



Northern  
Territory  
Government

creating  
success  
together



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2013–2015



# CONTENTS



Chief Executive’s Message . . . . . 2

Our Purpose. . . . . 4

Our Context . . . . . 5

Our Vision. . . . . 7

Our Strategic Principles . . . . . 7

Our Values . . . . . 9

Our Accountability . . . . . 10

Our Goals. . . . . 11

Goal 1: A great start for children . . . . . 12

Goal 2: Every student a successful learner. . . . . 14

Goal 3: Quality leaders, quality teachers, quality schools. . . . . 16

Goal 4: Responsive services and systems . . . . . 18

Goal 5: Building productive partnerships. . . . . 20

Measuring Our Performance . . . . . 22

How We Will Use Our Plan . . . . . 23

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S MESSAGE



I am pleased to present the Department of Education 2013-2015 Strategic Plan *Creating Success Together*.

The plan provides the strategic direction for education and children's services in the Northern Territory for the next three years, and supports the Government's *Framing the Future* agenda for the Territory's social and economic advancement.

Quality education is the key to positive participation of Territorians in our community and our economy. The strategic plan outlines the priorities that we as an agency will work towards, to deliver our vision to educate young Territorians to become confident and capable global citizens. It builds on our commitment to provide sustainable and innovative programs and services from early childhood through to senior years. These programs are reflective of 21st century technology and the contemporary social environment in which we operate.

The plan refocuses our effort to ensure that every student in the Northern Territory can and does access a quality education.

The plan has been developed through a process of consultation with staff and external stakeholders to ensure it reflects not only what we want to achieve but also how we will achieve it.

It frames a common purpose towards which we will work over the next three years to deliver our high level goals. It outlines the strategies for achieving these goals and how we will measure our progress.

The Strategic Plan forms the basis of our accountability to Territorians for the services we deliver. It captures the education journey of a young person from birth through to adulthood and the critical role of education

in creating future success for young Territorians. Government has set this agency a big agenda as we work to deliver education and care services to young Territorians. We will need to be responsive and adaptable where programs are delivered in our schools and in our early childhood services. I look forward to working together as we put this plan into action to achieve our goals.



Ken Davies  
September 2013



Ken Davies with Anne Donnelly (left) and Heather Standley (centre), Darwin High School teachers

## OUR PURPOSE

The Department of Education delivers services to children and young people to maximise their educational outcomes, safety and wellbeing from their early years through to senior years of schooling. We work with a range of key stakeholders to achieve the best possible educational outcomes and pathways for children and young people in the Northern Territory.



Anula Primary School, Darwin

## OUR CONTEXT



The Department of Education provides education services to over 33 000 school-aged children across the Northern Territory's 154 government schools, providing programs from the early years to post schooling pathways.

In the Territory, 70 per cent of government schools are located in remote and very remote areas and 46 per cent of our students are enrolled at these schools. We have a diverse student population, with Indigenous students making up 40 per cent of the total student population. A large proportion (29 per cent) of Northern Territory students have a language background other than English.

We are prepared to meet challenges to service delivery through flexible and innovative programs, including access to high class online learning services delivered through the Northern Territory Open Education Centre. Education programs are delivered by over 3800 dedicated staff working in our schools to support young Territorians to reach their potential. These professional staff working at the coalface are supported by an additional 630 staff providing systems and services that support them to deliver quality education.

Reforms to improve outcomes for disadvantaged, Indigenous and remote young people are a major priority for the Northern Territory, and our activity is aligned to the national reform agenda being driven through a number of key national agreements with the Australian Government.

The Strategic Plan sets out the department's agenda for achieving its part in the Government's higher level strategic plan, *Framing the Future*.







## OUR VISION

---

*Young Territorians are confident and capable global citizens*

We will work with families, communities and other key stakeholders to deliver quality educational services for young people across the Territory. This will ensure our services reflect current and future social and economic needs of the Territory and our services and systems are responsive to the needs of our communities and schools. Through our commitment to providing higher quality education services, we will assist young people to become confident and capable global citizens.

## OUR STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

---

The Strategic Plan has been built around five strategic principles.

