



Australian Government

# SMARTER SCHOOLS NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS



## SMARTER SCHOOLS NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY  
LOW SES SCHOOL COMMUNITIES  
LITERACY AND NUMERACY  
CLOSING THE GAP

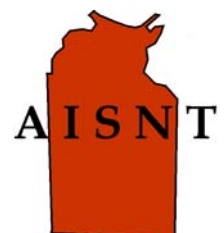
## Northern Territory Annual Report for period ending 31 March 2010



Northern  
Territory  
Government



northern territory diocese of darwin  
catholic education office



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The National Partnership Agreements on Literacy and Numeracy, Low SES School Communities and Improving Teacher Quality are collaborative initiatives supported by funding from the Australian Government, the Northern Territory Government and the Catholic and Independent school sectors.

## Section 1 – Smarter Schools Summary

### Highlights

The Northern Territory is currently undertaking unprecedented reforms in remote education and the Smarter Schools National Partnerships (SSNP) are a key contributor to this reform effort.

Much of the SSNP activity undertaken to date has involved planning and preliminary project implementation as well as reviewing and transitioning initiatives that commenced under the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) to ensure the reform effort continues to build and create improved opportunities for Indigenous students living in prescribed communities.

The collaborative planning effort undertaken in the development of the SSNP implementation plan required the establishment of new working arrangements with the non-government sector which have resulted in closer working relationships. Government and non-government school leaders have also engaged, together, in some cases, with community representatives in preliminarily planning workshops to discuss potential reform activities and share good practice.

A range of innovative and targeted local solutions are emerging as schools engage in the planning of their SSNP activities, and there is significant potential that these strategies, as part of the broader whole-school improvement process, will lead to better outcomes for students.

The recruitment of quality, suitably qualified personnel and availability of accommodation in non-urban areas create challenges, however there are innovative solutions emerging – through the use of virtual and blended learning models which are expected to show considerable success over time. Strategies being implemented in relation to pre-service practicum programs and remote teacher recruitment and retention are also likely to address this issue in the longer term.

The development of an Evidence Based Framework will enhance the literacy and numeracy reform effort in the Northern Territory and the addition of the remote synthesis developed through Research Circles during 2010 is likely to be the first of its kind.

Whilst the SSNP reforms are in their early stages of commencement, progress is being made and momentum is building through schools, regions, sectors and the system to drive improvements in outcomes for Northern Territory students.

### Closing the Gap

The transition of activities commenced under the NTER is likely to continue through 2010 as initiatives are finalised. The directions set out under the Closing the Gap National Partnership are designed to enhance the support and services available to support students in prescribed schools and value add to the effort under the other SSNP reforms.

### Cross sector collaboration

The Non-Government Schools Ministerial Advisory Council (NGSMAC) has been established to provide strategic governance for the implementation of SSNP in the Northern Territory. The NGSMAC has been engaged since the commencement of SSNP planning in February 2009, in the development and endorsement of directions set out the implementation plan and continue to be provided regular information about progress of the SSNP.

Operationally, sectors collaborated extensively in the design of the priority reform elements that informed the development of the implementation plan. Sectors continue to work together to ensure that reforms are designed and delivered in line with the directions set out in the Bilateral Agreement and implementation plan, whilst maintaining sectoral and/or contextual flexibility.

Implementation of the SSNP in the Northern Territory comprises a combination of sector specific and cross-sectoral reforms that focus effort into areas of identified priority across the Northern Territory. Schools are grouped according to their areas of common need and services, support and resourcing is provided both

## Section 1 – Smarter Schools Summary

direct to schools and through regional/sectoral and systemic means to drive reform.

The government sector is responsible for leading the implementation of many of the cross-sectoral initiatives, with opportunities provided to the non-government sector to guide the planning as they become available. In addition, the non-government schools sector is leading the design and delivery of reforms associated with improved support for residential students. Ongoing monitoring of these cross-sectoral projects to ensure value for all involved will be essential. Processes to ensure this will continue to be developed and the funded initiatives reviewed for their appropriateness and benefit to all eligible schools.

The nature of the extensive cross-sectoral collaboration in the planning and implementation of the SSNP has required a new approach to working that has resulted in enhanced relationships across sectors in the Northern Territory.

Non-government school leaders have participated, alongside their Government school leaders in initial workshops and as a result are, in some cases, continuing to network in order to share their challenges and successes across common areas of reform effort.

The arrangements for administration of funding between the Northern Territory Government and the sectors have been formalised to ensure prompt release of SSNP funding following receipt from the Australian Government.

### **Closing the Gap**

Funding from the Closing the Gap National Partnership is being managed separately by each sector. However, as all schools supporting students living in prescribed areas are also eligible for support under the Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities and Literacy and Numeracy National Partnerships, the reforms are aligned to deliver against the agreed SSNP reform elements. Initiatives enhance, extend and support existing effort at these sites – much of which commenced under the previous NTER activities. In addition, many of the workforce development initiatives being progressed under the Closing the Gap National Partnership support the Northern Territory's Teacher Quality National Partnership reforms.

