

Education Services Australia

Impact report
2019-20



Education
Services
Australia

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Education Services Australia wishes to acknowledge the Kulin Nation, Traditional Custodians of the land on which our offices are located, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We also acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands across Australia, their Elders, Ancestors, cultures and heritage.



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About us

In this report we highlight just some of the ways in which we are making a positive difference in the lives and learning of young Australians.

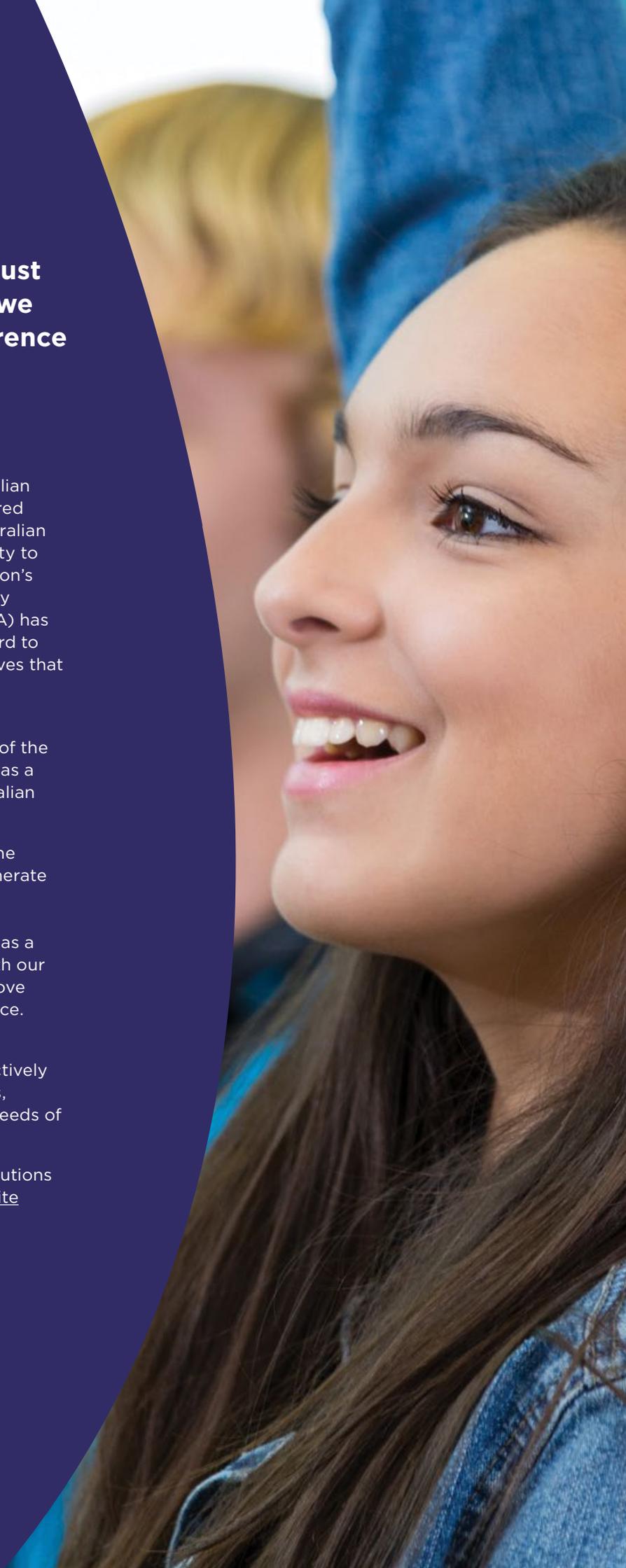
Achieving educational excellence in Australian schools requires strategic initiatives delivered on a national scale that provide every Australian student in every school with the opportunity to reach their potential. As Australian education's national, cross-sector education technology provider, Education Services Australia (ESA) has the relationships, capability and track record to take a leadership position in driving initiatives that achieve this goal.

