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# Final Report: Evaluation of the AIME Outreach Program

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# Final Report: Evaluation of the AIME Outreach Program

## **Abstract**

The AIME (Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience) Program was established in 2005 when 25 students from the University of Sydney volunteered to work with 25 Indigenous children from local high schools. Since 2005 more than 3000 mentors have been recruited to work with 3542 Indigenous school students in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. The AIME Program is based on the recruitment of university students as mentors who provide advice and personal support to Indigenous school mentees from years 7 to 12. Its overall goals are to improve retention rates of Indigenous high school students to Year 12 and to encourage the transition of Indigenous students to university.

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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND INTERDISCIPLINARY EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, UOW.

# Final Report

## Evaluation of the AIME Outreach Program

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, University of Wollongong  
8 March 2013

DISTRIBUTED TO DEEWR AND AIME

A REPORT BY the AIME Evaluation Team<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This report was prepared by the AIME Evaluation Team, which comprised:

- (i) personnel from the contracted university (University of Wollongong): A/Prof. Valerie Harwood, Dr. Sarah O'Shea, Professor Kathie Clapham, Professor Jan Wright, Dr. Lisa Kervin, Ms. Nicoli Humphry, Ms. Samantha McMahon, Mr. Michael Hogan and
- (ii) sub-contractor, Dr. Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews, from University of Western Sydney.

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*We would like to pay respect to elders past, present and future for they hold the stories and knowledges of Aboriginal Australia. We would also like to acknowledge the Dharawal and Wodi Wodi people, the Traditional Custodians of the land to which this report was constructed and pay respects to all who have been involved in the development of this project.*

### **Mount Keira acknowledgment**

The Images of Mount Keira (overlooking the university of Wollongong) were used as it holds significance of identity, knowledge and learning to the Dharawal and Wodi Wodi people.

*\*Permission to use Mount Keira image granted by Aunty Barbra Nicholson of the Dharawal Nation.*



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## Executive Summary

The AIME (Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience) Program was established in 2005 when 25 students from the University of Sydney volunteered to work with 25 Indigenous children from local high schools. Since 2005 more than 3000 mentors have been recruited to work with 3542 Indigenous school students in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. The AIME Program is based on the recruitment of university students as mentors who provide advice and personal support to Indigenous school mentees from years 7 to 12. Its overall goals are to improve retention rates of Indigenous high school students to Year 12 and to encourage the transition of Indigenous students to university.

AIME has a multi-pronged approach to retaining students within the school system and encouraging transition to university. The 'Core Program' which has operated since 2005 involved Interaction with the mentees in three ways: through AIME Learning Centres where school students from all grades attend after school sessions designed to provide support in relation to schoolwork and afternoon activities; via Tutor Squads where mentors visit schools; and via on-campus programs at universities.

Internal monitoring conducted by AIME over the first five years suggested that the Program was having a positive impact on both school completion rates and university admissions. In 2011 the high school completion rate for AIME students was 88%, 36% of whom gained entry to university in 2011 (AIME 2011 Annual Report). Subsequently, in 2012, in an attempt to extend the program's reach, AIME initiated the AIME outreach program (AOP). The AOP varied from the previous form of Program delivery: it was based on groups of students being mentored for three separate day-long sessions over three school terms rather than the weekly mentoring sessions offered over two school terms in the Core Program. This change in program delivery has enabled AIME to increase its reach to Indigenous students beyond the '30 minute drive radius' catchment area of the Core Program.

In October 2012 the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience Indigenous Corporation (AIME) and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) commissioned the University of Wollongong (UOW) to evaluate the 2012 AIME Outreach Program. The UOW team, in collaboration with University of Western Sydney, undertook an evaluation of the AOP. The overall aim of the evaluation was to identify what it would take to replicate and expand the Outreach program across other university sites nationally.

The evaluation was required to answer the following six questions:

1. What are the achievements and impacts of the Core Program?
2. What are the outcomes for participants (mentees) in the AIME Outreach Program?
3. Have the objectives of the Outreach Program been achieved?
4. What is the capacity of the Outreach Program as an outreach educational mentoring initiative for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people?
5. What are current operational Outreach Program costs and what are the projected costs for expansion?
6. How can the Outreach Program be expanded?

The evaluation focuses on the AOP, providing an insight into its objectives, impact and replicability.

## Methodology

The evaluation utilises a mixed-method design involving the collection of qualitative and quantitative data and incorporating: observation of program delivery; interviews with program facilitators, mentors and mentees; review of AIME documentation and the design and conduct of a quantitative survey of mentees.

The six evaluation questions guided the evaluation process and provided the structure for this final report. This Final Report has been prepared in compliance with the pursuant research agreement between AIME and UOW. The Report has four main functions, it: demonstrates that the Evaluation Team has undertaken the proposed research; describes the research findings; explores AIME mentees and their experiences through a number of case studies (provided in Appendix B); and provides recommendations regarding the expansion of the Outreach program.

### *Survey methods*

The nature of the quantitative AIME report was to identify the potential impact the AIME Core and Outreach programs may have over the schooling aspirations, engagement, and identity of participating mentees. In devising the analytical strategies to be utilised, care was taken to commit to a proactive and culturally sensitive research lens, ensuring that previously maligned deficit orientations that have plagued Indigenous education research were not repeated (Mellor & Corrigan 2004). Consequently, research aims were directed at capturing the positive experiences of the mentees within AIME, and how such experiences may be associated with more desirable educational and life outcomes.

Across the measures capturing themes relating to experiences within AIME, school and post-school aspirations, achievement, school engagement, and a sense of self and identity, a series of analytical techniques were utilised to answer questions:

- i. What is the nature of the responses to the measures for Core and Outreach mentees;
- ii. Do the measures hold a variety of strong validity estimates;
- iii. Are there any significant differences between the Core and Outreach mentee responses across all the measures;
- iv. Are the mentee experiences of the AIME Core and Outreach programs positively associated with the schooling and identity outcome measures; and
- v. For the significant associations identified, are they independent of a variety of mentee background measures (e.g., socio-economic status).

