

**Indigenous Education Alliance submission to
the Senate Select Committee on Regional and
Remote Indigenous Communities**

August 2009

In Partnership with



This Submission is based on the views of the Indigenous Education Alliance but may not reflect the full or particular views of all of its Member Bodies and its Partnership Body the Queensland Association of State School Principals (QASSP).

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Introduction

The Indigenous Education Alliance (IEA) is pleased to table a submission to the Senate Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities.

The IEA is a unique grass-roots organisation developed to provide greater coordination of Indigenous education provision across Queensland. The Alliance membership is a group of State School leaders representing their member schools dedicated to improving the delivery of education to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across Queensland. This is achieved through participation in key projects, aligning practices with systemic directions, collegial sharing and supporting a united response for exploring and implementing new and innovative approaches to improve Indigenous education outcomes across Queensland. In 2008 the IEA signed a partnership agreement with the Queensland Association of State School Principals (QASSP) to ensure continued growth and further promote strategic and coordinated approaches to Indigenous Education service provision.

Purpose

This submission outlines a series of recommendations to attract, develop and retain quality teachers in rural and remote Indigenous Australia under the headings:

1. Recognise the realities of remote settings
2. Develop breadth and depth of leadership
3. Shift the demand
4. Provide real and realistic incentives.

The solutions (Attachment 1) and recommendations outlined in this submission are based on practical on the ground experience. These solutions do not require large injections of government funding, rather a transformation in thinking about the way schools operate organisationally and industrially. The purpose is to forward a series of recommendations and garner the advocacy of the Committee at a National level to ensure

practitioners and policy makers reflect on current practices in attracting, developing and retaining teachers and begin to reassess these in a practical and honest way.

Background

The schooling and life outcomes of Indigenous Australians compared to non Indigenous Australians is well reported and researched generating the 'gap' consistently referred to across all government portfolios. The 2008 National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results highlight the disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous achievement with students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 working at or above the national minimum standard markedly lower for Indigenous students across all jurisdictions.¹ This latest outcome is one that has been consistently reported over time.² Rural and remote Indigenous students achieve the poorest results across all available measures.³

The traditional approach to improving Indigenous education outcomes, particularly in rural and remote settings is to implement a strategy, policy or program which may produce some results, these though are not generalisable or sustainable. This is due to a failure to 'build in' these initiatives rather than 'bolt on' programs that require embedding into the systemic delivery of curriculum.⁴ Indigenous success, particularly in remote and rural settings must be core business. This is not a deficit view of Indigenous education rather an equal view to delivery, expectations and outcomes for all students.

¹ MCEETYA (2008). National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy: Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, Full Report.

² Altman, J.C., Biddle, N., & Hunter, B.H. (2008). *How realistic are the prospects for 'closing the gaps' in socioeconomic outcomes for Indigenous Australians?* Discussion Paper No. 287. ANU: College of Arts & Social Sciences.

³ Cape York Institute & Macquarie University (November, 2007). *Teach for Australia: A practical plan to get great teachers into remote schools.*
<http://www.cyi.org.au/WEBSITE%20uploads/Education%20Attachments/Teach%20For%20Australia1.pdf>

⁴ MCEETYA (2006). Australian Directions in Indigenous Education 2005-2008. AESOC Senior Officials Working Party on Indigenous Education.

The focus of this submission is the teacher; empirical research consistently demonstrates that the individual teacher has the highest school based influence on school achievement.⁵ To close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous life outcomes is larger than looking at the quality of teachers, however growing and developing teachers into the best educators to improve student achievement begins to 'build in' rather than 'bolt on' approaches to Indigenous education.

Recommendations

The following outlines a series of transformational recommendations, for an in-depth analysis of the four solutions and related recommendations, the Committee is directed to Attachment 1.

Solution 1: Recognise the realities of remote settings:

1. The IEA recommends a comprehensive induction program is implemented in remote Indigenous school settings for a period of one to two years.
2. The IEA recommends an Exit Strategy is developed and implemented for all education staff completing remote Indigenous service.
3. The IEA supports a comprehensive research project commissioned into the long-term psychological and professional implications for teachers completing remote Indigenous community service.

Solution 2: Develop breadth and depth of leadership

1. The IEA supports partnerships with the Indigenous Education Leadership Institute to increase the capacity of leadership in remote Indigenous settings.
2. The IEA recommends an aspirant program is established targeted toward the attraction and retention of senior leaders to remote Indigenous settings across Australia.
3. The IEA recommends Remote Area Teacher Education Program and similar programs across Australia are supported and expanded.

