Non-Government Reform Support Annual Report

2023

Association of Independent Schools of the Northern Territory

<u>**Executive Summary**</u>

The Association of Independent Schools of the Northern Territory (AISNT) advocates for and represents Independent schools in the Northern Territory, delivering services to Member Schools to support a vibrant and effective Independent Schooling Sector, providing affordable choice for parents. AISNT delivers services support and advice in strategic planning, good governance, meeting regulatory obligations, implementation of good pedagogy, catering for the needs of all students, as well as facilitating networking opportunities. AISNT acknowledges the assistance received from the Australian Government through the Non-Government Reform Support Fund, which enables AISNT to expand the services provided to schools to meet a range of needs and government priorities. This assistance is greatly appreciated.

AISNT delivered the following projects utilising the NGRSF:

Project	Project Title
NCCD	Enhancing the quality of Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on Students with a Disability utilising the INSPIRE – Learning with diversity platform
NAPLAN	Continued Support and Utilisation of Data
Governance	Continued support with Governance and Financial Management Practices
Governance	Governance Training for Indigenous School Boards
Leadership	Developing and Empowering Leadership Teams
Leadership	Developing Future Leaders
School Improvement	Empowering School Self Improvement School
School Improvement	Improvement Education Engagement Strategy – Cultural Responsiveness

Each of the projects encompassed several objectives in line with the Australian Government school reform priorities:

Priority 1: Improve the quality of information on the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability and to improve the efficiency and integrity of the data collection:

Priority 2: Strengthening NAPLAN, including through bringing the test window forward to Term One from 2023 and offering schools the opportunity to opt-in to assessment of students' ability in Science, Digital Literacy and Civics and Citizenship;

Priority 3: Improve governance and financial management practices in Independent Schools in the Northern Territory to strengthen financial viability, improve business decision making and build resilience to mitigate unforeseen circumstances.

<u>**Progress against strategic plan**</u>

AISNT has overseen the rollout of the INSPIRE – Learning with Diversity integrated software platform, to Member Schools to assist teachers with identifying and planning for students with disability. The INSPIRE Learning with Diversity platform also collects evidence for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with a Disability (NCCD).

In 2023, the NGRSF was used to support the employment of AISNT staff to continue to oversee and support the use of INSPIRE – Learning with Diversity software platform by Teachers and Inclusion

Support staff in Member Schools to collect and record evidence for the NCCD, and analysis of data for planning, developing and implementing Education Adjustment Plans.

The Inclusion Support Network was established in 2020. In 2023, AISNT continued to facilitate these network meetings.   The Inclusion Support Network four times throughout 2023. Inclusion Support staff were upskilled in the use of the INSPIRE – Learning with Diversity software platform, to collect and analyse data, to use to develop individualised Educational Adjustment Plans. Expert consultants were engaged to offer support and provide advice on appropriate interventions and adjustments to improve learning outcomes for students with disability. Network meetings enabled Inclusion Support staff to further engage with the Disability Discrimination Act and the Disability Standards for Education ensuring Inclusion staff in Member Schools are fully aware of the legislative and regulatory requirements.

The Association of Independent Schools of the Northern Territory worked collaboratively with the Northern Territory Department of Education as the Test Administration Authority to provide support to Member Schools in preparation for the NAPLAN test window that was brought forward to Term One in 2023. This included AISNT staff engaging with related Territory and National working groups to ensure Member Schools were informed of NAPLAN processes and procedures. AISNT provided support to Member Schools in data analysis and how to use this data to inform teaching and learning programs.

AISNT are committed to building capacity of school leaders in Member Schools, including governing bodies, to ensure effective governance and ongoing school improvement planning and practices. AISNT engaged Dr Stephen Brown, The Brown Collective to facilitate two one day forums, delivering workshops in leadership formation and development, building capacity of emerging, current and aspiring leaders.

AISNT provided targeted support through governance advice and training for Indigenous School governing bodies.

AISNT engaged a governance and finance expert and a workplace legal expert to deliver a one day Business Managers Forum in Darwin. They provided information and support to Business Managers in targeted areas of regulatory compliance (Financial Questionnaire and Accountability; Census; Student Attendance; and other key compliance activities), good financial management practices and how to deal with work place industrial matters in schools.

