



SILVER LINING FOUNDATION
A U S T R A L I A

Desert Mob Silver Lining School ANNUAL REPORT 2022

(based on 2021 data)

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BOARD CHAIR REPORT

This year, the Desert Mob Silver Lining School has provided great opportunities to the students and has seen solid outcomes with regards to students improving in attaining literacy and numeracy skills. The classrooms at the school are always very engaging with dinosaur bones and skeletons on display and lots of hands-on learning experiences for the students that are enrolled at the school.

Students have had numerous opportunities to learn cultural activities and participate in cultural camps which have been embedded into the school curriculum. It has been a wonderful opportunity to see how young people have grown through their learning at the school and how students are becoming confident learners.

It has been a difficult year for the Desert Mob Silver Lining School with Covid. Most First Nations communities in Queensland have had a reluctance to send their young people away from their community home to attend boarding schools because of Covid. Desert Mob Silver Lining School has seen several students being very apprehensive about returning to school and to the local Aboriginal Hostel in Barcaldine because of lock downs and the Covid threat.

I would like to thank all the staff who have had to go the extra mile to make sure that the school was Covid compliant and had much work to do in the community to assure families that attending school is in the best interest for the young people.



Nigel Daisy
BOARD CHAIR

SILVER LINING FOUNDATION AUSTRALIA

The Silver Lining Foundation Australia is a First Nation's charity working with Australian young people in areas of training and education. Established in 1999, the Foundation has been influential in helping to shape the lives of young Indigenous people in Queensland. The charity is governed by Indigenous people, and it runs programs on Traditional Land in Queensland.

Silver Lining Foundation Australia is committed to an Indigenous led response regarding the growing amount of disengaged young people in regional and remote Australia.

DESERT MOB SILVER LINING SCHOOL

The Desert Mob Silver Lining School is a small co-educational independent secondary school (7-12), located in Barcaldine, established to cater for the diverse learning needs of disenfranchised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners from the desert lands of Central and Western Queensland and across the Northern Territory border to the Alpurululam and Aramwelke communities and north to Katherine. The school delivers learning experiences that are culturally rich, age appropriate and academically achievable, while maintaining the integrity and intent of the Australian Curriculum.

Students are at the centre of our practice, with their needs, backgrounds, perspectives, and interests reflected in the learning programs.

The school networks with vocational educators, health care professionals, local businesses, and community service providers, working towards establishing better options for healthy and meaningful futures.

Desert Mob Silver Lining School acknowledges that United Nations statement regarding the *Right to [an] Education* that is “available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable.”¹ Furthermore the school aims to deliver a culturally appropriate education in consultation with community elders.



¹ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 13 – the Right to Education, UN Doc E/C.12/1999/10 (1999), paragraph 6–7. *Our Community*

Our Local Community

Desert Mob Silver Lining School is located 580 km west of Rockhampton, and 107km east of Longreach, in central Queensland. This is Yiningai Country, an Indigenous Nation of ancient art, ceremony and historic sites.

Barcaldine was first visited by non-indigenous people in 1846 and by 1860 pastoralists were establishing stations forcing aboriginal peoples from their land, and in many cases moving them to other places.



Community, Cultural and Family

Connectedness of family and community is fundamental for Indigenous communities. When events are scheduled, there is a strong tradition for the mob to gather. This may be for ceremonies, celebrations or country-specific occasions. Students have often missed mainstream school to participate in these cultural events. As cultural learning is essential to the learning program, many of these activities are embedded into our curriculum and participation in the experience is a vital part of our learning.

Our Young People

Students enrolling at the DMSLS reside at a local, aboriginal hostel where they hold the expectation that students will attend school every day. When students are required to return to their communities for family reasons, it is at least two days travel in addition to the days they are expected to remain on country.

The DMSLS understands the importance of these cultural expectations and supports students on their return to complete missed schoolwork.

The school offers a culturally appropriate, academically robust, hands-on, and highly individualised approach to learning which aims to prepare students for a transition to the workplace or further learning. The school welcomes both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.



Many students have been unable to successfully engage in other schooling options due to significant social, emotional, and learning needs. The school continues to work collaboratively with community services to ensure that wrap-around support is provided for young people and their families.

EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY AND AIMS

Statement of Philosophy

To empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to confidently navigate the two worlds they live in, by prioritising cultural learning and growth, alongside academic learning.

