

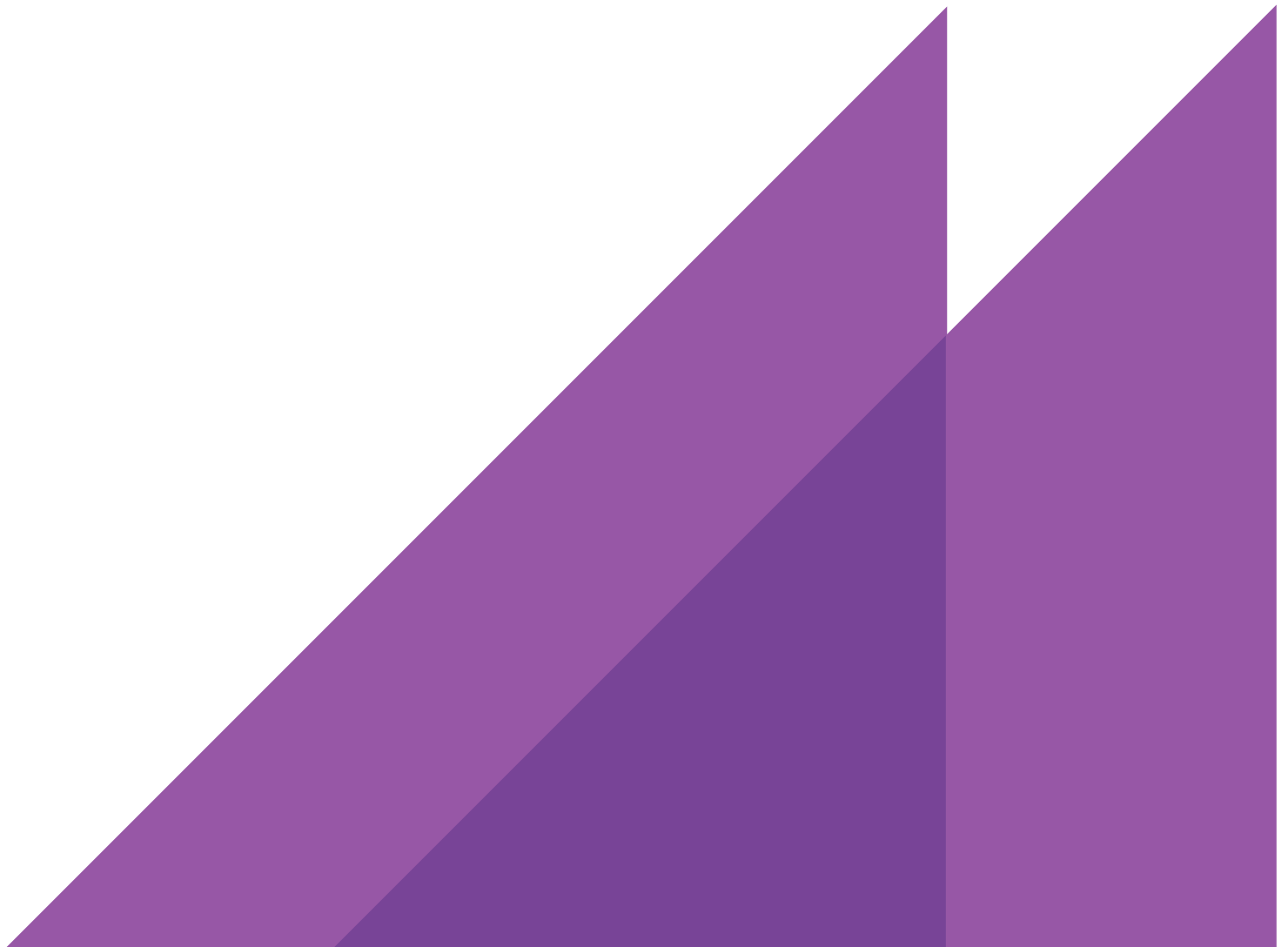
REPORT TO
NT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

25 APRIL 2018

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION STRATEGY EVALUATION



FINAL REPORT: STAGE 1,
JAN 2015–OCT 2017





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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ABSTUDY	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Study Assistance Scheme
ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
AEDC	Australian Early Development Census
ASC	Assessment of Student Competencies
CFC	Child and Family Centre
CSIP	Children and Schooling Implementation Plan
DoE	Department of Education
EALD	English as an Additional Language or Dialogue
EDC	Every Day Counts
EYLF	Early Years Learning Framework
FaFT	Families as First Teachers
FELA	Foundations of Early Literacy Assessment
GGSA	Good to Great Schools Australia
IERI	Indigenous Education Review Implementation
IES	Indigenous Education Strategy
IFLO	Indigenous Family Liaison Officer
ILCRG	Indigenous Languages and Culture Reference Group
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
LIP	Local Implementation Plans
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
NT	Northern Territory
NPA	National Partnership Agreement

NTBOS	Northern Territory Board of Studies
NTCET	Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training
NTIS	Northern Territory Indigenous Education Council
PaDM	Performance and Data Management
PAT-M	Progressive Achievement Test – Mathematics
PAT-R	Progressive Achievement Test – Reading Comprehension
PLS-5	Pearson Preschool Learning Scale
PPDP	Principal Professional Development Program
RLPA	Remote Learning Partnership Agreements
RSAS	Remote School Attendance Strategy
SCPA	School Community Partnership Agreements
SEAM	School Enrolment and Attendance Measure
TSU	Transition Support Unit
VET	Vocational Education and Training

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

ACIL Allen Consulting in partnership with the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education has been engaged by the Northern Territory (NT) Department of Education to evaluate the first Stage of 'A Share in the Future: Indigenous Education Strategy 2015-2024' (IES).

The IES is a 10 year strategy and is being implemented in three stages—the first Stage covers 2015-2017 and involves 25 Actions, grouped under 5 Elements (**Figure ES 1**).

FIGURE ES 1 OVERVIEW OF THE INDIGENOUS EDUCATION STRATEGY, STAGE 1

Indigenous Education Strategy: Stage 1, 2015-2017				
Element 1 Foundations	Element 2 Essentials	Element 3 Pathways	Element 4 Engagement	Element 5 Workforce
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. FaFT 2. Early Childhood Assessment Tool 3. Early Childhood Guidelines 4. Early Transition 5. Preschool Curriculum 6. Integrated Service Centres 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Literacy & Numeracy Essentials 2. Direct Instruction 3. Benchmarks 4. Principal Performance Plans 5. Indigenous Languages and Culture Policy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build Boarding 2. Transition Support Unit 3. Secondary Provision 4. Employment Pathways 5. Post Primary 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engagement Charter 2. Align SEAM 3. Girls' Engagement 4. Behaviour Management 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Workforce Plan 2. Assistant Teachers 3. Developing Remote Principals 4. Strengthening Remote School Staff Capabilities 5. Teacher Housing Refurbishment and Construction

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, A SHARE IN THE FUTURE: INDIGENOUS EDUCATION STRATEGY 2015-2024.

The Evaluation

The Evaluation examined the implementation and effectiveness of the first three years of the IES, and will be used to inform the next stage. This report is the final Evaluation report and covers the period January 2015 to October 2017.

Five sources of evidence are used to inform this report—program documentation, interviews, school case studies, School and Department Assessments, and administrative and outcomes data.

Evaluation findings

The Evaluation findings are organised according to each of the five Elements, preceded by findings on overall implementation progress.

Implementation progress

Stage 1 of the IES has seen considerable activity and achievements across the 25 Actions—this is particularly evident in FaFT (E1A1), Direct Instruction (DI) (E2A2), the Transition Support Unit (TSU) (E3A2), Employment Pathways (EP) (E3A3, E3A4, and E3A5) and the Girls' Engagement programs (E4A3).

The large and complex roster of Actions was necessary at the time of design, and their development and implementation has challenged the capacity of head office, regional offices and schools. A number of Actions experienced delays due to the difficulty in recruiting suitable candidates to fill key internal roles. These recruitment issues, experienced across the public sector more broadly in the NT due to a low unemployment rate and lack of appropriately skilled workers, will continue to impact implementation progress if not addressed.

This has meant that the roll out of the IES has been slower than originally anticipated, with some Actions beginning implementation late in Stage 1 (most notably LANE (E2A1)) and many Foundations Actions to be fully implemented in 2018 (the Behaviour Management (E4A4) and Indigenous Languages and Culture (E2A5) Actions).

With the majority of key tools and resources now developed, the focus is on assisting schools to implement the IES Actions. Translating the IES and its composite parts for operation at the school level forms an important part of this, as does coaching of school staff and ensuring Principals are providing strong leadership for implementation in schools.

Specific findings noted in the report are listed below.

1. *State of implementation*

Over the three-year Stage 1, most IES Actions have been fully implemented in schools, with the remaining two (Behaviour Management (E4A4) and Indigenous Languages and Culture (E2A5)) to be rolled out in 2018. Schools' involvement with the IES has increased considerably over the three years and at the end of 2017 most schools are implementing seven or more Actions. While implementation has been focused on Remote and Very Remote schools, which have by far the greatest share of Indigenous students and face unique challenges, a number of the IES Actions are being implemented across all NT government schools.

2. *Element 1 – Implementation*

FaFT has expanded under the IES to 32 sites, and continues to be a popular program with schools and communities. It is widely viewed as addressing a high priority need by providing literacy skills to children and their parents and carers in a welcoming and culturally appropriate manner. The Department has identified the importance of increasing the number of days children attend FaFT for the program to be most impactful.

The other five Foundations Actions began implementation in 2017, with considerable work and trialling being undertaken by the Department in 2015 and 2016 to develop the associated frameworks and materials. Some Actions experienced delays in the initial phases due to issues with recruitment.

3. *Element 2 – Implementation*

Literacy and Numeracy Essentials (LANE) (E2A1) began implementation in 2017 and by Semester 2 67 schools were implementing the program's explicit teaching and an English as a Second Language approach. Involved schools report being able to use the associated resources flexibly and are seeing early improvements in student outcomes.

Direct Instruction (E2A2) has been implemented since 2015 and, at its peak, involved 19 schools. Some schools report improvement in student achievement attributed to DI, despite initially being sceptical about the approach. Some school staff expressed concern about the amount of time DI takes in the school timetable and the impact this can have on formally integrating Indigenous languages and culture into the curriculum. The cessation of Australian Government funding for DI after 2017, and the relative costliness of the model, means the Department is currently investigating a sustainable option for future delivery of DI.

Under Benchmarks (E2A3), five rounds of biannual PAT testing have been conducted to date with training and regional-level structures in place to support data collection. The assessments, however, have not been delivered in a consistent way in schools, making it difficult to compare the data collected between schools or over time. The eWrite and FELA assessments have been developed and tested in some schools, with accompanying training carried out. Further roll out of eWrite and FELA is planned for 2018.

The Principal Performance Plans (E2A4) guidelines are complete, and all Principal Performance Plans were updated by mid-2017. The Indigenous Languages and Culture Policy (E2A5), known as the NT Board of Studies Plan, has been finalised, launched by the Minister and distributed as at October 2017.

4. *Element 3 – Implementation*

The key activity under Build Boarding (E3A1) has been the boarding school constructed at Nhulunbuy, with the first students moving in at the commencement of the 2017 school year.

The Transition Support Unit (TSU—E3A2) was established in 2015 and in 2016 supported 278 students to pursue a secondary boarding option. The TSU's 'rapid response at risk' for remote students in boarding schools received 238 referrals/notifications for students requiring re-engagement support in 2016. Schools saw this as an area the TSU should continue to focus on, as they reported students can experience difficulty in settling into boarding school and often return early to their communities.

The three Employment Pathways (EP) Actions (E3A3, E3A4, and E3A5) have made good progress in curriculum and resources development, and demand from schools has exceeded initial expectations. Seven schools implemented the program in 2016, and an additional three schools began implementation in 2017. These schools reported developing partnerships within their local communities, and are focusing on re-engaging students who previously attended school.

5. *Element 4 – Implementation*

Four schools have completed their Engagement Charters (E4A1), with 35 schools at different points in the development process. While some schools are already taking steps to improve community engagement in school decision making, the Engagement Charter appeared to be treated by many as a 'compliance' requirement or a duplication of existing strategies and policies. Enhanced communication regarding the role and value of the Engagement Charter in the context of the wider strategic goals may help it become a more active part of school activities.

The Department has worked with the Australian Government to align the School Enrolment and Attendance Measure (SEAM) and the Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS) (E4A2). This was codified in the 'Every Day Counts' attendance strategy, released in 2016. Most schools reported that there is no evidence as yet that attendance initiatives are having a positive impact, underscoring the challenge of measuring policy effectiveness in this area. The lack of measurable effect of current attendance-focused initiatives may be reflective of the interplay between a range of related factors, and therefore requires a rethink of existing strategies in this area. One example being considered is that attendance may be better achieved through placing a greater emphasis on student engagement with education, rather than attendance being targeted as an outcome in its own right.

Girls' Engagement (E4A3) programs are being delivered in 14 schools. Schools identify positive impacts from the Girls' Engagement programs—including improved perceptions of social inclusion,

increased pride in Indigenous identity, and higher graduation rates—indicating it is a useful model for establishing and maintaining girls' involvement in school.

The trials of the Behaviour Management Action (E4A3) have been completed and full implementation has been scheduled for 2018, with many schools indicating enthusiasm for system-wide roll out.

6. *Element 5 – Implementation*

The Workforce Plan (E5A1) was launched in October 2016 and included an Indigenous employment strategy. The Plan is now driving the Department's efforts to attract, recruit, develop and retain teachers and other school staff members.

The Assistant Teachers (E5A2), Developing Remote Principals (E5A3) and Strengthening Remote School Staff Capabilities (E5A4) Actions all began implementation in 2016 and are working to support and develop these key roles in the school system. In part due to these programs, there is emerging evidence of a greater understanding and focus on the importance of coaching and mentoring across schools and the Department. The school case studies and other interviews carried out for this **Evaluation also point to an increasing awareness of the value of Assistant Teachers, particularly over the last 18 months.**

Construction of new, and refurbishment of existing, dwellings (E5A5) has been underway since 2015. By mid-2017, nine new dwellings had been constructed and 35 refurbishments had been completed, with a further 112 being scoped.

7. *The impact of other reforms on IES implementation*

The IES has been implemented within an environment of significant education system change. Two related education policy reforms are Global School Budgets and Visible Learning.

The Global School Budgets (GSB) reform is a 'student needs' based model, where funding is distributed to schools in line with student numbers using an effective enrolment methodology. The school Principal is accountable for the GSB and its allocation according to local needs. Some schools viewed GSB as constraining their ability to apply sufficient resources to IES implementation, while others argued the increased autonomy of the reform enabled them to better roll out Actions in their school. The evaluation did not find anything inherent in the GSB reform that is inconsistent with the IES, though at the time of this report GSB is being examined in a separate review.

Visible Learning is a professional development program which provides guidance and support to teachers to become evaluators of their practice, in turn improving the educational experience of learners by focusing on high impact practices. Visible Learning is almost universally seen as integral to and supportive of the IES, in particular its focus on evidence and continuous improvement (which is consistent with a number of IES Actions).

Some schools were, however, concerned about the extent and scale of the improvement agenda over the last three years—the time required to be devoted to the reforms can lead to a lack of depth in the implementation of the Actions, particularly in small schools. In recognition of this, the implementation of IES Actions in schools has been staggered to reduce the likelihood of schools having to implement too many projects concurrently.

Impact

The first three years of the IES have seen evidence of some progress, albeit uneven, towards the 10 year targets.

NAPLAN results can be volatile over time, so it is not possible to draw strong conclusions over a three-year period. There are early indications, however, that the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students is shrinking in Years 3, 5, and 9, while in Year 7 the gap has increased slightly. Notwithstanding these broad signs of improvement, the gaps in NAPLAN results are still large with, for example, only a third of Indigenous students achieving the reading National Minimum Standard in Year 5, compared to 90 per cent of non-Indigenous students. There is also a large gap between

Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the proportion completing the Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET), which has been steady since 2014.

That said, substantial impact of the IES on NAPLAN scores and NTCET attainment rates is not expected at this stage of IES implementation. Key IES Actions aimed at improving literacy and numeracy skills (particularly LANE (E2A1)) will only be fully implemented in 2018, and the impact of other Actions (such as FaFT (E1A1) and other Foundation Actions) on NAPLAN results will take at least a few more years.

The proportion of Indigenous students attending four or more days was 33 per cent in 2017, a slight increase from 2014. The gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students has reduced by four percentage points since the start of the IES. This reduction is due to both the increase in the proportion of Indigenous students attending four or more days and a decrease in the proportion of non-Indigenous attendance over the same time.

The share of Indigenous students attending at least four days is considerably lower in Very Remote schools (16 per cent) compared to Remote (41 per cent) and Provincial (65 per cent) schools. The Remote rate fell from its pre-IES point, and the Very Remote rate was equivalent to its pre-IES point.

The lack of improvement in this metric for Remote and Very Remote students (and in attendance rates) may indicate the need to reconsider the design of SEAM and RSAS, considering they have been in operation since 2013 and 2014 respectively.

Specific impact related findings noted in the report are listed below.

8. *Element 1 (Foundations) – Impact*

The most recent Australian Early Development Census was in 2015 with the next collection to take place in 2018. As such, it is not possible to measure progress towards the Element 1 target before 2018.

9. *Element 2 (Essentials) – Impact*

Since the introduction of the IES, improvements in Indigenous reading and numeracy results in Year 5, and numeracy results in Year 3, has led to a reduction in the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students on these measures. The Year 3 literacy gap has increased slightly.

Despite these positive results, the gaps are still large, with, for example, only a third of Indigenous students achieving the reading National Minimum Standard (NMS) in Year 5, compared to 90 per cent of non-Indigenous students.

Given the early stage of implementation of the key Element 2 Actions (LANE (E2A1) will only be fully implemented in 2018) and the volatility in the NAPLAN data, NAPLAN results need to be interpreted with caution. At this stage, it is not possible to report the impact that the IES is having on the share of Indigenous students reaching the NMS.

10. *Element 3 (Pathways) – Impact*

Since the introduction of the IES, the reading and numeracy gap between Year 7 Indigenous and non-Indigenous students has increased, while the equivalent gaps in Year 9 have decreased. Despite these changes, the gaps are still large, with for example only 23 per cent of Indigenous students achieving the Year 9 reading NMS, compared to 79 per cent of non-Indigenous students.

There is also a large gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the proportion completing the NTCET, although it is encouraging that the number of Indigenous students completing the NTCET has increased by 36 since 2014.

The full impact of the IES on Year 7 and 9 NAPLAN scores and NTCET attainment rates is not to be expected at this stage of IES implementation. Full implementation of the Pathways Actions occurred throughout 2017, and the TSU's work supporting students to transition to boarding school will take time to impact NAPLAN scores and graduation rates. The IES Actions at the early childhood and

primary school levels are also anticipated to improve secondary school NAPLAN results and NTCET completions, but with a considerable lag.

11. *Element 4 (Engagement) – Impact*

Given the challenges of measuring student engagement in the school environment, attendance rates have been used as a proxy to determine the impact of Element 4.

The proportion of Indigenous students attending four or more days was 33 per cent in 2017, a slight increase from 32 per cent in 2014.

Since 2014, the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students has fallen three percentage points to 51 per cent, in part due to a decrease in the proportion of non-Indigenous students attending four or more days. In overall proportion of days attended, the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students has been considerably smaller, at 27 per cent for each of the three years of the IES. This indicates that there is a wider distribution across the number of days attended per week by Indigenous students compared to non-Indigenous students (which are concentrated in the four or five days a week attendance groups).

The lack of direct evidence in relation to ‘what works’ for attendance initiatives presents challenges for determining the appropriate strategic direction, as multiple factors can influence attendance. The lack of measurable effect of current attendance-focused initiatives may be reflective of the interplay between a range of related factors, both school and non-school, and could require a rethink of existing attendance strategies. One option could be to shift the focus from attendance to engagement in learning activities as the primary objective.

12. *Element 5 (Workforce) – Impact*

As with engagement, it is difficult to directly measure the impact of workforce initiatives. The IES associated the 10 year target for Element 5 with NAPLAN scores, using educational outcomes as a proxy for workforce effectiveness. Over the period 2014-16, the proportion of Remote and Very Remote government schools with the same or higher mean NAPLAN score increased overall from 20 per cent to 24 per cent. The improvement was concentrated in Very Remote schools, which increased from 22 per cent to 27 per cent, while Remote schools fell from 16 per cent to 14 per cent.

Workforce composition and retention is another indicator of the impact of Element 5. While the retention rate of the non-Indigenous workforce has remained relatively consistent since the introduction of the IES, the retention rate of the Indigenous workforce has pleasingly seen an improvement of seven per cent.

Recommendations for future focus

Stage 1 of the IES has seen considerable activity and achievements across the 25 Actions, particularly in FaFT (E1A1), DI (E2A2), the Transition Support Unit (E3A2), Employment Pathways (E3A3, E3A4, and E3A5) and the Girls’ Engagement programs (E4A3). Some of the Actions were not able to be progressed at the pace initially envisaged, with the time used to gain a better understanding of the resources and tools required to enable successful implementation, and to address any critical constraints.

As such, the first three years have been important in setting the foundation for the IES, allowing development of the frameworks and resources necessary to be able to commence implementation of the IES Actions as an integrated package. With these key tools and resources firmly established, the next stage can now focus on ensuring effective operation at the school level.

In this regard, the findings of the Stage 1 evaluation have been used to set out the following suggestions and recommendations for the future implementation of the IES, organised into four main areas:

- IES management—bedding down management and funding approaches
- IES structure—configuring the IES to incorporate the achievements and lessons to date

- IES roll out—scaling the IES in ways that will help maximise outcomes with available resources
- Reporting and monitoring—capturing data to encourage and support reflexive monitoring and action.

IES management

1. Recommendation 1

That a dedicated implementation function within the Department be continued throughout Stage 2, but with a shift in emphasis from setup and management of the Actions to assisting schools and regional offices with their implementation.

A dedicated section was established within the Department in 2014 to drive and oversee implementation of the IES. The IERI section has played a significant role in project establishment and implementation in Stage 1 of the IES. Without this dedicated team, it is likely less progress would have been made and more issues would have arisen in rolling out the IES.

It is important that the IERI function be maintained to continue to drive and monitor implementation of the IES as it transitions to Stage 2, but with a revision to its roles, responsibilities and resourcing, potentially even its name, in alignment with the increased school-based focus of Stage 2.

2. Recommendation 2

That an explicit objective for Stage 2 of the IES is for the Actions to become progressively part of normal school and Department operations.

The progressive integration of the IES into the relevant sections of the Department provides the opportunity to transition the IES to core business operations at the end of the 10 year strategy. There are already a number of Actions that are being applied across all schools, not just Remote and Very Remote (such as FaFT and Behaviour Management), and others should be assessed for integration with the Department's overall business strategy, especially the current Education NT Strategy 2018-2022.

3. Recommendation 3

That opportunities be sought to consolidate funding for related activities to improve strategy and action-level implementation. This should include the exploration of common objectives, governance, and reporting to streamline administrative processes and enable the progressive shift of IES Actions to normal school and Department operations.

Throughout Stage 1, multiple funding streams have been used to support the development and implementation of the Actions under the IES. The experience with the implementation of a number of Actions (such as DI (E2A2) and Align SEAM (E4A4)) was that multiple funding streams can create complexities for schools, communities and departments, particularly in relation to:

- reconciling competing timeframes
- engaging with different governance models
- aligning policy objectives and areas of focus.

In Stage 2, opportunities should be explored to simplify funding approaches and ensure they are consistent with the overall IES. This could include examining opportunities to pool funding to leverage existing resources, to increase flexibility in the delivery of Actions, and to streamline reporting processes for collaboratively funded activities.

IES structure

4. Recommendation 4

That Action-specific lessons from Stage 1 be addressed in the design of Stage 2, in particular the opportunity to re-focus attendance programs in order to make greater progress on improving attendance rates, and the enhancement of supports to re-engage students who return to community before graduating from boarding school.

The Stage 1 Actions provide a rich set of experiences and lessons to inform the Stage 2 project design and implementation. The specific lessons from each Action are available in Appendices B – F and provide an evidence base for what is working in terms of implementation and impact.

The design and implementation of Stage 2 projects can also draw on evidence from the case studies which point to possible areas of specific focus for the IES. Two strong themes of the case study consultations were the opportunity to support students who return to community from boarding school, and the importance to schools and communities of Indigenous languages and culture education.

5. Recommendation 5

That the focus of Stage 2 of the IES and its components be on supporting school-based implementation of Actions. This may involve translation of Actions into local school contexts, including through mapping the projects to a common customisable framework. The dedicated implementation function (Recommendation 1) should lead these efforts, with support from head office project managers.

With considerable work now completed in developing frameworks, resources and tools under the IES, it is important that schools are well supported to take-up and maximise the use of these materials. Throughout the evaluation of the first three years of the IES, schools regularly noted the need for additional support to implement Actions, particularly those that were new activities for their school.

This could be facilitated by translating the IES and its Actions into a school-ready format by tailoring the current IES Element-Action framework to align with how schools put education policy into practice. The recast implementation function (Recommendation 1) could lead these efforts, with support from head office project managers.

6. Recommendation 6

That the structure for head office and region-based support for Stage 2 IES implementation be reviewed to enable a greater focus on schools with similar needs, rather than just their geographical location per se.

To assist with IES implementation over Stage 2, the Department could consider a revised framework for supporting schools in the implementation of the IES. While Stage 1 focused on geographic groupings of schools, case studies and consultations identified that location was not the primary factor impacting on implementation of Actions – rather, school capability and resourcing were the key influences.

A revised grouping of schools would allow a consistent approach to schools based on the level and status of their need, and could drive resourcing, support and school levels of autonomy.

IES roll out

7. Recommendation 7

That the current staging approach is continued, and strengthened where possible, to focus on reducing the administrative burden on schools, particularly for small schools, and free up capacity in schools to implement the IES.

The case studies and School Assessments provided evidence that schools were concerned about the extent and scale of the improvement agenda over the last three years—specifically, the time required to be devoted to the reforms was observed to lead to a lack of depth in the implementation of some Actions, particularly in small schools.

Further efforts could be made to reduce the administrative burden on schools to free up time and resources to devote to IES implementation. A review of administrative support to schools in the NT is due to report in late 2017, which could be used as a catalyst to further improve how assistance is provided.

8. Recommendation 8

That opportunities are sought to further integrate the IES with the work of other NT Government departments to improve the broader range of outcomes for students.

In the NT, as elsewhere, education outcomes are impacted by many factors outside of the formal school system, including student health, safety, housing conditions, and level of family support. Parts of the IES are designed to address these social determinants of education outcomes, particularly the work to support CFCs (E1A6) and FaFT (E1A1). Learnings from Stage 1 demonstrate that these Actions were seen to leverage opportunities to engage community members and address multiple needs through one connected activity.

Under Stage 2 implementation of the IES, further opportunities should be sought to work to address the social conditions which impact education outcomes in coordination with other NT Government departments.

IES reporting and monitoring

9. Recommendation 9

That connections and communication links between the Department and school communities in Stage 2 focus on the translation of the IES to school-based implementation. This could involve the establishment of formal reporting and feedback mechanisms between individual schools and central functions to address the specific actions applicable to the school and the nature of their implementation within the school. The dedicated implementation function within the Department should be a focal point of this effort.

Consultations undertaken for the Evaluation indicate there has been considerable central office stakeholder engagement activity. For the implementation of Stage 1 of the IES, communication was primarily focused on raising awareness of the IES and preparing for its implementation, with Regional Directors playing a key intermediating role.

Associated with the recommended shift for Stage 2 to concentrate on school implementation (Recommendation 5) is the requirement for targeted consultation and feedback mechanisms. This stage may require the regional support model to be strengthened to enable closer engagement between central functions and school communities. One option could be the establishment of dedicated 'case managers' working with a small number of schools to contextualise the intent of the Actions and tailor and support local responses. This would also facilitate monitoring of implementation, collection of local data, and the iterative improvement of implementation approaches, as required.

10. *Recommendation 10*

That IES Actions establish consistent local school-level data capture processes to support both outcome measurement and to provide data which allows for ongoing evaluation, adjustment and refinement of implementation.

Interviews with Department staff indicate that reporting and monitoring continues to be a challenge for the IES. There is a premium on data which is suitable to assist with measuring the impact of Actions, and with tracking implementation (examples in relation to this have been the Benchmarks Action (E2A3) and the Transition Support Unit (E3A2)).

Across the Stage 2 projects, there is an opportunity to more clearly specify which data will be collected, how the data will be linked to other datasets, those responsible for collecting, cleaning and using the data and a template for data collection. This could also include a specification of how the data will be analysed once collected to ensure the data collected are valuable and will meet the reporting and evaluation needs of the Department.

11. *Recommendation 11*

That the evaluation approach for Stage 2 utilise the locally-embedded data capture to measure the impact of key identified IES projects, using experimental design where appropriate to evidence causality, and that these Action-specific findings are used both to evaluate Stage 2 and inform the Stage 3 approach.

It will be important that the evaluation strategy for Stage 2 of the IES focuses on capturing the evidence of the impact of key Actions. The transition to Stage 2 provides the opportunity to embed evaluative methods to monitor the impact of the IES, and its specific Actions, and inform the subsequent stage of the IES. These evaluation methods should be based on consistent frameworks and program logics, but be locally-tailored to better understand the impacts and causal relationships.

12. *Recommendation 12*

That the findings and outputs of the evaluations associated with the IES are published and communicated to key stakeholders, within both schools and the Department, to assist with practice improvement.

The Stage 1 evaluation has benefited from the participation of a wide range of stakeholders, including school Principals, school staff, Department officials, service providers, and peak bodies. This broad participation has allowed the collection and synthesis of considerable evidence on Stage 1 implementation.

The benefits of this evidence collection, both from Stage 1 and throughout Stage 2, could be further realised by sharing the findings and outputs of the evaluations associated with the IES with school staff and the Department head and regional offices, and with key stakeholders outside the Department.



1.1 Introduction

The Northern Territory (NT) Government is implementing a 10 year Indigenous education strategy titled 'A Share in the Future: Indigenous Education Strategy 2015-2024' (IES). The IES will be implemented in three stages—Stage 1 covers 2015-2017 and involves 25 Actions, grouped under 5 Elements—Foundations, Essentials, Pathways, Engagement and Workforce.

ACIL Allen Consulting, in partnership with the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, has been commissioned to evaluate Stage 1 of the IES.

The Evaluation is examining the implementation and effectiveness of the IES, and will be used to inform the next stage. It comprises two progress evaluation reports (in mid-2016 and mid-2017), a case study report (late 2016), and an overall Stage 1 report (this report, in late 2017).

1.2 Evaluation method and this report

1.2.1 Evaluation method

The Evaluation framework has four research areas:

- Implementation—how the IES's inputs and activities are translated into outputs, including how the activities are carried out.
- Outcome indicators—the outcomes of the IES against the strategy's targets and other quantitative indicators.
- Effectiveness—the outcomes and impact of the strategy, qualitatively and quantitatively.
- Lessons for the future—enhancements to the future design and implementation of the IES.

1.2.2 This report

This report is the final Evaluation report and covers the period January 2015 to October 2017.

The focus of the IES and the Evaluation is on Remote and Very Remote schools, as defined by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) geographical location classification. Having said this, a number of IES Actions are being implemented across all NT government schools, and these are noted as such throughout the report.

The report draws on five main sources of evidence as outlined below. Throughout the report, citations are provided where there is a single specific source of evidence. Where no formal citation is provided, the information has been collated from a range of sources of evidence.

Program documentation

Department program documentation reviewed and used in this report includes Action project plans, project monthly reports, Department reporting on the IES, previous reviews and literature on school system improvement.

Interviews

The Evaluation team carried out interviews in late 2015, early 2016, early 2017 and late 2017. Interviewees included Department policy leaders, school system and Indigenous peak bodies, and other relevant school system stakeholders. The interviews focused on the progress of implementation, factors impacting implementation, early signs of outcomes, and lessons for future implementation.

School and Department Assessments

School and Department Assessments were carried out through separate online survey tools that collected information on the implementation and effectiveness of the IES.

The Assessment tools included:

- survey questions and Assessment activities on each IES Action relevant to the respondent
- survey questions on the broader implementation of IES.

Schools were asked specifically about those Actions which they were implementing, which is why some charts only report Department Assessment results.

The Assessment tools were completed in March-April 2016 and March-April 2017. All schools were invited to complete the Assessment in 2016, whereas in 2017 the data collection only included Remote and Very Remote schools, reflecting the focus of the IES on schools in these geographic areas.

School case studies

Ten case studies were undertaken to collect detailed qualitative data on how the IES is being implemented in schools. Case study schools were selected across north and south regions of the NT, geo-locations (Remote and Very Remote), school type (senior, middle and primary schools) and sites with Families as First Teachers (FaFT) programs and Child and Family Centres (CFC).

A separate case study report was produced which provides detail on each school's implementation of the IES.

Administrative and outcomes data

Quantitative data regarding program administration and impact were examined from a range of sources.

Where IES Actions produced data on implementation—for example, the number of students involved in a particular program—it was used to examine implementation progress of the Actions. Action-level finance data were also used to track implementation progress.

Progress against the IES 10 year targets was measured using school administrative data (for example, enrolment and attendance data) and results and standardised testing data (for example, NAPLAN and graduation data). It is important to note that many of the IES Actions are still in the early stages of implementation, and so it is not expected that the outcomes data will show the impact of these Actions. As such, the outcomes data analysis serves as a baseline against which Stage 2 of the IES can be measured.

1.2.3 A note on terminology

This report uses the IES nomenclature to discuss IES activity. IES projects are called Actions; the five groups of these actions are called Elements. A shorthand of E[Element number]A[Action number] is used to denote Actions, for example the Behaviour Management Action is E4A4.

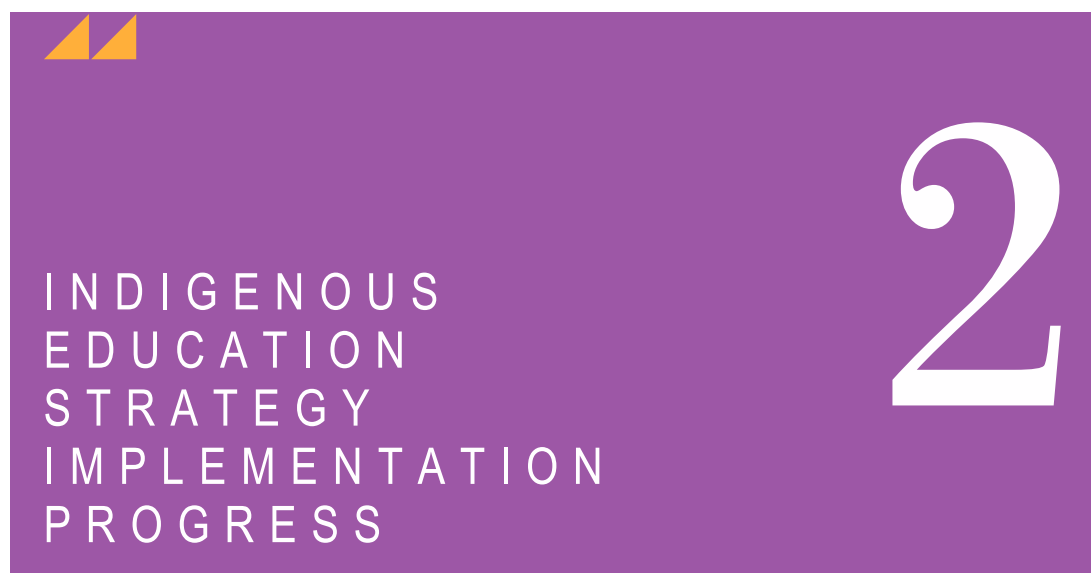
1.3 The structure of this report

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 sets out the component parts of the IES and how they were implemented
- Chapter 3 analyses data on outcomes relevant to the IES
- Chapter 4 details areas of focus for the next stage of the IES.

The report also includes nine appendices:

- Appendix A sets out perspectives on IES implementation from the Assessments
- Appendix B to Appendix F reports on Action-level implementation under each of Elements 1 to 5 respectively.



2.1 Overview of Indigenous Education Strategy implementation

2.1.1 The Indigenous Education Strategy

The IES aims to ensure 'Indigenous students are successful and confident in their education journey' and aims to provide 'Indigenous students with real career choices and opportunities both within and beyond their communities' (NT DoE 2015). The IES is a 10 year plan in three stages: 2015–2017 (Stage 1), 2018–2020 (Stage 2), and 2021–2024 (Stage 3).

The five Elements and 25 component Actions of Stage 1 are shown in **Figure 2.1**. The Actions are projects the Department considers to 'have a direct and measurable impact on education outcomes for Indigenous students' (NT DoE 2015).

The IES aims to take a comprehensive approach to children's education with Element 1 covering early childhood education, Elements 2 and 3 covering primary and secondary school instruction, Element 4 focusing on engagement, attendance and behaviour, and Element 5 providing a strategy to recruit and train the necessary education workforce. Each Element and its associated Actions are discussed in this chapter and in more detail in Appendices B-F.

FIGURE 2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE INDIGENOUS EDUCATION STRATEGY, STAGE 1

Indigenous Education Strategy: Stage 1, 2015-2017				
Element 1 Foundations	Element 2 Essentials	Element 3 Pathways	Element 4 Engagement	Element 5 Workforce
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. FaFT 2. Early Childhood Assessment Tool 3. Early Childhood Guidelines 4. Early Transition 5. Preschool Curriculum 6. Integrated Service Centres 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Literacy & Numeracy Essentials 2. Direct Instruction 3. Benchmarks 4. Principal Performance Plans 5. Indigenous Languages and Culture Policy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build Boarding 2. Transition Support Unit 3. Secondary Provision 4. Employment Pathways 5. Post Primary 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engagement Charter 2. Align SEAM 3. Girls' Engagement 4. Behaviour Management 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Workforce Plan 2. Assistant Teachers 3. Developing Remote Principals 4. Strengthening Remote School Staff Capabilities 5. Teacher Housing Refurbishment and Construction

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, A SHARE IN THE FUTURE: INDIGNEOUS EDUCATION STRATEGY 2015-2024.

The IES is integrated with the Department's current Strategic Plan 2016–2018. The Strategic Plan has five high level goals each with accompanying strategies and key actions, which can be clearly linked to the IES Actions. As an example, the Foundations Element FaFT Action is the third key action under Goal 1 in the Strategic Plan.

The focus of the IES is on Remote and Very Remote schools. Almost half of NT government schools are in Remote and Very Remote areas, and these schools have by far the greatest share of Indigenous students. In 2016, 49 per cent of students enrolled in Remote schools and 91 per cent of students enrolled in Very Remote schools were Indigenous (21 per cent of students enrolled in Provincial schools were Indigenous).

The Actions vary in size, timing, complexity and reach across NT Remote and Very Remote government schools—some Actions are being implemented in all schools, while others are being implemented in less than 10 schools.

It should be noted that while this report focuses on student outcomes in Remote and Very Remote schools, a number of the IES Actions are being implemented across all NT government schools. One example is the Behaviour Management Action (E4A4) where a social and emotional learning curriculum is to be implemented across the government school sector in 2018, not just in Remote and Very Remote schools.

The Department established a dedicated unit, called the Indigenous Education Review Implementation (IERI) team, to drive and oversee implementation of the IES. This team is responsible for one IES Action (the TSU, E3A2), with the other 24 Actions residing in the relevant policy areas of the Department.

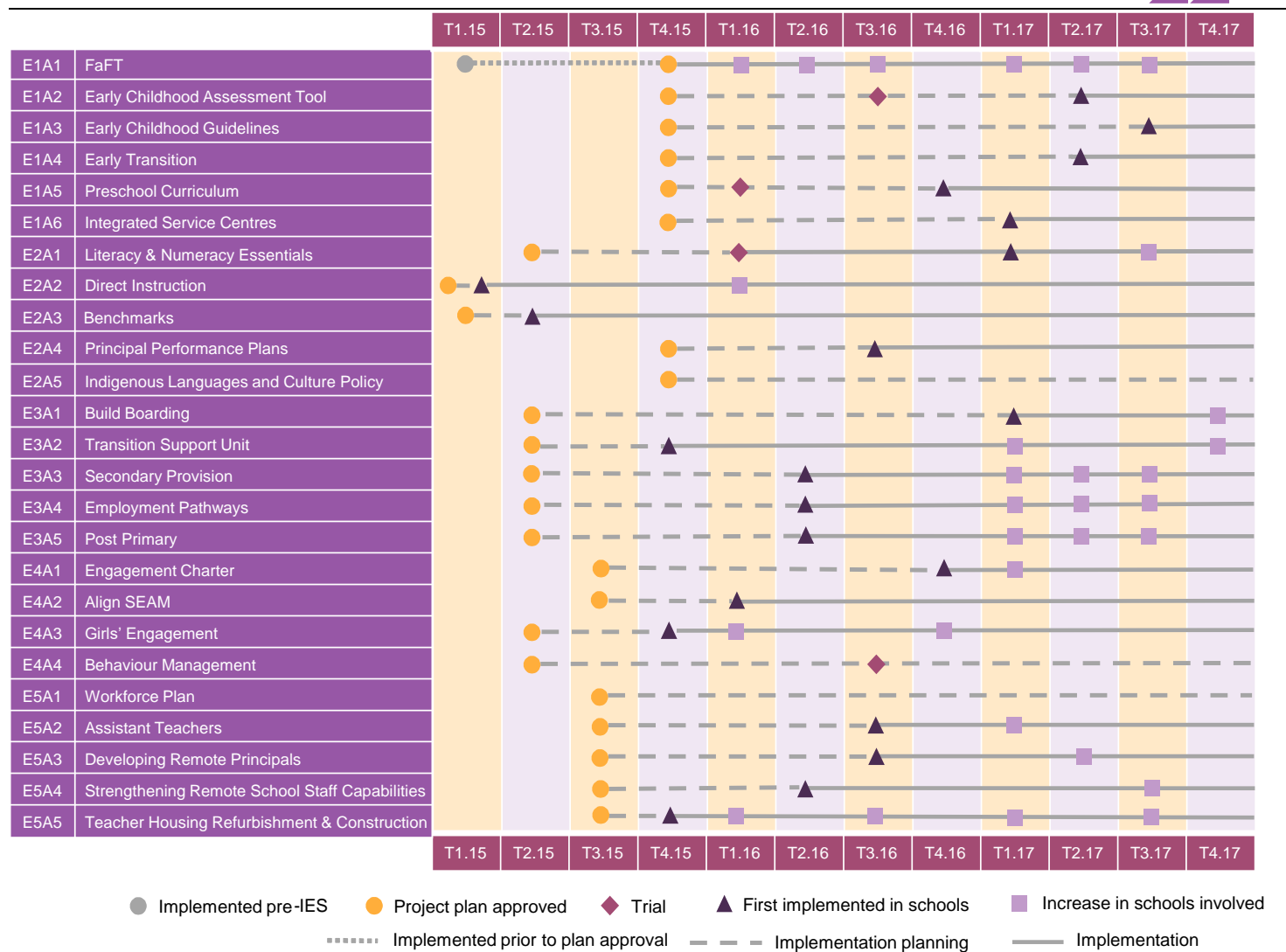
2.1.2 Timelines

Figure 2.2 shows the implementation timeline for each Action across project planning, implementation planning and implementation in schools. Implementation in schools is being staged, with five Actions implemented by the end of 2015, rising to 16 by the end of 2016. By the end of 2017, 23 Actions will be implemented, with the remaining two Actions (the Indigenous Languages and Cultures Policy, E2A5, and Behaviour Management, E4A4) to be rolled out to schools in 2018.

Some Actions are a continuation of pre-IES projects, and so began implementation in schools prior to IES Action project plan approval.

As noted in the two Evaluation progress reports, a number of Actions experienced design and implementation delays due to difficulties in the recruitment of suitable head office staff.

FIGURE 2.2 IMPLEMENTATION OF IES ACTIONS



Note: This diagram has been developed using the IES School Matrix and project reporting. As a result, there may be differences between this diagram and the data in the following chart which is based purely on the IES School Matrix.

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT IES SCHOOL MATRIX AND MONTHLY PROJECT REPORTING

Over the three years of Stage 1, the number of Actions being implemented by individual schools steadily increased. At the start of Stage 1, Term 4 2015, each school was implementing an average of three Actions. This increased to an average of seven Actions per school at the end of the following year. By the end of the Term 4 2017, around 80 per cent of schools are scheduled to be implementing seven or more Actions.

KEY FINDING 1 STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Over the three-year Stage 1, most IES Actions have been fully implemented in schools, with the remaining two Actions to be rolled out in 2018. While implementation has been focused on Remote and Very Remote schools as these schools have by far the greatest share of Indigenous students and face unique challenges, a number of the IES Actions are being implemented across all NT government schools.

The intensity of school involvement with the IES has increased considerably over the three years and at the end of 2017, most schools are implementing seven or more Actions.

2.2 Element 1: Foundations

2.2.1 Element 1 overview

The Foundations Element aims to ensure 'Indigenous children entering primary schooling have the skills and attributes they need to succeed in their education', including through engaging parents and carers to support their children's learning and development from the earliest years' (NT DoE 2015).

The six Actions under the Foundation Element include a dedicated early learning and family support program for children aged 0-3 years (Families as First Teachers—FaFT, E1A1) and supporting resources for Child and Family Centres (CFCs) which provide health, wellbeing and education for families with children aged 0-5 years.

The other four of the Actions provide tools for improving early childhood education, namely: a tool to assess children in FaFT (E1A2), guidance for Principals for managing early childhood programs (E1A3), a preschool curriculum to increase consistency across the system (E1A5), and a transition strategy to assist children/students to move from FaFT to preschool, and from preschool to primary school (E1A4) (Table 2.1).