A complete quantitative report of the survey findings is provided in Appendix A.



## Summary of Findings

Overall the results of the evaluation indicate that the AIME Outreach Program is achieving positive results for participants (mentees) that are comparable with the Core Program. AIME works successfully in a complex environment to make a difference in education and other associated outcomes for the Indigenous young people engaged in the AIME Program.

Based on the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data collected to answer the evaluation questions, the five key findings of the evaluation are summarised below:

1. *In its first year of operation, the AOP reached its objective of encouraging better school grade progression rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, compared with the national average.*
2. *The achievements and impacts of the AOP are comparable to those of the AIME Core Program, as measured by school progression rates, school completion rates and the AIME evaluation survey results. Outcomes from both programs are better than the national average.*
3. *On the basis of findings from both the qualitative and quantitative data, the AOP was assessed as having a positive impact on mentees. AIME positively impacted:*
  - i. The strength and resilience of mentees;
  - ii. Mentee pride in being Indigenous;
  - iii. Mentees making strong connections with Indigenous peers, role models and culture;
  - iv. Aspirations and engagement for finishing school;
  - v. Aspirations for continuing to further study;
  - vi. School retention rates.
4. *While the Core program has benefits such as the development of mentor-mentee relationships over a longer time period, the AOP can access a wider group of school student and fits well with school scheduling.*
5. *On the basis of AIME financial modelling on cost per mentee, the AOP costs are comparable to the Core program.*

## Survey Results

Overall, the results of the survey attested to the efficacy and effectiveness of both the Core and Outreach programs, as:

- i. The mean responses to the AIME questionnaire were exceptionally positive across both the Core and Outreach programs;
- ii. Where possible, strong validity estimates were identified, suggesting that the items were measuring what they were designed to measure;

- iii. No significant differences between the Core and Outreach groups could be identified across any of the measures;
- iv. A large number of positive and significant associations were identified (51 in total) between the AIME mentee experiences and the schooling and identity outcomes for both the Core and Outreach groups; and
- v. Of the 51 positive associations, 46 remained significant after controlling for student background variables.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The recommendations are summarised below:

1. *Develop a clear strategy for AOP expansion.* This strategy will need to address the following:
  - i. Take account of lessons learnt to date, including findings from the AOP Evaluation.
  - ii. Design a clear rationale for expansion to particular regions based on knowledge of the needs and circumstances of particular communities.
  - iii. Be contextually and geographically relevant with particular reference to the recruitment of AIME Facilitators from the local area.
  - iv. Consult with local communities and create opportunities for Program Managers to build relationships with community members.
  - v. The need to balance a quick response with careful planning and consultation with communities and key stakeholders.
  - vi. Explore and expand on the mentees' capacity to 'market' the AOP via communication with family and friends about their participation.
  - vii. Include scope for capacity building of Indigenous staff. This will require an AOP costing model that factors in the training, development and support of Indigenous staff.
  
2. *Continue to train, develop and support AIME staff ensuring that all training requirements are met prior to the program expansion, and that training and development is consistent across programs.* This needs to:
  - i. Establish mechanisms for the AOP at the organisational level to ensure support for Program Managers and for ensuring ongoing knowledge of site to site differences between universities and between main and satellite campuses and how these impact sessions.

In short, the evidence strongly suggests that the AIME program is effective in strengthening and solidifying both the Core and Outreach mentees' school and post-school aspirations, sense of engagement, and sense of identity. This firmly places this report, and more importantly AIME itself, as a proactive agent of strength much needed in Indigenous education research.

- ii. Provide mechanisms for the training, development and ongoing support of AIME staff at AOP sites that is sensitive to the needs imposed by geographic distance and potential isolation (including cultural and collegial).
  - iii. Provide a culturally safe working environment for AIME staff and implement planning to support such an environment at AOP sites.
- 3. *Continue to train and develop AIME volunteer mentors (university students) and that training is consistent across sites.* This needs to:
  - i. Recognise the specific skill sets required by mentors for delivering the AOP (i.e. group based interaction as opposed to 1:1 mentoring). AOP Mentor training will need to reflect these differences.
  - ii. Identify and draw on the full range of mentor expertise and proficiencies.
  - iii. Consider replicating the ‘rehearsal’ approach of training Program Managers and National Presenters with the mentors, to ensure consistency of the mentoring experience for mentees, across AOP sites.
- 4. *Make changes to curriculum and program delivery that:*
  - i. Provide AOP specific instructions on the sequencing of the sessions with the option of a catch-up session delivered online for mentees unable to attend.
  - ii. Revise the structure and pedagogy of session delivery to better consider the day-long sessions as opposed to weekly one-hour sessions.
  - iii. Consider content on the need to ‘negotiate change’ to better balance the emphasis on ‘goal setting’.
  - iv. Schedule of the AOP to take into account school commitments such as state school examinations.
  - v. Explore and assess the feasibility for delivering ‘more’ outreach days per year. In 2013 AIME has instituted a four-day Outreach Model. It will be of benefit to assess the impact and efficacy of the increase in sessions.
  - vi. Evaluate the ways in which technologies and social media might be incorporated.
- 5. *Conduct ongoing research and evaluation that continues to critically engage with the program and which is conducted independently.*



# INTRODUCTION

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 An overview of AIME and the Outreach program

AIME provides a dynamic educational program that gives Indigenous high school students the skills, opportunities, belief and confidence to finish school at the same rate as their peers. AIME has proven to dramatically improve the chances of Indigenous kids finishing school. AIME also connects students with post Year 12 opportunities, including further education and employment.

(AIME 2012)

The above quote describe the AIME program and provide evidence of successful outcomes since 2005. However, evidence to date mostly relates to the Core program. This study was commissioned as the first to consider the effectiveness and replicability of the AOP, which was introduced to AIME's suite of programs in 2012.

