Recruitment, retention and development of quality educators in very remote NT schools

2012

Prepared for
Northern Territory Department of Education and Training
Acknowledgements;

Every effort has been made to represent the range of perceptions and varying quality of quantitative data accurately. We greatly appreciate the generosity of many DET, CDU and BIITE staff in contributing to this review.

Authors:
Georgie Nutton
Bonnie Moss
Julie Fraser
John McKenzie
Sven Silburn

Corresponding Author:
Georgie Nutton
Georgie.nutton@menzies.edu.au
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Executive Summary

This report reviews the implementation and examines the outcomes of a range of Northern Territory Department of Education and Training (DET) initiatives to improve the recruitment, retention and quality of teaching staff in very remote schools.

DET’s approach to workforce development has included a special focus on Indigenous staff. Significant investments have been made in developing the local education workforce through the Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy, and a number of associated initiatives.

This review does not aim to evaluate the effectiveness of each initiative in isolation, but rather to assess the overall strategy of building the capacity of the remote school workforce.

The set of workforce planning and development initiatives to be included in this review was identified by DET’s Executive Director of Strategic Policy and Planning and the Chief Executive. For the purposes of the analysis for this review, these initiatives have been grouped into five broad areas of activity:

- **Building the next generation of remote teachers by promoting teaching as a career to school students targeting young people through schools:**
  - Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools,
  - Beyond School Guarantee and
  - Jobs Guarantee projects

- **Improving remote Indigenous Assistant Teacher Career and Workforce Development referred to as “Growing Our Own” in the DET strategic plan:**
  - Increasing the number of certificate and diploma qualifications for Assistant Teachers (formerly known as the Quality Teaching Package)
  - Increasing the number of Indigenous people with degree qualifications through the Remote Indigenous Teacher Education program and Indigenous Teacher Upgrade Program
  - Improving access to the electronic portfolio and assessment system.

- **Improving Recruitment of teachers**
  - More Indigenous Teacher Scholarships
  - DET Teacher Education Scholarships
  - Remote Teaching Service and Teach Remote
  - National Alliance for Remote Indigenous Schools
• **Improving retention of teachers**
  - Cultures of Collaboration
  - Leadership aspirants programs through Centre for School Leadership, Learning and Development

• **Improving and Diversifying the Early Childhood workforce**
  - Vocational Education and Training qualifications gained on-the-job such as Families as First Teachers, and Integrated Child and Family Services.
  - Building the Remote Early Childhood Workforce pilot.
  - Strengthening the sector as a whole through the NT Early Childhood Workforce Plan 2012-2020

**Overall observations and recommendations:**
The main observations from the document reviews and staff interviews were:

1. A comprehensive overall DET workforce strategy is needed to achieve a more coherent align of the range of efforts toward addressing the complex needs of remote educators,
2. The “Growing Our Own” initiative has made some encouraging progress,
3. Training and employment pathways for remote Indigenous DET staff should be more clearly articulated for improved access,
4. Poor documentation of past workforce development initiatives has lead to loss of corporate memory and limited the data available to benchmark progress and inform current policy decisions,
5. The Department’s data systems and collections of workforce data are not adequate for monitoring and tracking progress on outcomes,
6. Overall literacy and numeracy competencies in the remote Indigenous workforce are concerning low.

More information on these observations and the recommendations arising from them is outlined below.

**Observation 1: A coherent and comprehensive overall DET workforce strategy is needed to align the disparate efforts toward addressing the complex needs of remote educators.**

While there are many examples of positive initiatives to improve the very remote schools workforce a more coherent alignment of efforts is needed. The review found a general lack of alignment between many of these initiatives and no overarching organisational framework for their coordination. The overall strategy will need to more successfully integrate program components across DET business areas.

**Recommendation 1:** Develop a more coherent logic for an overarching strategy that incorporates the Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy and all other efforts toward developing a quality workforce to better monitor and track resources and outcomes.

**Observation 2: “Growing Our Own” has made some encouraging progress.**

Northern Territory Department of Education and Training Remote Workforce Report
“Growing Our Own” has achieved some significant outcomes, but recent remote area teacher training programs have produced few teacher graduates. The success of intensive, fast-track programs requires ongoing review. Current assessment of these programs is limited by small numbers of participants and program variations between sites.

**Recommendation 2:** Growing 200 Indigenous teachers by 2018 requires a strategic and collaborative approach that brings together DET, Charles Darwin University (CDU), Batchelor Institute for Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) and community.

**Observation 3:** Training and employment pathways for remote Indigenous DET staff are more clearly articulated for improved access.

Momentum must be maintained through longer implementation periods. Longer time frames are required to address the recruitment of trainers, a wide range of literacy and academic competencies on entry to training, and current levels of buy-in from remote Indigenous trainees. Sustained resourcing, effort and broader communication across the organisation and to the general public about progress are crucial.

**Recommendation 3:** “Growing our own” is making progress. To achieve the goal of the number of Indigenous educators and leaders proportional to the student population, program management need to maintain momentum, sustain resourcing and strengthen the overall strategy.

**Observation 4:** Poor documentation of past workforce development initiatives has lead to loss of corporate memory and limited the data available to benchmark progress and inform current policy decisions.

DET can draw on experiences of both success and failure as it strives to respond to the need for more Indigenous teachers and professional school-based staff in remote workplaces. Poor corporate memory was identified as an issue. In particular, knowledge tends to be lost when initiatives are undertaken with time limited funding or are a short term and externally driven imperative.

**Recommendation 4:** DET strategic and program level planning would benefit significantly from having a system for collating past lessons in to an evidence framework.

**Observation 5:** Data systems and collections about the workforce are not adequate for monitoring and tracking progress on outcomes.

The availability of outcome data for workplace training and development has been limited by the systems and ongoing system change.

**Recommendation 5:** Continue to strengthen the data management systems underpinning Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy and the broader workforce professional learning.
Observation 6: Overall literacy and numeracy competencies in the remote Indigenous workforce are low.
A more concerted response to meeting the literacy and numeracy support needs of Indigenous education staff is needed, and this will require specific research and investment. Given the current efforts to increase economic participation in remote communities, opportunities for comprehensive approaches to adult literacy and numeracy support are required.

Recommendation 6: Adult Literacy planning is needed across whole of community and government.
1. Introduction

In July 2009 the revised scope of the Transforming Indigenous Education Evaluation contract between DET and Menzies included a component focused on DET’s systemic reform effort to improve the remote schools workforce through a range of specific initiatives (see Text Box 1). This report provides an analysis of the 16 initiatives designed to improve recruitment, retention and quality development. Through a discussion of the education labour source and pathways for development, the report aims to establish a framework for reflection on other existing or proposed initiatives.

The scoping and preliminary framework for this evaluation of DET’s remote workforce development initiatives was developed over the twelve month period to February 2011 through discussion with stakeholders across different business areas of DET, and in consultation with NT training providers. This framework identified three objectives which the evaluation would need to address, and associated research questions for each objective:

- improve the supply of very remote teaching staff;
- reduce the impact of ‘demand’ challenges that derive from high staff turnover, and
- increase the qualifications and quality of very remote teaching staff.

The proposed evaluation framework was submitted to DET Chief Executive for consideration and approval to proceed with the inclusion of the specific initiatives outlined in Table 1.

During 2012, at the request of the Chief Executive, the provision for Remote Early Childhood workforce development was included in scope of the review as DET was obligated through Australian Government funding, national partnership agreements and quality service frameworks to guarantee the quality and supply of a more diverse early childhood workforce. The initiatives within the scope of this review have been grouped into five broad themes:

Box 1. Deliverable 5 of DET Menzies contract.
Menzies will work in partnership with DET to design and implement a robust program evaluation of a significant systemic reform initiative aimed at attracting, developing and retaining quality personnel in very remote schools. This will include but not be limited to partnerships with Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia to maximise cohesion across the Top End and Central Australia.
There has been a long history of strategic support and concerted effort towards improved workforce development within DET. This has been linked to Northern Territory Government efforts to build capacity in the public education sector generally, and DET’s effort to grow and strengthen the NT education workforce. DET has put considerable work into the ‘system level’ planning required for an informed and strategic approach to developing its workforce. We are mindful that many specific recommendations to develop DET remote workforce capacity have been implemented in response to commissioned inquiries and reports\(^2,3,4\). A significant number of Indigenous people are employed in remote schools, but few are qualified teachers. Increasing the local Indigenous workforce to enable improved student outcomes has been a key aim of DET’s workforce development activity.
Placing the initiatives in a broader context.

The evaluation aims to strengthen the strategy for building the local remote education workforce. It is underpinned by the idea that increasing the quality of teaching staff and the number of Aboriginal people with a higher education qualification in education is an important part of the work. Specific national strategies to strengthen quality teaching and grow the Indigenous Teaching workforce overlap with NT Government activity. The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs has set a specific target in an effort to increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, principals and education workers (Aboriginal and Islander Education Workers (AIEWs) and equivalents)\textsuperscript{5}.

More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (MATSITI) is a Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) funded national four year (2011-15) program to increase the number and professional capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in Australian schools.

DEEWR is a key partner and has funded monetary incentives and scholarships, training, mentoring and in-classroom support in NT Emergency Response prescribed communities.

With the recent shift in emphasis and investment in Early Childhood Development policy and standards, the Early Childhood Development workforce has experienced rapid growth, which is projected to continue.

Strategic policy links

The NTER Quality Teaching Package (QTP) is a professional development framework designed to build the capacity of the existing education workforce in remote Northern Territory (NT) communities to accelerate student learning outcomes.

In 2009, the Quality Teaching Package was implemented under three key components:

1. **Indigenous Training and Development** - A continuation of the Indigenous Staff Development (RAMP) model established in 2008 designed to match Indigenous education staff roles, skills and experience with pathways to career, qualification, training and development opportunities with a priority focus on Indigenous teacher upgrades;

2. **Quality Teacher Development** – A continuation of targeted professional development and training opportunities for teaching staff working in prescribed communities to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes; and

3. **Leadership and Cultural Competency** – An initiative to build and strengthen leadership at both the school and community level within the NTER prescribed communities.
All staff working in the 65 government remote schools prescribed under the NTER communities were eligible for these opportunities.

**Links to Strategic Plan Priority Areas**

**DET Strategic Plan** (2011-2014): “Growing Our Own” includes a range of activities broadly administered under the Smart School National Partnership with a focus on increasing the number and qualification of Indigenous teachers, expanding Indigenous leadership networks and executive coaching.

**DET Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy** sets the following expectations:

- Realisation of the Strategy will contribute to strengthening DET’s capacity to deliver its services.
- A workforce representative of the Territory population is more likely to provide appropriate services.
- Indigenous employees are strong advocates of the value of education and training in their communities.
- At the workplace, Indigenous staff are uniquely placed to help develop strong partnerships between Indigenous communities and DET.
2. Methodology

2.1 Aims and research questions

Given the relative early stage of implementation of a number of these projects and initiatives, it is not yet possible to fully assess their effectiveness. The aim of the review has therefore been to collect and analyse both qualitative and quantitative data to build a picture of how the individual programs collectively work to meet the three high level objectives:

- improve the supply of very remote teaching staff;
- reduce the impact of 'demand' challenges that derive from high staff turnover, and
- increase the qualifications and quality of very remote teaching staff.

The following research questions were used to determine the focus of this investigation.

**Objective 1. Quality Teaching Package and Remote Indigenous Teacher Education with an examination of the pathways into education based jobs via VET in Schools, Beyond School Guarantee and Jobs Guarantee projects.**

*Research question 1a. What are the critical elements enabling and challenging the successful implementation of the Quality Teaching Package and Remote Indigenous Teacher Education “pilot”?*

*1b. How effective are the programs intended to facilitate pathways from schooling into very remote education sector positions?*

**Objective 2. Remote Teaching Service including impact of National Alliance for Remote Indigenous Schools**

*Research questions: 2a. Has the Remote Teaching Service improved retention and impacted recruitment costs?*

*2b. How has National Alliance for Remote Indigenous Schools enhanced this package?*

*2c. What elements of the Remote Teaching Service package specifically have contributed to the improved retention?*

**Objective 3. Recruitment, retention and quality improvement for local, non-Indigenous and Indigenous workforce through initiatives in the Centre for School Leadership and Learning, teacher education scholarships, and CDU graduates.**

*Research questions: 3a. What data and tracking systems do DET have in place to identify and respond to professional learning needs including the career aspiration and professional learning and support needs of their para-professional and professional staff?*

*3b. How does DET support, coordinate and promote pathways into teaching in the NT and track professional learning?*
2.2 Data Collection
Several methods were used to explore the evaluation questions. These included:

- a desktop review of documentation relating to DET workforce development (Appendix A);
- analysis of available data sets
- descriptions and targeted outcomes of specific initiatives using both quantitative data and qualitative data from interviews with key stakeholders. A specific evaluation tool for face-to-face interviews was developed (Appendix B).
- The key findings were reviewed by DET stakeholders for validation before this report was finalised. This enabled findings and recommendations to be made about the range of initiatives and their effectiveness in recruiting, retaining and developing staff in remote locations. Due to the very early stages of implementation of many programs the findings are referred to in the remainder of the document more accurately as observations.