TABLE 2.1 ELEMENT 1 OVERVIEW

	Name	Description	Timeline	Schools/sites involved
E1A1	Families as First Teachers (FaFT)	FaFT is an early learning and family support program for children aged 0-3 years and their parents/carers. FaFT early learning activities have an emphasis on child and adult learning, including through facilitated adult-child interactions, reading, learning games, and learning on nutrition, health and hygiene. The Action supports the continuation of FaFT at 21 sites, and establishes an additional 11 sites.	FaFT was operational in 21 sites prior to the beginning of the IES in 2015. The 11 additional sites have been established progressively over 2015-2017.	21 sites initially, increasing to 32 sites by the end of 2017.
E1A2	Early Childhood Assessment Tool	The Tool is designed for use in FaFT to assess children's developmental levels and readiness for school, track children's progress, and report on early childhood education program performance and design. The Action involves sourcing and testing two tools, and then rolling out the preferred Tool across FaFT sites.	First trials took place in 2016, with implementation in 2017.	4 sites as at late 2017, increasing to 23 sites.
E1A3	Early Childhood Guidelines	The Guidelines are designed to assist Principals with the support and management of early childhood education and care programs. The Action involves developing the Guidelines and then training Principals to use them.	The Guidelines were distributed to schools at the start of Term 3, 2017.	The Guidelines are to be used in all schools with early childhood programs (118 schools).
E1A4	Early Transition	The Early Transition plan is a strategy at each relevant school that sets out how students transition from FaFT to preschool, and from preschool to school. The Action involves developing resources, including the NT Early Childhood Transitioning Information Package, to support schools to develop such a plan.	The resources were developed in 2016 and distributed to schools in Term 2, 2017.	The Guidelines are to be used in all schools with FaFT and/or preschool (118 schools).
E1A5	Preschool Curriculum	The Preschool Curriculum aims to support teachers to use explicit and intentional teaching and learning in preschool classes. The Action involves developing the Curriculum and associated resources, and developing and delivering accompanying professional learning.	The Curriculum and resources were trialed in 37 preschools in 2016. It was launched in July 2016, with professional learning beginning in the latter half of 2016.	All schools that deliver preschool education (118 schools).

Name	Description	Timeline	Schools/sites involved
E1A6 Integrated Service Centres	<p>Integrated Service Centres, more commonly called Child and Family Centres (CFCs), allow families to access services to support the health and wellbeing, education, and care of children aged 0-5 years at a single location.</p> <p>The Action involves developing an integrated early childhood service delivery model and associated resources for CFCs, and developing assessment and outcomes processes and frameworks.</p>	Resources were developed in 2016 and implemented in 2017.	The six CFCs (and associated schools).

SOURCE: NAME, DESCRIPTION AND TIMELINE SOURCED FROM IERI PROJECT REPORTING. SCHOOLS/SITES INVOLVED SOURCED FROM SCHOOLS MATRIX.

2.2.2 Element 1 implementation

All six Element 1 Actions are being implemented. This section details FaFT, the largest Action of Element 1, before discussing the CFCs and the other four Actions. Additional information on the lessons learned from Element 1 is provided at Appendix B.

Families as First Teachers (E1A1)

FaFT was operating at 21 sites prior to the IES, and over Stage 1 an additional 11 FaFT sites were established. Each FaFT is staffed by an early childhood teacher (called a Family Educator—FE) and local Indigenous Family Liaison Officer (FLO). These positions were staffed at the 10 new FaFT sites during Stage 1, with the final planned FaFT site, Ampilatwatja, unable to be established in 2017 due to an inability to recruit a FLO (in part, due to remoteness and accommodation issues).

Across the 31 sites, 1,383 children participated in FaFT in Semester 1, 2017, up 30 per cent from 1,066 in Semester 2, 2015 (at 21 sites) (Table 2.2). An average of 45 children participated in FaFT per site in Semester 1, 2017. Data for parent/carer participation is only available up to Semester 2, 2016, at which point an average of 48 children and 40 parents/carers participated in FaFT per site across 26 sites.

The Department has identified the importance of increasing the number of days children attend FaFT (or the 'dosage'). The current average of 0.7 days per week across the 31 sites is recognised as being too low, as children with this kind of attendance rate are unlikely to capture the full benefits of FaFT.

TABLE 2.2 FAFT PARTICIPATION

	2015		2016		2017
	Semester 2	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 1	Semester 1
Sites	21	23	26	31	
Children					
Total children participating	1,066	1,154	1,254	1,383	
Average children participating per site	51	50	48	45	
Average number of days attending per week (children)	[not available]	[not available]	[not available]	0.7	
Parents/carers					
Total parents/carers participating	1,217	1,058	1,035	[not available]	
Average parents/carers participating per site	58	46	40	[not available]	

SOURCE: ACIL ALLEN CONSULTING ANALYSIS OF FAFT DATASET

FaFT continues to be a popular program and is widely seen to be addressing a high priority need by providing literacy skills to children and their parents and carers in a welcoming and culturally appropriate manner.¹ FaFT additionally has been found to provide parents/carers with exposure to employment opportunities in the school and assist in preparing them for work opportunities in the school environment—some parents/carers began at FaFT before being employed in the program, and then go on to becoming an Assistant Teacher.

The success of FaFT in Remote and Very Remote schools has led to the program's expansion to urban locations (that is, Provincial schools), demonstrating the potential of IES Actions to be extended to non-remote locations.

Integrated Service Centres (E1A6)

Through the Integrated Services Centres Action, the CFCs (five established pre-IES with the sixth operational from 2016) each have a CFC Manager and Indigenous Coordinator. The integrated service delivery model documentation was finalised in March 2017 and accompanying Professional Leadership learning began in Term 1, 2017.

School Assessments reported that the CFCs have increased the integration of services across education, health, family support and parenting services—increasing parental capacity and active engagement in children's learning and development. The case studies reinforced this, indicating that the CFCs have had a positive effect on families and the community, increasing access to services through the provision of a safe space that prevents social stigma.

A set of tools for measuring impact and process indicators were developed and have been implemented as part of the CFC Quarterly Report Tool. Data will feed into the development of the CFC Outcomes Framework, which will guide further refinement of the CFC model.

Early childhood education frameworks and resources (E1A2, E1A3, E1A4, E1A5)

The early childhood education frameworks and resources have been developed under the IES and are being used in schools. Development of the resources was delayed in some cases due to difficulties in recruiting Project Managers and undertaking the required research.

Schools broadly reported a positive experience working with the Preschool Curriculum (E1A5)—it is a valuable document for teachers and educators, providing clear guidance on teaching methods and content. It was also seen to have a positive impact on family understanding of child development by articulating the development and progression of literacy and numeracy skills for young children. However, School Assessments consistently noted the need for sufficient capability (and, in some instances, additional support and training) in the areas of early childhood and local language skills to implement this Action effectively and embed the principles of the Preschool Curriculum in learning activities.

Early Childhood Assessment Tool (E1A2) was trialled in 2016, and in 2017 was implemented in schools, with data from the Tool yet to be received. Initial feedback indicated that the tools had the potential to improve families understanding of children's development levels and school readiness.²

Early Transition (E1A4) resources were distributed to schools in Term 2, 2017, as were the Early Childhood Guidelines (E1A3) in Term 3, 2017. It is too early to evaluate the outcomes of these Actions, although the Early Transition framework has been influential within the Department with potential take-up of a modified framework for primary to secondary transition, and boarding school transition.

¹ Based on this Evaluation's consultations, school self-assessment results and school case studies.

² This timing means that evidence collection for the Evaluation was only able to capture Department feedback on this Action

KEY FINDING 2 ELEMENT 1—IMPLEMENTATION

FaFT has expanded under the IES to 32 sites, and continues to be a popular program with schools and communities. It is widely viewed as addressing a high priority need by providing literacy skills to children and their parents and carers in a welcoming and culturally appropriate manner. The Department has identified the importance of increasing the number of days children attend FaFT for the program to be most impactful.

The other five Foundations Actions began implementation in 2017, with considerable work and trialling being undertaken by the Department in 2015 and 2016 to develop the associated frameworks and materials. Some Actions experienced delays in the initial phases due to issues with recruitment.

It is too early to determine the outcomes of these Actions, although the Early Transition framework has been influential within the Department, with potential take-up of a modified framework for primary to secondary transition, and boarding school transition.

2.3 Element 2: Essentials

2.3.1 Element 2 overview

The Essentials Element aims to ensure 'Indigenous students achieve age benchmarks in literacy and numeracy in their primary years', including through identified schools being 'centrally supported to deliver mandated quality evidence-based literacy and numeracy programs' (NT DoE 2015).

The five Actions under the Essentials Element include three curriculum-focused programs, namely: Literacy and Numeracy Essentials (LANE) (E2A1), a curriculum for all schools; Direct Instruction (DI) (E2A2), an explicit instruction literacy and numeracy program for select schools; and Indigenous Languages and Culture Policy (E2A5) for all schools.

The other two Actions support these curricula through standardised, system-wide literacy and mathematics assessments (E2A3), and incorporation of LANE into school and Principal Performance Plans (E2A4) (Table 2.3).

TABLE 2.3 ELEMENT 2 OVERVIEW

	Name	Description	Timeline	Schools/sites involved
E2A1	Literacy and Numeracy Essentials (LANE)	LANE is a common curriculum and resources for teaching, learning and assessing of literacy and numeracy across Remote and Very Remote schools. The Action includes professional development for regional staff and Principals/teachers.	37 schools implemented the programs in Semester 1, 2017, with 30 coming on board in Semester 2.	At full implementation, all Remote and Very Remote schools without Direct Instruction will be involved (up to 76 schools).
E2A2	Direct Instruction	DI is a program which uses explicit teaching through a prescribed script and a systematic curriculum design. It covers literacy and maths. The Action involves the organisation 'Good to Great Schools Australia' supporting schools to implement DI.	DI-literacy was introduced in 15 schools in 2015 and in an additional four schools in 2016. DI-maths was introduced in eight of the 19 schools in mid-2016.	19 schools (three schools have since removed themselves from the DI program). Up to 76 schools will be involved.
E2A3	Benchmarks	This Action focuses on measuring student outcomes through twice yearly testing. The most important tool for this testing is the Progressive Achievement Test (PAT)—for literacy and mathematics assessment.	The first round of PAT testing took place in Term 1, 2015. Four subsequent rounds have conducted.	146 schools.

	Name	Description	Timeline	Schools/sites involved
E2A4	Principal Performance Plans	This Actions updates Principal Performance and School Improvement Plans to reflect LANE/DI and identify school-based strategies for success.	Guideline documents were developed in 2015, with regional offices working with schools to develop updated Plans from Term 3, 2016.	153 schools.
E2A5	Indigenous Languages and Culture Policy	The Policy aims to improve access to Indigenous languages and culture programs in schools. The Action involves the development of an Indigenous Languages and Culture plan, curriculum and associated materials.	The plan was launched in April 2017, and the curriculum is under development with planned roll out in 2018. Guidelines to support the NTBoS Plan were finalised and published as at October 2017.	N/A

SOURCE: NAME, DESCRIPTION AND TIMELINE SOURCED FROM IERI PROJECT REPORTING. SCHOOLS/SITES INVOLVED SOURCED FROM SCHOOLS MATRIX.

2.3.2 Element 2 implementation

The DI, Benchmarks and Principal Performance Plans Actions are fully implemented, with LANE implemented in about half of schools that will ultimately receive the program. The Indigenous Languages and Culture curriculum is under development and will be rolled out in 2018. Additional information on the lessons learned from Element 2 is provided at Appendix C.

Literacy and Numeracy Essentials (E2A1)

LANE implementation commenced in 37 schools in Semester 1, 2017, after a well received 13 school trial in 2016. An additional 30 schools began implementing LANE in Semester 2, 2017. The LANE program has been supported with professional development and training at the regional, school leadership and teacher level. The core elements of the LANE model—learning progressions, explicit teaching and an English as a Second Language approach—will be implemented across all Remote and Very Remote schools without DI in 2018.

The development of LANE was a significant undertaking for the Department over 2015 and 2016, including research on programs for ESL learners, gap analysis of existing programs, development of curriculum and other resources, and writing of training modules.

While implementation of LANE is in its early days, many involved schools report being able to use the associated resources flexibly and observe improvements in student outcomes. The intention is that with a standardised approach, teachers across Remote and Very Remote schools will be supported to deliver high quality, consistent literacy and numeracy lessons.

Direct Instruction (E2A2)

DI implementation began in Term 1, 2015, starting with 15 schools. As at mid-2017, DI was being implemented in 16 schools—all of these schools had the literacy DI program and eight also had the maths DI program. Three additional schools were implementing the DI literacy program, but have since chosen to cease participating, deciding that DI was not a good fit for their community and students.

The case studies indicated that, even where there was initial resistance to DI, in many cases staff and community members became supportive after seeing early evidence of classroom success. Innovative outreach to community to explain DI also assisted with this, including demonstrating DI methods using local language to parents and community members at community events. At this stage, there are insufficient data on student outcomes at the system level to indicate the overall impact of DI, or to test some of the different outcomes reported by different schools.

Some teachers and other school staff raised concerns about the amount of time DI takes in the school timetable, and the impact this can have on formally integrating Indigenous language and culture into the curriculum. Some case study schools have adapted by ensuring that languages and culture are integrated into out of school hours programs or by altering the DI standard delivery model to help local Indigenous staff find a more active role in delivering the program.

DI implementation over 2015-2017 was funded by the Australian Government Flexible Literacy for Remote Primary Schools Programme, and managed by Good to Great Schools Australia (a non-government organisation) which engages the United States of America NGO, National Institute for Direct Instruction, to provide resources and coaching to DI schools, supported by the NT Department of Education. This program structure created issues at times, requiring complex governance arrangements and additional work to ensure all organisations were operating consistent with the broader NT school education system.

The cessation of Australian Government funding for DI after 2017, and the relative costliness of the model, means the Department is currently determining a sustainable option for potential DI delivery in 2018. This includes community consultations in Term 3 2017 and gathering insights from the Queensland Government's use of DI.

Some of the key benefits reported in the DI approach—such as teacher coaching, curriculum structure and regular student assessment—do not necessarily rely on the other components of DI and could be extended to other programs in a less resource intensive manner.

Benchmarks (E2A3)

Under the Benchmarks Action, three assessments have been rolled out (**Table 2.4**).

Five rounds of biannual PAT testing have been conducted to date with regional-level structures to support data collection in place. All Principals and teachers have been trained in data collection procedures. The eWrite and FELA assessments have been developed and tested in some schools, with accompanying training carried out. This process identified useful learnings in relation to the broader use and implementation of similar tools, particularly the need for specialised training and support materials. Further roll out of eWrite and FELA is planned for 2018.

The Department is developing benchmarks for reading, writing, sight words, and phonological and phonemic awareness. The benchmarks will be incorporated into the recommended planning process for LANE, and will be trialled in schools in Term 4, 2017.

TABLE 2.4 BENCHMARKS ASSESSMENTS

Name	Areas tested	Year levels	First introduced	Schools involved	Students involved
Progressive Achievement Test (PAT)	Literacy and mathematics	Transition-Year 10	Term 1, 2015	146	16,435 (literacy) 18,620 (maths)
eWrite	Literacy	Years 5-8	Term 1, 2016	13	1,009
Foundations of Early Literacy Assessment (FELA)	Phonological awareness	Transition-Year 3	Term 3, 2016	9	178

SOURCE: IERI PROJECT REPORTING

The Benchmarks Action, and PAT in particular, has experienced difficulties in achieving consistent data quality that would support analysis of student achievement to-date. The PAT assessments have been delivered inconsistently in schools making it difficult to compare the data collected between schools or over time—for this reason, analysis of PAT results are not able to be included in this report.

Over time the continued implementation of the Benchmarks assessments is expected to improve data quality, and the Department intends to continue working with schools to support assessment implementation and school-led analysis of collected data.

Principal Performance Plans (E2A4)

In July 2016, the Principal Performance Plan guidelines were distributed, and regional offices had begun to use the guidelines when updating Principal Performance Plans. All Principals Performance Plans were updated by mid-2017. Two regional IES Project Quality Assurance officers have been established to support the incorporation of mandated aspects of the IES into both Principal Performance and School Improvement Plans.

Indigenous Languages and Culture Policy (E2A5)

The Indigenous Languages and Culture Policy, 'Keeping Indigenous Languages and Cultures Strong—A Plan for Improving the Teaching and Learning of Indigenous Languages and Cultures in Northern Territory Schools', was launched in April 2017. The associated curriculum and support materials are currently under development, with implementation in schools expected in 2018. The Guidelines to support the NTBoS Plan were finalised and published as at October 2017.

KEY FINDING 3 ELEMENT 2—IMPLEMENTATION

Literacy and Numeracy Essentials (LANE) (E2A1) began implementation in 2017 and by Semester 2 67 schools were implementing the program's explicit teaching and an English as a Second Language approach. Involved schools report being able to use the associated resources flexibly and are seeing early improvements in student outcomes.

Direct Instruction (E2A2) has been implemented since 2015 and at its peak, 19 schools were involved. Some schools report improvement in student achievement, despite initially being sceptical about the approach, while some school staff expressed concern about the amount of time DI takes in the school timetable and the impact this can have on formally integrating Indigenous languages and culture into the curriculum. The cessation of Australian Government funding for DI after 2017, and the relative costliness of the model, means the Department is currently determining a sustainable option for potential DI delivery in 2018.

Under Benchmarks (E2A3) five rounds of biannual PAT testing have been conducted to date with training and regional-level structures to support data collection in place. The assessments have not been delivered in a consistent way in schools making it difficult to compare the data collected between schools or over time. FELA and eWrite have been trialled with further roll out planned for 2018. The trials generated useful lessons about contextual considerations for the implementation of similar benchmarking tools.

The Principal Performance Plans (E2A4) guidelines are complete, and all Principals Performance Plans were updated by mid-2017. The Indigenous Languages and Culture Policy (E2A5) curriculum is in the later stages of development, with implementation in schools expected in 2018.

2.4 Element 3: Pathways

2.4.1 Element 3 overview

The Pathways Element aims to ensure 'Indigenous students complete schooling well equipped to take up employment, training and higher education opportunities', through tailored secondary education programs and strong transition support (NT DoE 2015).

The five Actions under the Pathways Element include building boarding school facilities (E3A1) and supporting students to transition to boarding school. Three of the Actions (E3A3, E3A4, and E3A5) come together in the post-Primary Employment Pathways program for small Very Remote schools. (Table 2.5).

TABLE 2.5 ELEMENT 3 OVERVIEW

	Name	Description	Timeline	Schools/sites involved
E3A1	Build Boarding	This Action aims to build a number of boarding facilities aligned to Northern Territory secondary schools, implementation to date has focused on the construction of a boarding school at Nhulunbuy.	The Nhulunbuy boarding facility has been completed and was opened to students at the beginning of 2017.	One school.
E3A2	Transition Support Unit	The Transition Support Unit (TSU) provides a service to schools, parents and students to assist as students move from their home communities to residential boarding.	The TSU was established in 2015 and began working in schools in Term 4, 2015.	79 schools.
E3A3	Secondary Provision	These three Actions are discussed as a group given their interdependence and are collectively called 'Employment Pathways'.*	Seven schools were involved in 2016, before an additional three schools were brought on board across Terms 1, 2 and 3, 2017.	10 schools.
E3A4	Employment Pathways	Employment Pathways is a suite of post-Primary curricula and resources designed to provide relevant learning outcomes for Indigenous students and to be delivered in Very Remote schools which have low student numbers.		
E3A5	Post Primary			

Note: * Secondary Provision (E3A3) provides the authorising environment to ensure that Post Primary (E3A5) can be delivered, supported by the programs and materials developed under Employment Pathways (E3A4).

SOURCE: NAME, DESCRIPTION AND TIMELINE SOURCED FROM IERI PROJECT REPORTING. SCHOOLS/SITES INVOLVED SOURCED FROM SCHOOLS MATRIX.

2.4.2 Element 3 implementation

All five Actions under Element 3 are being implemented at the end of 2017. This section details the Build Boarding and TSU Actions, before discussing the Employment Pathways Actions collectively. Additional information on the lessons learned from Element 3 is provided at Appendix D.

Build Boarding (E3A1)

While the Build Boarding Action aims to build a number of boarding facilities aligned to NT secondary schools, implementation to date has focused on the construction of a boarding school at Nhulunbuy. Construction of the boarding facility was completed in late 2016, and it opened to students at the commencement of the 2017 school year.

Nhulunbuy High School is focused on ensuring that consultation with Indigenous communities in the region is thorough and ongoing. The school is attempting to employ as many remote Indigenous workers as possible and will accommodate family members who can stay with students as they first attend in order to help students settle more quickly.

Transition Support Unit (E3A2)

The TSU was established in 2015 and began working in schools in Term 4, 2015. The TSU supports students to access boarding school, and includes a 'rapid response at risk' service for remote children in boarding schools. It is using a case management approach and has developed a Boarding NT database which records interactions with students, parents and boarding schools, and supports the case management approach.

In 2016, TSU identified 533 young people in Years 6 and 7 from 46 Very Remote communities with limited access to secondary teaching and learning programs—278 chose to pursue a secondary boarding option with the support of TSU. An additional 274 individual requests were received to support students in years 8 and above to apply for boarding school. The rapid response service also received 238 referrals/notifications for students requiring re-engagement support.

The case studies and School Assessments indicate that the TSU is most effective working in partnership with schools that have strategies for supporting the choice to go to boarding school, and developing community expectations around the factors that support successful engagement with

boarding school—such as good attendance, preparation for the separation from family and community, and clear intentions of an academic pathway (normally, completion of the NTCEET).

Schools and communities have found less helpful those TSU activities seen to be focused on recruitment to boarding schools rather than presenting the range of options available. Some schools reported infrequent contact with the TSU and a limited number of visits from the TSU, both of which were seen as limiting the ability of the TSU to support these schools.

A number of case study schools and those responding to the School Assessments argued that the TSU could enhance its capacity to support students, schools and communities post enrolment in boarding school, and particularly where students experience difficulty in settling into boarding school or return early.

Secondary Provision (E3A3), Employment Pathways (E3A4), Post Primary (E3A5)

The number of schools participating in Employment Pathways (EP) is on track at the end of 2017 with implementation across 10 schools. Seven schools were involved in 2016, before an additional three schools were brought on board across Terms 1, 2 and 3, 2017. The Department had produced a considerable number of resources and curricula to support this roll out.

There is an increase in demand for EP among Very Remote schools, and may reflect the quality of EP materials being produced. The Department has responded to this demand by using savings from other parts of the IES to provide seed funding for EP to a number of schools with low student numbers. The intention is that initial introduction of EP will allow these schools to increase student numbers, which will then trigger more funding under the Global School Budgeting rules that link funding to student enrolment/attendance.

Case study schools involved in EP reported that the Actions were supporting existing school and community activities—schools with well-developed employment pathways showed strong community engagement and reflected good local employment opportunities. These schools showed an awareness of the need to partner with their local community to identify sustainable employment opportunities and to develop appropriate training for their students.

KEY FINDING 4 ELEMENT 3—IMPLEMENTATION

The key activity under Build Boarding (E3A1) has been the boarding school constructed at Nhulunbuy, with the first students moving in at the commencement of the 2017 school year.

The Transition Support Unit (TSU—E3A2) was established in 2015 and in 2016 supported 278 students to pursue a secondary boarding option. The TSU's 'rapid response at risk' for remote students in boarding schools received 238 referrals/notifications for students requiring re-engagement support in 2016. Schools saw this as an area that the TSU could continue to work on, as they report students often experience difficulty in settling into boarding school and many times return early to their communities.

The three Employment Pathways (EP) Actions (E3A3, E3A4, and E3A5) have made good progress in curriculum and resources development, and demand from schools has exceeded initial expectations. Seven schools implemented the program in 2016, and an additional three schools began implementation in 2017. Involved schools report developing partnerships within their local communities, and are focusing on reengaging students previously attending school.

2.5 Element 4: Engagement

2.5.1 Element 4 overview

The Engagement Element aims to ensure 'Indigenous children at all stages of schooling attend school regularly and are supported in their education by their families and community', including through 'quality student engagement programs' and 'a whole-system approach to behaviour management and wellbeing' (NT DoE 2015).

The four Actions under the Engagement Element include a program to support Engagement Charters at schools (E4E1), and a program to provide extra-curricular support for Indigenous girls (E4E3). Align SEAM (E4A2) focuses on improving behaviour management and student wellbeing, while the final Action (E4A4) aims to better align a number of Australian Government and NT Government attendance programs (**Table 2.6**).

TABLE 2.6 ELEMENT 4 OVERVIEW

	Name	Description	Timeline	Schools/sites involved
E4A1	Engagement Charter	The Engagement Charter is an agreement between a school and its community which sets relationship expectations for both parties. The Action aims to support and encourage the adoption of Engagement Charters in Remote and Very Remote schools.	In late 2016 and early 2017, four schools finalised their Charters. In 2017, 35 schools are in the process of developing their Charters.	39 schools (up to 108 schools to be involved).
E4A2	Align SEAM	This Action works to align programs aimed at improving school attendance, in collaboration with the Australian Government, including: Every Day Counts (EDC), School Enrolment and Attendance Measure (SEAM), and Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS).	The alignment strategies were implemented over 2016-2017.	38 schools.
E4A3	Girls' Engagement	Girls' Engagement programs provide an out-of-class program for Indigenous students, which focus on educational outcomes, health and wellbeing, sport and employment options beyond school. This Action complements the Clontarf Academies, which target the engagement of Indigenous boys	Programs began in 12 schools in 2015, with one more school beginning programs in 2016.	13 schools.
E4A4	Behaviour Management	This Action develops and implements an integrated approach to wellbeing and behaviour, including: a positive behaviour management framework, a social and emotional learning curriculum, resilience program materials and system-wide monitoring and data collection.	Aspects of the curriculum were trialled in 24 schools in 2016, with full implementation scheduled for Term 1, 2018.	76 schools.

SOURCE: NAME, DESCRIPTION AND TIMELINE SOURCED FROM IERI PROJECT REPORTING. SCHOOLS/SITES INVOLVED SOURCED FROM SCHOOLS MATRIX.

2.5.2 Element 4 implementation

Three of the Element 4 Actions are being implemented at the end of 2017, with the Behaviour Management Action to be implemented in 2018. Additional information on the lessons learned from Element 4 is provided at Appendix E.

Engagement Charter (E4A1)

A Charter template and supporting tool have been developed to assist schools to document family, community and school commitments and actions for working together to support student learning.

To date, four schools have completed their Engagement Charters. Four schools have finalised their second draft statements (which are currently under review by their community) and initial consultation has also commenced at approximately 30 schools. It is intended that the Engagement Charters be rolled out to 108 Remote and Very Remote schools.

Implementation of this Action has been slower than anticipated. Case studies and School Assessments reported that there were varying perspectives on the utility and relative priority of the Engagement Charter. While some schools are already taking steps to improve community engagement in school decision-making, it appeared to be treated by many as a 'compliance' requirement and was seen to duplicate existing community engagement policies or statements. The School Assessments indicated that the implementation of the Engagement Charter would have benefited from more clarity on the purpose of the Charters and existing school-level documentation

relating to community engagement. Enhanced communication regarding the role and value of the Engagement Charter in the context of the wider strategic goals may help it become a more active part of school activities.

Align SEAM (E4A2)

The Department has worked with the Australian Government to align the School Enrolment and Attendance Measure (SEAM) and the Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS) (Table 2.7). This was codified in 'Every Day Counts—Northern Territory School Attendance Strategy 2016-2018', released in 2016. Governance arrangements designed to implement this Action alongside the Early Years Strategic Plan (Great Start Great Future) have also been developed.

TABLE 2.7 SEAM AND RSAS OVERVIEW

Program	Details	Year introduced	NT schools involved
School Enrolment and Attendance Measure (SEAM)	If students do not enrol and attend school, their parent/carer must attend a compulsory conference with NT Department of Education staff and agree to a school attendance plan. If the plan is not adhered to the parents' income support payments will be suspended.	Trialled in 2009-2012. Implemented from 2013.	38*
Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS)	School attendance teams help students attend schools, using different approaches, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Talking to children and families about the importance of regular school attendance. – Identifying reasons for non-attendance of students. – Providing practical support like driving children to school or helping to organise school lunches, uniforms, and after-school care. – Working with the school to monitor attendance and follow up on student absences. 	2014	29

Note: *An additional 14 non-government schools are also involved in the NT. **An additional five non-government schools are also involved in the NT.

SOURCE: SEAM SCHOOLS/SITES INVOLVED SOURCED FROM SCHOOLS MATRIX; RSAS INFORMATION SOURCED FROM DEPARTMENT OF PREMIER AND CABINET 'REMOTE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE STRATEGY – INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT', 2015.

Most schools reported no clear evidence as yet that attendance initiatives are having an impact, underscoring the challenge of measuring the effectiveness of policies in this area. This is supported by administrative data on attendance which indicates that attendance rates have remained relatively consistent for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students over the period 2011-2017 (see section 3.4). The lack of evidence in relation to 'what works' for attendance initiatives presents challenges for determining the appropriate strategic direction, as multiple factors can influence attendance.

The lack of measurable effect of current attendance-focused initiatives may be reflective of the interplay between a range of related factors, both school and non-school, and therefore require a rethink of existing attendance strategies. One option could be to shift the focus from attendance to engagement in learning activities as the primary objective. This may take the form of different initiatives that concentrate on meaningful participation in education, rather than regular attendance at school *per se*.

Girls' Engagement (E4A3)

Girls' Engagement programs are being delivered in 13 schools by two providers—Role Models and Leaders Australia (RMLA) and the Stars Foundation. Between 2015 and 2016, the total number of participants increased on average by 30 per cent across before falling 8 per cent in 2017 (Table 2.8). It is not clear what caused this fall in participation—it may be that the growth in 2016 exceeded the capacity of the programs or it may be that the programs have room to improve their retention strategies.

One of the providers of the Girl's Engagement programs reported improved educational outcomes for students; for example, 35 of 39 girls participating in the Girls' Engagement program graduated year 12, approximately 80 per cent of whom subsequently gained full time work or entered full time study.

TABLE 2.8 PARTICIPANTS IN GIRLS' ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

	Schools	Program participants			Change in participation	
		2015	2016	2017	2015-2016	2016-2017
RMLA	5	484	581	497	20%	-14%
Stars	7*	397	576	572	45%	-1%
Total	13*	881	1157	1069	31%	-8%

Note: * two less schools were involved in 2015.

The total number of girls participating may be slightly lower than the figures shown above, as students are counted using the Enrolled UPN. If a student changes year levels within the selected period, they will be counted twice.

SOURCE: ACIL ALLEN CONSULTING ANALYSIS OF RMLA ENROLMENT AND ATTENDANCE, STARS ENROLMENT AND ATTENDANCE DATASETS

Schools have identified positive impacts from the Girls' Engagement programs—including improved perceptions of social inclusion, increased pride in Indigenous identity, and higher graduation rates—indicating it is a useful model for establishing and maintaining girls' involvement in school. This was supported by the School Assessments, which noted evidence of improved attendance figures, completion of academic work, and engagement in health and wellbeing activities for girls involved in Girls' Engagement programs.

Behaviour Management (E4A4)

The full suite of materials for the Behaviour Management Action were finalised in Term 3, 2017. Aspects of the curriculum were trialled in 24 schools in 2016, with full implementation scheduled for Term 1, 2018.

Scaling up the Action to the intended total of 76 schools has been recognised by the Department as an issue of available capacity. While an implementation plan has been developed, resourcing was insufficient to progress roll out beyond the initial 24 trial schools until 2018. Although resourcing has impacted implementation, interest from Remote and Very Remote schools in participating remains high.

Efforts to develop a systematic approach to monitoring and mapping Positive Behaviour and Resilience are on schedule. Data collection has been undertaken in the trial schools which will support the development of supporting measures, and work is underway to identify potential improvements for existing data collection measures within schools.

The implementation of Behaviour Management highlights a number of challenges also experienced, albeit to a lesser extent, with the other Actions under this Element. Initial planning and design of the Action did not account for the time taken to conduct adequate research and develop an evidence-informed approach, which led to delays in implementation. Difficulty in recruitment of the staff with capabilities required also impacted the timelines for implementing the Action.

KEY FINDING 5 ELEMENT 4—IMPLEMENTATION

Four schools have completed their Engagement Charters (E4A1), with 35 schools at different points in the development process. While some schools are already taking steps to improve community engagement in school decision-making, it appeared to be treated by many as a ‘compliance’ requirement. Enhanced communication regarding the role and value of the Engagement Charter in the context of the wider strategic goals may help it become a more active part of school activities.

The Department has worked with the Australian Government to align the School Enrolment and Attendance Measure (SEAM) and the Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS) (E4A2). This was codified in ‘Every Day Counts’ attendance strategy, released in 2016. Most schools reported that it is not clear yet whether attendance initiatives are having an impact, reflecting the challenge of measuring the effectiveness of policies in this area. The apparent lack of traction of current attendance-focused initiatives may indicate a need for a considerable rethink of existing strategies in this area. One option the Department is considering is that attendance may be better achieved through placing a greater emphasis on student engagement with education, rather than attendance being targeted as an outcome in its own right.

Girls’ Engagement (E4A3) programs are being delivered in 134 schools. Schools identify positive impacts from the Girls’ Engagement programs—including improved perceptions of social inclusion, increased pride in Indigenous identity, and higher graduation rates—indicating it is a useful model for establishing and maintaining girls’ involvement in school.

The trials of the Behaviour Management Action (E4A3) have been completed and full implementation has been scheduled for 2018, with many schools indicating enthusiasm for system-wide roll out.

2.6 Element 5: Workforce

2.6.1 Element 5 overview

The Workforce Element aims to ensure ‘Indigenous student outcomes are improved through a consistent system-wide approach to providing highly skilled and motivated educators and leaders in schools’ (NT DoE 2015).

The five Actions under the Workforce Element include a school system Workforce Plan, and the refurbishment and construction of housing for teachers at Remote and Very Remote schools. The three other Actions aim to support and professionally develop Principals (E5A3), teachers (E5A4), and Assistant Teachers (E5A2) respectively in Remote and Very Remote schools (**Table 2.9**).

TABLE 2.9 ELEMENT 5 OVERVIEW

	Name	Description	Timeline	Schools/sites involved
E5A1	Workforce Plan	This Action involved the development of the <i>Strategic Workforce Plan 2016-2018</i> and the <i>Indigenous Employment and Workforce Strategy</i> to guide the attraction, recruitment, development and retention of a high quality school workforce.	The Plan and Strategy were launched in 2016.	153 schools.
E5A2	Assistant Teachers	This Action aims to ensure employment and professional development arrangements for remote Indigenous Assistant Teachers consistent with those of other staff. The Action includes updating job descriptions and professional standards, developing performance frameworks, and providing training to ATs.	Renewed training for Assistant Teachers began in 2016, with resources for schools distributed beginning in 2016.	86 schools.
E5A3	Developing Remote Principals	This Action develops a coaching and mentoring framework and program for new and relocating Principals in Very Remote schools, including cultural competency training.	The framework was released in 2017, and training commenced in late 2016.	22 schools.

	Name	Description	Timeline	Schools/sites involved
E5A4	Strengthening Remote School Staff Capabilities	This Action aims to support induction and continuous professional development and networking for remote school staff, including an introduction to Indigenous languages and team teaching strategies.	Training began in 2016, and induction materials were released in 2017.	15 schools, increasing to 30 in late 2017.
E5A5	Teacher Housing Refurbishment and Construction	This Action aims to replace and/or refurbish government employee housing for teachers in Remote and Very Remote school sites.	Construction and refurbishments commenced in 2015, and continued over 2016 and 2017.	44 refurbishments and new dwellings, with an additional 112 planned (total of 156).

SOURCE: NAME, DESCRIPTION AND TIMELINE SOURCED FROM IERI PROJECT REPORTING. SCHOOLS/SITES INVOLVED SOURCED FROM SCHOOLS MATRIX.

2.6.2 Element 5 implementation

The Element 5 Actions primarily began implementation in 2016, with some construction and refurbishments (E5A5) commencing in 2015. Additional information on the lessons learned from Element 5 is provided at Appendix F.

Workforce Plan (E5A1)

The Department developed two workforce plans to guide attraction, recruitment, development and retention of the school workforce. Titled *Strategic Workforce Plan 2016-2018* (the Plan) and *Indigenous Employment and Workforce Strategy* (the Strategy), the plans were launched in October 2016.

The School Assessments reported that significant numbers of schools see the Workforce Plan as promoting a culture of continuous improvement and professional development, and that the activities under this Action were seen to provide strategies for increased retention. This said, a large number of respondents surveyed in early 2017 were neutral on all questions relating to the Workforce Plan, which may indicate that it was too early for some to determine the value. Others highlighted systematic issues in relation to budgets, resources and availability of potential recruits as impacting on the plans. There was particular support for the professional development activities and requirements as outlined in the plans, but the challenges of remote locations in accessing training were also highlighted.

Assistant Teachers (E5A2)

The Assistant Teachers Action has delivered a suite of policies and resources including updated job descriptions and professional standards, performance frameworks, and a resource for Principals on Assistant Teacher duties and responsibilities. Training for Assistant Teachers is also a key part of the Action, and in mid-2017, 315 Assistant Teachers were enrolled in training, most with Batchelor Institute.

Schools reported that the redeveloped professional learning system for Assistant Teachers provided improved career development guidance, and was enhancing team teaching and mentoring of Assistant Teachers.

The school case studies and other interviews carried out for this Evaluation point to an increasing awareness of the value of Assistant Teachers, particularly over the last 18 months. Assistant Teachers will be essential to the successful roll out of the Indigenous Languages and Culture curriculum (E2A5) in 2018.

Within schools, there were signs of positive impact from the Assistant Teacher Action, but these will take time to fully develop and be seen in key metrics. Many of the deliverables relate to improving understanding of the Assistant Teacher role and developing stronger practices of team teaching. While there is early evidence that these are having the desired impact, continued change will require time to scale up and become embedded in school and community cultures.

Developing Remote Principals (E5A3) and Strengthening Remote School Staff Capabilities (E5A4)

The Remote Principals Coaching and Mentoring Framework and supporting learning plan (E5A3) have been developed and initial implementation commenced in August 2016, with a trial of Executive and Regional Directors in five regions. Feedback from the regions was incorporated into the final draft, which was released in early 2017.

The Framework is being used in each region with new Principals who are being paired with a mentor and school leaders in all regions are undertaking coaching training with a variety of organisations. Positive feedback has been received from participating schools, who reported that the Action has provided a new opportunity for identifying the learning needs of Principals.

The Strengthening Remote School Staff Capabilities (E5A4) Action has developed new induction materials (released in Term 3, 2017), online training resources to support a remote-specific mentoring program and a strategy for accredited training of remote teachers. In mid-2017, 22 teachers were enrolled in the Graduate Certificate of TESOL (Education) through Deakin University. The Department continues to support Principals to implement the new induction process and establish mentoring for teachers in schools.

This area of activity, as with a number of others, experienced delays due to time required for consultation and development of resources. A positive learning from this Action has been the benefit of working with other areas, internally such as Human Resources and externally such as with Deakin University, to gain efficiencies and ensure alignment of related deliverables.

Teacher Housing Refurbishment and Construction (E5A5)

Construction of new, and refurbishment of existing, dwellings has been underway since 2015 and by late-2017, nine new dwellings had been constructed and 35 refurbishments had been completed, with a further 13 dwellings and 99 refurbishments being scoped.

Overall, the School Assessments noted that remote teacher housing was improving, though it was too soon to comment on whether this was positively impacting on staff retention or whether it was a direct result of this Action. A lack of clarity on which specific building activities were to take place and when was raised as an issue—improved communication on the schedule and prioritisation of building works would be welcomed by schools.

KEY FINDING 6 ELEMENT 5—IMPLEMENTATION

The Workforce Plan (E5A1) was launched in October 2016 and included an Indigenous Employment strategy. The Plan is now driving the Department's work to attract, recruit, develop and retain teachers and other school staff members.

The Assistant Teachers (E5A2), Developing Remote Principals (E5A3) and Strengthening Remote School Staff Capabilities (E5A4) Actions all began implementation in 2016 and are working to support and develop these three key roles in the school system. In part due to these programs, there is emerging evidence of a greater understanding and focus on the importance of coaching and mentoring across schools and the Department. The school case studies and other interviews carried out for this Evaluation also point to an increasing awareness of the value of Assistant Teachers, particularly over the last 18 months.

Construction of new, and refurbishment of existing, dwellings (E5A5) has been underway since 2015 and by mid-2017, seven new dwellings had been constructed and 60 refurbishments had been completed, with a further 39 being scoped.

2.7 The impact of other reforms on Indigenous Education Strategy implementation

The IES has been implemented within an environment of significant education system change. Two other related and substantial education policy reforms are Global School Budgets and Visible Learning.

Global School Budgets

The Global School Budgets (GSB) reform was introduced in 2015 and provides financial resources to schools with which schools make staffing decisions. Whereas previously the number of teachers employed in each school was set by central office, under the GSB reform, schools have the autonomy to decide their preferred staff mix, based on their school budget.

Each schools' budget is determined by a 'student needs' based funding model. The model builds a cost profile of students enrolled in each school, taking account of individual needs factors for each student, including year level of schooling, Indigenous status, socio-economic status and remoteness of the school (NT DoE 2016).³

Schools reported mixed views on whether the GSB reform contributed positively or negatively to IES implementation. Some schools saw the reform as inhibiting the implementation of the IES in schools due to either an increase in uncertainty caused by the budgeting approach, a reduction of staff, or the additional administrative work required. Other schools, however, noted that the increased autonomy has assisted schools in working towards the goals of the IES, primarily through allowing the better use of resources.

There does not appear to be anything inherent in the GSB reform that is inconsistent with the IES. As the IES works to facilitate greater consistency in pedagogy and programs, GSB should be aiding school autonomy, consistent with the IES principle of balancing system-wide effort and school decision-making. The administrative burden on schools from GSB, among other issues, is being examined in a separate review.

Visible Learning

Visible Learning is a professional development program that provides guidance and support to teachers to become evaluators of their practice, in turn improving the educational experience of learners by focusing on high impact practices. The program focuses on 'teaching strategies that have the greatest impact and building teacher capacity to analyse data and evaluate their own performance' through setting individual learning goals and monitoring progress toward achieving these goals (NT DoE 2015).

Visible Learning began implementation in 2013 in 50 schools in the Alice Springs and Barkly regions, before being rolled out to all schools in 2015.

Schools have been almost universally positive about Visible Learning and its interaction with the IES. In particular, schools noted the consistency of the Visible Learning focus on evidence and continuous improvement, and the Benchmarks Action which is implementing the PAT standardised testing. DI was also seen as consistent with Visible Learning. A Department project manager noted that Visible Learning will complement the IES Behaviour Management Action when it is implemented in 2018.

The implementation of a number of reforms simultaneously

As the above discussion makes clear, the Department is undertaking a number of substantial reforms aimed at improving school performance and student outcomes.

A number of schools noted the extent and scale of the improvement agenda and expressed concern that schools are being overloaded with reforms. In particular, that the time required to be devoted to the reforms can lead to a lack of depth in the implementation of strategies or Actions. Small schools

³ The student needs-based funding model is not used to allocate funds to distance education schools, special schools, and students in targeted programs such as intensive English units—these programs are funded based on historical costs.

reported lacking the management and administrative resources to properly focus on each Action and give it the full attention it deserves.

As evidenced in interviews for the Evaluation, the Department is conscious of the scale of the IES and concurrence with other reforms being introduced in schools. As a result, the implementation of IES Actions in schools has been staggered to reduce the likelihood of schools having to implement too many projects concurrently. The Department is also developing processes to track IES Action implementation at the individual school level.

KEY FINDING 7 THE IMPACT OF OTHER REFORMS ON IES IMPLEMENTATION

The IES has been implemented within an environment of significant education system change. Two related and substantial other education policy reforms are Global School Budgets and Visible Learning.

Some schools viewed Global School Budgets as inhibiting IES implementation, while others argued the increased autonomy of the reform supported the roll out of Actions in their school. There does not appear to be anything inherent in the Global School Budgets reform that is inconsistent with the IES, though Global School Budgets are being examined in a separate review.

Visible Learning was almost universally seen as supportive of the IES, in particular its focus on evidence and continuous improvement (which is consistent with a number of IES Actions).

Some schools were, however, concerned about the extent and scale of the improvement agenda over the last three years—the time required to be devoted to the reforms can lead to a lack of depth in the implementation of strategies or Actions, particularly in small schools. The implementation of IES Actions in schools has been staggered to reduce the likelihood of schools having to implement too many projects concurrently.

2.8 Tracking Stage 1 implementation

This Evaluation covered the early phases of the IES and has therefore focused in large part on the process of implementation. A number of sources of evidence, described in chapter 1, were available to support the process evaluation and have provided the foundation for the evaluation findings in chapter 2. At the same time, opportunities were identified that would improve the availability of data and evidence to support future evaluation and adjustment of implementation. These primarily relate to project planning and reporting processes, and are discussed below.

Project logics

Each of the Actions for the IES was supported by a detailed Project Plan that generally outlined the background, key deliverables, milestones, budgets and a risk assessment. Some variation was observed in the project plans across Actions in relation to the type, volume and quality of content contained which, at times, posed challenges for making comparison of Actions and tracking of implementation.

The development of a concise and consistent project logic template for each Action would assist future evaluations and regular monitoring of implementation. This would also contribute to tracking impact, which is discussed further in chapter 3. The use of a standard project logic template would assist in distilling and communicating the key components of each Action, particularly to schools, and would include concise information on:

- The rationale
- Inputs (physical, human and financial resources)
- Activities (key tasks associated with the Action)
- Outputs (products of the Action)
- Outcomes (the intended impact of the Action).

