



Department of Education and Training

National Priorities: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Secondary Student Transitions project

Final Report

June 2016





AMSRO



© Cultural & Indigenous Research Centre Australia

Developed by the Cultural & Indigenous Research Centre Australia 2016

All research conducted by CIRCA for this project was in compliance with ISO20252



Acknowledgements

The Cultural and Indigenous Research Centre Australia (CIRCA) wishes to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional owners of Australia and custodians of the oldest continuous culture in the world, and pay respects to Elders past and present.

We would like to thank all those who generously contributed to the research. We would also like to thank the Department of Education and Training, for their valuable partnership in this research.

Executive summary

This review provides a high level thematic analysis of publicly available national and international research regarding Indigenous young people's access to high-quality vocational learning and vocational education and training (VET). The review was commissioned by the Department of Education and Training and the research relates to vocational learning, VET delivered to secondary students (by schools and external RTOs) as well as VET more broadly.

A number of key themes emerged from the research that consistently underpin successful delivery of vocational learning and VET to Indigenous young people:

- Context
- Flexibility
- Two-way learning and community engagement
- Aspiration, self-esteem and belonging
- Real-world job pathways.

Applying these themes to an understanding of the design, delivery and operation of vocational learning and VET provides insight into “what works” and “what doesn't work” for Indigenous young people.

Much of the literature warned against reducing analysis of the needs of Indigenous young people to a one size fits all approach, noting that there are many factors that influence why and how Indigenous young people do or do not engage in school learning, including vocational learning and VET. Where a young person lives, socio-economic factors, including indicators of advantage or disadvantage, and the strength of their connections with family, Indigenous community, school community and the community at large, are all influences on the decisions that they make regarding career and study options and their capacity to move confidently into the world of work.

Strong and trusting relationships between schools and Indigenous families and communities were identified as essential supports to engagement by Indigenous young people in vocational learning and VET. Ongoing involvement by school personnel at all levels in a process of two-way learning, and recognition of the needs and aptitudes of bicultural and bilingual learners through pedagogical approaches that moved beyond strictly western models, was stressed in many reports. A flexibility in how learning is accessed and assessed, helping individuals to find their best way to learning, was an important component of vocational learning and VET programs that were able to meet Indigenous student needs. Across metropolitan, regional and remote locations, cross cultural competency training for all school personnel, local employers and relevant members of the broader community, was seen as an important measure to increase a sense of belonging that is an essential component of engaging with learning and to reduce the possibility of racist attitudes that may negatively influence vocational learning options and the experiences for Indigenous young people. Many reports described a concern by Indigenous young people that training would actually lead to a realistic job prospect and a real-job prospect was seen as an important reason to engage or not with VET.

The experience of Indigenous young people living in remote locations was seen to add challenges as well as potential strengths in vocational learning and VET. Difficulties in attracting high quality and consistent teaching staff, the lack of local industry and commerce and the necessity to travel far from home to complete VET and find employment were all identified as additional pressures for Indigenous young people in remote locations. At the same time, connections to family, country and culture remain strong in many remote communities and provide a focus for training and employment. It was noted in a number of studies that work that contributes to community wellbeing was seen as worthwhile employment for many Indigenous young people.

Broadly applicable strategies are applied thematically in this report to address barriers and challenges to engagement and completion of vocational learning and VET by Indigenous young people across metropolitan, regional and remote locations. The overriding theme of “context” applies in the application of strategies so that rather than drilling down to identify highly specific situations, the report suggests broad approaches that may be applied and adapted in particular settings. National and international literature pointed to the value of embedding vocational learning and VET with broader curricula, alongside the provision of individual mentoring and personal supports. As a whole, the strategies form a framework for building relevant, engaging and successful vocational learning and VET for Indigenous young people in their particular circumstances.

It is widely noted in national and international literature that there is a paucity of data from evidence based studies that analyse the outcomes of vocational learning and VET for Indigenous young people. Nevertheless, a large amount of descriptive information is available that shows many different approaches to providing vocational learning and VET for Indigenous young people. A selection of examples of good practice from metropolitan, regional and remote locations across Australia demonstrate the application of themes and strategies in real life situations. Good practice vocational learning and VET programs for Indigenous young people are seen to benefit not only individual Indigenous young people, but the whole communities in which they live, study and work.

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| Acknowledgements | ii |
| Executive summary | iii |
| 1. Background | 1 |
| 2. Method | 3 |
| 3. Research findings - themes | 4 |
| 3.1 Themes in vocational and VET learning for Indigenous young people | 4 |
| 3.2 Overarching theme: context | 5 |
| 3.3 Flexibility | 6 |
| 3.4 Two-way learning and whole of community | 7 |
| 3.5 Aspiration, self-esteem, and belonging | 9 |
| 3.6 Real-world job pathways | 11 |
| 4. Research findings - strategies | 14 |
| 4.1 Flexibility | 14 |
| 4.2 Two-way learning and whole of community | 15 |
| 4.3 Aspiration, self-esteem, and belonging | 15 |
| 4.4 Real-world job pathways | 16 |
| 5. Research findings - good practice examples | 17 |
| 5.1 Successful strategies and programs that increase retention rates in high-quality vocational learning | 17 |
| 5.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students undertaking and successfully completing a school-based VET course | 21 |
| 5.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' access to quality VET courses | 23 |
| 6. Conclusion | 26 |
| References | 28 |

1. Background

This literature review is a high-level thematic analysis of existing research and publicly available information on relevant state and territory department websites regarding approaches for providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students access to high-quality vocational learning and vocational education and training (VET), including preparing students for work, work experience and structured work placements. The review was commissioned by the Department of Education and Training and the research relates to vocational learning, VET delivered to secondary students (by schools and external RTOs) as well as VET more broadly.

The review addresses the questions posed by the National Priorities Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Secondary Student Transitions project including identifying barriers to learning by Indigenous young people and strategies to improve VET outcomes. The review presents a thematic analysis of vocational learning and VET for Indigenous young people including examples of good practice in vocational learning and in VET that align with the thematic analysis.

School completion rates for Indigenous students continue to be significantly lower than those for non-Indigenous students (Ainley, Buckley, Beavis, Rothman, & Tovey, 2011; Helme & Lamb, 2011). School engagement is understood as an essential basis for improved education outcomes for all students (SCRGSP, 2014) and is specified as a key outcome for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in national policy and planning (MCEECDYA, 2010; SCRGSP, 2014). For the purposes of this study, engagement describes more than student attendance or adherence to basic school rules and requirements, but extends to include emotional links to study such as how students feel about school environments, study options, belonging, self-esteem as well as their level of motivation and achievement in vocational learning and in VET outcomes (Cuervo, Barakat, & Turnbull, 2015; Mission Australia, 2014; Nelson & Hay, 2010).

Strategies to engage and retain participation by Indigenous students in vocational learning and VET share much with those appropriate for other students. Individual aspiration, self-esteem, a sense of belonging and belief in one's own ability to succeed, and the belief in one's abilities by others such as parents, teachers and trainers, all contribute to the capacity of young people to successfully engage with learning. Nevertheless, there are significant additional layers of complexity for Indigenous young people, linked to a variety of contextual circumstances including socio-economic, cultural and geographic factors when undertaking school learning, including vocational learning and VET (Helme & Lamb, 2011; Price & Dalgleish, 2013).

Indigenous young people face a variety of particular challenges in accessing quality career education and vocational learning programs that allow and support them to explore the world of work. In many instances, challenges and associated barriers are linked to deficiencies in the provision and nature of vocational learning opportunities that are made available to Indigenous young people.

Identifying effective pathways on the basis of rigorous evidence is difficult because the availability of such research is limited. While detailed descriptions of outcomes are available, structured analysis that would allow for a confident identification of activities that do or do not work is less so. Evaluation of vocational pathways requires longitudinal data and best-practice methodology to ensure that evidence

is credible and relevant. The international literature emphasises that without greater use of research which controls for confounding factors and/or evidence based information about program outcomes, it's difficult to issue definitive statements about 'what works' (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Hare, 2011; Hunter, 2010).

A striking thematic consistency did emerge in the reports and studies to describe challenges, barriers, strategies and good practice for successfully engaging and retaining participation by Indigenous students in vocational learning and VET programs.

This analysis identifies themes that emerged consistently from the literature review including factors that contribute to the success of learning programs or to barriers that impede engagement in vocational learning and completion of vocational studies for Indigenous young people. The examples of good practice provided demonstrate successful strategies for providing vocational learning and VET for Indigenous young people in a variety of contexts including metropolitan, regional and remote locations.

2. Method

The literature review has covered vocational learning, career training and VET courses for Indigenous young people in metropolitan, rural and remote regions that support the transition from school to employment. It presents a thematic analysis and assessment of vocational learning processes and programs. The review has also identified issues and challenges as well as examples of good practice to increase engagement and retention of Indigenous young people in vocational training and their access to high quality career education and VET courses.

The literature review examined 14 academic databases including AGIs Plus Text (Informit), HeinOnline, Academic Search Complete (EBSCO), Expanded Academic ASAP International (Gale), Informit Complete, Google Scholar, JSTOR, SCOPUS (Elsevier), TROVE, ProQuest Research Library and Australian Education Index (Informit), Australian Education Index – ATIS (Informit) Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet, and Learning Ground: Indigenous Education Research Database.

The search terms used for the literature scan included: “VET” OR “Vocational Education and Training” OR “Vocational learning” OR “VET in schools” AND “Indigenous” OR “Aboriginal”, AND “student” OR “secondary student, AND “retention”, OR “engagement” AND “transition” OR “good practice” OR “program*” OR “strategy” OR “access” OR “barrier” OR “culture” OR “workplace” OR “industry”.