### **Stakeholder consultation/engagement**

As part of their improvement planning processes schools engage with key stakeholders (which may include parents and representatives from the local community, as well as local business and industry) to identify the priorities to which they will target their effort. Where appropriate, the outcomes from external review processes -which often involve further consultation with stakeholders - are taken into consideration. SSNP funding provided to schools is targeted to supporting the implementation of activities that assist the school to deliver the priorities identified in their school improvement plans.

Parents and community members have the opportunity through participation in school governance processes to engage further in the monitoring and implementation of national partnership reforms. In many schools, part of the focus of school improvement includes introducing strategies to enhance parent and community engagement with schooling and school governance processes. Resourcing and effort, both as part of the SSNP and complementary activity, is targeted toward supporting this.

The priorities identified by school communities through their school improvement planning processes inform the allocation and targeting of regional/sectoral and system support and services.

During the development of the Northern Territory's SSNP implementation plan, a number of stakeholder groups were briefed on the directions being proposed in the plan and contextual advice and feedback informed the directions set. Such groups included:

- Non-Government Ministerial Advisory Council
- Representatives from the Department of Education and Training, the Catholic Education Office and the Association of Independent Schools Northern Territory
- School leaders in both government and non-government schools
- Northern Territory Indigenous Education Council

## Section 1 – Smarter Schools Summary

- Association of Northern Territory School Leaders
- Northern Territory Board of Studies
- Australian Education Union
- Council of Government Schools Organisation.

As appropriate these groups will be engaged in the implementation process

### **Closing the Gap**

Prior to the commencement of the Closing the Gap National Partnership, funding was provided through the *Enhancing Literacy and Quality Teaching Package* measures under the NTER. Review of the suitability and effectiveness of the activities supported under NTER informed the way forward under the Closing the Gap National Partnership. The consultation undertaken to identify priorities for the broader SSNP planning process also informed priorities, and resourcing of Closing the Gap National Partnership activities.

A range of stakeholders relevant to specific initiatives are engaged in, and collaborate on the implementation of specific initiatives. For example, in the development of the Northern Territory's Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) 2010 Action Plan, the Department of Education and Training has collaborated with

- Australian Government agencies (DEEWR, FaHCSIA)
- non-government agencies (Red Cross Australia NT, The Smith Family, Anglicare NT, Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance NT)
- Menzies School of Health Research
- local communities and service providers
- other Northern Territory Government Agencies
- Non-government schools sector.

### **School level plans**

The Northern Territory's Bilateral Agreement commits to the publication of the school improvement plans for all participating SSNP schools by October 2011. All SSNP schools that receive funding are required to identify within their annual school improvement plans the SSNP funding allocation and the strategies the resources are directed towards. School Plans are made available online via the Northern Territory's SSNP website at: <http://www.det.nt.gov.au/smarterschools/participating-schools>.

Through school annual reports, communities will be provided information about the progress and outcomes achieved over the preceding year, including those relating to SSNP activities.

SSNP funding is available for schools in complex remote communities to engage critical friends to support quality school improvement planning process and assist school leaders work with their communities to identify appropriate strategies to support the delivery of quality education services.

### **Closing the Gap**

School improvement plans for eligible Closing the Gap National Partnership schools will be made available on the SSNP website in line with the schedule outlined above.

## Section 2 – Improving Teacher Quality

### Progress statement

An extensive process was undertaken during 2009 **to consult, develop and finalise the direction** set out in the Northern Territory's implementation plan.

The Northern Territory has participated in the **nationally facilitated activities** that relate to the Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership. This includes:

- involvement in the consultation regarding the draft national Professional Standards for Teachers
- representation on the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
- exploration of the potential for the Teach For Australia models to be adapted to assist target pre-service support in areas of remote teacher shortage
- representation on the Teaching Dataset Working Group and the enhancement of data systems to ensure quality workforce data will be available in line with national requirements.

Legislative changes will enable **teacher registration** and **pre-service course accreditation** to move toward nationally consistent approaches.

Work is continuing to **enhance the pre-service training opportunities** in the Northern Territory with existing models under review to inform the development of appropriate future programs to ensure quality preparation of teaching and para-professional staff wishing to work in very remote schools.

Scholarship program has been established to **attract high performing students** to teaching.

### Milestones and Performance Indicators

The key milestones outlined in the Northern Territory's Bilateral Agreement have been achieved as follows:

Milestone (April 2010)	Detail of Achievement
<i>Teacher Registration Act Amendment Bill</i> , to support move toward national consistent registration practice tabled	<p>The <i>Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Amendment Bill 2009</i> was passed in the Legislative Assembly on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2010. These amendments will result in the Teacher Registration Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• introducing two categories of registration – provisional and full</li> <li>• requiring teachers to meet registration requirements every five years, based on evidence of ongoing competence and good character</li> <li>• accrediting teacher education courses in the Northern Territory</li> <li>• having clearer powers in undertaking disciplinary and compliance procedures</li> <li>• having better access to information from third parties.</li> </ul> <p>The new Act commences on July 1 2010.</p>
Policy and regulations for new registration procedures developed and testing of data to support these underway	<p>The relevant policies are drafted and the Regulations for the Act are currently being developed.</p> <p>The database to support the new registration practises is now at the testing stage.</p>

In addition:

- the Northern Territory is in the process of **scoping the Centres of Excellence project** to determine its connectivity to other pre-service initiatives, including those involving Indigenous Teaching Assistants
- **Scholarship program** has been developed to target high performing students to teaching. A Minimum Tertiary Entrance Rank score of 75 is required to be eligible to apply. 80 eligible applicants applied for 20 scholarships in the 2010 round.