1. Education is a vehicle that will drive social and economic advancement for the Territory.
2. Resourcing decisions are based on effective, evidence-based practices and ensure high expectations are maintained and student outcomes are improved.
3. Service quality and efficiency is enhanced through contemporary, flexible and innovative delivery models.
4. Decisions are best made and resources have most impact closest to the point of service delivery in schools.
5. Autonomy is balanced by consistent and system-wide effort and accountability.



## OUR VALUES



Values underpin our organisational culture and behaviour. They underpin our work in the Department of Education in delivering quality services to Territorians and guide us to achieve our best performance at work.

Our values are:

### *Professionalism*

We are an organisation with a strong performance agenda that expects the achievement of high standards by all employees.

### *Respect*

Our day-to-day interactions with students, colleagues, parents and stakeholders are conducted honestly and respectfully. We value respect as an essential foundation for working collaboratively.

### *Innovation*

We are adaptive, proactive and innovative as we work together in our schools and workplaces to be able to find new approaches to meeting challenges in an ever-changing environment.

### *Diversity*

We create inclusive work environments where people are valued for their cultures, experiences, skills, knowledge and capabilities. We provide culturally inclusive and responsive services.

### *Excellence*

We have high expectations of our people, children and students to strive to achieve their best.

## OUR ACCOUNTABILITY

Our strategic plan reflects Government's *Framing the Future* priorities and sets out the goals and strategies for our agency to achieve our vision to educate young Territorians to become confident and capable global citizens. We will translate our goals and strategies into actions through division and directorate plans; into business unit and school plans; and then into individual staff plans.

We will monitor and report our performance against the strategic goals through a clearly defined accountability framework. We will regularly review our progress against deliverables and key actions, assessing risks to achievement of these and applying risk mitigation strategies. We will analyse our performance and use evidence-based practices to inform planning of future actions and investments. We will be transparent and accountable to the community by reporting on our performance as an agency each year, including the performance of our people and our financial position.



Belyuen School, Wagait

## OUR GOALS

---

### *A great start for children*

We are committed to working with families so children have the best possible start in life and begin school ready to learn.

### *Every student a successful learner*

We are committed to creating opportunities and the environment for successful learning for every student in every school.

### *Quality leaders, quality teachers, quality schools*

We are committed to fostering a strong and collaborative learning culture for our people and schools.

### *Responsive services and systems*

We are committed to providing accessible and timely services and systems to support effective operations and inform decision making.

### *Building productive partnerships*

We are committed to partnerships and collaborations that support the economic and social development of the Territory.





# GOAL 1

## A GREAT START FOR CHILDREN

*Successful learning starts from birth.  
We are committed to working with families  
so children have the best possible start  
in life and begin school ready to learn.*



## GOAL 1: A GREAT START FOR CHILDREN

---

Early years learning and development are critical to improving and maximising learning outcomes in the formal years of schooling. By working together with families and agencies that provide services such as health, and delivering quality early childhood education services and integrated and targeted support programs, we can improve child wellbeing and overall school readiness, particularly for remote and Indigenous children.

A range of strategies at the system, regional, school and community level have been identified to support children to have the best possible start in life and begin school ready to learn. In 2013 and 2014, we will deliver a number of key actions against these strategies.

