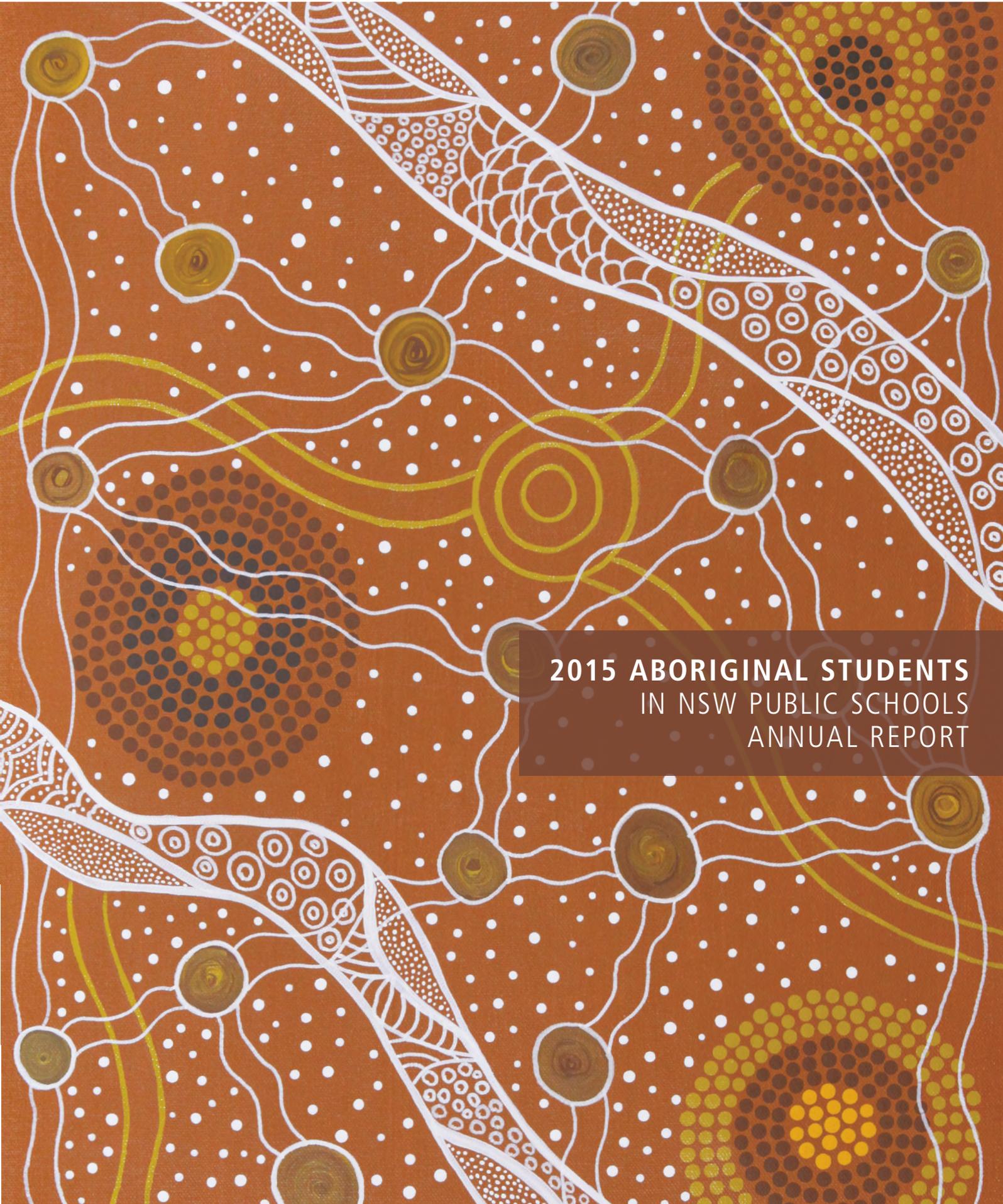




Education

The background of the cover is a vibrant Aboriginal artwork. It features a rich brown base color with intricate white and yellow patterns. These patterns include wavy lines, circular motifs, and areas filled with fine dots or stippling. The overall style is reminiscent of traditional Indigenous Australian art, possibly representing a specific cultural story or landscape.

2015 ABORIGINAL STUDENTS
IN NSW PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ANNUAL REPORT

CONTENTS FEATURES

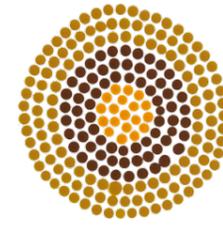


Traveling Country

The painting is about how the rivers run through our land and how the billabongs are left behind after the rivers changes it's course. In my painting I depict the rivers and the land how I see it through my own eyes. The rivers and the land are a special place for the wiradjuri people they are a means of survival, the three large dotted circles are the meeting places the medium circles are the billabongs connecting to the rivers and the small dots are our people travelling the land.

Artist **Sharon Smith**

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SECRETARY'S FOREWORD

It is my pleasure to share with you the *2015 Aboriginal Students in NSW Public Schools Annual Report* which builds on last year's inaugural report.

Improving Aboriginal education outcomes is a current state priority identified in *NSW Making it Happen*. The report outlines progress for Aboriginal students for the years 2010 to 2014 in the key areas of enrolment, attendance, retention, suspension and NAPLAN performance.

Knowing how our Aboriginal students are performing at school, how they are learning and how they are achieving is important to us; whether we are parents, caregivers, teachers, school leaders, departmental officers or community members.

I am proud of our achievements in attendance and retention. In both of these areas, the improvements in outcomes for Aboriginal students have exceeded that for non-Aboriginal students, an indicator that more schools are understanding and meeting the needs of their Aboriginal students.

In the period 2010 to 2014, Aboriginal student attendance rates increased by 0.8 percentage points while those for non-Aboriginal students increased by 0.4 percentage points. In the same period, Aboriginal student Year 7-12 apparent retention rates increased by 14.8 percentage points while those for non-Aboriginal students increased by 5.8 percentage points.

The work of Home School Liaison Officers and Aboriginal Student Liaison Officers in developing solutions to attendance issues in partnership with families contributed to these improvements. In 2015, an increased number of schools implemented the Individual Sponsorships to support Aboriginal students to complete Year 12 with a recognised qualification.

