

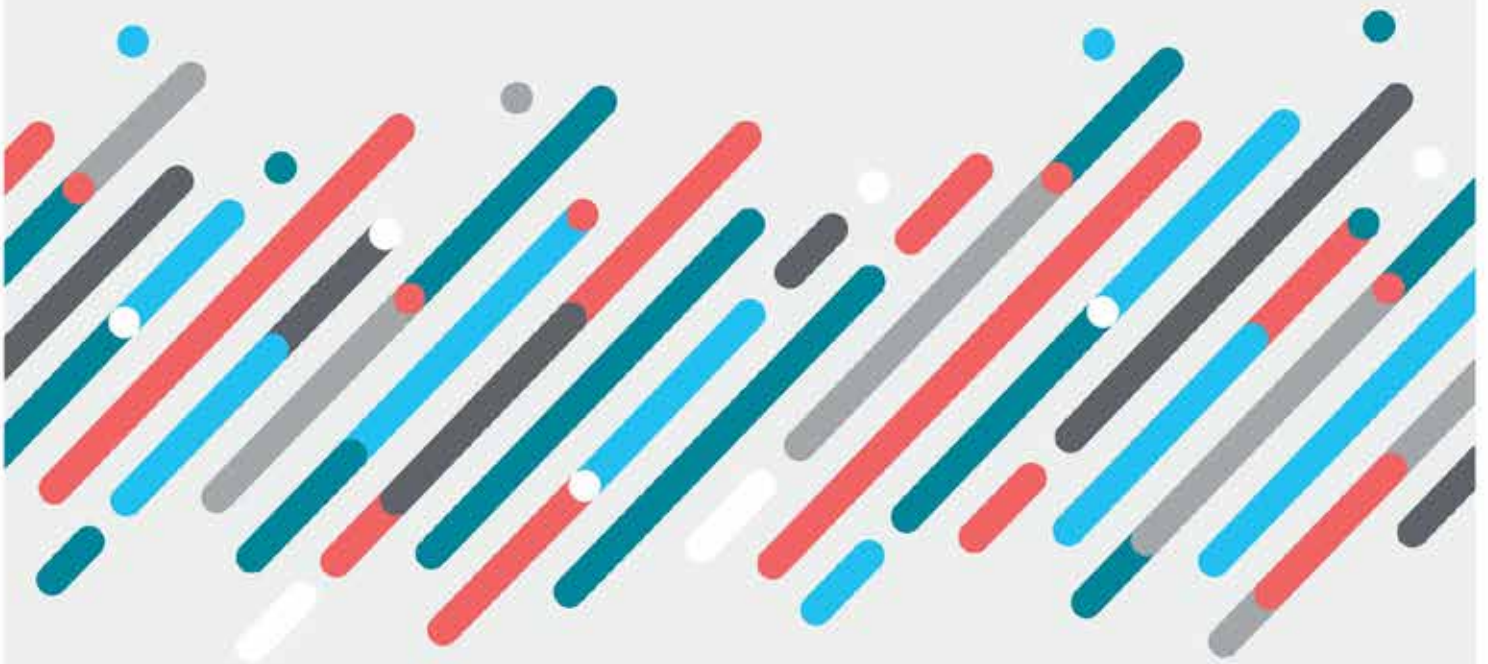


Australian Government
Department of Education

Choice and Affordability Fund Work Plan 2026-27

Catholic Education Western Australia Limited

Date agreed – 21 November 2025





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The document must be attributed as the (Choice and Affordability Fund Work Plan 2026-27).

Summary of Work Plan 2026-27

The 2026 to 2027 Work Plan builds upon and consolidates initiatives which have run for the past six years. The 2024 CAF annual report has outlined the success and impact of projects since the commencement of the 2022-2025 work plan. Based on the evidence of impact on schools, projects have been continued or slightly modified. The number of initiatives has been reduced to fewer high impact activities which address the priorities of the CAF program.

This consolidation in many cases means that significant funding can be provided to the activities. There have been a number of underlying strategic principles which inform this Work Plan. Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) strategic planning and the quality schools initiatives define system priorities for all schools. Elements of the Closing the Gap initiative and the Alice Springs Declaration underpinning initiatives relating to First Nations peoples are addressed. The Better and Fairer Schools Bilateral Agreement is also reflected in many of the activities. The Work Plan is therefore nationally and locally strategic, high-impact, equitable and inclusive of school communities. Support for vulnerable school communities remains a cornerstone of CEWA's philosophy. In this work plan, information is included on the descriptions and anticipated outcomes of the activities, which clearly demonstrates that they are beyond normal service provisions of schools and accordingly, add value to the education and wellbeing of students.

