

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mrs Lambley to the Minister for Education:

2022-2032 Education Engagement Strategy

The 2022-2032 Education Engagement Strategy released in October 2021 is a 10 year plan that aims to address very poor school attendance in most remote Aboriginal communities throughout the Northern Territory.

However, the strategy does not include any timeframes or milestones for achieving outcomes and delivery reform on how education is provided in the Northern Territory.

1. Please provide timeframes for the rollout, implementation and achievement of the goals and outcomes of the 2022-2032 Education Engagement Strategy.
2. What is the primary strategy the Northern Territory Education Department will use to address the very poor school attendance in most remote Aboriginal communities throughout the Northern Territory?
3. The consultation for the 2022-2032 Education Engagement Strategy included minimal consultation in Central Australia.

Will the Education Department be doing further consultation to inform the implementation of the strategy?

4. How is the 2022-2032 Education Engagement Strategy different to any other previous or existing education strategies in the Northern Territory?
5. What additional funding will be allocated to implement the 2022-2032 Education Engagement Strategy?
6. When will the implementation of the 2022-2032 Education Engagement Strategy commence?
7. Why is the 2022-2032 Education Engagement Strategy a 10-year plan, when there is no other timeframe mentioned in the whole document?
8. Why will reform of the Northern Territory Education Department take 10 years?
9. How will the Northern Territory Department of Education be different in 10 years? What is the vision?

10. Was the 2022-2032 Education Engagement Strategy opened up for public consultation?
11. What is the first priority of the 2022-2032 Education Engagement Strategy?
12. What is broken within the Northern Territory Department of Education that has overseen a decline in school attendance across the Northern Territory over the past 5 years, despite an increase in funding?
13. Has there been any independent input or independent consultation in forming the 2022-2032 Education Engagement Strategy and the state of the Northern Territory Department of Education?
14. Who exactly wrote the 2022-2032 Education Engagement Strategy?
15. How many Executive Officers are employed in the Northern Territory Department of Education as of 1st January 2022?

Please provide details of the number of Executive Officers at each level and where those Executive Officers are located within the Northern Territory.

16. What is the total number of students enrolled in Northern Territory public schools in 2021?
17. How many students had an 80% or more attendance rate?
18. How many Northern Territory children were disengaged from the Northern Territory Education system by attending school less than 70% of the time, at of the conclusion of the 2021 school year?
19. How often does the Northern Territory Department of Education collate data on school attendance for the Northern Territory?
20. Is this data publicly available at those intervals?
21. How can people find this data?

ANSWERS:

1. The strategy will be delivered in three phases of three years each. The 11 key deliverables announced by the Minister for Education represent Phase 1.

Implementation is underway including the expansion of the Remote Aboriginal Education Program with new participants commencing this term.

A range of other immediate priorities are being implemented including school-based engagement plans, localised cultural competency training, establishing a youth representative group and a peak Aboriginal education group.

2. The Education Engagement Strategy 2022–2031 and the Education NT Strategy will guide the department and schools to support increased engagement in education across the Territory. Localised engagement strategies will continue to be a priority for all schools, focused on the 4 goals of meaningful learning; wellbeing and inclusion; the right people and education as a partnership, as evidence and consultation recommended.
3. Consultation will be ongoing with students, families and community. In June 2021, 151 participants attended 7 consultation events in the Central Region.

Date	Location	Total attendees	Type of consultation
17/06/2021	Owen Springs	8	Community
17/06/2021	Alice Springs parent workshop	2	Conversation
18/06/2021	Areyonga	8	Community
18/06/2021	Alice Outcomes	3	Conversation
22/06/2021	Alice Springs Round table	70	Workshop
22/06/2021	Alice Springs Public Forum	25	Public Forum
22/06/2021	Alice Aboriginal Education Officers/CFC educators	35	Conversation