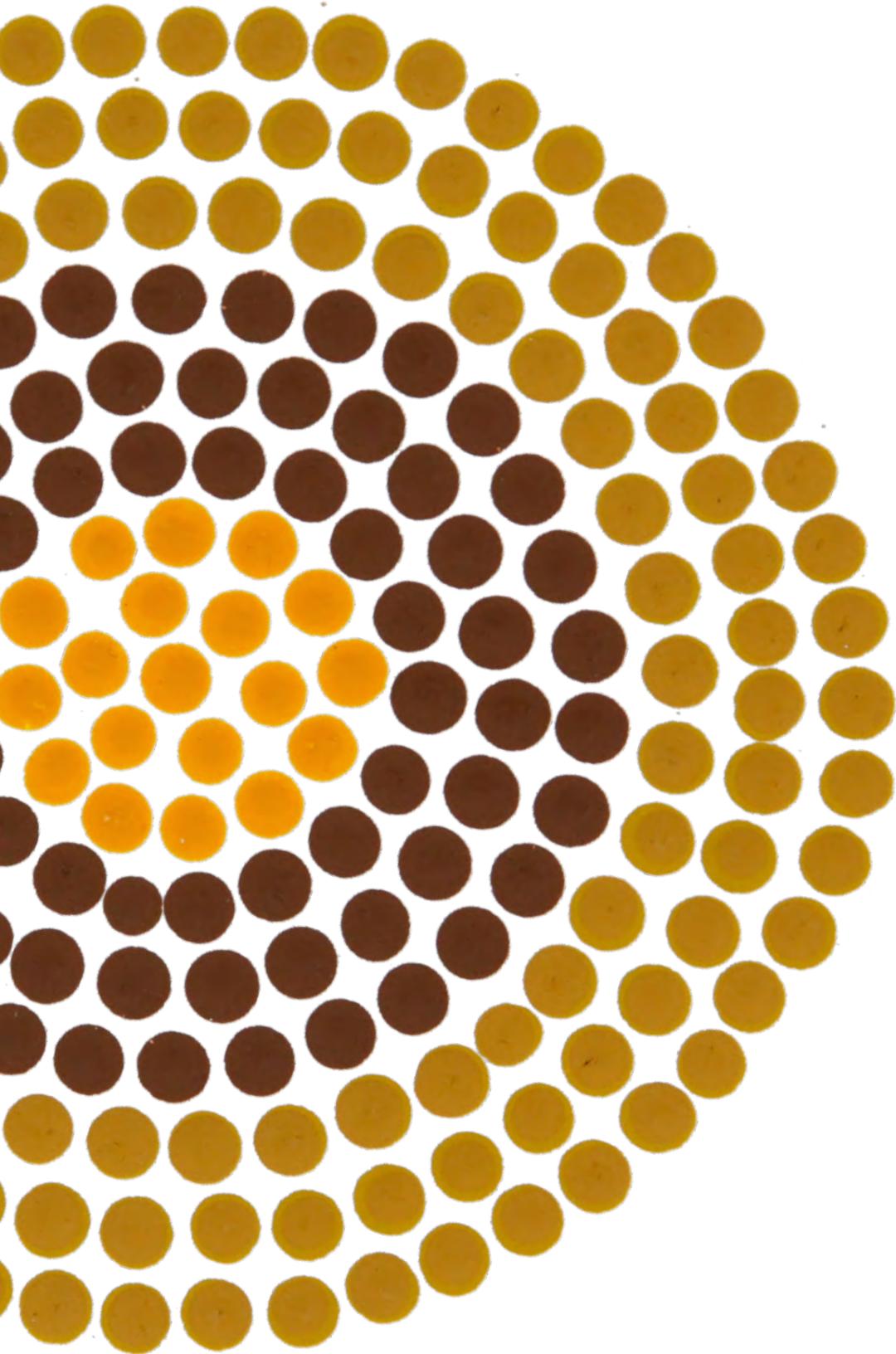
It is clear that we need to do more in the area of literacy and numeracy achievement for many Aboriginal students.

Early Action for Success provides schools with instructional leaders to build staff skills and knowledge in teaching and assessing literacy and numeracy and customising interventions for individual students. In 2015, learning assistance was provided for over 2,000 Aboriginal students in Years 4, 6, 8 and 10.

I would like to acknowledge the work of the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc. at a state, regional and local level in helping to build the knowledge and cultural competence of teachers, executive, principals and directors.

I commend this report to inform planning and practice across the Department to provide Aboriginal students with strong educational pathways to shape their future.

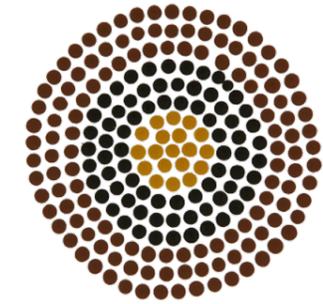
Dr Michele Bruniges AM
Secretary, Department of Education



REPORT OVERVIEW

This report is the second report of its kind to be published by the Department. It provides an overview of key educational measures for Aboriginal students in NSW public schools.

The report provides 2010 to 2014 data for the following indicators of school participation and performance for Aboriginal students: preschool enrolment, school enrolment, attendance, retention, student suspension, school aged students enrolled with TAFE NSW and NAPLAN attainment.



This report will provide valuable information to school communities to promote a broader understanding of Aboriginal student achievement. As part of the evidence base for school planning, it provides schools with key messages on effective practice.

In addition, the data presented in this report will better inform agency partners who work closely with schools and Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

It is important that we not lose sight of the fact that many Aboriginal students are performing well at school. In 2014, over 80% of Aboriginal students state-wide performed at or above minimum national standards in NAPLAN reading and numeracy and on an average school day, more than 85% of Aboriginal students attended school.

The Department acknowledges it has more to do to improve the engagement and performance of Aboriginal students and has implemented significant reforms to improve their wellbeing and educational outcomes.

These include strengthening local decision making, implementing the Resource Allocation Model (RAM) which provides specific funding to every public school in NSW with Aboriginal students and working in genuine partnership and close collaboration with parents/caregivers, local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (AECGs) and Aboriginal communities at the local level.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY

GENUINE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATIVE DECISION MAKING ARE VITAL TO IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS.

COLLABORATIVE DECISION MAKING

Aboriginal students are entitled to leave school having experienced a high quality education, which equips them with the skills and knowledge they need to achieve success, whatever pathway they choose to pursue, while maintaining a strong sense of identity and pride in their culture.

The Department recognises that, in order to improve the engagement and achievement of Aboriginal students in NSW public schools, it is vital that we work in genuine partnership and close collaboration with Aboriginal parents, caregivers, communities and the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc. (NSW AECG Inc.) at all levels.