Education Services Australia Limited was formed in 2010, through the consolidation of the Curriculum Corporation and Education.au, as a not-for-profit company owned by all Australian education ministers.

ESA has demonstrated an ability to combine education and technology expertise to generate and deliver digital education materials and solutions that further Australia's education reform agenda. Building on our reputation as a trusted and reliable partner, ESA works with our stakeholders to deliver solutions that improve student outcomes and enhance performance.

Since its inception, the company has demonstrated a capability to operate effectively and flexibly as an organisation that evolves, grows and contracts to meet the varying needs of government and commercial clients.

For more detailed information on ESA's solutions and services, please refer to the [ESA website](#)



From the Chair

This year marked the tenth anniversary of ESA's establishment. However, COVID-19 restrictions meant that rather than celebrating ESA's achievements, it was a time to bring the years of accomplishment and experience to bear in supporting the education community through a period of immense upheaval.

One significant insight ESA drew from the rapid shift to system-wide remote education, is that the provision of digital resources and skills to enable education, both in and outside the classroom, will continue to increase in importance.

Digital resource provision, a cornerstone of ESA's work, together with our substantial growth in technological expertise, the understanding of user needs, and collaboration with education departments, the non-government sector and our partners has been critical to ESA's continued success. We are grateful to all, particularly the teachers, students and parents who participated in user discovery, testing and feedback on our work during COVID-19.

The Board is proud of the company's achievements in this extraordinary year. The remarkable team culture and spirit has been sustained through an extended period of working apart, with staff adapting to maintain the quality of work and keep projects on track.

Finally, we are grateful to Education Council and AESOC for continued support of our work through funding of projects and access to resources enabling us to evolve over the past ten years.



Ms Diane Joseph

Chair, Education Services Australia



From the CEO

In my first annual report on joining the company in 2017, I commented on the apparent strong team spirit, and the energy and dedication with which staff approach working with stakeholders and partner agencies. Working from home for nearly half of this year was particularly challenging, given our reliance on teamwork, consultation and collaboration with external stakeholders and clients.

I am proud of the incredible resilience and ability of staff to maintain cohesion and productivity throughout the lockdown periods. Project and services staff adapted to enable vital consultation and feedback to progress delivery, while corporate services ensured that all staff were equipped with the necessary tools for remote working and that efficient essential services continued. In particular, our People and Culture Team were outstanding in supporting the wellbeing of all.

The result is that productivity continued throughout the year, leading to the many achievements in this report.

This year ESA is proud to have joined more than 1,000 organisations across Australia in developing a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, affirming our commitment to be active in this space.

As in my first year at ESA, I am inspired by the commitment of ESA's people and am proud to lead an organisation so dedicated and focused on its mission to support the teaching and learning of all young Australians.



Andrew Smith

CEO, Education Services Australia



Our work at a glance

2019–20



Scootle. Provides access to over 20,000 quality assured digital resources aligned to the Australian Curriculum in a single national repository. **Users increased by 45% to over 1.4 million users.**



Early Learning Languages Australia. Encourages Australian children to study a second language by offering a fun, digital, play-based language program. Uptake continues to grow, with **4,229 preschools participating across Australia.**



X 4,229



Digital Technologies Hub. Supporting the Digital Technologies curriculum with high-quality resources and services for teachers, students and parents. **Users increased by 25% to 138,541,** with 5,440 Facebook followers and 5,774 newsletter subscribers.



+25% Users



Endeavour 250. The year **2020** marks the **20th year of National Reconciliation Week** and the **250th anniversary of the voyage of HMB Endeavour** to Australia. Eight inquiry-based learning sequences for years F-10 examine the complex histories and legacy of the voyage, particularly the impact on First Nations Australians.



Literacy Hub. An online portal with evidenced-based resources and professional learning for Australian educators and activities for families. It includes a **Phonics Check for teachers of Year 1 students** and advice and activities to assist families support their child's literacy development at home.





