

***Review of the IAS
funded secondary
school scholarships
for Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander
Students***

Final Report

Part 1

**PwC's Indigenous
Consulting**

*Department of the
Prime Minister and
Cabinet*

June 2017



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Executive summary

PricewaterhouseCoopers Indigenous Consulting (PIC) was appointed in February 2017 by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (the department) to undertake a review of Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) funded secondary school scholarships.

About the scholarships

Attainment of higher levels of education is directly associated with improved health outcomes, socio-economic status and prosperity.¹ Completion of Year 12 or its equivalent provides an important step along the path to economic participation and access to further training or education opportunity. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' school completion rates fall well below the rates of their non-Indigenous counterparts.

The IAS' three core priority areas of getting children to school, adults into work and building safe communities are supported by five programme streams one of which is the Children and Schooling Programme. Under this programme the IAS funds ten scholarship providers to provide secondary school scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. A smaller number of tertiary scholarships are also delivered by some scholarship providers.

IAS funded secondary school scholarships are intended to help address geographical impediments (students living in isolated and remote communities where education may be sparse or non-existent), access to high quality education providers including boarding schools, and economic barriers (the costs of attending school) preventing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attaining Year 12 or equivalent qualifications. In addition scholarships can play an important role in promoting the importance of education attainment and participation and place a priority on leadership development as well as providing a strong platform for future economic participation and career outcomes.

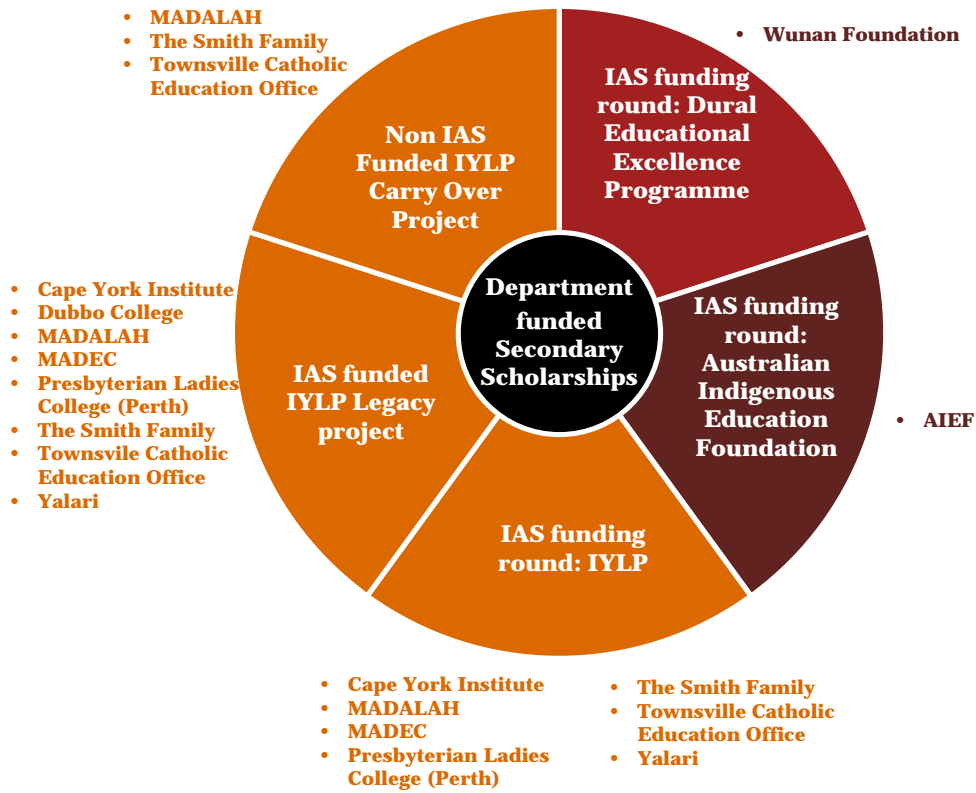
The department provides funds to support a number of scholarships including:

- Non-IAS funded Indigenous Youth Leadership Programme (IYLP) carry over scholarships: Allocated unspent funds identified during the 2012 acquittal to support students commencing in Year 10 in 2014 through to December 2016. Scholarships under these agreements were of 3 years duration.
- IAS funded IYLP legacy project: Provided support to scholars who commenced a program but had yet to complete their secondary school studies under the previous IYLP to attain a Year 12 or equivalent qualification.
- IAS funding round which allocated funds as follows:
 - A competitive grant round where previously funded IYLP scholarship providers were invited to make submissions for scholarship funding
 - the Wunan Foundation
 - Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (AIEF).

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 4704.0 - The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, Oct 2010 available at <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/lookup/4704.0Chapter365Oct+2010>; <http://www.oecd.org/edu/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm>

Figure 1 provides a summary of IAS funded secondary school scholarships including the scholarship providers.

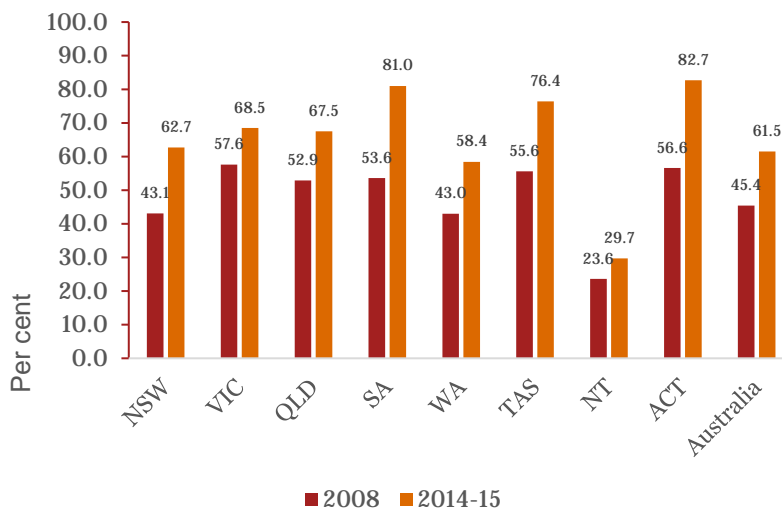
Figure 1 Department Funded Secondary School Scholarships



About the review

The *Closing the Gap Prime Minister's Report 2017* indicates that progress is being made on improving Year 12 or equivalent attainment by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people as set out in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Proportion of Indigenous 20-24 year olds with Year 12 or equivalent attainment, by state/territory, 2008 and 2014-15



Scholarship projects funded by the IAS have reported high completion rates. A review of the projects was required to assist with developing a comprehensive picture of the reach and achievements of the IAS funded scholarships and the contribution of these scholarships to improving attainment.

It is in this context that this eight week review comprised two distinct components:

- 1 building as comprehensive a picture as possible of funded activity with specific lines of inquiry focused on:
 - administration and delivery
 - student application and selection processes
 - evidence of current and future need
 - costs (this includes an assessment of value for money including level of co-investment in scholarships and various cost drivers including school type and student characteristics)
 - impact and outcomes.
- 2 providing advice on data availability and quality. This includes an assessment of strengths, gaps and opportunities to enhance data collection, quality assurance, analysis, storage and sharing in the future.

Our approach combined desktop analysis, data review and analysis, consultation (particularly with scholarship providers and education partners), and the facilitation of a workshop with the department to develop recommendations for future data requirements.

Overview of scholarship providers

The department provides funds to ten secondary school scholarship providers in order to enable Indigenous students to attend high performing schools (i.e. education partners) across the country. In addition to high performing secondary schools, some scholarship providers have established education partnerships with Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), TAFEs and other tertiary institutions. However, unless otherwise stated, any reference to 'education partners' throughout this report refers to the high performing secondary schools which have existing partnerships with the IAS funded scholarship providers.

Following our desktop review, consultation and data analysis, we have assembled detailed profiles for each funded scholarship provider. For each scholarship provider the profile provides:

- an organisation overview
- background and context
- an overview of current practice
- other notable funding.

Detailed scholarship provider profiles are provided at Appendix A.

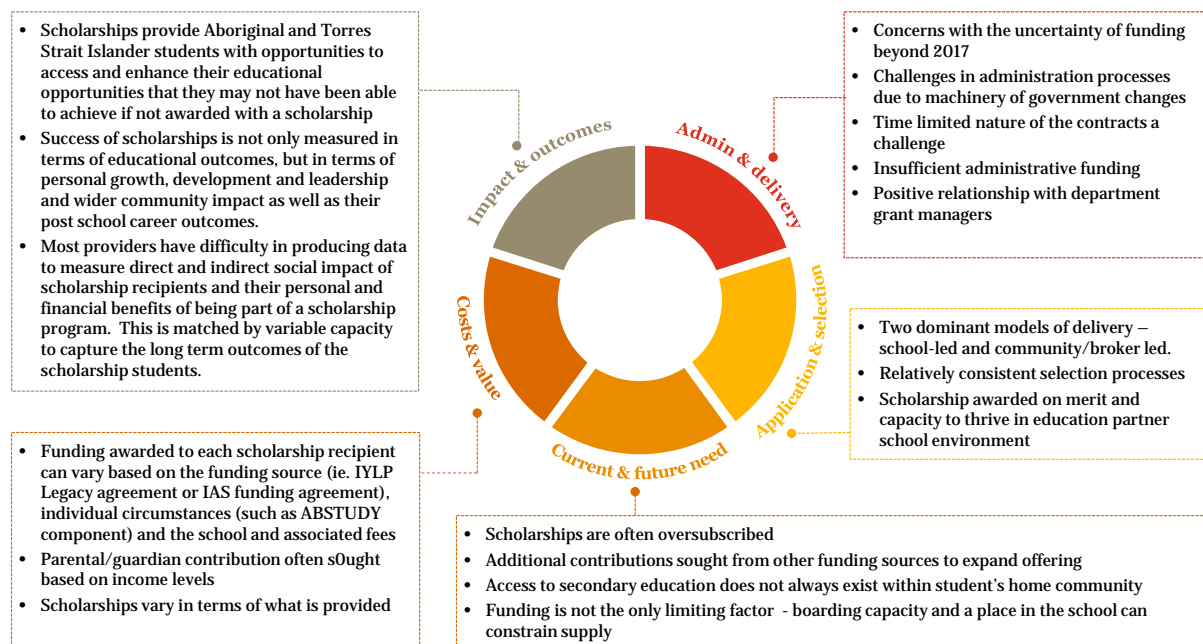
Scholarship providers are located in Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland and reach a student catchment area which includes Western Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

While each scholarship provider has unique characteristics and qualities there are two dominant approaches to the administration of scholarships – a school led model and a community/broker led model. In very simple terms, a defining feature of the school-led model is that the school

selects and enrolls applicants while in the community/broker-led model this process is administered by the scholarship provider.

Consultations were held with all ten scholarship providers, comprising a combination of face to face and teleconference interviews. Key themes from the consultations against each line of inquiry are outlined in Figure 3. A detailed summary is provided in section 2.6.

Figure 3 High level summary of consultation themes



The education partner survey and consultations demonstrated that the majority of respondents view the IAS funded scholarships positively. A summary of their survey responses to key assertions relating to the scholarships (and their relationships with scholarship providers) is provided below. It is important to acknowledge that not all education partners participated in the survey. Therefore, the following table provides a snapshot of perceptions based on the feedback received from the survey respondents.

Table 1: Summary of education partner perceptions of the IAS funded scholarships

Assertion	Inadequate	Somewhat inadequate	Neutral	Some extent	Great extent
Administration of scholarships supports recipients to complete their education	0%	3.8%	5.7%	30.2%	60.4%
Scholarships are targeting the students most in need	0%	5.7%	15.1%	39.6%	39.6%
Recipients are making the most of the opportunities at their respective schools	0%	3.8%	7.5%	20.8%	67.9%
Scholarships have assisted recipients to complete Year 12	0%	0%	11.3%	26.4%	62.3%
Current funding is sufficient to support recipients to complete their education	7.5%	5.7%	1.9%	28.3%	56.6%

Current state of data holdings

Snapshot of the IAS funded secondary school scholarships

Although the INDIGO database has been decommissioned, the department currently requires each scholarship provider to report its key activities via an alternative reporting mechanism. Whilst the requirements are not comprehensive, the department held data can be used to provide a snapshot of the IAS funded secondary school scholarships as they are currently delivered. The department provided PIC with data for eight out of the ten scholarship providers. PIC engaged with the other two scholarship providers and obtained a comprehensive data response from one of these organisations. The following snapshot therefore includes data from nine out of the ten scholarship providers.

Based on the available data, in 2016 1,418 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were recipients of an IAS funded secondary school scholarship. Of the recipients, the majority were male. Specifically, 52.0% of recipients (i.e. 737 scholars) were male and 45.3% (i.e. 643 scholars) were female. The gender of 2.7% of scholarship recipients (i.e. 38 scholars) was not stated.

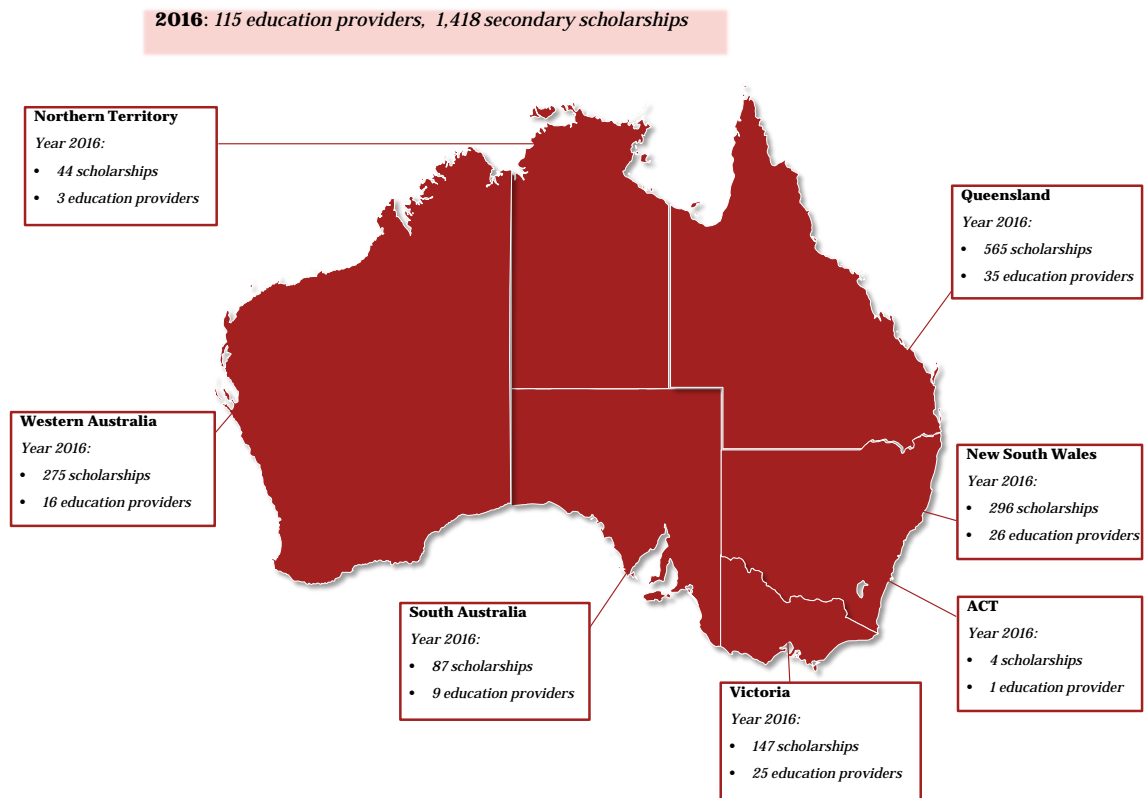
Of the scholarship recipients in 2016, 49.7% (i.e. 705 scholars) were from remote or very remote communities with a further 30.4% (i.e. 431 scholars) from regional areas of Australia. As outlined below, the majority of scholarship recipients (61.4%) in 2016 were completing Year 10, Year 11 or Year 12.

Table 2: Distribution of scholarship recipients by school level

	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Total
No. of recipients	1	110	202	234	317	312	242	1,418
Percentage	0.1%	7.8%	14.2%	16.5%	22.4%	22.0%	17.1%	100.0%

In total, in 2016 the ten scholarship providers had active partnerships with more than 115 Catholic, independent and government schools around Australia. Figure 4 summarises the location and number of education partners in 2016, as well as the number of secondary scholarship recipients in each state and territory.

Figure 4: Number of education partners and secondary scholarships in 2016



Note: Based on data held by the department for nine out of the ten scholarship providers.

When aggregated, the reports submitted to the department by each scholarship provider highlight a range of significant achievements by the 2016 cohort of scholarship recipients. Most notably, of the 242 scholarship recipients in their final year of secondary school, the scholarship providers report that 235 graduated Year 12. This represents a graduation rate for 2016 of 97.1%.

Responses to the data request

On 15 February 2017, PIC sent a data request to all scholarship providers which asked each to provide all data that is currently collected relating to the IAS funded secondary school scholarships. This included unit record level data to:

- build as comprehensive a picture as possible of the current delivery of the IAS funded secondary school scholarships
- understand any gaps or variability in the data collection processes and capabilities of the scholarship providers.

All scholarship providers responded to the data request. However this process revealed data gaps and inconsistencies. In some instances the model of delivery means that some data are not held by the scholarship provider. For example in the school-led model scholarship providers may not have access to detailed information on demographic profile of all scholarship applicants. Each scholarship provider has access to a diverse range of data points many of which are not currently collected or reported in a consistent manner.

