

National School Reform Agreement

**Northern Territory Bilateral Agreement:
2021 Progress Report**

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – NT – 2021

Executive Summary

The Northern Territory remains committed to improving outcomes for all students and young people in the NT. In 2021 the NT launched two new strategies, the [Education NT Strategy 2021–2025 \(PDF 7.6MB\)](#) and [NT Education Engagement Strategy 2022-2031](#) which have been informed and shaped by the voices of families, community members. Both strategies identify priority actions and areas for reform, building on the work already undertaken through implementation of the reform activities agreed under the NT Bilateral Agreement.

In 2021 the Northern Territory Government, Catholic and independent school sectors have successfully completed the 2021 activities under the Bilateral Agreement, with the exception of one activity related to the evaluation of the school improvement framework, which has commenced, and is now due to be completed in 2022. Progress continues on all ongoing reform directions, and the NT is on track to meet all associated reform actions.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has had some impact on the delivery and implementation of education reforms in the NT, however the NT has continued to deliver reform actions to support improvements in student learning, teaching and school leadership.

In 2021, the NT successfully transitioned all remaining schools to NAPLAN online, with 76 of 185 government schools, and four of 18 Catholic schools, utilising the no or low bandwidth solution.

Another highlight of 2021 was the strong participation of senior secondary students in Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs, with 1046 students from 33 remote and very remote schools enrolled in nationally accredited VET programs. A total of 247 students from remote and very remote schools completed a full qualification. 1046 students from 33 remote and very remote schools enrolled in nationally accredited VET programs.

Strong collaboration between all sectors continues in relation to the implementation of the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on Students with Disability, with seven cross-sector moderation forums successfully held in 2021, both online and in-person across all regions in the NT. A total of 106 educators from 76 schools participated, including non-government schools and educators. This is an increase of 51 participants and 34 schools compared to 2020.

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – NT – 2021

Progress Against Each Reform Direction

Reform Direction A – Support students, student learning and achievement

Implementation of NAPLAN Online

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Cohort of government and non-government schools implement NAPLAN Online	All sectors	May 2019	<i>Information provided by all sectors:</i> Completed in 2019.
Improved data processes in place to increase integrity of NAPLAN assessment data across both government and non-government sectors.	All sectors	Sep 2019	<i>Information provided by all sectors:</i> Completed in 2019.
All eligible government and non-government schools implement NAPLAN Online, noting that, at the date of signing this agreement, no tested no/low bandwidth solution has been delivered which may affect the Northern Territory's ability to implement in those affected schools.	All sectors	May 2020	Timing revised to May 2021 due to NAPLAN cancellation in 2020. <i>Information provided by the NTG Department of Education:</i> Completed in 2021. All eligible NT schools participated in NAPLAN Online in 2021 as part of the national transition to online assessment by 2022. Testing took place from 11 to 21 May 2021. Of the 185 schools, 32 had also undertaken online testing in 2019, and 76 used the national low and no bandwidth solution.

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – NT – 2021

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			<p><i>Information provided by the Association of Independent Schools NT:</i></p> <p>Completed in 2021.</p> <p>All Independent Schools across the Northern Territory completed NAPLAN Online with the support of NT Department of Education staff.</p> <p><i>Information provided by Catholic Education NT:</i></p> <p>Completed in 2021.</p> <p>All Catholic Education NT schools transitioned to NAPLAN online with 4 schools accessing the low bandwidth solution in 2021; and 14 schools accessing the high bandwidth solution.</p>
Growth data available for first cohort of matched students who have NAPLAN Online in 2020 and 2022	All sectors	Sep 2022	<p><i>Information provided by all sectors:</i></p> <p>N/A</p> <p>NAPLAN was not conducted (nationally) in 2020 due to COVID-19. The department intends to produce matched growth data for 2021 and 2023, once available, however this will be based on advice from ACARA, noting NAPLAN testing will be moving to term 1 in 2023.</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – NT – 2021

Invest in pathways for remote and very remote students to provide opportunities and deliver workplace-specific skills and knowledge that is tailored to employment opportunities within communities

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Mobile and embedded trainers working with approximately 15 very remote schools in 2018	NTG	2018	<p><i>Information provided by the NTG Department of Education:</i></p> <p>Completed in 2018.</p>
Up to 225 students are engaged in accredited training	NTG	2018	<p><i>Information provided by the NTG Department of Education:</i></p> <p>Completed in 2018.</p>
Up to 250 students annually, and their communities, engaged in accredited training	NTG	2019-2022	<p><i>Information provided by the NTG Department of Education:</i></p> <p>2021 activities completed</p> <p>The department continues to work with industry, training providers and schools (government and non-government) to ensure that VET programs delivered to secondary students result in appropriate and relevant employment pathways which are aimed at improving the number of qualification completions.</p> <p>In the 2021 school year, 1046 students from 33 remote and very remote schools enrolled in nationally accredited VET programs. A total of 247 students from remote and very remote schools completed a full qualification.</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – NT – 2021

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			In addition to students undertaking VET in schools, 48 students from remote and very remote NT schools were undertaking a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship in 2021.

