



SOCIAL
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FINAL REPORT

Evaluation of the TAEG-School Based Traineeships Program – 2016-19

For the National Indigenous Australians Agency

December 2020

Social Compass

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Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the many lands to which Indigenous participants in this evaluation belong. We pay our respect to your culture and Elders past, present and future. We are thankful to the many Indigenous people who participated in this research from all across Australia, in particular students and their families who gave us their time and shared with us their stories.

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Disclaimer

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Acronyms

AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
FASD	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders
GTO	Group Training Organisation
HEC	Higher Education Certificate
HSC	High School Certificate
HREC	Human Resource Ethics Committee
IAS	Indigenous Advancement Strategy
ICSEA	Index of Community Socio-educational Advantage
ICYP	Indigenous Youth Careers Pathways
JLEP	Jobs, Land and Employment Program
NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
NRL	National Rugby League
PMC	Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
QA	Quality Assurance
QCE	Queensland Certificate of Education
RSAS	Remote School Attendance Strategy
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SBAT	School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship
SBT	School Based Traineeship
S2W	School to Work
SMART	Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-framed
TAEG	Tailored Assistance Employment Grants
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VETiS	Vocational Education and Training in Schools

Executive summary

The Tailored Assistance Employment Grants School Based Traineeships (TAEG-SBT) program is an educational and employment pathway designed to improve Year 12 completion rates and long term employment outcomes. It is a sub-program under Tailored Assistance Employment Grants (TAEG) – a flexible employment approach that aims to get more Indigenous people into work, being a part of the Australian Government’s Indigenous advancement strategy (IAS) program 1.1. Through the program participants gain hands-on work experience, off-the-job vocational training, and have the opportunity to complete a nationally recognised qualification (usually Certificate II or III) while completing their secondary school studies. This can build young people’s capability for an effective transition from school to work or further study. Since commencement in 2016 the program has funded 18 service providers to support approximately 2,000 Indigenous trainees at a total cost of \$13.9m as at 30 June 2020.

The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) engaged Social Compass to evaluate the TAEG-SBT from 2016-2019 focusing on the following objectives.

1. The appropriateness of program design and implementation.
2. The extent to which expected outcomes of the SBT program have been achieved (effectiveness).
3. How efficiently the program funding has been used and the implications for policy and future impact.

Methodology

The evaluation is theory based using a Program Theory of Change to describe how the key program outcomes are achieved (Appendix A). The evaluation addresses the three evaluation objectives using the following key evaluation questions.

Evaluation objective	Evaluation questions
Appropriateness	1.1 How appropriate is the design of the SBT program in meeting its objectives? 1.2 How well has the SBT program been implemented?
Effectiveness	2.1 To what extent have the expected outcomes of the SBT program been achieved? 2.2 Have there been any unintended outcomes/ consequences associated with the program?
Efficiency	3.1 How efficiently has the program funding been used?

Data Collection and analysis

Consistent with a mixed methods approach, the data collection included a literature review, interviews, document review including analysis of provider progress reports, statistical analysis of program data and national VET data, surveys and case studies. Data from all sources were triangulated to inform the evaluation findings. Interview numbers were found to be sufficient to enable key themes to be identified relating to program delivery. This meant data saturation was achieved – i.e. no new themes emerged from additional interviews or surveys. In total there were 74 interviews and 48 surveys across all states and territories, including within urban, regional and remote areas.

Limitations

The evaluation had several limitations.

- The program data of trainee outcomes was incomplete and unreliable due to poor database design and data entry practices. To ameliorate these deficiencies to the extent possible, extensive analysis of two 'free text' fields enabled the creation of new outcomes variables that provide important quantitative evidence regarding the program's success (See Appendix E).
- The impact of Covid-19 reduced the ability to undertake interviews and surveys. Specifically, only four jurisdictions (New South Wales, Tasmania, Northern Territory and South Australia) gave permission for data to be collected directly from schools and survey rates were reduced by additional workloads caused by Covid-19.
- There was potential bias in results as the 20 trainee evaluation participants were voluntary, therefore they were likely to be the more successful and higher achieving trainees. They nevertheless confirmed many aspects of the underlying program theory including: student disengagement from school; having to deal with multiple complex barriers; coming from a disadvantaged background; the benefits of 'hands on' learning; and the transformative personal development from the responsibilities of employment in an adult work environment.

Findings and recommendations

The evaluation identifies key themes/findings and subsequent recommendations across the three evaluation objectives of appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency.

A stand-alone list of recommendations is provided at Appendix B, grouped by recommendation types.

Evaluation objective 1	Understanding the appropriateness of program design and implementation
Key themes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of tailored, holistic, wrap-around mentoring support is the centrepiece of program design as it addresses barriers that reduce trainees' capacity to complete/participate in the program. • TAEG-SBT can be culturally affirming for trainees improving engagement with vocational/training opportunities and levels of confidence. • Trainees with multiple and complex needs generally require a higher level of tailored support. • The program objectives are described in 'deficit language rather than strength based language.' • There is limited evidence of program co-design with Indigenous communities and no current provision for a trainee voice preventing improvements in design and delivery. • NIAA/Provider relationships could be improved in order to improve program implementation.

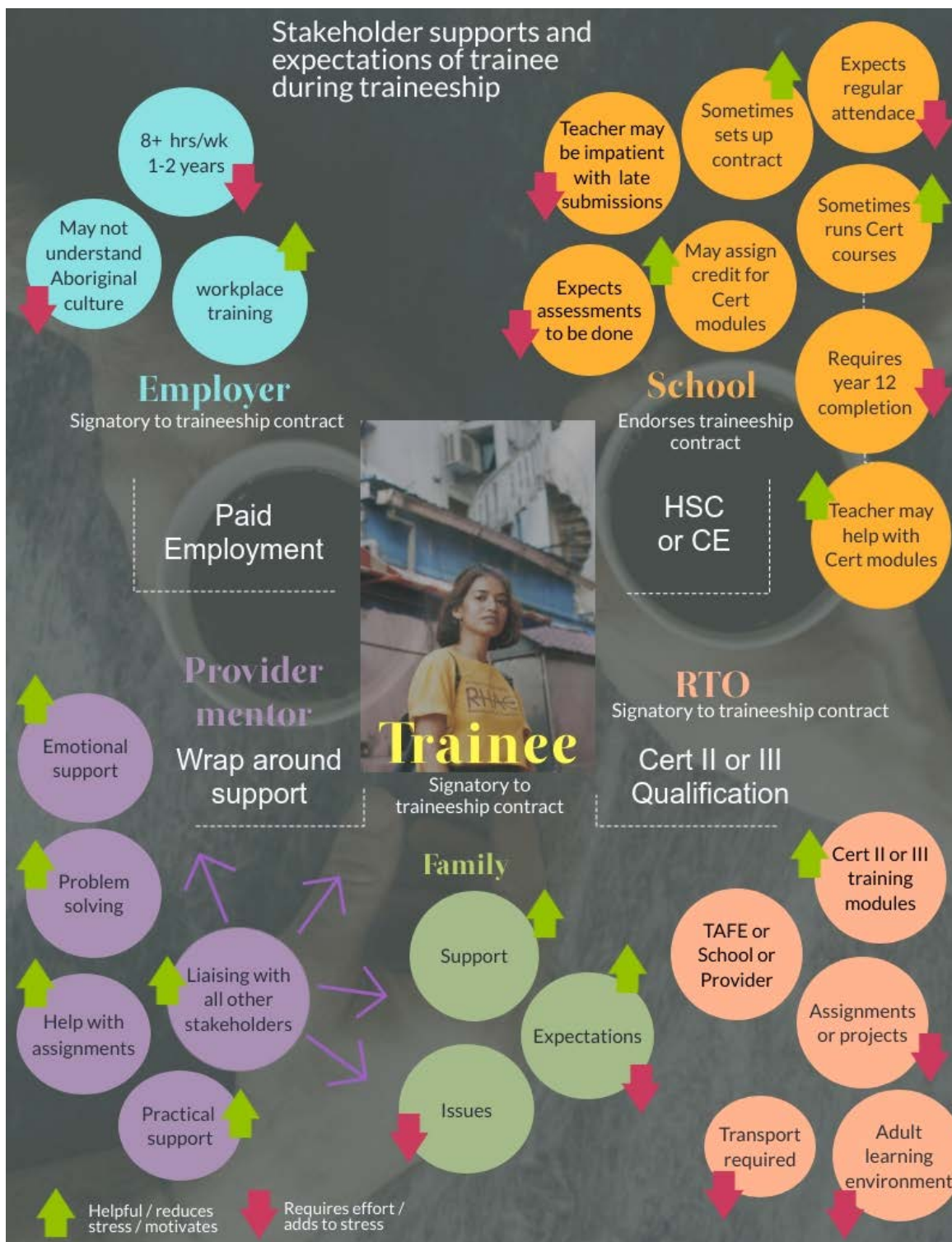
TAEG-SBT trainees are Indigenous students in Years 10-12 choosing to take a vocational pathway at school. They are a highly diverse cohort; differing in attitudes to school, place of residence, career aspirations, personal and family circumstance, the barriers they face and their support needs. They range from highly disengaged from education and at risk of leaving school engaged but facing challenging personal circumstances, to engaged and well supported. Flexibility in program delivery allows providers to tailor their programs to accommodate this diversity.

The NIAA funds 18 intermediary service providers' ('provider's') to deliver tailored support to Indigenous trainees. The providers role primarily consists of mentoring trainees at work and at school to address any barriers, and facilitating communication between employers, schools and RTOs with the trainee and their family. Providers vary in size, location, corporate structure, and ways of working (see Section 5.2.4). Providers

support traineeships in diverse fields including banking, travel, retail, sport, health, education and environment.

The employment of Indigenous mentors to provide a cultural aspect to the program is a common design feature across providers. The literature confirms the value of mentoring in meeting the needs of disadvantaged students. The complexity and diversity of trainees' support needs (see Figure 1: Stakeholder supports and expectations of trainees) supports the centrepiece of the program design – the provision of tailored, holistic, wrap-around mentoring support.

Figure 1: Stakeholder supports and expectations of trainees



The program design of TAEG-SBT has aspects that are culturally affirming, including the provision of culturally appropriate support by Indigenous mentors. This is important given employers and schools can lack the cultural competence necessary to keep trainees engaged. Indigenous providers can so enhance the cultural element when they provide traineeships on-country with an Indigenous employer. Additionally, the ‘hands on’ practical learning embedded in traineeships, in an area of interest to the trainee, is more consistent with Indigenous pedagogies than classroom learning.

Key Finding 1: The focus on supporting Indigenous trainees to take a vocational pathway at school, the provision of tailored mentoring support, the flexibility to apply funds in ways that are responsive to individual needs, and the attention given to cultural affirmation and safety, are features of the program design valued by all stakeholders (see Figure 1). The program logic captures these aspects well.

Key Finding 2: Except for the three Indigenous providers, there is limited evidence of service co-design with Indigenous communities and no provision for a trainee voice. The literature identifies that the input of service users into program design and enhancements maximises appropriateness and effectiveness (see Section 3.2 and Recommendation 6).

Key Finding 3: Current program design, as illustrated by the current program logic, does not fully cater for the causes of student disadvantage:

- The appropriateness of targeting of disadvantaged and disengaged using the Index of Community Socio-educational Advantage (ICSEA) (i.e. schools with a score less than 1000) is contested. Not all Indigenous students at these schools are disadvantaged and some disadvantaged students attend schools that have an ICSEA above 1000 (see Section 3.4).
- The program design does not allow a higher level of resourcing for students with more complex needs related to their circumstances and level of disadvantage. This can result in higher dropout rates for this cohort of students (see Section 3.5.2).
- Program objectives are not described in a S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time framed format) which is inconsistent with good management norms. Further, the target group is described using deficit (e.g. ‘disengaged’) rather than strength-based language which contradicts the actual program reality.

Recommendation 1A: That the current funding model be replaced with a tiered model to better resource provision of intensive support for trainees with multiple and complex needs (See Section 3.5.2).

Recommendation 1B: That the role of the ICSEA in determining program eligibility be reviewed in order to improve program reach and impact.

Recommendation 1C: That program objectives be written in a SMART format using strengths based language, clearly articulating the full range of employment, education and personal development outcomes as articulated in the program logic.

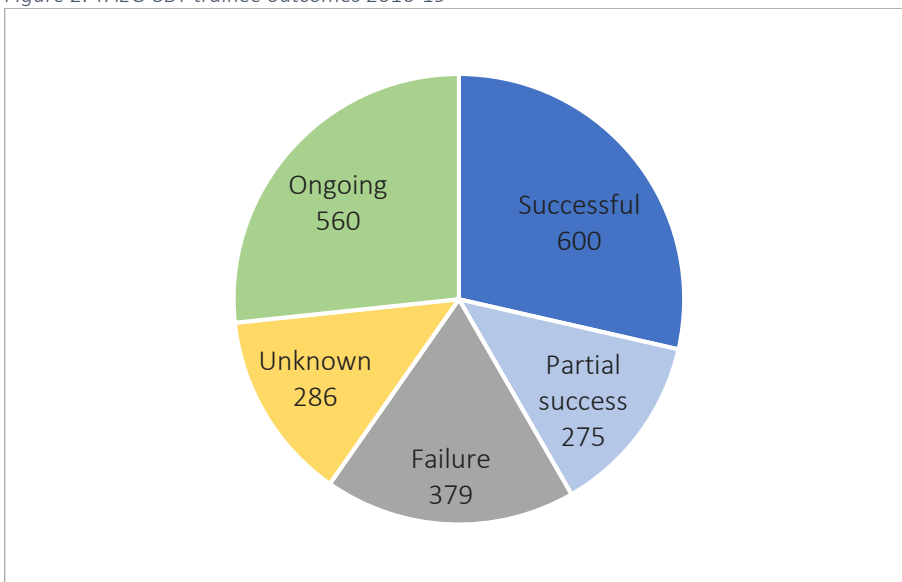
Key Finding 4: The working relationship and contractual arrangements between providers and the NIAA is important for effective implementation. In some cases the relationship was not effective at the local level with lengthy time-frames for decision making, coupled with short term funding agreements, and some indications of lack of support (see Section 3.6).

Recommendation 2: That the NIAA undertake an annual review process with providers to understand what is and is not working, why this is the case, and, where appropriate, identify strategies for improvement.

Evaluation objective 2	Understanding the extent to which expected outcomes of the SBT program have been achieved
Key themes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor data quality and an inadequate data platform limit the breadth and reliability of trainee outcome data. • Currently there is a lack of capacity to monitor participant outcomes at 26 weeks which reduces the ability to understand long term impacts of program. • Despite these limitations, the program demonstrates promising outcomes for 70% of program participants. • Students disengaged with school and at risk of dropping out can be re-engaged through their participation in a practical traineeship. • The program enhances the skills and attitudes that prepare trainees for work and can lay the pre-conditions for future employment. • The quality of mentoring is variable, with the strength of the personal relationship between mentor and trainee of critical importance. TAEG-SBT does not set professional standards for mentors or require they be trained meaning some trainees may not be effectively supported.

Figure 2 shows the outcomes for TAEG – SBT from 2006-2009, including 560 trainees ongoing in the program and 286 for whom their outcome is unknown. Six hundred trainees were successful in completing both their traineeship and Year 12. A further 275 were partially successful, for example, completing Year 12 without attaining a traineeship or leaving school to take up employment. When compared with the 379 trainees who did not complete the program, the overall TAEG-SBT success rate (excluding the ongoing and unknowns) is 70%. There was very limited evidence available of post traineeship outcomes at 26 weeks, with only 22 (4%) recorded in the data platform.

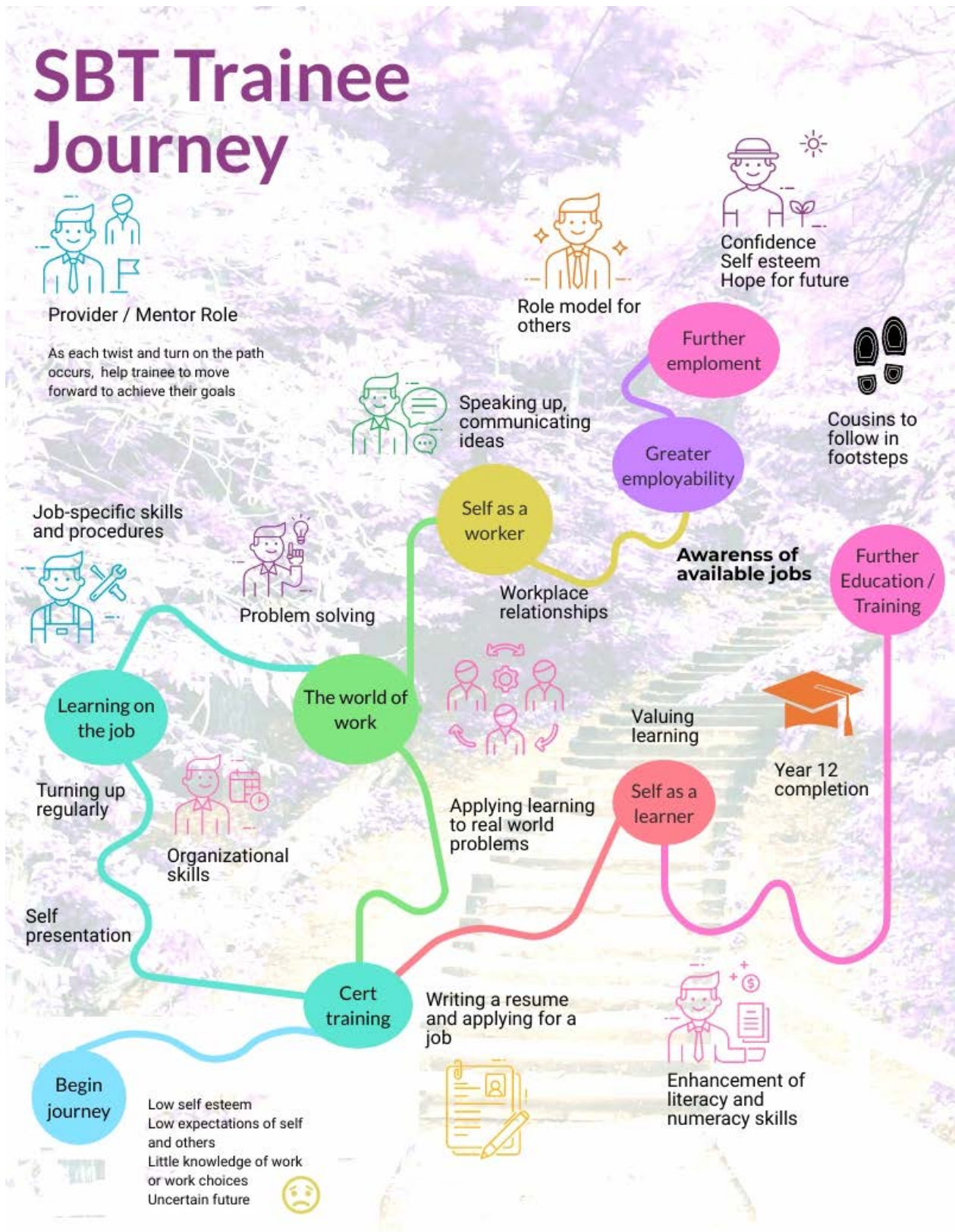
Figure 2: TAEG-SBT trainee outcomes 2016-19



This evaluation did track post-school employment and further education outcomes for the 20 former trainees interviewed. This showed high rates of success – 90% were employed and half of them were also doing further education (see Table 14, Section 4.3.2). These outcomes are indicative of what is achievable where effective implementation of the program provides flexible and tailored support specific to the trainee’s context (see Sections 4.2-4.5). As noted these results do not necessarily indicate broader trends due to small sample size (1%) and those trainees that interviewed are likely to be more engaged in the program.

TAEG-SBTs also have similar levels of success across all remoteness categories: metropolitan (60%), inner regional (62%), outer regional (71%), remote and very remote (61%). The relative success of TAEG-SBT in remote and very remote regions is surprising as generally Indigenous students in these regions do worse educationally than those in other regions. This success applies across all occupational areas and indicates that TAEG-SBT can be a promising way to address disparities in schooling outcomes in remote areas particularly when it is targeted to vocation/employment opportunities which are locally available.

Figure 3: TAEG-SBT Trainee Learning Pathway



The majority of stakeholders (82%) identified positive employment outcomes from TAEG-SBT particularly trainees (95%) and employers (89%). The program was found to lead to positive personal development outcomes (82%) particularly for trainees and family members (100%). These are important findings as the literature identifies lack of confidence as a major barrier for Indigenous people at work. The program design that broadens trainee networks to include adult working people enables them to acquire work references as

well as social, emotional and practical support including the mutual support of their peers (see Section 4.3). The *TAEG-SBT Learning Pathway Infographic* (Figure 3) represents these learnings.

The main strength of TAEG-SBT identified by the interviewees (25%) is that it equips trainees for work by small increments over time, not suddenly all at once at the point when students leave school and enter the workforce. All stakeholder groups identified that TAEG-SBT graduates with a traineeship qualification and substantial work experience have an advantage over other Year 12 graduates.

TAEG-SBT was also found to have positive inter-generational effects. Thirty-three (45%) interviewees stated (including family members (71%), employers (56%) and NIAA staff (57%)) that when trainees work in businesses such as banks, airlines, pharmacies and childcare this became a source of community pride and optimism (Section 4.2.4). In such instances TAEG-SBT is contributing to breaking the cycle of inter-generational unemployment.

The program does also have some negative unintended consequences. It can be demoralising for participants (according to three providers and one school) if work placements fall through, or post-school work opportunities do not materialise. However, there is no evidence this is a common occurrence.

Key Finding 5: While the program logic identifies the importance of program performance management to monitor the effectiveness of the program, there is no identification of the mechanisms to achieve this such as the use of routine data for monitoring purposes. The TAEG-SBT program has poor data collection processes and a data platform which is not designed specifically for the program meaning it is difficult to understand program outcomes at a broad level. In particular:

- the data platform does not have sufficient fields to record a range of successful education and employment outcomes
- there is limited quantitative program data about post-program further education and employment outcomes post-program.

Recommendation 3: That NIAA install a data platform customised to the program design, objectives and intended outcomes of TAEG-SBT and this data be used for monitoring, improvement and accountability, including in the annual provider progress review (see Recommendation 2 and Appendix E).

Recommendation 4: That the program impacts are measured when trainees complete the program with a post-school employment and further education commencement outcome, in addition to exploring better ways to record longer term employment and education outcomes.

Key Finding 6: TAEG-SBT mentoring support is an important part of program design due to the strength of the personal relationships the mentor develops with the trainee and their family, school and workplace which are critical to success. However, interview responses from 14 stakeholders suggest variable mentoring quality. Staff turnover and difficulty in accessing professional development opportunities are contributing factors. These findings about mentor quality and workforce development are absent from the program logic

Recommendation 5: Given the critical importance of the mentor role, providers need to be accountable for ensuring their mentors are appropriately trained/supervised (including potentially accredited). This could be assessed prior to providing funding and at the annual progress reviews.

Key Finding 7: Stakeholders in strategy roles in departments of education, school staff and other stakeholders identified the value of traineeships in disadvantaged communities. Some areas are underserved having traineeships in a narrow range of fields (see Section 4.3).

Recommendation 6: Given the evidence of areas of SBT undersupply and lack of choice, as well as the lack of Indigenous community engagement in program design and implementation:

- a) a TAEG-SBT pilot demonstration project be conducted to test the potential of a community-based co-design approach to building the number of traineeships and broadening the range of occupational choice.
- b) the NIAA take a strategic approach to identifying employment sectors available at a regional level to fill potential gaps, drawing upon understanding of what works effectively in other regions (for example, explore the systematic roll-out of ranger based traineeships across Indigenous ranger organisations)

Evaluation objective 3	To understand how efficiently the program funding has been used and the implications for policy and future impact
Key themes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAEG-SBT provides value for money by leveraging resources and support for trainees from a range of stakeholders and collectively this prevents vulnerable trainees from becoming long-term unemployed. • TAEG-SBT has lower unit cost than other NIAA employment programs, due to the shared responsibility taken to the program across multiple stakeholders. • Mentoring complements, but does not replace support networks trainees have at school, at home and in their community. • Success rates of providers are highly variable. The better performing providers often have capacity due to prior experience with traineeships and established relationships with stakeholders. • The program design does not specify any particular trainee selection process or criteria or resource the initial trainee engagement phase of the program. Attention to recruitment, carefully matching students to traineeships, may contribute to better retention. • There is minimal overlap between complementary school based services which stakeholders use with little evidence of unnecessary duplication. • There is no process for providers and other stakeholders to share lessons learnt about effective practice or gauge their relative success.

TAEG-SBT provides value for money by leveraging resources and support for trainees from schools, training services and employers, and by reducing the need for future remedial funding from government. According to 68% of interviewees program mentoring supplements, but does not replace, support networks trainees may already have at school, at home and in their community; it fills gaps and value adds. At interview 56 stakeholders (76%), including 15 trainees (75%) made positive comments about the future impact of the program, but 31 stakeholders (42%) identified ways to enhance efficiency and impact.

TAEG-SBT has lower unit cost than other NIAA funded employment programs. Comparisons were made with TAEG Employment Grants and Vocational Training and Employment Centres (VTEC). TAEG-SBT is around a half to one third the cost per participant. However, this is not necessarily evidence of greater efficiency. Differences in the programs such as variable intensity of the intervention and the different foci and approach limit comparability.

Better retention is found to be created by sound attention to recruitment in the initial engagement phase, carefully matching students to traineeships. Currently, program design does not specify any particular trainee selection process or criteria which reduces the ability to implement the program effectively.

Program success rates are highly variable (see Table 21) suggesting scope for some providers to improve their efficiency and for NIAA to assess provider performance. Better performing providers have prior experience with traineeships and established relationships with all stakeholders and appear to invest in critical

relationships. They have a close, often pre-existing, relationship with the trainees and families they work with. They have the respect and confidence of the community. This is particularly important as the evaluation found school engagement with the program to be highly variable. Better performing providers typically have a strong relationship with the schools and their leadership. By contrast other providers new to the space struggle because they lack these pre-existing relationships.

The provider with the highest success rate has developed a service model with innovative features. A single teacher works with each trainee enabling a supportive trusting personal relationship to develop. There is also a peer support strategy linking trainees across employers, regions and state borders. But perhaps most crucially this provider is also the employer, RTO and the school all combined. This eliminates inter-agency coordination challenges. This supports the principle of the importance of relationship building and building social networks.

There is a lack of ongoing provider performance monitoring, a trainee feedback mechanism, and little opportunity for sharing of effective practice from these better performing providers, to better inform understandings of ‘What works for whom under what circumstances?’

A Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis would also be of benefit to measure the longer term economic, social, and cultural value of the program. This will assist in efficiency analyses in the future. In the case of TAEG-SBT it should include an assessment of outcomes, and also long-term value in diverting at-risk youth. Failure to transition from school to work places a substantial future financial burden on government.

Key finding 8: The TAEG-SBT program logic includes “partnership with schools” as a program activity, but current arrangements do not ensure close collaboration in practice (see Section 5.2.4). A traineeship is a substantial 2-year undertaking accompanied by rigorous study and work requirements. Students, families, schools and employers need to understand what is required and make informed decisions before they commit. In particular:

- not all schools participating in TAEG-SBT demonstrate a strong commitment to the program
- the program design does not specify any particular trainee selection process or criteria
- there are opportunities for providers to learn lessons about program design and operation from each other, from other mentoring programs, and from their trainee participants (see Section 5.3.4).

Recommendation 7: With the critical relationship with schools being of variable quality, that NIAA work with providers to formulate a draft template MOU agreement as a tool for use with schools in order to clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations (see Section 5.2.1).

Recommendation 8: That the current funding model be revised to better resource student recruitment, including the capacity of trainees and their families to make informed choices about the appropriateness of an SBT pathway for the trainee’s circumstances and the commitment and preparation that it will require (see Section 5.2.5).

Recommendation 9: Given program quality could be enhanced through TAEG-SBT providers and other mentoring programs learning from each other’s successes and challenges, that NIAA foster a collaborative evidence-based culture of continuous improvement through:

- a) the development of a community of practice
- b) institution of a mechanism for trainee input (see Section 5.3.4).

Key Finding 9: A Social Rate of Return (SROI) analysis has not been undertaken to measure the long-term economic, social, and cultural value of the program. This is not currently possible with the poor data collection practices identified in this evaluation. This would be valuable to understand the savings to government that

result from the program's efficacy in diverting youth from long-term unemployment and supporting community change.

Recommendation 10: Following implementation of Recommendation 2 and subsequent collection of robust data, conduct an SROI to determine the TAEG-SBT program's rate of return and better understand its place in the wider VETiS system. This would include assessment of the program's success in transitioning trainees into employment and/or further education and training, and in diverting at-risk youth to sustainable education and employment outcomes (see Section 5.2.2).

Recommendation 11: That the NIAA consider the critiques and suggested amendments of the program logic made throughout this report and ensure their incorporation into the future design and implementation of the program, as well as an updated program logic.

Conclusion

Overall, all stakeholders report positive views of the TAEG-SBT program. The core strength of TAEG-SBT is its demonstrated capacity to provide trainees with work experience, qualifications, life skills and personal attributes that give them an advantage in competing for employment. The program has demonstrated a capacity to enhance culturally safe learning and working environments. Provision of tailored individual mentoring support is a necessary strategy given the diverse variety of needs and other barriers that many Indigenous trainees face.

There is room for program improvement in several areas including greater community and trainee input into processes of program co-design, fostering a community of practice amongst providers to ensure lessons learnt about effective practice are shared, and greater investment in the professional development of mentors. This is consistent with the broader policy context. Recently re-worked '*Close the Gap*' targets have placed a sharp spotlight on the need to demonstrate that programs are both co-designed and effective.

Further, the needs of trainees with multiple and complex needs are underfunded. There is a need to introduce a more robust process of data collection and analysis to enable effective performance monitoring of providers and to inform future evaluations. Conducting a comprehensive SROI will provide much better information on the relative value of TAEG-SBT in particular, and SBTs generally, as part of the VETiS offerings identified as a critical part of Australian education futures. The program logic also needs updating to address gaps identified in the course of this evaluation.

Finally, SBT has demonstrated that the opportunity to do meaningful paid work in an adult learning environment, and committed professional mentoring support, can inspire and motivate trainees; supporting them on a positive life trajectory.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The TAEG-SBT program is an educational and employment pathway designed to improve Indigenous student Year 12 attainment rates and employment outcomes. In 2016 it replaced the Indigenous Youth Careers Pathways (IYCP) program. Since commencement in 2016, this NIAA program has funded 18 intermediary service providers to support approximately 2,000 Indigenous stakeholders at a total cost of \$13.9m as at 30 June 2020.

TAEG-SBT participants potentially gain hands-on work experience, off-the-job vocational training, and have the opportunity to complete a nationally recognised qualification (usually Certificate II or III) while completing their secondary school studies. It therefore can prepare young people for the transition from school to work or further study.

This evaluation tests this capacity through examining the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of program design. This evaluation informs understandings of:

- program design and activities implemented to date;
- outcomes (both intended and unintended) and factors contributing to the achievement and non-achievement of outcomes; including characteristics of locations, participants and providers
- how the program can be improved to have greater impact and what the implications are for future design and implementation.

1.2 History of SBTs

School Based Traineeships (SBTs), also referred to as School Based Traineeships and Apprenticeships (SBATs), were introduced in the mid-1990s as one part of the broader trend towards Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) (Klatt, Clarke & Dulfer 2017, p.480). Initially uptake was slow, but by 2013 enrolments had grown to 21,000 students (Klatt, Clarke & Dulfer 2017, p.480). The expectation is that SBT will simultaneously address workforce shortages (Conway, Brazil & Losurdo, 2012) while at the same time engaging students at risk of leaving school (Polesel et al. 2017, p.283).

Traineeships consist of formal training with on-the-job work experience components. Full-time secondary students undertake paid part-time on-the-job training with an employer and complete off-the-job training with a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) (Misko et al. 2019, p.15). Most SBTs are completed at a Certificate II or III level (Dockery, Koshy & Stromback 2005, p.6). Klatt, Clarke & Dulfer, (2017, p.474) found stakeholders generally have a positive view of SBT.

Indigenous SBATs are programs targeted towards Indigenous students, with the aim of reducing the gap in Indigenous employment and education. Indeed, higher levels of education, including VET courses, are associated with greater Indigenous employment opportunities, higher income and broader social participation (Armstrong & Buckley 2011, p.62; (Biddle & Cameron 2012; Crawford & Biddle 2017). Increased rates of school completions and employment for Indigenous Australians are associated with considerable social, health and economic benefits (Gray, Hunter & Biddle 2014; Deloitte Access Economics 2014).

1.2.1 History of TAEG-SBT

Tailored Assistance Employment Grants (TAEG) are part of NIAA's overarching Jobs, Land and Economy Program (JLEP) initiative. JLEP was introduced in 2014 as part of the Australian Government's Indigenous

Advancement Strategy (IAS). JLEP assists working age people into jobs, supports Indigenous business enterprises, and enables economic and social benefits from effective use of Indigenous land.

TAEG offers three streams of flexible grant funding:

- TAEG Employment funds Indigenous employment projects
- TAEG Cadetships assist Indigenous tertiary students to engage in employment.
- TAEG School-Based Traineeships (TAEG-SBT) provides support to Indigenous school students choosing a vocational education and training (VET) pathway.

TAEG-SBT is a supported educational and employment pathway purposely designed to address the gaps in Year 12 attainment rates and in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. It prepares young people for the transition from school to work or further study. TAEG-SBT participants gain hands-on work experience, off-the-job vocational training, and have the opportunity to complete a nationally recognised qualification (Certificate I, II, III, IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma Level) while completing their secondary school studies.