Language Learning Space.

Supports teachers and students of Chinese, Japanese and Indonesian languages by providing access to thousands of online, curriculum-aligned digital resources.



Ketawa Online Indonesian Language Program.

Provides support for Western Australian teachers without formal language training to teach Indonesian in schools.



Student Wellbeing Hub

Supports the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework with information, resources and professional development for teachers, students and parents, to assist them to create and maintain a safe and welcoming school environment for all students. Usage increased by 53% to over 120,000 users.



myfuture. The national career education service assists young Australians with career planning, career pathways and work transitions. The website recorded 617,133 sessions, 8,410,829 page views and 475,000 users.



myskills. The national directory of VET organisations and courses, providing access to current, trustworthy information to help job seekers, students and employers find the training that best suits their needs.



Girls in STEM Toolkit. Encouraging female students to study and pursue careers in STEM, providing online resources and case studies to all Australian schools. Over 16,000 users accessed the GiST.



Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability.

Facilitating better understanding of the needs of students with disability and how they can be best supported at school. The Portal has had 359,000 users, 12.9 million pageviews and 119,000 e-learning course completions since February 2019.





Online National Assessment Platform.

Enabling national assessment to be delivered online across all Australian schools using contemporary assessment and reporting technology. Currently used to support delivery of NAPLAN and National Assessment Program (NAP) sample testing in Civics and citizenship and Science literacy.



Schools Catalogue Information Service.

SCIS provides a central library cataloguing service to create high-quality, consistent catalogue records for 85% of Australian school libraries. Internationally, SCIS is used by 45% of New Zealand schools and 145 schools in two other nations.



School Survey. Enabling schools to gain valuable feedback from their school community via a purpose-built online survey tool developed to meet the needs of government schools in WA, Tas, SA and the NT.



Secured managed hosting services.

Securing personal and private data on behalf of Australian Government departments and agencies via enterprise-grade, secure infrastructure as a service (IaaS) and platform as a service (PaaS).



National Schools Interoperability Program. Enabling secure exchange of education information by establishing education data standards and working collaboratively with stakeholders on interoperability and data sharing.



Edu.au domain. The edu.au domain register is the sole provider for Australian education and training providers to register website domains specific to the education sector. ESA provides registration and renewal services for over 16,500 domains across the sector.



x 16,500



Our mission and strategy

Mission

ESA's mission is to combine education and technology expertise to create and deliver national solutions that further education reform in Australia and contribute to improved student outcomes, enhanced teacher impact and stronger school communities.

Role

ESA works in collaboration with all Australian education jurisdictions to provide technology-based products and services for education. Focused on advancing nationally agreed education initiatives, programs and projects, ESA has been established to:

- research, test and develop innovative technologies and communication systems for use in education
- devise, develop and deliver curriculum and assessment, professional development, career and information support services
- facilitate the pooling, sharing and distribution of knowledge, resources and services to support and promote e-learning
- support national infrastructure to ensure access to quality-assured systems and content and interoperability between individuals, entities and systems
- create, publish, disseminate and market curriculum and assessment materials, ICT-based solutions, products and services to support learning, teaching, leadership and administration.

Enhancing our impact

During the year, ESA's work was guided by the strategic plan *Enhancing our impact*, which sets out our commitment to ensuring that our work has a positive impact on the lives and learning of young Australians. The plan focuses on five strategic pillars that build on our core capabilities:

1. Deliver high-quality projects and services
2. Disseminate insights that support decision-making
3. Provide leadership in education information management
4. Develop and maintain national education technology platforms that increase access and improve connectivity
5. Strategically engage stakeholders to establish partnerships that help achieve their goals



1

Supporting teaching and learning

Online Formative Assessment Initiative

Having well-prepared, knowledgeable teachers who have the flexibility and the right tools to help students learn is a priority for Australian education systems. ESA, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) have been working on this issue. Together we are establishing the foundation for a world-leading solution for Australian teachers. Innovative assessment solutions that integrate resources, data collection and analytical tools in one 'ecosystem' will be accessible, interactive and scalable to meet future needs.