The AOP is designed to deliver successful elements of the Core program to Indigenous high school students further afield (that is, beyond the '30-minute drive radius' catchment area of the Core program). To address issues of geography and travel times, elements of the weekly, Core program are condensed into an Outreach program comprising three, day-long sessions.

The two programs use the same set of curriculum resources and apply the same pedagogical techniques with mentees. Curriculum resources are slightly modified to fit the scaled down AOP (9 sessions in Outreach compared to 15 sessions in the Core). Pedagogical techniques that are the same include the modes of delivery (e.g. use of audio-visual content and stylised AIME sessions), 'role modeling' by AIME facilitators, and connections and inclusion of local Elders and community. Differences are with program design and format. The Core program runs for fifteen sessions over two school terms, for one hour per week. The AOP runs for 9 sessions over three days that are spread out across three school terms.

As the first study to consider the effectiveness and replicability of the new AOP, the purpose of this evaluation was twofold. Firstly, the researchers evaluated the AIME AOP against its objectives and measured its achievements and impacts. For the purpose of this report these are defined as:

*Achievements* are successes of the AOP that contribute to AOP aims and objectives.

*Impacts* are tangible outcomes on the mentee participants (these may be observed by others or described by the mentees).

Secondly, the researchers investigated issues of replication and expansion to make recommendations regarding 'what it will take' to successfully grow the program to

operational status nation-wide. To achieve this, the Evaluation Team worked with AIME staff, mentors and mentees as well as an Indigenous research consultant at the University of Wollongong to investigate six research questions:

- Question 1. What are the achievements and impacts of the Core program?
- Question 2. What is the capacity of the AOP as an outreach educational mentoring initiative for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young peoples?
- Question 3. Have the objectives of AOP been achieved?
- Question 4. What are the achievements and impacts of the AOP?
- Question 5. What are current operational AOP costs and what are the projected costs for expansion?
- Question 6. How can the AOP be expanded?

These questions have been reworded and reordered to improve the analysis and reporting of the evaluation data (original research question order and wording at Appendix D).

## 1.2 Methodology

The research takes a participatory action research approach that considers culturally appropriate methods of design, data collection and data analysis. This approach is regarded as being a theoretical framework that is culturally sensitive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' perspectives and worldviews (Jordan, Stocck & Mark 2010). The research evaluation is conducted by a team of university researchers from UOW and UWS.

Indigenous researchers have been, and continue to be, central to the development and implementation of the study. The chief investigators include two Indigenous academics from the ARC funded special initiative National Indigenous Research and Knowledges Network (NIRAKN). Professor Kathleen Clapham (Professor, Indigenous Health) has been involved in pre-fieldwork planning for the qualitative work and post fieldwork analysis. This has included co-authoring the focus group and interview questions and being present at meetings of the qualitative research team to mentor them and foster culturally appropriate research practices. Dr. Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews designed and led the quantitative enquiry and has both sourced and developed culturally sensitive survey instruments for use in this project. An Indigenous undergraduate student, Michael Hogan, was also employed to assist in the coding of the qualitative data.

In this respect, throughout the project the research team has worked with Indigenous researchers alongside the AIME team to identify issues and areas of investigation. The phased nature of this evaluation combined with regular reporting facilitated ongoing collaboration, and opportunities to share different kinds of knowledge.

## 1.2.1 Method

The evaluation used mixed-methods and is led by team members with expertise in qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Analysis drew on the expertise of the evaluation team and included joint data analysis, team consultation and three evaluation review meetings at UOW.

### Research sites

Data collection for the evaluation was carried out across seven sites. Interview and observational data was collected during visits to six universities on the third and final day of the 2012 AOP. The university sites visited by the evaluation team spanned three Australian states: Victoria (Monash, RMIT), New South Wales (University of Sydney, University of Wollongong, University of Technology Sydney) and Queensland (University of Sunshine Coast). The seventh research site was the AIME office in Sydney, where AIME documentation was collected. Telephone interviewees and survey respondents participated outside of AIME program time at a time and location of their choosing.

### Interviews

One hundred and eight (n = 108) people participated in individual, paired or small group interviews for this evaluation. The 108 participants included 87 mentees, 10 mentors, 5 AIME staff members, and 7 additional interviews with teachers, social workers and industry partners. All interviews took place either on the third and final day of the 2012 AOP (at various university sites) or via telephone.

Table 1.1 Number of mentees and mentors interviewed per site

Site	Mentees	Mentors
Monash	12	1
RMIT	5	2
Sydney University	11	2
University of Wollongong	27	1
University of Sunshine Coast	10	-
UTS	22	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>10</b>

### Observations

In-depth observations of the third and final day of the AIME Outreach program were undertaken. Additionally, Sam McMahon, the project manager for the evaluation conducted observations of pedagogy focused on three scholastic year levels and sites (Year 9, Sunshine Coast; Year 10, Wollongong; Year 11/12, UTS, East Sydney). This observation process was framed by Setting Theory. Setting Theory was originally part of a broader theory of 'Ecological Psychology', however, teacher educators (Cambourne & Kiggins 2004) have adapted Setting Theory to better understand observations of classroom pedagogy. Using this framework the observation notes focused on: participants (notes describing the people in the classroom); space and place (notes describing the physical spaces of the research and related

paraphernalia and resources); teaching episodes (notes sequencing, labelling and describing in detail each teaching episode); and informal conversations and interviews (which recorded incidental conversations with the facilitators, mentors and mentees not captured in formal, audio-recorded interviews).

Each member of the research team who engaged in fieldwork recorded incidental observations from their attendance at the six sites of the AOP agreed to in the research proposal (Sunshine Coast, Wollongong, East Sydney, Sydney City, Melbourne North, South-East Melbourne).

Both the formal, setting theory data and the incidental field work observations were transcribed into word documents and included for analysis in the QSR NVivo™ dataset.

## Document review

Curriculum documents, Internal AIME Evaluation Forms, AIME mentee progression data and a costing report have been reviewed and are considered in the findings of this Final Report.