Table 2 Summary of Data Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of data</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualitative</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DET program managers and directors</td>
<td>7 (5)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DET Co-ordinators of program delivery staff</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program participants</td>
<td>(18)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External RTOs and providers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quantitative</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracts and agreements</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress and final reports</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briefs and strategic plans</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel Information PS and program datasets</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Number of participants in workshops no inclusive of individual interviews
2.3 Analysis and Outcome measures

Quantitative
Due to the early stage of implementation of most initiatives and the limitations of the primary administrative data set, descriptive statistics have been used to identify key changes, with some simple models applied where the data and sample size permitted.

Qualitative
Thematic analyses of interviewees’ perceptions of the successes, challenges and opportunities of specific programs were collated to complement findings from the quantitative analysis.

2.4 Methodological Considerations

Focus on limited selection of initiatives
This review does not attempt a systemic evaluation of Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy, which was established post-contract and would not capture the non-Indigenous workforce.

Early implementation phase for some initiatives
Although some of the major initiatives, such as the National Alliance for Remote Indigenous Schools, were announced in 2009 or 2010, they are still being defined or negotiated with other collaborators.

Missing Data
Key documents for the funded components of initiatives programs, although numerous, had significant gaps.
3. Overview of DET workforce and challenges

In this evaluation the primary focus has been on the long-standing issues of high staff turnover in very remote Indigenous schools. This situation has been approached from both the workforce recruitment and retention challenges perspectives in section 4 of this report. The education workforce supply in the Northern Territory has traditionally had two distinctly different streams: interstate recruitment and building local, particularly Indigenous teacher numbers.

In this report we have identified and separated out for investigation three kinds of initiatives designed to contribute to the improved recruitment of the education and early childhood workforce. The three kinds of initiatives are (i) building the next generation (section 4.1), (ii) developing remote Indigenous Assistant Teachers development (section 4.2), and more effective recruitment of teachers (section 4.3). The initiatives targeted at improving retention of teachers in remote schools are described in section 4.4. These initiatives are focused on i) improved orientation to the cultural and linguistic contexts of remote schools; ii) more supportive professional learning, processes and structures, and iii) opportunities for progression into leadership roles.

3.1 Profile of current remote education workforce in relation to whole of DET

The overall proportion of Indigenous staff employed by DET in June 2010 was 12.1%. Table 3 demonstrates the upward trend since 2003 which reflects DET’s the effort in this area. DET reports that 25% of school council employees are Indigenous. School council employees are not reported on here as they are not included in the personnel information system. The proportion of Indigenous staff separations has decreased from 40% in 2007 to 27% in 2009, although data were not available to further explore the contributing factors to this positive trend.

Table 3 Proportion of DET’s Indigenous staff 2003-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Indigenous</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DET HR Metrics

Table 4 provides a demographic profile of DET’s workforce as per the personnel information dataset as provided, at 1st of April, 2012. This table confirms the gender imbalance across all categories and is strongest in the proportion of female assistant teachers compared with males. Currently 70% of DET’s staff are allocated to classroom positions and 27% of these positions are in Closing the Gap schools. “Closing the Gap schools” in this report refers to the 79 government sector schools identified in the Smarter Schools national partnerships for Closing the Gap.
initiatives and funding. Of the total classroom positions, Closing the Gap schools had 27% and Assistant Teachers comprised 9%. A total of 674 staff started employment with DET as Assistant Teachers. Of these, 613 started at Closing the Gap schools and 619 ended at one. Many of the Assistant Teachers that changed to a Closing the Gap school were Mobile Preschool Assistant Teachers and this change is likely to have been an administrative anomaly.

Over one third of the staff did not identify as having an English-speaking background status, with a higher proportion of Assistant Teachers in this category. Indigenous staff are most strongly represented in the Assistant Teacher classification (72%), although they comprise only 29% of the total classroom staff in Closing the Gap schools. The age profile of assistant teachers is markedly different to other categories of classroom staff. Almost 70% of Assistant Teachers are aged 30-49 years whilst All classroom, Closing the Gap and non-Closing the Gap classroom staff have between 51-54% in this age group.

The mobility between classroom and non-classroom jobs is relatively low. Only 3.4% of staff moved into classroom work from non-classroom but school based positions, while 3.2% of staff who were initially in the classroom moved into school based and non-classroom positions.

**Table 4 Demographic profile of DET staff as of 1st April, 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All DET Staff in PIPS</th>
<th>All DET Classroom Staff</th>
<th>Non-Closing the Gap Classroom Staff</th>
<th>Closing the Gap Classroom Staff</th>
<th>Assistant Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=3119</td>
<td>n=2183</td>
<td>n=1591</td>
<td>n=592</td>
<td>n=201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-English Speaking Background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Status:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Indigenous</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Stated</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at start of database</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-29 years</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39 years</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49 years</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+ years</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in Australian Schools

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers are significantly under-represented in Australian schools, comprising approximately 1% of the teaching community compared to Indigenous students (who comprise 4% of the total school student population).

In 2008 there were 1977 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in Australian schools, an increase of nearly 500 teachers from 2001.

Approximately 300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people graduate from Australian university schools of education each year.
Educational attainment in remote education and school based staff

Written documentation and reports reviewed for this evaluation indicate the following trends and delivery issues relating to the educational attainment of remote staff:

- There are low access and participation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in teacher education programs in Australia, including in the NT.

- Until 2010, Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Education, was the primary source of teacher education programs for Indigenous students. Their courses have specific pedagogical practices to support bicultural teaching and learning. Learning two-ways and support for self determination have a strong place in the approach.

- Trends for 2002-2006 show a significant decrease in overall enrolments and a specific and marked decrease in the level of enrolments and progression of students from the remote communities of the NT.

- Numbers graduating from all courses are low, and completions rates slow.

- There are significant attrition rates.
Specific projects where pre-service teacher education programs are delivered, in situ, to Assistant Teachers in remote Indigenous communities have been successful in producing cohorts of graduates in the last two years. These programs have significant costs (CDU and Catholic Education Office’s “Growing Our Own” an Remote Indigenous Teacher Education has cost more than 6 million dollars).

In remote settings, there are multiple reasons for the low attainment of bachelor degrees, but the low level of secondary school completion is a key issue. Second chance education and next generation strategies are needed to increase the pool of suitable applicants to enrol in education courses.

VET participation in specific Education Support qualifications is increasing. Insufficient data is available to assess the effectiveness of these as pathways to teacher education.

Qualifications relevant to education and school based work are now being mapped within remuneration and professional standards structures (Table 5).

While Bachelor of Education degrees have traditionally been the benchmark qualification, there are many other qualifications related to education and education support work. Access to a wider number of VET qualifications from the Community and Services Training Package is directly related to the education workforce and career pathways to teaching.

**Table 5 Education and Education Support Work qualification examples**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Typical Qualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Next Generation Pre Vocational</td>
<td>Units of Competency Community Services Training Package Certificate 1 and 11 level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Teacher Level 1</td>
<td>Nil required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Teacher Level 2</td>
<td>Certificate 111 Education Support Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Teacher Level 3</td>
<td>Certificate 1V Education Support Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Teacher Level 4</td>
<td>Diploma in Education Support Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Bachelor of Teaching &amp; Learning or an equivalent qualification recognised by the NT Teacher Registration Board</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Significant investment is needed in all local workforce initiatives to address entry point literacy and numeracy, and information technology skills for ongoing workplace competency in addition to increasing access to pathways. This is an issue which is fundamental to all NT public, corporate and community sectors’ approaches to economic participation and fulfilment of human capability needs.

3.2 Program Logic

Measuring program impact and success is dependent on understanding the program’s implementation against the intended design and outcomes. Menzies developed a logic model for the initiatives included in this review and their contribution to the overarching and high level objectives to improve recruitment, retention and staff quality (Figure 2). This model was developed through the documentary review and a feedback workshop with DET internal stakeholders (16 April 2012).

The logic model has been designed to illustrate the outcomes that DET expects to see from the initiatives included in this review against the broader outcomes for improved workforce recruitment, retention and quality development. This may also assist in the development of a more coherent and comprehensive mapping of all DET initiatives.

Given that measuring program impact is dependent on understanding the program fidelity\(^{10}\), understanding the program’s original intent was imperative.

The major benefit to developing program logic and accompanying indicators of program fidelity early in the evaluation of a complex program is that this allows us to identify where activities have ‘drifted’ from their original intent, and to treat outcomes data accordingly. In addition, where outcomes or implementation failure is observed, logic models can help identify how the ‘drift’ occurred\(^ {11}\).
Figure 2 Logic diagram for collective contribution of initiatives in review toward improved recruitment, retention and quality staff development
4. Initiatives and Strategies

4.1 Building the next generation

4.1.1 Background Strategic and policy development

Exposing young people who are still in school to work and careers in the education sector is a strategy that aims to increase those young people’s interest in working with children. It will also give them an understanding of education and children’s services work, and increase their awareness of the career possibilities. Often the engagement with, education and children’s services careers for high school students is through VET programs. It is expected that this exposure may lead to ongoing work with early childhood, classroom support employment, and enrolments in children’s services and teaching qualifications. The programs emphasise the pathways between study and work. The program of study is usually customised for younger school based learners.

In the NT the National Partnership Agreement for Youth Attainment and Transitions aims to provide alternative programs for re-engagement of students through meaningful and practically-based skills development. The introduction of the legislated\(^\text{12}\) requirement for young people, up to 17 years of age to be engaged in work or training was accompanied in the Territory by a broad suite of initiatives under the banner of *Every Child Every Day*\(^\text{13}\). Many of these initiatives have reportable milestones under the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions.

4.1.2 Key / defining initiatives and activities

In 2010 DET’s major structural response to improving opportunities for young people in very remote settings was to establish the Pathways and Participation division. This included the employment of officers organised into five teams to target specific issues of enrolment, attendance and participation in educational enterprise to achieve youth attainment and transition outcomes. In this review the work of two Pathways and Participation teams in particular were in scope. These are the “Learn and Earn Team” and the “VET in Schools Team”.

Examples:

*Vocational Education and Training in Schools and Structured Work Placements*

The VET in Schools programs offered during 2010-2011 were largely driven by the availability of trainers and local resources rather than targeting local skills shortages or listed skills shortages\(^\text{14}\). For the commencement of the 2012 year however, this appears to have been addressed in the re-introduction of community services and children’s services to the VET in Schools schedule.
During 2010, VET in Schools did not include programs in human services and only 30 of the 497 structured work placements were located in remote schools. In 2011 there were ten students enrolled in Community Services Certificate II, seven enrolled in Certificate III in Children’s Services and two enrolled in Certificate III in Education Support Work. It is unclear from the data provided where these programs were delivered and how many of the enrolled students were new or continuing.

In 2012 there are 15 places in Children’s Services Certificate III, delivered in two parts by CDU across Centralian Senior College, OLSH College, St Phillips College and Yirara School. In data provided this includes nine new students commencing in 2012. In Katherine the 18 places in Children Services Certificate III (part 1) are provided between Katherine High School and St Josephs College, with nine new students commencing in 2012.

Kormilda and Northern Territory Christian School Association provide Community Services Certificate II to 22 students (20 are new students in 2012) across Kormilda College, Marrara Christian School, Darwin High School, St Johns Catholic College, Casuarina Senior College, O’Loughlin Catholic College, Palmerston High School and Good Shepherd Lutheran College.

**Jobs Guarantee**

The Jobs Guarantee aims to offer facilitated entry into local public sector apprenticeships or base-grade entry for NT Certificate of Education and Training graduates in Territory Growth Towns. The goal is to achieve ‘local jobs for local people’ although the positions offered may not be in the graduate’s home town, and there is no obligation to take up the offered position.

In 2010 there were 25 students expected in ten of the 20 Territory Growth Towns to complete a NT Certificate of Education and Training. Under the Jobs Guarantee 21 positions were offered in nine of the ten Territory Growth Towns (Umbakumba, Yirrkala, Numbulwar, Maningrida, Milingimbi, Ramingining, Nguiu, Galiwin’ku, Gapuwiyak). The positions offered include three industry types: assistant teacher traineeships; Aboriginal health worker apprenticeships, and remote housing administration.

