
Choice and Affordability Fund Annual Report

2020

**The Association of Independent Schools of the Northern
Territory**



Choice and Affordability Fund

Association of Independent Schools of the Northern Territory – Annual Report 2020

Executive Summary

The Association of Independent Schools of the Northern Territory stayed committed to achieving the outcomes as per the agreed Choice and Affordability (CAF) Work Plan for 2020 despite COVID-19. Our work with our member schools was affected by COVID-19 but we worked together to overcome the obstacles we could to ensure schools had the best possible opportunities given the circumstances we found ourselves in.

The main activity we undertook under the CAF Initiative was to provide schools with the services of a schools' financial expert who could work with them to develop a clear understanding of their current financial strengths and weaknesses and then develop a plan to assist in the ongoing improvement of their financial health. We worked with John Somerset who provided a comprehensive presentation on the services he could provide the schools at a meeting of our school leaders. His services are being used by a number of our member schools as per our CAF plan. This work is continuing into 2021 and beyond.

School Improvement Planning went hand in hand with Financial Planning under the CAF Initiative. Dr. Stephen Brown provided his services both through the meeting of school leaders and via individual school advice.

The analysis and support that has been provided by Stephen Brown and John Somerset and the AISNT School Support Officers have also supported the commitment AISNT has made under its transition support plans.

The Transition Assistance Initiative went ahead in the form of provision of services from two School Support Officers employed by AISNT to assist schools in the areas of Special Education, Curriculum and Teaching and Learning as well as other areas as requested. The identified Transition Schools' relevant staff have been working closely with the two School Support Officers. The officers have been assisting schools in a range of teaching and learning initiatives as well as special education and NCCD. Work on the development of a grants program has commenced. The imperative is to have this finalized in readiness to provide grants to the transition schools from the commencement of 2024.

The Strengthening Outcomes Imperative has been a major focus for AISNT and our member schools. The main area of attention has been the setting up and negotiation of the implementation of the INSPIRE program to assist schools in the collection of data and the consistent identification of students under the NCCD scheme. As this scheme is the major component of schools' recurrent funding for students with disabilities, AISNT saw INSPIRE as a way to ensure the data collected gives an accurate rating of the level of adjustment that the students should be allocated to. Implementation of this integrated software platform is now underway.

Wellbeing and Strengthening Outcomes are being supported by the Schools Support Officers. AISNT has also worked closely with Amy Hetherington, Adam Drake and Bernie Shankshaft who were the guests of honor at our 'World Café' on Wellbeing at our schools' conference in Alice Springs. This was a powerful, eye-opening experience emceed by Amy with Adam and Bernie sharing their stories and responding to Amy's questions and observations as the evening progressed. This event was well attended by leaders and staff from the majority of our member schools.

The distribution of funding

NGRB Expenditure Profile

AISNT has worked close with the schools to determine the best way forward for the use of the funding as provided under CAF.

It was agreed that schools requiring Transition Assistance will need this in the future rather than immediately. AISNT has therefore retained a part of this finding with the aim of making it available for those schools requiring it in 2023/24.

The expenditure under each of the priorities was used as per the original budget provided in the workplan with a number of exception. The Special Circumstance funding was not used so this \$200,000 has been carried forward to be available if needed in 2021. The other areas we were unable to deliver as per the budget, due to COVID-19 restrictions, were in Student Wellbeing element and Strengthening Outcomes. Due to the COVID restrictions and the subsequent widespread bio security and other related closures creating dramatic implications on our ability to work with the majority of our schools, we had to look for alternative delivery methods. We chose to work with online platforms to work with each of the schools who had capacity to do so. This allowed for to provide services related to wellbeing over this platform until term 3. We therefore were unable to provide the forums and sharing experiences we had planned. We have carried the \$149,814 forward to 2021.

Part of Term 3 and term 4 of 2020 saw the relaxation of the closures which allowed us to meet face to face and this is when the majority of the planned initiatives requiring this mode of delivery were undertaken.

AISNT completed the initiatives we had committed to in the agreement for the 2020 CAF Program, with the exception of the ones explained above. The \$200,000 budgeted for Special Circumstance for 2020 was not used so these funds have been carried forward to 2021. The unspent \$149,814 has also been carried forward.

	2020 \$	2021 \$	2022 \$	2023 \$	2024 \$	2025 \$	2026 \$
Estimated expenditure	\$496,870	\$731,008	\$836,470	\$985,310	\$1,135,810	\$1,988,028	\$2,142,022

2027 \$	2028 \$	2029 \$
\$2,297,848	\$2,377,032	\$2,411,950

Interest earned

No interest was earned during 2020. The funds were held in the AISNT everyday account which did not attract interest. The funds being held for future distribution have now been placed into term deposits.

	2020 \$
Interest earned	\$0

Explanation of Summary of Outcomes Table

The Summary of Outcomes Table is the document we use to break down the different activities we are undertaking within each of the Priority Areas. Under each of the activity areas we have included the budget and expenditure for the 2020 programs and activities.

