

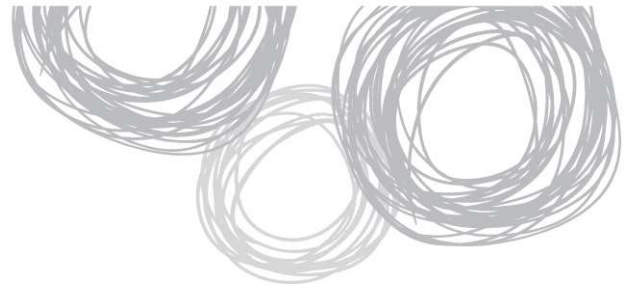
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2008 Premier's Awards for Excellence in Public Sector Management

Partnerships and reconciliation

Western Cape College Cradle to Employment





Introduction

Western Cape College is a P-12 education facility serving the communities of Aurukun, Mapoon, Weipa and Napranum in Far North Queensland.

Two years ago the College launched *Cradle to Employment*, an ambitious program designed to deliver improved education, training and employment outcomes for Indigenous students.

Cradle to Employment implements a number of programs to ensure the College has the capacity to meet its systemic and strategic requirements and the aspirations of its communities for its children.

Featuring an intense focus on community engagement, it addresses the needs of local communities and ensures the establishment of quality life pathways for every student.

The project has resulted in increased retention of Indigenous students to Year 12, successful transitions from communities to secondary schooling options and improved outcomes.

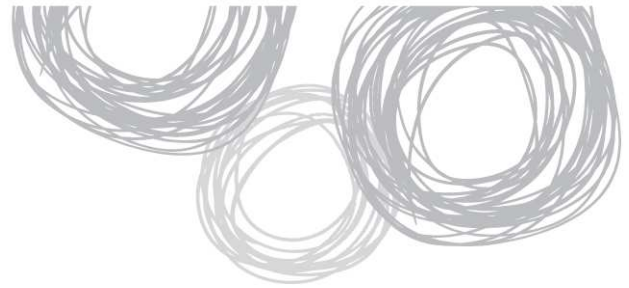
Western Cape College's *Cradle to Employment* initiative has not only delivered on its promise, but also sets a benchmark for the future.

Awards specific criteria

Cradle to Employment was inspired and guided by the *Bound for Success Education Strategy for Cape York*, a Department of Education, Training and the Arts strategy which recognises the uniqueness of Cape York as well as the community's desire to set its own educational aspirations, and share ownership and leadership for education reform in the region.

The *Bound for Success* agenda comprises a raft of reforms to build the foundations, continuity and consistency of learning, ensuring smooth and successful transitions for students from primary to secondary schooling and from junior to senior secondary schooling.

Cradle to Employment underscores these goals by ensuring every student achieves a level of literacy and numeracy that enables them to reach their full potential and achieve academic success, as well as establishing worthwhile, relevant, viable and accessible pathways from school to work, through nurturing and strengthening the capacity of school leadership, teachers and the communities it serves.



2.1 Recognition of Rights

The *Cradle to Employment* initiative and its associated projects prioritise the achievement of quality life pathways for all students. This means that at Western Cape College Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will achieve educational success comparable to their non-Indigenous peers. This position promotes communities working together to ensure the best outcomes for their children, through the recognition of an individual child's right to a world class education regardless of race, location and gender.

2.2 Sustainability of the Reconciliation Process

Reconciliation and positive race relations are important at Western Cape College. In our communities this involves building opportunities in four different communities, with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people working together to achieve the vision of the *Cradle to Employment* strategy. The commitment of the College to *Cradle to Employment* prioritises reconciliation through recognising the individual circumstances, intelligence and knowledge each child brings to the classroom, and by building on these to ensure each child achieves to their capacity. This means that students and staff develop a cross-cultural appreciation of what is involved in terms of resources and support for each child to move successfully from infancy to employment.

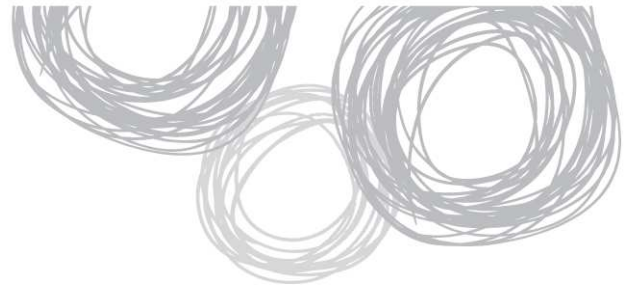
2.3 Reduction in Disadvantages

Through *Cradle to Employment*, the students at Western Cape College have access to a number of initiatives that reduce the disadvantage associated with geographic isolation and race. There is no excuse for failure at Western Cape College, a mantra perpetuated by the *Cradle to Employment* philosophy. The College has high expectations: that means we as a community expect the best from our students, families, staff and communities to deliver quality outcomes for each child. At Western Cape College the business of schooling extends beyond the 9am to 3pm, P-12 traditional schooling model.

