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Indigenous Ranger Cadetship Pilot Guidelines

The purpose of the Indigenous Ranger Cadetship (IRC) pilot guidelines (Guidelines) is to assist schools, education authorities, Ranger Groups and relevant community organisations to implement the IRC pilot. The Guidelines set out arrangements for the administration and delivery of the IRC pilot. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (the Department) may, at its discretion, vary these Guidelines from time to time. Before making any amendments, the Department may consult with relevant stakeholders who are involved with the IRC pilot programme.

1. Programme Overview

1.1 Background
The IRC pilot will test approaches to the development and implementation of Indigenous Ranger Cadetship programmes in regional and remote communities. The IRC pilot aims to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people complete school and build their capacity for further study, training, jobs and careers in land, sea and natural resource management. The IRC pilot will engage students in culturally relevant school-based programmes involving land, sea and natural resource management, heritage related activities and cultural studies. The school-based programme of study should be based on the Certificate I in Conservation and Land Management as well as selected Units from the Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management.

The IRC pilot also aims to generate stronger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community engagement and is designed to improve school capacity to retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to Year 12 and to assist students with their transition from school to further education, training and work. This will contribute to lifting Year 12 attainment levels for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary students and contribute to closing the gap in learning outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.

The IRC pilot will be underpinned by strong partnerships between the Australian Government, state and territory government and non-government education authorities, schools, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Ranger Groups and other relevant government and non-government entities.

1.2 Objectives
IRC pilot objectives:
- Increase school attendance, retention, grade progression and Year 12 completion rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in participating schools.
- Improve the readiness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to transition from school to further training, education or work and improve linkages between schools and pathways into further training, education and work.
- Establish a community based, school led partnership between VET training provider(s), Ranger groups and relevant agencies that support community ownership and involvement in the design and delivery of the pilot.
- Develop and deliver a culturally responsive, integrated and comprehensive curriculum that integrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander natural resource management and culture with the regular school curriculum and broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community goals.
- Utilise the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and other members of communities to contribute to learning that balances and integrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental knowledge, heritage, and culture within mainstream schooling.
1.3 Outcomes
The outcomes sought from the IRC pilot include:

- provision of culturally relevant school-based learning;
- development of industry appropriate skills for employment;
- increased motivation and commitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to complete secondary school; and
- contribute to halving the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and all students Year 12 attainment rates by 2020.

1.4 Target group
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school-age students and schools located in regional and remote communities.

1.5 Funding rounds
14 schools were selected to participate in the IRC pilot, in three cohorts. The first cohort (10 schools) was selected in 2012, to commence activity from July 2012. The second cohort of two schools was selected in November 2012, to commence activity from Term 2 2013. Cohort Three schools were selected in November 2013 to commence activity from Term 2 2014.

1.6 Contact information
Enquiries about these guidelines or about the IRC pilot should be directed to:

Programme Manager
Indigenous Ranger Cadetship Pilot
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
GPO Box 6500
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Email: christopher.dunn@deewr.gov.au

2. Pilot school selection

2.1. National Trade Cadetship Advisory Panel role
The National Trade Cadetship (NTC) Advisory Panel, chaired by Professor Denise Bradley AC, has been established to guide IRC work. The NTC Panel is also tasked with the identification of possible IRC pilot schools.

2.2 Selection criteria
The NTC Panel has developed selection criteria to inform consideration of the readiness of schools to participate in, and benefit from, the IRC pilot. The NTC Panel has approved the use of selection criteria and supporting evidence, detailed at Attachment A, to identify potential IRC pilot schools based on their suitability and likelihood of success.

The NTC Panel considered that this approach would be most appropriate due to the very small number of schools to be supported through the pilot and the specific focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and studies in land, sea and natural resource management.

2.3 Selection process
Former DEEWR State and Regional Offices conducted a national scan of potential IRC pilot schools against the selection criteria and nominate a number of schools from their respective states and territories.

The relevant state and territory government and non-government education authorities will then be engaged to further test the suitability, readiness and identify any issues that might impact on these schools’ participation as a possible IRC pilot school. Advice from the former Department of Sustainability, Environment,
Water, Population and Communities was also sought in relation to Indigenous Ranger Groups and Working on Country projects in the schools’ vicinity. The NTC Panel considered this advice and made recommendations to the then Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth for approval.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Programme delegate
The Assistant Secretary of the School Attendance and Community Engagement Branch is the programme delegate, and is responsible for the overall management of the IRC pilot.