TAEG-SBT is supplementary, designed to complement VET and school funding for SBTs. The program funds service providers and employers to respond to the needs of trainees. Providers work with schools to deliver tailored wrap around mentoring and other support to Indigenous students in Years 10, 11 and 12 for up to three years. Service providers funded by the program may assist with:

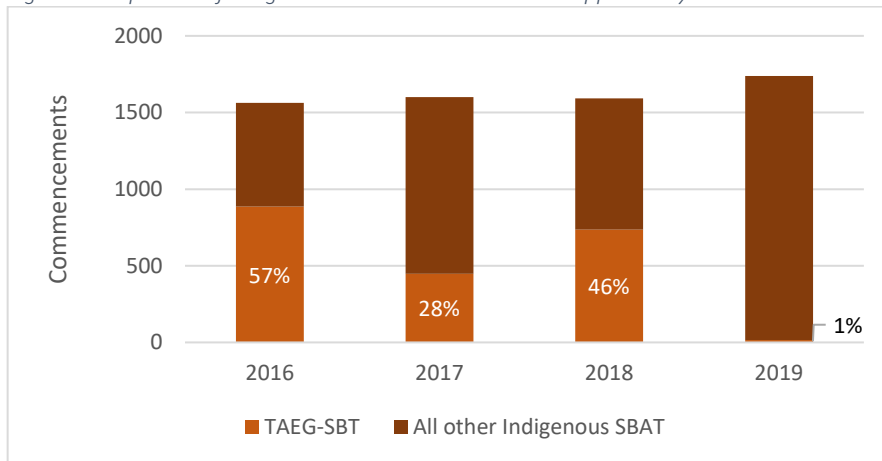
- arranging a suitable work placement for the trainee
- mentoring trainees at work and at school to identify barriers to education, employment and training and overcome them
- facilitating communication and relationships between trainees and their employers, schools, RTOs and families
- ensuring employment and training occur in culturally safe and affirming environments
- providing practical support with transport and work clothing
- bringing trainees together for peer support
- assisting trainees to access specialised support in areas such as tutorial assistance and social and emotional wellbeing.

Post-graduation employment support may also be provided for up to six months, post Year 12. Providers receive outcome payments aligned with milestones.

TAEG-SBT supported traineeships as a proportion of all Indigenous SBAT¹ commencements has varied over the years reflecting the variable funding schedule and timeframes (typically 2-3 years) of TAEG-SBT activities (Figure 4). The overall proportion of Indigenous SBAT for 2016-2019 that has been supported by TAEG-SBT is 2070 out of 4386 students, which is 32%. SBATs are part of a much larger focus on VETiS that includes 81,157 Indigenous students. TAEG-SBT constitutes approximately 2.5% of all Indigenous VETiS commencements.

¹ Note the use of the term SBAT for the NCVER data as it is not possible to distinguish apprenticeships from traineeships as they are included in the same dataset.

Figure 4: Proportion of Indigenous SBAT commencements supported by TAEG-SBT



Source: Apprentices and trainees - March 2020 accessed from National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) Oct 2020; TAEG SBT - FULL DATA SET 110520 and SBT from TAEG MLT 110520 received from NIAA May 2020 SBT enrolments were extracted per year according to the 'Activity Start Date' column.

1.3 Previously Commissioned Research and Evaluation

In 2015 EY Sweeney interviewed trainees and other stakeholders in the Indigenous Youth Careers Pathways (IYCP) program, the forerunner to TAEG-SBT. It found the provision of consistent mentoring support from service providers results in positive education and employment outcomes for Indigenous traineeship students (EY Sweeney 2015). Subsequently in 2019 NIAA commissioned Social Ventures Australia (SVA) to develop an Evaluation Strategy for TAEG-SBT. The evaluation questions and program logic they developed have been revised for this evaluation in consultation with NIAA.

2 Methodology

2.1 Evaluation Strategy

The methodology is theory based. That is understanding the causal pathways and chains of action that lead to the key program outcomes (Centre of Excellence for Evaluation (CDD), Government of Canada 2012). In particular, it focuses on building further understanding of the program theory and how the program logic can be used to test the links between activities and longer term outcomes through understanding the program's causal pathways.

2.2 Evaluation Objectives

The evaluation informs understandings of:

- how SBTs have been designed, and how the program activities have been implemented to date;
- the outcomes (both intended and unintended) that SBTs have contributed to, and the factors that explain the achievement and non-achievement of outcomes; including characteristics of locations, participants and providers; and
- how SBTs could be improved to increase impact and what the implications are for future program design and implementation.

2.3 Evaluation Questions

The evaluation findings are structured around evaluation questions which are provided in Table 1.

2.4 Theory of Change

Social Ventures Australia developed the current TAEG-SBT program logic (see Appendix A) in consultation with the NIAA and other stakeholders. As a theory based evaluation it provides a framework to assess findings and inform analysis. The evaluation has identified gaps in the program logic including a better understanding of the casual pathways to achieve outcomes and recommendations for activities that will improve both individual and system level outcomes.

2.5 Ethics and jurisdictional approvals

The Human Research Ethics Committee at the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies granted ethics approval for this evaluation. Participant Information Sheets were provided to all participants and written consent obtained to conduct interviews. Three Indigenous SBT Providers provided letters of support for the evaluation.

There was a requirement to alter the initial ethics approval due to staff changes and extended timelines because of Covid-19 impacts. Jurisdictional approvals were sought to undertake interviews with school staff and current participants. The impacts of Covid 19 on schools saw all jurisdictions except NSW suspend their approval processes for a significant period of the evaluation. New South Wales and Northern Territory provided approval in time for undertaking interviews with school staff. South Australia and Tasmania provided approval in time for limited surveys with schools to be undertaken. In addition, two members of the NIAA's Indigenous Evaluation Committee peer reviewed a draft of the evaluation.

Table 1: TAEG-SBT Evaluation questions

EVALUATION OBJECTIVE 1: Understand program design and implementation - APPROPRIATENESS DOMAIN	
QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS
<p>1.1 How appropriate is the design of the SBT program in meeting its objectives?</p> <p>1.2 How well has the SBT program been implemented?</p>	1.1.1 Does the SBT program’s design and its implementation meet its objectives and, if not, why? (*refer below)
	1.1.2 Who is the SBT program targeting? Is it filling a gap for students? What are the characteristics of the SBT providers and participants?
	1.1.3 To what extent has the program design supported cultural values and connection to culture?
	1.2.1 What has been done well and not well?
	1.2.2 What challenges and difficulties have we (NIAA and providers) encountered in implementing the program?
EVALUATION OBJECTIVE 2: Understand impact - EFFECTIVENESS DOMAIN	
<p>2.1 To what extent have the expected outcomes of the SBT program been achieved?</p>	2.1.1 What are the education and employment outcomes for students?
	2.1.2 To what extent does the traineeship pathway work for students in gaining employment and further education after Year 12?
	2.1.3 What regional characteristics (and job types) contributed to the success or otherwise of the program? To what extent have outcomes differed across different regions and job type?
	2.1.4 To what extent has the program supported participants’ well-being and participation in education and work?
	2.1.7 What are the key strengths and weaknesses of the program?
	2.1.8 What changes or enhancements to the program would enable delivery of better outcomes?
<p>2.2 Have there been any unintended outcomes associated with the program?</p>	2.2.1 What factors cause participants' non-achievement of outcomes, or negative outcomes and what adjustments were made?
EVALUATION OBJECTIVE 3: understand policy implications and potential for future impact.	
<p>3.1 How efficiently has the program funding been used?</p>	3.1.1 To what extent did the program deliver value for money?
	3.1.2 How can the program costs be better targeted to achieve the most impact, and to avoid duplication with other similar school based traineeship government-funded services?
<p>*SBT program objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide tailored support for disadvantaged or disengaged Indigenous secondary students in Years 10, 11 and 12 to stay in school and complete School Based Apprenticeships/ Traineeships (SBT) and; Support these students and their schools to balance their vocational and non-vocational requirements at school and their workplace, and during the transition from school into further education, training and/or employment 	

2.1 Evaluation Governance

Social Compass and NIAA established an Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) to guide the implementation and interpretation of findings of the evaluation. The role of the ERG was to provide the cultural authority (four out of ten members are Indigenous), feedback on the evaluation scope, review evaluation progress and findings, and discuss the implications for future directions of the program.

2.2 Literature Review

A good education provides the foundations for a successful career and contributes to overcoming disadvantage (Helme 2010; Hunter & Yap 2014). Higher levels of Indigenous education are correlated with improved wellbeing (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs 2017, p.10).

Initiatives directed towards addressing the educational and employment disadvantage of Indigenous Australians have a long history including with a range of programs and approaches. However, there is still limited literature definitively identifying effective programs and which features lead to education and employment outcomes.

Nevertheless the literature shows:

- effective programs need to be both responsive to the local labour market and tailored to the needs of individual trainees
- success depends on strong relationships between, and buy-in from, several stakeholders: providers, schools, employers, funders, families and communities
- holistic support is required because the barriers faced by many Indigenous students are multiple, complex and interrelated
- there is growing evidence youth mentoring has a positive impact, although further longitudinal research is required (Ware 2013, p.2).

2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The evaluation adopted a mixed-methods, systematically collecting data from multiple sources:

- telephone or video interviews with Indigenous SBT trainees, family members, intermediary service provider organisations staff (both management and mentors), schools, employers and NIAA staff
- service provider progress reports, a survey and case studies
- quantitative data provided by NIAA and NCVER
- extensive review of relevant literature and websites
- information and feedback from ERG and other meetings with NIAA.

Interviewee demographic information is summarised in Tables 2-4. Approximately half of the 74 interviewees were Indigenous, two thirds were female and the majority came from New South Wales and Queensland, consistent with the greater distribution of traineeships in these states. The 20 Indigenous trainees interviewed represented all states. Fourteen were metropolitan. Queensland had the greatest representation.

Table 2: Number of interview participants by participant type, Indigeneity and gender

Participant type	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Total
	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Employer	1	-	6	2	9
Family	7	-	-	-	7
NIAA	2	1	4	-	7
Other government	1	1	1	1	4
Provider	2	4	3	9	18
School	1	-	6	2	9
Trainee	14	6	-	-	20
Total	28	12	20	14	74

Table 3: Number of interview participants by participant type and state/territory

Participant type	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	Total	% of intended scope
Employer	-	6	-	3	-	-	-	9	90%
Family	-	3	-	3	1	-	-	7	Over 100%
NIAA	3	2	-	-	1	-	1	7	100%*
Other government	-	3	-	-	-	1	-	4	80%
Provider	-	9	-	4	-	-	5	18	Over 100%
School	-	5	4	-	-	-	-	9	90%
Trainee	-	5	-	7	5	2	1	20	80%
Total	3	33	4	17	7	3	7	74	

* Including four regional NIAA staff

Table 4: Former trainee interview participants by state/territory and regional status

Former trainees	Metro		Regional		Total
NSW	3		2		5
QLD	5		2		7
SA	5		-		5
TAS	-		2		2
VIC	1		-		1
Total	14		6		20

Evidence from the interviews was coded into themes using NVivo and these were used extensively to support the findings throughout the report. The themes were related to the program logic to help understand program efficacy and potential barriers to achieving outcomes. The interview themes are summarised in Appendix C.

Quantitative data was collected through two surveys. A stakeholder survey with 48 respondents whose demographic information is summarised in Table 5. The 48 respondents come from all states and territories and covered all geographic regions.).

Table 5: Regions represented by stakeholder respondents to surveys

Stakeholder role in SBT	N	State / Territory								Areas serviced*			
		NSW	QLD	VIC	WA	S A	NT	ACT	TAS	Metro	Outer metro	Regional	Remote or very remote
Employers	15	2	3	1	3	4	1	1	0	8	3	9	1
SBT Provider)	11	3	3	2	1	2	0	0	0	7	2	7	3
Mentor/Field Officer	5	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	3	0
School	9	4	0	0	0	4	0	0	1	4	1	3	1
NIAA	8	1	3	2	0	1	1	0	0	6	0	2	0
Total	48	12	11	5	4	12	2	1	1	28	6	24	5

*Stakeholders may work in more than one region

A second survey for provider managers was completed by eight out of 18 providers (44%). A survey of past trainees was also implemented. However, with only five respondents this data source was not used in the analysis. Data collection instruments are at Appendix D.

2.3.1 Limitations

Investments in Indigenous education are important contributors to improved economic participation and other positive outcomes in areas such as health, income, social participation and crime and justice (Ware 2013; Karmel et al. 2014). However a connection between the outcomes of any one program and broader population-level outcomes is yet to be empirically demonstrated (Karmel et al. 2014, p.3).

NIAA program data informing this evaluation is not clearly articulated in formats amenable to simple quantitative analysis and for a number of providers was not complete with large numbers of 'unknown' outcomes. This was despite interviews illustrating, for example, that some of the trainees in question had completed. To ameliorate these deficiencies extensive analysis of two 'free text' fields enabled the creation of new outcomes variables that provide important quantitative evidence for the success of the program. The processes of developing this outcome data and processes required for improvement and implementation of Recommendation 3 are provided in Appendix E.

Limited jurisdictional approvals due to Covid-19 impacts on approval processes meant that school perspectives were limited to four jurisdictions with one of these being received in the week before submission of the draft report. Late approvals meant there was minimal time to work with schools to identify current students that were over 18 years to engage in interviews or surveys. The evaluation therefore relied on participants who had completed.

While it was intended to obtain a larger voice of participants and families through an on-line survey it became apparent that providers did not maintain up to date contact details for the majority of their completed cohort.

Overall the stakeholder survey (providers, employers and schools) had a limited response with most providers reluctant to circulate beyond relevant staff. While a few providers did not engage at all with the evaluation those that did were supportive but, off the back of an extremely difficult year with Covid-19, were selective with regard to burdening their employer and school stakeholders with requests to complete the survey. While the resultant number of respondents are low and cannot be seen as representative, they are a diverse group of stakeholders with their responses complementing the interview data by strengthening the triangulation of results.

2.3.2 Analysis

Findings of this report are based on a triangulation and synthesis of evidence drawn from each of the data sources informing this report. No findings are made on the basis of evidence drawn from a single source. Interviews were analysed using applied themes based analysis; based on inductive and deductive approaches to help generate findings across the three evaluation objectives. Quantitative program data analysis helped explain trends but was limited by the lack of program outcome data.

2.3.3 Testing of Findings

In the course of the evaluation, preliminary findings were developed based on initial analysis of the evidence. These have been 'ground truthed' by the ERG through successive feedback loops. A feedback loop with SBT Providers allowed further refinement of the findings and recommendations.

3 Appropriateness of Program Design and Implementation

3.1 Overview and key findings

This section of the report considers the appropriateness of program design, specifically whether providers and the NIAA have implemented the program in the way articulated in the program logic and broader evaluation strategy.

The major design components were found to be appropriate, as they allowed providers the flexibility to deliver tailored wrap around support in a culturally appropriate way to a highly diverse cohort of Indigenous students, most from disadvantaged backgrounds. Nevertheless, some aspects of design including those not adequately articulated in the program logic need addressing to improve the likelihood of positive program outcomes (see Table 6). These include the use of the ICSEA as a proxy measure of student disadvantage, lack of rigour in selection processes, inadequate provision for trainees' with multiple and complex needs, and difficulties in the relationship between the NIAA and providers.

Table 6: Key themes identified from interview data relating to program appropriateness and design features.

Appropriateness	Trainee (20)	Family (7)	Employer (9)	Provider (18)	School (9)	Other (4)	NIAA (7)	Total (74)
Positive comments about program appropriateness	18 (90%)	7 (100%)	7 (18%)	16 (89%)	5 (56%)	4 (100%)	6 (86%)	63 (85%)
Negative comments about program appropriateness	3 (15%)	1 (14%)	6 (67%)	13 (72%)	6 (67%)	3 (75%)	5 (71%)	37 (50%)
Negative aspects of provider-NIAA relationship	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (44%)	0 (0%)	1 (25%)	4 (57%)	13 (18%)
Cultural appropriateness (employers, providers and program generally)	12 (60%)	2 (29%)	5 (56%)	12 (67%)	2 (22%)	1 (25%)	4 (57%)	38 (51%)
Negative or absent cultural experiences	1 (5%)	1 (14%)	3 (33%)	7 (39%)	3 (33%)	1 (25%)	3 (43%)	19 (26%)
Engagement and matching challenges	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (33%)	7 (39%)	2 (22%)	1 (25%)	1 (14%)	14 (19%)

3.2 Program Design and Implementation

Evaluation Question: Does the SBT program's design and its implementation meet its objectives and, if not, why?

This section of the report evaluates the appropriateness of the TAEG-SBT program design. The program provides tailored support to 'disadvantaged' and 'disengaged' Indigenous secondary students in Years 10-12 to stay at school and complete a traineeship. The program focus on supporting Indigenous trainees to take a vocational pathway at school, the provision of tailored mentoring support, the flexibility for providers to apply funds in ways that are responsive to individual need, and the attention given to cultural affirmation and safety are valued features of the program design.

The provision of tailored, holistic, wrap-around mentoring support is the centrepiece of TAEG-SBT design. This kind of support is appropriate for two reasons:

- the sheer extent, complexity and diversity of Indigenous trainee support needs requires an individualised response

- a growing literature testifies to the value of mentoring as an appropriate response to the needs of disadvantaged students and those new to the workforce (Dockery & Milsom, 2007, p.7).

The stakeholder surveys identified a broad range of supports that trainees may require, depending on individual circumstance (Table 7).

Table 7: The proportion (%) of trainees requiring individualised supports as rated by all stakeholder groups.

	Provider						
	Employer N=15	Provider N=11	manager N=8	Mentor N=5	School N=9	NIAA N=8	All N=56
Liaising* with schools	90	95	90	55	90	95	90
One on one mentoring	55	90	80	60	70	95	80
Liaising* with families	70	85	75	45	80	95	75
Other types of liaising* with employers	75	75	70	30	95	55	70
In-house academic support (e.g. extra tutoring or help with assignments)	55	45	55	55	65	50	55
In-house counselling/emotional support	60	45	55	45	50	60	55
Cultural awareness raising with employers	55	50	50	45	10	70	50
Help obtaining a driver's licence	50	50	50	50	65	60	50
Financial support (e.g. uniforms, transport)	40	40	45	45	25	85	40
Home visits to connect with families	40	35	40	25	40	75	40
Support engaging with their culture and/or community	25	30	35	40	20	35	35
Referral to external counselling services	45	35	35	20	30	55	35
Transport to placements or classes	25	25	35	60	20	55	35
Arranging external tutors	30	20	30	40	50	35	30
Support to address racism from work colleagues or clients	35	25	30	20	10	60	30
Assistance with serious issues for family (e.g. homelessness, substance misuse, justice issues)	15	15	30	35	10	60	20
Assistance with serious issues (e.g. homelessness, substance misuse, justice issues)	15	15	25	30	10	45	20

Source: Stakeholder Survey and Provider Management Survey

* Liaison refers to facilitating communication and relationships between trainees and their employers, schools, RTOs and families to address issues of relevance to the successful conduct of the traineeship

All stakeholders interviewed for the evaluation (n=74) gave positive feedback on overall program design. A provider commented:

A key strength is supporting an external provider to provide wrap-around support for young people on that journey. There's a level of flexibility. Schools might not have flexibility to visit the workplace, talk to the TAFE teacher, take the young person to look at an apartment, go to Centrelink. I think it's the wrap-around support and flexibility to look at the whole picture.

Providers unfamiliar with the program design nevertheless made general comments about it achieving its aims despite lacking specific knowledge of design features. A mentor commented:

Look, I've been involved in a lot of different programs and when it comes to these type of ones, there can be barriers, but it's been one of the best I've been involved in. That's why I'm passionate about it, because I see it works so well.

Trainees and family members were especially positive about the program. Nine trainees and five family members described it as transformational and 'life changing', as captured in the following comments.

Looking back now and those few years through the traineeship and following on were some of the best I'd experienced. Just so full on with personal and career experience, and being so young that's exactly what I needed. It was a massive achievement for not only me, but my family ... From there, it was just career possibilities.

- Trainee

Sorry, I'm just getting a bit emotional ... I didn't think my little girl would achieve so much ... I recommend it to all our Indigenous children ... I take my hat off to them. They make children feel wanted and want to go and get help. They've got to give them that security.

- Family

The stakeholder survey showed that program participants strongly supported key features of the program design. (Table 8). TAEG – SBT's focus of supporting school based traineeships is well supported in the Australian research literature. VET participation is an effective pathway to employment for students generally (Misko et al. 2019, p.12). More specifically traineeships have been found to be effective in improving Indigenous labour market outcomes where they provide practical work experience and are inclusive of other promising practices identified in labour market policy research (Mangan & Trendle 2019, pp.309–310; Biddle, Brenna & Yap, 2014, p.2). Short-term work experience is often an incremental step towards securing permanent employment (Giddy, Lopez & Redman, 2009, p.12). Furthermore, Dockery et al (2005, p.26) found that by age twenty-one Indigenous trainees are not only more likely to be in employed and earning higher wages than would otherwise be the case, but they are also more likely to be employed in their preferred career (54% compared to 36% of non-participants). Overall the literature suggests a certificate qualification, Year 12 completion and enhanced job readiness are key factors in overcoming Indigenous labour market disadvantage, providing solid foundations for a successful career (Helme 2010; Hunter & Yap 2014).

However, there are two aspects of program design that can potentially be improved. Firstly, program objectives are not described in a S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time framed) format. This is inconsistent with management norms (Drucker 1977). There is also the problem of the target group being described using deficit rather than strength-based language. A provider questioned the appropriateness of the term 'disengaged' as a trainee has to be highly engaged to complete a traineeship. A theme in the literature is such language risks socialising Indigenous children to accept negative stereotypes which fuel low expectations of their education, training and employment prospects (Stronger Smarter Institute 2014, pp.1-2).

Table 8: Proportion of stakeholders who agreed or strongly agreed with each design statement

Agree or Strongly Agree to these statements	SBT					
	Employer N=15	Provider N=11	Mentor N=5	School N=9	NIAA N=8	All N=48
Some cohorts of Indigenous students face barriers to accessing appropriate school-based traineeships	73%	100%	80%	89%	75%	83%
Some cohorts of Indigenous students require additional support to achieve positive outcomes from school-based traineeships (or similar structured VET pathways)	93%	100%	100%	100%	100%	98%
Employers require additional support to facilitate positive outcomes for Indigenous students in school-based traineeships/ (or similar structured VET pathways)	87%	82%	100%	78%	88%	85%
Brokerage provided by an intermediary (e.g., SBT Provider) is an effective response to address support needs of students and employers	60%	100%	100%	100%	75%	83%
Students are well supported to successfully balance study and traineeship requirements	87%	100%	100%	67%	50%	81%
The SBT program provides a cultural safety network that helps Indigenous students to succeed	67%	64%	100%	67%	75%	71%
The traineeship pathway is tailored and relevant to the student needs	73%	91%	80%	89%	38%	75%

Secondly, appropriate program design requires the input of service users, e.g. Indigenous communities to drive program delivery (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training, and Youth Affairs 2000, Commonwealth of Australia 2020, Productivity Commission 2020). While there is strong evidence of cultural engagement and safety in program implementation (discussed below), there is less consistent evidence of program co-design with Indigenous communities. When stakeholders were surveyed only 50% agreed “The SBT program has been designed and delivered in collaboration with Indigenous people,” significantly less than all the other design statements listed in Table 8. A provider commented:

If we don't get an Aboriginal perspective, we should close the door on this. It doesn't work.

Furthermore, the program design does not provide for a trainee voice, as a provider observed:

We never heard if the Department has surveyed any of our previous students. Have never heard that that has happened. Something I thought was lacking in the whole design of the program and how it was run.

3.3 Program Targeting

Who is the SBT program targeting? Is it filling a gap for students? What are the characteristics of the SBT providers and participants?

3.3.1 Trainee Characteristics

More than 2000 trainees have participated in TAEG-SBT since program commencement in 2016. Table 9 reveals the majority are females, live in metropolitan or inner regional areas, and come from NSW and Queensland.

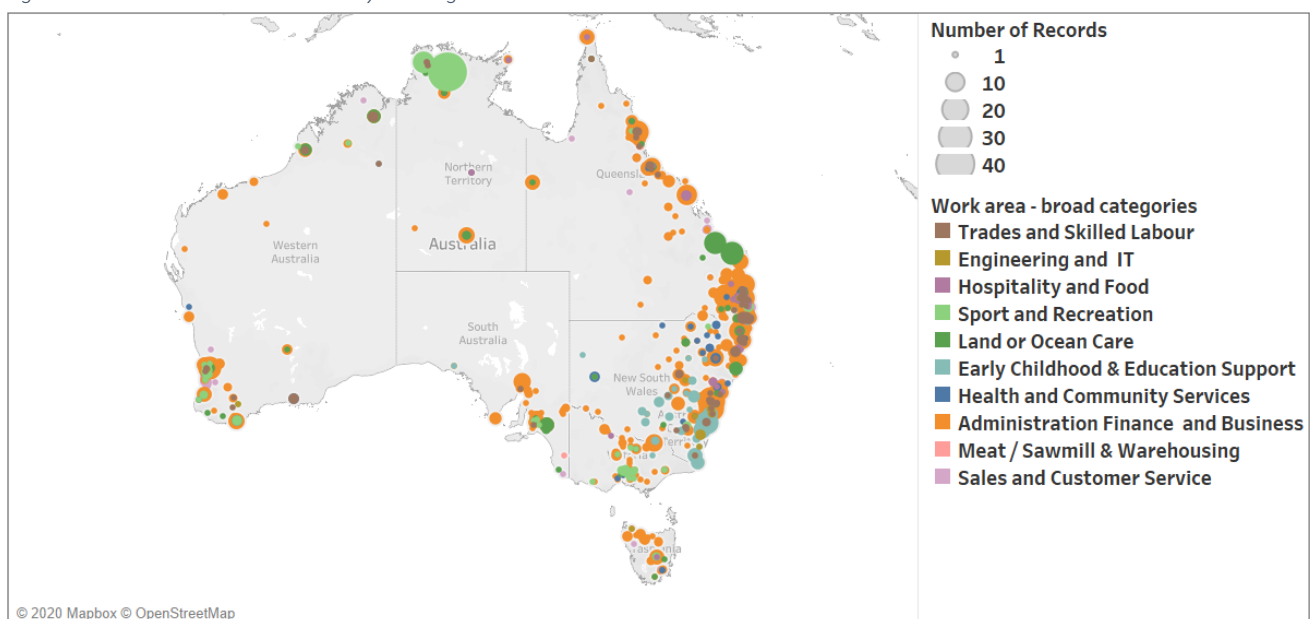
Table 9: Distribution of TAEG-SBT Trainees

State	Total	% of Total	Major Cities		Inner Regional		Outer Regional		Remote & Very Remote		Male		Female	
			N	State %	N	State %	N	State %	N	State %	N	State %	N	State %
QLD	771	37%	436	57%	146	19%	167	22%	22	3%	218	28%	553	72%
NSW	589	28%	232	39%	256	43%	90	15%	11	2%	181	31%	408	69%
WA	290	14%	176	61%	23	8%	36	12%	55	19%	108	37%	182	63%
NT	145	7%	-	-	-	-	107	74%	38	26%	81	56%	64	44%
SA	110	5%	56	51%	20	18%	27	25%	7	6%	34	31%	76	69%
VIC	99	5%	46	46%	43	43%	10	10%	-	-	37	37%	62	63%
TAS	46	2%	-	-	29	63%	17	37%	-	-	17	37%	29	63%
ACT	38	2%	21	55%	17	45%	-	-	-	-	15	39%	23	61%
Total	2,088	100%	967	46%	534	26%	454	22%	133	6%	691	33%	1,397	67%

TAEG-SBT trainees are Indigenous students in Years 10-12 choosing to take a vocational pathway at school. They are diverse in other respects; including having differing attitudes to school, places of residence, career aspirations, personal and family circumstances, the barriers they face and their individual support needs. TAEG-SBT trainees have differing motivations for choosing a SBT pathway. According to the participant interviews the hooks of engagement include interest in a particular field, dislike of school, and the prospect of earning an income.

Trainees face differing barriers to education, employment and training access. They come from different socio-economic circumstances and have a range of support needs. Some come from impoverished families without a history of sustained employment, while others have grown up in working families. Some have clear career aspirations, while others have no idea what they might do when they leave school. One provider observed ‘Some trainees will find their place in the workplace and training easily, others will be unsure and daunted by the process for some time.’

Figure 5: TAEG-SBT student location by training area



TAEG-SBT trainees enrol nationally in a broad range of traineeships (Figure 5). Traineeships are diverse with the highest number in 'Administration and Business'.

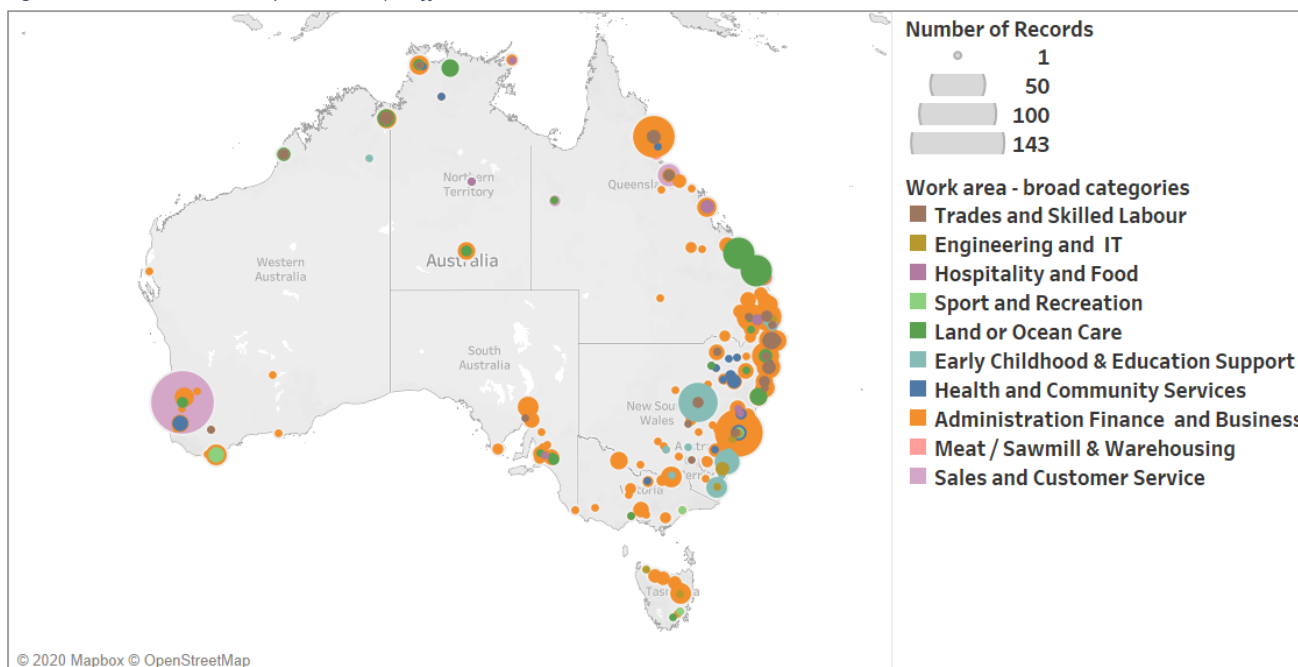
3.3.2 Provider Characteristics

NIAA funds 18 TAEG-SBT intermediary service providers ('providers') to recruit, prepare, place and support trainees. These providers deliver tailored, holistic wrap around mentoring support to Indigenous trainees. The employment of Indigenous mentors to provide a cultural dimension to the program is an important feature across the program.

Providers are very diverse as they vary in size, corporate structure and ways of working. Some are large national or regional organisations and some are small and regionally based. They range from small-scale localised community organisations catering for less than 50 trainees through to large organisations catering for over 200 trainees operating across state boundaries. One provider works with more than 100 schools, while a small provider works with just one. Most providers are mainstream, but three current providers are Indigenous community-controlled organisations. Some choose to work with trainees with multiple and complex needs, while others tend towards trainees in less challenging circumstances. Some providers are for profit, while others are not-for-profit. Some offer many services, while others are specialised. Some are providers of education, employment and training programs that complement TAEG-SBT. One is a national consortium of 11 Group Training Organisations (GTO). Other providers do not deliver any education, employment and training programs related to TAEG-SBT. The significance and implications of these differences are analysed in the Section 5 of this report.

The location of providers vary by the type of traineeship they offer (Figure 6). Providers support traineeships in diverse fields including banking, travel, retail, sport, health, education and environment.

Figure 6: Provider location by traineeships offered



Some providers offer a range of vocational training options ranging across industries and occupations, while others are specialised in what they offer. Some providers have contracts with large corporates such as the 'Big Four Banks', Australia Post and Qantas. As a consequence there is a predominance of administration, finance

and business traineeships. Section 4.4 further explores the implications of occupational choice for student engagement and outcomes.

The program design does not prescribe any particular service model. Different providers are free to implement the program as they see fit. 'One size fits all' program design is not appropriate in circumstances where knowledge about effective practice is far from settled and innovative practice and organisational learning is required. Differing approaches by providers in different places can suggest flexible contextually responsive place-based service delivery. The link between the appropriateness of design and its impact on outcomes is explored further in Section 5.

3.4 Cultural Engagement

Evaluation question: To what extent has the program design supported cultural values and connection to culture?

The research literature suggests strong cultural attachment contributes to the wellbeing of Indigenous students (Karmel et al. 2014; Dreise et al., 2016, p.15; Ware 2013). Furthermore, Craven et al. (2005, p.23) found families want their children to have a strong cultural identity as a foundation for life.

Cultural support emerged as a key theme in this evaluation. In total 38 (51%) of interviewees across all stakeholder groups related that TAEG-SBT strengthens the cultural attachment and identity of Indigenous trainees, reinforcing cultural values. A key theme found across stakeholder groups was that cultural content matters and TAEG-SBT had been designed with Indigenous cultural values in mind.² A provider commented:

You can tell it's been designed for Indigenous student needs ... It's developed and designed sensitively, which is why we're seeing success. It's very culturally sensitive and specific which is great.

Interviewees regard TAEG-SBT as culturally affirming for one or more of the following reasons:

- Trainee support is provided by Indigenous mentors
- Current providers include Indigenous organisations
- Practical hands-on learning inherent to traineeships aligns with Indigenous pedagogy
- Trainees can have opportunities to participate in culturally relevant traineeships.

The data collection found that provision of support by Indigenous mentors is appropriate because they are able to provide culturally safe and responsive support and build relationships of empathy, trust and rapport with trainees. Interaction with Indigenous mentors exposes trainees to the guidance of culturally connected Indigenous role models. Providers often employ mentors from within the communities where the trainees are located. Stakeholders stressed the relational advantages of having an Indigenous mentor, someone who understands their background and family circumstances.

To have me as an Aboriginal person provides a cultural lens to it. I'm there to support Aboriginal students and provide that extra layer of comfort.

Sometimes when you're working with a young person from an Indigenous background who's got significant trauma, that then becomes an additional barrier and by having someone from an Indigenous background, who's working with them and supporting them, they have a better understanding and a better ability to actually assist them through that.

² The evaluation is making a distinction between the higher standards of 'co-design' (see Section 3.2) and providers including cultural content.