## Section 2 – Improving Teacher Quality

- **pre-service practicum** scholarship program is being developed. The scholarships will focus on attracting quality pre-service students, to quality remote practicum placements, providing them with quality support with a view to retaining them in remote employment. Key elements involve building partnerships with universities that prepare students to teach in very remote contexts and identifying and supporting students from local tertiary institutions interested in teaching in very remote schools.
- Collaboration is occurring with other jurisdictions with similar contextual issues to generate **shared approaches and models for remote teacher recruitment and retention**.

### Implementation or impact issues

All new applicants for teacher registration will be registered under the provisions of the new Act after 1 July 2010. Existing teachers will come under transition provisions in determining which of the two new registration categories will apply, and in the introduction of registration renewal requirements.

### Activities supporting Indigenous students and/or teachers

Many of the reforms being implemented, including those targeting pre-service programs and improved teacher recruitment processes are focused on improving the quality of the very remote workforce. In addition, complementary activities under the Closing the Gap and Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities National Partnerships such as those that support **Indigenous Workforce Development** are also contributing to this effort.

### Good practice

The introduction of provisional registration and registration renewal requirements ensures that teachers in the Northern Territory who hold Full Registration (a new category for the NT) are competent to teach, being required to demonstrate their on-going competence against the *Standards of Practice for Northern Territory Teachers* by providing evidence of professional learning and currency of practice.

Provisionally registered teachers will be prepared to apply for full registration through supported professional practice and professional learning.

The Act now provides for the Teacher Registration Board to accredit pre-service teacher education programs for delivery in the Northern Territory. Such programs will be required to meet program standards and professional standards of practice for graduating teachers and positions the Northern Territory to participate in national initiatives in pre-service teacher education accreditation.

## Section 3 – Low SES School Communities

### Progress statement

An extensive process was undertaken during 2009 **to consult, develop and finalise the direction** set out in the Northern Territory's implementation plan.

**Implementation has commenced**, with significant effort involved in establishing and scoping projects, creating positions, and ensuring the recruitment of quality, suitably qualified staff. Project initiation processes continue to involve reviewing resourcing and approaches to ensure **contextual complexities are addresses and service delivery models are adapted** to overcome challenges such as shortages of teacher housing and availability of appropriately skilled staff.

**Initiation workshops** have been conducted for school leaders participating in the Remote Whole School Reform (RWSR) and Engaging Urban Students (EUS) initiatives. Schools have commenced planning and implementation of strategies targeting their specific areas of focus.

**Virtual schooling trial** is underway at four very remote schools in Certificate 1 (Hospitality).

**Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) qualification** is available through Charles Darwin University (CDU) and units have been provided to new recruits to remote schools.

Research project to identify the **capabilities of good very remote school leaders** has commenced.

**Funding provided to schools** to target toward locally determined strategies that assist support delivery of education services to disadvantaged students.

### Milestones and measures

The key milestones outlined in the Northern Territory's Bilateral Agreement have been achieved as follows:

Milestone (April 2010)	Detail of Achievement
School improvement plans published for 12 schools participating in the Remote Whole School Reform (RWSR) group	School improvement plans for Alekerenge School, Angurugu School, Borroloola School, Elliott School, Kalkaringi School, Lajamanu School, Ngkurr School, Shepherdson College and Yuendumu School have been published and are available via the Northern Territory's Smarter Schools website at: <a href="http://www.det.nt.gov.au/smarterschools/participating-schools">http://www.det.nt.gov.au/smarterschools/participating-schools</a> School plans for the remaining schools will continue to be published online as they become available during Term 2 2010.
School improvement plans published for 8 schools participating in the Engaging Urban Students (EUS) group	School improvement plans for Bradshaw Primary, Gillen Primary, Katherine High, Sadadeen Primary, MacFarlane Primary, Tennant Creek Primary, Tennant Creek High have been published and are available via the Northern Territory's Smarter Schools website at: <a href="http://www.det.nt.gov.au/smarterschools/participating-schools">http://www.det.nt.gov.au/smarterschools/participating-schools</a> School plans for the remaining schools will continue to be published online as they become available during Term 2 2010.
Milestone (April 2010)	Detail of Achievement
Twenty schools have received funding to support delivery of reform outlined in their school improvement plan	<b>12 schools participating in RWSR have received funding</b> to target locally determined priorities to support whole school improvement. A range of strategies have been employed at these sites including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trial of inclusive leadership models such as cultural advisors and community mentors</li> </ul>