⁵ Hattie, J. (October, 2003). Teachers make a difference: What is the research evidence? *Australian Council for Educational Research Annual Conference on Building Teacher Quality*. University of Auckland.

4. The IEA recommends Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers from remote communities receive incentives to practice in urban and rural settings as is the case for all other teachers who serve in 'remote' contexts.
5. The IEA recommends the implementation of colleges and cluster arrangements to create P-12 models and frameworks in remote settings.

Solution 3: Shift the demand

1. The IEA recommends the establishment of public secondary schooling hostels in key areas of remote Australia attached to a P-12 schooling structures.
2. The IEA supports communities establishing links to larger secondary schools through college frameworks or secondary school transition programs

Solution 4: Provide real and realistic incentives

1. The IEA recommends employment positions in remote and isolated communities are permanent.
2. The IEA recommends staff receive incentives and benefits that reflect the cost of living and are reviewed periodically.
3. The IEA recommends an audit of employee housing in remote contexts for quality assurance.

Conclusion

This submission in the body and following attachments has outlined four practical solutions to attract, develop and retain quality teachers in rural and remote Indigenous Australia. These solutions differ in their capacity to be delivered in the short term and long term however they all require a transformation in the way that systems, governments and practitioners approach the task at hand. This task is the most important one that many of us will face in our professional careers and personal lives and that is to ensure that **every child has universal access to quality education that delivers results**. It is not until we remove the structural barriers that currently exist for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who live in these remote communities that we will begin to see results. The story of remote

Indigenous Education Alliance schools such as Coen, Pormpuraaw and Kowanyama and the College journey of the Western Cape and Torres Strait Nation tell us that structural barriers can be overcome and that Indigenous children do achieve success. In these schools and others across Australia who are working in a high expectations school environment Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students outperform their peers because they have access to quality teachers and quality leaders in quality classrooms who believe that all children can achieve success.

Attachments

Attachment 1

In-depth: The Solutions

Solution 1: Recognise the realities of remote settings

1.1 Early Career Teachers

The primary step to attracting, developing and retaining quality teachers in remote Indigenous schools is to recognise the realities of remote settings and develop appropriate responses to these realities. There are approximately 7,500-8,500 teaching graduates each year entering the profession and statistically between 25% and 40% of these newly recruited teachers will leave the profession in the first three to five years as a result of burnout.⁶ In remote schools high rates of attrition are common place and staff that are available often come with little or no experience, fresh out of university.⁷ Consequently, leadership positions in remote Indigenous community contexts are often held by teachers with two or three year's classroom training.

National teacher supply's are at crisis levels with remote Indigenous schools already struggling to staff for enrolments. There are many methods to attract experienced teachers to these settings, incentives and boomerang transfers for instance, however the situation remains. It is time to take stock and realise this reality and develop solutions to deliver a high expectations education in an environment of high turnover and young graduates. This level of acceptance enables leaders, educators and policy writers to begin to implement practices with the ingredients we have; we need to develop graduates into effective high performing teachers.

In the debate to attract and retain quality teachers to improve Indigenous learning outcomes an assumption is perpetuated that early career and beginning teachers do not have the skills and knowledge to perform as quality educators. Gore et al

⁶ Roberts, R. (2004). *Staffing an empty schoolhouse: Attracting and retaining teachers in rural, remote and isolated communities*. Eric Pearson Study Grant Report: New South Wales Teachers Federation.

⁷ Cape York Institute & Macquarie University (November, 2007). *Teach for Australia: A practical plan to get great teachers into remote schools*.
<http://www.cyi.org.au/WEBSITE%20uploads/Education%20Attachments/Teach%20For%20Australia1.pdf>.

(2007)⁸ found no causal relationship between years of experience and quality teaching. Therefore, quality teaching can be found in early career teachers' classrooms, however there needs to be practical measures in place to develop the effectiveness of these teachers. Teacher effectiveness increases dramatically in the first five years of teaching and all evidence suggests that students placed with high performing teachers will progress three times as fast as those placed with low performing teachers.⁹ Increasing the effectiveness of early career teachers to ensure high performance in Indigenous classrooms should be the focus of policy makers and Governments to improve Indigenous learning outcomes.