For the 25 NT Certificate of Education and Training remote graduates from 2010 (Table 6), the follow up one year later revealed that 21 of these graduates were offered NT public sector positions. Seven of these positions were accepted in the following communities: Umbakumba (three positions), Ramingining (two positions), Maningrida and Yirrkala Homelands (one position each). Two DOH health worker apprentices are still employed (one on sick leave); one assistant teacher trainee commenced but is no longer in the position or in the community (married and moved); one school tutor was appointed but no longer in the position (married and moved; one DET trainee commenced but is no longer in position (married but expected to return).
Table 6 Remote NTCET graduates' destinations and Jobs Guarantee uptake

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Offered NTPS position</th>
<th>Wanted NTPS position</th>
<th>Did NOT want NTPS position</th>
<th>Not offered NTPS position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010 NTCET remote graduates</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Position descriptions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Teacher trainees 2</td>
<td>No suitable job matches 3</td>
<td>1 centre link</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health trainees 2</td>
<td>Not working 4</td>
<td>1 store</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Various alternative employment 6</td>
<td>1 office work at clinic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Homelands Association</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pathway as at Nov 2011</strong></td>
<td>Unknown 1</td>
<td>On track 2 (DOH trainees)</td>
<td>3 employed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not working 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Beyond School Guarantee**

The *Beyond School Guarantee* is a referral service provided to NT Certificate of Education and Training graduates in the two years following school. The service is provided by DET corporate staff and accessed by students via phone and email links from the DET website. Graduates may receive advice or referrals regarding pathways to employment, further education or training options.

At the time of qualitative data collection the program had only been operational for a short time with the first year having three users of the service. Some of the key observations were around the level of awareness of the service among school leavers and where they might seek such support.

Aligned with this service is the Beyond School Destination Survey which achieved a 30% return rate in 2011. The survey is expected to generate sufficient volume of data in the coming year for a review of the Beyond School Guarantee, leading ultimately to more nuanced services based on clearer profiles of where students end up in the years following school.

**4.1.3 Observations and Outcomes against targets**

Programs to facilitate pathways from school into particular industry areas are often ad hoc and in many jurisdictions including the NT are not accompanied by broader career advice or activities such as mentors and direct links to employment-based opportunities such as apprenticeships and traineeships. The results are that students take VET courses as a “taster” or because the particular industry training has resources and trainers available at the time, as opposed to choices being driven by aspiration. While these programs may well benefit students in a number of ways, there is a lack of evidence that they lead to increased workforce participation at any
level. The programs are relatively widespread in regional centres. However they remain untested in Territory Growth Towns. The programs will need to be used much more widely before evaluation of their impact towards an increased education and children’s services workforce.

The investment in increasing online learning for VET programs which are largely practically based training for students, may be prohibitive for students with low literacy and unreliable access to IT. With consistent and sustained professional support through Distance Education for trainers and educators delivering in remote settings, they may be more successful than many of the like programs developed for adults with low literacy in the past.

Potentially better connections could be made with local industry. Government may need to facilitate this in innovative ways, for example by supporting traineeships based in local non-government industries. Given the new work in the Department of Business and Employment to map the employment opportunities in remote towns, there may be opportunities for NTPS to consider more authentic and realistic positions mapped to students aspirations. In addition, it is expected that a more responsive program will be informed by findings from the Destination Surveys, as well as the follow up of youth in Jobs Guarantee positions. However, other industry reviews suggest that such programs do not contribute significantly to addressing workforce supply.

4.2 Remote Indigenous Assistant Teacher Career and Workforce Development

4.2.1 Background Strategic and policy development

*Strategically the development of Assistant Teachers has been targeted through a careers development framework, which maps to qualifications, career opportunities and professional standards. It supports school improvement efforts by contributing to individual capacity development and developing enabling systems for ongoing sustainability. It compliments other intensive or scaffolded pathways into teaching careers for Indigenous staff.*

DET has pursued various strategies linked to Indigenous Assistant Teacher career and workforce development. This review considers those internal to DET and those contracted outside by DET. The review makes clear that DET recognises that many local employees in remote school settings possess levels of cultural knowledge, skills and experiences that standard approaches to formal education and training do not address. ATs contribute directly through their education support work roles but also through their pastoral support for Indigenous students and brokering relationships between non-Indigenous school staff, parents and local community members. They are essential to the functioning and sustainability of remote schools.
It has been documented that the majority (196 of 215) of Assistant Teachers employed in DET schools are working in NTER prescribed communities and Territory Growth Towns. Consequently overcoming the challenges of literacy and ESL to deliver professional development across diverse remote locations has also been a feature of the initiatives.

The initiatives reviewed were funded from both NTER AL and QTP, and QTP under the Closing the Gap component of Smarter Schools National Partnerships.

4.2.2 Key / defining initiatives and activities

*Indigenous Assistant Teachers are frequently the longest serving members of the school staff, making them essential not only for continuity but for inducting new staff and mediating the cultural distance between the non-Indigenous teachers and local students*16

Building a sustainable local workforce can strengthen the cultural connections between schools and communities, assist to develop and embed locally relevant content into curriculum, and build a representative sustainable workforce in the NT.

A broad list of achievements has been documented by DET linked to the development of the Assistant Teacher workforce. A specific time of high activity was during the period 2006 – December 2011. At that time many components of the current internal Assistant Teacher Career and Development Strategy were put in place.
Examples:

Expansion of Assistant Teacher career planning: Remote Staff Survey and RAMP Model

Commencing in 2006 there has been a significant acceleration at the system level of specific workplace planning for the Assistant Teacher workforce. This included investment in the provision of VET delivery for Assistant Teacher professional development (Growing Our Own) and also in the commissioning of specific training and assessment models and innovative tools to enhance career and professional development for the remote education workforce. Initially this work was under the guidance of the Indigenous and Remote Workforce Development Division.

In 2006 the design and completion of a survey to establish Indigenous staff profiles for all those employed in remote school. Approximately 500 Indigenous staff profiles were compiled and a database created for easy tracking and reporting on workforce development. The survey highlighted that:

- Low numbers of Assistant Teachers were undertaking and completing formal study to gain qualification
- Assistant Teachers aspire to gain recognition of prior learning
- Low literacy and numeracy are the major impediments to study
- Training delivered in community is preferred
- Teachers feel they have insufficient adult teaching skills to work effectively with Indigenous Assistant Teachers in a team teaching role
- Teachers are unfamiliar with the VET environment, competency-based training and recognition of prior learning approaches
- Staff have very limited time during the day to be away from the classroom for professional development purposes
- Professional development opportunities should focus on student pedagogy rather than adult learning needs

Findings from the survey created impetus for a range of Assistant Teacher workforce planning, and the results were described by DET staff as a baseline for measuring the impact of future investment in Assistant Teacher professional development.

During 2008 the RAMP employment-based training framework was established. RAMP is designed to match Indigenous education staff roles, skills and experience with pathways to career, qualification, training and development opportunities with a priority focus on Indigenous teacher upgrades.17

Key RAMP training and development pathway elements are determined as being:

- employment-based and therefore enacted with the Assistant Teacher and DET/School Council with links to salary and career advancement,
- structured training on and off the job,
- a formal contract of training, which is a binding agreement stipulating responsibilities of DET/School Council, conditions for training and support, and the
responsibilities of all parties signed by the DET/School Council, Assistant Teacher, coach/mentor and the registered training organisation,

- underpinned by the national VET recognition framework, which includes training packages to guide the curriculum and assessment of competence.

**Indigenous Staff Profile System**

At the system level the Indigenous Staff Profile System operates to underpin planning and data on trends, reports and information of the professional and learning status of Indigenous staff in schools, including those employed by School Councils. This system has been described as forming the evidence base to be used to target future Quality Teaching Package investment and to measure the impact of existing initiatives. The VETRAK system for monitoring staff progress on VET courses was introduced in 2009 and was expected to be linked to the Indigenous Staff Profile System.

The 2009 data snapshot captured a total of 349 Assistant Teachers enrolled for study including 250 enrolled in a Certificate III, 57 in Certificate IV and 12 at Diploma level. Tracking VET enrolments provides valuable information about the outcomes of the overall strategy. However, it was observed that Indigenous Staff Profile System aligned to staffing and professional learning have undergone significant changes which are not fully described in DET documents. For example, Menzies review staff were informed that a new system is being discussed for utilisation.

**Assistant Teacher Capabilities and Standards and the Assistant Teacher to Teacher Qualification pathways**

Considerable investment has been made in establishing and documenting qualification pathways and expected professional standards for both the Assistant Teacher and Teacher workforce. Specifically:

- Assistant Teacher to Teacher Qualification Pathways have been documented and are being made accessible to the workforce

- Assistant Teacher Professional Standards have been designed and are being utilised

The Assistant Teacher qualification pathways framework is also known as the RAMP model. It is linked to career development as it provides clear pathways, into higher education and teacher qualifications. The standards are linked to all teaching, learning and assessment resources commissioned to support Assistant Teacher career development. It is expected that future work on the alignment of Assistant Teacher career pathways and the clear articulation of professional standards will be supported by appropriate remuneration structures.

**Provision of completion bonuses**

The idea of provision of completion bonuses to be paid to each Indigenous staff member completing a Certificate III/IV has been progressed. This incentive scheme is linked to the qualifications framework.
The framework's development and operationalisation has been a significant outcome of the Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy at work. Although specific targets were set annually (for example 50 in 2009), data and feedback suggest that fewer people have accessed bonuses than were predicted.

**Creation of DET Remote Workforce Development Support Teams and MOU with BIITE to coordinate Assistant Teacher education support**

Improving the overall management, coordination and support of training to Assistant Teachers has been a priority. The Vocational Education and Training system has been challenged to deliver training effectively in remote schools. A key approach has been the establishment of Remote Workforce Development Support Teams. Four regional teams have been established. Each team has a coordinator and Quality Training Package coaches (twelve across the four regions) who work in schools to assist with planning and managing the Assistant Teacher training. A Memorandum of Understanding with Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education ensures coordination of formal enrolment requirements, and the provision of training support and delivery.

Support was planned to work at two levels:

1. Regional coordinator positions undertaking brokerage and coordination roles between tertiary institutions, registered training organisations, schools and
2. Quality Teaching Package coaches working directly at the school and individuals participant level with Indigenous staff undertaking training.

All Assistant Teachers and other school support staff (including administration, canteen, cleaning and outdoor grounds staff) in the 79 government schools prescribed under the NT Emergency Response were eligible for inclusion. Specific, planned outputs included: development of individualised development and training plans, each employee undertaking study, linking individual plans to school operational plans, management of Indigenous Staff Profile System reports, support with distribution of tools to collate on-the-job skills development and to promote innovative ways of documenting recognition of prior learning.

**Remote Indigenous Teacher Education**

Remote Indigenous Teacher Education program is an intensive Bachelor of Teaching and Learning degree delivered by Charles Darwin University (CDU) through in – community lecturers employed by DET. The Remote Indigenous Teacher Education program commenced in January 2010 and was based on the successful model trialled by CDU and Catholic Education Office NT in the "Growing our own" 2008-2009 project (funded by Australian Government’s Literacy and Numeracy in Low SES Schools Pilots). The Remote Indigenous Teacher Education students are recruited as employees of DET, usually in positions of Assistant Teacher. They participate in lectures one to two days per week, depending on the stage of the course. They continue working in a variety of classroom placements, much like an internship, under the supervision, and with support from the classroom teacher mentor. Students cover one academic semester during each school term. They cover the same
content and use the same materials as internal CDU students enrolled in the same degree course. Students attend two periods of on-site lectures each year at CDU Casuarina campus whilst in Darwin for urban school practicum placements. The DET’s $1.6m contract with CDU was to provide the Remote Indigenous Teacher Education program to seven students at Maningrida and five students at Galwinku over two and half years (January 2010 – June 2012). The resourcing for the program included 0.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) CDU lecturer coordinator and 0.2 FTE Administrator. In each community site there was 0.5 FTE lecturer employed by DET and seconded to CDU. All students are mentored by the classroom teachers with whom they are placed over the course of the two years. No additional resourcing is provided to the supervising classroom teachers.

All five Galwinku students withdrew within the first semesters citing personal reasons for withdrawal. Of the seven students at Maningrida, four continued and are expected to graduate on completion of their remaining academic work and final placement in semester two, 2012. A second cohort of three students commenced at Maningrida in 2011, two of whom are progressing well.