A summary of the key strengths, gaps and limitations in the dataset is outlined in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Summary of the strengths, gaps and limitations of the data provided

Strengths	Gaps	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scholarship providers have provided descriptions of their respective operating models, how funding is allocated and the range of supports provided for scholarship recipients. Scholarship providers clearly articulate current application and selection processes, including the respective roles (if any) of their education partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of a consistent unique student identifier has meant the 'pathway' for some scholarship recipients cannot be tracked. Similarly, for some scholarship providers it is not possible to identify students who 'switched' scholarship providers. Few scholarship providers have submitted unit level data on scholarship application and selection processes. Only AIEF and Cape York Institute have provided Year 12 completion and student destinations at the unit level (PLC, The Smith Family and Yalari have provided partial lists of student destinations which they have compiled to inform this project). Only AIEF, CYI, MADALAH, PLC and Yalari have provided estimates of the average annual administration costs per scholarship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the absence of INDIGO or an alternative data reporting tool, data are provided in a range of reporting formats and often require some interpretation. Different reporting cycles means that only some scholarship providers have reported data relating to 2016 and 2017. Little evidence of data sharing between scholarship providers and education partners in terms of data collection and collation. One scholarship provider indicated that schools cannot legally share data with scholarship providers. Given the tight time lines of this project, many scholarship providers have only provided what they have had at hand, and have been working to compile the information requested.

All scholarship providers were highly engaged in the review process with many indicating that they had the capability to construct more complete data sets if required, provided this is agreed with scholarship providers and consistent data mechanisms are implemented.

The decommissioning of the INDIGO database has contributed to significant variation in data collection arrangements amongst scholarship providers. While reporting arrangements are in place under grant agreements the data collected is not as complete as was the case with INDIGO.

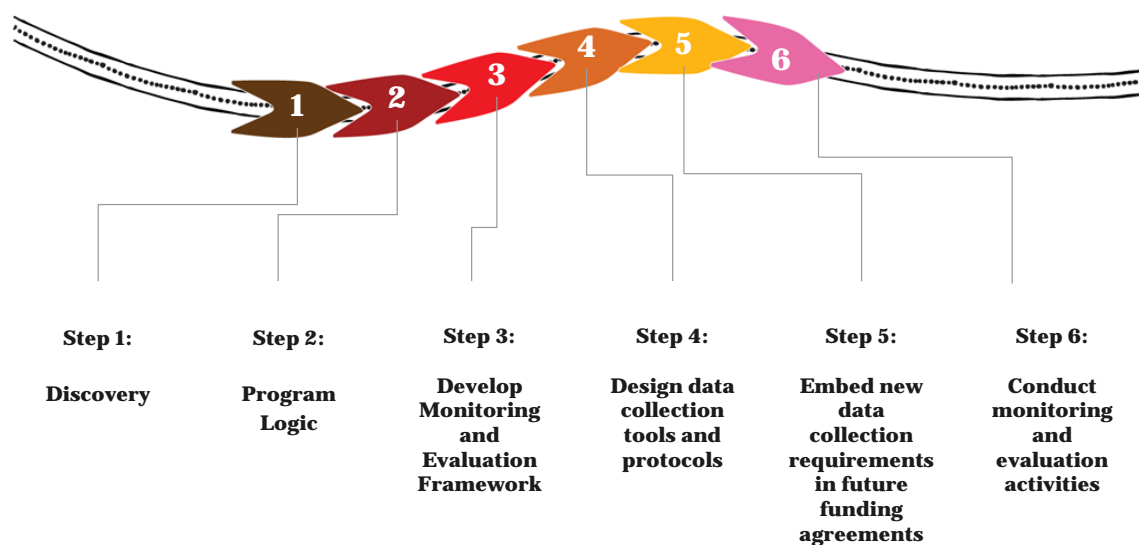
It was our intention to use the data set assembled with information provided by scholarship providers to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the IAS funded secondary school scholarships. However, inconsistencies and limitations of the data set have not supported a robust analysis of this kind.

Section 3 of this report outlines the data that is needed to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the IAS funded scholarships as they are currently delivered. Based on the responses to the data request, it identifies key data points required to build an evidence base to inform a rigorous evaluation of the IAS funded secondary school scholarships.

Future data improvement plan and options

There are a number of opportunities to improve future collection of data related to the operation of funded scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary school students. These are set out in the data improvement plan at Figure 6 and summarised below.

Figure 6 Data improvement plan



The purpose of data collection should be to determine how funded scholarship contribute to achieving agreed outcomes. A number of scholarship providers caution against data collection processes standardising scholarship provider activity resulting in a one size fits all approach to delivery. It is vital that any new data collection requirements and processes are developed in consultation with scholarship providers to ensure data collection arrangements:

- reflect the range of circumstances of scholarship providers
- do not impose an undue administrative burden on scholarship providers
- are proportionate and do not unintentionally stifle innovation, capacity of scholarship providers to meet specific needs or compromise the capacity of scholarship providers to implement their own service delivery model.

Recommendation 1

The department should consult with funded scholarship providers on any proposed changes to data collection requirements to ensure that new data collection arrangements are proportionate, flexible and do not impose an undue administrative burden.

Discovery

PIC has gathered input from all currently funded scholarship providers on their current data collection. On the basis of this work PIC has found that the current state of the data is compromised by data gaps, inconsistencies and disparate data. Data in this form will not support robust evaluation approaches such as impact assessment being conducted.

A data ‘wish list’ is set out in Section 4 for a range of data, including unit record level data, that will support evaluation design in three key domains: pre entry into a scholarship, during scholarship participation and post scholarship completion. PIC sought input from currently funded scholarship providers to gain insights as to whether they currently collect or have the capacity to collect these data.

Scholarship providers:

- have the capacity to collect a range of relevant data to support evaluation activities but require guidance, direction and structure for this collection

- are keen to be consulted and involved in future discussions about data requirements and the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework.

Program logic

Program logic models outline the logic of funded activity and link the activities to the aims and intended outcomes. A draft program logic has been developed for funded secondary school scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students based on desktop analysis and review of grant requirements.

A key part of the development of a program logic is consultation to ensure that there is an agreed understanding and to support ownership of the program logic amongst key stakeholders. Further consultation on the program logic is required in the development of the monitoring and evaluation framework including with funded scholarship providers. This will also support grant program funding requirements.

Recommendation 2

The department should consult with current scholarship providers to test, validate and refine the draft program logic which can then be used to help guide and frame a monitoring and evaluation framework for the funded scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary school students.

Monitoring and evaluation framework

A monitoring and evaluation framework for funded scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary school students is required. This should:

- specify a minimum data set for funded activity
- distinguish between those items which should be routinely collected and monitored with those that can be collected for a specific purpose or to address a specific evaluation question or set of questions.

Data collection processes across scholarship providers differ in terms of their comprehensiveness and completeness. In addition to the evaluation of all funded activity the potential exists to specify a more detailed nested outcome evaluation project which could be undertaken in partnership with one or more funded scholarship providers. This could be undertaken with those scholarship providers who have more robust data collection processes and practices.

Recommendation 3

The department should develop a monitoring and evaluation framework in consultation with scholarship providers which is informed by a finalised and agreed program logic and a consistent definition of success for scholarship providers. At a minimum this monitoring and evaluation framework should:

- **specify data collection requirements for monitoring activities and for evaluation**
- **specify data terms in the form of a data dictionary to ensure consistency of collected information and identify data collection methods**
- **articulate how data will be used and a reporting schedule for analysis**
- **reflect different delivery models of scholarship providers.**

Design data collection tools and protocols

Scholarship providers have the capacity to collect a range of relevant data but require guidance, direction and structure for this collection. At a minimum this should take the form of a standardised reporting template which can facilitate data collection.

Recommendation 4

The department should develop a standardised reporting template or spreadsheet in consultation with scholarship providers to facilitate the collection of data in line with the specified minimum data set.

Embed new data collection

The department has significant leverage through the funding that it provides for the scholarships.

The department's funding or grant agreements should be used to embed any new data collection requirements agreed with scholarship providers.

Some scholarship providers have invested significant resources into data collection, analysis or reporting systems. It is therefore critical that the department consult with scholarship providers in the development of new, modified or enhanced data collection requirements.

It will be important that consideration is given to the costs and administrative burden of additional data collection requirements on scholarship providers.

Recommendation 5

The department should embed any new, modified or enhanced data collection requirements agreed with scholarship providers in future grant agreements. These new modified or enhanced data collection requirements should be determined with reference to the cost and administrative burden on scholarship providers and education partners.

Implement monitoring and evaluation activities

Review and evaluation activities should be implemented in line with the agreed monitoring and evaluation framework. Providing feedback and sharing insights from these activities will be important for the credibility of the framework. This will contribute to ensuring scholarship providers' data collection efforts are recognised and evidence is collected on the contribution that funded scholarships for secondary school students are making to closing the gap in Year 12 or equivalent attainment by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, future economic participation and career outcomes.

Next steps & broader implications

The main observations that we have drawn from our analysis relate to future data improvement plan and options detailed in the preceding section.

While variable data quality and the limited time frame for this review precluded the formation of broader specific recommendations for the operations of the grant program there are a number of observations which are supported by our analysis and consultations with scholarship providers, education partners and the department.

Diverse service models and organisation types

The department funds a diverse range of scholarship providers in terms of:

- scale/size of organisation
- organisation purpose/mission (ranging from organisations whose sole purpose is the delivery of scholarships to those for whom the delivery of scholarships forms one part of a broader portfolio of activities)
- organisation type (including not for profit, schools and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations)
- service model with grants funding two key dominant models amongst scholarship providers: the school-led model and the community/broker-led model

The diversity of scholarship providers appears to be a strength of the grant funding as it:

- enables organisations of scale to, in some instances, achieve national reach and critical mass
- enables organisations to design programs to meet specific community needs
- provides Aboriginal families with choice of provider and scholarship which is consistent with the principle of self-determination
- supports innovation and ensures that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach is not imposed. This is a key factor in ensuring that government funding provided leverages corporate and philanthropic co-contributions.

Future questions for consideration include:

- whether there are differences in outcomes achieved depending on the organisation or model types
- whether administrative costs differ between school led and community/broker led models or organisation type or size.

Striking the right balance between providing direction and enabling innovation

Scholarship providers expressed a range of views around measures to provide greater clarity in the form of more consistent grant guidelines. Views expressed included:

- the potential for more consistent grant guidelines to assist in monitoring and reporting and providing clarity around expectations. This view was more commonly expressed by previously IYLP funded scholarship providers
- the concern that more consistent guidelines might undermine the benefits of diverse service delivery models identified above and result in a 'one-size-fits-all' approach
- the need to define and agree the full dimensions of what success looks like for scholarship funding.

This should be explored in future discussions the department will have with scholarship providers in line with recommendation 1.

Student need and demand

While all scholarship providers assert they are meeting, or exceeding their obligations under funding agreements further work is needed to better understand need and demand.

Determining unmet demand is challenging as:

- placing students in high performing schools often requires a judgement to be made of the student's capacity to thrive and succeed in these environments. This is particularly the case where students are boarding. Developing a deep understanding the pool of *potential* applicants is challenging due to the subjective nature of assessment processes
- the school-led and the community/broker-led models have significant differences in the direct relationship between the scholarship provider and scholarship applicants
- the availability of places with suitable education partners including in some instances constraints on boarding facilities.
- data collection, particularly of applicant data, is inconsistent.

While anecdotally some scholarship providers noted practices of no longer promoting the availability of scholarships as demand outstrips supply, others indicated that they could double the number of scholarships they provide, including leveraging corporate or philanthropic funding dependent on additional IAS funding being provided.

Better data is needed to support comparative analysis and to identify grant refinements. The department should seek evidence from scholarship providers of unmet demand in order to inform decisions around funding allocation in future rounds including any potential increase to funding allocations. This evidence should include geographic area of scholarship need and include an estimate of numbers and rationale in addition to track record of the scholarship provider in delivering, or exceeding scholarship grant requirements.



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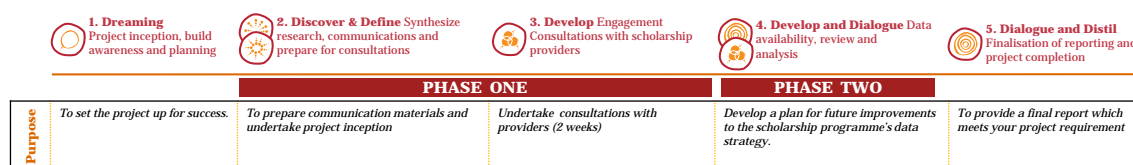
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1 Methodology

1.1 Our approach in summary

Our approach consisted of five stages across the two project phases as outlined in Figure 7.

Figure 7 Overview of project approach



The core methodological elements of our review included:

- desktop review and development of a draft program logic
- data collection and analysis and workshop facilitation on future data requirements
- stakeholder consultation with a particular focus on funded scholarship providers and education partners.

1.2 Desktop review and program logic

In addition to reviewing publically available information in relation to the IAS, PIC's desktop review focused primarily on analysing the large number of grant agreements between the department and scholarship providers.

While grant agreements vary in the detail specified they may include:

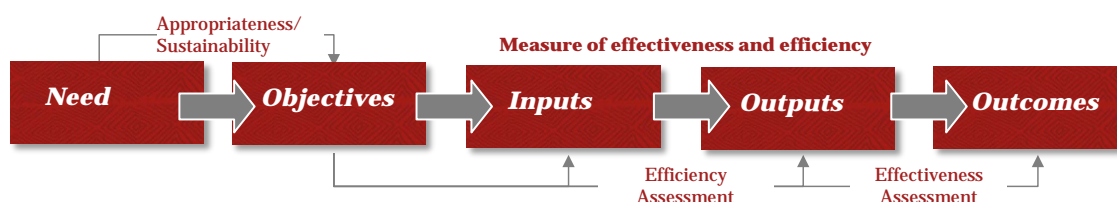
- details of funding provided including the uses to which funding can be put together with payment schedules
- requirements for scholar application and selection processes
- performance metrics and reporting requirements
- specification of the minimum number of scholarships that the provider must deliver
- for some grant types the proportion of scholarship recipients from specific Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) Geographic Locations
- other requirements such as:
 - key characteristics of education providers
 - requirements to access other funding including ABSTUDY, parental contributions, industry partners, philanthropic organisations, individuals, schools and families.

While the *Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Act 2000 Indigenous Youth Leadership Programme Guidelines 2014* are referred to in Carry Over Scholarship agreements these have not been reviewed by PIC.

On the basis of this desktop review PIC developed a draft program logic for IAS funded scholarships and aligned this program logic to the core lines of inquiry specified by the department for this review.

The program logic, once agreed, will provide a useful foundation for building a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework to assess progress towards specific targets while also measuring impact. The conceptual framework for the program logic approach is set out in Figure 8.

Figure 8 Program logic design and links to core review and evaluation questions



1.3 Data collection, analysis and workshop

Data held by the department collected through the INDIGO data base was, on advice from the department, excluded from the review analysis on the basis that:

- these data are incomplete as the INDIGO data base has been decommissioned
- there are concerns about data integrity and errors.

PIC developed a detailed information request of scholarship providers (refer to Appendix D). This detailed information request was developed in consultation with the department and issued to scholarship providers on 15 February 2017.

PIC developed a model data set based on the review lines of inquiry and identified the key gaps in this data set to inform future data collection and evaluation plans. PIC also analysed quantitative data reported by scholarship providers to the department.

As part of Phase Two of this project we facilitated a workshop with the department to determine future solutions to data capabilities.


1.4 Stakeholder consultations

A key component of the review involved consultation with scholarship providers. To provide a framework for our semi-structured interviews we developed a consultation guide anchored in the five core lines of inquiry.

Consultation with all scholarship providers occurred as set out in Table 3.

Table 3 Completed consultations with scholarship providers

Date	State	Scholarship provider	Method
21/02	QLD	Cape York Institute	Face to Face
22/02	NSW	Australian Indigenous Education Foundation	Face to Face
23/02	NSW	Dubbo College Senior Campus	Teleconference
23/02	WA	Presbyterian Ladies' College	Teleconference
27/02	SA	The Smith Family	Face to Face



Date	State	Scholarship provider	Method
27/02	VIC	MADEC Australia	Face to Face
28/02	QLD	Townsville Catholic Education Office	Teleconference
28/02	WA	Wunan Foundation Inc	Teleconference
28/02	WA	MADALAH Limited	Teleconference
2/03	QLD	Yalari Limited	Face to Face

Detailed service provider profiles are provided at Appendix A.

1.5 Education partner survey and consultations

To understand the views and experiences of education partners associated with the scholarship program, an online survey was designed framed around the key lines of inquiry.

The survey was delivered using an online platform and comprised 26 questions, including a series of multiple choice and free text options for respondents to provide more detailed comments. The survey was received by 90 education partners with a total of 53 completing the survey (i.e. a response rate of 59%).

De-identified data were analysed using descriptive statistics, providing findings to each of the questions. The findings also captured both quantitative and qualitative data. The open free text questions were analysed using content analysis.

In addition, a series of consultations were held with a five education providers over the period from 28 April to 4 May. The consultation questions were based on the review lines of inquiry.

The education providers were selected at random, each representative of one of the five school categories:

- single sex independent school
- co-educational independent school,
- government school
- school in remote area
- school engaged with more than one scholarship provider.



2 *Scholarship overview*

2.1 Background to IAS funded scholarships

A range of scholarships is funded by the IAS. Funded scholarship providers implement a range of scholarship models.

Commencing in 2006, the Indigenous Youth Leadership Programme (IYLP) was a program operated, with Commonwealth funding, by the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) providing secondary school scholarships and leadership development opportunities to Indigenous students particularly in rural and remote areas.