In recognition of the vital role of community engagement and collaborative decision making in education, the Department has a Partnership Agreement with the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc. This Agreement, titled *Together We Are, Together We Can, Together We Will*, is a key document for all working in public education in NSW. It sets out shared commitments to improve education and training outcomes for Aboriginal learners.



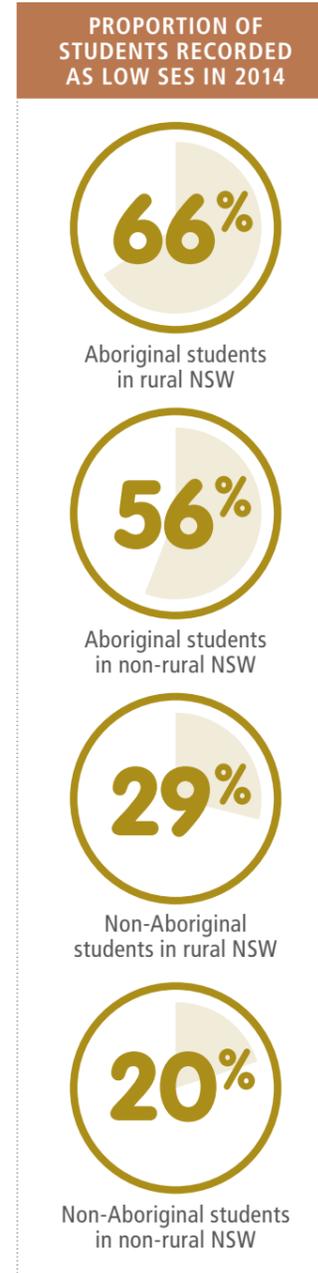
The Partnership Agreement is built on the principles of respect, commitment, collaboration and accountability and outlines a shared goal where Aboriginal learners have access to an education and training system that values their cultural heritage and identity.

Under Local Schools, Local Decisions, it is critical that, at the local level, schools engage with Aboriginal parents, community and local AECGs to involve them in decision making. Genuine, effective, and respectful consultation, collaboration and engagement should be central at all stages, from planning to implementation to evaluation, and in all aspects of school planning and educational service delivery so as to achieve positive outcomes for Aboriginal students.

The NSW AECG Inc.'s website, which provides AECG contact details and other information that may be useful to schools, can be accessed at <http://www.aecg.nsw.edu.au/>.

IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

EVERY ABORIGINAL STUDENT ENROLLED IN A NSW PUBLIC SCHOOL IS **SUPPORTED THROUGH THE ABORIGINAL BACKGROUND EQUITY LOADING** PROVIDED BY THE RESOURCE ALLOCATION MODEL.



There is a significant gap between the average achievement of students from low SES families as a group and all students. The difference in achievement is also reflected in students' participation in further education and training.

Aboriginal student participation and performance at school is closely associated with social factors such as health, socio-economic status and remoteness. These factors can impact on the educational attainment of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

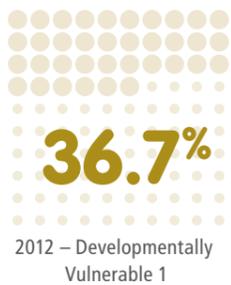
In rural NSW, 66% of Aboriginal students are reported as low SES. In non-rural areas, 56% of Aboriginal students are reported as low SES.

The difference in the educational participation and attainment levels of Aboriginal students in rural compared to non-rural areas is similar to that for all students.

The Rural and Remote Education: A Blueprint for Action launched in November 2013, contains a range of strategies to support schools, teachers and students in rural NSW and improve student outcomes.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

PERCENTAGE VULNERABLE



The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is a nationwide data collection of early childhood development at the time children commence their first year of full-time schooling.

The AEDC highlights what is working well and what needs to be improved or developed to support children and their families. The AEDC provides evidence to support health, education and community policy and planning.

In 2009, data was collected for 3,951 Aboriginal children in NSW. In 2012, this number grew to 4,988, an increase of 26%.

The AEDC measures childhood development across five domains: physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills and communication skills and general knowledge.

- BETWEEN 2009 AND 2012 THERE WAS A DECREASE IN THE PERCENTAGE OF ABORIGINAL CHILDREN IN NSW WHO WERE IDENTIFIED AS BEING DEVELOPMENTALLY VULNERABLE ON EITHER ONE OR TWO DOMAINS. THIS NOTWITHSTANDING, 2012 DATA INDICATES THAT, NATIONALLY, INDIGENOUS CHILDREN WERE MORE THAN TWICE AS LIKELY TO BE DEVELOPMENTALLY VULNERABLE THAN NON-INDIGENOUS CHILDREN.
- WHEN THE RESULTS FROM THE 2015 AEDC DATA COLLECTION BECAME AVAILABLE, THEY WILL ENABLE THE ANALYSIS OF TREND DATA OVER THREE TIME POINTS, WHICH WILL PROVIDE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE STATE AND PROGRESS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN NSW (AND IN PARTICULAR, FOR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN).

PRESCHOOL ENROLMENTS

There is consistent international evidence that children who have participated in high-quality preschool education programs gain significant long term benefits from what has been termed the 'preschool advantage' (Farrar et al, 2007). These include higher levels of completed education and subsequent employment, greater stability in relationships and lower rates of mental illness (Farrar et al, 2007). While the evidence indicates that all children benefit from high quality pre-school education, the gains are greatest for children from disadvantaged family backgrounds (Cunha et al, 2006; Sylva et al, 2004).^[1]

Evidence shows that the first five years of a child's life are vital for brain development. These early experiences help to shape a child's social competence, cognitive skills, emotional well-being, physical abilities, language and literacy skills. These are critical predictors for successful transition to school and life-long education and employment outcomes. To ensure the best possible start in life it is imperative that high quality early childhood education is accessed.

To maximise the number of children benefiting from the 'preschool advantage' the NSW government entered an agreement with the Federal government to increase the number of children enrolled in preschool. This can include enrolment in government and non-government preschools and long day-care settings that provide a preschool program aligned to the National Quality Framework (NQF) and the Early Years Learning Framework.

THE DATA RELATING TO ENROLMENT IN GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENT PRESCHOOLS AND LONG DAY-CARE SETTINGS THAT PROVIDE A PRESCHOOL PROGRAM ALIGNED TO THE NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK (NQF) AND THE EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK INDICATES A STEADY INCREASE IN ENROLMENTS.

ACCESSING A HIGH QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION HELPS TO ENSURE THE BEST POSSIBLE START IN LIFE.