Several key factors for success in this model were identified by Head of the School of Education, CDU following the completion of the Catholic Education Office (NT) “Growing our own” pilots. These included:

- a very well defined process for empowering Assistant Teachers and community members’, such as community elders and family including the buy-in and providing a commitment to provide specific and explicit support to the students,
- guaranteed training times were clearly communicated with an expectation of full participation,
- Indigenous knowledge about child development and ways of learning, held by the trainees was maintained at the core of instruction,
- routine weekly training was delivered at the workplace by the one lecturer to cover all units,
- a maximum of 4-5 students per community,
- English oracy and literacy were embedded in course content.

Recruiting suitable lecturers, teacher mentors, and addressing travel and accommodation were cited as challenges during the establishment phase of the Catholic Education “Growing our own” program. Lecturers needed to be well prepared and adept at covering the whole curriculum and incorporating the cultural and linguistic knowledge of the trainees.

The number of enrolments in the Remote Indigenous Teacher Education program was small and it is too early for any analysis of outcomes. However, there are a number of differences between the Catholic Education “Growing our own” program and DET’s Remote Indigenous Teacher Education program implementation that will need to be incorporated into any future analysis. An example is the method of recruitment of trainees in Catholic Education “Growing our own” which required nomination of potential trainees by Elders; an approach to trainees and intensive interviews with families and school leadership.
**Indigenous Teachers Upgrade Program**

The Indigenous Teachers Upgrade Program commenced in December 2008 under an agreement with Batchelor Institute for Indigenous Tertiary Education pending DET receiving $788k funding from the Australian Government (NT Emergency Response funding for the Quality Teaching Package). Under the schedule for Indigenous Teachers Upgrade Program, Batchelor Institute were expected to provide intensive fourth year qualification upgrades to 22 DET staff (19 classroom teachers, 1 Assistant Teacher and 2 staff in promotional positions) by end of 2010. By the end of the contract eight students had successfully completed. Six students continued studying into 2011 with two achieving completions.

The Indigenous Teachers Upgrade Program students were expected to study three units per year whilst in full time employment unless they had access to study or long service leave. A combination of trainees’ English-as-a-Second-language, low literacy and information technology skills were identified as challenges to completions. In addition, this program did not provide in-community lecturers, mentors or support staff for students to manage the academic, work, community and family obligations. In addition to this, was limited attention to ensuring the program was supported by school staff or that there was an awareness of the demands and expectations of the program. One issue cited in the BIITE final report raised the need for more clarity in the agreements about roles and responsibilities of lecturers and managers to provide more flexible timing and structure.

BIITE reported the essential criteria for success of Indigenous Teachers Upgrade Program students as:

- Consistent and coordinated support from BIITE and DET,
- Supportive workplace staff and principal for trainees,
- Dedicated routine study release time and dedicated study space,
- Access to study leave or long service leave period,
- Access to technology and information technology skills,
- On-site tutor.

**4.2.3 Observations and Outcomes against targets**

Remote Workforce Development Teams have been successfully operationalised. Success was described by regional staff in terms of the model of regionalised coaches creating ongoing structural support for Assistant Teacher formal training, and increased enrolments and qualification outcomes for Assistant Teachers. The secondment of staff across DET and Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education has enhanced communication and collaboration between these organisations.

Provision of cohesive support for Assistant Teachers occurs where it was perceived to have been previously be *ad hoc* or absent.

However some continuing specific challenges were also identified by Remote Workforce Development Team members. These include:
• Ongoing workforce churn and difficulties in recruitment to remote locations especially for trainers in the RTO,
• Role clarification issues highlight the need for recognition that DET Co-ordinators cannot replace the work of trainers RTOs cannot recruit trainers,
• High travel costs mean that funding is a continuing pressure. There is currently a lack of clarity about longer term funding for teams and the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education MOU. However, interviewees emphasised that growth in enrolments requires additional funding for Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, or any other registered training organisation's coordination and delivery.

**Procurement of professional development components**
Beyond the strengthening of its internal career development strategy, DET has procured externally a number of professional development components. This reflects the fact that although national courses (training packages) are available for Assistant Teachers they may not be culturally suitable or sufficiently available to be helpful for remote workers. One of the barriers to growing people is that DET is not itself a registered training organisation. Hence the training of ATs needs to be formally conducted through registered training organisations such as Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education.

It is possible to make sure that courses for Assistant Teachers are responsive and relevant to the needs of both the Assistant Teachers and DET (as their employers) by commissioning specific course content, delivery supports and pre-purchasing places. This involves consideration of both the Assistant Teachers’ delivery preferences and learning needs, and of the DET’s expectations that staff can fulfil the position descriptions across a range of education programs.

**Initiative Examples**
Quality Teaching Package funding was used in December 2008 to commission Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and Taminmin High School Council to develop and trial RAMP support components in these areas: training framework for Mobile preschool Assistant Teachers, and design develop and trial work-ready workshops (Certificate I Level in Work Preparation).

**Development of a program framework to improve the skills base of Mobile preschool Assistant Teachers 2009**
Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education was contracted during late 2008 to design a framework for beginning workplace training for ATs employed as at Mobile Pre-School sites. Mobile Pre-School delivery in remote sites required Assistant Teachers to be confident and competent in running a daily program without a supervising preschool teacher being present. The training framework was designed
around competencies at the Certificate I Work Preparation level and was delivered to DET in early 2009.

It has been necessary to contract specific training programs in order to make sure that staff receive the professional development support that both they and their program required. Evaluation data indicates that the framework was not actioned, and that delivery of training across the cohort of workers was not formally progressed, although some Mobile Preschools Assistant Teachers did enrol in Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education Assistant Teacher or Children’s Services courses.

**Development and trial work ready workshops 2009**

Taminmin High School Council was commissioned during late 2008 to design, develop and plan a delivery framework for Indigenous Staff Development workshops at the Certificate I Work Preparation level for 10 remote schools. This involved employing both a project manager and field officer, conducting an analysis of training needs in the 10 identified schools and delivering a large workshop for 24-30 staff at Maningrida School in 2009.

However, although this contract was completed, few records of outcomes were retrieved by DET staff or were able to be accessed by Menzies. This will hinder utilisation of the framework and sustainability or benefits from development for this level 1 pathway investment.
**Purchase of full fee places for ATs undertaking VET qualifications**

An ongoing approach has been for DET to purchase or prepay for ATs training. This has created opportunities for existing workers to upgrade skills and gain qualifications. Pre-payment of places ensures that sufficient access, and a range of training options are available. It also ensures that workers with existing skills and experience have access to recognition of prior learning.

A small number of registered training organisations are registered to deliver Education Support Work qualifications, but the largest provider of VET training relevant to remote education workers is Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education. Education Work qualifications are included with the funded profile of their annual quotas for delivery purchasing places address undersupply pressure. CDU delivers these qualifications to enrolled urban participants. To broaden access, Assistant Teacher training was also purchased from Australian Adult Training Services (Brisbane) for delivery to existing school employees at Ramingining, Alpara, Milikatpiti and Peppermanti during 2009. This was funded through the DEEWR Productivity Places Program. Ramingining School Council, backed by the principal, used this additional funding to support a large cohort of Assistant Teachers to study toward the Diploma in Education Support, a newer national VET qualification. A total of 200 study places were purchased in 2009-10 to allow people to enrol in existing Education Support Work courses.

Purchasing places for Assistant Teacher training has become an established and effective approach to enhance access. However it was observed that challenges remain in the system to tracking the overall qualification completion outcomes. This is the core measure of success for these initiatives.

**Web-based Resources**

DET has funded the design and trial of a number of web-based courses and resources to support training. SSNP funding was utilised in 2009 - 2010 to commission the design development and trial a number of specific training and learning resources.

Developing web-based resources to support Indigenous workplace learning is a relatively new approach in the NT. A scan of projects being funded throughout the NT indicates web-based courses are being used across a range of industries. Potential benefits include the development of specialised 'Indigenous two way' resources which customise National Competencies to local workplaces and to the literacy needs of the participants. Training can also be accessed at times convenient to both participants and trainers, materials can be easily modified and updated, and new technologies are integrated into learning. It can reasonably be assumed that technology-based, culturally suitable resources may have a positive impact on the cost of distance delivery, consistency of training delivery, and knowledge deficits (expressed by supervising classroom teachers, trainers and mentors) relating to the national training and assessment requirements.
At the same time, however, provision must be made for support for participants to help them access hardware, use new technologies, and understand the training materials and assessment tasks.

**e-PIE an e-Portfolio system – a model supporting workplace learning and Recognition of Prior Learning**

DET contracted a research team from CDU and The Work Lab in 2010 to develop and trial an electronic Portfolio system and also linked this to eAssist to enable enhanced VET assessment skills for AT mentors. The results of the trial were well documented\(^1\). Features of the finished system ePIE include capacity to:

- provide an alternative to face to face teaching, or other paper-based training and assessment workbooks
- increase regular contact between Assistant Teachers and training staff of registered training organisations
- safely store and present evidence online (in a range of digital/multimedia formats) of all knowledge and skills, regardless of where, when and how it is acquired
- aggregate and present evidence for formal assessment purposes, including recognition of prior learning;
- aggregate and present evidence for demonstrating performance against Professional Standards and for employment applications;
- improve communication between peers, assessors and other audiences; and
- support professional development planning and lifelong career development

The contract with CDU also focused on ways to help classroom teachers or other mentors, better support students learning in the workplace. This was to be through a second component called e-Assist. The core approach was to make four units from the National Training and Assessment qualification electronically available to classroom mentors and training staff via e-PIE. Unspent funds within another CDU contract for provision of tuition for Masters in Education was reallocated to the e-PIE project during 2010.

E-PIE was noted in the Smarter School National Partnerships Progress Report 2010 as contributing to a significant achievement towards enhancing pathways for school support staff. Activities were listed as contributing DET Responsive Systems Approach to Driving and Supporting Transformation. The report highlighted contributions to better recognition of prior learning and resource specific support materials which enhance workplace learning.

CDU’s final report on the project indicated that for participating Assistant Teachers the e-PIE system did work as storage of work for personal, study and assessment purposes and enabled significant recognition of prior learning to be undertaken during the trial. Assistant Teachers were challenged around learning new skills in digital media and information technology and found this beneficial. Feedback from
the 25 school sites involved in support for the trial indicated that the system improved coordinated access to quality professional development, improved capabilities of employees and enabled reporting of progress of quality of work against Professional Standards. CDU note that e-PIE has enabled DET to explore the potential of e-Portfolios to support the needs of Aboriginal learners in the context of their lives and work

**On line literacy and information technology resources**

A scan of the environment indicated that a range of on-line literacy support materials with scaffolded literacy and information technology learning were also funded for development by DET. Three were linked to the e-PIE initiative and were included in this evaluation:

The *iTalk ESL Self Assessment* on the web tool was developed by isee – i talk.com, and used in delivery of a series of iTalk workshops with remote and regional Assistant Teachers. The workshops focused on increasing participants’ familiarity and confidence in using computer technology and the WEB and *ITalk for ITUP Students*, *ITalk Teaching* “You can do it” career promotion comic.

Other examples such as *Reading English on the WEB* was created by BIITE as a tool to address ‘chronic literacy issues in the remote Aboriginal workforce’and *Reading on the WEB TREC*s for children services Technology, Reading and Early Childhood Services is a literacy support program that complements the Learning at Work Book, a work-based learning model developed to help remote community Indigenous early childhood education practitioners in the Northern Territory. These are linked to another DET funded project for the children’s service workforce *Learning at Work book* model (BIITE) were not considered to be within the scope of this evaluation. They are significant programs of work in themselves but are linked to the core work of capacity building of the early years and school workforce.

While the resources reviewed may have a range of benefits for participants and training support staff including registered training organisations, it should be noted that they have not been widely used beyond the development phases. Hence, there is still little possibility of gathering sufficient evidence that the resources have had, or will have, observable benefits to increase participant outcomes in the longer term.

*Learning at Workbook* model (BIITE) which is outside the scope of this evaluation is increasing in usage in both children’s and education support work course delivery.

A major barrier to using ePIE and also eASSIST beyond the life of the funded project has emerged. Both were built around Mahara software and were designed to connect to DET’s existing ICT architecture. Alternative software programs such as Moodle and SharePoint are endorsed for use as collaborative web-based supports for DET workforce development. Consequently at project completion ePIE was migrated to the DET sever but has not been turned on. The systems is parked with DET Corporate ICT and its use is not supported within DET ICT. Developing this system further will require commitment and leadership.
No evaluation materials indicated that *I Talk* resources were utilised beyond the development trial phase.

Overall innovative resources commissioned and developed have not been systematically or effectively used to benefit workers’ training and assessment. It will be important to plan to use and document the effectiveness of these resources to fully benefit from the investment that has already been made.
4.3 Improving Teacher Recruitment

4.3.1 Background Strategic and policy development

In the NT there have been two primary sources of teacher degree level graduates, Charles Darwin University and recruitment drives from interstate.