Three TAEG-SBT providers are Indigenous organisations that in total support 292 (14%) trainees. These providers believe they have an advantage when it comes to effectively engaging Indigenous trainees. One provider commented: *“As an indigenous organisation [we] understand the needs of Aboriginal people.”*

Traineeships offer ‘hands on’ practical learning opportunities more consistent with Indigenous pedagogies than school classroom learning. The practical applied pedagogy of TAEG-SBT is seen as especially relevant to Indigenous students. The program can be an engaging option for Indigenous students because it offers relational, context-based, hands-on learning and reinforces the culturally founded notion of treating youth as capable independent young adults able to make their own choices and learn from their own mistakes (Hackling et al 2015, Yunkaporta, T 2009, Yumi Deadly Centre 2014, State of NSW Department of Education and Communities 2012). Trainees like being treated like adults because, as a family member stressed, in traditional society boys were initiated into manhood at an early age.

It's just such a different environment to school, like not every student likes to take directions from teachers and I think when you're in that different environment and learning from other adults and it's something that they want to be there for. It just changes the whole experience for that child, for that young adult... Just such different learning experiences and different kids learn differently.

(Family)

Cultural engagement is fostered by the curriculum content involving sport, recreation and on-country activities such as Ranger training that builds on the strengths and passions of trainees. These types of traineeships involve 256 trainees (12%) of SBT-TAEG trainees. An employer commented: *“Ranger led work, that included cultural components ... helped strengthen Aboriginal identity to country, language and traditional site management.”*

Where trainees are disconnected from their cultural heritage, mentors can work to strengthen this over time. For example, trainees not connected with their Indigenous heritage due to family separation can especially value activities that enable them to find their roots. One trainee commented: *“I’m Aboriginal on my mum’s side, but I’m in foster care so I don’t have much to do with my biological mum and my heritage, only through programs in high school.”*

Even in traineeships that don’t have cultural content, such as in banking or the travel industry, employers may provide opportunities for trainees to participate in cultural activities. One trainee stated:

We actually got to plan some events for NAIDOC week, which was really fun. Everything I do I want to bring out the cultural aspect, so that was a good opportunity. I brought in bush foods and we did a quiz on Aboriginal culture and history.

One aspect of the mentor role is to educate non-Indigenous host employers on Indigenous issues to improve their cultural competency so they are able to more effectively engage with TAEG-SBT trainees. Understanding Indigenous historical and cultural contexts enables trainees to feel supported at work, thereby contributing to the prospects of a successful TAEG-SBT outcome. Where employers lack cultural competence an Indigenous mentor can bridge the gap as a provider explains.

Indigenous mentors facilitate cultural understanding so that the employer is able to provide a culturally safe environment for the trainee. The mentor is available to provide advice and guidance to strengthen the employer/trainee relationship. The relationship with the employer is really important to make sure employers feel comfortable asking an Indigenous person’s view as to any concerns that the trainee may have. They provide a significantly improved cultural understanding for our employers.

In contrast to the 38 positive stakeholders, 19 stakeholders (26%) identified negative experiences (e.g. racism in the workplace) or lack of cultural content in the program. This includes respondents identifying through the stakeholder survey that racism impacted on 30% of trainees. In contrast only one trainee interviewed (5%)

related negative cultural experiences, the low figure could be due to the selection bias regarding the trainees interviewed (see Table 10, Section 3.5.2).

The data collection also showed that employers can lack the cultural competence necessary to keep trainees engaged with work. This included eight stakeholder interviews identifying a lack of cultural competence of employers and instances of racism experienced at work from colleagues or customers as issues. In some cases it is the first time they have employed an Indigenous person.

The cultural side of things really isn't provided by [the employer]. That's why it's important that we link closely with [the Provider] and their cultural programs ... It's important that the young student feels that support, particularly from the cultural side of things.

(Employer)

A part of the mentor role is to assess whether a work placement is appropriate for an Indigenous trainee to ensure they are not being placed into a culturally unsafe environment. Providers have run cultural orientation sessions for employers on occasion.

(Provider)

There are employers with cultural capacity 'in-house' having long had Indigenous staff and experience working with Indigenous people. There were 13 interviewees (65%) who made positive comments about the capacity of employers to work with Indigenous trainees. An Indigenous employer stated: "We are an Aboriginal directed organisation with an 86% indigenous employment outcome so dealing with Indigenous students was culturally appropriate in this case."

Most trainees interviewed (95%) had a positive cultural experience in their work placement. Family members interviewed also stated providers work with their children in culturally safe and responsive ways. The one trainee who expressed a counter view stated: "It definitely was more mainstream, it wasn't focussed on being Indigenous at all." Other interviewees also identified instances where the cultural experience of Indigenous trainees in the program was not strong including school staff member not being supportive of TAEG-SBT on the basis everyone should be treated the same with no 'special treatment'.

In summary, the findings indicate TAEG-SBT does support the cultural values and connections of Indigenous trainees, but this experience is not universal because not all workplaces are culturally safe. This can happen where staff members have not previously worked with an Indigenous trainee. In these circumstances mentors can play a valuable role in culturally orientating the employer, acting as a communication link between employer and trainee.

3.5 What has been done well and not well?

Evaluation question: What has been done well and not well?

Overall, stakeholders are positive about program design being confident about the programs ability to deliver on the programs objectives: to enable disadvantaged and disengaged Indigenous secondary students to complete a traineeship, stay at school, balance vocational and non-vocational requirements, and finally transition to a job or further education and training. Providers have sufficient flexibility to provide a diverse range of supports in response to diverse trainee needs. Trainees and providers are diverse as are the types of traineeships supported by the program.

However, three implementation issues are identified for attention – the role of ICSEA in targeting disadvantaged students, trainee selection processes, and the differing levels of support needed by trainees.

3.5.1 The role of ICSEA in targeting disadvantaged students

ICSEA is a broad indicator of socio-economic disadvantage in schools. The TAEG-SBT program targets 'disadvantaged' and/or 'disengaged' Indigenous secondary students in Years 10 - 12 by providing a higher payment for students in schools with an ICSEA score less than 1000 and a requirement that 90% of TAEG-SBT trainees be recruited from these schools. The overwhelming view of stakeholders is that it is appropriate for TAEG-SBT to target these students (See Table 8).

However, ICSEA is not a measure of individual student disadvantage. Twenty-eight percent of respondents in the stakeholder survey disagreed with the statement that '*focusing on students at schools with a lower ICSEA is a good way to target the program.*' Fifteen stakeholders (21%) were critical of program targeting, especially the reliance on the ICSEA. Interviewees had two main concerns about the appropriateness of using the ICSEA:

- not all Indigenous students at schools with an ICSEA below 1000 are disadvantaged
- disadvantaged Indigenous students attend schools with an ICSEA above 1000, including those from regional and remote communities.

While program design identifies disadvantaged and disengaged students as the target group, in practice not every TAEG-SBT trainee is 'disadvantaged' or 'disengaged'. Nor does every TAEG-SBT trainee require substantial support. A few trainees noted they would have completed Year 12 even if they had not chosen the TAEG-SBT pathway. This is not to suggest these trainees have not benefitted from program participation, only that they are not necessarily 'disadvantaged' or 'disengaged.'

3.5.2 The Service Gap – selection processes and differing levels of student need

TAEG-SBT is particularly relevant to students at risk of not completing high school and not transitioning to post-school training, employment or further education. Forty-three interviewees (58%) spoke of how TAEG-SBT assists participants to complete Year 12, including 10 trainees (50%). One third of these, including four trainees, identified that they would not have completed Year 12 without the traineeship. The gap TAEG-SBT fills is the provision of supplementary support to enable Indigenous students to take and stay on a vocational path at school. This is captured well in the program logic: "*Traineeship pathway is tailored and relevant to student needs.*"

The program recognises TAEG-SBT trainees have needs requiring additional support because of the extent of the barriers to education, training and employment they face. The interviews revealed a significant number of barriers faced by participants (Table 10). On average survey participants identified 20% of Indigenous trainees as requiring extensive support, with a further 40% requiring additional support to what would typically be expected. One provider wrote: "*Each student will have some level of barrier such as a remoteness of school or home location, lack of regional transport options access to work/school/TAFE, economic hardship, family crisis, and educational achievement.*" Another provider went further in an open ended written response:

Most of our students required significant support and some required very considerable support. Few required little support.

TAEG-SBT does not resource the initial trainee engagement process prior to the formal commencement of the traineeship. A traineeship is a substantial two-year undertaking accompanied by rigorous study and work placement requirements. Students, families, schools and employers need to understand what is required and make informed decisions before they commit. Trainees also need to be matched to an appropriate host employer. Failure to invest in this phase of the program increases the likelihood of recruiting students who are not a good program fit, ultimately contributing to poor retention and wasted resources.

Table 10: The percent of trainees experiencing personal barriers to success according to all stakeholder groups

Barrier	Employer	Provider	Provider Manager	Mentor	School	NIAA	Overall
	N=15 %	N=11 %	N=8 %	N=5 %	N=9 %	N=8 %	N=56 %
Difficulty balancing the demands of study, work and training	40	50	-	50	60	50	50
Lack of suitable job opportunities	45	35	40	45	55	40	45
Family issues	40	35		50	30	25	35
Poverty	45	25	35	35	30	20	35
Low literacy and numeracy	45	25	55	25	20	30	35
Trauma (including intergenerational trauma)	45	25	45	25	20	35	35
Mental ill-health	50	30	35	35	5	35	30
Negative influence of peer groups	40	25	45	30	15	45	30
Racism	40	30	45	25	5	20	30
Community/family obligations (e.g. Sorry Business, caregiving)	30	25	30	30	20	45	30
Personal aspirations and attitudes	30	30	45	40	5	45	30
Geographical isolation and/or inadequate transport options	15	30	40	40	30	30	30
Lack of support from family	30	25	30	35	15	20	25
Inadequate housing	30	15	25	25	5	25	20
Their mentor is unable to meet their needs	15	10	-	30	20	35	20
Inadequate coordination/communication between providers, employers, and schools	20	25	25	20	0	40	20
Negative employer attitudes and/or lack of understanding	10	15	25	15	0	25	15
Physical ill-health	15	15	10	10	0	35	10
Work placement issues (e.g. unclear expectations or roles)	5	15	-	20	0	10	10
Drug and/or alcohol problems	10	5	20	15	0	50	10
Lack of suitable training options	10	15	30	15	0	0	10
Contact with the criminal justice system	10	5	20	0	0	35	10
Pregnancy	10	5	5	0	0	10	0

Source: Stakeholder Survey and Provider Management Survey

Three of the managers responding to the Provider Management Survey support both non-Indigenous and Indigenous trainees. Their experience is that TAEG-SBT trainees face a higher degree of barriers up to 2-3 times higher, with trauma estimated to be six times more prevalent. A former trainee described their experience:

I had a lot of problems as a teenager ... My sister passed away and I started being naughty. The more classes I missed, the more I failed my classes. I ended up repeating Year 9, didn't finish Year 10 ... A lot of people in my family deal with alcohol and drugs. I lost a sister to a drug overdose.

Program design fails to adequately recognise the differing levels of support needs of different trainees and the resources required to support those with the greatest need. Stakeholders of all types see a need for more

frequent and intensive mentoring support for those trainees with multiple and complex needs. Where intense support is required trainees require many more hours of support in order to successfully complete. At present providers are either unable to provide optimal support or provide it at their own expense and they are especially vocal on this issue.

Some of the trainees we've done the most volume of work with and have made huge progress don't finish. We have to chalk it up as a loss. We'll do it anyway.

There should be a different way to fund it. At the moment, we really are stretched for funding. It's a bad model... We are restricted with what money we have.

For one provider the complexity of need became more than they could effectively manage:

We got quite a diverse range of students, some of them at risk ... It became a real challenge for the program ... It wasn't lack of motivation, but external factors such as family circumstances, instances of abuse ... fall-outs within families and then it's us becoming the glue holding those situations together. The program wasn't the challenge so much as the people within the program.

While the program logic recognises the importance of a traineeship pathway “tailored and relevant to students’ needs” there is no recognition of the highly variable support needs of trainees. There are resourcing implications because the greater the challenges the more support required.

By way of example we posit an alternate funding model with three tiers, designed in recognition of the fact some trainees require greater support than others and some providers have more trainees with multiple and complex needs.

- Tier 1: Students attract a base rate payment that applies equally to every trainee
- Tier 2: Students attract an additional payment if they attend a school with an ICSEA index below 900. NB: Under such an arrangement the current mandatory requirement to select 90% of students from schools with an ICSEA score below 1000 could be dropped.
- Tier 3: High needs students attract a further additional fee that assumes 10% of students are ‘very high need’. NB: Contract Managers would have discretion to increase the percentage where the provider demonstrates greater numbers of ‘high needs’ students.

Section 5.2.5 further explores the issue of trainee selection as important to the efficiency of the program.

The literature confirms disadvantaged people in Australia’s VET system benefit from the provision of intensive wrap-around support (Joyce 2019, p.110; The Smith Family, 2014). In particular the *Walk in My Shoes Project* (Generation One 2012) report found multiple complex and overlapping barriers impede the ability of Indigenous students to succeed in education and transition into the workforce. The support provided needs to be holistic because of the interrelated academic, emotional, physical and cultural nature of the barriers (Dreise et al. 2016, p.2).

3.6 Challenges in Program Implementation

Evaluation Question: What challenges and difficulties have we (NIAA and providers) encountered in implementing the program?

The stakeholder survey illustrated that a sound relationship between NIAA and providers is necessary for effective program implementation (67% of participants). The quality of TAEG-SBT delivery depends on the ability to attract and retain high performing providers. Two providers cited inadequate implementation support from government as a factor in their decision to discontinue involvement with the program.

At interview nine of the providers (50%) described collaborative relationships with NIAA program managers as important to effective program implementation as reflected in the following comment:

With NIAA it's a partnership. Obviously we both accept that each party has value to add. They might be seeing things that we aren't. We might be seeing some things that they're not as well. So it's around raising those issues, having conversations and then seeing how and if things can be changed.

Five providers (28%) also described poor relationships with NIAA due to funding arrangements. Three providers and three NIAA staff referred to past funding approval delays and four providers and one NIAA interview referred to the short duration of funding contracts as challenging the quality of the relationship. Delays in funding approval have meant students commence their traineeship well into the school year, reducing the time available to complete required study and work placement hours before the end of Year 12. It is also the case that where funding is late, prospective participants may have already committed to another pathway. These challenges are not unique to SBT-TAEG. The literature suggests inappropriate insecure funding arrangements adversely impact the quality of traineeship service delivery more generally (Giddy et al. 2009, p.10 & p.22; Guenther et al. 2017, p.9).

A further criticism is that voices from the field do not always filter up to inform the program direction because there is no systematic feedback mechanism. One NIAA staff member at interview spelt out the implications for TAEG-SBT:

It's not expanding, just the same thing all the time. That's not bad but they're just not branching out where new ideas might emerge to invigorate the program ... We often provide feedback to National Office, through meetings and things but at the end of the day our programs don't change a lot.

TAEG-SBT has not been a sufficient priority for the NIAA in the opinion of some stakeholders. This issue is addressed through Recommendation 2, implementing an annual review process.

Summary of links to Program Theory - Appropriateness:

While the program logic identifies that each trainee receives individualised tailored support there is no recognition of the variable experience of trainees in regard to the level of challenges they face. The greater the number or degree of the challenges the more support required. This has implications for the resources providers or other partners need to appropriately support the trainee.

While 'matching and enrolment' is an identified activity of the program logic it is not actually resourced in the funding model where the first payment is upon formal commencement of the traineeship. Schools, providers and employers identified the significant demands of traineeships requiring selection and/or preparation processes that identify trainees that are a good fit. Some providers put substantial resources into trainee selection, others rely on the school to identify the 'right' student. More attention to appropriate selection processes may improve the outcomes of the program.

The program uses deficit language, describing the target cohort as 'disengaged' and 'disadvantaged' In contrast, strength based language identifies the skills and attributes that will contribute to an individual's success in a traineeship (notwithstanding the fact that they may come from a disadvantaged background and be disengaged from school).

4 Extent to which Program Outcomes have been achieved

Evaluation Question: What are the education and employment outcomes for students?

4.1 Overview and key findings

This ‘Effectiveness’ section of the report considers the outcomes (both intended and unintended that the TAEG-SBT has contributed to, and the factors explaining the level of achievement. The primary source is quantitative data relating to traineeship completions. Data limitations have meant that information about post-school outcomes primarily relies on qualitative sources.

Key findings for this section point to the ability of the program to effectively engage disadvantaged students, build skills and attitudes that prepare trainees for work and lay the pre-conditions for future employment. The findings confirm the central tenet of the program of the importance of providing wrap around mentoring and support. Unfortunately, the poor quality of data recording and the NIAA’s data platform limits the ability to fully identify the extent of the program’s success although the existing data is promising. This includes the lack of capacity of providers to monitor 26-week employment or further education outcomes post traineeship completion. There is lack of ongoing monitoring of the program, mentoring quality is variable, and there is insufficient attention paid to workforce development. These are critical system level outcomes required to maintain and improve program quality that are not addressed in the program logic.

Overall, 73 of interviewees (99%) made positive comments about the effectiveness of TAEG-SBT. However, it is also noteworthy 56 interviewees (76%) identified one or more challenges related to the effectiveness of this program, suggesting room for improvement (refer Table 11).

Table 11: Effectiveness themes from interview data

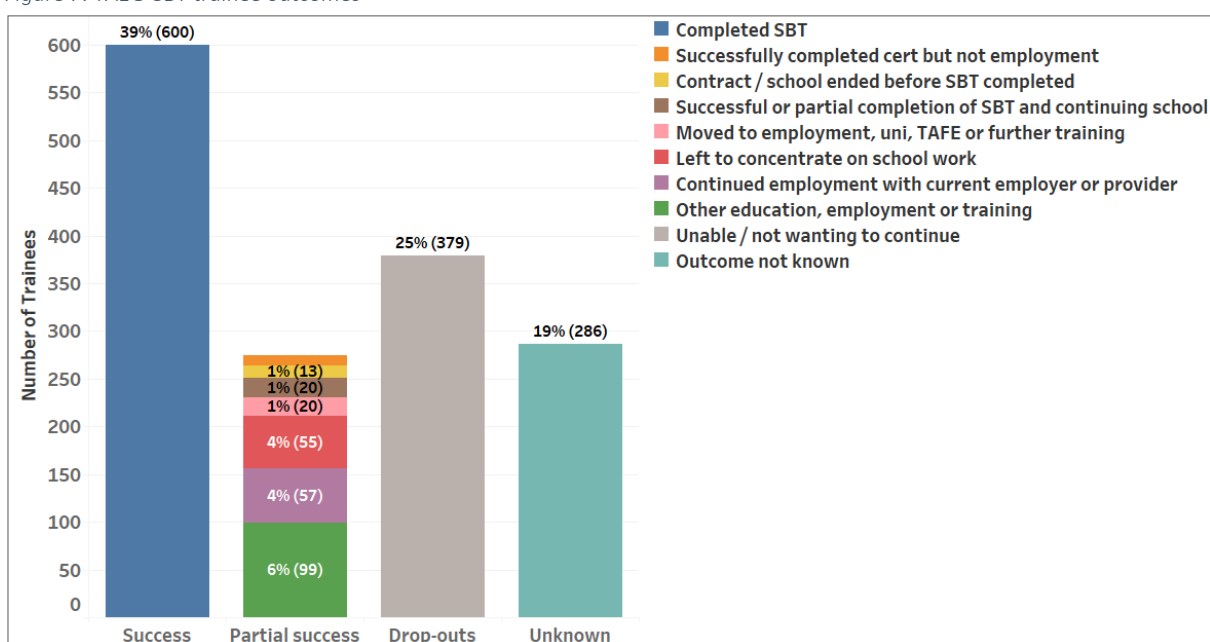
Effectiveness Themes	Trainee (20)	Family (7)	Employer (9)	Provider (18)	School (9)	Other (4)	NIAA (7)	Total (74)
Positive comments about effectiveness, outcomes	20 (100%)	7 (100%)	9 (100%)	17 (94%)	9 (100%)	4 (100%)	7 (100%)	73 (98%)
Negative comments about effectiveness, challenges	12 (60%)	3 (43%)	9 (100%)	16 (89%)	9 (100%)	3 (75%)	4 (57%)	56 (75%)
Any Employment outcomes (skills, pathways, network, aspirations)	19 (95%)	5 (71%)	8 (89%)	13 (72%)	8 (89%)	3 (75%)	5 (71%)	61 (82%)
Any personal development outcome	20 (100%)	7 (100%)	8 (89%)	14 (78%)	5 (55%)	4 (100%)	3 (43%)	61 (82%)
Any education outcome (Year 12, further education, attendance)	14 (70%)	5 (71%)	7 (78%)	14 (78%)	6 (66%)	2 (50%)	3 (43%)	51 (68%)
Any positive support experiences (from provider, family, employer, school, RTO)	19 (95%)	6 (85%)	7 (78%)	8 (44%)	5 (55%)	3 (75%)	2 (28%)	50 (67%)
Any negative support experiences	10 (50%)	3 (43%)	7 (78%)	11 (61%)	6 (66%)	3 (75%)	2 (28%)	42 (56%)
Any comments on need for support (mentor quality, tutors, balance, attendance issues)	12 (60%)	6 (85%)	6 (66%)	10 (55%)	8 (89%)	3 (75%)	3 (43%)	48 (64%)

4.2 Outcomes

4.2.1 Traineeship Outcomes

There are 600 TAEG-SBT trainees who attained a certificate qualification and completed year 12 and a further 275 known to have had a level of partial success, such as completion of Year 12 without attaining a traineeship or leaving school to take up employment before completing their traineeship. This is in contrast to 379 trainees who have been unable or not wanted to continue the program. This leads to an overall estimation of a 70% success rate and 30% attrition or ‘Drop-out’ rate based on these three categories. The success rate may in fact be higher, but this cannot be determined due to a failure to consistently record TAEG-SBT traineeship outcomes. There are 286 trainees (14% of total cohort) for whom outcomes are not available, reflecting poor data collection practice. These trainees have been excluded from the calculation of success and attrition rates (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: TAEG-SBT trainee outcomes



Source: NIAA Program data

The large proportion of unrecorded outcomes underlines the need to improve data recording for this program (see Appendix E). There are a further 546 trainees (26% of total cohort) currently in the program yet to complete that are not included in Figure 7.

From the limited data, the evidence suggests that TAEG-SBT contributes to improved employment outcomes with 82% of interviewees, including 19 out of 20 former trainees, stating the program contributes to employment outcomes and overall a 70% success rate. Analysis indicates a relationship between trainee age and completion rates with older trainees more likely to complete the program as shown in Table 12.

Table 12: TAEG-SBT success by age

Outcome	Age at commencement				
	14	15	16	17	18
Dropout	39% (9)	35% (118)	32% (172)	24% (73)	13% (7)
Success or Partial success	61% (14)	65% (216)	68% (361)	76% (236)	87% (47)

Males also have a greater proportion of success or partial success than females (73% as to 68%). However, this is largely due to more males undertaking a sport and recreation traineeship, which had a high success rate for both genders, and males being proportionally more successful in trades and skilled labour (see Section 4.4, Table 18). This latter finding is similar to that of the general VET population.

4.2.2 Program Attrition

Three hundred and seventy-nine trainees (30%) did not complete the program (Figure 7: TAEG-SBT trainee outcomes). Unfortunately, we are not able to compare this outcome with national Indigenous SBT success rates generally due to poor data collection processes resulting in different definitions of success. The reasons why trainees did not continue their traineeship are varied (Table 13). Most common (31%) was employer terminations of trainees because they considered they did not fulfil their duties.

Table 13: Reasons for TAEG-SBT trainees ceasing the program

Program cessations	Reasons TAEG-SBT Trainee cessation	Number of trainees	%
Terminated by employer/provider	Poor performance/ Unable to meet contract	116	31%
Health, medical and personal	Health, personal or family reasons	63	17%
Disengaged	Lack of interest / Not suited to the placement or traineeship	50	13%
Left employment	Employment ended / Left employment	11	3%
School disengagement	Failed or disengaged/suspended from school	31	8%
Moved	Family moved / Moved to another school	26	7%
Left traineeship	Ceased but reason unknown	82	22%
All cessations		379	100%

Source: NIAA Program data

Maintaining employer confidence can mean ensuring the placements are appropriate and they are able to deal with trainee issues, for example

We had [employers] who couldn't deal with behavioural problems that were an issue. For example, working at the coffee shop and responding poorly to people who might know them and start abusing them. [They] would end up being sacked rather than the employer working through it. When working outside the city, the challenge is finding employers who are happy to deal with these issues and take on more challenges than they would ordinarily take on in an employee.

It is difficult to predict in advance at the time of student selection which trainees will be at risk of dropping out at some stage. There are instances where trainees make a good start, but subsequently encounter personal or family difficulties and drop out. This is related to the design issue discussed in the previous section where different trainees can require substantially different levels of support depending on their circumstances. A provider commented *'It might be going well and then you find that for three months they're homeless or there's a death in the family, all these factors beyond the young person's control.'* In other instances:

Some disengaged students start and due to the commitment of mentors and diligence, they become 'VET Trainee of the Year'. Skilled mentors and Career Advisors have taken an interest, turning a disengaged kid into a really committed kid.

Progress reports from providers identify two factors contributing to program cessations. Firstly, that trainees struggle to balance personal, family, school and program expectations. This was also identified by 17 interviewees (23%). They are also at an age where they are subject to considerable peer and home

pressures, including pressure to leave school. They miss up to two days schooling each week because they are on work placement and doing the study component of their traineeship. This may leave only three days each week for other school work. The onus is on the trainee to catch up on any work missed.

Without support trainees can be overwhelmed by the competing demands of simultaneously completing challenging vocational and academic pathways, while also maintaining personal and family commitments and responsibilities. Seventeen stakeholder interviews (23%) identified the importance of supporting trainee wellbeing at school and work, noting this was stronger with trainees (55%). Twenty percent of interviewees identified the need for tutor support, again higher with trainees and school interviewees (40% and 33% respectively). Some providers were pragmatic making decisions that finishing Year 12 may be more important than finishing the traineeship:

At the end of the day is it more important for 16-17 year old to have a traineeship or complete Year 12? ... Our focus became keeping the child in school, working closely with the family, with the child, often being a broker of solutions within the family and the school ... I think in terms of design we got that right.

Secondly, young people need to discover what they are suited to. Some discover through program participation what is not right for them. One trainee initially engaged around his interest in sport subsequently decided he wanted to take another direction. The opportunities TAEG-SBT provides for career exploration are valuable outcomes in themselves, stepping-stones to another successful outcome that may not involve a traineeship. Such outcomes ought not necessarily be reported as program failure and should be the subject of better data collection and inclusion in the program logic (See Recommendation 1C).

4.2.3 School Outcomes

A major theme is that TAEG-SBT contributes to improved school outcomes with 69% of interviewees stating the program contributes to positive educational outcomes. Forty percent of former trainees and 67% of school staff felt the program improved schooling outcomes (attendance, engagement, retention, Year 12 completion). Interviewees suggest TAEG-SBT is contributing to improved attendance and enabling trainees to complete Year 12 in circumstances where they would not otherwise have done so. Examples were shared of circumstances where disengaged students responded to a traineeship. A family member reflected:

He was wanting to leave school to be honest at the end of Year 10, 'I've had enough.' The classroom wasn't for him ... So being a practical hands-on kid, if I didn't have that avenue of a school based traineeship, he would not have completed his HSC.

Attendance improved, not only because the traineeship curriculum is more engaging than an academic classroom environment, but also because completion of Year 12 is a necessary condition for attaining a traineeship qualification; a 'carrot and stick' approach. Mentor and trainer approach are also factors. One former trainee commented: 'They wanted me to learn which gave me motivation to actually do schoolwork and all that.'

The stakeholder survey lends further support to the interview data. Stakeholders identified the traineeship benefiting 80% of trainees through being 'more engaged at school' and 'increased attendance at school' (see Table 16).

TAEG-SBT does not always improve school outcomes. According to 18 interviewees (24%) students can progress well in the traineeship, but may nevertheless continue to struggle with issues of school achievement, behaviour, attendance and retention. Schools, providers and employers primarily identified this issue rather than former trainees and their families.

The program logic describes the themes of ‘*improved school attendance*’, ‘*increased engagement at school*’, and ‘*more likely to complete school years*’. However, it does not adequately capture the mechanism generating these outcomes. The program has utility in supporting traineeship and school completion outcomes because of engaging traineeship curriculum content and because it incentivises completion of Year 12.

4.2.4 Community Development Outcomes

TAEG-SBT also has positive inter-generational effects. When trainees work in businesses such as banks, airlines, pharmacies and childcare it is a source of community pride and optimism, a point made by 33 interviewees (45%), mostly strongly by family members (71%), employers (56%) and NIAA staff (57%).

There have been instances where family members have followed in the footprints of those who have gone before. In two cases trainees benefitted from the example of an older sibling or extended family member who had done a traineeship. In these instances TAEG-SBT is contributing to breaking the cycle of inter-generational unemployment. The sense of pride is captured in this comment from a family member.

I remember when [former trainee] was at the pharmacy, the number of people in the community that would tell me it was fantastic to have him there. And he was so respectful. Talking about health issues isn't comfortable for a lot of Aboriginal people. But to talk to this young Aboriginal man, I know some people who went over ... just to talk to him at the pharmacy.

Progress reports prepared by providers indicate they have evidence of ‘*good news stories*’ about TAEG-SBT trainee achievements. Graduates have been recognised at VET Achievement awards across the country. There are uplifting inspiring stories about trainees now in sustained skilled employment notwithstanding substantial family, personal and social challenges. In one instance a trainee secured a professional position following her traineeship despite a challenging back-story of an unstable home environment, parental addiction, incarceration, physical abuse, family separation and the assumption of responsibility for the care of younger siblings while she was still at school. One provider has an annual Chairman’s Award with a \$1000 prize. According to the provider ‘*There’s never a dry eye in the house when the winner talks about their journey.*’

The South Australian Training and Skills Commission (2019, p.10) found trainees can become strong advocates for VET system, promoting their positive experiences to attract others. There is evidence this is the case with TAEG-SBT. Former trainees and their families become a source of referrals to TAEG-SBT, with siblings and cousins following in the footsteps of those who have gone before. A provider commented: ‘*We want to build a family of students post-completion and bring them full-circle to talk about their role and difficulties they may have found, hearing from people who have already done what you’ve done before rather than some guy in an office.*’

A related community benefit is trainees become a resource for their families, sharing their newfound knowledge in areas such as finance and spreading their positive attitude by example. A NIAA staff member commented:

What I’ve seen happen for some people is that they achieve something, and then their parents who never had that opportunity, their parents went back to TAFE and got a school certificate. It makes me emotional just thinking about it. The changes it makes generationally ... it’s amazing!

Craven et al. (2005, p.24) suggest the barriers Indigenous Australians face can “entrench a fatalistic attitude”, depleting their resources of hope and optimism. The literature suggests many Indigenous students have “low academic self-concepts” due to the intersection between low teacher expectations and disadvantage (Craven et al. 2005, p.20; James et al. 2008, p.48). A high expectations environment such as created by TAEG –SBT fuels the self-belief that enables challenges to be overcome.

4.3 Pathways to employment and further education

Evaluation Question: *To what extent does the traineeship pathway work for students in gaining employment and further education after Year 12?*

4.3.1 Data Limitation Issues

To better understand TAEG-SBT outcomes it is necessary to examine post-school employment, further education and training outcomes; not only traineeship completions at the end of Year 12 schooling. The program design envisaged measuring outcomes 26-weeks after trainees complete. However providers find the collection of such data post completion of a two year traineeship is too challenging. NIAA records revealed that post-school data at 26-weeks has only been collected for 22 of the 600 trainees completing the traineeship and Year 12. Even with a robust data platform it can be difficult to collect data on sustained employment outcomes. The research literature reveals there is limited longitudinal data on the longer-term impact of traineeships (Misko et al. 2019, p.8; Hunter 2010, p.2; Conway, Brazil & Losurdo 2012). More specifically, the data necessary to map the journey of Indigenous Australians from school to sustained employment is generally not available (Hunter & Gray 2016, p.1; Ware 2013).

Given the extent of TAEG-SBT data collection difficulties one option is to replace the 26-week post program outcome. A more realistic alternative may be a post-school employment and further education commencement milestone. This is a measure whether trainees have initially transitioned into a job or further education and training. It provides useful information on whether former trainees are on a post-school pathway, before time transpires for former trainees to become un-contactable or choose to no longer be responsive to information requests from their provider. Further, if permission was obtained from the individual and education provider or workplace, a further audit could take place at 26 weeks by directly contacting the employer or educational institution.

4.3.2 Sustained Employment

The majority of interviewees (82%), including 95% of former trainees, identified TAEG-SBT as contributing to positive employment outcomes. An employer commented:

'We're getting kids who may have dropped out of school ... to end up in employment ... They've got a job already, gainful income, and they're set up with good habits.' Similarly a provider stated: *'By creating career pathways through school based traineeships you're seeing now kids go from school directly into employment and they're not actually seeing that world of welfare, not experiencing it themselves.'*

However, systematically collected quantitative data to support this anecdotal evidence is not available. However, the outcome data from the 20 interview participants shows 18 are employed (90%), including 13 still with their TAEG-SBT host employer (70%) (see Table 14). This indicates TAEG-SBT can achieve sustained employment outcomes for trainees, noting the sample may not be representative of overall trends due to selection bias.

Table 14: Current employment and education status of former trainees interviewed

Current Employment Status	No. of Trainees	Further Education	No. of Trainees
Ongoing employment with SBT host employer	13	Current Tertiary - University 3 - VET 5	8
Other employment	5	Tertiary Planned - University 2 - VET 0	2
Looking for work	1	None	9
Undecided	1	Undecided	1
Percentage working	90%	Percentage studying	50%
Total no. of Trainees Interviewed	20		20

Source: TAEG-SBT interview data

A NIAA survey³ of all JLEP participants, including TAEG-SBT trainees, over the 2017-2018 period provides further insights into the rate of school to work or further education transition. In the survey 81% of 15-20 year old JLEP participants were employed, with 48% involved in some further education or training. Of those studying, 63% were doing so at a Certificate level and 20% at a diploma or higher qualification level. The limited available evidence of positive post-school transition outcomes is encouraging, but the extent to which they reflect outcomes for TAEG-SBT trainees is not fully understood without further investment in data collection and data platforms.

4.3.3 Further Education

TAEG-SBT can assist Indigenous students to access further education post-school, with 39% of interviewees seeing this SBT as important for providing further education pathways, including 40% former trainees.

Stakeholders discussed instances of former trainees now studying towards science, nursing, teaching and other qualifications. One former trainee is studying part time at university while also supporting herself financially by continuing to work where she did her traineeship. Of the 20 trainees interviewed, five were either doing or planning to start university (25%) and a further five were undertaking further VET studies (25%).