1.2 Complex Communities

Remote Indigenous communities present a complex set of circumstances which state education departments recognise through the implementation of induction programs and incentives (Attachment 4). Education Queensland's RAIS Partners for Success¹⁰ induction program is an example of a targeted recruitment and selection strategy that recognises the complex nature of Indigenous communities, by preparing incoming staff for the work and life transition to a remote Indigenous community setting. Programs such as the RAIS P4S program in Queensland are a best practice example of targeted support to prepare teachers to deliver in an Indigenous high expectations classroom. However, there are two elements of living and working in a remote Indigenous setting that need to be considered. Primarily, strategies need to be implemented to ensure recruited teachers develop professionally into effective high performing practitioners and secondly that teachers returning to their base location, often an urban setting are prepared, professionally and psychologically for this transition.

Strategies to develop teachers, particularly early career teachers will be presented in the following section of this submission. The preparedness of teachers who have completed remote service, particularly in a remote Indigenous

⁸ Gore, J., Ladwig, J., Griffiths, T., & Amosa, W. (2007). Data-driven guidelines for high quality teacher education. *Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference Fremantle, 25-29 November.* University of Newcastle.

⁹ Barber, M., & Mourshed, M (September, 2007). *How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top.* McKinsey & Company.

¹⁰ For more information see Indigenous Schooling Support Unit at <http://www.learningplace.com.au/deliver/content.asp?pid=32710> (22/12/2008)

setting to return to their home base is an emerging issue that requires immediate attention. The issues facing Indigenous communities are increasingly reported though, often not well understood. Living and working in a remote Indigenous community as a non-Indigenous public servant from urban Australia can be a rewarding and life changing experience. However experiences are positive and negative, as complexities change, the transition between remote and urban settings may become complicated.

In many communities across Australia the implementation of alcohol management schemes and prohibition have changed the landscape of socialisation outlets for teachers and public servants working in these communities. Consequently, alcohol becomes a prized commodity; two options are presented, no drink or binge drink. This may not be the experience for all, however it is increasingly recognised as an issue. In addition to the prohibition of alcohol, increasing complexities of welfare reform agendas, community violence, and child safety concerns can have a direct impact on teachers professionally and psychologically. Furthermore, moving back into an urban setting can present a culture shock; trying to discuss experiences with friends and family with no common frame of reference, living and working in an urban setting with access to anything and everything and regaining anonymity can all be difficult adjustments for people to make.

It is proposed an **Exit Strategy** is implemented **for all education staff completing remote Indigenous service**. This strategy would provide a program, similar to the induction program currently implemented by all state education departments, providing practitioners with the time and the space to process their experiences to ensure healthy transition to their base location. This would ensure that all teachers completing remote Indigenous community service have the tools to prepare them for the transition to and from Australia's most remote and complex settings. It is further proposed that a **comprehensive research project** is commissioned into the **long-term psychological and professional implications for teachers completing remote Indigenous community service**. This research will inform the induction and development of the teaching profession in remote settings and enhance the capacity of education department's selection strategies.

Solution 2: Develop breadth and depth of leadership

2.1 Developing Teachers

Strategies to develop teachers, particularly early career teachers will be presented in the following section of this submission.

2.1.1.1 The Comprehensive Induction

It is proposed that a comprehensive **induction program** be implemented in remote Indigenous school settings to increase the effectiveness of early career teachers. Comprehensive induction is **a diverse program that includes mentoring, professional development, support and formal assessments** for a period of one to two years¹¹. Taking the next step and developing teachers into high expectations classroom operators, is necessary and worthy investment of state and federal resources at a local level.

The benefits of a comprehensive induction program include:

- increases quality of first teaching experience, positively related to retention
- builds learning communities
- may **reduce attrition rates up to 50%**
- develop novice teachers into high quality operators who improve student outcomes
- cost benefit analysis shown **\$1.37 return for every \$1 invested**
- increased teacher effectiveness equate to greater savings than the reduction in costs from teacher attrition
- **rapidly develops teachers; achieve skill level of a fourth year teacher in the span of one year**
- after five years, of a \$1 investment yields positive return to society, school, teachers and students¹².

The components of a comprehensive induction program include:

¹¹ Alliance for Excellent Education (2004). Tapping the potential: Retaining and developing high-quality new teachers (Report). Washington, DC. Retrieved December 2, 2008, from <http://www.all4ed.org/publications/TappingThePotential/TappingThePotential.pdf>

¹² Villar, A., Strong, M. (2007). Is mentoring worth the money? A benefit-cost analysis and five-year rate of return of a comprehensive mentoring program for beginning teachers. *Education Research Service Spectrum Journal of Research and Information*, Summer, 25, 3. New Teacher Centre, University of California: Santa Cruz.