Ladwig and Sara (2009) highlighted the limited gains made by DET to address the equity issue of Indigenous representation in the teaching workforce (and other levels of the department). The National Partnership Agreements have now set reportable measures and targets for the achievement by 2018. These targets are included in DET’s Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy against the More Indigenous Teachers scholarship program.

4.3.2 Key / defining initiatives and activities

Targeting degree level graduates is through scholarship programs. DET has had a range of teacher education scholarship programs for more than 20 years. The two major programs of scholarships currently offered by DET are included in this review. The first is targeted toward increasing the proportion of Indigenous teachers and educational leaders in DET schools. The second is the general scholarship program. Both of these programs include cadetship level entry, pre-service courses and fellowship for currently employed DET staff to upgrade with specialist graduate certificates or masters degrees.

Recruitment of teachers already in-service has also had a long history of various programs and strategies in the NT. The two major initiatives of interest in this review include a significant modification to selection processes commencing in 2010 (for commencement in 2011) and a national collaboration which consists of four activities directed at recruitment which have not commenced yet.

Examples:

The More Indigenous Teacher scholarship Program

The More Indigenous Teacher scholarship program aims to address the challenges of recruiting and retaining quality teaching staff for remote communities by assisting Indigenous Territorians to become teachers20.

The More Indigenous Teacher scholarship program includes four types of support which are co-funded with Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations:

- Indigenous Cadetship Support is aimed at NT residents, Indigenous secondary aged students and school leavers. The cadetships were previously called National Indigenous Cadetship Project
- MIT Scholarships: NT Indigenous residents (resident of 5 years)
- Fellowships: DET employees (Full time employee)
Two targeted programmes to support cadetship and scholarship applicants from remote communities - targeting Indigenous applicants living outside, Alice Springs, Katherine or Darwin: Remote Indigenous Teacher Scholarship and Wesley Lanhupuy Remote Indigenous Teacher\textsuperscript{20}.

DET have provided information which states that 154 students have enrolled from 2008-2011, between 33-45 students per year have enrolled during this time. Of these more detailed information was provided for 95 students with commencement dates ranging from 2004-2011. Presumably a number of these students, (possibly 4) commenced cadetships prior to MIT under the Commonwealth NCIP scheme.

Table 6 highlights the source of recruits to the MIT scholarship program. Notably 31 of the 92 MIT participants were already employed by DET as Assistant Teachers, Aboriginal Islander Education Workers or other types of DET employees. Another third of participants were either in their final year of school or recent graduates of secondary school.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of MIT scholarship recipients</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recent school leavers</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General public</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIEW’s in schools</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current university students</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DET employees</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current year 12 students</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Graduates</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 92 students with detailed records 41 have graduated since 2007. The majority (32) of these graduates were recruited from the Darwin region. As in the Teacher Education Scholarship scheme, most recipients are enrolled in degree courses. Detailed records for 33 of the 41 graduates from 2006 – 2010 identify eleven of these graduates now teaching in remote schools. Three were awarded fellowships as DET Indigenous employees and whilst listed as Darwin based students, they are now attached to remote schools. Another five graduates have a location listed in a very remote community. However these records may not be accurate according to program management as some graduates, at the time of being recruited to the scholarship program were in remote locations, they may now teach in Darwin.

Interestingly, six scholarship recipients started out as cadets and subsequently converted to teaching scholarships. Table 7 indicates the distribution of MIT
scholarship recipients by current status and DET region from which they were recruited.

**Table 7: MIT Recipients between 2004 – 2011 by DET service regions (very remote students)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2004-2011</th>
<th>Darwin</th>
<th>Palmerston and Rural</th>
<th>Alice Springs</th>
<th>Katherine</th>
<th>Arnhem</th>
<th>Barkly</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commenced</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>6 (2)</td>
<td>12 (3)</td>
<td>5 (2)</td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 (1)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5 (2)</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seven of the 28 students to withdraw were located very remotely, 15 from Darwin, and five Palmerston and Rural region. The reasons for withdrawal by region are described in Table 8. The highest proportion of students cited inadequate financial support as their reason for withdrawal, followed by inability to fulfil course requirements and impact of family issues. The support structures identified in the Remote Indigenous Teacher Education and Catholic Education Office’s *Growing Our Own* programs as promoting success could increase completions in the MIT program. In particular, access to mentor and academic tutors.

**Table 8: Reason for Withdrawal from the MIT scholarship program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Withdrawal</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate financial support</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not fulfilling the requirements of the course</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family issues</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interstate relocation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Issues</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusion/Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2008/2009 two scholarships were dedicated for remote applicants due to low application numbers from remote. These are filled at the moment. Another cohort of 19 scholarship recipients were recruited in March 2012 and another round of recruitment is planned for June 2012.
Teacher Education Scholarships

The current Teacher Education Scholarship program aims to “provide significant financial support to help applicants achieve a teaching qualification.”20 Applicants must reside in the NT and intend to study at a NT tertiary institution. There are two categories of Teacher Education Scholarships based on previous academic achievement. A strong emphasis has been placed on high performing school leavers and graduates (minimum Australian Tertiary Admission Rank scores of 75 or distinction average) since funding under the Smarter Schools National Partnerships commenced in 2009. This category of scholarship offers annual payments commencing at $12,000. The second category of scholarships for school leavers and graduates with a minimum Australian Tertiary Admission Rank scores of 65 or a credit average commence at $10,000 per annum.

In data collections made available to this review, information on graduates since 2008 was available. The completeness of this data is not guaranteed. The program manager advised that since 2002 a total of 94 Teacher Education Scholarship recipients had graduated. Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of qualification types over the 2008-2011 period in the scholarship program.

Figure 3 Distribution of Teacher Education Scholarship graduates by type of qualification 2008-2011
Remote Teaching Service

The Remote Teaching Service recruitment process was trialled in August 2010 which included the Teach Remote campaign. The aim was to secure staff appointments in very remote Indigenous schools for two years. This initiative resulted in 345 applications from which an initial 68 teachers were rated suitable or highly suitable for very remote Indigenous schools. These applicants were offered teaching positions in November 2010 to commence in 2011. Subsequently, another 80 applicants were rated suitable or highly suitable to commence in 2011.21

The key feature of the Remote Teaching Service initiative was the introduction of psychological and behavioural assessments in the recruitment process of those staff applying for remote teaching positions. In addition there were also incentives offered including:

- right of return to the education system from which applicants had been recruited;
- English as a Second Language teaching professional learning and support;
- support through an online "community" of remote teachers;
- proper recognition through opportunities to enter leadership roles, and
- quality induction including on-site cultural orientation by locals.

Some additional support processes were built into the Remote Teaching Service recruitment and monitoring, such as providing good levels of community information to applicants early in the recruitment process and a follow-up questionnaire five weeks after commencement for feedback and reflection on the level of satisfaction. No in-depth analysis of the perceptions of the initiative’s implementation, and effectiveness of various elements was possible as data from profiles, five week survey and exit surveys were not available.

The PIPS data was used to determine the overall trends in retention figures since the new database was fully commissioned in 2007. The analysis consort inclusion and exclusion process below resulted in a total of 2766 staff in the analysis (see Appendix C for data treatment details):

- only the staff data for first appointments (ie newly recruited n= 8987);
- in classroom positions (n=6171)
- not identified as Assistant Teachers (n= 5499)
- excluding pre-existing staff in 2007 (n=2447) and post April 2011 appointments (n=286)

Figure 4 highlights the comparison of the 67 Closing the Gap schools and non-Closing the Gap schools’ staff retention at six months and twelve months over the combined 2007-2011 period. The staff retention over 6 months is 5% lower in the non-Closing the Gap sites. This is statistically significant difference (p<.001). The retention over twelve months
is higher in the non-Closing the Gap sites at by 1% which was not statistically significant ($p=.735$). The comparison uses the individual records for “first appointment” with DET to filter out those staff not recruited to Closing the Gap sites but possibly returning from leave or elsewhere in the system. Only classroom teaching appointments were used ie not assistant teachers or other support staff and those retained to school rather than system.

**Figure 4 Comparison of combined 2007-2011 percentage of staff retained at 6 and 12 months in the RSD and non-RSD schools**

Table 9 indicates that the number of staff recruited was lower for the commencement of 2011 teaching year than in previous years. The 2011 retention rates at over 6 months and over 12 months increased substantially by comparison with previous years. The comparison of annual recruitment cohorts suggests that there is a statistically significant difference across years and locations and retention periods.
Table 9 Comparison of non-Closing the Gap and Closing the Gap schools retention of staff at six months and twelve months for each year 2007-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment Year</th>
<th>Non Closing the Gap schools</th>
<th></th>
<th>Closing the Gap schools</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff retained more than 6 months</td>
<td>Staff retained more than 12 months</td>
<td>Staff retained more than 6 months</td>
<td>Staff retained more than 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>52.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>64.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>76.4</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total recruits</td>
<td>1824</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>60.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In figure 5 the variation between years for staff retention over six months comparing Closing the Gap and non-Closing the Gap sites reflects a statistically significant ($p < .000$) difference with much higher proportion of retention in 2011 for both groups of schools. Each year Closing the Gap schools have had slightly higher retention rates compared to non-Closing the Gap schools at six months. Whilst it is difficult to tell from the data, it may be that this is an artefact of the availability of temporary staff for short term contracts in the predominantly urban school that comprise non-Closing the Gap sites for relief or backfilling temporary vacancies.
In figure 6 the variation between years for staff retention over twelve months between Closing the Gap and non-Closing the Gap sites is not significant. The same pattern of retention rates being higher in the Closing the Gap schools that was evident at the six month measure is evident in the twelve month retention measure except in 2008 and 2011. The data certainly warrant further investigation to identify any anomalies in contract issuing to be confident of the unexpected similarities between Closing the Gap and non-Closing the Gap school staff retention rates.

Figure 6 Comparison of staff retention (%) at twelve months and over in non-Closing the Gap and Closing the Gap schools 2007-2011
National Alliance for Remote Indigenous Schools

DET are the lead agency in this collaboration between Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia, New South Wales and Australian governments, and the Stronger Smarter Institute. The alliance was established in 2011 to improve recruitment, retention and development of quality teachers in approximately 170 remote Indigenous schools across Australia. There are 14 projects identified and are branded under the banner of Teach Remote. There are four projects identified (see Box 2) which are directed at improving teacher recruitment for remote Indigenous schools. These include:

- A marketing campaign;
- An improved online application system;
- Improved selection tools; and
- An Indigenous student support program.

To date none of these projects have received formal agreement.
### 4.3.3 Observations and Outcomes against targets

Through the "right of return policy" 18 teachers elected to transfer to very remote Indigenous schools in 2011. It is not clear whether all of these teachers were from NT urban schools or whether some "right of return" conditions were negotiated with other jurisdictions. A total of 146 teacher recruits were supplied through the Remote Teaching Service to fill the 92 actual and 47 potential vacancies identified for 2011. It is too soon to identify the improvement in retention of these recruits to the objective of a two year appointment completion. Unfortunately, data were not available to assess the perceptions of Remote Teaching Service recruits on their satisfaction with the application and recruitment process, induction and orientation or reasons for exit.

Each year the interest in Indigenous scholarships has increased with 120 people making enquiries in 2012. However, the application process is daunting and a number of factors such as committing to four years of study and the demand of academic literacy appear to be prohibitive for many.

Potential applicants living remote locations, particularly Indigenous students, still face the challenges of committing to a four year degree, having no case management support and dealing with inferior information technology services.

There are two key criteria for successful completion by remote Indigenous students in both pre-service degree courses and in non-degree award courses. These are, firstly, the inclusion of group instructional time for shared learning and shared understanding of "how the system works". Secondly, case management support has been effective for Darwin recruits with just under 25% of Indigenous scholarship recipients requiring high levels of support. This support is not available to remote scholarship holders and its absence may be associated with higher withdrawal rates. The financial assistance offered by the substantial scholarships is understood to allow students to focus on their study requirements, especially those with family responsibilities.

There are four key areas emerging from the qualitative data to be addressed in maximising the success of the initiatives targeted at improving recruitment:

- Some improvements have been made to the scholarship application process. However, remaining barriers have been identified for improvement, even for people whose first language is English. Potential for increasing scholarship applicants from the Alice Springs region need to be investigated.
- Support for remote and Indigenous higher education students is essential. The tertiary enabling programs including explicit guidance on how academia works and academic preparation are considered by lecturers and mentors to be necessary but currently inadequately addressed.
- Better links between the higher education program’s content at CDU and VET course content would support many more students in making a successful transition. For example, many remote staff developing their career pathways in schools, through
Certificate III, IV and Diploma in Children's Services, experience a significant and insurmountable jump in academic demands when moving into the Bachelor course.