Grey literature was widely sourced from the relevant federal and state government departmental websites, and relevant bodies in the VET and Indigenous Education sector including the principal research organisations the National Centre for Vocational Education Research and Australian Council for Educational Research. Subsequently 168 documents including reports, literature reviews, case studies, program evaluations and guidelines were examined in this analysis.

The literature scan was limited to 10 years and within Australia, Canada, the United States of America and New Zealand as these countries are the most comparable in terms of the historical and cultural contexts. All literature reviewed was highly specific and relevant to Vocational and Educational Training and the transitioning of secondary students, with the majority of literature being specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the Australian context.

Definitions

Vocational Education and Training (VET) enables students to acquire workplace skills through nationally recognised training described within an industry-developed training package or an accredited course. A VET qualification is issued by an RTO. The achievement of a VET qualification signifies that a student has demonstrated competency against the skills and knowledge required to perform effectively in the workplace.

Vocational learning helps secondary students explore the world of work, identify career options and pathways, and build career development skills. Vocational learning is delivered within the broader curriculum. It supports students to gain career development skills and provides opportunities for students to ‘taste’ the world of work through one-off events, initiatives such as enterprise learning, or spending time in a real or simulated workplace.

3. Research findings - themes

3.1 Themes in vocational and VET learning for Indigenous young people

A set of consistent key themes emerged from this literature review and literature review to describe essential components of successful vocational learning strategies for Indigenous young people, or “what works”. Conversely, the same thematic set of trends describe barriers to successful vocational learning strategies, or “what doesn’t work”.

A thematic analysis is useful in understanding supports and barriers to vocational learning by all students. However, vocational learning by Indigenous young people is influenced by socio-economic factors often linked to disadvantage as well as factors linked to Indigenous social capital such as strong family, community and cultural connections (Department of Indigenous Education, 2016; Dockery, 2013). The application of identified themes to vocational learning provides insight into strategies for engaging Indigenous young people in vocational learning programs and high quality VET.

Key themes that emerged from this research that link to the access and engagement of Indigenous young people in vocational learning and VET are:

- Context
- Flexibility
- Two-way learning and community engagement
- Aspiration, self-esteem and belonging
- Real-world job pathways.

Themes were seen to operate typically in a contextual framework combining to produce scenarios of integrated vocational learning supports or barriers for individual learners. For example, themes of two-way learning, flexibility and whole of community might combine in a case in which a school learns to understand, through its established relationship with the local Indigenous community, about a cultural demand that appears to have a specific negative influence on attendance patterns. Based on this understanding the school adapts its policy regarding the specific attendance pattern at issue, actively incorporating its new understanding of a particular Indigenous cultural practice into the administration of school attendance policy. As a result, Indigenous students are supported to both continue engagement with their school and to comply with duties and responsibilities attached to their place in family, cultural and spiritual practice.

Identified themes were seen to apply to the experience of Indigenous young people living in metropolitan, regional and remote locations, manifesting in different ways depending on the variety of factors of particular or individual situations. According to ABS findings gathered in the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage

(2014), approximately 44% of Indigenous populations live in geographical locations classified as remote or very remote locations. Remoteness is identified in the report as a key negative variable for year 12 attainment and employment (SCRGSP, 2014).

While the vocational learning needs, aspirations and experiences of Indigenous young people in metropolitan and regional areas share some statistical indications of disadvantage, living in remote Indigenous communities adds a layer of complexity to learning needs and experience. The context of learning in remote and very remote locations adds challenges as well as potential strengths in relation to accessing vocational learning and VET for Indigenous young people.

An international survey of vocational learning programs found that countries showing the most resilience to youth unemployment “educate the majority of their teenagers in a mix of school-based and company-based vocational training” (Hoffman, 2011). Australian approaches to VET including national training frameworks, mandated school and/or training participation requirements for young people until age 17 and the embedding of vocational learning, including traineeships and apprenticeships, within broader school curricula were cited as significant examples of good practice in increasing Indigenous young people’s engagement and completion of schooling. (Connelly, Blair & Ko, 2013, 2013; Hoffman, 2011; Hare, 2011)

3.2 Overarching theme: context

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy (Education Council, 2015) specifies the priority for a collaborative approach between, government, industry and communities to close the gap in Indigenous school engagement and retention, finding the best ways to support the engagement and retention of Indigenous young people. This identified priority should not be understood to imply however, that Indigenous young people form a single group with the same needs, interests, aptitudes and aspirations.

‘Context’ is the major overarching theme in the engagement of Indigenous young people in vocational learning and the provision of high quality VET living in a multiplicity of Indigenous cultures across metropolitan, regional and remote locations. This multiplicity requires that education strategies do not equate ‘Indigenous’ with ‘homogenous’ nor adopt a ‘one size fits all’ approach (Young, Guenther, & Boyle, 2007). Nuanced, contextual factors will influence individual or group learning undertaken by Indigenous young people (Cuervo et al., 2015; Rigney, 2011).

The specific contexts in which school and vocational learning take place, involving students, community and educational institutions in their particular metropolitan, regional or remote locations directly influence the needs of individual learners and their communities (Fredericks, et al., 2015). How vocational learning and VET can best meet these needs will depend on the context in which learning takes place and the different perspectives of those involved.

Transitional pathways from youth to adulthood are neither singular nor linear (Dandolo Partners, 2014; Deloitte Access Economics, 2012; Polvere & Lim, 2015). What each young person needs to become and remain engaged in vocational learning will differ from individual to individual and place to place, and will change over time. Transition pathways, including those leading to successful careers, are never flat and smooth (Abbott-Chapman, 2011; Cuervo et al., 2015; Fredericks et al., 2015). Individual

learning is influenced by many factors including cultural, geographic, linguistic, academic, economic and social. Alongside personal needs, aptitudes and preferences, an individual's vocational learning and career choices are made within social, cultural and economic contexts (Helme, 2010; Mission Australia, 2014).

High levels of socio-economic disadvantage experienced by Indigenous populations in general, including lower levels of life expectancy, higher levels of chronic health disease, high levels of unemployment, low attainment in formal education, high incidence of unsatisfactory housing and high levels of arrest, incarceration and death in custody will have a direct influence on the vocational learning experiences of young Indigenous people and the career options and choices that they can and do make (Cuervo et al., 2015; Helme & Lamb, 2011). How such shared socio-economic, cultural, geographic or broader economic factors interact with vocational learning and VET outcomes for Indigenous young people is influenced in turn by the additional contextual layer of personal experience, preferences and aspirations (Purdie & Buckley, 2010; Wilks et al., 2014).

3.3 Flexibility

"...what works for one person may not work with another." (Goodrick, et al. 2012)

Flexibility emerged as a major theme and contributing factor to successful delivery of vocational learning and VET for Indigenous young people, applicable to all aspects of how learning is structured, delivered and assessed. Rather than implying lack of academic rigour or quality, flexibility is based in a recognition that a rigid or singular mode of education, by definition, cannot meet the needs of diverse learners (Anderson, 2009b; Bottrell, Te Riele, & Plows, 2014; Te Riele, 2014). For many Indigenous young people, in particular, those living in remote or very remote locations, a western model of education is a foreign model of education (Oliver et al., 2012; Young et al., 2007).

Flexibility across all aspects of vocational learning access, delivery, assessment and workplace applications was consistently seen as a central and essential component in successful and high quality vocational learning and VET for Indigenous young people (Anderson, 2009b; Bottrell et al., 2014; Te Riele, 2014). This included flexibility in identifying and addressing the learning needs and strengths of individuals and communities and flexibility in structural and operational delivery of learning, modes of teaching and assessment approaches.

Factors influencing engagement, retention and transition in VET for Indigenous young people are complex and varied depending on factors linked not only to individual student needs, wants and aptitudes but on factors such as geographic location, the availability of employment options, and community expectations (Anderson, 2009a). Traditional classroom teaching cannot suit the learning needs of all students, even in streamed settings teaching modes that allow for varying student learning styles and provide learning supports in ways that suit individual students are required (Mitchell, 2009; Te Riele, 2009).

While flexibility in learning approaches was seen to support vocational learning and VET it was not seen to extend to any reduction in learning goals or outcomes, nor a reduced expectation for the achievement of literacy and numeracy skills or a lessening of educational standards (DEEWR 2007).

Aboriginal parents place a high value on the attainment by Indigenous young people of literacy and numeracy skills and preparation for employment (LSIC, 2015). Nevertheless, the community cultural worldviews and lived experience of individuals and their communities influence the preferred ways that people learn.

The roles, expectations and responsibilities of Indigenous young people within family and community will have an impact on how they learn and how training can best be delivered for them. For many Indigenous young people, the imperative of school attendance sits alongside other demands from family and community (Purdie & Buckley, 2010). Vocational learning and VET that is based solely within western pedagogical models will not be sufficiently flexible to bridge the cross cultural gaps that sometimes prevent Indigenous young people from successfully engaging with school studies (Purdie & Buckley, 2010). The provision of flexible course structures, content and teaching approaches that take into account the many different contextual factors that influence how Indigenous young people learn, applied in their particular situations, are necessary to providing them with access to and successful engagement in vocational learning and VET (Bottrell, te Riele et al., 2014; Te Riele 2014).

High quality VET is tailored to meet the needs of Indigenous young people, making direct links between their individual aspirations and the employment and career opportunities that exist in the particular contexts in metro, regional or remote locations. Learning what Indigenous young people expect and want from training in the different contexts in which they live, and reflecting those expectations in the way that training is devised and delivered supports their engagement and retention in VET (Abbott-Chapman, 2011; Briggs & England, 2007; Department of Training and Workforce Development, 2014a).