The Work Plan has been developed following significant consultation with schools. School improvement advisors (SIA) and regional officers (RO), as well as central consultants liaise with schools regularly. A manager is appointed for each initiative, and they work closely with the schools involved to ensure all needs are met. Whilst some activities are targeted for specific cohorts, the majority of activities are available for all schools to participate to.

Deferred funding from previous years will be applied sustainably to multi-year programs, ensuring continuity of key initiatives, while maintaining financial responsibility and avoiding future dependency on carry-forward funds.

Affordable schools

Two activities address this priority. One activity involves supporting smaller regional primary schools through direct fee relief processes, thereby ensuring greater choice and affordability for parents. Another important outcome is to ensure these schools remain sustainable and high-quality. A second activity – the virtual school network (ViSN) – widens curriculum opportunities for secondary schools. This contributes towards sustainable delivery and enhances choice in terms of subject selections. Both activities have been running for the duration of the funding.

Transition assistance

Regional transition funding – rural schools with enrolments of 150 or less will continue to be supported under this funding category. Nominated funds are fully allocated.

Transition funding – this commenced in 2024 and will continue to be the largest budget line in the Work Plan. After extensive consultation with schools and central finance staff, allocations are directed to areas of need as a consequence of funding model changes. The position of schools in terms of funding will be carefully monitored to ensure that new schools may be added to the list for potential support and that funds are distributed in a timely manner.

Special Circumstances funding

No specific allocation is made in this work plan for special circumstances initiatives. Should appropriate circumstances arise, funding can be applied immediately. This may mean that other activities fall into deficit; this will be underwritten by CEWA and recovered in the following year's funding. Any allocations will be made in a timely manner using these processes. The Australian Government will be informed immediately.

Supporting disadvantaged education communities

Five separate activities will be funded under this priority. The First Nations Families as First Educators Program will continue to be funded and expanded where appropriate to additional schools who show interest. Curriculum and re-engagement education (CARE) schools will also continue to be funded by providing teaching assistants and social workers. These schools cater for high needs cohorts. Another activity, the First Nations teaching assistant (FNTA) program, will also continue in partnership with the University of Notre Dame Australia (UNDA). A further equity program relates to the provision of devices and IT support to Kimberley schools. This program has proven to be extremely successful. A new program will be added for 2026 to 2027. This will provide early years numeracy support to smaller regional centres, particularly where it is difficult to find highly experienced staff. This program will involve visits and in-class support.

Student well-being

Two activities will continue. The first relates to specialised well-being support within CEWA's well-being framework. This involves a mixture of centrally organised professional learning and school visitations to work with teachers and students. The child safety program will also continue and support schools in this important area.

In summary therefore, the work plan focuses on key activities, most of which are continuing from previous years.

Overarching Risk Management

CEWA manages risk at a systemic level; the following contexts and processes supports this approach:

- CEWA as an incorporated entity – this provided strong governance and oversight of all schools across all four dioceses, including common financial and auditing requirements for each school. A refinement/upgrade of policies and procedures occurred during 2024 – and continues.
- Auditing and financial requirements are now common across all CEWA schools.
- Audit procedures are performed on an aggregated basis across all CEWA schools, with materiality assessed at the group level. Analytical review procedures are conducted over each school, in accordance with AIFRS and CEWA Accounting Policies.
- Staff in schools have received support regarding financial processes.
- A risk compliance officer was appointed to support all schools
- Legal counsel continues to provide advice in addressing potential risk.
- System-wide data collection platform and well-developed online capacity for schools
- Impact driven projects which built on established, evidence driven understandings; no 'experimentation' - which reduces the possibility of failing to deliver on performance indicators.

- Most projects are centrally driven and consistent with system strategic plans and priorities.
- Management model for projects – each project is the responsibility of an office Director and their consultants, and they are responsible for management of the project and liaising with schools.
- Overarching management of the entire program is conducted by dedicated central officers – milestone and financial oversight, including quarterly contact with the responsible Director.
- School Improvement Advisors and Regional Officers have an assigned number of schools and provide CAF updating, support and communication with central office staff.
- External reviews of some projects implemented in 2024.