- The prevailing equity issue of housing for local recruits to overcome perceived equity issue with non-local recruits. Supporting Aboriginal people/teachers to understand how the system works, become better teachers, then they can focus on teaching—(mentoring is needed)

Numerous reports and trials indicate that the investment in distance delivery has been unsuccessful due to the absence of participant buy in, whereas face to face and block instruction are more acceptable and achieve better outcomes. In addition the cost effective mentoring and supports for very remote Indigenous staff in Higher Education such as the RITE and MIT scholarships need to incorporate learnings from VET delivery successes and demonstrated achievement in the CDU and Catholic Education Office project, “Growing Our Own”.

At the time of finalising this review, there was no indication that a system or mechanism was in place to make use of data or information that has been collected for tracking program design against current knowledge of trainees’ or recruits’ needs, preferences or outcomes. There are very rich potential sources of data such as the Remote Teaching Service surveys, exit interviews, or final reports from Batchelor Institute contracts. One possibility to assist in building the evidence base may be to collate corporate knowledge across DET business areas to develop an evidence framework. Similar to the evidence framework for identifying literacy programs, this training framework could guide assessment of potential programs’ sustainability and relevance to particular contexts. Such an evidence framework requires an embedded approach to incorporating learnings from training models and new innovative or responsive methods in an ongoing manner.

Current indications from the combined data strongly suggest that specific cohort planning will be required to make the target of 200 More Indigenous Teachers. Strategic planning (potentially informed by the evidence framework above) will be required for putting the right people in the right training.
4.4 Improving Teacher Retention

4.4.1 Background Strategic and policy development

The majority of strategies related to improving remote teacher retention rates have been incentives under the conditions of employment, for example paid study leave and airfares out of remote areas. Anecdotally, these employment package incentives have been considered to have minimal impact on the overall retention rates of remote teachers. There is currently no overarching policy or workforce development framework to clearly articulate a strategy for retention of externally recruited teachers and school leaders.

4.4.2 Key / defining initiatives and activities

Three initiatives reviewed here implicitly acknowledge that improved retention of remote teachers requires more supportive and cultural orientation; professional learning specific to the demands of remote teaching; recognition, and opportunities for career advancement. The launch of the National Alliance for Remote Indigenous Schools has scoped a wide range of projects targeted at improved retention of teachers in remote schools. Although none of these are yet formally agreed across the seven jurisdictions and organisations, some key activities have commenced and are included for review. The Centre for School Leadership, Learning and Development was launched in 2011 as a joint project of DET and CDU. This centre provides career development programs, especially those promoted by the Remote Teaching Service project. The Cultures of Collaboration project was initiated prior to the commencement of the Centre for School Leadership, Learning and Development, but is now delivered through the centre.

Examples:

National Alliance for Remote Indigenous Schools

DET are the lead agency in this collaboration between Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia, New South Wales and Australian governments, and the Stronger Smarter Institute. The alliance was established in 2011 to improve recruitment, retention and development of quality teachers in approximately 170 remote Indigenous schools across Australia. There are 14 projects identified and are branded under the banner of Teach Remote. To date no formal agreements have been signed to deliver these projects. It is anticipated that the national virtual network will be launched in October 2012.

The DET hosted the inaugural remote teachers conference in October, 2011 and the national orientation program in April, 2012. A national leaders conference is scheduled for July, 2012 and the annual teachers conference will be held in October, 2012.
Given the very formative stage of development for much of the work in the 14 projects proposed under the alliance, only a brief description is provided for each project in Box 2 as sourced from promotional material.

**Centre for School Leadership, Learning and Development – Leadership programs**

The Centre for School Leadership, Learning and Development was established in 2011 and many of the previous leadership and professional development programs delivered by the DET were transitioned to the new Centre. Three leadership programs are discussed here as examples of the development opportunities offered to support teachers and current school leaders in their career development. Access to a number of opportunities in the Centre is a key incentive for teachers recruited through the Remote Teaching Service. The improved selection processes using behavioural and psychological profiles under the Remote Teaching Service project are understood to contribute to the likelihood of longer term retention and are not repeated in this section.

The Aspirant Leaders program is made available to Assistant Principals and Senior Teacher Level 3 aspiring to be Principals or Assistant Principals, and classroom teachers aspiring to be senior teachers.

The High Potentials program is aimed at Assistant Principals who are preparing for principalship. This program requires nomination by the Director of School Performance. This program consists of four workshops with routine contact through REACT, and an approved project completion. The workshops include topics on hard conversations, conducting 360 degree reviews, emotional intelligence and developing a project.

The Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher program is linked to the national standards for accomplished teachers. The expectation for graduates of this program is to be offered salary incentives to transfer into dedicated Leading Teacher positions in remote and very remote schools. Eleven of these positions were identified for commencement of the 2012 school year.

**Cultures of Collaboration**

The DET developed Cultures of Collaboration Program to provide cross cultural competency training at the individual and group level. The program is well suited to and has been delivered at the school level. All training is initiated by a principal or Director of School Performance level request to the Centre for School Leadership, Learning and Development.

Cultures of Collaboration was originally designed and run as an intensive four day program. It is expected that an Indigenous and non-Indigenous pair participate together through a range of self awareness and behavioural activities. It is designed to provide workplaces with a platform for ongoing conversations and activities as opposed to a “once off” experience.
Applicant System*
Making applying for teaching jobs in over 170 remote Indigenous schools across Australia easy and efficient for both teachers and employers. The system provides a valuable data source to inform ongoing recruitment and workforce management. (Project Leaders: WA)

Common Orientation Program
Creating a community of high quality and committed remote teachers across Australia who are ready to take up the challenge of making a difference to the lives of Indigenous students through education. (Project Leaders: NT/Qld)

Community and Cultural Orientation Program
Preparing new recruits for the unique challenges and opportunities of living and teaching remote. This involves a comprehensive online program that explores cultural understanding and practical strategies that have proven success with Indigenous students. (Project Leaders: Qld)

ESL Package
Generating success during the first ten weeks of remote employment through an online ESL course with practical and relevant strategies based on best practice and key understandings. (Project Leaders: Qld)

Indigenous Student Support*
Promoting teaching as a career of choice to senior secondary Indigenous students and connecting them with teacher mentors to build their capacity and willingness to pursue teaching qualifications. (Project Leaders: NT)

Leaders’ Conference
Strengthening and developing the national network of leaders committed to a quality teacher workforce for our remote Indigenous schools. A valuable opportunity for you to collaborate and share ideas with others leading the way in remote Indigenous education. (Project Leaders: WA/NT)

Leadership Mentoring
Building remote leadership capacity and capabilities through ongoing support and mentoring with experienced, exceptional principals. This program allows you to learn from those who’ve already experienced success on the remote leadership journey. (Project Leaders: NSW)

Marketing campaign*
Coordinated national communications campaign to attract suitable, high quality and committed teachers to teach in remote Indigenous schools across Australia. You’ll be kept up to date with the developing range of services, support and opportunities; playing a key role in actively spreading the Teach Remote message across the teaching profession. (Project Leaders: WA)

Master’s Scholarships
Recognising and rewarding outstanding remote teachers through scholarships for Master’s level study. This will include financial support and flexible learning options to help you take your teaching career to the next level. (Project Leaders: WA)

NARIS Website
Delivering a central online source of up to date information to keep you informed about upcoming employment opportunities, professional learning, news and available support services. (Project Leaders: Qld)

Numeracy Package
Giving new remote teachers the tools for success during the first ten weeks of employment through an online numeracy course with practical and relevant strategies. (Project Leaders: NT)

Selection Tools and Processes*
Helping remote schools find teachers with the right qualities, skills and dispositions to be successful. This involves creating a community of high performing teachers with a reputation for excellence that will support your career pathways and ongoing success. (Project Leaders: NT)

Teachers’ Conference
Sharing proven best practice, leading edge research and generating new ideas and partnerships. This exclusive annual event raises the professional profile of remote teachers and provides a rare opportunity for you to overcome geographic barriers and network with colleagues. (Project Leaders: Qld/WA)

Virtual Teaching Network
Connecting, developing and supporting remote teachers across Australia through an exclusive online network that lets you get online, get connected and get involved. (Project Leaders: NT)

*projects directed at improving teacher recruitment
4.4.3 Observations and Outcomes against targets

The Centre is in relatively early stages of development, with most programs offered presently having been transferred from the human resource business area of DET. Strategic planning and scoping of the business plan has only occurred in May 2012. There observations are made with full acknowledgement of this formative period for the Centre.

The Centre has identified that between 20 and 34% of staff in each of DET's service delivery regions are involved in a program delivered by the Centre. At the time of data collection for this review there were no identified Indigenous staff enrolled in programs at the Centre despite dedicated equity places being available. Some work was conducted by Principal consultants in the Centre to produce a white paper on Indigenous Leadership and Leadership in Remote Communities including the challenge of cross cultural conversations with regional directors.

The Aspirants program encourages active involvement of participants through project based learning and is reported to meet the needs of the current non-Indigenous and largely urban based participants. However, the emerging challenges and enablers to increasing Indigenous leadership in DET and schools, including the dual or co-principal arrangements have highlighted the need for highly skilled coaches and poor supply of such skills in regional areas.

The Highly Accomplished and Leading Teacher program attracted 60 applicants in 2011 with 32 being accepted. The DET reported over 30% of these participants from remote schools and although no Indigenous teachers applied. The 2012 program expects to achieve another 20 graduates.

There are currently six Culture of Collaboration facilitators available in the NT. All facilitators are fully employed in a range of other positions resulting a in "leave of absence" type of arrangement when required to provide Cultures of Collaboration training. Perhaps the most pressing issue for the place model of delivery, which allows the participation of any and all staff in a school, is that there is no allocated budget. There is no quantitative data available on the number of participants and impact on school culture or retention. One interviewee reported that the importance and impact of Cultures of Collaboration he had observed led him to believe that the process should be mandated for all remote schools rather than an ad hoc or volunteer subscription. Centre staff also reported that there is a perception that the program is under referred by the Executive Directors and Directors of School Performance. An important first step would be to review the program content and delivery design prior to further expansion.
4.5 Improving and Diversifying the Early Childhood workforce

The following section documents DET's involvement in Remote Early Childhood Workforce Development. Menzies note that building a quality remote teaching workforce needs to be considered very broadly when including provision of Early Childhood Development and Early Childhood Education and Care by DET. As such the following key issues are recognised:

- Early Childhood Development is an extremely complex service provision environment
- DET is a large employer and provider of Early Childhood Development in the NT, the largest provider in remote areas
- Growth, through new services such as Families as First Teachers and implementation of National Quality Framework reforms mean that more qualified workers will be required in remote areas
- Skilled professional workforce standards through the effect of the COAG reforms of the National Quality Standard are challenging to implement and supply will take some time to respond. This is true for both the Early Childhood Teacher workforce required for early years classrooms, and all other staff including the Indigenous workforce required for other school based activities and early learning and care programs
- New initiatives aligned to the Territory-wide Early Childhood Workforce Plan 2011-2021 are in place or commencing, linking of DET initiatives to these early in the planning and implementation phase may lead to enhanced Early Childhood Development Remote Workforce outcomes. This is in the early stage of implementation.

4.5.1 Background Strategic and policy development

Investing in the early years is now understood to be one of the most effective strategies available to government for reducing intergenerational disadvantage, building human capability and creating a fairer society.23,24

Government in Australia has embarked on a significant program of policy change to strengthen the early years and reduce developmental vulnerabilities. Local policy investment is consistent with trends internationally which endorse more systematic and integrated approaches to building a universal quality early childhood development sector while at the same time targeting specific policy initiatives for the most vulnerable children in society who need special support.

In the NT, as in other Australian jurisdiction and countries, the Early Childhood Development sector is comprised of a number of different service types and activities. Ensuring increased universal access, implementing consistent national quality
standards and an integrated approach to service provision in Early Childhood Development are, across the board, current priorities of governments. The sector is broad and has well documented complexity in its range of delivery systems and models\textsuperscript{24} it includes early childhood education and care, child health, and family support. In the NT many types of services make up the Early Childhood Development sector these include; Early Childhood Development and Early Childhood Education and Care, Child Health and increasingly Integrated Family Services.

NTG in conjunction with Australian Government has a long history of policy setting and funding of innovation in Early Childhood Development. Relevant to SSBF is the high level strategic policy investment undertaken by DET to build a sector capable of more robust and accessible delivery for early learning, education and care, and family service.