PRESCHOOL CLASSES IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

The Department operates preschool classes in 100 government schools throughout NSW. These classes were established to provide quality preschool education in areas of disadvantage.

Aboriginal children are given priority placement in the Department's preschool classes. The *Preschool Class Fees in Government Schools* policy provides free access to public school preschool classes for disadvantaged Aboriginal children. Aboriginal children living in other communities are also eligible for fee relief.

In 2014, 527 Aboriginal children were enrolled in Departmental preschool classes across NSW.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

“Educators who are culturally competent respect multiple cultural ways of knowing, seeing and living, celebrate the benefits of diversity and have an ability to understand and honour differences.” (Belonging, Being and Becoming the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, 2009)[2]. All preschools have a responsibility to embed cultural competency into their daily practices.

Preschools have many opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives and celebrate diversity throughout their daily activities. Examples of effective practice include:

- Developing and maintaining strong relationships with families and local Aboriginal communities through establishing genuine relationships and by acknowledging and valuing their knowledge and skills.
- Making cultural connections through talking to children and their families, mapping where children and their families are from (their Country) and what language they may speak.
- Promoting a sense of belonging by displaying family maps, including pictures of Elders and family groups (being aware of, and sensitive to, Aboriginal cultural protocols regarding images of deceased persons, if relevant) so that children can share their stories with each other.

- Developing culturally respectful practices by incorporating local Aboriginal languages throughout the preschool, accepting and valuing home dialects and including the importance of oral storytelling into daily practices.
- Creating an inclusive curriculum by offering learning experiences that are culturally relevant such as cultural play based learning centres, yarning circles, bush tucker gardens, Aboriginal books, songs in Aboriginal languages and use of the natural environment.
- Developing partnerships with families and communities by working collaboratively to create resources that share local traditions and stories, including Aboriginal language/s and using pictures of local places and local people.
- Creating a physical environment that is responsive to cultural needs of the local community including displaying flags, Aboriginal artefacts, utilising outdoor spaces and use of local resources to maximise learning opportunities.
- Connecting with the local Aboriginal Language and Culture Nest (depending on location) as a way of sharing language and cultural resources for teaching and learning.
- Celebrating Aboriginal culture by providing all children with opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of Aboriginal histories, culture and languages. This can be done by inviting local Aboriginal Elders to visit the preschool to share aspects of their culture, family history, language and life experience; celebrate important days and Aboriginal cultural events (for example, NAIDOC); acknowledging Country; displaying Aboriginal artwork and symbols around the preschool; using Aboriginal resources (preferably those developed with Aboriginal community members) in teaching and learning activities.

SCHOOL ENROLMENTS

In 2014, a total of 51,613 full time equivalent (FTE) students in NSW public schools identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander out of a total student population of about 763,700 students. This equates to about 6.8% of total enrolments.

Since 2010, the number of Aboriginal students attending NSW public schools has increased by over 8,700 students. The bulk of this increase has been in the primary grades.

Since 2013, the number of Aboriginal students enrolled has increased by 2,305.

There was a 26% increase in K-2 enrolments of Aboriginal students between 2010 and 2014.

Generally there are more primary students enrolled than secondary students. This in part reflects the younger age profile of the Aboriginal population compared to the NSW population generally.

However, there has also been a large increase in enrolments in later years of high school over the same period.

In 2014, as in 2013, 60% of Aboriginal students were in primary school and 40% were in high school.

There are approximately 20% more primary Aboriginal students enrolled in rural NSW than in non-rural areas.

There are approximately 20% more secondary Aboriginal students enrolled in rural NSW than in non-rural areas.

ENROLMENTS OF ABORIGINAL STUDENTS IN NSW PUBLIC SCHOOLS

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
RURAL PRIMARY	14,405	14,810	15,380	16,151	16,951
RURAL SECONDARY	9,594.9	10,374.4	10,684.5	11,076.9	11,199.2
NON-RURAL PRIMARY	11,208	11,792	12,456	13,261	14,162
NON-RURAL SECONDARY	7,639.7	8,207.6	8,566.3	8,819.5	9,300.4
TOTAL	42847.6	45184.0	47086.8	49308.4	51612.6

ATTENDANCE

As was the case in 2013, the majority of Aboriginal students in NSW public schools attend school regularly. In some parts of NSW, the attendance rate for Aboriginal students was not markedly different to that for non-Aboriginal students.

Particularly pleasing is the attendance rate for Aboriginal students in primary schools.

In 2014, as in 2013, more than 85% of Aboriginal students attended school on an average school day.

Some factors that affect attendance rates are out of the school's control. Many Aboriginal students who are not in class will have a valid reason for being away, such as illness or family issues. School attendance can also be a challenge for Aboriginal students living in rural and remote communities.

However, a small number of Aboriginal students have poor attendance patterns.

The data indicates that Aboriginal student attendance rates are higher in primary schooling than secondary.

ATTENDANCE RATES NSW GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Primary	ABORIGINAL	89.0	89.0	89.3	89.8	89.9
	NON-ABORIGINAL	94.0	93.9	94.0	94.2	94.3
Secondary (Year 7-10)	ABORIGINAL	78.5	77.5	78.1	78.9	79.4
	NON-ABORIGINAL	89.9	89.4	89.6	90.1	90.3
Overall	ABORIGINAL	84.9	84.4	84.7	85.4	85.7
	Non-Aboriginal	92.2	92.0	92.1	92.5	92.6

ATTENDANCE RATES OF ABORIGINAL STUDENTS IN NSW PUBLIC SCHOOLS BY PRIMARY AND SECONDARY AND BY RURAL AND NON-RURAL LOCATION

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
RURAL PRIMARY	87.9%	88%	88.4%	89%	89.2%
RURAL SECONDARY	77.1%	75.7%	76.6%	77%	77.2%
NON-RURAL PRIMARY	90.4%	90.3%	90.4%	90.7%	90.8%
NON-RURAL SECONDARY	80.7%	80.1%	80.2%	81.2%	81.5%

ABORIGINAL STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATES HAVE BEEN INCREASING SLOWLY SINCE 2012

Attendance rates for Aboriginal students in primary schooling have been increasing since 2011. In primary schooling, the attendance rate for Aboriginal students increased by 0.9 percentage points from 2010 to 2014. This was greater than the increase for non-Aboriginal students. Comparing 2013 and 2014, Aboriginal student in primary schooling attendance rates have remained relatively stable.