## Section 3 – Low SES School Communities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• specialist staff and programs to enhance student engagement and retention such as through VET, after school activities/excursions, music, arts and sport</li> <li>• purchase of equipment to support tailored intervention – such as sound amplification systems</li> <li>• whole-school professional development in literacy, numeracy and positive behaviour</li> <li>• programs and staff to facilitate pathways for disengaged youth</li> <li>• readiness for school programs focussing on early childhood</li> <li>• support and programs for Assistant Teachers to gain qualifications</li> <li>• programs and staff to improve family and community connection with schooling, and to monitor attendance</li> <li>• exploration of opportunities to modify the school day and calendar to increase flexibility and accommodate seasonal/cultural events.</li> </ul> <p><b>14 schools participating in EUS have received</b> funding to target locally determined priorities to support improved home school partnerships and student wellbeing programs. A range of strategies have been employed including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• employment of staff to support students and families engage with and attend school</li> <li>• Ready for School programs to assist students with language barriers, address behavioural issues, develop early literacy and numeracy, develop socialisation and classroom behaviours</li> <li>• specialised transport for students where barriers for school attendance are created by lack of suitable existing services</li> <li>• focus on enhancing student engagement and re-engagement through sport, technology, VET, life-skills and culturally inclusive approaches</li> <li>• professional development for staff in literacy, numeracy, ESL ,cross-cultural competency, collaborative practices</li> <li>• programs to improve attendance and learning such as introduction of elective classes and Homework Centres</li> <li>• parent and family engagement programs such as open days, information sessions, Families and Schools Together (FAST), establishment of dedicated family meeting places, mobile school</li> <li>• targeted pastoral care and programs for students and families</li> <li>• partnerships with specialist service providers such as Red Dust Role Models, The Smith Family and Clontarf</li> <li>• incentive and award programs to encourage and reward attendance.</li> </ul>
Milestone (April 2010)	Detail of Achievement
Panel contract established which schools can access to identify expert critical friends to assist and embed quality school improvement processes	Five consultants are available under a panel contract to act as <b>critical friends to support and enhance school improvement planning processes</b> . Schools are able to access these services on an as needed basis. Schools are also supported through their respective sectors to undertake quality improvement planning.
Officer employed to establish Residential Care Workers	Preliminary planning is underway and it is expected that the position will be advertised and filled by the commencement of Semester 2, 2010.

## Section 3 – Low SES School Communities

Program	
Very Remote Research project underway	<p>CDU has been engaged to undertake a qualitative case study research project that aims to contribute to the understandings about the definition of <b>good school leaders in very remote contexts</b> and the extent to which this differs from the requirements for success in urban and provincial settings. The research will provide insights to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the essential skills, knowledge and experience that most contribute to the successful leadership in Indigenous school contexts, including those by leaders to effectively deal with the capacity and infrastructure challenges</li> <li>• how leadership capability should be measured in remote Indigenous contexts</li> <li>• how leaders improve instructional leadership and ensure better outcomes for students and</li> <li>• how leaders build effective relationships with community and school staff.</li> </ul> <p>The study will contribute to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ongoing planning and delivery of priority focus areas and delivery/design decisions related to induction, professional learning and support for school leaders and those aspiring for leadership positions</li> <li>• attraction, recruitment, retention and selection policies and practices related to remote teaching and leadership positions</li> <li>• improved support structures for school leaders operating in these contexts.</li> </ul> <p>The insights gained about the views and visions of the participants in the study will provide a unique perspective on school leadership in Indigenous remote contexts.</p>
Accredited ESL course developed and being used to support staff in very remote schools	<p><b>TESOL qualifications established</b> at CDU through the Graduate Certificate of Education.</p> <p>More than 50 teachers participated in Unit One as part of 2010 teacher orientation and have the option to progress to Unit Two.</p> <p>Development of online units underway in association with CDU.</p> <p>The availability of this qualification will be more broadly promoted during 2010.</p>
<b>Milestone (April 2010)</b>	<b>Detail of Achievement</b>
Systemic processes to manage National Partnership activity established and coordination team recruited	Strategic coordination of SSNP has been established to manage ongoing monitoring, reporting, evaluation and cross-sectoral partnerships.

In addition, progress has been made in relation to the following initiatives:

**Virtual schooling trial underway** at Gapuwiyak, Maningrida, Numbulwar and Wugular to test resources developed in Certificate 1 (Hospitality). The program has been developed to specifically cater for the varying student literacy and numeracy capabilities.

**Leadership program targeting remote principals** will be held in May 2010. The program will be pitched at three levels – aspirants, beginning principals and accomplished principals. It is expected that there will be approximately 20 participants from remote schools in this program.

## Section 3 – Low SES School Communities

### **ESL professional networks established and operating via**

- electronic discussion groups for all participants undertaking the TESOL Graduate Certificate of Education qualification program
- establishment of a newsletter for distribution to schools to increase teacher access to materials and information about TESOL
- ensuring regional staff are connected regularly to discuss work in schools and progression of TESOL activities.

### **Implementation or impact issues**

The Northern Territory's Bilateral Agreement was signed on 20 January 2010 after an extensive process to finalise the Bilateral Agreement and Implementation Plan. The time taken to finalise the planning process impacted on the timing of implementation of some activities, including recruitment and formalisation of funding arrangements with the Non-Government sector. This has resulted in the delayed commencement of some activities, however momentum is continuing to build and significant progress is expected during 2010.

The availability of accommodation and appropriately qualified personnel continues to impact on recruitment; however, strategies are being explored to address these issues and ensure that delivery of specialised support and services that will enable reforms to be progressed, are available.