The strategy put in place seeks to develop the knowledge and tools available to early childhood educators and childcare workers. The quality of the care and education available to children in formal Early Childhood Education and Care is intrinsically linked to staff competencies\textsuperscript{25}. Appropriate specialist training in early childhood learning and development linked with appropriate working conditions for staff in all forms of Early Childhood Development provision are key themes in research and recent literature.

Staff should be appropriately trained for the service they work in, have strong knowledge grounded in child development and children’s rights. In all situations specialist support and resources to undertake Early Childhood Development work should be available\textsuperscript{26}. In terms of learning and development specialised teacher training produces better outcomes for children and less qualified staff are significantly better at supporting children’s learning when they work with an early childhood teacher\textsuperscript{26}.

The Productivity Commission Report 2011 reviewed key issues linked to the Early Childhood Development workforce in rural and remote areas. Specific recommendations included enhancement of targeted recruitment of workers from rural and remote backgrounds, the delivery of training in rural and remote locations, support for pre-service teachers to experience working life in rural and a reinforced the need for governments should provide all Early Childhood Education and Care workers in remote communities with timely access to appropriate housing. It is projected that more qualified workers will be required in remote areas to deliver Early Childhood Development programs. Implementation of NQS reforms mean that skilled professional workforce standards will be challenging to implement and supply will take some time to respond. This is true for both the Early Childhood Teacher workforce required for early years classrooms, and all other staff including the Indigenous workforce required for other school based activities and early learning and care programs.
Regulation and funding for early years services has been a priority. Activities include assistance to, and regulation of, child care services and the provision of resources to mobile services, playgroups and parenting support and information programs. Regulation of standards and licensing in child care centres is a key program area, with high relevance to quality standards in budget based remote services.

### 4.5.2 Key / defining initiatives and activities

1. DET is the lead agency in the partnership with AG to implement the COAG Investing in the Early Years – A National Early Childhood Strategy in the NT.

2. DET ECPR was the lead agency for the development of the Territory wide Early Childhood Workforce Plan 2011-2021, with the input from both the NT Early Childhood Steering Committee and the Early Childhood Workforce Development Working Group. Implementing a range of enablers to develop the workforce, including support for initiatives to build an enhanced Early Childhood Development remote workforce are planned through this division. DET has a funding commitment to implementing a range of strategic initiatives to build generally the Early Childhood Development workforce.

3. DET ECPR (NT Quality Education and Care) as the regulator of NT children services has in-depth knowledge of the National Quality Framework (NQF) and the changes that will be required to enhance quality in Early Childhood Development settings. Especially relevant is the implementation of recommended professional workforce standards around benchmark qualifications.

4. DET is the largest single provider of Early Childhood Development / Early Childhood Education and Care services in the NT, primarily through the operation of its school based preschool programs. The Early Childhood Development workforce includes staff in Early Years classrooms and other school programs (for example ISAs and Indigenous teaching support staff such as tutors). In remote areas DET delivers a preschool program in eighteen of the twenty Growth Towns, with Catholic Education Office being the other Early Childhood Education and Care provider. In recent years DET has undergone considerable growth in the area of direct service provision in Early Childhood Development to remote communities. The establishment of specific models for three programs: Remote Aboriginal Mobile Early Childhood Services to the Sandover- Plenty Highway Region of Central Australia (5-6 communities), Mobile Preschool Program to increase universal access to preschool to eligible children from communities where there are insufficient number of children to warrant employment of a full time preschool teacher to (24 smaller communities), Families as First Teachers (21 communities). Mobile Early Childhood Services and Mobile Preschool Program/Universal Access trial programs are currently undergoing programmatic changes. However in total these programs have considerable reach to remote communities and employ a significant Indigenous workforce (upwards of 70).
Examples:

Workforce development

DET ECPR has commenced provision of training for Indigenous staff in both Mobile Preschool Program and Universal Access, and Families as First Teachers. These had different training strategies and varied success. Although commenced in 2007 the training strategy for Mobile Preschool staff was not fully implemented. Enrolment in training was coordinated by individual schools. Over the length of the program many staff did not access formal VET qualifications. This contracts markedly to the FaFT program strategy commenced in 2011. FaFT developed and implemented a specific workforce strategy linked to dual stream profession recruitment for Family Educators (22), recruitment and provision of Certificate III in Community Service Work for Indigenous Family Liaison Workers/playgroup workers (35), and recruitment of EC trained professional as regional advisory staff (4). PD strategy for staff is well developed and resourced through provision of a quarterly PD, and attendance and costs of formal training for all Indigenous staff costed in the program’s budget. MPP/Universal Access had developed a workforce strategy linked to recruitment of Mobile Preschool teachers (a registered Teacher) and Teacher Assistants and provision of Certificate 111/IV in Education Support and more recently also Certificate 111 in Community Service Work.

Product development EC remote workforce Learning At Workbook

Support for products to enable consistent appropriate training delivery to remote early childhood workers has commenced. A key approach has been the development of a series of Learning At Workbooks designed by BIITE. The model aims to reduce fragmentation of training delivery approaches for workers in child care, preschool, playgroup, smaller crèches or people wishing to enter the early childhood workforce. The rationale of the product is to support consistency in the multiple agencies who deliver early childhood training. Product design has included the creation of paper based learning workbooks and also dvds, and the use of these in ‘yarning circles’ and individual study to reinforce workplace. Learning tasks are included in the workbooks and most learning tasks require learners to produce tangible evidence or some form of documentation of their learning. This evidence is assessment evidence mapped to competencies within the Certificates CHC10108 Certificate I in Work Preparation (Community Services) to CHC30708 Certificate III in Children’s Services.

Building the Remote Early Childhood Workforce Development Pilot

DET ECPR (IFS) is leading the development and implementation of Integrated Family Services approach and the development of Integrated Child and Family Centres in four growth towns: Ngukkur, Maningrida, Yuendumu and Gunbalunya. IFS will not be an employer of staff in these centres, but has a commitment to build the remote early childhood workforce in communities where the centres will be built. A one year intervention has commenced to fund and recruit local trainers to deliver accredited VET training and school based apprenticeships in child care and education work to current early childhood development staff and secondary students (next generation). Trainers will
employed by schools in Maningrida, Yuendumu, Ngukurr and Borroloola. This will include the first trial of Vocational Education and Training in Schools and School-based Apprenticeships for Children's Services qualification in the NT. Trainers will use the Learning at Work products.

4.5.3 Observations and Outcomes against targets

While the explicit focus of DET Early Childhood Policy and Regulations Division management is on the development of the early childhood development sector workforce as a whole, balancing the needs of DET employees is also required. Differing professional roles within service types have emerged for all these roles in required. Documentation (through position descriptions) is being undertaken and has required a strategic and coherent approach. Arrangements for provision of workforce training have fragmented with responsibilities resting across specific DET program areas and their budgets. This may create inequity for staff wishing to access training and qualifications. Research is required to establish the pedagogical needs for the range of early childhood development programs being delivered by DET and others in Strong Start Bright Future College locales. Documentation is needed to determine the mix of skills and qualifications needed generally across the DET early childhood development remote workforce.

While it is too early to gauge the success of the Building the Remote Early Childhood Workforce Project based on past learning around the extended length of time required to complete qualifications and for trainers to build rapport with students to enable progress the one year time frame is very optimistic.

Given the preferred qualification for family educators and other positions within DET's early childhood programs is an Early Childhood teaching degree, the planning to meet this demand may need to be embedded in the Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy.27
5. Summary and recommendations

This section provides the predominant themes emerging from the observations and outcomes of the initiatives included in this review.

5.1 Observation: A coherent and comprehensive overarching DET workforce strategy is needed to align the disparate efforts toward addressing the complex needs of remote educators.

While there are many examples of positive initiatives to improve the very remote schools workforce a more coherent alignment of efforts is needed. The review found a general lack of alignment between many of these initiatives and no overarching organisational framework for their coordination. Externally contracted initiatives have not always been aligned to DET system needs, and were frequently not sustained after a design or trial phase. This included initiatives to improve the provision of training to remote Indigenous school based staff. For example the innovative and ambitious web based resources e-PIE and e-ASSIST, have not been endorsed for use by DET Corporate IT division. Other resources developed to engage Indigenous people in literacy learning such as I-See I-Talk or Read English on the Web were designed to link to e-PIE, but these are now unusable. The Early Childhood sector has a high demand for a more diverse range of skills which will require clear identification of core competencies and career pathways will be supported.

Tracking and monitoring progress toward the outcomes would be facilitated by alignment of even the short term or seemingly ad hoc activities within an overarching framework for reporting and accountability. DET’s Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy has achieved a coherent and comprehensive logic for initiatives targeting the professional up-skilling of Indigenous staff. The considerable and concerted investment in facilitated career pathways and development opportunities are explicitly articulated in the strategy. Although in its early stages, the lines of accountability and collaboration with internal DET business areas and external training and higher education providers are explicitly articulated. This will enable improved program and system level monitoring and tracking.

Implications

The approach taken with the Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy and process of development and implementation provide a sound base and formula for the expansion and focus on developing a comprehensive DET workforce strategy. Alignment of current DET workforce policy documents and programs outside Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy is needed to achieve a clearer logic and accountability to high level objectives. This includes the full range of activity and initiatives from National Alliance for Remote Indigenous Schools, Remote Teaching Service, scholarships, cultural orientation and competencies, leadership and career pathway programs.
Using the Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy as a basis or model to incorporate and align other DET effort may be useful.

**Recommendation 1** Develop a more coherent logic for an overarching strategy that incorporates the Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy and all other efforts toward developing a quality workforce.

**5.2 Observation:** “Growing Our Own” has made encouraging progress.

Sustained investments in structural supports, such as the regionally based Remote Workforce Development officers, have occurred over recent years. The se structures have been particularly well funded through SSNPs. These are well in place to contribute in the longer term to overall strategic level outcomes.

Substantial investments in improving structural supports will contribute to long term Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy outcomes. Such investments include:

- improving the documentation of Teacher and Assistant Capabilities and Standards;
- clarifying qualification pathways from prevocational to education leader positions;
- establishing career progress incentive payments;
- funding places for delivery of whole qualifications for remote staff, and
- creating DET Remote Workforce Development Support Teams.

The ability of the Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy Steering Group to drive the strategy is critical to ensuring accountability for progress and planned outcomes. This drive must include ensuring sufficient resources are available to continue the momentum for the strategy.

This incorporates the systems ability to incorporate the learnings from monitoring of all programs including the RTS recruitment process.

**Implications**

Refined, specific cohort planning will be required to obtain outcomes of 200 teachers by 2018. Need to attend to strategic planning for funding the right people in the right training.

“Growing Our Own” has achieved some significant outcomes but recent remote area teacher training programs have produced very small teacher graduate numbers. This includes general community based programs by BIITE and specific project activities.

A radically improved and better supported strategy will be needed to achieve the NTG target of 200 Indigenous teachers by 2018, especially if this number is to include a significant proportion of remote Indigenous staff.
Highly optimistic timelines eg 2 years intensive pre-service may be too short for most participants ((results from GOO/RITE and Curtin work in WA). Cohort approach with internships appears to be successful model!

The success of intensive fast track programs, such as the Remote Indigenous Teacher Education program, requires ongoing review with only limited and small numbers of participants with a diverse range of approaches to recruitment to the program and resourcing. RITE is currently being implemented in only one remote school, Maningrida. The status of Indigenous remote staff currently undertaking teacher training and education support courses needs quantifying.

Recommendation 2 Growing 200 Indigenous teachers by 2018 requires a strategic and collaborative approach that brings together DET, Charles Darwin University (CDU), Batchelor Institute for Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) and community.

5.3 Observation: Training and employment pathways for remote Indigenous DET staff are more clearly articulated for improved access.

The importance of school-based, pre-vocational programs for potential Indigenous employees is generally accepted. However this review found that there has been a very low uptake in qualification areas that are even loosely linked to education work. The effective evaluation of pre-vocational programs will require specific planning and longitudinal follow-up of outcomes data. Similar observations relate to Indigenous teacher scholarships programs.

Details of financial resources to be committed over time to professional development for remote Indigenous staff were not available. For example funding after June 2012 for Training and Coordination Teams was unsure. This lack of certainty is likely to impact on the sustainability of specific components of the strategy, maintaining strong governance and longer term resource planning.

Implications

The RAMP model provides a clear articulation of training and career pathways. The successful progression of staff along the RAMP model to achieve their aspirations appears to be dependent on the availability of funded places and the type of level of support offered by each of the succession of projects. The ad hoc nature of contracts with registered training organisations which appear to be dependent on disparate funding opportunities are likely to prevail. This might be addressed by having an evidence based framework against which projects can be designed and implemented to address the ‘proven’ critical elements for greater success.