AISNT facilitated two Principal and Business Managers forums providing information in regulatory compliance, including updates on the latest industrial and work health and safety legislative changes.

Member Schools have shown continued interest to participate in school improvement work. AISNT staff continued to engage with individual Member Schools providing support and advice on school improvement tools and strategies, strategic planning and school improvement reviews. AISNT staff provided routine assessment support ensuring Member Schools are aware of, understand and are meeting legislative and regulatory obligations.

AISNT focused on embedding cultural responsiveness across our Member Schools. In line with the Northern Territory Education Engagement Strategy, AISNT worked with Member Schools on building cultural responsiveness, to deliver culturally relevant teaching and learning, catering to the diverse needs and motivations of each child or student.

AISNT facilitated two one day Indigenous Leaders Network forums and cultural responsiveness was key topic at these forums. AISNT staff worked with individual Member Schools in building the awareness and understanding of Indigenous perspectives, histories and cultures, and supporting schools to embed it into their school environment.

Relationship with state and territory government

AISNT Executive Director meets with the Minister Education quarterly to discuss matters concerning Independent Schools in the Northern Territory, including the National School Reform Agenda initiatives.

The Non-Government Schools Ministerial Advisory Committee convenes quarterly to various matters concerning non-government schools, including reform initiatives.

AISNT has a representative on the Northern Territory Board of Studies. This representation involves quarterly meetings with key stakeholders to discuss local and national educational issues and priorities, including initiatives related to the National School Reform Agenda.

Within the Northern Territory, AISNT (Association of Independent Schools of the Northern Territory) has representation on the Northern Territory Board of Studies. This representation involves quarterly meetings with key stakeholders to discuss local and national education issues, including initiatives related to the National School Reform Agenda, including reform priorities such as NAPLAN Online.

NAPLAN online is a collaborative effort between AISNT, Catholic Education NT and the Northern Territory Department of Education, involving regular communication and occasional face-to-face meetings to address challenges as they arise. These collaborative relationships provide clarity on joint initiatives and ensure that all sectors remain informed about intended activities and priorities, allowing each sector to advance its strategic goals.

Project Report

Include here a general statement that provides a response to the following:

Summary of 2023 Achievements

1. Project title	2. Project description and activities	3. Expected outcomes/ Overall achievements Achieved or Not achieved	4. Indicators of success	5. List any additional or variations of Activities undertaken/Achieved outcomes
National Policy C - Enhancing the national evidence base **State Initiative** Continued implementation of National Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) with a focus on moderation and quality control measures **2022/2023 priority 1 -** Improve the quality of information on the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data	**NCCD Enhancing the quality of Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on Students with a Disability utilising the INSPIRE – Learning with Diversity platform** **Professional Development provided for Member Schools using the INSPIRE platform** • Efficient systems to record evidence, utilising the INSPIRE platform • Understanding and applying the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and the Disability Standards of Education; • Shared understanding of the levels of adjustment and categories of student data through moderation;	• Improved accuracy in the data submitted and evidence collected through the use of the INSPIRE software platform for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD). **Achieved** • A common shared language and a consistent approach to NCCD across Member Schools. **Achieved** • Improved Member School staff understanding of the processes for the NCCD. **Achieved**	**National Policy C - Enhancing the national evidence base** **State Initiative** Continued implementation of National Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) with a focus on moderation and quality control measures. **2022/2023 priority 1 -** Improve the quality of information on the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data.	**NCCD Enhancing the quality of Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on Students with a Disability utilising the INSPIRE – Learning with Diversity platform** **Professional Development provided for Member Schools using the INSPIRE platform** • Efficient systems to record evidence, utilising the INSPIRE platform • Understanding and applying the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and the Disability Standards of Education; • Shared understanding of the levels of adjustment and categories of student data through moderation; • Determination of level of adjustment;

