

Choice and Affordability Fund

2024 Annual Report – Association of Independent
Schools of Western Australia



NGRB Ongoing Compliance Declaration

Section 92 of the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act) outlines the basic requirements for approval of a non-government representative body for a non-government school.

As such, the Department of Education is seeking confirmation that – Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia complies with the legislative requirements in relation to monitoring the body’s compliance with the Act.

Confirmation you continue to meet basic requirements for approval

Body corporate

Explain how you are meeting the relevant Commonwealth or State and Territory requirements to be a body corporate.

The Association of Independent Schools of WA is an incorporated association, registered with the ACNC. The ABN is 76 185 019 966.

Not-for-profit (NFP)

Explain how you are meeting the relevant Commonwealth, State or Territory requirements to be an NFP.

Association incorporation legislation changes from state to state, further guidance can be found on the [Australian Securities & Investments Commission website](#).

ASWA’s primary objectives as outlined in its Constitution are not carried on for the purpose of profit or gain. AISWA is also a registered charity with the ACNC.

Financial viability

When completing this section NGRBs should consider their ongoing operation status, their organisations risk management plan and whether the current organisations income is sufficient to meet current and ongoing operating costs as outlined in section 27 of the Australian Education Regulations 2023.

AISWA maintains adequate assets and cash reserves to meet both current and future operating costs and has a clear strategy for growing and utilising these reserves in alignment with its organisational purpose.

No matter as outlined under Section 27 of the Australian Education Regulations 2023 has been identified as an issue for AISWA.

Fit and proper person

When completing this section NGRBs should consider if the organisation has the relevant skills, knowledge and experience needed to support non-government schools, ongoing practices to ensure staff are of good character, law abiding and that conflicts of interest are managed correctly as outlined in sub section 28(2) of the Australian Education Regulations 2023.

AISWA's Board includes a number of member school elected Directors, aiming for representation across school types and who are appointed at the AGM. The AISWA Board can also co-opt up to three directors to fit skills gaps that may not be met through the regular election process. All Board members must act in the best interests of AISWA and adhere to duties under corporate governance law and ACNC governance standards.

No matter as outlined under Section 28(2) of the Australian Education Regulations 2023 has been identified as applying to persons employed by AISWA.

NGRB Annual Report Sign Off

This annual report is submitted in fulfillment of the annual report requirements in sections 50, 51 and 52 of the CAF Guidelines.

Name and Position of the person signing off on behalf of the NGRB¹: Chris Massey Executive Director



Date: 30 June 2025

¹ Name and position of the person within the NGRB with authority to sign off.

Summary of 2024

This summary captures AISWA's continued commitment to enhancing educational opportunities and improving outcomes for students across Western Australia through the Choice and Affordability Fund (CAF). In 2024, AISWA remained focused on its five priority areas: Choice and Affordability, Transition Assistance, Special Circumstances Funding, Strengthening Outcomes for Educationally Disadvantaged Schools and Students, and Student Wellbeing and Support.

Under Priority A – Choice and Affordability, AISWA delivered a wide range of initiatives to support schools in defining and communicating their unique value proposition. Through partnerships, professional learning, and governance workshops (e.g. AICD and Somerset Education), schools enhanced their financial and strategic planning. Over 570 staff engaged through state-wide events in Perth, Broome, Albany, and the Southwest.

Priority B – Transition Assistance addressed the challenges schools faced under the Direct Measure of Income (DMI) funding model. AISWA supported three groups: nine regional schools, 16 other eligible schools, and 10 National Adjustment Assistance Fund (NAAF) schools. Activities included financial reviews, demographic analysis, and transition planning. Over \$4 million in grants were distributed to assist schools in navigating funding reductions.

Under Priority C – Special Circumstances Funding, Casa Mia Montessori School received \$33,800 to support relocation planning. This funding ensured the school could maintain operations despite unforeseen financial pressure.

Through Priority D – Strengthening Outcomes, AISWA extended targeted support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through the Future Footprints program, supported CARE schools via the Creative Schools project, and strengthened literacy and numeracy programs using NAPLAN data and custom tools. AISWA also offered support for EAL/D learners and delivered whole-school numeracy initiatives, especially in regional and remote areas.

Priority E – Student Wellbeing and Support saw the continuation and expansion of the Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools initiative. In 2024, 20 schools participated, with wellbeing coordinators supported through network sessions and psychologist consultations. AISWA also supported schools in meeting Child Safe requirements, with over 3,800 staff completing online training and 52 schools attending workshops on the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Throughout 2024, AISWA ensured all Independent schools had opportunities to engage with CAF-funded programs. Activities combined universal offerings with targeted support for schools most affected by funding reforms or disadvantage.

Looking ahead, AISWA will continue delivering and refining these initiatives through 2025, with a focus on sustainability, inclusion, and evidence-based practice across the sector.

Activity Report

Activity/Initiative	Promoting School Choice and Improved School Marketing
Priority	A – Choice and Affordability

Activity Description

During 2024, all schools were encouraged to participate in multiple events offered by AISWA to support their financial governance and strategic planning.

Projects and activities were offered that unpack what ‘choice’ the Independent sector provides and how schools can present themselves as an attractive and affordable option that provides exceptional value for the investment families make through payment of school fees.

The CAF funding is used centrally to provide specialised services to schools that support schools in analysing their value proposition and to develop a pathway to reviewing and improve their brand/image and their student and school community offerings.

AISWA partnered with the AICD (Australian Institute of Company Directors) again in 2024, offering multiple governance courses for Boards of AISWA member schools both in person and online. Over 70 attendees engaged with these offerings. These courses offer important governance upskilling for member schools and Boards to assist with understanding obligations of governance and risk.

AISWA continues to engage with Somerset Education offering schools the opportunity to meet and workshop their financial statements and forward budgets to ensure financial viability is managed over the medium to long term.

In addition there were a variety of major activities throughout 2024 with member schools including:

- January 2024 – Board Chair Connect Event - topic “Independent Education – the Challenges and Opportunities in 2024”.
- March 2024 - Three-day duration - Albany Schools Workshop and visits.
- April 2024 Broome Conference - with the theme “Whatever it Takes” designed to ignite discussions, foster collaboration, and propel actionable strategies that address the unique challenges faced by AICS (Aboriginal Independent Community schools).
- August 2024 -South-West Workshop and regional membership meetings with 37 school leaders and Board members attending.
- September 2024 Perth School Strategy Session
- September 2024 AISWA engagement with school Business Managers at the ASBA Conference

These high level representations by AISWA facilitated continual engagement with and support for the member schools as they seek improved governance and management at senior levels.

The new Commonwealth funding model continues to provide challenges to schools transitioning to reduced per capita funding and schools receiving grants under this element continue to review their offerings to parents to remain competitive and ensure choice and affordability are maintained.

AISWA staff continue to support regional and transition schools by encouraging them to re-evaluate their offerings, define their market using demographic insights, conduct parent surveys, and prepare and revise long-term budgets, all within the context of reduced funding for some schools.

Eligible Schools

All schools were invited to participate in AISWA offerings, with each school making its own decision to join.

Timeframes

Relevant workshops and training seminars will continue to be offered at regular intervals until the end of 2025 for all schools and boards.

AISWA staff continue to support individual schools based on enquiry and other networking opportunities.

Outcomes Achieved

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Participating schools have a clear statement and value proposition of what their school offers and why their school should be the one of choice for families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">During 2024, over 570 school staff participated in programs and events. Regional schools also participated. AISWA facilitate this by utilising online platforms and by providing travel subsidies for regional schools.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Schools have looked at both their affordability for families and reviewed their finances to reduce expenditure while preserving their point(s) of difference.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All schools participating in the projects have a clear statement of what they represent and provide to families in terms of choice and value for money.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Potential Independent school families have a better understanding of the different options when selecting a school.	