The very remote Indigenous workforce development programs demonstrated greater success when design and implementation included:

- a cohort approach,
- trainees were mentored and managed,
• training occurred as an internship,
• financial assistance for intensive study periods.

Recommendation 3 “Growing our own” is making progress. To achieve the goal of the number of Indigenous educators and leaders proportional to the student population, program management need to maintain momentum, sustain resourcing and strengthen the overall strategy.

5.4 Observation: Poor documentation of past workforce development initiatives has lead to loss of corporate memory and limited the data available to benchmark progress and inform current policy decisions.

This observation is linked to the majority of DET workforce initiatives but is particularly pertinent to the large number of shorter term, ad hoc projects to support training pathways for very remote Indigenous staff. There is a short corporate or institutional memory and limited documentation from which to build the cumulative evidence about successful strategies. In particular, knowledge tends to be lost when initiatives are undertaken across short term or complex funding sources.

Implications

There is considerable cumulative knowledge in the areas of training delivery from DET training investments. This knowledge, and further research relating to this knowledge, should be used to inform ongoing strategic investment. For example:

a) Learnings from numerous reports and trials of training delivery approaches indicate that investment in distance delivery has achieved low levels of success as it is difficult to achieve participant buy in. Face-to-face and block delivery are much more acceptable and have better outcomes. Reinvestment in electronic delivery packages should be avoided unless significant change has occurred in the circumstances of students/ participants themselves and new investment can be appropriately justified;

b) The coordination of training for Vocational Education and Training enrolments appears to have beginning success; teacher trainees may benefit also from this approach;

c) Stories of recent successes in remote In-service teacher education programs should be collected and studied.

DET can draw on past learnings of both success and failure as it strives to respond to the need for more Indigenous teachers and professional school base staff in complex remote workplaces.

Recommendation 4 DET strategic and program level planning would benefit significantly from having a system for collating past lessons in to an evidence framework.
5.5 Observation: Data systems and collections about the workforce are not adequate for monitoring and tracking progress on outcomes.

This observation relates strongly to the need for building and evidence or research and development approach. The availability of outcome data for workplace training and development has been limited by the systems and ongoing system change. For example VETRAK commissioned in 2009 to monitor DET staff undertaking VET training has been replaced by a newer program. However, it will still be challenging to monitor staff training and qualification outcomes, especially internally provided professional learning. It is not anticipated that retrospective data will be entered.

Implications

An adaptable data collection and storage system that provides a consistent approach to monitoring and tracking development at the individual, regional and system level would support the reporting of the aligned efforts toward the high level outcomes or objectives.

Recommendation 5: Continue to strengthen the data management systems underpinning Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy and the broader workforce professional learning.

5.6 Observation: Overall literacy and numeracy competencies in the remote Indigenous workforce are low.

For all very remote Indigenous workforce initiatives a significant investment is needed to address entry point literacy, numeracy and information technology skills for ongoing workplace competency and access to training pathways. Some initiatives were focused on custom designed resources such as, Reading On the Web. Often these resources are not transferred to other workplace situations despite addressing common needs and outcomes.

Access to secondary education for residents in many remote NT communities has been low, and consequently there is only a small pool of people with the capacity to successfully undertake higher level vocational education or tertiary studies. The issue has been raised consistently in consultations, reports and publications. A more concerted response to meeting the literacy and numeracy support needs of Indigenous education staff is needed, and this will require specific research and investment. Given the current efforts to increase economic participation across the remote Indigenous population, opportunities for comprehensive across-government or across-sector approaches to adult literacy and numeracy support should be explored.

Implications

This issue is a much larger and more complex issue than just DET workforce needs to promote the integrity of training and expected high standards. A whole of community approach to two key areas are evident:
• thorough entry point assessments are needed to identify the support and preparation that will enable improved success or completions,
• maximise access to the range of resources already available and support their delivery or broader application.

Recommendation 6: Adult Literacy planning is needed across whole of community and government.
Documentary analysis

The evaluation team from Menzies met with the DET staff to identify potential data sources which could be used for the evaluation. These included:

**NTDET Strategic Directions & Program Reporting Documentation**

DET 20 Growth Towns Career Development Strategy: Briefing Paper for a proposed Strategy to the EC Steering Committee, October 2009

DET Indigenous Employment and Workforce Development Assistant Teacher Training Model 2009 powerpoint


DET Indigenous Assistant Teachers a school-based ‘teaching training’ model

DET Ramingining School Strategic Improvement and Annual Operational Plan 2009 -2011


DET Growing the Indigenous Workforce Crucial Factors for Success, September 2011.

DET ITUP 2011 Status Report: Program for completion of six continuing students

DET Memorandum from Manager QTP to CEO re QTP Funding – CDU, BIITE, Taminmin December 2008

DET More Indigenous Teachers Programs Summary for 2012 study year

www.indigenousteacher.nt.gov.au

DET CDU Funding Agreement for the pre-service Indigenous Teacher Training Program called Remote Indigenous Teacher Program

DET NTER EL & QTP June Semester 1 2009 Project Plan Progress Report

**Contract and Select Tender Documents**

CDU RITE Progress Report Jan- June 2010

BIITE Technology, Reading and Early Childhood Services (TRECS) Project Report May 31, 2010

BIITE ITUP Final Report December 2010

NTG CDU Partnership Agreement Remote Indigenous Teacher Education RITE 20010- 2012.

NTG Smarter Schools National Partnerships Northern Territory Progress Report 2011

**Other sources**

AVETRA , New tools for old hands: ePortfolios for career and professional development in remote education workforces, Alicia Boyle, The Northern Institute and the Social Partnerships in Learning Research
Consortium, Charles Darwin University, Darwin, Australia


Early Childhood Actions RSD LIP 15 Towns 190111.xlsm
Workforce Evaluation

Discussion guide – Program Manager/Deliverers working in programs which deliver training to Trainees - Assistant Teacher Trainees/ Student Teachers

Introduction

- Explain purpose, audio recording, confidentiality and how feedback will be used
- Clarify any questions

Background

1. Can you briefly describe your role in the delivery of the training program?
2. How long have you worked in this role?

Success criteria

3. What characteristics do you believe are required in a successful classroom assistant or teacher in this context?
4. What do you think leads to successful training or preparation of classroom or school support staff (paraprofessionals) or teachers?

Enablers

5. In your opinion, what aspects of this program, the........................ have lead to greater capacity for staff to teach children and support their learning more effectively? Examples
6. What are the aspects of the teacher education program delivered in this context which have enabled success for the participants and the program?
7. How have attitudes of other staff (including those directly involved in the program and those not directly involved) influenced the success of the training program?

Challenges

8. In your opinion, what have been the challenges to (program delivery, course completion?) for this program?
9. What have been the challenges of any other aspects of the training program activities in your school? 
10. How have challenges been resolved?

Program improvement

11. What changes would you recommend to DET to make the program more successful?
12. What suggestions would you make to DET to improve other aspects and activities within the scope of workforce development more successful? ( ? probe for views around recruitment, retention, quality)

Program effectiveness

13. In the locations where this program has been implemented, has the staff training lead to improved outcomes?(In RITE an increase in the number of Indigenous teachers who stay in the community- improved teacher retention, improved student attendance and improved learning outcomes) What outcomes? How do you know/what are the key signs? (probe for specific stories)
14. In your school, have any of the other activities? - what do you mean here? lead to improved outcomes? What outcomes? How do you know/what are the key signs? (probe for specific stories)
15. Are there any stories of significant change that you would attribute to the training/program? Discuss
16. In your opinion, has the training on site and in school time been an effective and sustainable way to deliver increased teaching capacity to remote/regional schools? Explore why/why not (Any other aspects of this program that enhance its effectiveness / sustainability?)

Wrap up
17. Are there any other comments you have about DET’s workforce recruitment, retention and development initiatives?

Workforce Evaluation –
TEACHERS MENTORING OR ALONGSIDE TRAINEES discussion guide
Introduction
- Explain purpose, audio recording, confidentiality and how feedback will be used – consent if appropriate
- Clarify any questions
[indicate any programs subject of interview and add any not listed but commented on]

Background
18. Can you briefly describe your role with the <<initiative>>?
[mentors, coaches or team teachers to staff undergoing training or development programs]

19. How long have you been in this role? (with staff involved in this training?)

Success criteria
20. What characteristics do you believe are required in a successful classroom assistant or teacher in this context?

21. What do you think leads to successful training or preparation of classroom teachers, assistant teachers (paraprofessionals) or leaders?

Enablers
22. In your opinion, what aspects of staff / training have lead to greater capacity for staff to teach children and support their learning more effectively? Examples

Challenges
23. What are the aspects of the teacher education program or assistant teacher training delivered in this context which have enabled success for the participants and the program?

24. How have attitudes to the training from other staff influenced the success of the training program?

Program improvement
25. In your opinion, what have been the challenges to (program delivery, course completion?) in the <<initiative>>?

26. What have been the challenges of any other aspects (such as roles and responsibilities in the school, supports for those involved) of the workforce initiatives in your school?

27. How have challenges been resolved?

28. What changes would you recommend to DET to make these initiatives more successful?

29. What suggestions would you make to DET to improve other aspects and activities directed at successful staff recruitment, retention and developing quality?
Program effectiveness

30. In your school, has the <<initiative>> lead to improved outcomes? What outcomes? How do you know/what are the key signs? [probe for specific stories In RITE an increase in the number of Indigenous teachers who stay in the community- improved teacher retention, improved student attendance and improved learning outcomes]

31. In your school, are there any other activities that have contributed to successful staff recruitment, retention or quality training directly linked to improved outcomes? Elaborate? How do you know/what are the key signs? (probe for specific stories)

32. Are there any stories of significant change that you would attribute to the training/program? Discuss

33. In your opinion, has the content, delivery model and supports for <<initiative/s>> been an effective and sustainable way to deliver increased teaching capacity in your school? Explore why/why not (Any other aspects of this program that enhance its effectiveness / sustainability?)

Wrap up

34. Are there any other comments you have about DET’s workforce recruitment, retention and development initiatives?
PIPS Data Treatment Notes

Data current as of 1/4/2012 regarding 8987 distinct staff. No data on independent school staff or school council employees.

The start dates for each individual's earliest listed appointment are all on or after 17/5/2004, with 2216 listed before 1/1/2005. This is an artefact of the data system’s initialization and will affect analysis of duration of specific appointments. 2683 individuals have earlier recorded commencement dates with the department but no record of their earlier role.

NESB and Indigenous status data were incomplete. NESC was not specified for 3359 staff (302, 5326). Similarly 7722 identified as non-indigenous, 935 as indigenous and 330 were unspecified. It is likely that NESB and Indigenous staff are overrepresented in the “unspecified” group.

The raw data from DET had a row for each contract appointment; in many cases (such as renewal or reclassification) several rows referred to, in effect, the same appointment. There are also many cases of more than one contract being held simultaneously.

The data were aggregated in two ways.

First, we aggregated by 'appointment'. Multiple contracts were regarded as a single appointment if:

- They are allocated to the same person (determined by Staff_Id).
- They are with the same organisation (most often a school or group school).
- There is a gap of less than 3 months between the end of 1 contract and the commencement of the next one OR the duration of one contract lies within the duration of another.

The second aggregation was by individual. Again, 'start' and 'finish' data were retained. No allowances were made for gaps in service. Various data from the earliest and most recent contracts (such as Job Classification) were retained.

The data record a total of 13,130 appointments for 8987 individuals. There are 3118 ongoing positions (contract ends after the data collection date of 1/4/12).

The filter used: all positions (13k) -> first positions (8987) -> Classroom (6171) -> Non-AT(5499). Eliminate pre 2007 start (2447) and post 1/4/11 start (286) leaving a total of 2766.
7. Endnotes

1. Efthymiades, E (Feb 2011) email to Menzies Evaluation team confirming Chief Executives’ approval of evaluation scope
4. Masters, G (2011) Improving Educational Outcomes in the Northern Territory: preliminary advice to the Northern Territory Department of Education and Training, with a particular focus on the ongoing improvement of students’ literacy and numeracy achievements. ACER
5. DET (March 2010) Smarter Schools National Partnerships Report 2009
12. NT Education Act (Amendments 2009)
14. NT Occupation Shortage List, sourced: Department of Business and Employment website, May 2012
15. DET NTER Progress Report June 2009
18. DET Smarter Schools Partnership Report 2010
20. Sourced DET website accessed April 2012

26 UN General Comment 2005

27 King, A (2012) Feedback provided directly to authors in response to preliminary findings workshop 16 April 2012