Risk	How the risk will be managed
Reporting against projects and success indicators not undertaken adequately.	CEWA has a comprehensive management and compliance process, including consultants and managers specialising in the project area. Assessments of projects and budgets occurs regularly. Progress compliance and budget summaries issued quarterly.
Schools fail to implement project initiatives as agreed and specified.	Office consultants, SIAs and ROs in contact with schools; some projects require interim reports; issues typically identified early, thus enabling intervention; most projects centrally run.
Schools fail to spend or adequately account for funds received, with potential wastage of funds.	All schools run common accounting systems and protocols; records examined periodically by CEWA staff; final audit and signoff by Deloitte.
School viability is challenged, threatening engagement in project.	No system school in CEWA would become non-viable such that CAF funds would be compromised; support funding and cross-subsidisation processes exist; monitoring of schools regularly undertaken.
Work plan and CEWA processes are not flexible enough to accommodate urgent imperatives, such as special purpose funding or ministerial priorities.	The management processes and oversight are agile and responsive; CEWA has the capacity to urgently reallocate funds or if necessary, run the funding into deficit – with Department of Education approval – and adjust for the next year. Communication processes with schools are well developed.
Insufficient expertise exists in CEWA to effectively manage projects – office or schools.	Highly qualified and backup staff exist in offices; policies and procedures are well

Projects become less relevant in terms of contemporary practice and national and local priorities. Priorities within a participating school change such that participation is not as relevant. Inadequate school consultation processes exist to ensure needs of schools are met equitably. Projects may become unsustainable without CAF support beyond 2029.	understood; few programs rely on one or two key staff in schools. All projects closely address program priorities and other national strategically important initiatives; evaluations are undertaken; evidence-based practice used; being mainly centrally run, CEWA can adjust; notwithstanding, local context is important. All central staff are closely briefed on projects under their remit. Schools closely monitored; capacity to withdraw school if needed. Effective school consultation processes are maintained; see section on stakeholder engagement. Most projects provide potential access to all schools. Most projects relate closely to existing strategic plans and school and system priorities; focus for most projects is on building long term capacity.
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Budget for 2026–2027

Priority	Activities/Initiatives	2026		2027	
		Centralised	Distributed	Centralised	Distributed
A – Choice and Affordability	A - ViSN Schools Network	\$152,800	\$417,720	\$157,385	\$430,252
	A – Affordable Schools		\$1,058,542		\$1,090,299
B – Transition Assistance	B – Regional Transition Assistance		\$160,928		\$166,670
	B – Transition Assistance		\$2,900,000		\$3,111,001
D – Strengthening outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools and students	D – Care School Services		\$53,045		\$54,636
	D – First Nations Teachers Assistants	\$66,309	\$61,000	\$68,298	\$62,830
	D – First Nations Families as First Educators	\$294,774	\$1,101,774	\$303,618	\$882,360
	D – IT Support Kimberley	\$426,985	\$50,400	\$449,921	\$51,912
	D – Early Childhood Numeracy Project	\$173,620		\$178,828	
E – Student wellbeing and support	E – Student Wellbeing	\$786,809		\$810,414	
	E – Child Safety	\$107,310		\$110,529	
Administrative costs		\$134,163		\$138,321	
Total		\$2,142,770	\$5,803,409	\$2,217,314	\$5,849,960

Activity/Initiative

Activity/Initiative	Name - Affordable Schools Project
Priority	A – Choice and Affordability

Description

Fees in CEWA's lower direct measurement of income (DMI) schools are generally low, with Concession Card (CC) discounts also available. CEWA supports families with an eligible Concession Card by reducing school fees and providing schools with subsidies to offset the loss in fee collection. This program has been in effect since 2010 and is funded as a system initiative through the Australian Government recurrent grant.

The Affordable Schools Project commenced in six schools, expanding to further schools. Fees are set at a maximum of \$1 per day for all students to boost access and retention. Schools receive funding to cover fee shortfalls, decreasing as enrolments rise and additional State and Commonwealth funding is attracted.

This project has been extended to other low socioeconomic status (SES) schools, mainly those with a DMI of 95 or less and at least 50% of schools supported are located in country regions. Schools join after negotiations with principals and school advisory councils. Funding allocations are based on enrolment increases and fee income shortfall adjustments and are paid directly to participating schools. Funds ensure affordability and choice for parents, with annual evaluations to monitor trends and budgets. New eligible schools are invited to participate in the initiative. A school will no longer receive support once the recurrent funding generated by the new enrolments exceeds the fee support provided through the program.

The Affordable Schools initiative aligns with CEWA's strategic initiatives, boosting enrolments and strengthening viability in primary and secondary schools, especially in regional areas. Positive outcomes include strong collaboration between CEWA consultants and school communities, with positive feedback from participating schools as their financial sustainability improves with increased enrolments and funding.

Eligible schools

Typically, available to smaller rural and metropolitan primary schools with a DMI of 95 or less and negotiated with the school principal and school council – approximately 5 to 8 schools in any one year with carryover for some schools. At least 50% of participating schools are regionally based.