Risk Management

Risk	How the risk will be managed
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The risk of future lockdowns means planned face to face sessions and networking cannot occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No significant risk events materialised during the reporting period. All planned face-to-face sessions and networking events proceeded as scheduled.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Insufficient demand for an activity, results in it being postponed or cancelled.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Participant interest and engagement were sufficient across all activities, with no need to postpone or cancel any due to lack of demand. As a result, no contingency measures (such as switching to online delivery, rescheduling, or rolling funds over) were required.

Activity Expenditure

	Centralised (Reporting Year Only)	Distributed (Reporting Year Only)
Expenditure	\$48,817	\$-

Centralised funds spent on this activity were used to support AISWA staff working to assist schools, provide general advice, organise activities and provide a contact point for queries on CAF funding and transition funding.

Activity/Initiative	Support for Transition for the Nine Regional Schools Identified by DESE
Priority	B – Transition Assistance

Activity Description

Regional schools have previously provided Transition Plans which outlined how they would operate in a reduced Commonwealth funding environment.

School Plans included financial viability, budgets and strategic reviews.

School Transition Plans included such things as:

- Surveys of Staff/ Parents/ Community to establish what is valued at the school.
- Budget revisions taking into account revised DMI funding.
- Efficiency analysis to inform budget reviews.
- Revision of class sizes/ fees charged/ student to teacher ratios/ curriculum offerings.
- Review of Key Performance Indicators, trend analysis to understand gaps in financial performance.
- Market research to inform strategy that specifically addresses the decrease in funding.
- Review of the school's strategic plan.
- A documented, clear statement outlining what school represents and the value and benefits provided to families.
- Reflecting on the business model to identify the 'value for money' parents receive.
- Reflecting on marketing and school image to ensure a clear statement of what the school represents and provides to families in terms of offerings and choice.

AISWA continued to work with the schools as they navigate their way through their changed financial circumstances. This includes continuing to review their school finances, provide schools the opportunity to source their own external support and provide all these schools access to other AISWA support both through the Choice and Affordability Fund and the other range of services offered to schools.

Schools were supported under this element with AISWA offering online and face-to-face governance information sessions, a demographic presentation, a financial governance workshop. Other events included topics on communicating in a crisis, recognising and managing psychosocial hazards and other funding for independent school events.

Regional schools were offered travel subsidies to support their attendance.

Eligible Schools

Regional Schools were selected based on similar criteria to transition school selection, and an ARIA (Accessibility Remoteness Index of Australia) score of greater than 0.

The Regional Transition Assistance Activity includes the nine schools identified by the Department in 2020. These are:

ID	School Name
65	Bunbury Cathedral Grammar School
25081	Court Grammar School
27701	Esperance Anglican Community School
16332	Georgiana Molloy Anglican School
14590	Geraldton Grammar School
15894	Great Southern Grammar
30237	St James Anglican School
13741	Swan Christian College
15338	Tranby College

Timeframes

Schools have been provided with direct grant payments for 2022, 2023 and 2024. Additional direct grant payments will continue to be provided to schools during 2025.

Outcomes Achieved

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The additional direct funding in the form of transition assistance ensures schools can continue to operate while minimising the need for fee increases. The grants keep the impact of low or negative federal funding growth to a minimum. The school remains financially viable and continues to offer education to its school community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fee increases in these schools are similar to those of similar Independent schools. All schools have maintained enrolments with most growing. Schools continue to operate in regional areas providing educational choice for students and families. Schools medium and long-range forecasting is backed by research and demographic insights.

Risk Management

Risk	How the risk will be managed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A particular school loses substantial enrolments making it no longer financially viable. A school lacks the resources or capabilities to put measures in place to ease into the transition to the DMI CTC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should a school be struggling with enrolments or other strategic actions, AISWA will work with them to develop strategies that could correct these risks. AISWA would provide intensive support to the school and its community to address the lack of capability and provide advice on ways to establish a sustainable way forward.

Activity Expenditure

	Centralised (Reporting Year Only)	Distributed (Reporting Year Only)
Expenditure	\$57,715	\$1,464,400

Centralised funds spent on this activity were used to support AISWA staff working to assist schools and provide general advice, and also includes admin support to consultants working in this area.

Activity/Initiative	Transition Support for the Other Eligible Schools
Priority	B – Transition Assistance

Activity Description

During 2024 Schools were supported with their Transition Plan which outlines how they will operate under a new low growth rate in their Federal Funding. This Plan identifies practical solutions to ensure the school’s ongoing financial viability and affordability of the school for the current and future members of its community.

Schools have been provided indicative grants for the period 2022 through 2025 with a strong caveat that these may change because of census data and their DMI CTC. Grant amounts may also be impacted should several schools see a large shift in their DMI CTC as it may mean more schools meet the criteria resulting in funds being spread across more eligible schools. The amount of the indicative grants included elements that factor in the school population and the size of the increase in their DMI CTC over their 2011 or 2016 SES.

Transition Plans included such things as:

- Surveys of Staff/ Parents/ Community to establish what is valued at the school.
- Budget revisions taking into account revised DMI funding.
- Efficiency analysis to inform budget reviews.
- Revision of class sizes/ fees charged/ student to teacher ratios/ curriculum offerings.
- Review of Key Performance Indicators, trend analysis to understand gaps in financial performance.
- Market research to inform strategy that specifically addresses the decrease in funding.
- Review of the school’s strategic plan.
- A documented, clear statement outlining what school represents and the value and benefits provided to families.
- Reflecting on the business model to identify the 'value for money' parents receive.
- Reflecting on marketing and school image to ensure a clear statement of what the school represents and provides to families in terms of offerings and choice.

AISWA is continuing to work with these schools as they navigate their way through their changed financial circumstances. This includes reviewing school finances, providing schools an opportunity to source their own external support and provide these schools access to other AISWA support both through the Choice and Affordability Fund and range of other support services already provided by AISWA.

Eligible Schools

In 2024, eligible schools were identified looking at the change in average three-year DMI-CTC scores between 2023 and 2024.

In 2024 a number of other considerations were considered as part of the review, including

- movement in enrolment growth for existing schools
- change + or – in comparative average three-year DMI-CTC scores between the previous year,
- School fees of less than \$20k, and

- consideration of the ceiling of 125 and floor of 93 CTC, noting some schools average DMI scores year-on-year land outside these ranges. This results in the schools SRS funding remained unchanged in spite of movements +/- in 2024.

In 2024, four small schools were identified and added to the list, total cost against the CAF grant of \$30,080.

List of eligible Schools: 16 Schools

ID	School Name
2084	Helena College
5398	South Coast Baptist College
13595	Grace Christian School
13602	Frederick Irwin Anglican School
13656	John Wollaston Anglican Community School
15360	Living Waters Lutheran College
16076	Peter Moyes Anglican Community School
16533	Hope Christian College
18149	Mandurah Baptist College
23696	Peter Carnley Anglican Community School
23697	Swan Valley Anglican Community School
29057	Austin Cove Baptist College
16673	Goldfields Baptist
86326	Hensman St Elementary
2190	Moerlina School
13616	Yallingup Steiner

This list may be modified if there are changes in the DMI CTC.

Timeframes

Grants will be provided through to 2025, with allocations reviewed at that time.