Flexible, strengths-based learning was shown to support learners to increase their confidence and expectations in vocational learning and VET (Black & Yasukawa, 2011; Helme & Lamb, 2011). Pedagogical approaches that embed vocational learning within a broader curriculum allow students to link their strengths and interest in particular work-related learning to other learning including foundation skills. Embedding vocational learning and VET within broader curricula allows for continuing focus on foundation. The teaching of foundation skills and employment skills has been shown to contribute to improved literacy and numeracy outcomes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people (Black & Yasukawa, 2011).

3.4 Two-way learning and whole of community

“Quality teaching is dependent on creating an environment of mutual learning, where both teachers and students grow in cross cultural understanding and sensitivity.” (Fordham & Schwab, 2007)

Vocational training routinely requires Indigenous young people to operate in bicultural and/or bilingual learning contexts, crossing cultural zones and developing competencies in more than a single cultural context. For many Indigenous young people, learning in western education models is learning across a cultural divide, in a foreign context that does not address the complexity of their learning needs (Oliver et al., 2012).

Balancing the sometimes aligned, but sometimes differing or even opposing demands, experience and beliefs of Indigenous life with the demands, experience and beliefs that inform western education adds

layers of complexity to learning for Indigenous young people that can be challenging to engagement in vocational learning. (Cuervo, Barakat & Turnbull, 2015). Regular school attendance is widely accepted as an indicator of potential for school achievement and year 12 completion. Purdie and Buckley (2010) note that school attendance rates for Year 7/8 to Year 12 in 2009 were 45% for Indigenous students compared with 77% for non-Indigenous students (ABS, 2009). A contributing factor to the disparity was seen by the authors as a lack of recognition by schools of Indigenous culture and history and the failure by schools to fully engage parents, carers and the community (Purdie & Buckley, 2010).

Two-way learning happens in the context of an evolving relationship and structured partnership between Indigenous and school communities that supports Indigenous young people to grow their learning aspirations and stay connected to school or training. A process of systematic, two-way learning between Indigenous and non-Indigenous school communities that builds Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into schools' philosophy and practice, and supports strengths-based vocational learning and VET depends on genuine, ongoing, whole-of-community participation (Department of Indigenous Education, 2011).

Two-way learning that supports Indigenous young people to successfully undertake vocational learning and VET depends on whole-of-community involvement. Essential relationship-building operates within the particular constraints or positive contextual factors that apply such as metropolitan, regional or remote geographic location (Wallace, Manado, Agar, & Curry, 2009). Active two-way learning is dependent on ongoing relationships of understanding and respect between key representatives of Indigenous communities and whole communities including school principals, deputies, teachers and classroom support staff, Aboriginal liaison and other Aboriginal support staff, parents, local community, local business and employers and where relevant, local industry and local VET providers and trainers, further education and tertiary education providers (Dreise, Milgate, Perrett, & Meston, 2016; Fordham & Schwab, 2007; Lonsdale, 2013). Many Indigenous young people, particularly those in remote locations, are bilingual or multi lingual, speaking English not as their first or "home" language (Biddle, 2010). Recognition of bilingualism of Indigenous communities, particularly those in remote locations, and the implications for teaching, including the adaption and use of ESL models, was seen as an essential requirement in the provision of pedagogically sound, culturally sensitive and engaging learning approaches for Indigenous young people (Cuervo et al., 2015). Provision of a culturally sensitive learning environment was seen as directly linked to the successful integration of home languages into the classroom learning (Biddle, 2010; DEEWR, 2012).

International reports examining vocational learning for Indigenous young people, including those in Canada, New Zealand and the United States, strongly supported a process of two-way learning between school and community (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Guillory, 2008; Hoffman, 2011; Hare, 2011). "Tribal communities" were seen to need high-standard schooling, including core curriculum, that was delivered through culturally responsive pedagogical methods connecting school with community and family. This was seen to be part of a broader task to support self-determination (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008). The importance of including family in processes to support Indigenous young people was seen in many cases, as integral to the continuing engagement of Indigenous young people in school (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Guillory, 2008).

Cross cultural supports for Indigenous students to engage with vocational learning and to complete VET were strongly supported in reports from metropolitan, regional and remote vocational learning programs (Bodkin-Andrews, Harwood, McMahon, & Priestly, 2013; Department of Indigenous Education, 2016; Department of Training and Workforce Development, 2014a; Macgregor et al., 2015). Successful strategies were seen to depend on whole school involvement in cultural competency training and two-way learning strategies. Active, ongoing involvement from staff at all levels was seen as essential to ensuring that genuine two-way learning was instilled into school processes and curricula. Such support includes mentoring and career counsellors, and early intervention programs that also involve and connect to families (Mission Australia, 2014; Polvere & Lim, 2015).

Effective two-way learning across metro, regional and remote locations requires a whole-of-school approach involves parents, principals, deputy principals, classroom teachers, teacher support staff, librarians and everyone else in the school who has meaningful contact with Indigenous students (Cuervo et al., 2015). In Metropolitan and regional schools, participation by non-Indigenous students will be a necessary part of the whole school community that contributes to building a safe, respectful learning environment that supports Indigenous students, allowing them to develop confidence to explore their own vocational skills and career options as broadly as possible (Biddle, 2010).

In remote locations, attracting highly skilled teachers and trainers may be difficult (so that vocational training and VET may be delivered by providers with little experience of Indigenous culture and little knowledge of the strengths of the Indigenous educational and socio-cultural contexts in which they are working Cuervo et al., 2015; Young et al., 2007). Formal, structured two-way learning assists in reducing learning barriers that form for Indigenous young people when vocational learning and skills training programs are delivered by a mono-lingual, non-Indigenous provider, operating on a deficit model of Indigenous learning and its implied racially-stereotyping assumptions (Cuervo et al., 2015).

3.5 Aspiration, self-esteem, and belonging

“Success can overcome many of the barriers to learning.”

(Black & Yasukawa, 2011)

From an early age, children begin to imagine themselves in the world, developing interests and aptitudes that grow into vocational choices and career pathways in adult life. How this vision of self is supported or diminished through the experiences throughout schooling is an important influence on the continuing engagement of Indigenous students in vocational learning. Nurturing the aspirations of Indigenous young people, beginning as early as primary school, was seen as an important way to break down barriers supported by deficit models of Indigenous education that may lead Indigenous young people to lower their career expectations and reduce their engagement with schooling in general, including vocational learning and VET (Helme, 2010).

The external socio-economic context in which a student’s learning takes place can have a powerful influence on a young person’s motivation to engage with learning or a particular educational task at any particular level. Indigenous youth are disproportionately exposed to risk factors such as grief, loss and discrimination, have poorer outcomes in health, education and social development and experience higher rates of suicide risk, neglect and abuse than other young people (Cuervo et al., 2015). A variety

of personal and socio-economic stressors may damage a student's self-esteem, confidence or practical capacity to remain in school or to carry out study. Depending on their particular circumstances, Indigenous young people are at risk of exposure to additional stress factors such as accommodation difficulties or overcrowding, domestic neighbourhood or social conflicts, low levels of nutrition, high levels of temporary mobility, and such factors reduce a student's wellbeing and capacity or interest to attend school (Fordham & Schwab, 2007).

Experiences of racism and racial stereotyping, limited teacher expectations and lack of acknowledgement of the importance of Indigenous cultural values may all reduce an Indigenous young person's sense of belonging in a metropolitan, regional or remote school environment and lessen their confidence in their ability to succeed (Ainley et al., 2011; MCEECDYA, 2010). A major attitudinal study conducted by Australian Youth Affairs Coalition and Reconciliation Australia (AYAC & RC, 2012) reported Indigenous young people's concern about barriers to learning that resulted from racism and discrimination while conversely identifying "relationships and trust as primary factors in removing barriers" (Cuervo et al., 2015). In schools with a small presence of Indigenous students such as in many metropolitan or regional schools, barriers raised by social isolation and alienation were seen to damage access to learning and contribute to reduced levels of educational and training attainment connected to employment outcomes (Alford 2002, 2003).

Racism in mainstream schooling was seen to contribute to a sense of alienation rather than belonging for Indigenous young people, that reduced their motivation and access to completing schooling (Guillory, 2008; Castagno & Brayboy 2008). Adoption by schools of formal and ongoing processes to acknowledge and celebrate Indigenous identity and heritage were seen as necessary to increasing a sense of belonging, self-esteem and educational aspirations. (Guillory, 2008; Castagno & Brayboy 2008; Hare, 2011).

A difficulty in maintaining consistent quality teaching in primary and secondary schools, 'teacher churn' (Doyle & Hill, 2008) is used to describe a too-rapid cycle of changes in teaching staff. Combined with a lack of bilingual curriculum and in some cases, lack of relationship between school and Indigenous community, school engagement and retention can be low, which in turn reduces literacy and numeracy levels (Doyle & Hill, 2008).

At the same time as they face a variety of vocational learning challenges and barriers, Indigenous young people were seen to carry unique strengths. Recognition of their cultural identity and the accompanying strong sense of individual responsibility for community were seen to promote greater engagement and achievement in education and training by Indigenous young people (Dockery, 2013; Mission Australia, 2014). Recognition within the school environment of Indigenous language, traditional cultural practice and connection to country along with acknowledgement and celebration of Indigenous achievements were seen to increase self-confidence, self-esteem and vocational learning aspirations of Indigenous young people (Indigenous aspirations: Employment and educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth, Mission Australia, 2014).