Teachers will have a single, secure and personalised portal to an extensive range of services and digital teaching, learning and assessment materials. At the heart of the system are the Australian Curriculum and the National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions. Assessments and resources will be aligned to these, so that information about student learning over time is consistent and coherent.

Extensive consultation with teachers, students and parents has provided insight into how this project can help teachers focus on what makes the most difference for their students, for example, identifying the most effective assessments and resources to measure student learning.

ESA led the work to develop user profiles and needs analysis for groups such as teachers, school leaders, students, parents and systems. The education profession welcomed our user-centred design approach, which included research, consultation and engagement with teachers and school leaders to inform design of digital resources. We are also providing project management leadership and services across the whole initiative.

In the Alpha phase, which commenced early 2020, ESA is testing the findings and hypotheses from the Discovery phase by building prototypes to explore different ways in which teachers' and students' needs might be met.

In collaboration with Deakin University, we developed the prototype of an important feature of the ecosystem, a suggestion engine that will recommend best-fit resources for teachers to allocate to students, based on information collected from the formative assessment ecosystem.

The ecosystem will bring together the important functions that teachers and students need, in an accessible and easy-to-use platform that integrates seamlessly with other valued tools and systems.





2

Supporting student wellbeing

Student Wellbeing Hub

As educators, we know how important wellbeing is for learning. Evidence shows that when students develop their social and emotional skills for wellbeing, health and safety, there is a direct impact on their learning outcomes.

The Student Wellbeing Hub provides resources tailored to students, parents and educators, to support the development of safe, inclusive and connected school communities that promote wellbeing and learning. The Hub is underpinned by the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework.

In 2019, ESA launched a re-designed Hub, with new content, an evidence and research section to provide up-to-date information related to student wellbeing and an updated section for parents, with articles on issues of most concern to them. Also included is Respectful Relationships education content for students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, and students with disability. The importance of principal and teacher wellbeing is given precedence in a professional learning module and five additional illustrations of practice containing videos and support materials.

Respectful Relationships education resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have been created by Aboriginal communities for use within their community. The first set of resources was created by and for the Yolŋu people of north-eastern Arnhem Land. These resources include videos, a teacher guide, advice for non-Indigenous people working in community, a series of radio plays in Yolŋu Matha and an exploration of how Borroloola's school-wide program seeks to enable Aboriginal students to become 'double culture people'.

During the year, resources were curated for educators, parents, students and local communities in response to the impact of the devastating bushfires and to support wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic. These resources include a webinar program on topics such as mindfulness, meditation and hope and resilience during extraordinary times of change.



3

Supporting access and diversity

Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability

All children deserve the best possible education; education that provides opportunities for children of all abilities to reach their potential.

The Australian Government's Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) is conducted annually. It is a fair and consistent way for Australian schools to collect information that reflects the support or adjustments being provided for students whose learning is impacted by disability.

In 2018, the Australian Government asked ESA to design and develop a comprehensive national web portal of information to support schools across Australia to implement the NCCD. The mandate for ESA was to assist teachers, disability support staff, school leaders and parents to better understand the Disability Standards for Education (DSE) and to undertake the NCCD process as accurately as possible.

During 2019–20, ESA developed and curated additional resources and published them to the portal. These include case studies, illustration of practice videos, a pre-service teacher professional learning course and an e-learning resource that uses case studies arising from research conducted by Monash University. The portal reflects changes to the NCCD Guidelines that modified reporting expectations for schools for 2020 due to COVID-19.

Enhancements in 2021 will enable schools to better understand how they are performing in relation to the NCCD. The online School Reflection Survey Tool can be used as a pre and post measure at the beginning and end of the NCCD cycle and/or each year to monitor staff NCCD understanding and implementation practices and approaches. In addition, ESA is developing and piloting the Confidential NCCD School Reports Tool, allowing users to compare their school's data to other 'like schools' on a confidential basis.