In 2009 the decision was taken to open the IYLP to a competitive process for scholarship providers. We understand that the FYA did not make an application to this process. Following this process the following scholarship providers were appointed:

- Cape York Institute
- Dubbo College Senior Campus
- MADALAH Limited
- MADEC Australia
- Presbyterian Ladies' College (Perth)
- Townsville Catholic Education Office
- The Smith Family
- Yalari Limited.

In 2015 responsibility for the administration of the IYLP was transferred through machinery of government changes from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Scholarship funding now forms part of the IAS Children and Schooling Programme.

Three scholarship providers (The Smith Family, MADALAH and Townsville Catholic Education Office) had unspent funds identified through the 2012 acquittal process. Approval was provided in 2015 for these scholarship providers to apply these unspent funds as part of the Carry Over scholarship programme.

In 2015 an IYLP Legacy Project was created to enable scholars who commenced studies under the initial contract to complete their studies and attain Year 12 or equivalent.

In 2015, a new IAS funding round was held. This round was not based on prescriptive input requirements and as a result there is a reasonable degree of variation in the approaches that different scholarship providers are implementing to achieve the outcome of improving Year 12 or equivalent attainment. A limited number of tertiary scholarships are also delivered by some scholarship providers with IAS funding. In this round all existing IYLP scholarship providers were successful in securing funding with the exception of Dubbo College Senior Campus.

The Wunan Foundation and AIEF were at this time also brought under the IAS umbrella. The Wunan Foundation's scholarship program was self-funded prior to the IAS. As outlined in

Appendix A, prior to the IAS funding round in 2015, AIEF relied on a mixture of private sector investment and funding provided by the Australian Government.

With the exception of the AIEF all existing scholarship providers' existing grant agreements cease at the end of 2017.

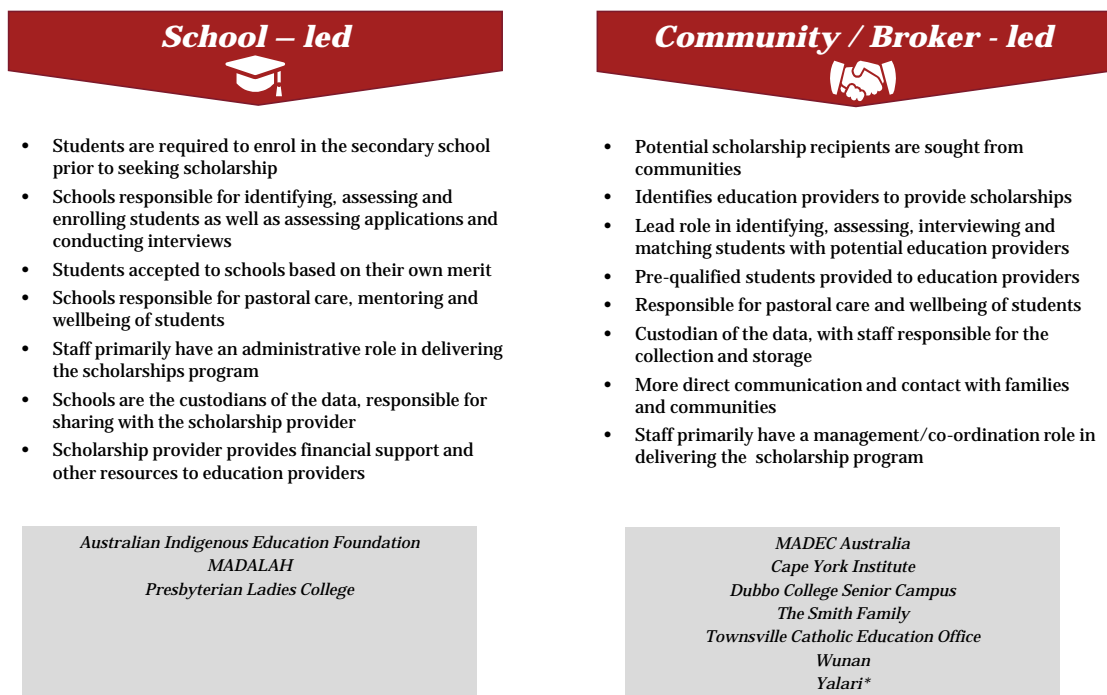
2.2 Models of delivery

As outlined above, the department provides funds to ten secondary school scholarship providers in order to enable Indigenous students to attend high performing schools (i.e. education partners) across the country. In addition to high performing secondary schools, some scholarship providers have established education partnerships with Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), TAFEs and other tertiary institutions. However, unless otherwise stated, any reference to 'education partners' throughout this report refers to the high performing secondary schools which have existing partnerships with the IAS funded scholarship providers.

From our consultations and discussions with scholarship providers there appear to be two dominant operating models – school-led and community/broker led. Figure 9 displays the characteristics of each of the models.

AIEF, MADALAH and PLC operate a school-led model. Whilst MADEC Australia, Cape York Institute, Dubbo College Senior Campus, The Smith Family, TCEO, Wunan and Yalari all operate a community/broker-led model. Yalari adopts some elements of the school-led model.

Figure 9: Characteristics of the school –led and community/broker-led models



* Yalari also has some elements of the school-led model

While we have identified two dominant operating models with common characteristics, it should be noted that each scholarship provider has unique characteristics and qualities in the delivery of their programs. Further details are explored in the detailed scholarship provider profiles at Appendix A.

2.3 Program logic

A draft program logic has been developed for discussion purposes and is provided in Figure 10. This high level program logic attempts to distil the core components which appear to be common across the scholarship components and providers regardless of the model of

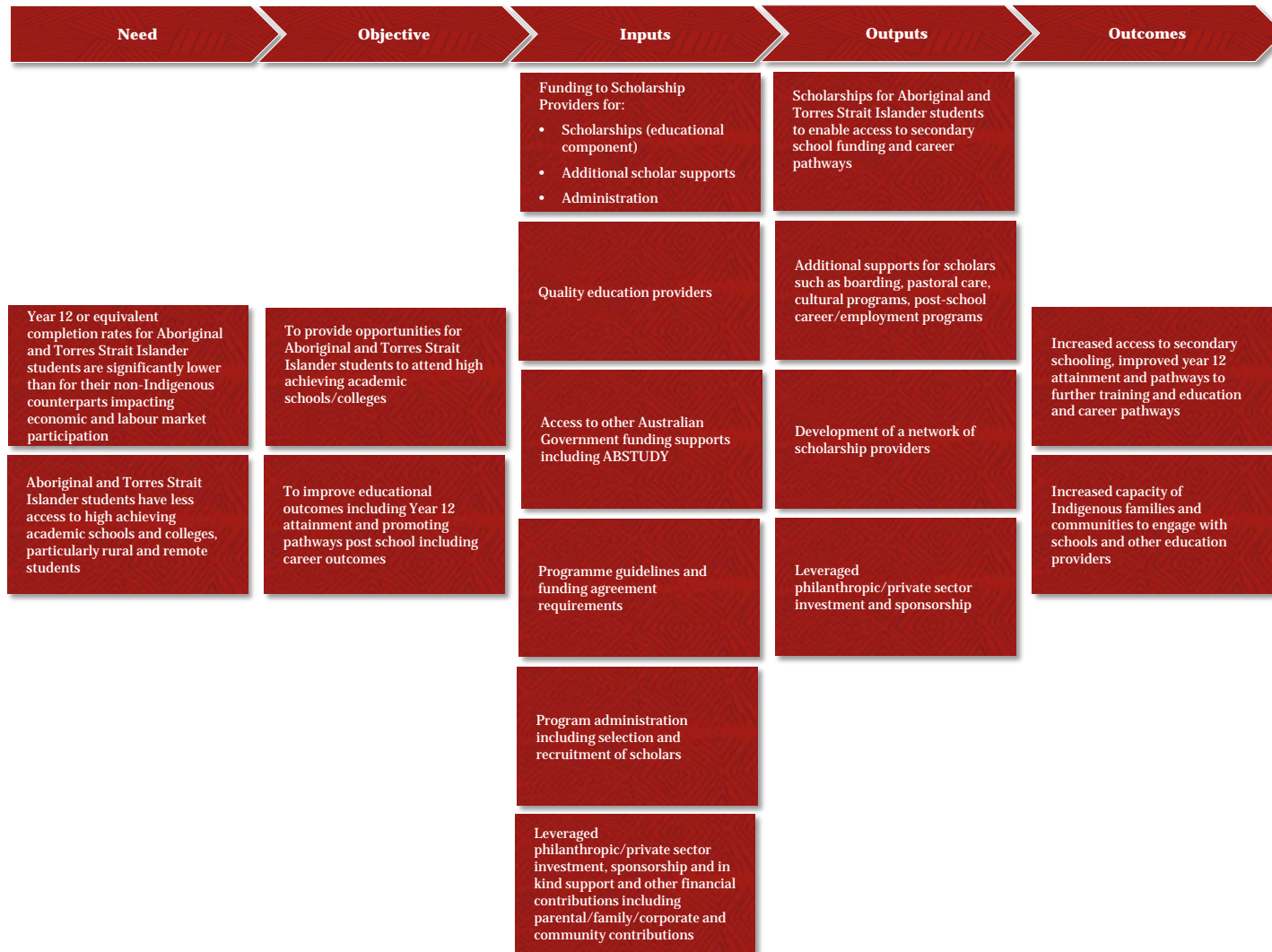
implementation. It will be important that consultation occurs on the draft program logic with scholarship providers. This draft program logic has been prepared as a starting point only to support these discussions.

The five key components of the program logic approach are:

- 1 **Need:** what issues the scholarships are attempting to influence?
- 2 **Objectives:** what are the specific aims of the scholarships?
- 3 **Inputs:** what is required to make the scholarships successful?
- 4 **Outputs:** what is delivered? What do scholars receive?
- 5 **Outcomes:** what are the desired changes over the short, medium and longer term?

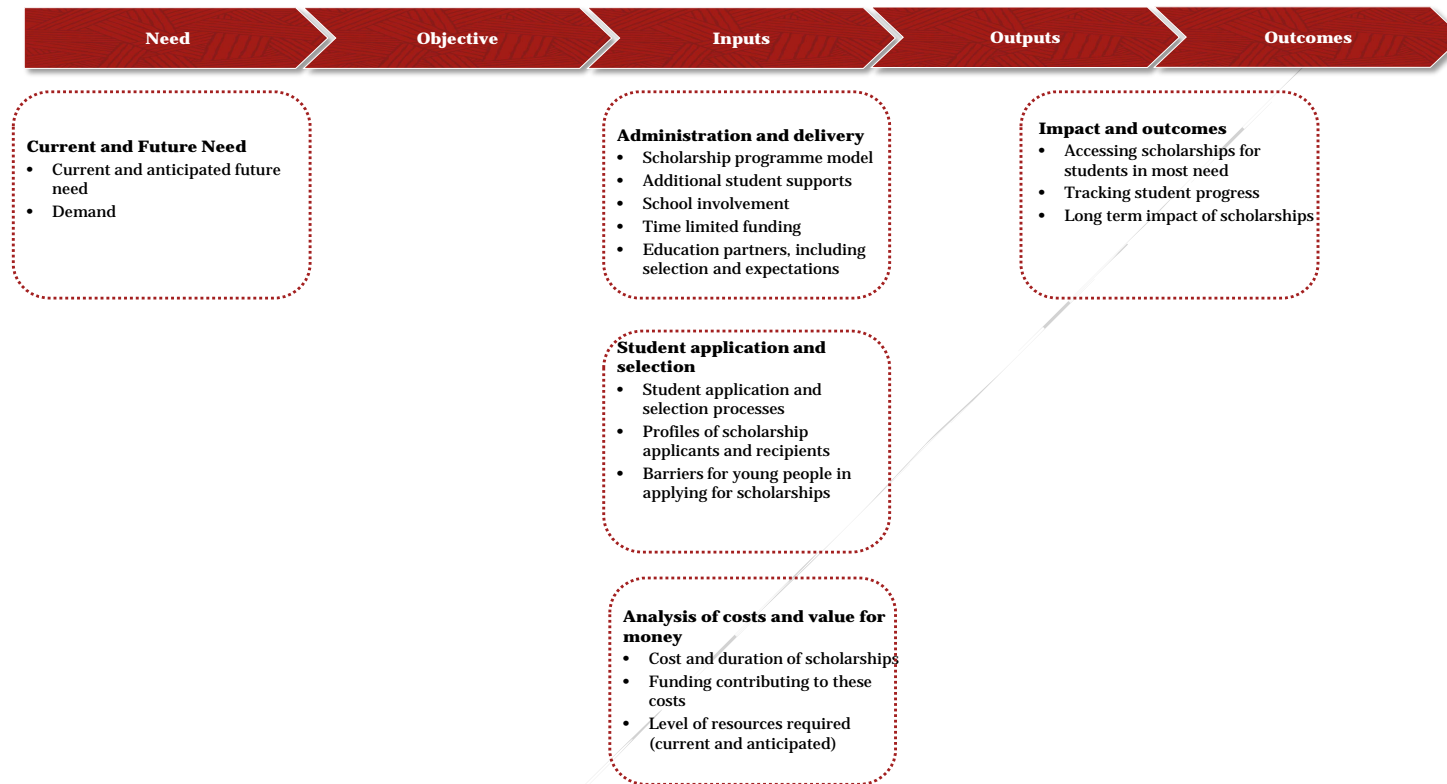


Figure 10 Draft Program Logic: IAS funded secondary school scholarships



The development of a program logic provides a potential structure for anchoring a future program design and evaluation and monitoring approach. The core lines of inquiry for this review align relatively neatly to the components of the program logic framework as set out in Figure 11.

Figure 11 Linking review lines of inquiry to program logic elements



The draft program logic may be an input into the future development of a monitoring and evaluation framework. Direct attribution of the contribution of scholarships to the outcome of improved Year 12 or equivalent completion and ongoing engagement in training, education or employment beyond school will require a more robust data collection than is currently the case

2.4 Need

It is widely documented that the Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates for Indigenous young people are significantly lower than their non-Indigenous counterparts. While this is particularly acute for individuals living in remote and rural areas who often have less access to secondary schools and tertiary education Indigenous secondary school students in regional and urban settings may also lack access to high performing schools.

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has agreed to a set of national Closing the Gap targets. Of direct relevance to this review is the target to halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 attainment rates by 2020 and employment targets.

Determining unmet demand is challenging as:

- placing students in high performing schools often requires a judgement to be made of the student's capacity to thrive and succeed in these environments. This is particularly the case where students are boarding. Developing a deep understanding the pool of *potential* applicants is challenging due to the subjective nature of assessment processes
- the school-led and the community/broker-led models have significant differences in the direct relationship between the scholarship provider and scholarship applicants
- supply factors such as the availability of places with suitable education partners including where required boarding facilities may be a constraint
- data collection, particularly of applicant data, is inconsistent.

While anecdotally some scholarship providers noted practices of no longer promoting the availability of scholarships as demand outstrips supply, others indicated that they could double the number of scholarships they provide, including leveraging corporate or philanthropic funding provided IAS funding is also available.

Education partner survey respondent's views in relation to demand included:

- 56.6% of respondents indicated that the number of scholarship do not meet the demand.
- 83% of respondents believe there will be a 'Higher' anticipated future demand for scholarships funded by scholarship providers.

The limited consultations undertaken with education providers also confirmed that the current number of scholarships at each of the schools does not meet demand and interest in scholarships.

Of respondents, 49.1% indicated that they are constrained by supply factors in the number of scholarships offered to Indigenous students including enrolment capacity and balancing enrolments to ensure Indigenous students are provided with adequate care. Respondents also indicated that limited boarding places were a significant supply constraint.

Overall, both survey respondents and consultations with education partners believed that scholarships funded by the scholarship providers are targeting students in most need. Survey respondents indicated that scholarships are meeting need to a 'Great Extent' (39.6%) and 'Some Extent' (39.6%).

2.5 Inputs

2.5.1 Scholarship funding

IAS funding supports 10 scholarship providers who each have their own service model. However, at a high level it is possible to identify some broadly consistent components of scholarship funding:

- IAS scholarship funding typically provides:
 - core funding to offset the costs of tuition at high performing schools
 - the capacity to provide some level of support and pastoral care
 - funding to support administration
- ABSTUDY forms an important component and typically contributes to the cost of travel and boarding for scholars
- Funding shortfalls following application of the IAS scholarship funding and ABSTUDY are met from an alternative source which may include family contributions in the form of fees, philanthropic funding, corporate sponsorship, partner school contribution and state government contributions.

