



What do we know about remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community engagement in education settings?: Implications for strategy development in tertiary education

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Acknowledgment of Country

I acknowledge that this meeting is being held on the traditional land of the Larrakia people and pay respects to elders past, present and future. I recognise the strength, resilience and capacity of the Aboriginal people of this land.

Overview

- What do we know about community engagement?
- What do we know about Indigenous community engagement?
- What do we know about Indigenous community engagement in education contexts?
- What do we know about community engagement in higher education contexts?
- Implications for strategy development for Indigenous community engagement in higher education contexts?

Why bother? More questions than answers

“How should I engage with remote Indigenous communities? What are the protocols?”

“What resources exist that tell me how to ‘do’ Indigenous community engagement well?”

“Can you introduce me to one of your community-based staff? I have a great project for them!”

“Somebody said I should talk to you about community engagement in remote communities. So here I am.”

What do we know about community engagement?

- CE can mean different things to different people!
- Lack of consensus in academic scholarship and grey literature (Ramachandra & Mansor 2014)
- Likewise, 'community' and 'engagement' are contested terms (Campbell 2008; Dempsey 2010)
- Can involve sharing, consultation and participation (Johnston 2010)
- Inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower (IAP2 2007)

Defining community engagement

“Community Engagement is a two way process by which the aspirations, concerns, needs and values of citizens and communities are incorporated at all levels and in all sectors in policy development, planning, decision-making, service delivery and assessment; and by which government and other business and civil society organisations involve citizens, clients, communities and other stakeholders in these processes.”

(United Nations 2005, p1).

Theories and principles of community engagement

- Journal of Community Engagement & Scholarship
- Inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary term
- Principles of community engagement:
 - Relational and partnership approaches (Dempsey 2010; Johnston 2010)
 - Empowerment (Dempsey 2010)
 - Consultation (Johnston 2010)
 - Collaborative practice (Dempsey 2010; Johnston 2010; Kotze et al 2013)
 - Sustainability (Clifford & Petrescu 2012; Ramachandra & Mansor 2014)
 - Collective Impact (Barnes et al 2015)

Theories and principles of community engagement

- **Indigenous community engagement** (Cervone 2007; Campbell & Christie 2008; Madden et al 2013)
- **Higher education and community engagement** (Campbell & Christie 2008; Dempsey 2010; Bernado et al 2012; Clifford and Pertrescu 2012)

What do we know about Indigenous community engagement?

- Happens in a range of contexts – health, education, land management, housing, etc
- Need to recognise the impact of colonisation – influences information exchange
- Emerging Indigenous engagement methods
- Place of Indigenous knowledges
- Understanding power relations is important

CE is popular in media and public policy discourses relating to Indigenous affairs

Element 4 Engagement

The best results are achieved when students are engaged with their learning and attend school regularly.

Vision

Indigenous children at all stages of schooling attend school regularly and are supported in their education by their families and community.

Goals

All students attend regularly and are fully engaged in learning through all their years of school.

- 4.1 Parents and communities are engaged with purpose to support their children throughout their learning journey.
- 4.2 Schools and regions achieve strong and consistent attendance of students from early childhood through to secondary schooling.
- 4.3 Quality student engagement programs support young adults in schools.
- 4.4 Schools provide a whole-system approach to behaviour management and wellbeing.

10-Year Target

The proportion of Indigenous students in government schools attending four or more days per week is consistent with the Territory's non-Indigenous cohort.

Warren Mundine delivers blunt message to Tony Abbott over 'lifestyle choice' comments

Posted 18 Mar 2015, 11:05pm

The chairman of the Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council, Warren Mundine, says he has delivered a blunt personal message to Tony Abbott about his comments on remote communities.

Last week, Mr Abbott angered Indigenous leaders when he backed a plan in Western Australia to close more than 100 remote communities and move more than 1,000 people, saying "what we can't do is endlessly subsidise lifestyle choices".