A strong Indigenous presence in the school can impart a sense of belonging for indigenous students, validating Indigenous identity and supporting continuing engagement. The presence of Indigenous teachers, trainers and Indigenous teacher's aides and support staff in the school's professional cohort can provide students with positive validation of their Aboriginal identity and act as culturally sensitive

academic, linguistic and social supports (Spiers & Spiers, 2007). Learning an Indigenous language has been shown to be an important factor in improving social and academic outcomes for Indigenous students across metropolitan, regional and remote locations (Lonsdale, 2013).

High quality vocational learning assists students to articulate interests and develop skills and aptitudes that they will carry with them into career education and employment later in life. To “dream big” was seen as an essential component in a young person’s ability to have vocational ambitions and to achieve them (Mission Australia, 2014). The aspirations of young people and their academic self-concept are influenced by many external factors including socio-economic measures (Fordham & Schwab, 2007). Despite some improvements in measurements of wellbeing, key indicators show that gaps in Year 12 school completion, employment, literacy and numeracy standards and rates of disability, chronic disease, domestic violence and incarceration remain significantly high for Indigenous people (Helme & Lamb, 2011; SCRGSP, 2014). Embedding vocational learning and VET with foundation skills allows literacy and numeracy skills to be increased through linking them with an individual student’s interests and areas of self-confidence (Black & Yasukawa, 2011).

A learning focus built around student interests and aptitudes rather than a deficit approach that may concentrate on low levels of literacy for example, appears to increase engagement with vocational learning by Indigenous young people (Black & Yasukawa, 2011; National VET Equity Advisory Council, 2011). High quality VET programs provide participants with access to personal learning supports and learning approaches that help Indigenous young people to increase self-confidence and motivation to stay engaged with study. Mentoring and career counsellors, and early intervention programs that involve and connect to individual students and their families were described as important in continued engagement of Indigenous young people to pursue a chosen career pathway (Mission Australia, 2014; Polvere & Lim, 2015).

3.6 Real-world job pathways

“Furthermore, good career advice, guidance, planning and decision making cannot create job opportunities where there are none or prevent skills mismatch where opportunities are limited.”

(Polvere & Lim, 2015)

The quality of vocational learning accessed by Indigenous young people, the experiences they have in job seeking and in the workplace, an individual’s skills-base including literacy and numeracy proficiency levels, and relationships with family, Indigenous community and broader community all influence the choices they make regarding VET and (Mission Australia 2014, Wilks, Wilson et al., 2014).

Large numbers of the Indigenous working-age population across metropolitan, regional and remote locations attend some form of training. Results from the 2014-2015 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016) indicate that ‘the proportion of people in the Australian population with a non-school qualification has generally been increasing over time, and this trend is also reflected in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. In 2002, just over one-quarter (26%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over had a non-school qualification, increasing to 32% in 2008, and to 47% in 2014–15. While the proportions of people with a non-school qualification have increased in both non-remote and remote

areas between 2002 and 2014–15, the increases have been greater in non-remote areas (21 percentage points) than in remote areas' (17 percentage points) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016).

'The increase in attainment of a non-school qualification is largely due to an increase in the proportion of people who have completed a Certificate level qualification. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over who had completed a Certificate III or Certificate IV increased from 13% in 2008 to 23% in 2014–15, as did the proportion of those who had completed a Certificate I or Certificate II (from 6% to 11%) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). In remote areas, the proportion of people who had completed a Certificate level qualification almost doubled between 2008 and 2014–15, increasing from 14% to 27%, while the proportion in non-remote areas increased by a similar margin, from 23% to 36% over the same period' (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016).

A major national study of VET pointed to an apparent inequity evident in an over-representation of Indigenous young people in Certificate 1 and 11 courses, at the same time as an under-representation in higher level certificate and further education courses (National VET Equity Advisory Council, 2011). Although no clear causes or approaches to changing this pattern were suggested, the Council recommended that the issue required urgent research to identify positive action.

A number of studies identified a 'line of sight' to a job as an important motivation for Indigenous young people to choose to take part in VET (Helme, 2010; Urbis, 2011). Indigenous young people who enrol in certificate training were seen to be less concerned with 'accreditation' and gaining a qualification than with actually getting a job. (Fordham & Schwab, 2007). In assessing what motivates Indigenous young people to study, a direct link to real employment, that is, getting a job, figured much more highly than reasons connected to a plan for career or further study (Fordham & Schwab, 2007).

Preferred choice of job by Indigenous young people across metropolitan, regional and remote locations appeared to be linked not only to local employment opportunities but also to work with a focus on community life such as health, environment and community care (Fordham & Schwab, 2007; Polvere & Lim, 2015). While no detailed research into the causes or effects of this was found, taking part in this kind of employment was seen to be directly linked to community strengths and the maintenance by Indigenous young people of their cultural responsibilities (Fordham & Schwab, 2007). Successful participation in VET and development of related job skills was seen as not only benefiting the individual, but also as providing "important community benefits as well as economic benefits centred on the individual" (Polvere & Lim, 2015).

How successfully job opportunities are accessed is linked to an individual's formal VET qualifications as well as a range of other experience and skills that may be gained through vocational learning (Helme & Lamb 2011). The capacity to find and successfully apply for a job, whether in local metropolitan, regional or remote locations is linked to a range of skills, knowledge and attitudes including literacy and numeracy levels and familiarity and confidence with job seeking skills such as taking part in interviews, writing applications and form filling (Helme & Lamb, 2011).

Indigenous young people in metropolitan and regional locations face particular challenges that may arise in working or job seeking in the "mainstream" job market, linked to the attitudes of employers

and their influence on levels of personal confidence, sense of belonging or not-belonging (Biddle, 2010; Fordham & Schwab, 2007). High quality vocational learning and VET help students to address these challenges, assisting them to build confidence and self-esteem and bridge cultural gaps that may impede their progress towards gaining work skills and employment in chosen fields (Biddle, 2010).

High quality VET programs were seen to directly nurture individual aspirations that are essential to successful engagement with vocational education (Ainley et al., 2011). An individual focus and personal support were seen to provide a positive counterbalance to the problems of low self-esteem and lack of confidence, helping students to feel committed to a career pathway or plan. Direct support and personal attention can help Indigenous young people to aspire to employment, engage with training and, especially for first-time employees, stay in employment (Bodkin-Andrews, Harwood et al. 2013, Hawke 2015). Individual mentoring programs were identified as a valuable and effective way to help Indigenous young people to grow confidence in job-seeking skills such as communications skills, and nurture aspirations for career and education (Bodkin-Andrews et al., 2013; Hawke, 2015; Mission Australia, 2014).

A major role for secondary schools was identified in providing case management for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Antelier Learning Solutions, 2012; Bond, 2011; Mitchell, 2009). Individual case management may include coordinated and customised assistance from relevant supports such as school counsellors, mentors, Indigenous support staff, teachers, community contacts and careers advisors. Case management could provide one-on-one discussions with people who have industry experience, tertiary college or TAFE representatives, family members, career practitioners, and classroom trainers with sensitivity to issues and challenges faced by Indigenous young people in the job market (Helme & Lamb, 2011; Urbis, 2011). The benefits of well managed Individual Learning Plans and other formal processes to help individual students to identify skills, achievements and goals were connected to careful, individual case management (Department of Training and Workforce Development, 2014b).

While all young people face multiple job seeking challenges, additional challenges in regional, rural and remote areas include limited exposure to different careers, limited number of universities and VET institutions in their home towns and an imperative to move away from home to pursue tertiary study or to seek employment (Polvere & Lim, 2015). In remote and very remote communities where opportunities for employment are reduced by the lack of local industry the theme of 'real jobs' has particular resonance (Dusseldorp, 2009). Vocational learning and VET in remote areas has a particular imperative to focus on relevant links with local employment and local need. Potential training and employment links with community responsibilities such as caring for country may be made in health, arts, community care, land care, tourism, construction and related local service jobs (Fordham & Schwab, 2007; Polvere & Lim, 2015). In the case of very remote community locations, there may be no training and employment opportunities. A "stepping stone" or "orbital" transition is seen as an important support in remote communities, whereby Indigenous young people are supported to orbit in and out of their community to access education, vocational training, work placement and job opportunities in adjacent regional centres (Dusseldorp, 2009).

4. Research findings - strategies

“What works, with whom, and in what context...”

(Goodrick, et. al. 2012)

This section describes the strategies and processes put in place to support learning. Strategies to successfully engage and retain Indigenous young Australians in high quality vocational learning and VET will vary according to the context in which learning takes place and may be adopted at systemic, community or individual levels.

4.1 Flexibility

- Strategies to support flexibility in vocational learning and VET intersect with other stated themes and range from straightforward, single practical actions for individual students to whole of school or community approaches (Mitchell 2009, Antelior Learning Solutions 2012, Department of Training and Workforce Development 2014).
- Flexible course structures in vocational learning and VET: adjust daily timetables and training calendars to account for other community demands, including regular, seasonal, cyclical or one-off demands on students such as sporting commitments; family, community, cultural responsibilities and one-off community and family demands. Flexibility in work experience programs, work-based training to include part-time and casual work, holiday cadetships and structured volunteering (Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 2009; Helme & Lamb, 2011; Fredricks et al, 2015).
- Flexible pedagogical approaches in vocational learning and VET that allow for alternatives to standard western learning approaches such as allowing for group work and intensive focus/completion of appropriate subject tasks in a single coherent block (Oliver et al., 2012; Young et al., 2007; Mitchell, 2009; Fredricks et al, 2015).
- Flexible entry requirements for VET: taking into account attitudinal qualities rather than traditional aspects such as attendance, literacy and numeracy standards achieved. This could include demonstrated attitudes such as enthusiasm/high level of interest in the specific area of work; evidence of commitment or achievement in non-academic areas such as sport; community service; removing attendance history from assessment for suitability for VET which can exclude those who have had limited access to schooling (Department of Training and Workforce Development, 2014a).
- Flexible Assessment in VET: Finding alternatives to standard written assessment tasks wherever appropriate and possible. Not all learning needs to be assessed in writing and competency in many employment skills can be demonstrated in directly appropriate and practical ways, rather than in writing (Black & Yasukawa, 2011).