Project reporting

Regular reporting was conducted throughout Stage 1 of the IES. Responsible project managers completed monthly reports against each of the Actions which included commentary against the deliverables from the project plans. These reports were collated into a dashboard that covered all of the IES Elements and Actions. In April 2016, the format of these reports changed to contain more detailed content on the progress of each Action.

Over the course of Stage 1, the information captured through project reporting varied in terms of detail and content. This is to be expected to some degree, as staff move to different roles and project management expectations shift. However, improved consistency in project reporting would contribute to the responsiveness of the IES to changing dynamics. Key considerations that could improve reporting in future include:

- Comprehensive change logs that detail amendments to the project logic, including type/number of activities and intended outputs
- A risk register that sits across all IES Actions to identify common trends and determine if broader strategies need to be implemented (for example, in relation to recruitment of qualified staff).

Implementation data

The tracking and evaluation of the implementation of individual Actions benefits from local-level information. In Stage 1, there were difficulties in accessing accurate data on the number and type of schools at the different stages of implementation for each Action (for example, involved in a trial or development, in the process of implementation, or post implementation).

The cause of these challenges is not fully clear, but may point to barriers in the monitoring of school-level activity or feedback loops between schools and project managers. Stage 2 would benefit from clear assignment of key performance indicators to facilitate tracking of individual Actions at the school-level and oversight of the IES implementation as a whole, how the data to monitor these indicators is to be captured, and the relevant responsibilities of schools, project managers and head office.

2.9 Summary

Stage 1 of the IES has seen considerable activity and achievements across the 25 Actions—these are particularly evident in FaFT (E1A1), DI (E2A2), the TSU (E3A2), EP (E3A3, E3A4, and E3A5) and the Girls' Engagement programs (E4A3).

Consultations and Assessments indicated that Stage 1's large and complex roster of projects was necessary at the time of design, but has stretched the capacity of head office, regional offices and schools to develop and implement the Actions.⁴ A number of Actions experienced delays due to the inability of the Department to recruit suitable candidates to fill key internal roles. The reasons for these recruitment difficulties are longstanding, experienced across the public sector more broadly in the NT due to a low unemployment rate and lack of appropriately skilled workers.

As a result, the roll out of the IES has been slower than originally anticipated, with Stage 1 developing the frameworks and resources for key Actions that only began implementation in 2017 (most notably LANE (E2A1) and most of the Foundations Actions) to be fully implemented in 2018 (the Behaviour Management (E4A4) and Indigenous Languages and Culture Actions (E2A5)).

With these key tools and resources now developed, the Department is focusing on how schools implement the IES Actions. Translating the IES and its composite parts for schools forms an important part of this, as does coaching of school staff, and ensuring Principals are providing strong leadership for implementation in schools.

⁴ There were multiple reasons for the large number of projects, including the need to respond comprehensively to the Wilson Review, the desire to build on the momentum of the Review, and to respond to Commonwealth Government funding imperatives.



The IES was developed in 2014 and established 10 year targets associated with each Element, primarily focused on closing the development, achievement and attendance gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

This chapter reports on progress towards each target over the first three years of the IES.

3.1 Element 1: Foundations—10 year target

The 10 year target for the Foundations Element is: ‘the proportion of Indigenous children who are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain of the Australian Early Development Census is reduced in-line with the Territory’s non-Indigenous cohort.’

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is collected every three years. The most recent AEDC was in 2015 with the next collection to take place in 2018. As such, it is not possible to measure progress towards this target before 2018.

For reference, the proportion of children vulnerable on one or more domain of the AEDC in the NT for the three censuses to-date are in **Table 3.1**.

TABLE 3.1 PROPORTION OF CHILDREN VULNERABLE ON ONE OR MORE DOMAIN OF THE AEDC

	2009	2012	2015
Indigenous	68%	59%	63%
Non-Indigenous	23%	21%	22%
Difference	45%	38%	41%

SOURCE: AUSTRALIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENSUS

KEY FINDING 8 ELEMENT 1 (FOUNDATIONS)—IMPACT

The most recent AEDC was in 2015 with the next collection to take place in 2018. As such, it is not possible to measure progress towards the Element 1 target before 2018.

3.2 Element 2: Essentials—10 year target

The 10 year target for the Essentials Element is: ‘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.’

NAPLAN results are reported on a consistent scale, from Band 1 to Band 10, across Years 3, 5, 7, and 9. A national minimum standard (NMS) is defined and located on the assessment scale for each year level (for example, Band 2 is the NMS for Year 3). Students below the NMS have not achieved the learning outcomes expected for their year level.

Table 3.2 reports the proportion of Year 3 and 5 students achieving the NMS in reading and numeracy in NAPLAN, over 2008-2017 (the pre-IES cells are coloured grey).

3.2.1 Year 3—reading and numeracy

The gap between Year 3 Indigenous and non-Indigenous students has fallen six percentage points in reading (to 48 percentage points), and risen 1 percentage point in numeracy (to 48 percentage points) since 2014.

The reading gap has fallen due to the share of Indigenous students achieving the NMS increasing nine percentage points (from 29 per cent to 38 per cent), while the non-Indigenous share has increased three percentage points. The numeracy gap has increased due to an unchanged Indigenous share achieving the NMS, and a slight increase in the non-Indigenous share.

3.2.2 Year 5—reading and numeracy

The gap between Year 5 Indigenous and non-Indigenous students has fallen four percentage points in reading (to 56 percentage points) and fallen 2 percentage points in numeracy (to 54 percentage points) since 2014.

The reading gap has fallen due the share of Indigenous students achieving the NMS increasing seven percentage points (from 26 per cent to 33 per cent), while the non-Indigenous share has increased 4 percentage points.⁵ The numeracy gap has decreased due to a larger increase in the Indigenous share achieving the NMS (30 per cent to 37 per cent) than the non-Indigenous share (up five percentage points).

3.2.3 Discussion

Since the introduction of the IES, the share of Indigenous Year 3 and 5 students achieving the NMS in reading has increased, as has the share of Year 3 students achieving the NMS in numeracy. The share of Year 5 students achieving the NMS in numeracy is the same in 2017 as it was before the IES.

Due to the improvements in Indigenous reading and numeracy results in Year 5, and reading results in Year 3, the difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students has decreased on these measures. The Year 3 numeracy gap has increased slightly.

Despite these positive results, the gaps are still large, with, for example, only a third of Indigenous students achieving the reading NMS in Year 5, compared to 90 per cent of non-Indigenous students.

Considering the early stage of implementation of the key Element 2 Actions (LANE (E2A1) will only be fully implemented in 2018), and the volatility in the NAPLAN data, NAPLAN results need to be interpreted with caution. At this stage, it is not possible to determine the impact that the IES is having on the share of Indigenous students reaching the NMS.

⁵ Numbers may not sum due to rounding.

TABLE 3.2 PROPORTION OF STUDENTS ACHIEVING THE NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARD IN READING AND NUMERACY IN YEARS 3 AND 5

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Year 3	Indigenous	26%	40%	43%	38%	40%	43%	29%	35%	40%	38%
	Non-Indigenous	80%	86%	85%	83%	85%	85%	83%	86%	88%	86%
	Difference	-54%	-47%	-42%	-45%	-45%	-43%	-54%	-51%	-48%	-48%
	Indigenous	39%	38%	41%	48%	37%	41%	41%	42%	46%	41%
	Non-Indigenous	87%	87%	89%	88%	86%	87%	88%	89%	90%	89%
	Difference	-48%	-49%	-48%	-40%	-49%	-46%	-47%	-47%	-44%	-48%
Year 5	Indigenous	21%	30%	27%	24%	23%	45%	26%	38%	26%	33%
	Non-Indigenous	81%	85%	82%	81%	81%	90%	86%	85%	87%	90%
	Difference	-60%	-54%	-55%	-58%	-58%	-44%	-60%	-47%	-61%	-56%
	Indigenous	31%	47%	33%	38%	28%	33%	30%	41%	37%	37%
	Non-Indigenous	84%	90%	87%	86%	84%	86%	86%	88%	89%	91%
	Difference	-53%	-43%	-54%	-48%	-56%	-53%	-56%	-48%	-52%	-54%

Note: Numbers may not sum due to rounding. The greyed cells are the pre-IES years.

SOURCE: NAPLAN

KEY FINDING 9 ELEMENT 2 (ESSENTIALS)—IMPACT

Since the introduction of the IES, improvements in Indigenous reading and numeracy results in Year 5, and reading results in Year 3 has led to a reduction in the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students on these measures. The Year 3 numeracy gap has increased slightly.

Despite these positive results, the gaps are still large, with, for example, only 33 per cent of Indigenous students achieving the reading NMS in Year 5, compared to 90 per cent of non-Indigenous students.

Given the early stage of implementation of the key Element 2 Actions (LANE (E2A1) will only be fully implemented in 2018), and the volatility in the NAPLAN data, NAPLAN results need to be interpreted with caution. At this stage, it is not possible to report the impact that the IES is having on the share of Indigenous students reaching the NMS.

3.3 Element 3: Pathways—10 year target

The 10 year targets for the Pathways Element are:

- ‘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 rates as the Territory’s non-Indigenous student cohort.’

Table 3.3 reports the proportion of Year 7 and 9 students achieving the NMS in reading and numeracy in NAPLAN, over 2008-2017 (the pre-IES cells are coloured grey).

3.3.1 Year 7—reading and numeracy

The gap between Year 7 Indigenous and non-Indigenous students has increased four percentage points in reading (to 60 percentage points), and increased one percentage point in numeracy (to 49 percentage points) since 2014.

The reading gap has increased due the share of Indigenous students achieving the NMS falling six percentage points (from 30 per cent to 24 per cent), while the non-Indigenous share has fallen only

one percentage point. The numeracy gap has increased due to a smaller increase in the Indigenous share achieving the NMS relative to the increase in the non-Indigenous share.

3.3.2 Year 9—reading and numeracy

The gap between Year 9 Indigenous and non-Indigenous students has fallen three percentage points in reading (to 56 percentage points), and fallen eight percentage points in numeracy (to 47 percentage points) since 2014.

The reading gap has fallen due the share of Indigenous students achieving the NMS increasing one percentage point (from 22 per cent to 23 per cent), while the non-Indigenous share has decreased three percentage points.⁶ The numeracy gap has decreased due to a larger increase in the Indigenous share achieving the NMS (31 per cent to 39 per cent) than the non-Indigenous share (up one percentage point).

TABLE 3.3 PROPORTION OF STUDENTS ACHIEVING NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS IN READING AND NUMERACY IN YEARS 7 AND 9

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Year 7	Indigenous	25%	35%	30%	40%	33%	27%	30%	39%	30%	24%
	Non-Indigenous	85%	85%	86%	86%	83%	84%	85%	88%	86%	84%
	Difference	-60%	-50%	-56%	-46%	-51%	-56%	-56%	-49%	-56%	-60%
	Indigenous	34%	41%	32%	36%	33%	38%	38%	44%	35%	39%
	Non-Indigenous	86%	87%	86%	86%	85%	85%	86%	88%	89%	88%
	Difference	-52%	-46%	-54%	-50%	-52%	-47%	-48%	-44%	-54%	-49%
Year 9	Indigenous	29%	27%	23%	28%	24%	26%	22%	18%	25%	23%
	Non-Indigenous	83%	81%	81%	78%	80%	81%	82%	79%	82%	79%
	Difference	-54%	-54%	-57%	-50%	-55%	-55%	-59%	-61%	-57%	-56%
	Indigenous	33%	38%	25%	30%	34%	22%	31%	32%	32%	39%
	Non-Indigenous	83%	86%	82%	83%	84%	77%	86%	82%	86%	87%
	Difference	-50%	-49%	-57%	-53%	-50%	-55%	-55%	-50%	-54%	-47%

Note: Numbers may not sum due to rounding. The greyed cells are the pre-IES years.

SOURCE: NAPLAN

3.3.3 Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training

The Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET) is the Year 12 graduation certificate in the NT and is the main qualification for students to gain admission into university. The number of Indigenous students completing the NTCET has increased by 36 students (30 per cent) between 2014 and 2016 (Table 3.4). In 2016, 766 non-Indigenous students completed the NTCET.

The IES 10 Year NTCET target does not specify the metric by which the rate of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students achieving the NTCET should be measured.

Table 3.4 sets out both:

- the rate of Year 12 students completing the NTCET (the share of Year 12 students who graduate following the NTCET)
- the rate of Year 7 students completing the NTCET (the share of students enrolled in Year 7 which complete the NTCET five years later).

While both measures have strengths and weakness, the measure based on Year 7 enrolments is a truer measure of the *rate* of NTCET completion.

⁶ Numbers may not sum due to rounding.

The number of Indigenous students enrolled in Year 12 is much lower than non-Indigenous students, but of those Indigenous students that make it to Year 12, a high proportion complete the NTCET (99 per cent in 2016, up from 97 per cent in 2014, before the IES). This completion rate is similar to the rate for non-Indigenous students, and has been since 2012.

A large gap, however, is evident when comparing the rate of Year 7 students going on to complete the NTCET five years after they enrol in Year 7. On this metric, only 16 per cent of Indigenous students complete the NTCET (up three percentage points since 2014), while 74 per cent of non-Indigenous students complete the NTCET. The gap of 58 percentage points in 2016 is the same as it was in 2014.

TABLE 3.4 NORTHERN TERRITORY CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMPLETIONS

		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Students that complete the NTCET	Indigenous	106	111	134	120	131	156
	Non-Indigenous	713	764	679	764	705	766
Share of Year 12 students							
Year 12 students	Indigenous	165	157	142	124	142	158
	Non-Indigenous	764	777	748	814	729	797
Share of Year 12 students that complete the NTCET	Indigenous	64%	71%	94%	97%	92%	99%
	Non-Indigenous	93%	98%	91%	94%	97%	96%
	Difference	-29%	-28%	4%	3%	-4%	3%
Share of Year 7 students							
Year 7 students, five years previously	Indigenous	993	1,060	1,045	909	1,028	970
	Non-Indigenous	1,200	1,158	1,068	1,070	1,093	1,037
Share of Year 7 students (five years previously) that complete the NTCET	Indigenous	11%	10%	13%	13%	13%	16%
	Non-Indigenous	59%	66%	64%	71%	65%	74%
	Difference	-49%	-56%	-51%	-58%	-52%	-58%

Note: Numbers may not sum due to rounding. The greyed cells are the pre-IES years.

SOURCE: NTCET DATASET

3.3.4 Discussion

Since the introduction of the IES, the share of Indigenous Year 7 students achieving the reading NMS has fallen, while the share achieving the numeracy NMS has increased slightly. Among Indigenous Year 9 students the share achieving the reading NMS has increased slightly, while the share achieving the numeracy NMS has increased more substantially.

As a result of these changes, the gap between Year 7 Indigenous and non-Indigenous students has increased, while the reading and numeracy gap in Year 9 has decreased. Despite these changes, the gaps are still large, with, for example, only 23 per cent of Indigenous students achieving the Year 9 reading NMS, compared to 79 per cent of non-Indigenous students.

There is also a large gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the proportion completing the NTCET, although positively the number of Indigenous students completing the NTCET has increased by 36 since 2014.

The full impact of the IES on Year 7 and 9 NAPLAN scores and NTCET attainment rates is not to be expected at this stage of IES implementation. The Pathways Actions are only being fully implemented in 2017, and the TSU's work supporting students to transition to boarding school will take time to impact NAPLAN scores and graduation rates.

To some extent, IES Actions at the early childhood and primary school levels are likely to exert the most upward pressure on secondary school NAPLAN results and NTCET completions, as students

with improved literacy and numeracy due to IES Actions, such as FaFT and LANE, progress to secondary school.

KEY FINDING 10 ELEMENT 3 (PATHWAYS)—IMPACT

Since the introduction of the IES, the reading and numeracy gap between Year 7 Indigenous and non-Indigenous students has increased, while the equivalent gaps in Year 9 have decreased. Despite these changes, the gaps are still large, with, for example only a 23 per cent of Indigenous students achieving the Year 9 reading NMS, compared to 79 per cent of non-Indigenous students.

There is also a large gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the proportion completing the NTCET, although positively the number of Indigenous students completing the NTCET has increased by 36 per cent since 2014.

The full impact of the IES on Year 7 and 9 NAPLAN scores and NTCET attainment rates is not to be expected at this stage of IES implementation. The Pathways Actions are only being fully implemented in 2017, and the TSU's work supporting students to transition to boarding school will take time to impact NAPLAN scores and graduation rates. IES Actions at the early childhood and primary school levels are likely to exert upward pressure on secondary school NAPLAN results and NTCET completions with a considerable lag.

3.4 Element 4: Engagement—10 year target

The 10 year target for the Engagement Element is: '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 metric 'four days or more a week' is based on the Wilson Review's finding that the 'evidence is clear that 80% attendance (four days per week) is the minimum for most students to achieve success throughout schooling and to gain an NTCET or equivalent.'⁷

The proportion of Indigenous students attending four or more days was 33 per cent in 2017, a slight increase from 2014 and a three percentage point increase from 2015 (Table 3.5). While an increase from 2014, the proportion of Indigenous students attending four or more days was slightly higher in 2011 and 2012, and the 2017 figure returns the proportion to the point it was in 2012.

TABLE 3.5 PROPORTION OF STUDENTS IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS ATTENDING FOUR OR MORE DAYS PER WEEK

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Indigenous	34%	34%	33%	32%	30%	30%	33%
Non-Indigenous	84%	85%	85%	86%	85%	84%	84%
Difference	-51%	-51%	-52%	-54%	-55%	-54%	-51%
Indigenous—Provincial	64%	64%	66%	63%	63%	62%	65%
Indigenous—Remote	43%	43%	42%	45%	37%	38%	41%
Indigenous—Very Remote	19%	20%	18%	19%	16%	16%	19%

Note: Numbers may not sum due to rounding. The greyed cells are the pre-IES years.

SOURCE: ENROLMENT AND ATTENDANCE DATASET

The gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students has fallen four percentage points since the start of the IES, in part due to a small decrease in the proportion of non-Indigenous students attending four or more days.

⁷ The Wilson Review found 'The greatest improvement [in the proportion of Indigenous students achieving the NMS in NAPLAN domains] occurs once attendance rises over 80%, at which point over 70% of Indigenous students achieve or exceed national minimum standard.'

BOX 3.1 ATTENDANCE RATES

Attendance rates measure the proportion of days a student attends school, and since 2014 have fallen in Remote and Very Remote schools, and across all stages of schooling. Using this metric, the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students is considerably smaller than the 'four days or more' gap, indicating that there is a wider distribution across the number of days attended per week by Indigenous students compared to non-Indigenous students (which are concentrated in the four or five days a week attendance groups).

While the gap in attendance rates is smaller, it has remained constant over the implementation of the IES (Table 3.6).

TABLE 3.6 ATTENDANCE RATES

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Indigenous	61%	62%	62%	63%	61%	61%	61%
Non-Indigenous	88%	88%	88%	89%	88%	87%	88%
Difference	-27%	-26%	-27%	-26%	-27%	-27%	-27%
Indigenous—Provincial	79%	79%	80%	79%	79%	78%	79%
Indigenous—Remote	70%	69%	68%	70%	65%	64%	63%
Indigenous—Very Remote	51%	53%	52%	54%	51%	50%	50%
Indigenous—Pre school	57%	58%	58%	58%	55%	55%	55%
Indigenous—Primary	66%	67%	67%	68%	67%	67%	67%
Indigenous—Secondary	54%	53%	53%	56%	53%	52%	51%

Note: Numbers may not sum due to rounding. The greyed cells are the pre-IES years.

SOURCE: ENROLMENT AND ATTENDANCE DATASET

The share of Indigenous students attending at least four days is considerably lower in Very Remote schools (19 per cent) compared to Remote (41 per cent) and Provincial (65 per cent) schools. The rates at Remote and Very Remote schools fell in 2015, before increasing in 2016 and 2017, although the Remote rate was still below its pre-IES point, and the Very Remote rate was equivalent to its pre-IES point. In contrast, the share of Indigenous students attending at least four days at Provincial schools increased relative to its pre-IES level.

The lack of improvement in this metric for Remote and Very Remote students (and in attendance rates—see Box 3.1) may indicate the need to reconsider the design of the remote attendance programs currently being implemented (see section 2.5.2).

KEY FINDING 11 ELEMENT 4 (ENGAGEMENT)—IMPACT

The proportion of Indigenous students attending four or more days was 33 per cent in 2017, a slight increase from 32 per cent in 2014.

Since 2014, the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students has fallen three percentage points to 51 per cent, in part due to a decrease in the proportion of non-Indigenous students attending four or more days. In overall proportion of days attended, the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students has been considerably smaller, at 27 per cent for each of the three years of the IES. This indicates that there is a wider distribution across the number of days attended per week by Indigenous students compared to non-Indigenous students (which are concentrated in the four or five days a week attendance groups).

3.5 Element 5: Workforce

The 10 year target for the Workforce Element is: ‘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.’

In 2016, the proportion of Remote and Very Remote government schools with the same or higher mean NAPLAN score relative to similar schools was 24 per cent, an increase from 20 per cent in 2014 (Table 3.7). This improvement can be attributed to Very Remote schools, as the share of Remote schools at or above like schools in NAPLAN fell from 16 per cent to 14 per cent.

TABLE 3.7 REMOTE AND VERY REMOTE SCHOOLS AT OR ABOVE LIKE SCHOOLS IN NAPLAN

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Remote and Very Remote	22%	17%	20%	22%	24%
Difference from 50%	-28%	-33%	-30%	-28%	-26%
Remote only	25%	18%	16%	14%	14%
Very Remote only	21%	17%	22%	25%	27%

Note: A school's ICSEA value is used to select a group of up to 60 schools with students from statistically similar backgrounds. Schools with students who have similar levels of educational advantage will have similar ICSEA values, even though schools in their group can be located in other parts of Australia and may have different facilities and resources. These schools are called similar schools. An average NAPLAN result is calculated for these schools to enable comparison with the selected school's own NAPLAN results. This comparison can be found in all presentations of NAPLAN results on My School. Special schools do not have an ICSEA value, and therefore do not have similar schools. Also, senior secondary schools do not have NAPLAN results, and therefore do not have ICSEA values or similar schools. The greyed cells are the pre-IES years.

SOURCE: NAPLAN, MYSCHOOL

School workforce retention rates have also been increasing since the beginning of the IES, which may indicate a positive impact of the Workforce Element (Box 3.2).

BOX 3.2 WORKFORCE COMPOSITION AND RETENTION

The size of the school workforce has increased since the beginning of the IES, including the number of Indigenous staff members (Table 3.8).

The teacher retention rate shows the extent to which teachers are staying in the NT school system and so a high retention rate indicates that more teachers are gaining experience teaching in NT schools.

The retention rate of Indigenous school staff has increased each year under the IES, reducing the difference between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous retention rates to four percentage points by 2016-17.

The Indigenous retention rate has improved by 8 per cent since the introduction of the IES, while the non-Indigenous retention rate has remained relatively stable. This suggests that the Workforce Action is impacting more positively on the Indigenous workforce, contributing to closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff.

TABLE 3.8 WORKFORCE COMPOSITION AND RETENTION

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Indigenous workforce	521	568	490	517	571
Non-indigenous workforce	3,569	3,451	3,232	3,340	3,407
Total	4,090	4,019	3,722	3,857	3,978
Share Indigenous	13%	14%	13%	13%	14%
Indigenous retention rate	79%	75%	74%	78%	82%
Non-indigenous retention rate	85%	84%	83%	86%	86%
Indigenous retention rate—Provincial	87%	84%	83%	87%	86%
Indigenous retention rate—Remote	74%	81%	78%	74%	84%
Indigenous retention rate—Very Remote	78%	71%	71%	76%	80%

Note: numbers may not sum due to rounding.

Note: Retention rates have been calculated by dividing the number of staff who were retained at the end of the year by the number of staff at the start of the same year.

SOURCE: STAFF ACTIVITY DATASET

KEY FINDING 12 ELEMENT 5 (WORKFORCE)—IMPACT

In 2016, the proportion of Remote and Very Remote government schools with the same or higher mean NAPLAN score relative to similar schools was 24 per cent, an increase from 20 per cent in 2014. This improvement has been largely in Very Remote schools, with the share of Remote schools at or above like schools in NAPLAN falling from 16 per cent to 14 per cent.

3.6 Measuring impact

The Stage 1 Evaluation has endeavoured to examine the impact of the Elements in relation to each of the 10 year targets, acknowledging that many of the Actions will take more than the first three years to generate change (either due to the focus of the IES on development and preparation or to the longitudinal nature of the outcomes).

Part of the challenge in measuring impact at the Action-level is that the documented key performance indicators (KPIs) for each Action are generally specified in terms of outputs rather than the anticipated

short or medium term outcomes. As a consequence, limited data have been collected regarding local-level impacts generated by the Actions, which could be addressed in Stage 2 by:

- Collection of school-level data that provides relevant measurement at the local level and can be aggregated as required
- Greater use of quantitative indicators, including the use of targets, to improve the assessment of progress and performance over time
- Establishing targets that Actions can influence within the required timeframes and which relate directly to the objectives
- Increased collection of longitudinal data, collected at regular points in defined timeframes, to track change.

Specific examples of opportunities to improve such evaluative data collection in Stage 2 are provided in **Table 3.9** below.

TABLE 3.9 MEASURING IMPACT – LESSONS FROM STAGE 1

Element	Key lessons	Potential strategies
1. Foundations	<p>Data gaps in relation to short-term outcomes, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – E1A2 ‘The assessment process, purpose and outcomes are clear to all stakeholders including families’ – E1A6 ‘Preschool teachers and program advisors have the necessary skills and knowledge’ 	Collect data on perspectives of local level stakeholders, potentially through surveys or short self-assessments
2. Essentials	<p>Quantitative data gaps, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – E2A2 ‘Number of staff turnover’ or ‘Number of trained staff delivering GGSA high fidelity DI programme’ <p>Potential to improve specificity of measures, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – E2A3 ‘The number of Northern Territory schools contributing to the achievement of system determined student performance targets through an improvement agenda’ 	Develop specific indicators and targets associated with each Action, which will improve clarity on data needs
3. Pathways	<p>Potential to improve usability of data by focusing on the local level, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – E3A2 ‘Transition and support provided to at least 70 per cent of remote and very remote schools’ <p>Need to develop outcomes and measures for key deliverables, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – E3A3 highlights measures for some deliverables, but is silent on measurement of outcomes associated with the transition from boarding school to further study or work 	<p>Replace aggregated measures with local equivalents that can be used to track local and collective impact</p> <p>Development of a comprehensive data collection strategy that captures outcomes and indicators across the IES</p>

Element	Key lessons	Potential strategies
4. Engagement	<p>Evaluation would benefit from greater qualitative data on impact and value, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – E4A1 originally planned for school perception surveys on the value of the Engagement Charters <p>Consistent data collection methods and definitions are necessary for cross-school comparisons, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – E4A2 highlighted the need for common standards and definitions in monitoring attendance 	<p>Strengthen approaches to leveraging qualitative data to understand why initiatives succeed</p> <p>Establish a 'data dictionary' for collecting information at the school-level</p>
5. Workforce	Data gaps in relation to tracking individuals over time, which is particularly important when measuring the effectiveness of workforce initiatives	Establish data systems and processes to collect longitudinal data on individual employees

3.7 Summary

While there is evidence of progress towards the 10 year targets over the first three years of the IES, it has been uneven.

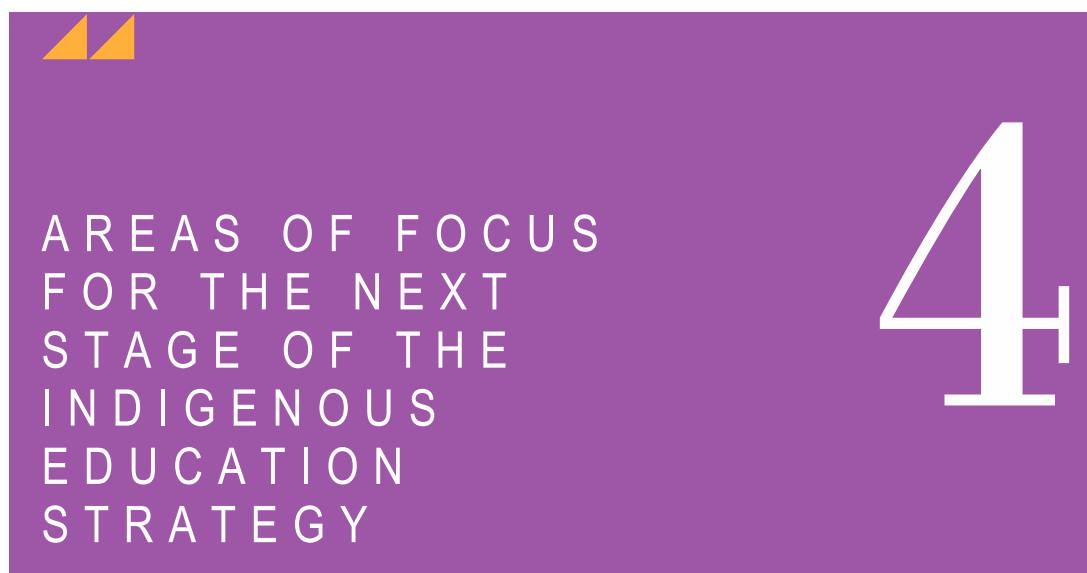
NAPLAN results for Indigenous students are volatile over time, so it is not possible to draw strong conclusions over a three-year period. There are early indications, however, that the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students is shrinking in Years 3, 5, and 9, while in Year 7 the gap has increased slightly. These results show broad signs of improvement; notwithstanding the gaps in NAPLAN results are still large, with, for example, only a third of Indigenous students achieving the reading NMS in Year 5, compared to 90 per cent of non-Indigenous students. There is also a large gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the proportion completing the NTCET, which has been steady since 2014.

That said, substantial impact of the IES on NAPLAN scores and NTCET attainment rates is not to be expected at this stage of IES implementation. Key IES Actions aimed at improving literacy and numeracy skills (particularly LANE (E2A1)) will only be fully implemented in 2018, and the impact of other Actions (such as FaFT (E1A1) and other Foundation Actions) on NAPLAN results will take at least a few more years.

The proportion of Indigenous students attending four or more days was 33 per cent in 2017, a slight increase from 2014. The overall gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students has fallen four percentage points since the start of the IES, reflecting that the proportion of non-Indigenous students attending four or more days has decreased over the same time.

The share of Indigenous students attending at least four days is considerably lower in Very Remote schools (16 per cent) compared to Remote (41 per cent) and Provincial (65 per cent) schools. The Remote rate fell from its pre-IES point, and the Very Remote rate was equivalent to its pre-IES point.

The lack of improvement in this metric for Remote and Very Remote students (and in attendance rates) may indicate the need to reconsider the design of SEAM and RSAS, acknowledging they have been in operation since 2013 and 2014 respectively.



Stage 1 of the IES has seen considerable activity and achievements across the 25 Actions, particularly in FaFT (E1A1), DI (E2A2), the TSU (E3A2), EP (E3A3, E3A4, and E3A5) and the Girls' Engagement programs (E4A3). Some of the Actions were not able to be progressed at the pace initially envisaged, with the time used to gain a better understanding of the resources and tools required to enable successful implementation, and to address any critical constraints.

As such, the first three years have been important in setting the foundation for the IES, allowing development of the frameworks and resources necessary to be able to commence implementation of the IES Actions as an integrated package. With these key tools and resources firmly established, the next stage can now focus on ensuring effective operation at the school level.

This chapter draws on the evidence gathered by the Evaluation and the findings in the previous two chapters to set out suggestions and recommendations for the future implementation of the IES.

The chapter and recommendations are organised as follows:

- IES management—bedding down management and funding approaches
- IES structure—configuring the IES to incorporate the achievements and lessons to date
- IES roll out—scaling the IES in ways that will help maximise outcomes with available resources
- Reporting and monitoring—capturing data to encourage and support reflexive monitoring and action.

4.1 Indigenous Education Strategy management

A dedicated section was established within the Department in 2014 to drive and oversee implementation of the IES. This team (internally referred to as the IERI—Indigenous Education Review Implementation) has specific responsibility for one IES Action (the Transition Support Unit), with the other 24 Actions residing in relevant policy areas of the Department. As an example, the Foundations Actions are managed by the Early Childhood Policy and Regulation section.

The IERI section has played a significant role in driving and overseeing project establishment and implementation in Stage 1 of the IES, focusing the Department on a key policy challenge and ensuring an emphasis on Indigenous education. Without this dedicated team, it is likely less progress would have been made and more issues would have arisen in rolling out the IES.

IERI ensured each section of the Department rigorously designed its Actions, and tracked and monitored implementation across the 25 Actions. It provided the IES with continuous prominence within the NT Government and the school system, and with a direct line of reporting and influence to Department executives. The IERI section also offered a central point of contact for stakeholders on the IES, including the Australian Government which funded a number of the Actions.

As the IES activity in the central office transitions to Stage 2, it is important that the IERI function be maintained to continue to drive and monitor implementation of the IES. As the weight of IES activity shifts from planning to school implementation, the roles, responsibilities and resourcing of the IERI section should be revised, potentially also its name, to ensure it has all the capabilities required for the school implementation phase of the IES.

RECOMMENDATION 1

That a dedicated implementation function within the Department be continued throughout Stage 2, but with a shift in emphasis from setup and management of the Actions to assisting schools and regional offices with their implementation.

The progressive integration of the IES into the relevant sections of the Department provides the opportunity to transition the IES to core business operations at the end of the 10 year strategy. There will be a delicate balance to strike between maintaining a dedicated Indigenous education focus to ensure momentum is continued, and 'mainstreaming' activities once they become mature.

There are already a number of Actions that are being applied across all schools, not just Remote and Very Remote (such as FaFT and Behaviour Management) and others should be assessed for integration with the Department's overall business strategy, especially the current Education NT Strategy 2018-2022.

The incorporation of the IES into normal business operations can provide a number of benefits, including a reduction in head office project and reporting processes, and simplification of implementation for schools.

Prior to such a move however, it is essential that significant progress is made on the IES 10 year targets (refer chapter 3), so that even if the targets are not reached by 2025, there is a clear trend of significant progress towards that achievement of the targets (that is, closing the achievement and attendance gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students). Remote and Very Remote schools should also see considerable improvement in capacity and community ownership prior to the IES that may also allow the focus to shift from a specific initiative to being integrated into normal business. These two components, namely progress against targets and community capacity, are important enablers for the successful implementation and maintenance of the IES Actions.

RECOMMENDATION 2

That an explicit objective for Stage 2 of the IES is for the Actions to become progressively part of normal school and Department operations.

Throughout Stage 1, multiple funding streams have been used to support the development and implementation of the Actions under the IES. Some funding was provided directly to the NT Department of Education for dedicated programs, such as FaFT (E1A1) and Girls' Engagement (E4A3). For DI (E2A2), the Australian Government funded Good to Great Schools Australia to manage the program, which in turn engaged the National Institute for Direct Instruction (from the USA) to provide resources and coaching to DI schools. While not directly part of the IES, the Australian Government also funds and manages SEAM and RSAS in the NT, which are a focus of the Align SEAM Action (E4A4).

The Australian Government funding and other support for the IES has been important in the Stage 1 development of a comprehensive strategy to address Indigenous educational disadvantage in the NT. The variety of funding approaches, however, has involved some administrative complexity in relation to:

- Reconciling competing timeframes
- Engaging with different governance models

- Aligning policy objectives and areas of focus.

For example, Commonwealth funding directed efforts towards initiatives in Remote and Very Remote schools meant that additional effort was required to ensure alignment between activities targeting these contexts and the general school population. DI is an example where the funding model required complex governance arrangements and additional work to ensure all organisations were operating in concert with the broader NT school education system. A further example included the Align SEAM Action, where schools reported that it was challenging to identify and work with responsible agencies for various components of the attendance activities.

In Stage 2, opportunities should be further explored to simplify funding approaches and ensure they are consistent with the overall IES. This could include examining opportunities to pool funding to leverage existing resources, to increase flexibility in the delivery of Actions, and to streamline reporting processes for collaboratively funded activities. A reduction in complexity and streamlined governance arrangements could provide greater strategy-level and program-level stability and coherence, and also assist with the aims of Recommendation 2 to progressively move the IES Actions to be part of normal operation.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That opportunities be sought to consolidate funding for related activities to improve strategy and action-level implementation. This should include the exploration of common objectives, governance, and reporting to streamline administrative processes and enable the progressive shift of IES Actions to normal school and Department operations.

4.2 Indigenous Education Strategy design

The Stage 1 Actions provide a rich set of experiences and lessons to inform the Stage 2 project design and implementation. The specific lessons from each Action are available in Appendices B – F, and key examples are discussed below.

There has been a lack of progress in improving Indigenous student attendance over Stage 1 of the IES (see section 3.4). The SEAM and RSAS programs have been in place since 2013 and 2014 respectively, but attendance figures reveal no evidence that they are having the desired impact of encouraging families to send their children to school, despite considerable resources and effort. Stage 2 of the IES presents an opportunity to explore other options to improve attendance rates, including through greater engagement of communities in how their schools are run and an improved focus on meaningful participation in learning.

The policy on secondary schooling in remote communities has evolved through Stage 1 of the IES. While initial concerns around the viability of such provision led to a policy focused on boarding school options for remote secondary school students, over time policy has shifted to place a greater emphasis on secondary provision in remote communities. There may be an opportunity to learn from this evolution to inform future policy in this area and to better communicate policy settings to remote communities.

The design and implementation of Stage 2 projects can also draw on evidence from the case studies which point to possible areas of specific focus for the IES. One example raised regularly was the issue of students attending boarding school and being sent back to their community for misbehaviour, where many do not re-attend the local school and some disengage from formal education. It is not within scope for this Evaluation to examine new program responses, but future design of IES projects could consider where such emerging needs could be addressed within existing or by additional projects.

A strong theme of the case study consultations was the importance to schools and communities of Indigenous languages and culture education. Some schools and communities saw Indigenous languages and culture education as being deprioritised in the early parts of Stage 1 of the IES, and expressed interest in the forthcoming Indigenous Languages and Culture Policy Action (E2A5). The

roll out of this curriculum, scheduled for 2018, is likely to be well received and should be informed by lessons from schools that have maintained a strong Indigenous languages and culture program in recent years.

RECOMMENDATION 4

That Action-specific lessons from Stage 1 be addressed in the design of Stage 2, in particular the opportunity to re-focus attendance programs in order to make greater progress on improving attendance rates, and the enhancement of supports to re-engage students who return to community before graduating from boarding school.

4.3 Indigenous Education Strategy roll out

With considerable work having gone into developing frameworks, resources and tools under the IES, it is important that schools are well supported to take-up and maximise the use of these materials. Through the evaluation of the first three years of the IES, schools regularly noted the need for additional support to implement Actions, particularly those that were new activities for their school.

This could be facilitated by translating the IES and its Actions into a school-ready format by tailoring the current IES Element-Action framework to better align with how schools view education policy and its implementation. Ideally the revised framework would be customisable by individual schools to reflect the set of Actions each are implementing.

The revised framing should be used by regional offices when communicating with schools about the IES, and would likely be more suitable for broader community outreach regarding the IES. This approach will better place schools to explain the IES to their communities, take advantages of interlinkages between Actions, and support the community-led schools policy.

The school-ready format should integrate with other key Department processes, importantly the School Improvement Plans each school must develop annually as driven by the Education NT Strategy 2018-2022. Ensuring relevant IES Actions, and their interactions, can be directly incorporated into schools' annual planning provides Principals and other school leaders greater opportunity to integrate the IES Actions' materials into their school's operations.

The recast implementation function (Recommendation 1) should lead these efforts, with support from head office project managers.

RECOMMENDATION 5

That the focus of Stage 2 of the IES and its components be on supporting school-based implementation of Actions. This may involve translation of Actions into local school contexts, including through mapping the projects to a common customisable framework. The dedicated implementation function (Recommendation 1) should lead these efforts, with support from head office project managers.

To assist with IES implementation over Stage 2, the Department should consider a revised framework for supporting schools in the implementation of the IES. While Stage 1 focused on geographic groupings of schools, case studies and consultations identified that location was not the primary factor impacting on implementation of Actions – rather, school capability and resourcing were the key influences.

While the regional office structure will remain as a geographical imperative, schools may be able to be better grouped or differentiated based on their capability and stage of reform. The McKinsey framework, which describes the improvement journey of a school system across four points (poor to fair, fair to good, good to great, and great to excellent) could be adapted to the school level (Moursshed, Chijioke, & Barber 2010).

A revised grouping of schools would allow a consistent approach to schools based on the level and status of their need, and could drive resourcing, support and schools' levels of autonomy. For some schools, IES case managers or translators could provide on-the-ground support on how to integrate and implement IES Actions. This approach would impact on support provided from both head and regional offices, which would need to be revised in accordance with the model adopted.

By designing the IES school support system to meet the different implementation capacity of different schools, projects are more likely to be implemented with high fidelity and therefore have the desired impact.

RECOMMENDATION 6

That the structure for head office and region-based support for Stage 2 IES implementation be reviewed to enable a greater focus on schools with similar needs rather than just their geographical location *per se*.

The case studies and School Assessments provided evidence that some schools were concerned about the extent and scale of the improvement agenda over the last three years—in particular, the time required to be devoted to the reforms was observed to lead to a lack of depth in the implementation of Actions, particularly in small schools.

The Department is cognisant of the scale of the IES and the number of other parallel reforms being introduced in schools. The implementation of IES Actions in schools has been staged purposefully to reduce the likelihood of schools having to implement too many projects concurrently.

A review of administrative support to schools in the NT is due to report in late 2017, which could be used as a catalyst to improve how assistance is provided, particularly to small schools with teaching Principals.

RECOMMENDATION 7

That the current staging approach is continued, and strengthened where possible, to focus on reducing the administrative burden on schools, particularly for small schools, and free up capacity in schools to implement the IES.

In the NT, as elsewhere, education outcomes are impacted by many factors outside of the formal school system, including students' health, safety, housing conditions, and level of family support.

Parts of the IES are designed to address these social determinants of education outcomes, particularly the work to support CFCs (E1A6) and FaFT (E1A1). The CFCs require close working with the other NT Government departments which provide services through the CFCs and this work has been central to progressing the IES CFCs Action. Case studies and School Assessments noted the benefits of the CFCs which were seen to leverage opportunities to engage community members and address multiple needs through one connected activity.

Under Stage 2 implementation of the IES, further opportunities should be sought to work to address the social conditions which impact education outcomes in coordination with other NT Government departments. The 10 year 'Starting Early for a Better Future' NT whole of government strategy for early childhood development (in draft form at November 2017) may provide an opportunity for this increased collaboration with other departments.

RECOMMENDATION 8

That opportunities are sought to further integrate the IES with the work of other NT Government departments to improve the broader range of outcomes for students.



4.4 Indigenous Education Strategy reporting and monitoring

Consultations undertaken for the Evaluation indicate there has been considerable central office stakeholder engagement activity. The IERI team has played an important role, helping lead the IES with external stakeholders. IERI staff, together with Department staff, have travelled to schools and communities to discuss the IES and its implementation with parents, students, teachers, and community members. Regional Directors played a key intermediating role in these discussions. Both the case studies and School Assessments demonstrated that this initial consultation was highly valued by schools and the community.

For the implementation of Actions for Stage 1 of the IES, communication was rightly focused on raising awareness about the IES and preparing for its implementation, and the resultant stakeholder engagement to date has informed the modification of some parts of the IES. The evaluation did identify, however, that the feedback mechanisms between schools and the Department did not always provide sufficient information or adequately focus on translating the IES into local school contexts.

School Assessments indicated that 35 per cent of Principals felt the IES and its associated elements were well understood, with 36 per cent reporting their school was well informed about its role in implementing IES Actions.⁸ Qualitative responses indicated that there was a desire for more information, increased community consultation and the tailoring of initiatives to the school context.⁹ Case study visits identified that many schools were undertaking activities in line with the IES for historical or other reasons, rather than as result of a clear understanding of the strategic direction of the IES. This was similarly supported through the School Assessments.

Associated with the recommended shift to concentrate on school implementation (Recommendation 5) is the requirement for targeted consultation and feedback mechanisms. The Department should shift engagement efforts to closer engagement between central functions and school communities to contextualise the intent of the Actions.


The shift to local implementation will also increase the requirement for formalised feedback mechanisms between schools and head office to ensure oversight and allow the opportunity to monitor and adjust implementation as required. This may require the regional support model to be strengthened, potentially with dedicated 'case managers' working with a small number of schools, to engage with local stakeholders and tailor the implementation of IES Actions. This would facilitate monitoring of implementation, collection of local data, and the iterative improvement of implementation approaches, as required. The dedicated implementation function within the Department should be a focal point of this effort.

⁸ Detailed analysis of these survey questions is provided at Appendix A.

⁹ In relation to the question 'What do you see as the enablers and barriers to implementation of the broader IES?', 20 per cent of School Assessment responses identified communication as a key obstacle. Representative responses included: 'Clear communication of the what how and why of the specific project', 'Not continuing to consult with and seek feedback from schools and communities' and 'Some of the projects or programs are not as differentiated for each school context. In relation to the question 'Are there areas in which the IES implementation could improve?', 30 per cent of School Assessment responses identified communication processes as an opportunity for improvement. Representative response: 'Have office staff who have a clear understanding of the IES implementation come out on the ground and explain to the local members of community what IES implementation is all about and why it is important'.

RECOMMENDATION 9

That connections and communication links between the Department and school communities in Stage 2 focus on the translation of the IES to school-based implementation. This could involve the establishment of formal reporting and feedback mechanisms between individual schools and central functions to address the specific actions applicable to the school and the nature of their implementation within the school. The dedicated implementation function within the Department should be a focal point of this effort.




