



Northern  
Territory  
Government



# A share in the future

Indigenous Education Strategy  
2015–2024



The painting that forms the basis for the design of this strategy and accompanying documents was provided by Jannette McCormack. Jannette initially provided her painting for *A Share in the Future — Review of Indigenous Education in the Northern Territory* and she has kindly extended permission to allow her artwork to be used again in this document.



Jannette McCormack is an artist and a teacher at Gillen Primary School in Alice Springs. The painting is called *Altyere Nwernekenhe*. Jannette says that it represents the Arrente view of the world. Altyere is the spiritual connection to the world. Nwernekenhe means 'ours'. The painting represents the shields of knowledge: the Indigenous world view and the western world view. The centre of the painting is where the learning takes place.

# Minister's Message

In 2013 I commissioned a review of Indigenous education in the Northern Territory. The review had clear terms of reference to provide advice to Government on the issues affecting improved education outcomes for Indigenous students in the Northern Territory, and to recommend actions to ensure a high quality, focused and consistent education program is delivered to Indigenous students in Territory schools. The review is the first comprehensive investigation into Indigenous education in the Territory since the Learning Lessons report, nearly 15 years ago.

The review's report *A Share in the Future* was provided to Government in May 2014. The report's findings and recommendations focused on improved education delivery, particularly in remote and very remote schools in the Territory. Although there are positive findings, including the commitment of teachers and other education workers often in challenging contexts, the report describes unacceptable outcomes for many of our Indigenous students. From a remote and very remote perspective, the education outcomes for Indigenous students are well behind those of other Indigenous students elsewhere in Australia.

Government values the findings of this review and is committed to taking immediate action to implement the recommendations we consider will bring about the biggest improvements for students, and offer greater opportunities for their future. We must tackle reforming education in remote and very remote communities with persistent and constant resolve.

The work we will undertake through this strategy starts with the very early years of a child's education experience, a clear and consistent approach to primary school education, and the provision of greater opportunities and pathways through secondary education that leads to real employment outcomes and opportunities. This is why Government insists on a 10-year strategy with clear planning and review every three years. Quality programs, quality teaching and strong community engagement are integral to the success of the reforms in this strategy.

I commend this strategy to all the partners of an Indigenous child's education including schools, teachers, families and their wider communities, and I invite stakeholders to be active partners in this very important reform of Indigenous education service delivery.

Peter Chandler  
Minister for Education

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# Context

There is nothing unique about having a plan to improve education outcomes for Indigenous students. Of the 152 government schools in the Territory, 70 per cent are located in remote and very remote areas, that is, areas outside the provincial greater Darwin region. The Northern Territory has for many years sought to address Indigenous student outcomes through a range of strategies and initiatives, attempting to meet the challenges of delivering education in a remote and very remote context.

In spite of the resources and effort, the review of Indigenous education in the Northern Territory *A Share in the Future* presents a picture of continued declining outcomes for many Indigenous students. The data underlines the significance of the issues: the average Indigenous student attendance rate in very remote schools is 58 per cent, impacting dramatically on student achievement in primary school but most notably in the secondary years of schooling. The review outlines the differences in Indigenous student outcomes by geolocation: provincial, remote and very remote areas. The starkest difference is in very remote schools where, by Year 9, Territory Indigenous students are almost five years behind very remote Indigenous students in the rest of Australia. This condemns many young Indigenous men and women to a life of limited choices and deprives them of the opportunity to participate in the Territory economy and contribute to its prosperity.

The review identifies the need for a comprehensive reform agenda driven through a targeted long-term strategy. This strategy is focused on actions which can be measured and which will have a direct impact on learning outcomes. The value of community engagement, central to the improvement of education outcomes for remote and very remote Indigenous students, is reflected throughout the strategy.

This strategy is intended to focus the effort of schools on delivering clear and effective programs that are proven to make a difference for Indigenous students. The strategy is a long-term framework to drive policy and programs in the areas we know will make the most difference for our Indigenous students so that they can achieve education outcomes equal to or better than other students across the country.

# Strategy

The *A Share in the Future – Indigenous Education Strategy 2015-2024* is a 10-year strategy of reform committed to ensuring **Indigenous students in the Northern Territory are successful and confident in their education journey.**

Implementing the *A Share in the Future* strategy will provide Indigenous students with real career choices and opportunities both within and beyond their communities.



# Principles

The five principles underpinning this 10-year strategy are:

1. Education provides social and economic advantages and all learners are respected.
2. Student wellbeing and education outcomes will not be compromised.
3. Community is engaged, has choice and culture is respected.
4. Resource decisions are based on effective, evidence-based practices driving improved outcomes for Indigenous students.
5. Autonomy is balanced with consistent and system-wide effort, accountability and alignment with Northern Territory Government policies addressing the needs of Indigenous people in the Northern Territory.

# Elements

The five elements of this strategy are centred on recommendations from *A Share in the Future – Review of Indigenous Education in the Northern Territory* that are considered to have a direct and measurable impact on education outcomes for Indigenous students.

# Element 1 Foundations

The education system takes the opportunity to directly shape education outcomes from the start of a child's life.

## Vision

Indigenous children entering primary schooling have the skills and attributes they need to succeed in their education.

## Goals

The key goals build on the work already underway to support families and children as they embark on their education journey. The work we do now will be an investment in our children today and our young people and communities in the future.

- 1.1 Early childhood education and development programs are evidence-based and focus effort on success in literacy learning.
- 1.2 Parents and carers are engaged in and support their children's learning and development from the earliest years.

