



**Business Plan 2016-17**

*“Making Boarding Better”*

## INTRODUCTION

Boarding Australia commenced a program of significant change in 2015. These changes will enable Boarding Australia to be agile and responsive enough to not only continue the activities which have defined Boarding Australia (and previously NARSA) for two decades, but to also explore new member services, project activities and products that focus on quality and continuous improvement in boarding.

In 2016-17, the aim is to continue to build upon the history of Boarding Australia, while also consolidating the changes implemented in 2015. A major organisational change will be the establishment of Boarding Australia as a company limited by guarantee, rather than continuing to operate as an incorporated association.

2016-17 presents Boarding Australia with the opportunity to utilise the capacity of its dedicated workforce to focus on key strategic and operational priorities that are outlined in the following Business Plan, as well as using the services of key partners to deliver products and services. In addition to the implementation of this plan, Boarding Australia will be an agile and responsive organisation.

*The 2016-17 Business Plan is designed to make Boarding Australia a leader in supporting boarding students, its members and the boarding sector. In short, the Plan will guide Boarding Australia in its vision of.....**Making Boarding Better.***

The plan for 2016-17 focuses Boarding Australia's efforts into the following key Action Areas, which intersect at many levels:

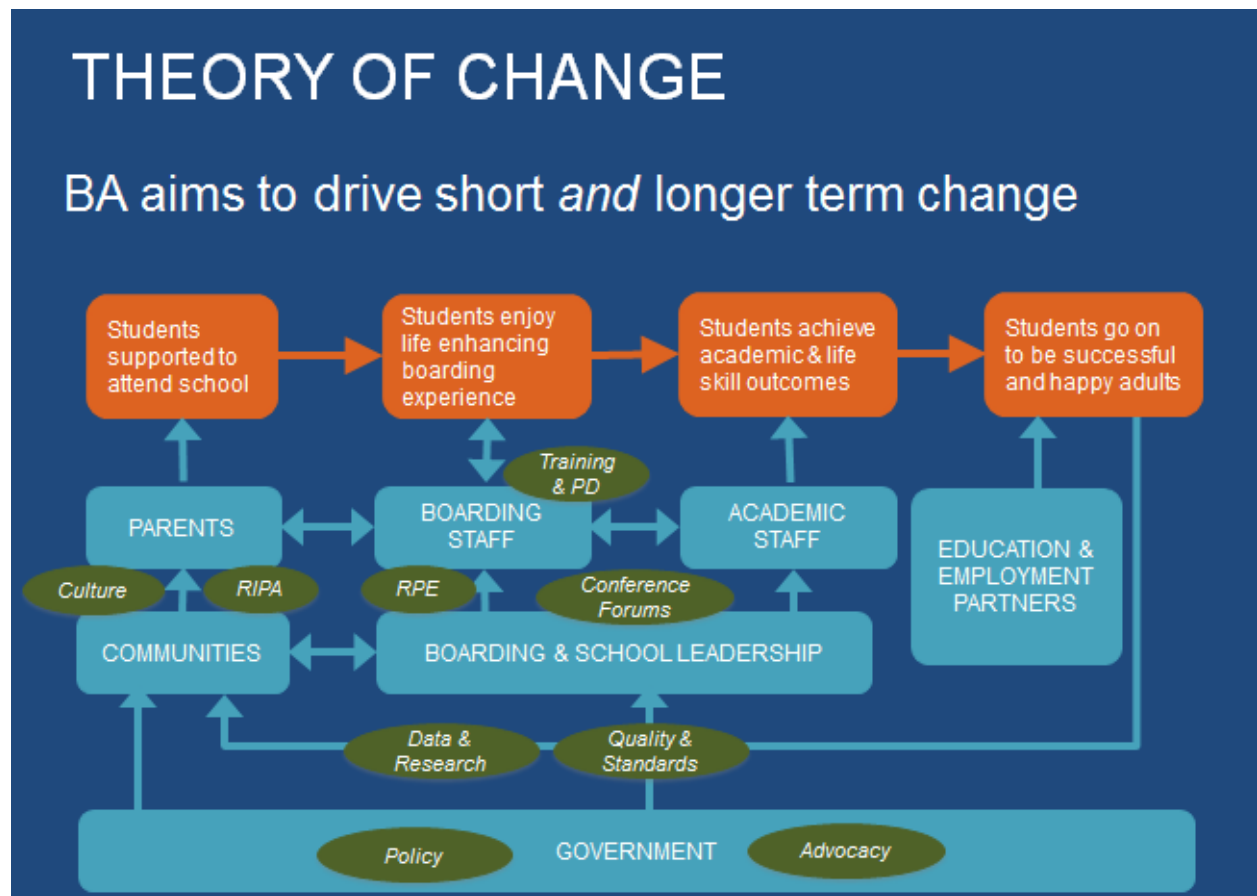
1. Quality improvement – relating to the National Standard, continuous improvement, training and professional development
2. Member services – including information, advocacy, practical advice, grants
3. Consultancy and advocacy – to members, government and other partners
4. Projects and research – to enhance the evidence-base and to define outcomes for boarding
5. Product development – delivering practical products for the boarding community and building a legacy of Boarding Australia's work.

