

## Recipient Details

Name of organisation or individual: [O] Independent Education Union of Australia

Reference Type: Teacher association

State or territory: ACT

Serial Identification Number: 478571

## Responses

Curriculum and assessment

Rating: 6

Teachers and teaching

Rating: 7

Leaders and leadership

Rating: 7

School and Community

Rating: 7

Information and Communication Technology

Information and Communication Technology

At Maitland Lutheran School, in South Australia's Yorke Peninsula, a humanoid robot, named Pink, is helping students to code. The students are learning to code Pink to move around obstacles, recognise student's faces and greet them in the local Aboriginal language of Narungga, and to speak words and phrases in Narungga.

More detailed information of the program can be found in the diversity section of this submission and at: <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-histories-and-cultures-illustrations-of-practice/illustrations-of-practice/what-do-a-humanoid-robot-and-the-recently-awakened-narungga-language-have-in-common/>

The Independent Education Union of Australia (IEU) firmly believes that all Australian students should have equitable access to information and communication technologies as this is in the long-term interest of the nation. There is no reason why students, in 21st Century Australia, studying and living in regional, rural and remote areas should have to endure slower, less reliable and more expensive ICT services than their metropolitan counterparts.

Rating: 6

Entrepreneurship and schools

Rating: 4

Improving access – enrolments, clusters, distance education and boarding

Improving access – enrolments, clusters, distance education, boarding

In 2016 the Queensland and Northern Territory branch of the IEU collected data about 19 Indigenous students who left a Northern Territory community school to attend boarding school. The

data relates to the enrolment status of eight junior students (Years 7-9) and 11 senior students (Years 10-12) between Term One 2014 and Term One 2016.

Overall, 63% of the total population of the community school spent at least some period of time at boarding school between Term 1 2014 and Term 1 2016. This included 53% of Junior School students and 63% of Senior School students. The average duration of enrolment at boarding school for all students was eight (8) weeks with junior students averaging eleven (11) weeks and senior students six (6) weeks.

The longest period of enrolment at boarding school for a junior student was 40 weeks during 2015. This student completed a full year of education at boarding school in 2015 before returning to the community school in Term 1 2016. The shortest period of time that a junior student remained enrolled at a boarding school was five weeks.

The maximum continuous enrolment at boarding school for a senior student was 20 weeks from Term 4 2014 until the end of Term 1 2015. This student returned to the community school at the beginning of Term 2 2015. The shortest period of time a senior student remained enrolled at a boarding school was less than one week. (See Figures 1 and 2 which I have attached in an email to the secretariat.)

A particular point of note is that, while more senior than junior students were recruited to boarding school, senior students appeared far more likely to disengage with schooling rather than re-enrol at the local community school after leaving boarding school.

Rating for enrolments: 6

Rating for clusters: 6

Rating for distance education: 6

Rating for boarding: 4

Diversity

Maitland Lutheran School

Maitland Lutheran School, located in South Australia's Yorke Peninsula, has developed an innovative program that is having a huge impact on students' outcomes and the wider local community. The program combines the local Narungga language and culture with robotics, namely a humanoid robot known to the students as Pink.

The school is using the language skills of a local Narungga woman to teach students local Aboriginal words and phrases, including acknowledgement of country, with students then applying their coding skills to teach Pink these words. Pink is also a motivator for students to learn coding skills, starting by moving her around obstacles to recognising faces and speaking the language.

One teacher hoped the program would have a positive impact on the school attendance of one of his Narungga students who had missed 46 days in the semester preceding the commencement of the program. This student missed 26 days in the following semester and is more connected to school and learning.

The Narungga woman teaching the words and phrases to the students and teachers points out that the Narungga students in the school are extremely proud that it is their language and culture being taught. They are also proud to have one of their people working in the school.

With the students of the school speaking the language outside the school environment the local elders are excited to see and hear the revival of a sleeping language, something they never thought they would see again.

Through the use of modern technology, a sleeping language, community connection and innovative integrated programming Maitland Lutheran School has brought about much pride and cultural empowerment to the children and adults of its community.

Further information about the program can be found at <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-histories-and-cultures-illustrations-of-practice/illustrations-of-practice/what-do-a-humanoid-robot-and-the-recently-awakened-narungga-language-have-in-common/>

Rating: 7

Transitioning beyond school

Rating: 5

Additional Comments

Responses to the questionnaire section of the submission need to be taken in context. The majority of these factors are just as important to metropolitan schools as they are to regional, rural and remote schools, and this is how it should be. There shouldn't be great distinctions to what is provided to metropolitan schools to what is available in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia. For example, all schools deserve quality leaders, teachers, teaching, facilities and infrastructure where the curriculum reflects an awareness of its students, the local community and culture.

Other factors, such as entrepreneurship and distance education, may be more important at the individual school or student level. Not all schools in regional, rural and remote areas, and indeed metropolitan centres, will have access to or need to run entrepreneurial programs. And not all schools or students will require distance education. Distance education should be available for isolated students, be this through location, opportunity (e.g. school unable to offer a subject) or circumstance (e.g. illness). The IEU has noted that many students studying through distance education live in large regional or metropolitan centres and that this mode of study has been chosen by their parents for a variety of reasons e.g. religion.

Finally, it is important for communities/parents to have thorough knowledge and understanding of what is involved when making decisions about education. Our boarding school example, provided earlier in the diversity section, showed neither students nor schools received great benefits from students leaving one school to attend another only to return to their former at a later time. The failings of such a program could have been due to any number of reasons including lack of resources, poor transition program, homesickness, poor facilities or lack of emotional support. It may have been that children from this particular community do not adapt well to living away from their family and community support.

This one example does not mean boarding schools do not have a role to play in education. Boarding schools, in both regional and metropolitan areas, provide a large number of students with an opportunity to participate in a wide range of educational experiences they might not have had by staying home and are held in high regard by the community.

The Independent Education Union of Australia (IEU) represents the interests and professional rights of teachers and support staff in non-government schools, early education and care services and other non-government educational institutions Australia wide. It currently has a membership of approximately 75,000 members. The IEU would be pleased to participate in any follow up discussion or focus groups.