Outcomes Achieved

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The additional funding in the form of transition assistance ensures the school can continue to operate and keep any fee increases, to make up for the low growth or negative growth in funding, to a minimum. • The school remains financially viable and continues to offer education to its school community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All participating schools have scenarios to evaluate the best way forward to transition to the new funding model. • Fee increases are similar to those in the broader WA independent education community. • All participating schools have a transition plan as a result of this process • School enrolments continue to grow

Risk Management

Risk	How the risk will be managed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A particular school loses so many enrolments that it appears it may no longer be viable. A school lacks the resources or capabilities to put measures in place to ease into the transition to the DMI CTC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AISWA would support a school in developing their transition plan by providing a planning template and pre-populating some of the data Should a school be struggling with enrolments we would work with them to develop strategies that could increase enrolments. AISWA would work with the school and the school community to address the lack of capability and provide sound advice as to way forward

Activity Expenditure

	Centralised (Reporting Year Only)	Distributed (Reporting Year Only)
Expenditure	\$57,715	\$2,579,080

Centralised funds spent on this activity were used to support AISWA staff working to assist schools and provide general advice and also includes admin support to consultants working in this area.

Activity/Initiative	Transition Support for the National Adjustment Assistance Fund Schools
Priority	B – Transition Assistance

Activity Description

Ten West Australian Independent Schools have been identified by Government as having been eligible for National Adjustment Assistance Fund (NAAF).

In 2024, Schools in this group were offered the opportunity to apply for a small grant to assist with planning for low or negative growth from 2022 through 2028. The indicative allocation to WA under the original NAAF plan was quite low and thus grants to these schools would be less than \$50,000.

This group of schools, as with many other schools, have been accessing some of the online webinars, demographic analysis, financial governance and planning support offered as part of the Choice and Affordability priority.

During 2024, eight schools applied for NAAF assistance with all being granted a one-off payment based on their application and commitment to review their existing finances, new market research, demographics of their school catchment area and other initiatives.

Throughout 2024-2025, AISWA will continue to work with these schools as they navigate their way through their changed financial circumstances. This includes continuing to provide support in the review their school finances, provide schools the opportunity to source their own external support, and provide all these schools access to other AISWA support both through the Choice and Affordability Fund and the other range of services we offer schools.

Eligible Schools

ID	Name	Period
65	Bunbury Cathedral Grammar School	2022 to 2028
83	Guildford Grammar School	2022 to 2028
84	Hale School	2022 to 2028
124	Perth College	2022 to 2028
201	St Mary's Anglican Girls' School (Inc)	2022 to 2028
245	Wesley College	2022 to 2028
2711	Penrhos College	2022 to 2028
2755	All Saints' College	2022 to 2028
28580	Banksia Montessori School	2025 to 2028
167	St Hilda's Anglican School for Girls (Inc)	2025 to 2028

Timeframes

Direct grants have been provided to the eight eligible schools in 2022, 2023 and 2024 with payments allocated and scheduled for 2025. In 2025, two additional schools, Banksia Montessori School and St Hilda's Anglican School for Girls, will become eligible to access this funding.

Outcomes Achieved

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools that apply to access these funds will have a plan for going forward with reduced Federal Funding. The school remains financially viable and continues to offer education to its school community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on stakeholder surveys, projects the schools undertook helped to inform a strategy of change in either their marketing for enrolments, their financial budgeting or their educational models. Fee increases are similar to those in the broader independent education community. Enrolment in these schools continues to be strong.

Risk Management

Risk	How the risk will be managed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A particular school loses a substantial number of enrolments, and it appears it may no longer be financially viable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should a school be struggling with enrolments AISWA would work with them to develop strategies that could correct the loss of enrolments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A school lacks the resources or capabilities to put measures in place to ease into the transition to the DMI CTC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AISWA would work with the school and the school community to address the lack of capability and provide sound advice to find a way forward.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The high-fee schools may see potential reputational risk in accessing additional government funding so applications for assistance may be low. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AISWA will encourage schools to access the small amount of funding support but does recognise this additional risk to high-fee schools.

Activity Expenditure

	Centralised (Reporting Year Only)	Distributed (Reporting Year Only)
Expenditure	\$-	\$170,000

Activity Description

This priority activity provides a process whereby schools could apply to access support where the school is impacted by special circumstances.

Under the CAF Guidelines, Special Circumstances Assistance can be provided for schools in situations that satisfy all of the following criteria:

- Unexpected
 - Could not have been reasonably foreseen.
- Causing severe financial difficulty
 - Where a school faces a real prospect of having to cease a large part of its educational activities or significantly lower its educational services.
- Short term
 - Schools should be able to overcome their financial difficulty and resume operations and must provide a five-year business and recovery plan.
- A special need
 - Schools have exhausted all other options to remedy the financial situation of the school.

The nature of support available to a school experiencing special circumstances will vary by the type of situation and circumstances. Schools can experience financial stress as a result of a range of events: a natural disaster like floods or fires, a sudden loss of a significant number of enrolments, loss of a number of long serving staff with significant entitlements owing, etc. All these result in financial stress and as well as providing direct financial support to the school if the criteria are met, AISWA would offer additional support to the school to review their business model and its ability to overcome its current situation and prepare an adapted budget to reflect its new financial position.

Eligible schools

All schools will be eligible to apply for Special Circumstances Funding if they consider they meet the criteria.

During 2024 Casa Mia Montessori school applied for and received funding of \$33,800 to assist them engage consultants as part of the school needing to relocate to different premises.

Casa Mia Montessori is a small primary school with 65 students and a DMI of 105. They currently lease their premises and have been attempting to renew their lease with the local authority, the Town of Bassendean, beyond 2027, but have been unsuccessful. If they cannot relocate, they face closure due to substantial and unexpected costs.

The school has explored numerous options, including hiring consultants for feasibility studies and reassessing their financial capacity to move to other leased premises or to construct a new building. Support from AISWA includes advocacy from the Executive Director on behalf of the school.

After a thorough review and receipt of an application by the Casa Mia Board, AISWA decided to provide Casa Mia with a small payment from this priority to help fund specialist consultants who can offer options and advice.

Timeframes

Special circumstances assistance will be available to schools through to 2029.

Outcomes Achieved

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A school impacted by a negative unforeseen situation applies for special assistance. If the application is approved the school receives financial assistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2024 one school successfully accessed special circumstances assistance when negatively impacted by unforeseen circumstances.

Risk Management

Risk	How the risk will be managed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A school that receives special circumstances funding is unable to trade out of the circumstances they find themselves in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AISWA will monitor the schools' use of funds and their progress in addressing the circumstances and provide in-kind support if needed.

Activity Expenditure

	Centralised (Reporting Year Only)	Distributed (Reporting Year Only)
Expenditure	\$-	\$33,800

Activity/Initiative	Curriculum Re-Engagement Schools Project
Priority	D – Strengthening outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools and students

Activity Description

This priority activity was developed by FORM’s Creative Schools program and was specifically for secondary school students attending Curriculum and Re-Engagement (CARE) Schools. This project built upon the experiences of participating schools in 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023.

The aim was to improve the attendance and engagement of students attending CARE Schools and their educational outcomes. Based on FORM’s Creative Learning Program, a program of creative learning specific to CARE school teachers and students was designed and implemented through the establishment of meaningful partnerships between teachers, creative (arts) practitioners, children and young people.

FORM’s experience in working with these schools since 2020 means they have developed significant expertise in knowing how to best support these students and some rich partnerships between creative practitioners, artists and schools have developed. Students have autonomy in their learning and many schools are also taking the opportunity to involve families in their projects.