Interviewees identified that this alternative pathway to academic study works because former trainees arrive at university with prior practical experience in their chosen field, an understanding of both the professional jargon and the required study pathway, and greater maturity and responsibility than other students straight out of school. As one trainee articulated:

In high school compared to uni, teachers hold your hand a little more than uni, so working at Qantas helped me to take a bit more responsibility for my actions. That would have helped me prepare for uni a bit. I didn't realise at the time but I think it certainly helps with that. Through uni, I'm an ambassador for Aboriginal education team and have done jobs around uni like small things taking over university Instagram and had to do an interview for that. So, the interview process for the traineeship would have helped with where I'm at uni in terms of doing things here and there.

³ Employment Service Outcomes Report Jobs, Land and Economy Programme January 2018 – December 2018
ppmsurvey@employment.gov.au

This pathway can be further supported where the certificate qualification contributes to a student’s ATAR. The administration and regulation of education and training services is a State and Territory responsibility, and those VET Certificate qualifications which do and do not count towards ATAR vary by jurisdiction and qualification.

There is little recognition in the literature suggesting school-based traineeships provide a significant and effective launching pad into further education post-school (Clarke, 2015, p.10 & p.11; Dockery, Koshy & Stromback 2005, p.26). However, this pathway is captured in transition outcomes described in program logic: “more likely to feel ... study is appropriate and meaningful” and “more likely to commence ... study post school”. Missing is the clear articulation of the casual pathways described above including practical experience, an understanding of professional jargon and study pathways, maturity and responsibility.

4.3.4 Career Planning

Almost half of providers (49%) think the program helps trainees explore career options, including 11 former trainees (65%). Mentors can work with school career counsellors to help trainees see where they fit career wise and the required pathways. At interview an NIAA staff member observed:

‘You can’t be what you can’t see’ and by people being involved in these programs people see it’s something they can do, whereas before they might not have seen it as an option or something for their people. As soon as you can see something you realise you can be it.

4.3.5 Program Mechanism

A major theme found (70%of stakeholders, 95% of trainees) is that is the program improves the job readiness and employability of trainees, giving graduates an advantage in the employment market over other school leavers.

The program was found to enhance the employability of trainees by growing their confidence, maturity, self-belief, aspirations and networks; all valued attributes of a work ready person (Table 15). Almost every trainee, family member, employer and other stakeholders interviewed and surveyed held this view. All trainees and other stakeholders referred to one or more improvements in personal development.

Table 15: Significant change themes identified by trainees interviewed

Theme	No. of Trainees
1. Greater confidence	12 (60%)
2. Other personal development	7 (35%)
3. New relationships (at work, with other trainees)	6 (30%)
4. Greater self-belief (stronger person, resilience)	5 (20%)
5. Greater social awareness (understanding, respect, empathy)	5 (20%)
6. Greater maturity	4 (16%)
7. Greater responsibility (independence)	3 (18%)
Total no. Trainees Interviewed	20 (100%)

Source: TAEG-SBT interview data

Overall 69% of interviewees, including 70% of former trainees, described TAEG-SBT as contributing to personal development outcomes. Confidence and communication skills were specifically mentioned by 65% of former trainees and 59% of interviewees overall, with little variation across different stakeholder groups. A former trainee commented:

The traineeship did have a big impact with getting my confidence up. I didn't feel left out or uncomfortable when showing to up work... I was the type of person who didn't like to stand up and do oral presentations at school. ... For myself, I saw my confidence build a lot especially taking on a task or work I was given by the managers during my traineeship. Being told to do data entry, phoning people or even working alongside other co-workers.

The program works by enabling trainees to gain maturity and independence. Former trainees and family members related that at work they must accept responsibility and routinely interact with adults. Every former trainee interviewed stated the program contributed to significant personal growth, one commenting:

One huge change was ... learning to take responsibility and how to manage yourself, not always needing someone to tell you what to do. Using a bit of initiative to fix something that needed to be fixed, or something that needed to be done... With the more difficult customers, how to manage that in a professional and polite way. So I think I got a lot out of it.

Furthermore, 35% of former trainees stated the program had contributed to their self-belief and resilience, made them stronger. At work they learnt they could do a lot more than thought they could. They came to believe in their capacity to gain skills and employment.

Table 16: The proportion of trainees experiencing positive outcomes as rated by all stakeholder groups.

	Employer	Provider	Provider manager	Mentor	School	NIAA	All
	N=15 %	N=11 %	N=8 %	N=5 %	N=9 %	N=8 %	N=56 %
Development of industry-relevant skills	100	100	95	85	100	85	95
Improved confidence and self-esteem	95	90	95	80	100	80	90
Increased independence/autonomy	95	85	100	80	95	75	90
Improved employability and job-readiness	95	90	95	80	100	70	90
Improved interpersonal skills and relationships	90	85	100	80	95	80	90
Greater understanding of career paths and opportunities	90	95	100	85	100	70	90
Greater access to employer networks	95	90	90	80	100	70	90
Overcoming personal and/or environmental barriers	90	80	85	80	100	70	85
Formal qualifications	90	90	85	80	90	75	85
Year 12 completion	90	85	90	75	90	80	85
Clearer career aspirations	80	85	80	85	95	55	80
Improved literacy and numeracy	90	85	90	75	70	60	80
Improved school attendance	80	85	90	70	75	80	80
More engaged at school	80	80	90	70	70	85	80
Increased engagement with culture and community	90	80	70	80	75	55	80
Successful employment	75	65	65	75	95	60	75

Source: Stakeholder Survey and Provider Management Survey

Stakeholders described trainees with career aspirations writing their own job and university applications. One commented: *'I learnt so much and grew so much, became more independent, more financially independent ... I think the biggest change for me is probably just growing that independence.'* Another noted the experience enabling them to become a more effective time manager: *'It's ... really good to have that training to balance school work with work, because if you decide to do TAFE or Uni in the future or tradies, then you have that mindset of what you can do and how it's going to work.'*

All respondent groups in the stakeholder survey rated highly the outcomes received by trainees, noting that the NIAA respondents were consistently 10-20 percentage points below providers, employers, school and other stakeholders as detailed in Table 16.

The evidence from this evaluation supports the program logic's identification of "increased belief and confidence in ability to achieve goals", "positive attitude towards education and employment" and the development of "work readiness skills including cognitive skills and 'soft' behavioural skills" as learning and growth outcomes of TAEG-SBT. Giddy, Lopez and Redman (2009, pp.10 - 12) found that even where programs do not directly lead to sustained employment, the development of such soft skills nevertheless lays the pre-conditions for future employment.

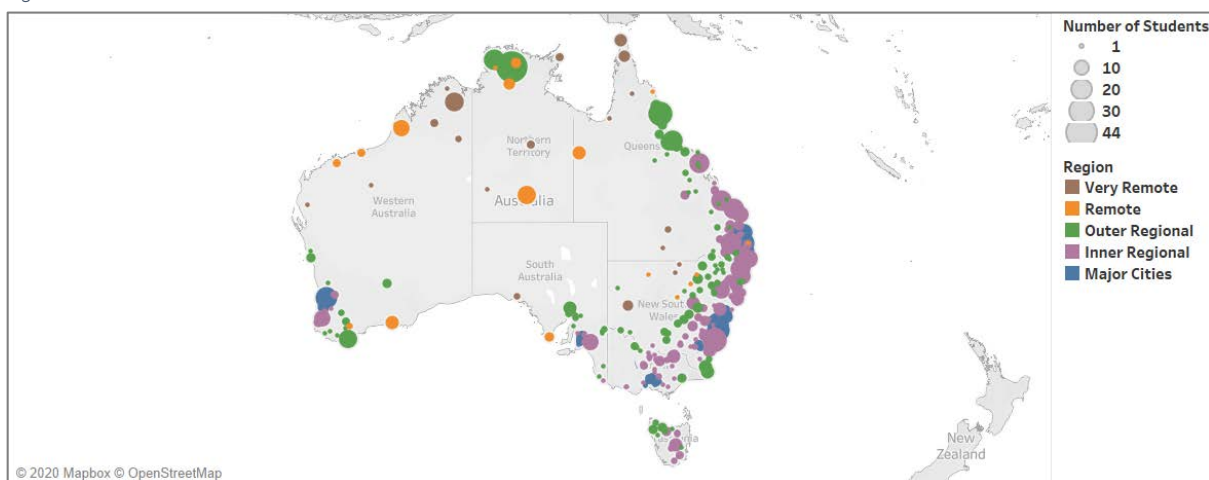
4.4 Regional factors and occupation

Evaluation Question: What regional characteristics (and job types) contributed to the success or otherwise of the program? To what extent have outcomes differed across different regions and job types?

TAEG-SBTs has a similar success rate across all regions: metropolitan (60%), inner regional (62%), outer regional (71%), remote and very remote (61%) (Table 17). The success of TAEG-SBT in remote and very remote regions is surprising because Indigenous students in these regions generally experience more barriers and do worse educationally (Klatt, Clarke & Dulfer 2017, p.479; Gale et al. 2010, p.7). This success applies across all occupational areas and suggests that TAEG-SBT is a promising way to contribute to addressing disparities in schooling outcomes between remote areas compared to urban areas.

TAEG-SBT providers deliver services across all states, the NT and the ACT (Table 17/Figure 8). The highest concentration of trainees are in inner regional areas of NSW and outer regional areas in Qld and the NT. Trainees in remote and very remote regions are mostly restricted to WA and the NT.

Figure 8: TAEG-SBT Student Distribution



National providers work across state and territory borders supporting trainees in urban, regional and remote locations. One national provider is a consortium of metropolitan and regional providers. Also included in the

national category are three providers that work in only two states, mostly serving urban and inner regional locations. State providers serve mostly urban and outer regional sites within a single state. Finally the regional providers mostly support trainees in inner and outer regional communities, with one also heavily involved in remote Australia.

Despite the variations in provider footprints (Table 17) there is no relationship between either the service footprint of providers (i.e. national, state or regional) or the geographic location of trainees and their success rate. In regards to the former, the range of provider success is high, with both low and high performing services in each category, but the average success rate is similar for all three. In regards to the latter, some providers have more success in metropolitan areas, while others have more success in regional and remote regions. Providers have demonstrated success in remote Queensland, NSW and north-west WA.

Table 17: Provider service footprint success rate

Service Footprint (N)	Proportion of Students % (N)				Average success*
	Major Cities	Inner Regional	Outer Regional	Remote & Very Remote	Range %
National (1316)	54% (717)	24% (317)	18% (241)	3% (41)	68% 49% to 100%
State (170)	49% (84)	4% (6)	39% (66)	8% (14)	77% 45% to 90%
Regional (600)	28% (166)	35% (211)	24% (145)	13% (78)	76% 38% to 100%
Total (2086)	46% (967)	26% (534)	22% (452)	6% (133)	70% 38% to 100%
Success rate by student location (%)	60%	62%	71%	61%	

**For three providers outcomes data is mostly not available except for early failures so the overall success rate may be an underestimate.

In the course of the evaluation three regional case studies were conducted (See Appendix F). Poor outcomes were related to the distance between provider and region, not remoteness per se. A stakeholder at interview remarked:

That personal touch is really, really important ... You just know you can't just send emails and texts, you have to get up close and personal if you want anything, any information from Aboriginal people.

A school staff member commented on the fact not all providers are based close to their trainees:

We have had students with [a provider] before, but found it is hard because they weren't local. They don't have a presence here. As far as [another provider] goes, they're here on the ground ... They're here all the time and they do things like drive them to work, buy them clothes. The mentor will stay in touch and call regularly or send a courtesy email checking how they go attendance wise.

Trainees resident in remote and very remote regions appear to be underrepresented in TAEG-SBT. They comprise only 200 of total TAEG-SBT trainees (10%), whereas 19% of the Indigenous population reside in remote and very remote communities. However, the number of remote trainees attending metropolitan boarding schools is not known. This would be useful data to be collected in order to get a more accurate understanding of the geographic distribution of TAEG-SBT trainees.

Several regional barriers impacting on TAEG-SBT success were raised by stakeholders in the interviews including restricted job markets (10 stakeholders or 14%), limited occupational choice (6 stakeholders or 15%), racism (11 stakeholders or 15%), poor access to services (3 stakeholders or 4%), different traineeship (11 stakeholders or 15%) and the pandemic (19 stakeholders or 26%). While these factors might be expected to impact TAEG-SBT participation and success rates in regional areas there is no evidence of this at a program level with participation and success rates similar to those of metropolitan trainees. It may be that trainees move away from some locations to get better opportunities in the city. In the course of the interviews seven stakeholders (10%) commented on the need to leave some regions in order to get a job. However, in the absence of a robust data platform it is not possible to confirm the extent of labour mobility. The key theme emerging from our analysis of regional barriers is that the most successful providers have demonstrated a considerable capacity to overcome them by building relationships with local employment providers.

The Covid-19 pandemic appeared to impact TAEG-SBT service provision in some regions more than others. Twenty-six percent of interviewees stated the pandemic had adversely impacted the program, but only 10% of trainees raised it. The impact appeared higher in schools (78% of school staff). As a result of Covid-19 businesses closed and trainees lost placements. Schools closed and study stopped. Trainees, provider and RTO's moved to on-line delivery. Some trainees had poor internet access. The anecdotal evidence from interview responses is a story of program adaptation despite the disruption. There is, however, no hard evidence yet of 2020 outcomes to see if Covid-19 has greatly impacted on outcomes.

Providers in regional and remote areas tend to focus on offering traineeships in a narrow range of fields; sport and recreation, early childhood, and ranger training. Six stakeholders (8%) commented on a lack of occupational choice. Two stakeholders in strategy roles in departments of education, school staff and other stakeholders identified the value of traineeship being expanded in disadvantaged communities. In one region there is only one type of traineeship available, offered by a national provider. There is therefore an opportunity to run a localised community development pilot project with a community-based provider in a disadvantaged community to test whether it is possible to effectively broaden the range of occupational choice and job opportunities available to trainees. A coordinated community development partnership approach between service providers, schools, RTO's, employers, community representatives and NIAA may enhance effectiveness of TAEG-SBT.

Consistency in success rates is found across most occupational types, as shown in Table 18. Nearly all occupations have a success rate in the 60%-76% range with one notable exception. *'Sport and Recreation'* traineeships have an impressive success rate of 93%. These traineeships account for 137 (11%) of all TAEG-SBT traineeship completions. This outcome is part testimony to the fact sport has consistently been demonstrated to be a powerful enabler of engagement with Indigenous youth. But the provider responsible for the majority of these traineeship outcomes has also developed a strength based, culturally informed service delivery model combining the school, RTO, employer and mentoring processes under a single organisational umbrella (see Section 5 for further discussion of provider models). The program uses the trainees' preferred sport as the basis for the work component of the program, running clinics with sporting clubs affiliated to the provider. The implication is that an increase in the number of TAEG-SBT 'sport and recreation' traineeships undertaken with the most successful provider would improve the overall success rate of TAEG-SBT.

Table 18: Trainee outcomes by occupational category

Occupational category	Outcome Simplified				
	Percentage %		Number of trainees		
	Success & Partial Success	Failure	Success & Partial Success	Failure	Total
Sport and Recreation	93%	7%	128	9	137
Trades and Skilled Labour	76%	24%	39	12	51
Administration Finance and Business	66%	34%	372	193	565
Land or Ocean Care	66%	34%	44	23	67
Sales and Customer Service	65%	35%	166	91	257
Early Childhood & Education Support	63%	37%	52	31	83
Hospitality and Food	60%	40%	15	10	25
Engineering and IT	60%	40%	9	6	15
Health and Community Services	53%	48%	21	19	40
Meat / Sawmill & Warehousing	25%	75%	3	9	12
Total	68%	32%	849	403	1,252

4.5 Trainee Well-being

Evaluation Question: To what extent has the program supported participants' well-being and participation in education and work?

4.5.1 Mentor and provider support

TAEG-SBT mentoring support was highly regarded by trainees and other stakeholders. This finding is consistent with the literature suggesting mentoring is an appropriate strategic response to the needs of students requiring support. However, interview responses from 11 stakeholders (15%), including two family members but no former trainees, suggest there is variable quality of mentoring within the program. Staff turnover and difficulty in accessing professional development opportunities are reasons for poor mentoring quality. Respondents to the stakeholder survey support this concern identifying that in 20% of cases mentors were unable to meet the needs of their mentee.

A key theme identified is the role of the mentor in providing wrap around support (65% of stakeholders). This included the mentor providing various kinds of trainee support such as engaging with family, liaising between stakeholders, checking in to discussing wellbeing, encouragement, cultural support and engagement, and helping to manage life issues. An NIAA staff member at interview articulated the rationale for mentoring support.

These are young people. They need guidance. They do need a bit of a push sometimes. They also have families that need that support. They may be the first in the family to do something like this, so parents need that support ... You can't just plonk them in a traineeship without support.

A growing body of international research confirms mentoring improves educational and employment outcomes for Indigenous youth (Mangan & Trendle 2019, p.309; Roberts, Takahashi & Park 2018, pp.208–209). Trendle (2013), for example, has shown that Indigenous apprentices with mentoring support are much more likely to complete than those without it. The literature confirms mentors can play a valuable liaison role joining-up schools and local business and industry (Jobs Queensland 2017, p.54). In effect they mediate between labour market supply and demand to create opportunities for trainees (The Smith Family 2014, p.1 & 6; Giddy, Lopez & Redman 2009, p.16).

Over half of former trainees (55%) stated TAEG-SBT specifically supports trainee *wellbeing* at school and at work, a view supported by three provider and two NIAA interviewees. A former trainee commented:

The support was amazing with my traineeship ... She was there for ... just like checking in on what state of mind and how I'm going with the TAFE and the work.

More broadly, the nature of the support provided by mentors through TAEG-SBT is diverse as identified in Table 7 in the earlier discussion of the program design. Mentors don't just work with the student and their families, but also with schools, school-based programs, trainers and employers. The role of a mentor is to identify and work on barriers to traineeship completion outside the normal scope of these stakeholders. A school staff member commented:

That extra intense support our students receive is invaluable to ensure student success. It adds another layer of support specifically for students in ensuring they have support in completing formal and on the job training when issues arise.

The mentor is a problem solver and linked into a community support network. Trainees have a wide array of personal wellbeing, educational and practical support requirements; including school attendance, tutorial support, social and emotional wellbeing counselling, contact with the justice system, or financial assistance with uniforms and transport. It is the job of the mentor to support across this broad range of issues facilitating communication. A provider commented, '*Where I see myself fitting in is really providing that voice ... for ... things they might be shy about. A lot of them are shy and reserved.*' Ninety-five percent of trainees and 68% of interviewees overall identified this broad support role of mentors.

The quality of support is also contingent on the strength of the personal relationships the mentor develops with the trainee and their family, school and workplace. Effective mentors are able to demonstrate empathy, trust and rapport. A family member commented on one mentor:

She was genuinely interested in how he was doing and getting on ... Look, if you've got that one person that you have a really good rapport with and work well with ... that's crucial. That just makes the whole experience a lot calmer, a lot easier, because you have that and know there's that person there that will understand and help you get what you need.

Effective mentoring requires a set of relational and trust building skills. Mentors who bring valued lived experience and a cultural perspective to their role are held in high regard. Eight providers in the provider management survey reflected on the value of the mentoring relationship for trainees, families, employers and schools (see Table at Appendix G). The program improvement section below (Section 4.7) draws upon this material to suggest recommendations for improving the quality of mentors.

While mentors play a critical support role, it is important to acknowledge they are part of a broader network of support. However, the level of this support is variable, for example evidence suggested that employers may not always be a source of support (15% of cases) and in 34% of cases family situations are challenging and not always a source of support for trainees, Therefore the role of the mentor could be to fill the gaps in support for trainees or to facilitate more supportive relationships with other key stakeholders. This could be more clearly articulated in the program logic.

4.5.2 Social Networks

According to 40% of trainees, TAEG-SBT enables trainees to build new relationships at work and with their peers according to It enables trainees to extend their stock of 'social capital', a term that refers to social norms of reciprocity and trust fuelling cooperative relationships, engagement and mutual support. The families of Indigenous students often don't have a bridge that enables easy access to the kinds of networks that assist when it comes to getting a job. Families in which few people have a sustained history of work don't have this mechanism. However, TAEG-SBT trainees get to extend their networks to include employers who can give them a reference and colleagues who can assist them at work. One former trainee commented:

I think definitely a positive is meeting new people, making new friends, colleagues and even customers. You start building relationships with them as well. I think that all was positive for me, coming to a workplace where I felt included and wanted.

Peer support networks that permit trainees to bond with each other are also be a valued source of support for trainees. One provider brings isolated trainees with different employers together in a collegiate process. Elsewhere a former trainee commented:

It could have helped if they could get a cohort of all trainees in the area ... There are so many pressures. I would love to talk to someone going through the same thing. If they'd put together a group or buddy program, that would have helped.

The implication is there is an opportunity to incorporate trainee group process into the program design so trainees together have mutual support, as well as a collective voice that can speak back to the program. The social capital theme is captured in the program logic: "Develop new school community and professional support networks."

4.6 Program Strengths and Weaknesses

Evaluation Question: What are the key strengths and weaknesses of the program?

The main strength of the program according to 95% of trainees and 82% of stakeholders is that it is effective in rendering trainees work ready and more employable. This is consistent with the literature. A Jobs Queensland (2017, p.54) review found SBT's "generally very well regarded" for their capacity to enhance employability. There is also research indicating SBT's ultimately contribute to increased job satisfaction (Dockery, Koshy & Stromback 2005, p.7).

TAEG-SBT graduates with a traineeship qualification and substantial work experience have a distinct edge over others competing in the employment market, noted by 95% of trainees interviewed and 70% of stakeholders overall. One former trainee reflected:

Having the chance to work and experience what the 'real world' is like, having continuous support around me too ... life skills and what it is actually like working. [Without TAEG-SBT] I wouldn't know the basic things that kids need to learn about working and having common sense ... I wouldn't have the work ethic like I do if I didn't do what I have done.

TAEG-SBT trainees have a set of 'real world' life skills and attitudes valued by employers who want work ready candidates, a point stressed by 56% of employers, 80% of trainees and 51% of stakeholders overall. An employer commented:

We're getting kids who may have dropped out of school ... to end up in employment ... They've got a job already, gainful income, and they're set up with good habits.

TAEG-SBT prepares young people for work in ways school does not. Schools alone are not equipped to prepare young people for their transition to the world of work. A former trainee commented:

I know the education system could've done better with teaching students to get themselves ready for reality and encourage them to start looking at opportunities during school. I know being at school ... the work given to us was just to complete our QCE.

The crucial point is the program mechanism works by providing a soft introduction to the world of work before trainees leave school, enabling them to gradually come to understand what it is like 'out there'. They are equipped by small increments over time, not suddenly all at once at the point when trainees leave. A provider observed, 'They don't come into the employment with the anxiety. We gradually teach the kids how to be employees and develop the right attitude.'

This critical aspect of the mechanism is not captured in the program logic.

4.6.1 Lack of awareness of the program

There is in some cases a poor awareness and understanding of the requirements of the program (11 interviewees or 15%). The issue is about ensuring trainees, their families and employers know what is involved and what they can expect before committing to a 2-year program. A family member commented:

These traineeships, there's something positive that's going to come out of these, no matter what you do [but] parents like us need to know the benefits of things like this to get into and involved in. Maybe advertise it a bit more, inform the parents a bit more.

In particular, students need to be aware of the academic implications of taking a TAEG-SBT pathway. These vary across state and territory jurisdictions because the administration and regulation of education and training services is a State responsibility. Traineeships in some states require substantially more work placement hours than in others, and some VET Certificate qualifications do not count towards a student's ATAR in some jurisdictions. Different traineeship system requirements across State and Territory borders was identified as an issue primarily by providers (6) and NIAA staff (3).

Once in the program trainees can find themselves pulled towards an academic pathway by their school and in an applied practical vocational direction by the provider. This is not a problem for high performing trainees according to one school staff member, 'If it's an HSC subject and they can complete an ATAR, why not? They're getting an ATAR and national recognised qualification at the same time.'

However, other trainees experience a tension between meeting traineeship requirements and their academic study commitments. Specifically TAEG-SBT participation can adversely impact the academic achievement of those simultaneously managing a full ATAR study load and seeking to complete both a traineeship and attain their Higher Education Certificate (HEC). Overall 23% of interviewees felt trainees struggle to balance traineeship and school academic study commitments, but more significantly 35% of trainees did so and 56% of school staff also.

Stakeholders provided feedback of the need for a more systematic structured approach to informing all stakeholders about the program. More knowledgeable and informed stakeholders can translate into better recruitment and improved retention. It is noted NIAA's Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS) program has a series of informative Fact Sheets.

Celebrating of success is a common approach of mentoring programs and as outlined in the community development section above a number of providers actively engage in celebrating success. In contrast the NRL School-to-Work (S2W), for example, has a quarterly on-line newsletter (The Scoop) promoting program awareness and recognising the contribution of partner organisations. TAEG-SBT has no equivalent. The TAEG-SBT program logic does not identify the value in celebrating success.

In summary, the strength of the program is its capacity to render trainees work ready and more employable, enabling them to develop critical life skills necessary to successfully navigate the school-to-work life transition. This is attributed to an incremental approach to job-readiness. The main weakness is a lack of readily available information about the program necessary to enable trainees, families, employers and schools to understand what they are committing to and make informed choices. Both of these elements are missing from the program logic.

4.7 Options for Program Improvement

Evaluation Question: What changes or enhancements to the program would enable delivery of better outcomes?

Evaluation Question: What factors cause participants' non-achievement of outcomes, or negative outcomes and what adjustments were made?

4.7.1 Trainees need for tutorial assistance

Interviewees identified tutorial assistance as a gap in trainee support. Poor literacy and numeracy pose challenges for trainees with the study component of the traineeship. In the interviews 20% identified a need for tutorial support, increasing to 40% of trainees. One former trainee commented: *“Because I don’t understand big words, my studies were the hardest thing in the whole traineeship because the work and the questions I could not understand.”*

Low literacy and numeracy is a barrier experienced by around half of all TAEG-SBT trainees, as shown previously in Table 10. A provider placed the issue in context:

TAFE is an adult learning environment, and students can find themselves challenged with the pace of the learning presented. Often work is expected to be completed out of class hours. Independent and self-paced learning can be difficult for some students. Some students find communication with TAFE can be hard as they see the teachers only once a week, and are reluctant to contact TAFE teachers via email.

When the tutorial support needs of TAEG-SBT trainees are not met the risk is that they will not complete their studies. Higher completion rates are contingent on the provision of tutorial support. Providers deliver some level of tutorial support, either directly or by referral. Although they may not always be equipped to do so, it often falls to the mentor to fill the gap in support. A strength of one provider is that they are also an RTO and the trainer can also tutor.

While two trainees (10%) identified tutorial support as an unmet need a further six (30%) identified it as a problem they had been able to overcome. They did this by finding a mentor, employer, RTO trainer, teacher, homework class, a school-based program or a family member to assist. Often these people volunteer their own time. An employer commented: *‘We put in place a lot of support tuition ... a lot of them would have dropped off the program if we hadn’t done that support in the traineeship.’*

Tutorial support can contribute to improved program success when involving a cohort with known literacy and numeracy issues. Lack of tutorial support is a risk factor that contributes to low completion rates. This critical aspect has been missed in the program logic. There are several options for improvement. Firstly, capacity of providers to offer tutorial support needs to be an important consideration prior to engaging them. Secondly, improved reporting by providers could help inform understanding as to the extent of this problem’s contribution to attrition. Finally, an MOU with participating schools could establish a commitment to source this support, either directly or through a school-based program or outsourcing.

4.7.2 Quality of Mentoring Relationships

Mentoring can be challenging work due to the attitude of participants. Evidence including a small number of providers and provider progress reports, reported instances where participants show little interest in learning, have frequent absences and are a disruptive influence on committed trainees. This places severe strain on limited TAEG-SBT mentoring resources, proves disruptive to committed trainees, and potentially damages relations with host employers. Maintaining regular mentor contact with some trainees is a struggle where they do not respond to telephone messages and emails and change their address and contact details without notifying. It is a program objective to have trainees complete school. However, the literature suggests compelling some students to stay on is unwise (Briggs, 2017, p.40). There is a need to ensure the mentor themselves is supported and not just left to fend for themselves as best they can in a myriad of complex situations, an aspect of the program not captured in the program logic.

A theme identified 15% of stakeholders relates to ensuring the mentoring is of sufficient quality, given its central importance in supporting the program. Where a provider experiences staff turnover and retention issues the quality and frequency of support is impacted because new mentors have to be build relationships from scratch. A NIAA interviewee commented:

It will always come back to mentoring and at the end of the day it's about the people delivering it. You could have the best program in the world, but if you've got a ... person delivering who can't connect to community, it will never work.

At interview 19 stakeholders (26%) were disappointed with the level of support provided to trainees. They felt the current provision of support can be too ad hoc, requiring more planning and structure. An employer observed:

With any organisation that wins a contract with this program it's important that the mentors understand their role. Perhaps funding should build in that component to ensure the people they're employing are adequately trained to support young people ... So it's important for organisations to employ the right people with the right skills to support these kids.

The professional development of mentors is crucial to program success given the role involves supporting a high needs group through a critical point of life transition. Some providers already invest in the professional development of their mentors. One conducts monthly meetings where trainee progress, barriers and support requirements are discussed. A provider identified the existing *Certificate III in Mentoring Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander People* as an example of a relevant course TAEG-SBT mentors could complete. There is the opportunity to leverage AbStudy Away From Base funding to cover travel and accommodation expenses to enable mentors to attend a block release course.

4.7.3 Unintended Consequences

This evaluation found that a key negative consequence occurred when planned work placements fall through or post-school employment does not materialise. This can be demoralising, a point made by three providers, a family member, and a school staff member. There is no evidence this is a common occurrence. This can occur where a business experiences a downturn, a provider loses key staff members, or trainee performance was considered to be unsatisfactory. A family member commented:

My oldest son, once he finished his school based traineeship, it was 'OK see you later, thanks very much'... They sort of said, 'Oh, well, no sorry, we've got nothing for you'. He just didn't pursue that. He just lost all interest... It was very disappointing to him. He kind of felt like he had wasted two years.

Summary of links to Program Theory - Effectiveness:

While the program logic identifies the importance of program performance management, there is no identification of relevant content or mechanisms to use routine data for monitoring purposes. The poor quality of the data platform prevents this. Further, the program currently identifies an important but hard to measure 26-week post program completion performance outcome while failing to measure trainee's transition at the completion of the program. Similarly, the program logic is silent on the importance of mentor quality and workforce development. These are examples of 'system level' outcomes which are not articulated in the program logic.

While the program logic captures the individual trainee level outcomes well it only identifies three system level outcomes: that 1) higher quality traineeships result in 2) greater student take up of traineeships and 3) better individual outcomes. The program logic would benefit from a clearer articulation of how the NIAA and providers engage in continuous quality improvement processes (such as through data monitoring and feedback cycles and workforce development) to improve program outcomes. The value of promotion of the program including recognising the value of celebrating success are also absent from the program logic.

Another weakness of the program logic is that while it correctly identifies personal, education, and employment outcomes it is silent as to the mechanisms of achieving these outcomes. The evaluation documents these mechanisms such as the gradual equipping through program delivery of knowledge and skills needed for employment and further education.

5 Efficiency and Future Impact

Evaluation Question: To what extent did the program deliver value for money?

5.1 Overview and key findings

This section explores value for money from the perspective of unit comparisons with other programs and also by exploring approaches to potentially improve program impact and reach.

The evaluation finds that TAEG-SBT represents value for money for NIAA in its ability to leverage resources and support from schools, school-based programs and training services. Unit cost comparisons with other programs are favourable but different program foci limit this comparison. The potential to reduce future government outlays by diverting youth from long-term unemployment and its consequences is a valuable feature of the program that would benefit from being quantified through the undertaking of a SROI after a period of appropriate data collection. There is minimal evidence of inefficient duplication between TAEG-SBT and other school mentoring programs.

There is the potential to expand the program in areas of unmet demand through appropriate community co-design and strategic engagement with employers. The NIAA could do more to identify and invest in high performing providers and improve trainee retention in the program. In particular future impact might be enhanced through supporting a community of practice around TAEG-SBT.

Table 19 provides the total number of interview participants addressing themes related to program appropriateness.

Table 19: Future Impact and Efficiency of TAEG-SBT

Future impact	Trainee (20)	Family (7)	Employer (9)	Provider (18)	School (9)	Other (4)	NIAA (7)	Total (74)
Positive future impact	15 (75%)	3 (43%)	6 (67%)	14 (78%)	8 (89%)	3 (75%)	7 (100%)	56 (76%)
Identified areas for future improvement	5 (25%)	3 (43%)	4 (44%)	8 (44%)	4 (44%)	3 (75%)	4 (57%)	31 (42%)

Source: TAEG-SBT Interview data

5.2 Value for money

5.2.1 Leverage

TAEG-SBT mentor support supplements, but does not replace, support networks trainees may already have at school, at home and in their community. A family member can provide transport to a placement, a school can provide access to a career adviser, a school-based program can assist a trainee to get a driver licence, a host employer can assist with study time, and a trainer can provide one-on-one tutorial assistance. TAEG-SBT is designed to provide supplementary support, filling gaps and adding value to the work of others. Two thirds of interviewees (68% interviewees, 95% trainees) expressed the view trainees receive good support from all sources; provider, family, employer, school and RTO. One former trainee reflected: "It wasn't just one person checking in with me, it was multiple."

At present the level of commitment of participating schools to the program is variable. These are many expectations and demands placed on schools. Participating schools engage with many services and stakeholders. TAEG-SBT is but one initiative amongst many. Related to this, sound relationships between

providers and participating schools are, a success factor for TAEG-SBT (refer program logic). Fifteen interviewees (21%) described a sound relationship between provider and school as critical. A well-resourced school can bring substantial resources to bear: Indigenous Education staff, Career Advisors, Counsellors, homework hubs, and teachers. They can identify the individual support needs of students and promote VETiS as a legitimate pathway (The Smith Family, 2014). This evaluation found some schools have large dynamic traineeship programs, with several identifying aspirations to grow them further.

At one extreme there is evidence some schools regard traineeships as a 'dumping ground' for problematic students (Training and Skills Commission 2019, p.14). SBT is seen as a diversion strategy for those not yet of an age where they can legally leave school. Providers can experience difficulty in gaining access to staff to discuss student issues and progress reports. Only 20% of former trainees interviewed found schools and school based programs to be a valued source of support to trainees, dropping to 16% of interviewees overall. Furthermore 23% of interviewees, including 15% of trainees, suggested schools and school based programs were not a valued source of support for trainees.

Collaborative partnerships between providers and schools significantly assist in producing program impact. The development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) spelling out mutual expectations may assist in building school commitment where their contribution is lacking. The NIAA could develop a template as a useful resource.