Attendance rates for Aboriginal students in Years 7 to 10 decreased in 2010 and 2011, but have been increasing since 2012. Comparing 2013 and 2014, Aboriginal student in Years 7-10 increased by 0.5 percentage points while the overall attendance rate for Aboriginal students across all years of schooling (Years 1-10) increased by 0.3 percentage points.

Aboriginal students in non-rural locations tend to have higher attendance rates than those in rural areas.

The attendance rate of Aboriginal students in secondary schooling in rural areas tends to be lower than for other Aboriginal students.

Work is needed to address issues that affect the attendance of all students in rural and remote areas, but particularly Aboriginal students. The Department's Rural and Remote strategy will contribute to improved outcomes in coming years.

BETWEEN 2010 AND 2014, THE ABORIGINAL STUDENT YEAR 7-12 RETENTION RATE INCREASED BY 14.8 PERCENTAGE POINTS WHILE THOSE FOR NON-ABORIGINAL STUDENTS INCREASED BY 5.8 PERCENTAGE POINTS

Student retention figures are an estimate of the number of students staying in NSW public schools from year to year.

The rate is not calculated based on the movements of individual students. Rather, retention rates are "apparent" as they do not track individual students through their secondary schooling. What they measure is the ratio of the total number of students in a designated year (i.e. Year 12 in 2014) divided by the total number of students in a previous year (i.e. Year 7 in 2009).

So, for example, if a student moves from the government schooling system to the non-government schooling system they will not be counted in the following year.

RETENTION

The proportion of Aboriginal students staying at school until Year 12 in NSW has increased steadily in recent years.

The proportion of Aboriginal students staying at school to Year 12 has increased from 36.1% in 2010 to 50.9% in 2014. From 2013 to 2014, the rate increased by 3.7 percentage points, going from 47.2% in 2013 to 50.9% in 2014.

While there was also an increase in the proportion of non-Aboriginal students staying at school to Year 12, the increase was larger for Aboriginal students. This means that the gap in retention rate outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students is narrowing. While we still have work to do to close the gap, the data indicates that we are making progress in this vital area.

A higher proportion of Aboriginal students in non-rural areas stay at school until Year 12.

The number of Aboriginal students staying in school to Year 12 in both rural and non-rural areas has been increasing since 2010.

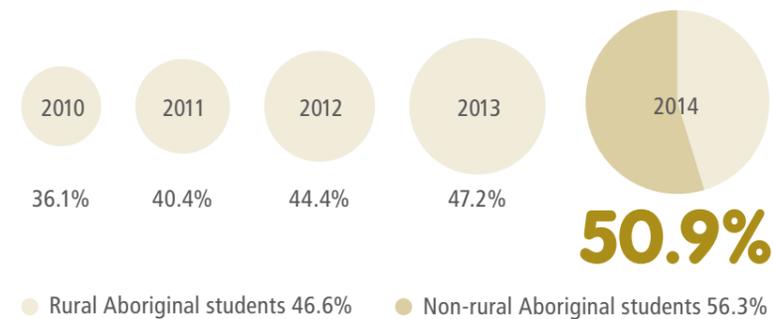
YEAR 7-12 RETENTION RATES FOR STUDENTS IN NSW PUBLIC SCHOOLS

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Aboriginal students	36.1%	40.4%	44.4%	47.2%	50.9%
Non-Aboriginal students	71.7%	73.5%	73.7%	76.0%	77.5%

YEAR 7-12 RETENTION RATES FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS IN NSW PUBLIC SCHOOLS

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Rural Aboriginal students	33.8%	38.1%	38.8%	44.3%	46.6%
Non-rural Aboriginal students	39.2%	43.5%	52.6%	51.6%	56.3%

RETENTION RATES FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS IN NSW PUBLIC SCHOOLS



SUSPENSION RATES

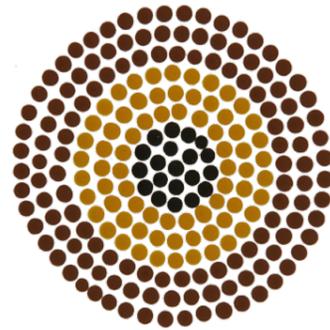
Establishing, maintaining and fostering positive student discipline is an absolute priority for effective learning to happen in every public school. Schools engage a range of individual, class and whole school approaches to manage challenging or disruptive behaviour, particularly where it impacts on the learning of others.

Principals are authorised to take action when the safety or wellbeing of others is at risk, or where a student has an ongoing history of disruptive behaviour that impacts on learning and wellbeing.

Suspension is not about simply excluding a student from the school as a disciplinary measure. Suspension is used as a strategy that allows time for the school to work with the student, their family and related support services to plan for the student's successful participation in school.

In the period 2010-2014, the proportion of Aboriginal students issued a short suspension decreased by 2.5 percentage points, while the proportion of Aboriginal students issued with a long suspension has varied between 5.7% and 6.3%.

Comparing 2013 and 2014, the proportion of Aboriginal students issued with a suspension, both long and short, remained relatively stable, varying by only 0.1 percentage points.



SUSPENSION RATES: PERCENTAGE OF ABORIGINAL STUDENTS ENROLLED

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Students short suspended	15.6%	14.2%	14.1%	13.2%	13.1%
Students long suspended	5.8%	5.7%	6.3%	6.2%	6.1%

ALTERNATIVES TO SCHOOL ABORIGINAL SCHOOL-AGE STUDENTS ENROLLED WITH TAFE NSW

TAFE NSW is the leading provider of vocational education and training (VET) to Aboriginal people in Australia, with a state wide footprint of over 130 campuses across NSW and the widest range of courses offered (over 1,300 work-related qualifications). The TAFE NSW network of 10 Institutes extends to rural and remote centres where TAFE NSW is often the only provider of vocational and tertiary education and training to Aboriginal students.

TAFE NSW has increased its support of school aged students enrolled in schools through programs such as TAFE-delivered vocational education and training (TVET), School-based Apprenticeships and

Traineeships, TAFE taster and Try a trade programs, as well as the Participation Phase Initiative.

TAFE NSW provides Aboriginal students with pathways to employment, 'second chance' education, including literacy and numeracy programs; and further study options. Some TAFE NSW Institutes have participated in the Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Program which funds Aboriginal School-based Trainees. An alliance of five TAFE NSW Institutes have established an Aboriginal Learning Circle to collaborate on providing culturally appropriate solutions for Aboriginal people, including school aged students, communities, organisations and employers.