The College staff and teachers are dedicated to students as individuals not statistics. This means we know the individual histories of each of our children and can provide tailored programs to meet their needs and ensure success. This tracking of and involvement with students starts as early as three years of age and continues up to 20 years of age.

Strong Foundations

Western Cape College is strategically placed to deliver a world-class P-12 education facility with an emphasis on transitions, accountability and excellence. In the past four years in excess of \$20 million has been spent on significant infrastructure development to ensure we have the capacity to deliver our programs.



An **Early Years Transition Team** has been established to coordinate the transition of students through the early phase of learning. This involves an intense support network established with parents, community members, students pre-Prep to Year 3, and alternative early education providers in each Western Cape community. This network coordinates the approach to early years education, highlighting age appropriate progression.

The **Parents as First Teachers (PAFT)** community engagement program aims to increase awareness of the value of education and the positive life impact that school completion can have on economic independence, and health and life outcomes to the Napranum community. The program has been running since 2007, working hand-in-hand with community service providers to build relationships with families and host various activities to engage parents with their child's education. These include homework centres, homework workshops with visiting professionals, and developing learning kits to educate the Napranum community about the school, in addition to promoting various themes including health and nutrition.

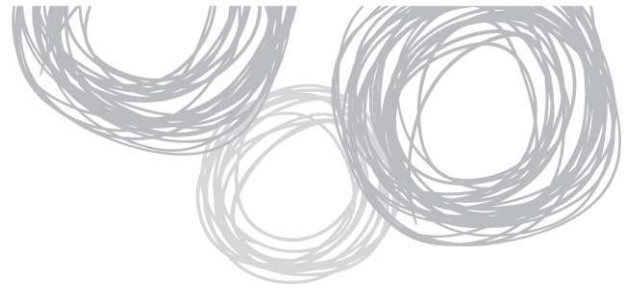
Western Cape College also has a **Transition Support Program**. This program helps students from Aurukun and Mapoon Campuses make a smooth transition when leaving their communities and entering into boarding schools to complete senior schooling. The program also assists families identify boarding school opportunities and acts as an interface between the school and the family to ensure strong community connections are maintained. Students involved in the program often have been among the first members of their families to complete their secondary education, a testament to the program's success.

The transition of students through the early years of schooling, and from primary to secondary education, are times when the students of Western Cape College require targeted support to ensure these transitions are successful. Creating these strong foundations provides Western Cape College with an additional mechanism to ensure Indigenous students from our remote communities have supported access to a P-12 education.

Continuity and Consistency

Western Cape College has implemented a number of other initiatives to ensure the delivery of consistent, quality curriculum, pedagogy and assessment across all campus sites and year levels. The curriculum programs provided at Western Cape College are comparable to any other school providing students with the best foundations when moving within schools and across year levels. Under the banner of *Cradle to Employment*, the College has:

- developed a College Curriculum Strategy that clearly outlines the vision and aim of the curriculum programs at Western Cape College. This ensures the College provides a curriculum that flows and eases the transition of students through P-12

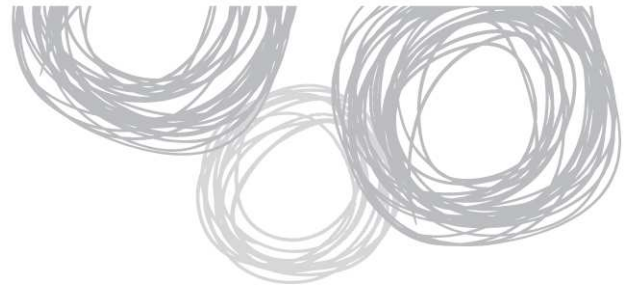


- developed a set of guidelines which teachers use to base their planning around the key aspects of literacy and numeracy, to ensure all students develop these essential skills
- implemented planning time-blocks for teams of teachers, Heads of Department and Heads of Staged Schooling
- introduced best practice professional development opportunities
- developed a coordinated approach to Teacher Aide professional development
- implemented programs that successfully embedded the literacy and numeracy agenda
- structured management of funds to increase Teacher Aide support which in turn increases classroom support
- implemented programs which provide teachers with ESL and language strategies
- promoted teacher participation in research to facilitate the identification of structure and pedagogical changes to teaching
- built a College Curriculum Committee which drives the strategic direction of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment at a College level. Campus Curriculum Teams feed into this committee to cement the accountability of staff in curriculum programs and promote consistency and comparability