5.2.2 Prevention of underemployment

Year 11 and 12 is a critical life stage for young people. Failure to transition from school to work places a substantial future financial burden on Commonwealth outlays in areas such as income support, employment and training programs and health, wellbeing and justice system expenditure. The program provides value for money to the extent it prevents trainees joining the queues of the long-term unskilled unemployed. The research of James Heckman (for example, see Heckman 2000, p.50) illustrates how over the life cycle additional support and intervention costs of far out weight the costs of earlier prevention.

Increased rates of school completions and employment for Indigenous Australians have considerable social, health and economic benefits (Gray, Hunter & Biddle 2014; Deloitte Access Economics 2014). TAEG-SBT funding is a form of preventive intervention to the extent sound life choices made in Year 12 divert youth from more expensive and difficult interventions later.

A Social Rate of Return (SROI) methodology can be used to measure the longer term economic, social, cultural and other value of the intervention. In the case of TAEG-SBT it would not only include an assessment of outcomes, but also of the value of the program in diverting at-risk youth from pathways to unemployment and the justice system and the flow on effects of positive role models to family and community members. It should also be seen in the broader policy context of Australian education reform which is increasingly seeking to strengthen the relationships between schools and industry such as through SBTs (Education Services Australia 2020). However, SROI methodology requires robust data not currently available for TAEG-SBT.

5.2.3 Value for money comparisons with other programs

Evaluation question: To what extent did the program deliver value for money?

TAEG-SBT is found to have lower unit cost than other NIAA funded employment programs but with some qualifiers.

Cost-effectiveness analysis is used to compare delivery costs of different programs on a per unit (participant) basis. The limitation is variations can reflect differences in the intensity of investment or different foci and

approach, rather than actual differences in efficiency. Table 20 compares the unit cost of TAEG-SBT with that of TAEG Employment Grants and Vocational Training and Employment Centres (VTEC), also both JLEP programs administered by NIAA. Financial data for other comparable programs was not available to the evaluation.

The evaluation finds substantial differences in unit cost per participant across these programs. In the case of a trainee deemed not disadvantaged, the annual TAEG-SBT payment is \$3,250 for a Certificate 11. The comparative TAEG Employment Grant payments are \$14,000. TAEG-SBT is around one third of the cost per participant of TAEG Employment Grant.

For disadvantaged participants the comparative TAEG-SBT amounts are \$9,000 for a Certificate 11 compared to \$17,700 for TAEG Employment Grant payments. TAEG-SBT costs around half as much. The unit cost per participant of TAEG-SBT has also been found to be about half that of those VTEC trainees classed as not disadvantaged (Stream A) and greater still classed when compared with VTEC participants classed as disadvantaged (Streams B and C).

Table 20: TAEG-SBT Cost Comparison with Other NIAA Programs

	TAEG – Employment unit cost		TAEG–Employment unit cost		VTEC unit costs		
	TAEG – SBT (Yearly support)	Total with disadvantage incentive payments (as per ICSEA score)	Work Ready	Highly disadvantaged (Job Active stream B/C)	Stream A (not disadvantaged)	Stream B	Stream C
Pre-employment	0	0	\$1000	\$1500			
First Job placement	\$1500	\$3000	\$6000	\$8250			
Cert 11	\$1750	\$6000	\$7000	\$7950			
Total Cert 11	\$3250	\$9000	\$14000	\$17700	\$8,000	\$13500	\$15000

Source: NIAA JLEP

This cost comparison indicates TAEG-SBT has a low unit cost relative to the other TAEG initiatives and VTEC. However, this analysis should not be read as suggesting TAEG-Employment and VTEC are inefficient or ineffective vis-à-vis TAEG-SBT. They have a significantly different focus including focusing of school students versus adults and while TAEG-SBT does not guarantee 26-week employment outcomes, both TAEG-Employment Grants and VTEC do.

The first activity described in the TAEG-SBT program logic is “program design set-up and performance management”. A priority for NIAA is to implement an appropriate data collection system so relative efficiency can be measured and meaningful comparisons then made with other programs at the program level.

5.2.4 Value for Money Comparisons between Providers

Program impact can be increased by ensuring funded TAEG-SBT providers have the necessary capacity to deliver desired outcomes. The success rates of the 18 providers are highly variable. From the information provided on the sample of services in this evaluation, the better performing providers have greater capacity to deliver because they have prior experience with traineeships and established relationships with all stakeholders. Variation in performance is not related to the size (caseload) of the provider or their service

footprint. Table 21 illustrates providers of all sizes can have a high or low success rates. Large, medium and small providers each, on average, have a similar success rate of around 70%. The implication is the scale of operations of the provider does not explain variation in performance.

Table 21: Success rates for small, medium and large providers 2016-2019

Program size, number of providers and total trainees	Range of trainees	Proportion of total trainees %	Lowest performer success* %	Highest performer success %	Average success %
4 x Large (200+): 1314	229-470	63%	58%	77%	67%
6 x Med (60 to 150): 541	63-123	26%	49%	100%	78%
8 x Small (Up to 50): 229	5-50	11%	38%	100%	75%
Total	2084	100%			70%

Source: NIAA program data

** Providers with limited data have not been included in average success percentages or ranges.

Nor is it related to traineeship occupation or geographic location of trainee as demonstrated previously in Section 4.4, with the notable exception of 'sport and recreation' traineeships which enjoys a very high success rate.

Some poorly performing providers have withdrawn from program delivery, which may contribute to cost savings and improved overall future success rates. The evidence is better performing providers have greater capacity to deliver. Specifically they have prior experience with traineeships and establish close relationships with all stakeholders. The desired characteristics of provider able to support success are summarised in Table 22.

Table 22: Provider characteristics supporting success

Provider characteristics that contribute to success	Explanatory Notes
1. Capacity of Provider	
1.1 Provider role combined with other traineeship roles to reduce system complexity	It is prior experience with traineeships that matters, not broader VET or employment service experience. In addition to TAEG-SBT some providers are also do other work involving traineeships. The most successful provider has combined school, RTO and employer roles.
1.2 Prior experience with traineeships to ensure competence to work in the sector	One regional provider has worked on traineeships since 2009. Another national provider has a specialised Indigenous Employment Team led by and primarily staffed by Indigenous people. It boasts decades of experience working with communities, students and trainees, jobseekers and employment programs, education and training programs, and disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.
1.3 Mentors are skilled & access professional development	Some providers invest in training their mentoring staff. Schools & other stakeholders gave examples both of excellent mentoring support & also poor standards. Staff turnover can be a catalyst for a decline in mentoring quality.
1.4 Student interests carefully matched to traineeship to ensure curriculum is engaging	Sport and recreation & on-country ranger positions engage some cohorts. Other trainees pursue personal interests in travel, childcare, finance & working with people.

Provider characteristics that contribute to success	Explanatory Notes
2. Quality of Relationships	
2.1 Close community relationships built over time to provide a foundation of empathy, trust & rapport	Local and/or regional Indigenous organisations have established strong community relationships. Large providers with long-term staff working at community level can also have connections. One provider employed mentors with decades experience working with the local community in the education sector. The two providers with the highest success rate both have close community connections.
2.2 Work closely with families	Indigenous families can be a source of support for trainees but may lack the educational background to assist with study. Where family stability & crises are an issue the mentor role can help support in broker solutions.
2.3 Pre-existing relationship with participating schools to ensure 'buy-in' & collaborative partnership	One provider has close 'whole-of-school' relationships. Others rely on a critical relationship with a single staff member, without the involvement of school leadership. Another provider had no pre-existing relationships with schools and had limited success, ultimately ceasing involvement with the program.
2.4 Frequent & planned contact with trainees	Extensive travel is required to maintain frequent face-to-face mentoring contact with trainees. It is challenging due to the national spread of trainees. By necessity providers must utilise other forms of communication. This suits some trainees, but not those preferring the personal touch.

Firstly, better performing providers in addition to delivering TAEG-SBT, are involved with traineeships in other ways. This reduces system complexity associated with coordination across multiple agencies and programs. The content of the traineeships they offer is also, engaging for trainees, underlining the importance of matching student interests to the traineeship right for them. Furthermore better performing providers are those that invest in training their Indigenous mentors. Three of the higher performing providers in the provider management survey identified the need for and provision of mentor training and/or had teacher qualifications. In contrast one of the lower performing providers noted the need for mentors to be supported but did not mention training.

Secondly, better performing providers invest in a number of critical relationships. They have a close, often pre-existing, relationship with the trainees and families they work with. They have the respect and confidence of the community. They also have a strong relationship with the schools and school-based programs. Successful providers also invest time in regularly visiting schools and school-based programs such as the Clontarf Academies run by the Clontarf Foundation, and they engage the school leadership. One school staff member commented of the relationship: *'They are across the road from us here, easy to contact or email, ... it's easy, efficient, we know our trainees are being well looked after.'*

The operation of the TAEG-SBT model relies on a close working partnership between all stakeholders. Some providers have strong working relationships with communities, families, schools, RTO's and host employers developed over years, long before TAEG-SBT was even established. By contrast other providers new to the program struggle because they lack these pre-existing relationships. The work of these providers is not informed by localised understandings of families, schools, businesses, services and job opportunities. A school staff member at interview commented: *'We have had students with [a provider] before, but found it is hard because they weren't local, they don't have a presence here.'*

There are other variables related to 'ways of working' listed in Table 23 yet surprisingly none of these are strongly linked to provider success. Providers who screen employers prior to work placements, who mentor frequently face-to-face and who offer referral to specialised help can nevertheless struggle to support trainees through to completion. Trainees may value these types of support, but when it comes to explaining

success, the available evidence suggests they are trumped by the critical success factors identified earlier in this sub-section such as prior experience with traineeships and established relationships with all stakeholders.

The program design does not specify a trainee selection process. The evaluation examined the approach providers take to trainee recruitment to see if this might be related to success rates. Two providers use a ‘top down’ approach whereby a placement, such as in a bank, is identified and the provider goes in search of a suitable trainee to fill it. This is in contrast to the ‘bottom up’ approach where a trainee is recruited and then the provider finds a suitable work placement matching their interests. The evaluation found no evidence one approach is any more successful than the other.

Table 23: Provider success by ways of working with stakeholders and trainees.

Provider Anon	Success / partial success %	Employers screened prior to placement *	Access to Mentor (in-house &/or by referral)	Counselling support, (in-house &/or by referral)	Tutor support (in-house &/or by referral)	Top Down Trainee Recruitment Process
P 14	100%		✓	✓	✓	
P 18	100%		**	✓		
P 7	73%		✓			✓
P 2	68%	✓	✓		✓	
P 4	63%		***	✓	✓	✓
P 15	49%		✓	✓		
P 10	45%	✓	✓	✓	✓	

*Not always required where employer is known to be appropriate

**Provider has outsourced provision of mentoring support to another agency.

***Mentoring support is provided remotely by various means including video conferencing, mobile phone, SMS and email.

A number of other variables were also analysed, but all were found not to explain different provider performance. These variables include the size of the TAEG-SBT caseload of the provider, their service footprint, and their corporate structure.

Providers were grouped into three main caseload categories based on the number of TAEG-SBT trainees they serve. In the 2016-19 period there have been 2070 TAEG-SBT trainees; 1,300 trainees with large providers (63%), 540 trainees with medium sized providers (26%), and 230 with small-scale providers (11%). It was hypothesised larger providers might have an operational advantage over smaller ones. For example, one large provider had the capacity to employ trainees itself when work placements elsewhere fell through. By contrast a small provider had to withdraw from the program altogether because it lost one key staff member. While there is substantial variation in success rates between providers within each of the caseload categories, there is no general relationship between the number of trainees a provider serves and their success rate.

The evaluation also analysed the data to see if variation in provider success rates is linked to the corporate structure of the provider. Relevant data for seven providers is presented in Table 24. Four were ‘not-for-profit’ providers and three ‘for profit’. The data revealed neither has a mortgage on success, with considerable variation in outcomes within both categories. Three of the providers focus exclusively on supporting Indigenous trainees, while the others support both Indigenous and non-Indigenous trainees. Again

there is nothing to suggest those with an Indigenous focus do better. The implication is that overall corporate structure is unrelated to success (although see the possible exception discussed in Section 5.2.6 below).

Table 24: Provider success by organisational structure and focus

Provider Anon	Success/partial success %	Not For Profit	Employer (e.g. GTO)	Indigenous trainee focus	RTO	Other VET provider	Employment service provider
P 14	100%		✓		✓	✓	
P 18	100%	✓	✓	✓			
P 7	73%			✓		✓	✓
P 2	68%	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
P 4	63%	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
P 15	49%	✓					✓
P 10	45%				✓	✓	✓

Source: Provider Manager Survey

NB: One provider was excluded from this analysis because data is not available. Indigenous organisations were not identified due to concerns related to identification.

There are some providers that in addition to delivering TAEG-SBT support are also involved in delivering other programs that might be considered complementary to TAEG-SBT, including four employment service providers. Intuitively there might be reason to think this advantageous when it came to finding suitable work placements for trainees. While, the evidence suggests these providers are less successful than those that are not an employment service this is confounded by two successful organisations being the employer of the trainees. Four of the providers offered VET services but again there is nothing to indicate they perform better than those that are not.

In summary, the evaluation evidence suggests that it is providers experienced with traineeships and able to relate to all stakeholders that have the higher success rates, providing the best value for money. There is an opportunity for NIAA to understand relative efficiency by comparing participant unit costs across providers at a national, state and regional level. Analysis of this level of data was outside the scope of this evaluation. However, different provider success rates suggest there is scope for some providers to improve their efficiency, and for NIAA to choose high performing providers. A caution to this would be careful consideration as to the level of disadvantage of trainees with which different service providers may engage. The program logic does capture the need for partnership with employers and schools, but not the depth of the other experience and relational factors identified in this evaluation.

5.2.5 Attention to Trainee Selection

Sound attention to recruitment, carefully matching students to traineeships, may contribute to improved success rates. Although not an issue raised by former trainees or family at interview, fifteen stakeholders (21%) were critical of some aspect of trainee recruitment. A provider commented:

Reviewing some of the trainees we've lost over the years, I think it's all coming back to that they were probably the wrong kids that shouldn't have been selected in the first instance ... So I think they're probably doing it for the wrong reasons in the first place.

The program design does not specify any particular trainee selection process or criteria. A traineeship is a substantial 2-year undertaking accompanied by rigorous study and work requirements. Students, families, schools and employers need to understand what is required and make informed decisions before they commit, a point made by 11 stakeholders. Providers have, therefore, developed their own approaches to selecting trainees. One, for example, ran an induction program in partnership with a major employer and then proceeded to select from the pool. Eight providers interviewed (44%) described a process where they recruit on the basis of trainee values and motivation such as:

- positively motivated to take a practical vocational pathway at school and engage in a work placement
- having realistic prospects of securing a work placement in their field of interest
- understanding of the attendance and study expectations of doing a traineeship
- having family support
- a demonstrated capacity to commit that will assist them in completing a traineeship
- not having a track record of disruptive behaviour likely to impact the learning of others
- having some work experience and/or a demonstrated a willingness to undertake work experience ahead of being formally accepted.

By contrast one provider stated they accepted every applicant on a *'first come, first served'* basis.

Some providers rely heavily on schools to nominate trainees. One school insists on prior work experience with the host employer. Others are not so thorough according to one provider:

Some schools have it wrong, and channel some dysfunctional, misaligned kids into the program and they require a lot of support. Sometimes they are mismatched by Career Advisors. Even if they have good intentions, kids suffer and disengage.

In summary, some providers and schools put substantial resources into trainee selection, but others don't. More attention to appropriate selection processes may improve retention. The program logic has not addressed the value of having effective trainee selection processes and the potential to improve retention, for example through induction programs or prior work experience with the employer.

5.2.6 Innovative Service Model

The provider with the highest success rate has developed a service model with innovative features. The trainee has a single dedicated teacher that works with them, thereby enabling a supportive personal relationship to develop. One trainee commented:

Because [the teacher] is with you like every day, every hour pretty much, you have that connection, and you don't want to hand something in late you want to be accountable. Back in Year 10, I would rock up late all the time and the teacher wouldn't care because I wouldn't see her for the rest of the day. And then I'll hand things in late and it didn't matter ... I think that connection really, it's like you and your boss, like once you have that sort of connection, you don't want to let them down. You want to do your best work and that's probably the biggest difference. Whereas like you can't really develop a connection with every teacher you had at regular high school.

There is a peer support strategy linking trainees across employers, regions and state borders together, and there is a mechanism for trainee feedback:

One thing we do a little bit differently, I guess, from other organisations is we actually have an Indigenous Youth Advisory Group within the organisation and several of the young people who were

involved in SBT actually do sit on that. So they're able to actually [not only] provide really quality feedback on what we're doing, but also helping us to inform some of that future delivery.

Finally, the TAEG-SBT provider is also the employer, RTO and the provider of schooling all combined. This eliminates inter-agency coordination challenges. While this model may not be necessarily translatable at a broader scale, lessons can be learned from the effective integration of the multiple roles.

5.3 Implementation and Impact

Evaluation Question: How can the program costs be better targeted to achieve the most impact, and to avoid duplication with other similar school based traineeship government-funded services?

5.3.1 Demand for Places

TAEG-SBT is 78% subscribed indicating potential capacity to accommodate more trainees (Table 25). There is considerable variation in the capacity of providers to fill their program quotas. Six providers are above 95%. Program under-subscription is not unusual in this sector. It is noted in the NRL S2W program struggles to fill its funded employment places and, to a lesser extent, further education and training places.

Table 25: Program Demand by Provider

Provider	Target no. trainees	Actual no. trainees	Uptake of target allocation (%)
1	485	470	97%
2	375	355	95%
3	415	260	63%
4	265	229	86%
5	168	123	73%
6	127	106	83%
7	163	99	61%
8	87	79	91%
9	88	71	81%
10	63	63	100%
11	82	50	61%
12	90	43	48%
13	60	34	57%
14	105	34	32%
15	<55	<55	100%
16	<55	<20	32%
P 17	<20	<20	78%
P 18	<20	<20	100%
All providers	2679	2084	78%

While there was little evidence of unmet demand for the program, in the interviews there was enthusiasm to see it expand in the future. A family member commented:

If we could get the word out of successful traineeships, market those young people who have gone through those traineeships and gone onto something else, full time employment and further study ... That's the biggest thing I could say where traineeships for Aboriginal young people could go. Market the successful ones and keep them local.

This evaluation stops short of recommending substantial program expansion until there is more evidence about the extent to which the program is able to transition trainees into employment and further education and more evidence that it provides a good return on investment. TAEG-SBT is a promising program, but its poor data systems require improvement to guide and test the value of possible expansion in the future.

5.3.2 Duplication and Overlap

TAEG-SBT exists in a crowded complex policy space with many overlapping services in and around schools. There are raft of mentoring and other initiatives assisting Indigenous school students. There is no single, standardised or centrally planned and coordinated Indigenous support service model operating across all schools. Nor is this necessarily practical or desirable given the importance of place based approaches to address local challenges. The services and gaps are different in different places. A region may or may not have a local TAFE or school-based academy.

A TAEG-SBT mentor does need to be responsive to local circumstance. If another program is filling a particular gap in a particular place, then the mentor is freed up to focus attention on some other needs. In some places they are required to be a tutor and provide transport. In other places programs such as Clontarf fill these gaps. It is for this reason the work of a mentor is different in different places. TAEG-SBT gives providers the flexibility to respond to whatever the local priorities may be with whatever local resources they can muster to ensure trainee needs are met.

The involvement of multiple agencies in traineeship programs inevitably gives rise to coordination challenges. The quality of the partnership arrangements between stakeholders is critical to effectiveness. The future impact of TAEG-SBT does require they all work well together. There are many examples of providers and other stakeholders doing so. While there are overlapping services, the evaluation finds little evidence of service duplication in practice. While there is risk of duplication it gets resolved through localised collaboration and adaptation. Only 17% of stakeholder survey respondents agreed with the statement *'There are other programs that duplicate or provide similar support to the SBT program'* whereas twice as many (38%) disagreed.

What differentiates TAEG-SBT from other mentoring programs is the flexibility to provide holistic trainee support beyond the schoolyard wherever it is required. Providers saw multiple program initiatives as essentially complementary:

Yes there are similar programs but I don't think they come with the same focus and fill the same needs as a specific SBT program.

I'm not aware of other programs that provide that support at every point. They might be able to engage on the school side, for example, but not with TAFE and employers.

There's a level of flexibility. Schools might not have flexibility to visit the workplace, talk to the TAFE teacher, take the young person to look at an apartment, go to Centrelink. I think it's the wrap-around support and flexibility to look at the whole picture ... and it's based locally so we can tailor it.

Given the strong evidence as to the importance of stakeholder relationships in maximising positive outcomes, particularly with schools the evaluation recommends that the NIAA work with providers to develop an MOU template as a tool for use with schools in order to clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations (Recommendation 7).

5.3.3 Comparison with Similar Services

This evaluation compares TAEG-SBT with the Clontarf Academies and S2W, two Indigenous mentoring programs funded by NIAA with similar objectives to TAEG-SBT.

The Clontarf Foundation operates Academies on 120 school campuses throughout Australia delivering educational support to around 10,500 young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males each year with plans to add 2,000 more. The amount of funding disbursed is tied to the performance indicators:

- Proportion of unique serviced clients that are participating in education or employment-related activities
- Number and proportion of unique students receiving scholarships or mentoring
- Mentoring only – Proportion of students that have a school attendance rate of at least 70 per cent of school days attended
- Number of unique students participating in the activity attaining Year 10 or Year 12 certificate.

Academies are established in partnership with a network of schools and operated in consultation with local Indigenous organisations and the broader community. Primarily, Academies activities aim to keep students engaged, improve attendance and academic achievement, and support Year 12 completion. The focus is on the development of life skills and the promotion of positive social norms around health, behaviour, discipline and violence. There is a requirement each participant receive a minimum 20 hours intensive support each week throughout the school year, in recognition of multiple and complex needs.

Clontarf and TAEG-SBT funding models differ. IAS grants for Clontarf Academies are disbursed through regular payments on agreed dates, subject to acceptable progress being made measured against the performance indicators. By contrast TAEG-SBT funding is tied to outcome milestones and there is no up-front payment ahead of initial student engagement.

Advice from NIAA indicates the participant unit cost of the Clontarf Academy model is similar to TAEG-SBT, but the cost to the Agency is substantially less because it meets only about a third of the total cost, the balance coming from state and territory governments and the private sector. Similar to the VTEC and TAEG-Employment analyses it is not possible to draw conclusions from these comparisons due to the substantially different services provided and outcomes sought. Further, State and Territory governments significantly contribute indirectly to the cost of TAEG-SBT because they are responsible for funding VET services and schools. Assessing the value of this contribution to TAEG-SBT is beyond the scope of this evaluation.

Another comparable mentoring program is NRL School to Work (S2W). It provides work experience, mentoring support, career guidance and leadership development opportunities to Indigenous youth in years 10-12 to enable them to complete school and transition into employment or further education and training.

While S2W and TAEG-SBT have similar objectives, S2W has a more flexible engagement as it's not bound by the strict structures surrounding traineeships. One provider saw consumer choice rather than service duplication.

I guess our challenge there is that the NRL School-to-Work Program is funded through NIAA, similar funding to what we have for our school based traineeship program. I guess that's ... an area in which they do overlap. But in my mind, we do support the kids in a different way ... It's great having a choice of services ... which target different areas of supporting kids.

S2W has three streams relating to HSC student recruitment (1,500) and subsequent employment (500) and education (500) outcomes for a subset of the HSC completions as outlined in Table 26.

Table 26: S2W Success Rates

Stream	Committed places (%)	Commencements (% of target)	Completions (% of commencements)
HSC Support (completion of Year 12)	1,500	1,475 (98%)	863 (59%)
Post Year 12 Employment	500	256 (51%)	133 (52%)
Post Year 12 Education	500	391 (78%)	189 (48%)

Source: Data provided by NIAA

NB: The S2W recruitment end date was 30 June 2020.

As at April 2020, S2W has supported 1,475 participants to commence their HSC with 863 (59%) completing and a further 452 (31%) continuing towards completion. Overall success rates for TAEG-SBT school completions (68%) and S2W HSC Support (56%) are similar. The S2W figures are an under-estimate because students are still completing their HSC. The S2W program target is that 70% of school graduates will go on to attain the 26-week milestone outcomes in employment, further education or training. The S2W commenced 256 participants into employment, with 133 reaching the 26-week milestone (52%).

Direct comparison of TAEG-SBT and S2W post-school outcomes is not possible because TAEG-SBT tracking is poor. By contrast S2W maintains contact with participants enabling it to measure outcomes at 26-weeks post-school. This is achieved by maintaining close contact with employers formally contracted and partnered into the program. For those in further education, connection is sustained in partnership with Indigenous Support Units on university and TAFE campuses.

But perhaps more importantly, sport is a recognised hook of engagement for Indigenous youth, especially when it comes with an opportunity to meet high profile stars. The NRL held a Youth Summit on the Gold Coast in February 2020 with 68 students participating in workshops alongside players. They also had the opportunity to apply to become Youth Ambassadors. This provides a powerful incentive for students to want to maintain contact with the program.

In the initial roll out of S2W mentors struggled with caseloads including students with multiple and complex needs. Subsequent funding per participant was increased by around 50% as a result and is greater than the unit cost of TAEG-SBT.

5.3.4 Continuous Program Improvement

This evaluation recommends NIAA facilitate the development of a community of practice amongst providers, other mentoring programs and institute a mechanism for trainee input to foster a collaborative evidence-based culture of continuous improvement. There are lessons about program design, effective engagement with trainees, broadening resource support and critical success factors providers can learn from each other, from their trainees and from other mentoring programs. However, at present there is no process to enable lessons learnt about effective practice to be shared in a community of practice. A TAEB-SBT provider reflected:

I think we've had our fair share of successes, but we've also had our fair share of failures as well. But I think the important thing is that with those failures we need to ensure that we learn from them to reduce the risk for that happening again in the future.

One option is an annual conference, face-to-face or virtual, bringing stakeholders together, not just TAEG-SBT stakeholders (including trainees), but other mentoring programs as well. NIAA's Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS) is an example of an initiative that has brought providers together to share stories and ideas about sound practice and innovation.

There is an opportunity for providers to learn about each other's service models. The TAEG-SBT provider with the highest success rate, for example has developed a unique model with innovative features. Trainees have a single dedicated teacher working with them, thereby enabling a supportive personal trusting relationship to develop. One trainee commented:

Because [the teacher] is with you like every day, every hour pretty much, you have that connection, and you don't want to hand something in late you want to be accountable. Back in Year 10, I would rock up late all the time and the teacher wouldn't care because I wouldn't see her for the rest of the day. And then I'll hand things in late and it didn't matter ... I think that connection really, it's like you and your boss, like once you have that sort of connection, you don't want to let them down. You want to do your best work and that's probably the biggest difference. Whereas like you can't really develop a connection with every teacher you had at regular high school.

There is also a peer support strategy linking trainees across employers, regions and state borders together, and there is a mechanism for trainee feedback:

One thing we do a little bit differently, I guess, from other organisations is we actually have an Indigenous Youth Advisory Group within the organisation and several of the young people who were involved in SBT actually do sit on that. So they're able to actually [not only] provide really quality feedback on what we're doing, but also helping us to inform some of that future delivery.

Finally, this TAEG-SBT provider is also the employer, the RTO and the provider of schooling all combined. This eliminates the inter-agency coordination challenges that can frustrate other providers

There is an opportunity to drive program improvement and increase future impact by embedding stakeholders in a process of continuous improvement. A provider at interview reflected: *"There was never effort to bring providers together to share and learn."*

Summary of links to Program Theory – Efficiency and Future Impact:

The very first activity described in the TAEG-SBT program logic is "program design set-up and performance management". However, NIAA lacks an appropriate data collection system to measure provider performance and meaningful comparisons of cost and relative efficiency made between providers and with other programs. "Improvement/ increase compared to outcomes of other comparable school-based traineeships" is identified as a system outcome, but not addressed prior to this evaluation.

The program logic identifies building partnerships between providers, schools and employers as foundational activities for TAEG-SBT. However, current arrangements do not describe any mechanisms to ensure close collaboration in practice, nor a sense of the depth and quality of relationship required to achieve program success. The program logic also identifies "matching and enrolment" as an activity, but does not identify trainee selection criteria and process as a mechanism to improve retention. Nor does the program logic identify provider expertise and experience working with traineeships as a success factor.

This evaluation has recommended fostering a 'community of practice' amongst providers, trainees and other mentoring programs, as well as the development of an MoU template to facilitate relationships between providers and schools, as system level actions to address these issues, but again they are not recognised as outcomes in the program logic.

6 Conclusion

The evaluation evidence presented suggests the program is promising because it assists students to complete schooling and obtain a qualification. However, currently the small scale of the program precludes any significant impact on Close-the-Gap education targets. TAEG-SBT traineeships only account for 2.5% of total VETiS nationally.

The findings illustrate support for the program approach but with suggested improvements. . Firstly, stakeholders support offering disadvantaged and disengaged Indigenous youth a vocational pathway supporting them to finish school and preparing them for work or further education. Mentoring support is also identified as a necessary strategy given the extent of personal, family and other barriers many trainees face. While the program does contribute to a culturally safe learning environment, there are some issues around service quality and training. There are opportunities to strengthen program design through greater attention to the initial student engagement phase of the program and recognition trainees with multiple and complex needs require more intensive support (Recommendations 1 and 7).

Secondly, a robust data platform and SROI (Recommendations 2, 3 and 9) are required so program effectiveness in transitioning school leavers into employment and further education as well as 'value for money' can be properly measured. Then it becomes possible to consider the case for program expansion. The impact the program seeks to have according to the program logic is "More Indigenous students transition from school into further education, training and sustained employment", but at present there is no systematic monitoring of the extent to which this is occurring.

Thirdly, greater program efficiency can be achieved simply by investing in those providers with demonstrated capacity to achieve successful outcomes and supporting the development of the stakeholder partnerships critical for program success (Recommendations 4, 5 and 6). The program does provide value for money because it leverages off other initiatives and in the longer term it is ultimately preventative in nature, but there is variable performance in some areas. Joining-up and embedding providers in a community of practice and a process of continuous program improvement alongside similar initiatives will likely drive further efficiencies and innovation (Recommendation 8).

Finally a key lesson to be learnt from this evaluation is that a student disengaging from school is not necessarily disengaged from a working future. TAEG-SBT has demonstrated that the opportunity to do meaningful paid work in an adult learning environment, and committed professional mentoring support, can inspire and motivate trainees; placing them on a new life trajectory.