- **High quality mentoring:** defined as structured coaching and mentoring models; involving classroom observations and feedback, demonstration of effective practice, construction of lesson plans and analysis of student work and data. An average time commitment of at least two hours per week is advocated. Mentor selection is crucial.
- **Common planning time:** scheduled to collaboratively make connections between pedagogical practice and improved learning outcomes.
- **Ongoing professional development:** meets the needs of teachers, expands content knowledge, focused on skill development, build capacities to teach literacy and numeracy at all levels secondary level, manage diverse learners and behaviours.
- **External networks:** create a community of colleagues, reduces isolation and broadens support networks¹³.

The investment required to achieve a comprehensive induction program is based on time, money and resources. Release time and whether compensation is paid to mentors vary the cost, estimates from American programs place the average induction cost at US\$4000 per teacher per year¹⁴. However, figures for return on investment ensure comprehensive mentoring programs are a viable and cost effective method to develop new teachers in remote Indigenous schools.

A comprehensive induction program should to be delivered at the local level, a 'fly in' model with resources based in urban centres is not conducive to the time investment advocated by the mentoring component of the program. Therefore, a strong core of quality teachers is needed within the school to realise the implementation of a comprehensive induction program. High attrition rates in remote Indigenous settings provide a difficult environment from which to develop a strong core of teachers. This issue will be addressed through a number of measures focused on school improvement and staffing flexibility outlined in section 2.2 and 2.4 of this submission.

¹³ Alliance for Excellent Education (2004). Tapping the potential: Retaining and developing high-quality new teachers (Report). Washington, DC. Retrieved December 2, 2008, from <http://www.all4ed.org/publications/TappingThePotential/TappingThePotential.pdf>

¹⁴ Alliance for Excellent Education (2004). Tapping the potential: Retaining and developing high-quality new teachers (Report). Washington, DC. Retrieved December 2, 2008, from <http://www.all4ed.org/publications/TappingThePotential/TappingThePotential.pdf>

2.1.1.2 Cultural Intelligence

Social justice and pedagogy are closely interrelated and the fragmentation of educational delivery across contexts and groups of students exacerbates current social inequalities. Gore et al (2007)¹⁵ discovered substantial differences in the quality of pedagogy received by Indigenous and low-SES students compared to their peers. The implication is that teachers must have a clear understanding of the diversity of learners and how to engage and challenge all learners meaningfully. Education equity is essential if we are to improve the education outcomes for Indigenous and low-SES students and this means that the connections between social justice, teaching and learning need to be established and reinforced by all teacher education programs, induction and mentoring efforts. Teachers must have a true understanding of:

- the consequences of their teaching behaviours and methods
- how to flexibly approach their classroom as a pedagogical practitioner to achieve success
- their disposition and skill base to achieve student accomplishment in all settings.

Inadequate student results all too often are a result of lowered teacher expectations of achievement¹⁶. Teaching efforts need to be doubled and intensified rather than lowered in order to celebrate pseudo student achievement.

Teacher education programs, induction and mentoring programs must reinforce the connection between social justice and pedagogy if we are to improve student outcomes and close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous achievement.

2.2 Developing School Leaders

Leadership is a critical tool in building a high performance culture. It is a process of influence, accomplished by a number of different approaches adopted to generate an environment that is cohesive and coherent¹⁷. True leadership drives

¹⁵ Gore, J., Ladwig, J., Griffiths, T., & Amosa, W. (2007). Data-driven guidelines for high quality teacher education. *Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference Fremantle, 25-29 November*. University of Newcastle.

¹⁶ Poplin, M., & Rivera, J. (2005). Merging social justice and accountability: Educating qualified and effective teachers. *Theory into practice*, 44(1), 22-37.

¹⁷ Deal, T.E. & Peterson, K.D. (1999). *Shaping school culture: The heart of leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

high performance as people are motivated and inspired to achieve a common vision¹⁸. The importance of leadership to improve education outcomes in remote and rural Indigenous Australia cannot be underestimated. The following section outlines key strategies to build and develop quality leaders in a remote and rural context. These strategies employ a coaching methodology and are focused on developing a strong leadership nucleus within schools¹⁹. This strong foundation creates a pool of experienced staff that can employ coaching and mentoring tools to develop teacher effectiveness and leadership for all. Schools with high rates of attrition cannot develop a strong stable nucleus. These low leadership capacity schools are often principal dependent and produce poor student outcomes²⁰. Such issues will be addressed in the following section on school improvement and staffing.

