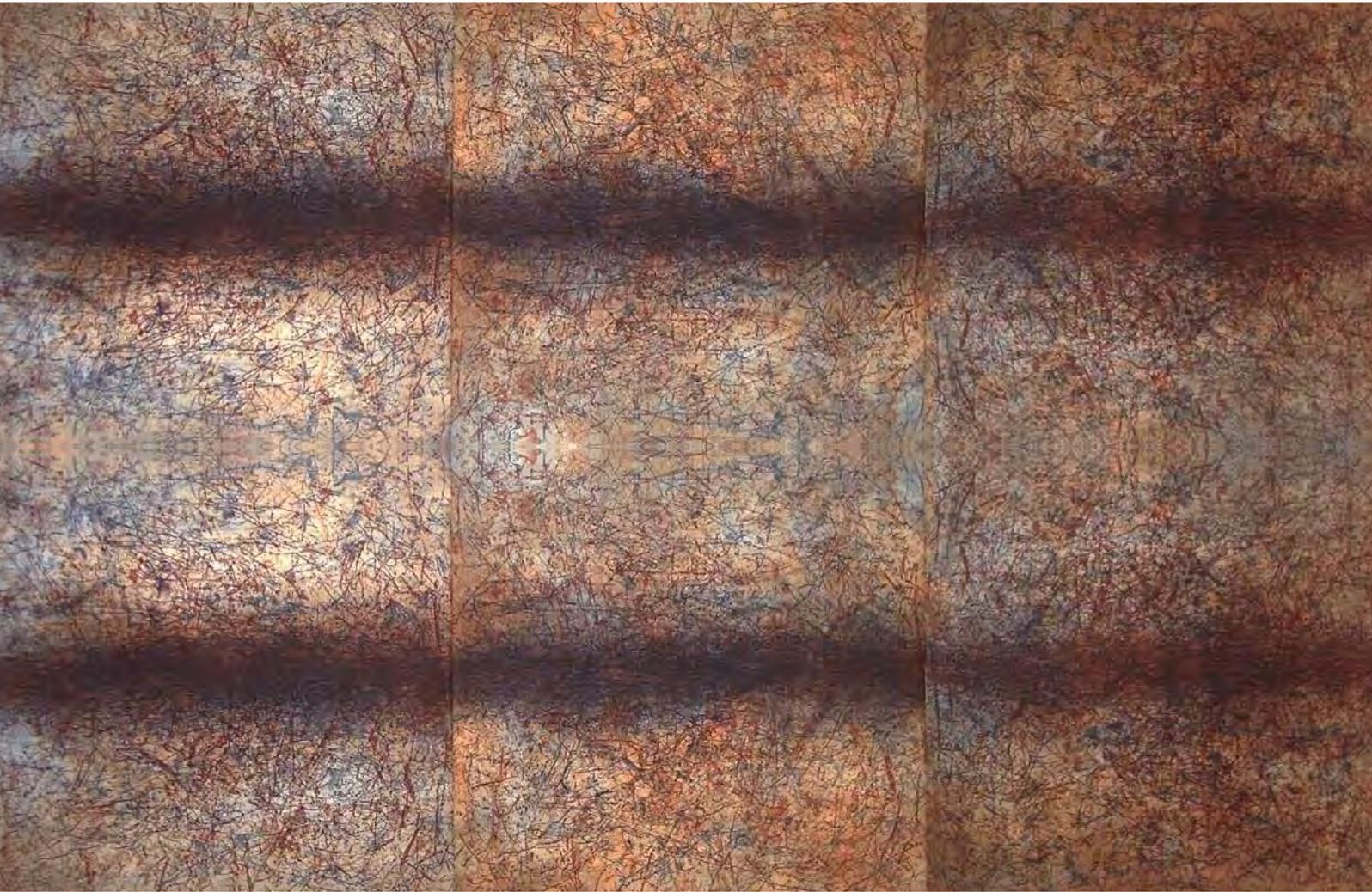


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Changing the Rules of the Game

The SEDA Program at Tiwi College 2015

Emeritus Professor Stephen Crump
Professor Roger Slee

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CHANGING THE RULES OF THE GAME

THE SEDA PROGRAM TIWI COLLEGE 2015

SEPTEMBER 2015

Emeritus Professor Stephen Crump
Professor Roger Slee

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Digital images used in this report were taken by the author, downloaded from the Tiwi College public web pages or as otherwise credited wherever possible and known, with the access date. Digital images taken by the author were done with permission, respecting participant privacy, taken discreetly with a phone camera to avoid encroaching on or disturbing student activities in or outside class.

The cover artwork *Terra Aequilibrium* is used with permission.

The design expresses the Tiwi College and community and acts as a guide to culture. The ochre markings represent Indigenous country and the blue depicts non-Indigenous country. Both come together in the middle to portray a path used by both cultures moving into the future in a spirit of parity and equality where “both worlds” are recognised and respected. Technically, the ochre marks were made by scratching stones on an etching plate and the blue marks were made by scratching broken shards of crockery - hence the metaphor of Indigenous and Anglo-Australian cultures together.

**Something special is happening this year.
SEDA at the Tiwi College is potentially a real game
changer in how we engage and produce real outcomes
for our young men.**

**Acting CEO, Tiwi Land Council
Secretary to the Tiwi Education Board
2015**

Author biographies

Emeritus Professor Stephen Crump taught in secondary schools before moving into higher education where he lectured in educational leadership and policy studies, becoming the inaugural Head of the School of Professional Studies at the University of Sydney. He was then appointed Pro Vice-Chancellor External Relations and Professor of Education at the University of Newcastle, Australia. Stephen has been awarded over \$2 million in research grants, including Chief Investigator for an ARC Linkage study of remote communities switching from radio to interactive distance satellite lessons in New South Wales and the Northern Territory.

Professor Roger Slee is the Founding Director of The Victoria Institute for Education, Diversity and Lifelong Learning at Victoria University, Melbourne. He is a leading scholar in the field of inclusive education and has led numerous large research projects around the world. Prior to his current appointment, Roger was Chair of Inclusive Education at The Institute of Education, University of London and has been Dean of education faculties at McGill University (Canada), The University of Western Australia and Goldsmiths, University of London. Roger was formerly the Deputy Director-General of Education Queensland and is the Founding Editor of The International Journal of Inclusive Education.

About

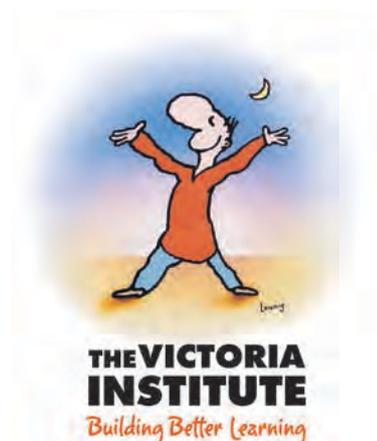
The Victoria Institute

The Victoria Institute was established in 2011 under the leadership of Professor Roger Slee. It is a research-intensive unit focused on impact and influence, particularly in the areas of educational reform and inclusive practices.

Well placed within Victoria University, The Victoria Institute has social justice as a key focus. Our researchers work collaboratively with a range of government departments, policy makers, philanthropic organisations and community groups. The Victoria Institute operates with the explicit intention of improving educational experiences and outcomes for all.

Our targeted research program aims to build better learning and greater participation and success for students from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds as well as those who are disengaged or excluded.

The Victoria Institute is connected with the College of Education and works in association with The Mitchell Institute and the Centre for International Research on Education Systems.



Preface

In talking to people about Sport Education Development Australia (SEDA) towards the start of doing the fieldwork for this report, it was put to me that SEDA people tend to have an almost “religious fervour” about their work that one needs to be wary of.

Seemed like good advice. This is an independent, dry-eyed, evidence-based evaluation of the progress and outcomes, or not, of the SEDA program at Tiwi College in the Northern Territory (NT) based on extensive research experience over 20 years and underpinned by a proven theoretical platform. It was commissioned and funded jointly by SEDA and Tiwi College because they wanted a disinterested and outsider’s critique of ‘what’s working and what’s not’ and suggestions for the future.

The process of ‘making the strange familiar’ in a human context, rather than a laboratory, requires an even stricter onus on the researcher to be clear-headed, scientific and ethical about how the task is done, analysed and reported. Yet, starting with the longer-running Darwin SEDA program, it seems headstrong to persist in what has been called ‘the wild goose chase of objectivity’ when:

- You hear about a young man who didn’t hand in one piece of Year 11 work last year at his mainstream school, but this year will not only get a NT Year 12 qualification but also a vocational qualification that will almost definitely get him a job
- You stand a metre away from a young woman who was “Trouble” (with a capital T) at her previous school, but has just arrived by taxi – somehow paid for herself - at the Cricket NT sports complex because her bus didn’t come (I’ve had that happen to me in Darwin) and she didn’t want to miss her class, even though she had the perfect excuse to just go home
- You learn some SEDA students are studying additional VET courses (e.g., fashion, graphic design) on their own initiative to broaden their credentials
- You are freely offered accounts of parents close to tears at their end-of-term meeting with teachers, simply grateful for turning the life of their child around where no-one else could
- You gather anecdotes of education officials and employers who state they can spot a SEDA student by the confident way they walk and maturity of their conversation; despite all sorts of barriers to achieving in school, now displaying these characteristics as if they’d had them for years, and
- You discover the majority of SEDA graduates go on to tertiary education or employment all around Australia.

This Report confirms what the people on the ground at Tiwi College, like the SEDA staff in Darwin, know from daily experience. The Report confirms their awareness that they are changing the rules of the game, many of which hinder and limit education and training outcomes for Indigenous youth.

The Report confirms this individual awareness through multiple and triangulated sources of evidence that held true through various analyses and across disparate informants, at no stage succumbing to ‘confirmation bias’ or ‘confidence bias’ where one only investigates things most likely to confirm the story one wants to tell.

The rest of this report focuses exclusively on Tiwi College. If, after reading the following pages, you arrive at



Spot the teacher(s): Milikapiti sports clinic May 2015

the same conclusions as the Acting CEO of the Tiwi Land Council and Secretary to the Tiwi College Board that “something special” is happening with the SEDA Tiwi College Senior Boys class in 2015 - *it is*.

While the Report has extensive positive findings, it does not romanticise the Tiwi College context and outcomes. Rather, the Report describes pragmatic and hard-won strategies that might assist sustaining and expanding this “something special” on the Tiwi Islands for 2016 and beyond without glossing over the tensions, many not of their own making, that impact on these young men’s lives, their communities and Tiwi College staff.

Leaving Darwin after both fieldwork trips I was subjected to racist rants from both taxi drivers who took me to the airport; in May about it being a waste of time to try to educate Indigenous Australians and in August about ‘Asians’ buying up “our” houses. On both occasions I was appalled to think both taxi drivers assumed I would share and be sympathetic to their views – simply because of the colour of my skin?

This Report portrays hard-won strategies that might assist sustaining and expanding this “something special” on the Tiwi Islands into 2016 and beyond.

These incidents acted as warning bells about how one can change the rules of the game as is happening with SEDA at Tiwi College, but not everyone will play by the new rules. To help counter factors that trigger and allow prejudice to flare up, this report might also act as a guide for adapting Tiwi College strategies elsewhere in Australia, through SEDA or similar agencies, to assist other young men, women and their communities *close the gap* evident between the educational, training and employment opportunities and outcomes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students through changing the rules of the game.

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Abbreviations

ACARA:	Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority
AFL:	Australian Football League
AIEF:	Australian Indigenous Education Foundation
CMM:	Connections, Capacities and Meanings (Framework)
COGSO:	Council of Government School Organisations
FGH:	Family Group Home
HOL:	Hands On Learning
IAS:	Indigenous Advancement Strategy
NAPLAN:	National Assessment Program, Literacy and Numeracy
NSW:	New South Wales
NT:	Northern Territory
SEDA:	Sports Education Development Australia
TC:	Tiwi College
TLC:	Tiwi Land Council
TEB:	Tiwi Education Board
VI:	Victoria Institute
VET:	Vocational Education and Training

Executive Summary

The Tiwi Islands have a history unique amongst Indigenous Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples. The geographic isolation of the islands, just north of Darwin bordering the Timor Sea and Beagle Gulf, had its disadvantages, as did its strategic position for shipping attracting unwanted attention going back to the 17th Century.

But these factors were also advantages the Tiwi used to change the rules of the game for ‘first contact’ and subsequent points in time. The Tiwi demonstrated an aptitude to trade on equal terms with seafaring nations nearby, or passing by during the age of European exploration by sea, whilst retaining strong territorial and cultural positions that have held true through to the present day.

Visitors to the Tiwi Islands over the last 500 years or so were made to feel welcome, but the Tiwi also expected them to behave in a mutually respectful way and reciprocate the friendship openly offered.

Geographic location and socio-cultural resilience thus shaped the Tiwi as exemplars of ‘walking in two worlds’ well before they had to accommodate and ameliorate the contemporary challenges they face so graciously and optimistically.

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation of the SEDA program at Tiwi College aimed to articulate how the Tiwi College hosts, SEDA personnel and other stakeholders experienced the changes brought about since 2014 for teaching the Senior Men’s class in a new way.

Guiding questions for the evaluation were:

- Are young Indigenous students in the Tiwi College SEDA program engaged with, and achieving within, the SEDA program objectives?
- What skills and attributes does the SEDA program develop that prepare students for higher-level qualifications for work and lifelong learning?
- How do the SEDA student outcomes at Tiwi College reflect possibilities for other cohorts in Tiwi College and other Indigenous contexts adopting and adapting identified success factors?

The evaluation was designed to collect a broad spectrum of data that could be triangulated for verification. Evidence was collected through quantitative data including using the Hands On Learning survey (adapted to context), student school attendance rates, and classroom achievement towards VET Certificate II and higher.

Whilst using the HOL survey was useful for getting an indication of the SEDA students’ participation in class over a full week, quantitative data needs to be contextualised and placed into a longer-term narrative. Thus qualitative data was compiled from SEDA and TC organisational policies, SEDA and TC curriculum documents, TC teacher and student “yarning”, and participatory observation over two fieldwork site visits.

The methodology was approved by the Victoria University Human Ethics Committee including valued input from the Indigenous unit *Moondani Balluk* (HRE 15 - 037).

KEY FINDINGS

The findings of this evaluation of the SEDA program at Tiwi College constitute a positive testament to the hard yards the staff and students have done to change the rules of the game when it comes to student attendance, active participation, qualifications earned, plus breadth and depth of potential career and life options opening up at Tiwi College. This can be summed up in a testimonial given to the evaluation more than once: “Something special is happening here this year”.

The objective in 2013 was to introduce something the Tiwi Education Board owns and Tiwi College runs within the vision, ethos and structures of the school. Working with SEDA, that objective has been achieved in 2015.

Despite the good luck to have such a good story to tell, this report consciously resists romanticising the context and outcomes. The Report acknowledges the tensions between what the students of the Senior Men’s class achieve through SEDA and other aspects of their school and community lives, tensions they increasingly handle with maturity and astute, confident insights.

The future for these students looks much brighter compared to how it could have been before SEDA and Tiwi College changed the game plan, starting in 2014. But there is no certainty of success just because something is done differently. This report provides an account of what was changed at Tiwi College, what success looks like, and what factors could change the game in other rural and remote locations.

Strength-based Teaching and Learning

The intent of the curriculum developed at Tiwi College is that learning for students should be an authentic experience, matching the students’ learning needs, context, extensive informal knowledge and community expectations and aspirations. This approach gels with the SEDA focus on ‘hands on’ learning, and both are looking forward to position each student for employment.

The key to SEDA’s success is that learning is real and authentic; that is, it has consequences, it is learnt then acted on, often as a public and/or workplace action that empowers each student and lets them feel success, pride and respect. The curriculum builds from the Certificate II in Sports and Recreation, a VET qualification that requires students to demonstrate satisfactory competence in 11 Units, supported by literacy and numeracy activities.

Students are not achieving such positive outcomes in isolation but in response to broad school strategies around an affirmative and Tiwi-ised school community ethos. They are also doing it through the successful efforts made by the SEDA Program Facilitator to build classroom relationships and adjust the curriculum to drive practical outcomes for each and every student.

Attendance and Participation

Tiwi College has achieved attendance rates consistently above the target of 80%; also well above the NT average for remote secondary school students. Tiwi College students are ‘voting with their feet’ by regularly attending every week. This is as good an indication as any of a thoughtful, systematic and culturally appropriate classroom management and school values system that has students wanting to be at Tiwi College. The College works on the basis of establishing and exercising Trust, Empathy, Respect and Mercy across staff, students, family groups, and visitors.

There is a strong Indigenous focus in class activities, linked to other familiar and relevant community contexts. There is also a strategically powerful link between student skill development and Tiwi Island communities; best

illustrated by the sports clinics the Senior Men's class runs (very successfully) for primary school students.

This is the platform for both getting students to want to attend school and, more importantly, participate and achieve. SEDA class attendance rates at the end of Term 2, 2015 show ten students attending more than 70% compared to only seven in 2014. In addition, the rates show that five of those ten students attended for more than 90% of schools days, with two students over 95%, one at 100%.

From a purely empirical perspective, the participation rates for Tiwi College must appear as an exemplar to funding and umbrella organisations, with the rates sitting well above national averages for rural and remote locations. Considering the unique and contextualised factors impinging on what the school actively undertakes and achieves, the raw numbers look even more impressive.

Inclusion, Skilled and Useful

The Tiwi College HOL survey data indicates strong positive scores across all eight items. Over the five days, 61 complete single sheet responses were able to be tallied from 11-15 students each day, the numbers varying due to competing school commitments.

The spread and variation in responses on nearly every single survey sheet clearly suggests that the Tiwi college SEDA Senior Men's class undertook the survey task seriously and meaningfully. This alone is a measure of the maturity and positive outcomes of the class this year, the individual and group respect for their teacher, the value they place on being at Tiwi College, and their willingness to contribute to this evaluation to assist planning for the future.

The survey data confirms how these students are developing skills, finding meaning in class by being involved in real tasks valued by themselves, their school and communities, and are feeling better connected to lifelong education and training. These findings are confirmed by the SEDA teacher's classroom strategies, accounts given by the students and descriptions provided through observation, interview and documentation. For the days the survey was completed:

- 97% felt they used or improved skills
- 95% felt they enjoyed class
- 95% felt things in life generally were great, OK or going well
- 94% felt that the day was useful
- 87% felt the class was effective
- 77% felt included in classwork mostly or nearly all the time
- 75% felt listened to all or most of the time
- 72% felt what they learnt that day mattered.

These results match the attendance rates now consistently above 80%. A strong hypothesis would be to draw a relationship between high attendance and high satisfaction.

Success Factors

There are some interesting parallels and differences between Darwin and Tiwi College that highlight variables and factors to inform further development of the programs in both existing NT locations, as well as any future SEDA programs in locations likely to have classes with a significant Indigenous student make-up.

The success factors identified in this evaluation reflect more universal findings. Though cumulative data is not

generalisable without qualification, the factors sum up a suite of actions that shaped the success of the two different patterns of SEDA programs in the NT that could form the basis for future programs in new locations.