Underpinning this work is Boarding Australia's commitment to build a vibrant and sustainable organisation that, in conjunction with its members and partners:

- Actively engages with the boarding and education sector
- Analyses and considers the policy content that influences and supports boarding
- Builds positive partnerships that assist boarding
- Positively promotes the boarding sector.

## Boarding Australia is an agent of change

The following figure illustrates how Boarding Australia's core activities are intended to impact on boarding providers, boarders, parents and communities, as well as the broader education sector. By considering the life course of a student (orange), we are able to identify where Boarding Australia's work (green) is likely to make a difference. It also prompts us to consider how we will engage with key stakeholders and partners (light blue) and assists us to foresee the 'downstream' effects of our activities, maintaining a focus on the ultimate objective of enabling boarders to be successful and happy adults.



Ultimately, these activities are designed to make boarding a life enhancing experience that contributes to improved educational outcomes for students.

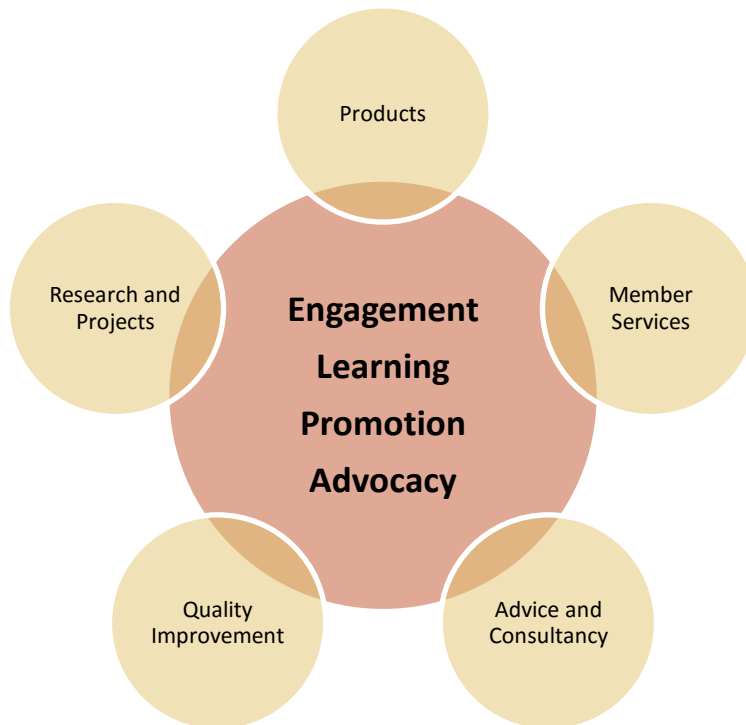
In delivering this sector-wide change, Boarding Australia will conduct operations by working within a framework of:

**Engagement** – Boarding Australia recognises the importance of hearing and understanding the views of members/boarding providers, students, parents, communities, government and other stakeholders.