4. As outlined during the launch, the strategy has been built from the voices of families, students, communities and guided by an expert reference group and educational leadership Aboriginal reference group. It will embed culture and language in the classroom and strengthen connections between communities and schools. This is what communities have told us will make a difference. This is the first engagement strategy to include the non-government school sector, with the intention to provide a common approach to supporting engagement and increasing attendance.
5. As outlined during the launch, an additional \$10m has been committed to implementation across the first 3 years of the strategy to support identified key deliverables outlined in Attachment A.
6. Implementation has commenced.
7. School attendance has been a challenge in the Territory for successive Governments. There is no silver bullet to improving attendance and engagement overnight. It will take time to fully embed strategy actions but the intention is to achieve continuous improvement. The strategy will be

reviewed every 3 years and adjusted as agreed by the Minister for Education. The Minister for Education released a 3 year action plan with launch of the strategy - Attachment B.

8. See question 7. The Department of Education constantly looks at reform of its programs and practices. It is a process of continuous improvement.
9. The vision for the Department of Education is set out in the Education NT Strategy 2021-25. The strategy sets out our ambition, goals and commitment; our ways of working; and our seven system priorities.
10. All consultations during the development of the strategy were open to the public with 5 specifically targeted and promoted as public forums. Details of all stages of the strategy development can be found on the have your say page <https://haveyoursay.nt.gov.au/education-engagement-strategy>
11. The priority deliverables for the first 3 years of the strategy were announced at the launch of the strategy and these will remain the initial priorities for implementation. (Attachment B refers).
12. Schools are part of and reflect the broader social structure of a community and should be considered in that context. Consultation identified that there are many factors that influence a student's engagement in learning. Foundations of the Education Engagement Strategy 2022 – 2031, include relationships, wellbeing and inclusion, culture and identity and belief and motivation. Cross agency collaboration at region and system level will be part of the ongoing actions of strategy implementation.
13. As outlined during the launch, the development of the strategy included input from and consultation with a number of reference groups including student voice, an independent expert reference group, an education leaders reference group, a non-government sector reference group, and a cross agency reference group. Fifty one online submissions were received. Charles Darwin University developed the reflections paper after independently analysing all of the consultation feedback. All of this information was provided at the launch of the strategy and is readily available on the Department of Education website.
14. A team within the Department of Education, led by an educational strategy expert, designed and developed the strategy. It was reviewed and endorsed by the expert reference group and the Education Executive Board. Drafts of the strategy were presented to key stakeholders for input, before the final version of the strategy was developed.
15. Executive Officer Headcount as at 22 December 2021

	Region
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Classification	Barkly	Big Rivers	Central	Darwin	East Arnhem	Total
EO1C	0	0	0	10	0	10
EO2	0	0	0	2	1	3
EO2C	1	1	2	10	0	14
EO3	0	0	0	1	0	1
EO3C	0	0	1	6	0	7
EO4C	0	0	0	1	0	1
EO6C	0	0	0	2	0	2
Total	1	1	3	32	1	38

In addition, as at 22 December 2021, 87 principals were employed at executive levels leading schools across all regions in the NT.

16. Average number of students enrolled Term 4, 2021 was 33,296
17. 58.7%.
18. 32.4%.
19. In NT Government schools, attendance data is recorded by school staff for every student at a session level—usually twice a day in primary schools, and for every lesson in middle and senior schools.

Eight times per year, school principals are asked to review and confirm the summary statistics produced from the session level attendance data. This validated data set forms the basis of summary attendance reporting.
20. Data for each term is published on the department’s website. Data is not released until thorough validation is complete.
21. NT Government publicly available enrolment and attendance data is at: <https://education.nt.gov.au/statistics-research-and-strategies/enrolment-and-attendance>

