



INDIGENOUS  
EDUCATION  
& BOARDING  
AUSTRALIA

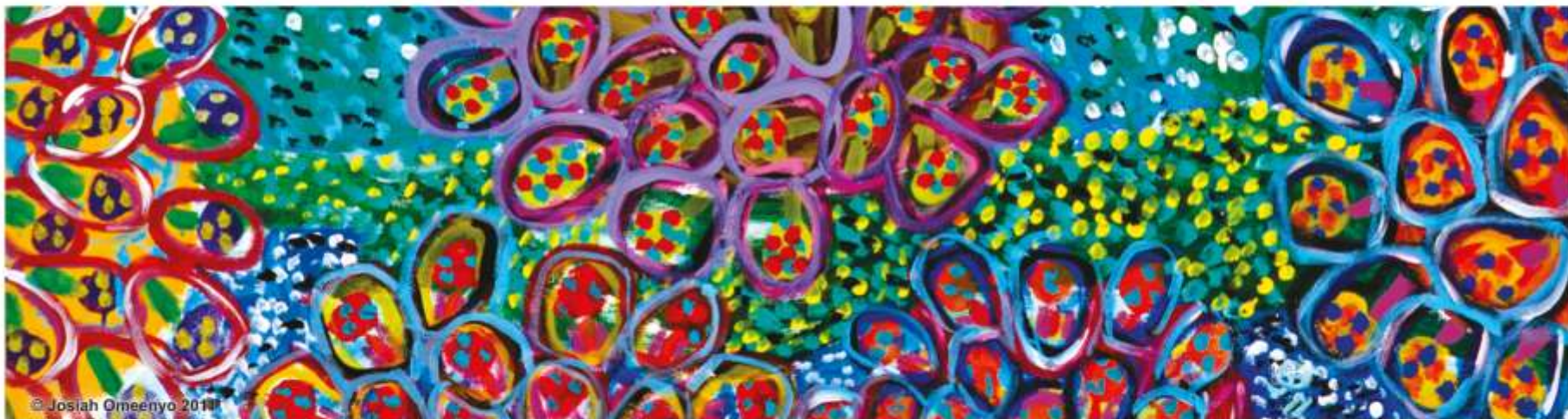


# National Indigenous Boarding Symposium Brisbane March 2019 'Onboarding'

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# Our Focus

“Transitions have been identified as phases of life changes connected with developmental demands that require intensified and accelerated learning and that are socially regulated. They are also characterized as **phases of heightened vulnerability**. In a child’s life, transitions can be the birth of a sibling, parental separation, puberty, and, last not least, transitions into educational institutions.” (Griebel and Niesel, 2005, p.6).



# Why the Need to Transition ?

“Almost all of the Indigenous people from remote Australia who have succeeded in education and gone on to make a leading contribution on behalf of their people were educated at boarding schools often a long way from their homes, most often at church schools. In Cape York Peninsula, no Aboriginal tertiary graduates have come from local public secondary schools” (Pearson, 2011).

“The evidence of education and, as a consequence employment outcomes achieved by Indigenous children who attend boarding schools is indisputable’ (Nigel Scullion, Indigenous Affairs Minister, 2014).

In the Far North Queensland context (and throughout remote Australia) secondary education opportunities are ‘limited.’ In communities such as Pormpuraaw, Mapoon and Coen there is no secondary provision. Other communities offer alternative secondary programs .

To access a comprehensive secondary education to Year 12, children from remote communities must leave home. The opportunity to transition affords some families the ability to exercise a degree of choice in education. But we need to be honest: boarding schools and residential providers choose children as much as families choose schools.





# Our Focus: What does it take to get an Indigenous student from the bush to prepare for and commence boarding?

- Commitment to the task (Fairholme and Kowanyama story)
- Resilience on the part of school boarding, administrative and teaching staff. Its not just kids who need to be resilient
- An ability on the part of boarding providers to interpret an Exit (remote community) school report: Tyrese and the AFL/NRL story
- It takes an acknowledgement of the complexity of the transition and a coordinated and an appropriately resourced response to that complexity
- It takes schools and boarding facilities that are prepared to engage fully with families and communities **IN COMMUNITY**
- Cultural competence.



