



# Study Away Review

## Fact Sheet

### Key Points:

- The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) is aware of the numerous barriers to Year 12 completion still faced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- PM&C is leading work through the *Study Away Review* to identify and address issues in the boarding space and support students to have more successful boarding experiences. This work is being carried out in collaboration with the Departments of Human Services, Social Services, Education and Training, and Health.

### Findings:

- Initial research and consultations carried out as part of the *Study Away Review* identified a number of areas where additional support is needed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who study away.
- Consistent with the [final report](#) of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs' Inquiry into Educational Opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students, the Review found that:
  - for many students and their families there is little preparation and information
  - ABSTUDY administration is experienced as being overly complex
  - travel support varies from student to student and for many students it is inadequate
  - many families and communities are unsure of how to prepare and support their children in boarding school
  - there are a lack of alternative education options for students not suited to mainstream boarding, and
  - there are gaps in funding and policy responsibility in a range of areas such as health management, family and community engagement, travel support and staff development (e.g. in cultural awareness and trauma informed practices).
- The *Study Away Review* Report, released on 21 December 2017, provides greater detail on these findings.

### Current Work:

- Following the Review, the Departments of Human Services and Social Services have started work to simplify the ABSTUDY claims process and to make ABSTUDY administration less complex for families and schools.
- PM&C are also looking at the range of support families and schools need to help these students get to school, stay in school and complete Year 12.

- Based on the findings of the Review, the Department is working to improve support for students who study away with a focus on:
  - **Building the evidence base** on what works in the boarding space
  - **Improving the coordination of services** in both community and schools, and between the two
  - **Streamlining funding arrangements** to make the claims process less complex for families and schools
  - **Strengthening community capacity** so families can better prepare their children for the transition to boarding and engage more effectively in their education.

**Background:**

- Ten per cent of very remote communities have access to a school that goes up to Year 12, which means that studying away from home is the only option.
- The Commonwealth is therefore helping Indigenous boarders mostly from remote and very remote locations with an annual commitment of over \$100 million through ABSTUDY and \$25 million per year through scholarships (1,500 places each school year).
  - The Commonwealth also funds hostels for secondary students operated by Aboriginal Hostels Limited.