3.2 National Trade Cadetship Advisory Panel
Responsibilities include:

- developing selection criteria and processes;
- identification of possible IRC pilot schools and making recommendations to the Minister;
- provide expert advice, as appropriate, on IRC matters including monitoring and evaluation of pilot school progress, possibly involving work with the evaluation consultant; and
- stakeholder engagement, for example the NTC Advisory Panel may be engaged in activities such as a programme launch, pilot school site visits and accompanying the Minister to IRC related activities.

3.3 The Department
The School Attendance and Community Engagement Branch responsibilities include:

- developing advice to the Minister on IRC policy and administration;
- developing and updating of programme documentation including Guidelines, funding agreements, reporting templates and other supporting documentation;
- managing IRC pilot school selection processes including liaison with the National Trade Cadetship Advisory Panel;
- developing and maintaining strong relationships with DEEWR State and Regional office staff, IRC pilot providers, education authority representatives, other key stakeholders using both formal and informal communications channels to support successful IRC pilot implementation and contract management;
- monitoring the implementation and delivery of IRC pilots, in conjunction with DEEWR State and Regional Office staff, and assisting where necessary;
- assisting and monitoring risk and the future directions of the IRC pilot;
- approving project reports including the IRC pilot school implementation plan, progress reports, final report and financial acquittal;
- engaging an evaluation consultant to conduct ongoing evaluation of all projects and the overall programme;
- collecting, analysing and reporting information on the overall performance of the IRC pilot, including financial management;
- providing policy advice on IRC pilots to Department of Education State and Regional offices; and
- arranging and managing payments, monitoring and financial management of the IRC programme budget.

3.4 Department of Education State and Regional Offices
Responsibilities include:

- assisting in the initial phase of the IRC pilot selection process against the selection criteria;
- liaising with the School Attendance and Community Engagement Branch and providing local knowledge and input relevant to the IRC pilot;
• conducting site visits to IRC pilot schools as required and provide feedback to the School Attendance and Community Engagement Branch;
• liaising with IRC stakeholders as required; and
• working with the School Attendance and Community Engagement Branch to support successful IRC pilot implementation and contract management, including receipt and assessment of IRC pilot school implementation plans, pilot progress reports, financial acquittals and make recommendations for acceptance and payment against these deliverables.

3.5 Education Authority Responsibilities include:

• assisting in the identification of IRC pilot schools;
• partnering with the Australian Government in overseeing the implementation of the IRC pilot;
• executing a funding agreement with the Commonwealth, as represented by the Department for the implementation of IRC pilot projects;
• entering into arrangements/agreements with schools to support the implementation of the IRC pilot;
• working with schools to support the implementation of the IRC pilot including the development of the IRC pilot school implementation plan, and where appropriate assist schools with the engagement of a project coordinator and/or mentor, provision of accommodation and transport requirements and assisting with reporting and evaluation requirements; and
• ensuring pilot schools are fully familiar with their obligations and conditions of participation as an IRC pilot school and monitoring their performance against IRC pilot objectives and outcomes.

3.6 Pilot school Responsibilities include:

• entering into arrangements/agreements with an education authority or equivalent entity to support their participation in the IRC pilot as an IRC pilot school;
• where appropriate engaging an IRC project coordinator and/or mentor to:
  — develop and deliver IRC pilot arrangements in the school
  — coordinate course delivery
  — submit, as directed by the education authority, information and material that will be required for the IRC pilot school implementation plan and other reports that the education authority must submit to the Department under the funding agreement
  — be fully familiar with the terms and conditions for their participation in the IRC pilot as an IRC pilot school;
• complying with the terms and conditions for participation in the IRC pilot; and
• participating in any Australian Government launches or events relating to the IRC pilot.

4. Funding

4.1 Notification of funding
Following the selection process, the schools’ relevant state or territory education authority or relevant legal entity will be sent a letter of offer to participate in the IRC pilot.

4.2 Funding agreements
Funding agreements will be executed by the Australian Government, as represented by the Department, and the relevant state or territory education authority or equivalent entity for the delivery of the IRC pilot. Funding recipients are expected to familiarise themselves with the terms and conditions of their funding agreement; funding recipients must, in particular understand their contractual enforceable obligations under the funding agreement.
These Guidelines form part of each funding agreement with participating state and territory education authorities or equivalent entity. Unless the contrary intention appears, if there is any conflict or inconsistency between any part of the terms and conditions of the funding agreement and these Guidelines, the terms and conditions of the funding agreement have precedence over the material in these Guidelines, to the extent of any conflict or inconsistency.