### **Activities supporting Indigenous students**

Performance of Indigenous students is a specifically targeted and measured component of all reforms being implemented in the Northern Territory. A significant emphasis of this will be on supporting schools in remote and very remote localities whose student populations are extensively Indigenous, however many of the initiatives implemented under the EUS reforms will target non-remote Indigenous students, particularly those living in town camp communities.

### **Good practice**

Quality school planning processes are essential in the planning and implementation of the SSNP reforms. The process of embedding SSNP reforms into school planning processes has enhanced the focus on quality school improvement planning and will assist to continue to build capacity and collaborative effort in this area.

The cross-sectoral collaboration generated through the SSNP planning and preliminary implementation process has strengthened relationships between all sectors.

The trial of virtual schooling programs is likely to generate significant demand as a means of extending the availability of quality course offerings to remote schools. The planned future expansion of these programs incorporates an ESL program and academic focused courses.

### **Performance Indicators**

From 2011, the Northern Territory will provide performance data against the performance measures outlined in Section 23 of the Smarter Schools National Partnerships Bilateral Agreement.

## Section 4 – Literacy and Numeracy

### Progress statement

An extensive planning process was undertaken during 2009 to **consult, develop and finalise the direction** set out in the Northern Territory's implementation plan and to negotiate performance targets for reward payments.

**Workshops** were conducted for school leaders participating in the Maximising Improvements in Literacy and Numeracy (MILaN) schools to share practice and participate in the development of appropriate improvement measures. Schools commenced local implementation of strategies and incorporated these into the school improvement planning processes.

**Evidence Based Framework** developed and planning for Research Circles to develop remote-specific contextual adaptations is underway.

Initial commencements and recruitment continuing for personnel to support **enhanced use of data and diagnostic tools to inform teaching practice and assess student learning needs.**

### Milestones and measures

The key milestones outlined in the Northern Territory's Bilateral Agreement have been achieved as follows:

Milestone (April 2010)	Detail of Achievement
School improvement plans published for nineteen schools participating in Maximising Improvement in Literacy and Numeracy (MILaN)	School improvement plans for 9 of the 19 sites have been published and are available via the Northern Territory's Smarter Schools website at: <a href="http://www.det.nt.gov.au/smarterschools/participating-schools">http://www.det.nt.gov.au/smarterschools/participating-schools</a>  School plans for the remaining MILaN schools will continue to be published online as they become available during Term 2 2010.
Nineteen schools have received funding to support deliver accelerated improvement in literacy and numeracy outcomes	All nineteen schools participating in MILaN have received funding to target locally determined priorities to support literacy and numeracy improvement. A range of strategies have been employed including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establishment of whole school approaches to literacy and numeracy</li> <li>• professional development for teachers and tutors in <i>First Steps Maths/Reading/Writing, QuickSmart Numeracy, Lexia Learning, Count Me In Too, Accelerated Literacy</i> and <i>NZ Maths</i></li> <li>• establishment of professional learning communities to share and explore good practice</li> <li>• employment of specialist Literacy and Numeracy coaches, coordinators and tutors</li> <li>• implementation of diagnostic assessment tools such as Progressive Assessment Test (PAT) and TORCH</li> <li>• targeted intervention and support for at risk students – including guided reading programs</li> <li>• purchase of audio amplification systems and IT resources to support strong oral language and phonological awareness programs</li> <li>• parent awareness workshops and information.</li> </ul> <p>Further site-specific information is available in individual school plans.</p>
Milestone (April 2010)	Detail of Achievement
Evidence Based Practices	The <i>Evidence Based Literacy and Numeracy Practices Framework</i> (the

## Section 4 – Literacy and Numeracy

<p>Framework (EBPF) developed Literacy and numeracy programs identified as suitable have been assessed against system scalability criteria and endorsed for use in schools</p>	<p>Framework) has been developed and defines the features of effective literacy and numeracy teaching and learning. It will be used to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assess the merits of commonly used literacy and numeracy programs in NT schools</li> <li>• evaluate whole school literacy and numeracy programs</li> <li>• inform site based professional learning of educators.</li> </ul> <p>A Scalability Framework has also been developed which will enable further evaluation of programs before being considered for possible resourcing at the system level.</p> <p>The Framework is currently being tested with two programs (<i>QuickSmart Numeracy</i> and <i>First Steps Reading</i>) being assessed against the critical features and viewed for system scalability.</p> <p>The Framework will be made available online in June 2010 and will be used to guide selection of strategies to be used in schools involved with the second phase of the MILaN initiative.</p> <p>Further development of the Framework will be informed by Research Circles which will commence in the Arnhem region in Term 2 2010. The Research Circles will commence in three schools and will be based on the Australian National Schools Network model that uses an inquiry-based action learning approach supported by an external critical friend. Schools will evaluate their use of programs/strategies against the Framework to test assumptions about what works in remote Indigenous contexts. The outcomes of Research Circles will assist in possible modifications or additions to the Framework to ensure it meets the needs of all school contexts in the Northern Territory.</p>
<p>Assessment for Learning Consultant positions established</p>	<p><b>Data Literacy and Diagnostic Systems Project Officers have been established</b> within each region and three have been successfully recruited and are operating in the Central Australia and Palmerston and Rural regions. The Arnhem region has employed a consultant to undertake this work.</p> <p>The positions will work with school leaders to develop data literacy skills and support school review processes. They will also provide professional development for teachers to use data and diagnostic systems to inform teaching practice and better assess student learning needs.</p> <p><b>Central coordination position has been established</b> and is supporting the <i>National Literacy and Numeracy Diagnostic Tools Trial</i>, as well as the scoping of policy outlining recommended tools for diagnostic assessment. The central coordination position will work closely with the Data Literacy and Diagnostic Systems Project Officers to enhance assessment practices and use of data to inform teaching and learning in schools.</p>