Between 2010 and 2014:

- Aboriginal students who were enrolled at TAFE NSW and in schools increased by 14%
- Aboriginal students who were enrolled at TAFE NSW but not at school decreased by 25%
- Aboriginal students who were enrolled in Certificate III and above qualifications increased by 37% in line with TAFE NSW's shift to deliver more higher level qualifications
- Aboriginal students who were enrolled in TAFE NSW Institutes outside the Sydney metropolitan region attended about 75% of the time

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITH TAFE NSW AND OTHER VET PROVIDERS **INCREASE PARTICIPATION BY ABORIGINAL STUDENTS** BY PROVIDING MORE STUDY CHOICES AND PATHWAYS TO FURTHER STUDY.

ABORIGINAL STUDENTS ENROLLED WITH TAFE NSW*

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
In school	3,232	3,045	3,481	3,721	3,689
Not in school	3,430	3,072	2,905	2,519	2,580

ABORIGINAL STUDENTS WHO ARE ENROLLED AT TAFE NSW AND IN SCHOOLS INCREASED BY

14%

PERFORMANCE AND PARTICIPATION IN NAPLAN READING AND NUMERACY

Many Aboriginal students are performing well at school.

For example, across the period 2010 to 2014, the percentage of Aboriginal students in NSW public schools performing at or above minimum national standard for reading and numeracy averaged over 86% for Year 3, and nearly 80% for Year 5 students.

For the same period, the percentage of Aboriginal students performing at or above minimum national standard averaged over 83% for reading and over 84% for numeracy for Year 7, and over 75% for reading and over 79% for numeracy for Year 9.

Generally the performance of Aboriginal students is improving. For example, NAPLAN performance for at or above

minimum national standard was better in 2014 than for 2010 in all aspects except Year 3 reading and Year 5 numeracy.

Between 2010 and 2014, the difference between the percentage of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students performing at or above national minimum standard narrowed for numeracy in Year 7 and Year 9.

There are some trends in the data that would be a concern if maintained over a number of years. At this point, more data are needed to indicate a reliable effect.

The difference between the percentage of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students performing at or above national minimum standard only narrowed moderately between 2010 and 2014 for reading in Year 5, Year 7 and Year 9.

The difference between the percentage of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students performing at or above the national minimum standard for reading in Year 3 moderately increased from 2010 to 2014.

The difference between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in the percentage of students performing at or above the national minimum standard for numeracy in Year 3 and Year 5 has been relatively unchanged over time.

The difference between the percentage of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students performing at or above the national minimum standard for reading in Year 7 and Year 9 moderately reduced from 2010 to 2014.

MANY ABORIGINAL STUDENTS ARE PERFORMING WELL AT SCHOOL. HOWEVER, A STRONGER FOCUS ON LITERACY AND NUMERACY ACHIEVEMENT IS NEEDED TO ENSURE THAT ABORIGINAL STUDENT OUTCOMES MATCH OR BETTER THOSE OF THE BROADER STUDENT POPULATION.

READING NAPLAN YEARS 3-5

% AT OR ABOVE NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Year 3 Aboriginal students	86.9%	86.6%	86.3%	89.6%	82.4%
Year 5 Aboriginal students	74.8%	76%	73.5%	92.5%	79%
Year 3 Non-Aboriginal students	96.1%	96.0%	96.3%	97.0%	94.7%
Year 5 Non-Aboriginal students	91.9%	92.1%	91.7%	98.1%	94.2%

READING NAPLAN YEARS 7-9

% AT OR ABOVE NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Year 7 Aboriginal students	81.3%	85.8%	80.8%	81.0%	86.3%
Year 9 Aboriginal students	69.9%	76.8%	74.4%	80.6%	73.8%
Year 7 Non-Aboriginal students	94.0%	95.7%	93.7%	94.3%	95.7%
Year 9 Non-Aboriginal students	89.8%	92.1%	91.1%	93.9%	90.4%

NUMERACY NAPLAN YEARS 3-5

% AT OR ABOVE NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Year 3 Aboriginal students	87.1%	90.1%	84.5%	89.1%	88.1%
Year 5 Aboriginal students	82.5%	82.6%	79.9%	82.2%	80.3%
Year 3 Non-Aboriginal students	96.4%	96.9%	95.8%	97.0%	96.5%
Year 5 Non-Aboriginal students	95.3%	95.7%	94.5%	94.4%	94.4%

NUMERACY NAPLAN YEARS 7-9

% AT OR ABOVE NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Year 7 Aboriginal students	82.6%	84.4%	81.1%	87.9%	88.0%
Year 9 Aboriginal students	77.2%	78.3%	83.9%	72.0%	87.3%
Year 7 Non-Aboriginal students	95.5%	95.2%	94.6%	96.6%	96.6%
Year 9 Non-Aboriginal students	93.2%	93.8%	95.0%	90.1%	96.3%

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

NAPLAN PARTICIPATION RATES

Many Aboriginal students are participating well at school.

The number of Aboriginal students sitting NAPLAN numeracy and reading tests in all years increased between 2010 and 2014.

The participation rate for the NAPLAN reading and numeracy tests for Aboriginal students has consistently been lower than for non-Aboriginal students across all year levels across the period 2010 to 2014.

IN 2014, OVER 94% OF YEAR 3 AND YEAR 5 ABORIGINAL STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN THE NAPLAN READING AND NUMERACY TESTS.

Connected Communities is a new approach to address the educational and social aspirations of Aboriginal children and young people living in a number of complex and diverse communities in NSW. The strategy positions schools as community hubs that will facilitate a range of services from birth, through school, to further training and employment.

Connected Communities schools work in partnership with Aboriginal leaders in the local community to help improve education outcomes for young Aboriginal people.

All Connected Communities schools have established School Reference Groups. Over 30 initiatives have been determined through the advice of these groups.

Nine Connected Communities Schools are offering opportunities to learn Aboriginal Languages and all schools are coordinating Aboriginal cultural studies classes or cultural activities in the school.

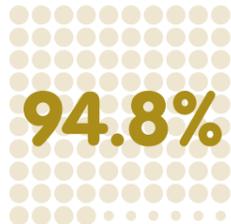
Early years programs have been introduced in all central and primary Connected Communities schools to increase Kindergarten enrolments and support children and their families as they start school.

All Central and High schools run programs to encourage further learning or pathways to employment programs. All Connected Communities schools have established partnerships with local health services to increase access to students and the community.

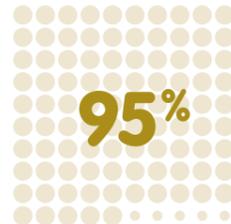
A \$35 million building and maintenance program is improving facilities in Connected Communities schools with all schools having minor capital works improvements and major capital works programs are underway at Brewarrina Central School, Walgett Community College and Moree East Public School.

