



**CHARLES
DARWIN
UNIVERSITY**

VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION &
TRAINING

Ready for Work

Stories of Innovative Vocational Education and
Training for Regional and Remote Indigenous
Students at Charles Darwin University

Cover: CDU VET Bathurst Island horticulture students working on banana plants at Casuarina campus

Back cover: CDU Bathurst Island horticulture students graduating in 2018

Executive summary

About this review

This report provides a series of case studies of Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs at Charles Darwin University (CDU) that are recognised for delivering positive outcomes for regional and remote Indigenous students in the Northern Territory (NT).

The term 'Indigenous' is used throughout the report to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and First Nation people living in the NT with full recognition that Indigenous populations consist of many different people, languages and cultures, and communities have extensive connections to broader community groups beyond their geographic location.

A common theme in Indigenous VET policy and literature is the imperative for educators to be culturally sensitive to the needs, priorities and interests of regional and remote Indigenous learners and communities for VET to succeed (Guenther et al, 2017, Windley, 2017, OECD, 2018, Ackehurst et al. 2016, Hall and Wilkes, 2015, Anderson, 2011, Miller, 2005). Much has been written about the importance of the involvement of Indigenous people in the governance, design and delivery of VET programs, of the need for flexibility in delivery as well as quality educational support, especially mentoring, academic tutoring and language and literacy support. This review was commissioned by CDU VET to investigate the specific factors that are contributing to the success of CDU's regional and remote Indigenous VET programs and how the programs can be improved into the future. Three research questions guided the review:

1. What factors are contributing to positive outcomes for CDU's regional and remote Indigenous VET students in the NT?
2. How might CDU's regional and remote VET programs be improved for future delivery?
3. What capabilities do VET educators need to deliver these outcomes and how might they be better supported to continue this work?

Seven case studies were selected by CDU for the review as exemplars of good practice in VET in regional and remote Indigenous communities. They include:

1. Work readiness VET programs at Gulkula in North-East Arnhem Land
2. Work-based training for early childhood education workers at Ngukurr and Santa Teresa
3. Training for working night patrol officers in the Tennant Creek region
4. Conservation and land management training for park rangers at Jabiru and Maningrida
5. Work-readiness programs for unemployed young people in the Darwin region
6. Horticulture training for women in the Tiwi Islands
7. Work-based training for aged care workers in East Arnhem Land.

The case studies are based on data retrieved from public sources and from interviews with CDU educators, learner support specialists, administrators and other stakeholders involved in regional and remote VET delivery. As the majority of interviewees were VET educators, the cases are written in a narrative style with a strong focus on educational practice from their perspective. Students were not interviewed for this review.

Key findings and recommendations

The case studies highlight rich diversity in environments, social contexts, cultural backgrounds and languages in regional and remote Indigenous communities in the NT. They also demonstrate the complexity of delivering VET in these communities and the challenges regional and remote Indigenous students face when participating in VET. A single approach to VET will not accommodate the needs of each student or the aspirations of each community. What works in each one can only be understood in the specific local social, cultural and environmental context.

There are however factors in common across the case studies that are contributing to positive outcomes for CDU's regional and remote Indigenous VET students. While acknowledging that some VET programs in this review are in early stages of development, much of their success is due to the respectful, caring and supportive way VET educators work with and support students to prepare for work and gain a qualification. This complex and demanding work is occurring in partnership with professional services at CDU, local Indigenous communities, employers, local councils, national park authorities, government agencies and a range of other service providers committed to the long-term development of Indigenous communities.

The case studies affirm that VET is most successful for regional and remote Indigenous students when it is directly related to work or with opportunities for work. However, it is VET educators and their pedagogies that are enabling regional and remote Indigenous students to achieve competencies and VET qualifications. Their cultural knowledge and understanding, ability to keep students engaged 'in the moment' and care for the welfare and support of students are fundamental to achieving positive outcomes. The case studies also affirm the need for institutions to adequately resource language, literacy and numeracy support for students and for ongoing engagement with Indigenous communities. Regional and remote VET educators display a range of unique capabilities, some of which may not be associated with mainstream VET teaching. High levels of cultural competence, pedagogic innovation

and resourcefulness are key capabilities common across the case studies. These findings give substance to the need for targeted professional development programs to sustain CDU's regional and remote VET programs into the future. This review concludes with a series of recommendations to support the continuation of CDU's effective delivery of VET in regional and remote Indigenous communities. These include:

- Providing integrated learner support functions to support CDU's future VET delivery to regional and remote Indigenous students.
- Investigating mentoring models with mentors based in local communities.
- Designing a professional development program to build the capability of new regional and remote VET educators in consultation with CDU VET's stakeholders.
- Where possible, implementing flexible regional and remote teaching models that ensure continuity of educators, ongoing learning and mentoring support for students, and professional development opportunities for new regional and remote VET educators.
- Continuing to develop learning and assessment resources, including digital, in local languages.

Measuring the success of VET for Indigenous learners in terms of qualification completions, transition into further learning and employment outcomes alone does not capture the full range of benefits that CDU VET is delivering to NT's Indigenous students and the complex and valuable work VET educators do.



CDU VET Bathurst Island horticulture students

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List of Acronyms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AFB	Away From Base program
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
BRC	Barkly Regional Council
CDP	Community Development Program
CDU	Charles Darwin University
EARC	East Arnhem Regional Council
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
ELC	Early Learning Centre
GACE	Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation
GCL	Gumatj Corporation Limited
GRTC	Gulkula Regional Training Centre
HE	Higher Education
Indigenous	Aboriginal, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and/or Australian First Nations people
IAS	Indigenous Advancement Strategy
Ironbark	Ironbark Aboriginal Corporation
LL&N	Language, Literacy and Numeracy
LoC	Learning on Country
MEP	Miwatj Employment Program (Centrelink)

NATSISS	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
NT	Northern Territory
NTG	Northern Territory Government
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OH&S	Occupational Health and Safety
OISS	Office of Indigenous Student Services at CDU
PM&C	Prime Minister and Cabinet
SBA	School-based Apprenticeships
TITEB	Tiwi Islands Training & Employment Board
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VSS	VET for Secondary Schools
Yolŋu	Indigenous people and languages of the East Arnhem region

Definitions

The term 'Indigenous' is used throughout this document to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and First Nation people in the NT with full recognition that Indigenous populations consist of many different people, languages and cultures with extensive connections to broader community groups beyond their geographic location.

Indigenous cultures are understood as the knowledge, laws, philosophies, expressions, art and creativity, and connections to people and places that are transmitted from generation to generation and define local communities and their sense of continuity and identity (AIATSIS, 2018: 4).

The term 'VET educator' encompasses teachers, trainers and educational managers involved in the delivery of CDU's VET programs for regional and remote Indigenous learners. Learner support specialists refer to members of CDU's learning support teams who provide academic, English language, literacy and numeracy, and personal support for students.

The term 'engagement' is defined as 'a sustained relationship between groups of people working towards shared goals' (Hunt, 2014).

Innovation in VET is defined as knowledge producing practices that involve 'absorbing knowledge, applying it to new uses and creating new knowledge' (Shuetze, 1999).

While a contested term in VET, the term 'pedagogy' is used throughout the report to describe teaching and learning practices of VET educators and to emphasise the complex, challenging and skilful nature of the work that CDU VET educators do when teaching adult and secondary school Indigenous students in regional and remote locations of the NT.



Park Ranger Training at Jabiru

Introduction

About this review

CDU VET (Vocational Education and Training at Charles Darwin University) commissioned this review of Indigenous VET Programs in the Northern Territory (NT) in the second half of 2018 to:

1. Document cases of innovative CDU VET programs and practices that are delivering positive outcomes for regional and remote Indigenous learners and their communities.
2. Investigate the factors that are contributing to the success of these programs and ideas to improve future delivery.
3. Identify the capabilities VET educators need to achieve successful outcomes for remote Indigenous learners and how educators can be better supported to work in regional and remote locations.

Seven case studies of VET programs in regional and remote regions of the NT were undertaken (Figure 1). The case studies were recommended by CDU VET as examples of innovative VET programs and practices that are producing positive outcomes for non-urban Indigenous students and their communities. Positive outcomes include the completion of a qualification or the transition to employment and/or further education as well as less tangible outcomes such as the development of personal confidence and identity, improved LL&N capabilities, communication and employability skills and the extent to which local communities are involved in and support VET programs (Guenther et al., 2017).

Figure 1: Case study sites across the NT

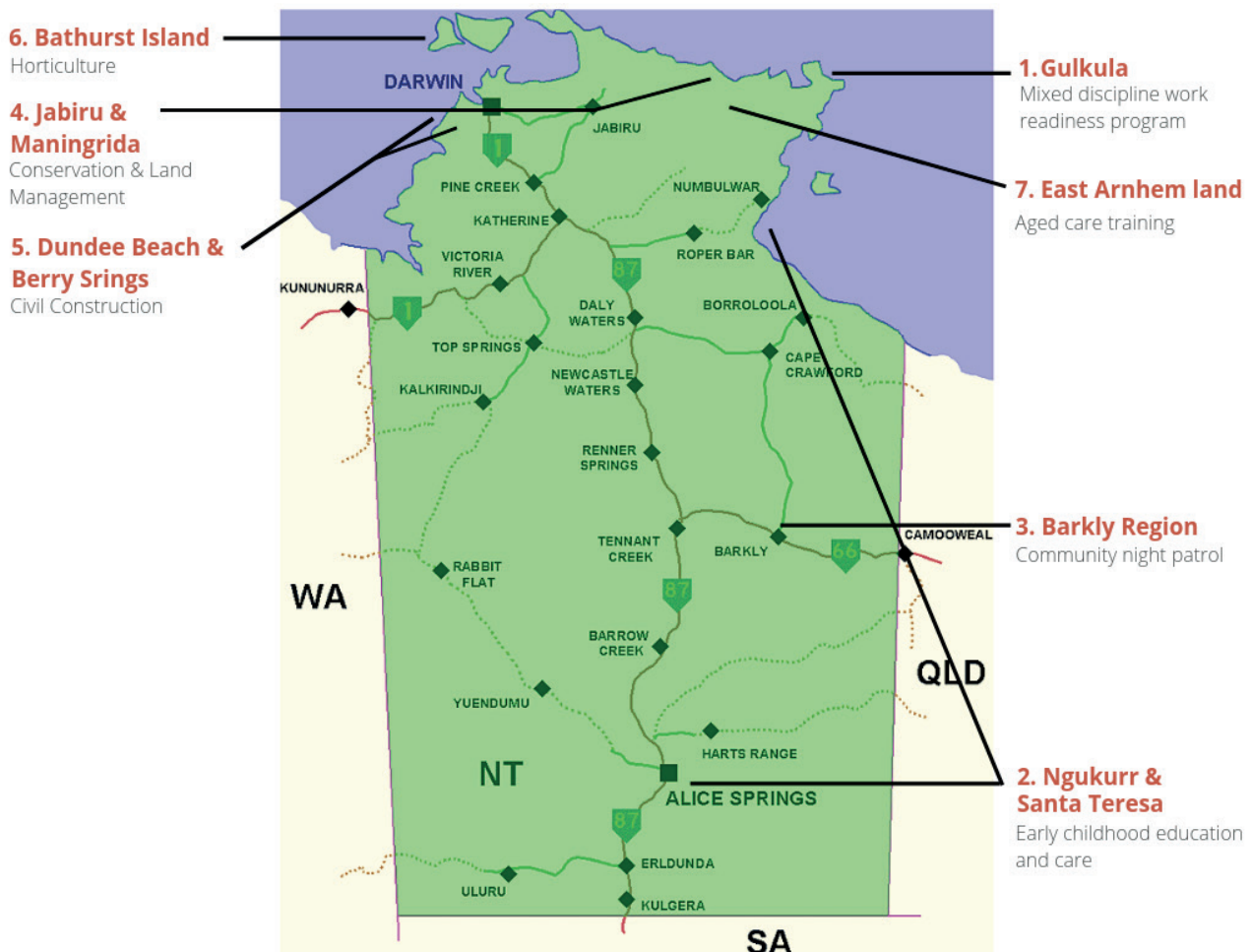


Image source: [wikimedia commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Blank_nt_location_map_in_Northern_Territory.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Blank_nt_location_map_in_Northern_Territory.png)

While each case study is unique in terms of location, local cultural environment and delivery model, they share the challenges associated with working in regional and remote locations and assisting Indigenous students to overcome significant barriers to education and employment.

Indigenous education at CDU

As the only dual-sector university based in the NT,¹¹ CDU has long been committed to improving education, health and leadership opportunities for Indigenous Territorians. The NT has the highest proportion of Indigenous people of all states and territories in Australia, currently at 30.3 % (Wilson, 2018) which makes increasing participation by Indigenous students in tertiary education a priority for CDU. CDU's current Strategic Plan 2015-2025 aims to increase:

- The number of Indigenous students commencing higher education (HE) programs to 15% by 2025.
- The retention rate of HE Indigenous students to 60%, along with a long term aspiration to reach parity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous student retention rates.
- The unit completion rates of Indigenous VET students to 75%, also with a long term aspiration to reach population parity (CDU Strategic Plan 2015-2025).

CDU VET is the largest VET provider in the NT, providing VET courses and qualifications to approximately 10,000 students annually (CDU, 2018). Over 3,000 of these students are Indigenous, studying courses in health and community services, the trades, early childhood education and care, conservation and land management, horticulture, hospitality and tourism, business, personal services and information technology. Ranging from secondary school and pre-employment programs to higher VET qualifications, CDU VET courses are closely connected to work and with pathways to higher qualifications at CDU and are delivered in metropolitan, regional and remote areas across the NT.

To support Indigenous students, CDU has campuses and centres in Darwin, Casuarina, Palmerston, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Jabiru and Nhulunbuy, and an Office of Indigenous Student Services (OISS) within the Pro Vice-Chancellor's office

for Indigenous Leadership. Indigenous education is also one of four strategic priorities in the CDU VET Plan (2017-2019). According to Strategic Priority 2: Linking skills and prosperity for Indigenous Australians and their communities,

CDU VET will actively engage with Indigenous Australians to shape skills development in ways that are culturally appropriate, meaningful and productive for Indigenous Australians in the NT (CDU VET Plan 2017-19: 3).

Key initiatives under Priority 2 include the expansion of culturally appropriate and contextualised Indigenous community development models and the design of a new model of Indigenous learner support relevant to regional and remote students. A key principle is that all training services for Indigenous Australians are grounded in a sound, 'fit for purpose' evidence base that is developed through collaborative research and review of Indigenous VET programs. This review was commissioned on this principle.

Methodology

Case study methodology was used to capture in-depth accounts of CDU's VET program design and educational practices for Indigenous students living in regional and remote locations of the NT. Three research questions guided the review process:

1. What factors are contributing to positive outcomes for CDU's VET regional and remote Indigenous students in the NT?
2. How might CDU's VET regional and remote programs be improved for future delivery?
3. What capabilities do VET educators need to deliver these outcomes and how might they be better supported to continue this work?

A review of Indigenous VET policy and literature was undertaken to determine what is currently understood as good practice in regional and remote Indigenous VET and to provide background and context for each case study. Data were collected through:

- Documentary evidence relating to regional population, geographic and cultural information, and data related to student outcomes.

¹¹ CDU provides both higher education VET qualifications and courses.

→ Seventeen semi-structured interviews with nineteen VET educators, student support services and employers involved in the delivery of a VET program. Interviews were conducted face to face in Darwin or by telephone with people living in other areas of the NT.

A summary of the interview questions is provided in Attachment A.