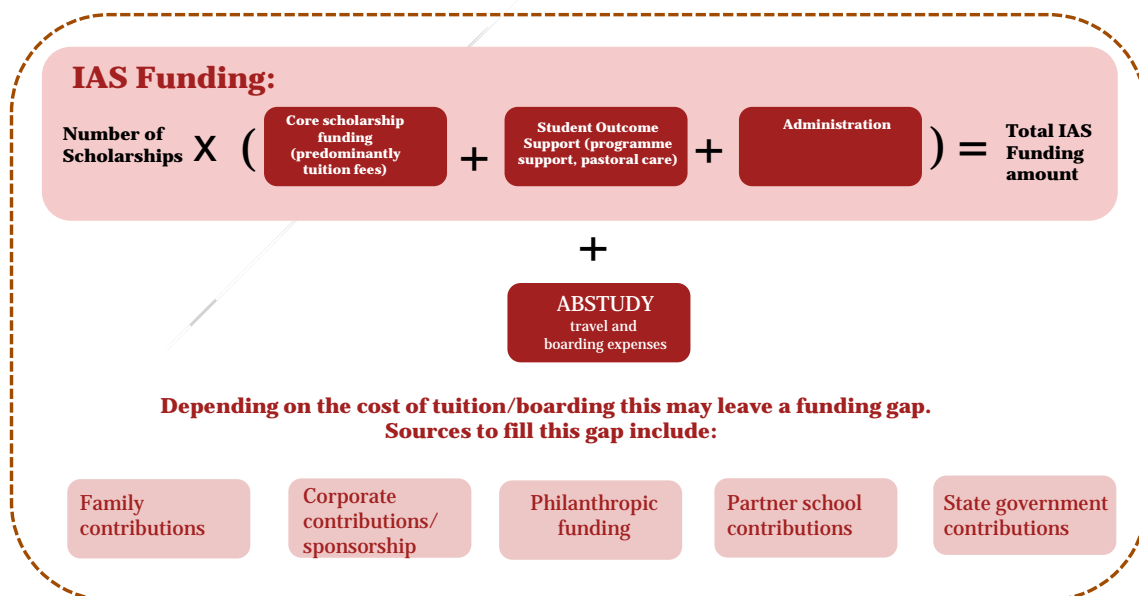
All scholarship providers indicated that the IAS funded scholarships covered at least 42 percent of the total schooling costs per annum, with only one scholarship provider indicating that IAS funding typically covers all costs. In addition to ABSTUDY, common additional sources of funding include:

- school contributions
- contributions from private foundations, corporates and philanthropy
- other family contributions.

This was supported by the responses to the education partner survey.

Figure 12 illustrates at a high level the components of the typical funding model.

Figure 12 Scholarship Funding: high level conceptual map



A summary of the IAS secondary scholarship providers currently funded by the department is provided in Table 4. Generally, the department reports funding in GST exclusive terms. For completeness, in the following table the funding amounts are provided in GST exclusive and GST inclusive terms.

Table 4: Summary of the IAS funded secondary school scholarships 2015-2017 (minimum requirements)²**IAS funded scholarship providers (IYLP Legacy project & IAS funding round: IYLP)**

Scholarship provider	Agreement	Secondary school scholars			Transition			Tertiary scholars			Funding		Total (Incl. GST)
		2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	Excl. GST	Incl. GST	
Cape York Institute	IYLP Legacy Project		58	45							\$ 2,071,816	\$ 2,278,998	\$ 3,186,498
	2015 IAS Funding Round	9	13	17							\$ 825,000	\$ 907,500	
Dubbo College	IYLP Legacy Project		39	24							\$ 1,285,065	\$ 1,413,572	\$ 1,413,572
	IYLP Legacy Project		116	87.5							\$ 3,836,795	\$ 4,220,475	
MADALAH	2015 IAS Funding Round		21	21	6	21	21	10	21	21	\$ 1,470,000	\$ 1,617,000	\$ 5,837,475
	IYLP Legacy Project		55	42							\$ 923,402	\$ 1,015,742	
MADEC	2015 IAS Funding Round		50	100							\$ 1,712,000	\$ 1,883,200	\$ 2,898,942
	IYLP Legacy Project		31	22							\$ 1,095,654	\$ 1,205,219	
PLC	2015 IAS Funding Round		6	10							\$ 600,000	\$ 660,000	\$ 1,865,219
	IYLP Legacy Project		117	86							\$ 4,054,519	\$ 4,459,971	
The Smith Family	2015 IAS Funding Round		103	136					20	40	\$ 7,400,000	\$ 8,140,000	\$ 12,599,971
	IYLP Legacy Project		77	62							\$ 2,074,903	\$ 2,282,393	
TCEO	2015 IAS Funding Round	78	116	131	257	120	120				\$ 3,775,000	\$ 4,152,500	\$ 6,434,893
	IYLP Legacy Project		81	66							\$ 2,971,401	\$ 3,268,541	
Yalari	2015 IAS Funding Round		22	22							\$ 1,100,000	\$ 1,210,000	\$ 4,478,541
	IYLP Legacy Project												
Total		87	905	871.5	263	141	141	10	41	61	\$ 35,195,555	\$ 38,715,110	

IAS funding round: AIEF*

Scholarship provider	Agreement	Secondary school scholars				Total funding	
		2015	2016	2017-2027	2028	Excl GST	Incl GST
AIEF	2015 IAS Funding Round: AIEF	159	186	2,695	248	\$21,000,000	\$23,100,000

*AIEF received \$32.0 million in pre-IAS funding.

IAS funding round: The Dural Education Excellence Programme

Scholarship provider	Agreement	Secondary school scholars			Total Funding	
		2015	2016	2017	Excl GST	Incl GST
Wunan	2015 IAS Funding Round: DEEP	12	12	12	\$ 475,000	\$ 522,500

² Transition scholarships refer to funding provided to assist students in Year 13 make the transition from secondary school to employment or tertiary education.

2.6 Consultation themes

A key component of the review involved consultation with scholarship providers. The key themes from these consultations have been presented thematically based on the five core lines of inquiry for the review:

- administration and delivery
- student application and selection
- current and future need
- costs and value for money
- impact and outcomes.

Table 5: The key themes from consultations

Line of inquiry	Common themes from consultations
Administration and delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty around funding beyond 2017 is a significant concern for providers. Providers articulated a keen interest in obtaining clarity as soon as possible about funding arrangements beyond the current agreement terms to enable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ current scholarship recipients who have yet to complete their studies to continue their academic career ○ scholarship providers, education providers and applicants to confidently enter future scholarships rounds which, depending on availability of Government funding, might be available to commence in calendar year 2018. Scholarship rounds typically open in late Term 1/early Term 2 in the year preceding the commencement year for the scholarship ○ future planning around resources, particularly with regards to staffing associated with the scholarship program, to ensure staff remain engaged and retained and schools remain engaged and committed. • A number of scholarship providers who were funded under the previous IYLP model noted challenges in administration processes in the transition from the DEEWR IYLP model to the IAS with particular reference to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ reporting requirements ○ information flow especially in the early stages of machinery of government changes with a number of scholarship providers noting communications from department providers was ad hoc ○ loss of knowledge and data and challenges in capturing and retaining corporate memory. • The time limited nature of the contracts creates a challenging environment between scholarship providers and education



Line of inquiry	Common themes from consultations
	<p>partners and also between scholarship providers and families. In the main contract terms are three years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarship providers funded under the IYLP and IAS noted administrative challenges in funding agreement requirements when one is calendar year and the other is financial year. • The timing of reporting under the funding agreements can be challenging for some providers particularly where this coincides with the start of the school year. • Some scholarship providers indicated that the proportion of administrative funding is not sufficient. They reported administrative costs are generally being absorbed by the scholarship providers or education partners as part of the wider budget or with other sources of funding, such as philanthropic funds. • A majority of scholarship providers indicated that the IAS funding agreement has afforded greater flexibility in the administration of scholarships which has provided a more responsive and adaptive program to meet students' needs and requests from education providers. This includes being able to customise the implementation of funded scholarships to align with the organisational mission and operating model of the auspice organisation and leverage corporate and philanthropic co-contribution and sponsorship. • All scholarship providers indicated that the relationships with department grant managers were positive and that queries from scholarship providers are answered promptly by the department. • 60.4% of respondents to the education partner survey indicated the administration of scholarships by scholarship providers to support recipients to complete their education was done 'Very well', with a further 30.2% of respondents nominating 'Well'. This view was also widely supported during the consultation with education partners.
Student application and selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through consultations we identified two dominant models of delivery – school-led and community/broker led – with similarities of each model across the scholarship providers. However, each provider has unique characteristics, elements. • For those scholarship providers funded under the previous IYLP many follow, or have adapted the original IYLP guidelines as a basis for the selection of Indigenous students. Criteria for scholarships can differ by region and the student's home/community location. • Despite different models of delivery, providers have adopted relatively consistent selection processes for awarding scholarships: promotion; application (online) with supporting documents; short listing; interview face to face; decision against a criteria; offer to successful applicants.



Line of inquiry	Common themes from consultations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some scholarship providers balance a range of considerations in allocating scholarships: remoteness category of students' home community, their academic and leadership ability, and their capacity to meet academic standards at the school (often cited as 'setting students up to succeed, not fail'). Scholarship providers often described having a dedicated position or staff to undertake, administer and manage the student application and selection process. One provider indicated that many of the challenges are eliminated in the school-led as schools undertake this function. Education partners indicated that scholarships funded by the scholarship providers are targeting students in most need to a 'Great Extent' (39.6%) and 'Some Extent' (39.6%)
Current and future need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In instances where applications are gathered by scholarship providers, all indicated that the scholarships are often oversubscribed. Most providers seek additional contributors for their scholarship programs, such as private sponsorship. This requires a significant amount of relationship building between providers and potential investors. Given the remoteness of many scholarship applicants, access to secondary education does not always exist within their community. Therefore, the decision to grant a scholarship can be challenging for some scholarship providers as in some cases the decision may influence whether a child commences secondary education or not. Students who are unable to complete their schooling in their own community have to travel away from home. This can be challenging and pastoral support is required to ensure their continued engagement in the education program and to ensure that they maintain their connection to culture and home. Whilst funding can be a limiting factor in awarding scholarships, the availability of boarding accommodation can limit the number of available places. A number of providers argued that grant funding delivers strong value for money leveraging significant co-funding from corporate and philanthropic funding. According to the education partner survey, 83% of respondents believe there will be a 'Higher' anticipated future demand for scholarships funded by scholarship providers.
Costs and value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding awarded to each scholarship recipient can vary based on the funding source (ie. IYLP Legacy agreement or IAS funding)



Line of inquiry	Common themes from consultations
	<p>agreement), individual circumstances (such as ABSTUDY component) and the school and associated fees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most scholarship providers require a parental/guardian contribution based on income levels. • Government funding provided for scholarships leverages significant corporate and philanthropic co-contributions helping achieve a value for money outcome from the Government's investment. • Scholarships vary in terms of what is provided or included but all include core components of tuition and a range of additional supports. Optional items are generally at the discretion of the school or scholarship provider staff. These include leadership camps and higher education transition programs. • According to the education partner survey, funding provided by scholarship providers generally was allocated to boarding and tuition fees (15.9%) and uniforms, text books, IT requirements (14.6%). 56.6% of respondents agreed that the current funding provided to education providers from scholarship providers is sufficient to support recipients to complete their education to a 'Great Extent'. • 54.7% of respondents to the education partner survey did not agree that the scholarships funded by the scholarship providers cover the full cost of a student's education at the respective school. In order to cover the gap between the costs of the student's education and the value of the scholarship funded by the scholarship provider, survey respondents predominately sought funding from school foundation (or equivalent) (25.5%) and private donations to the school (23.5%).
Impact and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarships provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with opportunities to access and enhance their educational opportunities. • Many scholarship providers indicated that success of scholarships should not be measured in terms of educational outcomes alone. Other factors that should be considered included personal growth, development and leadership and employment destination including career outcomes. A number of scholarship providers argued for a consistent definition of success of IAS funded scholarships. • Scholarship providers indicated that scholarships have a range of flow on effects such as students becoming role models for other young Indigenous people in their communities. • Scholarship providers report that scholarships have provided an opportunity to promote culture, reconciliation and connections with community stakeholders and the wider school environment. Examples include students promoting and organising NAIDOC and Reconciliation week events, establishment of traditional



Line of inquiry	Common themes from consultations
	<p>dance groups, cultural awareness sessions and Indigenous guest speakers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of scholarship providers identified that there is currently a lack of a systematic approach to capture the long term outcomes of the scholarship students. • According to the education partner survey, 62.3% of respondents agreed that the scholarships funded by the scholarship providers have assisted recipients to complete Year 12 to a 'Great Extent', whilst 26.4% of respondents agreed to 'Some Extent'.

2.7 Scholarship provider profiles

Following our desktop review, consultation and data analysis we have assembled detailed profiles for each funded scholarship provider.

For each scholarship provider the profile provides:

- an organisation overview
- background and context
- an overview of current practice:
 - administration and delivery
 - costs and value
 - current and future need
 - impact and outcomes
- other notable funding;

Detailed scholarship provider profiles are provided at Appendix A.



3 Overview of current data holdings

This section provides a snapshot of the departmental held data relating to the IAS funded secondary school scholarships, and also provides an overview of the current data holdings provided by each scholarship provider. It outlines the responses of each scholarship provider to the data request, the key strengths, gaps and limitations in that data that have been collated; and provides an assessment of data availability and quality.

From our engagement with each scholarship provider throughout the review, it is apparent that they have access to diverse data points which are not currently collected or reported on in a consistent manner. Although no scholarship provider was able to fulfil all aspects of the data request, all scholarship providers were highly engaged in the review process. In some instances, the data gaps relate to the service model adopted by each scholarship provider. It is clear that many have the capability to construct more complete data sets if they had greater clarity on the data they are expected to collect as well as consistent data reporting mechanisms and infrastructures (assuming adequate administrative funding is provided).

3.1 Snapshot of the IAS funded secondary school scholarships

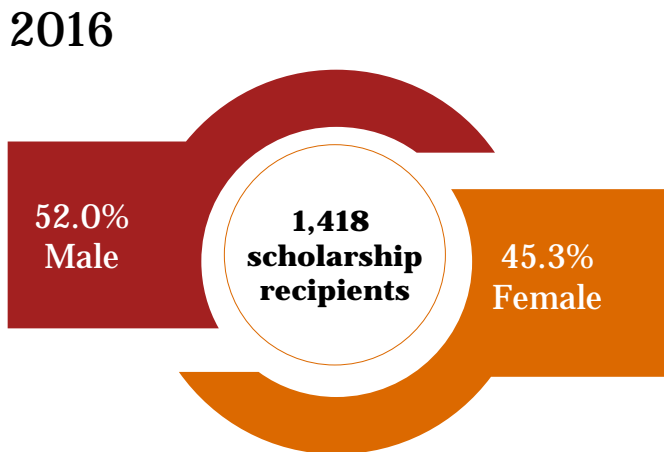
Although the INDIGO database has been decommissioned, all IAS funded scholarship providers are currently required to report on their activities and outcomes. Providers complete reporting which is then entered into FOFMS, the department's grant management system, internally. In addition, AIEF has its own reporting documentation and requirements, which are entirely outside of FOFMS. Using the data held by the department, this section provides a snapshot of the IAS funded secondary school scholarships as they are currently delivered.

The department held data relating to the IAS funded secondary school scholarships consists of:

- annual performance reports and self-assessment by each provider for IAS, Legacy and COS funding
- Excel spreadsheets showing a range of information for most scholarship providers, including information relating to scholarship recipients' age, gender, home location, scholarship level, secondary school name/location, school type/category, and the expected end date of the scholarship.
- case studies of scholar success stories
- photographs and other miscellaneous material.

The department provided PIC with data for eight out of the ten scholarship providers in an Excel format. PIC engaged with the other two scholarship providers and was able to obtain a comprehensive data response from one of these organisations. The following snapshot includes data from nine out of the ten scholarship providers. For the purposes of providing a snapshot of the IAS funded secondary school scholarships as they are currently delivered, the following overview is based on 2016 data held by the department as this was provided in the most consistent manner by scholarship providers.

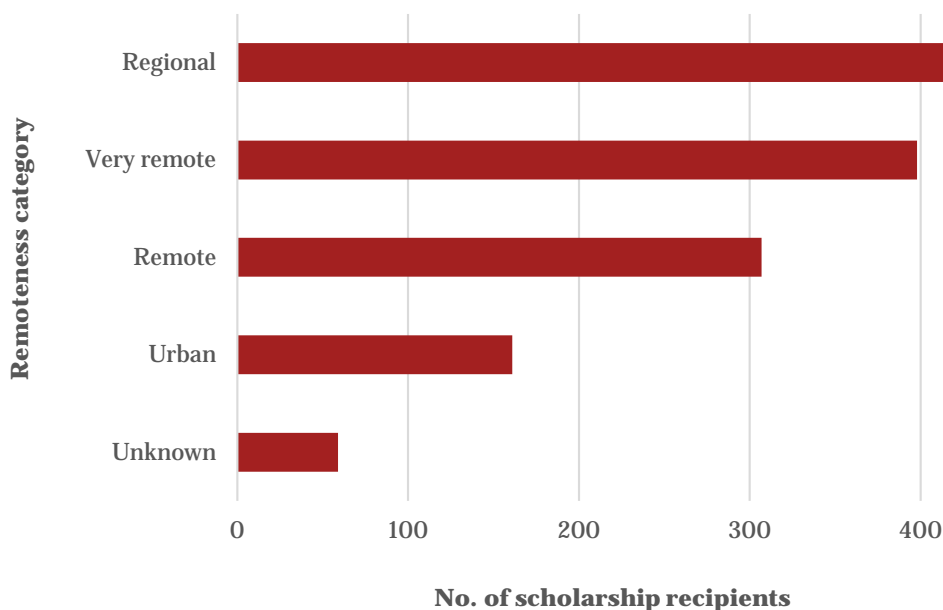
Figure 13: The IAS funded secondary school scholarship recipients in 2016



Note: Based on data held by the department for nine out of the ten scholarship providers. The gender of 2.7% of recipients is not stated.

As illustrated in Figure 13, based on the data held by the department, in 2016 1,418 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were recipients of an IAS funded secondary school scholarship. Of the recipients, 52.0% of the recipients were male (i.e. 737 scholars) and 45.3% (i.e. 643 scholars) were female. The gender of 2.7% of scholarship recipients (i.e. 38 scholars) was not stated.

Figure 14: The remoteness of the home communities of the 2016 scholar cohort



Note: Based on data held by the department for nine out of the ten scholarship providers.