Timeframes

Program runs from January 2026 to December 2027, with plans to continue for the full duration of the CAF agreement.

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
· Increased enrolment in schools especially pre-primary and kindergarten · Increased retention of existing students · Improvement in financial viability of the school and associated resourcing benefits · Stronger family involvement. · Evidence of students transitioning to CEWA secondary school · Evidence of high retention rates in schools receiving health care card support · Informed by evaluation and coupled with school liaison, possible extension to additional schools	· Names of schools; demographics and geolocation · Effects on enrolment/retentions · Qualitative feedback schools/parents · Evaluations undertaken towards the end of each year to inform possible expansion in subsequent years · Names and categories of schools receiving contributions to Health Care Card support · Indications of retention rates as a result of support · Numbers of families keeping all children at the school

Activity/Initiative

Activity/Initiative	Name - Virtual School Network (ViSN)
Priority	A – Choice and Affordability

Description

Students in smaller secondary schools – typically in rural and remote regions – are unable to access an extensive range of subjects, in Years 11 and 12. This limits choice and may mean some students will leave the school in pursuit of wider subject ranges elsewhere. ViSN is a virtual learning platform which enables schools to access a range of subjects, including Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR), UniReady and Vocational Education and Training (VET). Courses are developed by teachers in schools and that school then assists in delivering that course to other students. This project seeks to expand ViSN courses and to continue developing resources and provide support for students and professional learning for teachers. Funds will be used centrally to support ongoing expansion in numbers of courses and students involved. Funding will also be used to reduce costs of accessing courses for schools.

In terms of funding allocations, some funds were directed centrally to support the program organisation. The program was supported by school charges according to the number of students involved. Schools who supported a teacher delivering the course are eligible for payment and can use this as credit towards students in their school who needed to enrol in another ViSN course. Any CEWA school with Year 11 and 12 is eligible to enrol students in a ViSN course.

The outcomes and success indicators show this to be a key equity service for many smaller schools. CEWA also sees ViSN playing an important future role in online delivery given the move by many schools to a blended learning model. The program also helps to address equity issues.

ViSN aligns with system initiatives in providing choice for parents. Currently the Department of Education WA provides similar opportunities through their School of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE). CEWA Schools can access some SIDE offerings, however costs are in excess of \$4,500 per student and not all courses are consistently available. ViSN therefore provides schools with the ability to offer a wider range of courses in Years 11 and 12, including General and VET opportunities. This has now become more significant as WA Universities continue to provide different pathways for university entry. As a result, students are increasingly able to complete their Year 11 and 12 studies within their regional communities, rather than relocating to larger metropolitan schools such as those in Perth.

A further important outcome of the ViSN project, has been the upskilling of teachers and schools in the development and delivery of this mode of learning. ViSN not only provides increased breadth of study opportunities but also reflects more flexible and sustainable delivery opportunities. As more schools access the ViSN project there may be opportunities to expand ViSN in other years of schooling and to meet the needs of our students in more diverse ways.

Eligible schools

Any school which currently delivers year 11 and 12 courses, this includes both country and metropolitan schools. Schools contact CEWA central office to participate.

Timeframes

Program runs from January 2026 to December 2027, with plans to continue for the full duration of the CAF agreement.

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
· Increase number of students participating by 15% per year, specifically targeting continued enrolments in Year 12 and the inclusion of additional CEWA schools · Prevent loss of enrolments which may have otherwise occurred due to lack of subject choice · Maintain high standards of achievement for students involved in ViSN · Provide professional learning for all teachers involved in ViSN · Increase the range of subjects and resources available, particularly in the languages area · Make ViSN a sustainable program	· Number of schools; range of courses · Names of schools and geolocations · Quantitative data related to results and course completion · Details of professional learning accessed by teachers · Quantitative data on courses available

Activity/Initiative

Activity/Initiative	Name - Regional Transition Support
Priority	B – Transition Assistance

Description

This initiative involves providing support for regional schools which would be adversely affected by changes to regional school funding loadings. In accordance with National Catholic Education Commission agreements, the allocation was withheld for two years, and the three-year accumulated amount distributed to CEWA schools. This was allocated to selected regional schools with enrolments of 150 or fewer students; 22 schools were supported in 2025, and 22 schools are budgeted to be supported in 2026 and 2027.

These funds are critical to the schools involved enabling them to fund the purchase of additional resources in supporting students. Most of the schools are low DMI schools and would be eligible to receive additional support through CEWA's co-responsibility arrangements and other CAF funding, where there has been a negative impact on school finances due to changes in the funding model.

Eligible schools

Regional schools with enrolments of 150 students or fewer. Schools are automatically included. Funding is the same for all schools participating.