These factors can be grouped under the following four headings for planning purposes:

- Curriculum, Student Interest and Sports focus
- Leadership, Teacher Skill Set
- Resources and Funding
- Parent Interaction, Community and/or Employer Engagement, Philanthropic and/or Industry Partners

While these factors provide a useful audit and action tool, each new SEDA operation will look significantly different, though composed of the same elements. Each new SEDA program will change the rules in their own way for doing education and training with young people in SEDA-inspired schools, communities and homes.

SUMMARY

The evaluation of the SEDA Tiwi College program was asked to determine how the program was progressing and, if progressing well, outline what it is that works for these students, and whether what works for Tiwi College could be applied to new locations with predominant Indigenous student cohorts.

This report provides clear evidence that things are working well for the Tiwi SEDA program, with significant improvements in class numbers, attendance rates and strong evidence for high levels of inclusion, skilling and student achievement that is positioning them well for future employment.

These results are remarkable given the SEDA program is only in its second year, the class teacher is new, some students joined the class well into this year, and many students previously felt alienated from school and lacked some basic skills. Other factors include English being the students' second (or 3rd or 4th) language and the extent of schoolwork foregone throughout the year for important cultural obligations and commitments.

While the SEDA program is sport-based, student outcomes extend well beyond the Cert II-IV VET qualifications each student earns into substantial and broad opportunities for employment and to other key determinants of a fulfilling and prosperous future.

Tiwi College and SEDA staff and students know the challenges they face. We hope this evaluation helps bolster their resolve to do a few more hard yards to change not only some of the rules, but maybe the game itself.

In October 2012, SEDA was approached by Tiwi College <http://www.tiwicollege.com/> to explore how SEDA might work with them to run a within-school program. Tiwi College had worked earlier in multiple partnerships with, for example, the Clontarf Football Academy, Australian Football League (AFL) NT and Essendon Football Club.

This time it was looking for a longer-term ongoing solution with a better institutional fit. SEDA seemed to answer both of these expectations. Links between the two organisations, while slight before 2014, were long-standing with SEDA's founder, Rob Flower, visiting Tiwi much earlier.

A key focus for teaching and learning at this new site was to be a VET qualification built around AFL, given the prominence of sport on the Tiwi Islands, and a Building and Trades qualification given the opportunities it would offer for local employment. SEDA had only operated this way once before, with McKillop College in Victoria, but was keen to partner with a remote and Indigenous school by invitation.

The program started with senior male students in 2014, continued into 2015 with a SEDA skilled teacher taking over the class, with even stronger expectations for 2016.

SEDA

SEDA is a provider of senior secondary and vocational qualifications for young people who respond constructively to applied learning focused on each student's interests, primarily around sport and, more recently, creative arts and construction.

SEDA was established in 2006 in Victoria <http://sedagroup.com.au/>. There are currently over 2000 young people completing their senior secondary / vocational qualifications with SEDA. SEDA provides students with the opportunity to identify their future pathway through a range of learning experiences. Students work closely with SEDA staff to identify areas of interest and develop specific career plans through further study or transitioning directly into employment.

SEDA is a provider of senior secondary and vocational qualifications for young people who respond to applied learning focused on each student's interests.

The personal learning environment based on high expectations enables students to work closely with the teacher and other students who share common interests and goals. The trick at SEDA is arranging teaching and learning around helping young people realise they have the capacity to do well in education and training, and in life generally, not just through sport.

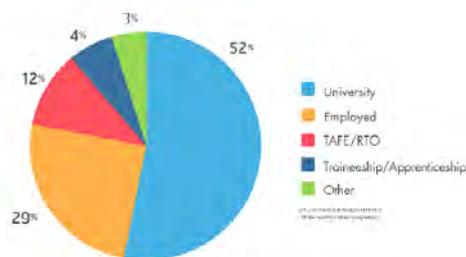
The SEDA curriculum focuses on a combination of both theoretical and practical learning activities, providing students with the opportunity to develop key life skills including initiative, independence, teamwork, organisation and public speaking. SEDA places a strong emphasis on industry placements and has a broad and extensive range of industry, government and community partnerships in all areas of operation.

SEDA classes are focused on three elements:

1. Engage (through skills and passion)
2. Educate (for senior secondary qualifications and life skills)
3. Empower (with skills and confidence to pursue pathway)

It's the "doing" of the SEDA class that gives these young people a sense of self-worth. The actual career taken up may differ to the qualification gained through SEDA, but the important thing is they have experienced success and use that feeling to apply their learning and engage with their peers, employers and communities.

Further Education, Training & Employment Pathways



In encouraging and fostering each student's ambitions and goals, students who complete their studies at SEDA graduate with a focused education and career plan. Each student's plan reflects their individual interests and is designed around achieving positive long-term outcomes. Upon completion of the program, SEDA remains committed to maintaining contact with each student, supporting them as they transition into further study or the workforce.

As reported on the SEDA webpage, SEDA has facilitated exceptional outcomes for young people who may not have otherwise completed their schooling nor transitioned successfully to work or further study, with 52% going on to tertiary education, and the rest into employment or activities like a gap year. For detailed research on SEDA see the Te Riele et al., (2014) Report and eight case studies: <http://www.vu.edu.au/contact-us/kitty-te-riele>.

TIWI EDUCATION BOARD

Tiwi College is owned and managed by the Tiwi people through the Tiwi Education Board (TEB), comprised of senior men and women from all Tiwi communities. The College is located at Pickataramoor on Melville Island, approximately 60kms away from the closest Tiwi community. Tiwi College is a weekly boarding facility where students are accommodated in family group homes. The college caters for holistic learning, helping students become "work ready". Life skills are valued as highly as academic programs / outcomes.



The Tiwi Land Council (TLC) was established in 1978 after the 1976 Aboriginal Land Rights Act was enacted. That event triggered the Tiwi people being given statutory control of Bathurst and Melville Islands. The TLC has up to 40 members entrusted with managing Tiwi lands, coast and sea.

The TLC received no Commonwealth funding but raised a small amount that now represents assets of more than \$200 million in forestry, mining, tourist lodges and Tiwi College itself. Until September 2014, the TLC was led by the inaugural Chair, Cyril Kalippa OAM and the CEO, John Hicks, both of whom worked hard to bring to life the vision of the founders, including Cyril as well as Walter Kerinauia and Jimmy Tipungwuti.

This vision was to break away from dependence on welfare by ensuring Tiwi children got a good education that in turn would help them to use the land to generate wealth and further develop the next generation of leaders. Cyril's view was that education and hard work are the most fulfilling things you can do with life. He argued from the start that the Tiwi should have their own school. 25 years ago he had in mind the old timber mill at Pickataramoor as the best site due to its connection to history and culture as well as isolation from communities to give students a place to think about life from two different, not always competing, perspectives.

The Tiwi Land Council advocates for and facilities support for school operations and activities, cultural exchanges and strategies that lead to real career options for students. The current Acting CEO of TLC is also Secretary to the Tiwi Education Board. He is thus able to provide seamless two-way communication built on a lifelong association with Tiwi communities and organisations.

WE'RE TIWI, WE'RE DIFFERENT

Through the resilience of Tiwi culture, not only are the Tiwi people facing and addressing the many of the challenges in contemporary Australian society, but also that Tiwi College is a microcosm of these achievements, now enhanced through the agency of the Senior Young Men's SEDA program. That is why Chapter 4 spends some time on the history of the Tiwi Islands interaction with various expressions of Christianity, and the passionate adoption of AFL as the preferred sport.



Equally, the accounts in Chapters 6 and 7 about what is being achieved in the SEDA class can only be understood as possible within this broader context, including glimpses into the powerful mindset that lies at the heart of Tiwi culture; that *We're Tiwi, we're different*. Unless this is acknowledged, accepted, endorsed, and cherished, then little happens, nor should it.

As one senior informant explains:

One of the frustrations of the Tiwi Education Board was that we kept getting people who had been in other places, be it the desert or elsewhere, and they'd come in a say 'This is how we did it here', 'This is how we did it in North Queensland, so we should be doing it like that here'. So we got very frustrated because we kept saying (but) "We're Tiwi, we're different!"

This Report reviews the literature on education and Indigenous students (Chapter 2), as well as outlining the goals of the evaluation, methodology and fieldwork trips (Chapter 3), before providing a helicopter view of Tiwi College organisation, facilities and curriculum (Chapter 5), finishing with some Reflections (Chapter 8) on what is and what might come next.

Tiwi College is a weekly boarding facility that caters for holistic learning. Life skills and being 'work ready' are valued as highly as academic outcomes.

This report also includes a number of "Yarns" to illustrate various aspects, events, influences and encounters that occurred during the time of the evaluation - selected from many others - to help fill out the depiction of SEDA at Tiwi College in a way both the authors and the actors value and enjoy; the writing / painting and telling / sharing of a good story.



Detail of artwork from Tiwi College Website

This chapter will briefly review a core selection of research literature and policy documents relevant to shaping the evaluation strategies and used for the analysis of the Tiwi College SEDA student experiences.

The focus is on the “learning by doing” philosophy of education of both the Tiwi College and SEDA, achieving better education and training outcomes and how this fits into, and informs, broader Indigenous youth strategies in Australia. The review is far from exhaustive, intended to highlight contemporary thinking and dilemmas relevant to the Tiwi College context as a springboard for further reading.

LEARNING BY DOING

Education and training are, if nothing else, actions; actions encompassing activities, experiences, excitement, doubts, growth, realisations, collaborations and self-reflection. Throughout history, in both Western and Indigenous cultures, the passing on of knowledge has been a central element of social renewal and inter-generational survival, because knowledge is power.

The problem of practice has troubled philosophers for millennia, with no immediate indication of being resolved, but there is recognition that knowledge grows out of experience, every day experience generating common sense knowledge that is the foundation of more theoretical, abstract and spiritual thinking (Dewey, 1938/1963; Garrison, 1997).

Learning, Performing, Knowing - these are the outward signs of successful connections made between the social and interactive processes generating the purposeful learning that is the hallmark of the SEDA program at Tiwi College and of Tiwi culture for thousands of years.

Up against a ‘white curriculum’ (Peters, 2015) and all the distractions, paraphernalia and ephemera of life in the 21st century, Tiwi young people are navigating reciprocal relationships between identifying with Country as young Australians getting a work place credential or winning tertiary entrance (see, Driese, 2014, Hewitson, 2007).

Tiwi youth are thus proving the duality of their circumstances is not only resolvable, but offers to themselves and others exciting interpretations of what a better life can be in a world some see as “gone wrong” (See, Smith, 2009, and McKnight, 2015).

Through learning by doing, in an appropriate cultural context, in a classroom rich in cultural variation, SEDA has found a perfect partner for changing young people’s lives through engagement with education and training. Tiwi College, through the agency of SEDA, is responding to Dewey’s (1893, p. 660) appeal for society to,

(...) cease conceiving of education as mere preparation for later life and make it the full meaning of the present life.

Dewey’s call to action is the premise for ‘pragmatic curriculum development’ (Crump, 1995; Crump 2001) and consequent expressions of policy in practice. While SEDA and Tiwi College are only at the beginning of this transformation, they have history and philosophy of education on their side.

EDUCATION AND BETTER OUTCOMES

As te Riele, Davies and Baker (2015, p. ix) point out, flexible learning through relevant curriculum offers a way to expand career choice and life options as they are

(...) pivotal for enhancing young people's access to post-school pathways. (...) For most learners, the most highly desired pathways are on to some form of employment and viable financial independence, alongside further study.

In a separate research project, te Riele, Plows and Bottrell (2015) establish how those young people who do not finish Year 12 are amongst the ones who find it hardest of all to get a job. SEDA and Tiwi College start with this fact as the basis for everything they do.

It has also been shown how the benefits of flexible learning programs and training pathways not only benefit individual students, but also broader society in terms of better social cohesion, reduced costs for long-term unemployment, reducing recurring ill-health, anti-social behaviour and disproportionate levels of incarceration. These factors are of particular concern for contributing to increased poor mental health, criminal convictions and youth suicide for Indigenous youth (Amnesty, 2015).

Throughout history, in both Western and Indigenous cultures, the passing on of knowledge has been a central element of social renewal and inter-generational survival, because knowledge is power.

White and Rosauer (2015) argue that half a million Australian school children are missing out on significant amounts of schooling due to chronic diseases and general ill-health, with very little policy action on this problem. Manning et al., (2015) have likewise shown that Indigenous well-being is a specific subset of this problem, with its own difficulties and barriers to change.

The SEDA program at Tiwi College, and the Tiwi College residential strategy, address this issue directly as it was an issue that underpinned the rationale for starting the program in 2014.

INDIGENOUS YOUTH STRATEGIES

It is not the place here to rehearse the arguments of the “Closing The Gap” reports, nor to undertake a detailed account of how various strategies do or might help Indigenous students reach their potential (Wilkinson, 2009), or alternatively whether the gap is becoming a gulf (Gordon and Harrison, 2015). But this a rich area for further reading and analysis.

As part of more practical policy responses, a major and high quality Australian Government project on “What Works” for improving outcomes for Indigenous students produced a thorough and accessible set of teaching guidebooks for successful practice, especially around literacy and numeracy, reducing suspensions and setting up the whole school for success.

In addition, the Wilson Report (2013) for the Northern Territory government, *A share in the future*, derived its title from an address by Galarrwuy Yunupingu when accepting his nomination as Australian of the Year in 1978, when he said,

We are at last being recognised as the indigenous people of this country who must share in its future.

The Report found too many Indigenous students are fulfilling the legal requirement that they remain at school, without benefiting from the moral requirement that they gain something worth having from this experience.

Young people who do not finish Year 12 are amongst the ones who find it hardest to get a job. SEDA and Tiwi College start with this as the basis for everything they do.

The review recommended a dramatic shift in how secondary education, and particularly senior secondary education, is provided through the NT's urban schools in Darwin, Palmerston, Alice Springs, Katherine, Nhulunbuy and Tennant Creek, adding that a corollary of this approach will be the provision of residential accommodation for remote students.

The NT Council of Government School Organisations (COGSO) published a Memo on 01 June 2015 in support of the NT government Indigenous Education Strategy, outlining the seven key government projects for Stage One of the new policy, running from 2015-17. COGSO supported the policy "where the educational outcomes for Indigenous students are well behind those of other Indigenous students in Australia".

There was also qualified support for the NT government's "Families as First Teachers Program" which COGSO says it is "seeking detail on this," accessed 03 June 2015, <http://www.ntcogso.org.au/>

With this in mind, it is worth noting that there is strong evidence that household's financial resources are important for children's educational outcomes, and this relationship is one of cause and effect (Maguire, 2015). Maguire argues that protecting households from low income is unlikely to provide a complete solution to less well-off children's worse outcomes, but ought to be a central part of efforts to promote children's educational opportunities and life chances.

As the Evaluation that follows reveals, the Tiwi Land Council and the Tiwi Education Board, working with Tiwi College and SEDA, understand these points well as they provide opportunities for learning by doing to reach each student's potential.

SUMMARY

This chapter has outlined examples of the research literature and contemporary policy documents that spoke to the issues and context of the Tiwi College and SEDA innovations, and thus helped shape the data gathering strategies and units of analysis for assembling the evidence upon which to base the findings of this evaluation.

The brief review of the literature has established that there is a firm theoretical foundation to the practice-based learning models of both organisations and strong evidence from Australia and internationally that changing lives through education and training can only be achieved when you change community and national socio-economic factors as well as individual actions, outcomes and dreams.

The Victoria Institute of Education, Diversity and Lifelong Learning (VI) was established in 2011 at Victoria University, Australia. VI researchers explore alternative ways of offering students from diverse, disadvantaged and under-represented communities opportunities to learn, using a variety of trans-disciplinary techniques to understand and contextualise the education environment and consider how local issues impact a student's learning outcomes.

Research at The Victoria Institute is undertaken collaboratively to develop innovative solutions to complex problems.

Research at VI is undertaken collaboratively to develop innovative solutions to complex problems. VI works with other researchers, teachers, communities and policy makers to improve sustainable educational experiences and outcomes and to produce comprehensive and reliable data to drive change across Australia and internationally. Victoria Institute welcomed the chance to undertake this evaluation.

EVALUATION AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The evaluation aimed to articulate how the different stakeholders experience the SEDA Tiwi College program through engagement with the Tiwi College hosts and community stakeholders. The research approach agreed on by all partners built on site visits by other VI staff in 2014 that allowed this evaluation to quickly establish research parameters, participant trust and agreement regarding research protocols.

The evaluation had at least one Tiwi Island school and/or community person to assist bridge and broker relationships, participant engagement, the fieldworker's cultural and language appropriate behaviour, interpretation of cultural and language data meaning, and reporting back to Tiwi College.

Guiding questions were:

- Are young Indigenous students in the Tiwi College SEDA program engaged with, and achieving within, the SEDA program objectives?
- What skills and attributes does the SEDA program develop that prepare students for higher-level qualifications for work and lifelong learning?
- How do the SEDA student outcomes at Tiwi College reflect possibilities for other cohorts in Tiwi College and other Indigenous contexts adopting and adapting the identified success factors?



Tiwi College Main Building

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

As noted above, the evaluation was designed to collect a broad spectrum of data that could be triangulated for verification and reliability given the number of participants. Evidence was collected through:

- Quantitative data
“Hands On Learning” survey (adapted to context); TC SEDA student attendance, and assessment and achievement data where available
- Qualitative data
SEDA / TC policies, curriculum documents, teacher journal, “yarning” interviews and participatory observation.

Building on preparatory reading about Tiwi culture and the school environment (via Annual Reports and the Newsletter), the first visit started with a brief cultural immersion session given by the Tiwi College Principal so that the outside researcher could start to engage with staff and students, participating in or observing shared activities and seeking opportunities for yarning.

The second visit was to the Darwin SEDA program, joining a class being held at the Cricket NT ovals to gain a more comprehensive view of SEDA programs in the Northern Territory.

This was followed by an extended period of additional data collection and initial feedback, especially about the Yarns, with the assistance of Tiwi College and SEDA personnel and academic critical friends that led to the production of the first full draft of the Report, with limited distribution as a confidential “Consultation Draft”.

The third and final visit provided an opportunity to share draft findings with the Tiwi College community and seek verification (or not) of, and reflection on, the likely conclusions before finalising the Report as well as attend the Thursday night communal dinner and social staff / student basketball games.

Throughout the evaluation there were formal and informal reviews of strategy, data sources, informants and comparative contexts with SEDA program and head office, and Tiwi College personnel. This led, for example, to including Tiwi College and SEDA adults in the interview / yarning strategy, as well as changing the response scale in the Hands On Survey from a 1-5 numerical scale to one based on five emoticon faces shifting from very happy to very sad. Both changes to the evaluation proposal were notified to the Victoria University Research Office for approval as fieldwork amendments (Ethics approval # HRE 15-037).