Figure 14 demonstrates the remoteness categories of the home communities of the recipients' of IAS funded scholarships. It shows that 49.7% (i.e. 705 scholars) of scholarship recipients in 2016 were from remote or very remote communities with a further 30.4% (i.e. 431 scholars) from regional areas of Australia.

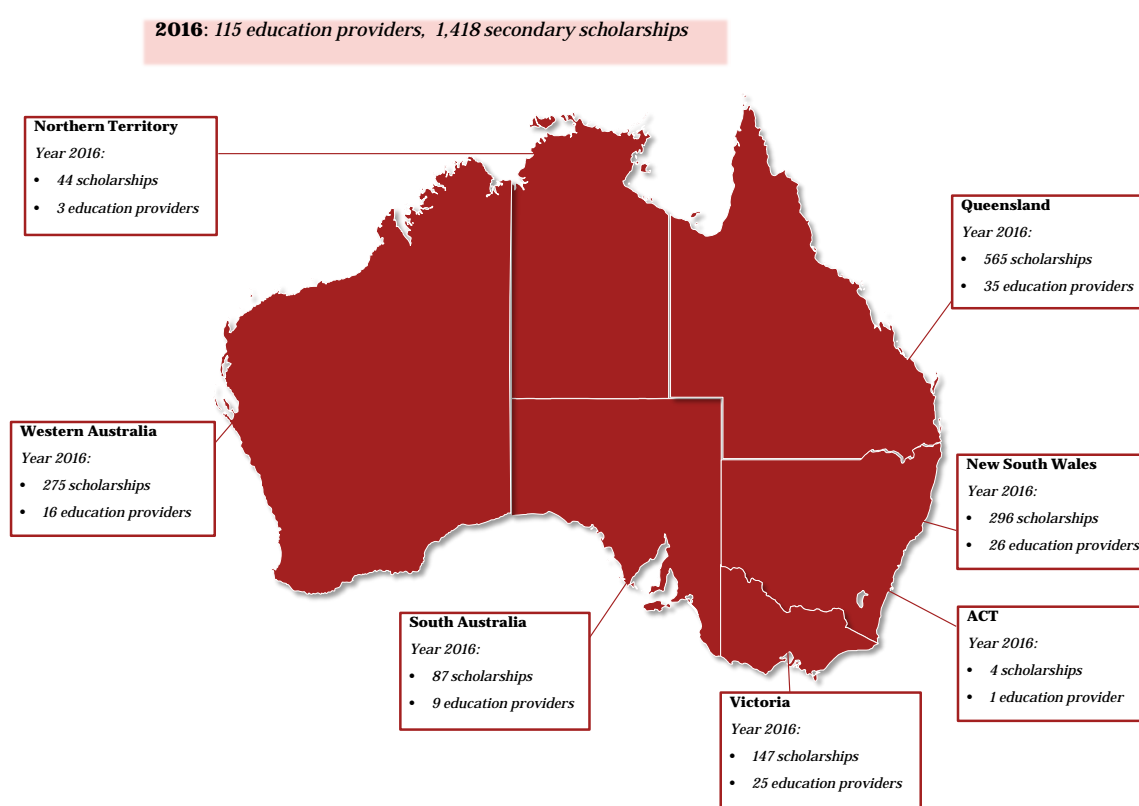
Further, as outlined below, the majority of scholarship recipients (61.4%) in 2016 were completing Year 10, Year 11 or Year 12.

Table 6: Distribution of scholarship recipients by school level

	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Total
No. of recipients	1	110	202	234	317	312	242	1,418
Percentage	0.1%	7.8%	14.2%	16.5%	22.4%	22.0%	17.1%	100.0%

In 2016, the IAS funded scholarship providers had active partnerships with more than 115 Catholic, independent and public schools around Australia. Figure 15 summarises the location and number of education partners in 2016, as well as the number of secondary scholarship recipients in each state and territory.

Figure 15: Number of education partners and secondary scholarships in 2016



Note: Based on data held by the department for nine out of the ten scholarship providers.

When aggregated, the reports submitted to the department by each scholarship provider highlight a range of significant achievements by the 2016 cohort of scholarship recipients. Most notably, of the 242 scholarship recipients in their final year of secondary school, the scholarship providers reported that 235 graduated Year 12. This represents a reported Year 12 graduation rate for 2016 of 97.1%.

3.2 Responses to the data request

On 15 February 2017, PIC sent a data request (see Appendix D) to all scholarship providers which asked each to provide all data that is currently collected relating to the IAS funded secondary school scholarships, including unit record level data. The intention of the data request was to build as comprehensive a picture as possible of the current delivery of the IAS funded secondary school scholarships and to understand any gaps or variability in the data collection

processes and capabilities of the scholarship providers. The five lines of inquiry of the data request were:

- 1 administration and delivery
- 2 student application and selection processes
- 3 current and future need
- 4 costs and value for money
- 5 impact and outcomes.

All scholarship providers responded to the data request. However, as outlined in Section 3, data submitted by each scholarship provider were in a variety of formats.

Figure 16 provides an overview of the types of data requested against each line of inquiry, and summarises the responses from each scholarship provider to date. As outlined in the key:

- cells that are shaded green indicate data have been submitted by the scholarship provider for the relevant line item
- cells that are shaded green and labelled '1' indicate the data submitted completely meets the data request for the relevant line item
- cells that are shaded green and labelled '0.5' indicate the data submitted only partially meets the data request for the relevant line item
- cells that are shaded grey indicate that data collection is not applicable or relevant for the scholarship provider's delivery model
- cells without shading indicate no data have been provided for the relevant line item.

For each line item, a score of '10' indicates that all scholarship providers have submitted complete responses whilst a score of '0' indicates that no scholarship providers have submitted a response. Of all the responses received, no scholarship provider has been able to respond to all aspects of the data request. One reason for the incomplete responses to the data request identified by scholarship providers is that they have not had to provide this information to fulfil their funding agreements and therefore have, in some instances, not seen any valuable purpose in collecting that data.

Figure 16: The responses to the data request by each scholarship provider

Line of Inquiry	Data requested	AIEF	CYI	Dubbo	MADALAH	MADEC	PLC	T CEO	TSF	Wunan	Yafari	Completeness
Administration and Delivery	Background on current operating model	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
	Information on the specific support services and programme components provided	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
	Information on any key partners to your program/s	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
	List of schools associated with your program/s	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
	Number of scholarships per school 2017	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
	Number of scholarships per school 2016	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
	Number of scholarships per school 2015	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
	Duration of scholarship for each student	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
	Funding amounts per individual scholarship recipient	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
	Extent of administrative involvement or supports	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4
Average annual cost of administrating scholarships	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	
Student application and selection	Copy of current student application form and guidelines (if applicable)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
	Current selection process (including criteria and any weightings)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
	Demographic profile of scholarship applicants , unit record level information on: o age	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4
	o gender	1	1	1	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	4.5
	o home or community location (where the student was living prior to the scholarship)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
	o whether of applicants option of accessing schooling to year 12 in their home community	1	1	1	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	0.5
	o previous school attendance and achievement	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
	o parental/guardian engagement	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
	o school location on applying for your organisation's program/s	1	1	1	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	2.5
	o school achievement on applying for the program/s	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
	Demographic profile of scholarship recipients , unit record level information on: o age	1	1	1	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	6.5
	o gender	1	1	1	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	9.5
	o home or community location (where the student was living prior to the scholarship)	1	1	1	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	6.5
	o whether recipients have the option of accessing schooling to year 12 in their home community	1	1	1	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	1.5
	o any family characteristics collected as part of the application process	1	1	1	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	2
	o previous school attendance and achievement	1	1	1	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	0.5
	o parental/guardian engagement	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	o scholarship school location	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
	o school achievement (current year level and year level when student entered the funded scholarship)	1	1	1	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	6.5
	o scholarship funding amount per student.	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	0.5	1	1	7
Current and future need	Number of applications per year	1	1	0.5	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	8
	Number of successful applications per year (common barriers/reasons for unsuccessful applicants)	1	1	0.5	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	6
Costs and value for money	Scholarship funding amount per student per year	1	0.5	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	0.5	1	7
	Any criteria that assists in determining scholarship amounts (if not a fixed fee)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0.5	1	4.5
	What each scholarship covers (fees, books, boarding etc.)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
	Proportion of government funding (Commonwealth and state/territory) contributing to costs	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
Impact and outcomes	Breakdown of any funding in addition to the IAS grant funding that contributes to the scholarship	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5
	Any data on post-scholarship achievement including completion of Year 12, pathway to post-secondary, etc	1	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	4

Key:

1	Data can be submitted by the scholarship provider upon request.
1	The data submitted completely meets the data request.
0.5	The data submitted only partially meets the data request.
	No data provided.
	Data collection not applicable/relevant to the provider's delivery model



Based on this coding system, it is clear that the data provided by each scholarship provider is inconsistent and often disparate, with the most significant gaps relating to the provision of unit record level information on scholarship applicants and recipients including:

- whether applicants and recipients have the option of accessing schooling to Year 12 in their home community
- previous school attendance and achievement
- the level of parent/guardian engagement and any socioeconomic or family characteristics collected as part of the application process.

The other most significant gaps relate to the provision of unit level records about:

- the extent of administrative involvement or supports for each scholarship recipient
- unit level information on each application including the name and location of each applicants' school (at the time of application).

It is important to acknowledge that some scholarship providers do not collect the information requested as it is not relevant to their respective delivery models' (e.g. under the school-led model, the responsibility for the collection of certain information lies with education partners and not scholarship providers). This suggests that formal data sharing protocols may be necessary if applicant and recipient information is to be accurately and consistently recorded in the future, noting that caution is needed so that different delivery models are not compromised to comply with a 'one size fits all' approach (particularly given in school-led models the school itself is the custodian of the data).

A summary of the key strengths, gaps and limitations in the data that have been provided to date is outlined in Figure 17.

Figure 17: Summary of the strengths, gaps and limitations of the data provided

Strengths	Gaps	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarship providers have provided descriptions of their respective operating models, how funding is allocated and the range of supports provided for scholarship recipients. • Scholarship providers clearly articulate current application and selection processes, including the respective roles (if any) of their education partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of a consistent unique student identifier has meant the 'pathway' for some scholarship recipients cannot be tracked. • Similarly, for some scholarship providers it is not possible to identify students who 'switched' scholarship providers. • Few scholarship providers have submitted unit level data on scholarship application and selection processes. • Only AIEF and Cape York Institute have provided Year 12 completion and student destinations at the unit level (PLC, The Smith Family and Yalari have provided partial lists of student destinations which they have compiled to inform this project). • Only AIEF, CYI, MADALAH, PLC and Yalari have provided estimates of the average annual administration costs per scholarship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the absence of INDIGO or an alternative data reporting tool, data are provided in a range of reporting formats and often require some interpretation. • Different reporting cycles means that only some scholarship providers have reported data relating to 2016 and 2017. • Little evidence of data sharing between scholarship providers and education partners in terms of data collection and collation. One scholarship provider indicated that schools cannot legally share data with scholarship providers. • Given the tight time lines of this project, many scholarship providers have only provided what they have had at hand, and have been working to compile the information requested.

Although the information received is disparate and varied, a concerted effort has been made to organise and clean the data. Most scholarship providers provided partial information with few providing unit level data for all years that their scholarship recipients have attended secondary school whilst on an IAS funded scholarship. The responses to the data request have been tested with, and validated by, each scholarship provider.

3.3 Determining the effectiveness & efficiency of the IAS funded secondary school scholarships

As part of the review, we had sought to provide an accurate and up-to-date snapshot of the current activities of each scholarship provider in administering the IAS funded secondary school scholarships. It was our intention to use the data sets provided by the scholarship providers to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the IAS funded secondary school scholarships as they are currently administered by anchoring the analysis in the draft program logic (Figure 10). However, the incompleteness, inconsistencies and limitations of the data set that has been collated has meant that it is not possible to undertake a robust analysis of this kind. Instead, as outlined in the previous section, we have supplemented this with information provided by the department.

Given the data gaps and inconsistencies in the data provided in responses to the data request, the following section identifies key data points which need to be obtained if an appropriate evidence base is to be compiled to inform a rigorous evaluation of the IAS funded secondary school scholarships. It also identifies other matters for consideration, many of which were raised during the consultations with scholarship providers.

3.3.1 Effectiveness

To determine the effectiveness of a program or service, it is necessary to understand the program logic and the extent to which the outputs achieve the stated objectives or desired outcomes. Based on the draft program logic developed as part of the review, and noting the significant gaps and limitations of the data provided in response to the data request, if the effectiveness of the IAS funded secondary school scholarships is to be determined, information relating to the following three areas needs to be collected:

- 1 Application and selection
- 2 Scholarship recipients and education partners
- 3 Scholarship recipient outcomes.

Application and selection

What is desirable to demonstrate effectiveness?

A key objective outlined in the draft program logic is to provide opportunities for Indigenous students including those from regional and remote/very remote areas (who do not have access to secondary school education in their home communities) with the opportunity to attend and complete secondary school. In order to determine the effectiveness of the IAS funded scholarships in achieving this objective, data collected about the application and selection process is critical.

Specifically, by analysing data relating to applications (that is, unit level data on successful and unsuccessful applicants each year) it should be possible to deduce the extent to which Indigenous students from regional and remote communities are provided with the opportunity to access secondary schooling opportunities as a result of being a recipient of an IAS funded scholarship.

In order to provide an accurate snapshot of the application and selection processes for each scholarship provider, important unit level data points to obtain include the:

- year of application for each applicant
- age or date of birth of each applicant
- gender of each applicant

- location of each applicant’s home community, including the remoteness category (as specified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics)
- each applicant’s year level at the time of the application
- a definitive statement (i.e. ‘Yes’ or ‘No’) of whether each applicant has access to a secondary school education in their home community
- status or outcome of each application (i.e. whether the applicant was successful, unsuccessful or withdrew)
- school that successful applicants will be attending.

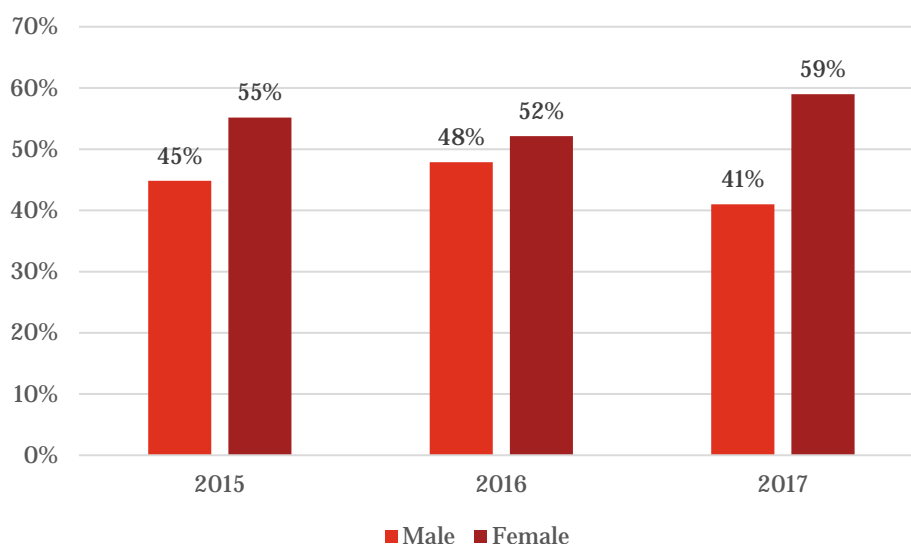
In addition to the above, as scholarship providers that adhere to a school-led model often rely on their education partners to facilitate the application and selection process, data sharing protocols (or similar) may need to be explored so that all relevant information is captured and stored. However, in determining these protocols care needs to be taken to not prescribe a ‘one size fits all’ approach that compromises the efficacy and integrity of the different models of delivery.

Preliminary snapshot based on the data provided in response to the data request

Four of the ten scholarship providers submitted unit level data relating to applications for IAS funded secondary school scholarships between 2015 and 2017. As discussed in Section 3, not all scholarship providers systematically collect application data as those under a school-led model tend to rely on their education partners to undertake this task. This means that the applications data is incomplete. One other scholarship provider only submitted applications data for 2017 as the data collected for earlier periods was provided in an inconsistent format.

Based on the applications data provided by four of the ten scholarship providers, 798 applications were received between 2015 and 2017 – 261 in 2015, 259 in 2016 and 278 in 2017. As outlined in Figure 18, of these applicants, the majority have been female students.

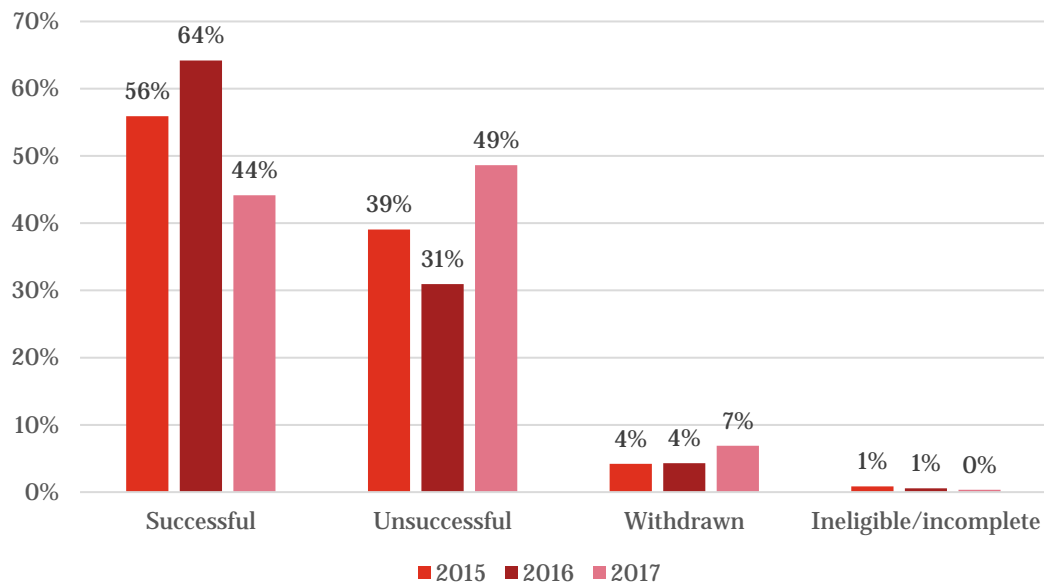
Figure 18: Gender of applicants between 2015 and 2017



Note: Only includes data from four out of ten scholarship providers.