Timeframes

Program runs from January 2026 to December 2027, with plans to continue for the full duration of the CAF agreement.

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
Provide direct funding support to selected small regional schools whose funding has been affected by size loading changes; this will assist smaller schools to continue to offer education and choice in certain centres	- Names of schools supported - Amounts provided - Indicators – enrolments, fee trends and other evidence showing the impact on maintaining choice and affordability in the regional centre

Activity/Initiative

Activity/Initiative	Name - Transition Support
	Transition support re-DMI
Priority	B – Transition Assistance

Description

An essential feature of the CAF program is to provide support for schools who have been impacted by the implementation of the DMI as an allocative process for funding. CEWA has identified trends, quantified relative disadvantage, tracked enrolment trends, negotiated with school leadership and assisted in any adjustments to budgetary processes to address any issues. Extensive collaboration occurred with leadership teams and 12 schools are expected to be supported in 2026 and 2027, with the total allocations for each year amounting to \$2,900,000 and \$3,111,001 respectively.

CEWA considers this to be a highly effective and sustainable approach, which will continue for both the currently supported schools and any others identified as requiring assistance in the future.

Eligible schools

Schools most affected by the current funding model are identified centrally. Extensive negotiations occur with the school to determine financial capabilities and other related matters. Funds are then directed to most impacted schools.

Timeframes

Program runs from January 2026 to December 2027, with plans to continue for the full duration of the CAF agreement.

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
· Collaborative approaches with schools · Rigorous identification of need and therefore appropriate allocations of funds; Direction of funds to most affected schools · Enabling participating schools to minimise cost increases and therefore maintain appropriate choice for parents as well as sustainability of the school · Creation of an accepted process among schools as a basis for ongoing review and future allocations	· Names of schools involved; Amounts will be recorded in financial summaries · Details of ongoing review processes to identify schools; report on outcomes · Any feedback received from schools

Activity/Initiative

Activity/Initiative	Name - Special Circumstances Funding
Priority	C – Special Circumstances Funding

Description

Special Circumstance Funding will be allocated to any school affected by an unforeseen circumstance such as bushfire, flood, earthquake or similar unpredictable circumstances. Fortunately, such circumstances have not arisen to date. Should they arise, CEWA will negotiate with the Australian government to ensure eligibility.

Eligible schools

Will depend on the nature and timing of the special circumstances.

Timeframes

Once the special circumstances have been recognised, funds will be directed to the affected school/s immediately.

Program runs from January 2026 to December 2027, with plans to continue for the full duration of the CAF agreement.

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
- Support for schools affected by an unforeseen circumstance - Ensure the viability and ongoing operation of the school in both the short and longer term	- Name of school involved and details of the nature and impact of the significant event - Details of both CEWA support and CAF support provided - Details of processes used to provide assistance including timelines for continuance of education provision - Details of any longer-term planning and support negotiated with the school

Activity/Initiative

Activity/Initiative	Name - Curriculum and Re-engagement in Education (CARE) schools
Priority	D – Strengthening outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools and students

Description

CARE schools cater exclusively for disengaged secondary students who typically have mental and social health issues and are significantly disengaged from mainstream education. CEWA currently operates 3 CARE schools. These schools increasingly require wrap around support from staff such as FNTAs, youth workers and social workers. This project involves appointing 1 x FNTA and/or 1 x social worker who will be shared by the metropolitan CARE schools.

Funds are provided directly to the schools to employ the staff involved and are not centrally incurred. CARE schools in most need and with higher First Nations enrolments were prioritised. This project also assists in reaching Closing the Gap targets – education engagement, health, and wellbeing.

CARE schools are an important part of CEWA's strategic initiatives in supporting vulnerable students. Enrolments are typically less than 40 students, although Clontarf Aboriginal College has more. Students in CARE schools require individual attention both in their studies and wider therapeutic support. Social Workers are important in supporting students in wellbeing issues and both St Clare's and St Francis' School have reported greater wellbeing amongst their students. FNTA's also play an important role in assisting First Nations students and do this under the direction of the teacher. FNTA's also provide an important link between the school and wider First Nations community. CEWA is currently investigating locations of need for more CARE schools, and it is likely that increased funding will be directed to schools in the future under this initiative.

Eligible schools

St Clare's School; St Francis School and Clontarf Aboriginal College.

Timeframes

Program runs from January 2026 to December 2027, with plans to continue for the full duration of the CAF agreement.

