

## 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 should go 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 cost already being absorbed by schools themselves.

Since AIEF was established it has provided scholarship funding to enable its partner schools to respond to the increasing demand from Indigenous families and increase the number of Indigenous boarders at their schools. AIEF has two roles – one in education and one in careers – and in both of these areas AIEF has *enabling* functions as follows:

- **Education:** Provision of financial support through scholarship funding paid directly to schools to enable them to achieve education outcomes for students (the AIEF Scholarship Program); and
- **Careers:** Provision of career support to students and alumni to enable them to achieve career 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, and they enrol Indigenous students themselves through a variety of different programs, organisations and funding arrangements. This approach to Indigenous education is what we call a 'school-led' model. It acknowledges that each 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:

- Achieving educational outcomes for scholarship students
- Liaison and engagement with the students' families and communities
- Indigenous cultural activities
- Applications, enrolment and student admission
- Nomination of students for AIEF scholarships and their eligibility for the scholarship
- Education delivery

- Pastoral care
- Student safety, health and wellbeing
- Supporting delivery of the AIEF Pathways Program for careers

There are a variety of aspects of a school that a family will look at when considering the suitability for their child 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 their Indigenous culture, it is not surprising that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to Indigenous cultural activities. It is the responsibility of each school to consult with the communities that they work with and decide how they help Indigenous students feel culturally welcomed, included, celebrated and supported, and parents will discuss these things directly with the schools.

AIEF scholarships help to facilitate parental choice by removing the financial barriers that may prevent Indigenous students who want to pursue their education with our partner schools from doing so. AIEF scholarships are awarded by schools on the basis of student enthusiasm and family support, among other eligibility criteria as such as being Indigenous, in receipt ABSTUDY, and completion of the year at school. With AIEF scholarship funding, a parental contribution to the school fees is based on a means-tested scale linked to the family income, and for eligible students AIEF pays the shortfalls 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 the school and other relevant staff to obtain information about eligibility and all the processing, payment, acquittal, data management and reporting functions related to the scholarship distributions to the school each year on account of the scholarship students.

### **AIEF Pathways Program**

As part of the offering for scholarship students, AIEF also provides the AIEF Pathways Program to help students with their careers when they complete their studies. The AIEF Pathways Program aims to:

1. **Prepare** scholarship students for their careers while they are at school.
2. **Support** scholarship students with one-on-one career support as they make the transition from their education to their careers.
3. **Monitor** and track students' career progression and provide ongoing career support as needed.

The costs of the AIEF Pathways Program, travel and accommodation for participation in events and activities, and associated costs are also covered.

### **AIEF Partnership Principles**

AIEF aspires to make a sustained and significant, positive impact by achieving educational and career outcomes aligned to its mission, and has entered into more than 500 contracts with stakeholders, reflecting its belief that it is only through the collective efforts of many parties that these education and career outcomes can be achieved. The key relationships we seek are those that positively and

unequivocally make a contribution to the partnership dynamics and tangible education and career outcomes in an efficient way.

AIEF is committed to achieving the best education and career outcomes for scholarship students and using its time, energy and resources in the most efficient and effective manner to do this. Because effective collaboration is so important 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