The scholarship providers reported variable application success rates (Figure 19) between 2015 and 2017.

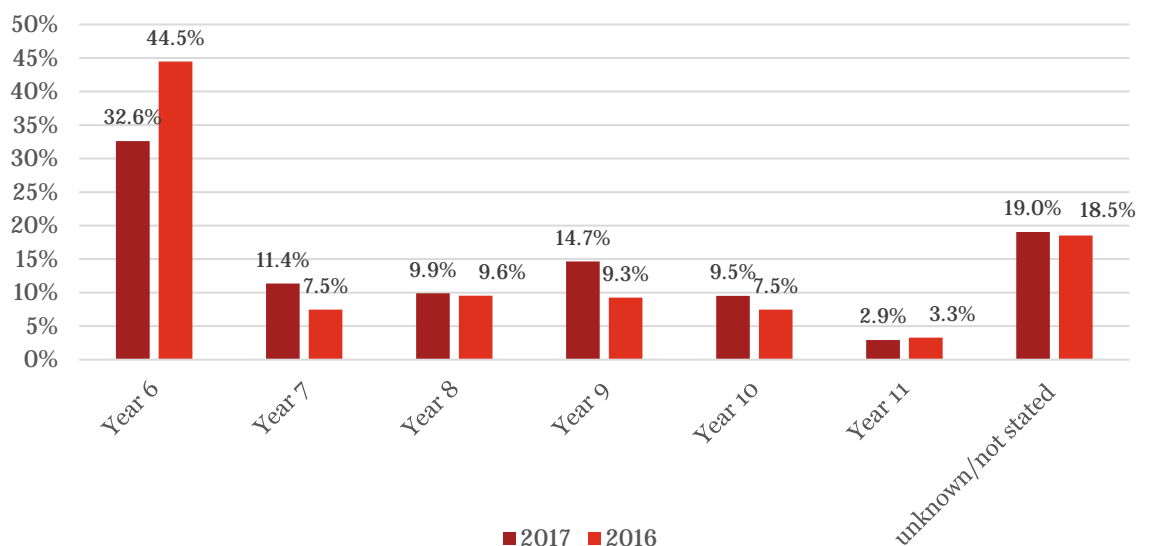
Figure 19: Application outcomes between 2015 and 2017



Note: Only includes data from four out of ten scholarship providers.

Of the ten scholarship providers, four submitted unit level data relating to the year level (at application) of each student applying for a scholarship in 2016 and 2017. As illustrated in Figure 20, the distribution by year level (at application) of the prospective students' applying for the scholarships were similar in 2016 and 2017, with the largest proportion of applicants (44% in 2016 and 33% in 2017) applying for an IAS funded secondary school scholarship whilst they are in year 6 so they can access the first year of secondary school.

Figure 20: School year level of applicants upon making secondary school scholarship applications in 2016 and 2017



Note: Only includes data from four out of ten scholarship providers.

Of the ten scholarship providers, two provided application success rates by year level for 2015 to 2017. One other scholarship provider submitted its applicant success rates for 2017. As outlined

below in Table 7, applicant success rates by year level vary significantly for each scholarship provider between 2015 and 2017.

Table 7: Application success rates by provider and year level (at application) for 2015-2017

Scholarship Provider	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
2015						
Scholarship provider 1	85%	100%	100%	100%	n/a	n/a
Scholarship provider 2	71%	75%	59%	47%	67%	44%
2016						
Scholarship provider 1	50%	58%	33%	40%	100%	0%
Scholarship provider 2	100%	100%	89%	84%	82%	75%
2017						
Scholarship provider 1	16%	50%	11%	20%	100%	n/a
Scholarship provider 2	88%	85%	74%	82%	89%	86%
Scholarship provider 3	n/a	22%	43%	50%	0%	n/a

Note: Based on impartial data provided by three scholarship providers.

In terms of whether the scholarship applicants are most 'in need', only one scholarship provider collected data relating to the socioeconomic status of applicants.

Similarly, in response to the data request only one scholarship provider submitted data relating to the degree of remoteness of the home communities of each applicant in line with the ABS Remoteness Area categories. This showed that 47 % of applicants in 2016 were from remote or very remote areas, whilst 76.3% of successful applicants between 2015 and 2017 were from outer provincial, remote or very remote communities.

Other matters for consideration

- The data provided does not paint a complete picture of the application and selection processes of each scholarship provider. As outlined in Section 3.2, significant gaps exist especially in relation to the provision of unit record level information on scholarship applicants and recipients. For scholarship providers operating in line with the school-led model, application and selection data is often not collected. Rather, it is collected and/or held by their education partners. Accordingly, in response to the data request, some scholarship providers were unable to provide this. This indicates a need to establish an alternative mechanism to collect this data which may require data storing protocols. However, in determining these protocols care needs to be taken to avoid prescribing a 'one size fits all' approach that compromises the efficacy and integrity of the different models of delivery.
- Based on the data provided, assessment of need (i.e. whether Indigenous students most in need of scholarships to access a secondary school education) cannot be accurately determined. Most scholarship providers have not provided a definitive record of whether each applicant has access to a high performing secondary education in their home community in lieu of a scholarship. This information would be useful as it would provide an indication of whether the applicants have the opportunity to access a high performing secondary school education if they did not receive an IAS funded secondary school scholarship. Whilst a definitive statement on whether each applicant has access to a high performing secondary school education in their home community is one component of demonstrating need, the case would be bolstered if the socioeconomic status of the applicant and their families could be determined. One option adopted by a scholarship

provider was to collect parent/guardian income data of applicants. However, during the consultations, several scholarship providers asserted that this was a contentious issue for them. As an alternative, some scholarship providers used the level of ABSTUDY (once it is calculated and applied) as a proxy to assess the need of each successful applicant. This is not ideal as the level of ABSTUDY allocated to each prospective student is not known at the application stage and is only divulged whilst they are at school.

Scholarship recipients & education partners

What is desirable to demonstrate effectiveness?

An objective and an outcome articulated in the draft program logic for the IAS funded secondary school scholarships relates to improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students including Year 12 attainment. In order to determine the effectiveness of the IAS funded scholarships in this regard, it is necessary to understand the profile of all recipients of scholarships and to monitor their experiences and progress throughout their secondary school education.

Unit level data collected in relation to each scholarship recipient can be useful in 'tracking' their experiences throughout their secondary school education. That is, from being awarded an IAS funded secondary school scholarship (and accepting a place at an education partner) to graduation (or an earlier exit).

In order to monitor the individual pathways of scholarship recipients whilst at school, important unit level data points to obtain include the:

- date of birth of each scholarship recipient
- gender of each scholarship recipient
- location of each scholarship recipient home community, including the remoteness category (as specified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics)
- status of each scholarship recipient (i.e. 'current', 'attrition' or 'graduate')
- each scholarship recipient's school that they are attending
- scholarship and school start date for each recipient
- duration of the scholarship provided to each recipient
- the year level of each scholarship recipient at school for each year they are at school to 'track' their progress (e.g. in Year 10 in 2014, progressed to Year 11 in 2015 and then Year 12 in 2016)
- total scholarship amount (excl GST) provided to each student for the duration of their scholarship
- year level and date that a scholarship recipient may exit secondary school
- a definitive statement (i.e. 'Yes' or 'No') on Year 12 completion
- post-school destinations of each scholarship recipient in the years 1, 3 and 5 after they exit school or graduate.

In addition to collecting unit level data relating to their experiences and progress at school, it is also important to determine the education partners that scholarship recipients are going to and whether there are any patterns or trends which relate to student retention and school completion.

In order to understand the contribution of education partners on each scholarship recipient it would be possible to canvas scholarship recipient experiences of the student supports provided at each education partner. Although it would be interesting to compare retention rates for students per education partner³, care is needed in any target setting based on this metric and its potential to incentivise scholarship providers and education partners to 'cherry-pick' high performing Indigenous young people (rather based on need) in order to inflate their school completion outcomes.

Preliminary snapshot based on the data provided

Although nine out of the ten scholarship providers were able to provide data relating to scholarship recipients in 2016 to the department (see section 3.1), as outlined below the data provided in responses to the data request is disparate and varied.

For instance, five of the ten scholarship providers submitted unit level data relating to the number of scholarships issued in 2015 and 2016. Similarly, two scholarship providers submitted definitive data relating to Year 12 completion (i.e. 'Yes' or 'No'). If all scholarship providers reported this information at the unit level it would be possible to calculate the graduation rate of these scholarship recipients and identify any common trends across the scholarship providers and the scholarship cohorts.

Likewise, only two scholarship providers submitted data relating to the remoteness categories of scholarship recipients for 2016.

All scholarship providers submitted data relating to their education partners. Specifically, they indicated the names and locations of their education partners, and the number of IAS funded scholarship recipients enrolled at each.

Key matters for consideration

- Based on the responses to the data request, there is significant variability in the way that scholarship recipient data is currently captured and recorded by scholarship providers. Specifically, few scholarship providers submitted unit level data for scholarship recipients for each year that they have been at secondary school. Rather, they have provided partial information often relating to a single year of a scholar's attendance at school (e.g. 2016 only). The data held by the department indicates that each scholarship provider has the capacity and capability to collect information relating to their respective activities provided they have clear expectations of what is necessary.

Scholarship recipient outcomes

What is desirable to demonstrate effectiveness?

In order to demonstrate effectiveness, the outcomes for each scholarship recipient need to be documented. Documenting the short-term and long-term outcomes of each scholarship recipient can help determine the extent to which the IAS funded secondary school scholarships are assisting Indigenous students to complete Year 12 and to transition to post-school destinations including future study and work.

To determine and monitor short-term outcomes (i.e. Year 12 completion/school achievement), it is necessary to analyse unit level data for each recipient, including their year level of education and provide a definitive statement of whether each scholarship recipient has completed Year 12 (i.e. 'Yes' or 'No'). In addition to this, to determine the extent to which receiving a scholarship has contributed to a recipient's longer-term outcomes, post-school pathways (i.e. Year 1, Year 3

³ This information can be collected for each cohort of scholarship recipients with the respective retention rates compared with the apparent retention rates from Year 7/8 to Year 12 compiled by the Australian Bureau of Statistics for all full-time students and for Indigenous students

and Year 5) must also be recorded at the unit level. This will enable analysis to be conducted in order to understand any patterns of causality between the experiences of scholarship recipients and their post-school outcomes.

If information was collected in this manner, it could be possible to compare the Year 12 completion rates and post-school destinations of scholarship recipients with data relating to a comparable age cohort of Indigenous young people from regional and remote Australia (e.g. ABS Apparent Retention Rate from Year 7/8 to Year 12).

Preliminary snapshot based on the data provided

As outlined in section 3.2, the data provided by the scholarship providers in relation to student outcomes is variable. The rationale for this is that few scholarship providers have recorded unit level data over consistent time periods.

Of the two scholarship providers that submitted Year 12 completion data at the unit level, their Year 12 completion rates compare favourably with the national average for Indigenous young people from remote areas which is 33.9%.⁴

Further, one scholarship provider submitted unit level data relating to post-school destinations for students that completed Year 12. However, it does not collect information relating to the post-school destinations of the past scholarship recipients who exited school early. The reason for this is they cannot compel students who exit school early to provide data. Similarly, four scholarship providers have submitted partial lists of student destinations which they have compiled to inform this project.

Key matters for consideration

- One scholarship provider provided unit level data on post-graduation outcomes (ie Year 13 and beyond) for its scholarship recipients. Several others indicated that they have strong relationships with their past scholarship recipients and are able to compile this information. However, the main data provided in response to the data request has not been recorded using a consistent, unique identifier meaning it has not been possible to 'track' a recipient's pathway during secondary school and then post-school. Ideally, information would be collected not only 1, 3 and 5 years after school completion for graduates, but also the first year that a student who exits the scholarship program early in order to determine whether they continued school elsewhere, transferred to another scholarship provider or are pursuing an alternative pathway (e.g. vocational education and training or employment).
- All IAS funded scholarship providers' currently record scholarship recipient data using personal attribute keys, such as name and address. However, these are usually not unique to the individual, change over time, and are often entered into different systems in different formats. This means there is significant potential for data-entry errors (e.g. misspellings). The use of a unique student identifier can attempt to correct for some of these changes and errors and also make it possible to 'track' the pathway of each scholarship recipient from the application stage to graduation (or earlier exit). A unique identifier for each student would also enable scholarship providers and the department to document instances where a scholarship recipient transfers schools or changes scholarship providers.
- A unique identifier is the simplest form of deterministic linking which involves the exact matching of different records across datasets so the pathway of an individual observation (i.e. student) can be tracked from successful application to school exit. The unique identifier is a number or code that uniquely identifies each student. The department could

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, (2016), *Education*, 4714.0 – National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2014-15.

require each scholarship provider to assign a unique identifier (e.g. student number) to each successful recipient of an IAS funded secondary school scholarship. In order to do this, the department would need to specify the format of the unique identifier to all scholarship providers, articulate the rationale for utilising a unique identifier (i.e. accurately track the pathways of each scholarship recipients whilst engaging in secondary school) and require each scholarship provider to report student progress and outcomes utilising the unique identifiers. The use of a unique student identifier could be stipulated in funding agreements. Importantly, before a decision is made, any proposed changes to the existing data collection mechanisms and/or requirements must be designed, developed and agreed in close consultation with all scholarship providers.

- If it is not possible to establish a unique identifier, there are a number of other options available. One example is the creation of a deterministic linkage key using a combination of identifying information on each record such as name, address and date of birth. However, this will not eliminate the risk of human error in terms of entry into data systems (e.g. misspelling names) or potential changes to personal attribute keys (e.g. name changes). Regardless of the method which is adopted, it is important that all scholarship providers collect the same information about each student at predetermined 'stages' of their engagement with scholarship providers and education partners so it is possible to 'track' the pathway of each student. Not only should this include each student's personal attribute keys (e.g. name, gender, age and address) from the application stage to graduation (or earlier exit), but also instances where students' transfer schools or change scholarship providers.

3.3.2 Efficiency

The efficiency of the IAS secondary school scholarships refers to whether its desired outcomes represent value for money. That is, the extent to which the relationship between the inputs and outputs in the draft program logic are timely, cost-effective and meet the expected standards.

Based on the draft program logic, and the responses to the data request, two measures have been identified to provide a preliminary snapshot of the efficiency of the current delivery of the IAS funded secondary school scholarships. These are:

- 1 The average value of funding per scholarship recipient per annum (including the proportion of costs covered)
- 2 The average administration costs per scholarship recipient.

Based on the responses to the data request, the average value of funding per scholarship participant varies for each scholarship provider. Specifically, the highest level of funding per scholarship was \$23,500 whilst the lowest amount was \$7,963. The median level of funding per scholarship is \$17,500. It is important to acknowledge that this information is variable as it depends on:

- the level of ABSTUDY awarded to each student
- the level of parent/guardian contributions
- the schools fees (and other educational costs) associated with the education partners of each scholarship provider.

Further analysis of student experiences for each scholarship provider would need to be undertaken to understand the extent to which the scholarship amount provided impacts on student experiences and outcomes.

All scholarship providers indicated that the IAS funded scholarships covered at least 42 percent of the total schooling costs per annum, with only one scholarship provider indicating that IAS

funding typically covers all costs. In addition to ABSTUDY, common additional sources of funding include:

- school contributions
- contributions from private foundations, corporates and philanthropy
- other family contributions.

Several scholarship providers indicated that they leverage the government funding they receive to obtain funding from these additional funding sources which covers the majority of the total cost of delivering the secondary school scholarships. In fact, four of the ten scholarship providers asserted that more than half of the total funding they receive is from non-government sources. This represents value for money for the department.

In addition to the average value per scholarship and the contribution of IAS funding to schooling costs, another measure of efficiency is the average administration cost per scholarship for each scholarship provider. Four scholarship providers have estimated the average cost of administration per scholarship, ranging between \$1,750 per scholarship to \$3,500 per scholarship. In order to provide a more accurate assessment of efficiency, further work is required to obtain the average administration costs per scholarship for the scholarship providers.

Other considerations

- The cost of support services was provided by one scholarship provider. It would be interesting to examine the kinds and degree of the supports funded by each scholarship provider for each scholarship recipient to assess the extent to which this contributes to the desired outcomes.
- During the consultations, some scholarship providers indicated that they engage education partners who also work with other scholarship providers. Some of these scholarship providers asserted that there was some administrative burden when they engaged with education partners that had more than one scholarship provider. As outlined below in Table 8, based on the responses to the data request there are ten education partners with more than one scholarship provider. It would be interesting to estimate the size of the reported administrative burden associated with education partners having multiple scholarship providers. It must be noted that in a number of these schools, one of the providers is already transitioning out of the partnership.