The case studies were analysed to identify factors in common that are contributing to positive outcomes for Indigenous learners and the practices and capabilities shared by regional and remote VET educators. The aim of the review was not to develop a 'tick-box' list of success factors but to deepen understanding of what works and what doesn't work for CDU's regional and remote Indigenous VET students in the NT to inform future delivery. Seven different case studies of regional and remote Indigenous VET programs were selected to provide sufficient breadth in location, industry specialisation, delivery model, and teaching and learning practices. In some cases, students are working and are supported to achieve a VET qualification as part of their employment while in others, students are job seekers preparing to find a job.

The philosophical underpinnings of this review recognise VET educators as professional teachers who bring about positive and often transformational outcomes for students and that VET is a system for social inclusion, equality and justice as much as a vehicle for economic growth and workforce productivity. Through VET, people have an opportunity to participate in education, training and employment, engage more fully in their community and have a voice in decisions that affect them.

Structure of the report

Section 1 in this report provides a background and context for the case studies. The challenge for Indigenous students and VET educators in regional and remote locations in the NT is explored in the context of education and employment outcomes and opportunities for Indigenous Territorians. Section 1 is followed by seven individual case studies, two of which describe different sites of delivery for the same or similar VET program. The cases are written in a narrative style to reflect the views and experiences of regional and remote VET educators in line with the research

questions. Each case study concludes with interim observations of the factors that are influencing positive outcomes in that specific location and context and ideas that can improve future delivery. Section 9 discusses the findings of a cross-case analysis of the seven case studies. The review concludes with a summary of recommendations for CDU's future delivery of VET to regional and remote Indigenous students in the NT.

Limitations of the review

As a non-indigenous person, the reviewer acknowledges that she has not lived or worked in regional and remote Indigenous communities and may therefore have bias that could influence the findings of this review. To overcome this possibility, she has attempted to remain objective throughout the review process and engaged in considerable research into Indigenous culture for each case study.

To improve the dependability of the data and analysis process, interviewees involved in the case studies were provided with a draft of their specific case study to confirm the interpretation of the data and to provide additional information if they chose to. As most interviewees were CDU VET educators working directly with regional and remote Indigenous students, this report has a strong focus on educational practices from the perspectives of educators and learning support specialists. These are highly important views that are often absent in policy discourses (Miller, 2005) and are validated in some case studies by external sources.

The reviewer also acknowledges that the analysis in this report is based on relatively small datasets and any findings, observations and recommendations may not apply to VET delivery in other regional and remote Indigenous contexts.

Acknowledgements

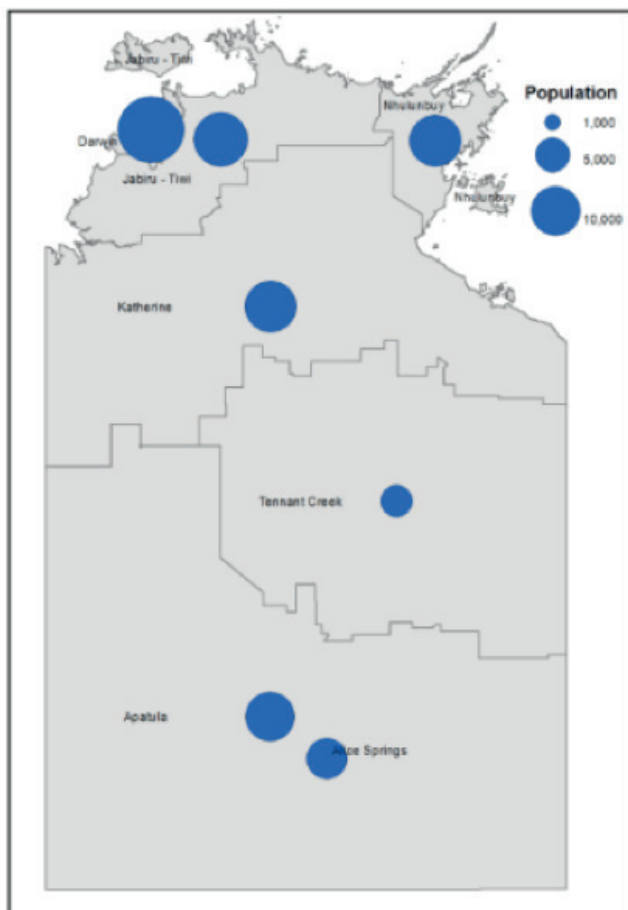
Special thanks go to the participants who contributed to the case studies and shared invaluable knowledge and insights into the educational practices that make VET programs and practices work for regional and remote Indigenous students. Special thanks also to Christine Robertson, Pro Vice-Chancellor CDU VET and Barbara Cram, VET Indigenous Training Coordinator at CDU, whose leadership and commitment to Indigenous students in the NT has ensured the success of the regional and remote Indigenous programs in this review.

The challenge for regional and remote Indigenous VET in the NT

NT's Indigenous population

NT's Indigenous population is approximately 74,550 people (2016 Census) and represents just over 30% of NT's total population (Wilson, 2018). Indigenous communities are spread over vast regions across the NT including the Darwin, Jabiru-Tiwi, Nhulunbuy, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Apatula and Alice Springs regions (Figure 2) and have extensive community networks and family ties stretching far beyond their immediate location and jurisdictional boundaries (Hunt, 2013).

Figure 2: Spread of Indigenous populations in the NT (Wilson, 2018)



Many Indigenous Territorians are fluent in a number of Indigenous languages, especially those living in regional and remote communities. There are over 40 Indigenous language groups in the NT with some communities, such as the Yolngu community in

north-east Arnhem Land, speaking more than a dozen different languages under the Yolngu Matha group. Over half of remote Indigenous communities (54%) speak an Indigenous language as their main language at home (Shalley and Stewart, 2011) and, in very remote areas, this number increases to over 80%. English in these communities can be a 3rd or 4th language.

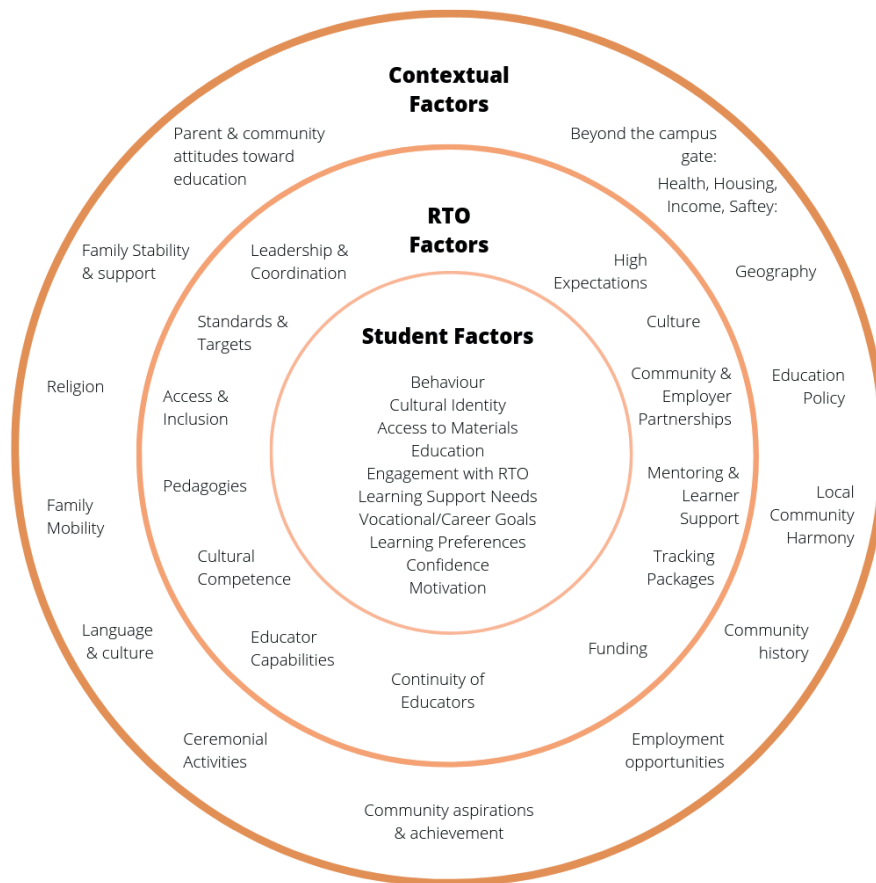
Remote Indigenous VET

Access to VET is important to the future of young Australians living in regional and remote Indigenous communities. VET provides access to education and employment, English language, numeracy and literacy (LL&N) and other employability skills (Windley, 2017) as well as practical, work-orientated educational options, especially for students with little or no work experience and lower levels of education. Interest in VET is growing as more Indigenous students are starting VET at a young age (Ibid.) and achieve a VET qualification (Guenther et al, 2017).

In 2017, CDU provided VET to over 3,000 Indigenous students (CDU, 2018), many of whom live in regional, remote and very remote regions of the NT. To ensure the best outcomes possible for these students, CDU worked collaboratively with local Indigenous organisations, regional councils, government agencies and other service providers to assist students to overcome a range of contextual, educational and personal challenges to participation in VET (Figure 3). Regional and remote students can experience significant disadvantage when compared to their peers in cities and regional centres due to limited access to opportunities for education and employment and to reliable transport and other public services and resources (including the internet) (Ackehurst et al, 2016).

Education policy settings, geography and non-inclusive curriculum, pedagogy and teaching and learning strategies are also acknowledged as factors that can impact negatively on educational outcomes (ACIL Allen, 2014).

Figure 3: Indigenous Student Learning Framework (adapted from ACIL Allen, 2014: iii)



Participation in VET in regional and remote locations can be disrupted by weather, cultural and family events, health and home life, adverse behaviours in the community and low levels of education and English LL&N. Mental health is also an issue in many communities (Guenther et al, 2017). Most of these challenges are beyond the scope of VET educators alone and need coordinated responses from employers, governments, community service providers and community leaders as well as educational institutions.

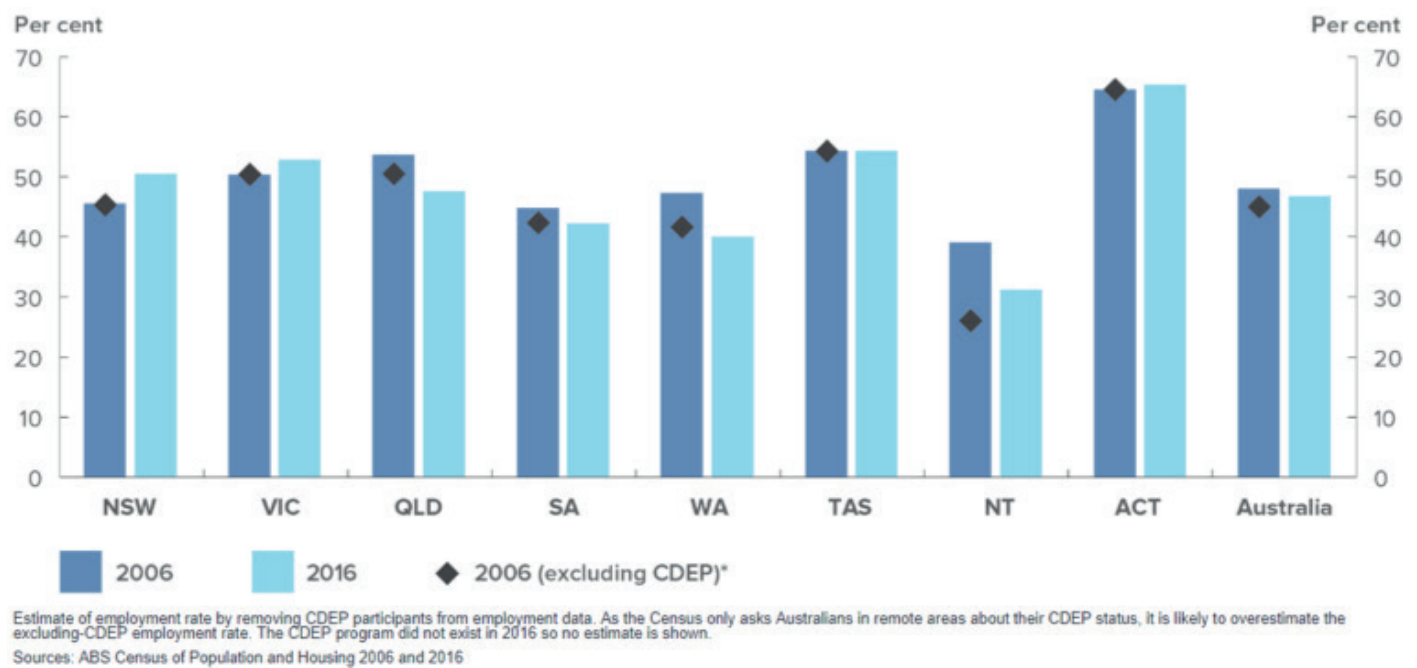
One of the most pressing issues for CDU's VET educators working with Indigenous students is the variable achievement of English LL&N. English spoken in regional and remote communities often differs in many ways from academic English and can include other sounds, words, syntax as well as different text forms, pragmatics and underlying conceptualisations (Bowman and Callan, 2012). Students in regional and remote communities may also have experienced interrupted schooling or left school at an early age

with low levels of educational achievement and this can lead to intergenerational effects on education and employment, particularly in low socio-economic families (ACIL Allen, 2014). Given the strong relationship between education and employment for Indigenous Australians (Crawford and Biddle, 2017), low levels of education can have major implications for the future for young people. Indigenous Australians with post-compulsory school qualifications, on the other hand, are significantly more likely to gain employment, although not always in very remote locations (Windley, 2017).

The challenge for VET in the NT is raising levels of English LL&N and qualifications in the adult Indigenous population and ensuring these qualifications lead to successful employment outcomes, especially in regional and remote locations. This is a significant challenge given only 16% of Indigenous adults currently hold a qualification above a certificate level II and employment rates for Indigenous adults are falling (Figure 4).²

² Changes in employment targets were complicated by the change of the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) which counted its participants as employed, to the replacement Community Development Programme (CDP) which does not.

Figure 4: Indigenous employment rates by Australian jurisdiction (15-64 year olds) (PM&C, 2018)



However, while VET qualifications and employment are highly desirable outcomes, there are other significant personal and community outcomes to be gained from participation in VET (NCVER). Indigenous graduates report high levels of personal benefit, whether they gained employment after training or not (Windley, 2017).

They talked about relationships and networks, support, mentoring, training coordination and cultural values all contributing to retention. They talked about transformative and sustaining processes, for example, building confidence and foundation skills, social engagement, maintaining connections to language and culture and benefits for children, substantially more than they did about employment outcomes (Guenther et al, 2017: 30).

The personal outcomes gained from participation in VET relating to increased self-confidence, self-esteem and improved communication skills, and feelings of being respected by others, are important enabling factors for positive outcomes (Bowman and Callan, 2012). People living in regional and remote Indigenous communities aspire to achieve economic independence through paid or voluntary work, participating effectively in their community's development and contributing to the prosperity of Indigenous enterprises and local economies (Ibid.). Participation in VET can also contribute to maintaining and strengthening local culture and language and individual and family health and wellbeing.

Improving outcomes for regional and remote Indigenous VET students

Research shows that a 'basic condition' of good practice in VET to improve outcomes for regional and remote Indigenous students is the recognition of Indigenous culture and identity at every stage of the education experience (McIntyre et al, 1996). This can be achieved when Indigenous people are directly involved in the leadership, design and delivery of VET courses 'from start to finish' and can ensure training is appropriate to the training needs of students and the aspirations of communities (OECD 2018, Campbell and Christie, 2008, Miller, 2005, ANTARAC, 1988). Indigenous ownership of VET is possible when local people become invested in VET and see the relationship between the objectives of VET and their own cultural experiences (Campbell and Christie, 2008).