Creative learning projects are co-designed by the teacher and the creative learning practitioner to best address Curriculum content and student learning needs. The project culminated in a final showcase where students shared how they explored the content. Students also engaged in a podcasting experience, as another way to share their thoughts, opinions, and key takeaways from their participation in the project. This is a relatively recent addition to the project and anecdotally has proved popular with students (as seen in high levels of engagement).

Participating School/Campus	Year Level	Student Numbers
Alta-1 Ellenbrook	7-9	25
Alta-1 Joondalup (ConnectED class)	7-9	22
Alta-1 Joondalup	7-9	25
The Y Mirrabooka	10 & vocational 11	25
Port School	9	14
Fairbridge College Pinjarra	8-11	16

Each cohort experienced:

- 16 x creative schools’ sessions on campus (with a specialist creative practitioner)
- 1 x FORM Gallery excursion (practical workshop run by Lyndsay Humphries)
- 2 x podcast sessions at Murdoch Uni (with access to a podcaster and university lecturer who assisted with using the podcast studios)

The teachers from participating schools were also provided with 2 x Professional Learning days prior to the project’s commencement, as well as a reflection day and ongoing support.

The project evaluation included a thematic analysis of the multiple survey responses collected over 2021-2024. Student participation in the Creative Schools program, resulted in the identification of the following themes:

- Positive emotional impact, increased happiness and reduction in stress.
- Enhanced personal growth, confidence and academic engagement.
- Building social cohesion, collaboration and a sense of belonging.
- Pride in achievements, personal transformation and hope for the future.
- Creative journalling enables self-expression and healing.

The quotes below exemplify some of these themes.

- “So many of our anxious students have come out of their shells to attend the classes, and even more to attend round 2 of the podcasting!” – **Teacher**
- “I love this program, and I’ve learned a lot more than at any other school. I feel proud of what I’ve achieved here.” – **Student**
- “There is an absence of stress in Creative Schools, but it is not relaxing. You have to think a lot. It is fun to be engaged.” – **Student**
- “The whole class has such a level of comfort now. They are willing to try new things with each other, and these are really anxious kids normally. Their tolerance for dealing with things being uncertain has come a long way. New things are now not as scary for them anymore.” – **Teacher**

Additional quotes related to attendance and engagement in learning:

- “I’m actually going to school now instead of just wagging.” – **Student**
- “Many of our students who struggle to communicate found their voice and were keen to engage, not only with other students, but with the creative practitioners. This is a HUGE amount of engagement, effort and adjustment in attitude towards school and learning” – **School Leaders**
- “Many of the parents were blown away by their child’s ability to engage, demonstrate and articulate their learning to [the visiting] adults.” – **School Leaders**
- “I have a student with serious social anxiety who was a runner and an elective mute. He would run away all the time and only attended 2 hours of school a week. Creative Schools was a massive game changer for him. One day during a Creative Schools session he said: “Can I make something?” From then on, he started talking. He now attends school 4 days a week. He is no longer running away.” – **Teacher**

Timeframes

This project will continue in 2025.

Outcomes Achieved

Outcomes	Indicators of success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participating schools will develop a case for implementation and will express interest through a formal application process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Six schools/campuses participated in 2024. Schools with an existing engagement in the program were prioritised. This enabled capacity building for teachers in these schools, as well as improved engagement from students. Most schools were keen to continue engaging with the program including Alta-1, Port School, The Y and Fairbridge College. Alta-1 expanded their engagement and included their Connected cohort who usually only attend school once a week.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools will develop an ethnographic approach with students to determine the co-designed curriculum implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A final showcase was held at Council House, Perth to coincide with Scribblers Festival and was well attended by schools and the wider community. Student podcasts were accessible to visiting audiences at this showcase.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School based project managers will support the program implementation to ensure high participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anecdotal evidence showed high engagement in learning from the students, and high levels of completed creative tasks as illustrated in quotes collected from students and teachers (see above). The project ran smoothly. An additional session for students was scheduled at FORM gallery in response to student demand. Creative practitioners worked alongside teachers to develop curriculum-aligned learning sequences.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The expectation is that attendance and engagement in learning will improve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The final report had an evaluative focus rather than a quantitative focus, and the quotes included above reflect the rich qualitative data on gains made in attendance and engagement in learning. A broader range of creative practitioners were utilised to best suit student needs. For example, podcasting (two sessions) was added as an activity in 2024.

- Schools will develop collaborative creative capabilities.
- Creative practitioners and students co-delivered the program to students in the school, with check in points and a reflection day to evaluate the process.
- Creative practitioners worked alongside teachers to develop curriculum-aligned learning sequences.

Risk Management

Risk	How the risk will be managed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The risk of future lockdowns means planned face to face sessions and networking cannot occur. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant risk events materialised during the reporting period. All planned face-to-face sessions and networking events proceeded as scheduled.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient demand for an activity, results in the project being postponed or cancelled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant interest and engagement were sufficient across all activities, with no need to postpone or cancel any due to lack of demand. As a result, no contingency measures (such as switching to online delivery, rescheduling, or rolling funds over) were required.

Activity Expenditure

	Centralised (Reporting Year Only)	Distributed (Reporting Year Only)
Expenditure	\$180,000	\$-

Centralised funds were used to contract the organisation “FORM” to engage with the schools, run the activity and undertake all matters in relation to this project. Included was an exhibition of works showcasing student achievements.

Activity/Initiative	Tracking and Improving Student Achievement
Priority	D – Strengthening outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools.

Activity Description

This priority activity concentrated on underperforming schools in the National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). The aim was to identify the learning needs for students based on misconceptions in Mathematics and specific areas of English development. Students at or below minimal standard are identified using the Valuate platform (AISWA’s NAPLAN analysis tool). Using this data, Professional Learning and targeted support was provided for schools to address deficits and gaps in student learning.

All schools participating in NAPLAN were eligible for this project as most had some under-performing students. In addition, some schools were identified through the analysis of NAPLAN data and specially invited engage with this project. This project commenced in 2022 and continues until 2025. The Literacy aspect supported underperforming schools with improving reading and writing.

For writing, schools were identified based on data from Valuate (AISWA’s NAPLAN analysis tool) and the Brightpath Narrative ruler (evidence-based formative assessment writing tool). Overall data shows that usage of the Brightpath ruler continues to grow especially as it has extended into Years 7 and 8. Professional Learning using the *Brightpath Next Steps* product (created by AISWA), was offered as part of this priority, however uptake was less than the intended targets. Curriculum aligned, professional learning was also offered to support engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors. Whilst face to face Professional Learning was not taken advantage of, an online session was well attended.

For reading, support was offered with resources and programs including but not limited to: Sharp Reading, Scaffolding Adolescent Literacy, and Visual Literacy. Supporting EAL/D learners in the classroom was identified as a particular area of need for all AISWA schools. As part of this priority, Professional Learning was provided to support teachers of EAL/D learners including but not limited to using the Western Australian EAL/D Progress Maps.

Working with remote Aboriginal Schools has formed a large part of support to schools in 2024. These schools typically have a high turnover of teaching staff, who come with little or no experience in working with Aboriginal students who speak English as another language. The Numeracy aspect supported underperforming schools with a focus on developing skills in teaching place value.

Using the *Teaching Place Value* resources (co-developed by AISWA and Dr Paul Swan), schools were supported to develop a whole school approach. Professional learning packages and accompanying teaching resources, were specifically designed for remote and rural schools who do not have ready access to professional learning opportunities. This suite of *Teaching Place Value* materials includes a Facilitator’s Guide, *Teaching Place Value* year books, video instruction for activities, year by year Menu Planners, resources, and assessment materials.

