



HEDLAND ATTENDANCE STRATEGY

supporting the wellbeing of children



PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document formalises the future directions and strategies needed to ensure the sustained success of the Hedland Attendance Strategy.

This strategy has been informed by engagement with the key project partners, including a detailed planning workshop conducted in May, 2019 at Hedland Senior High School involving the project partners.

INTRODUCTION

The Hedland Schools Attendance Strategy represents a highly successful, community-based approach to supporting the wellbeing of children by ensuring they attend school on a regular basis in Port Hedland and South Hedland.

Commencing in Term One 2019, this collaborative initiative was born out of a common belief by the Hedland Aboriginal Strong Leaders and Elders (HASL), government agencies, schools and community organisations that low levels of school attendance was impacting on some children and their families, hindering their welfare and limiting their future life prospects. It was also recognised that regular non-attendance by some students impacted the community - through a greater risk of crime and anti-social behaviour and diminished community cohesion.

Through a common purpose, and a belief that every child matters, every day, this unique partnership has forged a new path in interagency collaboration to encourage and support students' school engagement and attendance.



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

OUR VISION

A sustained and successful interagency and community partnership that ensures all children within Hedland regularly attend school and succeed in their engagement in education.



OUR MISSION

To ensure regular school attendance of students at risk and support their families to develop routines to ensure students have strong social and lifelong outcomes by positively engaging in education.

OUR OBJECTIVES



To identify students at risk and develop a “wrap around” service to support and increase their school attendance



To foster a collaborative, interagency and localised community approach to supporting students’ school attendance



To maintain a responsive transport service to ensure students can attend school



To deliver a respectful and supportive transition to school for students



To foster family and community support to encourage them to value education and school attendance



THE STORY SO FAR

BACKGROUND

A number of key actions were commenced to support disengaged students when the Hedland Attendance Strategy commenced in Term One 2019. These included:

- Identification of students with low school attendance
- Allocation of resources across the partners to engage with students and families
- Commencement of a bus service is provided between the hours of 8am and 10am supporting this initiative with presence on the bus to:
 - Encourage families to develop a regular attendance ethos with their children
 - Support families to transport students to school
 - Develop interagency relationships with families in a positive manner
 - Reinforce that Education Matters, Every Day
- Developing in-school transition actions to support the re-entry of students back into a school environment

HOW IT WORKS

Each school day the Pilbara Attendance Coordinator from the Pilbara Education Regional Office joins representatives from WA Police, a representative from Department of Communities, and a member from the Youth Involvement Council in a meeting at South Hedland Police Station. Homes are visited and the Pilbara Attendance Coordinator supports school-aged children to attend school using the service provided.

The Pilbara Attendance Coordinator is provided with support when required by the WA Police Force and Department of Communities (Child Protection and Family Services) to develop positive relationships with disengaged families and establish a safe environment. Students whom may have been referred by WA Police Force for the Strategy are supported by local officers.

Identified students are regularly added or removed from the list due to referrals from schools, WA Police Force and from the Department of Communities and Pilbara Attendance Coordinator.

Referrals to the Department of Communities in relation to home environment, housing conditions and family environment are then directed to Department of Communities case workers and their teams as required.

The Youth Involvement Council provides the bus service with a driver and support with outside agency case management as required

from observations and referrals completed by WA Police and Department of Communities.

Local schools welcome all students and provide uniforms, breakfasts, lunches as part of their everyday processes - removing any possible barriers that prevent students from attending school. The schools also provide school stationery, backpacks, shoes and socks – which are funded directly by schools using the student-centred funding model and additional school resources.

Students without the required paperwork for enrolment commence immediately and documentation is followed up by the Pilbara Attendance Coordinator.

SUCCESSES SO FAR

The Hedland Schools Attendance Strategy has already achieved a number of successes since its inception including:

- Collaborative / whole of community approach to student truancy
- Establishment of structures to support student attendance and wellbeing
- Enhanced trust, information sharing and positive relationships between the project partners
- Enhanced relationships between agencies, their representatives and the families of students
- Increase in regular attendance and engagement of students involved in the program

STRATEGY

OUR PRIORITIES

The following priorities represent the key areas of focus of this strategy.

PRIORITY 1:

Cohesive Interagency Support



Delivering an integrated interagency partnership that provides a 'wrap around' approach to supporting student attendance, wellbeing and engagement in education.