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	• Determination of level of adjustment; • Understanding of the evidence requirements needed for a student to be included in the NCCD; • Educational Adjustment Plans, using the INSPIRE platform. School support was provided through the following: • Information sessions, both face-to-face and online; • Information briefing session at Principal and Business Managers Meeting; • School visits; • School based consultancy; • Moderation sessions; Inclusion Support Network Meetings and Forum.	• Improved teacher confidence in determining student disability according to the definition of a disability using the DDA. **Achieved** • Relevant evidence is collected by the staff. **Achieved** • Improved teacher understanding of the different types of disabilities/learning difficulties. **Achieved** • Improved skills in accommodating and providing adjustments within the classroom. **Achieved** • Improved processes within schools in providing accurate evidence of adjustments. **Achieved** • Improved accuracy in determining the levels of adjustment. **Achieved**		• Understanding of the evidence requirements needed for a student to be included in the NCCD; • Educational Adjustment Plans, using the INSPIRE platform. School support was provided through the following: • Information sessions, both face-to-face and online; • Information briefing session at Principal and Business Managers Meeting; • School visits; • School based consultancy; • Moderation sessions; Inclusion Support Network Meetings and Forum.

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		• Improvement in skills, knowledge and understanding of the NCCD in collaboration with colleagues from all sectors. **Achieved**		
NCCD National Policy C Enhancing the national evidence base **State Initiative** Continued implementation of National Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) with a focus on moderation and quality control measures **2022/2023 priority 1 -** Improve the quality of information on the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data	**NCCD Inclusion Support Network** The Inclusion Support Network was established to facilitate opportunities for Inclusion Support Support Staff in schools to convene, exchange ideas and best practices and support each other in their school-related activities. Topics covered included: • Professional Learning Opportunities; • Disability Discrimination Act 1992; • Disability Standards for Education 2005;	• Inclusion Support staff have a better understanding of the Disability Discrimination Act and the legislative and regulatory requirements for schools. **Achieved** • Inclusion Support Staff have a better understanding of the Disability Standards of Education and the requirements for schools. **Achieved** Inclusion Support Staff have a better understanding of levels of adjustment and the evidence requirements. **Achieved**	• 70% of Member Schools have representation on the Inclusion Support Network. **Achieved** • 70% of Member Schools have staff attend Inclusion Support Network Forum. **Not Achieved** • 70% of Member Schools have staff attend Inclusion Support Network Meetings. **Achieved** Survey results of feedback on Inclusion Support Network Forum **Not Achieved**	The Inclusion Support Network Forum did not happen in 2023 due to school's busy timetables.

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	• Nationally Consistent Collection of Data for Students with Disability (NCCD) ; • Educational Adjustment Plans; • Differentiation; • Creating Inclusive Schools; • Essential Evidence for Auditing; • Reasonable Adjustments. An Inclusion Support Network Groups IO was established to enable Inclusion Support Staff to communicate and share ideas digitally. Four Inclusion Support Network Meetings were held in 2023.			

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NAPLAN **National Policy C -** Enhancing the national evidence base **State Initiative** Implementation of NAPLAN Online **2022/2023 priority 2 -** Strengthening NAPLAN	**NAPLAN Continued Support and Utilisation of Data** AISNT will continue to provide support to schools with the bringing forward of the NAPLAN Online test window to 2023. AISNT will work collaboratively with the Northern Territory Department of Education supporting Independent Schools through: • Provision of professional learning opportunities and training to ensure schools have the necessary skills and knowledge. • Engagement with the Northern Territory Department of Education (Test Administration Authority) to ensure schools are informed of NAPLAN procedures.	• Member Schools are ready and confident with NAPLAN occurring in March. **Achieved** • Remote and very remote Member Schools supported with delivering NAPLAN during the NAPLAN test week **Achieved** Member Schools analysing data from NAPLAN and using it to inform school improvement plans and teaching and learning programs. **Achieved**	• All Member Schools participated in NAPLAN Online in March. **100% achieved** AISNT staff supported Member Schools in the analysis of NAPLAN data and the use of data to inform school improvement plans and teaching and learning programs. **100% achieved**	