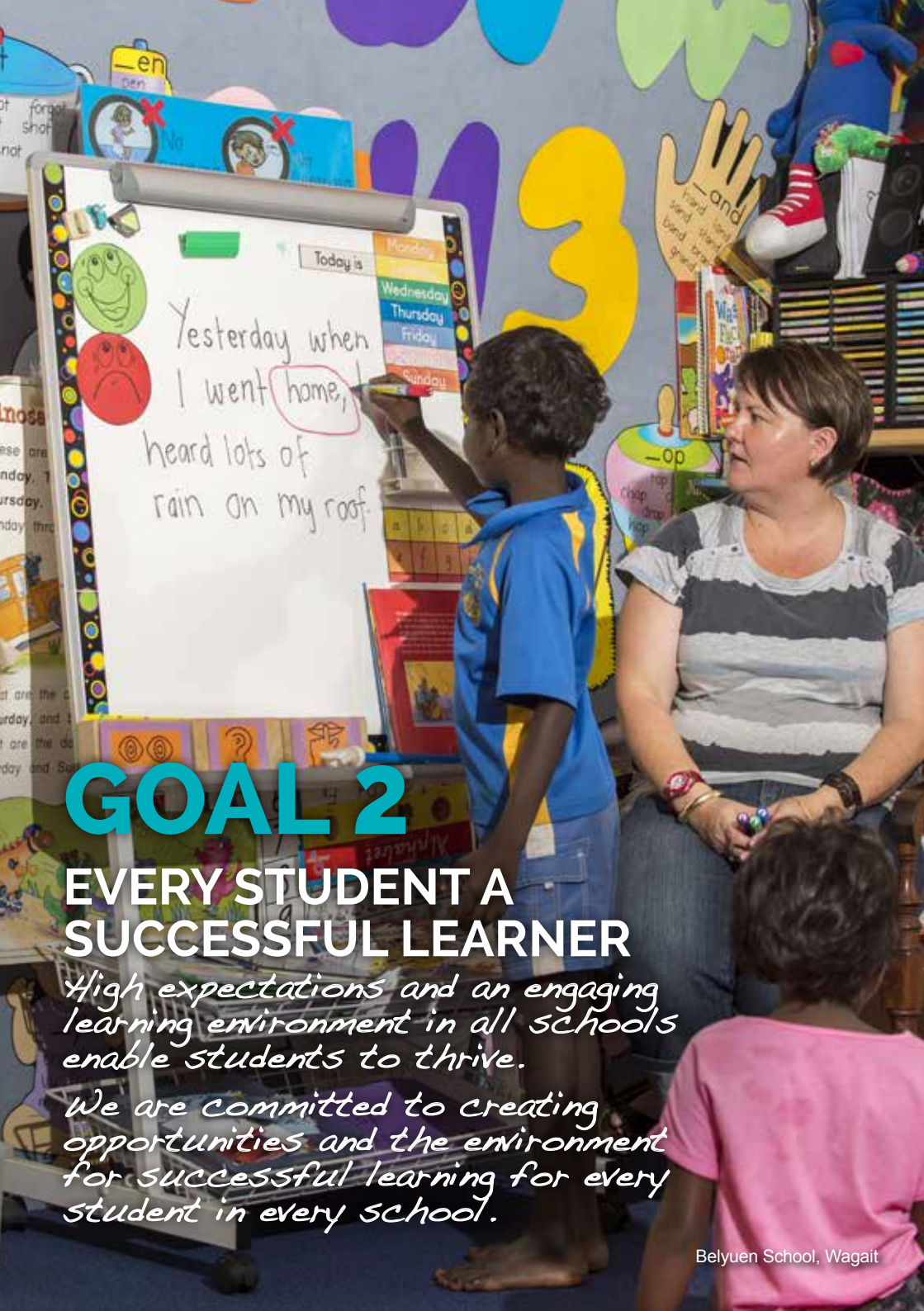
---

### STRATEGIES

1. Implement the National Quality Framework for quality early childhood education and care to continue to improve services across the Territory.
  2. Deliver targeted early learning support programs for children from birth to three years of age and their families.
  3. Provide quality preschool programs for all children in the year before full-time schooling.
  4. Provide integrated approaches to service delivery that prioritise the needs of families and children.
- 

### KEY ACTIONS FOR 2013 AND 2014

1. Implement the regulatory framework across all education and care services, including the commencement of regulation of all preschools.
2. Streamline and improve the quality and provision of early childhood services in remote areas by developing a hybrid approach to combine elements of the mobile Families as First Teachers program and mobile preschools.
3. Invest in pre-literacy and numeracy strategies that improve school readiness and child development outcomes.
4. Establish an additional five child and family centres with integrated early childhood services.



# GOAL 2

## EVERY STUDENT A SUCCESSFUL LEARNER

*High expectations and an engaging learning environment in all schools enable students to thrive.*

*We are committed to creating opportunities and the environment for successful learning for every student in every school.*

## GOAL 2: EVERY STUDENT A SUCCESSFUL LEARNER

---

This goal reflects our commitment to improving the educational outcomes of students across all stages of schooling. Central to this is ensuring that all students are connected to their school, attend regularly and are motivated and enabled to achieve. This will be done by providing a high quality, integrated curriculum that students can identify with and that meets their learning and achievement needs, utilising modern approaches to service delivery and 21st century teaching resources to support program delivery. A significant focus of this goal includes working with families and agencies to provide support and services for students experiencing emotional, physical and cognitive vulnerability.