Table 8: Education providers with more than one scholarship provider in 2015 and 2016

Education Provider	State	Scholarship Providers	No. of scholarships 2015	No. of scholarships 2016
Aquinas College	WA	AIEF	3	5
		MADALAH	14	14
Brisbane Boys College	QLD	AIEF	2	2
		Cape York Institute	8	2
Clayfield College	QLD	AIEF	11	8
		Cape York Institute	5	6
Marist College Ashgrove	QLD	AIEF	13	13
		Cape York Institute	9	10
Presbyterian Ladies' College	WA	AIEF	3	5
		PLC	n/a	15
Scotch College	WA	AIEF	16	18
		MADALAH	8	12
		Yalari	4	1

Education Provider	State	Scholarship Providers	No. of scholarships 2015	No. of scholarships 2016
St Gregory's College	NSW	AIEF	31	34
		The Smith Family	2	n/a
St Peters Lutheran College	QLD	AIEF	28	27
		Cape York Institute	n/a	4
St Scholastica's College	NSW	AIEF	7	4
		The Smith Family	20	6
Wesley College	WA	AIEF	13	17
		MADALAH	n/a	n/a

3.4 Assessment of the availability and quality of data

In summary, based on the responses to the data request submitted by each scholarship provider:

- the current state data is compromised by data gaps, inconsistencies and disparate data which will not, in its current form, support robust evaluation approaches in particular impact assessment based on the draft program logic
- scholarship providers have the capacity to collect relevant data to support evaluation activities but require guidance, direction, resources and structure for this collection.

With the decommissioning of the INDIGO database, the significant variation in the responses by each scholarship provider to the data request can in many ways be expected in the absence of an alternative data collection and recording tool, the different contracts and models. In lieu of INDIGO, all IAS funded scholarship providers are currently required to report on their activities and outcomes to the department. However, the reports are not comprehensive as they include qualitative case studies illustrating successful outcomes, list the key activities delivered by the scholarship provider within the designated time period and identify any key outcomes for scholars. AIEF has its own reporting documentation and requirements which is stored separately by the department.

To better understand the effectiveness and efficiency of the IAS funded secondary school scholarships as it is currently administered and also make an accurate assessment of the impact it is having, it is crucial that a robust evidence base is collated. Gathering this evidence base is vital to not only ensure that each scholarship provider can accurately monitor the outputs and outcomes of its practices, but so that the department can measure the cumulative impact of these practices and inform alternative approaches if the desired results are not being achieved. The development of this evidence base is necessary if the department is to be equipped to effectively distribute resources and to improve educational outcomes for the recipients of IAS funded scholarships.



4 Future data improvement plan and options

Given the disparate, inconsistent and incomplete data set that has been compiled based on the responses of scholarship providers to the data request, it is apparent that the evidence base in its current form is inadequate for any meaningful analysis or impact assessment. Despite the observed data shortcomings, there is a significant opportunity for the department to specify a data improvement plan for implementation in the next round of funding agreements. This section outlines the data needed to determine the impact of the IAS funded secondary school scholarships and outlines a preliminary data improvement plan and recommendations. However, it is critical that this is developed over time and in close consultation with the scholarship providers so as to not undermine their existing investments and initiatives.

4.1 Improving the data held by scholarship providers

From our engagement with each scholarship provider throughout the review, it is apparent that they have access to diverse data points which are not currently collected or reported on in a consistent manner. All scholarship providers were highly engaged in the review process with many indicating that they had the capability to construct more complete data sets if they had greater clarity on the data they are expected to collect as well as consistent data mechanisms and infrastructures, including the necessary resources to undertake this.

If the data collected by scholarship providers is to be improved, it is imperative that the department investigates the following options:

- develop a program logic for the delivery of the IAS funded secondary school scholarships in collaboration and agreement with scholarship providers
- specify the minimum data sets to be collected by each provider to build a rigorous evidence base and explain the rationale for doing so
- develop and implement a standard data reporting requirements for all scholarship providers so that the outputs and outcomes of their practices can be documented, monitored and compared in a systematic and robust manner. Where it does not already exist, this could include the development of a standard reporting tool.
- recognise each scholarship provider's organisational structure and their respective models of operation by establishing data sharing protocols when information is collected and/or held by education partners. It is crucial that data collection responsibilities are allocated based on the principles of devolution so that scholarship providers are not faced with administrative burdens when avoidable.

4.1.1 Developing a program logic

Program logic models are useful in framing monitoring and evaluation activities primarily concerned with supporting decision making around program resources, activities, outputs, and outcomes and answering questions such as:

- were allocated resources sufficient to implement the program effectively?
- were the funded activities conducted as intended?

- were expected outputs achieved?
- to what extent did the funded activity achieve its short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes?

While different terminology can be used to describe the approach including program theory, theory of change, outcomes hierarchy and intervention logic, in essence the purpose of all program logic type frameworks is to outline how a project works by linking program activities with intended outcomes. In particular program logic models:

- **provide a readily accessible summary of the funded activity:** Developing a program logic supports the development of a deeper understanding of the activities and intended outcomes of funding and brings a systematic approach, imposing structure, rigour and discipline which makes clear the relationships among its components at various stages. Importantly program logic models link the activities to the aims and intended outcomes.
- **identify evaluation questions:** presenting the funded activity in a program logic model format helps identify key evaluation questions and support decision making to target evaluation efforts to the most critical areas. The program logic can help make clear the audiences for evaluation material and the potential sources and holders of data which may extend beyond the direct grant funding recipients (for example education partners). In addition program logic models help fine tune general evaluation questions into “clear, specific, and actionable evaluation questions”.⁵

As discussed in section 2.3, as part of the review PIC has developed a draft program logic for funded secondary school scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students based on desktop analysis and review of grant requirements. However, a key part of the development of a program logic is engaging in a range of consultation to ensure that there is an agreed understanding and to support ownership of the program logic diagram. Further consultation on the draft program logic is recommended in the development of the monitoring and evaluation framework including with funded scholarship providers.

4.1.2 Specifying a minimum data set


In terms of improving the data collected and held by scholarship providers through the specification of a minimum data set to be collected in the future, it is important to recognise that there are two purposes for the use of this data:

- 1 ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the delivery of the IAS funded secondary school scholarships
- 2 rigorous impact analysis of the IAS funded secondary school scholarships.

1. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the delivery of IAS funded secondary school scholarships

The successful monitoring and evaluation of a program or service involves the delivery of timely and relevant information so that progress towards outcomes can be tracked and adjustments can be made to implementation arrangements as necessary. For the IAS funded scholarship providers, tracking progress in a deliberate and systematic manner on an annual basis is crucial to:

⁵ Lawton, B., Brandon, P.R., Cicchinelli, L., & Kekahio, W. (2014). Logic models: A tool for designing and monitoring program evaluations. (REL 2014–007). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.

- 
- understand the extent to which they are meeting the requirements in their funding agreements
 - understand the extent to which they are assisting Indigenous students to access and complete secondary school and transition to post-school outcomes
 - reflect on existing implementation arrangements and improve their practices.

Regardless of the model that is currently adopted by each scholarship provider in administering the IAS funded secondary school scholarships (i.e. school-led, hybrid or partnership broker), data collection and reporting is not the primary focus of any scholarship provider. Although it is clear from the responses to the data request that some scholarship providers currently adopt more sophisticated approaches to data collection and monitoring, across the ten scholarship providers existing practices are inconsistent.

Whilst engaging in the review process, a common theme arising from discussions with scholarship providers is that they often collect data to monitor progress internally (i.e. in line with the respective governance structures) or to satisfy the requirements stipulated in funding agreements. Machinery of government changes, the various iterations of funding agreements associated with this and the absence of a consistent data collection tool to replace the INDIGO database has resulted in diverse and inconsistent monitoring practices across the scholarship providers.

In lieu of INDIGO, all IAS funded scholarship providers are currently required to report on their activities and outcomes to the department. However, the reports are not comprehensive as they include qualitative case studies illustrating successful outcomes, list the key activities delivered by the scholarship provider within the designated time period and identify any key outcomes for scholars. AIEF has its own reporting documentation and requirements which is stored separately by the department.

In order to assist scholarship providers to successfully monitor their delivery of IAS funded secondary school scholarships, the department should define the data to be collected and the method used for monitoring. For instance, the department could specify a Monitoring Framework as a key document to guide all evidence collection, analysis and reporting by scholarship providers, with the objective of being able to inform adaptive management and enable evidence-based decision-making. This is important for the department to identify any variability between funding agreements and the actual outputs and/or outcomes being generated by each scholarship provider. It is also vital for each scholarship provider as it allows them to adopt consistent data collection processes and procedures to monitor their activities and to reflect on and improve their practice.

There have been significant moves towards the application of evidence-based approaches across policy and practice in recent years, particularly to using data more strategically to identify what works, under what conditions, to drive change.⁶ Additionally, there is a growing trend internationally and nationally towards an outcomes – rather than outputs – based approach with the focus being on measuring the impact (to clients, program recipients etc.) resulting from inputs and activities. This approach is critical for evidence-based practice in order to make changes and improvements, guide system development and funding allocations to ensure achievement of the greatest (and intended) impact.

Evidence-based practice is supported through having a clear and shared understanding about the desired outcomes, as well as how to measure and assess these outcomes. The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework would provide the opportunity for these to be detailed.

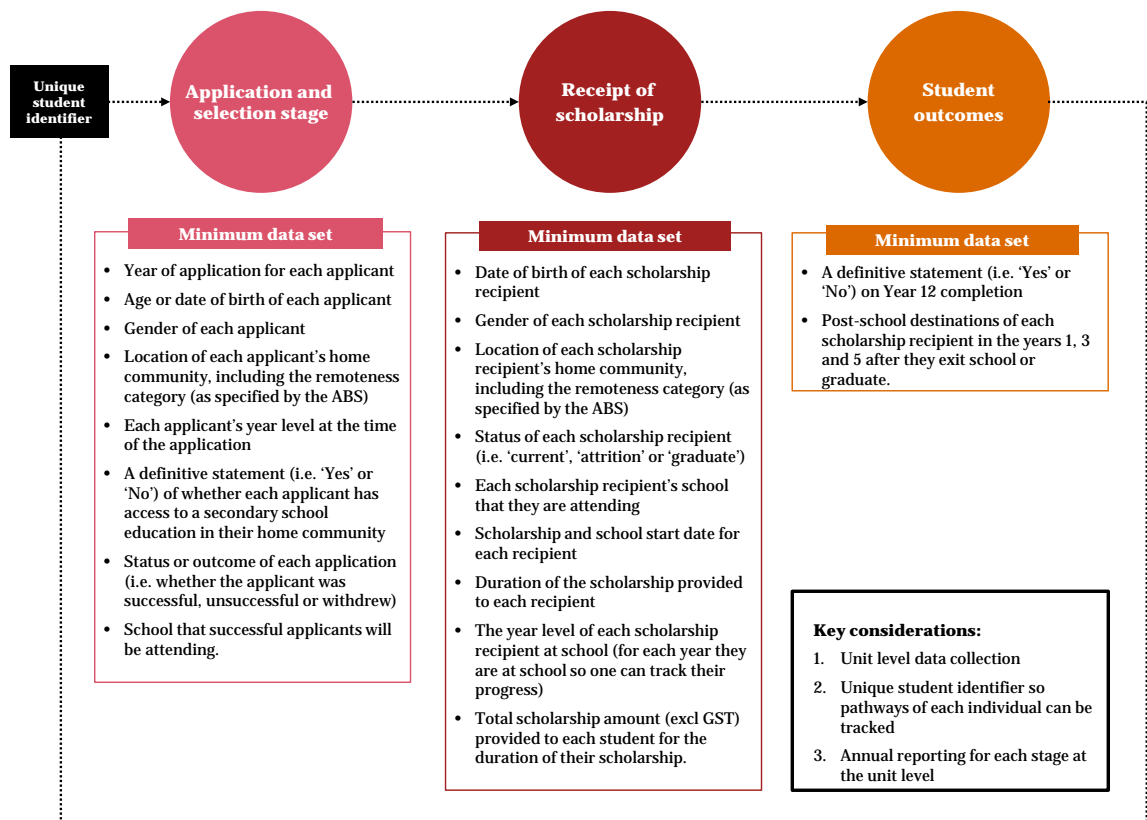
⁶ Moore, T. (2016) Towards a model of evidence-informed decision making and service delivery. Working Paper #5. Murdoch Children's Research Institute. May 2016. Available at: http://apo.org.au/files/Resource/working_paper_5.pdf

The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will function to:

- ensure shared understanding and collective agreement across scholarship providers about outcome areas (shared vision)
- provide details about the indicators and measurements to be used to assess impact in relation to outcomes (measures)
- enable a consistent and joined-up approach to monitoring and assessing outcomes over time (transparency)
- identify key methods and data requirements for building the evidence-base (application)
- enable scholarship providers to understand and meet their data requirements (accountability)
- provide an example reporting template which can facilitate data collection (tools).

As part of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, the department could specify the minimum data sets that IAS funded scholarship providers must collect and report on annually to provide a consistent snapshot of their outputs and outcomes. Based on the findings of the consultations and the data analysis, preliminary thoughts on the minimum data set to be collected for each IAS funded scholarship provider is outlined in Figure 21.

Figure 21: Preliminary indication of the minimum data set that could be collected by the department from each scholarship provider to successfully monitor the delivery of IAS funded secondary school scholarships

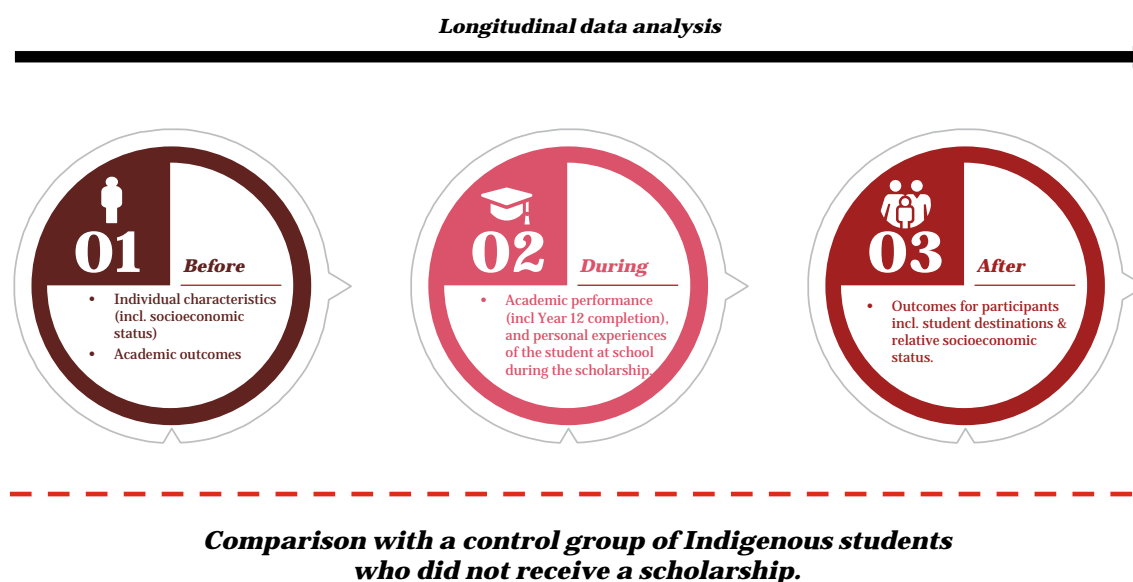


2. Rigorous impact analysis of the IAS funded secondary school scholarships

In addition to continuously monitoring scholarship provider outputs and outcomes, the second purpose of data collection and collation is to evaluate the impact (i.e. the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency) of the IAS funded secondary school scholarships in its entirety.

In order to evaluate impact and outcomes of the IAS funded secondary schools scholarships, it is crucial that all scholarship providers and education partners are collecting and collating the appropriate data. As illustrated in Figure 22, to accurately assess the impact of the IAS funded scholarships, it is necessary to understand the individual characteristics and academic performance of Indigenous young people before their engagement in the IAS funded scholarships, their experiences and academic performance during scholarships and, ultimately, the destinations of the scholarship recipients upon graduation or exiting school. The longitudinal data relating to these participants can then be compared with a matched group of students who did not receive a scholarship to attend secondary school. By comparing the outcomes of the students participating in the IAS funded scholarships to those students in the matched group, the impact of the IAS funded scholarships can be determined.

Figure 22: An illustration of a longitudinal impact analysis



To conduct a longitudinal impact analysis, a robust and comprehensive data set is necessary which captures a range of information relating to the experiences of IAS funded scholarship recipients before, during and after their engagement in secondary school.

Based on longitudinal studies⁷, of educational experiences tracking cohorts of young people from childhood to adulthood as well as discussions with scholarship providers around their

⁷ This analysis was informed by the approaches adopted in longitudinal studies such as Reinhertz, H. (1976), 'Simmons Longitudinal Study – Adaptation & Development Across the Life Span', National Institute of Mental Health (USA); and, New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER), (1993), 'Competent Children, Competent Learners', Ministry of Education (New Zealand).

The Simmons Longitudinal Study (SLS) has prospectively traced the life course of a single-aged cohort from childhood (age 5) to adulthood (age 26). Data were collected from each participant at seven major time points: age 5 (1977), age 6 (1978), age throughout their schooling (i.e. preschool, kindergarten, Year 3, Year 9, Year 12 and age 21) to track their pathways in terms of their employment, social functioning, and family relationships. The study began as a broad-based effort to determine behavioural, health, and family factors that identify preschool youth at risk for poor

respective models and existing data processes, a preliminary list of the minimum data set required to inform a longitudinal impact analysis was compiled.

This list, which outlined the minimum data set to be collected before, during and after engagement in secondary school, was tested with the department and circulated amongst all scholarship providers for refinement. All scholarship providers provided feedback on the list and including the feasibility of collecting this information based on their existing practices.