# Our Focus: The National Agenda

- Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. (States required to indicate responses to recommendations)
- House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs Inquiry into Indigenous Education Outcomes
- TSS external review and recommendations for change
- Closing the Gap Report 2018
- Study Away Review and ISCA response : “Barriers and Bureaucracy.”
- Halsey Review
- Forrest Review
- Wilson Review (creation of the TSU in the NT)
- The Research Agenda
- Closure of Shalom College, Woolanig Homeland School, Transfer of Ownership of Kormilda College, Closure of Kaziew Rangath Academy.







# Our Focus

- School attendance in remote communities is at a level that seriously impacts on the life chances and opportunities for Indigenous children: i.e. below 90%.
- There are boarding schools and residential facilities. We need to be precise in terms of our language:
- Boarding schools and residential facilities exist to provide access to a quality, breadth and depth of education not available in remote communities. BUT they need to ensure they operate from a **strengths based and not a deficit mindset**. (Trevor and Andrew from Wadeye attaining 100% attendance)
- There are no plans to establish comprehensive high schools (Maths B, Physics, non-English Communications English) in any remote centres, so we need to get this right.
- Articulate and challenge the comparisons between the transition to boarding and the Stolen Generation.





# Our Focus: #Whatever it takes

- The transition to boarding is the work of the FNQ region and then the work of all regions where children transition. They are the region's children regardless of their post-Year 6 destination.
- Linkages to all regional/departmental services e.g. FNQNES (Far North Queensland Non Engaged Students, SGO's (Senior Guidance Officers, Diverse Learners, Indigenous Education and Community Engagement Team, Curriculum Team, Student Protection (Out of Home Care/Child Safety).
- Connection, core business, visibility.
- Articulation of roles and responsibilities
- Planning for transition well before Year 6





**Atherton**

Centre for  
Learning and Wellbeing

# Transition Readiness Workshop

Friday 8 March





# Current work in FNQ

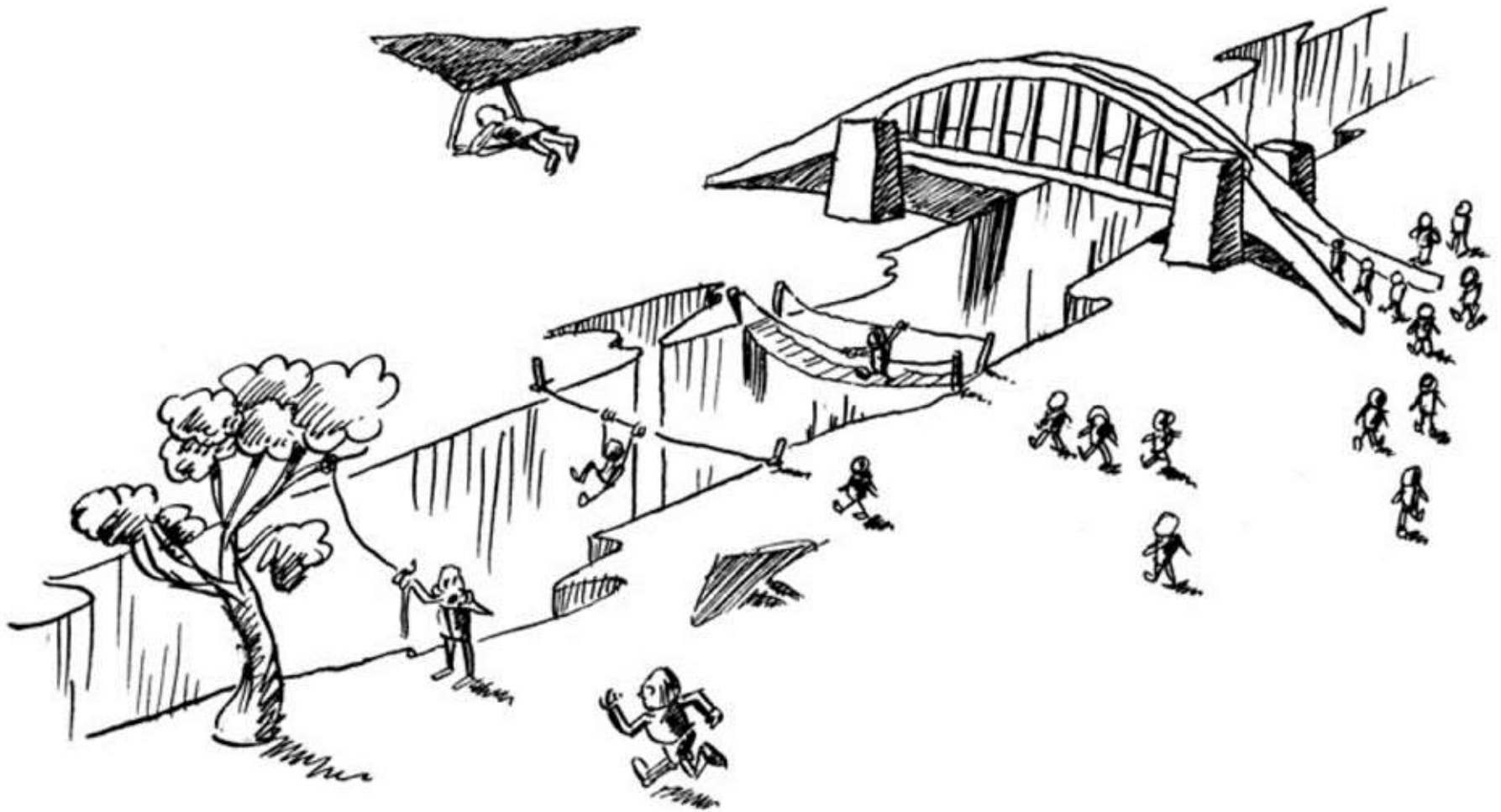
- Transition Readiness Guide developed which articulates clearly roles and responsibilities of all key stakeholders. Resources to support the Exit school's role in Transition Readiness are being developed.
- The responsibility for Transition Readiness rests with Exit Schools in remote communities. Some are ready for this work. For far North Queensland we have to get this right now!
- Workshop with Aurukun, Kowanyama, Lockhart River and Pormpuraaw community principals and/or senior staff on Friday March 8<sup>th</sup> with a follow-up curriculum meeting in May. Key staff from Aurukun, Kowanyama and Lockhart River are all here today!



