

# Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment 2025-31 – Early Learning and Access to Education

FEDERATION FUNDING AGREEMENT – AFFORDABLE HOUSING,  
COMMUNITY SERVICES AND OTHER

**Table 1: Formalities and operation of schedule**

Parties	Commonwealth Northern Territory
Duration	This Schedule is expected to expire on 30 June 2031.
Purpose	<p>This Schedule supports the delivery of the Early Learning and Access to Education investment priority under the <i>Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment: Investing in Aboriginal Self-determination to Close the Gap in the Northern Territory Partnership Agreement</i> (NTRAI Partnership Agreement).</p> <p>The NTRAI Partnership Agreement is between the Commonwealth, the Northern Territory and the Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APO NT).</p> <p>This Schedule recognises that continued investment in Early Learning and Access to Education is essential to support the achievement of multiple outcomes under the <i>National Agreement on Closing the Gap</i> (National Agreement), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome 4 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive in their early years.</li> <li>• Outcome 5 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve their full learning potential.</li> <li>• Outcome 7 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are engaged in employment or education.</li> </ul> <p>This Schedule aims to deliver on key objectives set out in the NTRAI Partnership Agreement, which are aligned to the Priority Reforms set out in the National Agreement, including:</p> <p><u>Priority Reform Two</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build the capacity and capability of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO) in remote communities to deliver high quality services.</li> <li>• Tangible action and local jobs in remote communities in line with the Aboriginal employment target in the Additional Terms of this</li> </ul>



	<p>Schedule.</p> <p><u>Priority Reform Three</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving the standard of remote services, including the design, management and delivery of high-quality, culturally responsive services.</li> <li>• Ensuring Aboriginal people living in remote communities have equitable access to mainstream services in a way that is relevant to their context.</li> <li>• Identifying and eliminating racism in mainstream organisations and institutions delivering services to remote communities.</li> <li>• Embedding and practicing meaningful cultural safety in government organisations delivering services to remote NT communities.</li> <li>• Delivering mainstream services for remote communities in partnership with remote communities and their organisations.</li> </ul> <p>Funding provided under this Schedule builds on previous Commonwealth investment in remote Aboriginal communities through the NTRAI and is intended to supplement service delivery in the Northern Territory. It is not intended to exclude or disadvantage the Northern Territory Government from accessing other funding sources, including from the Commonwealth.</p> <p>Acknowledging the supplementary nature of NTRAI investment, where the Northern Territory Government negotiates with the Commonwealth for new funding for services and programs within the scope of NTRAI, the Northern Territory will notify the Commonwealth of the funding being provided under NTRAI for those services and programs with appropriate records maintained. In addition to this Schedule, there is an agreement between the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Block Grant Authority, which provides supplementary funding for 14 non-government schools in remote and very remote areas of the Northern Territory.</p> <p><b>Supplementary investment for early learning and access to education</b></p> <p>This Schedule provides supplementary funding for the delivery of support activities to contribute to improved school readiness, attendance, attainment and engagement for Aboriginal children in remote government schools.</p> <p><b>Delivery of remote early learning (FaFT)</b></p> <p>The Families as First Teachers (FaFT) program aims to enhance development and learning outcomes for children prior to commencing</p>
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school, by working with families to build parents' capacity through the program's support and adult-learning activities that are linked to children's learning and development.

A review of the FaFT program was finalised in November 2024. A co-designed response to this review will be used to strengthen and improve the consistency and quality of program delivery across sites, including trialing new models.

FaFT will contribute towards Priority Reform 2 and 3 set out in the National Agreement by providing local jobs in remote communities and access to a high quality, culturally responsive early learning service.