Delivering Options

Western Cape College believes that by delivering options for students and staff, success will follow. These are options for leadership and employment which contribute to a quality life outcome, an essential aspiration in our communities.

The **Senior Schooling Service Guarantee** implemented at Western Cape College stipulates that 100 per cent of Western Cape College Year 12 graduates will receive an OP, articulated VET pathway or paid employment. This initiative has been successfully implemented since 2006, tracking students two years post-destination to ensure sustainability and suitability of pathway. This program means that Indigenous students in our communities can see the links between education and future success. It has proved so successful the College is working to extend the guarantee to its communities' boarding students.



So-Solid is an Indigenous Leadership Program based in Weipa where students seek inspirational speakers to visit the schools to help inspire and motivate them to adapt and employ positive life outcomes. A significant achievement of this program was the *Foot in the Door* initiative that involved a significant number of Indigenous students taking up work placements in Sydney media outlets, including Channel 7's Sunrise program. The *So-Solid* program has seen increased representation of Indigenous students taking on leadership roles within the school and community. The program provides students with the option to take on leadership roles in a supported environment and has been integral to improving the self-esteem and confidence of our Indigenous students who now aspire to achieve more.

The **DARE Team** (Dreams Aspirations Respect Education) attends, supports and assists with the organisation of *So-Solid* events. This team is run by a group of Indigenous workers, both professional and paraprofessional, to initiate programs across the College to improve Indigenous participation in viable economies to produce employment outcomes. This program promotes community-based leadership and encourages Indigenous staff and community members to take an active role in the delivery of education – not only to the community, but also for the benefit of their own careers.

Partnerships

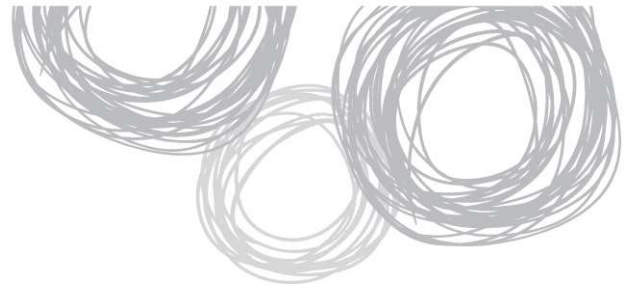
Through partnerships with the community, business and other education service providers Western Cape College is in the position to deliver on its *Cradle to Employment* philosophy and its *Bound for Success* commitment.

The *Rio Tinto Aluminium Weipa - Western Cape College Forum* is a partnership between the two organisations, established in 2006 to create school-to-work pathways for Western Cape College students.

Through the forum, Western Cape College and Rio Tinto Aluminium work together to address shared needs, addressing skills shortages and developing successful school-to-work transitions. The forum was the recipient of a Prime Minister's Award for Partnerships in 2007.

Most recently the forum agreed to a program of joint activities including:

- work exposure for students from all campuses, and some arrangements for senior students attending boarding schools
- career talks by Rio Tinto Aluminium employees
- student work experience
- school-based traineeships



- strengthening school-to-work pathways
- reinforcing the importance of academic excellence
- specialist lessons (e.g. observing the application of physics at the mine)
- Rio Tinto Aluminium support for academic prizes, scholarships and other initiatives

Western Cape College has led a number of arts and culture initiatives in the Western Cape through its **Arts and Culture Program**. This has involved engaging with arts enterprises and establishing an arts hub in Weipa. Students across the College participate in community-based cultural activities to ensure maintenance of culture and increased cross-cultural understandings. These activities also promote community involvement in education.