Aims

Desert Mob Silver Lining School aims to:

Embrace Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, cultural knowledge and wisdom to foster strong, positive identities for our young people.

Create a safe environment in which students can develop their emotional literacy, cultural knowledge, academic knowledge, skills and confidence to achieve their full potential so that they may contribute positively to their families, their communities and the broader society.

Provide opportunities for learning that have real world links to vocational outcomes.

Core Values

Desert Mob Silver Lining School core values are:

Resilience	The development of a robust, Indigenous context underpins all aspects of school life & learning.
Learning	Learning, and the joy and opportunities that it can bring to individuals and communities.
Community	Healthy communities where individuals feel valued.
Respect	Individual self-respect and respect for others, their property and their reputation.
Reconciliation	Reconciliation between first nation and second nation people.
Diversity	The world view & cultural perspective of all individuals and what this offers the whole community.
Personal excellence	the striving for personal excellence in all aspects of life.

Mission Statement

The purpose of Desert Mob Silver Lining School is to provide an educational environment in which young Indigenous people can grow culturally, emotionally, intellectually, and physically, empowering them to engage positively and successfully in their culture, their community, and the broader world.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy (2015)

Desert Mob Silver Lining School is an Indigenous led response to the ever-growing disengagement and educational gap of young Indigenous people. The local culture of the Nywaigi people and maintaining relationships of trust and respect are foundational in meeting the educational needs of our students.

The School's Education Program is guided by the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy (2015). The principles that underpin the strategy include:

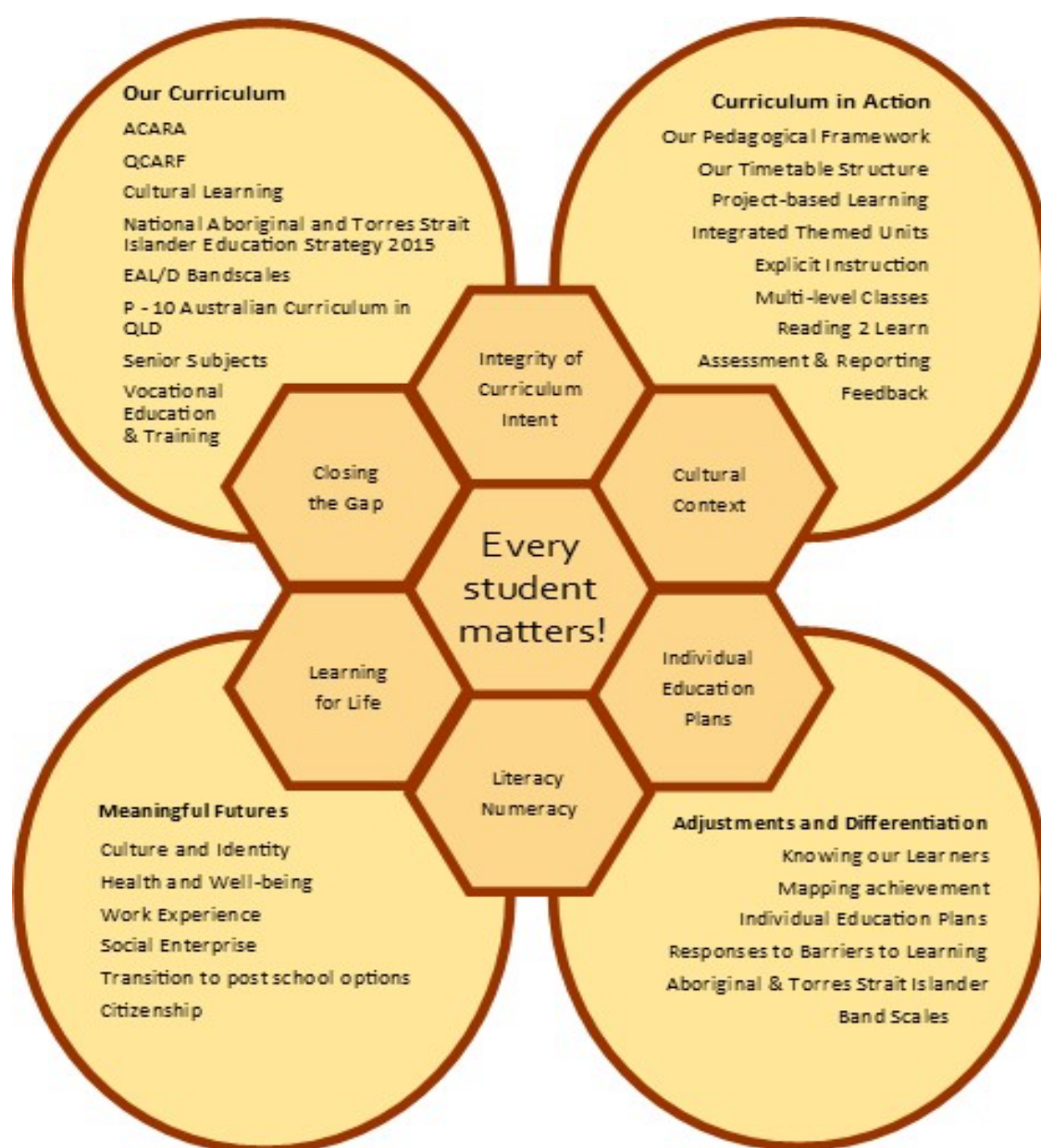
- ✓ High expectations for our young people to achieve their potential
- ✓ Equity of educational opportunities for young people in our community
- ✓ Accountable, transparent and responsive practices
- ✓ Recognition of our community's culture, histories, values and languages
- ✓ Time spent in our community to develop meaningful relationships
- ✓ Partnerships with the community to make decisions for the school
- ✓ A local approach which maximises educational outcomes
- ✓ Quality programs based on knowledge, evidence and research