#### **Coordinated support for remote students to improve access and participation in education**

This Schedule enables the extension of supports to students who are not provided for by the Northern Territory or Commonwealth funding streams under the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025–2034* (BFSA) - that is, students who are either: not actively attending a Northern Territory government school at the time of the Age Grade Census; and/or require outside-of-school support to access boarding. Specifically, this includes support to:

- Connect remote and very remote families in the Northern Territory to secondary education, training and pathways in line with the Northern Territory Secondary Reform Program. This includes support for government and non-government students to transition and access boarding to augment the secondary education program available to their community.
- Actively work with local communities, families and students to coordinate and provide support for those students who have been chronically disengaged from school (on the Intensive Support Roll) and connect them with education and/or employment pathways and support long-term participation.

These services contribute to Priority Reform 3 of the National Agreement by ensuring equitable and responsive access to secondary education; and by working with community and family to provide support for students to re-engage in schooling.

#### **Remote Aboriginal Teacher Education (RATE)**

The RATE program streamlines support for Aboriginal educator employees to engage in education-specific professional learning. The program supports recruitment, retention and professional development strategies to further develop the remote Aboriginal education workforce, increasing local Aboriginal employment and career



	<p>development.</p> <p>The RATE program contributes to Priority 3 of the National Agreement by providing local jobs that also create more culturally responsive learning spaces for students.</p> <p>Funding for the RATE program will cease under this schedule on 30 June 2027, however the NT has committed to continuing to deliver the RATE program under the NT's Bilateral Agreement for the BFSA. For the avoidance of doubt, Commonwealth funding provided under this agreement cannot be claimed under any other Commonwealth agreement.</p> <p>This Schedule will contribute to the Northern Territory's strategic objective to partner with students, families and communities to raise school attendance, create pathways to real jobs, and improve student wellbeing.</p>
Governance	<p>The NTRAI Partnership Agreement sets out the enduring shared decision-making arrangements to guide NTRAI investment and maximise alignment to Closing the Gap Priority Reforms, including establishing the NTRAI Joint Steering Committee (JSC). To facilitate shared decision-making, monitoring and oversight of NTRAI investment by the JSC, the NT Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare biennial plans to outline the strategic direction of outputs funded through this Schedule and submit these for consideration by the JSC. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Biennial plans provide a mechanism for shared decision-making and oversight of investment and reform effort, not operational arrangements for service delivery. Plans do not establish additional requirements for the purpose of assessing performance against milestones for the provision of payments to the NT Government.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Prepare progress reports at 6-month intervals as per the due dates in Table 2, which will be submitted to the JSC for consideration.</li> </ul> <p>The JSC will provide advice to the Commonwealth delegate on the alignment of plans and progress reports with the Partnership Agreement and Closing the Gap Priority Reforms. This advice must be provided within 10 business days of the plan being tabled. The Commonwealth delegate will consider the JSC's advice in determining relevant milestone payments.</p> <p>If the JSC does not provide advice regarding alignment with the Partnership Agreement and the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms within</p>