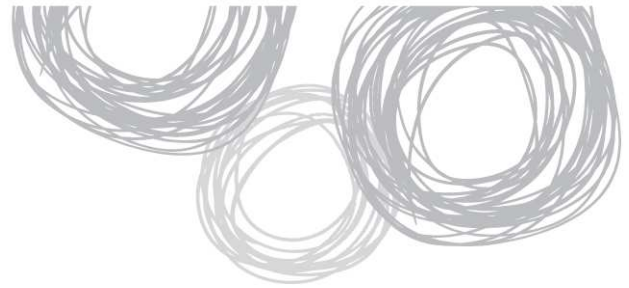
A **Work Readiness Partnership** with TAFE and the Weipa Chamber of Commerce delivers a comprehensive work readiness program funded by the College and the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations to deliver 120 work readiness places across our four communities. This \$2.4 million program provides essential support for the College to meet its Senior Schooling Guarantee and provide options to students to achieve success.

The **Centre for Leadership and Teaching Excellence** (CLTE) is a strategic response that has been developed as a partnership between Western Cape College and the Indigenous Student Support Unit, designed to address the difficulties associated with delivering induction support and appropriate professional development to department staff in remote Indigenous settings. The CLTE has developed and delivered workshops specifically designed for teaching staff based on the needs identified by campus leadership. This initiative ensures the College has the capacity to professionally foster teaching staff to deliver the best service to our communities and students. The CLTE also delivers *Make'n'Take* workshops, providing parents and carers with strategies to assist with their child's learning, reinforcing the College's commitment to community engagement.

Address general criteria

Strengthening Indigenous Communities and Strengthening Educational Outcomes are two of the Government's current and most important priorities.

Both are consistent with the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) recently expressed commitment to close the gap of Indigenous disadvantage in a range of areas, including education.



Among their aims are the creation of real choices and opportunities for Indigenous Queenslanders; fostering the uptake of cultural economic opportunities to further a culture of esteem and positive identity; working with Indigenous communities to build pathways to education, training and employment; and improving economic and social wellbeing through place-based initiatives.

In particular, Western Cape College is actively improving the availability of high-quality early education programs, while also enabling smooth transitions from school to work.

Cradle to Employment is one of several strategies adopted by the College to ensure its success in building a strong Indigenous community supported by learning and the arts.

3.1 Demonstrates responsiveness to and acceptance of diversity within the community, workplace, and/or relevant industry

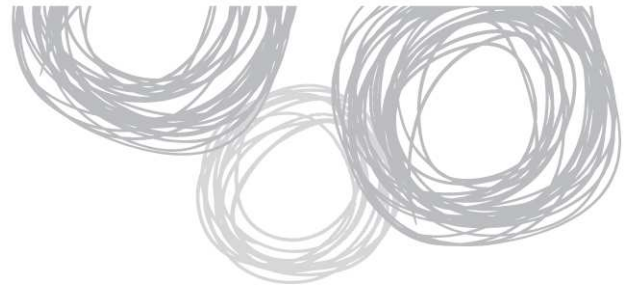
The *Cradle to Employment* initiative encourages, accepts and responds to diversity – a philosophy born out of a need for the College to improve the education and life outcomes for the students of its communities.

This was a much needed response to the previously poor education outcomes for Indigenous students across the Western Cape. Those outcomes were not restricted to the region; worryingly they reflected an epidemic of national proportions. Data across Australia demonstrated that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were achieving dramatically below non-Indigenous state benchmarks on measures such as attendance, retention, completion and achievement.

Additionally, the program was in direct response to the phenomena of living in a culturally and economically rich local context, with high employment demand and high unemployment rates for Indigenous community members. However, the mentality that Indigenous students and children were not capable to participate in this context was rejected by the College. The program accepts and embraces the challenges involved in delivering a world class service in this context, and has implemented a number of strategic responses that are appropriate and necessary to meet the needs of our communities. This means getting students' work ready: school-ready and life-ready.

3.2 Reflects the Smart State vision through alignment with the Government's priorities

The *Cradle to Employment* initiative supports the Queensland Government's Smart State vision – of a state where knowledge, creativity and innovation drive economic growth to improve prosperity and quality of life for all Queenslanders.



The *Cradle to Employment* program aligns with the Queensland Government Smart State vision because it is a systemic response to the department's *Bound for Success Education Strategy*, designed to address the poor education outcomes for students from Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands.

The programs deliver this by providing Indigenous youth of the Western Cape the scope and support to achieve quality life outcomes; by providing strong foundations, consistency and continuity of programs, promoting partnerships with communities and business, and delivering options.

The provision of this program ensures that our Indigenous children have access to the strong economic opportunities available in our region – and that they have the capacity and confidence to pursue them.

