

## Additional Information about AIEF

The rationale for AIEF's existence is to empower Indigenous families to make key decisions affecting their own family, including how and where their children are educated. AIEF does not advocate that any Indigenous child goes to boarding school, nor does AIEF promote boarding school as the best educational option. Consistent with the principle of self-determination, AIEF responds to self-generated demand from Indigenous families and provides *co-funding* for those families who choose a school themselves, initiate the enrolment application process and financially contribute to the school fees.

Most boarding schools in Australia with Indigenous education programs have been engaged in this field for many years before AIEF was established. The issue that AIEF sought to address when established, after being approached by boarding schools to help with scholarship funding for their existing Indigenous education programs, was to support schools to increase the number of Indigenous boarders to help address scholarship demand from Indigenous families. These boarding schools identified that expansion was constrained, and a scholarship provider was critical for growing their programs due to difficulty accessing external funds to pay for their Indigenous education programs and the financial costs already being absorbed internally.

Since AIEF was established, it has provided scholarship funding to enable Partner Schools to respond to the increasing demand from Indigenous families and increase Indigenous boarders at their schools.

AIEF has two roles – one in education and one in employment – and in both of these areas, AIEF has *enabling* functions as follows:

- **Education:** Provision of scholarship funding to enable students to complete their studies (the AIEF Scholarship Program).
- **Employment:** Provision of career support to scholarship students and alumni to enable them to achieve employment outcomes after they complete their studies (the AIEF Pathways Program).

### AIEF Scholarship Program

Each Partner School's Indigenous education program is run and led autonomously by the school itself. Partner Schools enrol Indigenous students through a variety of different programs, organisations and funding arrangements. This approach to Indigenous education is what we call a 'parent and school-led' model. It acknowledges that each Partner School is independent, with differences in culture, local context, historical origins, values, beliefs, teaching styles, leadership, ethos and approaches to Indigenous culture, education, pastoral care, parental engagement and student support. Accordingly, AIEF Partner Schools are solely and autonomously responsible for:

- Indigenous student selection and enrolment;
- direct support for the achievement of educational outcomes for Scholarship Students;
- the relationship with a Scholarship Student's family or community;
- cultural training, guidance, advocacy or support (including cultural awareness training or similar);

- involvement in the planning, delivery or support of Indigenous cultural activities or any other events and activities at a Partner School;
- pastoral care (including counselling or specialised professional support); and
- Scholarship Student safety, health and wellbeing.

There are various aspects of a school that a family will look at when considering their child's suitability, including location, gender, academic offerings, extra-curricular activities, learning support, pastoral care, and Indigenous cultural activities. Given that AIEF Scholarship Students and Alumni come from over 400 home communities around Australia and have varying levels of connection to Indigenous cultures, it is not surprising that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to Indigenous cultural activities. It is a Partner School's responsibility to consult with the families and communities that they work with and decide how they help Indigenous students feel culturally welcomed, included and supported. Parents will discuss these things directly with the schools they are interested in applying to for enrolment.

AIEF Scholarships help facilitate parental choice by removing the financial barriers that may prevent Indigenous students from pursuing their education with an AIEF Partner School. AIEF Scholarships are awarded by Partner Schools based on student enthusiasm and family support, among other eligibility criteria, such as being Indigenous, in receipt ABSTUDY, and completion of the year at their respective school.

AIEF Scholarships include a parental contribution to school fees. The parental contribution is based on a means-tested scale linked to the household income. AIEF then pays the shortfall in boarding and tuition fees and some other expenses after ABSTUDY in the form of scholarship distributions to Partner Schools at the end of each year.

In the AIEF Scholarship Program, AIEF works directly with the administration and finance office at a Partner School to obtain information about eligibility and all the processing, payment, acquittal, data management and reporting functions related to scholarship distributions.

### **AIEF Pathways Program**

The purpose of the AIEF Pathways Program is for AIEF to ensure that 100% of Alumni have employment outcomes after completing their studies (Year 12 and university), and that we have an active role in achieving that outcome for every Alum.

The AIEF Pathways Program, therefore, aims to:

- **Prepare** Scholarship Students for the transition to employment while they are at school.
- **Support** Scholarship Students with one-on-one career support as they transition from education to employment and further study.
- **Check-in** with Alumni and determine their Productive Engagement status, providing ongoing support as needed.

To achieve this, AIEF focuses on three key elements:

- a) **Employment Readiness** – ensuring Scholarship Students have a range of skills required to interview and apply for employment (full-time, part-time or casual) or study opportunities and live independently. This includes ensuring we assist every Year 12 Scholarship Student to

have a resume and career plan and ensuring AIEF has an active role in securing the first job or tertiary enrolment for each Year 12 student. Through our engagement with Scholarship Students, we will also make sure they understand workplace expectations and attitudes, recognise what employers or tertiary institutions are looking for, the importance of being reliable, accepting guidance and asking for help.

- b) **Employment and Tertiary Planning** – developing a career plan for all Year 12 students and actively working with each to secure their first job or tertiary enrolment.
- c) **Employment Networks** – leveraging AIEF's relationships to create a network of people and connections that can provide employment opportunities for Alumni and be called on for advice, ideas, support and introductions relating to their employment.

AIEF addresses these elements through two functions of the AIEF Pathways Program:

- **Employment Support** – providing support to Scholarship Students whilst at school and the years after. This support includes group workshops and more intensive one-on-one support to work intensively with Scholarship Students and Alumni to help ensure 100% have employment outcomes after they complete their study.
- **Mentoring** and support for employment options.

### **AIEF Partnership Principles**

AIEF aspires to make a sustained, significant and positive impact by supporting Partner Schools to enable Scholarship Students and Alumni to achieve positive educational and employment outcomes for. This is reflected in more than 500 contracts with stakeholders, highlighting the belief that it is only through many parties' collective efforts that these outcomes can be achieved.

The key relationships we seek are those that positively and unequivocally contribute to the partnership dynamics and tangible education and employment outcomes efficiently.

AIEF is committed to using its time, energy, and resources to efficiently and effectively do this. Because effective collaboration is vital to our work, we are disciplined about focussing on partnerships that are the most likely to have enduring success. In this regard, some of the guiding principles in our partnerships are:

1. Avoid duplication or overlap
2. Avoid mission drift
3. No outsourcing of the core business of either partner
4. Ensuring that partners bring different skills and expertise so that the product of their combined contribution and their core competencies results in education and career outcomes that are greater than the sum of the parts
5. Ensuring that the partnership is mutually willing and enthusiastic and is entered into voluntarily without external duress or other agendas
6. Partners have mutual respect and approach the partnership in good faith
7. Partners support each other's work, purpose and mission - publicly and privately
8. Risks are shared between the partners according to who is best able to manage the risks