A range of strategies at the system, regional, school and community level have been identified to support the successful learning of students. In 2013 and 2014, we will deliver a number of key actions against these strategies.

---

### STRATEGIES

1. Create safe, positive and healthy environments for students to learn and grow that are connected to and informed by the expectations of families and the local community.
  2. Foster an inclusive culture and high expectations of students who are learning in our schools.
  3. Deliver quality teaching and learning that is relevant, meaningful and differentiated for successful futures.
  4. Work with families and relevant agencies to monitor and support the learning needs of vulnerable students.
  5. Work with families and communities to close the educational achievement gap for Indigenous students.
- 

### KEY ACTIONS FOR 2013 AND 2014

1. Review Indigenous education to inform future service delivery for Indigenous students, particularly in remote and very remote locations and for secondary service provision, and implement outcomes of the review.
2. Operationalise special teams to effectively support schools to manage critical incidents.
3. Continue to implement the Australian curriculum in all schools in a way that is contextually relevant and meets the needs of all students.
4. Work with students and their families to address barriers to schooling and transition students back to school through truancy and attendance officers and the School Enrolment and Attendance Measure.





# GOAL 3

## QUALITY LEADERS, QUALITY TEACHERS, QUALITY SCHOOLS

*Learning outcomes are maximised by high quality teachers and leaders.*

*We are committed to fostering a strong and collaborative learning culture for our people and schools.*

## GOAL 3: QUALITY LEADERS, QUALITY TEACHERS, QUALITY SCHOOLS

---

A high performing education system relies on quality leadership, quality staff, and upholding high expectations and standards of professional practice at all levels in all schools. Through strengthening the capacity of our classroom teachers and school leaders, we will provide the highest quality teaching and learning for our students, particularly those in remote areas of the Northern Territory. Of critical importance is embedding a culture of exemplary practice, developing our own teachers within the Territory, particularly Indigenous teachers, and valuing our staff.

A range of strategies at the system, regional and school level have been identified to ensure we have quality leaders, teachers and schools working to maximise the learning outcomes of students. In 2013 and 2014, we will deliver a number of key actions against these strategies.

---

### STRATEGIES

1. Strengthen capacity in educational leadership across our schools to maximise student outcomes.
  2. Build cultures of evidence-based practice and continuous improvement in our schools.
  3. Provide flexible and innovative options for service delivery to ensure all children have access to quality education and training programs.
  4. Strengthen the capacity of classroom teachers and trainers to provide the highest quality teaching, learning and training programs.
- 

### KEY ACTIONS FOR 2013 AND 2014

1. Implement the improvement and performance agenda through school reviews and staff performance and development reviews, applying national professional standards for principals and teachers and professional standards for assistant teachers.
2. Provide high quality data, reporting and analysis on staffing and school achievement that can inform decision making and continuous improvement.
3. Provide innovative service delivery options using a variety of mechanisms to enable access to quality education across the Territory.
4. Develop and implement guidelines and frameworks for literacy and numeracy teaching and for the assessment of student learning in reading, writing and maths.

# GOAL 4

## RESPONSIVE SERVICES AND SYSTEMS

*Quality programs and services are enabled by responsive and sustainable systems.*

*We are committed to providing accessible and timely services and systems to support effective operations and inform decision making.*



## GOAL 4: RESPONSIVE SERVICES AND SYSTEMS

---

We need to have connected and aligned services and systems that are focused on supporting the operations of schools more efficiently and effectively. We will use evidence-based approaches to underpin the delivery of education services and an appropriate resource distribution model to support programs and schools. Developing innovative ways to support frontline service delivery within the resources available are essential for our organisation.

A range of strategies at the system, regional and school level have been identified to support the effective operations across the department. In 2013 and 2014, we will deliver a number of key actions against these strategies.

