

C20 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reporting

The Directorate monitored achievements made against the headline indicators in sections of the *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2009* report.

Achievements in this reporting period included:

- an increase in the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in preschool with enrolments growing from 164 children in the February 2010 census to 193 children in the August 2010 census
- an increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in public schools with enrolments growing from 1,207 students in 2009 to 1,273 students at the end of the 2010 school year
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the ACT continued to outperform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in other jurisdictions in literacy and numeracy achievement as measured on the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
- four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (three in year 12 and one in year 11) participated in the ANU Secondary College program in 2010-11
- forty-six out of 72 (64%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in year 10 in public schools in August 2010 were awarded Year 10 Certificates
- thirty-four of the 48 (71%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who enrolled in year 12 public secondary colleges were awarded Year 12 Certificates
- *Reconciliation Matters: Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)* was launched in July 2010 and articulates nine measurable actions that committed the Directorate to long-lasting improvements in cooperation with the ACT's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Matters: Strategic Plan 2010-2013 (ATSIEM)* was launched in September 2010
- five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander year 11 students were awarded a scholarship in March 2010 to support their successful completion of school to year 12 and gain entry to university to pursue a career in teaching.

Early years learning

The February 2010 census showed that 164 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were attending preschool. Sixty children were enrolled in the Koori Preschool program.

The Koori Preschool program is an early childhood program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged birth to five years. Children under three attend with a parent or carer. The program has a capacity for 100 children across the five school sites: Nggunawal Primary School, Kingsford Smith School, Narrabundah Early Childhood School, Wanniasa Hills Primary School and Calwell Primary School.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged four, by 30 April each year, can access nine hours per week in the Koori Preschool program in addition to 12 to 15 hours in a local preschool program.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are three years old by 30 April each year may apply for early entry into local preschool programs. Early entry gives these children access to 21 to 24 hours per week in a preschool program (nine hours in the Koori program and 12 to 15 hours in the local preschool program) over an 18 month period prior to commencement in kindergarten.

Literacy and numeracy

In December 2010, the Directorate was successful in a proposal submitted to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations to deliver intensive literacy support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in years 5 to 9 who scored at or below the national minimum standard in one of the strands assessed in NAPLAN. The support will be delivered in partnership with four high schools in the Tuggeranong School Network, the Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation and the University of Canberra. The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Group will be involved in an advisory capacity to help facilitate advice and direction from parents and caregivers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

One of the key actions outlined in the ATSIEM is to track and monitor performance, progress and achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In this reporting period, primary and high schools provided information about the type of strategies being delivered to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who scored at or below the national minimum standard in one or more of the strands assessed in NAPLAN. Examples of the strategies implemented included the establishment of an Indigenous Studies Centre, the development of Personalised Learning Plans, the allocation of Learning Support Assistants to work with individual students and scaffolded approaches to literacy tasks. This work will form phase one of a longer term approach to assist schools to target strategies and resources to improve performance and achievement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

School leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education

In August 2010, 65 school leaders from 30 primary schools, 11 high schools and four P-10 schools in the ACT attended a leadership forum at the National Museum of Australia. The focus of the forum was how quality teaching models could be implemented to make a difference in learning outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

During May and December 2010, staff from 11 schools completed a Practitioner-Based Enquiry program. Twenty-three participants delivered presentations on their school-based inquiry research addressing the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. At the beginning of 2011, seven schools commenced new projects. Materials from these activities will be made available to all public schools in the ACT to assist them in their efforts to improve learning outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

In March 2011, a seminar titled *Sharing Practice – Building Networks* was conducted for high school teachers and members of leadership teams. The seminar involved representatives from four high schools delivering presentations on the results of their practitioner-based enquiries conducted during 2010.

In 2010, the Directorate supported four aspiring school leaders to undertake intensive training through the Stronger Smarter Leadership Institute in Queensland. This training focuses on leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. One participant has since been appointed to the position of principal of a primary school in the ACT. In 2011 the Directorate continued its involvement with the Stronger Smarter Leadership Institute by sponsoring an additional four aspiring school leaders to undertake training in leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

In 2010 and 2011, the Directorate sponsored a total of 22 school leaders to attend conferences provided by the Dare to Lead program operating under the auspices of Principals Australia. In 2011 the theme was Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at key transition points in their schooling. The North Canberra/ Gunghalin Network of schools and two sections in the Directorate have identified transition support as a priority in their business plans for 2011-12. Work on transition is a priority in the ATSIEM.

Cultural competency

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Matters: Strategic Plan 2010-2013 and the *Reconciliation Matters: Reconciliation Action Plan 2010-2011* both commit the Directorate to implement cultural competence training for all staff.

