

Department of EDUCATION

Education NT Strategy 2021–2025



EDUCATION NT
ENGAGE GROW ACHIEVE



Acknowledgement

The Department of Education respectfully acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands on which young Territorians are educated.

In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge and pay respect to the past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of the Northern Territory and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We respect and support the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

While this strategy uses the term 'Aboriginal', we respectfully acknowledge that Torres Strait Islander peoples are First Nations people living in the Northern Territory. In this document, 'Aboriginal' should be read to include both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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WARNING: This report may contain images and stories of deceased persons.

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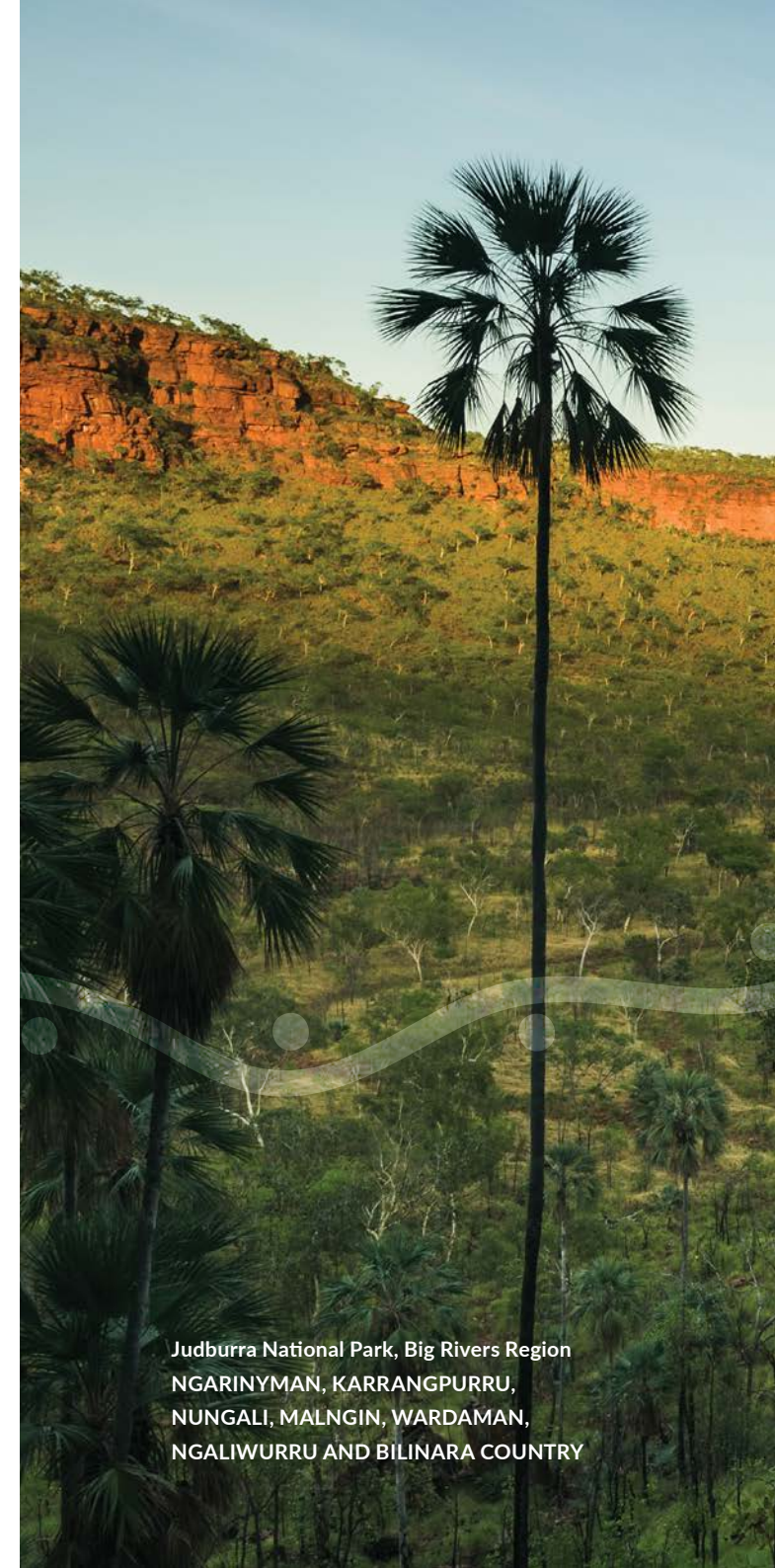
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Judburra National Park, Big Rivers Region
NGARINYMAN, KARRANGPURRU,
NUNGALI, MALNGIN, WARDAMAN,
NGALIWURRU AND BILINARA COUNTRY

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01.