As outlined in Figure 23, a traffic light coding system was utilised by each scholarship provider to illustrate the efficacy and feasibility of collecting the minimum data set for a rigorous, longitudinal impact analysis. Specifically:

- 'Red':** No indication that scholarship providers currently collect or have access to this data.
- 'Amber':** Scholarship providers indicated that it may be possible to collect this data, they do not currently maintain records in a systematic way.
- 'Green':** Scholarship providers currently collect this data and have provided examples to PIC.

It is important to note that this needs to be tested and refined via further collaboration and discussion with all scholarship providers.

academic performance and adjustment in the early school years. Data collection has focused on important developmental stages in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood.

Similarly, the NZCER project, 'Competent Children, Competent Learners' has tracked the development of a single cohort of young people in New Zealand from when they were in early childhood education (1993), through school and into adulthood. Seven phases of the project have now been completed - the first when the students were near age 5, the next when they were at age 6 and then at ages 8, 10, 12, 14 and 16. A further phase is currently underway collecting data from the sample of young people at age 20. The findings are used to inform policy-makers on the concurrent, short-term and long-term impacts of educational experiences.

Figure 23: A preliminary indication of the minimum data set for a longitudinal impact analysis & an assessment by scholarship providers of the feasibility of its collection based on current practices

General information about the student/Application information	AIEF	CYI	Dubbo	MADALAH	MADEC	PLC	TCEO	TSF	Wunan	Yalari
Date of birth										
Gender										
Location and/or remoteness category of the applicants home community										
Availability of secondary education in the applicants place of residence										
Socioeconomic status of parents/guardians/families										
Level of school completion (prior to scholarship)										
NAPLAN results prior to application (Y3, Y5, Y7 or Y9)										
Application submission date										
Record of how applicants heard about the scholarships										
School preferences in application										
Aspirations and goals of student as specified in application										
Copy of latest school reports (prior to application)										
First round outcome of application (ie successful, unsuccessful, declined)										
Rationale for first round application decision										
Interview observations										
Outcome of interview (ie successful, unsuccessful, declined)										
Rationale for interview decision										
Information collected about students whilst they are recipients of IAS funded secondary school scholarships	AIEF	CYI	Dubbo	MADALAH	MADEC	PLC	TCEO	TSF	Wunan	Yalari
Name of school/education partner										
Location of school/education partner										
Type of school/education partner (ie govt/non-govt, day/boarding, girls/boys/co-ed etc)										
Year level of entry										
Base scholarship amount per student (annual)										
IAS funding stream (ie Legacy or 2015 Funding Round)										
School costs (ie boarding and tuition, uniform, textbooks, IT, personal allowance, etc)										
School results and reports (annual)										
NAPLAN results whilst at secondary school (ie Y7 & Y9)										
Student engagement in co-curricular activities										
Student engagement in leadership opportunities/activities										
Highest level of schooling completed (ie Year 12)										
ATAR result										
Type and extent of the additional supports/mentoring provided to each student per year										
Extent of parent/guardian engagement in student's education										
Post-scholarship destinations/outcomes	AIEF	CYI	Dubbo	MADALAH	MADEC	PLC	TCEO	TSF	Wunan	Yalari
Students that exit school prior to Year 10 completion										
Students that exit school prior to Year 12 completion										
Students that stop receiving a scholarship but continue secondary school										
Students that complete school: now unemployed										
Students that complete school: now employed										
Students that complete school: now obtaining a VET qualification										
Students that complete university										
Students that complete school: now at university										
Students that obtain a tertiary scholarship										
Number of former secondary school scholarship recipients now in full-time employment										
Number of former secondary school scholarship recipients now in part-time or casual employment										
The place of work/industry where former recipients of IAS secondary school scholarships are currently employed										
Income levels of former scholarship recipients										
Highest level of education completed (eg high school, VET qualification, undergraduate, postgraduate, etc)										
University study areas (if enrolled at university)										

Despite the shortcomings of the current data holdings, the responses by each scholarship provider in Figure 23 demonstrates that there is significant potential to build the minimum evidence base required for the completion of a longitudinal impact analysis.

Although there are significant clusters of 'Amber' responses against data line items – particularly in relation to post scholarship destinations and outcomes – scholarship providers believe that it will be possible to collect and collate this data. It is important to acknowledge that the allocation of data collection responsibilities must be based on the principle of devolution so that scholarship providers or education partners are not faced with administrative burdens when avoidable. That is the responsibility for collecting the data sits with the most relevant, appropriate or best placed entity to do so.

Data points that a number of scholarship providers indicated they cannot currently access or collect are the:

- availability of secondary education in the applicant's place of residence
- NAPLAN results prior to application
- NAPLAN results of scholarship recipients whilst at secondary school
- ATAR results of scholarship recipients that complete school
- number of former scholarship recipients that have obtained a tertiary scholarship
- number of former scholarship recipients now in full-time employment
- number of former scholarship recipients now in part-time or casual employment
- the place of work/industry where former scholarship recipients are currently employed
- the income levels of former scholarship recipients.

4.1.3 Develop and implement a standard data reporting tool

During the consultations, many scholarship providers indicated that they previously used the INDIGO database as the mechanism to report and store data relating to the IAS funded secondary school scholarships.

A number of scholarship providers caution against data collection processes standardising scholarship provider activity resulting in a one size fits all approach to delivery. It is vital that any new data collection requirements and processes are developed in consultation with scholarship providers to ensure data collection arrangements:

- reflect the range of circumstances of scholarship providers
- do not impose an undue administrative burden on scholarship providers
- are proportionate and do not unintentionally stifle innovation, capacity of scholarship providers to meet specific needs or compromise the capacity of scholarship providers to implement their own service delivery model.

Many scholarship providers expressed frustration at the INDIGO database claiming it was poorly designed with data compromised by system glitches. Nevertheless, it remained the repository for information relating to recipients of scholarships and was often relied upon for reporting.



In the absence of the INDIGO database, it is apparent that there is a need for consistent reporting requirements for all scholarship providers so that the minimum data sets (for monitoring and evaluation and a longitudinal impact analysis) are being captured and stored appropriately. All IAS funded scholarship providers are currently required to report on their activities and outcomes to the department. However, the reports are not comprehensive as they include qualitative case studies illustrating successful outcomes, list the key activities delivered by the scholarship provider within the designated time period and identify any key outcomes for scholars. AIEF has its own reporting documentation and requirements which is stored separately by the department. Two options the department could pursue are:

- 1 Develop a detailed template for all scholarship providers to complete on an annual basis in order to meet the requirements of the minimum data sets.
- 2 Invest in the development of a new data platform tailored to the IAS funded scholarship providers.

It is important that each of these options aligns with any infrastructure or IT systems that already exist, including those established by scholarship providers.

4.1.4 Establish data sharing protocols

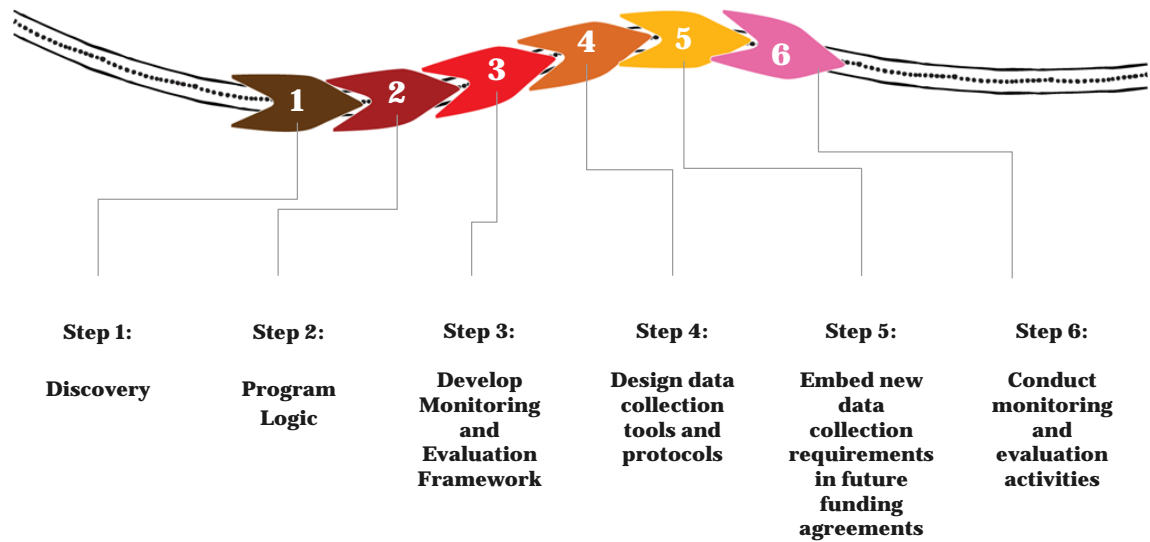
One of the most common explanations for the disparate and inconsistent responses to the data request, as well as the 'Amber' responses in Figure 23, is that scholarship providers do not collect certain data as it is the responsibility of their education partners or not relevant to their respective models.

Effective information sharing is a key component to the successful functioning of a partnership. In order to start the information sharing process, it is important that all partners are able to commit to the sharing of their information guided by a negotiated data sharing protocol between scholarship providers and education partners. By clearly defining why data sharing is required to scholarship providers and their education partners, the principles that will govern the sharing and how it will support the functions of the partnership, a protocol can provide the foundations for partners to agree to share information.

5 *Next steps & broader implications*

Through this review PIC has identified a number of opportunities to improve future collection of data related to the operation of funded scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary school students. These are set out in the data improvement plan at Figure 6.

Figure 24 Data improvement plan



The purpose of data collection should be to determine how funded scholarship contribute to achieving agreed outcomes. A number of scholarship providers caution against data collection processed standardising scholarship provider activity resulting in a one size fits all approach to delivery.

It is vital that any new data collection requirements and processes are developed in consultation with scholarship providers to ensure data collection arrangements:


- reflect the range of circumstances of scholarship providers
- do not impose an undue administrative burden on scholarship providers
- are proportionate and do not unintentionally stifle innovation, capacity of scholarship providers to meet specific needs or compromise the capacity of scholarship providers to implement their own service delivery model.

Recommendation 1

The department should consult with funded scholarship providers on any proposed changes to data collection requirements to ensure that new data collection arrangements are proportionate, flexible and do not impose an undue administrative burden.

Discovery

PIC has gathered input from all currently funded scholarship providers on their current data collection. On the basis of this work PIC has found that the current state of the data is



compromised by data gaps, inconsistencies and disparate data which will not, in its current form, support robust evaluation approaches in particular impact assessment to be conducted.

PIC developed a data 'wish list' for a range of primarily unit record data that will support evaluation design in three key domains: pre entry into a scholarship, during scholarship participation and post scholarship completion. PIC sought input from currently funded scholarship providers to gain insights as to whether they currently collect this data, whether they have access to the data but do not currently collect and record it systematically or whether they do not have access to these data.

In summary PIC has determined that scholarship providers have the capacity to collect a range of relevant data to support evaluation activities but require guidance, direction, resources and structure for this collection. Further, scholarship providers are keen to be consulted and involved in future discussions about data requirements and the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework.

Program logic

PIC has developed a draft program logic for funded secondary school scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students based on desktop analysis and review of grant requirements. Program logic models outline the logic of funding activities, link the activities to the aims and intended outcomes.

A key part of the development of a program logic is engaging in consultation to ensure that there is an agreed understanding and to support ownership of the program logic amongst key stakeholders. Further consultation on the program logic is recommended in the development of the monitoring and evaluation framework including with funded scholarship providers.

Recommendation 2

The department should consult with current scholarship providers to test, validate and refine the draft program logic which can then be used to help guide and frame a monitoring and evaluation framework for funded scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary school students.

Monitoring and evaluation framework

A monitoring and evaluation framework for funded scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary school students is required to:

- ensure shared understanding and collective agreement across stakeholders about outcomes areas (shared vision)
- provide details about the indicators and measurements to be used to assess impact in relation to outcomes (measures)
- enable a consistent and joined-up approach to monitoring and assessing outcomes over time (transparency)
- identify key methods and data requirements for building the evidence-base (application)
- enable stakeholders to understand and meet their data requirements (accountability)

As part of the monitoring and evaluation framework the department should specify a minimum data set. Informed by the data gathering and consultation, the draft program logic and the consultation with the department, PIC has developed a draft minimum data set for program monitoring and to support evaluation activities as a starting point.

The monitoring and evaluation framework will need to balance the needs of program managers and to support robust evaluation. As part of this it will be important to distinguish between

those items which should be routinely collected and monitored with those that can be collected for a specific purpose or to address a specific evaluation question or set of questions.

As part of the monitoring and evaluation framework consideration could be given to the specification and design of a nested outcome evaluation project which could be undertaken in partnership with one or more funded scholarship providers.

Recommendation 3

The department should develop a monitoring and evaluation framework, in consultation with scholarship providers, which is informed by a finalised and agreed program logic. At a minimum this monitoring and evaluation framework should:

- **specify data collection requirements for monitoring activities and for evaluation**
- **specify data terms in the form of a data dictionary to ensure consistency of collected information and identify data collection methods**
- **articulate how data will be used and a reporting schedule for analysis**
- **reflect different delivery models of scholarship providers.**

Design data collection tools and protocols

PIC found that scholarship providers have the capacity to collect a range of relevant data but require guidance, direction and structure for this collection. At a minimum this should take the form of a standardised reporting template which can facilitate data collection.

Recommendation 4

The department should develop a standardised reporting template or spreadsheet in consultation with scholarship providers to facilitate the collection of data in line with the specified minimum data set.

Embed new data collection

The department has significant leverage through the funding that it provides for the scholarships.

The department should seek to utilise any new funding or grant agreements to embed any new data collection requirements subject to agreement with scholarship providers.

Some scholarship providers have invested significant resources into data collection, analysis or reporting systems. It is therefore critical that the department consult with scholarship providers in the development of new, modified or enhanced data collection requirements.

It will be important that consideration is given to the costs and administrative burden of additional data collection requirements on scholarship providers.

Recommendation 5

The department should embed any new, modified or enhanced data collection requirements agreed with scholarship providers in future grant agreements. These new modified or enhanced data collection should be determined with reference to the cost and administrative burden on scholarship providers and education partners.



Implement monitoring and evaluation activities

Review and evaluation activities should be implemented in line with the agreed monitoring and evaluation framework.

Providing feedback and sharing insights from these activities will be important for the credibility of the framework and will also contribute to ensuring scholarship providers' data collection efforts are recognised and evidence collected on the contribution that funded scholarships for secondary school students are making to closing the gap in Year 12 or equivalent attainment by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

5.1 Broader implications

While variable current data quality and the limited time frame for this review precluded the formation of broader specific recommendations for the operations of the grant program there are a number of observations which are supported by our analysis and consultations with scholarship providers, education partners and the department.

Diverse service models and organisation types

The department funds a diverse range of scholarship providers in terms of:

- scale/size of organisation
- organisation purpose/mission (ranging from organisations whose sole purpose is the delivery of scholarships to those for whom the delivery of scholarships forms one part of a broader portfolio of activities)
- organisation type (including not for profit, schools and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations)
- service model with grant funding two key dominant models amongst scholarship providers: the school-led model and the community/broker-led model

The diversity of scholarship providers appears to be a strength of the grant funding as it:

- enables organisations of scale to, in some instances, achieve national reach and critical mass
- enables organisations to design programs to meet specific community needs
- provides Aboriginal families with choice of provider and scholarship which is consistent with the principle of self-determination
- supports innovation and ensures that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach is not imposed. This is a key factor in ensuring that government funding provided leverages corporate and philanthropic co-contributions.

Future questions for consideration include:

- whether there are differences in outcomes achieved depending on the organisation or model types
- whether administrative costs differ between school led and community/broker led models or organisation type or size.

Striking the right balance between providing direction and enabling innovation

Scholarship providers expressed a range of views around measures to provide greater clarity in the form of more consistent grant guidelines. Views expressed included:

- the potential for more consistent grant guidelines to assist in monitoring and reporting and providing clarity around expectations. This view was more commonly expressed by previously IYLP funded scholarship providers
- the concern that more consistent guidelines might undermine the benefits of diverse service delivery models identified above and result in a 'one-size-fits all' approach
- the need to define and agree the full dimensions of what success looks like for scholarship funding.

This should be explored in future discussions the department will have with scholarship providers in line with recommendation 1.

Student need and demand

While all scholarship providers assert they are meeting, or exceeding their obligations under funding agreements further work is needed to better understand need and demand.

Determining unmet demand is challenging as:

- placing students in high performing schools often requires a judgement to be made of the student's capacity to thrive and succeed in these environments. This is particularly the case where students are boarding. Developing a deep understanding the pool of *potential* applicants is challenging due to the subjective nature of assessment processes
- the school-led and the community/broker-led models have significant differences in the direct relationship between the scholarship provider and scholarship applicants
- the rate limiting factor of availability of places with suitable education partners including in some instances constraints on boarding facilities.
- data collection particularly of applicant data is inconsistent.

While anecdotally some scholarship providers noted practices of no longer promoting the availability of scholarships as demand outstrips supply, others indicated that they could double the number of scholarships they provide, including leveraging corporate or philanthropic funding dependent on additional IAS funding being provided.

Better data is needed to support comparative analysis and to identify grant refinements. The department should seek evidence from scholarship providers of unmet demand in order to inform decisions around funding allocation in future rounds including any potential increase to funding allocations. This evidence should include geographic area of scholarship need and include an estimate of numbers and rationale in addition to track record of the scholarship provider in delivering, or exceeding scholarship grant requirements.

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