	<p>10 business days, the Commonwealth delegate will proceed with their consideration of the relevant milestone payments.</p> <p>The parties acknowledge payment decisions are a matter for the Commonwealth delegate in line with the <i>Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations</i>. The Commonwealth will make payments subject to performance reports demonstrating relevant milestones have been met by the NT Government.</p> <p>Consistent with the NTRAI Partnership Agreement, the JSC will monitor the progress and outcomes of this Schedule to ensure this investment priority remains responsive to the evolving needs of remote NT Aboriginal communities. This may include recommending to the Ministers responsible adjustments to this Schedule over time.</p> <p>In accordance with Clause 14 of the NTRAI Partnership Agreement, the parties will work collaboratively through the JSC to embed Priority Reform 4 into the monitoring and evaluation of progress and outcomes relating to outputs delivered under this Schedule.</p>																																								
Estimated financial contributions	<p>The Commonwealth will provide an estimated total financial contribution to the Northern Territory of \$89.244m in respect of this Schedule.</p> <table><tr><th colspan="8">Table 1</th></tr><tr><th>(\$ million)</th><th>2025-26</th><th>2026-27</th><th>2027-28</th><th>2028-29</th><th>2029-30</th><th>2030-31</th><th>Total</th></tr><tr><td>Estimated total budget</td><td>18.479</td><td>15.358</td><td>13.244</td><td>13.641</td><td>14.050</td><td>14.472</td><td>89.244</td></tr><tr><td>Less estimated National Partnership Payments</td><td>18.479</td><td>15.358</td><td>13.244</td><td>13.641</td><td>14.050</td><td>14.472</td><td>89.244</td></tr><tr><td>Balance of non-Commonwealth contributions</td><td>0.0</td><td>0.0</td><td>0.0</td><td>0.0</td><td>0.0</td><td>0.0</td><td>0.0</td></tr></table>	Table 1								(\$ million)	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	Total	Estimated total budget	18.479	15.358	13.244	13.641	14.050	14.472	89.244	Less estimated National Partnership Payments	18.479	15.358	13.244	13.641	14.050	14.472	89.244	Balance of non-Commonwealth contributions	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
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Additional terms	<p><b>Roles and responsibilities</b></p> <p>The Northern Territory is responsible and accountable for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Delivering the agreed access to education and early learning activities provided for under this Schedule, including managing associated financial and service delivery risks.</li><li>Reporting on the delivery of outputs funded through this Schedule in</li></ul>																																								



	<p>accordance with the milestones at Tables 2 and 3.</p> <p>The Commonwealth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is responsible for making payments under this Schedule to support the Northern Territory to deliver the agreed access to education and early learning outputs.</li> <li>• Commits to sharing relevant data aligned with outcomes identified in the NTRAI Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Framework to support its implementation.</li> </ul> <p>The Commonwealth and Northern Territory are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upholding FFA Principles including demonstrating evidence of cost-effectiveness.</li> <li>• Liaising with the JSC prior to the release of any media statements relating to the Schedule.</li> <li>• Maximising opportunities to coordinate programs with other place-based service delivery.</li> <li>• Actively participating in the implementation of the overarching NTRAI MEAL Framework as described under the monitoring and evaluation section of this Schedule.</li> </ul> <p>APO NT is responsible for delivering ACCO sector strengthening grants, including to build organisational and financial management capacity within ACCOs. The Commonwealth will manage any funding agreement with APO NT for ACCO sector strengthening grants consistent with the terms set out in the relevant funding agreement.</p> <p><b>Reform Ambition</b></p> <p>Payments provided through this Schedule support essential service delivery to Aboriginal Territorians who live, or are from, remote NT communities. The parties agree that a principle underpinning this Schedule is ensuring the continuity of these services is maintained through certainty of funding flows and appropriate service delivery risk management.</p> <p>To support this continuity in service delivery, and in accordance with Clause 23 of the <i>Federation Funding Agreement – Affordable Housing, Community Services and Other</i>, the NT Government will report the minimum required, to demonstrate milestones have been met, as set out at Table 2 and Table 3.</p> <p>Acknowledging the shared reform ambition set out in the NTRAI Partnership Agreement the parties also commit to working towards the below aspirational targets over the six-year term of NTRAI investment for the Education investment priority.</p>
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	<p>These targets reflect the shared aspirations of the parties to the NTRAI Partnership Agreement and are not intended to represent benchmarks for the purpose of assessing performance against milestones for the provision of payments to the NT Government under this Schedule.</p> <p>This Schedule sets two aspirational targets for Aboriginal employment across government sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of remote early learning (FaFT) - 60%</li> <li>• Coordinated support for remote students to improve access and participation in education - 40%</li> </ul> <p><b>Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning</b></p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation will occur through the NTRAI MEAL Framework as outlined in the NTRAI Partnership Agreement, and the FFA Schedule – NTRAI Evaluation.</p> <p>The JSC will oversee the development of the overarching NTRAI MEAL Framework, which will be underpinned by Schedule specific 2-year plans, a contemporary program logic and a data matrix to outline the intended links between the activities, outputs and outcomes supported by this Schedule and the broader outcomes and objective of the Partnership Agreement. The data matrix will outline the proposed measures, baseline data and indicators for monitoring and evaluating progress and outcomes achieved by the outputs funded through this Schedule.</p> <p>Through Clause 14.3 of the NTRAI Partnership Agreement the Commonwealth and Northern Territory commit to maximizing transparency in relation to broader funding commitments and allocations for remote service delivery in the NT. This requirement will be met by the parties through the NTRAI MEAL Framework.</p> <p><b>Intersection with the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025-2034</b></p> <p>Under the BFSA, the Northern Territory has committed to implement reforms to improve education systems and outcomes, including for the Northern Territory's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and education staff.</p> <p>Whilst both the NTRAI Partnership Agreement and the BFSA have some similar goals, funding received under one agreement cannot be counted towards the other agreement and there must be a clear differentiation by the Northern Territory between funding sources during reporting against both agreements, such as for the RATE program.</p>
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Table 2: Performance requirements, reporting and payment summary