The success of VET in regional and remote Indigenous communities is also highly dependent on 'positive, supportive and respectful' long-term relationships between students and their communities (NCVER, 2017). VET educators also experience greater satisfaction in regional and remote work when they have developed long term relationships with particular communities (Campbell and Christie, 2008). Respectful relationships and advocacy for the preservation of Indigenous cultures and languages and the social and economic aspirations of communities are consistent themes in the Australian

Indigenous education literature. Respect, however, is not always easily translated between different cultures (Ibid). According to Miller (2005), VET works best in regional and remote Indigenous communities when seven principles are adhered to:

1. culturally appropriate training delivery
2. true partnerships
3. workplace learning and customisation
4. sustainable funding
5. flexibility in VET systems
6. the right staff
7. quality student support services.

The long term success of VET requires a coordinated approach by organisational partners across delivery sites in response to Indigenous community needs and livelihoods and continuity of educational staff in particular locations (Campbell and Christie, 2008).

Indigenous VET policy

Improving education and employment outcomes for regional and remote Indigenous Australians is a major focus for VET policy makers. At the Commonwealth level, Indigenous VET policy falls under the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's (PM&C) Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) which coordinates Indigenous social, economic and health policy across multiple Commonwealth departments. Targets to improve Indigenous education and employment are set in the National Indigenous Reform Agreement (better known as 'Closing the Gap') and in the Council of Australian Government's (COAG) National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development.

Relevant to the case studies, the Jobs, Land and Economy program in the IAS provides work-readiness and upskilling programs to support unemployed Indigenous Australians into work. The Community Development Program (CDP) for example prepares job seekers in regional and remote areas to prepare for work through participation in community projects. CDP participants work up to 25 hours per week and undertake training relevant to the project they are working on. PM&C also provides 'Away From Base' (AFB) funding to provide financial support to eligible Indigenous students enrolled in approved mixed-mode delivery for travel, meals and accommodation

expenses. Other funding sources are provided by the Northern Territory Government (NTG) and are, in some of the case studies, supplemented by employers. NTG funding sources for remote Indigenous students are described in further detail in Attachment B.

The following case studies explore CDU's VET regional and remote Indigenous programs and practices within the geographic, cultural and community contexts described in this section to identify factors contributing to their success for Indigenous students. The cases are written from the perspective of VET educators; this provides important information for the future delivery of regional and remote VET given the personal transformational change educators can affect in regional and remote Indigenous students and the pathways they create to further education and a career. What is not so well understood is what effective VET pedagogic practices for regional and remote Indigenous students look like and what knowledge, skills and capabilities are required to deliver them.



Kakadu National Park, Northern Territory

Case study 1

Preparing for work: Gulkula Regional Training Centre

Introduction

The first case study in this review describes a work readiness program being delivered by CDU VET for young Yolngu job-seekers at Gulkula in north-east Arnhem Land. Gulkula is located about 40 minutes' drive from Nhulunbuy on the Gove Peninsula and is the site of the annual Garma Festival. Gulkula is also adjacent to the first bauxite mine to be owned and operated by Gumatj people, one of thirteen Yolngu clans in the region.

The work-readiness program was developed by Gumatj Corporation Limited (GCL), a local Indigenous enterprise supporting training and employment for local people, in collaboration with CDU VET. GCL also owns a number of local businesses including DeltaReef Gumatj (DRG) building company, Gulkula Mining and the Gumatj timber mill, a concrete batching plant and works, cattle farm and butcher shop (Gumatj Corporation Limited, 2018). Recognising the need to provide employment opportunities for young people, GCL approached CDU to implement a suitable training program for local Yolngu people. An agreement was signed with CDU to deliver 3 X 17-week VET programs at Gulkula Regional Training Centre (GRTC), a training facility at Gulkula built originally to support the mining industry. The program commenced in mid-2017 for participants of the Miwatj Employment Program (MEP) funded through the CDP. GCL provides additional funding to cover the costs of delivery in Gulkula's remote location.

About the GRTC model

Participants in the GRTC program undertake a certificate I or II in one of six nationally-accredited VET qualifications. The qualifications were selected by GLC and CDU to match the workforce needs of

principal industries in the region which include mining, hospitality, construction and business. The 18 month training programs feature three main components:

1. A 17 week (one semester) training course based on units from a certificate II in one of four industry sectors. The program focuses on job-readiness, life and employability skills, LL&N and general health and wellbeing and includes both unpaid work placement and guaranteed local employment.
2. An industry traineeship³ for a second semester, where employers are willing.
3. An option of an apprenticeship with employment beyond the initial 12 months.

Students enrolled with CDU VET receive mentoring and learner support throughout the three stages of the program.

Training in the first 17 weeks is delivered in 10-day residential training blocks at the GRTC with students returning home for 4 days in between the blocks. Yolngu leaders live on site to support the students, transport them to and from home and organise social and recreational activities outside training hours. Musical instruments and sporting and recreational equipment are supplied by GRTC. The residential component is an important part of training aimed at developing students' general life capabilities such as cooking, washing, health and hygiene, teamwork and communication skills.

Potential students are nominated by the local community and selected by the GLC Board. Up to 20 students are initially chosen based on aptitude, ability, attitude to work and level of English LL&N skills using the Turnstone Discovery process or alternative

³ A traineeship combines VET and paid work and usually results in a nationally recognised Certificate II qualification.

selection instruments.⁴ Training starts with a welcome ceremony and a week of orientation activities which introduce students to support agencies involved in delivery such as Anglicare (which runs financial literacy training), MEP (which provides student welfare services and work clothing), Miwatj Health (which runs health checks and vaccinations prior to work placement), the Australian Apprenticeship Support Network and Centrelink. Students also have access to the Gulkula Mine site where appropriate.

After orientation, students can transition into industry-based 'skill taster' courses designed to assist them to select a traineeship and/or apprenticeship of interest and suited to them. The skill tasters provide opportunities for students to learn basic employability skills such as computer and typing skills (from business units), safe work practices (from mining and construction units), and food hygiene and food preparation (from cookery units). Over the first two programs, students had the opportunity to choose one of six qualifications:

1. Certificate II in Resources and Infrastructure Work Preparation [RII20115]
2. Certificate II in Construction Pathways [CPC20211]
3. Certificate I in Hospitality (Cookery) [SIT10216]
4. Certificate I/II in Business [BSB10115/BSB20115]
5. Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management [AHC21016]
6. Certificate II in Health Support Services [HLT23215]

Student numbers are kept at a maximum of 5 students per qualification stream. The first intake of students chose from the first 4 qualifications. The additional two qualifications were added prior to the second intake in response to demand from mining companies for conservation skills and from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) service providers for trained health workers. Training is interspersed with up to 5 weeks of work placement in an enterprise relevant to each student's chosen qualification. GCL mentors, CDU educators and LL&N specialists continue to

support students as they work. At the end of the first 17 weeks, students are offered employment and/or a traineeship in a local business such as Rio Tinto, Top End Health, small private companies, GCL or the NT Government to complete their Certificate II.

Outcomes

While the GRTC program is in its infancy, the combination of local training, employment and strong learner support are producing promising outcomes for Yolngu students. Two groups have now completed the 17-week program and over twenty GRTC graduates are now working in the region. In addition, a number of participants have completed or made significant progress towards completing their first qualification. Of the first group of 20 men and women enrolled in 2017, 2 students and a staff member completed a Certificate 1 in Hospitality after the first semester and 13 had completed individual units of competency. All students who completed the semester were offered employment including 5 with Rio Tinto or Gulkula Mining, 2 with the NT Department of Education (DET) boarding school in Nhulunbuy, and 2 with DeltaReef in construction. At the start of 2018, a further 20 participants were enrolled the program and 12 students completed their coursework during the first semester. Conservation and land management and mining were the most popular fields which resulted in ongoing work with Gulkula Mining. Three Health Support students were offered traineeships with the local hospital and one student gained a traineeship in business. Two students who commenced in 2017 graduated with the CPC20211 - Certificate II in Construction Pathways qualification during 2018.

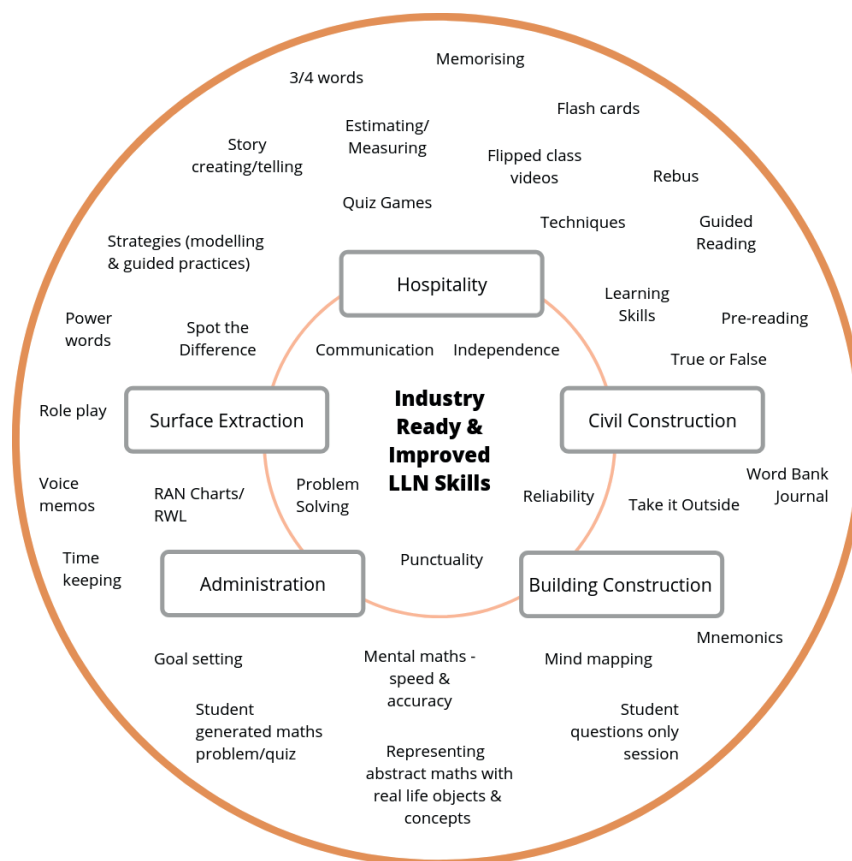
Innovative VET practices for job-seekers at Gulkula

These outcomes are significant given the low levels of adult English LL&N in the student cohorts at Gulkula. This is one of the major challenges for VET educators working at the GRTC. While most students can speak English, they can struggle to read and write English to the standards required for a VET qualification. The priority for CDU VET is making a culturally respectful and supportive learning environment that

⁴ The Turnstone Discovery process is a spoken and activity-based assessment and recruitment tool suited to people whose first language is not English and who may not have a work history or supporting documentation. <https://www.turnstoneprojects.com/work/discovery/>

accommodates the personal and academic learning needs of students. To achieve this environment, CDU VET educators and learning support specialists have developed an innovative model that integrates learner support in everyday learning at Gulkula using a range of teaching and learning techniques (Figure 5).

Figure 5: CDU's Learner Support Model at Gulkula



Two important principles underpin learner support: firstly, support must be directly related to work and secondly, strategies to support learners focus on building holistic life-long learning and critical thinking skills as well as LL&N and other employability capabilities.

We see this as a long-term lifelong learning model that relates learning – especially LL&N – to an occupation and makes it real and valued. Then things start to fall into place. It's not all about the end of learning – that is completing the qualification – but about the journey and students taking in the learning and the skills and strategies to get them ready for work and other challenges in life (CDU Learner Support Specialist, Interview 5).

Inspired by the model, CDU educators use a range of pedagogic techniques to encourage participants to think and learn in different ways while they study their specific VET qualification. Mind mapping, problem solving and games are proving to be effective ways to build LL&N and other foundation skills ⁵ and engage students in learning that they may not otherwise be interested in. Learning is made as practical as possible with paper-based learning restricted to no more than half a day.

If that's too much, I think on my feet and quickly turn it into a practical activity. For example, when I was teaching how to calculate the volume of dirt in the classroom, I could see they were losing interest so we went outside and dug a ditch, worked out how much dirt we needed and filled it again. Another

⁵ Foundation skills include; reading, writing, oral communication, numeracy and learning, and the employability skills of learning, communication, teamwork, problem-solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organising, self-management and the use of technology (Bowman and Callan, 2012).

time they were losing interest I asked them what they wanted to do. They said they wanted to build a volleyball court - so that's what we did. It was real civil construction work and they loved it - but making sure they all understand and have a go is a skill in itself (CDU Educator, Interview 2).

Flexibility and adaptability in teaching practices and in the scheduling of training is a strong theme in this case study. Students can be absent, sometimes for days and weeks at a time, due to community and family responsibilities. Quick thinking is a normal part of everyday teaching to accommodate students who don't turn up on the day.

Sometimes we had four lecturers waiting ready to teach 20 students and three would turn up. Then you have to work out a different schedule or go out and get the students. You have to have Plan A, B and C and think on your feet especially when you are trying new things. It really helps if the lead educator is very experienced and capable in remote teaching (CDU educator, Interview 16).

CDU educators and learner support specialists at Gulkula spend considerable time building relationships with students to gain their trust and engagement in learning, often using pedagogies based on storytelling.

I find the best way to engage them is to tell them my story. How I failed Year 10 and went home to work on the family farm and did lots of other jobs and then ended up doing a Graduate Diploma of Mining Engineering. I tell them I couldn't understand why engineers made their decisions the way they did and I wanted to know why. I tell them it was really hard but I got there in the end and that they can do it too if they want to and we are here to help them (CDU educator, Interview 2).

Through storytelling, students learn about work and VET through the educator's personal experience while the educator is learning about them; where they come from, what they are interested in and how they like to learn. VET is a consultative process between educators, learning support specialists, GRTC and participants. Involving students in decisions about their learning is a pedagogic strategy aimed at

developing their confidence and ownership of learning. Students are invited to attend the educators' fortnightly meeting to discuss their views on how the program is progressing with different students nominated to act as the student representative each time.

This has been a major contributor to the program's success. It was highly affirming for students to know that their views, insights and cultural knowledge and traditions are valued and shared. It also gave them experience of how to participate in formal meetings (CDU educator, Interview 16).

This consultative approach allows CDU educators to closely monitor student progress, identify problems that may impede on their learning and better understand their students' lives, attitudes and cultural traditions.

I had the Gulkula [students] teaching me their language. They loved it because they knew I was really interested in learning about them and had a good laugh when I was trying to pronounce their words. I learned so much more about their culture. That was the best learning we had - we call it both-ways learning. We were relaxed and laughing which is so important (Ibid.).

Both-ways learning, also known as two-way learning⁶ involves the sharing of personal and cultural knowledge between teachers and students (Bat & Shore, 2013) and has, in this case, led to the acceptance of CDU educators as trusted advisors and mentors by students.

We see teaching as mentoring our students into jobs and getting them ready for a new way of life. That is part of our role. Many students have never had a job and don't have mentors or role models who are working at home and need significant preparation to understand what employers expect (CDU educator, Interview 16).

While trust and friendly relationships are important at Gulkula, the educators maintain a careful balance between collaboration and keeping students accountable for their studies and work. Classes start strictly at 8 am and finish at 4 pm to ease students into the discipline and expectations of a workplace.