NAPLAN PARTICIPATION RATES – READING

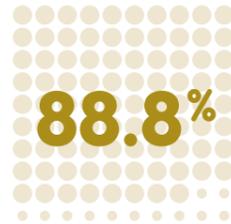
IN 2014, THE PARTICIPATION RATE FOR THE NAPLAN READING TEST BY ABORIGINAL STUDENTS WAS:



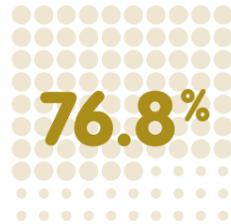
For Year 3, the highest since 2010



For Year 5, the highest across the period 2010 to 2014



For year 7



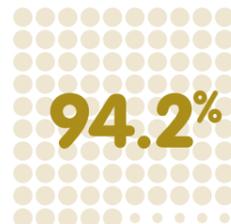
For Year 9

NAPLAN PARTICIPATION RATES – NUMERACY

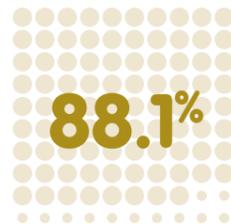
IN 2014, THE PARTICIPATION RATE FOR THE NAPLAN NUMERACY TEST BY ABORIGINAL STUDENTS WAS:



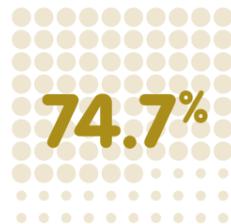
For Year 3, the highest across the period 2010-2014



For Year 5, the highest across the period 2010-2014



For year 7



For Year 9

\$35m

A \$35 MILLION BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE PROGRAM IS IMPROVING FACILITIES IN CONNECTED COMMUNITIES SCHOOLS WITH ALL SCHOOLS HAVING MINOR CAPITAL WORKS IMPROVEMENTS

ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE AND CULTURE NESTS

The Department has been working closely with the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc., Aboriginal Affairs and representatives from local Aboriginal language groups (including regional and local AECGs) to progress the Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests initiative under the NSW Government's OCHRE plan.

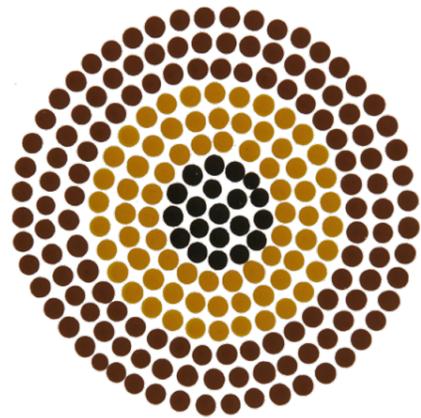
Five Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests have been established. They are North West Wiradjuri at Dubbo; Gumbaynggirr at Coffs Harbour; Bundjalung at Lismore; Paakantji at Wilcannia and Gamilaraay/Yuwaalaraay/Yuwaalayaay at Lightning Ridge.

Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests are local community networks connected by a language. The Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests provide communities with

opportunities to revitalise, reclaim and maintain their languages in partnership with schools, TAFE NSW, universities and other community language programs.

Each Aboriginal Language and Culture Nest will include a keeping place where language resources and materials are accessible to schools and community through community consultation.

Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests support Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students to learn Aboriginal languages in schools and communities so that Aboriginal languages are preserved and used. The work of the Nests also contributes to community empowerment, cultural self-determination and health and wellbeing.



ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL PROGRAMS SUPPORT ABORIGINAL STUDENTS TO BUILD THEIR IDENTITY, SELF-ESTEEM AND RESILIENCE.

PERSONALISED LEARNING PATHWAYS – SUPPORTING STUDENTS TO AIM HIGH AND ACHIEVE EDUCATIONALLY

Where Personalised Learning Pathways (PLPs) for Aboriginal students are developed in genuine partnership and collaboration with the students, their parents or carers and their teachers, PLPs can be an effective tool for increasing Aboriginal student engagement, retention and learning outcomes.

The PLP process is formed around a conversation to develop relationships with parents and carers to support student engagement in learning. During this process a specific pathway is created to support the student in their learning and aspirations.

Core to pathway planning is placing the student at the centre of the process and at the centre of the school's approach to the delivery of education.

Identifying a student's cultural, social and academic aspirations, and the means by which they can control their own educational journey, is critical to the PLP process.

It is important that PLP development is underpinned by high expectations, with a focus on building each student's unique strengths and talents.

A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO PLANNING, IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING PLPS FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS WILL CONTRIBUTE TO ALL KEY STAKEHOLDERS HAVING A SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF PLPS. EXTENSIVE CONSULTATION DURING THE PLANNING PHASE WILL ENSURE THAT A PLP IS DEVELOPED THAT MEETS THE LOCALISED NEEDS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY AND THE STUDENTS THEMSELVES.

WELLBEING

Schools play a very important role in supporting, enhancing and building the wellbeing of every child. Every staff member has an important role in contributing to the wellbeing of the children and young people in their school.

Wellbeing and its links with student engagement and learning are not new. Teachers play an important role in providing learning experiences and opportunities that develop and shape the character and wellbeing of children and young people.

The Wellbeing Framework for Schools has been developed to guide schools as they support students to be strong, confident, achieving contributors to their communities and to society. The Framework is holistic, prosocial and strengths based. It focuses

on developing the cognitive, emotional, social, physical and spiritual wellbeing of all students. It will support schools to implement a planned approach to support the wellbeing of students in line with the School Excellence Framework.

A planned approach to wellbeing in schools will contribute to a shared understanding of wellbeing by all students, teachers, staff, and members of the wider school.

This planned approach will also support quality teaching and effective professional practice and provide opportunities for teaching and learning experiences that celebrate difference and diversity; and recognise, respect and respond to identity and cultural background.

SCHOOLS PLAY A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE IN SUPPORTING, ENHANCING AND BUILDING THE WELLBEING OF EVERY CHILD. EVERY STAFF MEMBER HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN CONTRIBUTING TO THE WELLBEING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THEIR SCHOOL.