When comparing the Summary of Outcomes word table to the Spreadsheet please note the following:

- All budget and expenditure amounts are separated into centralised and distributed amounts.
- Each of the centralised and distributed amounts are further separated as either eligible for all schools or for Regional Transition Assistance (RTA) schools. Please note that the RTA amounts are labelled and highlighted in blue.
- All RTA expenditure, regardless of Priority or Activity is totalled and recorded in the Choice and Affordability Distribution Report. Where the Distribution Report shows RTA schools also received funding for other priorities, this is **not** attributed to the RTA priority.
- The total RTA centralised funding equals \$290,000, from which \$210,000 has been attributed to the four Regional Transition Schools with \$80,000 being attributed to RTA and the Transition

Assistance former NAAF Schools. The total RTA distributed funding equals \$20,000, from which \$10,000 has been attributed to the four Regional Transition Schools with \$10,000 being

- The allocation for the Choice and Affordability priority for centralised expenditure is \$60,000 and this is recorded in the distribution report with \$40,000 being recorded under the Regional Transition Assistance Priority.
- Under Strengthening Outcomes, all highlighted RTA funds are recorded under the RTA column.

Distributed Funding

The distributed funding amounts recorded are based on reimbursements for costs paid by the schools to enable inclusion in workshops, training and professional development for school leaders and staff.

Where the school organised and paid for services such as flights, accommodation etc, they were reimbursed on presentation of tax receipts. When AISNT booked services for the schools they were recorded in the AISNT General Ledger as payments to schools under the CAF Program.

This ensured all distributed funding was spent according to the purpose it was intended for.

Priority Area	Activities and Initiatives	Achievement against Objective as per Workplan
Choice and Affordability	<p>To assist schools to remain as viable options for choice of educational services, AISNT has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employed the Services of an Independent Schools’ Funding Advisor to assist schools in ascertaining their current financial health and assist them in the development of 10 year budgets to inform their Transition Plans. • Employed the services of a consultant specialising in school improvement planning to assist schools in developing ‘smart’ work plans that will match their financial capacity. • Two NAAF schools and the two Regional Assistance schools have undertaken work with John Somerset and Stephen Brow to develop ten year plans to support their leadership, management, financial and educational strategies as their schools transition to the new funding model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somerset Education was contracted to provide an introduction to the services he could provide for schools taking up the option to work with him. Twelve schools attended this session with 5 schools opting to use his program to varying degrees. • The Brown Collective was contracted to provide schools with information on school improvement planning to complement their financial planning. An information session was provided for 12 schools followed by individual school advice for 3 schools.

<p>Transition Assistance</p>	<p>AISNT has 4 member schools identified as meeting the criteria of Regional Assistance Schools (RA). Two of these schools would have been eligible under the former NAAF. The opportunities offered under the transition support, other than direct grants, were open to any member schools. The direct grant options were specifically for RA schools. AISNT has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commenced development of a grants program for RA schools. • Employed services of two Schools Education Support Officers to assist schools in Rationalising Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AISNT entered into discussions with the four RA Schools with a view to developing the timing of and process for the introduction of a grants support program. All 4 schools have participated and a grant support program and schedule has commenced development. Funds will now be made available from 2024. • Two Schools Support Officers have been employed and have each worked closely with the 4 RA Schools to offer assistance in advice and planning. All other member schools have been offered assistance and advice with an extra 10 schools being provided services, for no additional cost.
<p>Special Circumstances Funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AISNT developed the criteria and application process for schools in need of accessing Special Circumstances Funding. • No Schools applied or required this funding during 2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No applications received hence no activity.