4.3 Funding amounts
Provision of funding support under the programme will be subject to the execution of a funding agreement between the Commonwealth and the relevant state or territory education authority or equivalent entity. $500,000 will be made available for the delivery of IRC pilot projects for each pilot school.

4.4 Use of funds
Funds will be provided for the implementation of the IRC pilot at pilot schools. The Department will not fund activities which are inconsistent with this purpose. Funds provided could, for example, cover the costs of an IRC project coordinator, mentors, teacher accommodation, transport costs, logistics and course delivery including the development of materials, training resources and field trips. The terms and conditions relating to the use of funding will be stipulated in the funding agreement.

4.5 Payment Milestones
Payment will be made on the achievement of agreed milestones and acceptance of reports by the Department. Payment schedules will be negotiated with individual funding recipients and detailed in the funding agreements.

5. Project planning and reporting

5.1 Timeframes
The specific timeframes for reporting will be detailed in funding agreements. Each funding recipient will be required to submit an IRC pilot school implementation plan, progress and final reports, financial acquittals and any other reports as agreed. It is envisaged that funding recipients will receive funding for a maximum period of one year.

5.2 IRC pilot school implementation plan
An IRC pilot school implementation plan must be submitted to the Department for each pilot school, within four weeks of execution of the funding agreement, for Departmental approval. Each IRC pilot school implementation plan must outline and describe the scope of the IRC pilot activity for the funding period. The purpose of the plan is to set out the delivery of the IRC pilot from planning through to reporting and acquittal. A template will be provided by the Department to assist with this process. The IRC pilot school implementation plan may be amended during the funding period, subject to prior approval by the Department.

5.3 Certificate I and II in Conservation and Land Management
The proposed course of study for IRC pilot schools must be based on the Certificate I in Conservation and Land Management as well as selecting Units from the Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management. Specific consideration should be given to student participation in the Certificate II Elective Units in Indigenous Land Management.

The proposed course of study for each IRC pilot school must be described in the IRC pilot school implementation plan as outlined at 5.2 of these Guidelines.
The following Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management Elective Units must not be included in the proposed course of study of any IRC pilot school because the Units are unsuitable for school students:

- Protect and preserve incident scene
- Use firearms to humanely destroy animals
- Apply animal trapping techniques
- Fell small trees
- Operate and maintain chainsaws
- Operate two wheel motorbikes
- Operate tractors
- Operate vehicles
- Conduct grader operations
- Conduct excavator operations
- Conduct dozer operations
- Conduct scraper operations
- Operate 4 x 4 vehicle
- Operate a forklift.

5.4 Scope of projects
The IRC pilot school implementation plan must include, but not be limited to:

- a brief description of the nature of the IRC pilot
- an outline of the delivery of the IRC pilot including planning and reporting
- description of stakeholder engagement with relevant local Ranger Groups, local community organisations and Councils and local government and non-government agencies
- IRC pilot design, including:
  - in-class and field activities
  - cultural content and Indigenous ecological knowledge
  - access to country arrangements
  - assessment procedures.
- details of student cohort to be involved in the IRC pilot, including student numbers, age, sex, year level and how they were selected to participate
- details of partnership with a registered training organisation or self-delivery where the school is an appropriately accredited training provider
- identification of curriculum materials and/or training packages to facilitate programme delivery such as accredited training packages related to land, sea and natural resource management, heritage related activities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural studies, to be used
- required skills and qualifications of staff involved in IRC pilot delivery
- roles and responsibilities of teachers and Ranger Groups
- identification of the necessary supporting resources such as accommodation and transport
- identification of future pathways development, for example:
  - linkages between secondary school curricula and training packages with future education and training and/or
  - employment opportunities with Ranger Groups or other local organisations.
- governance arrangements
- monitoring, accountability and evaluation arrangements
- data collection plan that details the methods used for collecting the data required
- clearly itemised budget for delivery of the IRC pilot.

5.5 Progress and final reports
The purpose of the progress reports will be to provide updates on the activities and ongoing performance of the IRC pilot. The purpose of the final report is to provide a consolidated overview of activities and
performance over the funding period. Reports will also inform the evaluation of projects funded under the IRC pilot. Details of reporting requirements will be set out in the funding agreement.

