

# TRAVELLING AND MOBILE FAMILIES

Mobility is one of the hardest issues for RSAS teams to address. We all want students to go to school, but we also know that travelling is an important cultural practice for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

RSAS should not try to stop people from participating in cultural activities, but help families find ways to balance travelling with other responsibilities. It is important strategies are developed with local people to meet their needs and fit with their culture. Below are some tips on how to come up with a local mobility strategy.

- **Tell the school when community events are happening so they can plan lessons.**
  - Talk to the school about what they will do if students have to travel for unplanned events, such as sorry business.
  - Work with the school to make a return to school plan for when students are away for long periods of time.
  - When families are travelling to another community, call the local school to let them know the families are coming.
- **Invite families and community members to talk about how to balance travel with school attendance.**
  - Ask Elders and community leaders for their support to improve school attendance.
  - Be clear that RSAS teams want to help communities balance cultural practices and school.
  - Encourage families to enrol their children in the local school when they are travelling.
  - Invite the school to come and talk about how they can help students keep up in class if they are travelling. For example, giving students work to do while they are away from school.
  - Talk about the cultural responsibilities students have in your community. Provide a list of these responsibilities to the school and let them know who will be involved.
  - Ask the community to agree a list of reasons which are not okay for missing school, for example, certain sporting events.
  - Encourage the community to hold events on weekends or school holidays where possible.

➤ **Talk to the school about how they can support travelling students.**

- Ask the school to give families information about what they need to do when travelling to help their children keep up in school.
- Ask the school to set up special classes or catch up sessions for students who miss school for cultural reasons.
- If possible, use technology to help students keep up. For example, you may be able to set up a Skype lesson.
- Work with Elders and the school to see if lessons can be run during Sorry Business. For example, ask Elders if lessons can be run at Sorry Camp or if RSAS can do a special bus run to school.