Fieldwork and Consultation

The evaluation was of a single class at Tiwi College, the Senior Men’s Class, that in 2014 had become a dedicated SEDA program group. Participants included:

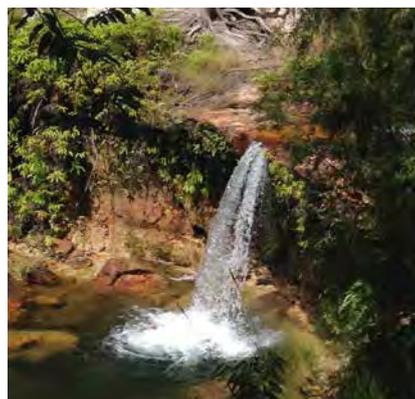
1. Students in the 2015 SEDA Cert II Sport and Recreation / traineeship program. N = 18 (May 2015), 19 (August 2015)
2. Tiwi College and Tiwi Education Board leaders, teaching staff and/ or house parents (key people in students' lives). N = 4
3. SEDA Darwin program comparison, with different parent contact. N = 3 Staff, 20 students, by informal observation only.

The Tiwi College and Melville Island research site visit involved:

- Welcome and cultural immersion on arrival at the Tiwi College airport
- Briefing from the Principal in the meeting space of his office, main building
- Tour of Hospitality precinct and staff accommodation
- Trip by car to Milikapiti to observe and talk with Senior Men's Class leading their sports clinic for primary students on school / community oval.
- Tour by bus of Milikapiti community and Snake Bay beach
- Stop off and information about *Taracumbie* waterfall and vicinity
- De-briefing by Principal on return to Tiwi College
- Yarn with Principal
- Group yarning with Senior Men's class and SEDA teacher; other SEDA personnel visitors joined as observers
- Observe SEDA students' skill display at "Kick The Board" (AFL style basketball) and trampoline, as end-of-day activity
- Informal yarning with Assistant Principal during the above
- Full bus tour of campus facilities, sites and features lead by the Principal, including: Family Group Homes and 2nd staff accommodation site, Library, Sports Oval, HaydenWay Garden classroom and VET precinct, as well as the Tiwi Land Council precinct
- In addition, the author subsequently visited the Darwin SEDA Program NT Cricket class, yarned informally with three SEDA staff and the NT SEDA State Manager and spoke informally with a number of students.



Tiwi College Thursday night staff / student basketball competition, August 2015



Taracumbie waterfall, Melville Island, 2015

A NOTE ON RESEARCH AND ETHICS

Given involvement of human subjects and the type of data gathering strategies agreed to by both commissioning institutions, this research applied for and was granted ethics approved by the Victoria University Ethics Committee in April 2015 (HRE15-037), including a statement (Supplement B) about researching with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

When researching a named and public context where there is a small population, it is not possible for a researcher to guarantee or even realistically and ethically promise anonymity and confidentiality, despite making the best efforts possible to respect the privacy and dignity of each participant.

This rings true for both staff and students at Tiwi College, arising as well as from the personal familiarity of the Tiwi Islands' communities as a whole. In this Report, use of the public name and location of Tiwi College is fundamental to explaining the data, findings and recommendations.

This dilemma was acknowledged in the ethics application process. Whilst this project did not fall under a category like "physically intrusive", it was recognised by the authors as being intrusive to the extent that a person's identity might be revealed and this raised a risk of possibly being held to account for what the research makes public through this Report.

For example, a participant might be identified by insiders who recognise a particular turn of phrase, exposing a potential social risk.

This is of particular concern for the doing as well as the reporting of research in this context, as Tiwi culture entails the notion of "shame" (discussed in the body of the Report) which can be triggered by inappropriate, insensitive, or too assertive questioning resulting in the recipient simply walking away to avoid shame and conflict, or, in some scenarios, resulting in immediate anger and antagonism.

We take the opportunity here to state that neither occurred in undertaking this project, thanks to the welcoming and courteous nature of the SEDA students and staff.

Anonymity reaches an impasse when there is only 1 person doing, and responsible for, each type of activity in a particular research site, such as a named small remote school, hospital, police station national park office or the like.

Even creating a pseudonym for the institution and/or location in these contexts, and a code for each participant, rarely survives scrutiny of where and who was involved, especially by those close to the particular field of work or locality.

The solution offered in the pages that follow is to state the position of the adult participant or informant where it would be a nonsense to de-identify him or her and where not knowing the role would make the data analysis meaningless.

Where positions have been named, by necessity so that sense can be made of the data, the informants have had the opportunity to review the consultation draft and co-edit the text, within the scope of retaining the intent of the Report's findings.

SUMMARY

This chapter has outlined the data gathering strategies and units of analysis for assembling the evidence upon which to base the findings of this evaluation. The proposed methodology was approved by the Victoria University Human Ethics Committee, with valued input from the Indigenous unit *Moondani Balluk*, culminating in uneventful fieldwork faithfully putting into effect the intentions of the researchers and funding partners (Tiwi College and SEDA).

The evaluation articulates how different stakeholders experienced the SEDA Tiwi College program as a guide to future planning and partner strategies.

The next chapter (Chapter 4) paints broad-sweeping word pictures of Tiwi history, culture and sport, before an overview of Tiwi College (Chapter 5) and then detail on the SEDA class (Chapter 6).



Flying in to Tiwi College private airstrip, 2015

THE TIWI ISLANDS CONTEXT 4

Ever since being cut off by rising sea levels about 7,000 years ago, there has been very limited contact between Tiwi Islanders and mainland (“off island”) Indigenous Australians, even though on a clear day one can see the green-brown haze of the ‘terra australis’ coast. Tiwi called the distant coastline *Tibambinumi*, the home of the dead, a place where the spirits rested.

Yet the Tiwi Islands offered, as it still does, a self-contained and well-resourced existence, so much so that “Tiwi” can be translated as “we, the people”, or “we, one people”, or “we, people” in a unique language with no word for “others”, a language that stimulated a rich and complex ceremonial life recognised now most widely in the highly symbolic and decorative *pukamani* pole and carved wood spears.

In 2015, the Tiwi Islands are entering a phase of prosperity with strengthened governance, robust control over finances and a distinct and appealing cultural identity. Tess Atie, of the Tiwi Land Council, spoke plainly and confidently of this new phase (Scott, 2015, p.10):

The Tiwi are ready to take off. This mob is doing really well – they give hope to other communities.

Travel writers drench their stories in superlatives when describing the Tiwi Islands.

Everything is intensified on the Tiwi Islands, from the rich green of eucalypt and pine thickets carpeting the land to the bolts of fabrics lined up in shades of magenta and lime at the screen-printing studio in Wurrimyanga. Then there is the droplet of orange concentrate that is the sun sinking earthward at day’s end”. Catherine Marshall, “Adrift in Time” The Australian, Travel, 23-24 May 2015, p. 8.



Moored for two nights in the lagoon-like Aspley Strait, dividing Bathurst and Melville Islands (...) on either side of starlit darkness come symphonies of colour, conducted by the sinking or rising sun. At dusk, the fiery orb departs from a lilac sky, throwing up defiant searchlights as the horizon swallows it whole. At dawn, it orchestrates a soft, golden glow that sweeps across the ocean, saturating the entire panorama. (Daniel Scott, A Journey Back in Dreamtime, The Age, Traveller, 04 April 2015, pp. 10-11). <http://saildarwin.com.au/tiwi-islands-grand-final-and-art-sale/>

LOCATION, GEOGRAPHY AND CONTEXT

The Tiwi, 3,000 strong, live on a pair of islands (Bathurst and Melville) 80 kilometres by sea north of Darwin. Population growth is 2.5% per annum.

The islands cover 8,320 square kilometers with natural and plantation forests of eucalypt, paper-bark, pine and acacia, edged by coastal wetlands and pristine beaches along a shoreline stretching 1,016 kms, separated by the narrow Aspley channel. Since 2008, the Tiwi control their water and ocean resources.

There is an abundance of marine life that provides a sustainable and healthy food source as well as supporting fishing tourism. There are some 56 species of birds, 27 species of reptiles and 19 species of mammals. The various forestry, tourism and marine activities employ over 900 people.

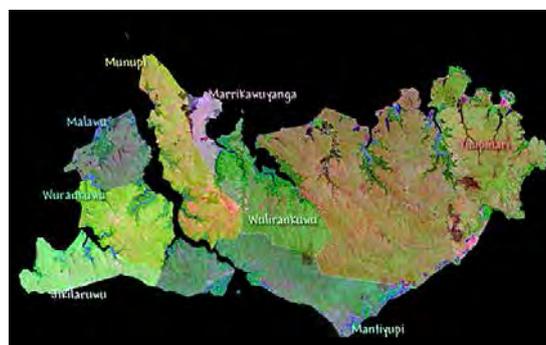
Most of the population lives in Wurrumiyanga (known as Nguuu until 2010) on Bathurst Island, and Pirlangimpi (also known as Garden Point) and Milikapiti (also known as Snake Bay) on Melville Island. There are other smaller settlements, including Wurankuwu (Ranku) Community on western Bathurst Island. There are eight “nations” on Tiwi, based on paternal heritage.



<http://tiwiislands.org.au/Area.html>
Accessed 29 May

The skin group, or “yiminga” of a Tiwi is matrilineal and determines the marriage line. The word “yiminga” means skin-group, totem, life, spirit, breath and pulse. There are four skin groups: “wantarringuwi” (sun), “Miyartiwi” (pandanus), “Marntimapila” (stone), and “Takaringuwi” (mullet) and each has many sub groups.

The skin-group determines whom Tiwi may or may not marry. For example, a person in the Wantarringuwi group can marry someone from the Miyartiwi or Takaringuwi groups, but never someone from the Marntimapila group, or from their own group <http://www.tiwilandcouncil.com/about/area.htm>.



In the 7,000 years the Tiwi have been sole custodians of the islands, there has been limited and spasmodic contact to the south with mainland Indigenous people, and to the north with other islander trading nations.

Other historical encounters include a number of unsuccessful colonisation attempts through outposts such as Fort Dundas set up by the British in 1824, defeated by heat and disease but also Tiwi resistance to uncompromising guests.

The first known historical record of contact between Tiwi and western explorers was with the Dutch under the command of Commander Maarten van Delft who took three ships, the *Nieuw Holland*, the *Waijer*, and the *Vosschenbosch*, into the Shark Bay area of Melville Island and landed on 30 April 1705, naming Cape Van Diemen on the north west point of Bathurst Island on their way home. “New Holland” likewise has many coastal features on almost every edge of the continent bearing the names of Dutch seafaring explorers, cities, noblemen and other descriptors of Dutch life such a ‘groote’ (large), Duyfken (Dove), and Rott (rat). <http://www.slideshare.net/jboyerswitalla/god-gold-glory-the-age-of-exploration>

There were other visits by explorers and navigators in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including by Dutchman Pieter Pieterszoon, Frenchman Nicholas Baudin and Briton Philip Parker King http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiwi_Islands accessed 29 May 2015. See also, <http://www.tiwilandcouncil.com/documents/about/Dutchtiwistory.pdf>.

The Tiwi Islands were not seen of value to exploit for the three “Gs”: Gold, God and Glory – as they were seen from offshore to be wasteland - and thus did not suffer to the same extent the history of frontier battles, dispossession and loss of language compared to most mainland Indigenous Australians. The Tiwi Islands were named an Aboriginal Reserve in 1912 and are now privately owned. The Tiwi value their legal right to grant or refuse permission to people wishing to enter their land and the permit system reflects the ‘permission principle’ of Tiwi culture and assists with land management and Tiwi privacy <http://www.tiwilandcouncil.com/permits/index.htm>.

RELIGION AND SPIRITUAL WORLDS

The Tiwi Creation story recalls how Mudangkala, the old blind woman, arose from the ground carrying three babies in her arms. As she arose in the darkness and crawled across a featureless landscape, seawater followed and filled in the imprints of her body. Pools of watered gathered together and eventually became a channel, as the old woman continued her journey and once again moulded the earth.

Before she left, she covered the islands she had created with plants and filled the seas with living things, ready for her children to live there, for generation after generation.



“Tiwi youths decorated as Emu chicks mimic the fledglings frustrated attempts to fly”, details from Frank Hodgkinson (1987) *Kakadu and the Arnhem Landers*, Sydney: Ure Smith Press, p. 23, p. 25

In 1911 a second Creation story came to the Tiwi Islands when the Catholic church missionary Francis Xavier Gsell arrived in 1911 and established a trusting relationship with many Tiwi people at the Bathurst Island Mission (at Wurrumiyanga, formerly Nguiu, as still named on some maps) and subsequently at St Therese's (a white weather-board colonial structure with hints of Tiwi architecture built in the 1930s). The depth of connection is seen in the example of one Sister retiring in 2015, after living for 62 years on the Islands, asking for a traditional burial on Tiwi.



Wurrumiyanga Catholic church in 2005
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiwi_Islands accessed 29 May 2014



<http://www.tiwicollege.com/culture.php> Accessed 2 May 2015

While the Catholic church has been seen to be dominant in Tiwi life, alongside sporadic periods of evangelical activity by other denominations, Tiwi resilience again triumphed by skillfully adopting and appropriating Christian symbols and song into Tiwi culture, adding beauty and colour in ways that had not yet been found in other mission outposts. As Molly Munkara (Scott, 2015, p.11) explained,

Though we became Christians, we never lost our traditional belief and they sit together just fine.

The place of Christianity in Indigenous communities in Australia has been undertaken as a two-way learning process not only on the Tiwi Islands. At Hermannsburg, south-west of Alice Springs, hymns (as one example) took on a mixture of German and Indigenous elements, creating a unique expression of the Christian message, with the Hermannsburg community taking its music to their namesake in Germany in 2015, before joining other Indigenous Australian church choirs to sing in a number of other international locations and events.

For the Anglican Church, the Diocese of the NT (formed in 1968) recognises the richness and diversity of Indigenous culture, with significant parishes in Arnhem Land, encouraging learning from both cultures. One example is the Literature Foundation that promotes and shares Indigenous traditions, as in the *Bark Art From Western Arnhem Land* published by the church in 2010.

AUSTRALIAN RULES FOOTBALL

Almost a religion itself, and certainly played and followed with religious-like fervour, Australian Rules Football established itself in the Tiwi Islands 75 years ago, having a broad appeal to both Tiwi men and women. AFL originates in part from a game called *marn-grook*, that Tom Wills (a founding father of AFL) played as a child with Indigenous young people around Moyston in Victoria in the 1850s, involving kicking a possum skin around an open space.

It is generally accepted that missionaries John Pye and Andy Howley introduced AFL to the Tiwi Islands in 1941. Like other imports, AFL was also co-opted into the Tiwi way, with an exciting run of play and opportunity to display physical prowess.

Regular games were played on Sunday afternoons and in those days a 50-pound sack of flour was awarded to the winners. From the 1950s the local mission school taught a muscular brand of tuition that promoted the learning of footy skills, and there has been a Tiwi Islands Football League competition since 1969.

The Tiwi Australian Football League has 900 participants out of a community of about 2600, the highest football participation rate in Australia (35%). Many of the male players also play for the St Mary's Football Club in Darwin, which was formed to allow Tiwi soldiers in the 1950s to play in the Northern Territory Football League.



<http://www.australia.com/en/places/nt/tiwi-islands.html> Accessed 25 June 2015

Veteran NT sports broadcaster, Charlie King tells it this way:

It's just gone full on since then. They play high-risk footy. It's attack at all costs. They don't put in a lot of effort in shutting down players and taggers and those sorts of things. They take it from one end of the ground to the other end of the ground without actually handing it over. The skill level is extraordinary. At ground level when the ball hits the ground they just run at it at a great rate of knots. It's footy as it was a long time ago.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-03-15/tiwi-islands-football-grand-final-thousands-flock-to-game/6319366>

Communities feel great pride when players from their local teams are drafted and recruited into Melbourne clubs, now including students from the NT SEDA program. Maurice Rioli and Michael Long are two of the early generation Tiwi players recognised as breaking through race and other background barriers to change things for future Indigenous AFL footballers including South Adelaide 'great' David Kantilla, the first Indigenous player in South Australia to play over 100 games (113) and chosen, in 2005, for the Indigenous Australian Team of the Century.

Brian Clancy, Acting CEO of the Tiwi Land Council, told a newspaper reporter how local leaders encourage senior players to become role models for the communities.

We want those footballers not just to be good footballers but to be good blokes. We want them to have jobs, look after their families - football is the ideal tool, if you use it right.

Clancy went on to explain how the Tiwi Bombers offered the best players a new level to aspire to. The reporter concluded, "The sight of strapping local lads on television, displaying their sporting prowess in front of adoring crowds is one few remote communities can boast," <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/sport/afl/for-tiwis-lifes-goals-come-from-sherrin/story-fnca0u4y-1226303345766> Accessed 25 May 2015.



Tiwi Islands AFL Grand Final, 2015

AFL helps bridge the differences between Western and Tiwi culture by providing a common topic for conversation. On grand final day, the whole community comes together at the main football ground on Bathurst Island. This day is one of the few opportunities for a tourist to visit Tiwi Island without a permit. The Grand Final is held in the middle of March each year, attended by thousands, including art and craft exhibits and sales and broader festival events.

The national TV and radio broadcaster, SBS, ran a story in 2014 about a Tiwi woman in her seventies, bent with age, swathed head to toe in blue, hollering so loud the reporter claimed to temporarily lose hearing in his left ear,

Bring it home, boys, BRRRRRING IT HOOOOOOOME!

Barracking for the Tuyu Buffaloes, her screams were rewarded minutes later when her team won the 2014 Tiwi Grand Final. <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2014/03/16/tiwi-islands-where-afl-way-life>.

AFL is the most visible and accessible example of how, whilst a strong and independent community, Tiwi are deeply connected to national values and interests.



<http://saildarwin.com.au/tiwi-islands-grand-final-and-art-sale/>

Australia-wide, many AFL clubs, like the North Melbourne Kangaroos, take pride in supporting and promoting Indigenous players. More than 20 Indigenous players have taken the field with North Melbourne, including forward Lindsay Thomas and mid-fielder Daniel Wells.

The Kangaroos commission a special Guernsey for each year's Indigenous AFL round, usually held late May to coincide with Reconciliation Week, and these are sell-out items at the games. The 2014 and 2015 designs

were the work of Gurindi artist Sarrita King, a NT resident. AFL is also a key ingredient in reaching out to young men to help reduce depression, domestic violence and suicide, a theme pushed hard at this time each year. See Yarn 3: No Shame In Talking it Out.



In 2010, Tiwi AFL player Malcolm Lynch (North Melbourne, Western Bulldogs and Flying Boomerangs) was the first Indigenous person to step on to Antarctica and displayed the Koori flag with Narelle Long (Indigenous track and field sportswoman).

They travelled to Antarctica as part of the Cool School program, featuring in a documentary about exceptional young people from all around the world who are concerned about the environment and want to make sure that in 2041, Antarctica is still free from mining and other activities that would destroy its wilderness, beauty and natural value <http://www.nitv.org.au/fx-program.cfm?pid=E9FE307C-B20A-C53C-9E1226D058BC8FD0>.

AFL bridges the differences between Western and Tiwi culture by providing a common topic for conversation and an AFL game on and off islands is the most visible example of how, whilst strong and independent, the Tiwi are deeply connected to national values and interests.

Malcolm is a fitting example of the ability of Tiwi people to retain strong culture and links to country, at the same time engaging broadly across Australian society, and globally, taking “the Tiwi way” environmental message, and a Sherrin..... .