## Section 4 – Literacy and Numeracy

In addition, the selection of schools that will participate in the next round of the MILaN initiative is underway. Schools are being assessed against the following criteria:

- 2009 NAPLAN results indicated room and capacity for improvement
- Improvement focused leadership
- Test cohort above 10 per year level
- Indigenous cohort more than 20%
- Total school population more than 50 students.

Schools that are currently involved in MILaN will be considered for continued inclusion or support to consolidate good performance.

### Implementation or impact issues

The availability of accommodation and appropriately qualified personnel continues to impact on recruitment, however strategies are being explored to address these issues and ensure that specialised support and services that will enable reforms to be progressed are available to all eligible schools.

### Activities supporting Indigenous students

Improving the literacy and numeracy performance of the Northern Territory's significant Indigenous student population is the target of a significant proportion of the reforms under the SSNP, and all participating schools are required to have a specific focus on literacy and numeracy improvement and on closing the gap in performance between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. There is substantial interaction between the activities funded under this Agreement and those being progressed under the Closing the Gap and Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities National Partnerships.

Improving the performance of Indigenous students will be specifically targeted and measured as part of the MILaN initiative.

### Good practice

The development of the *Evidence Based Literacy and Numeracy Practices Framework*, and the enhancements provided as a result of the Research Circles has significant potential to impact positively on the literacy and numeracy outcomes of Northern Territory students.

Enhanced data literacy and use of diagnostic tools is also expected to have a significant impact and are services and support being sought by many schools.

## Section 5 – Closing the Gap

### Progress statement

During 2009, the schools eligible for support under Closing the Gap National Partnership were accessing additional services funded through the NTER. The finalisation of this funding arrangement occurred in early 2010 and a number of continuing reforms are still in the process of transitioning to align with the directions set out through the planning for the Closing the Gap National Partnership. This will continue through 2010 and, as appropriate these will be reported through the agreed SSNP processes.

As the Indigenous education reform agenda is the primary focus for much of the Northern Territory's effort under the SSNP, there is significant interaction between the activities funded under the Closing the Gap National Partnership and the Improving Teacher Quality, Literacy and Numeracy and Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities National Partnerships. Many reforms are not only complementary in nature, but are also co-funded to enhance the outcomes for Closing the Gap National Partnership eligible schools.

In addition to undertaking the NTER to Closing the Gap National Partnership transition processes, the following progress has been achieved on new initiatives commenced under this Agreement:

**Inclusive leadership models** (cultural advisors, community mentors) are being trialled at eight large remote schools.

Schools in seven communities identified to deliver **VET in the Middle** programs to enhance the availability of flexible pathways programs for middle years students.

**Northern Territory Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) 2010 Action Plan** has been developed and identifies key actions in five priority areas.

Enhanced services provided to support students with **Conductive Hearing Loss**.

**Transforming Indigenous Education Evaluation** has commenced.

Services and support provided to schools under NTER transitioning to new models and delivered through the **Remote Improvement Team** and **Remote Schools Specialist Support Team**.

Initial commencements and recruitment continuing for

- **Remote Indigenous Education Managers** to support and enhance family and community engagement with schooling
- **Onsite Teaching and Learning Coaches** to support quality literary, numeracy and ESL teaching outcomes
- Coordinators and mentors providing **support for Indigenous staff completing qualifications**

### Milestones and measures

The key milestones outlined in the Northern Territory's Bilateral Agreement have been achieved as follows:

Milestone (April 2010)	Detail of Achievement
Panel contract established which schools can access to identify expert critical friends to assist with quality school improvement planning processes	Five consultants available under panel contract to provide <b>critical friends support to enhance school improvement planning processes</b> . Schools are able to access these services on an as needed basis.  Schools are also supported through their respective sectors to undertake quality improvement planning.
Milestone (April 2010)	Detail of Achievement
Intensive Improvement Team providing support to targeted	The <b>Remote Improvement Team has been established</b> to work intensively with targeted government schools to support improvement