PRIORITY 2:

Effective Data Management



Ensuring a collaborative method to data collection, analysis and sharing across agencies and partners to inform key decisions and actions in a timely manner.

OUR PARTNERS

The following partners are crucial the success of the Hedland Attendance Strategy.



Department of Education
(Hedland Primary Schools, Hedland Senior High School, Pilbara Education Regional Office)



Department of Communities
(Child Protection and Family Services)



Western Australia
Police Force

PRIORITY 3:

Sustained Resourcing



Advocating for and accessing sustained funding and resources that provide the foundation for the delivery of a successful attendance strategy.

PRIORITY 4:

Engaged and Supportive Community



Fostering parent capacity and community support for student attendance at school and their valuing of education.

WA Country
Health Service

Child and Parent
Centre

The Youth
Involvement
Council

Julyardi -
Hedland Aboriginal
Strong Leaders &
Elders

Town of
Port Hedland

OUR PLAN PRIORITY 1

Cohesive Interagency Support

1.1

ENTRENCHED INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

The following strategies will foster a collaborative approach across agencies.

- All agencies and strategy partners to be signatories to a Memorandum of Understanding that outlines agreed responsibilities and resourcing over a five year period
- Establish a program coordinator role to coordinate interagency meetings, oversight of the strategy and monitoring of the delivery of actions
- Continue a cross agency collaborative approach to identification of student and families for engagement in the Strategy
- Establish a Steering Group that meets every month and operates under an agreed Terms of Reference
- Provide fortnightly communiques to all agencies that provide updates on strategy issues and progress
- Investigate a cross district strategy involvement (once the strategy is embedded) to monitor and guide students when they move locations



1.2

WRAP-AROUND SERVICE

The following strategies will underpin a wrap-around approach to supporting students at risk from poor school attendance.

- Outside agency case management to be informed by observations and referrals completed by WA Police and Department of Communities
- Continue to implement non-traditional options to encourage attendance, including rewards for regular attendance
- Consolidate the approach to case review and response, including identification of what services are needed for each child
- Refer families and children to the Department of Communities, when there are concerns about the home environment, sustained truancy or absence from school, housing conditions and family environment
- Refer families and children to the Department of Education attendance officers when attendance issues are not being resolved through formal attendance meetings and attendance panels including representation from Julyardi - Hedland Aboriginal Strong Leaders & Elders on the panel process
- Engage members of the Aboriginal Strong Leaders in the attendance strategy process, in particular through engagement with families
- Ensure onward referral from bus supervisors to the schools
- Provide support to and refer to relevant agencies children with health issues which create barriers to engagement in education (ear health, speech, FASD, ASD)
- Upskill staff in trauma informed practice
- Establish a school holiday interagency collaborative program with strategy partners and the Town of Port Hedland to positively engage children

OUR PLAN PRIORITY 1

Cohesive Interagency Support

1.3 **FAMILY** **ENGAGEMENT** **AND STUDENT** **TRANSPORT**

The following strategies will facilitate effective engagement with families and transport of students to ensure they can attend school.

- Allocate a Student Attendance Bus to provide morning student collection and delivery to school
- Pilbara Attendance Coordinator allocated to daily engagement with students and families on the School Attendance Bus
- Youth Involvement Council (YIC) to provide a bus and driver (through support funding)
- Department of Communities staff and Police allocated to daily engagement with students and families on the bus



1.4

STUDENT ARRIVAL AND TRANSITION INTO SCHOOL

The following strategies will seek to ensure students can confidently transition into a school environment and focus on learning.

- Develop a triaging approach upon student entry at each school that assesses the student's readiness for engagement in mainstream schooling
- Investigate a transitioned and individualised approach to supporting students re-entering school
- Support and streamline enrolment process to make it easier for families to engage in schooling
- Seek to reduce delays in starting school due by accepting the children who present at school first and undertake administration tasks later
- Develop a range of engagement actions that support the student's sense of comfort once they arrive at school (e.g. buddy system)
- Continue to provide uniforms; stationery and other items needed for students to integrate into the school
- Where mainstream schooling is not an option for initial transition – direct students to appropriate alternative options or case manage to provide applicable supports for students

OUR PLAN PRIORITY 2

Effective Data Management

2.1

UNIFIED DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The following strategies will underpin a cohesive approach to the collection and analysis of data to inform key actions.