# Framing the Discourse

- SNAICC (Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Care) have developed a methodology that provides an excellent framework for us to conceptualize and map the transition to boarding:
- **“Supporting Transition to school for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children: What it means and what works?”**







# The Ready Child Equation: ECEC

Ready child

=

+ Ready schools

+ Ready communities

+ Ready Early learning Providers



Ready families



# The Ready Child Equation: The Transition to Boarding

- Ready Families
- Ready Communities
- Ready Exit Schools (Remote Community Schools)
- Ready Boarding Schools/Residential Facilities

= Ready Students + Retention to the first 100 days + enhanced retention to Year 12

+ enhanced life outcomes (Correlation between mother's level of education and child's birth weight. Correlation between years at school and life trajectory and life expectancy )

NSW Education Centre for Education, Statistics and Evaluation, the Transition to School

“Traditionally, the concept of school readiness has focussed on a child's age and skills. However more recent literature tends to adopt a broader definition, incorporating not only a child's readiness for the learning environment, but also the learning environment's readiness for the child “(Hair et al. 200; Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care 2013; Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne 2008.)



# The First 100 Days (Semester One)

- Getting children into school on time. Why should they start a week late, especially at the start of the year? (Djarragun, TecNQ, AFL and NRL travelled children before the long weekend in 2019)
- The time of transition is the time when students are most vulnerable and adjusting to changed **personal and social** circumstances presents the greatest challenge for transitioning students. So, make that the focus. What is your plan?
- Families in community should be kept informed of early progress
- For you as a boarding provider, what do you know about your remote community students BEFORE they arrive?





# Pop Quiz

- We have a number of boarding providers (boarding schools and residential facilities) in the room. What is your community visitation schedule for 2019?
- Will you ensure that your families maximise the revised travel entitlements now available with Abstudy? Do you know what they are?
- How often do you do parent teacher interviews face to face?
- Do you see Safe Travel Plans as an opportunity to engage with remote communities, students and families or are they just more work? Are you ready for July 1<sup>st</sup>?
- Did your staff, both teaching and non-teaching visit the remote communities your students come from before they were enrolled?
- Just how dangerous is Laura (the town)? Where is it?





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