The Portal has had 359,000 users, 12.9 million pageviews and 119,000 e-learning course completions since going live in February 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a significant increase in usage, registration and DSE completion.



4b

Helping students shape their future

Girls in STEM Toolkit

A diverse science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) workforce is critical for economic growth and prosperity. Schools and classrooms play a pivotal role in engaging all learners in STEM and in helping them realise their potential.

The Australian Government Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources engaged ESA to develop the online Girls in STEM Toolkit (The GiST) to provide girls with tools for understanding how their existing skills and interests can link to STEM careers and study pathways.

The GiST was launched in September 2019 and reached over 16,000 users in its first year. As well as providing information for students, the GiST includes resources for use by teachers, school leaders and families. These resources are provided to inspire and encourage girls to feel confident and enthusiastic about STEM and to take advantage of the increasing number of current and projected STEM-related jobs.

The most popular feature of the site is the GiST career quiz, a tool for girls to discover STEM careers based on interests, along with the four STEM-based lessons designed to engage girls in classroom activities.

The site showcases women in STEM, scientists, mathematicians and engineers making a difference every day and solving real-world problems. It includes interviews with the female recipients of the 2019 year's Prime Minister's Prizes for Science as role models for girls.

The GiST has featured in Science Teachers Association Victoria professional learning events across Australia during 2019-20 and as a workshop item on the Catalysing Gender Equity conference in February 2020.



5

Reimagining language learning

Early Learning Languages Australia

Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA) is a language learning program designed to spark curiosity in young learners using a unique digital, play-based pedagogy. This Australian Government initiative inspires children by driving a genuine interest in a new language and culture. ESA has had responsibility for the overall management and promotion of the program since its inception in 2014, developing 11 apps in each of 13 languages, support materials, educator training, and establishing support networks.

Up to 135,000 4-year-olds across Australia have access to ELLA at 4,220 registered preschools, and approximately 21,000 children are part of a national trial of ELLA in 300 primary schools. Independent analyses by Deloitte and Swinburne University reveal the unprecedented success of the ELLA apps in introducing new languages to preschool children, in raising awareness of other cultures, and in engaging their interest in learning different languages.

The technology mimics the experience of learning languages in real life, much like learning a home language, with the apps following the adventures of Talo and Beelee and their friends the Polyglots through scenarios familiar to children. They visit the zoo, spend a day at the beach and throw a birthday party where they even get to make a cake. In these settings, children are exposed to natural language experiences including numbers, colours, pets and names of family members.

The program is designed for use by educators who do not have formal language training. Extensive support, training and resources are provided to assist in the effective delivery of early language learning and cultural awareness.

Three out of four educators report that ELLA increased their confidence in incorporating language learning into their preschools and 90 per cent expected children to demonstrate an interest in learning a language in later years of schooling.

Parents have been astonished to hear their children spontaneously using phrases in languages like Mandarin and Spanish in everyday interactions. Students who are able to continue their language learning from preschool to primary school feel confident about their skills and are much more likely to continue learning a language throughout their schooling. There's growing signs ELLA is making a real difference to children with learning difficulties and non-verbal children.



6

Supporting schools and systems

Schools Catalogue Information Service

SCIS offers school libraries across the world access to high-quality and consistent catalogue records.

The Schools Catalogue Information Service (SCIS) is an online database of school-related library catalogue records. Schools subscribe to use the service, which reduces the cost and duplication of effort when cataloguing resources in schools.

SCIS continues to be a popular service, with 85 per cent of Australian schools and 45 per cent of New Zealand schools currently subscribing to the service. SCIS has also attracted subscribers from 145 schools in 22 other nations, including 87 from the UK.