Beginning in February 2011, a total of 222 non-teaching staff based in schools participated in a trial program delivered by Directorate staff. In June 2011, a total of 67 principals, managers and other staff participated in a one day cultural competency program involving a keynote address and workshops presented by external trainers. Feedback from the June event has provided direction for the Directorate to investigate content and delivery models for classroom teachers and administrative officers.

A tailored cultural competence program will be delivered to senior officers of the Directorate in the next reporting period.

Pathways to training, employment and higher education

Improving year 12 completion rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is a key goal for the Directorate. Indigenous Student Aspiration Coordinators work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to support them in successful completion of secondary school and progression to higher education, training and employment options.

In 2010-11, Aspirations Coordinators identified and worked with 131 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from years 5 to 12. Of these students, 67 regularly

engaged with the program coordinators and attended activities. During this reporting period, an additional 21 students have attended related programs.

The Directorate has allocated funds to high schools and colleges to allow for the provision of subject specific tutorial support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. High schools and colleges have adopted a variety of approaches to provide this support including after school study centres, employing a casual teacher to work in the school with students during the day and employing university students who have been approved to work with children. In the next reporting period the Directorate will pursue a partnership with the ANU to provide support in mathematics to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in years 11 and 12. Under the partnership, students from the ANU School of Applied Mathematics will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students during the remainder of the 2011 school year.

In 2010, 48 students completed year 12. Thirty-four students received a Year 12 Certificate while six students achieved a Year 12 Certificate and a VET Certificate. Table C20.1 provides detail of the results achieved.

Table C20.1: Year 12 results of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, 2010

Qualification	Students
Year 12 Certificate	34
Year 12 Certificate and VET Certificate	6
VET Certificate but no Year 12 Certificate	1
Neither Year 12 nor VET Certificate	7

Source: ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies

In 2010, 41 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students commenced or recommenced an Australian School-based Apprenticeship (ASBA). One of these students completed a qualification in 2010 and commenced a second course. Training was provided by 13 registered training organisations and students were employed in 10 different business/industry areas by 14 different employers.

Table C20.2: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments in ASBA courses, 2010

Industry	Qualification	Students
General Construction	Certificate II	3
Horticulture	Certificate II	1
Community Recreation	Certificate II	18
Business	Certificate II	4
Automotive	Certificate II	1
Hospitality	Certificate III	2
Construction Pathways	Certificate II	7
Tourism	Certificate II	1
Retail	Certificate II	2
Aged Care	Certificate III	1
Financial Services	Certificate II	1
Total		41

Source: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Student Support Branch

Links to national plans and policy

The ACT Government is committed to closing the learning achievement gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. That commitment has been articulated in various National Partnership Agreements to which all states and territories are signatories. The National Indigenous Reform Agreement underpins a significant set of priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and has been formulated around the following six building blocks:

- life expectancy
- young child mortality
- early childhood education
- reading, writing and numeracy
- year 12 attainment
- employment.

In June 2011, the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs' *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan* was launched. The plan articulates clear targets for closing the learning achievement gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The plan also outlines key actions that are required at the national, state and territory and local school level for the period 2010-2014. The Directorate participated in the development of the plan and has reflected or adopted the same domains in the ATSIEM.

ATSIEM was launched in September 2010 and established these key priorities for action: readiness for school; engagement and connections; attendance; literacy and numeracy; leadership; quality teaching and workforce development; and pathways

to real post-school options. ATSIEM provides clear direction for closing the learning achievement gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and other students and is clearly aligned with the Directorate's *Strategic Plan 2010-2013: Everyone matters*.

In July 2010, the Directorate launched RAP which identified measurable targets towards improving the following three focus areas:

- improving the relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people
- demonstrating respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- creating educational, training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Significant progress was made during the reporting period on implementing key actions outlined in the RAP. Achievements will be collated and presented in a report to the Directorate and Reconciliation Australia in August 2011. Those achievements will also be used to develop the second (refreshed) RAP which is proposed to cover the period July 2011 to June 2013. The refreshed RAP will have targets and actions in the same three focus areas as the 2010-11 RAP.

Enrolment

Over the last five years, a steady increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolling in public schools continued as shown in Table C20.3

Table C20.3: Enrolment of Indigenous students, 2006 to 2010

Year level	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Preschool-year 6	672	663	712	820	833
Years 7-10	248	259	247	275	312
Years 11-12	91	82	68	95	107
Specialist schools	21	19	19	17	21
Total	1,032	1,023	1,046	1,207	1,273

Source: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Student Support Branch

Attendance

Attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in ACT public schools have been relatively stable over the past two years, with a slight increase for years 11 and 12 students. These attendance rates remain below the attendance rates of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Improvement of attendance and participation has been made a key priority in the ATSIEM.

