

Executive Summary

Future Footprints Program

The Future Footprints Program supports Indigenous male and female students from remote regions in Western Australia attending boarding schools in Perth. The broad aim of the program is to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students and enhance their opportunities post school to further education, employment and/or training. The primary goal is to ensure the engagement of Indigenous students with the education system and foster a sense of belonging and self-worth and provide Indigenous students with the confidence, knowledge and skills to succeed.

The program is centrally administered by The Association of Independent Schools of WA Inc (AISWA) on behalf of seventeen participating residential schools (thirteen independent and four catholic member schools).

Whilst each school has a comprehensive pastoral care system, Future Footprints was established in response to schools identifying that, in order to address the needs of Indigenous students and to provide a supportive environment, additional support was required to maximise students' success and engagement with education while away from home.

Future Footprints Program now employs two Indigenous staff members, a full time Coordinator and an Aboriginal Liaison Officer for 0.5 FTE (as a week).

Roni Forrest is the Coordinator of the program. Roni is a Menang-Ngadu woman who comes from south east coast of WA. Through her role, Roni supports the students through their secondary schooling education and onto training/employment of further study. It involves working with school based personnel and the students themselves, providing a broad range of support to all schools in assisting them in understanding the full range of opportunities available for schools and Indigenous students linking them through various Government and non-Government services. Roni is passionate about her work, particularly in supporting students to be culturally strong in order to fit into the boarding school system and complete school with a graduation certificate. It is through this work and high level of commitment that resulted in her recently being awarded a Certificate in Education Excellence by the Australian Council of Education Leadership.

Christina Geerlings is a Bardi woman from One Arm Point. She joined AISWA as an Aboriginal Liaison Officer for the Future Footprints program in 2015. In this role she works to assist non-Government boarding schools in supporting Aboriginal students throughout their secondary schooling and understanding the full range of opportunities available to them.

The number of Indigenous students attending participating schools has significantly increased since the program began and the support provided has contributed towards retention, successful transitions and the higher rate of Year 12 completions.

This year a record number of students on the program achieved Year 12 certificate. 56% of these students applying for University entrance and 28% are going onto further training and apprenticeships

A total of 332 students supported by the program, 18% are Year 10 students and 18% are Year 12 students in 2015. Of the total Year 10 population 56% are female and 44% are male students. The students come from remote Western Australian regions boarding in metropolitan Perth. Over 30% of the students hail from the remote Kimberley region.

Additionally Future Footprints now support a new coeducational school, Carmel Adventist College, who have recently joined the Future Footprints program. Carmel Adventist College had 6 students graduate Year 12 with the support of the program.

In 2015 fifty six year 12 students participated on the Future Footprints program, with a ratio of 50% male and 50% female students graduating. 30% of these graduating students completed Certificate 11 or equivalent.

Fifty seven percentage of graduating Year 12s in 2015 are applying for university courses. The courses applied for are bridging or enabling courses, law & politics, early childhood education, physiotherapy, teaching, science

and land management, social work, speech therapy, nursing, midwifery, engineering and design. Twenty eight percentage of graduates are seeking traineeships or apprenticeships and eleven percent are desiring to seek employment

The Aboriginal Advisory Group is a new initiative of the Future Footprints Program. To date we have sought nominations from participating school Coordinators who have more frequent contact with parents of boarding students. We also have advertised on social media seeking expressions of interest from parents. Interested parents will be notified and the Advisory Group will be set up in the new year. Future Footprints program is widely known in the community and many parents contact the Coordinator in regards to enrolment in boarding schools.

Ms. Roni Forrest

Coordinator

Future Footprints AISWA

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