The *Facilitator’s Guide* outlines the six modules of professional learning and includes an overview on how to use the resource, the learning menus, activities, and video support for the activities. AISWA schools were provided with the opportunity to participate in an introductory 90-minute workshop at their school. Participating schools received a *Teaching Place Value Facilitator’s Guide* and *Materials Kit*, that includes counters, dice, transparent spinners, and a USB that houses the 14 videos.

Timeframes

These four activities will continue in 2025.

Outcomes Achieved – Valuate Assessment Tool

Outcomes	Indicators of success
<p>Teachers will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the learning needs for students based on specific areas of English development or misconceptions in Mathematics. • Use the assessment analysis to check against a progression of skills from the early years. • Support students to establish their zone of proximal development. • Identify those students at or below minimal standard with a view to establishing Individual education programs based upon their knowledge and understanding. • Use the data to plan a program which differentiates the learning for each individual student. • Use the data to make the learning visible for both students and parents. • Develop learning plans for each student. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 145 schools completed the NAPLAN assessment online. All schools were provided the opportunity to receive targeted professional learning surrounding the tables and displays for the 2024 set of results in Valuate. • Participants were supported to develop learning opportunities for at-risk students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 (refer specific indicators of success in the Literacy and Numeracy outcomes tables). • Samples of work plans and data on student gain were shared amongst participating schools and the wider sector. • 16 professional learning sessions were delivered to 26 schools in 2024, focusing on pedagogical practices informed by data. In addition, ad hoc over the phone and email support was provided as needed.

Outcomes Achieved – Literacy

Outcomes	Indicators of success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of the use of the Brightpath Rulers. • Support teachers to use the Brightpath Next Steps materials to address their schools' writing needs with a specific focus on the Teaching Emphases. • Targeted literacy support for locating, planning for, and using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authored texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data from the School Curriculum and Standards Authority showed a 10% increase in use of the Brightpath Ruler. • Due to the sale of Brightpath informal support was provided via email and phone calls. • 50% of schools include more ATSI authored texts. • Forty-eight participants attended an online session run by a local Aboriginal author. Email and phone support was provided to schools to support the inclusion of ATSI authors.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of access to quality classroom resources and materials developed for the teaching of literacy including Sharp Reading, Visual Literacy, Scaffolding Adolescent Literacy. • Feedback shows teachers have an increased awareness of meeting the needs of EAL/D students in developing English understandings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sixteen professional learning sessions were delivered in 2024 with 180 participants. These were presented both centrally and within schools. • 80% of the teacher participants in the PL indicated that the literacy resources have been effectively used in the classroom. • Anecdotal evidence also supports that the resources continue to be used. • 27 EAL/D sessions were presented with 300 participants. • 80% of participants indicated they now have a better understanding of meeting the needs of EAL/D students. • Fifteen visits to remote Aboriginal schools to provide ongoing literacy support. Working with teachers, these visits covered reading, writing and spelling, working with Aboriginal Education Workers, whole school planning, living in a remote community, and linking <i>On Country Learning</i> with literacy.
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Outcomes Achieved – Teaching Place Value

Outcomes	Indicators of success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of targeted numeracy and mathematics support for developing place value understandings, by schools focusing on a whole school approach that incorporates routines, repeatable activities, and a range of pedagogical practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Whole School Approach to Teaching Place Value was presented to over 200 staff from 25 schools. Schools in regional and remote WA are strongly represented. Three Kimberley Aboriginal and Independent Community Schools and three Mid-West Geraldton schools participated. There were two school from both the Great Southern and Southwest regions. The program was also delivered in the Goldfields. • Sixty seven percent of participating schools responded to a feedback survey. Forty percent of these schools have adopted a whole school approach.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upskilling of teachers to become more confident and capable maths teachers. The 14 videos will improve teacher knowledge and model how to conduct a range of place value activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ninety percent of participants in Professional Learning sessions used the place value resources. Fifty percent of respondents said they used the place value videos.

- Provision of quality classroom resources developed for the teaching and learning of mathematics and used by teachers.
- Identification of the learning needs for students based on assessing their additive and multiplicative place value understandings.
- Creation of a positive disposition towards Mathematics for both teachers and students.
- Feedback data shows improvement in place value understandings for students and teachers.
- Eighty percent of participants in Professional Learning sessions found both the books and manipulatives useful to develop place value understanding and to incorporate into warmup routines.
- The Learning Menus and assessments clearly distinguish between these understandings, but no data has been collected on this.
- Sixty percent of participants in Professional Learning sessions recorded a rating of '7 or higher' (1-10 scale) for increases in student engagement and interest. Teachers enjoyed the games and hands-on resources.
- Schools use the test summatively, so feedback data to validate any improvement of place value understandings was not collected.
- Focus was on workshopping staff on the activities in the sessions provided. Improvement will be better gauged, when the whole school approach for place value has been in place for 3 or more years.

Risk Management

Risk	How the risk will be managed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The risk of future lockdowns means planned face to face sessions and networking cannot occur. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant risk events materialised during the reporting period. All planned face-to-face sessions and networking events proceeded as scheduled.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient demand for an activity, results in it being postponed or cancelled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant interest and engagement were sufficient across all activities, with no need to postpone or cancel any due to lack of demand. As a result, no contingency measures (such as switching to online delivery, rescheduling, or rolling funds over) were required.

Activity Expenditure

	Centralised (Reporting Year Only)	Distributed (Reporting Year Only)
Expenditure	\$203,920	\$-

Centralised funds for this activity were used to provide consulting staff to support schools, prepare and deliver events in schools (including regional schools) and engage with the Valuate and Brightpath products.

Activity/Initiative	Engaging Aboriginal Communities in Community Schools to Support Improved Student Outcomes
Priority	D – Strengthening outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools and students

Activity Description

This project, commenced in 2020, continued to work with the governing bodies of **Aboriginal Independent Community Schools** (AICS) to engage them in the school to support improved educational outcomes for students.

“All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young peoples must be empowered to achieve their full learning potential, shape their own futures, and embrace their cultures, languages and identities as Australia’s First Nations peoples.” Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration 2019.

This initiative targeted leadership and skills development of school board members.

The essential focus on two-way learning for the empowerment of school board members in making their voices heard and acted upon was facilitated through:

- Empowering community mentors in guiding ‘the right way’, and cultural understandings.
- Framing ‘school board’ language and concepts through the application of culturally significant metaphors, *e.g. Turtle Steps*, has generated an agentive narrative.

Facing learning challenges and a deep commitment by all parties to two-way learning by providing multiple opportunities for learning in local languages and English.

Due to the difficulty of Governing Boards coming together at the same location, online PowerPoint sessions were created which Principals and Governing Bodies could work through at their own pace and adapt to meet their needs. The first of these PowerPoint presentations, Money Coming In, was presented at the 2024 annual remote schools’ governance conference, referred to as ‘The Broome Conference’. In addition, each school was provided with a copy of the Gunbalanya Governance Guide as a support for their journey of self-development.

Timeframes

This activity will continue beyond 2024 into 2025.

Outcomes Achieved

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating schools will develop a case for change with the aim of developing a comprehensive action plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligned financial terminology between Aboriginal Independent Community Schools (AICS) financial reports from the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporation (ORIC) and support modules. • First module created and presented at the 2024 remote schools Governance Conference. Presentation sent out to all 14 remote schools.