⁶ The two terms are used interchangeably in the literature. Both appear to mean 'learning together' where Indigenous and non-Indigenous respect each other, share knowledge and form relationships (Bat and Shore, 2013).

Interim observations

While still in early stages of development, the GRTC program is attracting significant interest from Yolngu communities, employers and NT government agencies as a successful collaborative community-led model for VET in remote Indigenous communities. CDU's VET engagement with the local community, the flexibility in delivery and ongoing consultation with students and the provision of structured LL&N and cultural support throughout the program is working well for Yolngu students and is clearly endorsed by GCL.

The adaptability of staff at CDU has been a key to the success of the program. Their very close involvement has made students feel very comfortable indeed. The fact that students have adapted well is largely due to the staff at CDU and Gumatj working together (GCL, 2018).

An interim analysis suggests that a number of interrelated factors are working together to produce positive outcomes for Yolngu students at Gulkula. These include:

- The collaborative partnerships between CDU, GCL and a broad range of service providers that are collectively creating a supportive learning and working environment and real employment opportunities for students.
- The leadership of GCL as an Indigenous organisation which ensures community ownership and involvement in the program.
- Adaptable, supportive and respectful CDU VET educators and learning support specialists who have extensive cultural knowledge and experience.
- Well-resourced, structured and integrated learning and mentoring support for students.
- The provision of training in regular residential training blocks that are located away from family and community, but close enough for support with local Yolngu community leaders as mentors and supervisors.

CDU's VET partnership with GLC is effectively trialling an innovative, culturally appropriate and contextualised community-led development model for Indigenous communities in line with the VET Plan 2017-2019, Strategic Priority 2. It also demonstrates CDU's commitment to engaging with Indigenous communities and industries to support local and regional economic development in the NT (Strategic Priority 3).

Ideas for improvement

Recommendations for future delivery of VET at Gulkula include:

- Extending the GRTC program to allow students more time to adjust to work routines, accompanied by additional mentoring.
- Allowing more time for students to experience each industry during the industry "skills taster" component of the program. Some students do not make the right decision at this early stage in the program which places them at a disadvantage if they want to change industries.
- Appointing mentors from the community for students who have never had a job and/or do not have a working family role model to provide additional support and encouragement.
- Continuing integrated learner support for future Gulkula training programs.

Case study 2

Working together: early childhood education training in Ngukurr and Santa Teresa

Introduction

The second case study in this review describes two innovative approaches to training regional and remote Indigenous early childhood education and care workers at Ngukurr and at Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa). Ngukurr is an Indigenous community located approximately 4 hours' drive south-east of Katherine in the Roper Gulf Shire and Santa Teresa is located 83 km southeast of Alice Springs in the MacDonnell Shire. Ngukurr has a population of 1,000 people who mostly speak Kriol, Ngalakan, Alawa and English as their main languages. The 600 or so Eastern Arrernte people living in Santa Teresa speak Arrernte and English.

CDU's early childhood education and care students at Ngukurr and Santa Teresa are working in Early Learning Centres (ELC) looking after the health, welfare and development of Indigenous and non-Indigenous children in the community. ELCs are funded by the Commonwealth Government and administered by the regional council in each shire. Early childhood education and care workers are required to complete a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care [CHC30113] as part of their employment.

CDU's VET School of Community and Children Services, English Language, Literacy and Numeracy delivers the certificate III at Ngukurr and Katherine Rural Campus from the Katherine town campus team, and at Santa Teresa from the Alice Springs team. Students undertake 18 units of competency from the Community Services Training Package and 120 hours of practicum. Their training is funded through the NTG 11J (mainstream funding) or NTG 11K (apprenticeship and traineeship funding) and the Commonwealth's

AFB scheme for eligible students. Both locations share the challenge of delivering a certificate III in remote communities but differ in the delivery model according to the local context.

Early childhood education and care training in Ngukurr

The CDU students pictured above are working at the Guluman Family Centre in Ngukurr which provides pre-school, long-day care, playgroups and health and family management services for the local community. The 2018 class at Ngukurr consists of eight women aged between 18 and 36, most with young children and with year 10 to 12 levels of education. Six students are studying the Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care and two are studying the Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care, joining over 50 early childhood education and care students studying at the Katherine campus from communities in Timber Creek, Mataranka, Kalkaringi, Lajamanu, Wugularr and Barunga as well as Ngukurr and Katherine.

Delivery of the certificate III and diploma at Ngukurr involves a combination of one-week residential training blocks held in Katherine twice each year and 4 workplace visits by CDU educators for training, assessment and mentoring support. While most of the students can read and write in English, they still require significant LL&N support to complete their qualifications. Local tutors from the Ngukurr community provide additional learning support, although the number and availability of these mentors varies. When training began in 2016, classes were held in one week blocks in the Guluman Family Centre.

Students worked for a half a day and attended training for the other half. However adopting this model, as a CDU VET educator reflects, 'turned out to be a waste of time'.

We failed at the start because we had little community support and the wrong learning environment. We had poor attendance and daily disruptions in the classroom from family members who wanted the students to come home. There was too much humbugging going on. I was relying on tutors in the community to support students which didn't go so well either (CDU VET educator, Interview 8).

Working with the centre and the local community, CDU negotiated to move the training to CDU's residential rural campus located 14 kms out of Katherine. This was not an easy move. At first the women could not bring their children to stay on campus but, after strong advocacy from VET educators on their behalf, close family members were able to be accommodated on campus and accompany the women during the training week. A bus now transports the women and their families from Ngukurr to Katherine and home again.

Classes run from 8 am to 4.30 pm each day and all meals are provided. Specialist learning support is provided but is not available on a consistent basis. Most assessments are completed during the residential week when students can concentrate on their studies without too many interruptions from family members. Guest speakers are brought in during the week to speak about specialist subjects such as early childhood legislation, regulations, duty of care, child protection services, ethical work practices, diet, dentistry and safe work practices.

Outcomes at Ngukurr

Of the ten students who started the certificate III in 2016, 2 have completed the qualification and are now studying a diploma. The remaining 8 students have completed 6 units of competency of the certificate III. Recently, for the first time, all 8 students who attended the residential training week in Katherine passed the two units delivered during the week. In addition, Ngukurr's Preschool, which is located at the Guluman Family Centre and staffed by CDU VET's early

childhood education and care students, was recently recognised by the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority for 'meeting and exceeding' the sector's National Quality Standards. CDU students were involved in the design and implementation of the preschool program and day to day care of the children.

Early childhood education and care training at Santa Teresa

CDU's early childhood training program at Santa Teresa differs from Ngukurr as it is based on self-paced learning in the workplace. Still in its first year of delivery, the training model was developed by CDU in close collaboration with the MacDonnell Regional Council and Santa Teresa's Early Learning Centre. Currently, 10 students are studying the Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care and like students at Ngukurr, they have young children and require significant English LL&N support.

Delivery of the certificate III at Santa Teresa also got off to a rocky start. At first, CDU educators and MacDonnell Council representatives visited the vocational students at the Early Learning Centre together for one day each month. However, without regular support students struggled with self-paced learning, often requiring interpreters to assist them to read learner guides written in English and to understand assessment questions. They quickly lost interest in their studies. After some deliberation, CDU and MacDonnell Council settled on a delivery model where CDU educators visit the students one day per fortnight accompanied, where possible, by a council representative and the council representative visits students in the intervening week to provide additional learning and mentoring support.

This model is working well. On CDU training days, students are split into two groups so one group can continue working, while the other trains for 2 hours. However, delivery is highly dependent on what is happening in the community.

We understand that local culture and family take precedence over training and we don't try to interfere with what is happening in the community. That means we can't have a set timetable and have to be very flexible (CDU educator, Interview 6).

Training takes place in the Early Learning Centre's 'baby's room' which is converted into a training room for the day. Usually, CDU educators work with students on their learner guides and assessments and the MacDonnell Regional Council representative provides one-on-one learning support. Both parties work closely with the director of the Early Learning Centre to monitor student progress and specific skill needs that may need addressing during training. For example,

As the centre is mainly staffed by women from the community, we had a discussion in class about how important it is to look after all babies in the centre from the moment they put on their uniforms to the moment they leave for the day (CDU Educator, Interview 17).

The director of the Early Learning Centre manages work rosters to fit in with training schedules and workplace visits and ensures that training is tailored to the work context. Students are also bused to Alice Springs twice a year for a day of specialist training by guest speakers and returned to Ltyentye Apurte in time to pick up their children from school.

Outcomes at Santa Teresa

Ten Santa Teresa students commenced their certificate III at the start of 2018 with an additional 2 students joining the group in semester 2. Of the original 10 students, 7 successfully completed all units of competency delivered in the first semester and one student withdrew from the course having secured a job in the local school. The remaining 9 students are currently studying a further 3 units and are progressing well.

Innovative VET practices for early childhood education and care workers

What stands out at both Ngukurr and Santa Teresa is the 'trial and error' (CDU educator, Interview 8) approach utilised by CDU's VET educators to determine what works best for early childhood education and care students and their employers. This experimental approach to VET is occurring in close collaboration with regional councils and directors of the centres and extends to the educators' interactions with students. For example, to overcome cultural sensitivities at Katherine's rural campus,

We developed a system where the women click their tongue if they have a question they don't know the answer to. I click back to let them know I've heard them and will come over when I can. That saves them the embarrassment of asking the question in front of everyone and I get to sort the problem (CDU Educator, Interview 8).

Significant cultural knowledge and understanding are required for VET educators to create culturally supportive and respectful learning environments along with a willingness to continue learning. For example,

I've just completed a two day Kriol awareness course. . . Anyone working with remote and very remote Aboriginal students who speak Kriol should do this course. It covered speaking, writing, skin and kin plus additional cultural competence all delivered by qualified linguists and Aboriginal Kriol speakers (ibid.).

Extensive cultural knowledge and understanding attunes the educators to the personal and cultural needs of their students and to issues that may pose barriers to learning.

One day I noticed the group was agitated and not concentrating. When I asked what was wrong, one of the older women told me that the younger women were upset that spirits in the accommodation facilities were tormenting them at night. We needed to do a smoking ceremony to get rid of them so we found an Aboriginal person in Katherine to do the job and everything was fine after that (Ibid.).

As occurs at Gulkula, VET educators at Ngukurr and Santa Teresa share stories with their students to get to know them and to build their trust and confidence. At Santa Teresa,

I start my story by letting the students know I come from a local Aboriginal family. It gives my students a way to relate to me. Due to my age and being the second oldest in the group, I'm an 'aunty' and they know where I fit in and more importantly, they know I'm not going to leave town anytime soon. Non-Indigenous teachers can do that too – talk about their lives and family to build relationships with their students and with the community. It helps work out what is important for them (CDU VET educator, Interview 17).

Story-telling is again a highly engaging pedagogy for Indigenous students that builds relationships and further familiarises students with the industry they are working in.

Then we all understand each other and the different rules and regulations we have to work under. That really helps the students to understand why we need to do things in certain ways and helps us to understand their lives a bit more (CDU Educator, Interview 6).

Face to face interactions are critically important to the storytelling process.

VET educators use a range of strategies to support students with low English LL&N. One of the most effective approaches is 'building a picture of competence' over time using alternative oral, visual and aural assessment tools in addition to written assessments and observations in the workplace. As one educator notes, this is not just about addressing English LL&N, but rethinking VET delivery in the context of English as a second, third or fourth language as is appropriate for international students (CDU educator, Interview 8).

The best model is team teaching where one lecturer can provide individual support for students who really need it (Ibid.).

Working with low LL&N early childhood education and care students involves creating new and flexible ways to collect evidence based on the principle of reasonable adjustment while ensuring that students meet the standards required for a certificate III or diploma level qualification. At Ngukurr,

... I don't do the writing for them. I continually say that I have high expectations and I know it is hard but I am here to help. They respond and now two in the group are doing their Diploma (Ibid.).

Supporting low LL&N students in Santa Teresa who are using self-paced learner guides written in English is even more challenging.

I get students to read bits from the learner guide to me and then tell me what it means. We then discuss the answers and I ask them to write what they can in their written assessment question book. Then I ask them verbally for the rest of the

answer and take notes as evidence, adding them to their book at the end of the day. I sign my name so auditors know it is my writing but it is the student's answer. It takes a lot of time but it really helps them (CDU VET educator, Interview 17).

To overcome the challenges of self-paced learning for low LL&N students, learning and assessment resources are being re-written to reduce the amount of heavy text and better utilise photos and other visual and aural aides. Where possible, some are being re-written to incorporate local languages and, to allow more time for students to apply their learning and build a picture of competence, a series of formative tasks are being added after each section of text. The revamped learning and assessment resources are already proving to be more learner-friendly, supportive and accessible for students.

I've had a lot of experience working with high needs students and it isn't always just about completing assessments, it's about improving the overall long-term outcomes for students and the children (Ibid.).

The ongoing efforts to make VET work for regional and remote Indigenous students in this case study suggests a commitment to and advocacy for the long-term development and welfare of students and communities.

The broader community trusts that I am here for the long term. They know I care about them and their families and the future of their community and will do what it takes to get good outcomes for them. . . All the grandmas wait outside to say hello when I'm teaching in community and drop in to see me when they come to town (CDU VET educator, Interview 8).

Interim observations

In a postscript to this case study, members of the community in Ngukurr offered the term 'wek mijimit', meaning 'working together' in the local Kriol language, to CDU VET educators as an alternative way to express the western concept of both-ways learning. This sums up the factors driving success in this case study. All parties – CDU VET educators, the Early Learning Centres and the MacDonnell Regional

Council – are working together to do ‘whatever it takes’ to make VET work for the benefit of regional and remote Indigenous students and their communities. Successful outcomes are reliant on the highly innovative supportive and respectful pedagogies of VET educators and their capability to work with low LL&N students.

CDU VET’s early childhood education and care programs at Ngukurr and Santa Teresa are successfully advocating for VET in Indigenous community settings (VET Plan 2017-2019, Strategic Priority 2), using innovative and culturally appropriate pedagogic approaches to support Indigenous students to succeed (Strategic Priority 1), and customising VET programs to meet specific needs in the early childhood education and care industry (Strategic Priority 3).

Ideas for improvement

Recommendations for future delivery of VET at Ngukurr and Santa Teresa include:

- Developing a flexible remote teaching model to ensure continuity of CDU VET educators and relationships with Ngukurr and Ltyentye Apurte communities.
- Continuing to rewrite self-paced learning resources to support low LL&N learners.
- Strengthening the number and capability of local tutors to support regional and remote students, especially those undertaking self-paced learning.

Case study 3

Learning in community: community night patrol training in the Barkly region

Introduction

The third case study in this review investigates an established training program for community night patrol officers in the Barkly region of the NT delivered by CDU in partnership with Barkly Regional Council (BRC). The Barkly region extends from the Queensland border in the east, to Barrow Creek in the south, to Newcastle Waters in the north and west into the Tanami Desert. Indigenous people living in the region speak Warumungu, Alyawarr, Mudburra and/or Warlpiri as their principal Indigenous languages (ABS, 2016). The BRC runs 9 community night patrols in Indigenous communities in Ali Curung, Alpururulam (Lake Nash), Ampilatwatja, Arlparra, Canteen Creek, Elliott, Mungkarta, Tara and Wutunugurra (Epenarra).

Funded by the Department of PM&C, community night patrols were established to increase safety in regional and remote Indigenous communities and reduce the number of people coming into adverse contact with the justice system. Most community patrols are initiated by the local community to provide safe transport for people at risk of harm or causing harm at night and for early intervention in incidents in the community such as disputes, self-harm, violence, homelessness and substance misuse (Australian Government, 2013). While night patrol officers liaise with police, they are independent from the law enforcement system and operate with a cultural rather than legal authority and liaise with a range of community support services such as women's and youth centres, health clinics and hospitals, mediation programs and counsellors, community justice groups and substance abuse support (Ibid.).