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	• Hands on support for remote and very remote schools if requested during the NAPLAN test week; • Support for schools to in the interpretation and utilisation of NAPLAN data to inform planning for learning to improve student outcomes. Provision of information to Member Schools on the opportunity to opt-in to assessment of student's ability in Science, Digital Literacy and Civics and Citizenship.			
Governance and Financial Management National Policy B – Supporting teaching, school leadership and school improvement **State Initiative** Assist schools to improve governance and financial management practices	**Continued support with Governance and Financial Management Practices** AISNT will continue to support effective governance in Independent Schools through working with school leadership and governing bodies on good governance procedures and financial management practices.	Members of Governing Bodies will have a clearer understanding of good governance practices. **Achieved** Access to high-quality governance training is improved. **Achieved**	75% of Member Schools provided with advice, training and information indicate improvement in governance capabilities. **100% Achieved**	A Business Managers Forum was held in Darwin for Business Managers in Independent Schools in Darwin. 5 schools participated (50%). The day included a presentation from Neil Leek, who facilitated a workshop - Information of the NT and Federal Funding, including the DMI Funding Methodology and the Block Grant Authority.

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2022/2023 priority 3 - Improve governance and financial management practices	This will include: • Providing information to support Governing Bodies, Principals and Business Managers in regulatory compliance. • Support for schools in sustaining registration criteria, and in creating financial sustainability through business planning. • Developing the governance capabilities and supporting governing body effectiveness.	Governing bodies have a clearer understanding of relevant legislation, regulations and registration compliance and processes. **Achieved** Governing bodies will understand the financial responsibility and demonstrate they meet regulatory compliance requirements. **Achieved**	75% of Member Schools provided with advice, training and information in financial management report improvement in procedures and processes. **100% Achieved** Survey on Principal and Business Managers Forums **0% Achieved**	Will Snow, from Findlaysons Lawyers presented a Crash Course in Workplace Law: • Fair Work Act; • National Employment Standards; • Northern Territory and Commonwealth Anti-Discrimination Laws; • Work Health and Safety • Workers Compensation • Hiring – General protections, Discrimination, Classification, Minimum Pay, Salary and Benefits, • Managing – Leave entitlements, Rates of pay, Dispute resolution, Consultation, Duties and changing them, Conduct issues. • Firing – Notice of termination, Protections, Process requirements, Consultation.

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	School support will be provided through the following: • A Business Managers Forum providing information and support to Business Managers in targeted areas of regulatory compliance (Financial Questionnaire and Accountability; Census; Student Attendance; and other key compliance activities) and good financial management practices. • Two Principal and Business Managers Forums providing information in regulatory compliance, including updates on the latest industrial and work health and safety legislative changes. Regular Principal • Breakfast Meetings. • Individual school support as requested, through customised advice, training and information sharing.			The survey for the Principals and Business Managers forum was not distributed. Verbal feedback from participants was positive, indicating that they had learnt more about regulatory compliance and good financial practices.

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	• Attendance upon request at governing body meetings to review processes and procedures. • Assistance for governing bodies in implementing governance improvement plans. • Presentation on school funding and responsibilities of governing bodies for a thorough oversight of school finances.			
Governance and Financial Management National Policy B – Supporting teaching, school leadership and school improvement **State Initiative** Assist schools to improve governance and financial management practices	**Governance Training for Indigenous School Boards** AISNT will provide continue to support effective governance in Member Schools with Indigenous School Boards by working with their governing bodies on good governance practices and financial management procedures.	Greater understanding and collaboration of the board and school leaders in their working relationship. **Achieved**	Working relationships with board and school are aligned, greater retention of experienced Principals. **50% Achieved** AISNT staff work with three Member Schools providing governance support for governing bodies. **75% Achieved**	AISNT provided Narwaddeken Academy Board with grant to engage a meeting facilitator. AISNT worked with Indigenous Boards, with a focus on the importance of cultural responsiveness in developing healthy Board/School relationships. AISNT staff worked closely with 6 out of 9 schools, with 4 of these schools having a change in the Principal/Principal location.

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2022/2023 priority 3 - Improve governance and financial management practices	This will include: • Building leadership capacity in Indigenous Schools. • Assist Indigenous School Boards to induct, support and develop newly appointed Principal. • Build a strong sense of identity, agency and purpose through the following: • Conference and Network Meetings • Board training • Attendance at meetings Advice and support School support will be provided through the following: • Attendance at governing body meetings to review governance processes and procedures and to ensure a good understanding of school funding and responsibilities for a thorough financial oversight of school's operations.		Two Member School governing bodies participate in governance training with an expert consultant. **0% Achieved**	AISNT could not source an expert consultant with expertise in training Indigenous Boards.