Introduction



Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, Central Region
ANANGU COUNTRY



Chief Executive introduction

The Department of Education is on a journey to become the most improving education system in Australia, and is committed to a strong and equitable public education system where every child has the opportunity to engage, grow and achieve.

Built in partnership with students, educators, leaders and communities across the Northern Territory, this strategy places children and students at the centre of our work. It supports young Territorians to realise their potential, from building the foundations for learning across early years through to transitions beyond schooling.

The strategy prioritises strengthening instruction: a systematic approach to curriculum and pedagogy based on knowing each of our learners. Engagement of families, communities, children and students in learning is critical to the future success of our young people. This requires a significant focus on cultural responsiveness across our whole system, recognising the incredible richness and diversity of cultures across the Northern Territory.

Building an expert education workforce and providing differentiated support for schools, services and communities are key priorities to achieving the goals of this strategy.

Our priorities over the next four years are informed by best practice and evidence. Importantly, they also respond to the voices of our children and students, the aspirations and experiences of families and communities and the expertise of our leaders and educators.

I look forward to working together to ensure every child has the opportunity to engage, grow and achieve.

Karen Weston
Chief Executive

02.

Our journey



Iytwelepentiy / Davenport Ranges National Park, Barkly Region
ALYAWARR, WAKAYA, KAYTETE AND WARUMUNGU COUNTRY



Our journey

The Education NT Strategy 2021–2025 continues to build on the momentum of the important work already taking place across the Northern Territory.

Throughout 2020–21, we continued to see improved outcomes for young Territorians.

- In 2020, a record breaking 1622 students from government and non-government schools completed their Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training, including 277 Aboriginal students.
- Participation in the department's Families as First Teachers program, increased from 2119 children in Semester 1 2020, to 2334 children in Semester 1 2021.
- In 2020–21, 83 per cent of the 225 approved services across the NT held a quality rating of 'meeting' or 'exceeding' the National Quality Standard (NQS), an increase of 7 percentage points compared to the previous year.
- In 2020–21, 10 remote schools were on a community-led school pathway, 37 Local Engagement and Decision Making (LEaD) committees were established in remote schools and 25 schools engaged in the LEaD process, strengthening Local Decision Making across the Territory.
- In 2020–21, our students were supported by a workforce of 4424 full-time equivalent staff. At 30 June 2021, there were 686 Aboriginal employees across the department, making up 14.2 per cent of all staff.
- Fourteen teachers from government schools achieved or renewed national Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) certification through the Teacher Registration Board NT in 2020–21, taking the total number of HALTs in government schools to 63.

03.

Our future direction



Nitmiluk, Big Rivers Region
JAWOYN COUNTRY

Our future direction

Our journey demonstrates our commitment to continued improvement. The Education NT Strategy 2021–2025 will enable us to continue to become the most improving education system in Australia by refocusing our priorities, working as one team, Territory wide. This strategy is based on best practice and evidence, as well as extensive input from our children and students, families, communities and our leaders and educators.

Together we will work towards the following goals, ambition and commitment.



OUR GOALS

All children and students engage, grow and achieve.

The Northern Territory continues to be the most improving education system in Australia.



OUR AMBITION

Every child in the NT has the best start in life and, through early learning and school education, gains a bright future.



OUR COMMITMENT

We are committed to a strong public education system that promotes excellence and equity and supports every child to become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners and informed members of the community.

04.

Our values and ways of working



Yellow Waters Kakadu, Top End Region
MURUMBURR COUNTRY

Our values and ways of working

The Northern Territory Public Service values of Commitment to Service, Ethical Practice, Respect, Accountability, Impartiality and Diversity guide our ways of working and how we make decisions. In our schools and early childhood services, across regions and our system, we enact our values through our shared ways of working. These enable the whole workforce to contribute to our improvement as one team, Territory wide.

Engage

- We engage, consult, seek feedback and partner with children, students, families, communities, staff and our stakeholders.
- We engage and support the Early Childhood Education and Care and non-government sectors in delivering a quality education for young Territorians.

Use evidence

- We make evidence-informed decisions, knowing these make the biggest difference for our learners.
- We acknowledge that we need a sustained effort to achieve results.

Collaborate

- We have clear roles and, through collaboration, everyone contributes to system improvement.

Inquire

- We use an inquiry-based approach to inform decisions and celebrate success.
- We support and monitor school and system performance.