**Learning** – Boarding Australia aspires to be a ‘learning organisation’, focused on collecting and interpreting evidence that is able to inform practice. Boarding Australia also seeks to build capacity in the sector by promoting the development and learning opportunities available to boarding staff.

**Promotion** – Boarding Australia seeks to promote the positive aspects of boarding, by celebrating success and identifying opportunities for improvement.

**Advocacy** – Boarding Australia will be an advocate for the boarding sector, recognising the critical role that boarding plays in the educational lives of students from rural and remote settings and particularly for Indigenous students.



Achievement of some of the goals in the Business Plan will be dependent on the success of funding submissions or development of collaborative partnerships. Other achievements, such as improved member engagement and communication, rely on different ways of working and providing links to useful products and services.

Boarding Australia will review this plan annually and regularly monitor performance against proposed activities.

## Action Area 1: Quality Improvement

Boarding Australia is committed to assisting boarding providers, government and other stakeholders to continue the improvement of boarding services in Australia.

To do this, in 2016-17 Boarding Australia will focus on:

### ***Boarding Standard for Australian Schools and Hostels***

Boarding Australia will provide practical assistance to boarding providers to promote the application of the National Standard. Boarding Australia will engage with members regarding the Standard, as well as supporting those wishing to prepare for its implementation.

In this regard, the following activities will be explored:

1. Boarding Australia will develop resources for members to assist with preparation for the Standard. This will include self-assessment resources and training that encompasses a broader approach to service improvement, rather than merely compliance with the Standard. Resources will be made available to members as part of their membership, with specific tools and training also offered on a fee-for-service basis.
2. Boarding Australia will work with individual boarding services (or organisations) to:
  - Affirm the utility of the National Standard in a variety of boarding settings;
  - Assist boarding providers in preparing for the Standard, including risk and gap analysis;
  - Develop Boarding Australia's capacity to contribute to a broader roll out of the Standard, including potential role in accreditation/certification processes;
  - Provide a consultancy service to boarding providers interested in implementing the Standard; and
  - Offering advice regarding suitability and potential refinement of the Standard.

### ***Quality Improvement Support***

As part of Boarding Australia's ongoing commitment to quality improvement, Boarding Australia will continue to provide advice to Government agencies, boarding providers and other stakeholders with the aim of improving quality in boarding. This will link with policy review, research and advocacy efforts that aim to translate evidence to improved practice in boarding.

Specifically, Boarding Australia will promote quality and service improvement by:

Professional development: promoting accredited training for staff and devising specific training programs that relate to quality improvement, legislative or other regulatory compliance. Boarding Australia will pursue opportunities that facilitate access to training for members and their staff, as well as building the skills of prospective boarding professionals.

Information services: Boarding Australia will develop a catalogue of best practice information, including published research, findings from Government inquiries and exemplars from the membership. The refreshed website launched in early 2016 will be a critical vehicle for this service.

Policy and data analysis: Boarding Australia recognises the relative paucity of information to describe best practice in boarding. In 2016-17, Boarding Australia will produce research papers that will assist members to better understand the impact of boarding practice and opportunities for improvement.

## Action Area 2: Member Services

Boarding Australia aims to consolidate its member-focused approach. In this context, Boarding Australia will actively work with members, government agencies and other stakeholders to create relationships and partnerships that benefit the sector. Boarding Australia's new corporate structure is also designed to ensure that the truly national representation of our membership is recognised.

In 2016, Boarding Australia will continue to deliver services to members in accordance with its principles and strong traditions of:

- Building the evidence for boarding as a facilitator of educational outcomes
- Promoting boarding as a quality education option for Indigenous students and those from complex, remote or disadvantaged backgrounds
- Supporting education and professional development for boarding professionals
- Engaging positively and collaboratively with partners across the sector.

Boarding Australia has a goal to increase membership in 2016 and 2017, including boarding providers, individual boarding professionals and other stakeholders with an interest in boarding. While not ignoring traditional secondary education boarding providers, this will include developing connections in sectors that have common issues and interests, such as child protection, university and post-secondary boarding and disability services.