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	• Engage expert consultants to provide culturally responsive governance training. • Support for Principals – understanding of the role and responsibilities of a Principal in an Indigenous School. • Two Indigenous Leaders Forums. • School site visits.			
Governance and Financial Management National Policy B – Supporting teaching, school leadership and school improvement **State Initiative** Assist schools to improve governance and financial management practices	**Leadership - Developing and Empowering Leadership Teams** AISNT will continue to support the development of leadership capabilities of leadership teams in schools. AISNT will provide a one day forum Developing and Empowering Leadership Teams that will be presented by The Brown Collective. The forum will focus on: • Effective Leadership Teams.	The quality and effectiveness of school leadership teams is enhanced. **Achieved** New leaders begin in their roles with an increased confidence in their skill. **Achieved** Shared understanding of the growth of teaching and leadership expertise in the Independent sector. **Achieved**	50% of Member Schools leadership teams attended one day forum. **80% Achieved** Survey of participants. **0% Achieved** 70% of Member Schools attend the Principal and Business Manager Network Meetings. **100% Achieved (80% of schools represented)** AISNT Principal Mentor visits 70% of Member Schools. **100% Achieved**	A written survey was not distributed. Positive verbal feedback was receive from the participants. All stating the knowledge they had gained from the one day forum facilitated by the Brown Collective. There have been requests for a similar program in 2024.

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	• Building Collective Efficacy. School support will be provided through the following: • Two one day Principal and Business Manager Network Meetings. • AISNT Principal Mentor to provide support and advice to Principals. • AISNT staff to workshop/provide professional learning activities to school leadership teams upon request.			
Governance and Financial Management National Policy B – Supporting teaching, school leadership and school improvement **State Initiative** Assist schools to improve governance and financial management practices	**Leadership – Developing Future Leaders** AISNT will continue to support the development of leadership capabilities of Future Leaders. The focus will be on Middle Leaders. AISNT will provide a one day forum Developing Future Leaders that will be presented by The Brown Collective.	Improved leadership capacity and skills of school leadership. **Achieved** Growth and development of leaders ensuring sustainable succession. **Achieved** The quality of school leadership is enhanced. **Achieved**	50% of Member Schools leadership teams attended one day forum. **100% Achieved** 50% of Member Schools attend Middle Leadership breakfast meetings. **100% Achieved**	System Leadership Course (The Brown Collective) An online program facilitated by Dr Stephen Brown and Maggie Farrar. Program started in September 2022 and was completed in April 2023. The leadership program initiative focused on nurturing system leaders and exploring global education system leadership.

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	The forum will focus on: • The nature of work of middle leaders; • Leading self and others; • Strategic thinking and leadership • Self/peer reflection • Approaches to the review and enhancement of school performance. School support will be provided through the following: Four Middle Leaders breakfast meetings, with presenters. AISNT staff will support Member Schools with the development of a school leadership succession plan.			The program consisted of seven online modules: • System Leadership: Depositions and Mindsets; • Global Trends and Approaches: Education Systems; • Networks and Collaborations; • Leading Reform: System Strategy, Approaches to Improvement and Culture; • Policy to Practice: Policy Formation and Effective Implementation; • Teaching and Curriculum Excellence; Stewardship of Resources.

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Governance and Financial Management National Policy B – Supporting teaching, school leadership and school improvement **State Initiative** Improving governance and financial management practices in Non Government Schools	**School Improvement – Empowering School Self Improvement** AISNT staff will continue to engage with individual Member Schools providing support and advice on school improvement tools and strategies, strategic planning and school improvement reviews. AISNT staff will provide routine assessment support ensuring Member Schools are aware of, understand and are meeting legislative and regulatory obligations. This will include: • Working with individual school leadership teams in the planning and implementation of a School Improvement Framework. • Supporting school improvement work to assist individual schools in assessing their effectiveness and plan for continuous improvement.	Continued interest from schools to participate in school improvement work. **Achieved** School leaders are strategic in their development of school improvement plans. **Achieved**	AISNT staff work with 50% of Member School leadership teams on the School Improvement Framework. **20% Achieved**	Two Member Schools requested support from AISNT staff to work with Leadership Teams on their School Improvement Framework and subsequent School Improvement strategies.