Malcolm Lynch and Narelle Long fly the Koori flag in Antarctica: sourced from NITV URL above



Malcolm Lynch, first Indigenous Australian in Antarctica: 2010 <http://www.coolschoolantarctica.com.au/category/malcolm>

Yarn 1

THE TIWI COLLEGE CAP

A few days after visiting Tiwi College I went for an early morning walk along Fannie Bay in Darwin. Approaching the beach, I saw a group of people readying themselves for the day. Seeing me approach, they closed the space between us by turning inwards to each other creating a palpable privacy.

There was a tourist sign nearby, next to the steps to the beach, which I stopped to read – happening to be about the ‘dreaming’ of the creation of the dugong. Whilst I was reading, a woman from the group quietly approached me and asked me for the time. Then she pointed to my head and asked, a little defensively, where I had bought the Tiwi College cap I had on against the heat and glare of the tropical sun.

She was a little surprised and hugely pleased when I told her I'd visited Tiwi College a few days before and was given it as a memento. Immediately she turned and yelled out my answer to the group, to their communal delight. Soon they were telling me some of them work for Tiwi College and asking whether I knew this person or another, whom indeed I had been lucky enough to meet. We talked about how beautiful Tiwi is and she asked if I'd been to the Taracumbie waterfall, which I had, to their delight but also surprise I hadn't swum there.

My interrogator-now-best-friend asked me what the time was again, but my answer didn't seem important to her; it slowly dawning upon me that asking the time was just a polite opening for the real question that she and her friends had wanted to ask once they spied my Tiwi College cap - the artifact that first blocked, then bridged, the personal and physical space between us.

Were these Tiwi people, visiting Darwin for the weekend, checking the propriety of me taking a degree of ownership over a symbol they valued? The Tiwi Islands never suffered invasion like most of the mainland, the islands are private land (where visitors need a permit) and Tiwi people firmly own their destiny through control of land and sea, and the establishment of various natural industries through the Tiwi Islands Lands Council and Tiwi Islands Training and Employment Board.

As a result, Tiwi culture is recognised, with a full measure of admiration, as confident and self-contained. It exhibits strong geographical detachment and interpersonal boundaries that are best crossed by invitation, not presumption. In my brief encounters, the Tiwi people are open and outward looking, having traded with the Makassan for hundreds of years, likewise skillfully adopting and appropriating Christian symbols and song, generous of spirit and good-natured. I hope to go back, soon.



Tiwi College is located at Pickataramoor, once the site of a sawmill but now transformed into a vibrant and well-resourced education and training campus supervised by the Tiwi Education Board which is comprised of traditional landowners and Tiwi representing each community.

The TEB oversees the governance and operations of the College and is responsible for managing the finances of the College and for strategic planning. Whilst adopting a light touch steering of the College, the TEB ratifies any decisions affecting employment of staff. The TEB is supported by a College Advisory Panel including the Chair of the TEB and the Secretary to the TLC and liaises with the principal about whole-of-college operations and implementation of TEB decisions.



<http://www.tiwicollege.com/pickertaramoor.php> Accessed 25 May 2015

VISION AND ETHOS

Between 2007-10 the Tiwi Education Board contracted out the running of the school, but increasingly felt it wasn't going in the direction the Tiwi people were looking for, and thus the Tiwi Education Board needed to take more ownership of the College.

Known through earlier teaching experience on Bathurst Island with some of the Tiwi Education Board members, the current principal (See Yarn 2: The Barefoot principal) was headhunted to pull the school into the shape and purpose that would fulfil the vision that:

With leadership and guidance from Tiwi, our College community uses a holistic approach to develop key knowledge and skills required for vocational choices and happy, healthy and rewarding lives



http://www.tiwicollege.com/vision_mission.php Accessed 25 May 2015

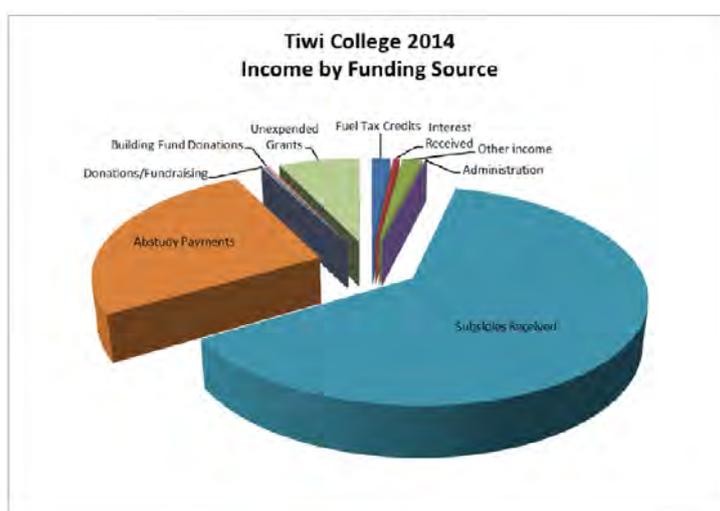
The print, *Terra Aequilibrium* is used as a guide for the culture of Tiwi College. The ochre markings represent Indigenous country, the blue standing for non-Indigenous Islanders. Both come together in the middle along a path used by both cultures moving into the future in the spirit of parity and equality.

The cornerstone of the culture of Tiwi College comprises the values: Trust, Empathy, Mercy and Respect. This guides the Tiwi College approach at all levels. Tiwi and non-Tiwi work with one another, with respect shown to all cultures, to learn from one another to move forward to a future of mutual trust and understanding; one where “both worlds” are recognised and respected.

STRUCTURE AND FUNDING

Tiwi College draws enrolments from three primary schools, as well as its own Primary class. In 2015 there are 70 students, with the school looking to expand to 100 in the next few years. Tiwi College does not charge fees but arranges funding through recurrent funding, “Abstudy” payments, donations / fund-raising, fuel tax credits, building fund and other items such as interest.

Figure 5i: Tiwi College Income by Funding Source, 2014 Annual Report



RESIDENTIAL

Tiwi College is residential from Monday to Friday each school week, with Pickataramoor located in an area away from the main community hubs. From a practical perspective, the family group homes provide a welcoming base to allow Tiwi students to regularly attend the academic program of the school.

The Family Group Home (FGH) set up provides a “family when away from family” and the couples who look after the FGH are the “parents when away from parents”; all part of the “Picka Family”.

Educationally, the family group homes provide a comprehensive program including aspects of Western ways of living, home management and behaving. House-parents have the responsibility to provide a 24-hour calm, structured and friendly environment for the students to live and learn. FGH parents also have responsibility for overseeing a Life-skills Program learning skills such as gardening, sewing, art & craft & setting up sporting competitions.

A basic student schedule, outlining when FGH Parents have Duty of Care is:

- 7:00 Wake up; shower & clothe, make beds, prepare morning tea & lunch
- 8:00 Breakfast
- 8:25 Walk with FGH Parent to school
- 3:15 Meet FGH Parent and walk home
- 3:30 Prepare for afternoon activities
- 4:00 AFL Training or FGH Life-skills training
- 5:30 Supervised free time
- 6:30 Dinner
- 7:15 Homework
- 8:00 Supervised activities
- 9:00 Supper
- 9:30 Bed

Tiwi College has a team of drivers that pick up students on a Monday from their community family home and drop them back on a Friday, which provides Academic staff with individual planning and preparation time for their classes.



Tiwi College Family Group Home
http://www.tiwicollege.com/family_group_homes.php
Accessed 25 May 2015

CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

Tiwi College has single sex classes for cultural reasons, and assisting the creation of a conducive learning environment. The classes are organised around groupings for Primary class, Middle School Girls (11-14/15), Middle School Boys, Senior Women and Senior Young Men.

Each of these classes includes students with differing literacy levels and development / maturity, thus the composition of each class is flexible to ensure the best learning environment possible. The timetable reflects the passion of the Tiwi for AFL Football; each day has four quarters.

The first half of the day is strictly devoted to Literacy and Numeracy with other subject areas taught in the afternoon, especially the more tactile subjects like sport, art, music, dance, horticulture and cooking. "After-school" programs are also regarded as part of schooling and are therefore reported on (see below). Incursions and excursions are staged throughout the year, alongside regular visits by high profile guests invited to share knowledge and experience with students and staff.

Within each class, all teaching is delivered according to the level of the students with the emphasis on a team-based approach to learning. Each literacy and numeracy unit is expected to be pre and post tested and improvements openly explained to students and the wider Tiwi Community via student reports and reporting to Tiwi Education Board members.

The intent of the curriculum developed at Tiwi College is that learning for students should match the students' needs, context, extensive informal knowledge and community aspirations.

The Tiwi College literacy program has a strong foundation in phonics-based learning via Direct Instruction (Primary School only), PM Readers, Honey Ant Readers, a streamed reading program and the use of EAL/D teaching techniques. Reading, writing, speaking, listening and comprehension data are collected to measure student growth and inform teaching needs.

Primary School students follow the Direct Instruction program. Middle School students follow the ACARA curriculum with EAL/D adjustments. Senior School students complete Stage 1 and Stage 2 SACE ESL subjects. Teachers use their knowledge of EAL/D learners to assist students to 'code switch' from Tiwi and/or Aboriginal English in the playground to Standard Australian English in the classroom.

Tiwi College's numeracy program follows the ACARA curriculum continuum, with a strong focus on strengthening core skills through programs such as Quicksmart, Mathletics and daily 'mental maths' programs. Numeracy skills relevant to life and work are given extra focus.

In the Middle School, staff develop ACARA-based units of work for all subjects, with adjustments for the students' learning needs, strengths and interests. A strong emphasis is placed upon preparing students for the content knowledge and learning skills required for the Senior School.

Personalised Learning Plans assist students narrow their focus on career aspirations so Vocational Education and Training, with a strong combination of Work Experience and Structured Workplace Learning, is a major focus of the senior years.



Strength-based Teaching and Learning

The intent of the curriculum developed at Tiwi College is that learning for students should be an authentic experience, matching the students' learning needs, context, extensive informal knowledge and community expectations and aspirations.

Using strength-based strategies, the teacher does not start by determining a fixed, linear progression based on averages, stereotypes and deficit theories, forcing students to fit into generalised curriculum stages and inappropriate remedial processes regardless of what they can or cannot do.

Rather, strength-based teaching and learning identifies then builds on each student's interests, capabilities, lived experiences, expert informal knowledge and intended school outcomes to plan the day they will spend doing practical work in or outside the classroom.

Strength-based curriculum asks questions about each student and is intended to be tactile, relevant, require active involvement, collaboration and flexibility.

Strength-based curriculum asks different questions about each student when programming and designing lesson activities and outcomes measurement. It is designed to be "tactile", relevant, require active involvement, collaboration and flexibility. It assumes a high rate of attendance, at the same time acting as the mechanism for achieving this.

On this basis, Tiwi College has a series of ceremonies celebrating the transition of students through all the different levels of school transition - then into the workplace and/or further study - marking significant rites of passage from primary school up.

Assessment

All units of work at Tiwi College use a combination of standardised tests or pre and post testing in order to obtain objective data regarding levels of improvement. These are collated and records kept by the classroom teacher and the Assistant Principal – Academic Curriculum.

Tiwi College grades are based on Northern Territory Certificate of Education (NTCE) English as a Second Language (ESL) levels. Grades are collated by each classroom teacher and documented in the student files. Literacy and Numeracy results, along with completion of units in VET, are collated by the Principal and reported to the Tiwi Education Board, as part of auditing the Tiwi College Mission Statement.

NAPLAN tests pose a conundrum for Tiwi College in that they have a surface value and help place student outcomes in a national context, yet it is a concern to the school if outsiders attribute too much meaning to NAPLAN results, or take the view that they are an accurate reflection of what the students do and can achieve, when many NAPLAN test questions are seen by students as too hard to understand and having little relevance to their lives.

There might get worse when NAPLAN moves to tailored online testing from 2017, with ACARA itself recognising that well-resourced schools with computers and iPads could have a head start over other schools in the next round of NAPLAN (Bitá, 2015).

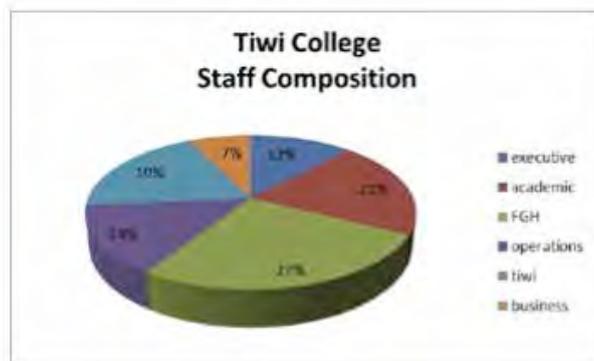
Remote schools, with poor Internet connections, are at serious risk of compounding the tyrannies of distance with out-of-date technology, factors that shape inaccurate and unreliable test scores upon which students and the school will be judged unfairly.

Reporting

Reporting is done each of the four school year terms, with information provided to Tiwi students, families and communities. To ensure clear understanding and communication of results, each student's pre and post testing results in Literacy and Numeracy are placed on a scale from "Pre-School" to "Work Ready", with band levels clearly marked. Students and parents are able to see long-term progression. Other units are reported in a similar style on a 5-point scale.

It is Tiwi College policy to have a day at the end of each term when staff travel to the communities to hand deliver the reports and speak with parents and care givers regarding each of their student's academic results, attitude and behaviour.

Figure 5ii: Tiwi College staff composition, Annual Report 2014.

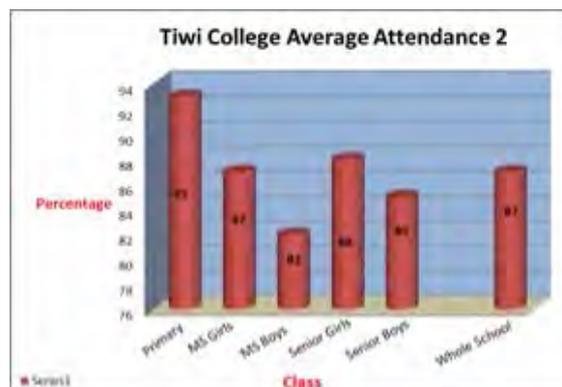


Attendance and Participation

In 2015, Tiwi College has achieved attendance rates whereby it is now consistently above the national target of 80% attendance, also well above the NT average for remote secondary school students. Tiwi College students are 'voting with their feet' by choosing and regularly attending every week.

This is as good an indication as any of a thoughtful, systematic and culturally appropriate classroom management and school values system that has students wanting to be at Tiwi College and building a future for them.

Figure 5iii: Tiwi College average attendance rates by class groupings, Weeks 6-10, Term 2, 2015.



Compare this to the situation as recently as 2011 when, we were told, some students would deliberately "break a window simply to be sent home" to hunt or fish or just muck around. But, this is now a very rare occurrence. Attendance data can also be significantly distorted by cultural factors. For example, there were 42 funerals in one semester in 2014 that required students to be absent from class and away from Pickartaramoor.

These are factors metropolitan schools never encounter and would utterly fail to accommodate as successfully as Tiwi College does. Student retention is also an area where Tiwi College is making sound headway.

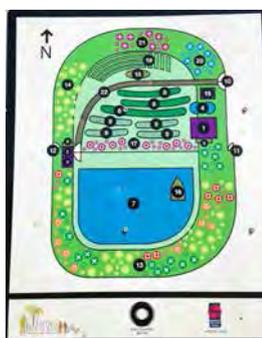
Table 5iv: Tiwi College student retention, Annual Report 2014.

STUDENT RETENTION	
Student retention of those students who were enrolled at Tiwi College and remained until the end of the year is shown as below:	
Primary	76%
Middle School	82%
Senior School	69%
College Average	76%

Even though our attendance rate was 3% lower than that of 2013, our student retention rate was a remarkable 17% higher. We are pleased with this result, displaying student satisfaction with our school. It augurs well for the future.

Extra-curricular

Tiwi College has a number of external groups and philanthropic individuals supporting what they do. One of the most visible is the HaydenWay Garden, a project supported financially and in person by Matthew Hayden and the Macquarie Group Foundation through a \$2,000,000 donation that supports a broad agriculture-based enrichment program using the garden to teach about sustainability, healthy eating, diet, life skills and employment skills.



Tiwi College HaydenWay Garden

In August 2015, the school brought in 100 day-old chicks for the students to nurture as part of their life skills program and to provide a very practical supply of fresh eggs to the family home groups. During the “build up” before the Wet Season, lots of fruit and vegetables come into season including bananas, watermelons, bok choy, pak choy, carrots, coriander, cauliflower, cucumber, chillis, pumpkin and beans, providing Family Groups Homes with fresh produce delivered weekly.

Tiwi College has a number of external groups and philanthropic individuals supporting what they do. One of the most visible is the HaydenWay Garden.

In 2014 the garden became the proud owner of a solar-powered pump, as well as a baby female water buffalo, named “Tuyu” that was left behind by the herd on the sport oval, and “delivered” to the garden by the SEDA Senior Men’s class students.

Table 5v: Tiwi College future planning, Annual Report 2014.

THE FUTURE

We are planning on 2015 to be one of planning for and instigating the preliminary stages of the *growth* of Tiwi College via our building program, whilst sustaining the good culture we have developed over the last few years.

In 2017 we are planning for the school population to increase to 100 students.

Thanks to the help of key partners such as KPMG we now have a clear set of aims and timeframes during this growth phase of the college.

2015 should also be a year when the vision of the *Tiwi Economy* emerges, with the first harvest and export of Tiwi woodchips via the impressive international port facility at Port Melville.

We have very exciting times ahead, where the dreams of many past and present elders are about to be realized. The Tiwi Education Board and our team at Tiwi College look forward to steering our way through any challenges that may emerge along the way, for the benefit of the young Tiwi in our care.

This growth could lead to about 30 senior boys, creating the need to expand into two classes and for a second teacher skilled in the SEDA program, the focus of the next Chapter. The TEB and TC principal intend to hasten slowly with these developments, making sure the changes arising out of this growth will not disrupt the hard-won positive and caring culture so evident in 2015.



Tiwi College new buildings under construction, August 2015

The potency of all these achievements can be found in the \$3 million grant by the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) to assist expansion during 2016-17, recognition from governments and observers that Tiwi College is doing lots of things right. Part of the IAS grant will be used to enrol another 24 students to be housed in two new Family Group Homes, taking total school numbers up to around 100.

Yarn 2

THE BAREFOOT PRINCIPAL

Unlike the propaganda around the dedication and positive health outcomes from the Barefoot Doctors movement in China in the 1970s, most of who were committed people but poorly trained and resourced, the positive vibe about the principal at Tiwi College, who literally goes barefoot at times, is justified.

The principal was headhunted late in 2010 at a time when Tiwi College was going through a bit of a rough patch. The Tiwi Education Board thus came to a decision to be more pro-active in managing the College, not just setting the framework through the vision statement and providing funding etcetera, in order to be sure “the Tiwi way” was being acknowledged and incorporated into the how and why of school operations and objectives.

The principal was known to some of the Tiwi Education Board from his time teaching successfully on Bathurst Island. While he didn't yet have experience as a school principal, the TEB judged that a much lower priority than his known teaching outcomes, effective community relations and reputation for getting things done. The latter had been achieved through empathy with Tiwi culture in tandem with a warm and trusting nature. He also was known for believing in the potential of all students.