Objectives/ expected outcomes	Indicators of success
· Improved liaison with communities and families · Increased provision of therapeutic support for students · Increased awareness by staff in how to best support students · Increased student engagement. · Increased capacity to secure related interagency support	· Appointment of 1 x FNTA FTE for St Clare's and St Francis' School apportioned at 0.5FTE each school– part support · Qualitative information on roles of the staff, including evaluation of improved outcomes for students · Qualitative information regarding student attendance and engagement

Activity/Initiative

Activity/Initiative	Name - First Nations Families as First Educators
Priority	D – Strengthening outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools and students

Description

This project is a continuation of the program funded by the former Indigenous Advancement Strategy, supporting schools and First Nations mothers and their children to engage with schools in early childhood settings. It uses the Abecedarian approach in training school staff involved in the program. The project involves schools in country and city locations with pre-school education settings and where First Nations Families are enrolled. CEWA engaged a university to conduct a formal review in 2022, and the findings have been implemented from 2023 onwards. The formal review indicated high satisfaction levels by parents and the wider community. The funding will continue to be used to provide training to school staff and salary payments for staff where necessary. Payments are provided to the schools involved for some aspects of the program. A key focus of the program is the engagement of parents to schooling in the broadest sense, helping to increase their engagement in the education process.

This project also links to Closing the Gap targets, particularly discussions with the families around education, early years learning, wellbeing of students, including health and nutrition. Funds for this project are directed centrally to employ a coordinator and to schools to support training and delivery costs. The schools involved are those that have requested support and include metropolitan and regional schools.

Eligible schools

Any primary or composite schools with sufficient First Nation enrolments who wish to establish a centre specifically for this activity are supported.

Timeframes

Program runs from January 2026 to December 2027, with plans to continue for the full duration of the CAF agreement.

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
· At least 9 schools to be involved. · All staff involved to be appropriately trained in program methodology. · Maximise involvement of First Nations families to at least 80% · Increase participation and engagement of these families in kindergarten, pre-primary and year one onwards at that school · Increase learning and socio-emotional outcomes for children · Continue to implement the recommendations of the 2022 review and evaluation · Increase family engagement and knowledge in education in subsequent years of schooling · Preference given to employment of First Nations assistants	· Names of schools · Demographics of schools · Number of staff trained type of training · Number of children and families · Qualitative feedback from schools and families · Report on possible expansion to more schools

Activity/Initiative

Activity/Initiative	Name - First Nations Teacher Assistant Up Skilling
Priority	D – Strengthening outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools and students

Description

First Nations Teacher Assistants (FNTAs) play an important role in supporting teachers in the learning and teaching program and can also assist in small group and one-on-one learning at the school. This project supports FNTAs to study towards higher credentials such as Certificate III and Certificate IV courses, thereby enhancing their education support role as well as enhancing pathways for tertiary study to qualify as a teacher. The program also involves an experienced First Nations educator to assist the FNTAs in their studies with the UNDA. Funds are used to pay the service provider as well as UNDA for training, support and certification.

The project focuses on Kimberley schools, where FNTAs play an important role. Aranmore Catholic College in Perth is also supported due to the cluster of First Nations students enrolled. This project also links to Closing the Gap targets. FNTAs play an important role in the education process as well as community liaison to address engagement and attendance. As reported below under indicators of success, this program experienced continuing unexpected difficulties from the training provider the University of Notre Dame. This resulted in targets not being met as explained. No new enrolments occurred in 2024, and negotiations are occurring with the provider. However, during 2025 significant re-engagement with the training provider has occurred and it is anticipated that the program will be well supported by trainees in 2026 and beyond.

Eligible schools

Any school with FNTAs who wish to complete a qualification can apply to be part of the activity.

Timeframes

Program runs from January 2026 to December 2027, with plans to continue for the full duration of the CAF agreement.

Objectives/ expected outcomes	Indicators of success
· At least 20 FNTAs enrolled in Certificate III or higher with UNDA · At least 75% have good standing at the end of the year – still enrolled and either completed or nearly completed their studies · CEWA consultant supports FNTAs along with a school-based mentor; partnership enhanced · Higher levels of engagement and proficiency of FNTAs in classroom support	· Names of schools involved · Number of FNTAs involved · Credentials completed · Qualitative feedback from principals and FNTAs as well as CEWA consultant · Feedback from UNDA trainers · Proportion of participants with good standing at the end of the year

Activity/Initiative

Activity/Initiative	Name - IT Support Kimberley Schools
Priority	D – Strengthening outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools and students

Description

CEWA has implemented IT systems and processes across all schools. Notwithstanding, problems exist in CEWA's capacity to properly service Kimberley schools for a variety of reasons, including, but not limited to; connectivity issues; different hardware being used; variable IT capacity of staff; and the need for routine in situ maintenance and support. The capacity for students to access reliable internet impacts on learning e.g. NAPLAN online; ViSN. The project aims to standardise hardware in the 13 Kimberley schools; establish a more reliable network access and provide technicians who can visit schools more regularly.