### *Curriculum documents*

An interpretive analysis was conducted on a range of documents produced by the AIME organisation. These documents included: curriculum documents, resources, session overviews, and reflections. Each document was systematically and critically examined to gain insight into the AIME program; specifically instructional needs, challenges and activities. (See Table 1.2)

*Table 1.2 Curriculum documents reviewed*

<b>Document</b>	<b>Brief description</b>	<b>Assigned code</b>
Curriculum documentation for outreach	An overview of outreach session timings, curriculum materials and documents, and overview of mentor training	CDO
AIME session - "Respect"	Mentor notes outlining the session focused on "respect"	S-Res
AIME session – "Racism"	Mentor notes outlining the running order for session focused on "racism"	S-Rac
AIME session – "Prime Minister 1"	Mentor notes outlining the running order for session focused on "Prime Minister 1"	S-PM1
AIME session – "Prime Minister 2"	Mentor notes outlining the running order for session focused on "Prime Minister 2"	S-PM2
Leadership and Development: Session guides (7, 8 and 9)	Internal documentation for session 7 "your passport to the world", session 8 "365 days", and session 9 "the next steps"	LDSG-7 LDSG-8 LDSC-9
Year 9 Interactive Textbook	Textbook for mentees 2012	IT-9
Year 10 Interactive Textbook	Textbook for mentees 2012	IT-10



### *Progression and costing documentation*

The researchers read the documentation provided by AIME and reviews with AIME staff and provided a summary report on this data.

### *Internal AIME evaluation forms*

AIME provided the research team with all feedback forms for the AOP in 2012, across all sites. To allow consideration of the impact of the AOP on mentees, document analysis focused primarily on data where a mentee had completed both a pre- and post- Outreach program feedback form. These forms were subjected to qualitative analysis, where the mentees' comments were coded against themes emergent from the wider data set.

## **Survey**

A comprehensive set of self-report measures, capturing the voices of AIME mentees, were utilised for this investigation (see Appendix G). The measures were designed and selected in careful consultation with AIME's Relationship Manager (Reporting and Research), and were ultimately derived from a mixture of prior research reporting positive quantitative findings in Aboriginal education (e.g., Bodkin-Andrews, Dillon, & Craven 2010), and questions specifically tailored from earlier qualitative findings emerging from the voice of AIME mentors and mentees.

The survey instrument was approved by the UOW Human Research Ethics Committee (ethics approval HE12/433). In total 610 surveys were posted to potential mentee participants on Monday 17 December 2012. Amendments to survey methodology to maximise response rates are detailed at Appendix E.

The nature of the measures included direct reports on varying demographic variables, perceptions of the AIME program, and a series of established multi-item variables designed to capture self-reports of self-esteem, academic confidence, identity, and engagement to school. The survey was administered to all mentees participating in the study (see design and procedures below). Following is a brief description of each instrument's purpose and subscales, is provided along with specific item examples.

### *Demographic variables*

Key demographic variables to be assessed include gender, Year, level of parental education (high school and university), and home educational resources (e.g., a desk to study on).

### *AIME variables*

In careful consultation with AIME's Relationship Manager, a total of 10 questions were formulated (see Appendix G, Section 4) to capture mentees' perceptions of their experiences in the AIME program. The measures centred on overarching feeling about AIME (e.g., Overall, what has your experience with AIME been like?), whether AIME has influenced mentees' understanding of culture (e.g., AIME has helped me understand more about my Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander culture), educational skills (e.g., AIME has shown me how to study better for school), and aspirations (e.g., AIME has shown me how valuable University can be).

### *Multi-item self-perceptions variables*

Academic Self-concept and General Self-Esteem Scales (Marsh et al. 2005): Two factors drawn from the larger Self-Description Questionnaire II- Short Version, and designed to capture students' positive feelings about themselves (I have a lot to be proud of) and confidence within school (I am good at most school subjects). Answers ranged from False (1) to True (6).

School Enjoyment Scale (Craven, et al.,2005): A five item measure designed to measure the degree to which students enjoy being at school (e.g., I like school). Answers ranged from False (1) to True (6).

Cultural Safety Scale (Craven et al., nd): A four item measure assessing the extent to which Aboriginal students feel confident about their culture within the schooling and classroom environment (e.g., I feel comfortable with being Aboriginal in school). Answers ranged from False (1) to True (6).

Aboriginal Pride and Respect for Elders (Bodkin-Andrews et al., nd): Two factors drawn from the larger Aboriginal Identity Measure designed to measure the degree of positive affective attachment Aboriginal students feel towards their culture (e.g., Being Aboriginal gives me strength), and the respect for their Elders (e.g., I have respect for the teachings passed onto me by Aboriginal Elders). Answers ranged from False (1) to True (6).

Perceived Instrumentality (Miller, et al. 1999): A five item measure designed to capture the extent to which school is important for students' long term future goals (e.g., I do the work in school because learning the material is important for obtaining my future dreams). Answers ranged from False (1) to True (6).

Academic dissociation (Bodkin-Andrews nd): A four item measure examining the degree to which students may be disengaging from the school (e.g., I think school is of no value to me). Answers ranged from False (1) to True (6).

Academic Buoyancy (Parker & Martin 2009): A four item measure of academic resiliency framed within a positive psychology reference, where students express an ability to overcome everyday hassles (e.g., "I don't let study stress get on top of me"). Answers ranged from False (1) to True (6).

### *Key school outcome variables*

A series of single item measures were utilised to capture attendance (i.e., How often do you attend school), aspirations (i.e., When would you like to leave school), and achievement (e.g., In 2012, what do you think your final grade was for English?)

## 1.2.2 Data analysis procedures

### Analysis of qualitative data

The qualitative data was transcribed and uploaded to QSR NVivo™ software for analysis. To allow thematic and text coding searches by parameters such as site, gender, scholastic year, interviewee type each transcript was assigned attributes accordingly (see Appendix F for an outline of attributes assigned).