Output	Performance milestones	Reporting Period	Report due	Payment
<p>Continued service delivery of Children and Schooling services</p> <p>NOTE: The activity being reported for this milestone relates to the previous NTRAI 2024-25 Children and Schooling FFA Schedule and is provided for continuity of information flows only.</p>	<p>Delivery of a final Report. At a minimum, the Report should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of sites where Families as First Teachers (FaFT) was delivered.</li> <li>Number of sites where Adult literacy and numeracy program was delivered.</li> <li>Number of remote and very remote schools where transition support was provided.</li> <li>Number of caseworkers employed to support chronically disengaged students and families.</li> <li>Number of families engaged to improve remote and very remote school attendance.</li> <li>Proportion of Aboriginal educators enrolled in further accredited training reported through the Remote Aboriginal Teacher Education program.</li> <li>Capital Works – progress towards delivered and committed agreed ongoing capital works schedule (<i>as per Annual Report 2024</i>).</li> </ul>	1 January – 30 June 2025	30 November 2025	\$4,619,845
Delivery of remote early learning (FaFT)	<p><u>Milestone 1</u></p> <p>2-year Plan for the remote early learning (FaFT) services in accordance with the requirements set out in Table 3 and tabled for consideration by the JSC consistent with the arrangements set out in the Governance section of Table 1.</p>	1 January 2026 – 31 December 2027	30 November 2025	\$2,150,000
		1 January 2028 – 31 December 2029	1 October 2027	\$912,374
		1 January – 31 December 2030	1 October 2029	\$967,938
	<p><u>Milestone 2</u></p> <p>6 monthly progress report on the 2-year plan that includes the requirements set out in Table 3 and tabled for consideration by the JSC consistent with the arrangements set out in the Governance section of Table 1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A minimum of 32 FaFT sites</li> </ul>	1 July – 31 December 2025	1 April 2026	Up to \$4,300,000
		1 January – 30 June 2026	1 October 2026	Up to \$4,429,000
		1 July – 31 December 2026	1 April 2027	Up to \$4,429,000