One example of the principal adjusting to the Tiwi College context was overcoming his doubts about the effectiveness of a student behaviour management strategy known as “restorative justice”, which does have its critics. However, for Tiwi College, the principal saw how restorative justice strategies that aim to reach a quick and mutually acceptable resolution of all types and levels of conflict was a good fit for the Tiwi way of resolving conflict in and/or between communities.

Under his leadership, discipline became a matter of asking students to walk away, calm down, say sorry, and move on. And it worked. Added to this, is his emphasis on a strong value system for being part of the Picka Family, built on Trust, Respect, Empathy, and Mercy that is summed up in the motto “Peaceful Picka”. This strategy gelled with the work done around “shame” and safe yarning (see next chapter) and reducing discipline problems assisted lifting teacher retention to a very high 93%.

The professional capital required to lead and manage complex, constantly changing, financially fluid and core community organisations like a school is a rare commodity. It is capital built up through a variety of personal investments of time, deep reserves of energy and a sharp eye for what does matter - and what does not - when implementing policy around education and training, youth, health and race / ethnicity.

Good leaders are good listeners, have high expectations of themselves and others, refuse to see students as victims, find the staff to build effective teaching and learning in all classrooms, monitor student and school outcomes and assess outcomes in terms of impact as well as targets, cultivate partnerships in the community, and are compassionate. Above all, they are “hands on” to build credibility and loyalty. They “get amongst it”, barefoot and all, with a deft and dogged determination to make a difference. And they smile lots.



The idea that SEDA should explore running some programs in the Northern Territory was first put to the SEDA Board in 2013. Fortuitously, this occurred at a time SEDA was going national by diversifying locations and the VET qualifications students would gain. The Board had shown itself to be quite flexible and open to ideas by expanding the SEDA concept in a number of directions previously and again showed its dexterity and quick footwork by looking for ways to make it happen in the NT.

SEDA IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Sport organisations across the NT are very active. The dilemma is that their activity drives further demands that are difficult to meet with limited resources, especially bridging education and sport in the way that SEDA does.

Solving one problem nearly always gives rise, sooner or later, to a new problem to be solved. The problem-solution cycle of change and change again has brought many education policies to grief. This cycle shouldn't be avoided but rather managed and exploited as a 'context for action'. This is what SEDA decided to do.

Through discussions with the Northern Territory Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) and other key partners, the decision was made to start a SEDA class as a program within Casuarina Senior College in Darwin as a trial, linking in to the NT DECS focus on keeping Year 9 and Year 10 students attending and participating in school so they would be more likely to go on into Years 11 and 12. If they do, it significantly increases their career options and builds the Northern Territory workforce.



Darwin SEDA Class at Cricket NT Oval, May 2015

If using the hook of sport worked to get young people into classrooms, then the attitude adopted by SEDA and the NT DECS was 'all the better'. The VET qualifications studied could then do their job to engage students and build confidence to lead to school and employment success.

The NT DECS also understood and accommodated the need to be flexible with structures and funding for SEDA to happen in Darwin and at Tiwi College, and those who facilitated this deserve credit.

This was matched by the flexibility of Tiwi College in accommodating the SEDA program within its structures, facilities and community as a concrete expression of the "walk in both worlds" educational philosophy

the College had been pursuing under the guidance of the Tiwi Education Board and Tiwi Land Council. All informants agreed with an observation that:

The key is the curriculum, through applied learning, engaging kids, having a great teacher, experiencing success.

To do this, they needed to change the rules of the education and training game, and change them they did.

SEDA ON THE TIWI ISLANDS

As noted above, the entry of SEDA programs into the Northern Territory began on the basis of what would be the best way, culturally and educationally, to make SEDA work in this context, by garnering information about what works from the experience of multiple key players in Darwin and on the Tiwi Islands.

At Tiwi College this included earlier contacts with AFL NT, Clontarf Football Academy and Essendon AFL Club using sport as a way of doing something about health and other areas of perceived Indigenous disadvantage. While these one-off interventions were successful they were limited encounters that raised questions about capability for follow-up and follow-through to deliver identifiable longer-term benefits.

The objective was to introduce something that the Tiwi Education Board owns and Tiwi College runs within the vision, ethos and structures of the school.

Representatives of the Tiwi Land Council and Tiwi Education Board were keen to see pathways mapped out for taking the young men through into purposeful adulthood and life-long learning. Towards the end of 2013, Tiwi College was ready for a group that would focus as much on developing employment skills in the young men as their sporting skills.

Developing employment skills

The key to SEDA's success is that learning is real and authentic; that is, it has consequences, it is learnt then acted on, often as a public and/or workplace action that empowers each student and lets them feel success, pride and respect.

An example is the Senior Boys SEDA class gaining competencies for a Building and Construction VET certificate through making interchange benches for the sport oval. Other employment options on the Tiwi Islands include forestry, seaport operations, health services, health and fitness, tourism (art and crafts, fishing, ranger) and local government. All of these are potential career options for Tiwi College students.

While this approach shares the goals and strategies of the Clontarf Foundation for engaging Indigenous youth through sport with education and training, the Clontarf program was perceived by the Tiwi Education Board to not quite fit its objectives, partly because Clontarf operates in an extra-curricular context, almost as a separate entity, but particularly because it was unable to find a way to include girls. For Tiwi College, this diverged from the "Picka family" school community model based around residential family home groups and a shared mission.

The Tiwi Education Board and College principal were firm in their belief that SEDA offered a chance for something that might work better, especially a program that included pathways through education and training to employment, which is the premise of all SEDA work. He noted that the College has a commitment to stick by each student until they move on successfully, something SEDA also strives for. A senior Tiwi College representative saw it this way:

We'd already decided we wanted to check this SEDA stuff out as having real potential, but we knew we needed to resource it and we needed to do it properly (...). So then the decision was made that [for 2015] we needed to employ someone [for the Senior Boys' class] who knows all about SEDA, Cert II competencies, and the like.

At the back of people's minds was the question "What next?" after the students leave the SEDA class. The answer was shaped holistically around impacting on the full spectrum of work, life, family and community skills needed to take the Tiwi Islands to the next level of self-determination and self-sufficiency.

The curriculum builds from the SEDA / Cert II in Sports and Recreation which requires students to demonstrate satisfactory competence in 11 Units, supported by literacy and numeracy activities.

A comment offered more than once to the fieldworker was that SEDA students stand out. They "walk tall". For example, they are known to introduce themselves to potential employers, effectively networking and unashamedly ambitious. They show a confidence and understanding of how the world works that, as one participant remarked, puts them 5-10 years ahead of themselves.

Gaining a new cohort of Tiwi Bombers was always understood to be a bonus, not the end game, of having SEDA operate within Tiwi College. Through the high expectations of their teachers, the efficaciousness of their VET studies including work-integrated learning, bolstered by engagement with community, students construct a SEDA "identity capital" (Côté, 2002) that has a value employers and Tiwi elders are more than happy to cash in.

Tiwi College Vision Statement

The vision is to for the Tiwi College to facilitate and actively shape the next generation of community leaders who will have the self-confidence, academic skills and sense of purpose to, for example, negotiate with mining company CEOs, or senior naval personnel, or similar people and organisations seeking to work with, or exploit, the Tiwi Islands' strategic and natural resources.

The concept also entailed the Senior Boys becoming role models for younger Tiwi males, and exemplars of regularly attending and succeeding in school. Making this visible is part of the rationale and observable outcomes of the sport clinics held in community primary schools (see below).

SEDA AND TIWI COLLEGE, 2014/15

While the Darwin SEDA program got underway in 2013, the delay of one year for SEDA at Tiwi College proved to be a better timeframe with a range of new developments bedded down under the leadership of the Principal. Even so, the experience of SEDA in 2014 was not ideal.

Rather than lose heart, the leadership of both organisations reacted proactively, viewing 2014 as "an unfair trial", the class having been run by a teacher without SEDA experience. The decision was made to "do it properly" in 2015 by employing a SEDA teacher, viewed proactively as an investment, not a cost. The outcome, also discussed in the YARN 'Get Amongst It!' at the end of this chapter, was

We've been able to do it properly this year. This is looking really good – we're pumped!

For success, good planning is needed, plus a little luck (getting the right teacher) and, "timing is everything" was a common theme in discussions and yarns:

Whether we or SEDA would have been ready earlier, I just don't know, but it (success) is all about the timing.

The strength of this joint program is that SEDA embraced “Tiwi-isation”, something essential for acceptance not only within the school but also, perhaps more importantly, outside in the communities.



SEDA national and NT staff learning about Taracumbie Waterfall, Melville Island, May 2015

As shown in Chapter 3, The Tiwi Islands have a sustained and thriving culture, and sense of self that has overcome attempts at physical and spiritual domination over the last 100 years. SEDA also brought into the Tiwi College TERM ethos (Trust, Empathy, Respect, Mercy; see below), itself a school strategy deeply respectful of, and drawing on, Tiwi culture and dispositions, as well as Western social mores, to empower the students to ‘walk in two worlds’.

For this to happen in practice, it also meant the SEDA teacher needed to have the right personality, social skills and cultural sensitivity and apply these in the unique Tiwi College context, without any ‘how to’ guide to fall back on. Perhaps this is where ‘luck’ comes in, with senior staff from both organisations telling the authors they “felt like we won Tatts Lotto” with the successful applicant.



<http://www.bonzie.com/c/a?a=pic&fn=iet576os&s=3>
Accessed 23 May 2015

The Tiwi College (SEDA) Senior Men's Class, 2015

In 2015 the SEDA Program class at Tiwi College had up to 19 students during both fieldwork visits (May and August) which was a big jump on average 2014 enrolments for this class. One student had moved up through the school in this group for three years and is in line to qualify for his Year 12 certificate this year. At the other extreme, a student had joined only in the week prior to the May fieldwork visit.

The Senior Men's Class teacher, also known as the SEDA Program Facilitator, takes the class for their whole program, except for the Building and Construction VET Certificate, for which a TAFE teacher comes over from Darwin. There is no typical week for the SEDA class, though morning theoretical work followed by afternoon practical work is the general pattern, interspersed with outdoor and off-campus work.

There is a strong Indigenous focus in the class activities, linked to other familiar community contexts, and a strategically powerful link between student and skill development and Tiwi Island communities, best illustrated by the sports clinics the Senior Men's class runs (very successfully) for primary school students.

Milikapiti Community has a population of 450. The school has an enrolment of nearly 80 students from Pre School to Middle Years. There are six teachers and a number of teaching assistants. The school is well resourced and classrooms are bright and inviting learning and teaching environments. In this photo, the oval is clearly seen, a proud centerpiece of the local community, attached to the school and other core facilities.

The curriculum is centred around the SEDA / Cert II in Sports and Recreation [SIS20312], which requires students to demonstrate satisfactory competence in 11 Units, supported by literacy and numeracy activities, remedial for some of the class, assisted by NTOEC.

The community Primary school sports clinics are usually run on a Thursday in two different primary schools (Milikapiti and Pirlangimpi), starting with fresh cut fruit and water prepared and provided by the Senior Boys before starting the coaching session. This is a service not only to primary students but also the broader community, with relatives present.

As one of the SEDA students told the authors in the yarning session,

I like, pretty much, (how) the seniors go out and do it yourself, and be in charge, not being told what to do, you just know things. We pretty much do it in class before heading out, so we know what do to and I like that. So, when you get there you're not mucking around, you get straight into it, know what to set up and everything. (...) I like to teach the kids so they can learn skills for the future.

The active level of involvement of the SEDA class with the younger children is very evident in this photo, where the SEDA students are guiding and training primary students to better their skills, even though in many cases – for this observer – they were at a high standard already for this age group; with one young girl hitting in turn each stump of the cricket wicket with just three throws.

It should come as no surprise then that the first thing that happens when arriving at a SEDA sports clinic is to hear the sound of happy, young, enthusiastic and active voices.



Milikapiti Primary School Sports Clinic, May 2015.

As these clinics are often attended and observed by many community members - adults, relatives and parents of the Primary school children as well as the primary students themselves - the Senior Men in the SEDA program become the catalyst for encouraging adults to persuade younger students to make the most of school – topping up the inspiration and enthusiasm the younger students feel themselves by seeing the Tiwi College Senior Men in a new light.

On the day of the fieldwork, when the clinic was finished, the SEDA class was ‘rewarded’ with a visit to the community shop, which was highly prized as they live in an isolated residential environment at Tiwi College. They then went for a swim, also highly prized given the heat, and a bonding activity within their group as well as between the group and the SEDA Program Facilitator.

The outcomes of the sports clinic include much more than passing a VET competency, though this is important. First and foremost, the experience of running the clinics increases confidence levels of the students in the SEDA class, starting with the self-assurance to talk with and instruct the primary school students, in front of the crowd on the oval including teachers and community members.

This outcome cannot be overstated. Traditionally, it is not the place of men at this age and in school to speak as an expert and thus lead to “shame” and withdrawal from the task. Yet, through the SEDA program, closely aligned with Tiwi College goals and Tiwi community aspirations, the SEDA students are starting to feel happy about going to the communities and teaching their relatives and friends, in front of parents and elders.

Learning By Doing – “Hands On”

The focus for teaching and learning for the SEDA Program at Tiwi College is clearly on what students are achieving, and on extending those achievements through ‘hands on’ activities inside and outside the classroom.

The Senior Men’s Class has a premium space in the top floor of the main building, with large floor space, high ceilings, lots of light from big windows that look across to the HaydenWay Garden, and down to the oval and basketball court. It is a valued space, where the SEDA students can be themselves and create an environment around them reflecting their work and productiveness, as shown in the digital images in this chapter.



Repeated comments made during the fieldwork were how lessons are ‘hands on’ in the classroom, then put into practice through ‘hands on’ activities in a real context. And it needs to be understood in this context that English is the language of instruction, but not the students’ first language, or even second. It also needs to be understood as a context where a student’s age does not necessarily equal their academic level, curriculum stage, or years of education. The SEDA Program Facilitator talked about how,

It’s definitely working out what the students need before they leave, and that’s why SEDA is really good (for them); it’s ‘hands on’ and lots and lots of these guys want to get into ‘hands on’ work after they leave. (lesson planning) is not X+Y+Z, it’s what’s best for the senior men, deciding what you can do to give them the best between now and departure.

Often, especially with literacy and numeracy, the ‘what you can give them’ is done by “stealth”. For Literacy, an “oral speech” task might be re-constructed as a task involving “giving instructions as a coach”. This task then triggers vocabulary and spelling, as the students need to learn words they do not, but need to, know to pass the SEDA Sports and Recreation Cert II competencies.

Another example is how the SEDA class might start the week watching the last ten minutes of an AFL game from the weekend, which draws them back in to the school context and acts as the basis for a piece of written work, such as writing a review of the game, in a way that is meaningful and relevant. This is purposeful learning.

In yarning with the Tiwi College Principal, he disclosed how one day doing the rounds of the school thought the SEDA students were just mucking around on the basketball court and disengaged and needed ‘speaking to’. But when he went up to the SEDA students intending to send them back to class, he discovered they were recording data as statistics on the number of goals scored, passes made, doing counting, tables, graphs in a way that was meaningful and relevant, and healthy and fun; this is what SEDA staff call “tactile” learning.



Tiwi College Senior Men sports clinic

In addition, literacy and numeracy is woven into the SEDA curriculum linked to skills needed for future work, skills that have been drawn up in consultation with local employers. By the end of Term 1 2015, the SEDA students had completed:

- CERT II Sport and Recreation SEDA competencies
- SISXMRT201A: Respond to an Emergency, and
- SISXCAI1014: Provide equipment for activities, through the sports clinics.

VET

The SEDA program began in 2014. This delivered Certificate 2 in Sport and Recreation. It began late and thus formal delivery was difficult and no certificates of attainment were awarded in 2014. We are expecting this to improve markedly in 2015, now that course delivery and the partnership is well understood.

The traineeship system worked well and the sports clinics taken by this group in the communities of Milikapiti and Pirlangimpi worked very well and augurs well for the future.

Our relatively small class of senior boys completed at total of 25 units of competency towards their Certificate 2 Construction Pathways certificate. We are very confident that a cohort from this class will complete the full certificate by 2015, should they remain at school.

This will be a very powerful addition to the students' CV when looking for employment on the islands as there are several opportunities arising in this field from 2015 onwards.

It was very pleasing to note that a *Working Safely at Heights* unit was completed, which "value added" to the skills set of the class in 2014.

TIWI College Annual Report 2014

Excursions / Exchanges / Guests

The Tiwi College SEDA Program offers many opportunities for students to engage with the Darwin SEDA group, other schools (such as Xavier College on Bathurst Island), communities, work organisations, and employers, on and off the Tiwi Islands. The aim is for the students to "get the bigger picture" and some "mainland experience" through activities and excursions that feed into shaping and expanding SEDA outcomes and student career and life options.

In addition, sport and other content experts, role models, cultural guests, guest teachers, high profile coaches, government officials, philanthropists and the odd celebrity come to Tiwi College to spend time with the students and learn from them as well. The Darwin 2014 'excursion' was reportedly highly successful, with the timing and planning for 2015 underway.

Attendance and Participation

National and local policy has increasingly focussed on improving Indigenous education and training by improving attendance rates. As argued in Chapter 7, attendance is not a synonym for participation, but a very active attendance strategy based on targets and reporting now operates that has improved the number of Indigenous students attending school and with improved regularity.

However, chasing attendance needs to be bolstered by other strategies to improve participation in the classroom, otherwise the old “sit-down money” (paid to attend a class to get a qualification the students know will not be of much use) scenario simply moves from adult education into secondary and even primary, as noted in the NT Wilson Report (2013) *A Share In The Future: Review of Indigenous Education in the Northern Territory*.

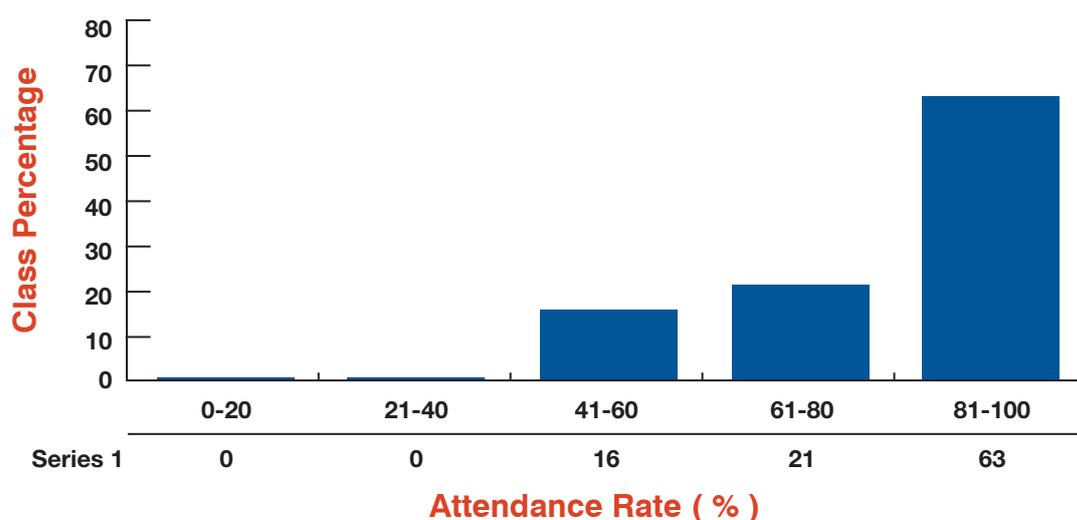
The Remote Schools Attendance Strategy has been important for Tiwi College. But the real strength of the Tiwi College model is that, in a residential setting, students get additional help with academic, personal and life skills as part of being in a Family Group Home. This is celebrated over a school community dinner on Thursdays (with every one on the basketball court), when every home group prepares food and one family group serves; followed by a social FGH Vs staff basketball competition.