Indigenous leaders, including Noel Pearson and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Mick Gooda, later criticised Mr



PHOTO: Mr Mundine urged the Government to engage in genuine discussion about how remote communities should be serviced. (ABC News, file photo)

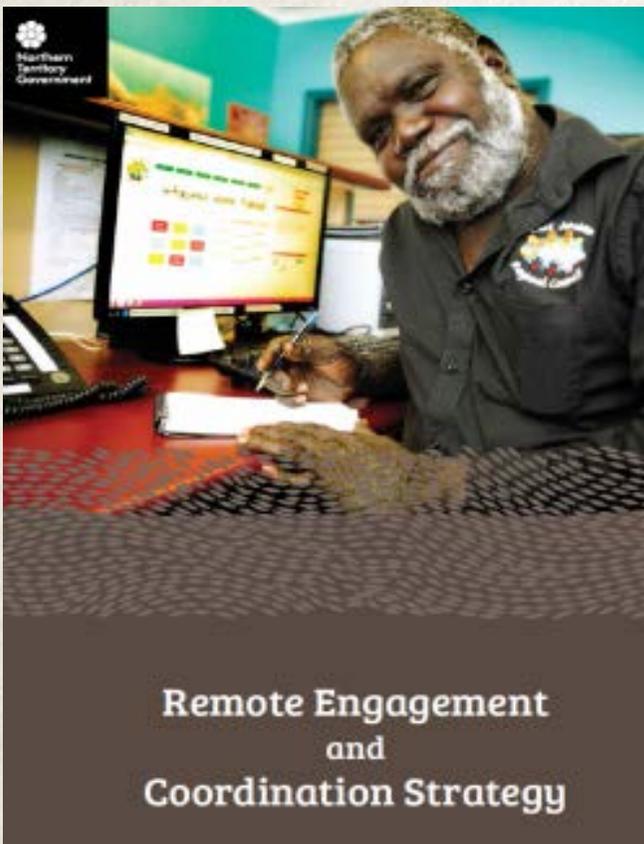
Indigenous Advancement Strategy

A new approach to engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to achieve real results.

The Australian Government is committed to achieving better results for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in three priority areas - getting children to school, adults into work and building safe communities.

To make this happen, the Government is transforming the way Indigenous programmes are delivered through the implementation of the Indigenous Advancement Strategy.

NT Engagement Commitment



Northern Territory Government

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Family and Community Engagement Framework

- ❖ COMMUNICATION
- ❖ PARTNERSHIPS TO LEARN
- ❖ COMMUNITY COLLABORATION
- ❖ DECISION-MAKING
- ❖ PARTICIPATION

A Guide for Families, Communities, Carers and Northern Territory Government Schools

Indigenous Education Strategy

Family and Community Engagement Framework
A Share in the Future – Indigenous Education Strategy 2015-2024
January 2016

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3: A critically engaged university of the region

CDU's place in the Northern Territory, in Australia and in the Asian region, is strategically important and comes with unique responsibilities, opportunities and challenges compared with other Australian universities. We are and will remain strongly committed to and focused on meeting the tertiary education and research needs and expectations of the Northern Territory community so that our region can develop and prosper, while continuing to develop our outreach to students and communities across Australia and internationally.

We believe we have something unique and important to offer those we engage with in all our spheres of operation, an understanding and capability born out of our sense of place in the Northern Territory that fosters new ideas and innovative approaches.

We will engage with governments, other education and research organisations, industry and the community to form mutually beneficial partnerships and relationships so that we can continue to provide the best possible educational services and research outcomes for the people and regions we serve. As the only university based in the Northern Territory, CDU has a unique partnership, and a strong alignment in focus, with the Northern Territory Government to provide the skills and knowledge the Territory needs to prosper.

PRIORITY 1 – Meet the needs and expectations of key stakeholders including alumni

CDU places a high priority on developing strategic, productive and mutually beneficial relationships with partners and stakeholders to ensure that the services we deliver and the graduates we produce meet the needs and expectations of our local and broader regional communities. We will commit adequate time and resources to ensuring that these relationships are developed and maintained so that they remain an effective part of our external engagement.

PRIORITY 2 – Empower and equip staff for successful engagement outcomes

CDU recognises that effective and successful engagement will depend on how well our staff can develop and maintain relationships with external stakeholders and partners, as well as how we as an organisation manage our external engagement. We will develop support systems to enable our staff to achieve successful engagement outcomes and to make engagement with CDU a rewarding experience for our external partners and stakeholders.

PRIORITY 3 – Serve regional needs with flagship engagement activities

Within the context of serving the needs of our region, CDU will develop flagship areas of engagement that will deliver results in targeted areas, in particular those related to the sustainable development of Northern Australia and addressing the need for enhanced Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education.