- The school governing body, with support, will develop its knowledge, expertise, and decision-making skills to drive positive change in the school and community.
- Each school provided with a copy of Gunbalanya Governance Guide.
- Ongoing professional support provided by ForwardThinking consulting to consultants focusing on financial training for a School Board.
- Training in governance accepted by several schools with one full board travelling to Perth for a workshop
- Surveys and feedback from principals, teachers, Aboriginal educators and board members rated these services relevant, valued and important for successful strengthening of outcomes for both schools and students.
- Provision of PL to Early Childhood Educators on the Early Years Learning Framework, Environments, Early Years Principles and Practices, and Assessment for Teaching and Learning onsite in country.
- 14 schools participated – all AIC’s schools

Eligible schools

All Aboriginal Independent Community Schools were invited to express an interest in being part of this project.

ID	School Name
2756	CAPS Coolgardie
8870	CAPS Kurrawang
5603	Karalundi College
16023	Kulkarriya Community School
17285	Nyikina Mangala Community School
13289	Parnngurr Community School
13596	Purnululu Community School
4264	Rawa Community School
2705	Strelley Community School
13603	Wongutha CAPS
16021	Wulungarra Community School
14016	Yakanarra Community School
29953	Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School
2771	Yiyili Aboriginal Community School

Risk Management

Risk	How the risk will be managed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to unforeseen circumstances planned face to face sessions and networking cannot occur. Insufficient demand for an activity, results in it being postponed or cancelled. School participation decreases due to difficulty in engaging community members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempts will be made to-reschedule an activity and review it to make it more appealing. Schools will be directly invited to take part. AISWA will work closely with participating schools and make every effort to keep community members engaged.

Activity Expenditure

	Centralised (Reporting Year Only)	Distributed (Reporting Year Only)
Expenditure	\$49,537	\$-

Centralised funds were used to facilitate staff travel and run culturally appropriate events to support AICS schools with governance and to develop relevant resources.

Activity/Initiative	Future Footprints: Strengthening the primary to secondary education transition experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, young people, and their schools
Priority	D – Strengthening outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools and students

Activity Description

The AISWA Future Footprints Program (FFP) has long supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attending boarding schools in Perth. In 2024, the program was significantly expanded through the Choice and Affordability Fund (CAF), enabling enhanced support for families and young people to make informed decisions about secondary education. This included guidance on local, regional, residential, and flexible learning options. FFP’s overarching goal remains the provision of culturally safe learning environments, improved student engagement, and support for transition from primary to secondary schooling and beyond.

1. School Coordinator Support and Staff Development

A key priority in 2024 was strengthening the skills and knowledge of school coordinators and staff. FFP delivered sustained support through individual mentoring, professional learning opportunities, and collaborative planning. A particular emphasis was placed on boosting capabilities around transition planning, cultural responsiveness, and student engagement strategies.

FFP facilitated a series of professional learning forums throughout the year, providing opportunities for coordinators and staff to share best practices, develop new approaches, and build a strong, cross-school professional learning community. These forums helped establish consistent, culturally informed transition planning across all participating schools. In 2024, the program also grew its membership base, extending its reach to additional schools and students.

2. Cultural Mentorship and Leadership

The leadership of AISWA’s Manager of First Nations Programs and Partnerships, an Aboriginal man with a strong background in cultural mentoring and education, was central to FFP’s success. His role involved guiding schools in creating culturally safe practices, mentoring staff and students, and strengthening engagement with local communities.

His longstanding relationships with Elders and community organisations ensured that FFP’s activities were both culturally appropriate and aligned with community aspirations. His mentorship supported schools in co-designing inclusive environments and responding effectively to the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families.

3. Community Outreach and Family Engagement

In 2024, FFP deepened its commitment to regional and remote communities through extensive outreach and relationship-building. A highlight of the year was FFP’s participation in the Broome Conference, where staff led cultural safety workshops for teachers and Aboriginal Teaching Assistants (ATAs).

Outreach visits to remote communities provided families with accessible, practical information about boarding school life and options in Perth, helping to alleviate concerns and foster trust. Regular community workshops, information sessions, and attendance at cultural events further solidified FFP’s role as a trusted, culturally safe point of contact.

A new pilot initiative was also launched to build ATA leadership, with professional learning pathways co-designed to support their expanded roles in cultural leadership, mentoring, and community engagement.

4. Student Development and Cultural Identity

FFP promoted student leadership and cultural identity through mentoring and cultural immersion activities. Students engaged in programs such as dance, art, and storytelling, which nurtured pride, confidence, and stronger connections to culture.

These experiences positively impacted wellbeing, strengthened school engagement, and supported retention. By blending cultural education with academic mentoring, FFP ensured students were both culturally affirmed and academically supported during key transition stages.

5. Systemic Advocacy and Cultural Change

FFP also played a strategic role in promoting system-wide cultural change across schools. In 2024, the program partnered with school leadership to challenge deficit-based thinking and embed strength-based, culturally responsive practices.

Professional development remained a cornerstone of this effort. FFP provided workshops and immersive learning experiences co-developed with Elders and cultural educators. These sessions helped build a deeper understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories among staff and leadership.

Through this work, schools were better equipped to provide inclusive and affirming environments. The program's alignment with Closing the Gap priorities further reinforced its focus on equity and systemic transformation.

In 2024, FFP continued to demonstrate strong outcomes through its culturally grounded, community-led approach. It remained vital in improving educational experiences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across Western Australia, with a strong focus on cultural safety, family partnerships, student empowerment, and school transformation.

Participating Metro schools

All Saints' College	Aquinas College	Carmel Adventist College
Christ Church Grammar School	Guildford Grammar School	Hale School
Iona Presentation College	Mazenod College	Mercedes College
Methodist Ladies' College	Penrhos College	Perth College
Presbyterian Ladies' College	Santa Maria College	Scotch College
SEDA	St Brigid's College	St Hilda's Anglican School For Girls
St Marys Anglican Girls' School	Trinity college	Wesley College

Participating AICS (Aboriginal Independent Community Schools)

CAPS Coolgardie	Caps Kurrawang	Karalundi College
Kulkarriya Community School	Manjali Studio School	Nyikina Mangala Community School
Parnngurr Community School	Purnululu School	Rawa Community School
Strelley Community School	Wongutha Caps	Wulungarra Community School
Yakanarra Community School	Yiyili Community School	Yiramaley Studio School

Timeframes

This activity will continue beyond 2024 into 2025.

Outcomes Achieved

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment of eligible member schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FFP expanded its reach by welcoming additional schools into the program with 36 schools participating in 2024. This included 21 metropolitan schools and 15 regional schools.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater awareness of the primary to secondary school transition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four forums enabled coordinators to share knowledge and strategies for supporting student transitions. Eight outreach visits and information sessions provided families with clear, accessible information. All professional development for school staff included a focus on transition planning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families living in regional, rural, remote, and very remote locations will have greater awareness of secondary school pathways and options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FFP strengthened relationships with families and communities through regional outreach. Eight outreach visits and information sessions provided families with clear, accessible information.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families will receive support with transition planning during Years 5 and 6 to build preparation for secondary schooling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outreach visits and community events offered information around secondary schooling. FFP's Manager of First Nations Programs provided mentoring and cultural guidance. All schools have transition plans for Years 5 and 6.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved school and staff capability to prioritise, resource and implement transition support planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Five tailored professional development sessions together with outreach visits improved staff capacity in transition planning. Mentorship and cultural guidance improved staff understanding of community needs. Schools were supported to embed transition support within broader school planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced school and staff understanding of approaches to supporting effective primary to secondary transitions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Five professional development and learning presentations/workshops for schools and key staff (i.e., AEWs) were delivered. Four forums and peer networking events were facilitated during the year that encouraged knowledge-sharing and reflective practice.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of transition resources for schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural training was co-designed with Elders deepened staff understanding. • An information booklet was produced and work on an online repository of resources has commenced. • Pilot programs focused on co-designing support structures for Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers (ATAs). • Transition tools and materials are informed by community input and best practice.
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Risk Management

Risk	How the risk will be managed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The risk of future COVID-19 lockdowns means planned (face-to-face) professional development and learning and networking cannot occur. • Travel restrictions or limited access to regional, rural, remote, and very remote communities. • Insufficient demand for a particular activity, results in it being postponed or cancelled. • Schools and families start in the project but withdraw part way through due to difficulty in engaging community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant risk events materialised during the reporting period. All planned face-to-face sessions and networking events proceeded as scheduled. • Participant interest and engagement were sufficient across all activities, with no need to postpone or cancel any due to lack of demand. As a result, no contingency measures (such as switching to online delivery, rescheduling, or rolling funds over) were required.