Interviews with Department staff indicate that reporting and monitoring continues to be a challenge for the IES. There is a premium on data which can assist with measuring the impact of Actions, and with tracking implementation and taking reflexive action, even re-design, as it is required. The challenge of collecting such data can be seen in the experience of the Benchmarks Action (E2A3), which due to issues around implementation fidelity, has not yet been able to produce system-wide student assessment data.

There is a need for better systems to capture data to support both outcome measurement and to provide data which allows for adjustment and refinement of implementation. As discussed in section 3.6, system-wide student assessments are important parts of this, but measures of interim outcomes, such as student engagement and teacher capability, are also critical to allowing head office to assess progress and reorient implementation if needed. For example, better tracking of students when they transition to boarding school (and possibly return to community), would assist with implementation of the TSU Action.

Across the Stage 2 projects, there is an opportunity to clearly specify which data will be collected, how the data will be linked to other datasets, those responsible for collecting, cleaning and using the data and a template for data collection. This could also include a specification of how the data will be analysed once collected—to ensure the data collected are valuable and will meet the reporting and evaluation needs of the Department.

RECOMMENDATION 10

That IES Actions establish consistent local school-level data capture processes to support both outcome measurement and to provide data which allows for ongoing evaluation, adjustment and refinement of implementation.



The evaluation strategy for Stage 2 of the IES should focus on delivering the evidence regarding the impact of key Actions.

Most evaluations have components of process evaluation (how the policy is implemented) and impact evaluation (changes that can be attributed the policy). The Stage 1 evaluation, taking place early in the IES, has had a process focus. The transition to Stage 2 provides an opportunity to bring a greater focus to impact evaluation of the IES, and its specific actions.


It will be important that the evaluation strategy for Stage 2 of the IES focus on capturing the evidence regarding the impact of key Actions. The transition to Stage 2 provides the opportunity to embed evaluative methods to monitor the impact of the IES, and its specific Actions, and inform the subsequent stage of the IES. These should be based on consistent frameworks and program logics, but be locally-tailored to better understand the impacts and causal relationships.

The Stage 2 evaluation could consider particularly rigorous measurement of the impact of a small number of key IES Actions. These Actions should be those intended to have a significant impact in important areas (for example, literacy and numeracy). For these specific cases, it may be justifiable to employ experimental evaluation design to ensure casualty can be drawn from the project to the impacts—such an approach is likely to be prohibitively costly to apply across all of the IES projects.

There is some experience of experimental evaluation design in Stage 1 of the IES, with a randomised control trial carried out of an Australian Government attendance program in one community. Lessons could be drawn from this experience to inform evaluation of Stage 2 projects.

RECOMMENDATION 11

That the evaluation approach for Stage 2 utilise the locally-embedded data capture to measure the impact of key identified IES projects, using experimental design where appropriate to evidence causality, and that these project-specific findings are used both to evaluate Stage 2 and inform the Stage 3 approach.




The Stage 1 evaluation has benefited from the participation of a wide range of stakeholders, including school Principals, other school staff, Department officials, service providers, and peak bodies, among others. This broad participation has allowed the Evaluation to collect and synthesise considerable evidence on Stage 1 implementation. Other evaluations, such as the FaFT-specific evaluation and the aforementioned evaluation of an attendance program, have also collected valuable evidence.

The benefits of this evidence collection could be enhanced by sharing the findings and outputs of the evaluations associated with the IES with staff in schools and the Department head and regional offices, and with key stakeholders outside the Department. This could allow others to learn from the evaluations, and potentially improve their practice.

RECOMMENDATION 12

That the findings and outputs of the evaluations associated with the IES are published and communicated to key stakeholders, within both schools and the Department, to assist with practice improvement.





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APPENDICES

There are three appendices:

- Appendix A sets out survey results on IES implementation
- Appendix B to Appendix F reports on Action level implementation under each of Elements 1-5 respectively
- Appendix G sets out the Action summary table sources.



As part of the 2016 Assessment process (carried out in March-April 2017), Department Project Managers and School Principals provided feedback on the IES at the strategy level. These results are compared to responses provided in the 2015 Assessments below. Respondents were also asked to self-assess progress on relevant Actions—these results are discussed where relevant in Appendices B-F.

A.1 Understanding of the IES

The 2016 Assessment results show that in the year since the 2015 Assessment, there has been an increase in how well the IES is understood within schools, and how well the IES is understood across the Department (**Figure A.1**).

The share of Principals who either 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' that the IES and its elements are well understood within their respective schools is 35 per cent, an increase of 8 percentage points from 2015. Greater improvement is seen within the Department Assessments, with an increase of 20 percentage points in the number of Project Managers who 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' that the IES is well understood across the Department (53 per cent in 2016 relative to 33 per cent in 2015).

Notwithstanding the increase, still only approximately a third of Principals report that the IES is well understood in their school. The Assessment responses suggest this is driven by a number of factors. In some cases teachers are familiar with the parts of the IES they are involved in but not with the strategy overall¹⁰, and some Principals see the IES as a policy-level strategy which is less important for teachers and students to have direct contact with.¹¹ Others report that high staff turnover means that at any one time there is a share of teachers who are not yet familiar with school system reforms such as the IES.¹²

Department Project Managers report a greater increase in understanding of the IES across the Department, with a majority (52 per cent) agreeing with this statement (compared to 33 per cent in 2015). This change is likely due, at least in part, to the increasing number of IES Actions which have completed their design phase and are now being implemented with accompanying communication within and outside the Department.¹³ This includes increased understanding at the regional office

¹⁰ A representative response: 'All elements are understood but their links to the IES is tenuous and unclear for most staff (especially new staff).'

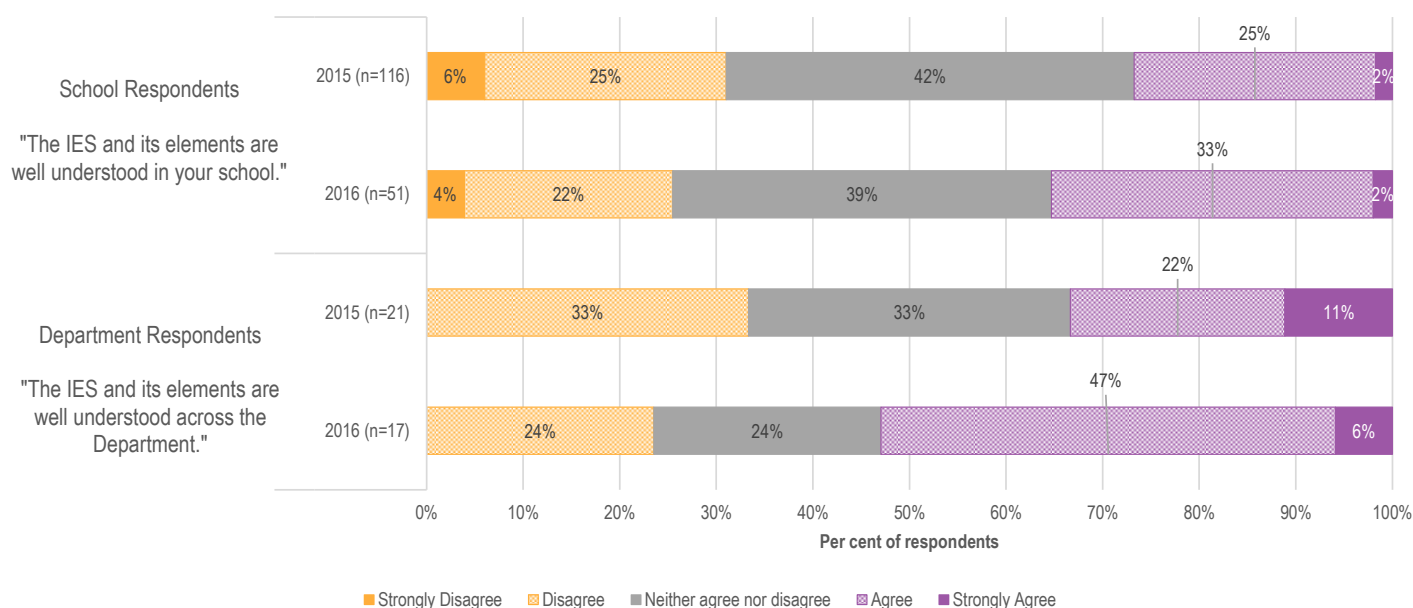
¹¹ A representative response: 'The IES is well understood by the Principal because it is my business to understand it. As it filters down through the staff structure the strength of the understanding dilutes and becomes a "Need-to-know" basis.'

¹² A representative response: 'yes the staff do have an understanding because they have been part of the process but new staff or graduates have had no experience with IES.'

¹³ A relevant response: 'Understanding about the project, the deliverables and objectives evolved throughout 2016. As deliverables were finalised and stakeholders informed, understandings about the project were further understood.' And: 'Numerous workshops and information sessions have been held both centrally and also in regions. Documents have been produced and forwarded to relevant stakeholders.'

level.¹⁴ Project Managers report that there is an opportunity for better sharing of information about IES implementation within head office.¹⁵

FIGURE A.1 UNDERSTANDING OF THE IES AND ITS ELEMENTS



SOURCE: DEPARTMENT AND SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

More than a third (36 per cent) of Principals 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' that their school is well informed about its role in implementing IES Actions, 15 percentage points more than in the previous Assessment. Respondents point to support from regional offices¹⁶, Principal Business Days, the IES newsletter¹⁷ and one-on-one communication from head office as key to informing schools of their role.¹⁸ Of those that do not feel informed, some report being new to their role/school¹⁹ while others argue that communication about the IES Actions has been insufficient.²⁰

Project Managers are less certain schools are well informed of the role of schools in implementing IES Actions—only 19 per cent agree with this statement (**Figure A.2**). Respondents indicate that whether schools are well informed depends on the extent to which Principals and regional office staff are proactive in communicating with each other and head office²¹, and that in some cases schools understand relevant Actions, but not the 'overarching strategy and why/how it is being implemented.'²²

¹⁴ A relevant response: 'It has been interesting to see the journey that some take in coming to an understanding. Regional Directors who are key to implementation have grown in their understanding but this has taken considerable time in some respects.'

¹⁵ A representative response: 'There may have been more opportunity to provide linkages and synergies across projects through IES meetings and communications. IES management for the project I worked on provided little communication and direction in terms of understanding the projects and networking across the department. More opportunity in this area would have been welcomed.'

¹⁶ A representative response: '[we are informed] through the Barkly regional office.'

¹⁷ A representative response: 'Have attended meetings, it gets on the Principal Business Days agenda, read the newsletter and also the Implementation Plan, have been proactive about find out about actions to improve the student learning at school.'

¹⁸ A representative response: 'We were given direct information at Principals Business meetings. We had meetings with [the IES implementation manager] where we could voice any concerns and get immediate feedback. The PaRR support team are up to date with actions and clearly relay them to our school.'

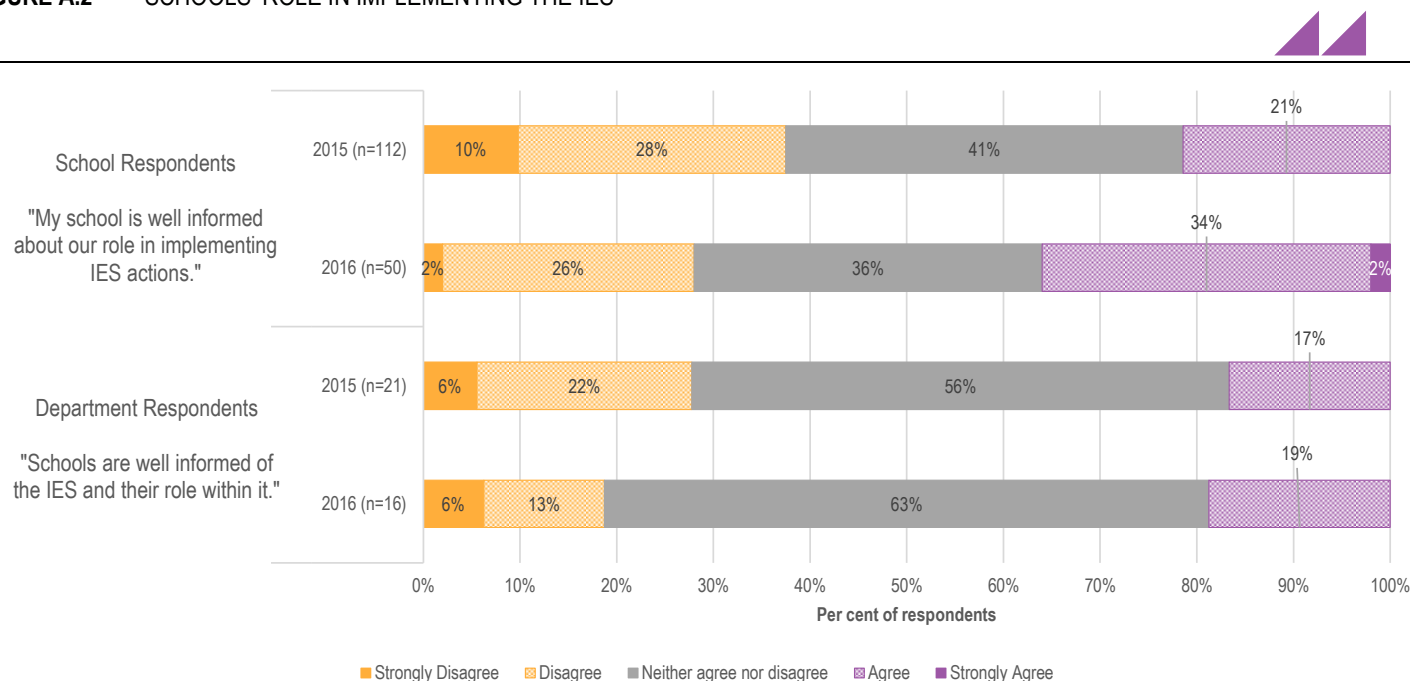
¹⁹ A representative response: 'As I am new in this role, I feel that I have not yet been able to establish a clear understanding of our schools role in the implementation of IES actions.'

²⁰ Responses include: 'An obscure excel matrix on the sharepoint site was the only documentation which told us which IES project we were meant to be implementing.' And 'No we have not had any support or information on the ground since the first investigation into Indigenous education.'

²¹ A relevant response: 'Where Principals are proactive and wanting to know, yes. Where RDs are working with their schools to know, yes. At least in so far as they impact on them.'

²² A relevant response: 'in our work with schools we do not hear a lot of discussion about the IES, I think schools are aware of individual projects but not an overarching strategy and why/how it is being implemented. I have occasionally seen IES posters in front offices/principals offices around schools.'

FIGURE A.2 SCHOOLS' ROLE IN IMPLEMENTING THE IES



SOURCE: DEPARTMENT AND SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Overall, the results show that schools and the Department have a better understanding of the IES relative to a year ago. There is a larger positive shift in the results of Project Managers compared to schools, although more schools are reporting to be well informed about their role in the IES. Despite this, the results indicate more could be done to improve understanding of the IES in the Department and in schools.

A.2 Interlinkages within the IES

Schools and the Department report slight improvements in how well interlinkages between IES actions are utilised relative to a year ago (**Figure A.3**).

More than a third of Principals indicate that their school is taking advantage of interlinkages between different IES Actions.²³ Where Principals disagree with this statement, they point to new staff still familiarising themselves with their IES Actions²⁴ and to teachers being time poor and unable to spend time seeking out linkages.²⁵

Most Project Managers (78 per cent) consider their section in the Department to be utilising interlinkages with different parts of the IES.²⁶ In some cases this appears to be systematised²⁷, while in other cases forming links has relied more on individuals²⁸ or happenstance.²⁹ Where Project Managers report not taking advantages of interlinkages, they put this down to 'not [being] encouraged to seek out information from other work units' or to other units being 'so busy focusing on their projects that the connections are slow to develop.'

²³ A representative response: 'important in implementation that people don't see each action or activity separately, - must see it all as contributing to improved outcomes for Indigenous students, nor different people working in isolation.'

²⁴ A representative response: 'Actions are still being understood and discussed amongst new staff in the school'

²⁵ A representative response: 'The communications through Web Newsletters is good but time poor teachers are challenged to spend the time required to investigate inter-linkages.'

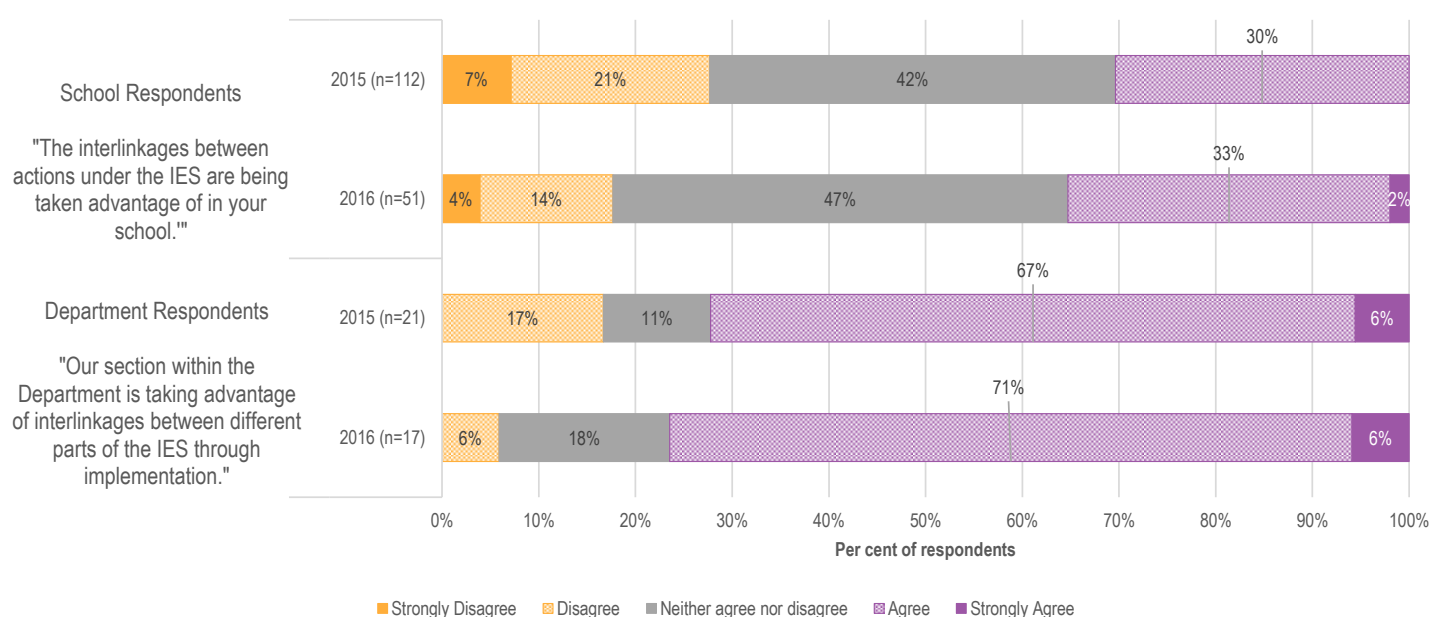
²⁶ A relevant response: 'Through the IES strategy, the Industry Engagement and Employment Pathways business unit is now working closely with other sections in the Department. In particular Health and Well-Being, Curriculum, Early Childhood, Attendance and the Transition Support unit.'

²⁷ A relevant response: 'Networking with all stakeholders is an integral part of our units service delivery'

²⁸ A relevant response: 'Establishing and taking advantages of interlinkages has been dependent on individuals.'

²⁹ A relevant response: 'These linkages have been developed through research and incidental meetings. There has little pro-active planning in this area.'

FIGURE A.3 CAPITALISING ON INTERLINKAGES BETWEEN IES ACTIONS



SOURCE: DEPARTMENT AND SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

A.3 Consistency and autonomy

The IES has sought to balance system-wide effort and school autonomy, as outlined in one of the five IES principles:

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.

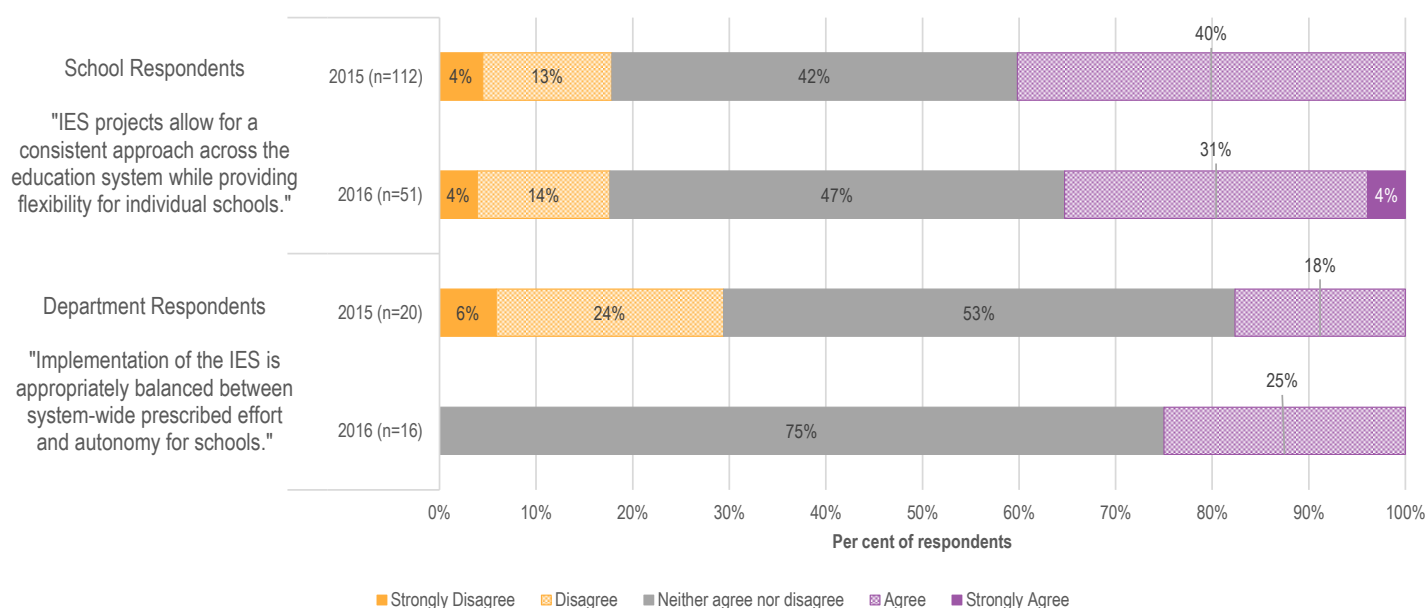
One in four Project Managers (25 per cent) reported the right balance has been struck between system-wide prescribed effort and consistency, up from 18 per cent in 2015; and in the 2016 Assessment no respondents disagreed that the IES appropriately balanced between these two characteristics. Where Project Managers report this is working well, they indicate head office is working directly with regions, schools and communities, and incorporating their feedback.³⁰ In most cases, however, respondents did not feel well placed to comment on the balance between system-wide prescribed effort and consistency.

While more Principals see the IES as getting this balance right, the share of Principals reporting this has fallen from 40 per cent to 35 per cent since the 2015 Assessment. It is not clear what has caused this relatively small fall. Some Principals see the IES as introducing greater consistency but less flexibility³¹ and are as yet undecided on whether the balance is right.³²

³⁰ A relevant response: 'Curriculum is being re-written based on feedback and schools are encouraged and supported with how to adapt resources to meet their cohorts needs whilst still maintaining the integrity of the learning intentions.'

³¹ Representative responses: 'Delivering mandated literacy and numeracy programs does not provide flexibility for individual schools, however it allows for a consistent approach.' 'I believe there is greater consistency but less flexibility for individual schools'

³² A representative response: 'It seems too early to know- what are the system measures of 'consistency' and 'flexibility' that are being used? This would need to be understood and progress towards these/beyond these also would need to be understood before I could comment.'

FIGURE A.4 THE BALANCE BETWEEN SYSTEM-WIDE PRESCRIBED EFFORT AND SCHOOL AUTONOMY

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT AND SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

A.4 Community engagement

The IES recognises the importance of community engagement in Indigenous education policy, as encapsulated in one of the IES principles:

Community is engaged, and choice and culture is respected.

A third of Principals 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' that stakeholders are engaged in the IES where appropriate, up 11 percentage points from the previous year (**Figure A.5**). Reported methods for engaging community stakeholders include the school council, work experience, and parent involvement in the school. Schools are also engaging with other service providers (such as health clinics and rangers) and the police.³³ Where respondents disagree that stakeholders are appropriately engaged, they note that it often 'depends on the particular community and the people within that community.'

A relatively small proportion of Project Managers reported that the community is being appropriately engaged relative to the previous Assessment (a fall from 33 per cent agreeing to 12 per cent). While it is not clear what are all the factors driving this fall, they reported that engaging communities in the IES has been challenging³⁴, with others reporting facing internal barriers in head office³⁵, or being unable to judge whether the appropriate engagement is taking place.³⁶

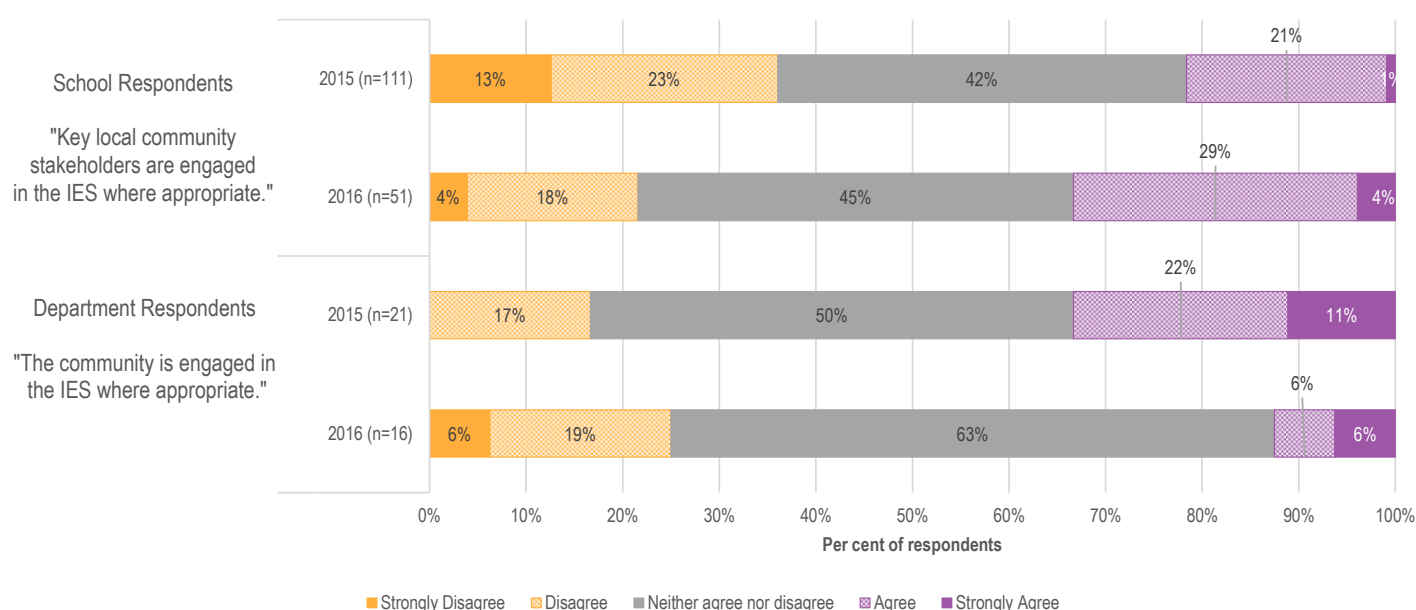
³³ A relevant response: 'Co-operation between service providers in small, remote communities has always been a part of normal operations - and will always be. It is difficult to say that IES has brought a change to this, as yet.'

³⁴ Relevant responses: 'Where schools are proactive in engaging their communities yes. Not sure across the board. There are pockets where communities are well engaged e.g. East Arnhem community orgs, engage to remain informed. not sure about other areas.' And: 'A stumbling block to improvement with IES is the lack of engagement from some communities and/or representatives of those communities'

³⁵ A relevant response: 'I was unable to consult with community... Consultation and consensus from indigenous people is essential or they will not embrace change.'

³⁶ Relevant responses: 'I don't have community contact to be able to judge.' And: 'My knowledge is limited in this area.' And: 'I cannot comment on this based on my 9 months with the department.'

FIGURE A.5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN THE IES



SOURCE: DEPARTMENT AND SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

More than a quarter (29 per cent) of Principals 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' that the community has been treated respectfully in the implementation of the IES. This has been aided by the consultation and collaboration undertaken with students and their families.³⁷ Where Principals report the community has not been treated respectfully, they point to changes in the approach to secondary provision in remote communities³⁸ and a lack of communication about the IES.³⁹ In some cases Principals have decided that their communication with the community will focus on the school improvement plan, rather than the IES.⁴⁰

More than half of Project Managers report that stakeholders have been treated respectfully, consistent with the previous year's Assessment.⁴¹ Areas for improvement suggested by Project Managers include informing regional offices and Principals of IES Actions earlier in the process⁴², and seeking greater input from students and families.⁴³

The consistent difference between Principals and Project Managers on this question in both years is likely due to a number of factors. It appears that most Principals are treating the 'implementation of the IES' as something the head office is responsible for, whereas some Project Managers are interpreting 'implementation of the IES' as the responsibility of the school system. With this different framing some Principals are not necessarily including their role as implementers, while some Project Managers may be including the work Principals do with stakeholders in 'implementation of the IES'. Further, there are

³⁷ A relevant response: 'Consultation and collaboration have been key strategies throughout all implementation phases for students and their families.'

³⁸ Relevant responses: 'The boarding school staff cannot be regarded as treating people with respect.' And 'To an extent. The issue re boarding school and lack of Middle and Senior Years opportunities' continues.'

³⁹ Relevant responses: 'I am not aware of any direct consultation or involvement of the IES with the local community here or having set up mechanisms by IES to evaluate the level of connection and appropriateness.' And: 'DI forced upon schools. LANE forced upon schools. ON country learning approaches need to be adopted.'

⁴⁰ Relevant response: 'At this stage I have not included IES in conversations. The school improvement plan is always referred to and this aligns with the IES.'

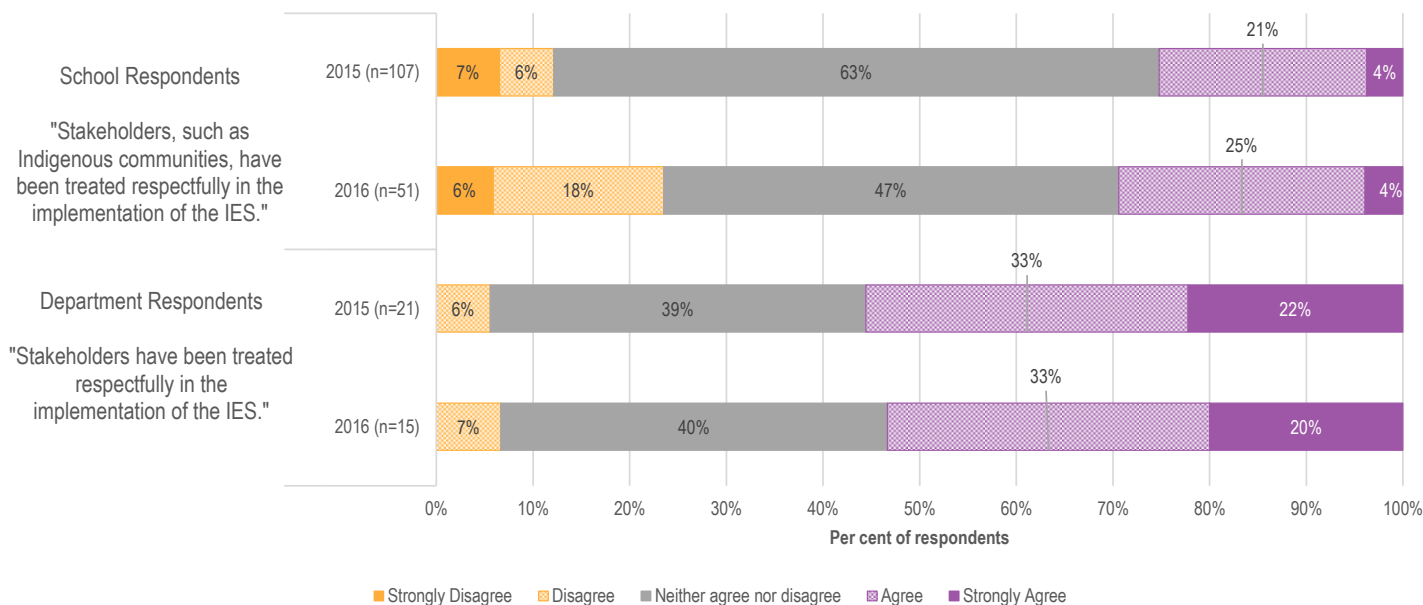
⁴¹ Relevant responses: 'It's my experience that extensive stakeholder consultation is part of the development and implementation of actions under the IES.' And: 'We have worked to engage partners across health and within the schools that have [particular IES Action] programs via parent ref group/principals ref group etc'

⁴² A relevant response: 'My opinion is that more consultation was required. EDs, RDs and Principals should have been notified of new programs and processes very early in the project. Not enough consultation with external stakeholders such as Principals Association. It would have been great to build relationship with RDS about how they work now, what works best for them. How would they like to see it work? They are the experts. Not managers and officers in HR.'

⁴³ A relevant response: 'I do not have extensive awareness of this beyond our project however our experiences with schools would suggest that more could be done in this area to inform and consult with local families, staff and students to ensure they are aware and have input into IES implementation.'

likely differing interpretations of ‘respect’—some Principals see ‘respect’ as consulting with stakeholders and then implementing their feedback, while Project Managers, who may face political or policy constraints, may define ‘respect’ as consulting and only implementing some feedback.

FIGURE A.6 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN THE IES: STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT



SOURCE: DEPARTMENT AND SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

A.5 Summary

Understanding of the IES across the school system has increased relative to the first year of the Evaluation. This improvement is due to a number of factors, including greater implementation progress and strong levels of involvement and engagement by head office and regional offices with schools. Notwithstanding this, only a third of school respondents are positive in their understanding of the IES, which means that this needs to be a continuing focus of the IES implementation.

Utilisation of the interlinkages between the IES projects has also increased, though to a far higher degree by Department Project Managers than schools. This is to be expected given that most schools are involved in only a relatively small number of the IES projects, though the question remains whether more could be done to provide schools with greater knowledge of the interlinkages.

Schools reported improved IES-related community engagement, though Department Project Managers were less positive about the ability of the IES to engage with community stakeholders. This appears due to a range of factors, with some Project Managers not yet considering themselves in a good position to judge.

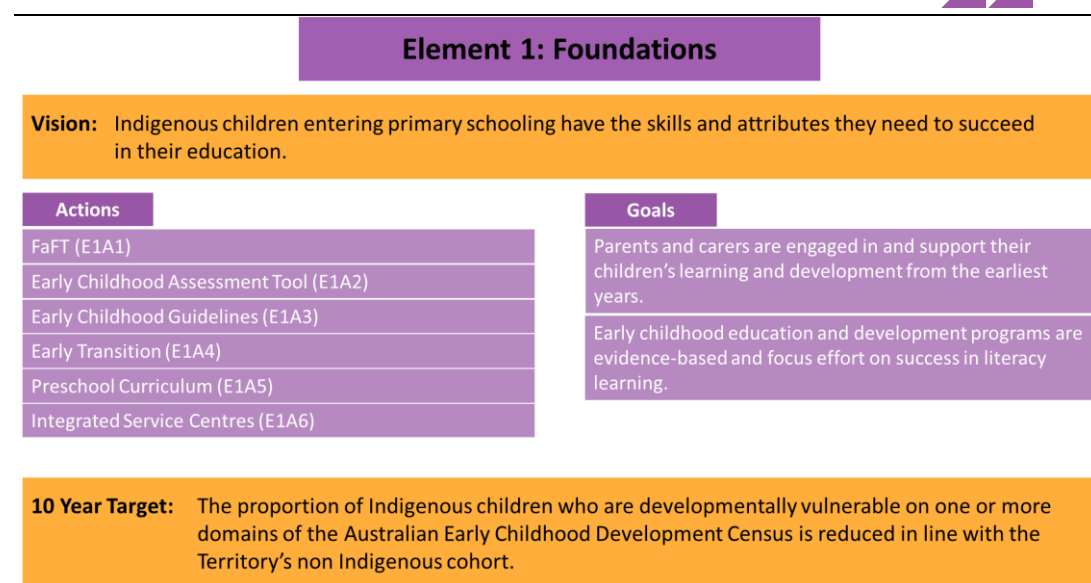
The extent to which community is being appropriately considered throughout the IES implementation is contested, with some schools pointing towards policy decisions they see as inconsistent with community expectations. Of importance is that Department Project Managers assessed the level of respect shown as much higher than schools, which indicates that the IES implementation should endeavour to better understand and address this difference in perception. Project Managers indicated a desire to increase engagement with schools and communities in the early stages of project development, as well as in implementation.



B.1 Overview of Foundations Element Actions

This chapter details the implementation and achievements of the Foundations Element. The figure below provides an overview of the Element.

FIGURE B.1 SUMMARY OF ELEMENT 1: FOUNDATIONS



The Foundations Element has links to the Essentials Element, as early childhood is an important part of preparation for primary school, and flow on impacts to the other Elements of the IES. The Actions under the Foundations Element cover transition from early childhood to primary school, children's readiness for primary school, and the assessment and management of early childhood outcomes and programs. The Actions themselves are also interlinked. For example, FaFT (E1A1) is at times delivered in an Integrated Service Centre (E1A6) where the Assessment Tools (E1A2), Guidelines (E1A3) and Curriculum (E1A5) assist delivery of these early childhood services.

Each of the above mentioned Actions and their implementation is analysed in the following sections.

B.2 Foundations Element implementation

The following sections provide a summary report of each of the six Actions of the Foundations Element including the objectives, resources, implementation progress, lessons and potential improvements. Each Action starts on a new page using a standard format.

B.2.1 FaFT (E1A1)

TABLE B.1 FAFT (E1A1) SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

This Action is an expansion of the FaFT program, which develops a place-based response through provision of supported playgroups with targeted services. The expansion supports the continued operation of 21 remote sites and establishes an additional 11 remote sites.

Objectives

FaFT aims to increase the capacity of children to succeed in their education and the capacity of families to support their children’s educational engagement.

Background and history

The high levels of disadvantage in the early childhood Indigenous population impacts on the capacity of children to engage with schooling at the entry point and has a lasting impact on literacy, numeracy, and cognitive and behavioural outcomes. FaFT was established in 2009 to address this issue by supporting families to enhance their children’s development and learning opportunities from birth.

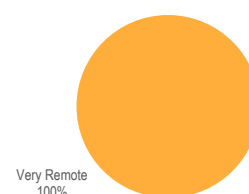
Timelines

Project plan approved internally	12 October 2015
Project first implemented in schools	Some FaFT sites were already established prior to the IES
Project end point	Implemented in all sites by end 2017 and implementation maintained

School coverage

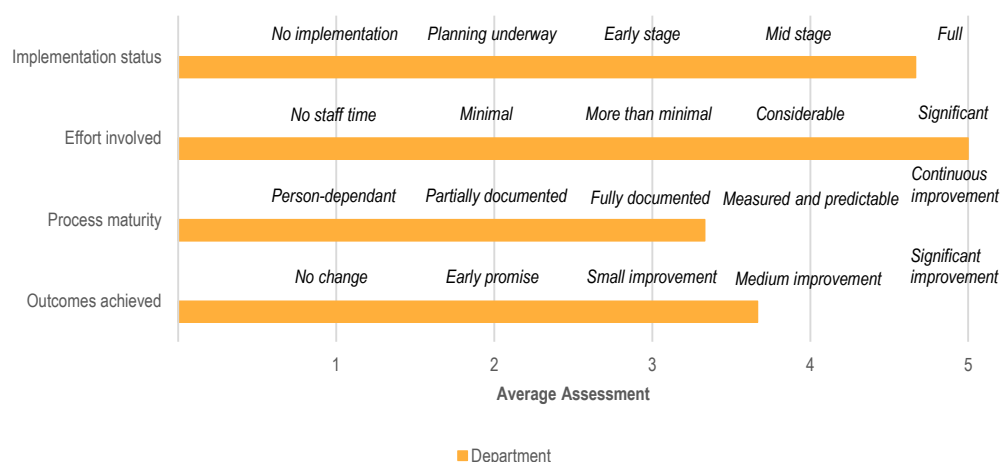
Number of schools currently involved	27
Total number of schools to be involved	32
Schools types where Action is being predominately implemented	Preschool Combined

Location of schools



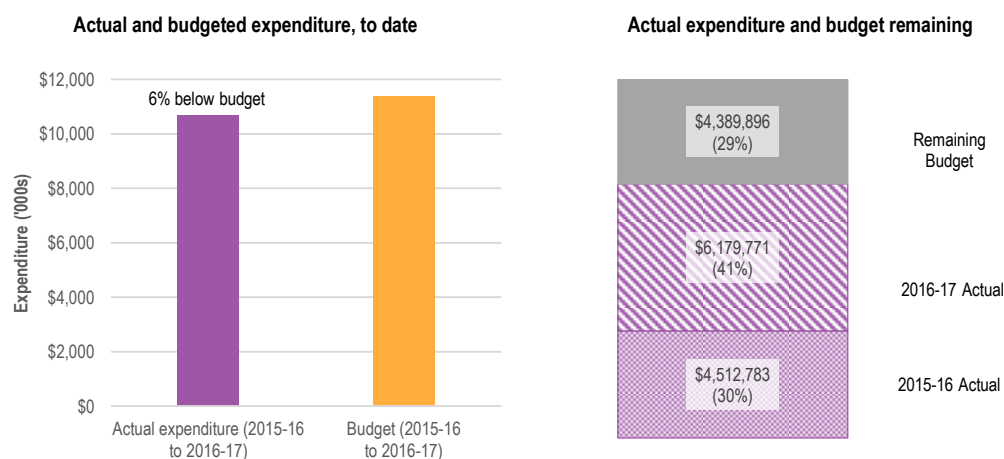
Assessment

2016 results



2015 and 2016 results compared						
	2015		2016		Difference 2015 to 2016	
	Schools	Department	Schools	Department	Schools	Department
Implementation status	-	4.33	-	4.67	-	0.33
Effort involved	-	4.67	-	5.00	-	0.33
Process maturity	-	5.00	-	3.33	-	-1.67
Outcomes achieved	-	4.00	-	3.67	-	-0.33

Finance data



Note: Due to the nature of schools' involvement with this Action, they were not asked Assessment-style questions on this Action in the 2015 and 2016 Assessments.

SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

Implementation progress

Implementation of FaFT focused on three key areas:

- Determining criteria for identifying and selecting additional FaFT sites
- Creating FaFT early childhood teacher and Indigenous Family Liaison Officer (IFLO) positions
- Delivering FaFT program in 32 remote communities by the end of 2017.

The criteria for FaFT sites was developed and finalised in 2015, and were applied to identify expansion sites beyond the initial FaFT sites. In addition to the initial 21 FaFT sites, a further 11 sites were identified and established using the criteria.

The creation of FaFT early childhood teacher and IFLO positions is well progressed. The positions were first established in the initial 21 sites, and have now been rolled out successfully to 30 operational sites.

The full roll out of FaFT to 32 remote communities by the end of 2017 is on track. At the end of June 2017, 30 FaFT sites were operating and the last expansion sites had been identified. The final planned FaFT site, Ampilatwatja, was unable to be established in 2017 due to an inability to recruit a IFLO (in part, due to remoteness and accommodation issues).

The implementation of this Action has been supported by the pre-existing FaFT program structures, which have been operating since 2009. Implementation continues to be supported by a central FaFT staff member providing assistance in human resources and recruitment, professional development, and supporting policies and procedures.

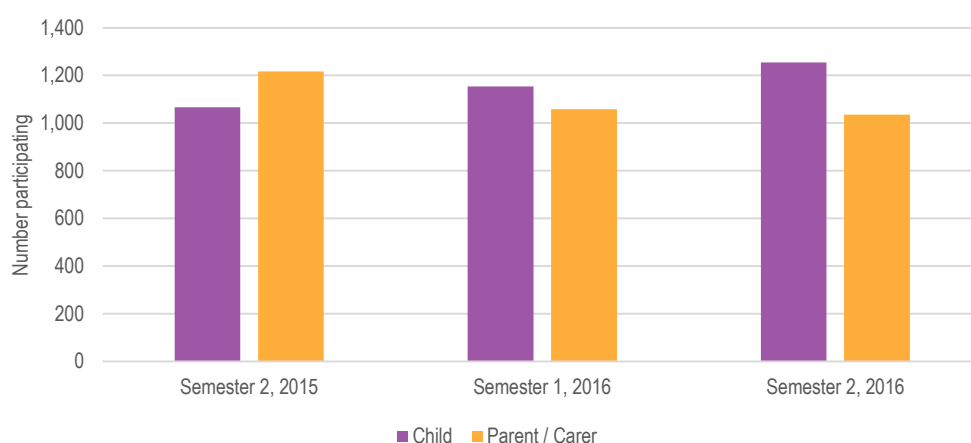
The Department Assessment of process maturity and outcomes achieved has decreased since 2015. This may be a product of the focus on establishing FaFT in new sites, as opposed to focusing on pre-existing sites, and the associated effort required. The FaFT Action is six per cent under budget, and 29 per cent of the total budget remains.

The School Assessments indicated some mixed experiences of FaFT implementation at the local level, with perspectives split on effectiveness. Schools indicated that the implementation of FaFT can be resource intensive, with progress delayed in some instances due to insufficient human resources.