To ensure rigorous inductive coding, the qualitative data was independently read and themed by each research team member then discussed at data meetings. At these data meetings Professor Kathie Clapham, who has extensive experience analysing qualitative data, was present as an Indigenous consultant to ensure our interpretations were culturally sensitive and appropriate.

These data meetings served as a space for the research team to share their overall impressions of the data and to highlight and agree upon important foci and emerging themes for closer analysis. This process of discussion for consensus amongst the research team tempered the dangers of subjectivity and bias of a single researcher in analysing and reporting on the dataset. Moreover, the reported findings were distributed to the entire research team and a meeting held to discuss, contest and edit its content, to ensure the findings faithfully represented the discussions at the data meetings.

### Analysis of quantitative data

A variety of statistical techniques were utilised to glean the most information from the data available. This included not only simple frequency and descriptive (e.g., Means) analyses of the data to give a general overview of mentees responses to the data, but also more advanced inferential statistics to aid in increasing confidence in the validity of the variables (where possible), to identify significant relationships between variables, and identify important group differences. Following is a description of the more advanced statistical procedures:

**Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA):** A series of one-factor, or multifactor CFAs were conducted to validate each multi-item measure's factor structure and relations across differing factors (see Bodkin-Andrews, Ha, Craven, & Yeung 2010 for a more detailed description). These models will be assessed according to the goodness-of-fit criteria of the Comparative Fit Index (estimates must be above .90) the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (estimates must be below .08), and also factors loadings where the estimates must be significant and above .30 (Hills 2005). In short, CFA allow researchers to be confident that the measures accurately reflect the overarching factor representing the combination of items (Byrne 2012).

**Multiple Indicator Multiple Cause Modelling (MIMIC):** MIMIC is considered a stronger statistical technique than traditional multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and multiple regression techniques as it simultaneously estimates the underlying factor structure of the instrument (whether it be discreet and/or continuous variables) in addition to determining

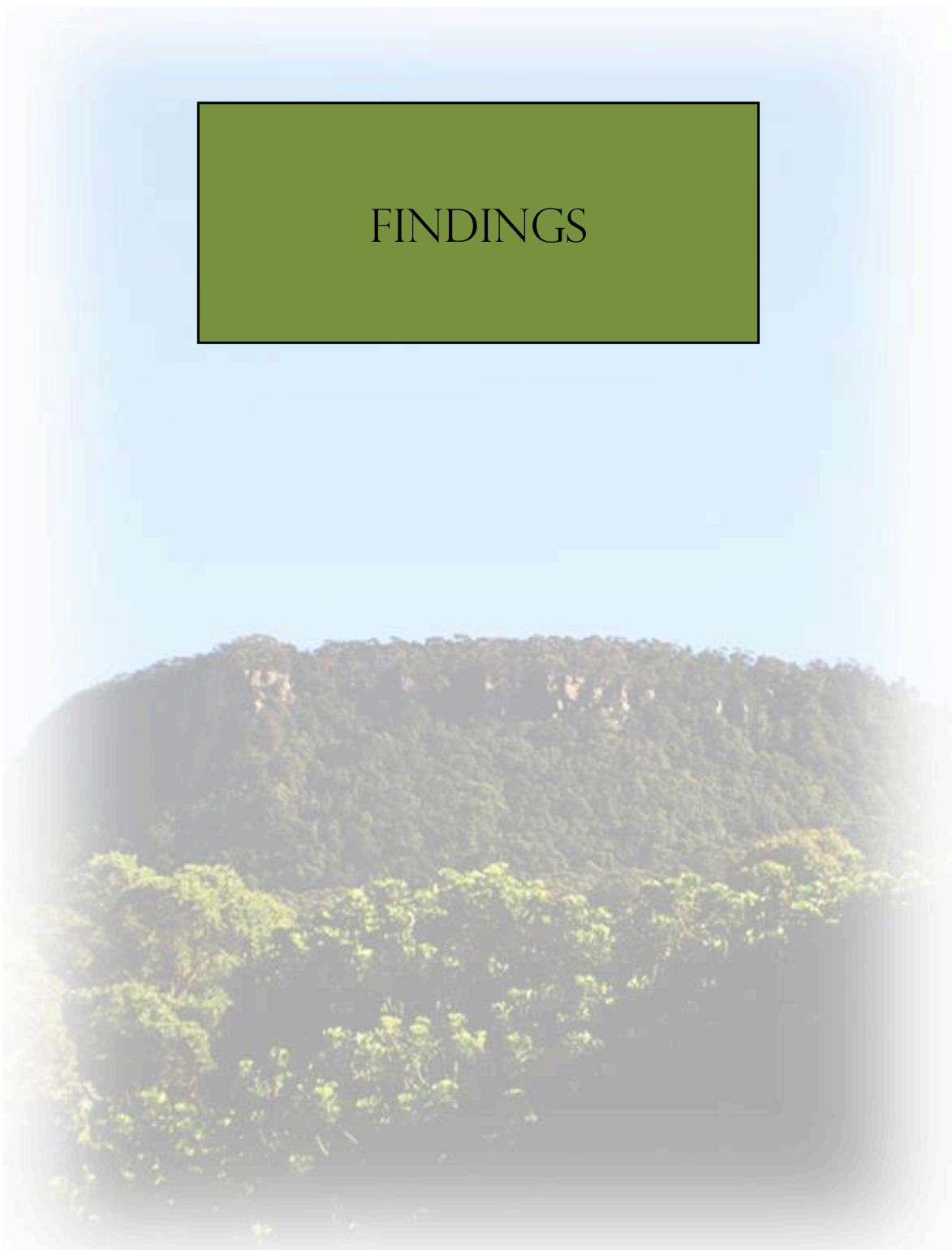
the extent to which multiple observed or grouping variables (e.g., Core & Outreach, male & female) may cause the multiple factors (e.g., school enjoyment), and even the extent to which multiple grouping variables may interact with a latent factor (Marsh et al. 2005).