The *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy* 'priority areas' that are reflected in our Education Programs include:

1. Culture and Identity
2. Partnerships
3. Attendance
4. Transitions
5. Literacy & Numeracy

PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The pedagogical framework creates the structure around the philosophy of learning and teaching that underpins our teaching practice. A set of guidelines enables teachers to evaluate and refine their practice. It is a consistent and commonly shared approach throughout the school and community. The pedagogical framework is designed to support teachers in the delivery of high-quality learning and teaching based on best practice research and relate it to the most effective way that students learn.



CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNING

Learning Areas and Subjects

Desert Mob Silver Lining School offers a flexible curriculum program which caters for the needs of students of all students. All students Years 7 -12 participate in a variety of *Immersed Learning* activities, *Wellbeing Program*, and *Cultural Learning* experiences in addition to the core learning areas.

Years 7-9 Curriculum

The School's Years 7-9 program has a significant focus on Literacy and Numeracy as well as providing students opportunities to engage with other learning areas in a way that is both culturally and developmentally appropriate.

The 7-9 Curriculum is founded in the Australian Curriculum including all ACARA Learning Areas, General Capabilities, Cross-Curricular Priorities. The Framework for Aboriginal Language and Torres Strait Islander Languages forms a foundation for the cultural learning program.

Senior Curriculum (Years 11-12)

The Senior secondary education program offered at Desert Mob Silver Lining School is based on the QCAA senior syllabus and includes and other courses recognised by the QCAA.

Students are given options regarding their senior program through the SET plan process.

In addition to the QCAA senior subjects and courses available, students may also continue with elements of the Year 7-10 program, including individual literacy and numeracy programs.

STUDENT WELLBEING

The wellbeing of students is foundation for developing a healthy learning community at Desert Mob Silver Lining School. Student wellbeing is achieved through a learning community where young people are active participants in the learning community, and where their views and ideas are valued. Students who do not feel safe and supported in their school environment are at greater risk of disengagement from the school and wider community.

STUDENT DISENGAGEMENT

Desert Mob Silver Lining School recognises the significant barriers students face on a daily basis which impact on their attendance, engagement and learning. Some of these barriers are influenced by factors including:

- *Remoteness*
Family & Cultural Needs
- *Social Disadvantage & Poverty*
- *Health & Wellbeing*
- *Disabilities*
- *English as an Additional Language or Dialect*

The school recognise that student disengagement is rarely caused by a single factor or event and is usually the result of a complex process which has resulted from barriers related to the individual, family, school, and wider community.

Desert Mob Silver Lining School provides a pathway to re-engagement through understanding the barriers to learning experienced by its students, then creating an environment to mitigate these factors. By understanding the powerful impact students' attitudes, motivation and behaviour toward learning; staff focus on student strengths, celebrate successes with the goal of alleviating shame and fear of failure.