Services directly aimed at members will include:

### ***Improved Communication with Boarding Providers***

- Boarding Australia will deliver at least 8 newsletters in 2016 and 2017, with a focus on practical information that is useful to boarding professionals.
- Boarding Australia will pursue interactive communication processes. This will include the development of a new interactive website that offers the chance for members to communicate with Boarding Australia and each other, with features such as a practitioner blog or 'ask Boarding Australia' forum. Facebook posts that are linked to the new website will also be regular forms of communication with members.
- Boarding Australia will provide regular policy and practice updates to members, building on research and project findings, as well as current trends and issues. This will include the creation of special interest group forums (e.g. Indigenous boarding).
- Boarding Australia will actively engage with boarding agencies by conducting education events and forums.

### ***Education, training and professional development***

Boarding Australia will continue to promote the upskilling of the boarding profession, in keeping with emerging evidence, standards and industry demand. Boarding Australia actively supports the pursuit of minimum recognised qualifications for all staff in boarding.

In 2016-17, the priority areas for training and education include:

1. Quality and service improvement, with a focus on the Standard;
2. Improving cultural competency within the boarding industry;
3. Increasing the number of boarding professionals with a minimum certificate IV level qualification;
4. Keeping boarding staff abreast of outcomes and findings of Royal Commissions and Parliamentary Inquiries.

Boarding Australia is also committed to the delivery of a high quality, practice-focused national conference – in 2016, the conference will be held in conjunction with the New Zealand Boarding Schools Association and will return to Australia in 2017. Boarding Australia will use the conference to build networks and act as a platform for ongoing engagement with its membership.

### ***Human Resource Assistance***

Boarding Australia aims to provide practical assistance to boarding providers by offering opportunities to advertise vacancies on the website, via Facebook and/or in the newsletter. For members with vacancies, Boarding Australia will also offer advice and links to the Boarding Australia network to promote positions, refine job descriptions and if practicable, support recruitment and selection processes.

For qualified boarding professionals seeking a role or for those wishing to enter the boarding sector, Boarding Australia will offer advice and access to the Boarding Australia network, as well as linking to training opportunities.

### ***Partner services***

Government partnerships will be cultivated, to position Boarding Australia in a way that has a voice in policy and service development that relate to boarding. Boarding Australia will seek to develop Memoranda of Understanding with partner agencies to formalise the relationships with key government agencies and stakeholders with common strategic priorities.

Boarding Australia will also create partnerships with agencies offering goods and services to the boarding industry. This includes corporate partnerships with trusted suppliers, making special offers available to members.

Joint projects will be explored, enabling Boarding Australia and its members the chance to participate and learn from innovation, service development and policy review. In this way Boarding Australia will seek input from boarding providers when working with other agencies, with a commitment to 2-way feedback.



## Action Area 3: Consultancy and Advocacy Services

Boarding Australia is well positioned to provide expert advice to members, government and other policy makers. This service also presents an opportunity for Boarding Australia to build a sustainable business model.

Delivering high quality consultancy services relies on capacity, effective communication, positive relationships and a commitment to excellence. Building on Boarding Australia's history of fostering relationships across the boarding sector, Boarding Australia will:

- Be a 'learning organisation' interpreting policy, research and principles that support innovation and improvement;
- Offer evidence-based advice to government and members, including the preparation of submissions to inquiries, participation in evaluation and review projects and position papers that build on member feedback;
- Consolidate the collective experience of 'what works' from boarding providers to assist policy and service development;
- Develop expertise that contributes to reform and quality improvement;
- Provide independent services that advocate for the boarding sector and promote service improvement;
- Act as a partner in projects and research that support boarding.

Boarding Australia will focus its consultancy and advocacy efforts in areas of specific expertise, namely:

- Parent and community engagement;
- Restorative Principles of Engagement (RPE) in boarding;
- Indigenous student experience, including Indigenous education policy and ABSTUDY;
- Workforce planning, recruitment and staff development;
- Service design and quality improvement;
- Cultural competency;
- Policy analysis, advice and government liaison;
- Research and evaluation; and
- Delivery of services in remote settings.