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government schools	<p>processes. In particular the team focuses on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enhancing data analysis</li> <li>• determination of whole school approaches</li> <li>• supporting targeted professional development to enable effective leadership of programming and planning as well as teaching for assessment of learning.</li> </ul> <p>The current focus schools are Lajamanu School, Nganmariyanga School and Numbulwar School.</p> <p>The work of the Remote Improvement Team is supplemented by the services and support provided by regional staff provided to support data literacy and the teaching of TESOL students, as well as onsite Teaching and Learning Coaches. This model has been established following review of the services and support provided through the NTER Strategic Improvement Teams.</p>
Trial of inclusive leadership models underway in selected very remote schools	<p>Schools involved in the RWSR initiative have the opportunity to <b>trial inclusive leadership models</b> that assist principals to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve liaison with community leaders</li> <li>• develop strong cultural leadership and shared responsibility</li> <li>• integrate local community culture in curriculum and school business</li> <li>• improve cross-cultural skills and knowledge of staff.</li> </ul> <p>Through the appointment of community mentors and cultural advisors, such inclusive leadership models are being trialled at Alekerenge School, Maningrida School, Shepherdson College, Yirrkala School, Yirrkala Homelands School, Yuendumu School, Kalkaringi School and Angurugu School. It is likely that other schools will prioritise the trial of inclusive leadership models as they complete their RWSR planning.</p>
Six Indigenous Education Coordinators employed	<p><b>Remote Indigenous Education Managers</b> will work closely with school leaders and facilitate enhanced community partnerships in education. One position, in the Barkly region, has been filled with readvertising of the remaining positions to extend nationally during Term 2 2010.</p>
Remote Catholic Schools Specialist Support team established	<p>The <b>Remote Schools Specialist Support team</b> established under the NTER is continuing to provide assistance to remote schools. As part of the transition to Closing the Gap National Partnership, the team's service delivery model is being refined to ensure it is positioned to provide effective support for the delivery of priorities identified in school improvement plans. A workshop involving schools and their communities to assist identify their priority focus areas is planned for May 2010, and this will further inform the service delivery model for the future.</p>
<b>Milestone (April 2010)</b>	<b>Detail of Achievement</b>
Ten Literacy, Numeracy and ESL coaches supporting schools	<p>Recruitment processes for <b>Onsite Teaching and Learning Coaches</b> have commenced, however there has been difficulty in attracting suitably qualified, quality staff to these positions.</p> <p>Strategies are being implemented to enhance recruitment process (such as through national advertising of groups of positions within a region) and on adapting the service delivery model to address issues such as</p>



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	<p>insufficient accommodation (such as drawing on existing onsite expertise supplemented by relief or contracted personnel and use of fly-in-fly-out support models).</p> <p>These on-site coaching positions have been established to extend and enhance assistance that had previously been provided to schools through system support services under the NTER.</p>
<p>Guidelines for ongoing remote screening process developed</p>	<p>A specific <b>selection process for the recruitment of quality teachers to remote schools has been developed</b> and is being trialled during Term 2 2010. It incorporates a three-phase process of screening, pre-selection and selection which includes use of online application tools, personal profiling and facilitated interaction with a Recruitment Panel. Principals will be trained to ensure they are able effectively recruit staff relevant to their school and community context from the pool of suitable applicants. A website is under development and will provide a one-stop service point that provides clear information about the recruitment and selection processes for remote schools as well as professional development and networking opportunities for remote teachers.</p>
<p>Conductive Hearing Coordination established</p>	<p>Hearing Team expanded to enable <b>enhanced services and support for students with conductive hearing loss</b>. 33 eligible Closing the Gap schools have accessed services from the team, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• professional learning programs for classroom teachers, special education teachers and assistant teachers that focus on Conductive Hearing Loss (CHL) Auditory Processing, ESL and CHL, How to read an Audiogram and Classroom Acoustics and Amplification. Professional learning in CHL provided at teacher orientation and Special Education Teachers are being unskilled to enable them provide ongoing professional learning new staff commencing at their schools throughout the year.</li> <li>• provision of advice about improving classroom acoustics and support with the installation and use of Sound Field Systems</li> <li>• supporting the processes of audit, action planning and evaluation through the use of Hearing Continuums</li> </ul> <p>A 2010 Work Plan for the Hearing Team has been developed and additional activities include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provision of fist port of call information and support in the development of action plans for individual and groups of students who are diagnosed with Otitis Media (middle ear disease) and CHL</li> <li>• the development of Educational Adjustment Plans which can be implemented within schools.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Milestone (April 2010)</b></p>	<p><b>Detail of Achievement</b></p>
<p>Remote and Indigenous Workforce Development team transitioned to strategically align with new regional service delivery models</p>	<p><b>Indigenous and Remote Workforce Development</b> team is responsible for the collection and provision of workforce training and development data, provision of professional development and support for the creation and use of resources and tools for the remote Indigenous workforce.</p> <p>The team supports regionally based Indigenous Workforce Development Consultants and Coaches who work in-schools to mentor and provide support Indigenous staff who are completing qualifications, and also students who have identified an interest in pursuing careers in education. Recruitment is continuing to fill the regionally based positions.</p>