Value feedback

- We welcome and share feedback as part of our inquiry-based approach and our learning culture.
- We enable and amplify the voice of children, young people and families.

Are accountable

- We work with integrity and uphold the values of the Northern Territory Public Service.
- We have robust accountability and governance systems in place.

"All schools should build their teacher and student capability in delivering and receiving effective and beneficial feedback"

- student voice

05.

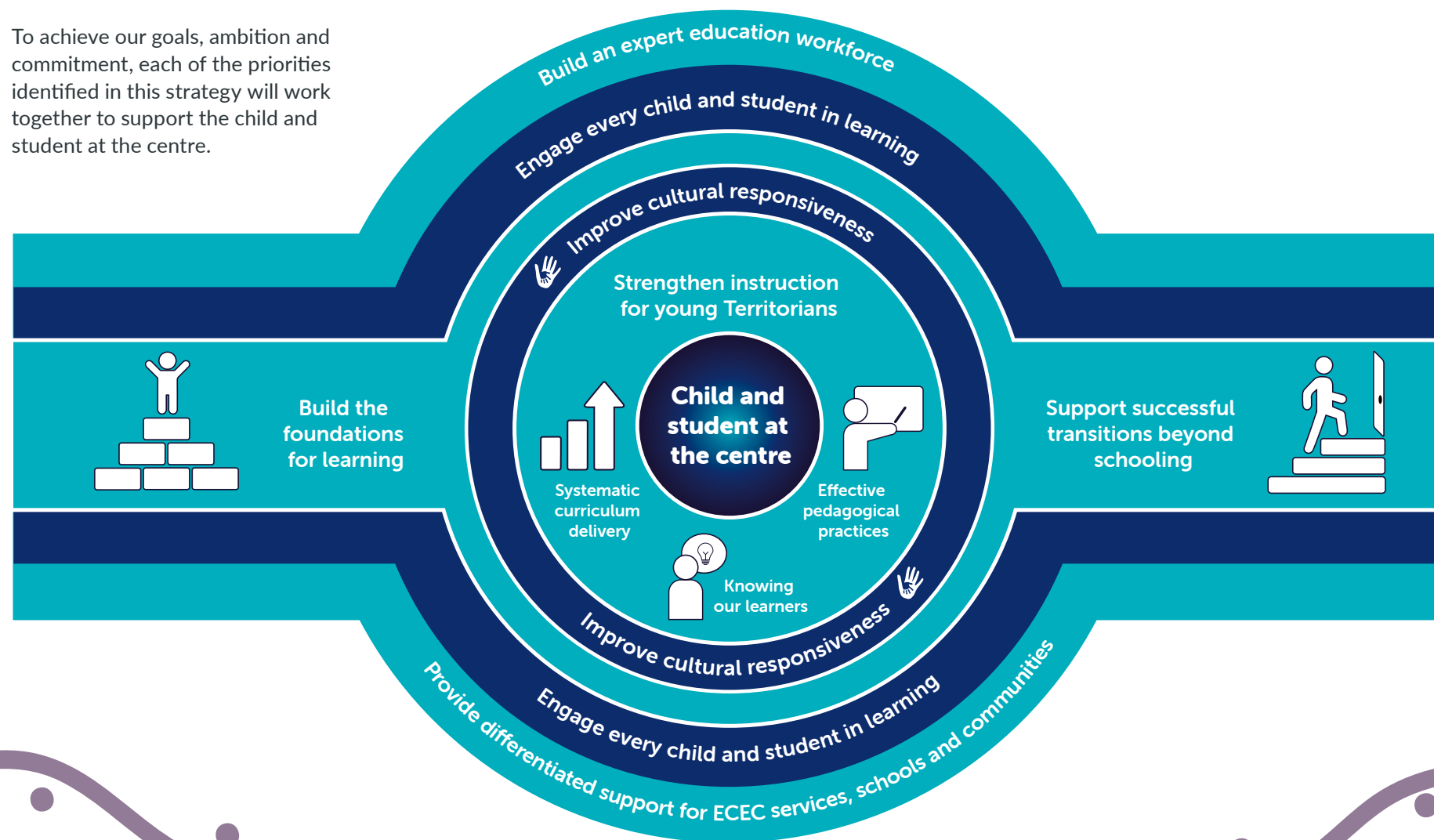
Our seven system priorities



Nightcliff, Darwin Region
LARRAKIA COUNTRY

Our seven system priorities

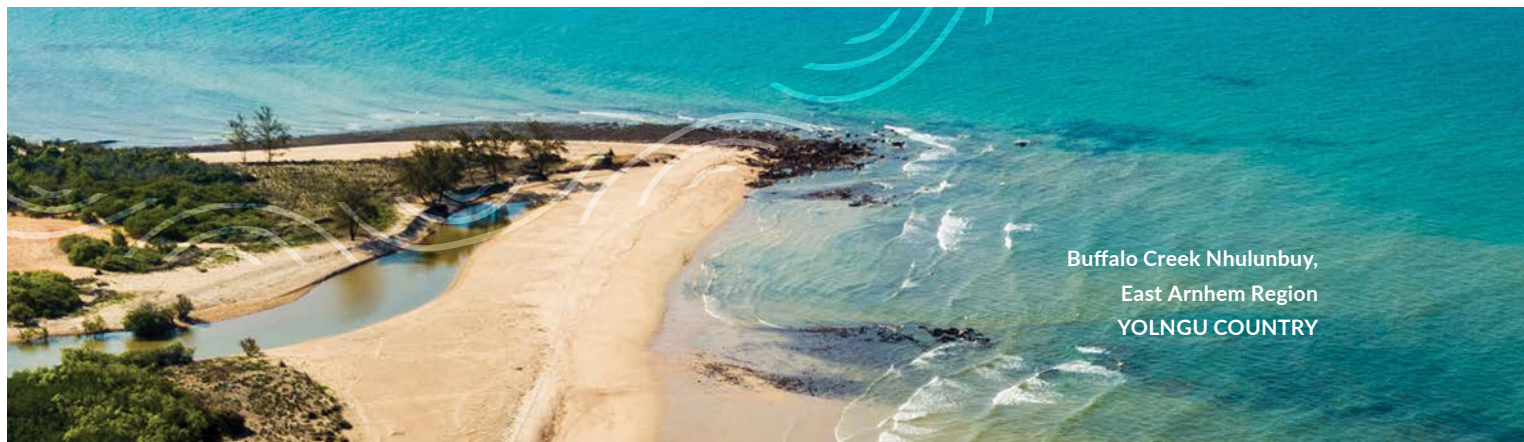
To achieve our goals, ambition and commitment, each of the priorities identified in this strategy will work together to support the child and student at the centre.



06.

Our Strategic Actions 2021–2025

Our strategic actions will be delivered over four years, supported by annual action plans which will be published each year.



Buffalo Creek Nhulunbuy,
East Arnhem Region
YOLNGU COUNTRY

Strengthening instruction in every classroom across the Territory will deliver the curriculum through effective teaching practice and a student-teacher relationship where each of our learners is known. This will engage our students and improve their learning outcomes.

Strategic Actions 2021–2025

- Implement the Framework for Inclusion 2019–29 to ensure all students' wellbeing and equitable access to learning.
- Renew a Territory-wide approach to curriculum delivery and assessment across all stages of schooling, from birth to Year 12.
- Embed system-wide guidance and support for curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, which is inclusive and culturally responsive to Aboriginal students.
- Define and deliver high quality instruction from birth to Year 12 and achieve this through strong instructional leadership in schools and whole-of-system support.

"We learn more when we work in groups and when learning is play"

— student voice