## Action Area 4: Projects and Research

Boarding Australia aims to be a 'learning organisation' that contributes to a 'learning sector'. Boarding Australia recognises that there has traditionally been a lack of evidence surrounding boarding and supports efforts to build the evidence base with its members and partners.

Boarding Australia also recognises that there are opportunities to learn from other sectors and international experience.

The delivery of funded projects and commissioned research, as well as a dedicated focus on the collection of evidence and routine analysis of data, are critical areas of activity for Boarding Australia in 2016.

### ***Projects that contribute to improvement***

Boarding Australia will lead and participate in projects that build capacity within the boarding sector. Projects will be designed to include boarding providers, communities, students and parents with a commitment to delivering practical results that improve the boarding experience.

In 2016-17, Boarding Australia will:

1. Continue ongoing projects, related to parent and community engagement, the establishment of the Remote Indigenous Parents' Association (RIPA) and restorative practice (RPE), funded under the Commonwealth Indigenous Advancement Strategy;
2. Pursue projects related to quality and standards – including the development of resources, checklists, training and piloting of the Standard;
3. Seek project funding to improve competency and cultural representation in the boarding profession;
4. Actively create partnerships with the research and university sector, to create a focus on boarding – in particular, research that is focused on building the evidence base regarding practice and outcomes in boarding;
5. Apply an 'educational lens' to boarding projects, affirming the critical role that boarding has in the achievement of educational outcomes;
6. Identify and pursue innovative ideas for research and projects via active engagement with government and other funding bodies.

### ***Research that builds evidence and practice***

Boarding Australia is committed to building evidence regarding boarding. Research plays a crucial role in developing principles of good practice, as well as prompting reflection on the effectiveness of current models of boarding.

In 2016, Boarding Australia will play an active role in promoting research in the boarding sector and encouraging member participation in research. In particular, Boarding Australia has an interest in participating in projects and research that:

1. Describe outcomes and apply learning from related sectors and international boarding practice;
2. Relates to changes to government policy, formal Commissions of Inquiry and data releases (e.g. census data);
3. Is translational – that is, can be applied in a practical setting by boarding providers;
4. Has a focus on student wellbeing.

Boarding Australia will participate directly in research and projects either as a lead agency, co-contributor or facilitator. This will include working with boarding providers to include them in critical research to build evidence and contribute to practice improvement.

In addition to actively participating in research, Boarding Australia will also seek and provide links to relevant data and reports published by other researchers.

## Action Area 5: Product development

Boarding Australia considers that practical tools and products are critical offerings for members and to contribute to quality improvement in the sector.

Boarding Australia understands that many boarding providers and individual professionals have limited capacity to develop instruments and products that aid them in their day to day work. Boarding Australia also recognises that the industry has significant intellectual capital and that there is a great opportunity for learning from the collective experience of boarding providers.

Boarding Australia will seek advice from members regarding the products that would be of most value. Potential products could include:

- Staff development materials and targeted training that is responsive to the needs of members;
- Human resource and enterprise agreement support;
- Parent and community engagement resources;
- Funding and grant opportunities, including support regarding government funding availability and processes (e.g. ABSTUDY);
- Checklists to support quality initiatives, accreditation guides and advice;
- Student assessment and behaviour facilitation;
- Information and advice for parents and prospective students;
- Restorative practice guides and training.

In addition, relevant links to existing tools and products will form part of Boarding Australia's engagement and communication with members. This will include policy and reform initiatives, research and advice from experts. Improved communication platforms, including a refreshed website, updated newsletter and social media presence will enhance the profile and delivery of these products and services.

Through ongoing engagement with members, demand for specific products will be assessed and Boarding Australia aims to be responsive to member requests.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

The 2016-17 Business Plan represents the aspirations of Boarding Australia for the year. The following assessment is presented to identify and mitigate the risks associated with the action areas and goals defined in the plan.

Risks have been rated in accordance with AS/NZ 4360 Risk Management standard, applying the matrix below.