SCIS cataloguers created 39,310 records in 2019–20, continuing their critical support for school libraries as they supported the transition to remote learning. Despite the challenges, hit rates remained high in 2019–20, with SCIS provisioning data for over 94 per cent of all customer book requests.

SCIS extends its support for schools through a comprehensive suite of professional development webinars for subscribers and the regular publication of *Connections* magazine.

Online National Assessment Platform

Federal, state and territory education ministers agreed that all schools will transition from the current paper-based National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) to NAPLAN Online in order to provide a better and more precise assessment that is more engaging for students. State and territory education authorities will determine when their schools move online. The current plan is for all schools to transition to NAPLAN Online by 2022.

NAPLAN Online provides better assessment, more precise results and a faster turnaround of information. The assessments can run through a real-time internet connection or onscreen without an internet connection.

ESA is responsible for the development and ongoing operation of the Online National Assessment Platform (ONAP) to deliver the NAPLAN Online and NAP sample assessments in science literacy, civics and citizenship and information and communication technology.

Significant enhancements have been delivered during the year, including implementation of a new web application firewall (WAF), centralised performance monitoring (CPM) and ongoing development of low/no bandwidth (LNB) solutions.

ESA supported ACARA in using the assessment platform to deliver the NAP: Civics and Citizenship main study test, held from 14 October to 1 November 2019. Approximately 339 Year 6 classes and 324 Year 10 classes, drawn from schools across Australia, participated. A total of 13,250 students sat the assessments.





7

Strengthening our connections

Engaging our stakeholders

ESA is known as a trusted strategic partner that helps stakeholders to achieve their goals.

Consultation is key to understanding stakeholder needs and providing practical, effective products and services to meet those needs. User-centred design is embedded in our processes. We undertake rigorous market research and stakeholder consultation to design and develop products and services. User feedback and ongoing stakeholder steering groups regularly inform service improvement.

ESA staff are active members of Education Council working groups. The Board Chair and CEO have attended meetings of the Education Council and the Australian Education Senior Officials Committee (AESOC) and continued to engage with individual ministers and department CEOs to better understand the unique needs of all jurisdictions.

ESA is committed to regular review of its performance via independent surveys of key stakeholders. Following the last such survey, which was conducted in November 2018, it was determined in 2020 to establish a baseline of stakeholder perceptions against a set of values and capabilities, to be replicated and expanded upon in future years to track changes in perception over time. Key results of the ESA 2020 'Voice of Education' Stakeholder Survey will be shared with our stakeholders in 2021.

International Women's Day

On Friday 6 March, ESA hosted a breakfast in celebration of International Women's Day. Our panel of ESA colleagues and guest speaker Jane Ward shared information on the day's history, as well as personal stories. Together we explored the importance of challenging stereotypes and gender bias through our work, with staff making pledges of action to help forge a more gender-equal world.

Reconciliation Action Plan

In May 2020 ESA launched our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), acknowledging our commitment to fostering respect, finding opportunities for reconciliation, and embedding reconciliation into our governance. Through the RAP process, ESA contributes to the goal of better educational and life experience outcomes, not only for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, but for all children in Australia.

ESA is privileged to have Keisha Leon – a proud Waanyi-Kalkadoon and Chinese woman, graphic designer and digital artist – as the cover artist and designer for our RAP. The cover artwork titled ‘Growing and learning’ represents the journey of growth and working together to co-create the future of education.

Actions taken to implement the RAP included:

- ensuring compliance with Commonwealth Procurement Rules and the Minimum Mandatory Indigenous Participation Requirement targets for Indigenous supplier use for ESA high value contracts
- expanding procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses and employment within ESA
- ensuring internal and external communication focuses on ESA’s commitment to reconciliation, including promotion of Reconciliation Australia’s Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education program via ESA News
- celebrating National Reconciliation Week. Although we were apart due to COVID-19, ESA staff came together in the spirit of this year’s theme, *In this together*, to develop a deeper understanding of our country and its first peoples.





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