

Recipient Details

Name of organisation or individual: [O] Boarding Australia

Reference Type: boarding staff association

State or territory: SA

Serial Identification Number: 478486

Responses

Curriculum and assessment

Rating: 0

Teachers and teaching

Rating: 0

Leaders and leadership

Rating: 0

School and Community

As outlined in the Discussion Paper (p 43) achievement of educational outcomes is directly linked to parental engagement, involvement and understanding of the education system. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island families, the involvement of others external to the community requires shared trust in and knowledge of the community and its members. Further, recognition needs to be given to the differing constructs between learning for these families and the western approach to education.

Acknowledging these essential understandings Boarding Australia (BA) conducted extensive consultation and development work with families and communities in the Roper Gulf Region to better understand their needs in relation to education and boarding.

In 2015 the Remote Indigenous Parents' Association (RIPA) was launched. The Association draws its members from the Borroloola, Jilkminggan, Barunga, Bulman, Beswick, Ngukurr, Numbulwar, Manyallaluk, Minyerri and Robinson River communities. It was established as a model to enable expansion nationally.

RIPA in partnership with BA was established to:

- encourage and support remote Indigenous parents to ensure their children attend school every day
- advocate for improvement in educational and associated services that are or should be provided for students in remote Indigenous communities
- engage and educate Indigenous parents and their children in understanding what they need to prepare for when their children go away to board to complete their education.

It is proposed that, together, RIPA and BA build on the momentum already generated. This direction includes:

- creating improved understandings and engagement between boarding providers and communities in relation to Indigenous students,

- development of a National Indigenous Boarding Strategy which ensures that boarding places for Indigenous students are offered based on outcomes, choice and need,
- implementing recommendations from the Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, Study Away Review and the Royal Commission,
- advising new boarding services about best practice service delivery,
- advocating for an efficient and effective use of ABSTUDY resources, and
- creation of a database for boarding that provides students and families with the choices and options that suit their needs.

Rating: 7

Information and Communication Technology

Rating: 0

Entrepreneurship and schools

Rating:

Improving access – enrolments, clusters, distance education and boarding

Boarding Australia (BA) has been working with numerous new and existing boarding services as they prepare to offer placements for Indigenous students who are required to move away from home to continue their education. There is growth in scholarship programs for Indigenous students however the great majority of rural and remote Indigenous students cannot participate.

As demand for Indigenous boarding places continues to grow, it is critical that a planned and considered range of options is made available to meet this demand.

BA offers experience and expertise in the development of a 'National Indigenous Boarding Strategy,' which would include specifications for new boarding services in areas of high need/demand.

The Strategy would identify and address issues, including:

- the location of boarding services according to demand profiles and community expectations,
- number of places required to ensure no students 'miss out' on access to education,
- priority and urgency assessments allowing specific communities/regions to be targeted for tailored action, in accordance with community needs and preferences,
- types and model of boarding consistent with the evidence base and community preferences,
- intense support acknowledging high needs of remote Indigenous students in mainstream boarding services,
- quality and standards implications, recognising the Boarding Standard for Australian Schools and Residences, the Indigenous Affairs Standing Committee Inquiry into Educational Outcomes, and the findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and
- resource implications, including the potential impact on ABSTUDY, scholarship programs and State/Territory public schools.

BA and its member network could support implementation of the strategy, which would involve Government, private, Indigenous community and non-government organisation partners.

Models of accommodation vary. BA is keen to explore the relative merits of differing models and to provide accessible information that will assist families making the decision to board. It would build on the information for example, that BA has developed in collaboration with Remote Indigenous Parent Association including 'What parents need to know about boarding.' This DVD developed with Indigenous people is presented in a culturally appropriate and accessible style and answers many of the questions facing Indigenous families.

Rating for enrolments: 5

Rating for clusters: 5

Rating for distance education: 4

Rating for boarding: 7

Diversity

Rating: 0

Transitioning beyond school

Rating: 0

Additional Comments

About Boarding Australia

Background

Boarding Australia Ltd is a not-for-profit public company limited by guarantee which is established to be, and to continue as, a charity. Its history spans more than 20 years, when it was originally established as the National Association for Rural Student Accommodation (NARSA).

The Board of the company currently comprises 8 members, with extensive experience in boarding service operations, Indigenous education, management and training.

Membership

Of the 200+ boarding services across the country, Boarding Australia represents more than 100 boarding providers, particularly those responsible for delivering services to almost 6,000 Indigenous boarders from rural and remote settings.

As a member-focused entity, Boarding Australia also supports individual staff within these organisations by providing access to resources, information and professional development opportunities.

Purpose and Vision

According to Boarding Australia's constitution (2015), the company's object is to pursue the following charitable purpose(s):

- advance education by improving access to education for children and young people from rural and remote areas
- advance education and improve access to education for Indigenous Australians

- advance education through the promotion of quality improvement in educational boarding and residential care
- advance education through initiatives that enhance the health and wellbeing of children and young people in educational boarding and residential care
- advance education by improving the skills and knowledge of those working in educational boarding and residential services for children and young people.
- Boarding Australia's vision is quite simply 'Making Boarding Better'. 'Better' for students, their families and communities, for boarding staff and for the schools and residences they represent.

By working directly with government, boarding providers (and their staff), and parents and communities, we believe that more students will be able to:

- access and attend school
- remain in school and achieve academically
- have a positive boarding experience that builds skills for life.