Community night patrols at BRC are managed by an Indigenous leadership team consisting of a regional manager, two zone Managers and a team leader for each community. Night patrol officers are supported to complete the NT-accredited 10357NAT Certificate III in Community Night Patrol as part of their employment with

BRC. The certificate III consists of units of competency from the Australian Community Services Training Package and electives from the public sector, local government, correctional services and community and health training packages.

About community night patrol training

The delivery model for community night patrol training was designed collaboratively by BRC, CDU and Indigenous communities based on successful training models for community patrols in Alaska and Canada. Typically, the certificate III is delivered in 9 X 1 week residential training blocks, held every four weeks in Alice Springs. Night patrol officers and managers travel together to Alice Springs for training and CDU educators also accompany night patrol officers on duty travelling in a second patrol vehicle to train, assess and provide mentoring support.

It is really important to take the students away from their communities and focus them on work and working together as a team. This way night patrol officers from one community learn to work together with their teammates from other communities. They never know when they might need to call on a teammate during a night patrol (BRC, Interview 3).

The training model is highly flexible, designed to assist students to balance the pressures of study, community and family responsibilities and night patrol duties. Multiple sessions of each unit are offered at different times to accommodate students who can't attend training on a specific day. The training program focuses on building the skills and capabilities required for night patrol work and on preparing officers for future employment beyond night patrols such as a career in the police force, other government services or local business.

One of the pressing issues for VET educators is preparing and assisting night patrol officers to deal with the challenging nature of night patrol work. Officers are often first responders to incidents in the community which can be distressing and/or involve someone they know (CDU educator, Interview 14). The success of community night patrols relies on how well they can deal with a range of complex, difficult and sometimes traumatic situations. For example,

After one lot of night patrol officers had just completed their aggressive behaviour management training they attended a footy carnival ... north of Alice Springs. Things got a bit heated between two large groups at the carnival and the officers managed to control the situation until authorities arrived (BRC, Interview 1).

Mental health is also an issue in remote communities where access to mental health services can be limited. To assist officers to deal with these situations, BRC provides additional training for night patrol officers in areas such as aggressive behaviour management, suicide prevention, mandatory reporting in-house and English LL&N.

Improving levels of English LL&N across the night patrol workforce is a high priority for BRC. Night patrol officers come from a range of different communities and, while most have adequate English speaking skills, they can struggle with writing, reading and numeracy; this can make it difficult to complete night patrol duties and can be disempowering for officers (BRC, Interview 1). English LLN is embedded in learning activities in the classroom and is reinforced by both BRC and CDU on the job. Both parties work closely together to monitor each student's academic and personal progress and community events that may impact on students' participation in training and learning. The program is reviewed annually to ensure it meets the needs of night patrol officers and the expectations of BRC and local communities.

Outcomes of night patrol training

Since the program commenced seventeen night patrol officers successfully completed their training and graduated with a Certificate III in Community Night Patrol. The training partnership between BRC and CDU has resulted in high levels of attendance in class and a significant improvement in the quality of patrol services in the Barkly region.

The learning is meaningful because it targets each person's aims, interests and workplace requirements. Delivery has been culturally and academically non-threatening for our employees because it is contextualised and is supplemented by ongoing mentoring and learning support from managers and the LLN trainers, resulting in high levels of attendance and engagement (BRC, Interview 1).

It has built up a team that the community trusts and goes to for help and [has] given them a much better understanding of their duties and responsibilities including legislation. . . We have noticed an increased confidence in staff taking part in the training and the positive flow-on effects this brings to the community (BRC, Interview 3).

Innovative VET practices for night patrol officers

Supporting community night patrollers to deal with the stress and complexity of night patrol work is a major focus for CDU VET and BRC. Both parties work hard to ensure that learning environments are culturally appropriate and that students have adequate personal mentoring support. CDU's VET educators have extensive experience working with family violence programs in regional and remote Indigenous communities and are supported by BRC's Indigenous managers and team leaders who attend all training sessions and accompany officers on night patrols. Their involvement ensures that cultural protocols are respected, that learning is relevant to night patrol work and that training fits in with what is happening in local communities.

This is not a mainstream classroom situation and you have to do a lot of planning around what is happening in the community. It might be men's business, women's business, sorry business, the regional show or the local sports carnival. The students won't show up if anything is going on. You have to be prepared to work around that. When this happens I take off to visit other students in the workplace in different communities. . . If you are rigid about the training schedule and as a trainer, you won't survive (CDU Educator, Interview 13).

Knowing and understanding local cultural rules and traditions is essential when visiting students on duty in their communities. Rules can include ringing ahead of a visit, signing in to a community and having a contact person who knows 'where you can and can't go and who you can and can't talk to'.

I'm aware of situations with new lecturers that may have ended up poorly due to their lack of knowledge of social rules and protocols. I have trusting relationships with my students that have taken time to build. I know they will always look after me if trouble is brewing in a community. I recently went out to a community to do a workplace assessment and found the student waiting for me with his whole family . . . That's why you can't just change lecturers and break the rapport and the trust (Ibid.).

The time and effort taken by CDU's VET educators to learn about students through both-ways learning in order to build trusting relationships is a consistent theme in this case study.

I do this through two-way learning. When we're in Alice Springs together, I try to learn a word a day from my students in their language and then they test me at the end of the week (Ibid.).

Learning is made meaningful by allowing students time to 'think and translate' what they are learning and by using alternative teaching and learning strategies to keep students engaged.

If students are not grasping a concept, I have to be creative and mix it up a bit, thinking on your feet. I also have to be alert to students who are not keeping up or need LL&N support. In the absence of learner support I use peer support so students who have completed their assessment earlier may help others. Then I get out in the community to reinforce the learning (Ibid.).

Learning is also made meaningful by contextualising the certificate III to local community priorities and interests. For example,

For one of the training blocks, I brought two night patrols from different councils together to learn about governance and maintaining culture. I wanted them to learn from each other and hear different viewpoints that exist within their own culture. The students trusted what I was doing and it was a safe place to learn. I structured the learning over 4 meetings and started with a discussion about what they felt was most important. Their assessment was to describe the impact of government policy on their lives (Ibid.).

Assessments are tailored to suit each student's level of LL&N and are undertaken when students indicate they are ready. Pedagogies driven by respect and care for

the wellbeing of night patrol officers enable educators to maintain trusting relationships with students while pushing them to achieve high standards.

The challenge is not to over help students – especially when they have lower LL&N skills. I try to be caring and respectful without being patronising or mothering. It is important to be emphatic yet firm - to set standards and push students to achieve them so they pass on their own merit (Ibid.).

Caring pedagogies extend the educators' role beyond teaching to being a 'counsellor, first aid officer, accommodation/ catering coordinator and mentor' for students and promote the long-term health and safety of remote Indigenous communities and the value of VET to them.

The time we put into supporting students is delivering successful outcomes. We have a good reputation and communities see the value of VET when there are positive outcomes around student achievements. It's about getting out there in the community and the workplace to reinforce the value of education (ibid.).

Interim observations

Trust, respect and a shared commitment by CDU VET and BRC to the long term career and welfare of night patrol officers are factors underpinning the success of night patrol training in the Barkley region. The collaboration between BRC and CDU VET, and the additional training and mentoring support for night patrol officers provided by BRC, are major contributors to the program's success. This case study demonstrates the value of employers and educators working in partnerships to deliver VET in Indigenous communities and the importance of high levels of cultural awareness and understanding by both parties; ensured in this case by the involvement of BRC's Indigenous night patrol leadership and management team.

Time is also an important factor contributing to positive outcomes for students in this case study; time to build effective VET partnerships, time to learn about the rules and cultures of local communities and time for VET students to absorb and practice their learning, including English LL&N.

The successful night patrol program partnership with BRC is directly supporting CDU VET's commitment to open and collaborative engagement with governments (VET Plan 2017-19, Strategic Priority 1) to deliver culturally appropriate, meaningful and productive programs for the

long-term development of Indigenous communities and to advocate for the benefit of VET in community settings (Strategic Priority 2).

Ideas for improvement

Recommendations for future delivery of night patrol officer training in the Barkley region include:

- Strengthening the resilience of night patrol officers to deal with stressful and traumatic situations through further training.
- Building the capability of night patrol team leaders to become community leaders of the future.
- Increasing the number of Indigenous VET educators in CDU's night patrol delivery team.
- Developing a flexible teaching model that supports new VET educators to develop skills and capabilities to work remotely to train night patrol officers.

Case study 4

Learning On Country: park ranger training in Jabiru and Maningrida

Introduction

The fourth case study in the review investigates CDU's training programs for park rangers in Jabiru and Maningrida in West Arnhem Land. Jabiru is a major town near Kakadu National Park, 250km south east of Darwin with a population of just over 1,080 people. Indigenous people in Jabiru mostly speak Kunwinjku, English and Kundjeyhmi as their main languages (ABS, 2016). Maningrida is one of the most linguistically diverse communities in the world (Vaughan, 2018) and is located 300km north east of Jabiru with a population of approximately 2,000. Of the 15 languages spoken or signed daily in Maningrida, Djebenna, Burrarra & Kunwinku are the main languages (ABS, 2016).

Kakadu park rangers in Jabiru work for Kakadu National Park which is jointly managed by Parks Australia and the traditional owners, the Bininj/Mungguy (Aboriginal) people. Rangers in the Maningrida region work in the Djelk Indigenous Protected Area and are known as the Djelk Land and Sea Rangers. Their work involves the preservation of cultural and ecological environments in the parks by maintaining Indigenous cultural heritage sites and reducing environmental threats from weeds, feral animals, altered fire regimes and high concentrations of tourists. Rangers are required to complete a Certificate in Conservation and Land Management or specific skill sets or units of competency from the certificates as part of their employment or in preparation to become a ranger.

CDU has been delivering Certificate I, II and III in Conservation and Land Management to park rangers in West Arnhem Land for over 4 years. Classes in Jabiru are diverse, consisting of Indigenous and non-Indigenous rangers as well as VET for Secondary

Schools (VSS), school-based apprentices (SBA), CDP participants, Indigenous elders, traditional land owners and scientists working in the park who need specific technical skills and knowledge. Classes in Maningrida consist of young year 9 and 10 secondary school students studying a Certificate I or II in Conservation and Land Management as part of their studies at Maningrida College. Further training is delivered by Djelk Land and Sea Rangers who host and facilitate practical work experiences for the VSS students. Approximately 90% of CDU VET's park ranger students in Jabiru and Maningrida are Indigenous.

The diversity in CDU's conservation and land management VET students means that funding for training is provided via a range of different sources including the NTG's 11J funding with additional loading for remote training, 11H funding for VSS and AFB funding for eligible students.

About CDU's VET park ranger training in Jabiru

In Jabiru, training for Kakadu park rangers is delivered over a two-week induction block at the start of each year through a combination of classroom-based training and training on-the-job in Kakadu National Park. Training on-country is delivered in collaboration with CDU Conservation and Land Management (Top End) and CDU Agriculture and Rural Operations from Katherine Rural campus. Students may be undertaking a skillset or units of competency from the Certificate I, II or III in Conservation and Land Management, based on Kakadu National Park's operational policies and procedures and the skills and knowledge that park rangers require.

For example, the female rangers wanted more training in how to identify and control weeds, especially around sacred sites and waterways where you can't spray chemicals, so that's what we did (CDU Educator, Interview 9a).

A team of CDU educators travel to Jabiru to start training in the wet season, bringing most of the resources they need with them by road except for large equipment which is supplied by the park. 'Timing is everything' when scheduling conservation and land management classes in the Top End.

In the dry season many students go bush and we don't see them again - especially after the men have been initiated. In the wet season everyone is stuck in town - but we still can have problems with restricted access to the park and students having trouble getting to class when the river is flooded (Ibid.).

As there are significant risks associated with the work of park rangers, including the use of chemicals, chain saws and off-road vehicles, training starts with occupational health and safety (OH&S) units of competency. The practical training is done in the cool of the morning and is followed by classroom-based activities in the afternoon. Students come from a range of different communities and span a broad range of age, park ranger experience and levels of education and may know or be related to others in the class. Attendance on any day depends on what is happening in the community at the time and which units of competency are being delivered.

Sometimes we add extra classes if we have been interrupted by sorry business or bad weather. Earlier this year we lost a whole week due to Cyclone Marcus which was followed by a croc attack on a small child and we lost more time (Ibid.).

Kakadu National Park's training coordinator for the ranger program, who lives in Jabiru, keeps CDU educators abreast of community and other events in the region that may interrupt training and assists with the coordination of training dates and locations.

About CDU's VET park ranger training in Maningrida

The delivery model for the Certificate I and Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management at Maningrida

is different due to its secondary school context and the involvement of both Maningrida College and the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation which operates the Djelk Ranger Program. CDU educators travel to Maningrida 6 times per year to provide one week of face to face training in the classroom and technical workshops. Delivery is designed around school timetables and includes a highly successful week-long ranger camp led by CDU and park rangers as the practical component of the program.

The students wear a ranger uniform and PPE which is badged with their school and the national park rangers' logos. They are very proud of that and love looking after their country (CDU Educator, Interview 9b).

An important part of CDU's VET program at Maningrida is ongoing collaboration with the Learning on Country (LoC) representative who is funded by the Northern Land Council to support secondary school students to attend school and ensure their learning experiences are culturally responsive.

Innovative VET practices for park rangers

While working in Jabiru and Maningrida, CDU's VET educators are dealing with the challenges of student diversity on a daily basis. These challenges can be associated with cultural background, status and relationships, gender, age, educational levels and degree of park ranger experience. For example,

Sometimes there are problems with different groups who are related such as poison cousins. This year we had to split a mixed [gender] group who were doing level 2 chemicals because of people who were not allowed to be in the same class. One teacher took the boys and I took the girls which meant that suddenly we had to organise another classroom, whiteboard, laptop computer and data projector (all during smoko time). That worked well and everyone completed their training. You have to be ready to change quickly if this happens (CDU Educator, Interview 9a).

Dealing with diversity within student groups, especially in Jabiru, requires high levels of cultural knowledge, awareness and sensitivity to local rules and customs.

We make sure we know as much as we can about cultural traditions – where men and women can go for example – and work around them as much as possible. One time I was helping an elderly lady who was struggling to keep up with the class to learn about chemical application and she turned out to be a very important traditional owner. We have to be very careful about permissions and showing respect, you never know who you are dealing with. It really helps to have a person living in Jabiru who usually tells us if there is anything we need to know (Ibid.).

In a now familiar theme in the case studies, CDU's VET educators use pedagogies based on both-ways learning to learn about their students, identify areas of interest for students and issues that may impact on their learning and establish respectful relationships.

When we are on-country, our students teach us about the local bush plants and the best places to catch barramundi. They know all the local bush tucker and medical plants by their Aboriginal name and how to look after them too (CDU Educator, Interview 9b).

Team teaching is used to deliver units of competency involving risk to personal safety such as chainsaws and driving 4WD vehicles. Otherwise, one educator teaches a group of students; this can be challenging given the variation in levels of education and English LL&N in the group. Assessments are undertaken in the classroom and on-country using a range of tools that accommodate low LL&N levels, including verbal assessments, videos and photos to support evidence of competency in addition to written assessments.

We are very careful to make sure no one falls behind and work with the slower students to support them. We also get the students with higher LL&N to help the slower ones as much as possible. But we don't dumb down the training, we just make sure we use plain language and insist our students meet the required levels of knowledge and skills (Ibid.).

