



Swan View Senior High School – Aboriginal Learning Engagement (ABLE) Program

School Profile

- Western Australia
- Metropolitan
- Government
- Years 7 to 12
- On the land of the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation

Program Summary

Swan View Senior High School is located in the eastern suburbs of Perth. In 2017, approximately 22 per cent of its 620 students were from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds. The school runs a program for this cohort called Aboriginal Learning Engagement (ABLE), which was established in 2016 and is managed by a dedicated team. Three programs operate within that team, including the Follow the Dream program, the Flourish program and the Clontarf Academy. All three of these programs include elements designed to extend and promote positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The ABLE team uses an intensive and personalised case-management approach to analyse the support needs of each student to construct individual programs. The students' programs leverage particular elements of each of the three programs available along with the school's vocational education and training (VET) course offerings.

The programs that feature as part of ABLE include a focus on three key elements that make a difference to the education outcomes of the school's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students:

- strong coordinated leadership
- highly developed relationships between school staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- staff cross-cultural awareness.

Intensive case management of individual students is incorporated into all three of the programs, which operate exclusively for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the school.

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'We have buy-in from all staff, not just those staff that work within the programs. We look at every student and we look at their needs and then we bring the programs together from a big picture view and see how we're going to meet the different needs of our kids.'

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Melesha Sands – Principal, Swan View Senior High School
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The ABLE programs are overseen by Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers with focus directed towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' attendance, academic achievement, cultural celebrations and connection and student engagement.

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'We identify what [students'] strengths are or what their interests are and then we work with them, the families and the different programs to make sure that we can get the best possible outcomes for them. Doing a traineeship and linking them with an industry while they're still at school has led them to employment, which is a factor as to why these kids have been successful, because we've helped them transition while they're still at school.'

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Robyn De Fraine – Senior School Pathways Coordinator, Swan View Senior High School
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The ABLE program's two-way learning approach, based on the well-established Clontarf Foundation's holistic approach, enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to learn life skills and gain a broader perspective of their own potential by ensuring each activity is based around a key area of achievement.



A crucial part of the operation is the coordination of the activities and the individualised programs for the students, enhanced by the positive contact students have with employers and industry delivered by employment visits.

Follow the Dream

The Follow the Dream program, which is run by the Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation, has been operating at Swan View Senior High School since 2003 and provides after-school tuition or mentoring for a minimum of four hours per week. Eligible students in Years 7 to 12 and their families commit to maintaining school attendance, Follow the Dream program attendance and satisfactory school grades to remain within the program. The program provides case management support and aims to assist students to graduate from Year 12 and go on to university, other further education or training or meaningful employment.

Clontarf Academy

The Clontarf Academy at Swan View Senior High School is one of 96 locations throughout Australia. The Clontarf Foundation runs the sporting academy focusing on Australian Rules Football and Rugby League and aims to 'to improve the education, life skills, self-esteem and employment prospects of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys and men' (Clontarf Foundation, 2018). The provision of Clontarf Academies at schools are used as a school engagement mechanism by providing football training at local schools such as Swan View to enhance attendance at school. To participate in the academy program, students must attend school regularly, apply themselves to the study of appropriate courses and embrace the academy's requirements for behaviour and self-discipline.

Flourish

Commencing in 2015, the Kwobidak Yoka Flourish program targets girls from Years 7 to 9. The program aims to confirm and support elements of cultural identity, as well as to help girls build resilience and leadership skills. One formal lesson is provided each week, along with more regular pastoral interaction.



Jasmin Gentle, Coordinator Kwobidak Yoka Flourish program, talks with female students from years 7 to 9, in their weekly lesson.

Outcomes

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 'Aboriginal attendance is now 5.5 per cent greater than like schools and 5.4 per cent greater than WA public schools ... Aboriginal achievement will continue to be a priority in 2017, with a continued focus on attendance, academic achievement, cultural celebration and connection and student engagement.'

Swan View Senior High School (2016), Annual Report 2016

The ABLE program at Swan View Senior High School is in its early stages, but it draws on well-established programs and its success metrics of improved attendance data and transition data are already showing encouraging signs. A flexible approach to both learning and assessment is enabling the school to measure the success of all students in a variety of ways.