Correlational and Multiple Regression Analyses: Correlational multiple regression analyses were run to determine the extent to which each of the 10 AIME questions is not only related to the measures of schooling outcomes (e.g., absenteeism, aspirations, achievement) and the engagement and identity measures (e.g., school enjoyment, instrumentality, Aboriginal pride), but also whether such relations exist over-and-above the effects of the demographic variables (home education resources, parental education, school socio-economic index).

For this Final Report the quantitative results are reported separately, at Appendix B and they are also integrated throughout the report document (especially in Section 2).



# FINDINGS



## 2 Findings and discussion

The findings of the evaluation are presented in this Final Report as responses to the research questions from the research proposal. These responses are informed by interviews with 108 participants, review of 8 curriculum documents, field notes and 91 survey responses.

Overall the AOP compares favourably to the Core program in a number of aspects. We noted differing opinions about aspects of the Core and Outreach programs and have represented these comments in table format in Appendix C.

Within the preliminary quantitative analyses of the AIME program (both Core and Outreach), a series of promising results have emerged suggesting that not only do the AIME mentees think positively about themselves, their school, their futures, and their culture, but they also respond exceptionally positively to questions about the AIME program itself. That no differences were identified across the Core and Outreach mentees at least offers some limited evidence that both programs may be similarly effective in increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' engagement to school, their future, and their culture (for full statistical report refer to Appendix A).

“The kids seem to be a lot more engaged for the whole day more so than say maybe the Core students who, for the hour, after a few weeks it becomes habitual in a sense – they know the processes and sometimes it takes a while for them to switch on because the first 10-15 minutes they’re seeing people from last week from other schools but with the Outreach... From the Outreach, from my experience anyway, they’re kind of eager to get stuck into it straight away and respond pretty well to the sessions”  
(AIME Facilitator)

### 2.1 What are the achievements and impacts of the Core program? (Question 1)

One of the measures of the impact of the AIME program is whether it increases school grade progression rates for its mentees. In 2012 the AIME's Core program boasted 804 mentees in attendance, of these 423 mentees had progression rates reported. Progression is movement up to the next scholastic grade. AIME tracks a mentee's progression if their attendance at AIME programs throughout the year meets certain criteria. To be included in reporting for 2012 a mentee must have attended one of the following:

- at least 50% (7 sessions) of the Year 9 or 10 Core Program
- one of the Year 9-12 Outreach days
- one of the Year 11 & 12 Leadership and Development Days

- and/or at least four AIME Learning Centre or Tutor Squad sessions
  - AIME now records the Year 11 and 12 completion rates and university admission rates for all sites as we now have a targeted Program for these year levels.
- (National Report for AIME 2012 Annual Report)

The progression rates of AIME mentees are expressed as percentages of the ‘counted in reporting’ at Table 2.1

Table 2.1 The AIME Core program - 2012 progression data

	<b>Participated once</b>	<b>Counted in Reporting</b>	<b>Progressed</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Year 9 – 10 Core progression	211	141	139	98.6%
Year 10 – 11 Core progression	193	105	104	99.0%
Year 11 – 12 Core progression	125	115	98	85.2%
Year 12 Core completion	64	62	57	91.9%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>398</b>	

Note: AIME did not measure Year 7 and 8 completion rates as the structured Program begins in Year 9.

Compared to the national averages (cited from the *National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training*, 2008) presented in their 2011 Annual Report (AIME 2012a, p.8), the program’s performance is strong by this indicator. AIME 2012 Core students exceeded national progression rates of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Year 10, and Year 11 students; the progression rate of Year 9 students outweighs the national rate for Indigenous students and is very close to the national rate of Non-Indigenous students.

Of the 57 Year 12 students counted in 2012 reporting in the AIME Core program, 19 (or 33%) transitioned to university studies in 2013.

Table 2.2 AIME Core mentees progression rates compared to national averages

	<b>National Outcome Non-Indigenous Students (%)</b>	<b>National Outcome Indigenous Students (%)</b>	<b>AIME 2012 Core Students (%)</b>
Year 9 – 10 progression	99.4	91.5	98.6
Year 10 – 11 progression	90.2	74.0	99.0
Year 11 – 12 progression	84.6	66.7	85.2
Year 12 completion	99.2	71.8	91.9

Further to the AIME mentee progression data, the survey data reports on the achievement and impact of the Core and Outreach program across the key themes: aspirations, engagement and identity. This section reports on these themes for the Core program.

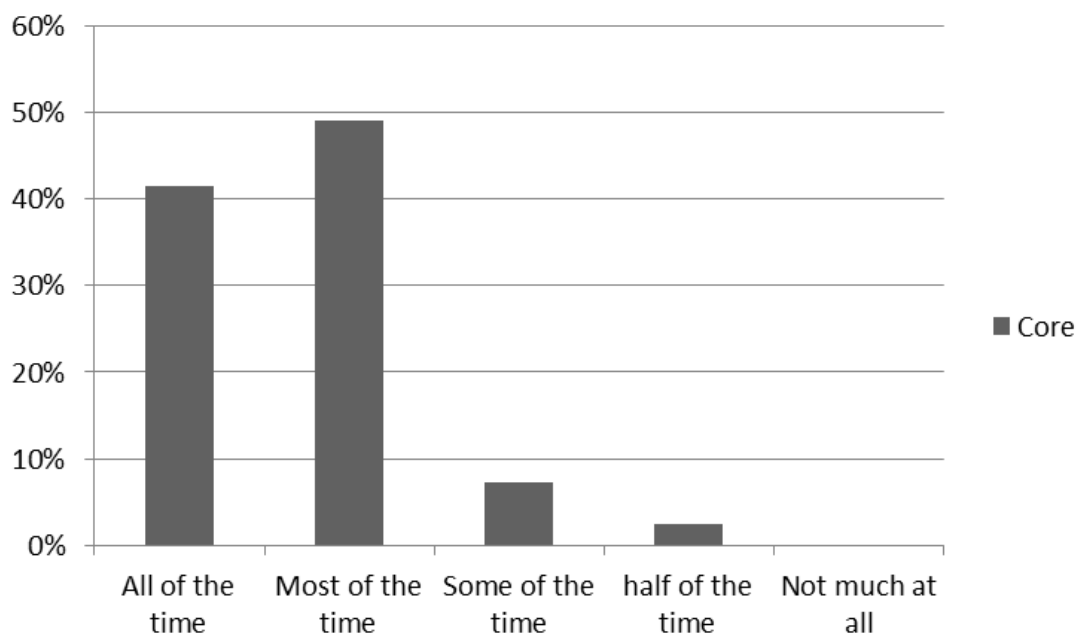
### 2.1.1 Aspirations of mentees in the Core program

The achievements and impacts of the Core program were measured through self-reports of proximal and more distant aspirations; namely, attendance at school, aspirations to complete Year 12 and post-school aspirations.