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – NT – 2021

Reform Direction B – Support teaching, school leadership and school improvement

Continued implementation of Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) with a focus on moderation and quality control measures

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Participation in two cross-sector moderation activities per annum	All sectors	2019-2023	<p><i>Information provided by the NTG Department of Education:</i></p> <p>2021 activities completed</p> <p>The department led and coordinated cross-sector moderation activities across the NT.</p> <p>In 2021, 7 cross-sector Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) moderation workshops were conducted both in person and online across all regions in the NT. A total of 106 educators from 76 schools participated, including non-government schools and educators. This is an increase of 51 participants and 34 schools compared to 2020.</p> <p>The moderation workshops assist with consistency of teacher judgement and reporting across NT government and non-government schools. The workshops included reviewing and making decisions about nationally consistent case studies from the NCCD portal, moderating case studies shared by schools to determine inclusion in the NCCD, the level of adjustment and category of disability based on the evidence provided.</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – NT – 2021

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			<p><i>Information provided by the Association of Independent Schools NT:</i></p> <p>2021 activities completed.</p> <p>Teachers and support staff from Independent Schools attended moderation workshops arranged by NT Department of Education in both Darwin and Alice Springs. AISNT held a moderation workshop for teachers and support staff in Darwin, with a focus on adjustment levels.</p> <p><i>Information provided by Catholic Education NT:</i></p> <p>2021 activities completed</p> <p>Catholic Education NT conducts internal NCCD Data mock audits with all schools annually and participates in NCCD cross sector moderation activities as scheduled.</p>
<p>Inclusion Support Coordinators in place and teachers trained to use the Learning with Diversity Integrated System</p>	<p>Catholic Education</p>	<p>2019-2023</p>	<p><i>Information provided by Catholic Education NT:</i></p> <p>2021 activities completed</p> <p>Inclusion Support Coordinators are appointed in all schools to work with staff and students and lead NCCD processes. 100% of Inclusion Support Coordinators and Inclusion Support Practitioners completed training and were supported with implementation and use of Inspire – Learning with Diversity Program.</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – NT – 2021

Support teachers through a system of coaching and mentoring to build teacher and school leader capability to ensure students have quality teachers who are proficient in literacy, numeracy and ESL pedagogy

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Project governance structure established through the network leaders within Education NT Strategy (coaches work under network leaders to work intensively with focus schools)	NTG	2018	<p><i>Information provided by the NTG Department of Education:</i></p> <p>Completed in 2018.</p>
Identify focus schools based on school improvement data	NTG	2018	<p><i>Information provided by the NTG Department of Education:</i></p> <p>Completed in 2018.</p>
Deliver intensive support to focus schools in 5-week sprints	NTG	2018-2023	<p><i>Information provided by the NTG Department of Education:</i></p> <p>2021 activities completed.</p> <p>School Improvement Journeys were updated to reflect 2019-2021 school improvement data. This data was used to inform a differentiated support model that provides universal, targeted and focused support to schools based on improvement trajectories and identified improvement goals. This data was triangulated with other systemic data, including school review findings, school survey and improvement planning information. This support has primarily focused on whole-school curriculum planning, evidence informed pedagogical practices and the analysis of data to inform teaching and learning.</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – NT – 2021

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			The department trialled 5-week sprints in 2019. Since then, the introduction of the School Improvement Journey methodology has enabled the department to better support, and be responsive to, individual school needs across the whole year. Schools' individual support needs are built into their Annual School Improvement Plans, which are reviewed and adjusted at the point of school reviews.
Evaluate at end of each 5-week sprint – refine strategies where necessary	NTG	2018-2023	<p><i>Information provided by the NTG Department of Education:</i></p> <p>2021 activities completed</p> <p>Previous differentiated support strategies have been refined following a review of past implementation. The findings of this review have been addressed, and current processes and practices reflect these findings.</p>

Strengthen local governance arrangements in remote and very remote school communities, ensuring decisions are community-led

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Develop Local Decision Making assessment continuum reflective of the Northern Territory Government Influence Model.	NTG	By Dec 2018	<p><i>Information provided by the NTG Department of Education:</i></p> <p>Completed in 2018.</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – NT – 2021

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Northern Territory Council of Government School Organisations Incorporated (NT COGSO) to develop governance training protocols and schedule of visits and workshops in remote and very remote communities.	NTG	By Dec 2020	<i>Information provided by the NTG Department of Education:</i> Completed in 2019.
Ongoing engagement with local communities to enhance school engagement and local governance across 50 per cent of remote and very remote government schools.	NTG	By Dec 2020	<i>Information provided by the NTG Department of Education:</i> Completed in 2020.

