



PRESBYTERIAN LADIES COLLEGE  
A COLLEGE OF THE UNITED CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

## THE SECONDARY BOARDING EXPERIENCE

“What Works” and How  
Can We Make It Work  
Better



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## Background to PLC Indigenous Program

- Selective Indigenous Scholarship Program
- Remote, very remote and regional students from Kimberley region
- Majority ESL learners



## Relevant Cultural Issues

- Language
- Experience of non Indigenous world
- Early childhood learning experience
- Pedagogy based on relationships rather than authority
- “Living in the moment”



## What Does The Research Say About Indigenous Education?

- Self concept- Strong personal and aboriginal identity
- School support for cultural identity
- Strong emphasis reading proficiency
- High expectations



## MISSION

- Provide a high quality and holistic education for Indigenous Australian students to enter the post school world with confidence and optimism, well prepared to make choices about their future, while at all times acknowledging and valuing their own cultural identity



## GOALS

- All Indigenous students to complete Year 12 and achieve the WACE.
- Increase the number of students achieving mainstream university entrance.
- Increase the number of students successfully completing one or more ATAR subjects.
- Provide assistance for successful transition to post school employment, education or training.



## GOALS - continued

- Employ an Indigenous Co-ordinator on a full-time basis who is Indigenous.
- Actively recruit Indigenous applicants for job vacancies at PLC.
- Establish record keeping systems that maintain the integrity and sustainability of the program.
- Extend knowledge, understanding and experience of Indigenous culture within the school community.



## Strategic Plan for Indigenous Program based on the "What Works" Model

- Cultural Recognition
- Participation
- Skill Development



## Lessons Learned

- Relationships – The beginning and the end
- Critical Mass – We all need a friend just like me
- Policies and Procedures – Be Prepared
- Funding – Do it anyway, you will find a way
- Cultural Recognition – Look for ways to value culture every day.
- Participation – much more than just being at school every day
- Skill Development – aim high and scaffold till they get it.
- Tutors – more than English or Maths teachers
- Language – Never underestimate the power of a total Australian Standard English environment
- Relationships, Relationships, Relationships with students, teachers, parents and home and school communities



## Student Outcomes

- Outcomes significantly better when students are selected
- High retention
- Almost all achieve WACE
- Most tackle some university entrance subjects
- Very small number achieve mainstream university entrance so far.
- All employed/study on leaving school



## Current research needs

- Literacy for the upper secondary student
- School to work/study transition- Year 13
- Community needs and career goals