Activity Expenditure

	Centralised (Reporting Year Only)	Distributed (Reporting Year Only)
Expenditure	\$260,850	\$-

Centralised funds were used to allow two staff to facilitate and host meetings, develop resources and travel to remote areas. These funds included spend on admin support and management oversight.

Activity/Initiative	Creating Safe and Supported School Communities
Priority	E – Student wellbeing and support

Activity Description

Schools are supported to create safe environments for the children and young people in their care. Creating safe and supportive learning environments for children and young people is recognised as essential by both state and federal governments. Following the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse and the release of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, schools have been implementing strategies to ensure each student in their care is safe and empowered to express concerns should they have them. At the state level, the school registration Standard 10 is devoted to child safety and child protection, specifically preventing, and responding to child abuse.

AISWA is supporting schools to assist them in creating and implementing a child safe organisation and in fulfilling the requirements under State *Registration Standards and other Requirements for Non-Government Schools* Standard 10 (Child Abuse Prevention).

All schools have access to an AISWA staff member who can provide support, consultation, provide guidelines on policies, procedures and practices and training in the areas of child abuse, grooming and mandatory reporting, reportable conduct, protective behaviours and sexual abuse prevention education, sexual behaviour in children and young people, staff professional boundaries and child protection.

Eligible schools

All schools can be involved in accessing this support to create a safe and supported learning environment for all students.

Timeframes

This activity has been undertaken under the current workplan to the end of 2025, with revisions in a new workplan for 2026-29.

Outcomes Achieved

Outcomes	Indicators of success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools are provided access to an AISWA child protection staff member for support and consultation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is continuing demand for support particularly leadership in managing and reporting child protection/safety matters and incidents. This is in the form of emails, phone consultation and occasionally school visits. This includes an increase in occurrences of sexual behaviour in children and young people including harmful sexual behaviour in students and to other students. Consulting and working with other AISWA staff in supporting schools.

- Consulting with outside agencies to gain further insight and further information. For example, Mandatory Reporting Service, Communities, CAIT (Child Assessment and Interview Team), CEWA etc.
 - Further training for consultant in Trauma Responsive Practice in Education to increase knowledge in supporting schools.
 - Being a member of the interagency project team in developing a Statewide HSB (Harmful Sexual Behaviour) Framework
 - All professional learning, supporting materials and resources were adapted and sourced to accommodate each specific school needs, philosophies etc including both AISWA Indigenous schools and AISWA CaRE schools. For example, the Keeping Safe training was adapted and structured with specific Indigenous activities and resources for the 2024 Broome Conference.
 - During 2024, 16 AISWA schools engaged in the Child Protection: Including Mandatory Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse, reporting other forms of abuse, Child Abuse Prevention, Grooming and Staff Professional Boundaries for all staff.
 - During 2024, 3875 participants completed the E-Learning online course. This course is updated each Semester.
 - A number of governing body members participated in either the E-Learning online course or the face-to-face child Protection session.
 - A small number of schools requested specific governing body member training. This also included Reportable Conduct Scheme Training.
 - Twelve schools participated in *Beyond Child Abuse Reporting* in 2024.
 - Each of these courses and presentations are continually updated with latest information, advice from experts and legislation change.
 - Various schools requested either professional learning or consultation regarding the Reporting Conduct Scheme.
- Provision of training and professional learning both face to face and online.
 - Professional Learning and training based on legislation and any related changes for example but not limited to:
 - Child Protection: Including Mandatory Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse, reporting other forms of abuse, Child Abuse Prevention, Grooming and Staff Professional Boundaries for all staff.
 - Child Abuse Reporting including Mandatory Reporting (E-Learning online course)
 - Beyond Child Abuse Reporting - Understanding Sexual Behaviour in Children and Young People, Grooming and Staff Professional Boundaries
 - Reportable Conduct Scheme

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional learning and training supporting school registration requirements for example but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implementing National Principals of Child Safe organisations from an Independent School perspective. ○ Standard 10 Registration Guidelines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fifty-two participants attended the Reportable Conduct Scheme Workshop conduct by the WA Ombudsman (Nov 2024) • Implementing the National Principles for Safe Organisations professional learning was unable to be presented during 2024. However, consultation occurred with various schools, and the content was also presented as part of the registration seminars during Standard 10 of the Registration requirements for Non-Government Schools. • Presenting <i>Complying with Standard 10: Preventing and responding to child abuse</i> as part of two one day seminars for school leaders and governing bodies. At least ninety AISWA school participants attended these sessions. • Schools visits, phone calls and team meetings • Engaging with NGSR (Non-Government Schools Regulation) in understanding the areas that schools require support in especially post re-registration.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Learning and training supporting a protective behaviours and sexual prevention education including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum • Train the Trainer Keeping Safe Child Protection Curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forty-six AISWA schools engaged in Keeping Safe training during 2024. • Consultation and support are available to schools in tailoring the implementation of this curriculum into their schools. • With continuing demand, schools are provided with the opportunity to have leaders trained at the Train the Trainer event so they can then train their staff in the one-day session. • Thirty- three participants engaged in the Train the Trainer event in 2024.

Objectives

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional learning and training supporting other areas of AISWA, for example but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New graduate program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of <i>Child Protection and Safeguarding</i> to the new graduates/ early career teachers in 2024.

- Wellbeing
- New leaders/principals
- Registration
- Professional learning or presentations engaging outside experts/speakers to provide specialist presentations on specific child protection topics.
- e.g., pornography, e-safety
- Updating Schools with child protection and child safeguarding information/changes
- Child protection related resources
- School re-registration and new school support and consultation in all related child protection and child safe standards in the Non-Government Registration requirements
- Representation and consultation on state and national groups including but not limited to:
 - NGSR – Non-Government Schools Regulator
 - Ongoing membership of the Mandatory Reporting Interagency Training Group (MRITG) (State group)
 - WA representation for AIS in child protection related matters/projects
 - WA Education intersectoral representation in current topic working groups e.g., Respectful Relationships
 - E safety Commissioner – Online Safety Education Council
- Presentation of *Introduction to AISWA Child Protection*
- Presentation to AISWA Psychologists on Mandatory Reporting
- AISWA Schools psychologists meeting
- Specific bespoke engagement with schools
- Reportable Conduct Scheme Workshop with the WA Ombudsman
- South Australia Keeping Safe Curriculum Trainers
- Schools were informed through newsletters, emails, and during presentations.
- During 2024:
 - Links to Mandatory Reporting Interagency Training Group training
 - Ombudsman WA website and webinar
 - Mandatory Reporting updated resources
 - Child Maltreatment Study statistics
 - Updating of the Child Protection section of the AISWA website.
 - E-Safety day
 - Child Protection week
- Presenting Complying with Standard 10: Preventing and responding to child abuse as part of two one day seminars for school leaders and governing bodies.
- Support was provided to schools as needed.
- During 2024, the AISWA child protection consultant continued to provide representation and consultation to these listed groups and in addition:
 - Independent Schools Australia Child Protection group
 - Interagency project team in developing a Statewide HSB (Harmful Sexual Behaviour) Framework.
 - Respectful Relationships Online Professional Development Program with DoE and CEWA.
 - Project group for the development of Respectful Relationships Education Resources for AISWA and CEWA schools