Assist schools to improve governance and financial management practices

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Provide leadership and school board professional development with an emphasis on roles and responsibilities and how to work effectively together	Independent Schools	2018-2023	<i>Information provided by the Association of Independent Schools NT:</i> Completed in 2020. AISNT continued to work with Stephen Brown from The Brown Collective to provide workshops for school leaders and the AISNT Board. The focus during 2021 was development of the AISNT strategic plan and leadership

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – NT – 2021

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			requirements of the Board of Directors as AISNT prepares for the move to a Company structure.
Provide assistance and training for Independent schools to improve financial management	Independent Schools	2018-2023	<p><i>Information provided by the Association of Independent Schools NT:</i></p> <p>Completed in 2021</p> <p>AISNT engaged John Somerset from Somerset Education. John presented two workshops on school funding and financial management. John worked with Principal's, Business Managers and School Boards from Independent Schools ensuring they understood their governance obligations regarding school finances. John also worked with Principal's and Business Managers from some Independent Schools to develop financial plans, business plans and budgets, accommodating future funding changes.</p>

Assist schools to improve governance practices

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
School leader and teacher recruitment and appointment processes reviewed and updated	Catholic Education	2018	<p><i>Information provided by Catholic Education NT:</i></p> <p>Completed in 2018.</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – NT – 2021

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Review of operations, personnel and structures to ensure support for schools is in line with best practice	Catholic Education	2018	<p><i>Information provided by Catholic Education NT:</i></p> <p>Completed in 2018.</p>
Review and refocus the CENT School Improvement and Renewal Framework to ensure an ongoing, rigorous approach to school self-assessment and review	Catholic Education	2019	<p><i>Information provided by Catholic Education NT:</i></p> <p>Completed in 2019.</p>
School Improvement Assessment, External Validation and Registration Renewal processes completed for all schools	Catholic Education	2019-2023	<p><i>Information provided by Catholic Education NT:</i></p> <p>2021 activities completed</p> <p>Catholic Education NT partnered with Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) to lead the External Validation review process for four schools using the National School Improvement Tool. Outcomes and recommendations from these reviews have informed school and system improvement priorities. All schools will have completed an external review within the 5-year period.</p> <p>Three schools completed the School Routine Registration assessment process. Internal school improvement assessments were conducted for 10 schools by the Catholic Education NT executive team.</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – NT – 2021

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Professional development programs and appraisal processes implemented for middle and senior school and system leaders.	Catholic Education	2019-2023	<p><i>Information provided by Catholic Education NT:</i></p> <p>2021 activities completed</p> <p>Leadership Development programs facilitated by the Brown Collective were delivered to middle, senior and executive leaders. There were 24 participants in the Leading from Within (Middle Leaders) and 2 participants in the Executive Leaders program.</p> <p>Formal appraisal processes are scheduled and embedded for all middle, senior and system leaders.</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – NT – 2021

Reform Direction C – Enhancing the national evidence base

Implement a system wide, data driven, coherent school and system improvement framework. The reforms will drive evidence-based strategies that will deliver differentiated support for Territory schools and ensure a focus on continuous school improvement

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Establish a School and System Improvement delivery unit to develop and implement a school and system improvement framework	NTG	Oct 2018	<i>Information provided by the NTG Department of Education:</i> Completed in 2018.
Develop standardised metrics for schools and system performance and improvement	NTG	2019	<i>Information provided by the NTG Department of Education:</i> Completed in 2019.
Develop resources identifying evidence-based school improvement strategies	NTG	By Dec 2020	<i>Information provided by the NTG Department of Education:</i> Completed in 2020.
Evaluate the school improvement framework	NTG	2021	<i>Information provided by the NTG Department of Education:</i> Activities underway. The School and System Improvement Unit (SSIU) worked with an evidence partner to define the scope and evaluation logic for the evaluation of the school improvement framework. The evaluation has been delayed due to rescoping following the release of the Education NT Strategy 2021-2025 in late 2021.

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – NT – 2021

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			A procurement process is underway to engage an external evaluator to conduct the evaluation with expected completion in October 2022.