Additional Information about AIEF

The rationale for AIEF's existence is to empower Indigenous families to make key decisions affecting their own family, including how and where their children are educated. AIEF does not advocate that any Indigenous child goes to boarding school, nor does AIEF promote boarding school as the best educational option. Consistent with the principle of self-determination, AIEF responds to self-generated demand from Indigenous families and provides *co-funding* for those families who choose a school themselves, initiate the enrolment application process and financially contribute to the school fees.

Most boarding schools in Australia with Indigenous education programs have been engaged in this field for many years before AIEF was established. The issue that AIEF sought to address when established, after being approached by boarding schools to help with scholarship funding for their existing Indigenous education programs, was to support schools to increase the number of Indigenous boarders to help address scholarship demand from Indigenous families. These boarding schools identified that expansion was constrained, and a scholarship provider was critical for growing their programs due to difficulty accessing external funds to pay for their Indigenous education programs and the financial costs already being absorbed internally.

Since AIEF was established, it has provided scholarship funding to enable Partner Schools to respond to the increasing demand from Indigenous families and increase Indigenous boarders at their schools.

AIEF has two roles – one in education and one in employment – and in both of these areas, AIEF has *enabling* functions as follows:

- **Education:** Provision of scholarship funding to enable AIEF Scholarship Students to complete their studies (AIEF Scholarship Program).

- **Employment:** Provision of AIEF Pathways to prepare AIEF Scholarship Students for life post-school and support their transition to further studies or employment.

AIEF Scholarship Program

Each Partner School's Indigenous education program is run and led autonomously by the school itself. Partner Schools enrol Indigenous students through a variety of different programs, organisations and funding arrangements. This approach to Indigenous education is what we call a 'parent and school-led' model. It acknowledges that each Partner School is independent, with differences in culture, local context, historical origins, values, beliefs, teaching styles, leadership, ethos and approaches to Indigenous culture, education, pastoral care, parental engagement and student support. Accordingly, Partner Schools are solely and autonomously responsible for:

- Developing and maintaining relationships with Indigenous families and communities, including establishing direct lines of communication with the families and communities of Scholarship Students to better understand each student's background, including their strengths and vulnerabilities and how best to support them.
- Identifying, assessing and enrolling Indigenous students.
- Providing a culturally inclusive, high-quality and holistic education for Scholarship Students, including through education, pastoral care and cultural activities to enable successful completion of Year 12 at the School.

- Supporting AIEF to deliver the AIEF Scholarship Program and AIEF Pathways, including ensuring AIEF funding and resources are used most efficiently and effectively by avoiding third-party duplication and overlap of activities and programs.

There are various aspects of a school that a family will look at when considering their child's suitability, including location, gender, academic offerings, extra-curricular activities, learning support, pastoral care and Indigenous cultural activities. Given that Scholarship Students and Alumni come from over 500 home communities around Australia and have varying levels of connection to Indigenous cultures, it is not surprising that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to Indigenous cultural activities. It is a Partner School's responsibility to consult with the families and communities that they work with and decide how they help Indigenous students feel culturally welcomed, included and supported. Parents will discuss these things directly with the schools they are interested in applying to for enrolment.

AIEF Scholarships help facilitate parental choice by removing the financial barriers that may prevent Indigenous students from pursuing their education with a Partner School. AIEF Scholarships are awarded by Partner Schools based on student enthusiasm and family support, among other eligibility criteria, such as being Indigenous, in receipt ABSTUDY and completion of the year at their respective school.

AIEF Scholarships include a parent contribution to school fees. The parent contribution is based on a means-tested scale linked to the household income. AIEF then pays the shortfall in boarding and tuition fees and some other expenses after ABSTUDY in the form of scholarship distributions to Partner Schools at the end of each year.

In the AIEF Scholarship Program, AIEF works directly with the administration and finance office at a Partner School to obtain information about eligibility and all the processing, payment, acquittal, data management and reporting functions related to scholarship distributions.

AIEF Pathways

AIEF Pathways and Pathways Activities support Scholarship Students to develop work-readiness skills and support their transition from Year 12 and beyond into further education and careers or other productive pursuits.

Scholarship Students will participate in activities or initiatives related to careers, mentoring, post-school pathways, life skills, financial literacy or ancillary programs. These events and activities promote:

- **Connectedness and relationships:** students build networks and feel supported during transitions.
- **Work readiness:** students develop skills for employment, tertiary studies, workplace relationships and independence.
- **Career planning:** students learn how to set goals, explore opportunities and access AIEF support.
- **Skills development:** students build confidence, resilience, self-belief, emotional maturity and other social skills.

AIEF Pathways Conferences

AIEF Pathways Conferences are practical, one-day events held for Scholarship Students in Years 9 to

12, designed to prepare them for the transition from school into further study or the workplace. These regional, conference-style gatherings bring together Scholarship Students from multiple Partner Schools and provide exposure to diverse information, stories, perspectives and experiences in a large-group setting.

Featuring guest speakers and presentations on a range of career and skill-development topics, AIEF Pathways Conferences connect current Scholarship Students with AIEF Alumni, Corporate Partners, universities and peers from other Partner Schools. These sessions offer valuable insights, showcase real and inspirational stories, deepen students' understanding of different industries and pathways and help build confidence in navigating life after school.

Year 12 Graduation and Alumni Networking Events

The AIEF Year 12 Graduation event celebrates the achievements of the graduating class of Scholarship Students and aims to reinforce the relationships between students, Alumni and AIEF.

The AIEF Network Day occurs the day after the AIEF Year 12 Graduation and is an opportunity for Year 12 students and AIEF Alumni to network and further build relationships among the extended cohort.

As part of these celebrations, key school contacts are asked to attend and participate in specially designed activities, including the Partner School Networking Session, which allows school staff to build relationships and provide feedback to AIEF.

AIEF Partnership Principles

AIEF aspires to make a sustained, significant and positive impact by supporting Partner Schools to enable Scholarship Students and Alumni to achieve positive educational and employment outcomes. This is reflected in more than 500 contracts with stakeholders, highlighting the belief that it is only through many parties' collective efforts that these outcomes can be achieved.

The key relationships we seek are those that positively and unequivocally contribute to the partnership dynamics and tangible education and employment outcomes efficiently.

AIEF is committed to using its time, energy, and resources to efficiently and effectively do this. Because effective collaboration is vital to our work, we are disciplined about focusing on partnerships that are the most likely to have enduring success. In this regard, some of the guiding principles in our partnerships are:

1. Avoid duplication or overlap
2. Avoid mission drift
3. No outsourcing of the core business of either partner
4. Ensuring that partners bring different skills and expertise so that the product of their combined contribution and their core competencies results in education and career outcomes that are greater than the sum of the parts
5. Ensuring that the partnership is mutually willing and enthusiastic and is entered into voluntarily without external duress or other agendas
6. Partners have mutual respect and approach the partnership in good faith
7. Partners support each other's work, purpose and mission - publicly and privately
8. Risks are shared between the partners according to who is best able to manage the risks