- Continuing review and adjustment of training strategies included in VET to meet the shifting needs of students, responding to evidence of student participation and achievement as well insight gained through evolving partnership relationships with families, communities and employer and industry contacts (Goodrick et al., 2012).

4.2 Two-way learning and whole of community

- Build and maintain trusted and respectful communication processes between local Indigenous communities and schools through informal meetings with families and communities and formal processes such as partnership agreements (What works, 2012; Fordham & Schwab, 2007; Cuervo et al., 2015; Department of Indigenous Education, 2011)
- Install systematic input from local Indigenous communities into whole of school professional development and review processes in cross cultural competency for all school personnel (Helme & Lamb, 2011; Dockery, 2013; Fredricks et al., 2015).
- Ensure whole-of-school participation in professional development in cross cultural competency including school principal, deputy principal, heads of department, curriculum and classroom teachers, trainers, teacher aides and all staff that have contact or decision making roles with students (Lonsdale, 2013; Purdie & Buckley, 2010; Fredricks et al., 2015).
- Ensure professional development in cross cultural competency (including input from local Indigenous communities) for local employer and industry groups, local community groups (Helme & Lamb, 2011; Dockery, 2013)
- Presence and active role for Indigenous staff in schools and in liaison with family, community and employer or industry contacts (Doyle & Hill, 2008).
- Support Indigenous community input into finding locally appropriate approaches to dealing with challenges such as attendance, for example, bus runs or attendance rewards (Dreise et al., 2016).

4.3 Aspiration, self-esteem, and belonging

- Active recognition and celebration by schools in metropolitan, regional and remote locations of Indigenous identity and facilitation of activities that focus on Indigenous cultural identity and pride. Active installation of anti-racism policies addressing discrimination at all levels in schools (Department of Indigenous Education, 2011; Dockery, 2013; Helme, 2010).
- Cross cultural professional development training in metropolitan, regional and remote locations for non-Indigenous education staff and local employers involved with provision of vocational learning and VET to reduce discriminatory or prejudicial learning expectations and teaching practice (Helme & Lamb, 2011; Dockery, 2013).

- Active and visible participation by Indigenous staff and Indigenous community members in metropolitan, regional and remote schools (Purdie & Buckley, 2010; Dockery, 2013).
- Individual student access to and ongoing support from Indigenous mentors and role models (Harwood et al., 2013). Include individual student career plans such as Managed Individual Pathways (MIPS) for students available from year 7 to 12, including students at risk (Kilpatrick, Le, Johns, Millar, & Routley, 2007).
- Strength based learning approaches that support individual students to identify personal skills and interests and the links with vocational learning, including embedding vocational learning and VET with broader curricula including literacy and numeracy (Black & Yasukawa 2011; Harding, 2008; National VET Equity Advisory Council, 2011).

4.4 Real-world job pathways

- Tailored and varied vocational learning supports including provision of career counsellors, early intervention programs, individual one-on-one focus linked to experiential learning (Dusseldorp 2008; Harding, 2008; Polvere & Lim, 2015; Urbis, 2011).
- VET support for individual learning styles allowing access to a range of individual learning supports including individual mentoring, tutoring, tailored individual learning plans, flexible transitions into work that better accommodate Indigenous young people's needs (Dusseldorp 2008; Mission Australia 2014; Polvere & Lim, 2015; Urbis, 2011).
- Support and training in work readiness skills including capacity to work within a more competitive work environment (Forde & Schwab, 2007).
- Provision of vocational learning and VET that link to geographically accessible, realistic job opportunities (Helme, 2010; Mission Australia, 2014).
- VET connections to industry including active promotion to business communities of the high quality of Indigenous school, TAFE and higher education graduates (Chamberlain, Kruger et al., 2009; Forde & Schwab, 2007).
- Collection and analysis of longitudinal qualitative data, together with quantitative retention data to inform vocational learning and VET planning and delivery (Harding, 2008; Purdie & Buckley, 2010).

5. Research findings - good practice examples

While many anecdotal and descriptive reports of vocational learning and VET programs for Indigenous young people were found in the literature review carried out for this report, few reports provided data from longitudinal studies or rigorous qualitative and quantitative evaluation.

Nevertheless, positive reports of vocational learning and VET programs for Indigenous young people were found that aligned with the themes and strategies identified in this report, which can be seen as demonstrating good practice.

5.1 Successful strategies and programs that increase retention rates in high-quality vocational learning

The following strategies and programs have been successful in increasing retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in high-quality vocational learning.

Weenthunga Girls Resilience Project

The Weenthunga 'Building Resilience in First Australian School Girls and Encouraging Interest in Health Careers' pilot project (the 'Girls Resilience Project') in Bendigo, Victoria, aims to increase the number of Indigenous young women pursuing a career in health and improve knowledge, competencies and collaboration of the Victorian health workforce to provide culturally sensitive services for Indigenous Australians.

The program has a focus on building supportive relationships with Indigenous young women and their families (mothers, aunties and carers) and encourages learning about post-secondary education possibilities within a broad range of health careers. Connections are built between local schools, TAFE, university, local Indigenous community groups, Aboriginal Community Controlled health services and mainstream health services.

The program is being grown gradually, with high levels of community input. Ongoing process evaluation has been carried out and provides direct feedback into program development. The program has begun in Bendigo with plans to extend to Ballarat, Geelong and Bairnsdale. The project employs a part-time health and educational consultant who builds relationships with Indigenous young women and their families, schools and relevant networks.

The Girls Resilience activities aim to support vocational learning for Indigenous young women in years 9-12 in a variety of secondary schools and included

- Practical individual support to arrange references, work experience opportunities, assistance to apply for scholarships and applications to further education

- Support to hold community gatherings that allowed Indigenous young women to connect with Indigenous role models and traditional custom such as storytelling
- Training to increase competency of local education and health professionals to provide vocational learning opportunities for Indigenous young women.

While quantitative evaluation of overall program outcomes, including school retention rates, has not been carried out, qualitative evaluation (Weenthunga Health Network, 2015) revealed that Indigenous young women who participated:

- Felt valued and supported in their individual aspirations for a health career
- Were inspired by, the stories of strong Aboriginal women and their journeys into the health profession
- Had a stronger sense of their Aboriginal identity and expressed an increase in self- confidence. There was a noticeable change in the girl's attitudes, pride in being First Australian women, inspired, confident, calmer, focused and purposeful
- Increased their knowledge of the pathways to a health career and of what they need to do and how to go about achieving their aspirations for a health career
- Gained a greater understanding of the unique roles and contributions that they can make as First Australian women in the health profession
- Expressed an attitude of 'I can do it', they feel positive, confident and strong and see themselves as role models within their community and take up leadership roles
- Are aware of and taking up opportunities they are stepping up and they have established positive supportive relationships with peers and are on the journey together.

The evaluation of the project is available at:

http://www.weenthunga.com.au/news/view_article.cfm?loadref=6&id=1080

V Tracks, North Coast, NSW

V Tracks is a staged vocational learning program developed by North Coast TAFE with input from schools. Stated objectives of V Tracks are increased high school completions and post-school pathways for Indigenous young people via increased the visibility and availability of VET to Years 8 to 10 school students.

V Tracks programs help students to:

- Explore and experience different vocational areas
- Identify transition pathways into further education, employment and training

- Have individual learning plans that add to or complement existing school programs and activities
- Work with Aboriginal mentors, role models, case managers, school tutors, Aboriginal Education Officers, Aboriginal Education Workers and community members
- Experience cross cultural orientation of programs through more equal and diverse learning contexts and strategies, including engagement and interaction with Aboriginal role models and traditional and contemporary Aboriginal culture
- Prepare for and/or engage in work placement.

V Tracks Stage One involves non-accredited 'taster' activities from every vocational learning area in North Coast TAFE, including an open 'Expo' day. There is a strong presence of local Indigenous community including Elders, parents and TAFE Aboriginal Student Support. Students take part in hands-on vocational workshops and discussions of education, training and employment pathways.

Stage Two includes accredited certificate I and II units from particular vocational areas and also key learning, communication and employability competencies. Theoretical learning is introduced gradually, for example, in short cycles within teaching sessions, so that students are highly supported and guided to make a transition into 'adult' vocational learning. From this stage, learners also have an opportunity to articulate into certificate I and II courses, Stage 5 (Year 10 early commencement) or Stage 6 (Years 11 and 12) VET conducted at a TAFE institute (TVET).

Stage Three encourages highly supported workplace-based learning, matched to the industry areas explored by students in Stage Two. This might include simulated workplace experience, industry visits and introduction to work experience or work readiness programs designed by TAFE staff in consultation with the students, V Tracks steering committees and schools.

The V Tracks programs are linked to the 'Deadly Days' festivals held at three North Coast TAFE campuses to provide students with opportunities to consolidate and showcase their learning throughout the year and also explore further education, training and employment opportunities.