"You must first learn about your student and how they learn if you hope to teach them"

— educator voice

Strengthen instruction for young Territorians

Improve cultural responsiveness



Across every aspect of the Northern Territory education system, we will value, and mobilise as resources, the cultural identities and knowledge that students and staff bring to the learning relationship. This will create a safe environment in which children and young people belong and will make learning more relevant.

Strategic Actions 2021–2025

- Develop and implement a Cultural Responsiveness Framework to increase cultural understanding and practices for corporate and school staff.
- Increase the relevance of early childhood and school education programs to local communities by expanding Local Decision Making and strengthening governance skills of school board, council and committee members.
- Enhance advisory and leadership roles of Aboriginal students, staff and community members to inform agency wide policy and programs.

"Changing the culture of our schools to make students feel valued and safe"

"Changing the way writing is taught, with student focused experiences and cultural connections"

— student voice

Territorians from birth to Year 12 will be actively engaged in learning which interests and motivates them. This will improve attendance, facilitate deep learning and lead to successful transitions beyond schooling.

Strategic Actions 2021–2025

- Implement the NT Education Engagement Strategy to create the foundations for engagement locally, regionally and across government.
- Develop a system-wide approach to empowering student leadership, voice and agency in partnership with young Territorians.
- Develop systems so that quality data follows each child as part of a tailored education experience as students move geographically, through stages of schooling, and across flexible education settings.
- Provide case management support for students who are disengaged, have additional needs or are identified as vulnerable.