Learning is made very practical; focused on mastering specific skill sets that appeal to the students' interest in working on country and enthusiasm to use ranger equipment and vehicles. Group work and peer learning are used extensively to promote teamwork, communication skills and tolerance of people from other cultures. Indigenous elders are called on as 'authoritative teachers' (Guenther et al, 2017) to bring cultural knowledge and order to the group and experienced park rangers are called on to mentor junior rangers.

When we have school-based apprentices, we put them with the older men who mentor them and keep them in check. Then there is no mucking around and everyone is learning (CDU Educator, Interview 9a).

Outcomes

In Maningrida, recent figures show that 50% of the 14 students who started a Certificate I in Conservation and Land Management in 2017 completed their qualification (Table I).

Table I: Conservation and land management training outcomes at Maningrida

Maningrida	Participation		Qualification Completions		Competency Completions	
QUALIFICATION	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018
AHC10110/AHC10116 Certificate I in Conservation and Land Management	14	11	7	1*	46	30*
AHC21010/AHC21016 Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management	38	20	N/A**	N/A**	151	39

* At the time of this review, certificate I students had not completed the 2018 academic year.

** A Certificate II takes 2 years to complete. Students commencing in 2017 will complete in late 2018.

It is difficult to determine qualification completion rates in Jabiru as most students who commenced in 2017 and 2018 completed specific skill sets and units of competency rather than full qualifications. In 2017, 15 students completed 56 units of competency. In 2018, another group of 51 students completed 104 units of competency.

Interim observations

A number of factors appear to be contributing to the success of CDU's VET conservation and land management programs in Jabiru and Maningrida. Most striking is the capability of CDU's VET educators to accommodate changing diversity in student groups on a daily basis and to adapt their teaching and learning practices as local circumstances change. Educators are working in close collaboration with park rangers, park authorities, traditional owners, community elders, schools, government agencies and LoCs to make VET work for regional and remote Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the classroom and on-country. This innovative and highly flexible work requires high levels of cultural knowledge and understanding and considerable time and effort to build and maintain relationships.

Pedagogies based on practical activities, group and peer learning, mentoring by Indigenous elders and both-ways learning are successfully creating culturally supportive and engaging learning environments for regional and remote students. Underpinning the strength of the programs is a shared commitment to looking after country both from an Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspective. As a result, all parties adopt different roles as learners, teachers, mentors and leaders at different times throughout the learning process. In the field, Indigenous students and elders are experts in edible and medical plants and Indigenous ways of managing the natural and cultural environment.

CDU VET's flexible and culturally respectful approach to conservation and land management training in Jabiru and Maningrida demonstrates the University's commitment to working with governments, Indigenous organisations and landowners for the provision of meaningful and productive Indigenous VET programs (VET Plan 2017-19, Strategic Priorities 2 and 3).

Opportunities for improvement

Recommendations to improve future delivery of conservation and land management training include:

- Exploring the possibility of local tutors to support students during classes.
- Creating videos or podcasts in the local language to help explain the theoretical components of units of competency.

Case study 5

Learning on-the-job at Dundee Beach and Berry Springs

Introduction

The fifth case study in this review describes a successful VET program run by CDU VET to prepare unskilled job-seekers for work in the Darwin and outer region. A partnership between CDU's Automotive and Civil Construction School of Trades based in Darwin and the Ironbark Aboriginal Corporation provides on-the-job training for job-seekers on real civil construction projects. Ironbark Aboriginal Corporation is a not-for-profit Indigenous organisation that provides community and employment services for Indigenous communities in the Darwin region.

Local communities and councils approach Ironbark Aboriginal Corporation and CDU's School of Trades with requests for civil construction projects such as new or upgraded roads, walking tracks and car parks. CDU and Ironbark Aboriginal Corporation collaborate on planning and implementing the project with work teams made of up CDU VET educators, Ironbark staff members and local job-seekers. Projects generally run for 12 weeks and participating job-seekers are required to work for 5 days a week and undertake a Certificate III in Civil Construction Plant Operations [RII30813/RII30815] during the life of the project.

The certificate III covers 19 units of competency, 14 of which are compulsory and 5 are elective. Students can also elect to do extra units relevant to the project if they are eligible such as 'drive medium rigid vehicles'. All participants must complete general construction induction training (GCIT), otherwise known as the NT white card, before they start work. Funding for the training is supplied through the NTG's funding agreement with CDU with subsidies provided by the Commonwealth's AFB program for eligible students. Ironbark Aboriginal Corporation sources participants for each project, transports them to and from the

work site and provides personal safety equipment, some large equipment and a site supervisor for each project. Large equipment such as rollers, excavators and trucks is also supplied by local councils and park authorities. CDU VET provides the civil construction training, learner support, technical expertise in civil construction, a mobile classroom (Photo 7) and other equipment.

Photo 8: CDU's mobile classroom on site at Dundee Beach 2018 (courtesy CDU VET Automotive and Civil Construction School of Trades)

The two projects featured in this case study include an all-weather road into the Dundee Beach area, approximately 125 km southwest of Darwin on the Timor Sea, and an upgrade to walking tracks at Berry Springs Nature Reserve which is a popular park and swimming pool on the Blackmore River, about an hour's drive southeast of Darwin.

About the Ironbark training model

The design of each Ironbark training program follows a similar process for each project. A project starts with a proposal to Ironbark Aboriginal Corporation from CDU outlining the nature of the project, roles and responsibilities of the parties involved and a project plan, work schedules and training plan. The training plan proposes suitable elective units for the certificate III according to each project's specific work requirements. Once the proposal is agreed, Ironbark Aboriginal Corporation selects up to 15 participants (students) and ensures that people from different Indigenous cultures and genders are able to work together. Before the project commences, resources and equipment are identified and a Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) is undertaken for the work site.

Work on the project commences with an orientation week for students on site which includes induction to the work site and an assessment of each participant's level of English LL&N. CDU's learner support team are on-site during the week to conduct the assessments. The orientation program is based on 4 introductory units of competency:

1. Work safely and follow WHS policies and procedures (including the NT White Card)
2. Control traffic
3. Plan and organise work
4. Carry out measurements and calculations.

Students are allocated into teams to work on the project along with the project's site supervisor and 2 CDU VET educators. All parties work together on each day's tasks according to the project plan. Training continues throughout the 12 weeks in a combination of face to face in the classroom and training, assessing and mentoring on-the-job.

The working day starts with a 'toolbox meeting' which involves all parties reviewing the project's progress to date and discussing the coming day's work. Assessment is undertaken on a continuous basis throughout the project and is completed during the final weeks. Extra training is provided for students who have not completed all the required competencies by this time. After the project has finished, students who have successfully completed their qualification are awarded a certificate of completion. Those who haven't completed the qualification receive a statement of attainment and the opportunity to undertake further training with CDU in Darwin or to obtain a work placement. CDU, Ironbark and the participating council or organisation involved meet regularly to discuss the project's progression and to 'tweak' the training. For example,

Initially the added truck licence unit was for a Heavy Rigid Truck however this was changed to Medium Rigid trucks to be in line with the actual Ironbark tip truck being utilised on site for the project (CDU Educator, Interview 10a).

Outcomes

The Ironbark training program is producing impressive rates of qualification completions. Between 80-90% of students are currently completing a Certificate

III in Civil Construction Plant Operations during the life of a project. While it is difficult to determine how many students gain employment after completing the program, they have all markedly improved their levels of LL&N, skills and knowledge of civil construction work and prospects for employment and/or further education through their participation. The program is also benefiting CDU's VET educators who, by using the latest civil construction equipment, keep pace with changing industry trends and technologies and civil construction work. The ongoing success for all parties of the Ironbark training program has resulted in at least 3 new projects being scheduled for 2019.

Innovative VET practices at Dundee Beach and Berry Springs

The Ironbark training program's principal objective is to prepare Indigenous job-seekers for a job while they are working on 'live' civil construction projects. The focus is primarily on getting the job done well rather than 'doing training to get a job', which means that students are treated as workers first and students second. This approach,

... makes the learning much more real and gives the students a good understanding of what they have to do to meet employer expectations – like turning up on time, doing a fair day's work etc. (CDU Educator, Interview 10b). ... It's a bit like an on the job apprenticeship arrangement. We do as much training as we can on the job (CDU Educator, Interview 10a).

As CDU educators are working members of a team with students, there are ample opportunities to train, assess and reinforce learning from the classroom and to monitor student progress as they adapt to civil construction work. Learning is made meaningful by clustering units of competency around practical tasks.

Most of the skills and knowledge we deliver are built around the equipment that students will use for the project. The equipment is pretty impressive to the students, and they are keen to learn to use it, but we must ensure all the safety requirements are met before we let them anywhere near it (Ibid.).

Most students participating in the program have low or very low levels of LL&N and require extensive

support and encouragement to complete a certificate III qualification in the timeframe.

If students are struggling, we spend extra time helping them so no one falls behind. We spend a lot of time showing them how to do things and carefully explaining theory to them in terms related to the job as we go. This links the theory directly with work and helps students make sense of the knowledge (Ibid.).

LL&N support is contextualised directly to civil construction work and reinforced on-the-job so students are learning both skills at the same time. Extra support is brought on-site to assist students with subjects that require higher levels of English LL&N, for example 'carry out measurements and calculations'.

The construction environment can be tough for all parties working on-site due to sometimes extreme weather conditions, the physical nature of civil construction work and the lack of facilities in semi-remote locations. The environment can be particularly challenging for students with little or no work experience who need mentoring support and encouragement to work through a long, hot week. In addition to motivating students in these conditions, VET educators need to juggle the pressures of project work, teaching, training and assessing on-the-job in tough conditions and frequently changing training schedules.

These are some of the biggest challenges for us. We have to think on our feet all the time. Timetables can change daily. One year we had 86 changes in 50 weeks. Plus, every program can require different equipment and we have to be very resourceful in getting it. If it is not supplied by the councils or organisations such as Ironbark Aboriginal Corporation, we find older equipment and our Heavy Vehicle Trades team get it going and maintain it for us (CDU Educator, Interview 10b).

Educators are rotated during the project to provide relief from the conditions and pressures of delivery and to vary the learning and working experience for students. However, consistency in CDU VET staff is a major contributor to the program's success so CDU's Trade School managers ensure continuity as much as possible throughout the project to build and maintain trust, rapport and team spirit with students.

Interim observations

The collaborative partnership between CDU VET and Ironbark Aboriginal Corporation is a prominent factor contributing to the success of the Ironbark training program. The partnership is ensuring a steady stream of 'live' civil construction projects for job-seekers to learn about civil construction work and achieve a VET qualification. As an Indigenous organisation, Ironbark Aboriginal Corporation sources the participants and provides ongoing cultural and mentoring support and CDU provides the training and extensive learning support that is customised to the work students are doing.

This innovative delivery model is producing beneficial outcomes for CDU, Ironbark Aboriginal Corporation, local councils and students who are well-supported to adjust to the work environment and to complete their certificate III within the project timeframe. Working alongside students enables VET educators to be fellow workers, team members, supervisors, teachers, mentors and assessors and to model civil construction work practices on a daily basis.

The Ironbark training program is demonstrating CDU VET's engagement with Indigenous organisations to deliver culturally appropriate, meaningful and highly productive VET programs for unemployed Indigenous Territorians (VET Plan, 2017-19, Strategic Priority 2).

Ideas for improvement

A key recommendation for future delivery of on the job training at Dundee Beach and Berry Springs is to follow up with program alumni on longer-term outcomes to ensure the site-specific intensive nature of this program supports broader knowledge retention and employment outcomes.

Case study 6

More than horticulture: training VET students on Tiwi Islands

Introduction

In 2017-18, CDU's School of Primary Industries in Darwin ran a horticulture program on the Tiwi Islands for women in the Wurrumiyanga (Nguju) community. The Tiwi Islands are located 80 km north of Darwin in the Arafura Sea. The horticulture program was delivered in partnership with the Tiwi Island Training and Education Board (TITEB) who approached CDU's School of Primary Industries to develop the program after the school ran a similar and highly successful program for men. Twenty women from the Wurrumiyanga community were interested in participating and 11 enrolled in a Certificate II in Horticulture [AHC20410/AHC20416], funded through the Commonwealth's AFB program.

About CDU's horticulture program

Originally CDU and TITEB planned to deliver a Certificate II in Rural Operations to the women over 10 months in TITEB's training centre. However, after consultation with the Women's Centre on Bathurst Island and the students, the qualification was changed to a Certificate II in Horticulture.

When we asked the women what they wanted to learn, they said they wanted to learn how to grow plants on the island – especially flowers like hibiscus for funerals and fruit for the community (CDU Educator, Interview 4).

The women also wanted to train at the Women's Centre rather than the proposed TITEB training facilities because it is closer to the school and the local shop. After further negotiation with TITEB and the Women's Centre, delivery commenced in mid-2017 in one week training blocks at the Centre, delivered by two CDU VET educators with significant knowledge and experience of Tiwi culture. However, as has

occurred in other case studies, delivering in the local community was complex and 'not all smooth sailing'.

It took longer than anticipated to do the training. There were many distractions from family, community, payday, fights and family feuds and so on. Kids would walk in to talk to their mums and even dogs came in. We just couldn't keep the students' interest for long enough (Ibid).

After more negotiations, CDU relocated the training to CDU's Casuarina campus in Darwin which meant that students had to travel to the mainland and live on campus for 1-2 weeks. The change in location was a significant cultural shift and interruption to family life for the women. CDU educators spent considerable time assisting with travel and other arrangements and met the women when they arrived in Darwin to transport them to CDU's accommodation facilities at Casuarina.

After we met them, we helped them to check into their rooms, moving mattresses around to make them feel more comfortable. We bought pizzas and had dinner with them too. The next time they came to Darwin they did everything for themselves. It was a great learning experience for them (Ibid.).

By this stage, student numbers had dwindled to five so CDU's VET educators placed the students in the mainstream horticulture classes at Casuarina campus and provided intensive support to assist them to integrate into the group and adjust to academic work. Being on campus meant the students had ready access to CDU VET's learner support team, the Office of Indigenous Student Services and a range of other student services. While it took some time for the students to settle in, the experience of learning with other students and a range of VET educators, and mingling with other people on campus, proved to be highly beneficial.

The people in the café, at the accommodation, running the AFB program – they all contributed to their learning experience. I call this inside/outside training where the women learned new skills and knowledge in their own environment and broader skills and knowledge in their new environment. It was so much more than horticulture (ibid.).

During their studies, the women learned how to identify, prune and propagate plants, how to set up and operate irrigation systems and how to use basic horticulture hand tools and machinery. Theory-based learning was reinforced with practical experience in CDU's gardens on campus and visits to Darwin's Botanical Gardens and the gardens at Government House. Learning continued on return to the Women's Centre on Bathurst Island where the women established a vegetable garden and orchard for the community. CDU educators visited the women at the Women's Centre in between their visits to Darwin to assess practical skills and capabilities and mentor them through the establishment process.

Outcomes

The adaptation of the horticulture program to suit the needs of the Tiwi women and moving the training to residential blocks in Darwin resulted in significant improvement in attendance in class. Over the 18 months of the program, 5 students completed 15 classes and 4 completed their Certificate II in Horticulture, graduating in October 2018 (Photo 10). A fifth student plans to finish the two remaining units of competency of her certificate II in 2019.

Innovative VET practices for remote horticulture students

The VET educators teaching the horticulture program on the Tiwi Islands have many years' experience living and working in remote communities.