Some of these strategies have been implemented to some degree of success by Education Queensland through the *Bound for Success Leadership Strategy* and by the Indigenous Education Alliance schools. The continuation and broadening of the scope of this work is essential to continue the inroads to leadership development in remote Indigenous contexts.

- **Sister Schools:** This is a process where remote schools establish links with urban school(s) to generate a mutually beneficial relationship that involves the identification and nurturing of aspirants, implementation of leadership development programs across settings, intense professional development and up-skilling of graduate teachers and opportunities for cross site visitation. The realisation of this concept would see new teachers nurtured in an urban setting and transferred for remote service in their third or fourth year with the option to return to their base location. Additionally, the principals and leadership teams involved in the partnership would work together to develop a strong leadership core across and within the sites.

¹⁸ Lambert, L. (1998). *Building leadership capacity in schools*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

¹⁹ Alliance for Excellent Education (2004). *Tapping the potential: Retaining and developing high-quality new teachers* (Report). Washington, DC. Retrieved December 2, 2008, from <http://www.all4ed.org/publications/TappingThePotential/TappingThePotential.pdf>

²⁰ Lambert, L. (2005). What does leadership capacity really mean? *National Staff Development*, Spring, 26, 2, pp-38-40. <http://www.nsd.org>

- **Upgrade Positions:** Often immediate responses are required to attract and retain experienced quality leaders in remote settings. The rising complexity in remote Indigenous communities is an issue that requires serious consideration if we are to generate sustainable school improvement and staffing cohorts. Upgrading principal positions is advocated when there is a level of complexity in a school or community location that is not recognised by the systemic position level. In these circumstances staff would retain their base level position, but for the time they serve in these locations they receive a premium pay level that reflects the complexity of this context and position at that point in time. This strategy is a short term, point in time application to current issues in staffing principal class positions in very remote, highly complex community and school contexts.
- **Catch and Release:** This is a strategy that has been used to great effect at Western Cape College and Tagai State College in Queensland's Far North Region. This strategy is about building systemic organisational leadership capacity. Staff who have demonstrated quality leadership attributes either in the classroom or in other roles are recruited to remote locations where these qualities are challenged and nurtured through the principalship, returning to base locations as senior leaders. In the Queensland example the *Bound for Success Leadership Strategy* selects these leaders as ambassadors, to identify and mentor other aspirants in the system.
- **Grown Your Own:** This is a philosophy where entry level teachers and aspirants undergo a process of personal development in order to achieve career development. This process encourages staff to grow their leadership capabilities in a de-contextualisation of leadership. The leadership growth and experience is a personal journey to achieve high leadership capacity schools where leadership and learning is for all staff. This generates a sustainability of leadership through the creation of a stable staff base.
- **Partnering with Stronger Smarter Leadership:** A number of our schools have had considerable success working in partnership with the Indigenous Education Leadership Institute lead by Dr Chris Sarra. This program involves a series of experiential learning activities and has built a national

- **Sizing Up Senior Leaders:** Attracting senior leaders to remote locations is a growing issue that is the result of systemic measures to improve student outcomes in remote Indigenous settings. The creation of cluster schools or colleges as school improvement measures will be discussed in section 2.4 of this submission. However in terms of leadership development the level of senior principal is one that requires addressing. It is recommended that an **aspirant program be established targeted toward the attraction and retention of senior leaders to remote Indigenous settings across Australia.** Following identification, a pool of leaders would receive a specific individual support plan timed at intervals to receive, targeted coaching based on experiential learning, project based challenges and supported acting opportunities. Hand over in established organisations would occur over a six month period and in the case of new appointments to a newly formed construct one year lead time with executive support is advocated.

Developing high leadership capacity in schools is critical for sustainability of school improvement and student achievement in remote Indigenous Australia.

2.3 Developing Indigenous Leadership

Developing and fostering Indigenous leadership is the key to sustainable staffing in remote Indigenous contexts both in schools and in communities. The following is just one example of a successful program and concept that will increase the effectiveness of systems to eliminate structural barriers to the development and nurturing of Indigenous leadership.

2.3.1 RATEP

The Queensland Remote Area Teacher Education Program (RATEP) is a community based teacher education program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The program is successful on all levels as it enables access to quality tertiary training in remote community locations. Successful RATEP graduates contribute significantly to the teaching pool of remote and rural

Indigenous communities. RATEP is a joint initiative between Education Queensland, James Cook University and Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE. There are a number of pathways to success through RATEP:

1. Direct entry to the four year Bachelor of Education Queensland
2. Completion of the Diploma in Education through TAFE, followed by three years at university
3. Completion of Certificate III and/ or IV of Education at high school or relevant RATEP site followed by the Diploma or first year university.