YARNING CIRCLES AND RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Yarning Circles are an important process within both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. This practise allows a learning community to develop the skills for respectful and honest interactions where members can have a space to hear from others and the chance to respond. Students participate in a daily Yarning Circle where relationships are further developed, cultural learning takes place, and matters impacting on the community are discussed and resolved. The use of Yarning Circles provides the basis for building a healthy environment where Restorative Practices can be implemented.

Desert Mob Silver Lining School uses restorative approach to developing healthy learning communities where individuals are held responsible when they have caused harm to others. The approach provides opportunities for individuals to accept responsibility for their role in conflicts and take the necessary steps to repair the damage caused.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Desert Mob Silver Lining School is committed to providing the highest quality Indigenous Special Assistance Education for young people who have disengaged from education for a variety of complex reasons. The school acknowledges the privilege and responsibility that comes with providing students with another chance at education.

Desert Mob Silver Lining School is committed to the implementation of policies, processes and practical strategies which emphasise the importance of tracking and assessment, regular monitoring of students, and strategies for engaging relevant students.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The average student attendance rate for the whole school in 2021 was 93%, with 79% of students attending 90% or more of the time (attendance rates on My School have been averaged to include Ficks Crossing, Desert Mob and Cairns data together and will therefore be different to these figures). The average attendance rate for each year level has not been included due to the low number of students in each year level.

The school implements a variety of evidence-based models and strategies to promote the engagement of student with complex needs in the teaching and learning process These models include:

- ✓ Breakfast and Lunch Program
 - ✓ Student Centred Approach
 - ✓ Attachment Informed Schooling
 - ✓ Restorative Practices
 - ✓ Cultural Learning
 - ✓ Connecting with Country
 - ✓ Explicit or Direct Instruction
 - ✓ Learning to Learn
-
- Education Support staff who undertake wellbeing check-ins for students and families
 - Clear communication with students and parents/carers regarding expectations around school attendance and school policy for approved absences
 - Communication with parents/carers regarding school absenteeism
 - Ongoing tracking of absenteeism to identify students who require early intervention and family support strategies to maximise school attendance (e.g., initiating home visits and support and advice from community elders)
 - Proactive monitoring of student attendance including community and family visits at the end of each term
 - Working with students, parents/carers, and other stakeholders to identify barriers to school attendance, and strategies to overcome these barriers
 - Notification to relevant government agencies when reporting of extensive absenteeism or non-attendance is required (e.g., Centrelink, EQ Regional Office)

NAPLAN RESULTS

In 2021 there were a total of three Year 9 students who participated in the National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy. The small number of participants and available background data meant that there were 'no comparisons available' for students with similar backgrounds, therefore, results cannot be provided.

YEAR 10 – 12 RETENTION RATES

Desert Mob Silver Lining School was unable to report on retention rates for the period of 2019 - 2021 as the school was not in operation in 2019.

YEAR 12 OUTCOMES

Desert Mob Silver Lining School were proud to have 5 students graduate Year 12 in 2021.

- ✓ All 5 students were awarded a Senior Education Profile & Senior Statement
- ✓ All 5 students had gained points towards the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) to continue working towards with post-school studies.

POST SCHOOL DESTINATIONS

This data will be available by September 2022.

OUR STAFF

In 2021 Desert Mob Silver Lining School had 2 teaching staff (FTE 2.0) and 4 non-teaching staff (FTE 2.3) on campus. An additional 7 staff provided the school with support from head office (allocated FTE 1.25). Our staff operate as a collaborative professional team, sharing a wide range skills and experience in supporting young people with diverse backgrounds and learning needs. The school employed 5 Indigenous staff; 3 who worked on campus and 2 providing remote support. The average attendance rates for staff in 2021 was 97%. *(Please note, in 2021 staffing rates for Barcaldine/Desert Mob were reported by My School as part of Silver Lining School – Ficks Crossing.)*

	Teaching Staff	Non-teaching Staff
Number of Staff	2	4
Full-time equivalent	2	2.3

STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Learning	Professional Standards Included	# Staff
First Aid	4, 6, 7	6
Child Protection	4, 6, 7	6
Curriculum, Teaching and Learning	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	2
ISQ Indigenous School Leaders Forum	3, 4, 5, 6, 7	1

SCHOOL FUNDING

Information regarding the school's funding sources can be found at the My School website www.myschool.edu.au



SILVER LINING FOUNDATION
A U S T R A L I A

Desert Mob Silver Lining School acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of this country throughout Australia, and their connection to land and community.

We pay our respect to all Traditional Owners, and to their Elders past, present and emerging.