'[The FaFT program] involves 1 FaFT teacher and an assistant teacher, both of which are .5 here and .5 at another school. It is very difficult to build momentum when the program only operates for half the week...I have seen FaFT work very well elsewhere but it is struggling at this school because it is only operating [part time]'

The number of children participating in FaFT has increased by approximately 90 children each semester while the number of parents or carers has decreased by a similar number over the period (**Figure B.2**). In Semester 2 of 2016, an average of 46 children and 38 parents/carers were participating in each FaFT program.

FIGURE B.2 NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN FAFT PROGRAMS



SOURCE: ACIL ALLEN ANALYSIS OF DEPARTMENTAL DATA, 2017

The school case studies indicated that FaFT is having a positive impact on both children's learning and family engagement. Teachers reported that FaFT programs are increasing children's confidence and learning abilities, leaving them better prepared for school. Similarly, FaFT sites reported increased family engagement facilitated by providing families with the knowledge and skills to support their children's development.

While the case studies showed positive impacts, the School Assessments reported mixed results in terms of improving children's readiness for school and parents' understanding of their children's learning and development. Some parents strongly agreed that positive outcomes were being seen, while others were neutral—potentially indicating it was too early to comment on the impacts of this Action.

Lessons and potential improvements

FaFT is viewed positively by the Department, schools and communities. At a system level, the policies and processes for implementation are considered well established. The scalable approach taken, whereby initial sites trialed FaFT and further expansion occurred over time, supported the success of this Action, and enabled the building of capability, development of processes and establishment of relationships over time to mature the Action and support its sustainability.

While FaFT is now a well-established and implemented program, the experience of this Action demonstrates that continued central support for regional activities may be required to sustain its effectiveness. The central support provided facilitated the dissemination of lessons learned and improved practice, assisted in recruitment and capability building, and provided regions with assistance and expertise that would otherwise be unavailable to them.

Also essential for FaFT programs to be effective are well developed community relationships with FaFT staff, facilitated for example through employment of local Indigenous community members and continuity in FaFT staff to provide consistent points of contact.

B.2.2 Early Childhood Assessment Tool (E1A2)

TABLE B.2 EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSESSMENT TOOL (E1A2) SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

This Action involves adopting an evidence-based early years' developmental assessment tool that can determine children's developmental levels and readiness for school, track children's progress, and report on early childhood education program performance and design.

Objectives

The Early Childhood Assessment Tool aims to align an assessment tool with system wide data collection methods. This will support the future use of data to inform the planning and tracking of children's progress, linking individual child data across the early years.

Background and history

There are currently no systematic or consistent tools that are applicable to all children attending remote Indigenous early childhood programs, and that can measure individual and population level outcomes. The Review recommended that early childhood programs should focus on successful outcomes in literacy learning and that a unified assessment for Indigenous children is developed to allow this.

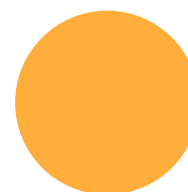
Timelines

Project plan approved internally	13 October 2015
Project first implemented in schools	Term 2, 2017
Project end point	Project completed by December 2017

School coverage*

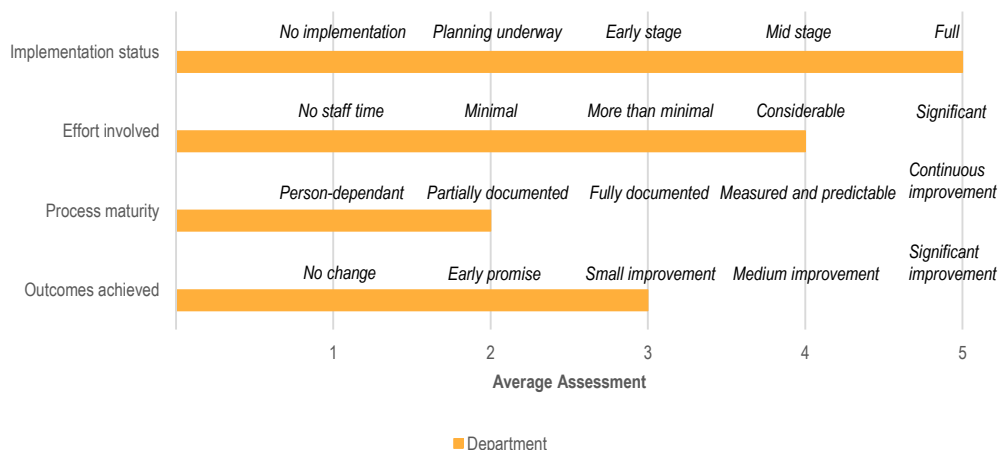
Number of schools currently involved	4	Location of schools
Total number of schools to be involved	23	
Schools types where Action is being predominately implemented	Preschool Combined	

Very Remote,
100%



Assessment

2016 results

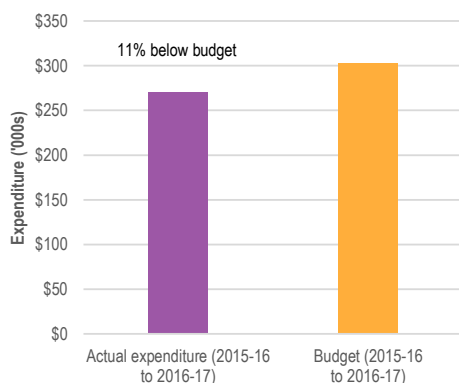


2015 and 2016 results compared

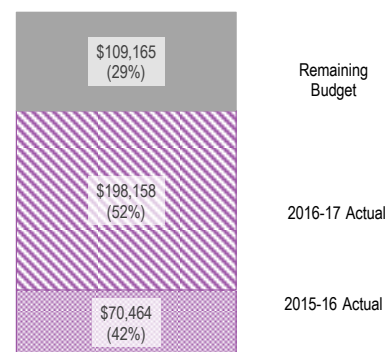
	2015		2016		Difference 2015 to 2016	
	Schools	Department	Schools	Department	Schools	Department
Implementation status	-	4.00	-	5.00	-	1.00
Effort involved	-	5.00	-	4.00	-	-1.00
Process maturity	-	-	-	2.00	-	-
Outcomes achieved	-	1.00	-	3.00	-	2.00

Finance data

Actual and budgeted expenditure, to date



Actual expenditure and budget remaining



Note: Due to the nature of schools' involvement with this Action, they were not asked Assessment-style questions on this Action in the 2015 and 2016 Assessments.

* This Action is being implemented across all NT government schools; the data included in this table and the accompanying text cover implementation in Remote and Very Remote schools.

SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

Implementation progress

Implementation of the assessment tool focused on three key areas:

- Identifying and selecting a measure for young children's development and learning
- Trialling of the tool in 10 sites
- Implementing the tool, including applying the tool for monitoring children's progress and planning and program development.

Two developmental screening tools⁴⁴ were selected in 2015 for trial in 10 sites by the end of 2016. The research and identification of appropriate tools for use in Australian Indigenous communities required considerably more time than was originally anticipated and the delay had a flow on impact on their trial and implementation. Consequently, trials were completed successfully in only four sites by the end of 2016.

Through the four trials, 85 children were assessed and a total of 176 assessments were completed. The data collected are currently being analysed by the University of Melbourne and findings are anticipated in 2017. It is intended that the findings from the trial will inform future development, adaptation and implementation of the assessment tools. In the interim, the *Ages and Stages Questionnaire – Talking About Raising Aboriginal Kids* (ASQ-TRAK) has been selected as the preferred tool. The phased implementation has commenced across approximately 30 per cent of FaFT sites and is on-track to achieve the target of 70 per cent by the end of 2017.

While the budget is currently 11 per cent underspent, this is the result of a significant underspend in 2015-16 due to delays in the project initiation. The Department Assessment reported that human resources for implementation were relatively high, with one central FTE and support from four Family Educator and Family Liaison Officers through the trials. The Department Assessment also reported that planning had not sufficiently accounted for the time required to plan for and establish the Action, which had impacted the quality of supporting systems.

The level of implementation and outcomes achieved, as reported through the Department Assessment, have improved from 2015. This Action is seen to be fully implemented and is beginning to show small signs of improvement in outcomes.

Only a limited number of the case study schools were participating in the trial of the assessment tools. Initial feedback indicated that the tools had the potential to improve families understanding of children's development levels and school readiness, though it was too early to determine the impact of its usage.

Lessons and potential improvements

The delays experienced in the implementation of this Action highlight the importance of effective project management, including the assessment of available resources and capabilities, sufficient time allocation for individual activities, and appropriate risk management. As the delay primarily occurred during the initial project commencement, the number of trials undertaken successfully is a positive indicator for future implementation.

At a local level, the trials provided an opportunity to cultivate stronger relationships with families, increase community engagement and build family understanding of children's strengths in learning.

⁴⁴ The tools are called the Pearson Preschool Learning Scale (PLS-5) and the Ages and Stages Questionnaire – Talking About Raising Aboriginal Kids (ASQ-TRAK). Two tools were selected as the research did not identify a single tool suitable for the purpose.

B.2.3 Early Childhood Guidelines (E1A3)

TABLE B.3 EARLY CHILDHOOD GUIDELINES (E1A3) SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

This Action involves the development of early childhood education guidelines for Principals which relate to the leadership and management of early childhood education and care programs, including those provided by school councils.

Objectives

The Early Childhood Guidelines aim to enhance the delivery of early childhood education and care services by improving financial and governance business practices. Quality will also be improved by increasing Principals, managers and coordinators' awareness of the value of early learning and the support afforded by the early childhood regulatory environment.

Background and history

Early childhood and school-based care services are increasingly being facilitated by school councils and other organisations, such as Child and Family Centres, which need access to information about early childhood education and care services. When schools are involved in these services, management falls to the Principals. Increasing the quality of delivery and engagement of children in early childhood programs, as well as the relationships between early childhood programs and schools, can result in improved school attendance, build parent capacity and improve educational outcomes for children, families and communities.

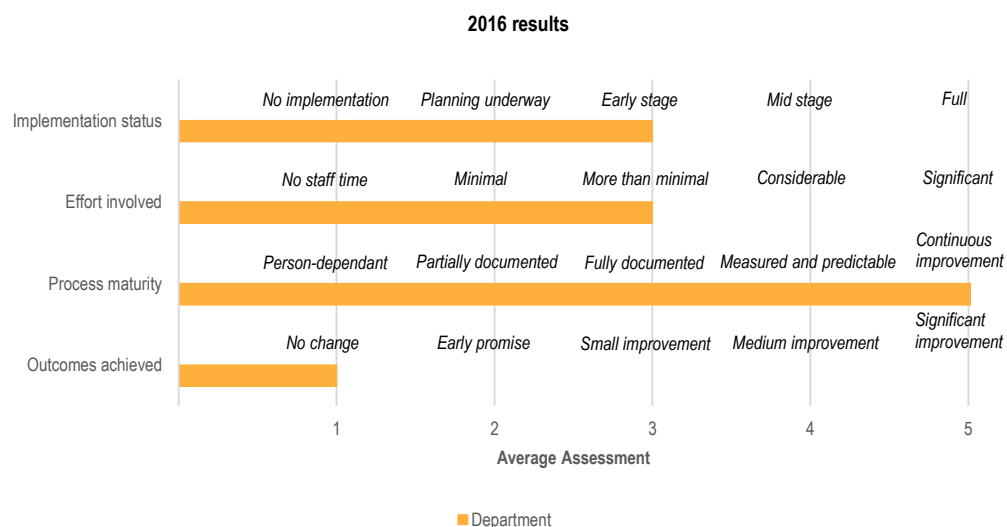
Timelines

Project plan approved internally	3 November 2015
Project first implemented in schools	Semester 2, 2017
Project end point	Guidelines implemented and training delivered to all Principals by the end of 2017. Review of the guidelines and support to Principals will be a continuing requirement.

School coverage*

Number of schools currently involved	0	Location of schools
Total number of schools to be involved	118	
Schools types where Action is being predominately implemented	Preschool Combined	n/a

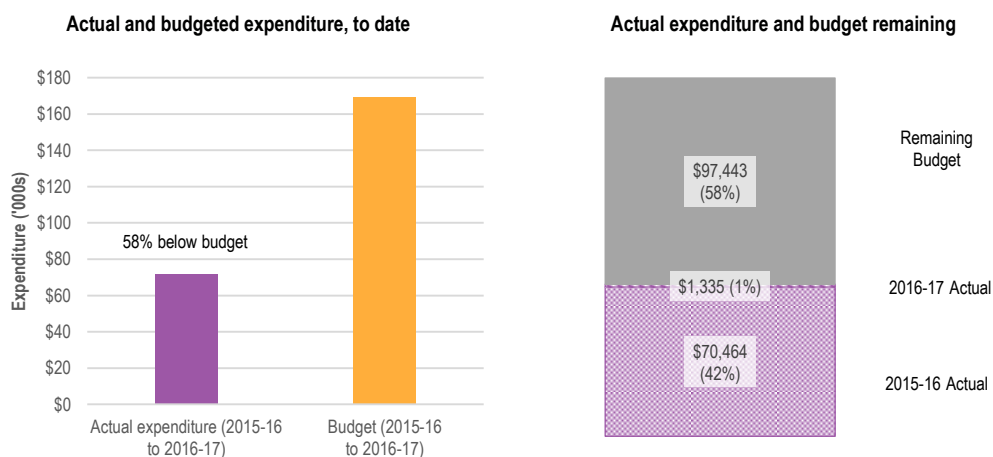
Assessment



2015 and 2016 results compared

	2015		2016		Difference 2015 to 2016	
	Schools	Department	Schools	Department	Schools	Department
Implementation status	-	3.00	-	3.00	-	0.00
Effort involved	-	4.00	-	3.00	-	-1.00
Process maturity	-	1.00	-	5.00	-	4.00
Outcomes achieved	-		-	1.00	-	-

Finance data



Note: Due to the nature of schools' involvement with this Action, they were not asked Assessment-style questions on this Action in the 2015 and 2016 Assessments.

* This Action will be implemented across all NT government schools; the data included in this table and the accompanying text cover implementation in Remote and Very Remote schools.

SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

Implementation progress

Implementation of the Guidelines focused on two key areas:

- Developing a suite of early childhood program guidelines and information for Principals
- Training all Principals in the use of the Guidelines.

The development of the Guidelines was undertaken by the Department in consultation with relevant business units, regional offices and the EC Principals Reference Committee. The Guidelines were distributed at the start of Term 3, 2017.

The Department Assessment noted that this Action had required significant time to plan, draft and consult on. However, the level of effort required was considered to be less in 2016 than 2015, which accords with the assessment that the processes had become very mature.

Given the Guidelines have not yet been implemented, it is not possible to comment on their impact. They are, however, intended to inform decision making and compliance with regulatory and operational standards, improving the quality of education and programs.

Between 2015-16 and 2016-17, the budget for this Action was significantly adjusted and the deliverable relating to training all Principals was removed. It is not clear why this adjustment occurred.

Lessons and potential improvements

The early stage of development of the Guidelines Action means it is not possible to comment on outcomes for schools, Principals or students. The Department Assessment indicated that no change in outcomes had been observed.

The consultation process was a key factor in the progress of this Action. Substantial feedback was received on the initial drafts of the guidelines which resulted in significant change to the content and structure. This is to be anticipated given the broad application of the Guidelines and the number of

stakeholders involved in the consultation process. In future, Actions of this nature would benefit from improved scoping of consultation requirements in the project design phase to prevent unanticipated delays.

B.2.4 Early Transition (E1A4)

TABLE B.4 EARLY TRANSITION (E1A4) SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

This Action will ensure each school with a FaFT program has an early years transition plan from FaFT to preschool, and from preschool to school. The transition plan will be targeted at children and their families.

Objectives

The Transition Plan aims to strengthen family engagement with their children's education, support children and their families and develop families' understanding of child developmental stages.

Background and history

The Review identified that parent engagement in schooling needs to be strengthened. There is evidence that despite strong levels of parent engagement in FaFT, parent engagement drops once a child reaches school. The Review recommended requiring all schools to establish a transition program from FaFT to preschool and from preschool to school.

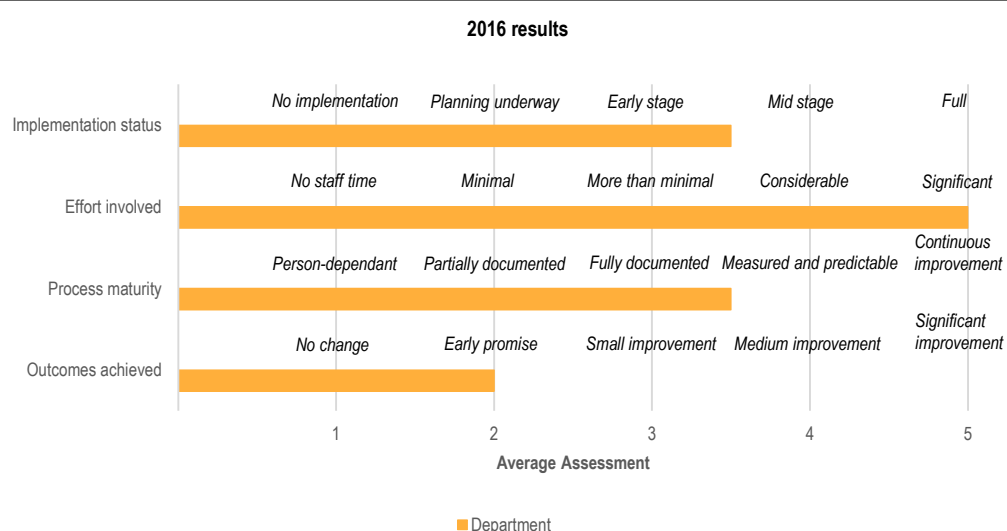
Timelines

Project plan approved internally	3 November 2015
Project first implemented in schools	Term 4, 2016
Project end point	All schools have transitions plans in 2017

School coverage

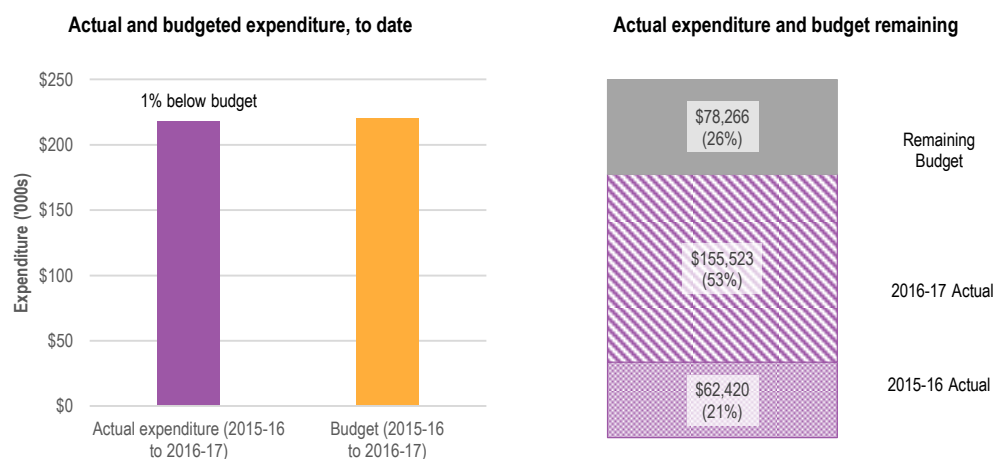
Number of schools currently involved	0	Location of schools
Total number of schools to be involved	118	
Schools types where Action is being predominately implemented	Preschool Primary Combined	n/a

Assessment



2015 and 2016 results compared						
	2015		2016		Difference 2015 to 2016	
	Schools	Department	Schools	Department	Schools	Department
Implementation status	-	3.00	-	3.50	-	0.50
Effort involved	-	3.00	-	5.00	-	2.00
Process maturity	-	5.00	-	3.50	-	-1.50
Outcomes achieved	-	2.00	-	2.00	-	0.00

Finance data



Note: Due to the nature of schools' involvement with this Action, they were not asked Assessment-style questions on this Action in the 2015 and 2016 Assessments.

SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

Implementation progress

Implementation of the Early Transition Action has focused on the development of clear transition processes between FaFT to preschool and preschool to school, ensuring parents remain engaged in the children's schooling.

To support this focus, an overarching strategic framework and service delivery model was developed in 2016. Resources, such as the Transition Resource Kit, have been developed to support implementation. The Resource Kits include a one-page overview of transitioning, a school-level Action Plan, and a template for an individual child's transitioning statement.

The resources identify four key elements, across wellbeing, positive engagement, and learning and teaching, as essential for transition:

- Ready children (confident and capable learners)
- Ready families (engaged and informed partners)
- Ready schools (welcoming and inclusive places)
- Ready communities (contributing and informed teams).

These resources were approved through internal Departmental processes in December 2016, and were published in April 2017.

The Department Assessment reported that the effort involved for this Action has been significant, and has increased from 2015 to 2016. While processes are well documented, the perception of their maturity has decreased from 2015. This may relate to the transition from the development stages (focused on supporting resources) to implementation in schools.

Implementation is still in the early stages and while no tangible outcomes were reported from the Department, there were early signs of change. 25 per cent of the budget for this Action remains,

possibly reflecting that there is further work to do in implementing the Early Transition Action within schools.

Given the Early Transition Action stage of implementation, it is too early for effects of the Action to have had time to be visible through outcomes measures.

Lessons and potential improvements

There is a limited ability to identify lessons or potential improvements as the Action is still in the early phases of implementation. Initial indications highlighted the high degree of interface between this Action and other Actions under the IES, such as FaFT (E1A1), the Preschool Curriculum (E1A5), the Transition Support Unit (E3A2), and Secondary Provision (E3A3). Given the whole-of-community context for successful transitioning, ongoing interaction and communication between these Actions is essential.

B.2.5 Preschool Curriculum (E1A5)

TABLE B.5 PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM (E1A5) SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

This Action relates to the implementation of a Preschool Curriculum that embeds explicit early language and literacy teaching and learning programs in government preschools.

Objectives

The Preschool Curriculum aims to support teachers to implement explicit and intentional teaching and learning so children have the skills and attributes needed to succeed in their education.

Background and history

Children that do not acquire the foundations of early language and literacy prior to, or in preschool are at significant risk of non-achievement at school. Some teachers also need additional knowledge and resources to build a solid basis for children’s literacy and numeracy. The Preschool Curriculum will ensure that appropriate teaching and learning strategies are adopted by preschool teachers.

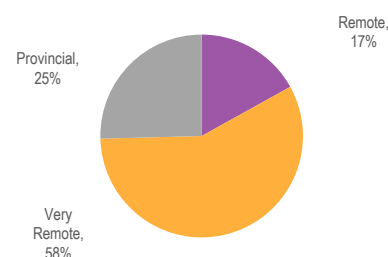
Timelines

Project plan approved internally	3 November 2015
Project first implemented in schools	Term 4, 2016
Project end point	Term 4, 2017

School coverage

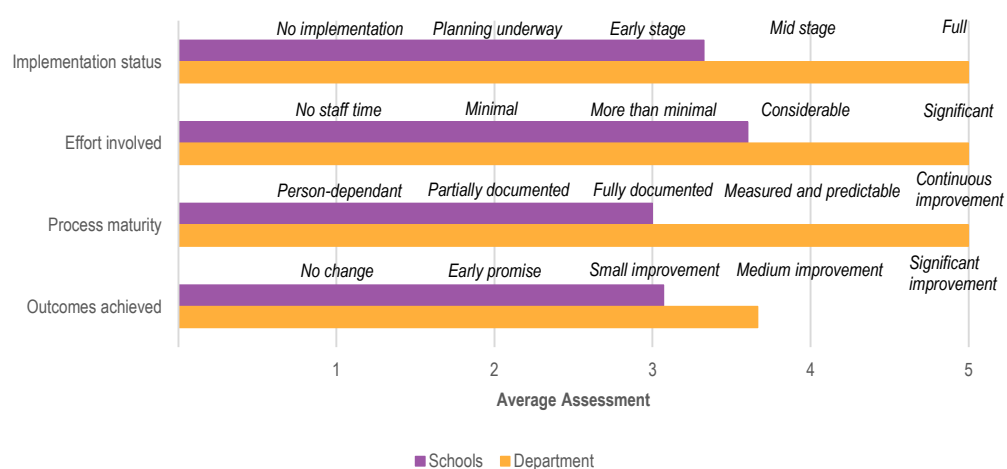
Number of schools currently involved	118
Total number of schools to be involved	118
Schools types where Action is being predominately implemented	Preschool

Location of schools



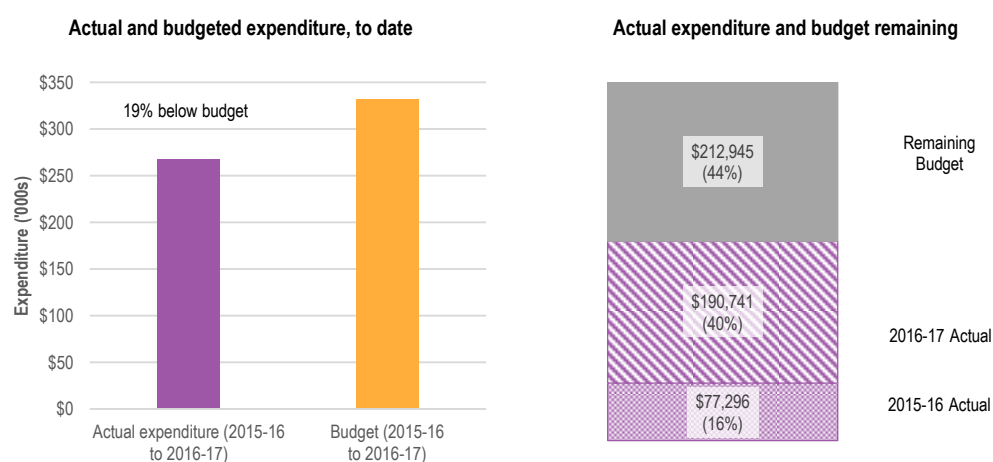
Assessment

2016 results



2015 and 2016 results compared						
	2015		2016		Difference 2015 to 2016	
	Schools (n=3)	Department	School (n=3)	Department	Schools	Department
Implementation status	4.17	3.33	4.33	5.00	0.17	1.67
Effort involved	4.33	5.00	4.00	5.00	-0.33	0.00
Process maturity	2.83	3.67	3.67	5.00	0.83	1.33
Outcomes achieved	3.40	3.00	3.00	3.67	-0.40	0.67

Finance data



* This Action is being implemented across all NT government schools; the accompanying text covers implementation in Remote and Very Remote schools.
SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

Implementation progress

Implementation of the Preschool Curriculum focused on three key areas:

- Developing guidelines, resources and materials to support consistent approaches to explicit and intentional teaching and learning in preschools
- Implementing targeted professional learning to ensure explicit and intentional teaching and learning in preschools, in line with the requirements of the Preschool Curriculum
- Establishing sustaining preschool professional development systems.

The development of guidelines, resources and materials was completed over 2015 and 2016. This included the trialling of the Preschool Curriculum in 37 preschools in Term 1 of 2016, and the formal launch of the Preschool Curriculum in July 2016.

Targeted professional learning was rolled out in the latter half of 2016, with a training package delivered to regional early childhood coordinators and advisors. Participants from the trials co-presented in the training to support the dissemination of learnings. In addition, a Preschool Curriculum training workshop was delivered, reaching 80 per cent of preschool teachers and educators. Further workshops have been scheduled for new staff starting in 2017.

Significant progress has been made in establishing sustainable professional development systems. A community of practice has been created, and an ongoing training calendar for continuing professional development developed. Supporting resources, such as e-learning components, are being developed on an ongoing basis and are made available through the Department's website.

The Department Assessment reported that the resource impact of this Action was high, noting that significant effort was required to ensure a quality product. The level of implementation has improved from 2015, with the high degree of support from teachers and school staff noted as a significant contributor to effective implementation. Supporting processes were considered quite mature, with full

documentation and procedures established. The project has tracked under budget for both 2015-16 and 2016-17 and 63 per cent of the original budget remains.

The majority of schools surveyed had embedded the Preschool Curriculum within their School Improvement Plan to support the sustainability of the Action. A small decrease in the effort required by schools was observed in 2016. At the same time, there appears to be a high degree of dependency on individuals at the school-level, with implementation delayed or impacted in some areas due to staff absences, illness or turnover. Competing priorities were also identified as a challenge to implementation, particularly attendance.⁴⁵

Noting the difficulties in implementation, schools reported a positive experience working with the Preschool Curriculum. Feedback stressed the relationship between professional development, regional support and successful implementation. The importance of staff capability and retention was a common theme, with schools noting that turnover in preschool staffing has disrupted the program in some cases.

In terms of outcomes, the school case studies consistently indicated the Preschool Curriculum is a valuable document for teachers and educators, providing clear guidance on teaching methods and content. It was also seen to have a positive impact on family understanding of child development by articulating the development and progression of literacy and numeracy skills for young children. The positive outcomes observed through the case studies were supported by the School Assessments, which reported evidence of improved literacy, numeracy and attendance at preschool programs.⁴⁶

Lessons and potential improvements

The effective implementation of the Preschool Curriculum is closely related to capability and training of staff. This emphasises the importance of maintaining professional development for teachers and educators in relation to both the Preschool Curriculum and its relationship to Early Years Learning Framework.

Similarly to the FaFT Action, the implementation of the Preschool Curriculum could be further improved through employing local Indigenous community members to support continued community engagement.

⁴⁵ For example, a school noted: 'We are currently focussed on getting attendance as without students there is no learning'.

⁴⁶ For example, a school noted: 'Children who now have access to Pre-School in our community will show knowledge of and display behaviours valued in our school. They will be 'school-ready' when they begin Transition. They will have more change of reaching an 'attained' in the [Assessment of Student Competencies].'

B.2.6 Integrated Service Centres (E1A6)

TABLE B.6 INTEGRATED SERVICE CENTRES (E1A6) SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

This Action will establish integrated early childhood services at Child and Family Centre (CFC) sites. CFCs provide a central site for families and the community to access local services to support the health and wellbeing, education and care of children from birth to five years of age.

Objectives

The integrated service centres aim to improve access to education, care, health and support for children and families. They will also increase families' engagement with services before children reach school age, with the objective of increasing children and families' ability to successfully engage with school.

Background and history

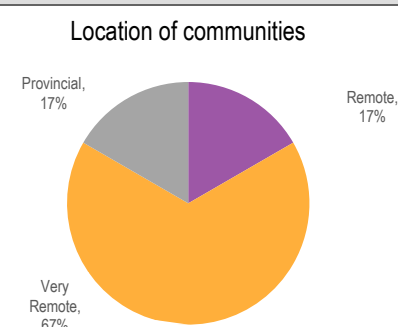
Service delivery in some remote communities has been untargeted and many hard to reach families have had limited access to a complete suite of services. Five CFCs will be established in Remote and Very Remote areas to provide integrated services to these hard to reach families. The Department has responsibility for the operation of CFCs in the NT.

Timelines

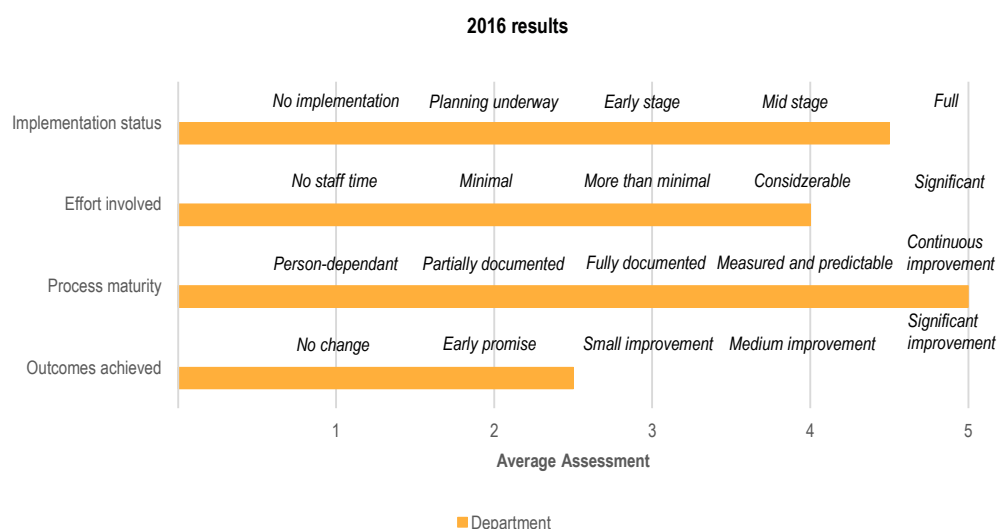
Project plan approved internally	3 November 2015
Project first implemented	Implementation of CFCs began prior to the IES
Project end point	A strategic plan and outcome framework developed by Term 3, 2017. Further funding is unclear, yet necessary for implementation of the plan.

School coverage

Number of communities currently involved	6
Total number of communities to be involved	6
Schools types where Action is being predominately implemented	n/a



Assessment



2015 and 2016 results compared						
	2015		2016		Difference 2015 to 2016	
	Schools	Department	School	Department	Schools	Department
Implementation status	-	3.50	-	4.50	-	1.00
Effort involved	-	4.50	-	4.00	-	-0.50
Process maturity	-	3.50	-	5.00	-	1.50
Outcomes achieved	-	1.00	-	2.50	-	1.50

Finance data

No data available.

Note: Due to the nature of schools' involvement with this Action, they were not asked Assessment-style questions on this Action in the 2015 and 2016 Assessments.

Note: As this Action is not primarily funded by the Department of Education, detailed finance data are not available.

SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

Implementation progress

Implementation of the Integrated Service Centres focused on three key areas:

- Developing an integrated service delivery model
- Developing nationally comparable intake, assessment and evaluation data processes and tools
- Reviewing and planning CFC Strategic Plan and Outcome Framework.

All six CFC sites are operating, employing CFC Managers and Indigenous Coordinators. The supporting documents for the integrated service delivery model were finalised in March 2017. Professional Leadership learning activities began in Term 1, 2017 and continued in Term 3, 2017.

Delays have arisen in relation to establishing place-based agreements with local providers and partners. The agreements have now been developed and are currently being progressed through legal advisory processes.

A set of tools for measuring impact and process indicators were developed and have been implemented as part of the CFC Quarterly Report Tool.

The Department Assessment indicated that this Action required considerable effort to implement, but that the processes had become largely mature. Implementation was identified as mid-range, and initial indicators showed promise for positive outcomes.

School Assessments reported that the CFCs have increased the integration of services across education, health, family support and parenting services. The integration was seen to have increased parental capacity and active engagement in children's learning and development. The case studies reinforced this perspective, indicating that the CFCs had had a positive effect on families and the community, increasing access to services through the provision of a safe space that prevents social stigma.

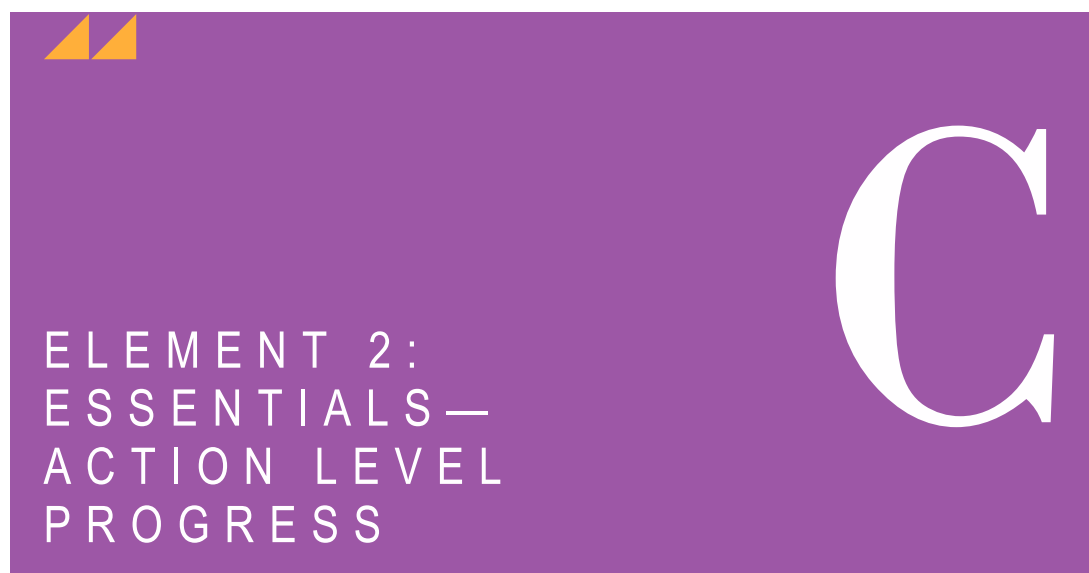
The CFCs operate as the interface between the community and services, working collaboratively to communicate family requirements and to foster culturally sensitive responses. While the implementation was in the early stages for some sites, there were signs that the CFCs may support ongoing family engagement in children's education. This was supported by the results of the School Assessments, with one school reporting that 'the CFC is now operational and is making a huge impact on connecting and integrating the services'.

Lessons and potential improvements

This Action is at a well-developed stage and its implementation supported by mature processes, including extensive consultation involving Principals and CFC managers in the development of relevant policies, procedures and resources.

Communities at case study schools reported positive outcomes associated with the CFCs and family participation in services. Having a safe and stigma-free opportunity to engage with diverse services also had other indirect social benefits for the community.

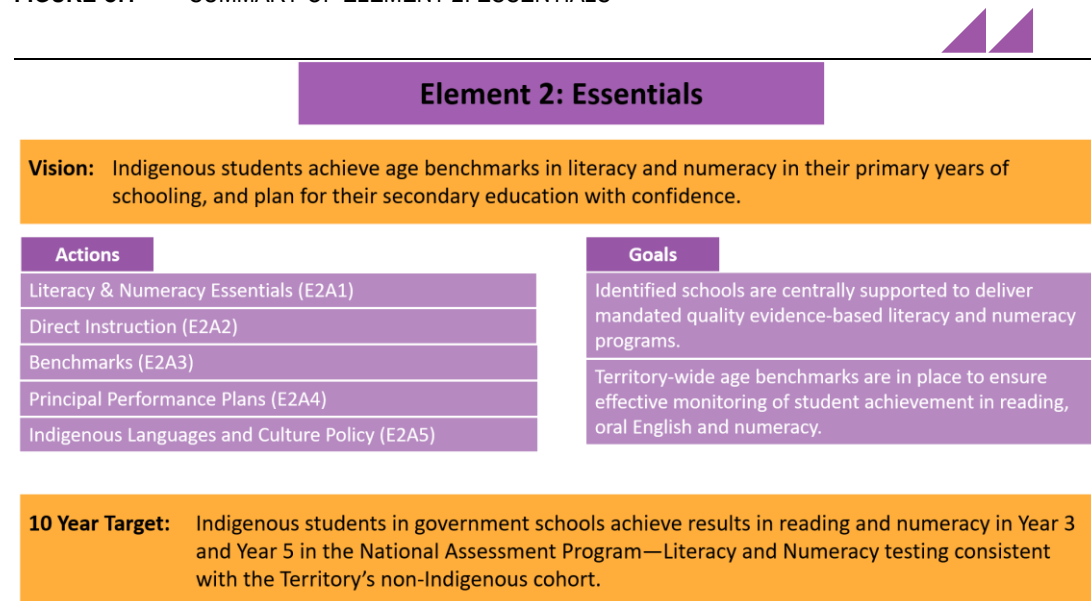
The collection of data through a quarterly report tool had commenced and the first report was produced in early 2017. It is likely that the data collection process will provide an opportunity for further learnings and the identification of continuous improvement opportunities.



C.1 Overview of Essentials Element Actions

This chapter details the implementation and early achievements of the Essentials Element. The figure below provides an overview of the Element.

FIGURE C.1 SUMMARY OF ELEMENT 2: ESSENTIALS



Element 2 has strong links to Element 1, particularly as children transition into primary school, and to Element 3 which focuses on secondary school learning. Engagement (Element 4) and Workforce (Element 5) activities also support the delivery of Element 2.

Within Element 2 there are strong links between E2A1 and E2A2 which seek to provide schools with evidence-based programs for the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy in primary schools, and E2A3 which supports measuring the impact of these and other programs on student outcomes. The Principal Performance Plans (E2A4) aim to incorporate these programs and support schools to improve student outcomes, while E2A5 provides guidance to schools on the Indigenous Languages and Culture program delivery.

Each of the above mentioned Actions and their implementation is analysed in the following sections.

C.2 Essentials Element implementation

The following sections provide a summary report of each of the five Actions of the Essentials Element, including objectives, resources, implementation progress, lessons and potential improvements. Each Action starts on a new page using a standard format.

C.2.1 Literacy and Numeracy Essentials (LANE) (E2A1)

TABLE C.1 LITERACY AND NUMERACY ESSENTIALS (LANE) (E2A1) SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

This Action seeks to improve the education outcomes of Indigenous students by establishing common approaches to the teaching, learning and assessing of literacy and numeracy across Remote and Very Remote schools in the Northern Territory, using well established research about programs that work.

Objectives

The programs aim to ensure that all Indigenous students who attend school at a rate of 80 per cent or more experience explicit teaching to help them learn, and a structured and coherent curriculum to help them progress.

Background and history

The Review found that Indigenous students in Remote and Very Remote locations continued to perform below the national minimum standard for each year level and in each of the NAPLAN domains in the primary years of schooling. The Review also found that there was significant variation in the approach to teaching literacy and numeracy and that teachers required more direction in order to support the consistent use of evidence-based approaches.

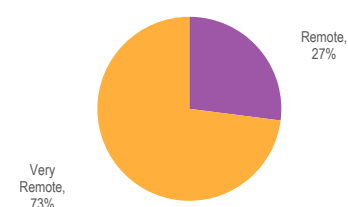
Timelines

Project plan approved internally	May 2015
Project first implemented in schools	Term 1, 2016
Project end point	Ongoing implementation

School coverage

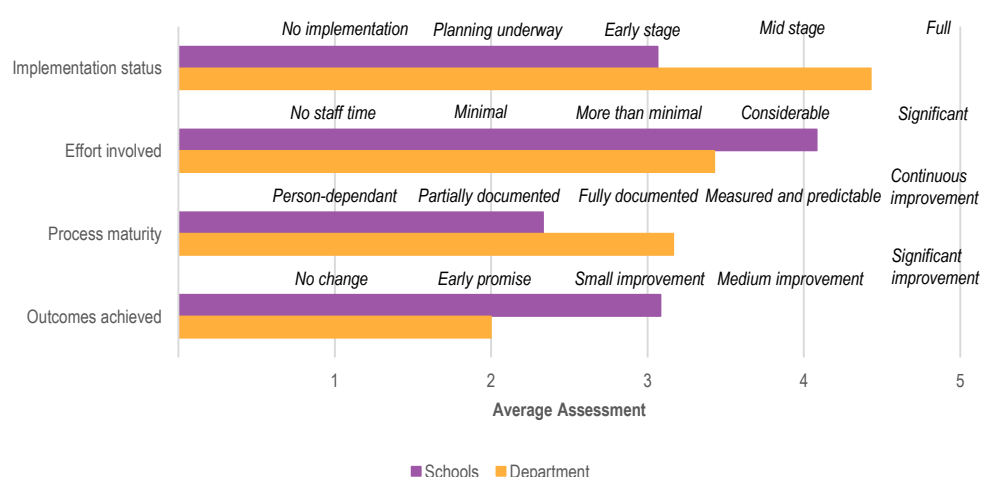
Number of schools currently involved	37
Total number of schools to be involved	76
Schools types where action is being predominately implemented	Primary Middle Combined

Location of schools



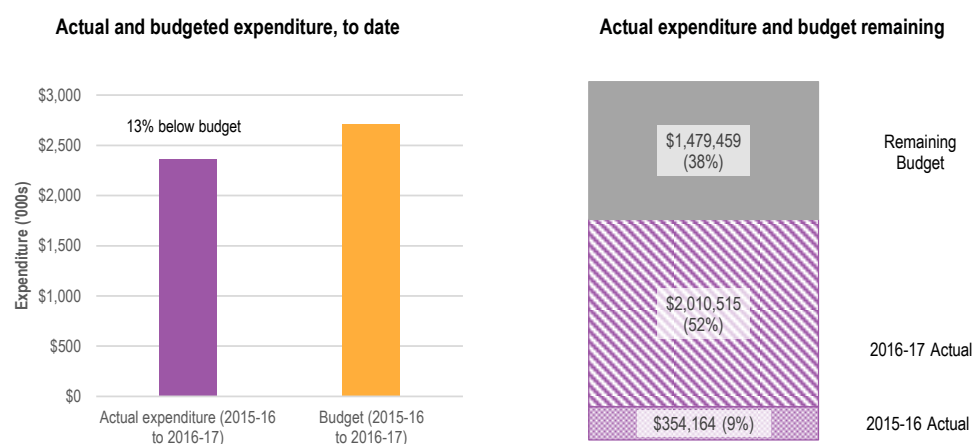
Assessment

2016 results



2015 and 2016 results compared						
	2015		2016		Difference 2015 to 2016	
	Schools	Department	Schools	Department	Schools	Department
Implementation status	-	2.17	-	4.43	-	2.26
Effort involved	-	2.60	-	3.43	-	0.83
Process maturity	-	1.40	-	3.17	-	1.77
Outcomes achieved	-	1.00	-	2.00	-	1.00

Finance data



Note: Due to the timing of implementation of this Action, schools were not asked about this Action in the 2015 Assessments, and so results cannot be compared across the two years.

SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

Implementation progress

The Literacy and Numeracy Essentials (LANE) program was implemented in 37 schools in Semester 1, 2017, after a well-received 13-school trial in 2016. An additional 30 schools began implementing LANE in Semester 2, 2017. The core elements of this model—learning progressions, explicit teaching and an English as a Second Language approach—will be consistent across all intended 76 participating schools.

The Department finalised the underpinning Literacy and Numeracy policy in 2016 and has completed the development of associated resources.