#### Absenteeism at school

In the Core program 42% said they were at school all of the time and 49% said they attended school most of the time (i.e. they only have days off when they are sick). This suggested that 91% of the AIME mentees show strong levels of attendance at school.

Figure 2.1 Self-reported absenteeism for Core mentees

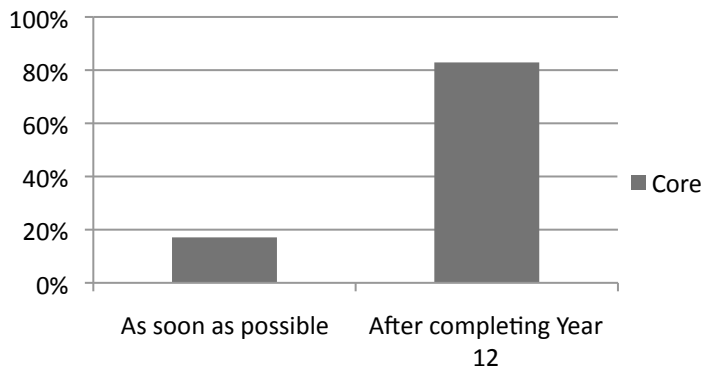


#### Aspirations to finish Year 12

With regards to wanting to complete Year 12, for the Core mentees, 83% said they wanted to finish Year 12, as opposed to 17% who said they wanted to leave school as soon as possible.



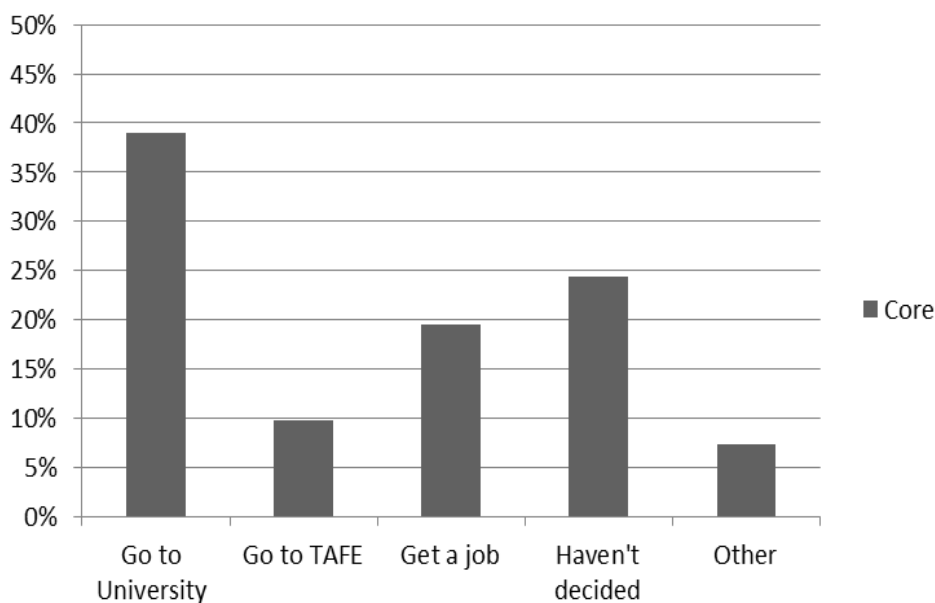
Figure 2.2 Aspirations regarding when to leave school



### Post school aspirations

For the Core mentees 39% aspired to go to university directly after school, 10% to go to TAFE and 20% wanted to get a job directly after school. Overall, this indicates that 69% of Core mentees had clear post-school aspirations.

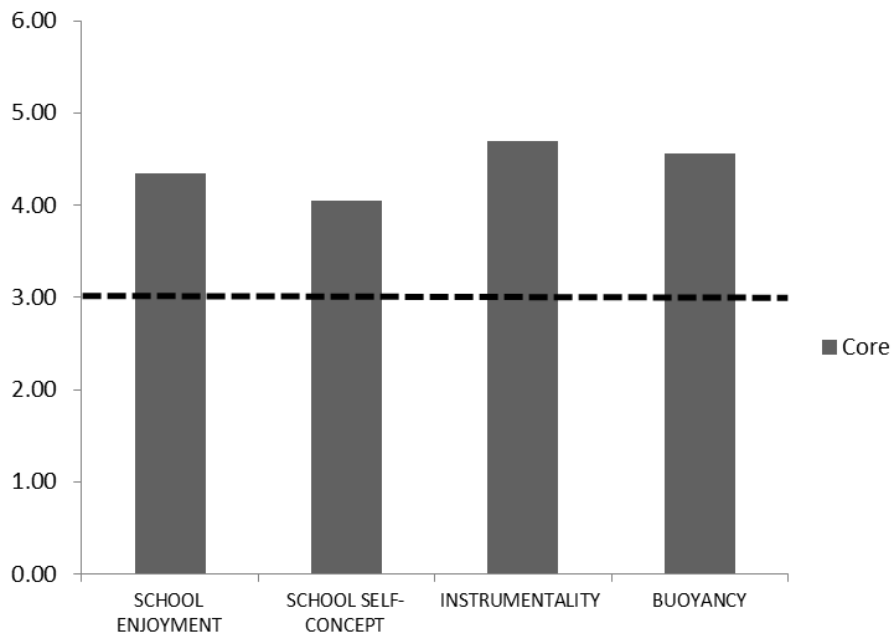
Figure 2.3 Post school aspirations of Core mentees



### 2.1.2 Engagement of mentees in the Core program

Engagement was captured by four positive measures encapsulating enjoyment of school (enjoyment), confidence at school (school self-concept), whether school is important for their future goals (instrumentality), and finally resiliency (buoyancy). As can be seen from Figure 2.4, across all engagement measures, the Core mentees responded exceptionally positively to the questions, suggesting that they are highly engaged with school learning.