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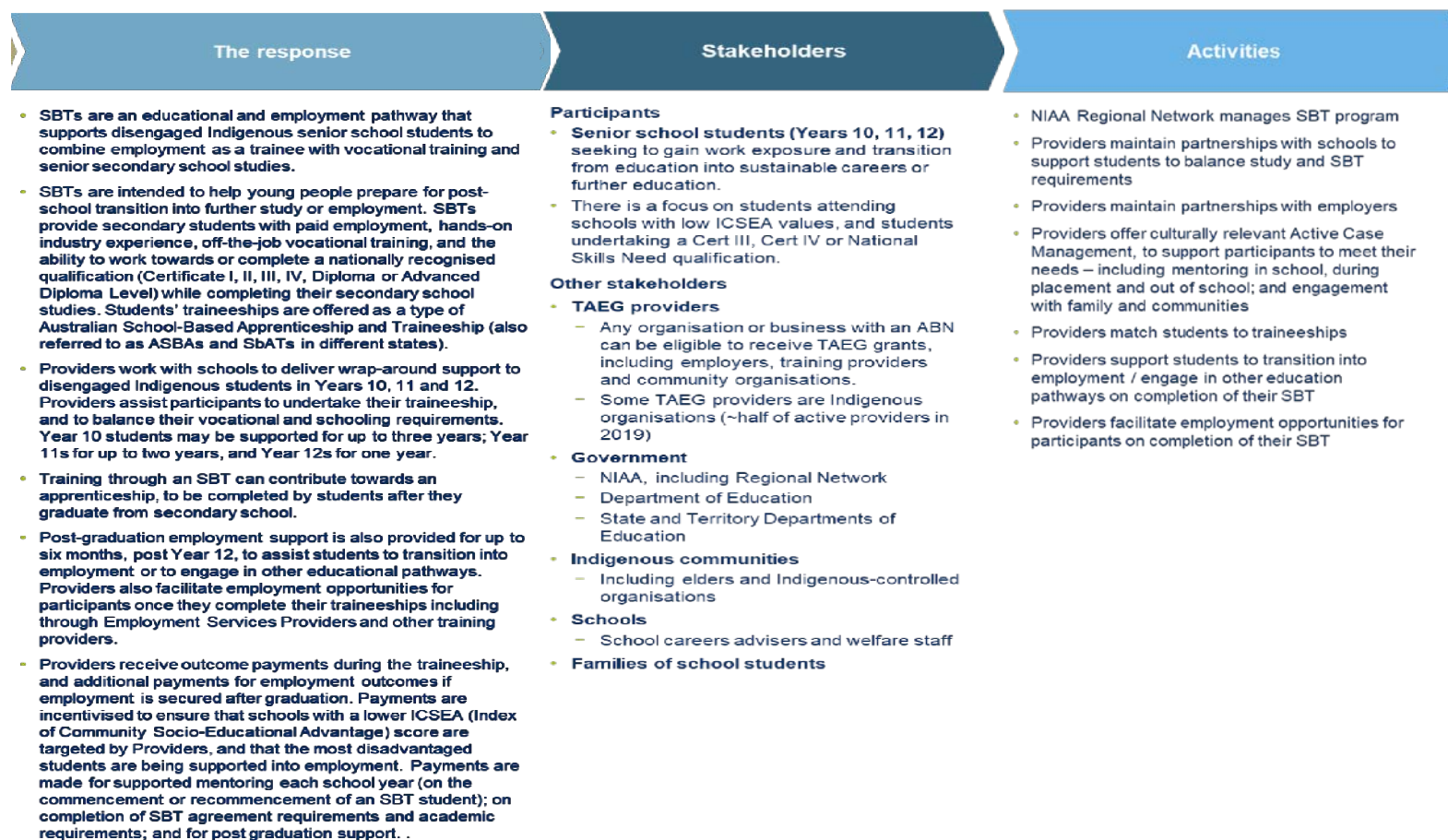
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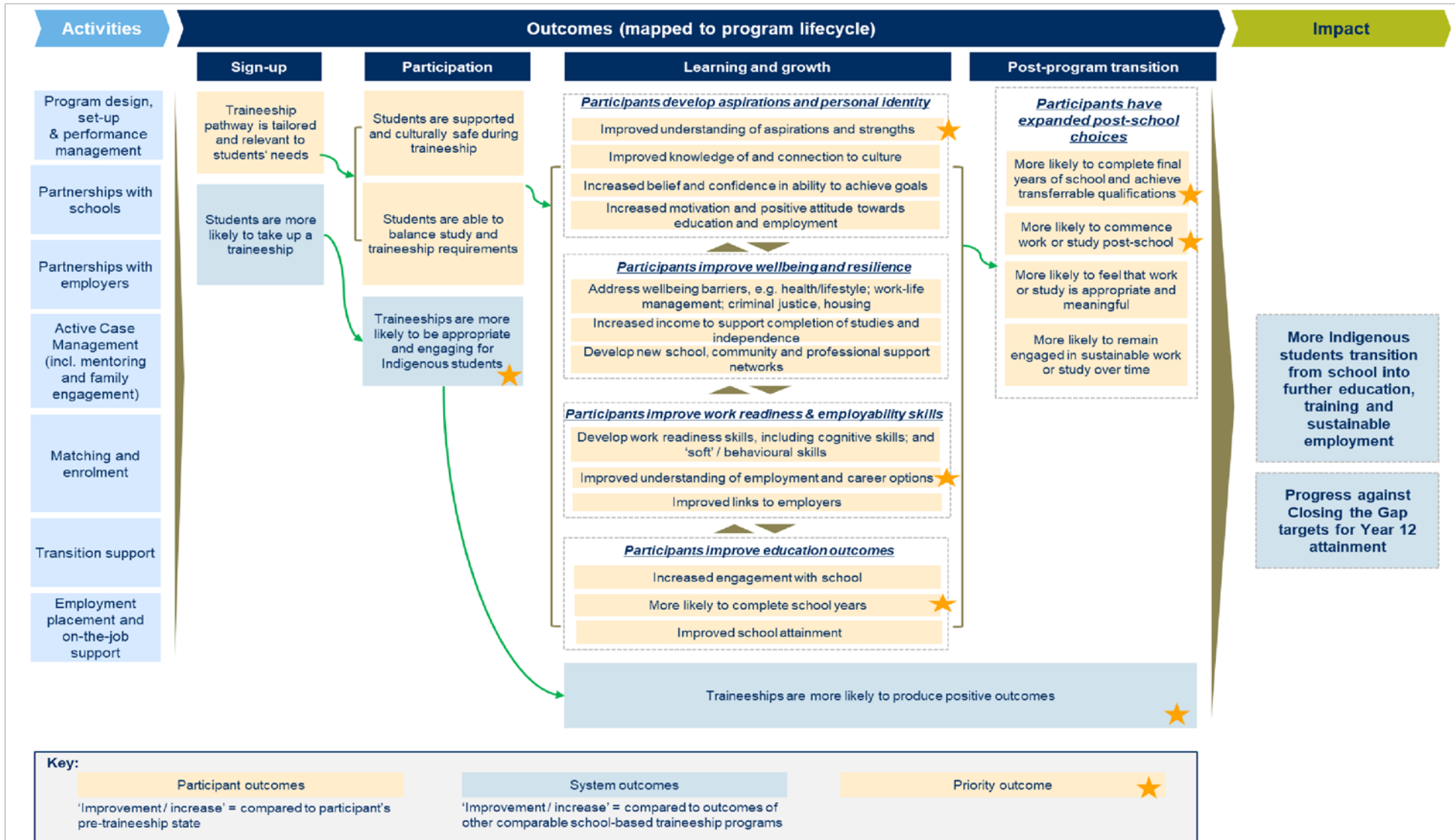
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Appendix A – TAEG-SBT program logic

SBTs program logic - Part 1 of 2



SBTs program logic - Part 2 of 2



Appendix B – List of Recommendations according to key themes

Theme	Recommendations
Improve Program communication	Recommendation 7: With the critical relationship with schools being of variable quality, that NIAA work with providers to formulate a draft template MOU agreement as a tool for use with schools in order to clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations (see Section 5.2.1).
Improve capacity to evaluate	Recommendation 3: That NIAA install a data platform customised to the program design, objectives and intended outcomes of TAEG-SBT and this data be used for monitoring and improvement purposes, including in the annual provider progress review (see Recommendation 2 and Appendix E).
	Recommendation 4: That the program impacts are measured when students complete the program with a post-school employment and further education commencement outcome, in addition to exploring better ways to record longer term employment and education outcomes.
	Recommendation 10: Following implementation of Recommendation 2 and subsequent collection of robust data, conduct an SROI to determine the TAEG-SBT program’s rate of return and better understand its place in the wider VETiS system. This would include assessment of the program’s success in transitioning trainees into employment and/or further education and training, and in diverting at-risk youth to sustainable education and employment outcomes (see Section 5.2.2).
Improve program design	Recommendation 1A: That the current funding model be replaced with a tiered model to better resource provision of intensive support for students with multiple and complex needs (See Section 3.5.2).
	Recommendation 1B: That the role of the ICSEA in determining program eligibility be reviewed in order to improve program reach and impact.
	Recommendation 1C: That program objectives be written in a SMART format using strengths based language, clearly articulating the full range of employment, education and personal development outcomes as articulated in the program logic.
	Recommendation 6: Given the evidence of areas of SBT undersupply and lack of choice as well as the lack of community engagement in program design and implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a TAEG-SBT pilot demonstration project be conducted to test the potential of a community-based co-design approach to building the number of traineeships and broadening the range of occupational choice. b) the NIAA take a strategic approach to identifying employment sectors available at a regional level to fill potential gaps, drawing upon understanding of what works effectively in other regions (for example, explore the systematic roll-out of ranger based traineeships across Indigenous ranger organisations).
	Recommendation 8: That the current funding model be revised to better resource student recruitment, including the capacity of trainees and their families to make informed choices about the appropriateness of an SBT pathway for the trainee’s circumstances and the commitment and preparation that it will require (see Section 5.2.5).

Theme	Recommendations
<p>Improve provider delivery</p>	<p>Recommendation 2: That the NIAA undertake an annual review process with providers to understand what is and is not working, why this is the case, and, where appropriate, identify strategies for improvement.</p>
	<p>Recommendation 5: Given the critical importance of the mentor role, providers need to be accountable for ensuring their mentors are appropriately trained/supervised (including potentially accredited). This could be assessed prior to providing funding and at the annual progress reviews.</p>
	<p>Recommendation 9: Given program quality could be enhanced through TAEG-SBT providers and other mentoring programs learning from each other’s successes and challenges, that NIAA foster a collaborative evidence-based culture of continuous improvement through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the development of a community of practice b) institution of a mechanism for student input (see Section 5.3.4).
	<p>Recommendation 11: That the NIAA consider the critiques and suggested amendments of the program logic made throughout this report and ensure their incorporation into the future design and implementation of the program, as well as developing an updated program logic.</p>

Appendix C – NVivo themes from interview analysis

Table 1: Aggregated appropriateness themes by interview participant type

Appropriateness	Trainee (20)	Trainee %	Family (7)	Family %	Employer (9)	Employer %	Provider (18)	Provider %	School (9)	School %	Other (4)	Other %	NIAA (7)	NIAA %	Total (74)	Total %
Positive comments about program appropriateness	18	90%	7	100%	7	78%	16	89%	5	56%	4	100%	6	86%	63	85%
Negative comments about program appropriateness	3	15%	1	14%	6	67%	13	72%	6	67%	3	75%	5	71%	37	50%
Negative aspects of provider-NIAA relationship	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	8	44%	0	0%	1	25%	4	57%	13	18%
Cultural appropriateness (including employers, providers, program generally)	12	60%	2	29%	5	56%	12	67%	2	22%	1	25%	4	57%	38	51%
Negative or absent cultural experiences	1	5%	1	14%	3	33%	7	39%	3	33%	1	25%	3	43%	19	26%
Engagement and matching challenges	0	0%	0	0%	3	33%	7	39%	2	22%	1	25%	1	14%	14	19%

Table 2: Aggregated effectiveness themes by interview participant type

Effectiveness	Trainee (20)	Trainee %	Family (7)	Family %	Employer (9)	Employer %	Provider (18)	Provider %	School (9)	School %	Other (4)	Other %	NIAA (7)	NIAA %	Total (74)	Total %
Positive comments about effectiveness, outcomes	20	100%	7	100%	9	100%	17	94%	9	100%	4	100%	7	100%	73	99%
Negative comments about effectiveness, challenges	12	60%	3	43%	9	100%	16	89%	9	100%	3	75%	4	57%	56	76%
Any employment outcomes (skills, pathways, network, aspirations)	19	95%	5	71%	8	89%	13	72%	8	89%	3	75%	5	71%	61	82%
Any personal development outcome	20	100%	7	100%	8	89%	14	78%	5	56%	4	100%	3	43%	61	82%
Any education outcome (Year 12, further education, attendance)	14	70%	5	71%	7	78%	14	78%	6	67%	2	50%	3	43%	51	69%
Any positive outcome	20	100%	7	100%	9	100%	17	94%	9	100%	4	100%	7	100%	73	99%

Effectiveness	Trainee (20)	Trainee %	Family (7)	Family %	Employer (9)	Employer %	Provider (18)	Provider %	School (9)	School %	Other (4)	Other %	NIAA (7)	NIAA %	Total (74)	Total %
Any positive support experiences (from provider, family, employer, school, RTO)	19	95%	6	86%	7	78%	8	44%	5	56%	3	75%	2	29%	50	68%
Any negative support experiences	10	50%	3	43%	7	78%	11	61%	6	67%	3	75%	2	29%	42	57%
Any comments on need for support (mentor quality, tutors, balance, attendance issues)	12	60%	6	86%	6	67%	10	56%	8	89%	3	75%	3	43%	48	65%

Table 3: Aggregated future impact themes by interview participant type

Future impact	Trainee (20)	Trainee %	Family (7)	Family %	Employer (9)	Employer %	Provider (18)	Provider %	School (9)	School %	Other (4)	Other %	NIAA (7)	NIAA %	Total (74)	Total %
Positive future impact comments (value for money, sustainability)	15	75%	3	43%	6	67%	14	78%	8	89%	3	75%	7	100%	56	76%
Negative comments about future impact (school relationships, awareness)	5	25%	3	43%	4	44%	8	44%	4	44%	3	75%	4	57%	31	42%

Table 4: Appropriateness themes by interview participant type

Appropriateness themes	Trainee (20)	Trainee %	Family (7)	Family %	Employer (9)	Employer %	Provider (18)	Provider %	School (9)	School %	Other (4)	Other %	NIAA (7)	NIAA %	Total (74)	Total %
Program support is tailored to individual need &/or context	2	10%	0	0%	3	33%	9	50%	0	0%	0	0%	2	29%	16	22%
Practical hands on learning is more engaging than classroom learning	4	20%	5	71%	3	33%	9	50%	3	33%	3	75%	3	43%	30	41%
Many trainees have multiple & complex needs	2	10%	0	0%	4	44%	6	33%	1	11%	2	50%	4	57%	19	26%
Providers have a financial disincentive to recruit trainees with multiple and complex needs (some go for 'low hanging fruit').	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	14%	1	1%
Provider-school partnership is critical to program success	2	10%	0	0%	2	22%	4	22%	5	56%	1	25%	1	14%	15	20%
Program provides an opportunity to explore career options	11	55%	3	43%	2	22%	10	56%	3	33%	2	50%	5	71%	36	49%
Provider has little or no eligibility criteria &/or selection/ trainee recruitment process	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Provider has eligibility criteria &/or a selection/ trainee recruitment process	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	8	44%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	8	11%
Trainee targeting/ recruitment/ selection is poor/not appropriate	0	0%	0	0%	2	22%	6	33%	4	44%	3	75%	0	0%	15	20%
NIAA-provider relationship is positive	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	9	50%	0	0%	0	0%	2	29%	11	15%
NIAA-provider relationship is negative	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	5	28%	0	0%	0	0%	1	14%	6	8%
Funding approval delays	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	17%	0	0%	1	25%	3	43%	7	9%
Duration of funding contract too short	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	22%	0	0%	0	0%	1	14%	5	7%
TAEG-SBT providers are culturally appropriate culturally affirming for trainees/ provide a positive cultural experience/ provide cultural opportunities	9	45%	2	29%	3	33%	11	61%	1	11%	1	25%	3	43%	30	41%

Program has little or no cultural content activities/ events/ experiences	1	5%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%	1	11%	0	0%	1	14%	4	5%
Cultural content activities/ events/ experiences are conducted/provided at work	6	30%	1	14%	2	22%	7	39%	1	11%	0	0%	1	14%	18	24%
Indigenous mentors have a relational advantage with trainees & families (over non-Indigenous mentors)	2	10%	0	0%	2	22%	7	39%	1	11%	0	0%	2	29%	14	19%
Employers have cultural awareness & capacity.	7	35%	1	14%	5	56%	0	0%	1	11%	0	0%	0	0%	14	19%
Employers lack cultural awareness & capacity.	0	0%	0	0%	2	22%	4	22%	0	0%	1	25%	1	14%	8	11%
Trainees experience racism, prejudice & discrimination at work & in their community	0	0%	1	14%	1	11%	5	28%	2	22%	0	0%	2	29%	11	15%
Initial trainee engagement phase of TAEG-SBT is not resourced.	0	0%	0	0%	2	22%	6	33%	1	11%	0	0%	1	14%	10	14%
It is a time consuming to match student interests with available work placement opportunities/ suitable employers (in some regions). Providers see it as important to do this	0	0%	0	0%	3	33%	5	28%	1	11%	1	25%	0	0%	10	14%
SBT-TAEG transforms the lives of graduates	9	45%	4	57%	4	44%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	17	23%

Table 5: Effectiveness themes by interview participant type

Effectiveness themes	Trainee (20)	Trainee %	Family (7)	Family %	Employer (9)	Employer %	Provider (18)	Provider %	School (9)	School %	Other (4)	Other %	NIAA (7)	NIAA %	Total (74)	Total %
Some TAEG-SBT students progress well in the traineeship, but continue to struggle with issues of school achievement, behaviour, attendance and retention.	0	0%	1	14%	5	56%	6	33%	4	44%	0	0%	2	29%	18	24%
Different traineeship system requirements across State & Territory borders are a burden/problem in some jurisdictions	0	0%	0	0%	1	11%	6	33%	1	11%	0	0%	3	43%	11	15%
the program improved the job readiness/ employability of trainees/ Program gives graduates an edge in the employment market because they are job ready/ attributes of SBT graduates are valued by employers.	19	95%	5	71%	6	67%	11	61%	7	78%	1	25%	3	43%	52	70%
The program provided trainees with career pathways	12	60%	2	29%	3	33%	7	39%	5	56%	0	0%	1	14%	30	41%
TAEG-SBT improves trainee confidence & communication skills	13	65%	4	57%	8	89%	10	56%	4	44%	2	50%	3	43%	44	59%
TAEG-SBT trainees gain maturity & independence by accepting greater responsibility & interacting with adults	12	60%	5	71%	4	44%	8	44%	4	44%	1	25%	0	0%	34	46%
TAEG-SBT enables trainees to gain greater self-belief & resilience/ become a stronger person.	7	35%	0	0%	1	11%	3	17%	1	11%	2	50%	0	0%	14	19%
TAEG-SBT enables trainees to achieve greater social awareness (understanding, respect, empathy)	6	30%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	6	8%

TAEG-SBT enables trainees to build new relationships at work & with other trainees	8	40%	0	0%	2	22%	4	22%	2	22%	0	0%	0	0%	16	22%
TAEG-SBT builds career aspirations &/or enables trainees to map & plan their own career pathway	5	25%	3	43%	1	11%	6	33%	2	22%	2	50%	3	43%	22	30%
Monitoring of post-school outcomes is difficult	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%	1	11%	2	50%	2	29%	6	8%
Data collection, analysis & provider performance monitoring is poor	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	14%	1	1%
Helped to complete Year 12	8	40%	3	43%	5	56%	11	61%	6	67%	2	50%	3	43%	38	51%
Regard further education as a destination/ outcome for trainees.	8	40%	2	29%	5	56%	6	33%	5	56%	1	25%	2	29%	29	39%
TAEG-SBT placements are a source of community pride, hope & optimism.	7	35%	5	71%	5	56%	8	44%	3	33%	1	25%	4	57%	33	45%
Some trainees have little interest in participating in program.	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
Mentors can struggle to locate/catch up with some trainees.	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%	1	11%	0	0%	0	0%	2	3%
the program improved Year 12 completion/ school attendance/ engagement/ retention.	8	40%	3	43%	5	56%	12	67%	6	67%	2	50%	3	43%	39	53%
The program enhances skills & attitudes that prepare trainees for work.	16	80%	4	57%	5	56%	6	33%	3	33%	1	25%	3	43%	38	51%
Quality of mentoring is critical to program success	0	0%	2	29%	1	11%	5	28%	1	11%	1	25%	1	14%	11	15%
TAEG-SBT effectively supports trainee wellbeing at school and at work.	11	55%	1	14%	0	0%	3	17%	0	0%	0	0%	2	29%	17	23%
Family is a valued source of support for trainees	5	25%	6	86%	0	0%	2	11%	0	0%	1	25%	0	0%	14	19%
Family situation is challenging/ NOT always a source of support for trainees	4	20%	1	14%	5	56%	6	33%	6	67%	2	50%	1	14%	25	34%

Employer is a valued source of support for trainees/ provides a positive experience	12	60%	1	14%	6	67%	1	6%	2	22%	0	0%	0	0%	22	30%
Employer is NOT a valued source of support for trainees/ provides a negative experience	1	5%	1	14%	2	22%	4	22%	1	11%	1	25%	1	14%	11	15%
Schools &/or school based programs are a valued source of support for trainees	4	20%	1	14%	0	0%	3	17%	4	44%	0	0%	0	0%	12	16%
Schools &/or school based programs are NOT a valued source of support for trainees	3	15%	2	29%	2	22%	6	33%	0	0%	2	50%	2	29%	17	23%
The VET sector (TAFE, RTO's, GTO's) is a valued source of support for trainees	6	30%	1	14%	2	22%	0	0%	0	0%	2	50%	0	0%	11	15%
The VET sector (TAFE, RTO's, GTO's) are NOT a valued source of support for trainees	3	15%	1	14%	0	0%	2	11%	1	11%	1	25%	0	0%	8	11%
Trainees struggle to balance traineeship & school academic study commitments/	7	35%	0	0%	2	22%	2	11%	5	56%	1	25%	0	0%	17	23%
There is a need for tutor support	8	40%	0	0%	2	22%	1	6%	3	33%	1	25%	0	0%	15	20%
Former SBT-TAEG trainees & their families are advocates for the program & are a source of student referrals to the program	1	5%	1	14%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	3%
Large scale providers have service delivery advantages e.g. economies of scale	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	11%	0	0%	0	0%	2	29%	4	5%
Small scale regional providers have advantages e.g. local networks	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	11%	1	25%	2	29%	4	5%
Pandemic has adversely impacted the program	2	10%	0	0%	2	22%	6	33%	7	78%	1	25%	1	14%	19	26%
Aggregate: any one of above	20	100%	7	100%	9	100%	17	94%	9	100%	4	100%	7	100%	73	99%

Table 6: Future impact themes by interview participant type

Future impact themes	Trainee (20)	Trainee %	Family (7)	Family %	Employer (9)	Employer %	Provider (18)	Provider %	School (9)	School %	Other (4)	Other %	NIAA (7)	NIAA %	Total (74)	Total %
Provider-school partnership is problematic	0	0%	1	14%	2	22%	5	28%	0	0%	2	50%	2	29%	12	16%
Provider-school partnership is strong	1	5%	0	0%	2	22%	1	6%	2	22%	3	75%	1	14%	10	14%
There is low awareness of SBT-TAEG amongst the Indigenous community &/or employers &/or schools &/or the VET sector.	5	25%	2	29%	2	22%	3	17%	4	44%	1	25%	2	29%	19	26%
TAEG-SBT leverages support from other stakeholders.	13	65%	1	14%	4	44%	6	33%	4	44%	0	0%	3	43%	31	42%
TAEG-SBT provides value for money	0	0%	0	0%	1	11%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	14%	2	3%
Would be unemployed/ under-employed if not for TAEG-SBT.	7	35%	2	29%	1	11%	2	11%	1	11%	1	25%	3	43%	17	23%
Want to see more Indigenous traineeships/ program expanded/ unmet demand	0	0%	1	14%	3	33%	4	22%	4	44%	3	75%	3	43%	18	24%
VETiS is a crowded policy and program space	6	30%	4	57%	4	44%	14	78%	9	100%	4	100%	6	86%	47	64%
TAEG-SBT contributes to close the gap	0	0%	2	29%	4	44%	11	61%	6	67%	2	50%	7	100%	32	43%

Appendix D – Research Instruments

Stakeholder interview questions

Interview questions were adapted to each participant type.

Appropriateness

Introductions

1. Please tell me about your involvement in the SBT program? (is it just Indigenous students or also non-Indigenous?)
2. Can you tell me a bit about the SBT students that have been placed with your organisation?
3. How do you support students?
 - a. Does your business support Indigenous students' values and connection to their culture? If so, how?
 - b. Has support from the SBT provider helped you to better support Indigenous students' values and connection to their culture?
4. Have you encountered any challenges in participating in the SBT program? If so, can you tell us a bit about them? If not, what helped you to avoid challenges?
5. What avenues are there to provide feedback to SBT providers?
6. Do students provide their feedback to you about their traineeship?

Effectiveness

1. Does the SBT program help students to finish Year 12? If so, how? If not, why not?
2. What is the most significant change you have seen for the students because of the participation in the SBT program?
 - a. What made that change possible?
3. What other positive outcomes has the program achieved?
4. Have there been any negative or unintended outcomes?
5. Does the availability of jobs or any other local contextual factors impact on outcomes for students? If so, how?
6. From your perspective what are the weaknesses of the program?
7. What are the key strengths of the program?
8. How can the program be improved?
9. Have any students not completed their traineeship with you? If so, what factors contributed to non-completion?

Efficiency

1. Are there any other similar SBT/Indigenous programs that you are aware of or participate in?
2. What is unique about this SBT program, by comparison to other services and programs?

Provider Management Survey

1. Name of SBT Provider _____

2. Please describe your organisation: (Check applicable boxes)

Profit Not-for-profit

National focus regional focus local focus

Indigenous non-Indigenous

Registered Training organisation (RTO) Yes No

Group Training organisation Yes No

Provide other VET Yes No

Employment provider Yes No

Other distinguishing characteristics)

3. Please complete the following table as to how many NIAA Indigenous School Based Traineeships (SBTs) you have supported in 2018 and 2019, as well as other Indigenous and non-Indigenous traineeships and apprenticeships, both school and non-school based.

	2018	2019
School Based Traineeships (SBTs)		
NIAA Indigenous SBTs		
- From how many schools?		
non-NIAA Indigenous SBTs		
- From how many schools?		
non-Indigenous SBTs		
- From how many schools?		
Traineeships (non-school based)		
Indigenous trainees		
Non-Indigenous trainees		
School Based Apprenticeships		
Indigenous Apprenticeships		
non-Indigenous Apprenticeships		
Apprenticeships (non-school based)		
Indigenous Apprenticeships		
Non-Indigenous Apprenticeships		

4. Do you provide any other VET pathway programs for Indigenous students? Yes No

If Yes _____

5. What are your recruitment processes for NIAA Indigenous school-based trainees?

6. Does this differ to the recruitment processes for non-Indigenous school-based trainees?

7. Do you provide a mentoring program with your NIAA funding? Yes No

If yes how does this mentoring make a difference for:

- Trainees? _____
- Their families? _____
- Their employer? _____
- Their school? _____

8. What are the essential elements that make your mentoring program successful?

9. What other support processes do you have for NIAA Indigenous school-based trainees?

10. Does this differ to the support processes for non-Indigenous school-based trainees?

11. How many Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff do you employ on your SBT program?

Indigenous _____

Non-Indigenous _____

12. In your experience of school based traineeships what percentage/proportion of students require the following supports?

Activity	Type of student	In your experience what percentage of students require the following supports?						All	Don't know
		None	A quarter or less	A quarter to a half	A half to three quarters	Three quarters or more			
Liaising with schools	Ind.								
	Non-Ind.								
Liaising with families	Ind.								
	Non-Ind.								
Home visits to connect with families	Ind.								
	Non-Ind.								
Cultural awareness raising with employers	Ind.								
	Non-Ind.								
To address racism from work colleagues or clients	Ind.								
	Non-Ind.								
Other types of liaising with employers	Ind.								
	Non-Ind.								
Helping students to obtain a driver's licence	Ind.								
	Non-Ind.								
Providing in-house counselling / emotional support	Ind.								
	Non-Ind.								
Referring students to external counselling services	Ind.								
	Non-Ind.								
Providing in-house academic support (eg extra tutoring/ help with assignments)	Ind.								
	Non-Ind.								
Arranging external tutors	Ind.								
	Non-Ind.								
One on one mentoring	Ind.								
	Non-Ind.								
Driving students to placements or classes	Ind.								
	Non-Ind.								
Interpreting the SBT 'rules' with flexibility due to the student's circumstances	Ind.								
	Non-Ind.								
Supporting student engagement with their culture and/or community	Ind.								
	Non-Ind.								
Playing an active role in community-wide activities	Ind.								
	Non-Ind.								
Providing financial support (e.g. uniforms, transport)	Ind.								
	Non-Ind.								
Assisting with serious issues for the student (e.g. homelessness, substance misuse, justice issues)	Ind.								
	Non-Ind.								
Assisting the student with serious issues for family members (e.g. homelessness, substance misuse, justice issues)	Ind.								
	Non-Ind.								
Other support 1 (please specify)	Ind.								
	Non-Ind.								
	Non-Ind.								

13. Please identify the three most important supports for students from the above list

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____

14. For what proportion of students does your SBT program produce the following outcomes

Student Outcome	Type of student	Proportion of students						Don't know
		None	A quarter or less	A quarter to a half	A half to three quarters	Three quarters or more	All	
Improved attendance at school	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
More engaged at school	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Increased Year 12 completion	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Greater understanding of career paths and opportunities	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Formal qualifications	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Development of industry-relevant skills	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Greater access to employer networks	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Improved employability and job-readiness	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Overcoming personal and/or environmental barriers	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Successful employment	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Improved confidence and self-esteem	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Increased independence/autonomy	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Improved interpersonal skills and relationships	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Improved literacy and numeracy	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Increased engagement with culture and community	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Clearer career aspirations	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Other support (please specify _____)	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Other support 2 (please specify)	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							

15. Please identify the three most important outcomes for students from the above list

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____

16. What proportion of students in your SBT program face the following barriers?

Student Barriers	Type of student	Proportion of students						Don't know
		None	A quarter or less	A quarter to a half	A half to three quarters	Three quarters or more	All	
Lack of suitable job opportunities	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Geographical isolation and/or inadequate transport options	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Negative employer attitudes and/or lack of understanding	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Lack of suitable training options	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Lack of support from family	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Poverty	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Inadequate housing	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Negative influence of peer groups	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Physical ill-health	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Mental ill-health	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Trauma (including intergenerational trauma)	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Drug and/or alcohol problems	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Inadequate coordination/communication between providers, employers, and schools	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Cultural obligations/commitments	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Pregnancy	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Contact with the criminal justice system	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Racism	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Low aspirations	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Low literacy and numeracy	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							
Other _____	Ind.							
	Non-Ind.							

17. Please identify the three most significant barriers for students from the above list

- i. _____
- ii. _____

iii. _____

18. During interviews some providers have identified that while the majority of their students adapt well to the SBT program a substantial minority of students need more intensive support, with a small minority needing extensive support, due to a range of life challenges that arise.

Does this sound representative of the students in your program?

Yes No Don't know

Please explain _____

If Yes what proportion of students do you estimate fall into each of these categories (e.g. 60% 30% 10%) Please answer for both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous student groups that you support.

	Expected Support	Need some additional support	need extensive support
Indigenous:	_____%	_____%	_____%
Non-Indigenous:	_____%	_____%	_____%

19. For those Indigenous students that need additional or extensive support, how do you find or allocate resources to meet this need?

20. Is the SBT program resourced well enough to adequately help Indigenous students?

21. Yes No

Why? _____

22. If you had the resources, what would you do more of?

23. If you could do one thing to improve the NIAA TAEG-SBT Program, what would it be?

Stakeholder survey

1. What is your primary form of involvement with TAEG - School Based Traineeship program (SBT)?

- National Indigenous Australians Agency
- Provider employee [Please select provider – drop down menu]
- Employer
- School employee
- Other

2. What is your role? _____

3. Is your organisation is currently involved with the SBT program

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

4. How long have you been involved with the TAEG-SBT program?

- Less than 6 months
- 6 to 12 months
- 1 to 2 years
- 2 to 5 years
- More than 5 years
- I don't know

5. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Other
- I'd prefer not to say

6. Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?

7. In which state/territory do you primarily work?

8. Which best describes the location in which you work?

- Metropolitan
- Outer metropolitan
- Regional
- Remote
- Very remote

9. For what proportion of students does your SBT program produce the following outcomes

Student Outcome	Proportion of students						
	None	A quarter or less	A quarter to half	Half to three quarters	Three quarters or more	All	I don't know
Improved attendance at school							
Improved engagement at school							
Year 12 completion							
Greater understanding of career paths and opportunities							
Formal qualifications							
Development of industry-relevant skills							
Greater access to employer networks							

Student Outcome	Proportion of students						
Improved employability and job-readiness							
Overcoming personal and/or environmental barriers							
Successful employment							
Improved confidence and self-esteem							
Increased independence/autonomy							
Improved interpersonal skills and relationships							
Improved literacy and numeracy							
Increased engagement with culture and community							
Clearer career aspirations							

10. Is there anything else you would like to say about the benefits of the SBT program for Indigenous students?

11. Is there anything you would like to say about the benefits of the SBT program for your organisation?

12. In your experience, what proportion of Indigenous students participating in the SBT program face the following barriers?

Student barrier	Proportion of students						
	None	A quarter or less	A quarter to a half	Half to three quarters	Three quarters or more	All	I don't know
Lack of suitable job opportunities							
Geographical isolation and/or inadequate transport options							
Negative employer attitudes and/or lack of understanding							
Lack of suitable training options							
Lack of support from family							
Family dysfunction							
Poverty							
Inadequate housing							
Negative influence of peer groups							
Physical ill-health							
Mental ill-health							
Trauma (including intergenerational trauma)							
Drug and/or alcohol problems							

Student barrier	Proportion of students						
Inadequate coordination/ communication between providers, employers, and schools							
Community/family obligations (e.g. Sorry Business, caregiving)							
Pregnancy							
Contact with the criminal justice system							
Racism							
Personal aspirations and attitudes							
Low literacy and numeracy							

13. Is there anything else you would like to say about challenges for SBT participants?

14. Is there anything you would like to say about challenges regarding SBT for your organisation?

15. In your experience of school based traineeships what percentage of students require the following supports?

Activity	In your experience what percentage of students require the following supports?						
	None	A quarter or less	A quarter to a half	Half to three quarters	Three quarters or more	All	I don't know
Liaising with schools							
Liaising with families							
Home visits to connect with families							
Cultural awareness raising with employers							
Support to address racism from work colleagues or clients							
Other types of liaising with employers							
Helping students to obtain a driver's licence							
Providing in-house counselling / emotional support							
Referring students to external counselling services							
Providing in-house academic support (e.g. extra tutoring or help with assignments)							
Arranging external tutors							
One on one mentoring							
Driving students to placements or classes							
Interpreting the SBT 'rules' with flexibility due to the student's circumstances							

Activity	In your experience what percentage of students require the following supports?						
Supporting student engagement with their culture and/or community							
Playing an active role in community-wide activities							
Providing financial support (e.g. uniforms, transport)							
Assisting with serious issues for the student (e.g. homelessness, substance misuse, justice issues)							
Assisting the student with serious issues for family members (e.g. homelessness, substance misuse, justice issues)							
Other support 1 (please specify)							
Other support 2 (please specify)							

16. Is there anything else you would like to say about supports for SBT participants?

17. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
Some cohorts of Indigenous students face barriers to accessing appropriate school-based traineeships						
Some cohorts of Indigenous students require additional support to achieve positive outcomes from school-based traineeships (or similar structured VET pathways)						
Employers require additional support to facilitate positive outcomes for these Indigenous students in school-based traineeships/ (or similar structured VET pathways)						
Brokerage provided by an intermediary (e.g. SBT Provider) is an effective response to address these support needs of students and employers						
Milestone-based funding for brokerage and support is an effective funding model for the SBT program						

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
There are other programs that duplicate or provide similar support to the SBT program						
There are positive outcomes associated with school-based traineeships (or similar structured VET pathways during school) for Indigenous students.						
The SBT program provides a cultural safety network that helps Indigenous students to succeed						
The SBT program has been designed and delivered in collaboration with Indigenous people.						
The SBT program is based on students' strengths.						
Support from family/community members is important for student success						
NIAA regional network management of the SBT program is important for its success						
It is important for providers to support students to transition into employment or further education on completion of their SBT						
To ensure more Indigenous students succeed in a SBT pathway, the NIAA Indigenous SBT program is essential						

18. Is there anything you would like to say about the design of the SBT program, or the assumptions upon which it is based?

19. Is focusing on students at schools with a lower Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) a good way to target the program?

Yes No Don't know

Please explain why or why not

If no can you identify a better way to target the program?

20. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
The traineeship pathway is tailored and relevant to the student needs						
Students are well supported to successfully balance study and traineeship requirements						
The SBT program enables participants to develop personal aspirations						
The SBT program enables participants to develop or strengthen their identity						
The SBT program helps participants to improve their wellbeing						
The SBT program helps participants to improve their confidence						
Participation in the SBT program improves work readiness and employability skills						
Participants in the SBT program have improved attendance at school						
Participants in the SBT program have improved education outcomes						
Participants in the SBT program have expanded post-school choices						

21. Is there anything you would like to say about SBT program's achievement of these outcomes?

22. Is there anything else that SBT program could do to support Indigenous students to complete their SBT?

23. [ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR PROVIDERS AND SCHOOLS ONLY]

During interviews some providers have identified that while the majority of their students adapt well to the SBT program a substantial minority of students need more intensive support, with a small minority needing extensive support, due to a range of life challenges that arise.

Does this sound representative of the students in your program?

Yes No Don't know

Please explain _____

If Yes what proportion of students do you estimate fall into each of these categories (e.g. 60% 30% 10%)

Expected support	need some additional support	need extensive support
_____%	_____%	_____%

24. For those Indigenous students that need additional or extensive support, how do you find or allocate resources to meet this need ?

[ALL STAKEHOLDERS]

25. Is the SBT program resourced well enough to adequately support Indigenous students

26. What do you see as key strengths of the SBT program?

27. What do you see as key weaknesses of the SBT program?

28. What opportunities exist for the SBT program to grow and innovate in the future?

29. Is there anything else you would like to say about the SBT program that has not been covered in this survey?

30. Is there any feedback you would like to provide about this survey?

Former trainee survey

1. I have read the participant information statement and understand the purpose of the evaluation. I understand the potential risks and benefits of participating in the evaluation and agree for my survey responses to be used confidentially.