<p>Strengthening Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AISNT employed one Schools' Education Support Officer to assist in supporting schools with the identification of educationally disadvantaged students and assist in the development of plans to improve outcomes for these students. This officer supports the schools through individualised visits so the work is contextualised to their particular situations. • AISNT employed one Schools' Education Officer to assist schools in the area of teaching and learning. This Officer has held two major workshops for all schools and attends schools on request. She is also actively engaged with the Australian Curriculum Review. • AISNT has entered a contract with SRA to provide our member schools with installation and training of the INSPIRE integrated software solution which has been developed to provide the consistent collection of data for students under NCCD. This was introduced on an opt-in basis. This is a staged implementation project that will continue into 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The employed Schools' Education Officers worked with the NAAF and Regional Assistance Schools. Staff from these schools have been involved in all activities undertaken by the Schools' Education Officers. The focus of this work is on improving access to services and resources to improve educational knowledge and understandings ensuring students have access to programs that result in improved outcomes. <p>The Schools Education Officer for Special Support provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual assistance through visits to 13 staff in 5 schools; • Individual support via phone, email and ZOOM with a total of 11 schools which included 28 special Education Staff. • Meetings as requested for leadership teams in 7 schools. • Two by two day forums were provided with UDL and NCCD being the foci. They were attended by a total of 25 schools and a total of 56 participants. • Under the contract with SRA, all 20 schools infrastructure was set up and 6 schools migrated to the program. The work on implementation for all schools will continue in 2021. • The provision of access to the INSPIRE platform will include all schools, including the NAAF and Regional Assistance Schools in the identification of students to be included in the NCCD, which will result in the maximisation of funding for identified students. This will assist and improve financial management.
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<p>Student Well-Being and Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AISNT facilitated a ‘World Café’ followed the next day by a forum with Amy Hetherington as the emcee and Adam Drake and Bernie Shankshaft as the guests of honour. Adam is a past NT Australian of the Year Local Hero who has his own Company, Balanced Choice, which concentrates its work with disengaged youth and youth within the criminal justice system. Bernie has a very similar background and was awarded the Australian Local Hero in 2020. He is the Founder of Back Track Youth Works which concentrates turning around the lives of some of Australia’s most vulnerable kids. The focus was on wellbeing through the strength of relationships, team building, kindness and support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total of 14 schools and 56 participants were represented at this event. • Both Adam and Bernie have assisted by working with individual schools to provide information, services and programs. A total of 5 schools have consulted with Adam and 3 with Bernie during 2020.
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Summary of outcomes

Priority ¹	Activities/Initiatives	Budgeted ²	Spent ³	Description of outcome against targeted priority
Priority as per your agreement/work plan	Activities and initiatives as per your agreement/work plan	Expenditure on the activity managed centrally by the NGRB and funding distributed to schools. RTA = Regional Transition Assistance		Please provide a description of outcomes achieved against the targeted priorities and indicators of success in your agreement/work plan
<i>Choice and Affordability of Schools</i>	School Financial Planning Assistance and small grants for schools	Centralised \$10 000 RTA \$30 000	Centralised \$10 000 RTA \$30 000	Schools understand the importance of financial planning with projections for 10 years. The schools have had presentations from John Somerset to assist them in understanding their financial viability and how to maintain their financial health. The funds distributed to the Regional Assistance and NAAF Schools was to cover the cost of attending meetings (ie: travel and accommodation). Some funding was provided to RTA schools but not directly related to transition assistance, therefore these amounts are attributed to Priority A—Choice and Affordability, in the Distribution Report. The funds were provided on us receiving a tax invoice from the school with copies of tax receipts, travel expenses and accommodation.
		Distributed \$10 000 RTA \$10 000	Distributed \$10 000 RTA and NAAF \$10 000 (Attributed RTA in column F of the distribution report, but also to be counted as support for NAAF)	
	School Improvement Planning	Centralised \$10 000 RTA \$10 000	Centralised \$10 000 RTA \$10 000	Schools have been involved in a workshop with Dr Stephen Brown. Schools who participated have an understanding of the importance of school improvement planning and how to undertake this planning within their budget constraints. The funds distributed to the Regional Assistance and NAAF Schools was to cover the cost of attending meetings (ie: travel and accommodation). The funds were provided on us receiving a tax invoice from the school with copies of tax receipts, travel expenses and accommodation.
		Centralised \$20 000	Centralised \$80 000	

Transition Assistance		Distributed \$60 000		The schools who were involved with this initiative were the schools who would have been eligible under NAAF and the Regional Assistance Schools.
Special Circumstances		Distributed \$200 000	Distributed \$0	This funding has been retained and included in the 2021 expenditure profile.
Strengthening Outcomes		Centralised \$30 000 RTA \$70 000	Centralised \$30 000 RTA \$70 000	The Schools' Education Officer has been employed to assist schools with support and professional development in all areas of teaching and learning and workforce development with an emphasis on Indigenous Education.
		Distributed \$10 000 RTA \$10 000	Distributed \$10 000 RTA \$10 000 (Attributed RTA in column F the distribution report)	Schools have been provided with assistance via payment travel, accommodation and other costs as required. Additionally, some funding was provided to RTA schools which was not directly related to transition assistance; therefore, these amounts are attributed to Strengthening Outcomes in the Distribution Report.
		Centralised \$20 000 RTA \$90 000	Centralised \$10,000 RTA \$70 000	The INSPIRE Program is rolling out as per expectations. The infrastructure for all 20 schools has been set up and the school rollout has commenced.
		Centralised \$30 000 RTA \$30 000	Centralised \$30 000 RTA \$30 000	A second School's Education officer has been employed to assist schools with advice and professional development in all areas of teaching and learning including differentiation and use of INSPIRE.
Student Well-Being Support		Centralised \$50 000	Centralised \$30 000	The AISNT organized and facilitated professional development and network forums to share existing practices and examine new research findings and practices related to student wellbeing.
		Distributed \$20 000	Distributed \$20 000	
Administrative costs ⁴		\$26 870	\$26 870	
TOTAL		\$746 870	\$496 870	