	FaFT pro-rata milestone payment methodology:		1 January – 30 June 2027	1 October 2027	Up to \$4,105,683
			1 July – 31 December 2027	1 April 2028	Up to \$4,105,683
			1 January – 30 June 2028	1 October 2028	Up to \$4,698,726
			1 July – 31 December 2028	1 April 2029	Up to \$4,698,726
			1 January – 30 June 2029	1 October 2029	Up to \$4,355,719
			1 July – 31 December 2029	1 April 2030	Up to \$4,355,719
			1 January – 30 June 2030	1 October 2030	Up to \$4,984,878
			1 July – 31 December 2030	1 April 2031	Up to \$4,984,878
Delivery of coordinated support for remote students to improve access and participation in education	<b>Milestone 3</b> 2-year Plan for the delivery of coordinated support for remote students to improve access and participation in education in accordance with the requirements set out in Table 3 and tabled for consideration by the JSC consistent with the arrangements set out in the Governance section of Table 1.		1 January 2026 – 31 December 2027	30 November 2025	\$1,411,520
			1 January 2028 – 31 December 2029	1 October 2027	\$412,000
			1 January – 31 December 2030	1 October 2029	\$437,090
	<b>Milestone 4</b> 6 monthly progress report on the 2-year plan that includes the requirements set out in Table 3 and tabled for consideration by the JSC consistent with the arrangements set out in the		1 July – 31 December 2025	1 April 2026	\$2,823,039
			1 January – 30 June 2026	1 October 2026	\$2,000,000
			1 July – 31 December 2026	1 April 2027	\$2,000,000



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	Governance section of Table 1. • A minimum of 11 FTE positions		1 January – 30 June 2027	1 October 2027	\$1,854,000
			1 July – 31 December 2027	1 April 2028	\$1,854,000
			1 January – 30 June 2028	1 October 2028	\$2,121,800
			1 July – 31 December 2028	1 April 2029	\$2,121,800
			1 January – 30 June 2029	1 October 2029	\$1,966,909
			1 July – 31 December 2029	1 April 2030	\$1,966,909
			1 January – 30 June 2030	1 October 2030	\$2,251,018
			1 July – 31 December 2030	1 April 2031	\$2,251,018
<b>Delivery of RATE (1 July 2025 – 30 June 2027)</b>  NOTE: From 1 July 2027, the RATE program will be funded and delivered under the BFSa.	<u>Milestone 5</u> 2-year Plan for delivery of RATE in accordance with the requirements set out in Table 3 and tabled for consideration by the JSC consistent with the arrangements set out in the Governance section of Table 1.		1 January 2026 – 30 June 2027	30 November 2025	\$1,058,325
	<u>Milestone 6</u> 6 monthly progress report on the 2-year project plan that includes the requirements set out in Table 3 and tabled for consideration by the JSC consistent with the arrangements set out in the Governance section of Table 1.		1 July – 31 December 2025	1 April 2026	\$2,116,650
			1 January – 30 June 2026	1 October 2026	\$1,250,000
			1 July – 31 December 2026	1 April 2027	\$1,250,000
<b>Delivery of teacher housing capital works</b>	<u>Milestone 7</u> Agreed Capital Works Schedule to close out 2018-25 NTRAI teacher housing projects and remaining allocation of funds, in accordance with the requirements set out in Table 3 and tabled for consideration by the JSC consistent with the arrangements set out in the Governance section of Table 1.		1 July 2025 – 30 June 2027	30 November 2025	Nil
	<u>Milestone 8</u> 6 monthly progress report on the Agreed Capital Works Schedule that includes the requirements set out in Table 3 and tabled for consideration by the JSC consistent with the arrangements set out in the Governance section of Table 1.		1 July – 31 December 2025	1 April 2026	Nil
			1 January – 30 June 2026	1 October 2026	Nil
			1 July – 31 December 2026	1 April 2027	Nil
			1 January – 30 June 2027	1 October 2027	Nil