---

### STRATEGIES

1. Recruit and retain high quality staff and provide safe and healthy work environments.
  2. Build the capacity of our workforce and leadership across all areas of the agency, with a particular focus on developing Indigenous staff.
  3. Align and strengthen strategic and operational planning, monitoring and reporting to promote transparent and accountable practices.
  4. Effectively and efficiently manage our resources through strong leadership, greater autonomy and responsible financial management to deliver quality services within agreed budgets and within a regional structure.
- 

### KEY ACTIONS FOR 2013 AND 2014

1. Implement a more equitable, accountable and efficient school funding model that provides government schools with greater flexibility in allocating their resources, monitoring expenditure and increasing school autonomy in decision making, through global funding allocations.
2. Develop a long-term strategy for contemporary asset management, infrastructure forecasting and planning education services.
3. Implement a strategic workforce planning framework to be supported by local-level workforce plans, together with contemporary recruitment systems which ensure we employ skilled and experienced people, where and when they are needed.
4. Implement a workforce and career development strategy which builds the capability of our employees and creates career opportunities, particularly for Indigenous employees.
5. Rewrite the *Education Act* to meet the future needs of education services in the Northern Territory, including evolving and advancing models of school governance and education.

# GOAL 5

## BUILDING PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

*Local and regional  
partnerships  
will progress  
the Territory's  
education and  
economic  
reform agenda.*

*We are committed  
to partnerships  
and collaborations  
that support  
the economic and  
social development  
of the Territory.*



## GOAL 5: BUILDING PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

---

We will support students to achieve better long-term employment and life outcomes that contribute to the Northern Territory in building a stronger social and economic future. We will work with school communities to develop governance that supports greater operational flexibility; support access to education by working with the non-government schools sector to deliver services; create partnerships with industry and employers that facilitate the transition of young people into work or further education when they leave school; create partnerships with Asia that underpin economic development and collaboration with our Asian neighbours; and build Indigenous cultural and language understandings to underpin economic development.

A range of strategies at the system, regional, school and community level have been identified to enhance collaborative partnerships and support the economic and social development of the Northern Territory. In 2013 and 2014, we will deliver a number of key actions against these strategies.

---

### STRATEGIES

1. In partnerships with communities and stakeholders, determine appropriate options for school governance arrangements.
  2. Build productive partnerships and collaborations with:
    - industry, and education and training providers to create structured pathways to employment, training and higher education for students;
    - education providers in our region to share resources and learning to improve our education systems; and
    - the non-government schools sector, the Australian Government and other Northern Territory Government agencies.
  3. Create opportunities to share and build Asian cultural understandings and language expertise to support greater regional economic collaboration.
  4. Work in partnership with communities to build Indigenous cultural and language understandings to support local economic development.
- 

### KEY ACTIONS FOR 2013 AND 2014

1. Work with remote school communities to shape the service delivery model and be accountable for education in their community.
2. Strengthen the relationship with the Australian Government, with strategic intent to agree a long-term plan that can be supported by funding commitments to achieve agreed outcomes.
3. Partner with the non-government schools sector to provide choice in the education system.
4. Develop a 10-year strategic plan for the Northern Territory as an international education hub, with a focus on partnerships with Asia.

## MEASURING OUR PERFORMANCE

---

As part of our commitment to achieving our vision, we will measure our progress and work towards achieving agreed performance targets by December 2015.

### *Monitoring our performance*

A quarterly report with performance measures and targets for each goal will monitor our progress towards implementing the plan.

We will share progress reports across the department to track and monitor the effort and achievements made.

### *Reviewing our performance*

We will review our performance annually and determine future key actions and targets based on our assessment of progress against our measures and targets.

### *Improving our performance*

We will use findings of monitoring and reviewing to ensure performance is improved.

We will continue to review our processes and systems to ensure they are as effective and efficient as possible and are contributing to a coordinated effort and culture of improvement across the department.

## HOW WE WILL USE OUR PLAN

We will share our vision and our goals with students, parents, families, communities and our partners.

We will publish our progress on implementation and performance against our targets in our Annual Report.

We will use our plan to drive our planning and research, financial management and evaluation.

We will review our plan to respond to the needs of young people and schools across the Northern Territory, in the context of broader social and economic government priorities.



Manunda Terrace Primary School, Karama





Alice Springs Child Care Centre, Alice Springs





