



AUSTRALIA



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Ongoing priorities and themes and follow-up: Indigenous children and Indigenous youth

**Statement by Ms Tania Rishniw, Assistant Secretary
Australian Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, and**

(Check against delivery)

Australia has made the future of Indigenous children one of its key priorities, particularly the education of future generations. Australia welcomes the opportunity to share its practical approach for tackling low school attendance rates with the Remote Schools Attendance Strategy.

It's hard to be literate and numerate without attending school; it's hard to find work without a basic education; and it's hard to live well without a job. A good education is fundamental to a good start in life. A lack of education limits choices later in life to engage economically, socially and politically within one's community and nation more broadly.

This is why Australia has placed a strong focus on breaking the cycle of non-attendance to ensure parents and carers take responsibility for educating

their children. It is important that today's children are getting to school so they can be equipped to become future leaders in their communities.

The Australian Government's Remote School Attendance Strategy addresses the issue of non-attendance with funding provided to help ensure every child attends school every day. Over 100 remote communities benefit from local School Attendance Officers on the ground working with parents and communities to improve school attendance rates.

School Attendance Officers encourage school attendance through a variety of measures, including walking or driving children to school, helping with school lunch preparation and organising uniforms.

The strategy is making a difference, with more than 600 additional students in school each day across the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia compared to 2013.

The Strategy also provides employment for Indigenous people, which is another key priority for the Australian Government. School Attendance Officers and School Attendance Supervisors are Indigenous people from the communities who are on the ground and work with parents and communities to improve school attendance rates. Remote communities will now benefit further from an increase in the number of School Attendance Officers and School Attendance Supervisors employed under the strategy. A key element in taking this forward is community ownership and participation.

- 3 -

Education is empowering and at the heart of creating opportunities and a better life. It is a key pathway to prosperity and wellbeing for all Australians to which the Australian Government is strongly committed.

Thank you madam Chair.