system board members, leaders and staff should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have improved understanding of the obstacles impeding attendance and engagement. Achieved • Develop a plan of action to improve attendance and engagement in conjunction with their students and school Communities. This should lead to Improved understanding in effective strategies to improve student attendance and engagement. Achieved • Understand the importance of relationship in improving student outcomes. Achieved • Develop a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and the impacts that this has on the students. It is about 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% of NT Independent Schools participate in working with the Indigenous Education Officer to examine obstacles to attendance and engagement. 100% Achieved • 75% of NT Independent Schools develop plans of action to improve attendance and engagement. 50% Achieved • 75% of NT Independent Schools demonstrate an understanding of the importance of relationship in achieving student well-being and outcomes. 100% Achieved • 70% of Independent schools develop improved cultural competency. 70% Achieved • 100% of NT Independent Schools will have access to the information and resources developed under 	<p>An Indigenous Schools Meeting was organised and occurred in Alice Springs. Representatives from remote and very remote Aboriginal Community Schools and schools with Aboriginal boarders attended. Opportunity for the group to discuss collectively issues that impact their schools. Opportunity to share good practice and successes.</p> <p>Consultation with Tammy Abala and Shane Tippamantameri from Mamanta on cultural competencies and teaching and learning strategies for Aboriginal students.</p> <p>Director of Indigenous Education and Workforce Development engaged in school site</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality professional development on working with remote and very remote Indigenous students. • Improving outcomes for all students through further work on Relationship Based Learning. • The provision of support and assistance for schools in providing quality and meaningful advice and assistance with curriculum in the area of ecological sustainability. 	<p>knowing your students. Achieved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know and understand the purpose of education from an ecological sustainable perspective. Achieved 	<p>the ecological sustainability project. 50% Achieved</p>	<p>visits/consultation/online meetings/forums and workshops.</p>

Financial Report

Project Activities	Reform support funding
<p>NCCD Quality Assurance and Moderation Offer training to teachers within the NT Independent Schools on the collection of data and the use the INSPIRE integrated software platform that has been designed to inform the NCCD and to assist schools in identifying and applying targeted evidence based strategies targeted for the particular students. This training will be delivered by AISNT in conjunction with the Catholic education Office and SRA Information Technology. Offer individual school support for all NT Independent schools. Provide advice and communications to all NT Independent schools in a timely fashion.</p>	
Workshop Venues and catering	\$7,000
Travel and accommodation	\$5,000
Charters	\$0
School site visits	\$5,000
Salary FTE	\$38,103
Teacher release	\$0
<p>NAPLAN online Continue to work with the NT Department of Education to assist NT Independent schools with the implementation of NAPLAN Online. This will include school site visits. Provide information and assistance for NT Independent schools as requested. Provide advice and communications to all NT Independent schools.</p>	
Travel and accommodation	\$7,972
Charters	\$0
School site visits	\$4,979
Salary FTE	26000
Teacher release	\$0
<p>Governance and Financial management Continue to work with Dr Stephen Brown on our process to provide Governance and Leadership training to the maximum number of Independent schools possible. Provide NT Independent Schools with access to School Finance Consultant. Ongoing work by consultants with support and advice to AISNT and Schools. Provide information and assistance for NT Independent schools. Provide advice and communications to all NT Independent schools in a timely fashion.</p>	
Consultant	\$22,900
Venue and catering	\$15,875
Travel and accommodation	\$5,000
Salary FTE	\$33,671
<p>Enhancing the National evidence base Hold two information sessions for all NT Independent Schools on the progress and requirements for the implementation of a National Unique Student Identifier program. Provide information and assistance for schools to keep them informed of the progress and</p>	

Project Activities	Reform support funding
requirements as this develops. Provide advice and communications to all NT Independent schools.	
Venue and catering	7000
Travel and accommodation	\$0
Salary FTE	\$14,000
Teacher release	\$0
Schools' Quality improvement AISNT will employ an Indigenous Education Officer to work with schools on improving engagement and attendance for disengaged regional and remote students. This Officer will also develop a Cultural Competency Framework and implement professional development for all staff including Aboriginal Education Workers. Provide information and assistance for NT Independent schools. Provide advice and communications to all NT Independent schools in a timely fashion.	
Venue and catering	\$6,000
Travel and accommodation	6600
Salary FTE	\$68,000
Teacher release	\$0
TOTAL	\$273,100