Education Engagement STRATEGY 2022–2031



<p>1. Education is a partnership</p>	<p>2. The right people</p>	<p>3. Meaningful learning</p>	<p>4. Wellbeing and inclusion</p>
<p>GOAL Families and education services work together to ensure all children and students get the best start to learning and are supported and encouraged to continue their learning journey.</p> <p>Key deliverables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with communities including school representative bodies, taking a place based approach, to embed cultural and two-way learning in and through the curriculum • Establish a youth voice peak group • Establish an Aboriginal education advisory group in Darwin, Top End, Arnhem, Big Rivers, Barkly and Central Australia 	<p>GOAL Positive, energetic, culturally responsive and skilled educators motivate children and young people to engage in learning and experience success.</p> <p>Key deliverables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide localised cultural and language competency training for educators and regional staff • Expand the Remote Aboriginal Teacher Education program to increase the number of Aboriginal educators in the NT • Support greater employment opportunities for local community members to work in schools, including as cultural educators • Supporting educators to strengthen quality teaching and practise 	<p>GOAL Children participate regularly in early years programs, remain engaged through the stages of schooling and achieve success in their education.</p> <p>Key deliverables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed the languages of first nations people as languages to be taught within the Australian Curriculum • Work with the Australian Government to expand the Learning on Country program • Provide more options for secondary education in remote locations 	<p>GOAL Inclusive education supports the physical and mental wellbeing and diversity of all children and young people.</p> <p>Key deliverables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve school counselling services, including to be more culturally responsive, through a partnership-centred approach



Lauren Moss
Minister for Education



Media Release

New Education Engagement Strategy to lift school attendance

19 October 2021

New Engagement Strategy to Lift School Attendance

The Territory Labor Government has today released a new strategy aimed at lifting school attendance across the Territory, backed up by an initial \$10 million action plan over the next three years.

The *NT Education Engagement Strategy 2022-2031* sets a new course for student engagement and improved educational outcomes.

It reflects feedback from students, families, communities and education experts, with 72 consultation sessions held across 21 urban, regional and remote communities and 51 online submissions.

An Expert Reference Group of researchers and academics with expertise in Aboriginal education and culture guided the development of the Strategy.

Central to the Strategy's success will be embedding cultural and two-way learning in the curriculum and increasing the number of Aboriginal educators and cultural advisers in classrooms.

A range of urgent actions have been identified across four key areas:

Ensuring education is a real partnership

- Work with communities to embed cultural and two-way learning in the curriculum
- Establish a youth voice peak group
- Establish regional Aboriginal education advisory groups.

Getting the right people, doing the right things

- Expand the Remote Aboriginal Teacher Education program
- Provide localised cultural and language competency training for school staff
- Provide more jobs in schools for local community members, including as cultural educators.

Providing students with meaningful learning:

- Back bilingual education in schools and through the Australian Curriculum
- Expand the Learning on Country program
- Provide more options for secondary education in remote locations.

Looking after the wellbeing of our kids:

- Invest in more school counsellors
- Partner with Aboriginal health organisations to better support student wellbeing.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education Lauren Moss:

“We need every child attending school every day; this Strategy offers a new approach for engaging students, and ensuring schools are more culturally responsive with communities at the centre of decisionmaking.

“Students, families, communities and educators have told us loud and clear what we need to do to lift attendance and support better educational outcomes for our kids.

“Our approach focuses on strengthening relationships with families and communities, embedding culture and first languages in teaching and learning, building our Aboriginal workforce in schools and better supporting the wellbeing of our kids.”

“Government won’t be able to do this alone; everyone needs to work together to get our kids to school and make sure they are engaged. This Strategy provides direction as we walk the path together to set our kids up for success.”

Quotes attributable to Professor Ruth Wallace, Expert Reference Group Chair, Dean of College of Indigenous Futures, Education and the Arts; Director Northern Institute CDU:

“This Strategy has been shaped by the voices of Territorians – families, community members, students, educators – who have told us, in sometimes confronting ways, about why so many young people are disengaging from education and what we can do to better engage them.

“For students in the NT to successfully engage in education, our educators must listen, develop trust, and collaborate with families, with communities and most of all, with our children and students.

“Our communities play a key role in leading our schools and so this strategy is about creating strong partnerships between schools and communities and building on our strengths to make positive changes to last.”

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