I grew up on a remote sheep station and developed a strong connection with country. I know what it is like to live remotely and what you need to be self-sufficient. I draw on a lot of this experience in my teaching. Call it gut-instinct if you like. I can slide pretty easily into remote Indigenous communities but I don't take that for granted. I spend a lot of time learning about the communities to get a

feel for bush stuff on the ground (CDU Educator, Interview 4).

The extensive knowledge and understanding of Indigenous culture gained through this experience is producing highly respectful and adaptive pedagogies based on local cultural rules and relationships.

For the first few days I don't teach much – I watch the dynamics in the group and work out how the relationships are working. Many of the women in this course are related so there are family dynamics to consider. It is really important to be aware and sensitive to their culture – being careful what you wear and respectful of what is appropriate in the community (Ibid.).

Engaging students in training and maintaining their interest is an intuitive process of reading signals in the group to interpret if they are engaged or not and acting immediately on the information.

It may not be what we expect – some visual clues I do not even realise I read, and I can't actually tell you what they are, it's quite intuitive. As an adaptive trainer, I am always looking for non-verbal clues – they guide your skill and knowledge sharing, such as eye contact for example. The Tiwi people use eye contact in a different way to us so I look to the leader/s (this can sometimes shift as well) in the group – especially if she is starting to disengage. Then I change what I do on the spot if something is happening. You lose them pretty quickly if you can't do that (Ibid.).

The challenge for the VET educators was that the Wurrumiyanga women were very interested in learning about horticulture, but not all were interested in attaining a VET qualification. The older students, in particular, had low levels of LL&N and struggled to read and write in English in the beginning, requiring significant English LL&N support and encouragement to reach a certificate II level. Some students also had limited vision and did not have access to visual aids. The educators' narratives reveal the high levels of care and support they provide to assist the women to overcome barriers to learning and achieve positive outcomes from their VET experience.

There is a lot of pastoral care involved in this work and you have to be ready and willing to give it. It

takes a lot of empathy, energy and passion to teach VET to remote Indigenous students and being prepared to go that extra mile to develop and keep trusting relationships. It's all about caring that they achieve the best they can. I'm a teacher and mentor to the women and really try to understand their everyday life and values. It is really important to be authentic and act as you are (Ibid.).

Pedagogies based on caring and trusting relationships are again enabling CDU's VET educators to push students to achieve the standards required to complete a VET qualification.

I don't spoon feed in this course, I try to be direct and clear with my expectations. It is like mustering/herding cats when I am teaching but I love it when I get to a point in the training where they are with me and trust me enough to take them anywhere. That's when we get to do our best work and achieve the best outcomes for students, the community and the RTO (Ibid.).

Interim observations

Of all the case studies, this one highlights the value of VET for regional and remote Indigenous students beyond a qualification and employment outcome. While a very small sample, the Wurrumiyanga women are the only students in the case studies who were not employed or undertaking a targeted labour market program but are likely to be undertaking voluntary horticulture work in the community. Their VET experience has provided them with a range of personal, social and educational experiences and confidence in their horticultural knowledge and capabilities to take back to their community. 'They really enjoyed the training and had a great sense of achievement' (Ibid.). Success in this case study is due to the perseverance of CDU's VET educators to find the best learning environment for Tiwi students and the culturally respectful and caring pedagogies they use to engage and support them. This case study is a strong exponent of CDU VET's use of leading pedagogical approaches for regional and remote Indigenous learners and of collaborative engagement with Indigenous organisations and communities to support remote communities (VET Plan 2017-2019, Strategic Priorities 1 and 2).

Ideas for improvement

Recommendations to improve future delivery of horticultural training to regional and remote Indigenous students include:

- Allowing more time for educators to coach and mentor regional and remote students in addition to teaching,
- Developing a mentoring program for VET educators new to regional and remote Indigenous VET to develop cultural awareness and affinity with local communities.

Case study 7

Home and community care training in East Arnhem Land

Introduction

The final case study in this review describes training for Indigenous aged and disability care workers in eight remote communities across the top of East Arnhem Land and on the Tiwi Islands. The home and community care (HACC) program is the largest VET program delivered by CDU for remote Indigenous students in the NT and is one of the most complicated in terms of the number and diversity of delivery locations. As is illustrated in Figure 6, these include communities on Milimigimbi Island (1), Raminingining (2), Galiwin'ku on Echo Island (3), Gunyangara on the Gove Peninsula (4), Milyakburra (5), Angurugu (6) and Umbukumba (7) on Groote Island and Bathurst Island in the Timor Sea (8).



Mobile Adult Learning Unit for Civil Construction training at Dundee Beach

Figure 6: CDU Home and Community Care training sites in East Arnhem Land and the Tiwi Islands



All locations come under the East Arnhem Regional Council (EARC) with the exception of Bathurst Island which is in the Tiwi Island Regional Council's jurisdiction. A wide range of Indigenous languages are spoken in communities in these locations, some of which are shared between different communities (Table 2).

Table 2: Principal Indigenous languages spoken at CDU VET HACC delivery sites

Location	Principal Indigenous Language/s
Milimgimbi Island	Yolngu
Raminingining	Djambarrpuynu, Dhuwala & Dhay'yi
Galiwin'ku	Djambarrpuynu
Milyakburra	Anindilyakwa & Yolngu Matha
Angurugu	Anindilyakwa and Yolngu Matha
Gapuwiyak	Djambarrpuynu, Ritharrngu and Dhalwangu
Gunyangara	Gumatj and Galpu
Umbukumba	Anindilyakwa & Yolngu Matha
Bathurst Island	Tiwi language group

CDU VET has been delivering the Certificate III in Individual Support [CHC33015] to Indigenous students working in day respite centres for over 9 years. Based in each community, day respite centres provide health, social and wellbeing services for elderly clients and people with a disability as well as day relief for their carers. The centres are funded by the Commonwealth's Home Support Program and are operated by the relevant regional council. Workers at the centres are required to undertake a certificate III in Individual Support as part of their employment. CDU's HACC students are funded predominantly by the NTG's 20A funding stream.

About CDU's home and community care training program

CDU VET educators deliver 20 days of training in each location annually through 4 X 5 day training

blocks spaced 6 weeks apart. Training is delivered mostly face to face on-site at the local Day respite centre and is accompanied by training, mentoring and assessment on-the-job. A major challenge for VET educators delivering HACC training is adapting to the different cultures, languages and expectations of each community they visit.

Each community is different and stands alone with its own language and culture. What you can do in one community you can't do in another and it can be a very fine line especially if local politics are going on. It's all about respecting each community and taking the time to learn about them. We had to overcome concerns that white people are trying to take away their culture and values (CDU Educator, Interview 14).

Indigenous HACC workers can only look after people of their own gender; it is common for CDU's HACC classes to consist of male and female students. Most students have very low levels of English LL&N and struggle to read and write English to the levels required for a certificate II and especially for a certificate III and require intensive English LL&N learning support. CDU educators work closely with day respite centre managers and coordinators to adapt training schedules to accommodate what is happening in the workplace and in the community at the time of their visit.

I could be teaching under a tree with elders present and participating, or I might need to teach the females for half of the week and the males for the other half. Other times if there is cultural business in the community, I am unable to go into the community. . . I can be totally organised one minute and not the next (Ibid.).

Outcomes

Since 2017 just over 200 competency achieved and recognition of prior learning grades have been issued as part of the HACC program.

One of the benefits of the HACC program is the improvement of LL&N and employability skills for students who have left the program. With high turnover in HACC staff, this has in some cases led to employment in other industries such as mining.

Innovative VET practices in remote East Arnhem Land

The low levels of English LL&N experienced by most HACC students means they often take longer than the anticipated two years to graduate due to the time required to build confidence and academic capacity. Much of CDU's VET educators' work is therefore focused on building this capability by integrating LL&N into everyday training and linking LL&N with subjects that the students are interested in. For example,

I might talk playing a game of football for example. I ask them to tell me in English what we need to play it – umpires, goal posts, scoreboards etc. Then I ask them; what are you going to tell me if you are going to kick a ball to me and I have to catch it and kick it back? This gives us a reference point and a really good start (Ibid.).

Appealing to student interests immediately captures their attention and gives them a sense of agency in how they are learning. It also allows the educators to get to know their students' personal interests and aspirations.

I find out what my students want to do with their lives and then I explain how they can get there. For example, if they want to work in the school I show them the qualifications they will need to do that. They learn much better when they can relate to it... They really want to learn so I push them all the time and tell them that this is a pathway for the rest of their lives (Ibid.).

Engaging students in this way requires knowledge and understanding of each community and flexibility to adapt to each culture and the dynamics in the class.

Engaging them may not be what you expect. For example, I find they are very private people and do not like eye contact. Like all of us they do not like to be shamed if they don't know an answer to a question. If they don't know, then I say OK – let's all look at what the answer might be so no one has to ask. I listen carefully to what is going on around me and can tell by what is happening by the tone of their voices and their body language . . . One thing we never do is allow a new educator to go into community alone as relationships and respect are based on trust (Ibid.).

Students and communities see the long-term value of VET beyond the immediate requirement for a mandatory qualification. The benefits of this approach to building HACC capacity within remote communities are significant.

Earlier this year I was teaching a group of students about dementia. They were a bit disrespectful and thought that people with dementia were crazy. Once they learned the medical reasons for it, they followed up in their Ccentre to see who might have dementia and ended up completely changing what they do to support them. This knowledge had a huge impact in the community (ibid.).

Interim observations

This case study reinforces the importance of both high levels of cultural knowledge and understanding and a long-term commitment to remote Indigenous communities to positive outcomes for remote HACC students. CDU VET educators base their pedagogies on trusting relationships, consistency and reliability, local cultures and empowering students to pursue a career as HACC practitioners for the long-term benefit of their communities.

CDU's VET HACC program is an impressive example of the university's commitment to developing leading pedagogies and student support strategies to meet the needs of learners (VET Plan 2017-19, Strategic Priority 1) and culturally appropriate, meaningful and productive ways to engage with Indigenous Australians to support long-term community-led development (Strategic Priority 2).

Ideas for improvement

Recommendations to improve future delivery of HACC training to remote Indigenous students in the top end include:

- Ensuring continuity of VET educators working with remote Indigenous students and communities.
- Providing intensive core cross-cultural training for VET educators new to working with remote Indigenous communities.

Discussion: Patterns of good practice in regional and remote Indigenous VET

Factors contributing to success for CDU's regional and remote Indigenous VET students

The seven case studies described in this report differ significantly in location, Indigenous cultural and geographic environment, industry specialisation, student cohorts, delivery models and program maturity. Some of the VET programs are well established and others are still in the early stages of delivery. It is difficult to compare the cases for these reasons. One can definitively conclude, however, that a single model of VET will not work in different regional and remote Indigenous communities (CDU VET Educator, Interview 7, Guenther et al, 2017) and that VET educators and their teaching practices are central to success for regional and remote Indigenous VET students. The case studies illuminate the diversity of regional and remote Indigenous communities, the many challenges students face to participate in VET and the complexity, situational nature and pace of teaching and learning practices and processes in these environments. VET for regional and remote Indigenous VET students is a learning process that can lead to:

- A qualification and/or a job
- A set of competencies and skills sets in readiness for work
- Improved LL&N and employability skills
- Increased personal skills and confidence
- Broader life experiences and capabilities (inside/outside learning)
- Contribution to local community welfare and development (such as community safety, land care, horticulture, health and early childhood education).

A cross-analysis of the case studies highlights three common themes that are contributing to positive outcomes for CDU VET's regional and remote Indigenous students. Echoing similar themes of good practice in Indigenous VET in the literature, they include:

1. Strong collaborative partnerships between CDU VET and Indigenous and non-Indigenous organisations for the delivery of VET in regional and remote locations.
2. The use of innovative and culturally responsive VET delivery models and pedagogies.
3. Highly capable VET educators with the right mix of capabilities and attributes to work with regional and remote Indigenous students.

These broad themes are discussed in the following section.

Strong, collaborative VET partnerships

The importance of CDU VET's partnerships with Indigenous and non-Indigenous organisations is a strong and recurring theme in the case studies. Successful delivery of regional and remote VET involves close collaboration between a number of organisations that share a commitment to making VET work for the benefit of regional and remote students and communities. Many of the partner organisations in the case studies are employers or potential employers. Four are Indigenous organisations that are leading VET initiatives in their community: GCL in Gulkula, Ironbark Aboriginal Corporation at Dundee Beach and Berry Springs and the TITEB and Women's Centre on the Tiwi Islands. Indigenous ownership and involvement in VET is a major contributing factor to the success of VET in these cases studies and is well-recognised in the literature (Campbell and Christie, 2008, Miller, 2005, OECD, 2017, ANTARAC, 1998). Indigenous partners facilitate effective communication with community leaders, ensure VET fits with local community aspirations and cultures and bring essential cultural authority and local knowledge to the partnership. They also source, select and support students and deal with cultural and social issues that may arise during training.

When community leaders value the training things happen. For example, when there was a death in Gulkula, the elders managed the situation so that the students only missed one day (CDU Educator, Interview 9).

The remaining three partners are regional councils running Early Learning Centres, day respite centres and community night patrol programs that have strong Indigenous representation and significant local cultural knowledge and experience. All partners play a critical role in creating supportive working and learning environments and 'doing whatever it takes' to support regional and remote Indigenous students to achieve positive outcomes. Advocacy for Indigenous students and their communities is a consistent theme in the narratives.

The work we do is really important. If you give the students skills and knowledge then they have greater choices in their lives. They can study and leave their community if they want to or they can stay and work in the schools or other jobs. You have to work with the community so they don't think you are trying to take away their culture and values (CDU Educator, Interview 14).

Essential to the success of CDU's regional and remote VET programs is the continuity of VET educators and the regularity of visits to communities. Continuity builds trust in VET and underpins successful engagement with regional and remote Indigenous communities.

Innovative VET programs and practices

Customising VET delivery

Innovation and flexibility are prominent and consistent patterns in CDU's VET programs and practices in the case studies. VET educators take significant time and effort to adapt timetables, pedagogies and learning activities to what is happening in the community and the dynamics within each student group, often in collaboration with VET partners. Changes to pedagogies occur frequently 'in the moment' when students are starting to disengage. An account of teaching on the Tiwi Islands equally applies to all cases studies.

This is not a mainstream classroom situation and you have to do a lot of planning around what is happening in the community. . . You have to be prepared to work around that. If you are rigid about the training schedule and as a trainer, you won't survive (CDU VET Educator, Interview 13).

This means, however, that the innovative programs and pedagogies in the case studies may not always fit the requirements of VET administrators and regulatory authorities. For example, while,

The system says to follow a teaching plan, when in fact, what actually happens is they [VET educators] are adapting to what is going on in community like sorry business or important community meetings (CDU Support Officer, Interview 15).

Basing learning in work

The second consistent pattern across the case studies is an emphasis on relating learning directly to work in local contexts. Work-based learning is predominant, mostly because students are working or they are undertaking a labour market or school-based VET program that requires them to undertake a training program. While this is clearly a motivating factor for students, it is the holistic integration of learning, assessment and learner support with the interests of students and with work that is notable in the case studies. In most, students are consulted to both determine their interests and give them a say in how, where and what they learn.

This is evident in the 'trial and error' (CDU Educator, Interview 8) approach to delivery at Ngukurr, Bathurst Island and Santa Teresa, and the formal meetings held with students by CDU educators at Gulkula. VET programs and pedagogies are continually being negotiated with students to fit their immediate cultural, learning and work context.

Structured learner support

The third prominent and consistent theme in the case studies is the provision by CDU VET and partners of extensive academic and pastoral support for students; many of whom require one-on-one tutoring and mentoring advice to complete their qualification. There is a strong coaching and mentoring refrain in the educators' descriptions of their practices as they pro-actively support students to overcome barriers to VET and work.