1. Project title	2. Project description and activities	3. Expected outcomes/ Overall achievements Achieved or Not achieved	4. Indicators of success	5. List any additional or variations of Activities undertaken/Achieved outcomes
	• Empowering of school teams to undertake self-directed change to improve school performance, student learning and teacher practice. • Supporting participating schools to conduct a self-assessment, identify priorities for change, implement an action plan and embed a cycle of school improvement. • Supporting schools with their Routine Assessments, ensuring compliance. School support will be provided through: An AISNT Officer to work with school leadership teams, on request, on developing, implementing and evaluating school improvement plans. School site visits. Individual school based consultancy.			

1. Project title	2. Project description and activities	3. Expected outcomes/ Overall achievements Achieved or Not achieved	4. Indicators of success	5. List any additional or variations of Activities undertaken/Achieved outcomes
	AISNT staff participation in Routine Assessment of Member Schools.			
Governance and Financial Management National Policy B – Supporting teaching, school leadership and school improvement **State Initiative** Improving governance and financial management practices in Non Government Schools	**Building Cultural Responsiveness in Schools In line with the Northern Territory Education Engagement Strategy** AISNT will be working with Member Schools on building cultural responsiveness, to deliver culturally relevant teaching and learning, catering to the diverse needs and motivations of each child or student to increase student engagement and improve outcomes for students. This will include: • Working with individual Member School in building the awareness and understanding of Indigenous perspectives, histories and cultures, and supporting schools to embed it into their school environment.	Member Schools have a greater awareness and understanding of Indigenous perspectives, histories and cultures. **Achieved** Member Schools have a greater understanding of cultural differences, and culturally safe and effective practices. **Achieved** Member Schools have a greater understanding that a culturally responsive workforce understands the importance of drawing upon the cultural identity, knowledge and skills of each child and student. **Achieved** Member Schools will provide learning spaces that provide culturally sensitive and culturally relevant learning opportunities. **Achieved**	50% of Member Schools attend the Indigenous Schools Network Meetings. **100% Achieved** AISNT Staff will engage with 50% of individual Member Schools, running workshop and professional learning activities. **100% Achieved** 40% of Member School will begin to develop Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP's). **100% Achieved**	

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	• Through engagement with staff in Member Schools develop an understanding of cultural differences and culturally safe and effective practices. • Support Member Schools embed Indigenous language and cultural knowledge and perspectives in teaching and learning programs and services, especially for learners in remote and very remote communities. • Teach localised Aboriginal culture, language, knowledge and history to all children and students to create learning environments that are based on common appreciation and respect for all. • Exploring learning spaces that provide culturally sensitive and culturally relevant learning opportunities.			

1. Project title	2. Project description and activities	3. Expected outcomes/ Overall achievements Achieved or Not achieved	4. Indicators of success	5. List any additional or variations of Activities undertaken/Achieved outcomes
	• Understanding that a culturally responsive workforce understands the importance of drawing upon the cultural identity, knowledge and skills of each child and student. School support will be provided through the following: • Two one day Indigenous Schools Network Meetings. School site visits. • Encourage Member Schools to develop Reconciliation Action Plans. • Individual school based consultancy. • School-based workshops and professional learning activities. Engaging with the Waratah Program (AISNSW)			

2023 Budget Expenditure

Project Activities	Reform Support Funding
NCCD	
Enhancing the quality of Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on Students with a Disability utilising the INSPIRE platform	$15,000
Inclusion Support Network Meetings and Forum	$20,000
NAPLAN Online	
Continued Support and Utilisation of Data	$30,000
Improving governance and financial management	
Continued support with Governance and Financial Management Practices	$18,000
Governance Training for Indigenous School Boards	$30,000
Leadership - Developing and Empowering Leadership Teams	$40,000
Leadership – Developing Future Leaders	$40,000
School Improvement – Empowering School Self Improvement	$30,000
Education Engagement Strategy - Building cultural responsiveness in schools	$50,000
Administration of Projects	$0
TOTAL	**$273,000**