- Yes I agree
- No I do not agree [If no exit the survey]

2. Did you complete your school based traineeship?

Yes No

If no what were your reasons for leaving? _____

3. Did you complete Year 12?

Yes No

If no what were your reasons for leaving? _____

4. How long were you enrolled in the Traineeship?

- 6-12 months
- 12-18 months
- 18 months to 2 years
- Over 2 years

5. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Other
- I'd prefer not to say

6. Who told you about the Traineeship?

7. What traineeship organisation did you sign up with?

- Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES)
- Access Group Training
- AFL SportsReady
- Brumby Hill Aboriginal Corporation
- Connect Northern Rivers
- Corporate Connexions International
- Gidarjil Development Corporation
- MAX Solutions
- Maxima Training Group
- Mid Coast Connect
- Mission Australia
- National Rugby League
- Novaskill / HGT Australia
- People Who Care
- Skill360 Australia
- South Metropolitan Youth Link (SMYL)
- Sports Education and Development Australia (SEDA)
- Taree Indigenous Development and Employment (TIDE)
- Yourtown
- Other

- I don't know

8. Which school were/are you attending?

9. What area of work was your placement in (please tick the closest option) ?

Banking
Clerical
Administration
Sales
Sports
Teaching / training / education
Childcare
Mechanic / Cars
Hospitality/ Cafes/ Restaurants
Community services
Health services
Recreation and Community Arts
Caravan Park and Camping Grounds
Aquaculture, Farming, Forestry or Gardening
Mining
Building/ Construction
Delivery / Postal
Labouring
Trades / Carpentry / Plumbing
Beauty / hairdressing
Technology
Other - Please specify_____

10. Why did you choose to do a traineeship?

11. What are you doing now that you have completed/left your traineeship?

- Working for the employer I did my traineeship
- Working for another employer
- Studying
- Looking for work
- Other – Please Specify_____

12. When you answer the following questions, please be direct and honest as you can. (Your answers are anonymous). Please tick the relevant box as to how difficult or easy it was to learn and do activities related to your traineeship and for your personal development.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
During my traineeship, I attended school regularly						
During my traineeship, I stood a good chance of finishing Year 12						
After my traineeship, I knew what jobs and careers were out there for me						
After my traineeship, I knew what further training was out there for me						
During my traineeship I felt likely to obtain a qualification						
After my traineeship, I had skills that employers wanted						
After my traineeship, I felt able to chose a job/career that I was interested in						
During my traineeship, I felt that education and training were helpful for me						
After my traineeship I felt good about my time-management and organisation skills						
After my traineeship I felt good about my reading, writing and numerical skills						
After my traineeship I felt healthy and strong						
After my traineeship I felt able to deal with issues in my life and in my family						
After my traineeship I felt confident						
After my traineeship I knew my own strengths and weaknesses						
After my traineeship I knew what I want to do with my career						
After my traineeship I felt able to look after myself						
After my traineeship I felt good about my relationships with others						
After my traineeship I felt able to communicate my thoughts and feelings						
After my traineeship I felt part of my community						

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
After my traineeship I felt connected to my culture						
After my traineeship, I felt that my life was going to be okay						

13. Has your life has changed in any other ways because of the Traineeship?

14. Please tick the relevant box as to how relevant the following barriers were to you during your traineeship

	Not relevant to me	Relevant to me but does/did not stop me from doing my traineeship	Relevant to me and sometimes stops/stopped me from doing my traineeship	Relevant to me and often stops/stopped me from doing my traineeship
No jobs available				
Hard to get transport to work				
Hard to get training for the job I wanted to do				
Employers negative attitudes or lack of understanding towards me				
My family was not supportive				
My family had many troubles				
Not enough money				
No secure house to live in				
My friends were not supportive or made trouble for me				
I was physically unwell				
I was emotionally unwell				
Drugs or alcohol were a problem for me				
Cultural commitments took up my time and energy				
Pregnancy/caring for children took up my time and energy				
Going to court / doing time in jail/ community service to pay off fines took up my time				
Racism				
My school did not really care how well I performed				
Lack of motivation				

	Not relevant to me	Relevant to me but does/did not stop me from doing my traineeship	Relevant to me and sometimes stops/stopped me from doing my traineeship	Relevant to me and often stops/stopped me from doing my traineeship
Not knowing what I wanted to do with my career				
I didn't have the reading or writing skills I needed				
I didn't have the numerical skills I needed				

15. Have you experienced any other challenges in during your traineeship?

16. Did you have to give up anything important in order to do this Traineeship? (Please tick all that apply)

- family and caring responsibilities
- education
- casual or non-ongoing work
- spending time with friends
- nothing
- other (please describe) _____

How did this make you feel? _____

17. In your experience, how important were each of the following factors for you to succeed in your Traineeship? Please rate your answer on a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important)

	1 Not at all important	2 Not very important	3 Not sure/ don't know	4 Important	5 Very important
One on one mentoring					
Support from family members					
Support from community members					
My traineeship mentor keeps in touch with the placement employer					
My traineeship mentor keeps in touch with the school					
My traineeship mentor connects with my family and communities					

	1 Not at all important	2 Not very important	3 Not sure/ don't know	4 Important	5 Very important
The traineeship fit with my skills and interests					
The traineeship was able to be adjusted when I had trouble					
My work placement responsibilities were clear to me from the start of the traineeship					
My study responsibilities were clear to me from the start of the traineeship					
I was able to balance study and traineeship requirements					
There was someone available and helpful that I could contact if I was having trouble					
I felt safe to tell my mentor about my personal life if it was affecting my traineeship,					
At the end of the placement the mentor helped me find employment or further training					
My mentor met with me regularly to help me and motivate me					

18. Is there anything else that the Traineeship program/mentors could do to support students to complete their Traineeship?

19. Are there any other ways the school-based traineeship program could be improved?

20. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
The traineeship has been /was respectful of my identity and values						
I am/was given the help I needed in the way that I needed it						

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
I trust/trusted my mentor who helps/helped and guides/guided me						
My traineeship mentor was respectful and understanding of my culture						
My traineeship placement was respectful and understanding of my culture						
The traineeship gave me the opportunity to build on my existing skills and strengths						
When Sorry Business and/or other cultural obligations affected my work, I was supported to take the time I needed						

21. When you answer the following questions, please be direct and honest as you can. (Your answers are anonymous). Please tick the relevant box as to how difficult or easy it was to learn and do activities at school and for your personal development before you enrolled in your traineeship.

<u>Before</u> my traineeship...	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
I attended school regularly						
I was interested in school						
I stood a good chance of finishing Year 12						
I knew what jobs and careers are out there for me						
I knew what further training is out there for me						
I felt likely to obtain a certificate or degree						
Had skills that employers want						
I felt able to get and keep a job						
I felt able to choose a job/career that I was interested in						
I believed that education and training is helpful for me						
I felt good about time-management and organisation skills						
I felt good about my reading, writing and numerical skills						
I felt healthy and strong						

<u>Before my traineeship...</u>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
I felt able to deal with issues in my life and in my family						
I felt confident						
I knew my own strengths and weaknesses						
I knew what I want to do with my career						
I felt able to look after myself						
I felt good about my relationships with others						
I felt able to communicate my thoughts and feelings						
I felt connected to my community						
I felt connected to my culture						
I felt that my life is going to be okay						

22. Is there anything else you would like to say about the Traineeship program that has not been covered in this survey?

23. Is there any feedback you would like to provide about this survey?_

7 Appendix E – Data issues and recommendations for enhancing future data collection and evaluations

Summary

Limitations: The existing NIAA dataset is limited in relevance, completeness and accuracy. It is based on a Centrelink / Jobseeker format that includes fields⁴ that are not of relevance to SBT but on the other hand, does not include important fields of relevance. Outcomes are not recorded or known for about 15% of the students. Moreover, the SBT dataset is not necessarily up to date, or in one place. Several attempts were made at retrieving and compiling the final data set for the evaluation and there is still some uncertainty as to whether all relevant providers have been included in the final data set.

Workarounds required: The evaluators were required to create relevant fields of importance to the evaluation by combining information from existing fields and comments. When these fields were inconsistent, the comments fields prevailed as the ‘higher truth’. Furthermore, the evaluators needed to source external datasets that would enable certain fields to be found. For example, ICSEA index and remoteness level are not fields in the NIAA dataset, even though they are important for monitoring and evaluation. Approximate ICSEA and remoteness fields were constructed, by joining the NIAA data with several external datasets (see details below).

Once new fields had been created, they then needed to be broken down into the categories or themes of interest to the department, the program and the evaluation. These categories were not known at the outcome of the evaluation and so a best guess at the outset was made; however, this needed to be refined as the project progressed and the salient concepts emerged.

Effects on evaluation: This data cleaning and data creation process has been a time-consuming exercise. Moreover, it adds a level of uncertainty to the final statistics that have been used for the analysis. This means that conclusions drawn from comparisons between derived categories or between NIAA and NCVER figures need to be considered indicative and treated with some caution. On the other hand, it is better to have indicative data than none at all.

Recommendations: The limitations of the NIAA dataset are common to many Indigenous programs. Currently, a set of guidelines for evaluation of Indigenous programs has been drafted by the Productivity Commission after looking into this issue and consulting widely. [*Productivity Commission, A Guide to Evaluation under the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy, Draft, 2020.*] It is recommended in this guide that programs build the evaluation into the design at the outset. A more detailed description of how this may be accomplished for the NIAA SBT program is given in the sections below.

8 Issues with existing data

The SBT data does not seem to be kept in one location at the NIAA end. It was unclear at first which providers were to be included in the current TAEG-SBT program. There were several attempts at sourcing the correct data (Jan – May 2020). The NIAA data team found two datasets that were then combined for the purposes of this analysis

- TAEG SBT - FULL DATA SET 110520
- SBT from TAEG MLT

⁴ The term ‘fields’ refers to columns of data in the dataset (e.g. age, start date, delivery location).

8.1 Inappropriate data being collected/not collected

The evaluation asked specific questions that were unable to be investigated directly using the existing dataset; e.g. there are no fields for ICSEA, school attended, Cert level taken, or remoteness region. The fields representing outcomes are relevant to jobseekers but not to SBT trainees or to program managers. The fields representing area of training are relevant to general adult employment but only partly relevant to school-based traineeships. The consequence of irrelevant or partly relevant fields for users entering data is that they select their best guess from the values available to them or they just select a random value in order to complete an entry. This adds a level of error and uncertainty to any analysis.

8.1.1 Sourcing data

Several variables of importance to the evaluation questions did not have fields in the dataset. This data was therefore sought from other government sources, both state and federal, using the following methods:

1. **Data on school engagement:** Each state was approached by Social Compass for jurisdictional approval to survey their students. At the same time, we asked each jurisdiction for access to Education department data on student attendance, behaviour, and year completions, in order to ascertain whether SBT has had an impact on school engagement. Two states were willing to share this data. However, they did not have information on whether students were in an SBT program or not.
 - o Education NSW could only share data at a summary level. Nevertheless, that department put several weeks into locating the data that they were eventually able to send.
 - o Education NT was willing to share individual data about SBT participants school engagement if NIAA was able to send de-identified data that could be data matched. Unfortunately, NIAA was unable to provide this data to the NT due to privacy issues that are yet to be worked through. However, this offer by Education NT provides a possibility for sourcing useful data for an NT case study in the future.
2. **Data on SBT enrolments and completions:** Potentially kept by existing government sources, this data was sought by conducting an extensive search for published data and by trying to locate departments that store such data. This search, along with the limitations of state Education data, resulted in the following realisations:
 - o There are two separate government entities that own the required data, each of which has an essential piece of the puzzle. They do not have an avenue for data-dialoguing with each other:
 - i. The VET sector has data on Cert qualifications and areas of training but does not have school records
 - ii. The Education departments do have school engagement data but do not keep records of SBT, NIAA SBT or even of which RTOs are involved in traineeships.
 - o The VET (Cert) data is available only to an extent. The Cert enrolment and completions data is sent to a commonwealth broker, TYIMS⁵ who then sends it to each State Training Authority. These State Authorities then send their data in a

⁵ The Training and Youth Internet Management System

specified format (using the AVETMISS⁶ rules) onto NCVER⁷, the federal clearing house for VET data and publications. NCVER has, for over two decades, published summary reports on many aspects of VET training and outcomes. However, NCVER do not have school engagement data. Moreover, they can only report on Apprenticeships and Traineeships together, as these are grouped by the State Training Authorities before they send the data on.⁸

In summary, this official data also has gaps. This means that, while government data can provide useful comparison figures, it cannot fill in for missing NIA data at this point in time.

8.1.2 Policy fuzziness interacting with data fuzziness

The irrelevance of the NIAA data may be partly due to lack of clarity up until now as to what are the important indicators for the Department that will allow it to adequately monitor the SBT program. How departments address the issue of “what constitutes success” interacts with data collection.

At the moment, boxes are being ticked based on available paperwork. However, the array of possible types of ‘success’ or ‘failure’ that are important to achieving program aims have not been clearly articulated into relevant fields in the NIAA database. The existing ‘outcomes’ field is borrowed from Jobseeker outcomes. Its available values do not clearly indicate Traineeship outcomes.

As it stands, the system reports the following outcomes. As section 4.2 shows, these figures do not reflect the real situation.

⁶ AVETMISS stands for the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard <https://www.ncver.edu.au/rto-hub/what-is-avetmiss>

⁷ National Centre for Vocational Education Research <https://www.ncver.edu.au/>

⁸ This was not the case prior to 2000. However in the late 1990s a commonwealth minister decreed that Apprenticeships and Traineeships were the same thing, and this was reinforced by a decree in 2015: *Apprenticeships and traineeships—hereafter referred to as Australian Apprenticeships by the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program (AAIP)* <https://www.anao.gov.au/work/performance-audit/administration-australian-apprenticeships-incentives-program>.

As a result, the ‘traineeship’ field is no longer sent to NCVER from State training Authorities, who do have this information, but chose not to send it to the Federal clearing house. The consequence of this decision is that for two decades, data on traineeships has not been available for government evaluations.

Table 1: Outcome information available from the current NIAA database

Placement outcome description		
Successfully completed	655	31%
Ongoing with the program	568	27%
Outcome not known	425	20%
Went to other Education or Training	155	7%
TERMINATED by Employer/Provider	98	5%
Continued employment with provider	75	4%
Went to other Employment	45	2%
Unemployed/Left Labour Force	33	2%
Medical Reasons	27	1%
Went to other Subsidised Assistance or Program	5	0%
Employee Left Region	2	0%
Grand Total	2,088	100%

This suggests that the NIAA dataset is not capturing what NIAA would like to know about the SBT trainees.

8.1.3 Suggestions for solving the problem

Three steps are needed:

1. **Decide what array of outcome are of interest** This would require conversations at a policy level to decide what types of success or failure are important to capture for both the trainee and for the Department (these may be two different things).
This step may be informed by the finding of this evaluation that the trainee is on a pathway that moves them from disadvantage to greater prospects of employability. Each trainee will advance by different amounts depending on their context and circumstances. Therefore, it may be of more use for the department to define success as both **progress** (such as completion of a Cert II) as well as **outcomes** (completion of Year 12 plus cert plus all employment hours). Similarly, it may be useful to know more about reasons for failure such as those listed in section 4.2.
2. **Turn desired outcomes into data fields** Define data fields for representing each of the different types of progress. For example, adding in separate fields that record levels of trainee progress as well as full SBT completion. Given there are three components to the SBT traineeship: school, training and employment, the outcomes fields need capture all 6 possible combinations of completions of these aspects. Similarly, a field that captures all main reasons for non-completion could be added. Finally, data capturing each trainee's intended next steps at the end of their SBT can be included (see Tables 6-9 below for the full list of suggested outcomes fields)
The data additions suggested should not add to the current data entry workload, as many users are voluntarily typing this information into text field. In fact, adding them in as fields with drop down menus would make data entry easier.

3. **Integrate collection of desired outcomes into program actions** **Date collection and analysis needs to be built into the design of programs.** The Productivity Commission Guide⁹ stresses the importance of building evaluation into the design of programs. Agencies are being asked to ensure that they have access to, or are able to collect, the data they need to effectively undertake evaluations. A set of suggestions for building in appropriate and effective methods for collecting the required data is given in Section 5 below.

9 Data cleaning process (Extracting and combining data)

The sub-sections below describe how the NIAA data was cleaned or used to find useful data for the evaluation.

9.1 Demographics

In order to provide most of the information about the trainee's situation, users entering data for the NIAA dataset use two available text entry columns **Placement Comment** and **Placement Description**. These 2 fields are used interchangeably. There are no other fields available for this information. The example below gives an indication of what these entries look like:

Table 2: Example of entries in the NIAA database that record trainees' situational information [These entries have been changed to fictitious names so as to protect identities]

Placement Comment	Placement Description
Yr 11 Mount White HS Mitta Rd, Bundanoon Nth	Cert III Health Services Assistance
MGoals - Year 10 Bundamba High	Cert III Business Administration
Yr 11 Eden Park HS	Cert III IT and Digital Design
ICSEA 991	Marvel Sports High - Business Services cert II - City of Sydney
Year 11 Campden High/ Bandoon Childrens Services - BVSC	Cert III Childcare Services
	Cert 2 Trainee Teller, Campden HS Yr11, Host: ANZ Campden
Bundanoon Valley Shire Council – Eden Park Pre School	Cert III Children's Services - Yr 11 Eden Park HS
Cert III Education Support - DEC - Campden High	Trainee Education Support Teacher

This small set of example items illustrates that:

1. These two strings contain important information about High School, Year level, Cert level, Employment area and Area of TAFE /RTO training area
2. There is no set structure for order of entry, or labelling (e.g. Cert II or Cert 2, e.g. Campden HS or Campden High)

To create useful data, these two strings were manually converted into several fields for each of the following variables of importance to the evaluation

- o Cert Level
- o School
- o Year Level

⁹ Productivity Commission, *A Guide to Evaluation under the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy, Draft, 2020*
<https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/indigenous-evaluation#report>

- Training area
- ICSEA index

Not all of these items were available in the original strings, thus each of the new fields had missing data

Data from other sources was used together with data from the NIAA dataset to create the required fields, as follows.

9.1.1 ICSEA

At the end of the above extraction from string fields process it became clear that not enough entries had ICSEA included. Moreover, some entries were inaccurate. Fortunately, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has published data that lists all schools with their ICSEA indices. However, the data strings did not have schools named for much of the data. The ACARA data report does have SA3 region and postcode. Since each trainee's home postcode is in the NIAA dataset, postcode was able to be used to find an approximate ICSEA and to find remoteness level for each student.

Average ICSEA for the SA3 region in which the student lives

Schools in each SA3¹⁰ region were used for finding the Average ICSEA for the region that a student lived in using data cleaning software and the following procedure:

For each SA3region: $Av_ICSEAforSA3region = Av (School-1_ICSEA, School-2_ICSEA, .. School-k_ICSEA)$

- where School-1, School-2, .. School-k are all in SA3 region and are high schools or combined schools
- where SA3 region for Student 1 is determined by Home Post Code of Student 1
- where School-k_ICSEA is given in the ACARA list

Schools in each SA3 were found by

- Extracting all school post codes from the ACARA list
- School postcodes were then linked to SA3 region using Australia Posts published *Postcode to SA3 SA4 conversions list*

The $Av_ICSEAforSA3region$ was matched to SA3 region for each student, so as to assign the student an $Av_ICSEAforSA3$ where they lived.

9.1.2 Remoteness Area

- School post code was linked to Australian Bureau of statistics *Postcode to remoteness correspondence*
- Multiples: if there was more than one remoteness region for a Postcode (which occurs a lot in the NT), then chose least remote
- Remoteness was assigned for each student via postcode matching

¹⁰SA3s create a standard framework for the analysis of ABS data at the regional level through clustering groups of SA2s that have similar regional characteristics. In outer regional and remote areas, SA3s represent areas which are widely recognised as having a distinct identity and similar social and economic characteristics. Australian Bureau of Statistics Catalogue no. 1270.0.55.001 - Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS): Volume 1 - Main Structure and Greater Capital City Statistical Areas, July 2016

At the end of this process, each student had been assigned an approximate ICSEA (for their SA3 region) and a remoteness area level

9.1.3 Training Area

The field of training that the trainee was involved in was also embedded in the two text fields **Placement Comment** and **Placement Description** as well as officially described in two selection fields Activity Industry and **Placement Detail Occupation**. However, the entries in the official selection fields did not correspond to the text, and so another field was created to represent the real situation. Once again, the text was taken to be the higher authority. Table 3 below give some examples of the manual creation of the **Training Area** field. This field started off with many categories but was collapsed down to a few main categories that correspond to relevant selections from the ANZSIC code used in the VET sector (see Section 5.3.1 below).

Table 3: Example entries in the NIAA database for area of training and how these were used to construct the field Training Area [These entries have been changed to fictitious names so as to protect identities]

Activity Industry	Placement Detail Occupation	Placement Comment	Placement Description	Training Area (constructed field)
Educational Support Services	Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers	Yr 11 Mount White HS Mitta Rd, Bundanoon Nth	Cert III Health Services Assistance	Health and Community Services
School Education	Primary School Teachers	MGoals - Year 10 Bundamba High	Cert III Business Administration	Administration Finance and Business
Educational Support Services	Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers	Yr 11 Eden Park HS	Cert III IT and Digital Design	IT / Digital Design
Central Banking	Other Hospitality, Retail and Service Managers	ICSEA 991	Marvel Sports High - Business Services cert II - City of Sydney	Administration Finance and Business
School Education	Early Childhood (Pre-primary School) Teachers	Year 11 Campden High/ Bandoon Childrens Services - BWSC	Cert III Childcare Services	Early Childhood and Education
Central Banking	Bank Workers		Cert 2 Trainee Teller, Campden HS Yr11, Host: ANZ Campden	Administration Finance and Business*
School Education	Primary School Teachers	Bundanoon Valley Shire Council – Eden Park Pre School	Cert III Children’s Services - Yr 11 Eden Park HS	Early Childhood and Education

*This entry may have been better classified into Sales and Customer Service; however because the Activity industry was Banking it was categorise into Administration Finance and Business. There were seven tellers categorised this way. This is an example of the interpretation required in constructing new data fields.

9.2 Outcomes

The NIAA dataset has two fields for recording information about outcomes, a selection field **Placement Outcome outcome desc** and a text filed **Placement End Comment** and. These two fields were manually combined to create a filed for the real outcome. The data entry in the **Placement Outcome outcome desc** column was shown to be in error when cross referenced with the text descriptions in the **Placement End Comment** field. If the two fields conflicted, the comment field was taken to be the higher authority, as it was entered by a provider/mentor who had knowledge of the trainee’s real situation. The constructed field **Real Outcome** was then used for the analysis. Examples of the combining process are given in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Example entries in the NIAA database for outcomes and how these were used to construct the Real Outcome field

Placement End Comment	Placement Outcome outcome desc	Real Outcome Ex (constructed field)
Cancelled SBT due to poor performance.	TERMINATED by Employer/Provider	Terminated due to poor performance/unable to meet contract
Transitioned to ID 26265482 to continue program.	Continued employment with provider	Continued new activity current provider
Cancelled SBT due to lack of interest.	Outcome not known	Lack of interest
Business case approved by delegate for Yr1 completion pyt.	Unemployed/Left Labour Force	Withdrew from traineeship
Left Cert II t/ship part way through Year 11. Commenced a fi	Went to other Education or Training	Went to other Education or Training
	Went to other Education or Training	Went to other Education or Training
No reason provided for cessation	Outcome not known	Ceased but reason unknown
Completed program	Went to other Employment	Successfully completed, Transition to Education/Employment
Ceased SBT due to lack of interest - remains in schooling.	Went to other Education or Training	Lack of interest but continuing school
	Successfully completed	Successfully completed
Cancelled SBT due to Health/Personal reasons.	Medical Reasons	Medical/Health/Mental Health
Ceased 10 weeks after commencing due to moving interstate.	Outcome not known	Student relocated
SBT Cancelled as did not complete required RTO work.	Outcome not known	Terminated due to poor performance/unable to meet contract
Completed 2nd year SBT but not participating in Transition.	Outcome not known	Completed SBT but not transitioning
Ceased SBT due to lack of interest and not suited to workpl	Went to other Education or Training	Lack of interest
Completed Yr12 then worked at Bunnings. Applying for job at	Went to other Employment	Progressed onto employment
Cancelled SBT 14/5/19 due to personal reasons.	Went to other Education or Training	Personal / family reasons
Cancelled SBT 26/8/19 due to leaving school.	Unemployed/Left Labour Force	Left School

The **Real Outcomes** column then contained many different entries. These were grouped into main categories, which were then grouped in to main themes, as shown in Table 10 at the end of this Appendix (Section 7). The themes were used in the analyses as the broad outcomes, and are summarised in Section 4.2 Figure 7 and Table 18 in the main report, and in Appendix D Section 3.2.

The themes and categories that emerged from this categorisation of outcomes process could be used as the possible field values for future data collection (see Tables 6-9 below).

9.3 Uncertainty in Evaluation

As a result of the above processes, which involved a number of levels of interpretation and well as the creation of estimates, the data that was used for the evaluation cannot be guaranteed to be accurate. It can be used to find patterns and as an indicator of issues arising. Future datasets that are more useful to evaluations can benefit from what has been learned here. Suggestions below for specific fields are based on what has been learned.

10 Recommendations for Future

Several changes can be made into the future that will allow for the collection and recording of data that will be more useful for future monitoring and evaluation.

10.1 Collecting 'Next Steps' data appropriately and effectively

This evaluation found that the existing method of collecting data on trainees next steps after Year 12 (transition data) is not working, an imposition on ex-trainees, and a waste of mentor time. This does not imply that the data should not be collected. Instead, it implies that this data needs to be collected differently. Many years of experience with student evaluations has taught that the best time to collect data on students is when they are 'in the room.'

It would be feasible to include a trainee feedback form near the end their traineeship. This could be tied to signing off the contact. This form could ask about their traineeship experiences and what they plan to / hope to do next (similar to the VET LSAY survey¹¹). A similar follow up survey sent at six months would then not come as a surprise to the trainees. Similarly, the mentor / field worker could also be asked to fill in a form about barriers and supports half way through and barriers/ supports and outcomes at the end of each trainee's journey. This could be tied to a provider payment. This trainee and mentor 'experience' data could be joined to the main dataset via trainee ID for evaluation purposes.

Using this method for collecting transition data is more likely to result in useful data being collected than the current method. It also allows for collection of the trainee voice and the mentor voice in a way that provides more rigorous data than is possible via interviews.

10.2 Obtaining data from government sources

The NIAA monitoring and evaluations may benefit from obtaining high level data from existing government databases.

10.2.1 NCVER

National data collections for the VET sector. The relevant catalogues are the **Apprenticeships and Traineeships** and **VET in Schools** collections. NCVER allows anyone to register and thereby create their own tables from these catalogues using their online table creation tools.

Note that NCVER 'completions' do not include Year 12 completion.

10.2.1.1 High level advocacy suggested

As footnote 4. details, Traineeships are not separated from Apprenticeships in the NCVER catalogued data, and this is an historical decision that has made evaluations of traineeships very difficult. There are other government departments and research institutions who are also affected by this situation.

There is currently an NCVER project looking at the information needs of data users. They have confirmed that they have already had this issue requested by others. NIAA could register concern on this issue in order to add weight to the business case for apprentice/trainee status. Comments do not need to be in great detail. They just need to show that you need to be able to identify trainees from apprentices. See <https://www.ncver.edu.au/contact-us/contact-us>.

NIAA could possibly also lobby at a high level for the 'traineeship' flag to be sent for State training boards to NCVER. Given that there are large industries with an interest in traineeship data, they may

¹¹ The Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) track young people as they move from school into further study, work, and other destinations. <https://www.lsay.edu.au/aboutlsay>

have some sway. So may the Productivity Commission who is aiming to produce more effective evaluations in this sector.

10.2.2 State Training Authorities

These authorities hold school and VET information, as well as traineeship information separate from apprentices. However, they do not have the ‘do-it-yourself’ tools available for public access as do NCVET. Requests can be made to these authorities however. There is a list of contacts for the various state training authorities at the following web address:

<https://www.ncver.edu.au/rto-hub/avetmiss-support-for-stas-and-boards-of-studies#h2heading3>

10.3 Harmonising NIAA data with government data

If government data is to be used for benchmarking, the NIAA data fields need to be harmonised in order to make useful comparisons.

10.3.1 ANZSIC codes for employment industry

An example of this emerged with the training area variable. In order to make comparisons with NCVET data, the training area categories that corresponded in the two datasets needed to be found. NCVET has a few possible classification systems for industry. The most relevant is the ANZSIC system, which contains categories or sub-categories corresponding to the main SBT traineeship categories. However, these are not always obvious at the top level, but may be buried several layers down in the ANZSIC system. For example, the **Food and hospitality** category in the NIAA traineeship data corresponds to **Food and Beverage Services**, nested inside of **Accommodation** in the ANZSIC code.

Table 5 below shows the correspondences that were discovered. This is a starting point for NIAA to create a field for classifying training areas that will allow for future comparisons with general Indigenous VET data.

Table 5: ANZSIC codes used by the VET system corresponding to NIAA SBT traineeship industries

NIAA traineeship industry	Employer Industry (ANZSIC) codes
Admin Finance and Banking	Financial and Insurance Services (K)
	Administrative and Support Services (N)
	Public Administration and Safety (O)
Sales and customer service	Retail Trade (G)
	Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services (L)
Early childhood and education	Education and Training (P)
Health care and community services	Health Care and Social Assistance (Q)
	95 - Personal and Other Services
Sports and Recreation	91 - Sports and Recreation Activities
Land Animal and Ocean Care	89 - Heritage Activities
Creative and Performing Arts	90 - Creative and Performing Arts Activities

NIAA traineeship industry	Employer Industry (ANZSIC) codes
Food and hospitality	Accommodation (H) / 45 Food and Beverage
Agriculture (extra)	Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (A)
Skilled Labour and Construction	94 - Repair and Maintenance
	Construction (E)
Technical IT and Engineering and Architecture	Information Media and Telecommunication (J)
	70 - Computer System Design and Related Services
	692 - Architectural, Engineering and Technical Services
	690 - Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (Except Computer System Design and Related Services)
Warehousing transport and unskilled labour	Transport, Postal and Warehousing (I) / 53 warehousing and storage services
	Manufacturing (C)
	Wholesale Trade (F)

11 Upgrading the existing database for NIAA programs

Below are some specific recommendations for changes to the existing database. Overall, some fields need to be removed, some refined and several added.

11.1 Demographics

Table 6: Suggested NIAA dataset fields for collecting useful traineeship demographics

Remove	Replace with	Values *	Notes
Placement Description	Qualification Level	Preparatory, Cert II, III, IV	Allows for preparation courses to be noted, which relates to literacy and numeracy issues
	School	Xxxxx High School Xxxx Secondary College	Needed to look up ICSEA in ACARA
	School State	ACT ... WA	Needed as school names repeat
	School postcode		Needed as school names repeat
	Year Level at start of traineeship	9,10,11,12	
	ICSEA index		May not be possible, for provider to enter this, but if have school details the NIAA team can look it up
	Placement comment		Only one comment field

Notes:

1. These values can mostly be set up as drop-down items in each field so that the user only needs to click to enter.
2. A guide needs to accompany the data entry so that user know how to enter text using the same protocol across users, and what each field and value refers to.

11.2 Training

Table 7: Suggested NIAA dataset fields for collecting useful traineeship training information

Remove	Replace with	Values *	Notes
Activity Industry Placement Detail Occupation Placement Description	Employer	Bank Australia Post Kmart McDonalds Hospital Public Service Provider / Group Trainer Local employer others	This list needs to be expanded based on advice from providers and group trainers.
	Training industry	Relevant ANZSIC industry categories as shown in Table 5 above	
	Role at placement	Customer service Admin Sales Labour Sports Land/Ocean care Trade Skilled work Health work Carer Working with children Food and beverages Performing arts IT Technical other	This list needs to be expanded based on advice from providers and group trainers.
	Placement Comment		Only one comment field

Notes:

1. These values can mostly be set up as drop-down items in each field so that the user only needs to click to enter.
2. A guide needs to accompany the data entry so that user know how to enter text using the same protocol across users, and what each field and value refers to.

11.3 Progress

Table 8: Suggested NIAA dataset fields for collecting useful traineeship progress

Remove	Replace with	Values *	Notes
Placement Outcome outcome desc	Final year level	9,10,11,12	
Placement End Comment	Completion of final year level	Yes , No, Partial, Unknown	
	Final Cert level completed	Preparatory, Cert II, III or IV	Allows for Cert completion after preparatory to be noted
	Completion of Cert modules	Yes , No, Partial, Unknown	
	Completion of employment hours	Yes , No, Partial, Unknown	
	Contract completed	Yes , No, Unknown	
	Year 12 completed	Yes , No, Unknown	
	Continuing with program	Yes, No, Unknown	
	Next steps	Employment with current employer, employment with other employer, TAFE, Uni, other training, job seek, unknown	This list needs to be expanded based on NIAA discussions (see above).
	Progress comments		Allows for extra info provider may have on progress. Not tied to placement ending.

Notes:

1. These values can mostly be set up as drop-down items in each field so that the user only needs to click to enter.
2. A guide needs to accompany the data entry so that user know how to enter text using the same protocol across users, and what each field and value refers to.

11.4 Reasons for leaving / non completion

Table 9: Suggested NIAA dataset fields for collecting useful traineeship reasons for non-completion

Remove	Replace with	Values *	Notes
	Left before employment completed	Yes / No	These three fields together specify the 6 possible combinations of non-completions
	Left before Cert completed	Yes / No	
	Left before Year 12 completed	Yes / No	
	Reason for non-completion	Left to take up work	These fields allow NIAA to understand non-completions. Some of these outcomes may be still favourable in terms of closing the gap aims
		Left to do other training	
		Left to go to Uni or TAFE	
		Lack of interest	
		Unable to cope with workload	
		Terminated by employer due to poor performance	
		Employment ended by employer for other reasons	
		Terminated by RTO due to poor performance	
		School finished before traineeship finished	
		Personal / family issues	
		Health / Mental health	
		Moved away	
		Contract date reached	
		Other	
	Unknown		
		Leaving Comment	

Notes:

1. These values can mostly be set up as drop-down items in each field so that the user only needs to click to enter.
2. A guide needs to accompany the data entry so that user know how to enter text using the same protocol across users, and what each field and value refers to.