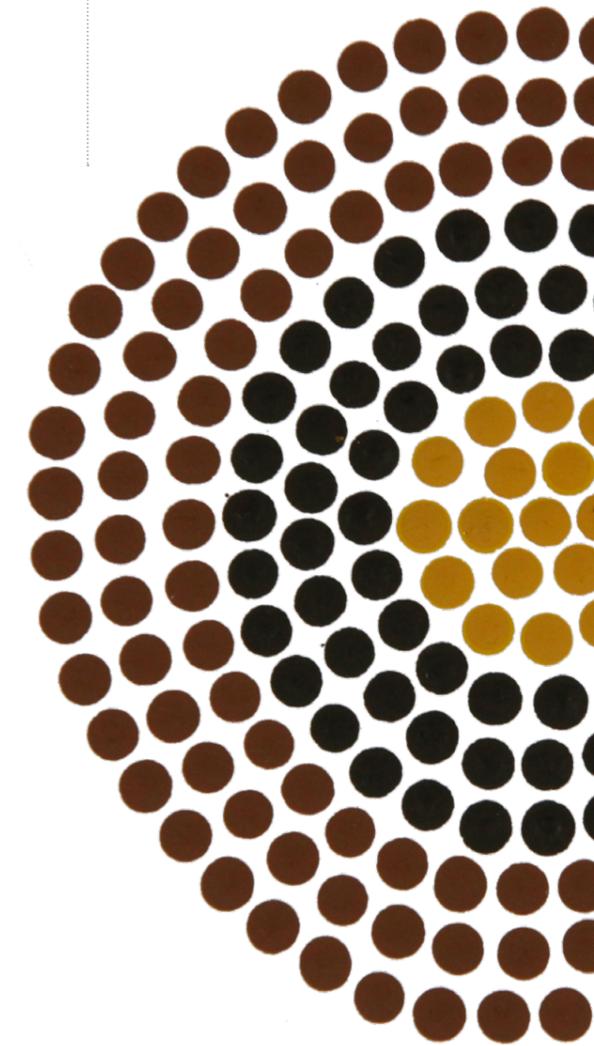
RESOURCING EVERY PUBLIC SCHOOL TO SUPPORT ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

As part of Local Schools, Local Decisions, a Resource Allocation Model (RAM) has been developed. The RAM includes a loading for Aboriginal students, with the rate per student increasing as the percentage of Aboriginal students in a school increases.

The RAM delivers significant additional funding to support all students who identify as Aboriginal. In 2014, for the first time, every NSW public school with Aboriginal students enrolled received funding to support their learning needs.

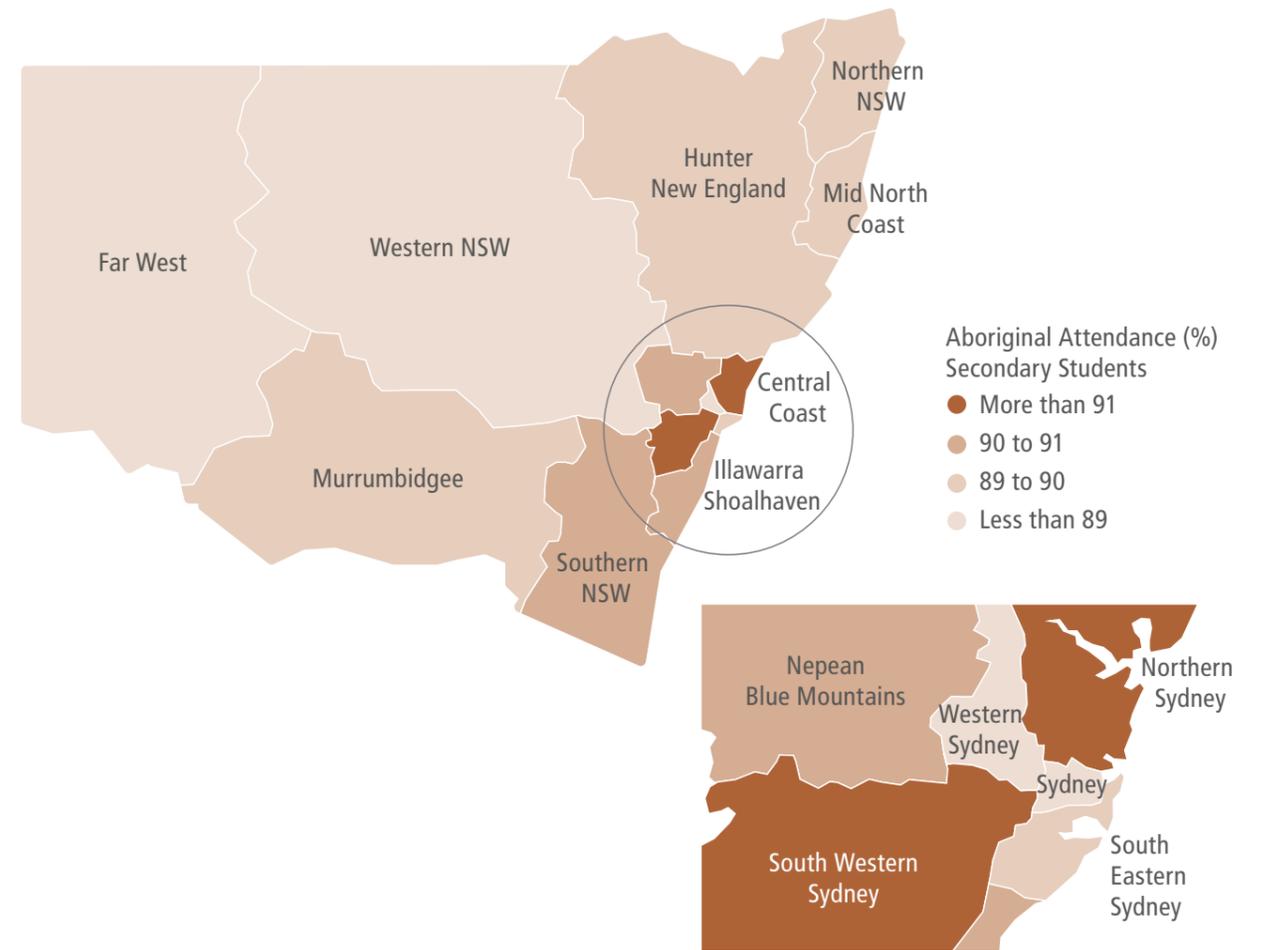
This has resulted in a fairer and more transparent allocation of funding support for Aboriginal students than the previous model which was largely program-based.

In 2014 the Department invested an additional \$18.5 million for Aboriginal background loading, distributing more than \$48m in total on this loading.



2014 ABORIGINAL ATTENDANCE BY FACS DISTRICT – PRIMARY STUDENTS

2014 ABORIGINAL ATTENDANCE BY FACS DISTRICT – SECONDARY STUDENTS





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