"Talking about the feelings: staff and students working together"

"Strong student and teacher relationships will help improve learning by showing everyone else how mutual respect can improve student engagement and learning"

— student voice

"Ensure all students are known and cared for"

— employee voice

Engage every child and student in learning

Build the foundations for learning



Through participation in quality early learning services and programs, children will have a strong sense of identity and wellbeing, and start their journey as confident and involved learners. This will strengthen the transition of all children into the early years of learning and improve the achievement of foundational skills and engagement through later years of schooling.

Strategic Actions 2021–2025

- Design and implement a contemporary early childhood system for Territory families, to provide equitable access to quality services.
- Extend access to quality early learning to ensure all children are able to access two years of quality early learning in the years before school, following the Early Years Learning Framework and delivered by qualified staff in partnership with families.
- Strengthen transitions to school through early identification of children with additional needs and collaboration with other Northern Territory Government agencies to provide timely wrap around support.

"Focus on positive engagement with families because family comes first"

— student voice

The secondary years of schooling will provide academic, vocational and flexible pathways to enable students' success. Students will have the capabilities and certification needed to take their next steps beyond schooling.

Strategic Actions 2021–2025

- Review and strengthen secondary education (Years 7–12) with a focus on increased participation, retention and completion, particularly in remote areas.
- Expand options (including both courses and mode of delivery) to deliver equitable and flexible access to the curriculum, particularly for remote secondary students.
- Strengthen support for each student, including boarding school students and those with additional needs, through the implementation of learner profiles for students working towards Year 12 completion (or equivalent).
- Follow and support the transition of students into secondary schooling and beyond into further education, employment or training, in partnership with local communities, industry, government and non-government organisations.

"Include critical and creative thinking in all areas of the curriculum explicitly because this will help in the future"

— student voice

"I want to become a mechanic so I can fix cars in my homeland, like a proper mechanic"

— student voice

Support successful transitions beyond schooling





Build an expert education workforce

All educators, school and early childhood leaders, allied health and other education system staff develop, maintain and share expertise relevant to the strategic priorities, our values and ways of working.

Strategic Actions 2021–2025

- Develop and implement a plan to ensure we build an expert education workforce with a focus on children and young people at the centre of our work.
- Implement a leadership strategy and leadership pipelines, enabling school and system leaders to be identified, developed and supported through each stage of their careers.
- Prioritise an agency-wide commitment to voice, collaboration across teams and health and wellbeing for all staff.
- Fulfil our commitment to develop and implement an Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Strategy to retain, develop and increase the number of Aboriginal staff delivering early years and education services.

"Great teachers make you want to be at school and talk to you in a way you can understand"

— student voice

"Quality professional learning for staff and ways of reporting that reflect student strengths"

"Facilitate training across the region, making it meaningful to the needs of each school"

— employee voice

Listening to services, schools and communities about what they need, and using an inquiry-led process based on evidence, to provide differentiated support.

Strategic Actions 2021–2025

- Embed the use of evidence-based strategies in school and early childhood service planning, with support from the system providing culturally responsive resources to guide delivery.
- Develop and implement a service model for differentiated support to schools and early childhood services to ensure universal, targeted and focussed support is provided in response to local need.
- Enhance the responsibility of regional and local staff to enable place-based, community led and multi-agency approaches to support children, young people and their families.

"Everyone doesn't want the same support, we want the support that we need"
— student voice

"Be responsive to individual school needs"
— employee voice

Differentiated support for Early Childhood Education and Care services, schools and communities



07.

Measuring progress



Sky above Fogg Dam, Top End Region
LIMILNGAN-WULNA COUNTRY

Measuring progress

We will monitor progress and evaluate our improvement journey through the use of headline improvement measures.

Headline improvement measures



School survey

Strengthen student wellbeing and teacher-student relationships so that students can reach their full potential.

Foundations for Early Literacy Assessment NT

Increase the proportion of Transition year students that have foundational early literacy skills.

Attended days

Increase the number of days students attend school each year by 10 days.

NAPLAN growth

Ensure every student achieves at least one year of learning growth in reading and numeracy for every year of school.

A-E grades

Increase student grades at and above the expected standards for English, maths and science.

Year 12 achievement

Increase the number of young Territorians that continue their school education through to Year 12 and increase the proportion of students that achieve an NTCET or Certificate II or higher.



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