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	<p>In addition, the team is continuing to manage through to completion a number projects that commenced under the NTER QTP Package including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• development of ePortfolio system for Indigenous educators (ePIE)</li> <li>• contextualisation of Read English on the Web (REOW) application for Indigenous Early Childhood educators</li> <li>• modification of the English Language Self- Assessment (ELSA) tool into an iSee-iLearn talking book</li> <li>• training for teachers working with Assistant Teachers in VET competency and assessment units from the TAA training package (eAssist)</li> <li>• payment of course fees and development of resources for Indigenous undertaking Certificate courses.</li> </ul> <p>The <b>Quality Remote Teaching Service team</b> provides services and support to improve the quality of recruitment and selection of the remote education workforce to enhance both teacher quality and retention. The team is responsible for developing strategies to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase the supply of quality teacher applicants to very remote Indigenous schools. Strategies will focus on ensuring the existing and future teacher workforce is adequately prepared to work in very remote contexts</li> <li>• manage teacher demand through reducing vacancy numbers and increasing length of tenure through rigorous teacher selection, including screening</li> <li>• ensure support mechanisms are available to encourage teacher retention in remote schools and case management of professional and career development.</li> </ul>
<p>Integration of remaining Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) deliverables in Closing The Gap reform effort and reporting</p>	<p>Priorities identified to be progressed under the Closing the Gap National Partnership have been based on a review of evaluative evidence as well issues/challenges presented through the implementation of NTER initiatives.</p> <p>The <i>Northern Territory Emergency Response Final Performance Report</i> provided details of the support provided to government schools under the Enhancing Literacy and Quality Teaching initiatives. It detailed completed activities as well as those that have ben redefined or are continuing under Closing the Gap National Partnership. These will continue to be reported through future reporting of the work of the Indigenous and Remote Workforce Development team.</p> <p>The Catholic Education sector is in the process of completing, reviewing and transitioning NTER initiatives into the Closing the Gap National Partnership, and finalising NTER reporting to DEEWR. Ongoing initiatives will be reported through future Closing the Gap National Partnership reporting.</p> <p>The Independent schools sector is in the process of negotiating with prescribed schools the priorities to which resources and reform will be targeted. Information on the progress of these initiatives will be reported through future Closing the Gap National Partnership reporting.</p>

Other activities that have been progressed include:

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**Northern Territory AEDI 2010 Action Plan** has been developed and identifies key action areas including

- supporting the dissemination and use of data within mappable communities
- improving understanding of AEDI data and data collection processes in un-mappable communities
- strengthening key community stakeholder understanding and use of AEDI data
- implementing second round of data collection to increase the number of mappable communities
- developing public information and education resources to increase the understanding of AEDI in the NT.

The expansion of the **VET in the Middle** program following its pilot in 2009 has been achieved earlier than its anticipated October 2010 milestone. Schools in Barunga, Borroloola, Maningrida, Nguiu, Ntaria, Numbulwar, Wugularr will deliver Engineering or Hospitality courses in 2010. It is estimated that 115 students will access these courses.

**Transforming Indigenous Education Evaluation** has commenced. Consultation with schools and communities at 3 sites has occurred (Maningrida, Ngkurr and Gunbalanya) and will inform the development of place-based planning and evaluation frameworks. These frameworks will build on existing community partnership agreements and school accountability and performance improvement processes and result in school performance improvement and results-based accountability processes suitable for very remote sites. This will also be an integral part of the cross-agency effort under the Remote Service Delivery National Partnership. A national and international meta-analysis of evidence based practice in early years English acquisition is under development.

Planning is underway to **pilot a Senior Years leadership and Pathways program** in Semester 2 2010. Project is currently being scoped and two possible delivery options are being explored. Identification of students will be made in consultation with schools.

### Implementation or impact issues

The transition from NTER to Closing the Gap National Partnership environment is continuing, and the Northern Territory is working with the Australian Government to ensure activity and reporting aligns with the new state/territory funding arrangements. It is likely that these negotiations will continue throughout 2010 as the level of detail and information required through quarterly reporting processes are refined and completed.

Recruitment of suitably qualified specialist personnel to regional positions that support remote schools continues to be a challenge, which is further impacted by lack of suitable accommodation. This also affects visiting specialists – such as those involved in the provision of vocation education programs. Alternative service delivery models continue to be trialled and explored during this early implementation phase to address these issues.

### Systemic Closing the Gap supported activity

The activities being implemented under the Closing the Gap National Partnership are a combination of systemic, regional/sectoral and school-based. They are also aligned with the outputs under the other Smarter Schools National Partnerships and in many cases provide supplementary funding to enhance the delivery of these reforms at schools supporting students in prescribed communities.

Systemic provided services are focused on building workforce capacity in schools supporting students in prescribed communities and/or enhancing the education experience for students and include

- extending services available to support conductive hearing
- improved screening and induction programs
- leadership and coaching programs for school leaders as well as indigenous staff
- leadership and pathways programs for Indigenous students
- coordination of enhanced ESL
- development of an integrated service delivery for early childhood services
- Transforming Indigenous Education evaluation
- Strategic coordination.

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### Good practice

The **VET in the Middle** program is currently working with schools to explore the integration of middle years delivery with both the @VET online/blended learning program and VET in the senior years to ensure sustainable and measurable training pathways for students.

### Performance Indicators

The *Northern Territory Emergency Response Final Performance Report* provided recent data regarding the process of schools supporting student in prescribed communities and from 2011, the Northern Territory will provide performance data against the performance measures outlined in Section 23 of the Smarter Schools National Partnerships Bilateral Agreement.

## Section 6 – Other evidence

### Evaluation, scoping, research and case studies

The Transforming Indigenous Education evaluation being conducted in partnership with the Menzies School of Health Research is the primary source of activity to assess the impact of the reform agenda in very remote schools and will be used to inform future resourcing and service delivery models. It is a longitudinal evaluation and progress will be shared in future reporting.

The outcomes of research undertaken and initiatives that show progress will be shared in future reports and via the Northern Territory's Smarter Schools website at <http://www.det.nt.gov.au/smarterschools>.