Tiwi College has made very significant progress improving attendance over the last five years. The SEDA class attendance rates are likewise impressive, and have the potential to be even higher, with ten students attending more than 70% in the second half of Term 2, 2015, compared to only seven in 2014.

In 2015, five of those ten students attended for more than 90%, with two students over 95%, one of those at 100%. These senior male student attendance rates are almost unheard of not only in similar contexts but also in many other senior secondary schools across Australia.

Table 6i: Tiwi College SEDA class attendance, Weeks 6-10, Term 2, 2015

Achieving further improvement to attendance rates at Tiwi College is not problem-free. In the Dry season it can be very windy, which prevents the punt (1 car at a time) crossing the Aspley Strait to (and from) Bathurst Island to pick up students. In the Wet season, the dirt roads to and from the school can turn into creeks, making driving hazardous, sometimes, impossible; both on Tiwi and across the Top End.



Cultural obligations also impact on the number of school days attended. This can drive down attendance rates, and appear to outsiders to weaken the College’s performance. But these are core cultural commitments that the school works hard to accommodate in a way that maintains continuity of learning as far as possible.

From a purely empirical perspective, the participation rates for Tiwi College should appear as an exemplar to funding and umbrella organisations, sitting well above national averages for rural and remote locations. When one makes allowance for the mostly unique and contextualised factors impinging on what the school actively undertakes and achieves, the raw numbers look even more impressive.

Far less often than in the past, but occasionally, the school feels it has run out of options to avoid suspending a student where the behaviour is dangerous on a regular basis and the student has been unable to work through the 'restorative justice' process ("What happened? Who has been affected? How can you make it "right"?). Thus, with small classes, the school's own actions can reduce the attendance rate, but for very good reasons.

The above factors also mean that improvements will never follow a linear path and targets based on regular upward improvements need to be ameliorated by the realities of the workplace and lived experiences of the participants.

One other issue faced squarely and openly by Tiwi College, in order to build on having the students in school for the week, is changing participation from passive to active. Elements of passive participation are related to Tiwi culture, associated with 'shame' as discussed elsewhere in this chapter, which is quite a different matter to boredom, disinterest or not seeing the relevance of school.

Whilst active participation, not just turning up, is a factor to be included if one is to get an holistic view of the Tiwi College students and schools' achievements, class size is another variable that, for 2015, shows Tiwi College is doing something right.

The growth of the Senior Men's class in 2015 has been achieved, we were told, through the very positive 'word of mouth' of the students themselves and their family members. Word has spread around the Islands' communities about the engaging, hands on, interest-based day each student has at Tiwi College.

Tiwi families value a school day that is being done 'the Tiwi way' and gelling with the Trust / Empathy / Mercy / Respect values of the school and staff. This is the key ingredient to improving attendance and growing the number of young people attending Tiwi College.

Classroom Management

There are classroom management issues at Tiwi College, usually arising from a perceived conflict over a cultural obligation, or a student stressing out from nicotine deprivation or, more seriously, self-affixiating. Spending five school days out of every week during school term without smoking causes real physical pain to some students and Tiwi College exercises a duty of care, at the same time maintaining a strict no smoking policy.

For Tiwi College SEDA students, everything that happens to them is wrapped around their consciousness of becoming men, and they expect to be treated like an adult. Their teacher explained:

If they make the wrong choice, then that's their choice – but coming down on them before they've made the decision definitely doesn't work for the senior men. It's very important to give them the power to make their choice and not tell them what to do.

Classroom management has to accommodate this and, as it should in any context, not exercise discipline through unreasonable control and authoritarian directions. This did not work in London either:

One thing I learnt in London, and I learnt pretty early on, is they're not "bad" kids; and as soon as you make

an effort to build a relationship they're going to see that, if you show you care, they're going to see that, so anything they say in the heat of the moment they probably don't mean. Nothing should be taken personally and you should be positive about moving them in the right direction. You see these same students in the Family Group Homes where they're looking after young children etcetera and they're certainly capable of great things.

The other strategy is to share stories about what happened on the weekend. The SEDA Program Facilitator in 2015 participated in the capture of a small buffalo on a weekend in early June, bonding with his students through a shared experience.

I would never have dreamt about doing something like that. It was culturally significant for them and something they could share with me, teach me – they get a lot out of that. They're the teachers then, and I'm learning from them, they've got so much knowledge themselves, we're both learning.

And, this experience became the starting point for the following week's work.

Teaching SEDA at Tiwi College

The students in the SEDA class are known to enjoy telling new people about what they hunt and eat around Tiwi, favourite local foods and methods for cooking them, anything to do with AFL starting with favourite team and player and are mostly happy to share where their country is, and talk about their families. As the SEDA Program facilitator quickly understood, this is the secret to successful teaching at Tiwi College (see Yarn "Get Amongst It", at the end of this chapter).



The Tiwi College Handbook for staff (p.32) states new staff should strive to develop relationships and ensure they take the time to let Tiwi students and staff get to know them by sharing knowledge about country, dreaming, community, skin group, blood family members, extended family, classmates & other people of interest in the school, and outside or "off island".

The Program Facilitator in 2015 had never experienced teaching in a remote or isolated region, nor predominantly with Indigenous students. However, he did have experience of working with disadvantaged students in London and hoped he could build similar positive relationships at Tiwi College. He, and his partner, took up the Tiwi College SEDA job unsure what it would be like but were determined to accept everything that came their way.

I think back then (late 2014) I was unsure what it would be like, but (partner's name) and I have accepted everything that's come our way and we're really lucky with the support here, whether from SEDA in Darwin or Tiwi colleagues. I was quite sure that if I went with it, something positive would

come, definitely for me, and the plan was I suppose for the students as well, and it seems to be headed that way.

Teaching at Tiwi College means making appropriate and approved modifications to the SEDA VET curriculum to make it work for the Tiwi College students.

The starting point for adjusting the curriculum is the skills the Senior Men have, then exploring what they need to get to get them where they want to go.

At the end of each Term, students are assisted to look back over the last few weeks and identify what they can now do, as a way of demonstrating they have learnt new things and are on their way to getting qualifications they can use.

TRUST, RESPECT, EMPATHY AND MERCY

Tiwi College works on the basis of establishing and exercising Trust, Empathy, Respect and Mercy across the staff and student, family groups, guests and visitors.

Trust

We will learn to trust one another. We will listen to and trust people who are helping us learn. We will help staff to trust us by our actions.

Trust is admirably illustrated in a number of ways in the sports clinic program the SEDA students run for primary schools in their communities. This chapter has noted already the way the SEDA students learn to trust themselves as ‘experts’ when running the sports clinics, and earning the trust of the younger students and of their relatives and other adults.

The SEDA teacher provided another example. When the Senior Men arrive to do a primary school sports clinic in a community, when it’s their own community, a number of boys usually ask permission to go and see a family member about something, given this is hard to do when in a residential school a long way away, with no mobile phone coverage, transport or the like.



The teacher remarked how in a “normal” situation a teacher would most likely say “No, I can’t let you leave and not be here with our class” but he recognised that he would then have a number of boys standing around doing nothing for a while and getting frustrated and possibly antagonistic to participating in leading a part of the clinic as they need to do to earn the Cert II competency. So, he let them go, initially not without some trepidation. His trust paid off, with all the boys ‘present and accounted for’ when the clinic started.

Empathy

We will care for one another. We will help others in need. We will try to understand the point of view of other people.

Forgiveness is a large part of the school culture and Tiwi way. After an issue, perhaps a fight, a restorative practice session is held when the students are calm and ready. Calming down can take some time as when Tiwi are angry they show it with their whole body. Once calm, the students are brought to a mutual space and whoever is mediating usually recounts what both parties have expressed happened and the reasons why.

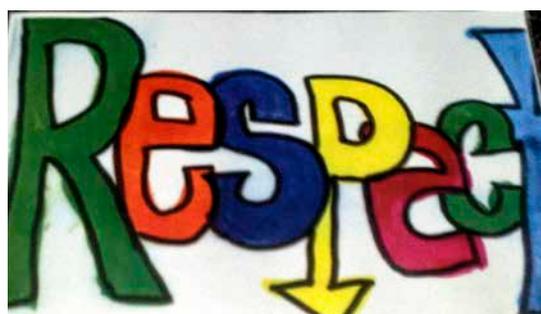


Then the students are given a chance to speak and are then asked if they are ready to forgive. Again this can take time but when the students say “Sorry”, they mean it. The meeting finishes with the word *Mana* (a word used to finish a ceremony) that suggests all is good and well.

Respect

We will love ourselves. We will respect one another. We will respect the Tiwi College family.

Mutual respect was evident during the fieldwork through the verbal and interpersonal spirit displayed playing “Hit the Board”, which is an AFL version of basketball. In this end-of-the-day game, the SEDA students were energetic, competitive and highly skilled, but never pushing things so far that they threatened physical harm or unfair behaviour. Observation suggested that, at least between them, poor sportsmanship just is not tolerated.



“Play the game, not the player” seems to be the unspoken motto of both the classroom yarning and AFL basketball, with those who watched impressed by the maturity, enthusiasm, and good nature of the SEDA students.

Respect and courtesy are embedded in the Tiwi Culture. Part of the College’s role is to help students understand this concept and apply it in a western context. Many taken-for-granted Western courtesies are not part of the traditional Tiwi Culture, for example the use of “please” and “thank you”. College staff strive to act as role models and display behaviours for students to copy.

There are times, we were told, when one of the boys will ‘lose it’, feel shame, or seek some kind of ‘pay back’

that threatens to, or actually does, lead to verbal and/or physical assault. But, in most cases the boys apply “Trust, Empathy, Respect, Mercy” and the situation is diffused, and forgotten.

Mercy

We will apologise when we do the wrong thing. We will show mercy and understanding to those who have hurt us. We will forgive.

The SEDA Program Facilitator provided this example:

“When we discussed the school values as a class I told them Mercy was about kindness and forgiveness. They struggled to give examples and always find this the toughest one to understand. But I see kindness in them all the time. Culturally sharing and caring for family and skin groups is an essential part of life.”

“They share everything with these important people. They have been very protective of me and my partner looking after our safety in and around buffalo and creeks where crocodiles are found.”



“I regularly see them splitting their only sandwich without hesitation that would leave them feeling hungry. I think this says so much. This means they are not shy to ask and I have lost track of the number of times I’ve had one bite of my apple or muesli bar before a student asks the statement/question “I’ll have that?” I have become accustomed to it now and usually just ask them to let me have another bite first!”

YARNING

The fieldwork yarning was very successful, with the positive, interested and fun spirit with which the SEDA students entered into it as important as what they said. They were confident, displayed good humour, could gently tease and laugh at each other, could be serious, own and share knowledge, accept difference, manage their own behaviour, all the time acknowledging the teacher’s status and instantly respectful when the Principal arrived to talk with them. In other words, the SEDA students were able to ‘yarn safe’ at least during the time they had us as visitors in the classroom – our guess is they are well on the way to ‘talking it out’ on a regular basis, feeling safe as part of the Picka family.



There's no doubt that the young people like the SEDA Senior Men have “got a lot going on” in their lives. In a report being drawn up for the national government, preliminary research indicates that youth suicide is now overtaking death from car crashes, with the latest statistics suggesting 1 out of every 20 Indigenous young people will die from suicide.

The advertisements from Headspace, run during Reconciliation Week in May 2015, and linked to the AFL Indigenous Round, drew on the power of Tiwi legendary player Cyril Rioli to get the message across: “No Shame In Talking It Out” www.yarnsafe.org.au.

The SEDA students would take notice of this, but also need the hope and purpose the Tiwi College SEDA program gives them for leading a productive, comfortable and enjoyable adult life.

SUMMARY

The evaluation of the SEDA Tiwi College program was asked to determine how the program was progressing and, if progressing well, outline what it is that works for these students and whether what works for Tiwi College could be applied to new locations with predominant Indigenous student cohorts.

This chapter and the next (“Where Education Matters”) provide clear evidence that whatever the explanation is, things are working well for the Tiwi SEDA program, with significant improvements in class numbers, attendance rates and, as the next chapter shows, strong evidence for high levels of inclusion, skilling and student achievement.



Tiwi College SEDA Senior Men's class, August 2015

The results presented in this Chapter can be summarised around a range of factors about what is working well based on the behaviours, decisions, dispositions and outcomes the students are displaying on an everyday basis.

Some of the discussion in this chapter has hinted at how the students are not doing this in isolation, but largely in response to broad school strategies around a positive, and Tiwi-ised, College ethos.

They are also doing it through the successful efforts made by the SEDA Program Facilitator to build relationships and to adjust the curriculum to draw on student strengths to drive practical outcomes for each and every one of them. As Salt (2015, p.16) writes, this combination of caring adult and professional judgement,

(...) is the value of good teaching and good teachers. It's not just the technical skills that teachers teach, it's the scale and breadth of the thinking that they are able to impart. It's also the role model that teachers, perhaps unwittingly, serve as for students at an impressionable time in their lives.

This finding is celebrated in the Yarn, "Getting Amongst It!" at the end of the next Chapter.

Yarn 3

“No Shame In Talking It Out”

‘Shame’ is a key element of Tiwi social relations and tradition. The Tiwi College Staff Manual (p.12) states: “Direct questioning and/or requests may cause shame or embarrassment by drawing public attention to the student. Take care whenever singling out individual students, particularly older initiated male students”. On p. 31, the Manual asks teachers to praise individuals discretely – at times (not always) there is still shame associated with excelling. ‘Shame’ can occur before an activity, action, event, as well as during and after.

For SEDA students, to put aside this aspect of their culture to meet conflicting cultural and educational practices and outcomes is quite a challenge but, as noted in multiple examples earlier in this chapter, SEDA students exhibit trust with their SEDA teacher, through leading sport activities, being ‘assertive’ by speaking when not appropriate in cultural contexts, and with visitors flying in for the day.

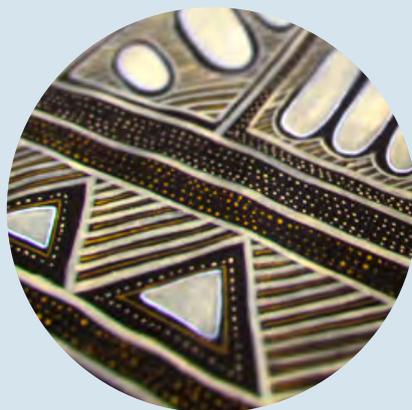
The SEDA students articulated this conundrum in the yarning we shared, frankly explaining an issue that generates a clash of cultures for them. Their position was that “shame” is an issue but that they were dealing with it. In 2015, the SEDA teacher is very sensitive to this issue.

The students mentioned it a number of times during the day in a way that expressed their acknowledgement that they were conflicted, but also expressing a quiet pride that nearly all of them managed to sublimate any ‘shame’ in order to, for example, speak in front of their peers, and to run the primary school sport clinic in communities in the presence not only of the primary schools students, but also teachers, elders, relatives and, during our visit, officials from Canberra, Darwin and Melbourne.

The significance of this aspect of the SEDA class cannot be underestimated, and the significance of accommodating and ‘contextualising’ such a core Tiwi social behaviour in order to get the students through the credential / qualification process is a high order achievement above and beyond where many other SEDA and non-SEDA groups start.

For the SEDA class, sublimating ‘shame’ has to be internalised and accommodated in a new and largely contradictory expression of their self, creating new “identity capital”.

The SEDA students have proven to have these qualities and the 2015 teacher has proven the same qualities through creating as safe space for this to happen.



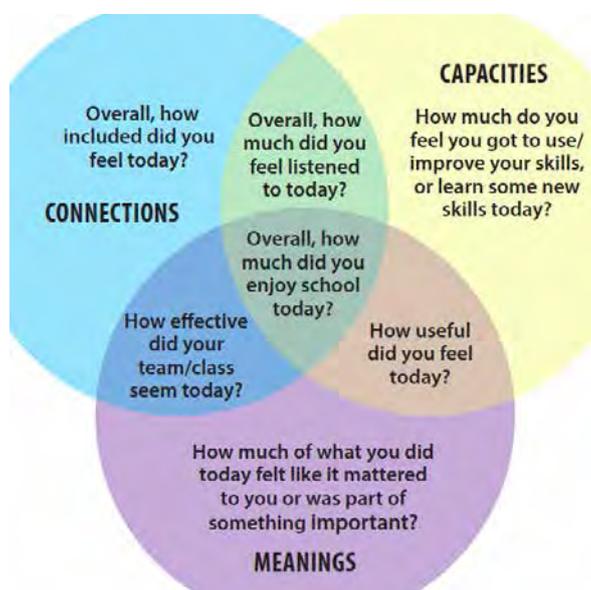
WHERE EDUCATION MATTERS 7

In order to gather quantitative data based on a small cohort (N=18) as for the Senior Men’s class at Tiwi College, it was decided to ask them to complete a contextualised version of the “Hands On Learning” [HOL] survey that has been used for similar flexible learning settings and already completed by more than 3,500 students in Victoria.

As it was impossible to pilot a new survey instrument with a small and unique cohort, the HOL survey offered both the ability to gather data via an instrument that had already been verified. Using the HOL instrument also allowed the research team to make some helicopter view comparisons between Tiwi College student outcomes (as measured by this survey) and those from Victorian HOL students to gain a perspective on comparable outcomes, but not record the latter as data in this report.

“HANDS ON LEARNING” SURVEY

The Hands On Learning survey given to the Seniors Men’s class was designed by Richard O’Donovan (2014) around three conceptual areas of student experiences: Connections, Capacities, and Meanings. The CCM Framework helps measure ‘what works’ with vulnerable young people and to assist schools measure their work, pool data and assess impact.



The CCM framework was developed out of the Enabling Spaces for Learning project, to assist the Building Futures for Young Australians project funded by the Australian Research Council. This project hypothesised that though important information, attendance and retention data tell us very little about the quality of the student experience, how engaged they are, whether they are not just there (in class), but participating, whether they feel valued and included, and whether they feel the teacher and school is providing an enabling space for their learning and achievement of career and life goals.

As Johanna Wyn (2014) Director of the University of Melbourne Youth Research Centre argues,

We need to know about more than school attendance and academic grades if we are to meet young people’s needs.

The HOL survey presented to the Tiwi College Senior Men's class had exactly the same number of questions, and identical items for each question in the HOL instrument, was similarly completed every day across one full week, and conducted in the middle of Term 2 (early June 2015).