Evaluation of the program carried out in 2008 identified positive results from the program (Harding, 2008) as including:

- Students could more confidently describe employment aspirations and confidence in seeking work, future career options, and links between what they were learning during V Tracks, school and the world of work
- A significant proportion (64%) of students agreed that V Tracks had encouraged them to attend school more regularly, often to ensure they didn't miss out on any news or risk being excluded from the activities. They also reported increased variety in their day-to-day schooling, while school staff described an ability to use the program to retain current 'at risk' students and re-engage students who hadn't been in school for some time

- Seventy-three per cent of students agreed that V Tracks had encouraged them to stay longer at school, for example, from Year 9 into Year 10, or from Year 10 into Years 11 and 12
- School staff identified Work Education electives, School to Work and Personal Learning Plans as an ideal vehicle to have conversations with students before, during and after programs such as V Tracks, and across year levels, for example, from Year 8 to Year 11.

More information available at:

www.northcoasttafe.edu.au/student-support/student-services/aboriginal-education.aspx

Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience

Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) (Bodkin-Andrews et al., 2013; Harwood et al., 2013; KPMG, 2013; O'Shea, Harwood, Kervin, & Humphry, 2013) provides a 6-year mentoring program for Indigenous students while they are undertaking high school studies from Years 7 to 12.

An important feature of the AIME program is partnering of university student volunteers in a one-on-one mentoring relationship with a high school Indigenous student, for one hour a week over the course of a 17-week program. AIME's goals are to improve Year 10 and Year 12 completion rates and university admission rates for all participating students. It allows for individualised student support and assistance to students and supports increase in career aspiration, levels of self-esteem and belonging. It assists in identification and broadening of career pathways linked to individual aptitudes and interests.

AIME outcome data for 2009 indicated:

- Year 10 to Year 11 progression rate was 81% for AIME participants, compared with the New South Wales rate of 59% for all Indigenous students
- Year 11 to Year 12 progression rate was 92% for AIME participants, compared with the New South Wales rate of 63% for all Indigenous students
- Year 12 completion rate was 73% for AIME participants, compared with the New South Wales rate of 60% for all Indigenous students
- University admission rates for AIME participants were 11 times the national average.

Evaluation of the AIME Outreach Program is available at:

<http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1223&context=ahsri>

5.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students undertaking and successfully completing a school-based VET course

Clontarf Aboriginal College

Clontarf Aboriginal College is a co-educational Catholic school located on the Whadjup Nyoongar Boodjar site in Waterford, Western Australia for Years 7 – 12 students. The college has been offering Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools programs since 2007 to assist Indigenous young people in attainment of a nationally recognised qualification.

In 2013 Clontarf Aboriginal College had a Certificate 2 or higher completion rate of 67% for Year 12 students. Clontarf Aboriginal College was State winner of the Schools First Impact Award for their Ertech Civil Construction specialist industry program in 2011 (Department of Training and Workforce Development, 2014a).

Clontarf students are from metropolitan, regional and remote locations and many have had limited regular schooling and speak one or more Aboriginal languages. The college focuses on spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional and social development as well as cultural renewal. VET in Schools programs play a major role in this plan. In addition to VET and other vocational learning students undertake studies in English (as a second dialect), Literacy, Mathematics, Religion and Cultural Awareness, and Sporting Academy (two periods).

The college builds strong relationships between school and students' families, including families of students from remote locations and there is a focus on finding local employment wherever possible, for students from remote locations. Clontarf College involves the support and resources of the whole community and uses a collaborative approach to manage and build partnerships with communities. An emphasis is placed on celebrating student achievements together.

Clontarf applies a flexible and supportive approach to assessing student suitability for enrolling and students are provided with individual mentoring, counselling and career support to suit their particular needs and preferences.

The college fosters a close relationship with industry training councils to ensure up to date and accurate information about industrial issues, skills shortages and current employment trends and links are made with employers that demonstrate a solid commitment to and genuine understanding of Aboriginal student needs.

More information at:

<http://web.clontarf.wa.edu.au/>

Townsville Flexible Learning Centre

Established in 2006, Townsville Flexible Learning Centre (TFLC) is a co-educational Catholic program located approximately three kilometres from the Townsville city centre and is one of 14 sites operated through clusters and networks as an initiative of Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) (Bottrell et al., 2014). In 2013 there were 120 students enrolled including male and female students who came from backgrounds that included significant levels of socio-economic disadvantage. Approximately fifty per cent of students were Indigenous young people.

Year 11-12 students undertake nationally accredited VET Certificate I-II courses while they carry out study towards the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE). There is a broad range of electives and project-based learning course that students may choose including Flexi-Farm, Music, Cultural Activities, Dance, Mindfulness, Parenting, Cooking, Barista, Art, Film and Photography, Sport, Gym, Skate Park, Outdoor Education, Fishing, Kayaking, Woodwork, Fibre-glassing and Plastics. All students are encouraged to engage in camps, outdoor activities and work experience where appropriate.

The school uses a holistic educational focus combining literacy and numeracy studies with relevant life skills and experiences aimed at increasing confidence and enjoyment of satisfying and responsible citizenship.

All students are assisted to construct a Personal Learning Plan that relates to their life experience and students' learning and wellbeing are supported through pastoral care, community groups, chaplaincy and inter-agency work. Staff act as mentors and advocates, providing guidance and resources to support students to recognise their potential, achieve their goals, and acquire an optimistic view of their future.

For more information:

www.youthplus.edu.au/schools-services-details/xavier-schools-network/flexible-learning-centre-townsville/townsville-flexible-learning-centre.html

Geraldton Senior College

Geraldton Senior College in Western Australia provides school-based VET options, including school-based traineeships, school-based apprenticeships, and Aboriginal school-based traineeships (Department of Training and Workforce Development, 2014b).

Students attend three days a week at school and two days a week at Durack Institute of Technology or on work placement. Areas of vocational study include automotive, building and construction, food industry, metals and engineering, and electro-technology.

Parental involvement is actively encouraged through the year 10 subject selection process, a formal VET parent information evening, and involvement in the traineeship induction and sign-up process. Potential trainees must meet a number of performance criteria in order to be eligible for the program, including having demonstrated career goals and interest in the industry. There are numerous sources of mentoring and pastoral support in place, including a school-based traineeship coordinator, an Aboriginal school-based traineeship coordinator, an Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer and an Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer. There is a strong emphasis in all programs upon a high

percentage (70 and above) of on the job training, which gives students a strong foundation for entering into further training or employment post school.

For more information:

<http://www.gsc.wa.edu.au/>

5.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' access to quality VET courses

AFL Sportsready

AFL Sportsready is a national, independent, not for profit RTO that provides employment based training, including school-based apprenticeships and traineeships. The majority of AFL Sportsready school-based trainees are Indigenous young people living in metropolitan and regional locations. Training is offered in a broad range of fields, including finance, banking, horticulture and hospitality.

AFL Sportsready claims a high level of program completion, with many trainees transitioning to full time employment with their host organisation. Program features include:

- Supporting strong relationships with schools, particularly the Aboriginal Education Liaison Officers and VET Coordinators
- Promotion of regular communication with all stakeholders including parents, school principals, VET Coordinators, and employers
- Active parental involvement in providing Indigenous cultural perspectives for learning
- Customised training plans to suit individual learner needs and complement workplace and school learning needs
- Dedicated mentor support including Indigenous mentors
- Careful screening of employers to ensure safe and appropriate workplaces
- Commitment to students' broader career development including study ranging from Certificate 1 through to Diploma level qualifications.

AFL indicates that to date, 1,300 Indigenous trainees have successfully completed their training programs. In 2014-2015, 122 Indigenous people graduated from AFL Sportsready VET training and in April 2015 AFL SportsReady had over 250 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander trainees employed with host employers across Australia (AFL Sports Ready, 2015).

For more information:

www.aflsportsready.com.au/indigenous

Central Land Council Community Ranger Program

The Northern Territory Central Land Council Community Ranger Program has supported employment of more than 90 Aboriginal people, including young people, who are employed by the Central Land Council (CLC) as rangers on their country (Central Land Council, 2015). The CLC ranger program supports traditional owners to sustainably manage and protect the cultural and natural values of their country.

Funding provided by the federal government's Working on Country program (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet) and Real Jobs program (Indigenous Land Corporation) enabled the establishment and growth of 11 ranger groups across Central Australia. Additional funding for operational capital support for the CLC Ranger program is provided by the Aboriginal Benefit Account (ABA).

The CLC ranger program is made up of 11 groups:

- North Tanami Rangers (based at Lajamanu in the northern Tanami),
- Warlpiri Rangers (based at Yuendumu, Nyirripi and Willowra communities in the southern Tanami),
- Kaltukatjara Rangers (based at Docker River),
- Tjuwanpa Rangers (based at Ntaria – Hermannsburg),
- Muru-warinyi Ankkul Rangers (based at Tennant Creek),
- Anmatyerr Rangers (based at Ti-Tree),
- Ltyentye Apurte Rangers (based at Santa Teresa),
- Anangu Luritjiku Rangers (based at Papunya),
- Munkurrumurnkurru Rangers (based at Daguragu).
- Arltarpilta Inelye Rangers (based at Atitjere – Harts Range)
- Angas Downs Rangers (based at Imanpa and Angas Downs IPA).

The program focuses on building skills and knowledge amongst participants to enable them to actively manage the cultural and biodiversity assets on Aboriginal lands across the region and build skills and qualifications to engage in other potential employment opportunities related to environmental services delivery.

The CLC has a dedicated Ranger Training Officer employed to ensure that each ranger receives accredited training in a wide range of core skills (including 4WD and quad bike training, First Aid, chainsaw operation, and safe chemical handling), and in other specialist skills areas (e.g. welding, multi-media training, fire management and heavy machinery operation). All rangers are also enrolled in

Certificate II (or higher) courses in Conservation and Land Management and participate in literacy and numeracy training, and other certificate training as appropriate, such as First Aid, to increase their baseline knowledge.