The LANE program has been supported with professional development and training at the regional, school leadership and teacher level. Regional officers and managers, together with staff from central office, have participated in training and regional officers have also completed an online short course on explicit instruction pedagogy.

At the school level, LANE training events have been conducted with Principals, teachers and Assistant Teachers from relevant schools. Teachers have completed an online short course on explicit instruction pedagogy as part of this training, and materials necessary for the delivery of the LANE program are available through the Department's online portal with new materials updated weekly. Trainers also visited schools to work intensively with teachers to place students on learning progressions and to prepare for teaching.

Feedback through the School Assessments indicates that teachers are utilising the supporting materials for their planning and that students are being screened and placed on learning progressions in literacy and numeracy.

The experience of training and implementation in the 13 trial schools was used by the Department to inform the plan to roll out general implementation. Schools also report that training has been delivered as required and there are no reports of significant difficulties in implementation.

School and Department Assessments indicate that this Action has made significant progress in a short period of time with regard to implementation and process maturity, reflecting the substantial effort and involvement of the Department and schools.

The Australian Government milestone related to this Action is that 20 per cent of Remote and Very Remote schools have a mandated literacy and numeracy program implemented by 2017. Programs which contribute to this number are LANE (E2A1) and Direct Instruction (E2A2) programs, and the milestone has been met. In 2017, the milestone to implement the program across 70 per cent of remote and rural schools is on track.

Lessons and potential improvements

Work by the Department to link this Action (E2A1) with Benchmarks (E2A3) has ensured that the projects are closely aligned. The extent of implementation progress, including planning, training delivery and gathering feedback to inform full roll out, indicates that the decision to combine the project teams for this Element with E2A3 was appropriate and has contributed to significant progress in meeting the Australian Government milestone.

C.2.2 Direct Instruction (E2A2)

TABLE C.2 DIRECT INSTRUCTION (E2A2) SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

This Action will see the implementation of Direct Instruction for reading, spelling, writing and mathematics in selected schools. Direct Instruction uses a particular methodology of teaching that emphasises well-developed and carefully planned lessons that are designed around small learning increments and clearly defined and prescribed teaching tasks. Under the projects professional development, coaching and mentoring support will be provided through the National Institute for Direct Instruction and Good to Great Schools Australia.

Objectives

The aim of Direct Instruction is to increase the proportion of Remote and Very Remote Indigenous students in government schools achieving at or above National Minimum Standard for NAPLAN reading and numeracy in Year 3 and Year 5.

Background and history

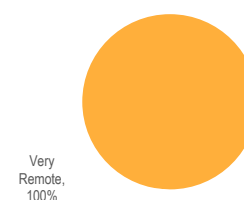
Good to Great Schools Australia was awarded \$22 million in 2014 under the Commonwealth Government Flexible Literacy for Remote Primary Schools Program to deliver literacy through Direct Instruction across three states and territories. In the Northern Territory, 19 government schools will trial and implement the DI model.

Timelines

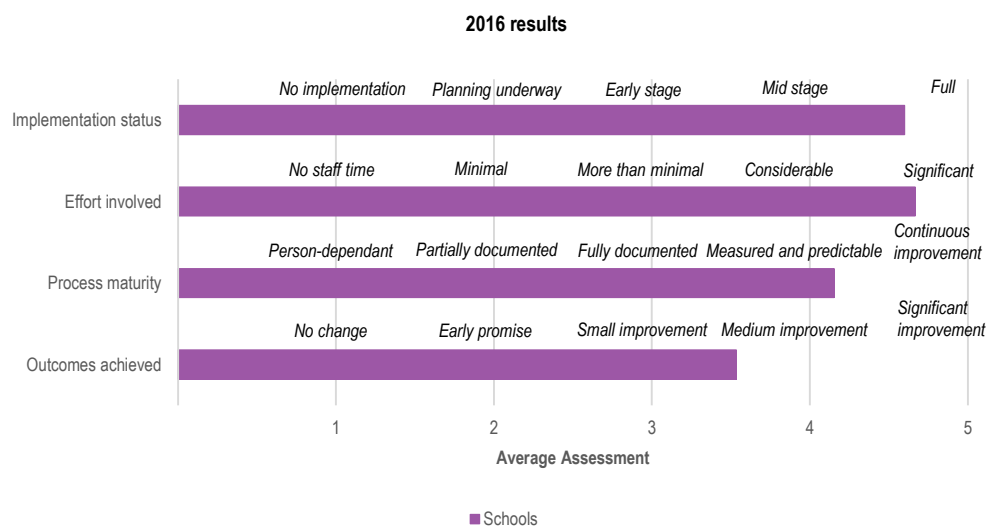
Project plan approved internally	April 2015
Project implemented in schools	Term 1, 2015
Project end point	Term 4, 2017

School coverage

Number of schools currently involved	16	Location of schools
Total number of schools to be involved	76	
Schools types where action is being predominately implemented	Primary Combined	

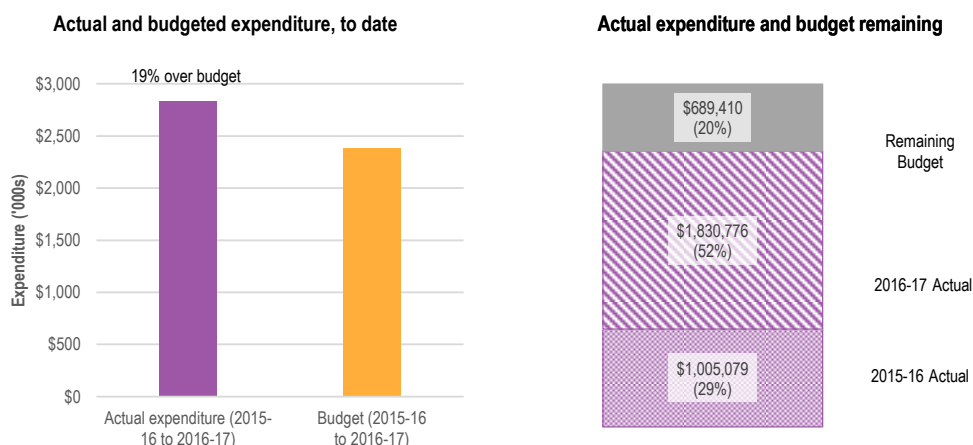


Assessment



2015 and 2016 results compared						
	2015		2016		Difference 2015 to 2016	
	Schools (n=6)	Department	Schools (n=6)	Department	Schools	Department
Implementation status	3.39	3.40	4.64	-	1.25	-
Effort involved	4.36	3.25	4.82	-	0.46	-
Process maturity	3.36	3.33	4.10	-	0.74	-
Outcomes achieved	2.86	2.50	3.55	-	0.69	-

Finance data



Note: 2016 Department Assessment results are not available for this Action.
SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

Implementation progress

Direct Instruction (DI) has now been implemented in 19 schools as follows:

- DI-literacy was introduced in 15 schools in January 2015 and in an additional four schools in January 2016 (three schools that were implementing the DI literacy program have since chosen to cease participating, deciding that DI was not a good fit for their community and students)
- DI-maths was introduced in eight schools in July 2016.

Regional office staff have participated in DI literacy and maths training and are now supporting Principals in the implementation of 'high fidelity' DI literacy and maths. This includes support for data collection and ongoing coaching in program delivery. Principals and teachers have received training in DI, with teachers having participated in extensive initial professional development. Teachers are also supported by coaches on a weekly basis.

Initial DI implementation, as indicated by participation in training and delivery and by School Assessment, is nearly complete. In terms of maturity, the process is considered to be 'measured and predictable' by schools and its implementation status nearing 'full' implementation. 'Considerable effort' is required to implement DI literacy and maths, as is to be expected with such a central part of the curriculum.

School Assessment responses indicate that professional development is appropriate and that school-based processes, such as the weekly staff meetings and review of data, are well established and valuable. DI supports consistency of teaching methods where there is high staff turnover, although schools noted the time and cost of training new teachers in DI and the impact this had on teacher time in the classroom.

The case studies indicated that, while there was often initial resistance to DI, in many cases staff and community members became more supportive after seeing early evidence of classroom success. Innovative outreach to community to explain DI also assisted with this, including demonstrating DI methods using local language to parents and community members at community events.

There is early evidence that DI was having a positive impact student outcomes in the case studies and the 2016 Assessment responses. Schools reported a small to medium improvement in outcomes, which are up slightly on the 2015 Assessment. There is considerable variation between schools however, with some observing improvement in individual student achievement while others report difficulties with student engagement and declining outcomes. At this stage, there are insufficient data on student outcomes at the system level to indicate the overall impact of DI, or to test some of the different outcomes being reported by different schools.

Some concerns remain among staff about the intensity of DI literacy and the amount of time it takes in the school timetable. There is particular concern expressed that the focus on DI literacy can make it more difficult to formally integrate Indigenous language and culture into the curriculum. Some case study schools have adapted by ensuring that language and culture are integrated into out of school hours programs or by altering the DI standard delivery model to help local Indigenous staff find a more active role in delivering the program.

This Action is meeting its targets for participation. Budget data indicates that implementation of this Action has increased in intensity in the 2016-17 financial year.

Lessons and potential improvements

Schools observed that like most school programs, DI is best supported by strong school leadership, low staff turnover and regular attendance of a core group of students—although the ability of DI to mitigate the impact of staff turnover and irregular attendance was also noted by some schools. The maintenance of DI resources with regular professional development and coaching are essential to teacher confidence and capacity to implement DI.

The time taken by DI in the school timetable is of concern to some schools, who report having less time available for other curriculum areas that were considered equally important—community members in some case study schools also raised this as an issue. Schools have adopted a range of approaches to maintaining curriculum connections with language and culture, including coordinating some curriculum activities with after school programs or integrating them into developmental play.

There is concern among schools about their capacity to support older students with poor literacy and numeracy. While these schools implement targeted literacy and numeracy programs such as MacqLit, they reported insufficient ESL teaching capacity and program resources to support students as they manage ESL and the secondary school curriculum.

Some of the key benefits reported in the DI approach—including teacher coaching, curriculum structure and regular student assessment—are strengths that do not necessarily require the other components of DI to be of value, and could be extended to other programs, possibly in a less resource intensive manner.

C.2.3 Benchmarks (E2A3)

TABLE C.3 BENCHMARKS (E2A3) SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

This Action will establish NT-wide benchmarks for numeracy, writing, reading, phonemic awareness and sight words through the use of benchmarks for all Government schools for use as norm-referenced tools to set and measure growth targets for literacy and numeracy. These tools are Progressive Achievement Test—Mathematics (PAT-M), Progressive Achievement Test—Reading Comprehension (PAT-R) and e-Write.

The Action will also support systems and capacity development so that data about student development can be transitioned across sites to follow student enrolment.

Objectives

The aim of the Benchmarks is to understand growth in student achievement and enable schools to access and interpret data to monitor student growth at an individual, class cohort and school level, and inform planning and teaching.

Background and history

All NT Government schools need to contribute to the achievement of system-determined student performance targets. The purpose of these systemic assessments are to:

- monitor the performance of students and schools so that the Department can prioritise its work and resources at a systemic and regional level.
- understand student performance so that teachers make informed decision about what, and how they teach.

Standardised testing and benchmarks support system analysis of strengths and weaknesses across schools and student cohorts over time.

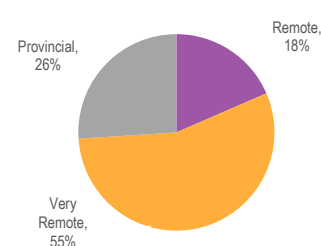
Timelines

Project plan approved internally	May 2015
Project implemented in schools	Term 2, 2015
Project end point	Term 4, 2017

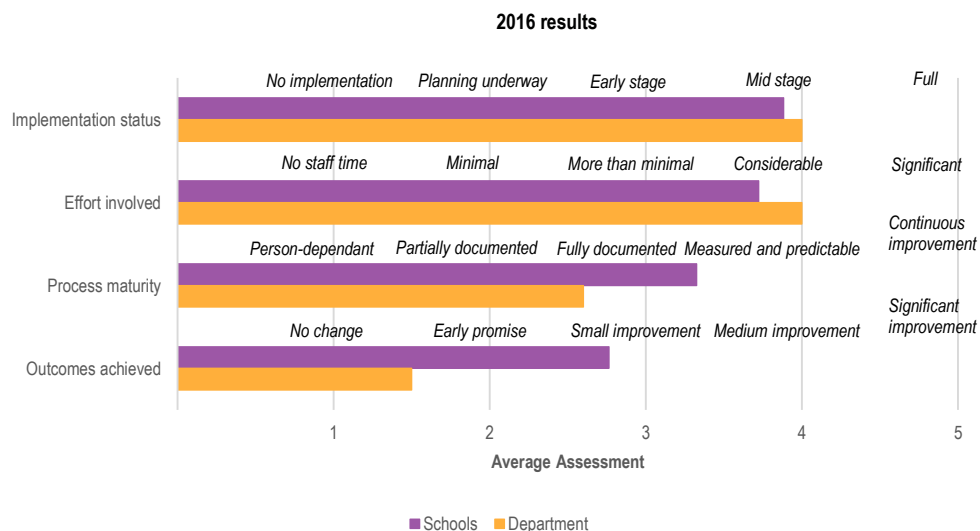
School coverage*

Number of schools currently involved	146
Total number of schools to be involved	146
Schools types where action is being predominately implemented	Primary Middle

Location of schools



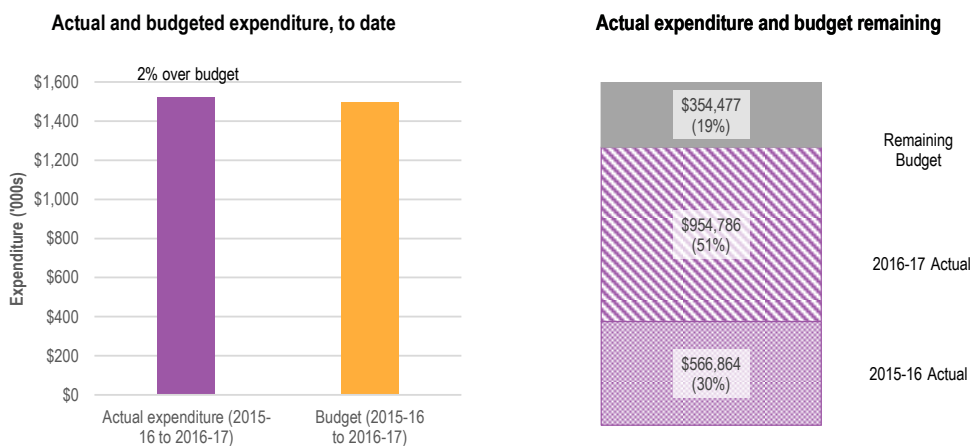
Assessment



2015 and 2016 results compared

	2015		2016		Difference 2015 to 2016	
	Schools (n=37)	Department	Schools (n=37)	Department	Schools	Department
Implementation status	3.89	2.83	3.86	4.00	-0.04	1.17
Effort involved	3.65	3.00	3.78	4.00	0.13	1.00
Process maturity	2.89	1.67	3.33	2.60	0.44	0.93
Outcomes achieved	2.63	1.67	2.83	1.50	0.20	-0.17

Finance data



* This Action is being implemented across all NT government schools; the accompanying text covers implementation in Remote and Very Remote schools.
 SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

Implementation progress

This Action focuses on measuring student outcomes through consistent testing, primarily using three tools:

- Progressive Achievement Test (PAT)—for literacy and mathematics assessment for Transition-Year 10
- Foundations of Early Literacy Assessment (FELA) NT—to measure phonological awareness in Transition-Year 3
- eWrite—for literacy assessment for Years 5-8.

Five rounds of PAT testing have been conducted to date, encompassing 147 schools and almost 20,000 students. A regional Data Literacy Network is being established to support the ongoing implementation of this Action. Regional-level structures to support data collection are now in place and all Principals and teachers have been trained in data collection procedures.

This project has experienced difficulties in achieving consistent data quality that would support analysis of student achievement to date. These difficulties have included inconsistency in test delivery in schools which has impacted the comparability of data received—for this reason, analysis of PAT-R and PAT-M results is not able to be included in this report.

Implementation effort has been focused on data quality with centralised procedures and data collection mechanisms now fully established at the system level for PAT-M and PAT-R. The Department has developed a timeline for improvement and recommendations on all systemic assessments have been developed to allow for data quality assurance processes and to provide schools with time to plan for, and incorporate, testing. The Department Assessment reported good progress in embedding consistent procedures, training materials and other support for teachers and schools.

Trialling of the FELA NT instrument has commenced and recommendations for the implementation of FELA NT in 2018 have been developed. The FELA NT trial included use of the administration support materials and assessment of its practicality. Teachers in nine schools have assessed students using this tool.

eWrite was trialled in 13 schools and was available to all schools on an opt-in basis from Term 4 2016. The Department has also made webinars available to teachers to support test administration for PAT and eWrite.

The Department is aligning PAT data and curriculum in order to support schools and teacher to use the data for planning. Next steps include:

- consolidating PAT administration
- rolling out eWrite and FELA NT to all schools
- using data from PAT to validate curriculum and growth expectations for all NT schools
- continuation of the Data Literacy Leaders Network
- working with schools and regions to develop cases studies and examples of data-driven school improvement.

The Department Assessment reported that the administration of systemic assessments is improving, with a decreasing number of repeated assessments in the later rounds of testing. Schools assign tests based on their evaluation of student achievement. When the test is not appropriate, the student may have to re-take a different test. In each round of testing, the number of re-tests has decreased as schools and teachers demonstrate improved understanding of the process and increased accuracy in assigning tests.

The School Assessments indicated that considerable effort is required from teachers and school leadership to implement PAT-M and PART-R testing, to unpack the data and to use it to drive planning and school improvement. While schools consistently demonstrate that the results of testing are used for planning at the classroom and whole-of-school level, there appears to be variation in the extent to which staff find the data useful. This may be affected by data literacy and/or the appropriateness of the tests for their student cohort.

Feedback from some schools suggests that students may not have the literacy skills to access PAT, such as observed by this respondent:

PAT-M and PAT-R testing reveals that remote students require sophisticated SAE (Standard Australian English) skills to participate fully - something this form of testing fails to acknowledge and factor for.

The development and implementation of the FELA NT has provided an understanding of the circumstances in which PAT-M and PAT-R may not be appropriate. One view expressed was that PAT may be inappropriate for some Transition to Year 3 students as these students may not yet have the literacy skills to access the test.

The Department Assessment indicates that significant effort has been applied at a systemic level to implement this Action. That this effort and progress is also seen in the School Assessments appears to reflect both Department and school commitment to the implementation of this Action.

Lessons and potential improvements

Ongoing communication with test developers as tools are trialled and implemented has been important in ensuring that schools have received the necessary support. Feedback obtained during interviews suggest that more use could be made of specialised support available for FELA NT in order to ensure effective teaching training in the use of the tool and its smooth operationalisation.

A continued emphasis on developing and supporting data literacy among schools will assist schools to be able to utilise data for student and school improvement.

C.2.4 Principal Performance Plans (E2A4)

TABLE C.4 PRINCIPAL PERFORMANCE PLANS (E2A4) SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

This Action will revise Principal performance plans and school plans to reflect the mandated literacy and numeracy approaches and identify school-based strategies for success.

Objectives

The aim of this Action is to develop guidelines for Regional Directors and Executive Director to facilitate the inclusion of key mandated aspects of the *A Share in the Future* actions being delivered and incorporated in Annual School Improvement Plans and Principal Performance Plans via the Accountability and Performance Improvement Framework business processes.

Background and history

The Principals Performance program is based on the intent of the Department's Strategic Plan, *Creating Success Together* (Goal 3) and aligns with recommendation 21(h) of the Review.

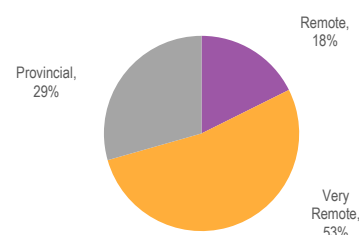
Timelines

Project plan approved internally	October 2015
Project implemented in schools	Term 4, 2016
Project end point	April 2017

School coverage*

Number of schools currently involved	153
Total number of schools to be involved	153
Schools types where action is being predominately implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary Middle Secondary Combined

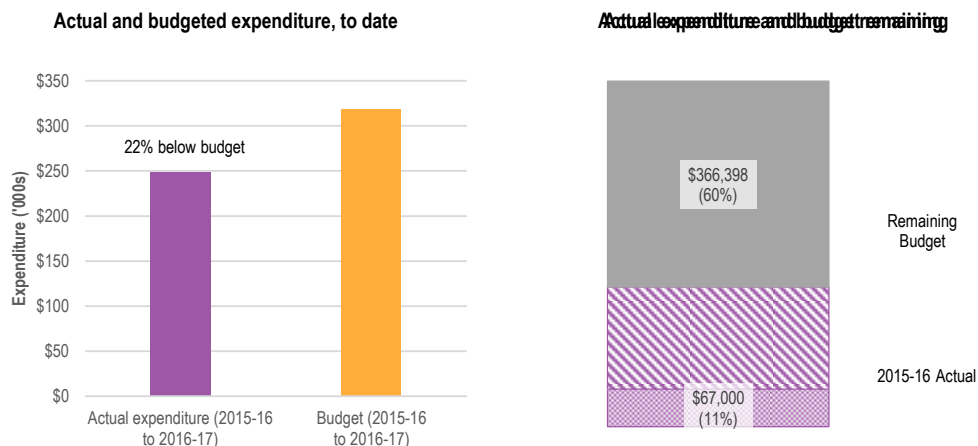
Location of schools



Assessment

No Department Assessment data for 2015 and 2016. Schools were not asked to assess against this Action in 2015 and 2016.

Finance data



Note: Due to the timing of implementation of this Action, schools were not asked about this Action in the 2015 and 2016 Assessments. 2016 Department Assessment results are not available for this Action.

* This Action is being implemented across all NT government schools; the accompanying text covers implementation in Remote and Very Remote schools.

SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

Implementation progress

There is limited reporting on this Action, and the 2016 Department Assessment for this Action was not available.

In July 2016, the Principal Performance Plan guidelines were distributed, and regional offices had begun to use the guidelines when updating Principal performance plans. All Principals Performance Plans are expected to be updated into the new format by April 2017.

In addition, two regional IES Project Quality Assurance officers have been established to support the incorporation of mandated aspects of the IES into both Principal Performance and School Improvement Plans.

C.2.5 Indigenous Languages and Culture Policy (E2A5)

TABLE C.5 INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AND CULTURE POLICY (E2A5) SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

This Action will develop and implement policy to guide the delivery of Indigenous Languages and Cultures programs in NT schools following national and NT policy direction.

Objectives

The Indigenous Languages and Culture Policy aims to improve access to quality Indigenous languages and culture programs in schools for Indigenous students and to encourage students to learn about communicating in Indigenous languages and associated knowledge systems and cultures.

Background and history

The Action will complement the Indigenous Languages curriculum component of the NT Curriculum Framework, the ACARA Framework for Indigenous Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages and the development of policy advice for NT schools by the NT Board of Studies through its Indigenous Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages Working Group.

Timelines

Project plan approved internally	October 2015
Project implemented in schools	Term 1, 2018
Project end point	n/a

School coverage*

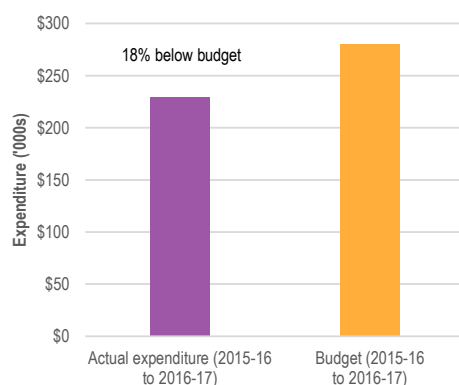
Number of schools currently involved	n/a	Location of schools
Total number of schools to be involved	n/a	n/a
Schools types where action is being predominately implemented	n/a	

Assessment

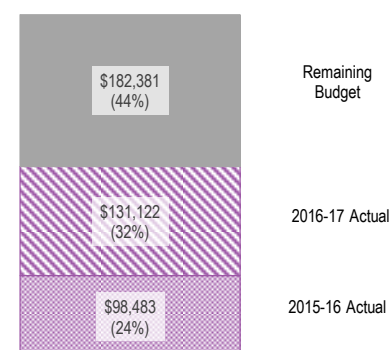
No Department Assessment data for 2016. Schools were not asked to assess against this Action in 2015 and 2016.

Finance data

Actual and budgeted expenditure, to date



Actual expenditure and budget remaining



Note: Due to the timing of implementation of this Action, schools were not asked about this Action in the 2015 and 2016 Assessments. 2016 Department Assessment results are not available for this Action. * This Action is being implemented across all NT government schools; the accompanying text covers implementation in Remote and Very Remote schools.

SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

Implementation progress

The development of the Indigenous Languages and Culture Policy (the Policy) has demonstrated good progress over the recent year, with the *Keeping Languages and Cultures Strong—A Plan for Improving the Teaching and Learning of Indigenous Languages and Cultures in Northern Territory Schools* launched in April 2017. The curriculum for ILC is currently under development, as are support materials to assist schools with implementation. Guidelines to support the NTBoS Plan were finalised and published in October 2017.

Development of the Policy has been supported by the Indigenous Languages and Culture Reference Group (ILCRG) who provided advice to the NTBoS. The ILCRG includes relevant school and community leaders who represent the schools sector, languages, stage of schooling, regional and programs. Members provide advice in relation to their area of expertise or experience. Representatives from the Department's Curriculum Assessment and Standards team are members of the ILCRG, as well as Principals, teachers and Assistant Teachers.

Work outputs for this Action are progressing and are responsive to research and consultation throughout project implementation. Curriculum and instructional materials are currently under development as part of the implementation model.

Budget data indicate an underspend in 2016-17 Actual year-to-date, reflecting in part the decision in 2015 to align implementation of this Action with the timelines of other stakeholders, such as the NTBoS.

Lessons and potential improvements

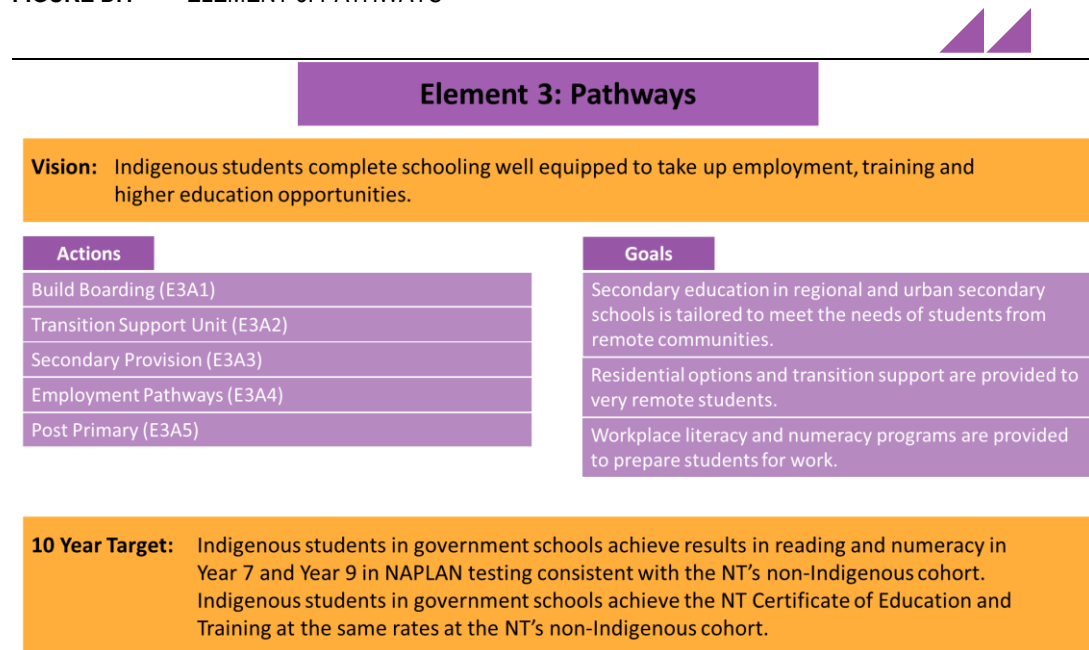
The revised development approach to this Action has been successful and is now making steady progress towards its targets. As it implements this policy, it may be appropriate for the Department to work with schools to address concerns about the place of language and culture in the context of implementing DI.



D.1 Overview of Pathways Element Actions

This chapter details the implementation and early achievements of the Pathways Element. The figure below provides an overview of the Element.

FIGURE D.1 ELEMENT 3: PATHWAYS



Element 3 has strong links to Element 2 as students transition to secondary school, and is supported by Element 4 which focuses on engaging students and communities, and by Element 5 which supports the school workforce. The Actions within this Element support schools to provide Indigenous students with secondary education programs, including boarding school options. E3A1 is building a new boarding school facility while E3A2 supports students to consider and take up a boarding school opportunity. E3A3, E3A4 and E3A5 work together and are, respectively, concerned with the design, delivery and materials to support employment pathways.

Each of the above mentioned Actions and their implementation is analysed in the following sections.

D.2 Pathways Element implementation

The following sections outline each of the five Actions of the Pathways Elements, including objectives, resources, implementation progress, lessons learned and potential improvements. Each Action starts on a new page using a standard format.

D.2.1 Build Boarding (E3A1)

TABLE D.1 BUILD BOARDING (E3A1) SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

This Action seeks to provide residential facilities and transition support to remote secondary students in order to enhance the educational opportunities for young Indigenous Territorians.

Objectives

The aim is to construct boarding facilities in order to facilitate attendance at the secondary school by students who are not residents of local towns.

Background and history

The Review identified that secondary education in remote communities is not achieving optimum results for Indigenous secondary students to complete schooling equipped to take up employment, training or higher education opportunities.

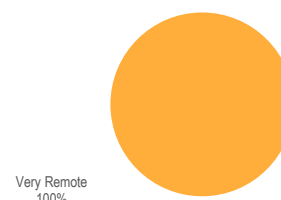
In order to expand the range of educational opportunities and pathways for Indigenous students from Remote and Very Remote communities, the Review recommended the provision of boarding facilities so that students are able to complete their schooling to support their chosen pathway.

Timelines

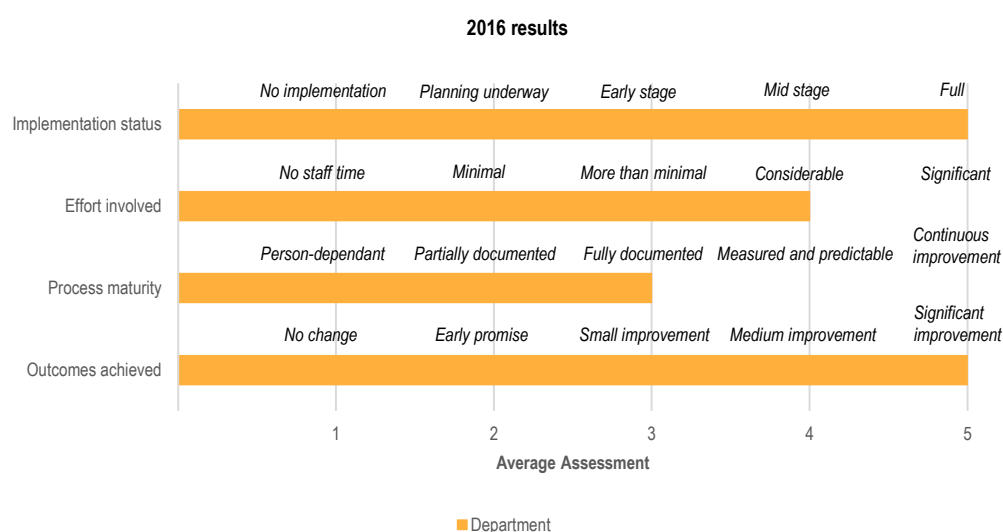
Project plan approved internally	April 2015
Project implemented in schools	Term 1, 2017 (boarding school opened)
Project end point	Late 2016 (boarding school constructed)

School coverage

Number of schools currently involved	1	Location of schools
Total number of schools to be involved	1	
Schools types where action is being predominately implemented	Secondary	



Assessment



	2015 and 2016 results compared					
	2015		2016		Difference 2015 to 2016	
	Schools	Department	Schools	Department	Schools	Department
Implementation status	-	3.83	-	5.00	-	1.17
Effort involved	-	4.17	-	4.00	-	-0.17
Process maturity	-	4.00	-	3.00	-	-1.00
Outcomes achieved	-	3.00	-	5.00	-	2.00

Finance data

No data available.

Note: Due to the nature of the school's involvement with this Action, they were not asked Assessment-style questions on this Action in the 2015 and 2016 Assessments.

Note: As this Action is not primarily funded by the Department of Education, detailed finance data are not available.

SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

Implementation progress

While this Action aims to build a number of boarding facilities aligned to Northern Territory secondary schools, implementation to date has focused on the construction of a boarding school at Nhulunbuy. The Nhulunbuy boarding facility has been completed and was opened to students at the commencement of the 2017 school year.

The school case study observed that the school is focused on ensuring that consultation with Indigenous communities in the region is thorough and ongoing. The facility plans to employ as many remote Indigenous workers as possible and will accommodate family members who can stay with students as they first attend in order to help students settle more quickly.

D.2.2 Transition Support Unit (E3A2)

TABLE D.2 TRANSITION SUPPORT UNIT (E3A2) SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

This Action will establish a complete transition service to schools, parents and students in order to maximise opportunities for successful educational experience as students move from their home communities to residential boarding.

Objectives

The aim of the Transition Support Unit is to support schools, students and families in preparing for and undertaking the transition to boarding facilities. It recognises that a successful transition to and engagement with residential boarding requires planning and a range of support services.

Background and history

Currently, there are 72 Remote and Very Remote schools offering middle years programs and 51 Remote and Very Remote schools providing senior years programs. These programs often have small enrolments, with the average middle school enrolment being 16 students and the average senior school enrolment being 15 students.

The Review found that a full range of secondary education pathways is best offered by aggregating students in larger groups, so that high quality programs covering a range of education and training needs can be offered.

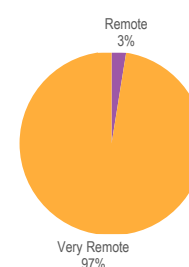
Timelines

Project plan approved internally	May 2015
Project implemented in schools	Term 4, 2015
Project end point	Term 4, 2017

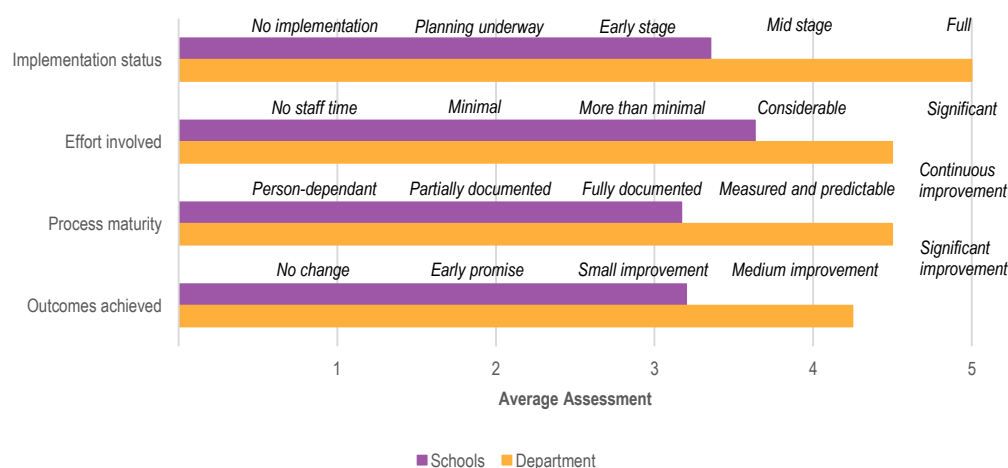
School coverage

Number of schools currently involved	79
Total number of schools to be involved	79
Schools types where action is being predominately implemented	Primary Middle Combined

Location of schools

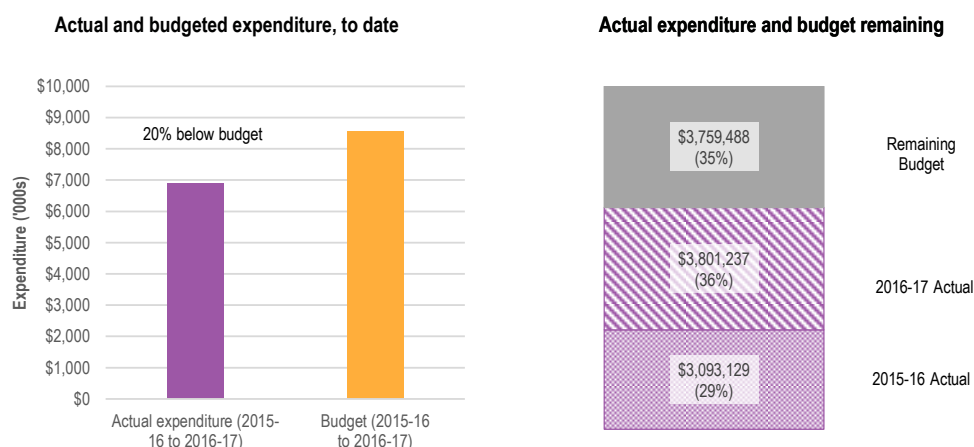


Assessment



2015 and 2016 results compared						
	2015		2016		Difference 2015 to 2016	
	Schools (n=4)	Department	Schools (n=4)	Department	Schools	Department
Implementation status	1.92	4.25	2.75	5.00	0.83	0.75
Effort involved	2.14	4.50	4.00	4.50	1.86	0.00
Process maturity	1.29	3.00	3.56	4.50	2.27	1.50
Outcomes achieved	2.14	3.50	3.22	4.25	1.08	0.75

Finance data



SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

Implementation progress

The TSU is now fully established and operating across North and South regions. The TSU carried out 269 community visits and 1085 meetings with parents in 2016. It facilitated 318 boarding school enrolments, and is case managing 634 students.

In 2016, TSU identified 533 young people in Years 6 and 7 from 46 Very Remote communities with limited access to secondary teaching and learning programs—278 chose to pursue a secondary boarding option with the support of TSU. An additional 274 individual requests were received to support students in Years 8 and above to apply for boarding school. The rapid response service also received 238 referrals/notifications for students requiring re-engagement support.

Activity data for 2016 suggests that the TSU met its 2016 target of transition support provided to 50 per cent of Remote and Very Remote schools. However, aggregate reporting of activity data means that it is not possible to confirm the number of schools that have received support from the TSU.

The case studies and School Assessments indicate that the TSU appears most effective where they are working in partnership with schools that have strategies for supporting the choice to go to boarding school, and developing community expectations around the factors that support successful engagement with boarding school—such as good attendance, preparation for the separation from family and community, and clear intentions of an academic pathway (normally, completion of the NTCET).

In these communities, the TSU complements the school's strategy and is able to support schools and communities with assistance in managing paperwork and accessing detailed information about different boarding school options. The TSU has also demonstrated that it can work with schools to strengthen school and community preparation for boarding school. As a staff member from a case study school observed,

That's what we need help with, talking to families about the options, showing them the options with the kids, getting the initial paper work started so it's not getting to the end of the year and finding out it's all booked up there.

Schools and communities reported finding TSU activities focused on recruitment to boarding schools less helpful when compared to activities focused on presenting the range of options available. Some schools reported infrequent contact with the TSU and a limited number of visits from the TSU, both of which were seen as limiting the ability of the TSU to support these schools.

A number of case study schools and those responding to the School Assessments argued that the TSU could enhance its capacity to support students, schools and communities post-enrolment in boarding school, and particularly where students experience difficulty in settling into boarding school or return early.

Lessons and potential improvements

The TSU has complemented school and community strategies to support students considering boarding school as an option and those planning to enrol.

The case studies indicated that some students attending boarding school were being sent back to their community for misbehaviour, where many do not re-attend the local school and some disengage from formal education. The TSU has contributed to considerable success in assisting students to transition to boarding schools, while a potential opportunity is to continue to develop TSU systems to support students while at boarding school in order to improve student outcomes. A revision to the role of the TSU to have an increased focus on the support provided to students both in the boarding facilities and when returning to community may facilitate improved retention and community participation.

As noted in the 2015 Evaluation report, the TSU will need to ensure that it continues to engage actively with schools and their communities so that the range of support services is delivered according to local needs. The difference in Assessments of the maturity and progress of this Action between schools and the Department appears to indicate that some schools are looking to work more closely with the TSU to refine the approaches and activities undertaken.

It may be helpful for TSU teams across the regions to share information on effective practices in community engagement and supporting schools in developing and maintaining responsive transition strategies.

D.2.3 Secondary Provision: Industry Employment Pathways (E3A3), Employment Pathways (E3A4) and Post Primary (E3A5)

Table summaries are first presented separately for the following related Actions:

- Secondary Provision: Industry Employment Pathways
- Employment Pathways
- Post Primary.

Implementation progress, and lessons and potential improvements will be discussed as a group given the three Actions' inter-dependence. Secondary Provision (E3A3) provides the authorising environment to ensure that Employment Pathways (E3A4) can be delivered, supported by the programs and materials developed under Post Primary (E3A5).

TABLE D.3 SECONDARY PROVISION: INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS (E3A3) SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

This Action will establish secondary education provision in regional and urban sites that meet the academic and vocational needs of students from Very Remote communities.

Objectives

The aim of Secondary Provision is to improve the NT Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET) and employment outcomes of Indigenous students by establishing and strengthening Employment Pathways Programs in regional and urban schools.

Background and history

The Review found that Remote schools have been attempting to provide both middle and senior years education but with very low numbers, engagement and completion. As enrolments of Remote and Very Remote Indigenous students increase in regional and urban schools in consequence of Actions 1 and 2, the Review recommended that the Department continue to develop VET pathways through secondary school to respond to the needs of this cohort.

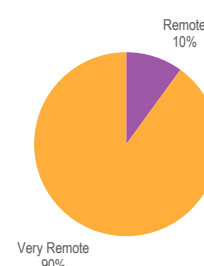
Timelines

Project plan approved internally	May 2015
Project implemented in schools	Term 4, 2015
Project end point	Term 4, 2017

School coverage*

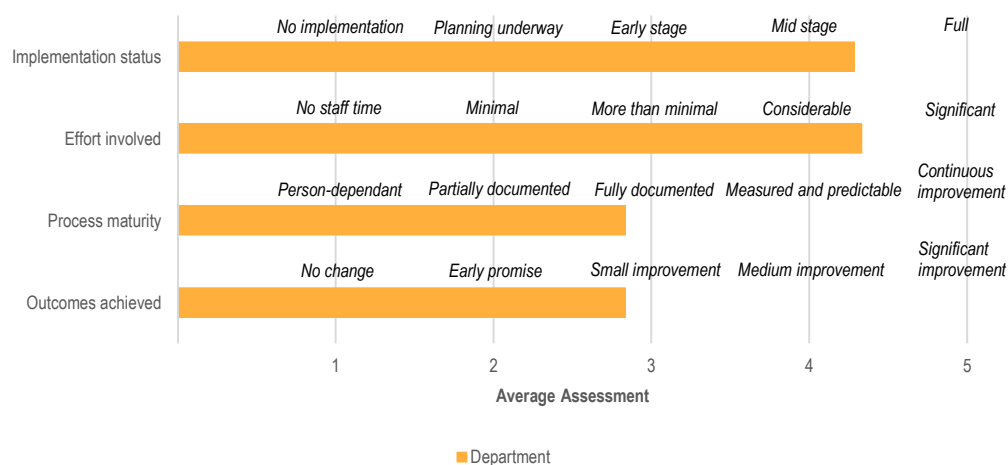
Number of schools currently involved	10
Total number of schools to be involved	10
Schools types where action is being predominately implemented	Middle Secondary

Location of schools



Assessment

2016 results



2015 and 2016 results compared

	2015		2016		Difference 2015 to 2016	
	Schools	Department	Schools	Department	Schools	Department
Implementation status	-	3.00	-	4.29	-	1.29
Effort involved	-	3.14	-	4.33	-	1.19
Process maturity	-	2.57	-	2.83	-	0.26
Outcomes achieved	-	2.29	-	2.83	-	0.55

Finance data

No data available.

Note: Due to the nature of schools' involvement with this Action, they were not asked Assessment-style questions on this Action in the 2015 and 2016 Assessments.

Note: Due to the close link between this Action and E3A4 and E3A5, it does not have a separate budget and so detailed finance data are not available.

* The data included in this table and the accompanying text cover implementation in Remote and Very Remote schools.

SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

TABLE D.4 EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS (E3A4) SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

This Action will support the development and delivery of a range of Employment Pathways programs:

- Remote Employment Pathways program (P-7+ schools)
- Foundation Employment Pathways (regional schools)
- Industry Employment Pathways Program (regional and urban secondary schools).

Objectives

The Employment Pathways Action aims to extend the success in educational outcomes observed in Indigenous students in remote, urban and regional contexts through embedded VET trainers and contextualised teaching by further development and implementation of the Employment Pathways model.

Background and history

This project responds to the Review’s findings that there was a need for improved delivery of employment pathways in urban and regional secondary schools and the creation of transition arrangements to allow students to receive support to transition from remote to urban and regional secondary schools. The project also provides options for students who do not take up the urban and regional secondary option.