These pathways combined with onsite access have reduced the structural barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to access tertiary education and qualifications. It is advocated that **participation in RATEP during year 11 and 12** is supported **to increase early uptake in the program and develop a larger pool of applicants** into the full program. This early entry provides senior students with initial experience in the profession to promote informed decision making. Additionally, it is advocated that RATEP and similar programs that are implemented across Australia be supported and expanded.

2.3.2 Reverse Incentives & Induction

Teachers are attracted and inducted to serve remote Australian schools using a range of incentives (Attachment 4). These incentives can include anything from locality allowance, subsidised accommodation, free electricity and gas and travel to base locations. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professionals who wish to broaden their teaching experiences and access different teaching contexts by serving in urban centres receive no like incentive nor induction into a community that is polar to their home base, this is also remote service.

If Indigenous teaching staff and school leaders have the desire to relocate for a period of time to teach in different settings, within different environments from their own communities this should be supported and encouraged with the delivery of induction programs and with similar incentives that are provided to non-Indigenous staff relocating to achieve the same benefits. To deliver quality Indigenous student outcomes through quality Indigenous teachers and foster Indigenous leadership in remote contexts there **must be a provision that facilitates the growth and development of Indigenous experience in**

classrooms in various contexts, as is the case for all other teachers who serve in 'remote' contexts.

2.4 School Improvement & Staffing

School improvement methodologies are an essential component of the four step practical approach to attracting, retaining and developing quality teachers in remote Indigenous contexts. College models and staffing flexibility will be discussed in this section and are promoted due to their effectiveness to build a strong stable school faculty, the importance of which, as discussed previously.

2.4.1 P-12 College Models

College models or clustering frameworks seek to improve and enhance the capacity of individual schools to deliver quality education and outcomes. Attracting, retaining and developing quality teachers in a remote Indigenous context is achievable within a P-12 college construct as evidenced by the work of Tagai State College and Western Cape College in Queensland's Far North. Consequently these two examples highlight the positive impact of college structures on student learning and life outcomes.

There are examples of cluster schools throughout the world and it is becoming an increasingly popular response to improving school and teacher effectiveness. The most significant outcome achieved by clustering is the influence it has on promoting grass roots participation by empowering communities and parents to become actively involved in their child's education²¹. This outcome is just one of the reasons schools are exploring clustering as a viable option and why the **Indigenous Education Alliance supports the implementation of these P-12 models and frameworks.**

College structures work because they:

- Provide integrated curriculum across schools and stages of schooling
- Provide secondary schooling options

²¹ MacGibbon, L., Besley, S., & Gilmore, A. (1999). *The school administration support cluster project: Whose agendas are being met?* Conference Paper, AARE/NZARE November 29-December 2. Unit for Studies in Educational Evaluation, Education Department: University of Canterbury.

- Provide continuous pathways through P-12 and from 'Cradle to Employment'
- Promote educational leadership
- Ensure clearer accountability
- Create a senior stable leadership team
- Increase focus on quality teaching and learning.

College structures deliver for schools, teachers, communities and children as they have the capacity through size and scope to strategically transition students from home through schooling and beyond whilst developing and nurturing teachers²². Systemically the bureaucracy must support the development of P-12 schooling frameworks to deliver on their closing the gap targets and legislative responsibilities to deliver a secondary education to all children. Until systems, governments and practitioners realise that the pathway to and through schooling and beyond lies outside the traditional P-12 or P-7 service provision we will continue to produce the same results. The college model has delivered results because it operates in a high expectations environment within and outside the traditional P-12 framework using a holistic and integrated service delivery model.

2.4.2 Staffing Flexibility

Staff flexibility in a remote context is enabled by college models but may be achieved if supported at a systemic level. Flexibility is an important component to developing teacher effectiveness and to achieve the stable nucleus of teaching staff and leadership, a constant theme. The following outlines a number of suggestions to improve teacher effectiveness and preparedness for remote community contexts. These have been gathered from a range of sources and are based on experience and experiments at the 'chalk face'.

- **Academy of Excellence:** This is a concept that works through the college model as a result of size and scope. Essentially centres of excellence are established on site with experts on hand to deliver professional development and learning. A unique model of delivery, academies of excellence utilise a variety of methods including new technologies to develop and support staff in their professional and personal development based in their location.