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration and consultation with other AISWA professionals including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Psychology team ○ Registration and governance ○ Industrial relations ○ Wellbeing • Timely reviews of AISWA policy and procedure guidelines that relate to child protection and child safeguarding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consultation with the WA Ombudsman to provide an Independent School perspective to the Reportable Conduct Scheme and plan workshops in 2024/25. • Support and collaboration with the AISWA Psychologists in becoming Mandatory Reporters in May 2024 • Continuing to consult and collaborate with the relevant consultant in matters that require registration and governance and particularly industrial and workplace relations. • The AISWA Child Protection Policy and Procedure Guidelines were extensively reviewed and updated in May 2024.
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Risk Management

Risk	How the risk will be managed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The risk of future lockdowns, natural disasters (floods, bushfires) etc means planned face to face sessions and networking cannot occur. • Insufficient demand for an activity or unforeseen event, results in a postponement or cancellation. • Inability to support high demand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2024 there was little to no risk in the area of natural disasters etc. • Opportunities for consultation and support was still able to be supplied via phone and/or email to some schools that may have been flood affected. • During 2024, there was an online E-Safety webinar that was cancelled due to insufficient numbers. This was reassessed as to reasons for lack of interest and further conversations with schools regarding need in the e-safety space. • Due to unforeseen circumstances (consultant was unavailable due to personal reasons), some professional learning was postponed. Alternatives were discussed with some schools doing online training in the interim. Most professional learning was rescheduled. • This is continually reviewed through data etc., as demand is high particularly during specific times of the year such as during pupil free days at the beginning of terms

Activity Expenditure

	Centralised (Reporting Year Only)	Distributed (Reporting Year Only)
Expenditure	\$175,225	\$-

Centralised funds for this activity were used to allow staff to develop resources, deliver and design professional learning, and travel to schools (including regional schools) where additional support was requested.

Activity/Initiative	Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools
Priority	E – Student wellbeing and support

Activity Description

Schools require ongoing proactive support to create and maintain safe environments and AISWA encouraged schools to access this support to create a safe and supported learning environment for students.

In 2024 this project supported 20 schools. Ten schools from the initial cohort concluded in June 2024 and ten new schools from cohort 2 joined the project at the beginning of 2024. AISWA provided financial support to enable the schools to employ a school-based Wellbeing Coordinator (approximately 1 day per week) to drive mental health and wellbeing in the school. AISWA provided centralised consultative support to the schools working to develop this role in schools.

This project provides schools the opportunity to network with other schools as they embed the Wellbeing Coordinator role in the school. Schools value the opportunity to share experiences as to what works and where more work needs to be done.

The centralised funding for this project supported the network meetings, professional learning and administrative support for the school psychologists working with the project schools.

Eligible schools

All schools were eligible to express interest to join this project. Schools were selected using blind procedures to ensure equity. Selection criteria included a balance of metropolitan, regional, primary, and secondary schools. Strong interest from school leadership in delivering whole-school wellbeing was a requirement for selection. Schools who already employed established health and wellbeing coordinators were not eligible.

Timeframes

Each cohort of 10 schools was supported over a two-year period, with a six-month overlap of the two groups occurring during 2024. The project will conclude in 2025.

Outcomes Achieved

Outcomes	Indicators of success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised awareness and shared understanding of best practice wellbeing approaches for schools and factors related to successful wellbeing interventions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Wellbeing Coordinators appointed and working in this role across all project schools.

- Schools will be supported to implement whole school evidence-based wellbeing strategies that reflect sustainable and continuous commitments to student wellbeing and mental health.

Cohort 1 schools – concluded June 2024

- Schools received PL in the form of 4 half-day meetings (2 per term) and 3 workshops in 2024 on creating positive climates in schools, physical environment, wellbeing policies and plans culminating in sharing of final whole school wellbeing plans.

Cohort 2 schools – commenced February 2024

- Schools received 4 whole-day network workshops (1 per term) across the year. Content included: wellbeing planning across the school, evidence-based practice, social and emotional learning, wellbeing measurement, and frameworks.
- Meetings were scheduled by consensus to facilitate regional schools to travel less frequently yet cover same the content as the previous cohort.
- By the end of year report, all schools had established wellbeing teams within the school to support the work of the co-ordinators.
- A community online page shared with all schools to consolidate project resources and relevant reference materials.

Cohort 1 schools – concluded June 2024

- At the conclusion of the project, 50% of schools had developed a whole school wellbeing plan, with a further 30% started planning or developed initial frameworks. Two schools had not provided any evidence of progress.
- All schools have received termly site visits to discuss context-specific wellbeing plans and initiatives.

Cohort 2 schools – commenced February 2024

- End of year reports indicated all schools had commenced exploring wellbeing frameworks to develop their own contextual plans. Some schools had conducted surveys while others had plans to implement surveys in 2025

- Improved whole school capability to prioritise, resource and implement the explicit teaching of social and emotional skills via age appropriate, developmental curricula.
 - All schools engaged via regular visits or virtual consultations with their school psychologist to discuss progress.
 - One school withdrew from the program during the year with a wait-list school engaged to join the program in 2025. No reports were received from the initial school during the year.
- Cohort 1 schools – concluded June 2024**
- By the final report 80% of schools had selected and implemented or planned to implement social & emotional learning (SEL) programs. One school was still actively investigating options, while the final school did not respond or submit evidence of progress.
- Cohort 2 schools – commenced February 2024**
- All schools had engaged in professional learning to evaluate effective social & emotional learning (SEL) programs.
 - The end of year report showed 6 schools had selected programs with plans to implement in 2025, 2 were still researching with one yet to explore options.

Risk Management

Risk	How the risk will be managed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The risk of future lockdowns means planned face to face sessions and networking cannot occur. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making when selecting Cohort 2 schools was refined to include enhanced discussions with school leadership regarding expectations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient demand for an activity, results in it being postponed or cancelled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to take schools from waitlist and enter program late to ensure maximum engagement.

Activity Expenditure

	Centralised (Reporting Year Only)	Distributed (Reporting Year Only)
Expenditure	\$1,222	\$323,000

The centralised funds for this activity were used to cover incidental costs incurred by staff working in this area.

Cohort 1 Schools until June 2024

ID	Name
16920	Blue Gum Montessori School
2085	Carmel School
85461	Helena River Steiner School
16533	Hope Christian College
233	John Calvin School (Albany)
15360	Living Waters Lutheran College
13271	Parklands School
2768	Regent College
13286	St Andrew's Grammar School
242	Treetops Montessori School

Cohort 2 Schools Jan – Dec 2024

ID	Name
14323	Al-Hidayah Islamic School
13800	Chrysalis Montessori School
16330	Ellenbrook Christian College
15894	Great Southern Grammar
13656	John Wollaston Anglican Community School
17271	Kwoorabup Nature School
243	Lance Holt School
30268	Northshore Christian Grammar
23696	Peter Carnley Anglican Community School
27701	Esperance Anglican School ** withdrew mid 2024