PRIORITY 4 – Further diversify income sources

As an organisation, CDU must operate sustainably and maintain an adequate revenue stream to support its teaching and research activities and to deliver the services required by our community and the nation. Revenue from teaching and research are expected to increase as student numbers and research activity expand. CDU will also look to diversify its revenue streams and build philanthropic income as part of a secure future.

Key indicators we are heading in the right direction will be:

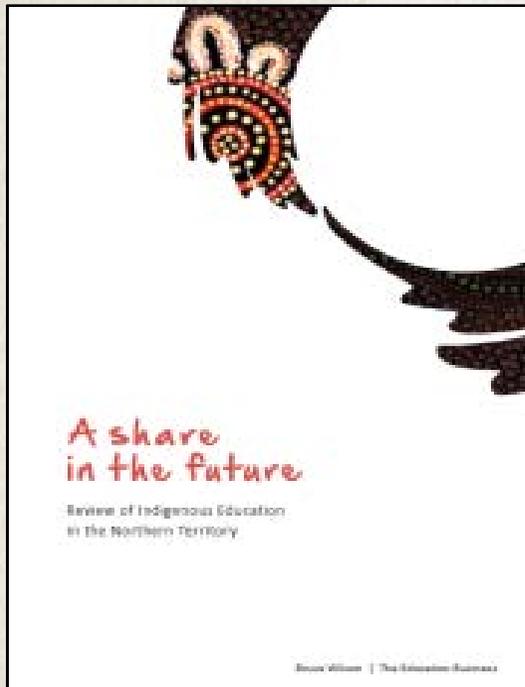
A 100% increase in revenue from all sources by 2025, compared with 2015.

Implementation of an appropriate framework for managing, monitoring and growing key stakeholder engagement over the life of this plan.

What do we know about Indigenous community engagement in education contexts?

- No systematic review
- Indigenous focused education policy and curriculum documents in Canada encourage community and family engagement
- Multiple perspectives – Indigenous students, parents, elders, families, teachers, cultural support workers
- Indigenous family-strengthening programs aim to enhance relationships and improve educational outcomes – but longer term impact has not yet been evaluated

What do we know about Indigenous community engagement in education contexts?



- Community engagement explicitly incorporated into Indigenous education policy documents in Australia
- “...parents and communities are engaged with purpose to support their children throughout the learning journey.” (NT Dept of Ed, p9)
- Disjunction between goals and measures – attendance vs achievement
- Accountability differs markedly across contexts

What do we know about community engagement in higher education contexts?

- Campus-community and/or university-community engagement has become increasingly important (Dempsey 2010)
- Key dimensions include:
 - Teaching and learning;
 - Curriculum design;
 - Policies; research;
 - External relations;
 - Social and cultural engagement;
 - Partnerships with school and educational providers;
 - Economic engagement; and
 - Organisation and participation of students

What do we know about community engagement in higher education contexts?

- CE included in strategic plans or dedicated CE strategies
- *Australasian Journal of University-Community Engagement*
- CE is used as an assessment criteria in staff promotions – value of contributions to profession, industry, government or communities

What do we know about community engagement in Indigenous higher education contexts?

- Nothing is reported nationally about Indigenous community engagement (in contrast to student access, participation, retention, and success; Indigenous involvement in university governance; and Indigenous employment)
- Limited evidence about what Indigenous community engagement in higher education can look and feel like
- But we know lots is happening!!!!

What do we know about community engagement in Indigenous higher education contexts?

- Engagement needs to be continuous and capable of catering for transitions in, through, and out of higher education
- Engagement needs to be ongoing (not adhoc) and built on strong and trusting relationships
- Indigenous engagement positions, programs, strategies and frameworks
- CE incorporated in RAPs
- Employment of Indigenous staff
- Whole of University approaches required

Implications for strategy development for Indigenous community engagement in higher education contexts?

- **Redefining community engagement from Indigenous stand-points** – Indigenous knowledges; cultural respect
- **Appropriately resourcing Indigenous community engagement activities** – core investment; resourcing for regional and remote; build workforce capacity; invest in Indigenous staff
- **Continuing to build an evidence-base to learn from recent Indigenous community engagement investments** – more sophisticated evaluations; research
- **Move beyond the rhetorical language used in many policy documents and frameworks** – needs to be defined by community

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