²² Western Cape College. (2006). The Journey to Success 2001-2006, www.westerncapecollege.com.au

- **School Based Flexibility:** The following are three steps that the Indigenous Education Alliance believes can make a difference to improve teacher effectiveness and sustainability of leadership in remote locations at limited cost. These suggestions require a shift in thinking rather than a large injection of funding.
 - Remote Indigenous locations have an administrative base of one principal and two assistant or deputy principal positions. These assistant principals have a teaching load that involves team teaching in first and second year teacher classrooms, mentoring and coaching. Immediately, increasing the administrative base in these schools generates a core experience base from which beginning teachers can depend, learn and grow from.
 - First year teachers receive additional release time and a reduced timetable load to increase time for planning, professional and personal development and conversations.
 - Outgoing and incoming principal handover during term 4, to promote the smooth transition of principalship and administrative systems within the school.
 - Teachers appointed and transferred into remote locations starting in or during term 4. This provides teachers the opportunity to settle into life and work in the community during the last few weeks of the school year before starting the following school year in term 1 ready and prepared to teach.

Solution 3: Shift the demand

3.1 Secondary Schooling Options

To improve learning and life outcomes for Indigenous students in remote contexts there is a need for increased access to secondary schooling options. The **establishment of public secondary schooling hostels need to be established in key areas of remote Australia attached to a P-12 schooling structure.** This will not only shift the demand currently placed on secondary boarding places at private and independent schools but ensure all students have access to high expectations quality secondary schooling close to their base community. Additionally, the demand to attract and retain secondary teachers in remote locations would be reduced. The continuation of physical and structural

barriers preventing access to education, to employment and to training will perpetuate the constancy of disadvantage that we see today.

3.1 Roll Down High Tops

The demand for secondary schooling, with the support of communities needs to be shifted from remote communities to larger, diverse settings. Schools in remote and isolated locations that do not have the capacity to deliver a full secondary school curriculum should not be supported to do so. Often in remote locations there are P-10 schools that offer secondary schooling curriculum options that are not comparable to other secondary schools across Australia. Indigenous students in communities cannot be expected to achieve the same learning and life outcomes of non-Indigenous students and those in urban Australia if they do not receive a comparable education. Therefore it is proposed that all communities **establish links to larger secondary schools** to ensure like access. This can be achieved through college frameworks as discussed earlier or transition programs that support students from years six and seven to enter state and non-state boarding facilities. This **roll down of school provision in remote communities** can only be achieved if supported at the community level and where there are functioning mechanisms in place that ensure children have access to alternative secondary school facilities. However if achievable, which in many cases it is this should be championed at a systemic level to **ensure equality of access and quality to secondary schooling options and reduced demand on staffing** secondary programs in remote community contexts.

Solution 4: Provide real and realistic incentives

The final step to attracting, retaining and developing quality teachers in a remote Indigenous community context is to provide real and realistic incentives. Attachment 4 demonstrates the disparity between states in terms of incentives offered for remote service. Teachers attracted to remote service cite smaller class sizes and future transfer preferences as the highest motivator for remote service²³. The federal government has recently released a plan to boost education outcomes by attracting 'super teachers' to work in the worst performing schools. These teachers will earn more than their teaching peers and teach

²³ Lyons, T., Cooksey, R., Panizzon, D., Parnell, A., & Pegg, J. (2005). The SiMERR National Survey. http://www.abc.net.au/news/opinion/documents/files/Highlights_National_Survey2.pdf 16/07/2009.

fewer classes²⁴. This creates a challenge in a remote Indigenous context where teachers are working and living in close proximity in the same conditions but not receiving the same industrial benefits. The implementation of benefits and incentives that ensure consistency across sites, states and indeed classrooms are required ensure a fair system that attracts the right people to the right roles. The following incentives are advocated as their implementation is realistic and achievable within a short timeframe.

- **Security of Employment:** Positions in remote and isolated communities are permanent and provide staff with the security of permanency.
- **Cost of Living:** Incentives and benefits provided to staff must reflect the cost of living, all schemes related to these entitlements need to be reviewed periodically to ensure relevancy.
- **Travel Assistance:** Staff need to receive travel assistance that reflects in real terms the cost of travel to their home base and the nearest urban centre.
- **Second Chance Uplifts:** Staff need to have access to a second uplift during tenure. This provides staff with the opportunity to uplift goods that are required in their context not considered previously, and in the case of new graduates that they couldn't afford to purchase when first relocated.
- **Flexible Leave Options:** Following two years of service staff have access to three months leave and after three years of service, six months leave that can be taken immediately or calculated toward long service leave entitlements.
- **Future Position:** The work of staff who have served in a remote context must be recognised in future placements. The work of a teacher and principal in a remote Indigenous community context must be valued by the system and as a result exiting staff supported in their future preferences.
- **Quality Employee Housing:** The rental rate and quality of employee housing is an incentive for remote service. Employee housing in remote contexts requires quality assurance.