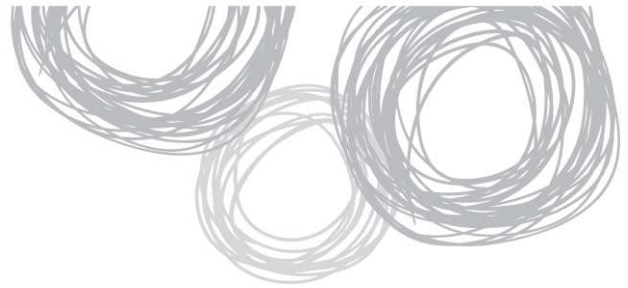
3.3 Relates to broader government directions

Western Cape College's *Cradle to Employment* initiative is founded on embracing the economic success of the Western Cape Region. Recognising that work is available in the local region, and not just in urban centres such as Brisbane or Cairns, means there is a broad scope of economic opportunity available for the region's youth. At Western Cape College all students are encouraged to follow their dreams, while still maintaining close connections to place and culture. Students may have to leave their home community to participate in these regional and urban opportunities – but by strengthening Indigenous education outcomes and by building the confidence communities have in their children, more Indigenous students are achieving quality life outcomes while maintaining vital connections to their home communities.

Statement of outcomes / Executive summary

The *Cradle to Employment* initiative at Western Cape College has resulted in improved Indigenous education and life outcomes. The success of the *Cradle to Employment* program is evident by:

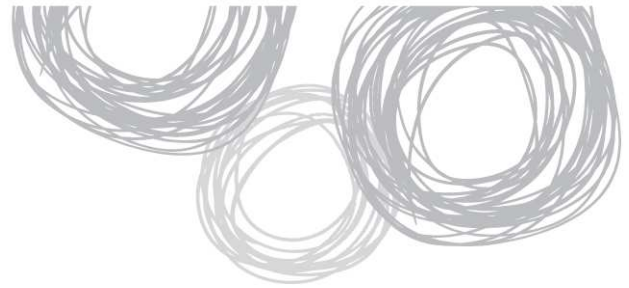
- significant participation in real economic opportunities across the portfolio of education, training and the arts
- numerous success stories of Indigenous leadership
- quality student outcomes in both academic and attendance areas



- a cutting-edge partnership with a multinational mining company securing job outcomes for students
- increased community engagement and satisfaction with the College
- unprecedented level of support for the College by the community

Specific Outcomes include:

- 100 per cent of Western Cape College students have received an OP, articulated VET pathway or paid employment since 2006
- increased retention and participation of Aurukun students in secondary schooling options with 88 students in 2008 enrolled in secondary education compared to 63 in 2005 and 49 in 2004
- the first Wik woman in 15 years completed Year 12 in 2005, and has maintained two years paid full-time employment, including a traineeship with Rio Tinto Aluminium, Brisbane, in 2007
- implementation of the Mapoon Transition Program in 2007
- pathways for all 5, 2008 Aurukun Senior Secondary students established and supported
- more than 170 unique direct interactions with parents and carers in 2007, and 452 learning kits distributed to Napranum homes
- parent attendance at Napranum community engagement morning teas has risen by 200 per cent, attracting 20 mothers within the first year of the program's inception, a figure which has since remained constant
- parents from the Napranum Community are for the first time attending P&C meetings
- active P&Cs established in Aurukun and Mapoon
- nine of 14 Rio Tinto Weipa Apprenticeships commencing in 2007 are Western Cape College students; a new, competitive, well-prepared yet direct transition from school to work



- four Rio Tinto Aluminium-Western Cape College school-based trainees are Indigenous students, representing the new opportunity for students to complete work-based training while at school
- maintained or improved literacy and numeracy results on benchmark, tests despite rapid Indigenous enrolment
- Mapoon students consistently achieving at or above state benchmarks on literacy and numeracy from 2005
- increased attendance and enrolment across all four communities
- two thirds of teaching staff across the P-12 context have attended professional development sessions to date in 2008, focusing on the areas of ICTs, Numeracy, Literacy, wellbeing and stress management
- nine Indigenous students nominated and elected into College leadership positions

The College measures this success using a number of tools:

- the Benchmark Data Report, a longitudinal report of student outcomes and achievements
- baseline study from the RTA partner evaluation process
- anecdotal feedback from community members and parents
- Senior Schooling Outcome Report
- Program Progress Reports

Referees

Mr Rob Atkinson, General Manager, Rio Tinto Aluminium Weipa (07 4069 8432)

Mr Peter Guivarra, Mayor, Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council (07 4090 9124)



Supporting Documentation