## 10-Year Target

The proportion of Indigenous children who are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain of the Australian Early Childhood Development Census is reduced in-line with the Territory's non-Indigenous cohort.



## Element 2 **Essentials**

Literacy and numeracy are essential for subsequent success in schooling.

### Vision

Indigenous students achieve age benchmarks in literacy and numeracy in their primary years of schooling, and plan for their secondary education with confidence.

### Goals

Literacy and numeracy are skills that provide all learners with a chance to succeed across the education spectrum. A structured literacy and numeracy program throughout the primary years of schooling is a priority for students in remote and very remote communities in the Territory.

- 2.1 Identified schools are centrally supported to deliver mandated quality evidence-based literacy and numeracy programs.
- 2.2 Territory-wide age benchmarks are in place to ensure effective monitoring of student achievement in reading, oral English and numeracy.

### 10-Year Target

Indigenous students in government schools achieve results in reading and numeracy in Year 3 and Year 5 in the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy testing consistent with the Territory's non-Indigenous cohort.

## Element 3 Pathways

Successful completion of secondary education provides options and choices for young adults.

### Vision

Indigenous students complete schooling well equipped to take up employment, training and higher education opportunities.

### Goals

Tailoring secondary education programs and providing strong transition support will build on the reforms in the early and primary years of education.

- 3.1 Secondary education in regional and urban secondary schools is tailored to meet the needs of students from remote communities.
- 3.2 Residential options and transition support are provided to very remote students.
- 3.3 Workplace literacy and numeracy programs are provided to prepare students for work.

### 10-Year Target

Indigenous students in government schools achieve results in reading and numeracy in Year 7 and Year 9 in the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy testing consistent with the Territory's non-Indigenous cohort.

Indigenous students in government schools achieve the Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training at the same rate as the Territory's non-Indigenous student cohort.



## Element 4 Engagement

The best results are achieved when students are engaged with their learning and attend school regularly.

### Vision

Indigenous children at all stages of schooling attend school regularly and are supported in their education by their families and community.

### Goals

All students attend regularly and are fully engaged in learning through all their years of school.

- 4.1 Parents and communities are engaged with purpose to support their children throughout their learning journey.
- 4.2 Schools and regions achieve strong and consistent attendance of students from early childhood through to secondary schooling.
- 4.3 Quality student engagement programs support young adults in schools.
- 4.4 Schools provide a whole-system approach to behaviour management and wellbeing.

### 10-Year Target

The proportion of Indigenous students in government schools attending four or more days per week is consistent with the Territory's non-Indigenous cohort.

## Element 5 Workforce

A high quality and stable workforce improves student learning outcomes.

### Vision

Indigenous student outcomes are improved through a consistent system-wide approach to providing highly skilled and motivated educators and leaders in our schools.

### Goals

A comprehensive workforce strategy will ensure that education services have highly skilled and committed educators and support staff to achieve our goals.

- 5.1 A strategic approach is adopted to managing, supporting and developing a strong workforce to achieve educational success for Indigenous students.
- 5.2 Working in remote schools is seen as a career opportunity for high performing principals and teachers.
- 5.3 Indigenous workforce and capacity is increased and is supported by scholarship and early careers programs.
- 5.4 Indigenous staff have equitable professional opportunities.

### 10-Year Target

At least 50 per cent of remote and very remote government schools achieve at or above like schools in the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy testing.



# Targets and Measures

	Vision	Target	Measure
<b>Element 1</b> Foundations	Indigenous children entering primary schooling have the skills and attributes they need to succeed in their education.	The proportion of Indigenous children who are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain of the Australian Early Childhood Development Census (AEDC) is reduced in line with the Territory's non-Indigenous cohort.	The proportion of Indigenous children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain of the AEDC is comparable to the proportion of non-Indigenous children.
<b>Element 2</b> Essentials	Indigenous students achieve age benchmarks in literacy and numeracy in their primary years of schooling, and plan for their secondary education with confidence.	Indigenous students in government schools achieve results in reading and numeracy Year 3 and Year 5 in the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy testing consistent with the Territory's non-Indigenous cohort.	The proportion of Indigenous students in government schools achieving at or above national minimum standard in Year 3 and Year 5.
<b>Element 3</b> Pathways	Indigenous students complete schooling well equipped to take up employment, training and higher education opportunities.	Indigenous students in government schools achieve results in reading and numeracy Year 7 and Year 9 in the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy testing consistent with the Territory's non-Indigenous cohort.	The proportion of Indigenous students in government schools achieving at or above national minimum standard in Year 7 and Year 9.
		Indigenous students in government schools achieve the Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training at the same rate as the Territory's non-Indigenous cohort.	The proportion of Indigenous students in government schools achieving the Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training in their final year of school – i.e. number of the Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training achievements as a proportion of cohort size.
<b>Element 4</b> Engagement	Indigenous children at all stages of schooling attend school regularly and are supported in their education by their families and community.	The proportion of Indigenous students in government schools attending four or more days per week is consistent with the Territory's non-Indigenous cohort.	The proportion of Indigenous students attending four or more days per week.
<b>Element 5</b> Workforce	Indigenous student outcomes are improved through a consistent, system-wide approach to providing highly skilled and motivated educators and leaders in our schools.	At least 50 per cent of remote and very remote government schools achieve at or above like schools in the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy testing.	Proportion of remote and very remote government schools with a National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy like-school comparative index of greater than or equal to zero.

# Implementation Timeline

The *A Share in the Future* strategy has been designed in four stages comprising three-year implementation cycles and a final evaluation in year ten.