²⁴ News.com.au. (July 10 2009) Plan puts 'super teachers' in worst schools
http://www.news.com.au/story/0,23599,25760871-2,00.html?from=public_rss

- **Industrial Staff Entitlements:** The Indigenous Education Alliance supports comparability of incentives across Australia that reflects the complexity, isolation and remoteness of the community context. This means that staffing entitlements must be changed industrially to protect the worker and ensure sustainability of base entitlements.

Attachment 2

Policy Framework

Attracting, developing and retaining quality teachers in rural and remote Indigenous schools is not a new endeavour and one that many state and federal government departments have injected a lot of time and money. An intricate policy framework has been developed across governments to improve Indigenous education outcomes. The driving policies covering this portfolio in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory (Attachment 3) should be the focus for rural and remote Indigenous students with 19% to 81% of Indigenous people across these jurisdictions living in remote and very remote Australia.²⁵ State Indigenous education agendas seek to achieve the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (Cwth) *National Goals for Indigenous Education*²⁶ which establishes 21 long term goals for Indigenous education, organised by four major goals:

- I. Involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in educational decision-making
- II. Equality of access to education services
- III. Equity of educational participation
- IV. Equitable and appropriate educational outcomes.

The Federal agenda for Indigenous Education was further refined in 2008 when the Council of Australian Governments agreed to meet six targets for closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. These targets and goals are articulated by state formulated visions for Indigenous education, expressed at the classroom level. The solutions presented in this submission align to the federal agenda, but require policy makers and educators to re-examine the way schooling and teaching in remote Indigenous contexts is delivered.

²⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006). Population Distribution, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Report No. 4705.0.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4705.0Main+Features12006?OpenDocument>.

²⁶ Department of Education, Employment & Workplace Relations, http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/policy_issues_reviews/national_goals_for_indigenous_education.htm (22/12/2008).

Attachment 3

Current State Indigenous Education Key Policy

State	Department	Policy	Vision for Indigenous Education
QLD	Education, Training and The Arts	Indigenous Learning and Arts Strategic Plan 2008-2011 Indigenous Education Strategic Directions 2008-2011	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders who are <i>'clever, skilled and creative'</i> .
NT	Education and Training	Indigenous Education Strategic Plan 2006-2009 Building Better Schools	Indigenous people to fully influence and participate in the social and economic future of the Northern Territory and the wider Australian community.
WA	Education and Training	Aboriginal Education and Training Operational Plan 2005-2008 Culture Strong, Career Proud Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2008-2010	Working together empowers all to make a significant difference enabling Aboriginal students to realise their full potential.
SA	Education and Children's Services	Aboriginal Education Strategy 2005-2010	The Department of Education and Children's Services is committed to a substantial improvement in the educational outcomes of its Aboriginal children and students.

Attachment 4

Current Remote Incentive Schemes by State

State	Scheme	Allowance	Housing	Tenure/ Transfer	Travel/ Leave	Other
QLD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remote Area Incentive Scheme (RAIS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to \$5000 pa Up to \$5000 retention bonus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some subsidized housing (single share) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional transfer points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional payment for dependant travel Up to 8 days additional leave 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 day induction for all new teachers Additional 3 day induction for graduates Onsite professional development
NT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching in the Territory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isolation allowances of up to \$1819 pa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guaranteed transfer to Darwin, Alice Springs or Katherine after 3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earn points toward study leave (one semester paid study) 3 airfares per year 4 additional days off to access services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reimbursement of freight Orientation for new teachers Paid travel & accommodation for 1 term service (try before buy)
WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remote Teaching Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locality and financial salary allowances from \$10k-15k pa Travel allowances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free housing (single share) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If 3 years completed transfer guaranteed to area of choice if available Permanency status granted after 2 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional 10 weeks leave if 3 years completed, additional 22 weeks leave if 4 years completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4WD course and induction program
SA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching in South Australia: More than a career it's a lifestyle Teaching Aboriginal Lands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to \$13,500 salary benefits Up to \$8500pa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free housing Free gas, water & electricity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfer options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 term study leave after 2 years service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 day induction for all new teachers 3 day conference mid year 4WD course One-on-one support from senior officer