	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Almost certain	High risk	High risk	Extreme risk	Extreme risk	Extreme risk
Likely	Medium risk	High risk	High risk	Extreme risk	Extreme risk
Possible	Low risk	Medium risk	High risk	Extreme risk	Extreme risk
Unlikely	Low risk	Low risk	Medium risk	High risk	Extreme risk
Rare	Low risk	Low risk	Medium risk	High risk	High risk

### Organisational Risks

Risk	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Treatment
Boarding Australia cannot deliver all goals in the Business Plan	Likely	Minor	High Risk	Be clear that the plan is aspirational. Focus on things that are achievable. Regularly report on achievements (with quantifiable data) and revise plan.
Resources do not support activities (including risk of small teams having capacity to deliver)	Possible	Moderate	High Risk	Seek funding to support activities. Work with partners so not all goals are reliant on Boarding Australia effort. Prioritise actions according to capacity. Create networks and teams with capacity to deliver Boarding Australia material.
New Boarding Australia corporate structure does not work as anticipated	Unlikely	Minor	Low risk	Board training to embed new structures. Seek advice from experts as required (e.g. accounting/legal). Utilise opportunities created by new structure.
Boarding Australia investments and costs are not sustainable	Possible	Moderate	High Risk	Build revenue streams. Any projects or liabilities to be explicitly costed.

### **Action Area 1 (Quality Improvement) Risks**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Treatment</b>
Little interest from providers in implementing Standard	Possible	Minor	Medium Risk	Promote merits of compliance. Work with potential funders and Standards Australia, ABSA to develop practical tools.
No funding made available for specified projects	Possible	Minor	Medium Risk	Develop partnerships with State & Commonwealth government agencies and large scale boarding providers.
Boarding Australia members do not achieve accreditation under Standard	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium Risk	Unlikely for providers to undergo assessment until support and testing has commenced
Boarding providers use alternative resources/ products for quality improvement activities	Possible	Minor	Medium Risk	Develop contextualised tools for members and develop them in a consultative way

### **Action Area 2 (Member Services) Risks**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Treatment</b>
Membership numbers do not increase	Unlikely	Minor	Low risk	Clear member value statement. Develop membership strategy with different levels of membership. Review cost structure. Conduct state forums.
Communication efforts not effective	Possible	Moderate	High Risk	Consult with members re what works, seek feedback. Be responsive to member needs, trial innovative uses of website, Facebook etc.
Conferences/events are not successful	Possible	Minor	Medium Risk	Minimise costs and seek sponsorship to subsidise delegates. Create interesting and engaging programs for events.
Effective partnerships not made or are destructive	Possible	Moderate	High Risk	Build on existing positive relationships. Adopt collaborative approach to relationship building.

### **Action Area 3 (Consultancy and Advocacy) Risks**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Treatment</b>
Boarding Australia expertise is lost or not recognised	Unlikely	Major	High Risk	Ensure handover and communication in the organisation to retain knowledge and expertise. Focus advocacy and consulting efforts on recognised areas of competency. Build partnerships with network of other experts.
Boarding Australia's position is at odds with key stakeholders (e.g. providers or government)	Possible	Moderate	High Risk	Maintain Boarding Australia's independence but reflect views of members. Clarify position under Boarding Australia's mission: 'Making boarding better'. Consult and consider alternative views on sensitive issues.

### **Action Area 4 (Projects and Research) Risks**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Treatment</b>
Project deliverables are not met	Possible	Moderate	High Risk	Engage qualified staff/contractors. CEO to oversee project delivery. Regular engagement with funders to ensure milestones are met and work is satisfactory. Reporting and team meetings to monitor progress across all elements.
Research projects do not attract funding	Possible	Minor	Medium Risk	Build relationships with university, government, NGOs with interests in research/projects. Build on existing projects and partnerships to develop new project proposals. Actively monitor public tender, research and other funding opportunities.
Project/research partnerships cannot be developed	Unlikely	Minor	Low Risk	Some relationships already exist. Additional partners already being consulted.

**Action Area 5 (Product Development) Risks**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Treatment</b>
Members do not find products useful or accessible	Unlikely	Minor	Low Risk	Ask what members want. Consult with members to ensure products meet expectations. Distribute resources via agreed methods/media. Monitor member utilisation and satisfaction.