There are two Ranger mentors employed within the CLC Ranger program to assist rangers to make the transition to a permanent job, helping with such things as setting up banking and debt management arrangements, work readiness and performance management, and organising support to resolve any personal issues that may affect attendance or performance at work. Senior traditional owners have a mentoring role transferring Indigenous ecological knowledge to the younger rangers.

Central Land Council reports that the broad range of social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits delivered by Indigenous ranger programs are increasingly acknowledged by government, research institutions and within Aboriginal communities themselves, generating growing demand on the CLC to support new programs in other communities across the region (CLC Ranger Program Report 2014-2015).

The CLC Ranger program is reported to have a high level of community support, participation and ownership. Training and certification in ranger skills has been identified by CLC as contributing to increased individual confidence and self-esteem amongst newly qualified rangers.

Some CLC ranger groups are engaging in fee-for-service work on National Parks through the Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife's Joint Management program and with mining companies where rangers undertake short term contract-based work to rehabilitate areas that have been mined. These opportunities allow rangers to develop skills needed to be competitive in any potential commercial work that may arise in the future.

In 2015 twelve rangers from six of the groups in Certificate II and six rangers from three groups graduate in Certificate III in Conservation Land Management.

For more information:

www.clc.org.au/articles/cat/aboriginal-employment/

6. Conclusion

While all young people have vocational learning needs, Indigenous young people in metropolitan, regional and remote locations face particular challenges and barriers to completion of secondary studies and engagement in vocational learning and VET (Polvere & Lim, 2015). These challenges and barriers are linked to a complex variety of factors that vary from place to place and situation to situation. At the same time, Indigenous young people have personal and community strengths that can support their successful participation in vocational learning and VET and manage a variety of challenges linked to socio-economic status and levels of disadvantage, racism and discrimination, and in the case of remote locations, lack of local industry, commerce and associated employment (Cuervo et al., 2015).

Low levels of literacy and numeracy, lack of positive acknowledgment of Indigenous identity and a range of socio-economic factors linked to disadvantage contribute to challenges and barriers to completion of secondary school and further education (Mission Australia, 2014; Helme and Lamb, 2011).

Evidence suggests that while Indigenous parents place a high value on literacy and numeracy, a lack of “sense of belonging” is often felt by Indigenous young people when attempting to study in learning environments based in western pedagogical models (Cuervo et al., 2015). Related low self-esteem, low personal academic expectations and low expectation from teachers and trainers, impede engagement by many Indigenous young people in school learning, including vocational learning and VET (Bodkin-Andrews, Harwood, McMahon, & Priestly, 2013; Department of Indigenous Education, 2016; Department of Training and Workforce Development, 2014a; Macgregor, Mann-Yasso, Wallace, Savage, & Signal, 2015).

In remote regions, these challenges are further compounded, thus further limiting the access of Indigenous young people to high quality vocational learning and VET. For example, geographic isolation contributes to difficulty in attracting highly skilled and experienced teachers and trainers, inconsistent provision of training due to “teacher churn”, unmet needs for bi-lingual and culturally sensitive schooling, and limited local employment opportunities (Biddle, 2010).

Some reports suggest the importance of including vocational learning activities from primary school age to help students identify and value personal interests, aptitudes and aspirations regarding work and career. There is some qualitative evidence to show that strength based approaches to embedding foundation skills in VET training can increase literacy and numeracy skills as well as levels of self-confidence for VET students (Black & Yasukawa, 2011). An apparent strength for many Indigenous young people is a shared attitude that links the value of employment with its value to one’s community. This provides a potentially powerful link to employment opportunities and incentive to undertake further study, in such areas as health, human care or environment.

Much small-scale, descriptive and anecdotal documentation of vocational learning and VET programs around Australia is available that can provide insight into aspects of quality vocational learning and VET, however it is widely agreed that the development of more large-scale, rigorous and longitudinal research is needed to inform policy (Purdie & Buckley, 2010).

There was consistent argument in the literature for a process of genuine 'two-way learning' leading to structured and ongoing input from Indigenous communities into all aspects of schooling for Indigenous young people, particular to local need and circumstances. A 'whole of school' and 'whole of community' approach was seen as essential to building learning processes that successfully engage Indigenous young people in vocational learning and completion of VET (Wallace, Manado, Agar, & Curry, 2009). A flexibility in many aspects of how vocational learning and VET are accessed, delivered and assessed was seen as a necessary component in engaging Indigenous young people (Cuervo et al., 2015; Department of Indigenous Education, 2011)

A holistic understanding by schools, training organisations and employers, of the particular personal, family, community and cultural assets of each young person's situation was seen as an essential basis for the provision of successful vocational learning and high quality VET (Cuervo et al., 2015; Young et al., 2007).

Examples of good practice in vocational learning and VET that support Indigenous young people were found to be operating in metropolitan, regional and remote locations across Australia. Good practice in vocational learning and VET for Indigenous young people aligns with the themes identified in this study, accounting for context, flexibility, two-way learning and links to real job opportunities. Good practice vocational learning and VET programs increase the self-esteem, sense of belonging and employment aspirations of Indigenous young people in processes that actively acknowledge and celebrate Indigenous identity.

References

- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2016). National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey 2014-15. Canberra, ACT Retrieved from <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/4714.0~2014-15~Main%20Features~Education~5>.
- Abbott-Chapman, J. (2011). Making the most of the mosaic: Facilitating post-school transitions to higher education of disadvantaged students. *Australian Educational Researcher*, 38(1), 57-71. doi: 10.1007/s13384-010-0001-9
- AFL Sports Ready. (2015). AFL Sports Ready Reconciliation Action Plan 2015-2017. Melbourne, VIC, Retrieved from: http://www.aflsportsready.com.au/images/news_items/AFL_SR_2015_RAP_SP_V7.pdf
- Ainley, J., Buckley, S., Beavis, A., Rothman, S., & Tovey, A. (2011). Analysis of Year 12 or Certificate II attainment of Indigenous young people—Stage 1: A report prepared for the Council of Australian Governments Reform Council (pp. 7). Melbourne, VIC: Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Anderson, S. (2009a). Learning respect : a case study of Indigenous community engagement in VET at Wugularr. *Learning Communities : International Journal of Learning Social Context*(1), 36-61.
- Anderson, S. (2009b). Linking Flexible Delivery and Community Development: The Wugularr Story. Occasional Paper. Adelaide, SA: National Centre for Vocational Education Research.
- Antelier Learning Solutions. (2012). *Final report on the evaluation of the youth connections specialised services program*. Canberra, ACT: Retrieved from https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/youth_connections_specialised_services_report.pdf.
- AYAC & RC. (2012). A Yarn About Youth Report Canberra, ACT: Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC) & Reconciliation Australia (RC).
- Biddle, N. (2010). A human capital approach to the educational marginalisation of Indigenous Australians: Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University Canberra.
- Black, S., & Yasukawa, K. (2011). *Beyond deficit approaches to teaching and learning: Literacy and numeracy in VET courses*. Paper presented at the Paper präsentiert an der 14th Annual Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association (AVETRA) Conference, Melbourne.
- Bodkin-Andrews, G., Harwood, V., McMahon, S., & Priestly, A. (2013) Aim(E) for completing school and university: Analysing the strength of the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience. *Vol. 14. Diversity in Higher Education* (pp. 113-134).
- Bond, S. (2011). Overcoming barriers to education: Peninsula Youth Connections evaluation: stage 1 summary report. Fitzroy, VIC: Brotherhood of St. Laurence.
- Bottrell, D., te Riele, K., & Plows, V. (2014). Townsville Flexible Learning Centre : case study. Melbourne: Victoria Institute for Education, Diversity and Lifelong Learning.
- Briggs, C. E., & England, U. o. N. (2007). A case study of factors influencing the retention of Aboriginal students in years 11 and 12 in two rural high schools in the New England Region. Armidale NSW: Armidale NSW: University of New England, 2007. University of New England.
- Broadbent, R., & Cacciattolo, M. (2013). The role of school community partnerships in building successful transition pathways for young people: one school's approach. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 40(1), 109-123.
- Castagno, A. E., & Brayboy, B. M. J. (2008). Culturally responsive schooling for Indigenous youth: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(4), 941-993.
- Central Land Council. (2015). CLC ranger program report: Supplement to the CLC annual report. Retrieved from NT: <http://www.clc.org.au/files/pdf/2014-15-CLC-Ranger-Report-Web.pdf>
- Connelly, G., Blair, G., & Ko, A. (2013). It's Their Future: A Pan-Canadian Study of Career Education: Learning Partnership.