11.5 Details of construction of outcomes data

Table 10: Construction of outcomes categories from existing NIAA dataset fields

Outcome Theme	Outcome category	Real Outcome	N
Outcome not known	Outcome not known	Outcome not known	286
Ongoing with program	Ongoing with program	Ongoing with program	546
Unusable data			832
Unable / not wanting to continue	TERMINATED by Employer/Provider, Terminated due to poor performance, Terminated due to poor performance/unable to meet contract	TERMINATED by Employer/Provider	53
Unable / not wanting to continue	TERMINATED by Employer/Provider, Terminated due to poor performance, Terminated due to poor performance/unable to meet contract	Terminated due to poor performance	12
Unable / not wanting to continue	TERMINATED by Employer/Provider, Terminated due to poor performance, Terminated due to poor performance/unable to meet contract	Terminated due to poor performance/unable to meet contract	51
Unable / not wanting to continue	TERMINATED by Employer/Provider, Terminated due to poor performance, Terminated due to poor performance/unable to meet contract	Total	116
Unable / not wanting to continue	Ceased as failing / disengaged at school, Ceased as failing at school, Left School and 2 more	Ceased as failing / disengaged at school	3
Unable / not wanting to continue	Ceased as failing / disengaged at school, Ceased as failing at school, Left School and 2 more	Ceased as failing at school	2
Unable / not wanting to continue	Ceased as failing / disengaged at school, Ceased as failing at school, Left School and 2 more	Left School	9
Unable / not wanting to continue	Ceased as failing / disengaged at school, Ceased as failing at school, Left School and 2 more	Left school and cancelled traineeship	16
Unable / not wanting to continue	Ceased as failing / disengaged at school, Ceased as failing at school, Left School and 2 more	Suspended from school	1
Unable / not wanting to continue	Ceased as failing / disengaged at school, Ceased as failing at school, Left School and 2 more	Total	31
Unable / not wanting to continue	Disengaged with mentoring due to court issues, Medical Reasons, Medical/Health/Mental Health and 3 more	Disengaged with mentoring due to court issues	1
Unable / not wanting to continue	Disengaged with mentoring due to court issues, Medical Reasons, Medical/Health/Mental Health and 3 more	Medical Reasons	6
Unable / not wanting to continue	Disengaged with mentoring due to court issues, Medical Reasons, Medical/Health/Mental Health and 3 more	Medical/Health/Mental Health	18
Unable / not wanting to continue	Disengaged with mentoring due to court issues, Medical Reasons, Medical/Health/Mental Health and 3 more	Personal / family reasons	29
Unable / not wanting to continue	Disengaged with mentoring due to court issues, Medical Reasons, Medical/Health/Mental Health and 3 more	Personal/medical but continuing school	6
Unable / not wanting to continue	Disengaged with mentoring due to court issues, Medical Reasons, Medical/Health/Mental Health and 3 more	Preganancy /Maternity leave	3

Unable / not wanting to continue	Disengaged with mentoring due to court issues, Medical Reasons, Medical/Health/Mental Health and 3 more	Total	63
Unable / not wanting to continue	Ceased but reason unknown, Left SBT, Withdrew from traineeship	Ceased but reason unknown	43
Unable / not wanting to continue	Ceased but reason unknown, Left SBT, Withdrew from traineeship	Left SBT	6
Unable / not wanting to continue	Ceased but reason unknown, Left SBT, Withdrew from traineeship	Withdrew from traineeship	33
Unable / not wanting to continue	Ceased but reason unknown, Left SBT, Withdrew from traineeship	Total	82
Unable / not wanting to continue	Lack of interest, Lack of interest / disengaged, Lack of interest in / not suited to the placement / traineeship and 2 more	Lack of interest	26
Unable / not wanting to continue	Lack of interest, Lack of interest / disengaged, Lack of interest in / not suited to the placement / traineeship and 2 more	Lack of interest / disengaged	9
Unable / not wanting to continue	Lack of interest, Lack of interest / disengaged, Lack of interest in / not suited to the placement / traineeship and 2 more	Lack of interest in / not suited to the placement / traineeship	10
Unable / not wanting to continue	Lack of interest, Lack of interest / disengaged, Lack of interest in / not suited to the placement / traineeship and 2 more	Lack of interest in the placement	1
Unable / not wanting to continue	Lack of interest, Lack of interest / disengaged, Lack of interest in / not suited to the placement / traineeship and 2 more	Lack of interest in the placement / traineeship	4
Unable / not wanting to continue	Lack of interest, Lack of interest / disengaged, Lack of interest in / not suited to the placement / traineeship and 2 more	Total	50
Unable / not wanting to continue	moved away for family reasons, moved away for work, moved to another school and 1 more	moved away for family reasons	1
Unable / not wanting to continue	moved away for family reasons, moved away for work, moved to another school and 1 more	moved away for work	1
Unable / not wanting to continue	moved away for family reasons, moved away for work, moved to another school and 1 more	moved to another school	1
Unable / not wanting to continue	moved away for family reasons, moved away for work, moved to another school and 1 more	Student relocated	23
Unable / not wanting to continue	moved away for family reasons, moved away for work, moved to another school and 1 more	Total	26
Employment ended / Unemployed / Left labour force	Employment ended / Unemployed / Left labour force	Employment ended	2
Employment ended / Unemployed / Left labour force	Employment ended / Unemployed / Left labour force	Unemployed/Left Labour Force	9
Employment ended / Unemployed / Left labour force	Employment ended / Unemployed / Left labour force		11
Unable / not wanting to continue	Total	Total	368
Completed SBT / completed with uncertain transition	Successfully completed	Successfully completed	459
Completed SBT / completed with uncertain transition	Successfully completed	Total	459
Completed SBT / completed with uncertain transition	Activity recently ended, Completed SBT but not transitioning, completion, looking for work and 3 more	Activity recently ended	13
Completed SBT / completed with uncertain transition	Activity recently ended, Completed SBT but not transitioning, completion, looking for work and 3 more	Completed SBT but not transitioning	51

Completed SBT / completed with uncertain transition	Activity recently ended, Completed SBT but not transitioning, completion, looking for work and 3 more	completion, looking for work	5
Completed SBT / completed with uncertain transition	Activity recently ended, Completed SBT but not transitioning, completion, looking for work and 3 more	Uncontactable	9
Completed SBT / completed with uncertain transition	Activity recently ended, Completed SBT but not transitioning, completion, looking for work and 3 more	Uncontactable for transition	7
Completed SBT / completed with uncertain transition	Activity recently ended, Completed SBT but not transitioning, completion, looking for work and 3 more	Unkown transition outcome	34
Completed SBT / completed with uncertain transition	Activity recently ended, Completed SBT but not transitioning, completion, looking for work and 3 more	Total	119
Completed SBT / completed with uncertain transition	Total	Total	578
Successfully completed with transition to education/employment	Successfully completed, Transition to Education/Employment	Successfully completed, Transition to Education /Employment	22
Successfully completed with transition to education/employment	Successfully completed, Transition to Education/Employment	Total	22
Successfully completed with transition to education/employment	Total	Total	22
Successful SBT		Total	600
Went to other education / training / employment	Unknown other Education/Employment, Unknown other Training/Employment, Went to other Education or Training and 2 more	Unknown other Education/Employment	25
Went to other education / training / employment	Unknown other Education/Employment, Unknown other Training/Employment, Went to other Education or Training and 2 more	Unknown other Training/Employment	2
Went to other education / training / employment	Unknown other Education/Employment, Unknown other Training/Employment, Went to other Education or Training and 2 more	Went to other Education or Training	42
Went to other education / training / employment	Unknown other Education/Employment, Unknown other Training/Employment, Went to other Education or Training and 2 more	Went to other Employment	29
Went to other education / training / employment	Unknown other Education/Employment, Unknown other Training/Employment, Went to other Education or Training and 2 more	Went to other Subsidised Assistance or Program	1
Continued employment with current employer or provider	Continued employment with current employer, Continued employment with provider, Continued new activity current provider and 5 more	Left to go to uni or TAFE	5
Went to other education / training / employment	Total	Total	104
Early or partial completion, continuing school	Successful early completion of SBT and continuing school, Successfully completed cert but not employment, Successfully completed SBT yr 10 or 11 and continuing and 1 more	Successful early completion of SBT and continuing school	6
Early or partial completion, continuing school	Successful early completion of SBT and continuing school, Successfully completed cert but not employment, Successfully completed SBT yr 10 or 11 and continuing and 1 more	Successfully completed SBT yr 10 or 11 and continuing	13
Early or partial completion, continuing school	Successful early completion of SBT and continuing school, Successfully completed cert but not employment, Successfully completed SBT yr 10 or 11 and continuing and 1 more	Successfully completed yr 10 or 11 and continuing	1
Early or partial completion, continuing school	Total	Total	20

Continued employment with current employer or provider	Continued employment with current employer, Continued employment with provider, Continued new activity current provider and 5 more	Continued employment with current employer	13
Continued employment with current employer or provider	Continued employment with current employer, Continued employment with provider, Continued new activity current provider and 5 more	Continued employment with provider	36
Continued employment with current employer or provider	Continued employment with current employer, Continued employment with provider, Continued new activity current provider and 5 more	Continued new activity current provider	6
Continued employment with current employer or provider	Continued employment with current employer, Continued employment with provider, Continued new activity current provider and 5 more	employment with host employment	2
Continued employment with current employer or provider	Continued employment with current employer, Continued employment with provider, Continued new activity current provider and 5 more	Progressed onto employment	8
Continued employment with current employer or provider	Continued employment with current employer, Continued employment with provider, Continued new activity current provider and 5 more	Progressed to further training	7
Continued employment with current employer or provider	Total	Total	72
Employment ended / Unemployed / Left labour force	Employment ended & Unemployed/Left Labour Force	Employment ended	2
Employment ended / Unemployed / Left labour force	Employment ended & Unemployed/Left Labour Force	Unemployed/Left Labour Force	9
Employment ended / Unemployed / Left labour force	Employment ended & Unemployed/Left Labour Force	Total	11
Employment ended / Unemployed / Left labour force	Total	Total	11
Left to concentrate on school work	Lack of interest but continuing school & left to concentrate on school work	Lack of interest but continuing school	20
Left to concentrate on school work	Lack of interest but continuing school & left to concentrate on school work	left to concentrate on school work	35
Left to concentrate on school work	Lack of interest but continuing school & left to concentrate on school work	Total	55
Left to concentrate on school work	Total	Total	55
Other partial completion	Successful early completion of SBT and continuing school, Successfully completed cert but not employment, Successfully completed SBT yr 10 or 11 and continuing and 1 more	Successfully completed cert but not employment	11
Contract / School ended	End of contract date & Finished school (yr 12)	End of contract date	2
Contract / School ended	End of contract date & Finished school (yr 12)	Finished school (yr 12)	11
Contract / School ended	End of contract date & Finished school (yr 12)	Total	13
Contract / School ended	Total	Total	13
Partial Success SBT		Total	275
Grand Total	Total	Total	2,086

Appendix F – Case studies

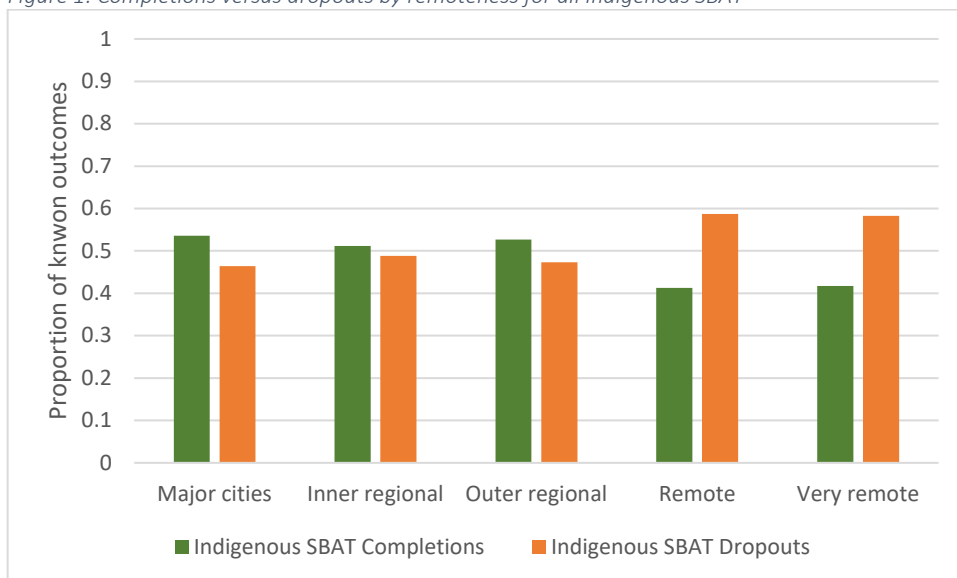
Differing regional characteristics contribute to variable program success. It is difficult to disentangle regional characteristics from the models and quality of the different service providers, noting that the same service provider outcomes may differ significantly across different regions. These differing outcomes could be due to staff recruitment issues in the poorer outcome area or a range of local issues such as differing traineeship requirements, labour markets, community attitudes, instruction methods, pandemic impact, and ways of working. Three case studies have been developed (two in NSW and one in NT) using interview data for one and NT and NSW Department of Education data for the other two to explore these regional issues in more detail. An overall lesson from the case studies and the analysis of NIAA program data is that local context varies so considerably that it is impossible to generalise. The NIAA needs to utilise the expertise in its regional offices with that of the providers and local communities to better understand the emerging evidence base addressing the core guiding evaluative question: ‘What works, for whom in what context?’

Introduction

Given all of the issues faced by remote student, the question to answer is whether SBT helps students in these regions.

The national data for Indigenous SBT shows that completions rates drop by about 10% in remote and very remote regions. The national data includes the NIAA data. However, the uncertainty of the NIAA ‘partial success’ data has made it impossible to compare NIAA figures against the national data at the time of this evaluation. With improvements in data collection, the NIAA data may be compared against these figures to see whether the NIAA SBT program is producing any greater relative success in remote areas than all other Indigenous SBAT programs.

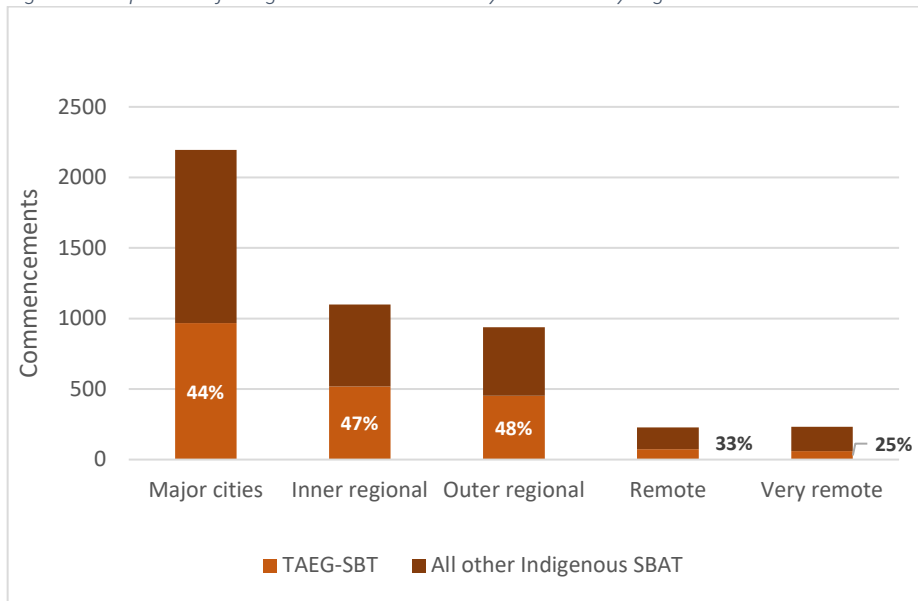
Figure 1: Completions versus dropouts by remoteness for all Indigenous SBAT



NCVER Apprentices and trainees - March 2020 2016 to 2019 reporting

While TAEG-SBT maintains outcomes across remote and very remote comparable to other regions, unfortunately the TAEG-SBT has less presence in remote and very remote areas compared to all Indigenous SBATs. The figure below shows that TAEG-SBT for 2016-2018 becomes a smaller proportion of Indigenous SBAT as the regions become more remote.

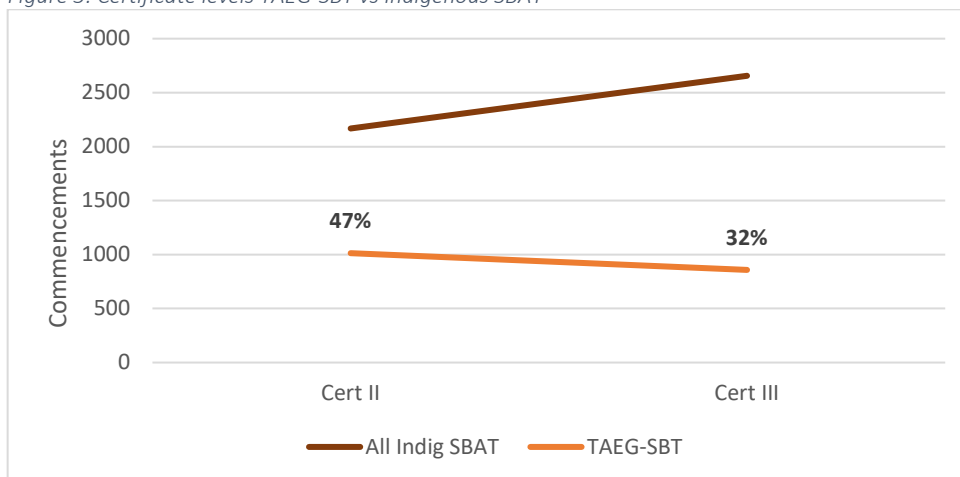
Figure 2: Proportion of Indigenous SBAT serviced by TAEG-SBT by region



Source: Apprentices and trainees - March 2020 accessed from NCVET Oct 2020; TAEG SBT - FULL DATA SET 110520 and SBT from TAEG MLT 110520 received from NIAA May 2020 Location was estimated from the student postcode columns matched to ABS data and may slightly inaccurate

Another interesting feature of TAEG SBT is that it has taken up about half of the total SBAT Cert II commencements compared to about a third of the SBAT Cert III commencements.

Figure 3: Certificate levels TAEG-SBT vs Indigenous SBAT

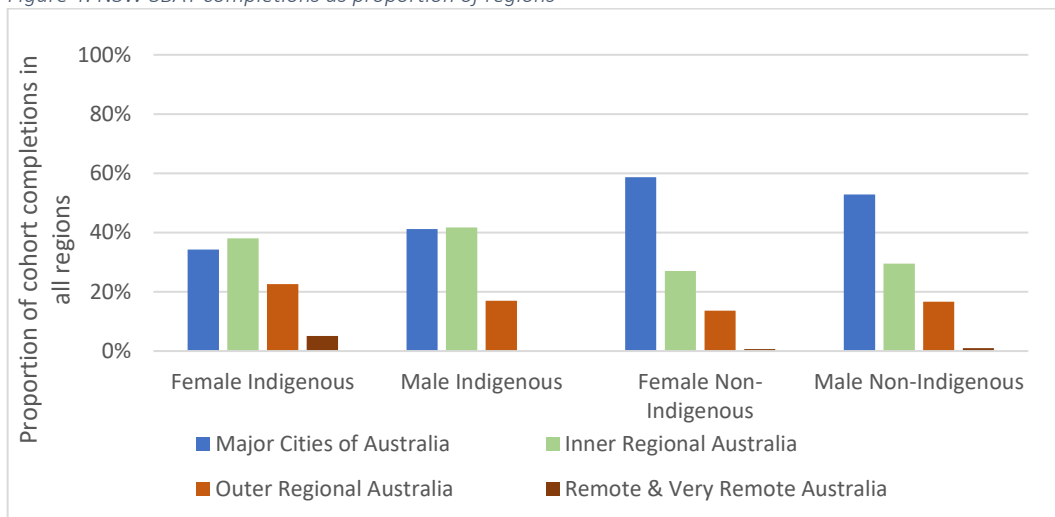


Source: Apprentices and trainees - March 2020 accessed from NCVET Oct 2020; TAEG SBT - FULL DATA SET 110520 and SBT from TAEG MLT 110520 received from NIAA May 2020 SBT Cert commencements were extracted from the comments columns and may be an underestimate.

Case Study 1 – New South Wales

The NSW Department of Education was able to supply outcomes data for School Based Traineeship Completions in NSW Government Schools between 2016 to 2019. This data shows that for the non-Indigenous students, there are twice as many SBT completions in the major cities as there are in the inner regional areas. For Indigenous students, however, there are about as many SBAT completions in the inner regional areas as there are in the major cities.

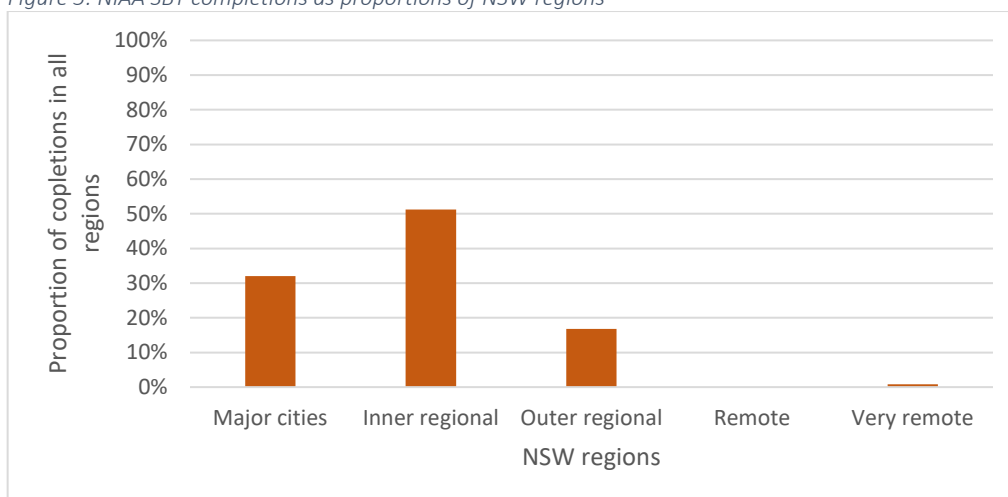
Figure 4: NSW SBT completions as proportion of regions



Data received from Education NSW Business Reporting Scope: School Based Traineeship Completions in NSW Government schools
Source: IVETS 05/07/2020

The NIAA SBT completions results for NSW show an even stronger pattern for more NIAA SBT completions to be from inner regional regions (see below). This pattern for NSW completions is likely to be explained by the providers in NSW targeting relatively more inner regional.

Figure 5: NIAA SBT completions as proportions of NSW regions



To explore the particularities in regional NSW further the following case study has been compiled from interview data.

Case Study 2 - TAEG-SBT Regional

Background

This case study covers, a regional coastal area. Sixteen interviewees were from this region, including: five employers, two family members, one NIAA contract manager, four provider staff (from two providers), three school staff and one trainee. While only one former trainee was interviewed, other stakeholders spoke extensively of different students and their experiences undertaking a school-based traineeship. Several other former trainees from this region were invited to participate but all declined or withdrew prior to scheduled interviews.

Several TAEG-SBT providers deliver traineeship support in this region. The two providers interviewed were a smaller Aboriginal organisation and a not-for-profit community organisation. The NIAA contract manager interviewed provided comparisons with larger providers.

Workplaces represented in employer were a pharmacy, two pre-schools/early childhood centres and a farm. Other placement industries described by stakeholders included finance and retail.

Two schools represented in interviews were high schools in regional towns with between 800 and 900 students, and the other was a small central school of approximately 130 students in a small rural village. All three schools have a relatively high proportion of Indigenous students.

Who is the SBT program targeting? Is it filling a gap for students? What are the characteristics of the SBT providers and participants?

Reflecting the national picture, stakeholders described a wide range of participant characteristics. The type of student generally targeted for traineeships differed between SBT providers and schools.

According to the NIAA contract manager interviewed, the larger provider was more inclined 'towards picking the low hanging fruit' (students who require less intensive support) and 'would probably shy away from recruiting students who would be [in] the too hard basket' (NIAA). While stakeholders described a range of students, they often focussed on those who were less interested in the academic side of schooling.

The smaller Aboriginal organisation targeted students who were not interested in ordinary academic pathways and wanted to participate in 'hands-on' work. As another provider conveyed, while many of their trainees 'may have faced considerable educational or employment barriers', they 'would not describe the students [...] as 'disengaged'' because 'in order to successfully secure and maintain a school-based traineeship they had had to be arguably more engaged than students simply pursuing their [school certificate] (Provider). An employer linked to this provider stated that trainees placed with their organisation tended to be those beginning to 'fall off the radar' and attend school less frequently (Employer)

All school staff interviewed in the region were highly supportive of SBTs, and view them as a legitimate pathway for a range of different students. Giving the example of a student from a challenging family situation, one careers advisor 'We actually target the kids that really need it the most and give as much support as we can' (School). Capacity to arrange and support SBTs, however, differed significantly between schools.

One of the interviewed providers predominantly delivered traineeships for young men, but several stakeholders stated that they would like to see additional SBT opportunities for boys more broadly.

To what extent has the program design supported cultural values and connection to culture?

One provider stated that they could not speak to the 'design' of the program, but strive to ensure cultural appropriateness through delivery, staffing and community engagement (Provider). Another provider interviewee emphasised the importance of cultural connection as a motivating factor for students (Provider). As an Aboriginal business they felt well equipped to provide this connection. They integrated cultural learning experiences on country with the trainee process and accessed additional funding from other sources to enable a trip interstate to learn about Aboriginal fire management practices. The former trainee who participated in an interview especially valued the opportunity to learn the local Aboriginal language through her placement at an Aboriginal child-care centre (Student).

Some stakeholders described the connection to country felt by Indigenous young people in the region. One careers advisor noted, 'We find Indigenous students have great connection to where they live' (School), and felt that completing a traineeship could increase the likelihood of obtaining employment without having to move far from country.

All employers interviewed expressed an interest in providing employment opportunities for Indigenous young people. One preschool expressed 'a really strong belief in employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on our team' to provide Indigenous role models for the children and normalise Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators working alongside one another (Employer).

Several other stakeholders emphasised the importance of Aboriginal young people acting as positive role models for other students at school and the broader community by working in local businesses. One family member that seeing 'young Aboriginal people put in trusting positions' may help to combat the 'hidden racism' in the town (Family). For the trainees themselves, a school Aboriginal Engagement Officer stated that

placements in local businesses 'gives them a sense of belonging in that wider world, and you know, it gives 'em to overcome the racism and the shame-ness, and it's just built up courage and strength for those people' (School).

What are the education and employment outcomes for students?

To what extent does the traineeship pathway work for students in gaining employment and further education after Year 12?

Several stakeholders emphasised how supports offered by the SBT providers enabled trainees to overcome challenges and complete their traineeship.

Most interviewees agreed that participating in a traineeship contributed to Year 12 completion. The former trainee did not obtain school certificate, but completed Year 12 through an alternate pathway, allowing her to complete the traineeship. A family member stated that her son 'wanted to leave school so many times' but the traineeship and vocational qualifications provided enough motivation for him to complete his school certificate. Employers also emphasised the importance of the SBT as a goal and 'something to have when they finish school' (Employer), which 'keeps them in school, even if it's a struggle' (Employer). Another family member stated that their grandson was always likely to finish Year 12, having been a 'little Einstein' earlier in school; but his interest in school had 'waned' more recently, and the traineeship had given him a greater sense of direction (Family).

Family members and employers gave several examples of trainees who had continued working for the same employer after completing their traineeship. At the pharmacy, this included progression into a higher-level Certificate III. The interviewed trainee transitioned into full-time work at the preschool where she undertook her traineeship and is now studying 'education support'. She stated that if she hadn't done the traineeship, she would probably be 'living with my parents working at a fast food shop' (Student). Another trainee had taken up an apprenticeship in another area of the farm (Family). Other examples were provided of trainees who had moved into similar employment at another business or organisation, such as another pharmacy, or the local Aboriginal Health Service: 'So outcomes are not necessarily pharmacy-based but I think they're life skills they can use in another job' (Employer). Calling upon an example of a current trainee, one Careers Advisor also highlighted the 'work readiness' developed to set participants in better stead for future employment opportunities: 'We had to do a lot of work around personal hygiene and dressing, and she wasn't work ready. But once she got into traineeship and pattern of work, her work readiness improved' (School). A mentor also emphasised the importance of ongoing connection to support outcomes beyond the traineeship: 'I'm still in contact with them and they know if they need a hand I'll come at the drop of the hat' (Provider).

What regional characteristics (and job types) contributed to the success or otherwise of the program? To what extent have outcomes differed across different regions and job type?

Several interviewees described their local area as rural/regional and low socio-economic, and some as relatively isolated. Apart from a small 'service industry, health, child care' (Provider) and 'primary industries' such as farming and fishing (School), interviewees stated that local employment opportunities are relatively limited in quantity and diversity. As a result, 'Most people have to leave town to get a job' (Employer). The relative isolation of some areas also posed challenges for trainees due to long travel distances and highly limited public transport for getting to work and/or training providers (School). One provider stated that it is important to source 'appropriate' employers because 'Some would be discriminatory in my experience, especially in some of the areas we're in' (Provider).

Several stakeholders emphasised the importance of personal connections and relationships between providers, schools, businesses and RTOs. Comparing their experience with a smaller local SBT provider to a larger national provider, one careers advisor stated 'We have had students with [larger provider] before, but found it hard because they weren't local; they don't have a presence here. As far as [local provider] go, they're here on the ground [...] they're here all the time and they do things like drive them to work, buy them clothes' (School).

Case study 3 - Northern Territory

The NT can be examined as a useful case study for remoteness outcomes, as it comprises only outer regional to very remote regions. The NT data shows benefits to remote students from the SBT program in that most of the SBT students in all regions, including very remote, have had positive outcomes. While not all complete the SBT, they do go on to further employment, training or education. The remote regions of Alice Springs and Katherine have the more negative outcomes.

Note the outcomes other than 'successful' are not treated as successes in official reporting. They are not included in the 'completed' proportions in the national VET data, and subsequently, not in our comparative NIAA calculations above. However, they are seen by the providers and communities as partial success, and a move towards self-development and positive career pathways for the students.

Figure 6: Outcomes by NT region

NT Region	Locations	Students	Outcomes	Number of outcomes	Percent of region
Outer Regional	Darwin / Palmerston	20	Successfully completed	5	25%
			Continued employment with provider	<5	10%
			Went to other Employment	<5	15%
			Went to other Education or Training	<5	15%
			Unemployed/Left Labour Force	<5	5%
			Outcome not known	<5	15%
Outer Regional	Melville Island (SEDA)	17	Successfully completed	16	94%
			Outcome not known	<5	6%
Remote	Alice Springs / Katherine	6	Continued employment with provider	<5	33%
			Went to other Education or Training	<5	17%
			Terminated by Employer/Provider	<5	17%
			Unemployed/Left Labour Force	<5	17%
			Outcome not known	<5	17%
Very Remote	Regions around Alice Springs / Arnhem / Barkly / Katherine / Nhulunbuy / Tennant Creek	<5	Went to other Employment	<5	100%

Appendix G – Mentoring benefits

Table 1: Mentoring benefits to various other stakeholders as reported by provider managers

Prov	Benefits to trainees	Benefits to families	Benefits to Employers	Benefits to Schools
A	Provides “wrap around” support to meet trainee identified challenges to completion, as well as raising trainee aspirations and transition into further education, training and employment	Provides an extra level of targeted support to support families in assisting trainees to complete	Assists with trainee workplace engagement and support	Assists schools with supporting trainee’s to manage time, work and coursework commitments
B	provides them with an advocate able to support them and work with employers to address any performance concerns or other stresses that may otherwise result in the trainee terminating their contract	our mentor worked very closely with the families to help them to see the benefits of their child undertaking the traineeship and how important their support would be.	mentors worked closely with employers both in the screening process (to ensure we had capable employers with the right approach to working with our trainees) and subsequently to assist employers in addressing any performance issues	Schools were varied in their willingness to engage. In some settings our mentor was able to work successfully with the school to try and address any issues that were impacting on performance (particularly around attendance). Other schools were less willing to engage or more importantly follow through on any issues that arose
C	Indigenous Mentors assist with facilitating the Trainees employment, they provide significant support in navigating the varying pressures associated with Trainees school/work/life balance. Their strong understanding of the importance of their cultural identity is valuable so that the trainee can grow in a supported environment. The role of the Mentor is often called on to support around	This role and relationship does vary; however, unlike our non-Indigenous Trainees our engagement with their family is much greater. Knowing that their children are well supported is very important and much of our credibility as an organisation in this area is based on the trust of families and communities over many years. Our Indigenous Mentors are at the	Indigenous Mentors facilitate cultural understanding so that the Employer is able to provide a culturally safe environment for the Trainee. The Mentor is available to provide advice and guidance to strengthen the Employer/Trainee relationship. The relationship with the Employer is really important to make sure Employers feel comfortable asking an Indigenous person’s view as to any concerns that the	The Mentor works with the school from the initial stages of recruitment. The Mentor works closely with support personnel or an Indigenous liaison (if the school has one) to ensure that the Trainee continues to progress with their studies, making sure that any issues are being managed and keeping the discussion open with appropriate staff to get a better outcome.

Prov	Benefits to trainees	Benefits to families	Benefits to Employers	Benefits to Schools
	issues that sit outside of the normal day to day employment concerns. They are often the intermediary between all of the support people and those involved in the Traineeship.	forefront of that reputation because of shared experiences and understanding.	Trainee may have. They provide a significantly improved cultural understanding for our Employers.	
D	they felt supported, guidance through the RTO and employee systems, assistance with mediation between the three, assisting with work place cultures and employer expectations, linking with additional services if required.	Family felt included, supported and provided assurances of safety	They had someone to call is issues arose so we could resolve them early and support the employer - as well as providing information around claims, and the traineeship	The school were provided with options as well as flexibility and in turn provided additional outcomes and increased attendance and increased completion of their HSC.
E	It provides skill development for both work and life. It also helps them to develop emotional skills and coping strategies. It also helps them to build their independence	It helps them develop a better understanding of the needs of their child and how they can support them during transition periods.	Assists them to understand the needs of Indigenous employees and those who are new to the work place. To reduce racism and prejudice against indigenous employers.	Provides a link to the young person where issues that are not relevant to school can be discussed and managed.
F	Additional support makes for better school and work outcomes	families are proud of the student's career steps	Can assist with school and work-related paperwork	Improvement in school attendance and school readiness
G	The SBT mentor is also the school teacher, it's a great relationship they have so the SBT is supported throughout the week, at the workplace and at school	Families see the guidance and support the SBT supervisor provides through ongoing conversation	{we are} also the employer, so we have a good relationship with the SBT supervisor, the student and the school	Our model helps the school by collaborating all information to assist with attendance, grades, communication and progress of the SBT