Contextualised adaptations were to:

- Delete 'background' items related to gender and other non-applicable items (years in HOL, subject choices, and class/age level)
- Replace the response request from "colour in the dot" to "tick the image" (sad <> happy face emoticon) to accommodate lower literacy levels, and
- Collect data on paper in class rather than online.

Whilst using the CCM Framework to survey the Senior Men's class enhances the breadth and depth of empirical data collected by this Project, quantitative data explains very little unless contextualised and placed into a narrative.

Thus the intent for this Project was that the survey findings and other empirical data (school attendance) was useful evidence but needed to be triangulated with other evidence sources such as documentation, interview / yarning, and fieldwork / observation to gain an holistic perspective and complete picture of what was happening with the SEDA class at Tiwi College in 2015.

In filling out the survey, students were told the survey was anonymous, asked not to write their name, and told "We just want your honest feedback (...) There are no trick questions (just) tick the images (5 stage sad <> face happy emoticons) that best describes your experience of school today".

To ensure consistency, as well as to allow for variations in experiences (peaks and troughs from day to day), the survey was completed each day over five consecutive days, midway through Term 2 (early June) 2015. Each student handed the completed survey to the Assistant Teacher to help improve anonymity and trust.

Hands On Learning Survey (Tiwi College)

The Tiwi College HOL survey data indicates strong positive scores across all eight items.

Over the five days, 61 complete single sheet responses were able to be tallied from 11-15 students each day, the numbers varying due to competing school commitments, the survey was undertaken on a volunteer basis, some students decided not to complete, or only partially complete the survey, and cultural events arising, for example, from the need for some students to return to community for a funeral on the last day of the data collection week.

Asking students to complete the survey on paper rather than online - where individual responses are less readily accessed - allowed a quick visual scan of each of the 61 surveys to ascertain whether students had just gone through the motions and ticked, for example, every second item for every question, or whether they had completed the survey thoughtfully, considering each question and varying their responses accordingly.

The spread and variation in responses on nearly every single survey sheet clearly suggests that the Tiwi college Senior Men's class undertook this task seriously and meaningfully. *This alone is a measure of the maturity and positive outcomes of the class this year*, the individual and group respect for their teacher, the value they place on being at Tiwi College and their willingness to contribute to this evaluation of the SEDA program in order to assist planning for the future.

In that context, the results embody a high degree of credibility that needs to be acknowledged in the data analysis and included in decision making about future options for Tiwi College and SEDA.

The survey data that follows confirms how Tiwi College SEDA students are developing skills, finding meaning in class by being involved in real tasks that are valued by themselves, their school and communities, and are feeling better connected to lifelong education and training.

SURVEY RESPONSES BY QUESTION

The raw number of responses for each question are slightly inconsistent, falling within an acceptable “error” margin: Question 4 = 61 responses; Questions 1 & 3 = 60 responses; Question 2 = 59 responses; Question 7 and 8 = 58 responses; Question 6 = 57 responses; and Questions 5 = 42 responses. Questions 5 asked, “Overall, how useful did you feel today” and perhaps what was meant by “useful” needed better explanation in the items underneath.

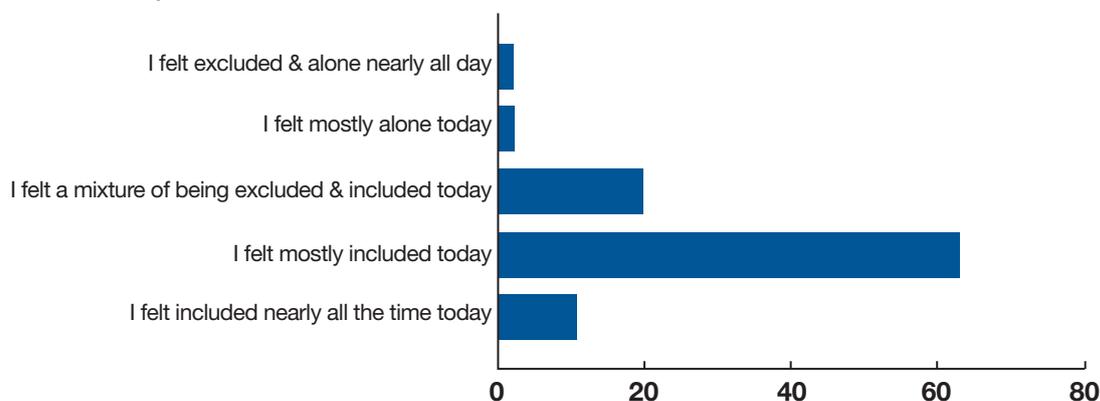
Included

Question 1 asked SEDA Tiwi College students “how included” they felt that day, for five consecutive days, using a scale 1<>5, with “5” the most positive response. Out of 60 responses, 46 [77%] felt included ‘mostly’ and ‘nearly’ all the time (items 4 and 5), with 12 responses [20%] feeling a mixture of included and excluded, 1 response [1.5%] feeling “mostly alone” and 1 response [1.5%] feeling “excluded and alone nearly all day”, both for only one of the five days. The results are shown in Figure 7i.

Question 1

Figure 7i: SEDA Tiwi College - How included did you feel today?

The SEDA class at Tiwi College creates a strong sense of belonging. While two students felt a bit left out on one of the days the week of the data collection, lessons are planned to help all students engage more deeply with their school day.

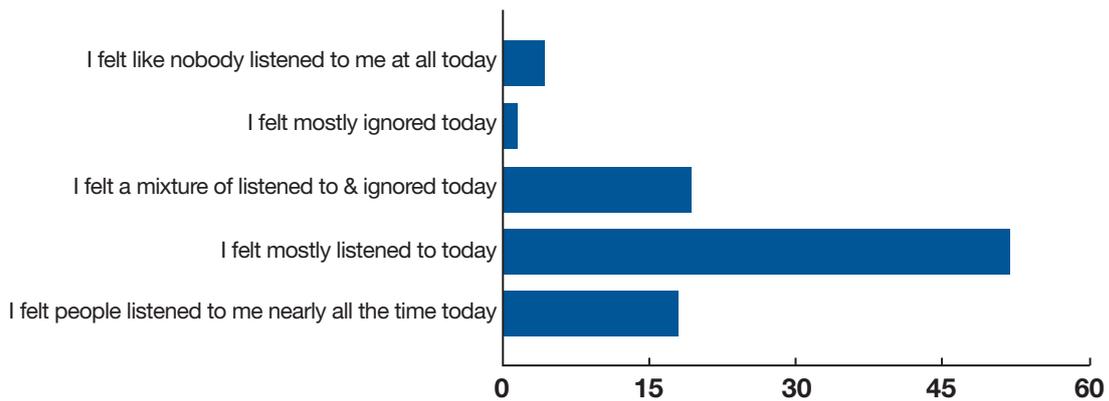


Listened to

Question 2 asked students how much they felt “listened to or ignored today”, each of five consecutive days. Out of 59 responses across the five days the survey was filled in, 44 [75%] felt listened to “all” or “most” of the time, 11 responses [19%] felt a “mixture”, one response on one day [1.5%] felt “mostly ignored” and three responses over the week, one day each, [4.5%] felt “nobody listened to me at all today”.

Question 2

Figure 7ii: SEDA Tiwi College - How much did you feel listened to today?

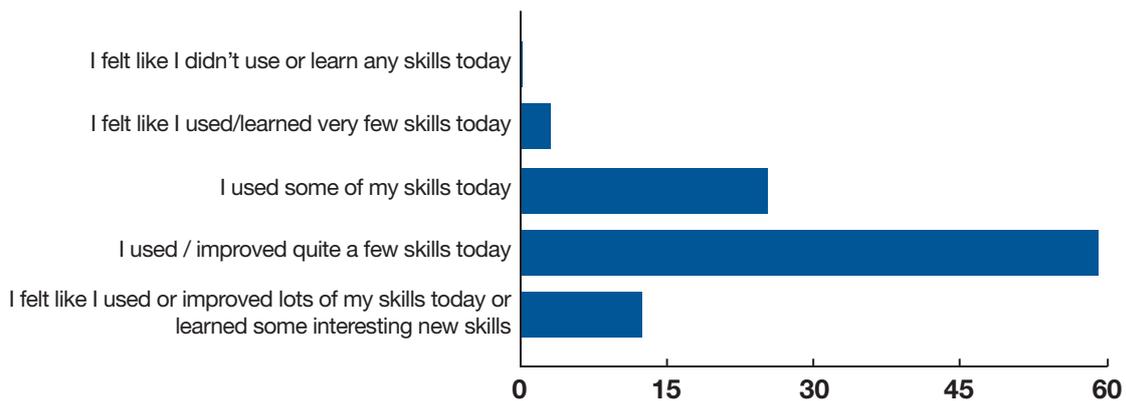


Using Skills

Question 3 asked students whether they got to “use/improve skills today”, each of five consecutive days. Out of 60 responses, 58 [97%] felt they used/improved “some”, “a few” and “lots”, with only two responses, once only, [3%] felt they used “very few skills”.

Question 3

Figure 7iii: SEDA Tiwi College - How much did you use your skills today?



The SEDA class at Tiwi College creates a sense of capacity, both teaching them new skills and giving them to chance to use them.

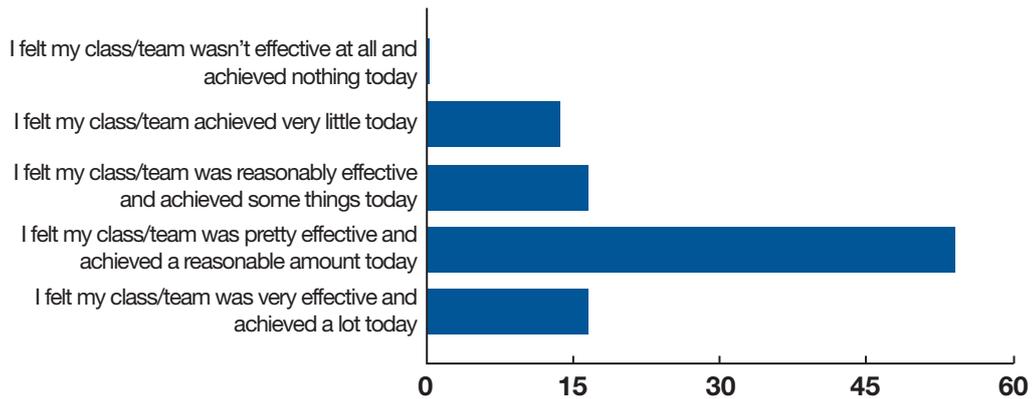
This finding is strongly confirmed by both the SEDA teacher’s teaching and learning strategies, the accounts given by the students in our yarning session, as well as descriptions from personal observation by school staff and community members provided through interview and documentation such as the Tiwi Annual Reports.

Class Effectiveness

Question 4 asked students how “effective did your class feel today”, each of five consecutive days. Out of 61 responses, 53 [87%] felt “reasonably”, “pretty” and “very” effective, with eight [13%] responses feeling “very little” effectiveness and no one, for any of the five days, feeling class “wasn’t effective at all”.

Question 4

Figure 7iv: SEDA Tiwi College – How effective did your class feel today?

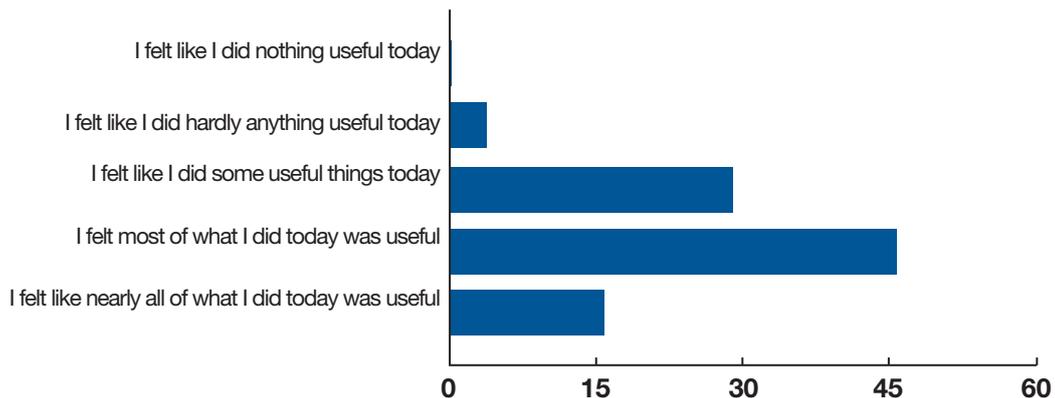


Feeling Useful

Question 5 asked students how “useful did you feel today”, each of five consecutive days. Out of 52 responses, 49 [94%] felt “some”, “most”, “all” days were effective, and three responses [6%] felt a “hardly anything”, and 0% “nothing useful” for one day that week.

Question 5

Figure 7v: SEDA Tiwi College – How useful did you feel today?



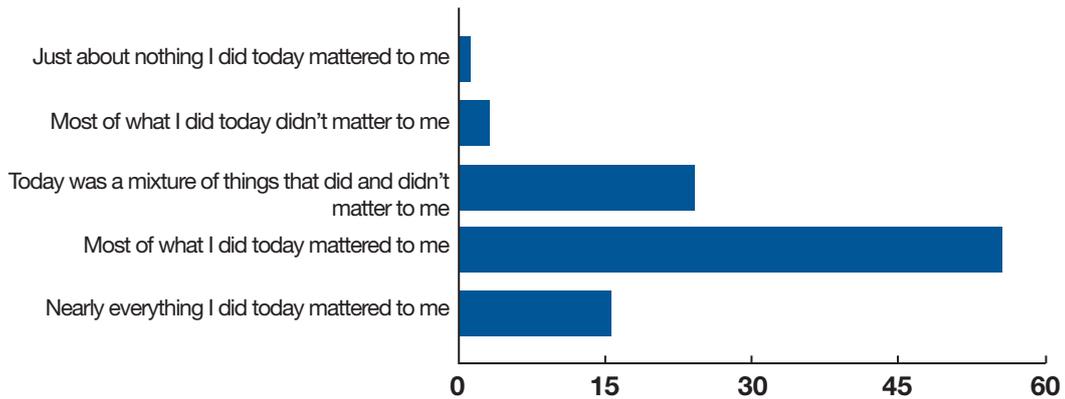
Today Mattered

Question 6 asked students “how much of what you did today mattered to you, or was part of something important”, each of five consecutive days. Out of 57 responses, 41 agreed [72%], 14 [24.5%] were ambivalent, and two responses [3%] thought “most” of what they did didn’t matter one of the days the week of the survey, and only 1 [1.5%] responded “just about nothing”, for one day.

For “what matters”, SEDA students responded that the school work they did mattered to them, was part of something important and, extrapolating from the other data sources, to the “Picka family” and their home communities.

Question 6

Figure 7vi: SEDA Tiwi College - How much of what you did today felt like it mattered or was part of something important?

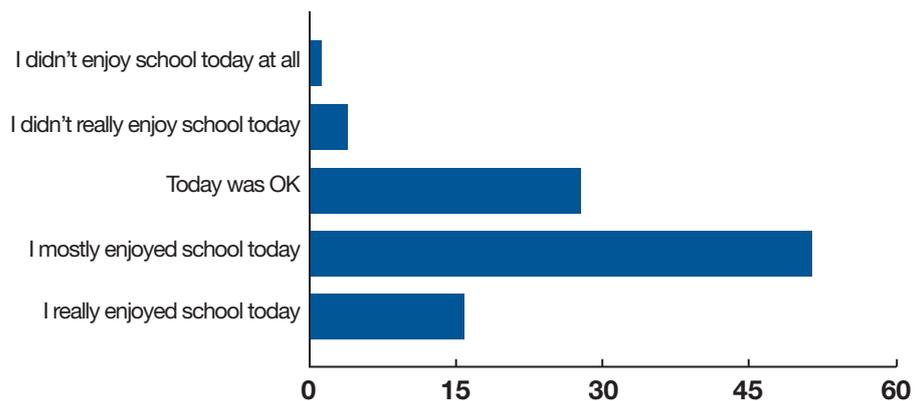


Enjoying School

Question 7 asked students “how much did you enjoy school today”, each of five consecutive days. Out of 58 responses, 55 [95%] felt “some”, “most”, “all”, with two [3.5%] responses indicating that, once only, they felt “hardly anything”, and 1 response, once only, felt “not at all”.

Question 7

Figure 7vii: SEDA Tiwi College – How much did you enjoy school today?

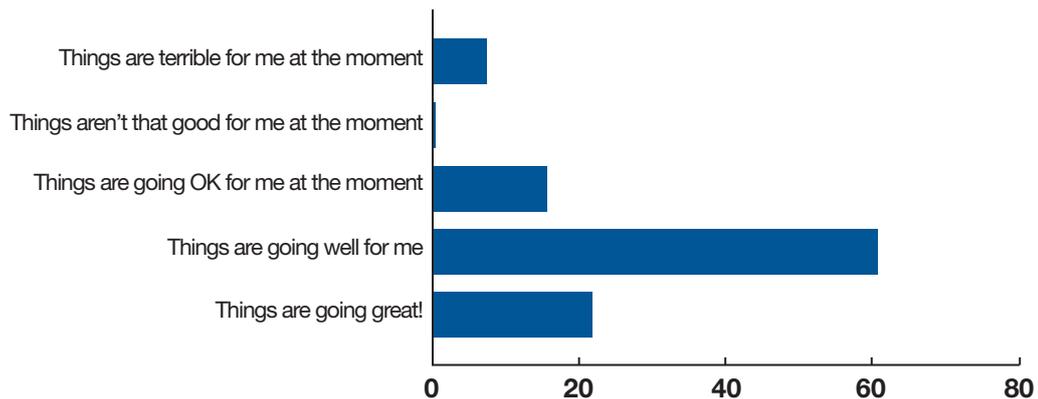


Life Generally

The final question (8) asked students “How are things in your life generally?”. A staggering 55/58 [95%] respondents felt life was “OK”, “going well” and “great!”, with 0% responding “things aren’t that good” and three [5%] reporting a one-off response that “things are terrible for me at the moment”.

Question 8

Figure 7viii: SEDA Tiwi College – How are things in your life generally?



Allowing for the tensions and challenges adapting to the College ethos and structures, coping with at times differing demands between school and community, weighed up against the achievements and successes of the students, this result in itself is testimony to the power of SEDA's engagement strategies and focus on strength-based curriculum for the Tiwi Islands young men.

Overall, according to the survey data, over 85% of SEDA students at Tiwi College are having positive experiences learning and using skills, felt the class was effective, felt useful, stated that school work mattered to them and was part of something important, reported they enjoyed school today and, finally that life is "OK" to "great!".

These findings are strongly confirmed by the SEDA teacher's teaching and learning strategies, accounts given by the students, as well as descriptions provided through observation, interview and documentation.

Paul McDonald (2015), former head of the Children, Youth and Family Division of the Department of Human Services, and now CEO of Anglicare, argues that:

The fundamental challenge of any youth-focussed issue is to make sure our youth feel they belong – in a world that has, typically, little time for, or focus on, their concerns, apart from, of course, when things go wrong.

Using the CCM Framework, the survey data confirms that, for Tiwi College students, this challenge is being met.