- Cuervo, H., Barakat, N., & Turnbull, M. (2015). Youth, belonging and transitions: Identifying opportunities and barriers for indigenous young people in remote communities: Research report 44). Melbourne, Australia: University of Melbourne Youth Research Centre.
- Dandolo Partners. (2014). *Evaluation of the national partnership on youth attainment and transitions*. Melbourne, Victoria: Australian Government Department of Education and Training Retrieved from <https://docs.education.gov.au/node/35457>
- DEEWR. (2007). What works. The work program. Core issues 7. Indigenous Education: International Perspectives. Melbourne, VIC Retrieved from http://www.whatworks.edu.au/upload/1311202790052_file_CoreIssues7.pdf.
- DEEWR. (2012). What Works. The Work Program. Success in remote schools: a research study of eleven improving remote schools. Melbourne, VIC Retrieved from http://www.whatworks.edu.au/upload/1341805220784_file_SuccessinRemoteSchools2012.pdf.
- Deloitte Access Economics. (2012). *Youth transitions evidence base: 2012 update*. Sydney, NSW: Retrieved from <https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/youthtransitionsevidencebase19nov2012.pdf>.
- Department of Indigenous Education. (2011). *Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into Schools: A guide for school learning communities*. Brisbane, QLD: Queensland Department of Indigenous Education Retrieved from http://indigenous.education.qld.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/eatsips-docs/eatsips_2011.pdf.
- Department of Indigenous Education (Writer). (2016). Deadly science VET program video. Brisbane, QLD: Queensland Government Department of Indigenous Education.
- Department of Training and Workforce Development. (2014a). *VET in Schools good practice models: Clontarf Aboriginal College*. Perth, WA: Western Australia Department of Training and Workforce Development Retrieved from <http://vetinonet.dtwd.wa.gov.au/VETinschools/Documents/5.2.2ClontarfAboriginalCollege-GPMpublication.PDF>.
- Department of Training and Workforce Development. (2014b). School-based apprenticeships and traineeships: A good practice guide. Perth, WA: Western Australian Department of Training and Workforce Development Retrieved from https://www.google.com.au/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjDtrGswu3MAhUONpQKHQutB6lQFggBMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fvetinonet.dtwd.wa.gov.au%2FResourcesandlinks%2FDocuments%2FPublications2014%2FSBA_SBT_Good%2520practice%2520guide_2014_V4_web.pdf&usq=AFQjCNH_pBZN_poZWc6yQow8DoSARKwg6w&sig2=CHi2NQi2g5e8kktqRZ6SIg.
- Dockery, A. M. (2013). *Cultural dimensions of Indigenous participation in vocational education and training: New perspectives: Research report*. Adelaide, South Australia: National Centre for Vocational Education Research.
- Doyle, L., & Hill, R. (2008). Our children, our future : achieving improved primary and secondary education outcomes for Indigenous students : an overview of investment opportunities and approaches. Sydney, NSW: AMP Foundation; Effective Philanthropy; Social Ventures Australia.
- Dreise, T., Milgate, G., Perrett, B., & Meston, T. (2016). Indigenous school attendance: Creating expectations that are 'really high'and 'highly real'. Melbourne, Victoria: Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Dusseldorp Skills Forum. (2009). Keeping up: Strengthening transitions from education into work for Indigenous young people. Sydney, NSW: Dusseldorp Skills Forum.
- Education Council. (2015). *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015* Melbourne, VIC: Education Council Retrieved from http://www.scseec.edu.au/site/DefaultSite/filesystem/documents/ATSI%20documents/DEC_D_NATSI_EducationStrategy.pdf.
- Fredericks, B., Kinnear, S., Daniels, C., CroftWarcon, P., & Mann, J. (2015). Path+Ways: Towards best practice bridging and Indigenous participation through regional dual-sector universities: Report. Perth: National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE), Curtin University.

- Goodrick, D., Allen, J., Trafford, E. d., Dobson, J., Hart, T., McLachlan, T., . . . Sayers, C. (2012). *Positive pathways for young people in remote communities: What works?* Canberra, ACT: Retrieved from https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/report_positive_pathways_for_young_people_in_remote_communities_what_works_july_2012.docx.
- Guillory, R. M., & Wolverton, M. (2008). It's about Family: Native American Student Persistence in Higher Education. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 79(1), 58-87.
- Harding, R. (2009). Early Vocational Education and Training Programs for Young Aboriginal Learners: Perceptions of Practitioners and Young People. Occasional Paper. National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).
- Harwood, V., O'Shea, S., Clapham, K., Wright, J., Kervin, L., Humphry, N., Bodkin-Andrews, G. (2013). Final Report: Evaluation of the AIME Outreach Program. Wollongong, NSW: University of Wollongong.
- Hare, J., & Pidgeon, M. (2011). The Way of the Warrior: Indigenous Youth Navigating the Challenges of Schooling. *Canadian Journal of Education / Revue canadienne de education*, 34(2), 93-111.
- Hawke, P. (2015). Towards Increasing Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's Experiences of Work Through Employment Services Focused Mentoring: An Urban Case Study: Australian Policy Online.
- Helme, S. (2010). Career decision-making: what matters to indigenous Australians? *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 19(3), 67-74.
- Helme, S., & Lamb, S. (2011). Closing the school completion gap for Indigenous students *Closing the Gap Clearinghouse*. 2011: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.
- Hoffman, N. (2011). Keeping Youths in School: An International Perspective. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 92(5), 8-13.
- Hunter, B. H. (2010). Pathways for Indigenous School Leavers to Undertake Training or Gain Employment. Resource Sheet No. 2. *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare*.
- Kilpatrick, S., Le, Q., Johns, S., Millar, P., & Routley, G. (2007). Responding to Health Skills Shortages: Innovative Directions from Vocational Education and Training. Support Document. Adelaide, South Australia: National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).
- KPMG. (2013). Economic evaluation of the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience Program. Sydney, NSW: KPMG.
- Lonsdale, M. (2013). *Making a difference: Improving outcomes for Indigenous learners*. Melbourne, VIC: Australian Council for Education Research.
- LSIC. (2015). *Footprints in Time: the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children Report from Wave 5: Keeping children at school*. Melbourne, VIC: Department of Social Services,.
- Macgregor, C., Mann-Yasso, M., Wallace, S., Savage, S.-K., & Signal, T. (2015). Indigenous Youth Sports Program - Widening participation for higher education. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 17(1), 86-102. doi: 10.5456/wpll.17.1.86
- MCEECDYA. (2010). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014. Canberra, ACT: Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA),.
- Mission Australia. (2014). Indigenous aspirations: Employment and educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth. Sydney, NSW: Mission Australia,.
- Mitchell, J. (2009). *Enterprising response to disadvantage: Kempsey High School*. Sydney, NSW: NSW Department of Education and Training, Retrieved from https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/vetinschools/documents/rs1a/kempsey_case_study_03.pdf
- Myconos, G. (2011). A path to re-engagement: Evaluating the first year of a community VCAL education program for young people. Fitzroy, Victoria: Brotherhood of St Laurence.
- National VET equity Advisory Council. (2011). Equity blueprint 2011 - 2016: Creating futures: Achieving potential through VET. Canberra, ACT: National VET equity Advisory Council.
- Nelson, A., & Hay, P. J. (2010). "I Don't Want to Grow Up and Not be Smart": Urban Indigenous Young People's Perceptions of School. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 39(01), 54-64.
- O'Shea, S., Harwood, V., Kervin, L., & Humphry, N. (2013). Connection, Challenge, and Change: The Narratives of University Students Mentoring Young Indigenous Australians. *Mentoring and Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 21(4), 392-411. doi: 10.1080/13611267.2013.855863

- Oliver, R., Grote, E., Rochecouste, J., & Exell, M. (2012). Addressing the language and literacy needs of aboriginal high school VET students who speak SAE as an additional language. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 41(2), 229-239. doi: 10.1017/jie.2012.23
- Polvere, R.-A., & Lim, P. (2015). Career development supporting young Australians: a literature review. Melbourne, VIC: Brotherhood of St Laurence.
- Price, M., & Dalglish, J. (2013). Help-seeking among indigenous Australian adolescents: Exploring attitudes, behaviours and barriers. *Youth Studies Australia*, 32(1), 10-18.
- Purdie, N., & Buckley, S. (2010). School attendance and retention of Indigenous Australian students, issues paper no. 1 produced for the Closing the Gap Clearing House. Canberra, ACT: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.
- Rigney, L. (2011). Indigenous education and tomorrow's classroom: three questions, three answers. In N. Purdie, G. Milgate & H. R. Bell (Eds.), *Two way teaching and learning: Toward culturally reflective and relevant education* (1 ed., pp. 34-47). Melbourne, VIC: Camberwell: ACER Press.
- SCRGSP. (2014). Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2014. Canberra, ACT: Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, Productivity Commission,.
- Spiers, H., & Spiers, M. (2007). Northern Territory adult literacy and numeracy best practice: Innovative practice. Darwin, NT: Northern Territory Council of Adult Literacy.
- Te Riele, K. (2009). *Making schools different : alternative approaches to educating young people*. Los Angeles Calif.: Los Angeles Calif.: Sage Publications, 2009. Sage Publications.
- Te Riele, K. (2014). Putting the jigsaw together: Flexible learning programs in Australia: Final report Melbourne, VIC: The Victoria Institute for Education, Diversity and Lifelong Learning.
- Urbis. (2011). National Career Development Strategy (NCDS) research project element 2: synthesis report. Sydney, NSW: URBIS.
- Wallace, R., Manado, M., Agar, R., & Curry, C. (2009). Working from our strengths : Indigenous community engagement through enterprise development and training. *Learning Communities : International Journal of Learning Social Context*(1), 104-122.
- Weenthunga Health Network. (2015). Weenthunga Girls Resilience Program: Weenthunga Health Network: Evaluation Report. Retrieved from Melbourne, VIC: http://www.weenthunga.com.au/_uploads/fckpg/files/160303%20WGRP%20Evaluation%20Report.pdf
- Wilks, J., Wilson, K., Hughes, T., Thomas, S., & Kinnane, S. (2014). Can't be what you can't see': The transition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students into higher education: Literature Review. Sydney, NSW: Office for Learning and Teaching, Department of Education.
- Young, M., Guenther, J., & Boyle, A. (2007). *Growing the Desert: Educational Pathways for Remote Indigenous People. A National Vocational Education and Training Research and Evaluation Program Report*: ERIC.



Level 1, 93 Norton Street

Leichhardt, NSW 2040

Tel: +61 2 8585 1353

Fax: +61 2 8585 1325