This project is important in establishing greater equity for these schools and their students compared with their metropolitan counterparts. Remote learning will continue to provide important support for these schools. Funds will be used partly to improve infrastructure and connectivity as well as materials for schools.

As stated above, the rationale for school selection was the specific needs of this region. Discussions occurred between the school principals and the digital transformation team at the CEWA central office.

The outcomes of this project will address existing equity issues and address Closing the Gap targets, particularly educational engagement.

2024 and 2025 saw a continuation of work in the previous years; this important project will continue for the duration of the CAF.

A key request as part of this 2026 to 2027 Work Plan relates to the approval of a "lease to own" agreement which will secure infrastructure assets and l pads for the remaining CAF period and beyond for each of the 13 Kimberley schools. This request to move from a "lease to return" to a "lease to own" arrangement will see these assets remain with the regional schools and will reduce the downtime and unsustainable operational costs that come with a lease to return model.

Eligible schools

All remote Kimberley schools are included as well is one school in Broome.

Timeframe

Program runs from January 2026 to December 2027, with plans to continue for the full duration of the CAF agreement.

Objectives/ expected outcomes	Indicators of success
· Standardise hardware in Kimberley schools to allow for easier training and support · Improve and establish a more sustainable network as a basis for more learning · Establish a more frequent and consistent in situ support service to schools · Improve learning outcomes for students and access to professional learning for staff	· Names of schools involved; geolocation, student and staff numbers who will benefit · Details of IT hardware and internet services provided · Details of technical support provided – FTE staff; schools visited; services provided and issues arising · Qualitative feedback on efficiency of IT processes and outcomes in schools · Tangible evidence of improvement in student outcomes · Evidence of staff engagement and increasing expertise

Activity/Initiative

Activity/Initiative	Name - Early Childhood Numeracy Project
Priority	D – Strengthening outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools and students

Description

The Early Childhood Numeracy Project enhances equitable access to high-quality mathematics education across Catholic schools in WA, particularly in disadvantaged and regional contexts. Targeting Kindergarten to Year 2, the project builds teacher capacity through professional learning, evidence-based resources, and school-based support to address declining national numeracy results. It strengthens affordability and choice by ensuring that all students, regardless of background, benefit from consistent, research-informed teaching practices. Aligned with CEWA's Vision for Learning and national priorities under the Choice and Affordability Fund, the project supports improved student outcomes, sustainable school capacity, and long-term system growth. CAF will provide funding for a project numeracy consultant.

Eligible schools

Target schools are low socio-economic schools with lower levels of numeracy achievement with a focus on non-metropolitan schools.

Timeframes

Program runs from January 2026 to December 2027, with plans to continue for the full duration of the CAF agreement.

Objectives/ expected outcomes	Indicators of success
- Strengthened teacher knowledge and pedagogy - Improved student numeracy achievement - Equitable access to quality resources	- Teacher growth in confidence - pre/post teacher surveys on confidence and content knowledge; participation rates in professional learning, including for regional schools - Student assessment data shows improvement - academic data for project schools (e.g. NAPLAN proficiency) - Development of quality resources available to all schools - number of quality resources developed; teacher feedback on usability

Activity/Initiative

Activity/Initiative	Name - Student Wellbeing Support
Priority	E – Student wellbeing and support

Description

Student wellbeing is a major priority in schools. CEWA currently has a team of school psychologists, behaviour support consultants and child safety consultants to support schools although demand is challenging their capacity to service schools. This project seeks to establish a specialist Wellbeing team consisting of a team leader and two additional consultants to further support schools – staff, students, and parents. Funds will be used for staffing, resource development and partnerships. The team developed a wellbeing framework which is consistent with the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework, especially in recognising student voice, providing professional learning, early intervention, coaching to schools, and the introduction of measurement and evaluation processes. The funding under this project will be used to partially fund the activities of centrally and regionally based staff to provide direct liaison for schools as outlined above. As part of the rollout and implementation of the wellbeing framework, professional learning was provided to schools in a variety of modes – in schools, centralised meetings, and online. This project continues to build on current work.

Eligible schools

Centrally delivered and in-school support – available to all schools' country and metropolitan.

Timeframes

Program runs from January 2026 to December 2027, with plans to continue for the full duration of the CAF agreement.