We see teaching as mentoring our students into jobs and getting them ready for a new way of life. That is part of our role. Many of these students have never had a job and don't have mentors or role models who are working at home. They need significant preparation to understand what employers expect. . . If you make a difference with one or two students it makes a huge difference in the community. They become role models to younger people (CDU Educator, Interview 16).

Effective models for low English LL&N students include the integration of structured English LL&N support in the classroom, as occurs at Gulkula and on Ironbark Aboriginal Corporation projects, and a team teaching approach where an educator, learning support specialist or employer representative works one-on-one with students who are falling behind. This approach is working well at Santa Teresa and for night patrol officers in the Barkly region.

Structured mentoring programs involving experienced people from the community or employer organisations work well but are dependent on the availability of suitable mentors. When structured learner support is not available, success for regional and remote Indigenous students depends on the capability and capacity of VET educators to work with low LL&N students.

Innovative pedagogies

The fourth and equally important pattern of good VET practice in the case studies relates to the innovative, relational and culturally respectful pedagogies of VET educators. Based on trust, relational pedagogies are as much focused on the quality of interactions with students as they are on the skills and knowledge students need to achieve a VET qualification, especially in the beginning.

For the first few days I don't teach much - I watch the dynamics in the group and work out how the relationships are working (CDU Educator, Interview 4).

The women decide who's in each group. I always consult the senior woman to get around the local politics. She organises the students and I tell her when I'm ready to start. A couple of the younger women who have authority always let me know

what is going on (CDU VET Educator, Interview 17).

VET educators allocate considerable time and effort to building trusting relationships, assuring students that their VET achievement and wellbeing are a priority. This approach enables VET educators to do 'whatever it takes', 'on the spot' and 'in the moment', to ensure students attend class, are engaged in learning and make progress towards positive VET outcomes. Strategies include adapting units of competency to make them meaningful for students in regional and remote locations rather than moulding students to fit the curriculum. Relational pedagogies resonate with Indigenous cultures where learning experiences are often shared through personal relationships and in small groups (Anderson, 2009).

In the case studies, relational pedagogies are evident in mentoring, peer and group learning, story-telling and both-ways (two-ways) learning. Peer learning is favoured by Indigenous students over individual study because they can work together and support each other (Bowman and Callan, 2012) and is used effectively to support Indigenous students at Ngukurr. However, success relies on having students in class with the skills and confidence to mentor others, and on the social dynamics within the student group. It is also used successfully at Jabiru where Indigenous elders are authoritative teachers (Guenther et al, 2017) in the classroom teaching and mentoring younger students.

Storytelling, well-known pedagogy in Indigenous cultures to teach young people about their history and the language and rules of their community (Etherington, 2006), is consistently used by VET educators in the case studies to ascribe personal meaning to VET experiences, build trust relationships with students and, as occurs at Gulkula, to familiarise students with work and the value of completing a VET qualification. Storytelling enables educators and students to share their interests, culture, history, life stories, aspirations and personalities. VET educators listen carefully to what students tell them before acting pedagogically with the information. As a respectful and non-judgmental both-ways learning process, storytelling enables all parties to better understand the cultural interface between Indigenous and western knowledge systems (Hall and Wilkes, 2015).

The best teachers say they learn as much as they teach' (CDU Support Officer, Interview 15).

The best way to teach remote Indigenous students is to tell a story . . . I always have bikkies in the classroom so I can pull them out for a cup of tea during the day. Then we talk and tell stories (CDU Educator, Interview 17).

The innovative pedagogies practiced by CDU's regional and remote VET educators are driven by care, empathy, patience, trust and advocacy for regional and remote Indigenous students and communities and are integrated into local community culture and aspirations.

Elders sit in sometimes and listen to the class. They really enjoy it and it builds respect for what I do too. It's a two-way learning process that really strengthens what you teach (CDU VET Educator, Interview 14).

Given the relationship between innovative pedagogies and technology in the literature, and the success of technologies in supporting people from cultures to demonstrate competence, it is worth briefly noting the relatively few references to digitally based pedagogies in the case studies. While some VET educators refer to using digital assessments and increasing technology-based pedagogies, their low reliance on technology may be due to the importance placed on relational teaching and learning practices especially for Low English LL&N students, and to the lack of reliable technologies and internet in remote areas of the NT.

Time and place

The fifth observation relating to patterns of good practice in the case studies is the importance of the place and time of delivery to achieving positive VET outcomes for regional and remote Indigenous students. Place refers to the location of delivery, such as the Women's Centre on the Tiwi Islands where students are more comfortable, and to the success of residential training blocks at Darwin, Gulkula and Katherine; these are located close enough for students to access family and community support but far enough away from the 'humbag' to allow students to concentrate on learning.

Time refers to allowing sufficient time for students to learn and absorb new skills and knowledge in a different language and time for educators to teach, support,

mentor and coach students on a one-on-one basis when required. There are also references in the case studies to the time required to organise the logistics of regional and remote VET delivery and to a long-term commitment to VET in Indigenous communities.

There are no quick results. I honestly believe it takes up to 2 years. After 4 ½ years, I'm starting to see the results. The relationships I have with the community are so strong now that students will come with me wherever I teach (CDU VET Educator, Interview 14).

However, the time taken by CDU's VET educators to produce positive outcomes for regional and remote Indigenous students is often greater than the funding for each unit of competency allows. While a unit of competency may have 20 ACH (annual hours curriculum) hours allocated,

We as the remote VET team may spend 50 hours delivering it. This could be 20 hours of teaching and 30 hours of booking tickets, accommodation and food vouchers for students to come to residential training, sorting out residential training blocks and AFB and Centrelink funding for them and liaising with Indigenous and other organisations and the learner support team to make sure everything is in place and ready to go (CDU Educator, Interview 4).

Time and place are contributing factors to successful outcomes for regional and remote Indigenous VET students but, as the case studies show, when inadequately accounted for, the wrong place and insufficient time can pose major barriers to positive outcomes for these students.

Highly capable VET educators

The final section in this discussion analyses the skills, knowledge, capabilities and attributes demonstrated by CDU's VET educators in the case studies. These are major contributors to the success of CDU's regional and remote VET programs. In the words of one VET educator,

You have to be a special type of person to do remote work. You have to be calm and relaxed, have lots of empathy and put up with conditions that can be frustrating at times. Students want to know what is going on and will quickly work

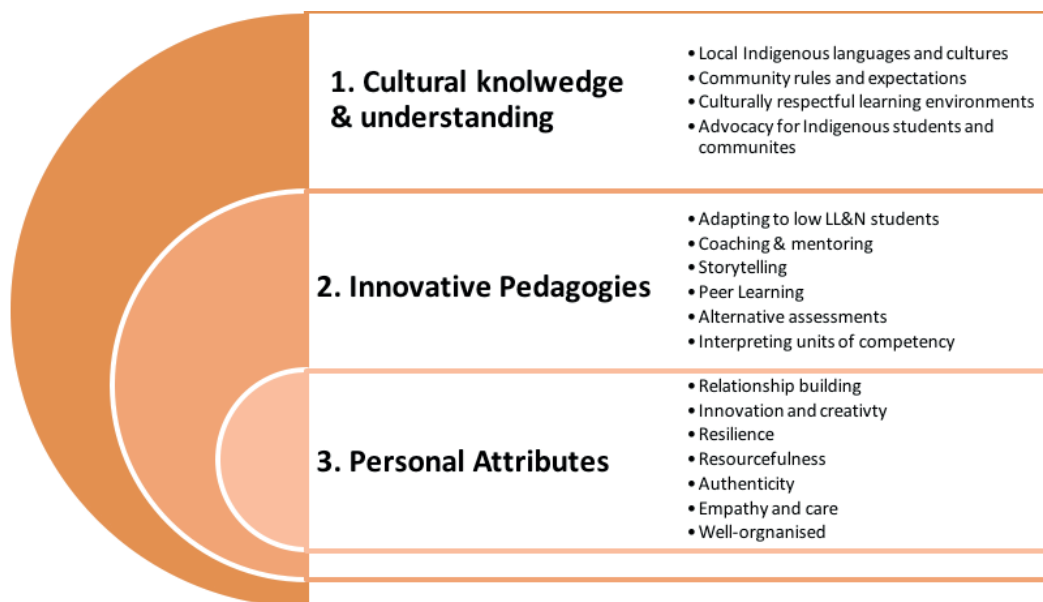
out what your intentions are so you have to be authentic and be able to build trust to teach (CDU VET Educator, Interview 16).

While it takes multiple capabilities to achieve positive outcomes for regional and remote Indigenous VET students, the key capabilities demonstrated by CDU's VET educators across the case studies (Figure 7) relate to their expansive cultural knowledge and understanding, their ability to work with low LL&N learners, the proclivity to be innovative, creative, resilient and resourceful and the ability to build positive and trusting relationships with VET partners and Indigenous students and communities. High levels of professional technical skills are also important as is the ability to interpret units of competency to make them

meaningful for regional and remote Indigenous students and to create fair, reliable and meaningful assessments that build a picture of competence over time.

Often you are alone and have to have all the resources you need with you. You have to ask a lot of questions about what you expect to see when you get there and it might not be what you expect so you have to have Plan A, B and C. The better you are at project management and looking after yourself, the better off you will be and the better the outcomes for students (Ibid).

Figure 7: Capabilities demonstrated by CDU VET educators working with regional and remote VET Indigenous students



1. Cultural knowledge and understanding is the most prominent capability underpinning the work of CDU's regional and remote VET educators in the case studies. High levels of cultural knowledge and understanding enable educators to create positive learning environments and to build trusting relationships with regional and remote Indigenous students and communities. Cultural knowledge and understanding demonstrated in the case studies involves recognising and respecting the unique culture of individual communities and understanding and working with their cultural, historical and spiritual traditions and aspirations.
2. Equally important to the work of regional and remote VET educators is their ability to adapt teaching and assessment practices to the needs of students and provide 'wrap-around' support (Lamb et al, 2018) for students experiencing low levels of English LL&N and other barriers to learning. In the case studies, educators describe highly innovative pedagogies that tailor learning to student interests, cultural needs and objectives and embed personal and LL&N support in learning for work.
3. At the centre of successful VET practices for regional and remote Indigenous students are the personal attributes of VET educators which, as the case studies show, include empathy and care, creativity, determination, commitment, resilience, resourcefulness, and the capability to negotiate with students, communities, partners and authorities and to quickly adjust to changing teaching and learning circumstances.

Conclusion

The seven case studies in this review illuminate the many challenges regional and remote Indigenous VET students in the NT can face when participating in VET and the respectful and supportive way CDU VET educators and their partners are assisting students to overcome these challenges and achieve positive outcomes. The main factors contributing to success of CDU's regional remote VET programs are the strong partnerships CDU VET has with Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners, the high levels of cultural knowledge and understanding, pastoral care and support for students, and the ability of VET educators to change what they do 'in the moment' to accommodate the interests and needs of regional and remote Indigenous students.

One approach to VET will not fit the diversity of regional and remote Indigenous communities. What works for Indigenous VET learners can only be really understood in the context of their local culture and community. Relational pedagogies based on care, trust and respect, common across all the case studies, are producing positive outcomes for these students including the skills, knowledge and attributes students need for work and a range of other benefits such as an enhanced sense of confidence and personal empowerment, general life skills gained through inside/outside learning and opportunities to further a career in their community.

The complex and demanding work of CDU's VET educators is occurring in partnership with local Indigenous organisations and communities, non-Indigenous employers, regional councils, national park authorities, early learning centres, day respite centres, government agencies and a range of other service providers committed to supporting regional and remote community development for the long-term.

The case studies suggest that VET is most successful for regional and remote Indigenous students when it is directly related to local work opportunities, when delivery models are highly flexible and innovative, when there is strong and consistent learner support embedded in real work activities, and when VET

educators – both Indigenous and non-Indigenous – have the right mix of skills, capabilities and attributes to work in regional and remote Indigenous contexts.

Measuring VET in terms of completion and employment outcomes does not capture the full benefits CDU VET is delivering for NT's regional and remote Indigenous students or the complex and valuable work regional and remote VET educators are doing to support them. It is important that, as a sector, VET recognises and supports educators and learner support specialists to continue this valuable work.

Recommendations

This report concludes with a summary of ideas for improvement to CDU VET's future regional and remote VET programs proposed in each case study.

- Providing integrated learner support functions to support CDU's future VET delivery to regional and remote Indigenous students.
- Investigating mentoring models with mentors based in local communities.
- Developing a professional development program to build the capability of new regional and remote VET educators in consultation with CDU's VET stakeholders.
- Where possible, implementing flexible regional and remote teaching models to ensure continuity of educators, ongoing learning support for students and professional development for new regional and remote VET educators.
- Continuing to develop learning and assessment resources, including digital, in local languages.

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Attachment A: Research questions

Quantitative data

Context

- Regional statistics:
 - Indigenous populations in the NT
 - Location, size of region and population of each case site
 - Indigenous communities and principal languages spoken at each case site
- Course information
 - Funding sources for each course
 - Completions and employment outcomes
- Background to Indigenous VET in the NT
 - Indigenous employment rates
 - Participation and completion rates in VET.

Qualitative data

Indigenous VET in the NT

- What are the major challenges for remote Indigenous learners?
- What are the major barriers to learning for them?
- What factors contribute to positive outcomes?

Research questions for participants

- Tell me about your role in the VET program
- Describe how the program works for me
- Describe what you do when teaching Indigenous students
- What are you trying to achieve? Why?
- What are the outcomes of the program?
- Which has been the most positive part of the program?
- What makes the approach so successful?
- What has been the most challenging part of the program?
- Which aspects of the program can be improved?
- What have you learned from the experience that could be shared more widely?

Attachment B: Relevant VET funding sources

NT funding sources

The key funding provided by the NTG includes 11J funding for mainstream VET programs, 11K funding for remote apprenticeships and traineeships, 11H funding for VET in secondary schools and 20A funding for health and community care courses.

Description	Code	Information
Indigenous Responsive Program	11B	To support accredited and non-accredited training that links to community projects and leads to employment outcomes, improved employability skills or enterprise development opportunities.
VET in Schools (Recurrent)	11H	As per description; AHC and funds included in VET profile.
Recurrent (Training Priorities)	11J	Targets accredited training with initial work outcomes; AHC and funds included in VET profile.
User Choice	11K	Australian apprentices and trainees, including School-based Australian apprentices and trainees (SBATs) who are party to a training contract registered under the Northern Territory Employment and Training Act (the Act).
VET in Schools for Remote Students	11V	To support VET programs in secondary schools in regional and remote areas of the NT. The aim is to provide school students training in an industry area that meets their needs and is a priority for economic development in the Territory.
Entitlement 11K	ETK	To support apprentices to access government subsidised training places, to a minimum of a person's certificate III qualification.
NTG Entitlement	ETP	Only available for approved courses for students completing by 31/03/2018.

Commonwealth funding sources

Productivity Places Programs – Job seekers	13C	Specific programs only. It targets to assist job seekers to acquire skills and gain lasting employment.
Government Initiatives	11E	For accredited training for key equity groups – ATSI persons, people with a disability, people with no post-school qualifications, people from NESB, people whose first language is not English, unemployed people, people from rural and remote areas, people returning to the workforce, or from gender underrepresented groups.
Workready Program	11Q	Designed to encourage the employment of Territorians seeking jobs in new industries. Training that will provide Territorians on a needs basis with direct access to new skills and enhance employment outcomes.



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