5.6 Financial reporting
Funding recipients must submit an audited financial acquittal report in accordance with the funding agreement for the funding period.

6. General requirements

6.1 Evaluation
Among other contractual obligations set out in the funding agreement, funding recipients will be contractually required to support, assist and cooperate with any evaluation commissioned by the Department, and comply with monitoring and reporting requirements as reasonably directed by the Department or as described in the funding agreement. If funding recipients undertake their own review or evaluation of a project funded under the programme, they must provide the Department with a copy of the findings.

Projects will be evaluated throughout their delivery for their capacity to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, including measures of student retention and engagement. The evaluation will identify both individual and combinations of characteristics that are key to these improvements. This will allow the Department to determine which approaches have a better chance of success with a range of schools, Ranger Groups and communities. The results may be published and shared with education providers (in accordance with, as applicable, relevant Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) obligations).

6.2 Data requirements
Funding recipients must contribute information, including data and measures of improvement, to inform the evidence-base of effective practice and information sharing. To support this requirement funding recipients must ensure the appropriate collection of data and the establishment of measures of improvement. A data collection plan will form part of the IRC pilot school implementation plan. Data to be collected may include, but is not limited to:

- Number of students who have:
  - commenced the IRC pilot
  - completed the IRC pilot
  - partially completed the IRC pilot (including reasons for attrition and steps taken to re-engage students in the IRC pilot).

- Number of:
  - statements of attainment
  - completed Certificate I
  - completed Certificate II.

- Qualitative information (may include survey data, self-rating pre- and post-pilot):
  - student, teacher, system and community satisfaction with the IRC pilot
  - motivation and commitment of students to complete high school
  - teacher capacity
  - school and system leadership capacity
  - school and teacher engagement with parents and community.

- Student destination information, where available, post-IRC pilot:
  - continuing Certificate I/ Certificate II
  - enrolled in further relevant training pathways
  - taking up apprenticeships/traineeships
  - engaged in employment.

6.3 Recognition
Funding recipients must comply with recognition requirements set out in the funding agreement. Standard requirements may include that the official Australian Government logo, as provided by the Department, be used for all materials concerning the pilot.
Funding recipients must also provide reasonable support, assistance and cooperation for any Australian Government launches or events relating to the IRC pilot that the Department seeks to implement.

6.4 Conflict of Interest
Funding recipients must comply with conflict of interest clauses detailed in the funding agreement.

6.5 Information Privacy
As set out in the funding agreement, when delivering the IRC project, funding recipients must comply with the Information Privacy Principles and other relevant provisions of the Privacy Act 1988 as a contractual obligation under the funding agreement.
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| 1. A significant cohort of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary students for whom culturally focused conservation and land management practice is highly relevant | • Education and training is part of a successfully implemented community development plan and is linked to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander management of land, sea, heritage and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural studies  
• Connections between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations and ranger groups on matters relevant to land, sea and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage management  
• Sufficient* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments in Years 9 – 12 with satisfactory school attendance and retention rates to senior secondary schooling.  
*A minimum of 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across Grades 9, 10 and 11 is suggested as a guide noting that student participation is voluntary. |
| 2. Demonstrated capacity to deliver appropriate vocational learning opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students | • School is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) or has strong existing partnership with an RTO and employs Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander liaison officers.  
• A range of vocational courses are being delivered as part of curriculum.  
• Vocational courses are linked to both potential employment and/or further education opportunities  
• Current and previous education/training partnerships have delivered on intended outcomes  
• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and knowledge reflected in course content and delivery |
| 3. Well developed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parental and community engagement and support | • Current involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, parents, caregivers, community and education groups in schooling  
• Community based consultative mechanisms and structures are in place and actively utilised to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and caregivers in school and training activity  
• Active and effective Parental and Community Engagement strategies currently in place that could be linked to the IRC |
4. Demonstrated quality teaching and learning outcomes
   - English literacy and numeracy and other social/cultural support programmes and services are in place and successful for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
   - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders on staff providing academic and social/cultural support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
   - Strong school support for and success in, improving learning outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

5. Capacity to lead and participate effectively in a national policy development pilot
   - Education Authority support and commitment to implementation, ongoing management, reporting and evaluation requirements
   - Strong local governance arrangements in place such as MOUs between school and relevant organisations
   - Capacity to build on existing Indigenous Education Programme (IEP) and other support programmes