**Table 3: Milestone requirements**

Report	Key deliverables
2-year Plans	<p>Plans should outline the strategic direction of outputs funded through this Schedule over a 2-year period, including how the delivery of outputs is intended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>align with the NTRAI Partnership Agreement and the Priority Reforms outlined in the Purpose section of this Schedule.</li> <li>meet relevant performance milestones; and</li> <li>strive to achieve the reform ambition as set out in the Additional Terms section of this Schedule.</li> </ul> <p>For the <i>delivery of remote early learning (FaFT)</i> output, the plan must include the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A co-designed response plan to the FaFT review to strengthen and improve the consistency and quality of program delivery across sites, including consideration of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FaFT delivery models and sites across the NT, with trialling new delivery models of FaFT in identified locations that include improved place-based partnerships and governance and transition to Aboriginal community control in identified sites;</li> <li>mechanisms to allow for new delivery models that maintain and strengthening program rigour and centralised support.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Identify further opportunities through FaFT delivery models for more joined up program delivery across: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child and Family Centres</li> <li>four adult literacy program sites.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>For the <i>delivery of coordinated support for remote students to improve access and participation in education</i> output, the plan must include the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An outline of the approach to deliver coordinated support to connect students to education, training or employment, consistent with regional planning and implementation of the NT's secondary reform program, particularly for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>chronically disengaged students on the Intensive Support Roll</li> <li>government and non-government school students accessing boarding to supplement access to secondary education.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>From 1 July 2025 until 30 June 2027 only:</p> <p>For the delivery of RATE output the plan must include the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planned delivery of RATE over the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2027 including planned participant numbers disaggregated by region.</li> </ul> <p>For the <i>delivery of teacher housing capital works</i> output, the plan must provide ongoing visibility of the rolling Capital Works Schedule (teacher housing) until all NTRAI funds are fully expended and all projects delivered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline of a proposed schedule of works for teacher housing to security upgrades and improvements.<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> There is no funding tied to this reporting element, reporting relates to the 2018-25 NTRAI Children and Schooling Capital Works (Teacher Housing) Capital Works Schedule.



6 monthly Progress Reports	<p>6 monthly progress reports must demonstrate progress or achievement of annual milestones and provide an update on the elements within the 2-year plan.</p> <p>For the <i>delivery of remote early learning (FaFT)</i> output reports must also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number of FaFT sites, by model</li> <li>• number of sites delivering family learning activities, including adult literacy activities</li> <li>• proportion of Aboriginal employment across government sites.</li> </ul> <p>For the <i>delivery of coordinated support for remote students to improve access and participation in education</i> output, reports must also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number of students on the Intensive Support Roll</li> <li>• number of students (government and non-government) case-managed for boarding support</li> <li>• number of sites supported</li> <li>• proportion of Aboriginal employment within the program.</li> </ul> <p>From 1 July 2025 until 30 June 2027 only:</p> <p>For the <i>delivery of RATE</i> output the reports must also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number of RATE participants.</li> <li>• numbers of locations where participants have accessed RATE by region.</li> </ul> <p>For the <i>delivery of teacher housing capital works</i> output the reports must also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• funds committed and expended schedule of work, including completed and in-progress.</li> <li>• number of works allocated by location, program financial year, and status.<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
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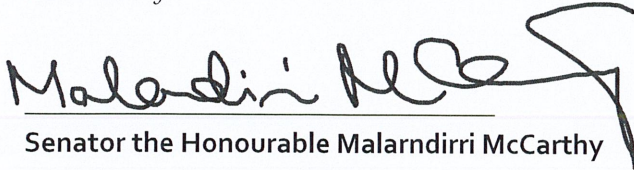
NOTE: In instances where data submissions are incomplete due to third party organisational capacity constraints, the Northern Territory may provide supplementary information outlining contributing factors and remediation efforts, with the expectation that such circumstances will be taken into account and will not negatively affect payment arrangements.



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The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this schedule as follows:

**Signed** for and on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia by

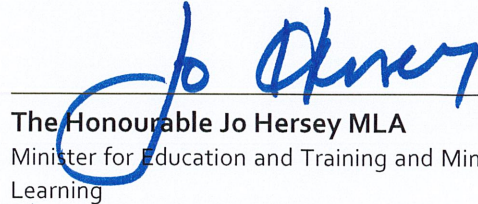


**Senator the Honourable Malarndirri McCarthy**

Minister for Indigenous Australians

Date: 14.11.25

**Signed** for and on behalf of the Northern Territory of Australia by



**The Honourable Jo Hersey MLA**

Minister for Education and Training and Minister for Early Learning

Date:

18 DEC 2025