- Formalise the needs of each agency to guide the data to be collected
- Centralise the collation of the data on a shared platform
- Data to be available in a live format to enable day to day monitoring
- Data collection to focus on:
 1. Identification of families
 2. Identification and recording of student engagement
 3. Recording of care issues
- Program Coordinator (new role) to manage the data collection and sharing
- Monthly reports on data findings and trends to be provided to all Strategy Partners with approved access at and through the steering committee



2.2

APPLICATION OF DATA

The following strategies will seek to ensure data informs future strategies and actions that benefit students.

- Use data for case reviews and to monitor strategy effectiveness
- Develop case plans for each student/family
- Use data findings and trends to inform strategy review
- Provide an annual report of program outcomes – using the data collected

OUR PLAN PRIORITY 3

Sustained Resourcing

3.1 RECURRENT FUNDING ADVOCACY

The following strategies will seek to implement a proactive approach to obtaining sustained funding support to ensure optimal program outcomes.

- Use data to provide a strong case for program success and outcomes
- Engage with the Department of Education to seek ongoing support and resourcing to support YIC Bus
- All agencies and strategy partners to be signatories to a Memorandum of Understanding that outlines agreed responsibilities and resourcing over five years
- Develop a project prospectus that includes relevant information and description of outcomes to foster ongoing financial investment opportunities for the State Government; Federal Government; Town of Port Hedland; and industry to support the resourcing of the Strategy
- Promote the successes via the local media and ongoing engagement and communication with project partners



3.2 REQUIRED RESOURCING

The following resources are required to ensure the strategies are effectively delivered and the vision is achieved.

*Required levels of funding will be determined and noted in ongoing operational planning. Typical annual resourcing requirements will include:

- **Pilbara Regional Education Office
Department of Education**
 - 0.4 FTE – Participation Coordinator, MO-L4
 - 0.24 FTE – Participation Coordinator, MO-L4
 - 0.10 FTE – Regional Attendance Coordinator, PS-L5
- **WA Police**
 - Constable (Youth Crime Intervention Officer)
 - Aboriginal Police Liaison Officer
 - Community Liaison Officer
 - Sergeant (admin, direction, meeting, liaison)
- **Schools**
 - Baler Primary School: 0.16 FTE – School Based Attendance Officer, MO-L2
 - Hedland Senior High School: 0.40 FTE – Engagement Coordinator, MO-L4
 - Cassia Primary School: 0.16 FTE – School Based Attendance Officer, AIEO –L3
 - South Hedland Primary School: 0.08 FTE – School Based Attendance Officer, MO-L2
- **Department of Communities – Child Protection and Family Services**
 - 0.4 - Field Support Worker, PSL2
- **Youth Involvement Council**
 - WET hire bus and driver
 - Family Support worker and vehicle
- **School uniforms, booklist, shoes, lunches and stationary for students in the program**
 - 124 students
- **Julyardi - Hedland Aboriginal Strong Leaders & Elders payment for student/family engagement**

OUR PLAN PRIORITY 4

Engaged and Supportive Community

4.1 ABORIGINAL STAKEHOLDER LEADERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT

The following strategies will seek to ensure local Aboriginal elders are actively involved in support family and student engagement.

- Engage with the Hedland Strong Leaders Group to identify elders with the interest, skills and capacity to support the Hedland Attendance Strategy
- Develop an 'Elders in Residence' program at schools, with direct Elder involvement with students and families and addresses cultural points of conflict
- Elders to provide advice and guidance to agency partners on culturally appropriate engagement
- Elders to provide specialist advice on solutions to Aboriginal student barriers to school attendance



4.2

COMMUNITY AND PARENT SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

The following strategies will seek to develop positive community and parent support for the Hedland Attendance Strategy

- Provide regular information and media articles that describe the value of school attendance and benefits of the program for students, schools and the community
- Work with key stakeholders to develop targeted parenting support programs through the Child and Parent Centre and other key stakeholders.
- Develop a parent-buddy approach, where families support each other to foster improved value of education
- Establish 'parent breakfasts' to encourage parents engagement and provide advocacy to them on the value of education for their children



This document has been proudly developed by the Hedland Attendance Strategy Interagency Working Party.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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