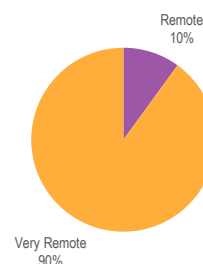
Timelines

Project plan approved internally	July 2015
Project implemented in schools	Term 4, 2015
Project end point	Term 4, 2017

School coverage

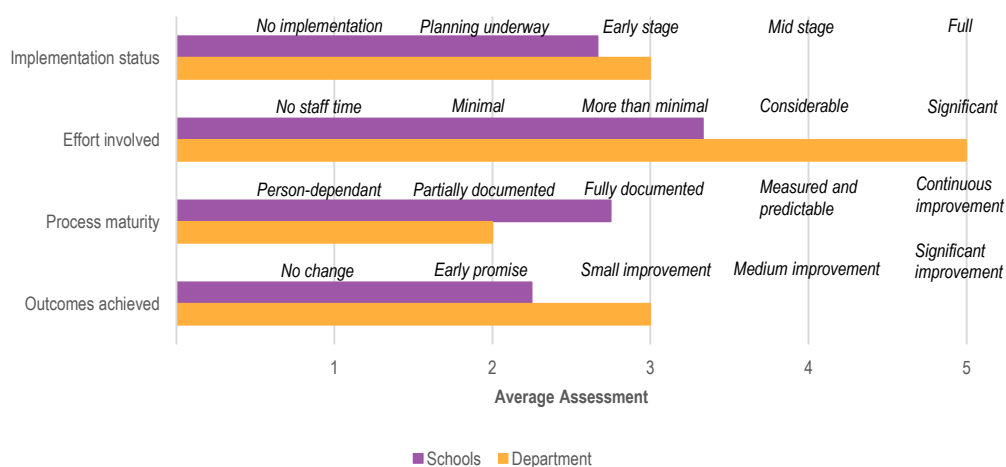
Number of schools currently involved	10
Total number of schools to be involved	10
Schools types where action is being predominately implemented	Middle Secondary

Location of schools



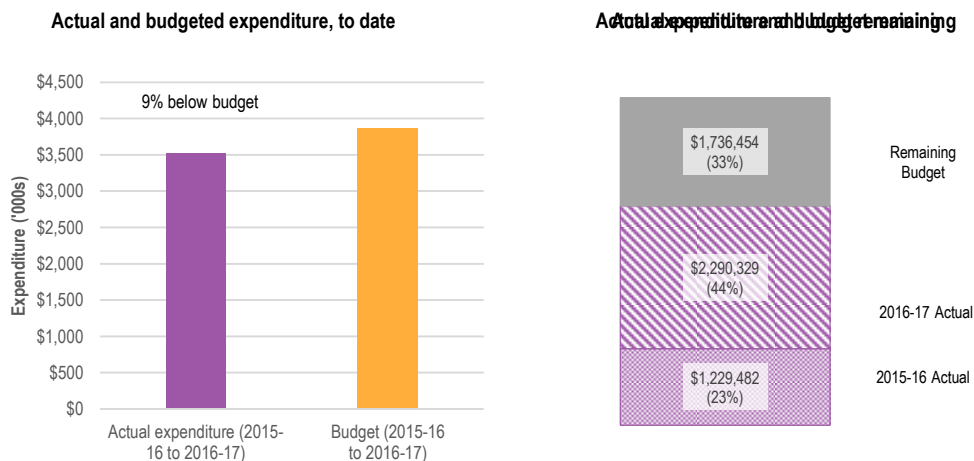
Assessment

2016 results



2015 and 2016 results compared						
	2015		2016		Difference 2015 to 2016	
	Schools	Department	Schools	Department	Schools	Department
Implementation status	-	3.00	-	3.00	-	0.00
Effort involved	-	2.83	-	5.00	-	2.17
Process maturity	-	1.83	-	2.00	-	0.17
Outcomes achieved	-	1.83	-	3.00	-	1.17

Finance data



Note: Due to the timing of implementation of this Action, schools were not asked about this Action in the 2015 Assessments, and so results cannot be compared across the two years.

SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

TABLE D.5 POST PRIMARY (E3A5) SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

This Action will establish a post-primary curriculum that is vocationally based in approved Remote schools. This project will deliver all necessary curriculum resources for the Foundation Employment Pathways Program as well as parts of the Industry Employment Pathways Program, designed to work for students, teachers, trainers, provisioning units and include implementation support.

Objective

The Post Primary Action aims is to provide further education and employment preparation programs for those students in Remote and Very Remote communities who do not transition to urban and regional secondary schools.

Background and history

The Review recognised that not all students would transition to urban and regional secondary schools and recommended that the Department create a post-primary program in approved school that would be training and skills-based, and prepare students for local employment.

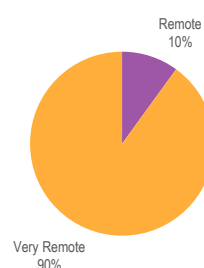
Timelines

Project plan approved internally	May 2015
Project implemented in schools	Term 4, 2015
Project end point	Term 4, 2017

School coverage

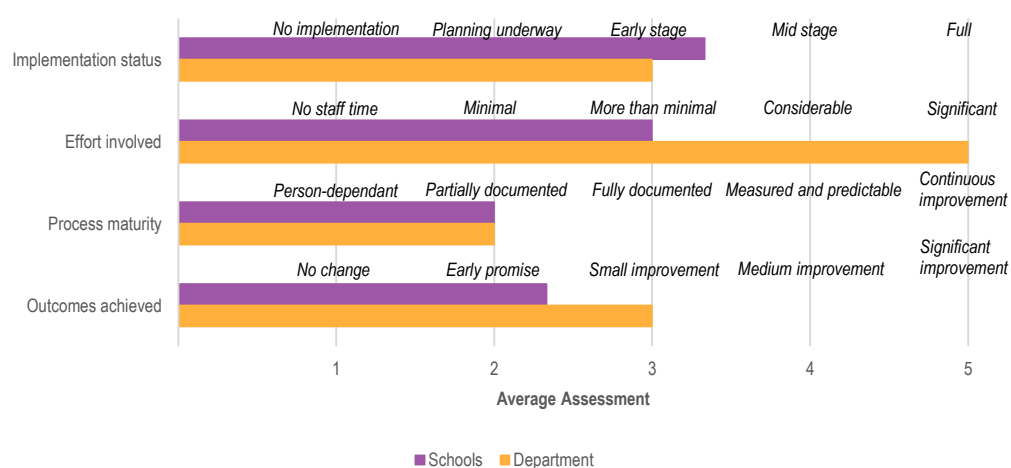
Number of schools currently involved	10
Total number of schools to be involved	10
Schools types where action is being predominately implemented	Middle Secondary

Location of schools



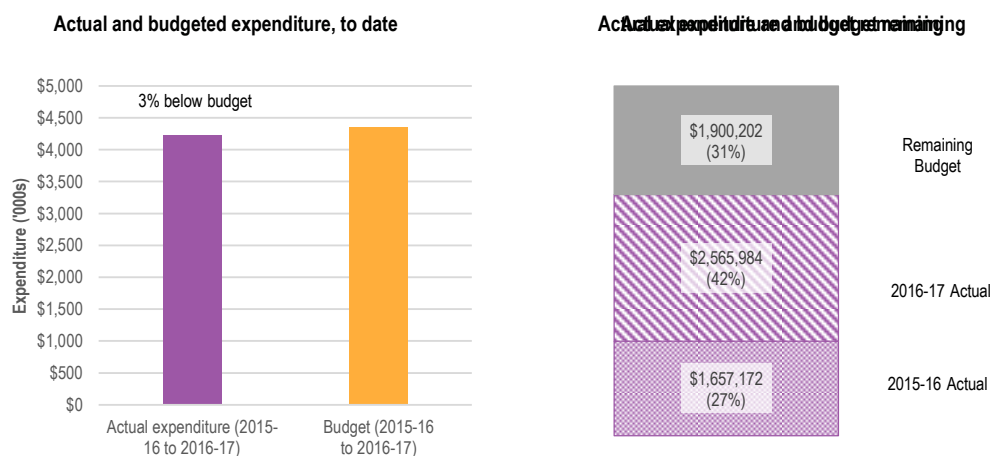
Assessment

2016 results



2015 and 2016 results compared						
	2015		2016		Difference 2015 to 2016	
	Schools	Department	Schools	Department	Schools	Department
Implementation status		2.78	-	3.00	-	0.22
Effort involved		3.44	-	5.00	-	1.56
Process maturity		1.88	-	2.00	-	0.13
Outcomes achieved		1.50	-	3.00	-	1.50

Finance data



Note: Due to the timing of implementation of this Action, schools were not asked about this Action in the 2015 Assessments, and so results cannot be compared across the two years.

SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

Implementation progress

Secondary Provision (E3A3), Employment Pathways (E3A4) and Post Primary (E3A5) are discussed as a group in this section due to the strong interrelationship between the Actions, and are collectively called 'Employment Pathways' (EP).

The Curriculum Framework for Employment Pathways was endorsed by NTBoS and was trialed at seven sites in Semester 2, 2016, with EP consultants working with schools to co-design delivery to suit the needs of their student cohort. Teaching and learning resources and education resources (including online materials and training workbooks) were made available for site-specific program delivery. Further resources were developed in 2017.

EP consultants undertook professional development session with school staff in 2017 to enable the delivery of specific literacy and numeracy training to teachers.⁴⁷ Data measures are planned for development in consultation with implementation sites.

The number of schools interested in participating in EP has risen. This growth indicates broad demand for EP among Very Remote schools, which may reflect the quality of EP materials being produced. The Department has responded to this strong demand by using savings from other parts of the IES to provide seed funding for EP to a number of schools with low student numbers. The intention is that initial introduction of EP will allow these schools to increase student numbers, which will then trigger more funding under the Global School Budgeting rules, which link funding to student enrolment/attendance.

Case study schools involved in the EP Actions reported that the Actions were supporting existing school and community activities, particularly in the delivery of pre-VET and literacy and numeracy support. Schools with well-developed employment pathways showed strong community engagement

⁴⁷ Macqlit (an explicit and systematic reading intervention program for small groups of older low-progress readers) and Junior Elementary Math Mastery (JEMM) (a remedial maths program).

and reflected good local employment opportunities. These schools showed an awareness of the need to partner with their local community to identify sustainable employment opportunities and develop appropriate training for their students.

The experience of one case study school indicates that the Department can play an effective supporting role in VET pathways where school resources are more limited or school-based momentum is disrupted by staff turnover. The provision of VET teaching materials and a Department training officer allowed the school to resume formal VET classes and assessment after the departure of the VET teacher.

Lessons and potential improvements

The Department's combined project implementation approach to these projects acknowledges the need for further alignment between the Element activities and its outcomes, goals and targets in relation to student achievement in NAPLAN and completion of the NTCET.

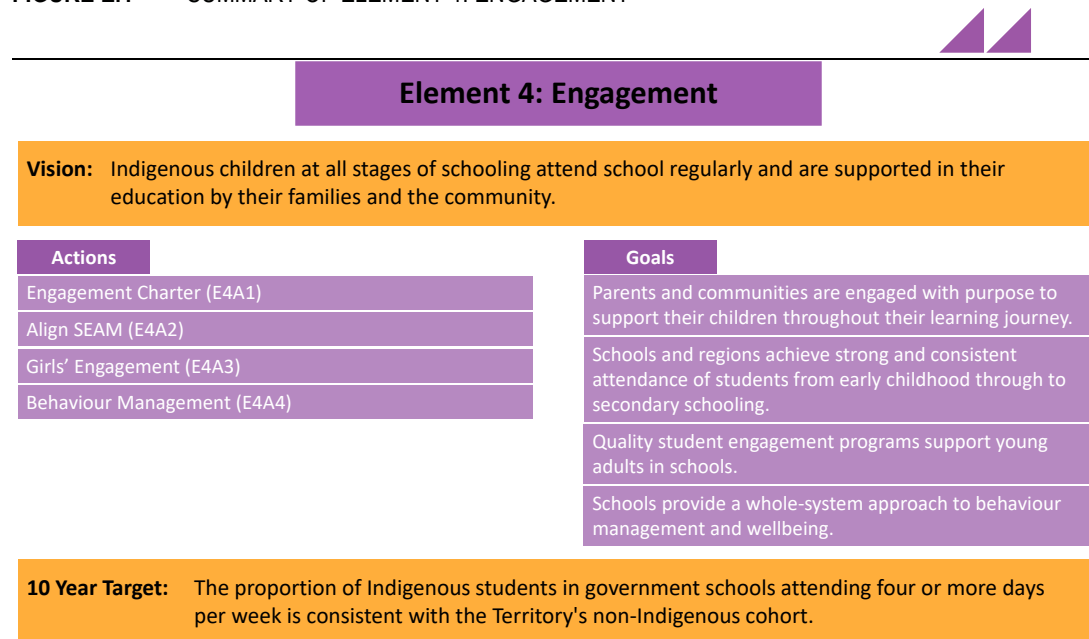
The level of effort required for these Actions has been significant which, compared to progress made, indicates that there may be benefit from a review of resource allocation and implementation methods.



E.1 Overview of Engagement Element Actions

This chapter details the implementation and early achievements of the Engagement Element. The figure below provides an overview of the Element.

FIGURE E.1 SUMMARY OF ELEMENT 4: ENGAGEMENT



SOURCE: PROGRAM DOCUMENTATION OBTAINED FROM THE DEPARTMENT

Element 4 has close links with the Element 2 and 3 Actions which support learning in primary and secondary schools. Community engagement and attendance also support the activities of Element 1, and the workforce Actions of Element 5 link with these aspects of Element 4 and the work on behaviour management. Element 4's Actions are also interlinked as they aim to educate students, schools, families and the community about their roles in engaging students and increasing attendance. In addition, the Girls' Engagement Action and the Behaviour Management Action aim to keep students in school over the long-term.

Each of the above mentioned Actions and their implementation will be analysed in the following sections.

E.2 Engagement Element implementation

This section provides a summary report of each of the five Actions of the Engagement Element including the objectives, resources, implementation progress, lessons and potential improvements. Each Action starts on a new page using a standard format.

E.2.1 Engagement Charter (E4A1)

TABLE E.1 Engagement Charter (E4A1) Summary table

Overview

This Action will develop and encourage the adoption of a system-wide community engagement charter across schools. The charter will set relationship expectations for schools and communities.

Objectives

The Engagement Charter aims to improve engagement of communities, families and students through all stages of learning to improve attendance, well-being and achievement. It is aimed at driving respectful and purposeful interactions between schools and their community.

Background and history

The Review found that community engagement is critical to achieving successful educational outcomes for Indigenous students. In the past, both the Australian and NT Government have invested in community engagement initiatives, including the Remote Learning Partnership Agreements (RLPAs), Local Implementation Plans (LIPs) and School Community Partnership Agreements (SCPAs).

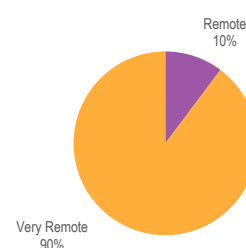
Timelines

Project plan approved internally	28 August 2015
Project first implemented in schools	Term 4, 2016
Project end point	Schools and communities display and action the Charter

School coverage*

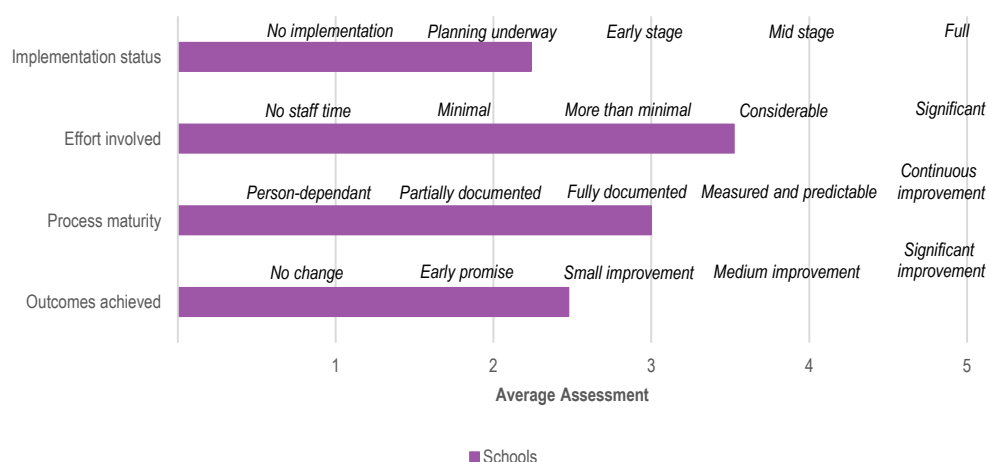
Number of schools currently involved	39
Total number of schools to be involved	108
Schools types where Action is being predominately implemented	All school types

Location of schools



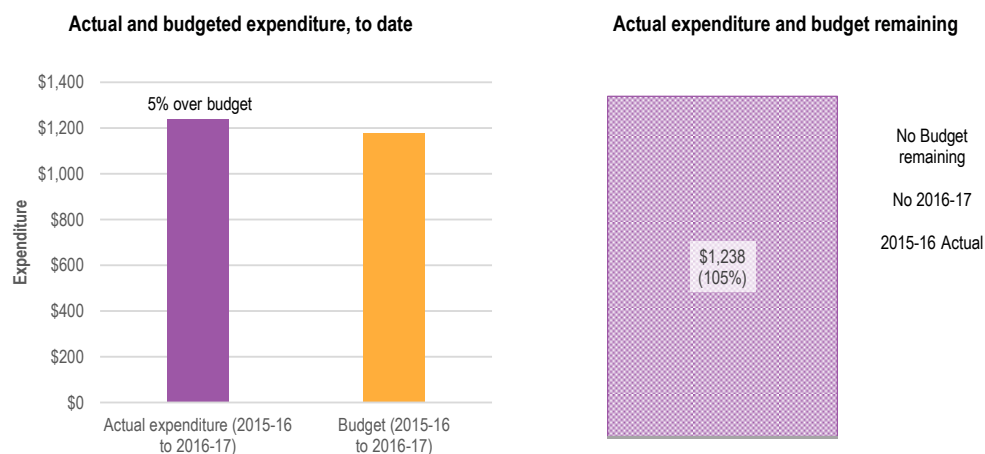
Assessment

2016 results



2015 and 2016 results compared						
	2015		2016		Difference 2015 to 2016	
	Schools	Department	Schools	Department	Schools	Department
Implementation status	-	2.67	-	-	-	-
Effort involved	-	3.00	-	-	-	-
Process maturity	-	2.67	-	-	-	-
Outcomes achieved	-	1.67	-	-	-	-

Finance data



Note: Due to the timing of implementation of this Action, schools were not asked about this Action in the 2015 Assessments, and so results cannot be compared across the two years. 2016 Department Assessment results are not available for this Action.

* This Action is being implemented across all NT government schools; the data included in this table and the accompanying text cover implementation in Remote and Very Remote schools.

SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

Implementation progress

Implementation of the Engagement Charter focused on three key areas:

- Developing a Community Engagement Charter document that details the Department, schools and community's commitment to engagement.
- Implementing a regional process to ensure Community Engagement Charters are quality assured and confirm the processes committed to in the charter are embedded in practice.
- Developing a supplementary poster that reflects the key messages of agreed community engagement and commitment.

The Family and Community Engagement Charter template has been produced and articulates what schools can do to strengthen learning outcomes for students, particularly through effective partnerships between Principals, teachers, students, families and the community. The development of the Charter involved a review of successful community engagement models in remote communities and consultations with remote school Principals, key Indigenous staff and educators.

A supporting tool was also developed to assist schools to document family, community and school agreed annual commitments and actions for working together to support students learning.

To date, four schools have completed their Engagement Charters. Three additional schools have finalised their second draft statements which are currently under review by their community and initial consultation has also commenced approximately 30 schools. It is intended that 108 schools will develop and finalise their Engagement Charters by the conclusion of this action.

A school that has completed the Engagement Charter reported that the process of development required significant community consultation; a view supported by other schools in the process of developing their charters. One school commented that the Engagement Charter template may not be

fit-for-purpose in facilitating community understanding, due to the perceived complexity of the language for community who speak English as an Additional Language or Dialect.

The School Assessments indicated that the implementation of the Engagement Charter would have benefited from more clarity on the purpose of the Action, the existing documentation it interfaces with, and at which point it can be deemed to be complete. A number of schools referred to other documentation, such as community engagement agreements and engagement policies, which pre-dated the Action.

Limited outcomes have been observed to date as the Action is still in the initial stages of implementation.

Lessons and potential improvements

At a local level, schools would have benefited from improved communication regarding the purpose of the Engagement Charter and its practical implementation. Additional clarity regarding the impact upon existing documentation, including whether the Engagement Charters were to replace established arrangements, may have improved the effectiveness of this Action's implementation.

The Engagement Charter appeared to be treated as a 'compliance' activity and as such was de-prioritised by some schools that chose to refocus efforts on other areas that they considered would generate greater value. Enhanced communication regarding the role and value of the Engagement Charter in the context of the wider strategic goals may improve on this perspective in the future.

E.2.2 Align SEAM (E4A2)

TABLE E.2 ALIGN SEAM (E4A2) SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

This Action works to align programs to improve school attendance, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Government, including: Every Day Counts (EDC), School Enrolment and Attendance Measure (SEAM), and Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS).

Objectives

This Align SEAM activity aims to ensure that the Commonwealth Government and NT attendance initiatives are aligned, complementary and working together to maximise school attendance outcomes. It also aims to engage with families and establish healthy patterns of attendance for Indigenous children from an early age.

Background and history

At present, there is significant disparity in attendance between students in Remote and Very Remote schools and students in provincial centres of the NT. This disparity is further compounded by differences in attendance between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

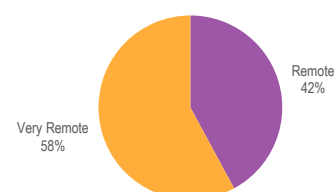
Timelines

Project plan approved internally	21 July 2015
Project first implemented in schools	Term 4, 2015
Project end point	Inter-governmental attendance activities are aligned and coordinated

School coverage

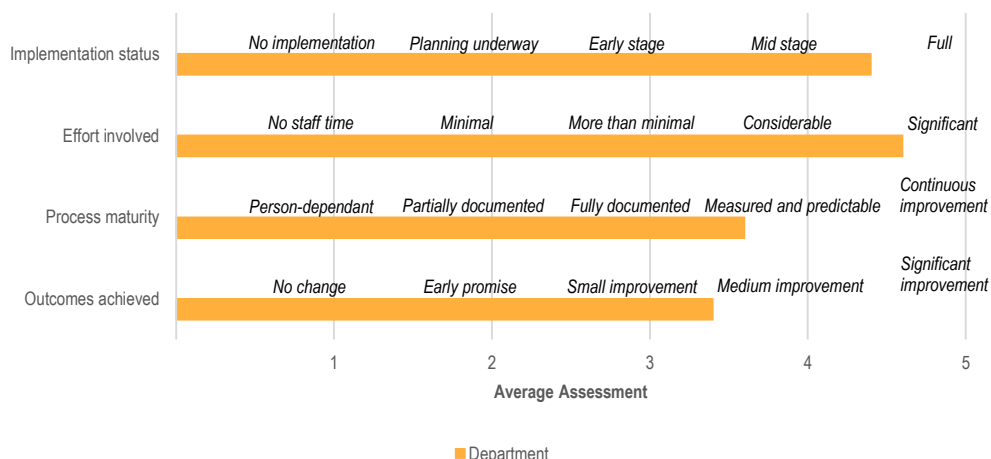
Number of schools currently involved	38
Total number of schools to be involved	38
Schools types where Action is being predominately implemented	Primary

Location of schools



Assessment

2016 results

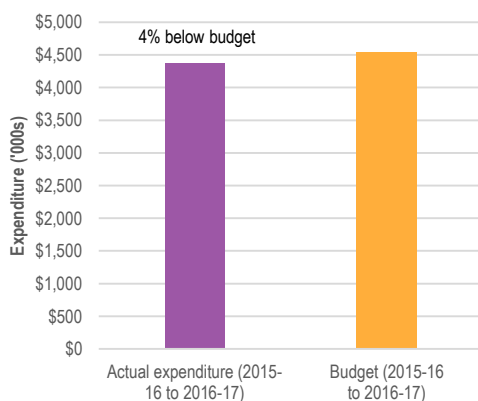


2015 and 2016 results compared

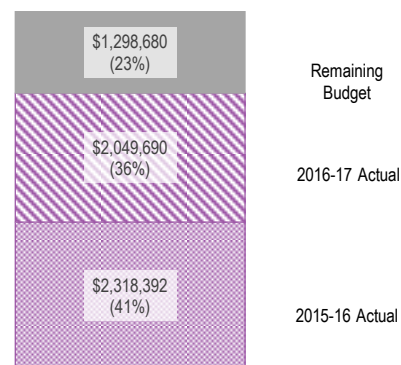
	2015		2016		Difference 2015 to 2016	
	Schools	Department	Schools	Department	Schools	Department
Implementation status	-	2.75	-	4.40	-	1.65
Effort involved	-	3.33	-	4.60	-	1.27
Process maturity	-	4.00	-	3.60	-	-0.40
Outcomes achieved	-	1.67	-	3.40	-	1.73

Finance data

Actual and budgeted expenditure, to date



Actual expenditure and budget remaining



Note: Due to the nature of schools' involvement with this Action, they were not asked Assessment-style questions on this Action in the 2015 and 2016 Assessments.

SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

Implementation progress

Implementation of the Align SEAM Action has focused on four key areas:

- Participating in bilateral negotiations with the Commonwealth Government to align attendance initiatives
- Agreeing on strategies that align inter-governmental activity with Enrolment and Attendance through a Bilateral Plan which includes a reformed model SEAM and RSAS in selected sites
- Enacting the Bilateral Plan

- Developing NT Government inter-agency strategy to improve coordination of efforts to improve school attendance.

The initial stages of implementation of Align SEAM saw the development of an Aligned Attendance Initiatives Business Model and the Attendance Strategy 2015–2020, with some key areas amended in 2015.

All of the key areas have now been completed and implemented. This includes the enacting of attendance strategies in partnership with the Commonwealth Government, the implementation of new SEAM model and RSAS sites, and the approval of an NT inter-agency strategy (*Every Day Counts*).

The Department Assessment reported that implementation of this Action was almost fully complete, and that considerable effort had been required. Processes and procedures were seen to be well embedded; however, there was acknowledgment that the integration of services and creation of a sustainable model requires significant input and time. This was reflected in a small decrease in the level of process maturity between the 2015 and 2016 results.

The shared ownership of attendance activities, between the Department and the Commonwealth, was seen as both a strength in that it encourages collaboration and continuous improvement, but also a limitation in that it can be complex and time consuming to negotiate. The Department Assessment reported small to medium improvements in outcomes achieved in 2016, showing progress from the 'no change/early signs' reported in 2015.

At a school level, there appeared to be limited understanding of this Action. While truancy officers were reported to be highly visible, schools were not able to readily identify how this Action interacted with activities on the ground, nor which agency was responsible for which elements of truancy responses. This impacted on the ability of schools to comment on the effectiveness of the Action.

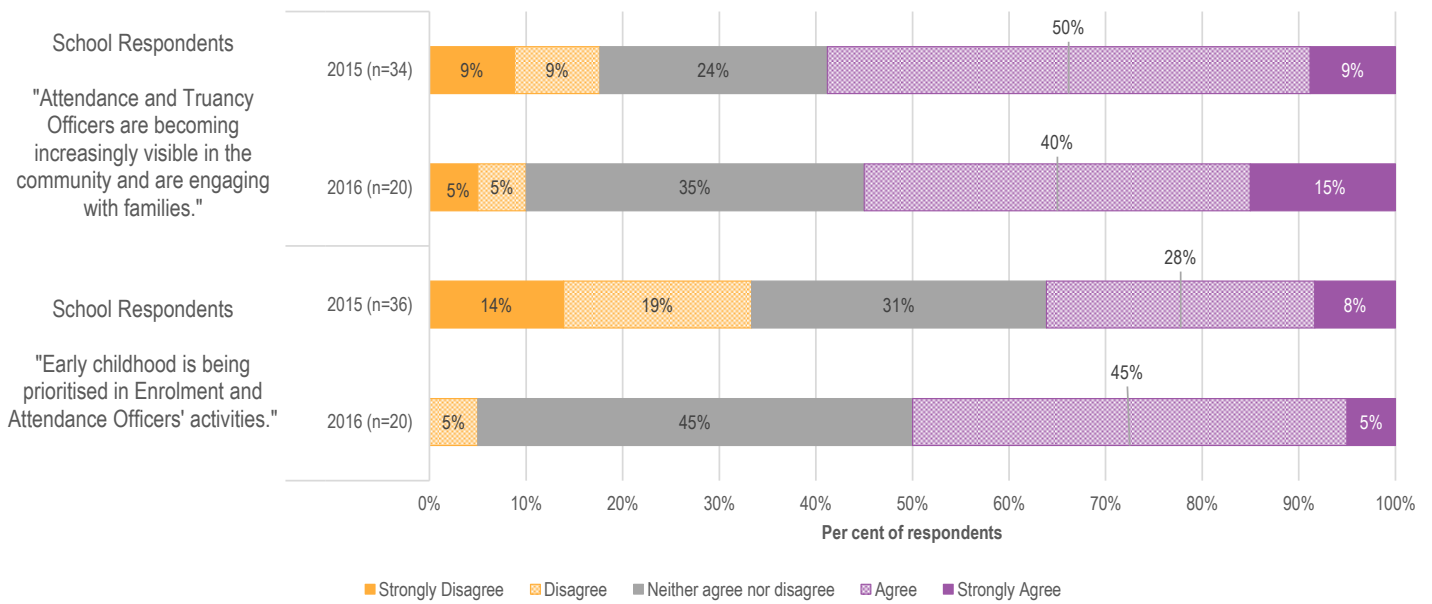
School attendance is a function of a complex range of factors including geography, community relationships, and local culture. The case studies reported varied impacts as a consequence of the Align SEAM Action—while some noted an improvement in attendance rates, the majority of schools did not report any impact on rates, or some backwards movement. A key issue identified was the ongoing resourcing required for attendance efforts, and the ever present risk of complacency. In addition, it was difficult to attribute outcomes to the Action overall, as opposed to individual local initiatives.

Interpreting the school-by-school attendance data was also identified as a challenge in reporting on this Action. Differences emerged in how attendance is recorded across communities, including recording attendance at different times of the day. Improved data and practice sharing across schools would also assist the targeting of attendance efforts, particularly given the high mobility of students between some Remote schools.

Notwithstanding the challenges of reporting on this Action, there were positive impacts observed in relation to school-community engagement. Collaboration between RSAS and SEAM was seen to improve engagement between the school, community, and attendance or truancy staff. The resultant consultation helped some schools identify appropriate goals and incentives to encourage student attendance.

The School Assessment survey results affirmed the case study findings in this area, with 55 per cent of respondents agreeing that attendance and truancy officers are becoming increasingly visible in the community (although this is down slightly from 2015) (**Figure E.2**). Half of respondents also reported that early childhood is being prioritised in attendance activities, with only 5 per cent disagreeing.

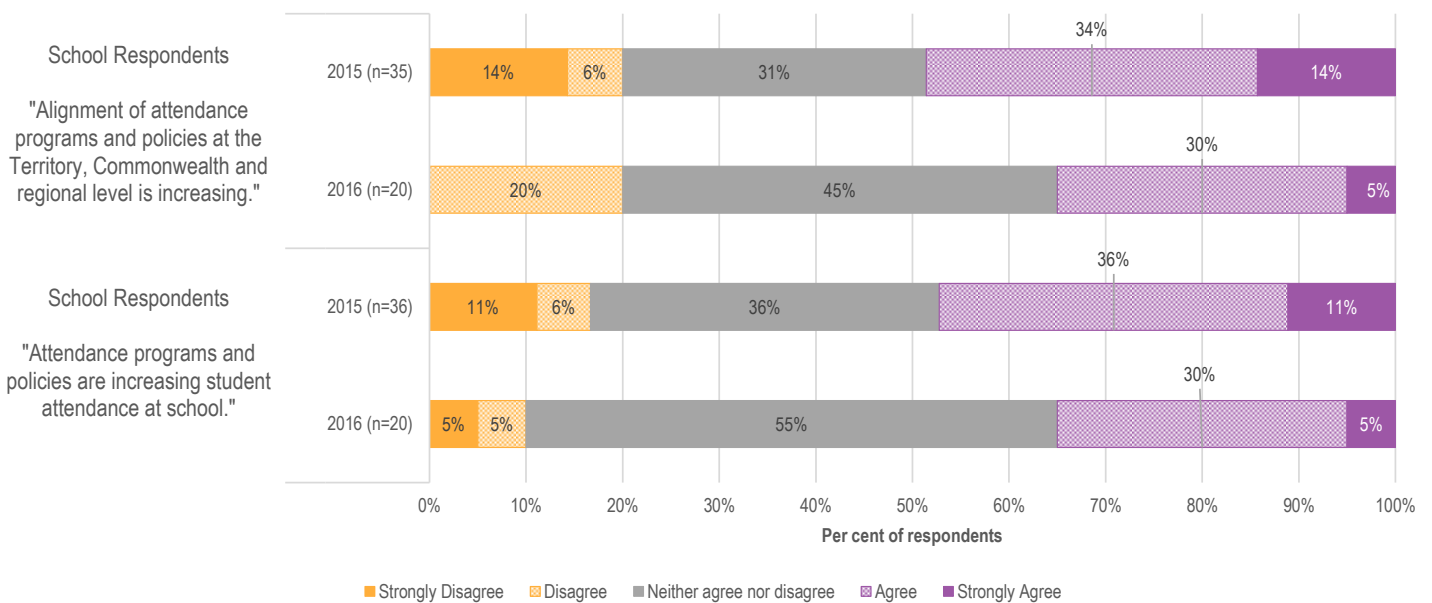
FIGURE E.2 SCHOOL ASSESSMENT SURVEY RESULTS: ALIGN SEAM—VISIBILITY AND EARLY CHILDHOOD



SOURCE: SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

At the same time, however, there has been a fall in the proportion of schools reporting increased alignment between Commonwealth and NT attendance initiatives (from 44 per cent in 2015 to 35 per cent in 2016), and there has also been a fall in share of schools reporting that attendance programs are increasing attendance (from 47 per cent in 2016 to 35 per cent in 2016) (Figure E.3). The latter result is consistent with Department administrative data (refer chapter 3) and underlines the challenges in increasing attendance.

FIGURE E.3 SCHOOL ASSESSMENT SURVEY RESULTS: ALIGN SEAM—ALIGNMENT AND OUTCOMES



SOURCE: SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Lessons and potential improvements

The focus of this Action is primarily at a strategic level and the learnings are key to future improvements. The activity undertaken so far as part of this Action represents incremental and positive change in the coherence of attendance strategies. A core consideration for future attendance activities is the time taken to develop the necessary relationships, negotiate interagency arrangements, and establish sustainable approaches.

While acknowledging the overall positive signs regarding the visibility of attendance program staff and their proactive role in bringing children to the classroom, schools also reported a degree of confusion on the interaction between the different staff and their functions.

Most schools reported that there is no clear evidence that attendance initiatives are having any impact, underscoring the challenge of achieving effectiveness in this policy area. While multiple school and non-school factors influence attendance, the lack of traction of current attendance-focused initiatives may indicate a need for a rethink of existing strategies in this area.

Improved communications could strengthen school understanding of the different attendance programs and policies, and the overarching goals of attendance activities. Attendance initiatives should maintain a dual focus on supporting children to attend school and communicating the value of attendance in a culturally appropriate way.

E.2.3 Girls' Engagement (E4A3)

TABLE E.3 GIRLS' ENGAGEMENT (E4A3) ACTION SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

This Action involves the delivery of Girls' Engagement programs which focus on educational outcomes, health and wellbeing, sport and employment options beyond school. The programs primarily target Indigenous girls across selected schools.

Outcome

The Girls' Engagement program aims to increase engagement of Indigenous female students in school, and increase secondary school graduation rates.

Background and history

The Girls' Engagement program will complement the Clontarf Academies, which targets the engagement of Indigenous boys. Previous Girls' Engagement programs have been in place in some NT schools, but a lack of funding led to their cessation.

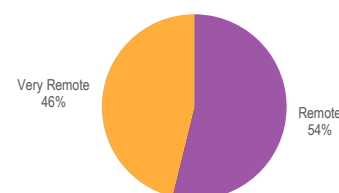
Timelines

Project plan approved internally	15 May 2015
Project first implemented in schools	Term 4, 2015
Project end point	The Girls' Engagement program successfully implemented in the relevant schools

School coverage

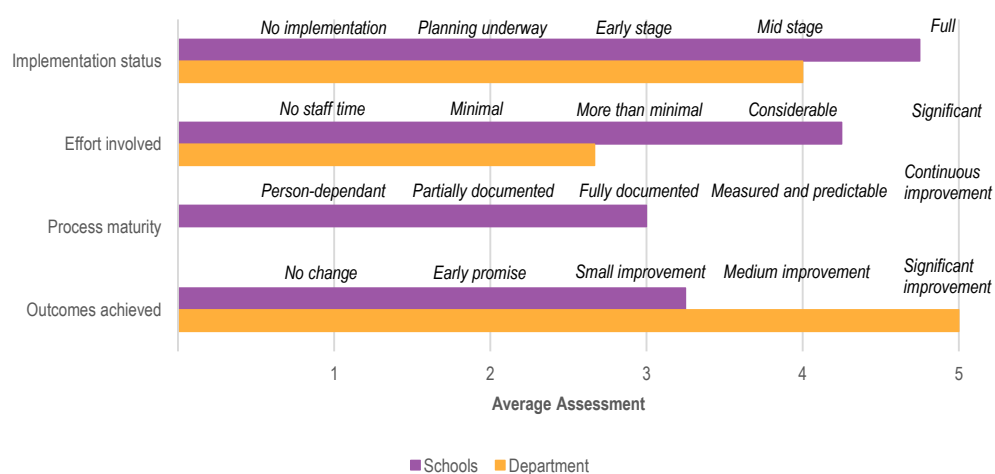
Number of schools currently involved	13
Total number of schools to be involved	13
Schools types where Action is being predominately implemented	Middle Secondary Combined

Location of schools*



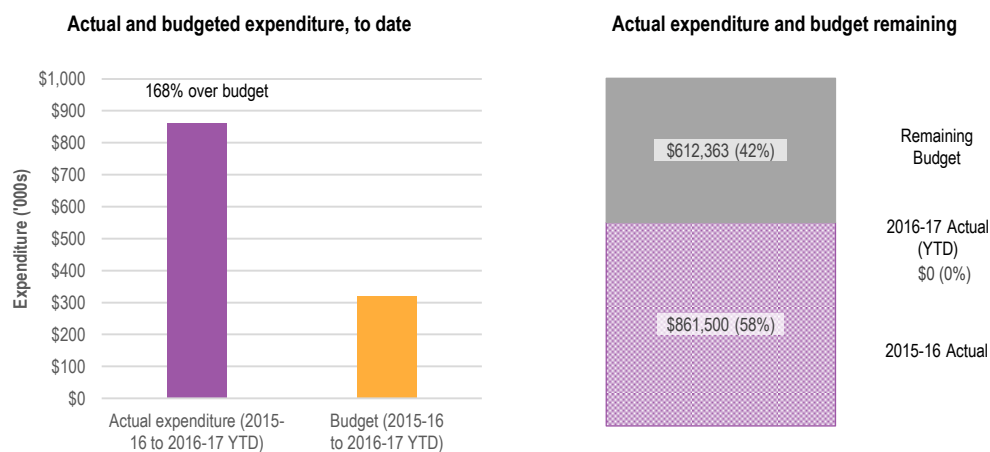
Assessment

2016 results



2015 and 2016 results compared						
	2015		2016		Difference 2015 to 2016	
	Schools (n=3)	Department	Schools (n=3)	Department	Schools	Department
Implementation status	5.00	4.25	4.67	4.00	-0.33	-0.25
Effort involved	3.00	3.25	4.00	2.67	1.00	-0.58
Process maturity	3.33	2.33	3.00	-	-0.33	-
Outcomes achieved	3.67	1.75	3.00	5.00	-0.67	3.25

Finance data



Note: Process maturity reported as not applicable in 2016 Department Assessment.

*: Only schools that were funded by XX included in this graph

SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

Implementation progress

Implementation of the Girls' Engagement program focused on four key deliverables:

- Approved Australian Government funding
- Establishing two providers for NT Girls' Engagement programs
- Achieving program benefits for schools, teachers and students
- Implementing the Girls' Engagement program in second round sites from 2016.

Funding was sought but not received from the Australian Government, and the Action is being supported by an internal budget allocation.

All deliverables for this Action have been completed. There are currently Girls' Engagement programs operating in 13 sites, engaging over 1,000 girls. Seven of these schools are in Remote or Very Remote areas.

The implementation process for this Action was reported by the Department as well developed, with processes fully matured and significant outcomes being achieved. The effort involved had been relatively low when compared with the other Actions, which may relate to prior Department experience in this area and the role of schools as individual program administrators. This is supported by the comparison of 2015 and 2016 results which show a decrease in the Department effort required for implementation and an increase in the school effort.

The School Assessments indicated that the level of implementation, process maturity and outcomes achieved decreased slightly from 2015 to 2016. This may be attributed to the roll out to new schools, expansion of programs within schools, and change in the support provided by the Department.

There are two providers for the Girls' Engagement program. An existing provider of girls programs was awarded Commonwealth Government funding and was maintained to run seven sites, while the selection process for an additional seven sites went through an open market process. This resulted in a second provider being selected and the two providers are now operating concurrently in different

schools. The delivery of Girls' Engagement programs has been separated between the two providers—Role Models and Leaders Australia (RMLA) and the Stars Foundation. Between 2015 and 2016, the total number of participants increased on average by 30 per cent across before falling 8 per cent in 2017 (**Table E.4**). It is not clear what caused this fall in participation—it may be that the growth in 2016 exceeded the capacity of the programs or it may be that the programs could have room to improve their retention strategies.

One of the providers of the Girl's Engagement programs reported improved educational outcomes for students; for example, 35 of 39 girls participating in the Girls' Engagement program graduated year 12, approximately 80 per cent of whom subsequently gained full time work or entered full time study.

TABLE E.4 PARTICIPANTS IN GIRLS' ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

	Schools	Program participants			Change in participation	
		2015	2016	2017	2015-2016	2016-2017
RMLA	6	484	581	497	20%	-14%
Stars	8*	397	576	572	45%	-1%
Total	14*	881	1157	1069	31%	-8%

Note: * two less schools were involved in 2015.

The total number of girls participating may be slightly lower than the figures shown above, as students are counted using the Enrolled UPN. If a student changes year levels within the selected period, they will be counted twice.

SOURCE: ACIL ALLEN CONSULTING ANALYSIS OF DEPARTMENTAL DATA, 2017

Schools continued to identify positive impacts from the Girls' Engagement programs, indicating it is a useful model for establishing and maintaining girls' involvement in the school community. While implementation is still in the early stages, initial observations of impact included improved perceptions of social inclusion, increased pride in Indigenous identity, and higher proportions of female graduates.

This was supported by feedback obtained through the School Assessment, which noted evidence of improved attendance figures, completion of academic work, and engagement in health and wellbeing activities for girls involved in Girls' Engagement programs.

Lessons and potential improvements

This Action is well progressed and is showing positive outcomes across a range of different schools. The effort required to administer the Girls' Engagement program is increasingly impacting on the resources at the schools. As an increasing number of girls participate in the programs, and as programs are scaled up, there will need to be consideration of the supporting funding and structures required to maintain the effectiveness of the activities.

The Girls' Engagement program is linking well with other actions, such as the Align SEAM (E4A2). In some instances, staff from the providers are working in collaboration with schools to identify children with poor attendance and develop strategies to increase attendance. This may include home visits, trips in the morning to collect children, or incentives to reward increased attendance. Drawing these different stakeholders into attendance activities was seen as a positive and more holistic approach.

E.2.4 Behaviour Management (E4A4)

TABLE E.5 BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT (E4A4) SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

This Action will develop and implement an integrated approach to wellbeing and behaviour, including: a positive behaviour management framework; a social and emotional learning curriculum; resilience program materials and system-wide monitoring and data collection.

Objectives

The Behaviour Management program aims to assist students to develop into healthy, resilient young people who can maximise their learning opportunities and outcomes.

Background and history

The Review stated that social and emotional learning, behaviour management and other health issues need to be addressed to improve learning outcomes. Previously NT government schools could choose to adopt any wellbeing and behaviour program which saw variable levels of commitment and success.

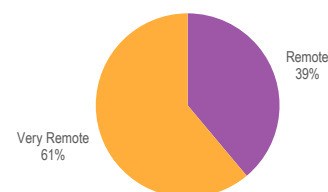
Timelines

Project plan approved internally	15 May 2015
Project first implemented in schools	Semester 2, 2016
Project end point	The system-wide approach to behaviour and wellbeing is embedded in quality assurance and other systems. Schools have ongoing professional development and access to support for implementation.