Objectives/ expected outcomes	Indicators of success
· Capacity building through formalised partnerships and internal learning opportunities · Capacity building through coaching and consultation. · Development of a CEWA Wellbeing measure; Implementation ongoing · Development and strengthened communities of practice. · Development of program partnerships · Improve principal wellbeing outcomes	· Updates on the well-being framework · Details of services to schools involved; number; geolocation · Details of students – numbers; types of support · Details of resources developed · Professional learning offered – number, attendance, locations · Qualitative feedback from schools and parents. · Details of wellbeing framework completion and rollout to schools – meetings, PL, number of schools, feedback from schools; evidence of effectiveness · Details relating to student wellbeing survey – completion; liaison with schools; feedback; pilot and number of schools; rollout details; evidence of effectiveness

Activity/Initiative

Activity/Initiative	Name – Child Safety Program
Priority	E – Student wellbeing and support

Description

CEWA already has a Child Safety Policy and team of consultants who are able to visit schools and provide professional learning and training for schools and their staff. There is also a Student Wellbeing Team as outlined in the project above. Both teams are now within the same directorate, although this project has a sharper focus on child safety. This project seeks to expand the operation of the team to include supporting the production of resources for schools and especially parents. Part of the project will involve the development of more online resources to replace some of the face-to-face programs, such as mandatory reporting, professional learning and other programs. Funds will be directed centrally to the operation of the team and production of resources. All schools will be eligible to access resources and professional learning.

Eligible schools

Centrally delivered and in-school support – available to all schools' country and metropolitan.

Timeframes

Program runs from January 2026 to December 2027, with plans to continue for the full duration of the CAF agreement.

Objectives/ expected outcomes	Indicators of success
- Increased capacity to support schools, teachers, students and parents - Greater liaison with other CEWA teams such as school psychology, wellbeing and School Improvement Advisors - Development of resources for parents - Development of other online resources for schools	- Details of professional learning provided - Details of resources produced - Qualitative feedback from schools on value of services and resources - Statistical information regarding cases in general terms.

Key Stakeholders

As outlined earlier, the approach adopted by CEWA has largely involved centrally organised activities and support which reflect system priorities as outlined in Strategic Directions and the system improvement framework Quality Catholic Education. An extensive consultation process has underpinned these plans and schools reflect the priorities in their individual strategic plans. CEWA is also aware, that many schools will have nuances and local variations to meet the needs of their communities. Individual projects have been approved to support these needs.

The fact that many of the original programs are still operating, albeit with some amendments and adjustments, has enabled ongoing dialogue with the stakeholders involved. This is important in ensuring that the programs meet stakeholder needs and are efficient.

It also needs to be recognised that funding allocation processes used by CEWA, other than CAF, also address school demand. These include, but are not limited to fee top ups, health Care Card initiatives, regional support and size loadings, cross subsidisation and co-responsibility arrangements, support for students with disability, psychology support services, loadings and additional support for Kimberley and remote schools and loadings for schools with higher First Nations and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse cohorts. As part of the CAF allocative processes and development of projects, existing central support is a consideration to maintain equity and sustainability. Schools accept this.

CEWA, as part of its governance structure, has a number of standing committees across areas such as finance, audit and risk, curriculum, First Nations education, and community with school and parental representation. While matters relating directly to CAF projects are not necessarily considered by these standing committees, policy and strategic directions are developed and agreed to. These influence CAF project development and allocations.

An example of school representation in action is the ongoing work with schools regarding emerging patterns of impact regarding the DMI funding model. This workplan demonstrates a substantial allocation of direct funding support in 2024 and a large proportion of annual funding thereafter. The allocation of funds in 2025 indicates the results of this negotiation and planning.

Examples of good practice in schools is shared amongst schools through principal and deputy principal networks primary and secondary, central consultants, SIAs and ROs. This includes centrally organised showcases, professional learning; school networks and discussions when consultants visit schools.

While there is limited liaison across education systems, many of CEWA's projects and priorities are reflected in the current Bilateral Agreement and also address key national stakeholder priorities in Closing the Gap, Alice Springs Declaration and Ministers' Meeting action items. The development of the Better and Fairer schools Bilateral Agreement in WA have resulted in some common aspirational projects and priorities which are reflected in this work plan.

2026-27 CAF Work Plan NGRB Sign Off

This 2026-27 CAF Work Plan is submitted in fulfillment of the workplan requirement in part 4 of the CAF Agreement and I understand that, once approved, the work plan forms Attachment A to the CAF Agreement.

Name and Position of the person signing off on behalf of the NGRB¹:

ANNETTE MOREY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.

Date: 28/10/2025

 sign.

¹ Annette Morey, Executive Director, CEWA Ltd