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 'We've had boys who are learning to become commercial divers with Fremantle Commercial Diving, working for the Land Council, work site visits through Officeworks. This term they're going to Caltex, visiting Kmart, they're partnered with Wesfarmers, Coles, Officeworks ... and Barmenco (Mining), so they get a wide range of opportunities and exposure to different workplaces.'

Brendan Welsh – Director, Clontarf Academy, Swan View Senior High School





Garth Taylor (left), Clontarf Academy Operations Officer at Swan View Senior High School, works with a participant before school.

The school's Clontarf Academy program has a strong emphasis on fostering vocational learning and a diverse range of employment pathways. This is achieved through the brokering of traineeships, site visits to industry and Clontarf Foundation events or camps, all of which expose students to a broad range of jobs and career possibilities.

The outcomes for students are closely linked to clear metrics of school transition, further education and employment pathways.

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 'When we finish school, we get a portfolio from Clontarf. It holds all our certificates, qualifications, bank details, driver's licence, Medicare, tax file numbers. It's really useful, because it tells our future employers what we are about and how we're useful.'

Raymond – Year 11 student, Swan View Senior High School

Industry Links

Swan View Senior High School's involvement with business and the community provides students access to mentoring and work placements. The school is part of the University of Western Australia's Aspire program, which works with partner schools and communities in regional Western Australia and Perth

to raise aspirations for tertiary education through the provision of camps, school visits and on-campus events. The school is also building links with the St John of God Hospital in Midland, with a view to establishing vocational pathways for students.

Through the Clontarf Academy program, the school has also developed a partnership with Qantas that has enabled students to undertake practical work experience in their career industry of choice. This partnership with the Clontarf Foundation supports the Qantas Reconciliation Action Plan 2015-2018, which set the goal of employing a minimum of 150 new Australian School-based Apprentices across the Qantas Group by the end of 2018.



Swan View Senior High School student Rohan is completing a Certificate II in Automotive Servicing Technology through Qantas as part of his participation in the Clontarf Academy program.



Why the ABLE Program at Swan View Senior High School Works

Recent research indicates that the following key themes consistently underpin successful delivery of vocational learning and VET, including career education, to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students:

- **Context:** ‘Nuanced, contextual factors will influence individual or group learning undertaken by Indigenous young people (Cuervo et al., 2015; Rigney, 2011).’
- **Flexibility:** ‘... recognition that a rigid or singular mode of education, by definition, cannot meet the needs of diverse learners (Anderson, 2009b; Bottrell, Te Riele & Plows, 2014; Te Riele, 2014).’
- **Two-way learning and community engagement:** ‘... happens in the context of an evolving relationship and structured partnership between Indigenous and school communities that supports Indigenous young people to grow their learning aspirations and stay connected to school or training.’
- **Aspiration, self-esteem and belonging:** ‘To “dream big” was seen as an essential component in a young person’s ability to have vocational ambitions and to achieve them (Mission Australia, 2014).’
- **Real-world job pathways:** ‘In assessing what motivates Indigenous young people to study, a direct link to real employment, that is, getting a job, figured much more highly than reasons connected to a plan for career or further study (Fordham & Schwab, 2007).’

Applying these themes to an understanding of the design, delivery and operation of vocational learning and VET provides insight into “what works” and “what doesn’t work” for this cohort of students.

Source: Cultural and Indigenous Research Centre Australia (CIRCA), National Priorities: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Secondary Student Transitions Project report

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Links

The *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* from AITSL outline what teachers should know and be able to do. As part of the ABLE program at Swan View Senior High School teachers are delivering vocational learning, VET or career education that aligns with the following standards:

Know students and how they learn

1.3 Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds

1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities

3.1 Establish challenging learning goals

4.1 Support student participation

Source: Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) (2011), Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

Contacts

If you want to know more about this program or think that it might benefit your community, please access the following links:

Swan View Senior High School

W: www.svshs.wa.edu.au

Clontarf Foundation (Clontarf Academy)

P: (08) 9356 2500

E: contact@clontarffoundation.com.au

The Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation (Follow the Dream)

P: (08) 9443 7260

E: pff@pff.com.au

My School

W: www.myschool.edu.au