Table C20.4: Attendance rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, 2006 to 2010

year level	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Preschool-year 6	88.4	87.5	87.4	86.4	84.6
Years 7-10	88.9	77.7	76.6	76.0	75.2
Years 11-12	88.1	84.8	84.9	77.3	78.5

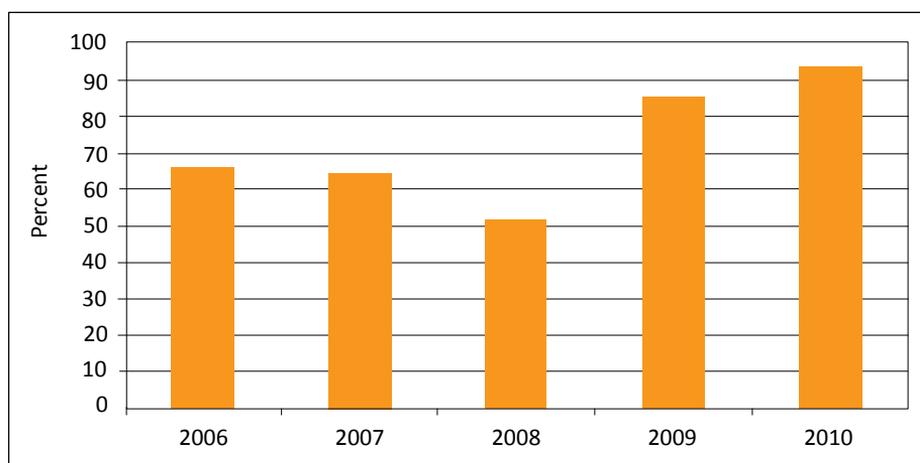
Source: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Student Support Branch

Note: Attendance rate is the number of actual days of attendance as a percentage of the total school days.

Retention

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are staying at school longer. The retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from year 10 to year 12 improved for 2009 and 2010.

Figure C20.1: Retention rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, 2006 to 2010



Source: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Student Support Branch

Over the reporting period the Directorate continued to deliver key programs targeted at improving attendance, retention and the successful completion of year 12. These programs included the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Aspirations program, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officers (ATSIEOs) and Indigenous Education Workers being placed in schools.

All public schools in the ACT are committed to keeping students engaged in quality learning programs. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the high school years this has involved the provision of enhanced communication and liaison between the school and home with the support of ATSIEOs based in seven high schools.

Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to succeed at school is a priority for the Directorate and all public schools.

In 2010, the Directorate employed eight ATSIEOs who were based in high schools to support the high schools and local primary schools. The focus of the work of ATSIEOs was to improve attendance, establish a connection and build relationships between schools and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities. The schools in which the ATSIEOs were based are Calwell High School, Wanniasa School (Senior Campus), Gold Creek School (Senior Campus), Melrose High School, Stromlo High School, Telopea Park School, Lyneham High School and Canberra High School.

In 2011, there were seven ATSIEOs based in the same schools noted above with the exception of Canberra High School where the position was relocated to Melba Copland Secondary School.

The Directorate also employed four Indigenous Education Workers to work across a number of primary schools where they provide support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their teachers in the school environment.

Partnerships and collaboration

The Directorate worked collaboratively with a number of key government and non-government agencies to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in their educational journeys.

The Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) program to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families is a collaborative service delivery model established as a partnership between Community Services, Health and the Education and Training Directorates. It provided early intervention services to children and families with complex needs who are being supported by several agencies. The program works to ensure that relevant education, health and family support services are delivered in a culturally competent, integrated and coordinated manner. Schools which have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with complex needs can be referred to the ISD program which will support families through a whole of government approach.

Throughout this reporting period the Directorate continued its relationship with Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation to support the delivery of educational programs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in high schools and colleges. In 2010 and 2011 the Directorate provided funds to allow for the employment of a classroom teacher to deliver literacy and numeracy support to students in years 7 to 10. The Directorate also provided funds for subject specific tutorial support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in years 7 to 12 in the Tuggeranong Valley.

Over the reporting period a partnership between the Directorate and Northside Community Services was established around a specific cohort of disengaged families with the goal of re-engaging school-aged students with their local schools or other

educational programs. The partnership involved the allocation of \$60,000 to employ part-time staff to provide literacy and numeracy tutoring to 10 children. Over the reporting period, eight of the 10 children attended regular tutoring sessions and remained engaged in their learning programs. Two of the 10 students were supported with their transition from primary to high school.

For more information contact:

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