The evidence is clear that the SEDA students at Tiwi College are building capacity by developing skills, are finding meaning in class by being involved in real tasks that are valued by themselves, their school and communities, and are feeling better connected to education and training through having a sense of belonging, both to place and people.

This explains why so many Senior Men have altered previously negative classroom and broader school community behaviours to make sure they stay in the SEDA program. There are no College windows being broken by this group, they would regret being sent home and missing out on the day's activities.

SUMMARY

These results are remarkable given that the SEDA program is only in its second year, the class teacher is new this year, some students joined the class well into this year so have not experienced the program for very long (one student only for two weeks before the survey), many of the students had previously felt alienated from school and lacking in skills, partly through other key factors such as English being the students' second (or 3rd or 4th) language and the extent of school work missed for important cultural obligations and commitments.

Yarn 4

“Getting Amongst It!”

The SEDA evaluation sponsor and fieldworker both met the new 2015 SEDA Program Facilitator for Tiwi College late in 2014 in Melbourne over coffee. He had particularly impressed the appointment panel as the only applicant not to ask about (assumed) discipline problems; and our first impressions were also positive. As this chapter has already shown, he felt confident he could draw on his experience teaching in testing areas of London, and was looking for another, different opportunity to work productively with young people, to “Get amongst it”.

As also discussed in this chapter, the 2014 pilot of the SEDA program at Tiwi College did not employ a SEDA trained teacher so outcomes were not as positive as expected. The proactive response was to recognise that “quality teaching is everything”, as one senior Tiwi person explained, and that the teachers of the Senior Young Men’s class needed to know the SEDA program, and needed to have the personality, social skills and cultural sensitivity to apply in the Tiwi context, with very few how to’s to act as a guide or hand book. Finding this person was perhaps where luck came in (see comments below) and the perceptive interview panel.

At our first meeting in November 2014, the SEDA Program Facilitator for 2015 was very enthusiastic about going to Tiwi College and eager to learn. At the same time, his body language suggested slight nervousness and he also verbally expressed anxiousness about organising everything in time for the move. We stayed in touch over email throughout January and February, as he undertook the training in Darwin, got out to Picka, and started to settle in. We had originally planned for him to play a very active role in data collection but, in the face of a full on job, this soon morphed into the role of go-between, alongside key informant, mostly over email.

For example, shortly after starting he emailed: “Overall, my experience has been awesome. Everyone’s very supportive, the kids are full of life, and I’m enjoying our recreational time on the island. My 1 metre barramundi (fish) has been the talk of the school this week – it fed all the staff dinner, then lunch the next day.” (11 February). As Term 1 went on, his growing confidence as a teacher in this new context, emerging stature with the SEDA students, recognised value to the school, and reputation within SEDA was tangible. When I spoke with him on the phone in April, I felt I was listening to a new person: the sureness in his speech, experiential and intellectual soundness of his suggestions regarding modifying the presentation of the Hands On Learning survey, and poise of his body language I could almost see, were a revelation.

I decided that day I wanted to include a yarn profiling his continuing professional development in this Report, something further confirmed during the fieldwork. As the Kaleidoscope Model (Appendix 1) shows, the teacher is one of 10 success factors needed to realise the objectives of the SEDA organisation in existing and future locations. As both senior personnel at Tiwi College agreed, with this teacher:

“We feel like we have won Tatts Lotto, I can tell you. It’s still early days I know but it feels like something special is happening with our Senior Young Men this year that I haven’t seen before. And part of that is the person running it, and his off-sider.”



There is so much to reflect on arising from this evaluation of the SEDA program at Tiwi College.

The first reflection is how worthwhile, enjoyable, even life-changing the task has been, arising from coming into contact for the first time with two organisations so intensely committed to changing young people's lives for the better and - the other side of the coin not always so tangible - seeing, hearing, watching and admiring those same young people respond with enthusiasm, guts and a maturity that defies their age and experience.

As this Report has noted throughout, and does again in this chapter, not one of the achievements portrayed in these pages happened without huge effort, long, hard, shared deliberations, professional decisions spiced up with a bit of risk-taking, and failures along the way.

But, every time, people picked themselves up, dusted off the red dirt and got amongst it – an often heard phrase typifying the 'can do' attitude that not only does the Tiwi and SEDA participants justice, but justifies the faith put in them by sponsors, partner organisations, governments and individual people offering a helping hand.

The outcome has been to change the rules of the game, one that starts to level out the education and training playing field for Indigenous youth in Australia both on and beyond the Tiwi Islands.

NEW RULES FOR A DIFFERENT GAME

While the SEDA program is sport-based, student outcomes extend well beyond Cert II-IV VET qualifications each student earns into substantial and broad opportunities for employment and to other key determinants of a fulfilling and prosperous future.

The evaluation has shown how Tiwi College SEDA students' "identity capital" or "embodied capital" (Côté, 2002) undergoes an almost cathartic transformation, with their personal, cultural, social and economic "capital" converted into very tradable goods in a short period of time.

The Tiwi College SEDA program builds higher self-esteem, improved health and life-style choices that change the rules not only for individual students but also for their communities and other connections.

The maximum time a student had been in the Senior Men's class was three years for 1 student (it had only been a SEDA class since the beginning of 2014). At the other end of the spectrum, a student had only been in the class for one week at the time of the May fieldwork and, again, another student had just joined before the week of the August fieldwork.

Beyond any expectation, acknowledging the educational and personal history of some of these students, both new recruits were already displaying the same positive character as the rest of the class, all of whom could be taken for having been "top" students for all their years at school. The newest student was proving to be the class leader and a positive force around many aspects of school life.

There are risks in changing the rules though. Providing students with a broader range of pathways and credit articulation does not always match what is available for them to take up post-school, or is not available or

supported by ready employment. This can lead quite quickly to disappointment and rejection of the value of achieving that can threaten to turn into disaffection triggering cultural estrangement and breakdown.

Asked in the yarnning what they would do next, students in the Senior Men's class answered, variously: 'sports job', 'any job I can find', 'something I'm capable of' or various expressions of this last point. Their insights into career choices reflect the acknowledgement by SEDA that sport, whilst the 'hook' into student interest and engagement for learning, is not the primary focus (you can enrol without any special sport prowess).

There was a general positive feeling and mood in the yarnning comments that they are gaining confidence in their skills and training that would take them somewhere after the SEDA year. They also had a conscious awareness that "somewhere" could be quite different for all of them.

Underlying their sense of the future was a premonition that whilst they did not precisely know what career and future lay ahead - and how many 14-17 yr. olds do know - they were going somewhere better than if not for SEDATC.

SEDA programs are not limited to preparing students for employment in a sport and fitness field, but aim to build confidence and a broad spectrum of skills to provide the basis for meeting a number of challenges students will face after SEDA, of which finding employment is only one. Improved health and fitness alone is a powerful legacy for these young men, as for SEDA students in Victoria and WA.

The Tiwi College SEDA program is designed to ensure a base level of literacy and numeracy that local employers accept as adequate, without striving to get all the Senior Men through the Year 12 NT certificate. The latter is not necessarily the passport to a job that employers in Tiwi-owned businesses are looking for in the way employers might be in large cities. This is very constructive and forward-looking and the Tiwi are right to feel they are ahead of the game.

At Tiwi College, in line with the goals of SEDA, the objective is to fill out basic literacy and numeracy skills with life skills (they largely learn in the Family Group Homes where they care for children with great gentleness, cook, clean and all the other domestic chores) and the motivation to get to a job on time, every day.

Tiwi College Senior Men do this because they feel good about themselves, and have bought into Cyril Kalippa's mantra (cited earlier) of education and hard work leading to employment to provide for life's needs.

A repeated motif put to the evaluation on the Tiwi Islands, and found in other contexts, was having 'food in the fridge' because historically and in existing households, food is what was missing once Indigenous people became hostage to sugar and flour rather than bush tucker.

This expectation is a huge responsibility for Tiwi College and SEDA. In raising these hoped-for-futures, it is important that there is a sufficient level of systematic follow-through and follow-up so that hope and expectation of fulfilment do not dissipate once students move on from the SEDA year(s).

Struggling to meet young people's hopes and expectations is not an issue only on the Tiwi Islands of course. Getting a job in Yirrkala, in Shepparton, or Port Elizabeth, or Albany, or Gladstone, or Wyong, has not been easy, even possible, for the majority of young people leaving school for the past decade or more.

The Tiwi Land Council has been very proactive for a long time in generating local investment and employment opportunities through an increasingly diverse portfolio including fishing, forestry, tourism and hospitality, community services and building and construction, alongside stevedoring, for the expansion of Port Melville.

Recent (2015) analysis of Australian Bureau of Statistics data by the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (AIEF) shows that there is almost no employment gap between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians with a high level of education www.aief.com.au. The AIEF claims that 92% of more than 600 Indigenous students on AIEF scholarships stay on at school and complete Year 12, the generally agreed threshold for further study and/or career success.

In partnership with the HSBC financial institution, the AIEF has developed a practical guide to valued practice in Indigenous education and training that echoes the philosophy and strategies of SEDA, and provides additional arguments for doing more to “close the gap”, noting again that education and training are only part of a package that includes personal health, local / regional employment options, community vitality, and broad social acceptance and funding safety nets.

Harvesting the Tiwi forest plantations began in June 2015, after decades of patient forestry management, with some SEDA students joining this landmark event as work experience students in August, hoping to work there one day.

While the acacia and pine plantations and other structural opportunities for employment are being expanded by the Tiwi Island Land Council entrepreneurial projects, there are limited opportunities on the Tiwi Island for ‘bricks and mortar’ further and/or higher education leading to some SEDA students having to leave the Islands if that is what they are seeking and distance education is unavailable.



Tiwi Island forestry development, August 2015

Related to this, there is a slight tension within Tiwi College and the broader Tiwi community about whether young men and women are offered the best life chances through programs on the Islands, or whether they would have more opportunities by attending a school on the mainland that offered broader curriculum choices and, in some cases, higher status / reputation.

This tension exists in many different types of schools and communities around Australia focused on religious, ethnic, class or gender factors, and there are no easy answers. A lot depends on the aptitude and personality of each individual child and there is no clear data or other evidence that ‘this’ or ‘that’ works best.

For the Tiwi Islanders, custodians of beautiful and rich lands and oceans, with close family ties and deep cultural links to Country, a vibrant language and all that entails in terms of art, music and craft - alongside a determination to build a strong Tiwi economy - going to school somewhere else would be to wrench oneself away from all this.



Yet, some young Tiwi may be looking over the horizon for something more (not necessarily “better”). The hope is that one day those same people will bring back to Tiwi the skills, know-how and other resources they have gathered and acquired during their time off-island. The cultural pull back to Tiwi Islands appears to be alive and well, so experiences elsewhere in the NT or other parts of Australia, even internationally, are unlikely to weaken connection to country and traditions, but rather to provide new life and a broader and possibly higher level of skills within the Tiwi Island communities when these young adults return.

One answer to the lack of “bricks and mortar” tertiary education facilities on the Tiwi Islands might be a “Pop-Up University” for two weeks twice a year on the Tiwi Islands, as trialled by La Trobe University at Warracknabeal in Victoria’s northwest. This is a two-way innovation that not only delivers courses to remote regions but also gives the academics insights into how their work may be relevant to regional communities (See Trounsen, 2015). It can be sustained between visits through interactive distance e-learning (Crump et al., 2010, Crump and Twyford, 2011).

Another option might be to introduce stronger Music and Art programs to broaden career options through strengthened links to “Jilamara Arts Centre” at Milikapiti and artists such as Brian Farmer, Munupi Arts and Crafts Association, Tiwi Designs Gallery and Ngaruwanajirri (Helping One Another) at The Keeping House in Wurrumiyanga Art and Craft.

Back View Message Actions ↓

B2M on 10 Years of Music

For the past 10 years an addictive and energetic sound, fresh with the enthusiasm of the Tiwi Islands, has spread across Australia. The creators are the NT’s own RnB super



In June 2015, the Tiwi rhythm and blues group B2M (Bathurst to Melville) took out the best Urban/Hip Hop track with “Parlingarri”, from their 2015 EP. Music offers pathways to employment on Tiwi at least as significant as at Yirrkala, home to Yothu Yindi and East Journey, another 2015 NT Song of the Year award winner.

CHANGING THE RULES FOR OTHERS

This Report focuses on the SEDA program as it functions as part of Tiwi College in 2015. However, in 2013 the SEDA sport development program in Darwin was one of eight case study sites included in a national research project on innovative and flexible learning programs (see Te Riele et. al. 2014).

There are some interesting parallels and differences between Darwin and Tiwi College that highlight variables and factors to inform further development of the programs in both existing NT locations, as well as any future SEDA programs in locations likely to have classes with a significant Indigenous student make-up.

Key similarities between Darwin and Tiwi Islands SEDA Programs

- Formal and informal support from the umbrella SEDA group in Melbourne
- Formal and informal help from the NT SEDA state manager
- Strong and extensive education and training, industry and community partnerships, both locally and interstate.
- Both are now located within a mainstream education context
- Both service local and distant communities through teaching a sport clinic to primary level students.
- Student numbers have grown, often by student to student 'word of mouth'
- Both have students who come from local as well as distant schools
- Both have RTO / VET / HEd affiliations to auspice credentials
- Both have SEDA staff members delivering the programs in 2015
- Both have high quality facilities on site or at their disposal.

Key differences between Darwin and Tiwi Islands SEDA Programs

- Tiwi College has 1 class; Darwin has 2
- Tiwi College has 1 teacher; Darwin has 4
- Tiwi College has only male students; Darwin has equal number of male and female students
- Tiwi College has 100% Indigenous student cohort; Darwin is 35% Indigenous
- Tiwi College parents are less explicitly involved as it is a residential school; Darwin parents have regular formal and informal contact with teachers.
- Tiwi College has \$0 fees; Darwin has an annual (relatively low) fee that can attract rebates
- Tiwi College has an exclusive AFL focus; Darwin is multi-sport including AFL, cricket, soccer, netball, and basketball.
- Tiwi College has the residential Family Group model offering students structured adult help with academic and life skills in evening programs, and
- Tiwi College SEDA Senior Men's class is part of a whole school program; SEDA Darwin classes are part of the program at Casuarina Senior College but operate offsite.

Both NT SEDA programs are demonstratively successful; both programs achieve significant outcomes - equally so but differently. Consequently, there is no single list of equally weighted success factors to adopt for starting fresh in new locations, but a lot can be learnt from exploring the similarities and differences and coming to an understanding about how they can be exploited within as yet unknown opportunities.

SUCCESS FACTORS

From these accounts, a formula for making a decision about why, when, where and how a new SEDA program could be set up elsewhere in the NT, or other locations in Australia with a significant Indigenous population, can be drawn up from a reference list (below) of identified SEDA success factors. The formula derived from the data collected in this evaluation suggests a “kaleidoscope” model, as outlined in Appendix 1, that is flexible and adaptable to context and differing cohorts of students.

Every one of these “success factors” needs to be contextualised, shifted around and weighted according to local conditions, facilities available, staff expertise, funding options and so on.

The “success” factors identified in this evaluation are not revelatory in the context of broader research on educational leadership and change management theory. But they do reflect more universal findings, and sum up a suite of actions that shaped the different patterns of SEDA programs in the NT as well as forming the basis for any future programs in new locations.

The Success Factors can be grouped under the following four headings for planning purposes:

- **Curriculum, Student Interest, Sports focus**
- **Leadership, Teacher Skill set**
- **Resources, Funding**
- **Parent Interaction, Community and/or Employer engagement, Philanthropic and/or Industry Partners**

Each new SEDA operation will look significantly different, though composed of the same elements. Each new SEDA program will change the rules in their own way for doing education and training with young people in SEDA-inspired schools, communities and homes.

It takes special people to make “something special” happen, people flexible and unafraid of new patterns, shapes and situations. The characteristics of these special people are illustrated in the Yarns about the barefoot principal and the SEDA teacher and hold true for the other SEDA and Tiwi people who contributed to the information that helped visualise this model.

Looking forward to 2020, Tiwi College and SEDA know the challenges they face. We hope this Evaluation helps bolster their resolve to do a few more hard yards for the Senior Men, and the rest of the Picka family, to change not only some of the rules, but maybe the game itself.



Pukamani Pole design, Tiwi College

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APPENDIX 1: THE KALEIDOSCOPE MODEL

Doing the fieldwork and working through the data analysis for this Report generated an image, or series of images, that brought into focus how the SEDA program at Tiwi College had been envisioned and enacted between 2013-15. We collapsed these mental images into what we call a **Kaleidoscope Model**, as it became clear how what was achieved at Tiwi College is not how it was achieved for equally successful SEDA groups in Darwin. That being the case, how “success” was achieved at Tiwi College does not translate into a one-size-fits all model for other, new, SEDA locations.



libertyinfinity.com Accessed 12 June 2015.

Thus the Kaleidoscope Model asks those responsible for program development in new locations to tumble the known SEDA success variables around - much like turning the colours and patterns in a kaleidoscope - until the bits fall into place and look just right for what SEDA wants to do, where, how and why.

Viewing the task ahead through a kaleidoscope is not playing with a toy; it is putting into the hands of SEDA staff a very pragmatic policy-in-action tool, itself an accumulation of the game plans, organisational processes, institutional strategic planning, community and individual implementation, inter-personal exchanges and ongoing iterations arising out of practice that were worked through by SEDA, the Tiwi Education Board and Tiwi College personnel between 2012-15.



SC re-image, 12 June 2015



SC re-image 12 June 2015

Employing a Kaleidoscope Model might sound like a ‘big ask’ but it’s been done before – it’s simply a diagrammatic account of how SEDA at Tiwi College materialised. It took a while for all the bits, colours patterns and new game rules to fall into place in Darwin and on Tiwi, but as this Report has shown, it’s smiles all round in 2015, with staff, student and community leaders all acknowledging that “something special” is

happening that also holds the promise of even better things to come as student numbers grow, graduates move into employment or further education and training, facilities expand and new partnerships are formed.

Thus the Kaleidoscope Model is deliberately unstable. Solutions beget new problems and knowledge to solve those new problems grows out of everyday experience, with every day bringing new challenges and wins. The rules need to be updated as the game changes, what was a success one year may fail the next. Schools are like that anyway, and failure is a powerful teacher.

There is so much arising from this evaluation of the SEDA program at Tiwi College starting with how worthwhile, enjoyable, even life-changing, the task has been, through coming into contact for the first time with two organisations so intensely committed to changing young peoples' lives for the better and - the other side of the coin not always so tangible - seeing, hearing, watching and admiring those same young people respond with enthusiasm, guts and a maturity that defies their age and experience.

As this Report notes throughout, not one of the achievements portrayed in these pages happened without huge effort, long, hard, shared deliberations, professional decisions spiced up with a bit of risk-taking, and failures along the way.

But every time people picked themselves up, dusted off the red dirt and got amongst it – a often heard phrase at Tiwi College and SEDA typifying the 'can do' attitude that does them justice and justifies the faith put in them by sponsors, governments, partner organisations and individuals offering a helping hand.

The outcome has been to change the rules of the game, to level out the education and training playing field for Indigenous youth in Australia both on and beyond the Tiwi Islands. It might even change the game itself.

Stephen Crump and Roger Slee

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