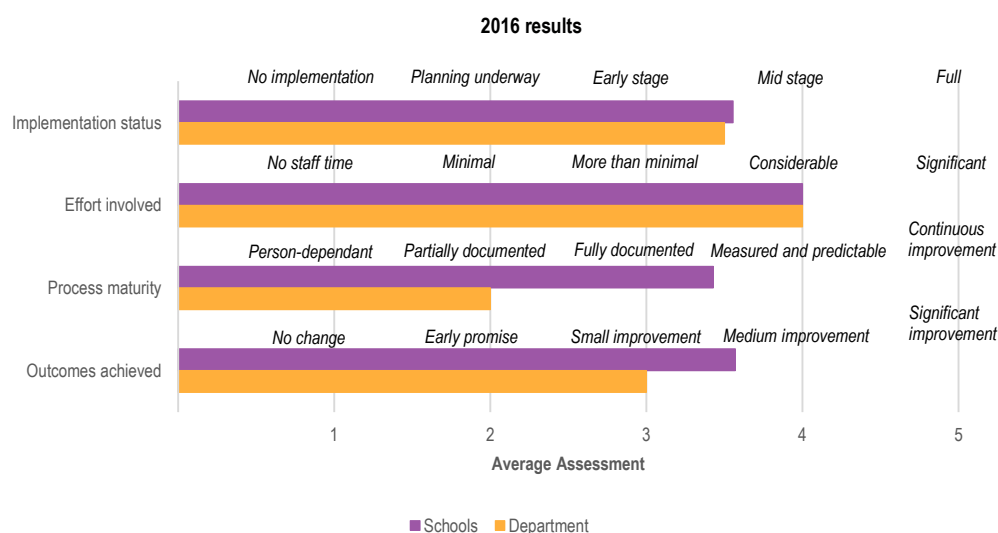
School coverage*

Number of schools currently involved	18
Total number of schools to be involved	76
Schools types where Action is being predominately implemented	All school types

Location of schools

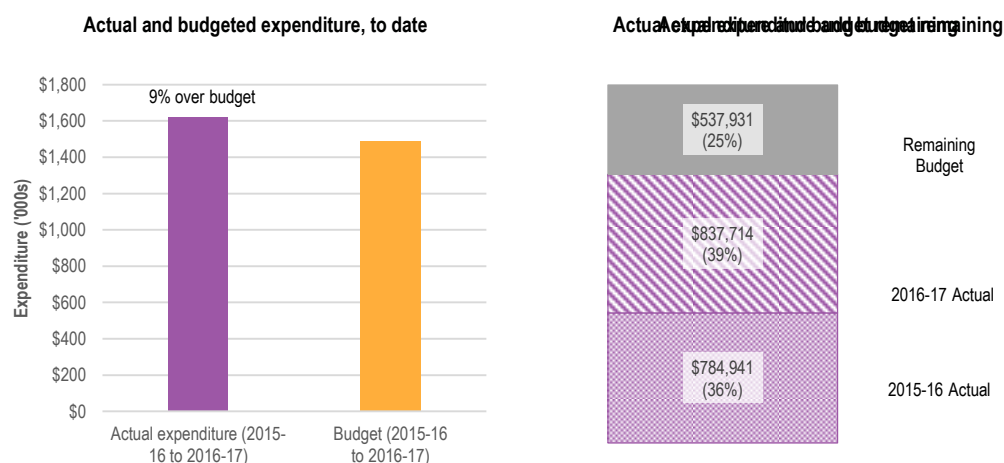


Assessment



2015 and 2016 results compared						
	2015		2016		Difference 2015 to 2016	
	Schools	Department	Schools	Department	Schools	Department
Implementation status	-	2.50	-	3.50	-	1.00
Effort involved	-	4.33	-	4.00	-	-0.33
Process maturity	-	2.67	-	2.00	-	-0.67
Outcomes achieved	-	1.67	-	3.00	-	1.33

Finance data



Note: Due to the timing of implementation of this Action, schools were not asked about this Action in the 2015 Assessments, and so results cannot be compared across the two years.

* This Action is being implemented across all NT government schools; the data included in this table and the accompanying text cover implementation in Remote and Very Remote schools.

SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

Implementation progress

Implementation of the Behavioural Management Action focused on four key deliverables:

- Developing a NT wide Positive Behaviour and Resilience approach
- Resourcing and implementing the Positive Behaviour and Resilience approach
- Designing and implementing a systematic approach to monitoring and mapping Positive Behaviour and Resilience
- Developing and implementing a Positive Behaviour and Resilience workforce capability strategy.

The essential components of the NT wide Positive Behaviour and Resilience approach have been identified, in consultation with key stakeholders. The curriculum and training modules have been developed in consultation with the University of Melbourne and Menzies School of Health Research. In Semester 2 2016, an adapted Building Resilience curriculum was trialed in 24 schools across the NT (16 of which are in Remote and Very Remote areas).

Scaling up the Positive Behaviour and Resilience approach to all schools has been identified as a capacity challenge by the Department. While an implementation plan has been developed, resourcing was insufficient to progress roll out beyond the trial schools. While resourcing has impacted implementation, interest from Remote schools in participating remains high.

Efforts to develop a systematic approach to monitoring and mapping Positive Behaviour and Resilience are on schedule. Data collection has been undertaken in the trial schools which will support the development of supporting measures. Consultation was underway to identify potential improvements for existing data collection measures within schools.

The workforce capability strategy has been progressed, with the establishment of a Positive Behaviour and Resilience Team. Initial internal consultations focused on aligning the strategy with existing

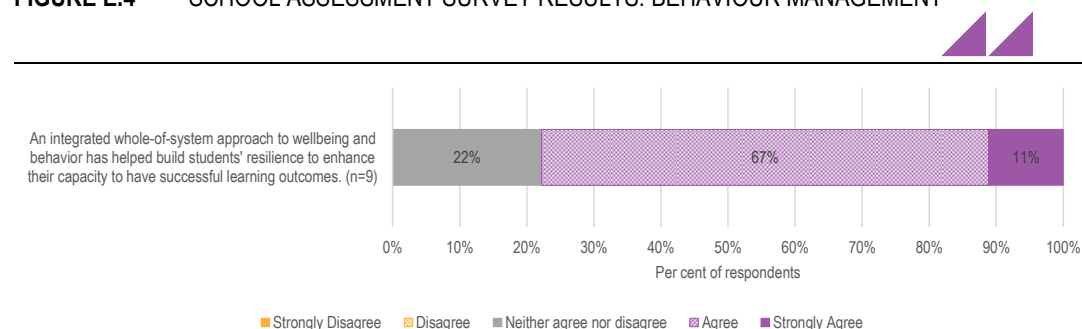
activities had occurred, and there was strong interest in the establishment of Positive Behaviour and Resilience Consultants. However, additional resources are required to complete this deliverable, particularly to support the development, implementation and evaluation of the associated training.

The implementation of this Action has required considerable effort from the Department. Particular challenges in the early stages of implementation included time taken to undertake sufficient research, clarity regarding roles and responsibilities, the absence of established processes, and inadequate staffing resources. Many of these challenges have been addressed over time and progress has been made; however, the size of this Action and amount of work associated will continue to challenge its implementation.

Additional resourcing is required to progress further implementation and up-scaling of the approach to Remote schools. This includes the development of curriculum materials and resources for early childhood, senior secondary, students with additional needs, VET and Industry Engagement and Employment Pathway, and transition programs. The results of the Department Assessment reflect this, namely through a decrease in the level of process maturity between 2015 and 2016.

The majority of schools reported that the integrated approach to behaviour management has helped build student's resilience and enhance their learning outcomes (**Figure E.4**). This school-level observed impact has not yet flowed through to student outcomes data and incidents data, although this is to be expected as the Action has only been trialled in a small number of schools to-date.

FIGURE E.4 SCHOOL ASSESSMENT SURVEY RESULTS: BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT



Note: Due to the timing of implementation of this Action, schools were not asked about this Action in the 2015 Assessments, and so results cannot be compared across the two years.

SOURCE: SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Lessons and potential improvements

The implementation of Behaviour Management highlights a number of challenges also experienced, albeit to a lesser extent, with the other Actions under this Element. Initial planning and design of the project did not account for the time taken to conduct adequate research to develop an evidence-informed approach, which led to delays in implementation. Difficulty in recruitment of the staff with capabilities required also impacted the timelines for implementing the Action.

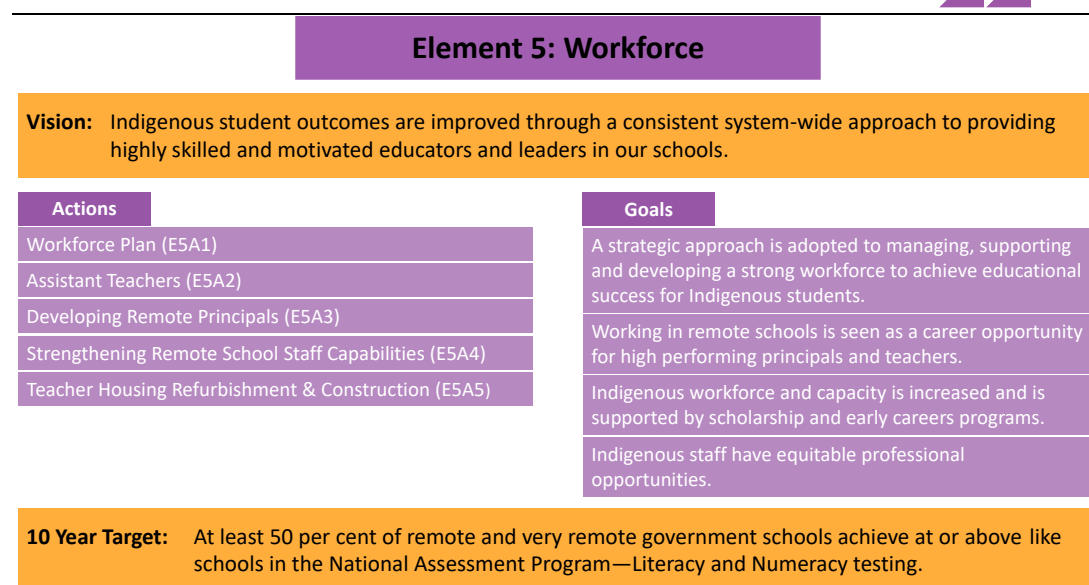
Notwithstanding the above, this Action demonstrates the benefits of integrating research into the development of tools and of contextualising products for the NT environment. The process taken in developing the behaviour management approach will facilitate continuous improvement over time, ensuring the products remain contemporary and fit-for-purpose. In addition, trialling the product in schools allows for the gradual building of autonomy and capability at a local level which will support sustainability and scalability over time.



F.1 Overview of Workforce Element Actions

This Appendix details the implementation and achievements of the Workforce Element. The figure below provides an overview of the Element.

FIGURE F.1 SUMMARY OF ELEMENT 5: WORKFORCE



Element 5 has links to all Elements as the associated Actions aim to develop the skills of the workforce which is implementing the other Elements. The Workforce Plan (E5A1) forms the foundation of, and strategic improvements for, the workforce. The other four Actions have a particular focus on improving the provision of skilled staff to schools in remote communities.

Each of the above mentioned Actions and their implementation is analysed in the following sections.

F.2 Workforce Element implementation

The following sections provides a summary report of each of the five Actions of the Workforce Element including the objectives, resources, implementation progress, lessons and potential improvements. Each Action starts on a new page using a standard format.

F.2.1 Workforce Plan (E5A1)

TABLE F.1 WORKFORCE PLAN (E5A1) SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

This Action involves developing a Department school workforce plan that includes an Indigenous employment and workforce development strategy.

Objectives

The workforce plan aims to deliver sustainable approaches to attraction, recruitment, development and retention of a high quality workforce.

Background and history

The Review identified a need for an overall workforce plan for all areas of the Department. This high level plan would provide direction for regional, divisional and school workforce plans.

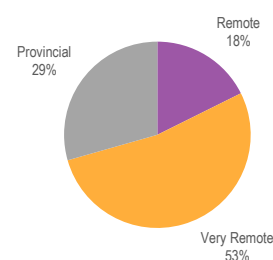
Timelines

Project plan approved internally	28 August 2015
Project first implemented in schools	The project plan does not relate to the implementation of the Workforce Plan in schools
Project end point	Plan finalised by 2017

School coverage*

Number of schools currently involved	153
Total number of schools to be involved	153
Schools types where Action is being predominately implemented	All school types

Location of schools



Assessment

2015 and 2016 results compared

	2015		2016		Difference 2015 to 2016	
	Schools	Department	Schools	Department	Schools	Department
Implementation status	-	2.00	-	-	-	-
Effort involved	-	3.00	-	-	-	-
Process maturity	-	3.00	-	-	-	-
Outcomes achieved	-	1.00	-	-	-	-

Finance data

No data available.

Note: Due to the nature of this Action, schools were not asked about this Action in the 2015 and 2016 Assessments. 2016 Department Assessment results are not available for this Action.

Note: As this Action is not primarily funded using existing resources, detailed finance data are not available.

* This Action is being implemented across all NT government schools; the accompanying text covers implementation in Remote and Very Remote schools.

SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

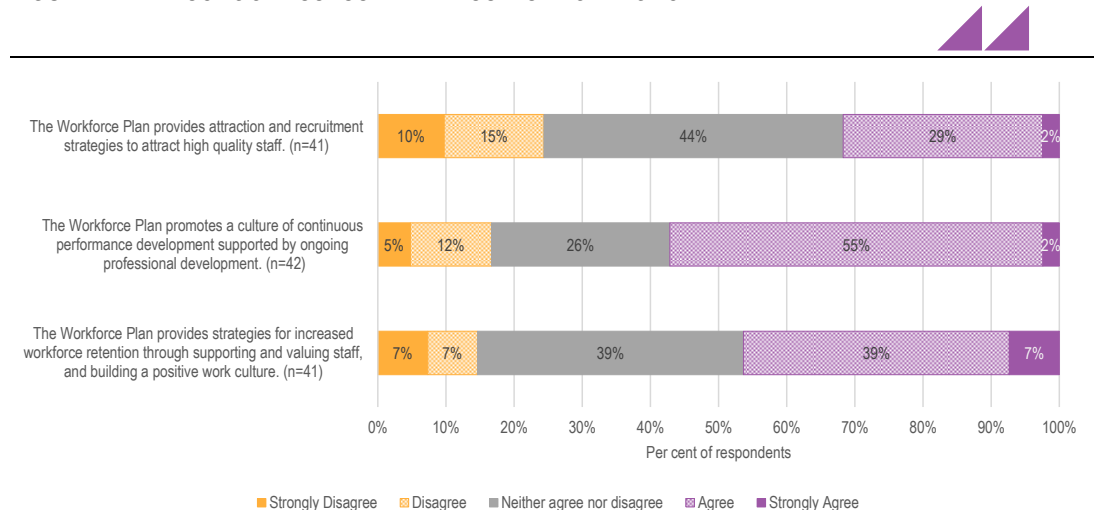
Implementation progress

The implementation of this Action focused on the development of a Workforce Plan for the NT Department of Education. Two workforce plans, titled *Strategic Workforce Plan 2016-2018* (the Plan) and *Indigenous Employment and Workforce Strategy* (the Strategy), were developed in consultation with Department stakeholders in 2015. These workforce plans were launched in October 2016 and are publicly available on the Department’s websites.

Alongside the workforce plans, the Department also developed implementation plans which were disseminated with the Plan and the Strategy. To progress implementation, the first meeting of the Indigenous Employee Reference Group was held in February 2017.

The School Assessments reported that significant numbers of schools see the Workforce Plan as promoting a culture of continuous improvement and professional development, and that the activities under this Action were seen to provide strategies for increased retention (Figure F.2). This said, a large number of respondents surveyed in early 2017 were neutral on all questions relating to the Workforce Plan which may indicate that it was too early for some to determine the value. Others highlighted systematic issues in relation to budgets, resources and availability of potential recruits as impacting on the Plan. There was specific support for the professional development activities and requirements as outlined in the Plan, but the challenges of remote locations in accessing training were also highlighted.

FIGURE F.2 SCHOOL ASSESSMENT RESULTS: WORKFORCE PLAN



Note: Due to the timing of implementation of this Action, schools were not asked about this Action in the 2015 Assessments, and so results cannot be compared across the two years.
 SOURCE: SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Lessons and potential improvements

The Workforce Plan Action has been completed, although the timeframes were delayed early in the planning stages due to underestimated consultation requirements and internal Department processes. The implementation of the *Strategic Workforce Plan 2016-2018* (the Plan) and *Indigenous Employment and Workforce Strategy* will now be enacted at a local level, as regions and schools undertake activities in support of the objectives. The translation of these efforts into outcomes will take time, and there are no immediate impacts to report as yet.

F.2.2 Assistant Teachers (E5A2)

TABLE F.2 ASSISTANT TEACHERS (E5A2) SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

This Action will establish employment and professional development arrangements for Assistant Teachers consistent with those of other staff.

Objectives

The Assistant Teachers program aims to develop the skills and employment of remote Indigenous Assistant Teachers by providing clear guidance on career development. This will contribute towards providing highly skilled and motivated educators and leaders in schools to improve student outcomes.

Background and history

Teaching in remote schools has historically involved teaming a teacher with an assistant teacher. The Review found that Assistant Teachers have recently had their roles limited. The integral role Assistant Teachers play needs to be understood and utilised. **The Review recommended that where there is an appropriate remote permanent position available, Assistant Teachers be given the opportunity to apply, in preference to casualisation of the workforce.**

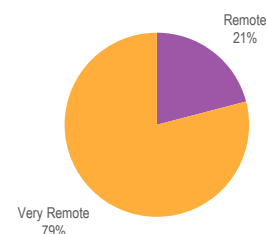
Timelines

Project plan approved internally	28 August 2015
Project first implemented in schools	Term 3, 2016
Project end point	Project completed and future funding agreement signed by 2017

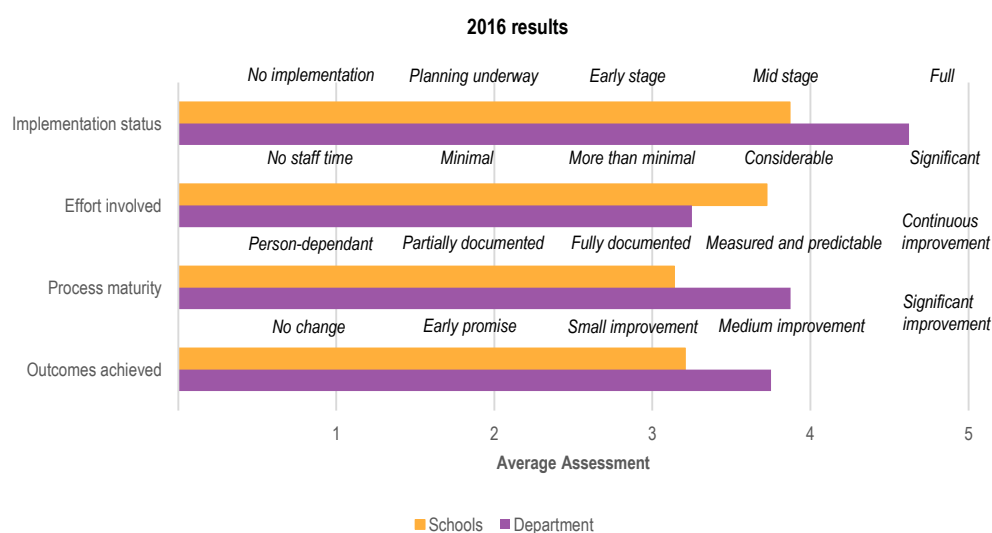
School coverage

Number of schools currently involved	86
Total number of schools to be involved	86
Schools types where Action is being predominately implemented	All school types

Location of schools



Assessment

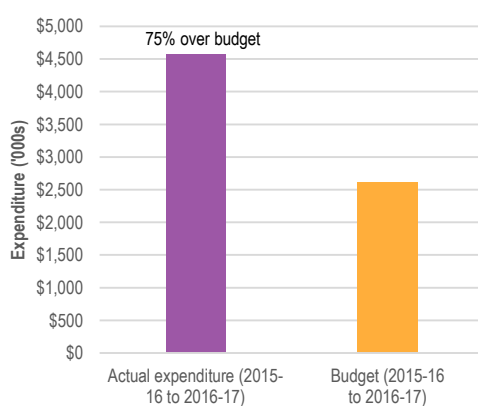


2015 and 2016 results compared

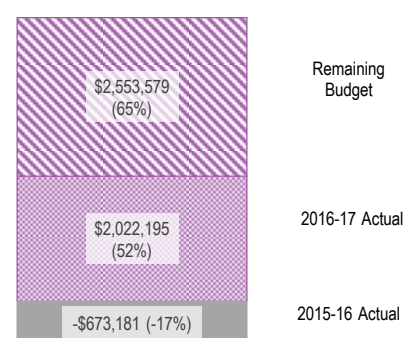
	2015		2016		Difference 2015 to 2016	
	Schools	Department	Schools	Department	Schools	Department
Implementation status	-	3.38	-	4.63	-	1.25
Effort involved	-	3.43	-	3.25	-	-0.18
Process maturity	-	2.67	-	3.88	-	1.21
Outcomes achieved	-	1.71	-	3.75	-	2.04

Finance data

Actual and budgeted expenditure, to date



Actual expenditure and budget remaining



Note: Due to the timing of implementation of this Action, schools were not asked about this action in the 2015 Assessments, and so results cannot be compared across the two years.

SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

Implementation progress

The implementation of the Assistant Teachers program focused on a suite of activities, from updating job descriptions and professional standards, to developing performance frameworks, through to providing training and support resources.

Implementation of this Action has overall progressed well, and has involved considerable resources and effort. A key area of activity has been ongoing consultation with stakeholders, including the Batchelor Institute and other areas within the Department. Implementation status and process maturity improved between 2015 and 2016, which correlated with a decrease in effort required.

While the Department Assessment reported only a small improvement in the understanding of, and support for, the Assistant Teacher role, the School Assessments indicated a more positive impact. The majority of respondents reported the updating of the professional learning system as clearly articulating career development opportunities (Figure F.3). Similarly, it was seen to improve understanding of the mentoring role as it relates to Assistant Teachers and other school staff.

TABLE F.3 ASSISTANT TEACHER ENROLMENTS AS AT JUNE 2017

Two career pathway documents for Assistant Teachers have been developed. The documents outline pathways to study and employment in the education support and teaching sector, and the early childhood and care sector. An information package for Assistant Teachers has also been produced and was trialled in Semester 2, 2017. Due to the additional consultation requirements, the timeline for completion of this work has been extended from June 2016 to November 2017.

The development of the induction program is currently underway, and timelines have been extended from December 2016 to November 2017. Challenges for implementation related to difficulties in identifying existing induction programs and limited resourcing within schools to support the progression of this deliverable—a regional trial implementation plan has been proposed for Semester 2, 2017.

The final deliverables under this Action relate to the interface between Assistant Teachers, professional standards, and the NT Teacher Registration Board. Potential industrial implications have also been highlighted associated with the proposed changes to allocate more responsibility for Assistant Teacher professional development to teachers.

Lessons and potential improvements

The implementation of the Assistant Teachers Action has experienced capacity and resourcing challenges which have delayed development and implementation. External factors may also impact the activities under this Action in future; for example, the recruitment and retention of appropriately qualified staff for external agencies (such as the Batchelor Institute) to undertake professional development is a continuing risk.

The school case studies and other interviews carried out for this Evaluation point to an increasing prominence for and awareness of Assistant Teachers, particularly over the last 18 months. Within schools, there were signs of positive impact from the Assistant Teacher Action, but these will take time to fully develop and be seen in key metrics. **Many of the deliverables relate to improving understanding of the Assistant Teacher role and developing stronger practices of team teaching; while there is early evidence these are having the desired impact, continued change will require time to scale up and become embedded in school and community cultures.**

F.2.3 Developing Remote Principals (E5A3)

TABLE F.4 DEVELOPING REMOTE PRINCIPALS (E5A3) SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

This Action will establish and implement a coaching and mentoring framework for new and relocating Principals in Very Remote schools, including cultural competency training.

Objectives

The aim is to professionally develop the skills and leadership of Principals in Very Remote schools. This will contribute towards ensuring continuous supply of quality teachers in remote Indigenous schools.

Background and history

Skill sets of Principals in Remote schools need to be developed for a variety of reasons; for example, Principals may have been appointed to Remote schools early in their careers, have limited contextual and cultural knowledge, and be expected to take on broader roles in the community.

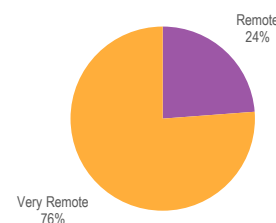
Timelines

Project plan approved internally	28 August 2015
Project first implemented in schools	Term 2, 2016
Project end point	Project completed by 2017

School coverage

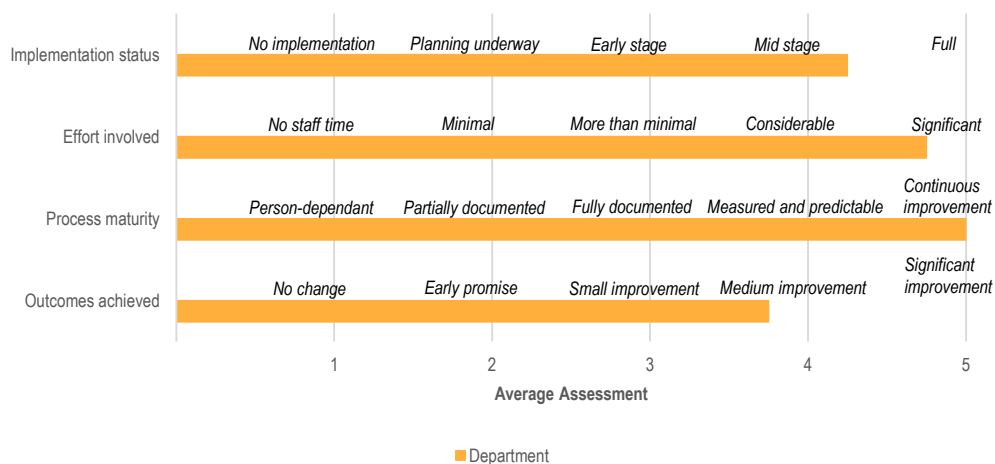
Number of schools currently involved	21
Total number of schools to be involved	22
Schools types where Action is being predominately implemented	All school types

Location of schools



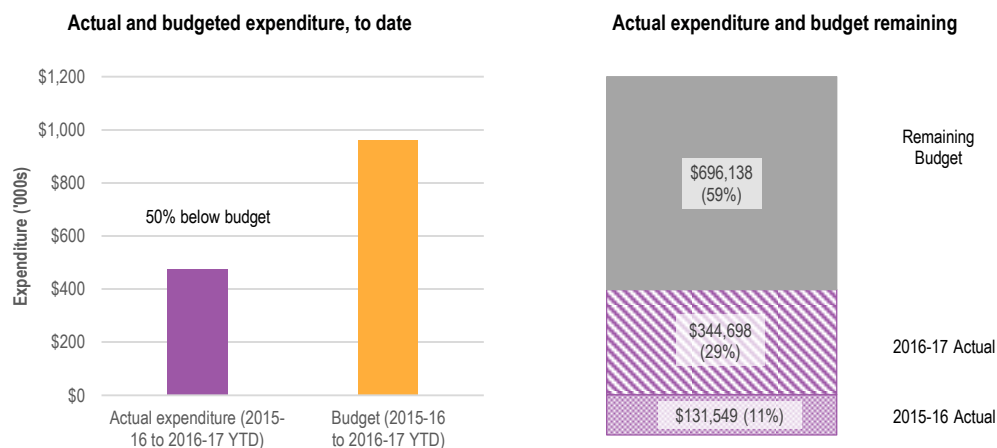
Assessment

2016 results



2015 and 2016 results compared						
	2015		2016		Difference 2015 to 2016	
	Schools	Department	Schools	Department	Schools	Department
Implementation status	-	2.75	-	4.25	-	1.50
Effort involved	-	4.00	-	4.75	-	0.75
Process maturity	-	2.50	-	5.00	-	2.50
Outcomes achieved	-	2.00	-	3.75	-	1.75

Finance data



Note: Due to the timing of implementation of this Action, schools were not asked about this action in the 2015 and 2016 Assessments.

SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

Implementation progress

Implementation of this Action focused on five key deliverables:

- Developing a coaching and mentoring framework
- Developing a learning plan which outlined the coaching and mentoring needs of Principals
- Identifying an appropriate pool of regional coaches and experienced principal mentors
- Establishing a cultural competency training program for all remote school Principals
- Systematically implementing the coaching and mentoring framework.

The coaching and mentoring framework and supporting learning plan have been developed and initial implementation commenced in August 2016, with a trial of Executive and Regional Directors in five regions. Feedback from the regions was incorporated into the final draft, which was released in early 2017. The framework has now been embedded in the Principal Performance and Development Plan, and is intended to help support sustainable and systemic change.

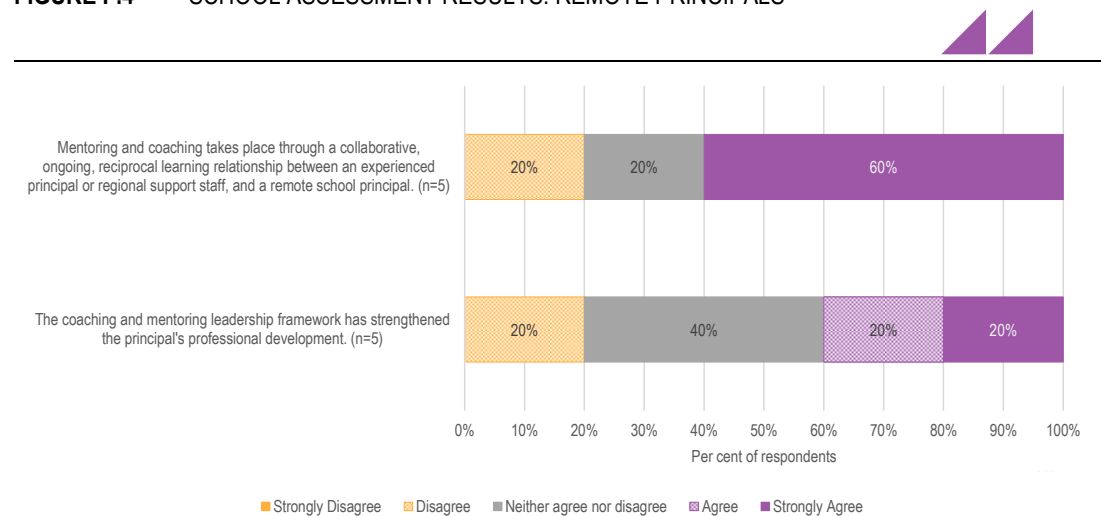
In relation to regional coaches and principal mentors, a supporting matrix was developed to record attributes of the mentor and mentee candidates. Twenty mentees were nominated by Regional Directors, and 20 Department Growth Coaches registered to participate as mentors. The program commenced in August 2016. Further work is being undertaken to support the affordability and sustainability of the program.

The cultural competency training program is well progressed, with the online module being aligned to the whole-of-government cross cultural training framework. This training, through the Centre for Cultural Competency Australia, is available on request. The milestone related to community engagement with Remote schools has been identified as at risk and the timelines adjusted as the Department undertakes further research on the best way for Department staff to engage communities and Principals in this area.

At this stage, the remaining implementation of the Action is on track to meet the Commonwealth deliverable of engaging 20 per cent of remote school leaders in the program by December 2017. The Department Assessment indicated that while resource investment has been high, processes are now well established which will support schools in progressing this Action. The budget is currently 50 per cent underspent, reflecting that there is remaining activity to be undertaken in implementing the Developing Remote Principals Action.

Positive feedback has been received from participating schools, who reported that the Principal Professional Development Program (PPDP) has provided a new opportunity for identifying the learning needs of Principals. The process was seen to provide personal support for Principals and an ongoing avenue for discussion as development needs change (**Figure F.4**). The School Assessment indicated that mentoring and coaching activities were taking place, though the relationship to the framework of PPDP was not directly referenced.

FIGURE F.4 SCHOOL ASSESSMENT RESULTS: REMOTE PRINCIPALS



Note: Due to the timing of implementation of this Action, schools were not asked about this Action in the 2015 Assessments, and so results cannot be compared across the two years.

SOURCE: SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Lessons and potential improvements

Activities under this Action to date have been research-led, widely consulted and progressively implemented. The development process for the PPDP and embedded framework involved consultation with relevant stakeholders, which has contributed to high levels of engagement in the activity and the quality of the final product.

While the initial phases of implementation experienced some delays in consultation and recruitment of participants, these appear to have been addressed and further roll out appears to be on track. The Department and School Assessments indicate that improvements are beginning to show as result of this Action.

F.2.4 Strengthening Remote School Staff Capabilities (E5A4)

TABLE F.5 STRENGTHENING REMOTE SCHOOL STAFF CAPABILITIES (E5A4) SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

This Action will provide resources for continuous professional development and networking to remote school staff, including an introduction to Indigenous languages and team teaching strategies.

Objectives

The aim is to prepare and support staff to work effectively, and improve retention and quality of staff in Remote schools.

Background and history

Attracting and retaining staff with adequate cultural competence in Remote schools is challenging. While there are many initiatives focused on preparing and supporting staff through learning, there is no systematic consistency across NT schools to ensure effective induction, mentoring and context-specific professional learning for staff.

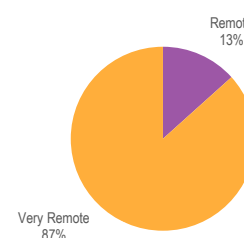
Timelines

Project plan approved internally	28 August 2015
Project first implemented in schools	n/a
Project end point	Activities under the Action will be embedded in Department work and processes to ensure sustainability

School coverage

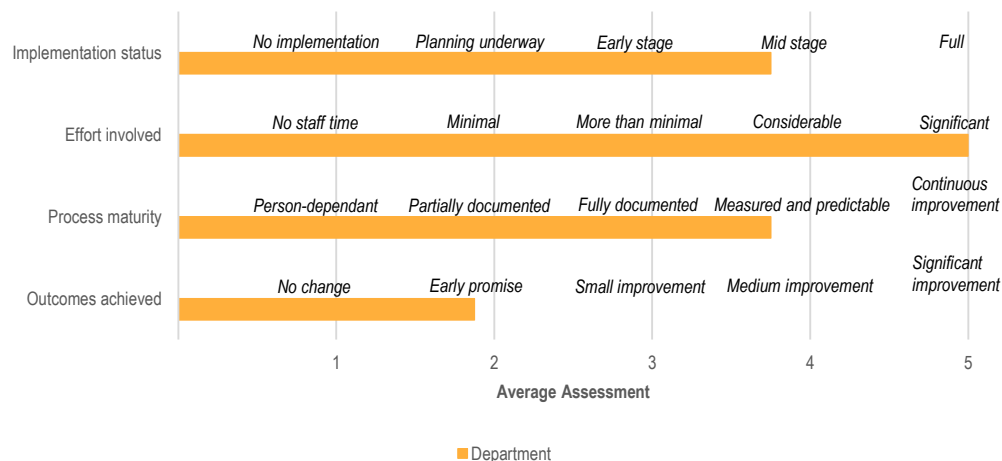
Number of schools currently involved	15
Total number of schools to be involved	30
Schools types where Action is being predominately implemented	All school types

Location of schools



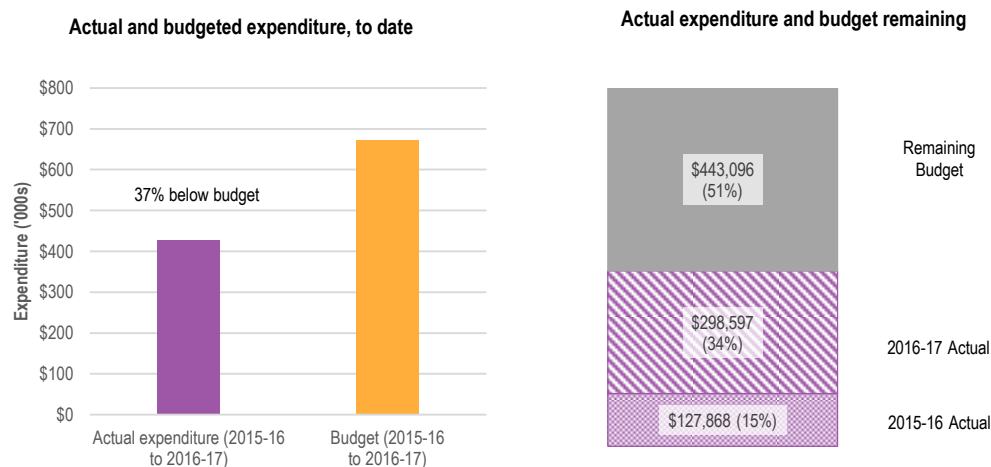
Assessment

2016 results



2015 and 2016 results compared						
	2015		2016		Difference 2015 to 2016	
	Schools	Department	Schools	Department	Schools	Department
Implementation status	-	3.00	-	3.75	-	0.75
Effort involved	-	2.88	-	5.00	-	2.13
Process maturity	-	2.00	-	3.75	-	1.75
Outcomes achieved	-	1.50	-	1.88	-	0.38

Finance data



Note: Due to the timing of implementation of this Action, schools were not asked about this action in the 2015 and 2016 Assessments.

SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES

Implementation progress

The implementation of this Action focused on a range of deliverables spanning consistent preparation of teachers commencing work in remote areas, the provision of on-site professional development opportunities, and a system-wide approach for remote staff in formal and accredited training.

In relation to preparation, the Department has developed new induction materials including guidelines and a planner. Teacher testimonials have been compiled which provide case studies of individuals working in remote communities. These products were released in Term 3, 2017.

Significant effort has been dedicated to the establishment of mentoring programs which have been contextualised for remote NT staff. The development of online training resources for both mentors and mentees is complete, as is the approval of a teacher mentor guide. Principals will be provided with support to implement mentoring arrangements within schools. Mentoring has also been integrated into the Principal Performance Plans.

A system-wide approach for remote staff engagement in formal and accredited training has been established. At this early stage, 22 teachers have been enrolled in the Graduate Certificate of TESOL (education) through Deakin University. Alternate options are being explored for other regions to provide appropriate support, given funding constraints.

The Department Assessment reported a substantial increase in the effort involved for this Action in 2016, along with some improvements in implementation status and process maturity. There is 51 per cent of the budget remaining, which is an indication that significant further activity will be required to develop and implement this Action.

Due to the relative infancy of this Action, there are no tangible outcomes reported yet at the school level. However, the Department Project manager reported that early promise of outcomes is evident in from the trialling process, based on feedback from participants.

Lessons and potential improvements

This area of activity, as with a number of others, experienced delays due to the time required for consultation and development of resources.

A positive learning from this Action has been the benefit of working with other areas, internally such as Human Resources and externally such as Deakin University, to gain efficiencies and ensure alignment of related deliverables.

F.2.5 Teacher Housing Refurbishment and Construction (E5A5)

TABLE F.6 TEACHER HOUSING REFURBISHMENT AND CONSTRUCTION (E5A5) SUMMARY TABLE

Overview

The Action involves identifying government employee housing for teachers in Remote and Very Remote school sites, and systematically undertaking a replacement and refurbishment program.

Objectives

The aims is to provide teachers in Remote and Very Remote communities with safe and comfortable living conditions to increase staff retention provision and retention of motivated and skilled teachers.

Background and history

The Review identified the need to provide safe and healthy work environments to support teachers in communities, as continuity of educators contributes towards students building relationships and trust with teachers and reduces recruitment expenses.

Timelines

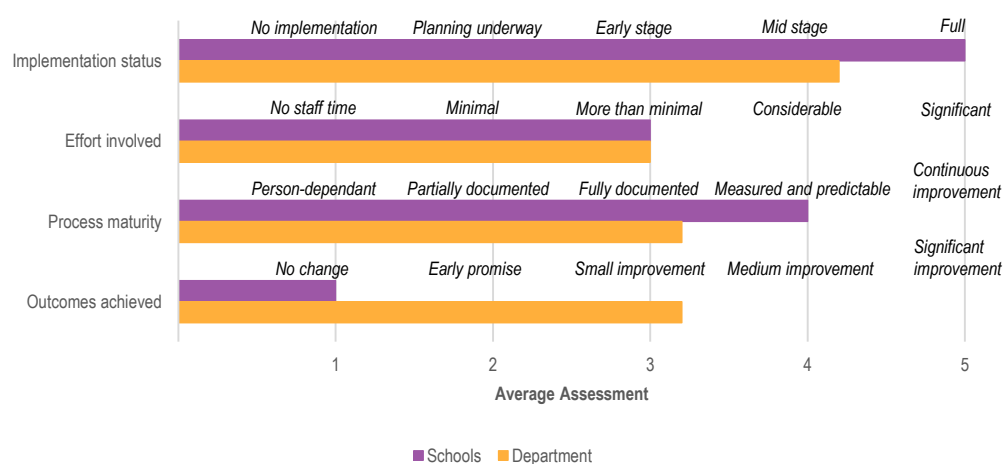
Project plan approved internally	28 August 2015
Project first implemented in schools	Term 4, 2015
Project end point	Identified refurbishments and replacements to be completed by 2019

School coverage

Number of refurbishments and new dwellings	44	Location of schools
Planned number of refurbishments and new dwellings	112	n/a
Schools types where Action is being predominately implemented	n/a	

Assessment

2016 results



2015 and 2016 results compared						
	2015		2016		Difference 2015 to 2016	
	Schools (n=1)	Department	Schools (n=1)	Department	Schools	Department
Implementation status	4.00	4.00	5.00	4.20	1.00	0.20
Effort involved	2.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	1.00	-1.00
Process maturity	2.00	4.00	-	3.20	-	-0.80
Outcomes achieved	3.00	3.00	1.00	3.20	-2.00	0.20
Finance data						
No data available						
<small>Note: As this Action is not primarily funded by the Department of Education, detailed finance data are not available. SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX G FOR SOURCES</small>						

Implementation progress

The implementation of this Action focused on five key deliverables:

- Construction of 10 new dwellings and 144 refurbishments (2015–2019)
- Land use approval for new dwellings
- Consultation with Regional Directors
- Final design and documentation
- Furniture for new dwellings.

Construction of new, and refurbishment of existing, dwellings is underway and incorporates the development of the final design and documentation requirements. By the end of 2017, nine new dwellings had been constructed and 35 refurbishments had been completed, with a further 68 being scoped.

Leasing arrangements for land use approvals were ongoing, with sites assessed and discussions with the Department of Housing and Department of Community Services underway. This had been supported through ongoing consultation with Regional Directors.

In relation to the furniture for new dwellings, progress was not reported on and as such the status was unclear.

The implementation of this Action indicates that it has involved a reasonable level of effort ('more than minimal') and that the processes were relatively measured and predictable, particularly in relation to tender documentation. Between 2015 and 2016, the Department effort required decreased, as did process maturity, although it was a relatively small amount in both cases. This may have been due to increased understanding of the requirements of implementation, and the challenge of systematising parts of the project management of what is primarily an infrastructure piece of work.

There was some variation in perspectives regarding the outcomes achieved. School Assessment results reported that there had been no change as a result of the activities, which was a substantial decrease from the 2015 results. By contrast, the Department identified a small improvement in outcomes. This may indicate that while much has occurred at the Department level, it is yet to translate to many schools, especially given the time taken for building and refurbishment.

Overall, the School Assessments noted that remote teacher housing was improving, though it was too soon to comment on whether this was positively impacting on staff retention or whether it was a direct result of this Action.

Lessons and potential improvements

The implementation of this Action is still in the early stages, with improvements primarily evident at the Department level.

A lack of clarity on what building activities will be undertaken and when was raised as an issue, and that improved communication on the schedule and prioritisation of building works would assist all parties.



Table G.1 provides the explanations of the fields in the Action summary tables, and the sources used to generate the tables.

TABLE G.1 SUMMARY TABLE – SOURCES AND EXPLANATION

Overview

Provides an overview of the Action. (Sources: Department Project Plans and reporting)

Objectives

Provides an overview of the Action. (Sources: Department Project Plans and reporting)

Background and history

Provides an overview of the Action. (Sources: Department Project Plans and reporting)

Timelines

Project plan approved internally (Source: Department Project Plans)

Project first implemented in schools (Source: IES School Matrix)

Project end point (Source: Department Project Plans)

School coverage

Number of schools currently involved Location of schools

Total number of schools to be involved Remoteness of schools involved. Options: Outer

Schools types where Action is being predominately implemented Regional, Remote, Very Remote. (Source: IES School Matrix)

Assessment

Reports results from the Department and, where relevant, the School Assessment tool, implemented as part of the Evaluation.

The tools asked respondents to rate performance on four metrics. Each metric had five options, of which respondents could choose one. The metrics and options are:

- a) *Implementation status*
 - i) *Not commenced, with no planning undertaken to commence implementation*
 - ii) *Not commenced, with planning underway for commencement*
 - iii) *Early stage implementation, with some related actions commenced or commencing*
 - iv) *Mid stage implementation, with most related actions commenced*
 - v) *Implementation fully underway, with all related actions having commenced.*
- b) *Effort involved*
 - i) *This activity has involved no staff time*
 - ii) *This activity has involved minimal staff time*
 - iii) *This activity has involved more than minimal staff time*
 - iv) *This activity has involved considerable staff time*
 - v) *This activity has involved significant staff time*
- c) *Process maturity*
 - i) *Processes and systems are informal and person-dependent*
 - ii) *Processes and systems are documented and partially reflective of reality*
 - iii) *Processes and systems are documented and fully reflective of reality*
 - iv) *Processes and systems are measured and predictable*
 - v) *Processes and systems lead to continuous improvement*
- d) *Outcomes achieved*
 - i) *No changes in outcomes*
 - ii) *Early promise that outcomes will emerge*
 - iii) *Early evidence of small outcomes improvement*
 - iv) *Clear evidence of improved outcomes*
 - v) *Clear evidence of significantly improved outcomes*

Finance data

Actual and budgeted expenditure, to date	Actual expenditure and budget remaining
<i>(Source: Department IES Finance Data)</i>	<i>(Source: Department IES Finance Data)</i>

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ACIL ALLEN CONSULTING IS ONE OF THE LARGEST INDEPENDENT, ECONOMIC, PUBLIC POLICY, AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS MANAGEMENT CONSULTING FIRMS IN AUSTRALIA.

WE ADVISE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND GOVERNMENTS ON ECONOMICS, POLICY AND CORPORATE PUBLIC AFFAIRS MANAGEMENT.

WE PROVIDE SENIOR ADVISORY SERVICES THAT BRING UNPARALLELED STRATEGIC THINKING AND REAL WORLD EXPERIENCE TO BEAR ON PROBLEM SOLVING AND STRATEGY FORMULATION.