Figure 2.4 Mean scores for school engagement outcome

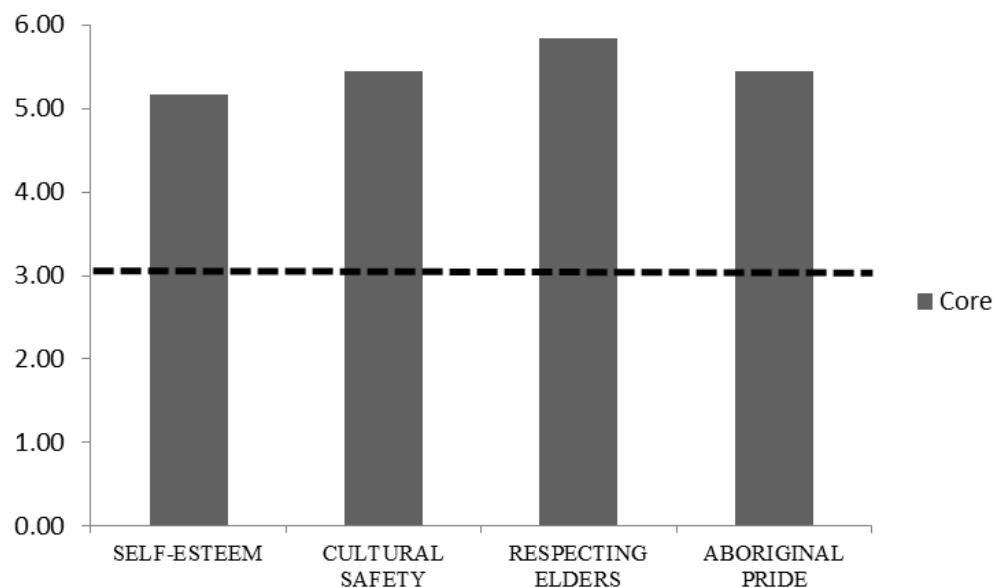


Note to figure – The dotted line indicates the division between positive and negative mean responses.

### 2.1.3 Identity measures of mentees in the Core program

Varying aspects of identity were captured ranging from general self-perceptions to more culturally specific measures, particularly focusing on a positive sense of Aboriginal identity. More specifically, the factors measured were general self-esteem (self-esteem), respecting Aboriginal Elders (respecting Elders), feeling safe about being Aboriginal in school (cultural safety), and finally having an overall sense of pride in being Aboriginal (Aboriginal pride).

Figure 2.5 Mean scores for identity outcomes for Core mentees

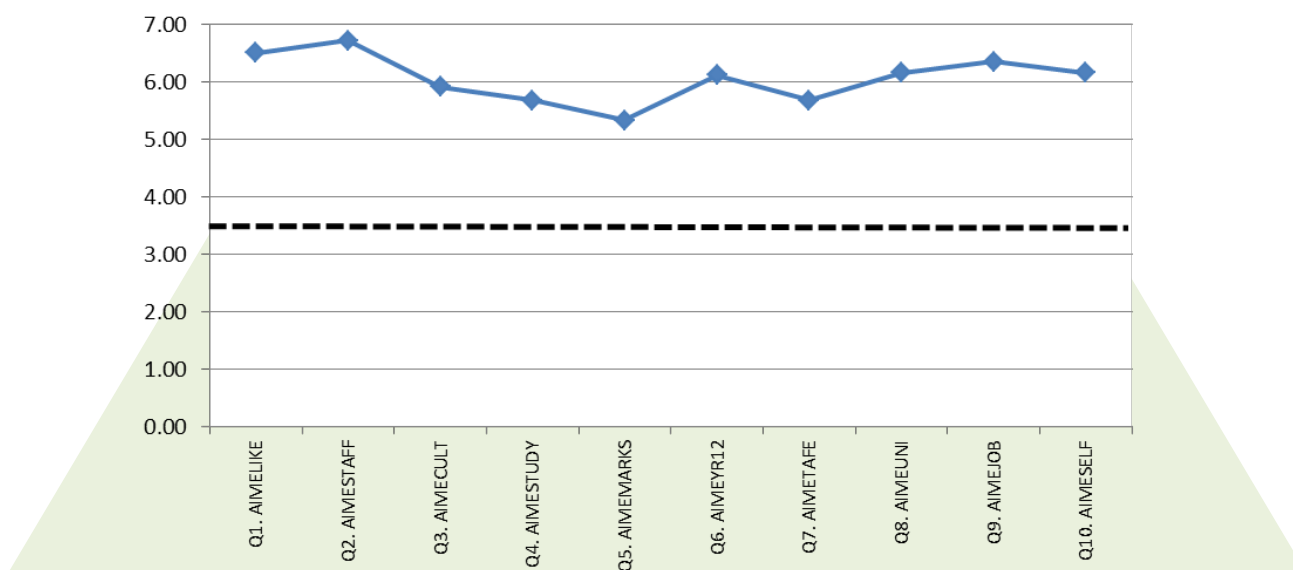


Especially for the engagement and identity measures, these findings suggest that the mentees participating in the Core program are highly engaged, not only with their school but their sense of culture. Such findings are critical. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers have long called for stronger links to be made between Indigenous students' sense of identity and their schooling experiences (Sarra 2011; MCEETYA 2006).

Although these findings suggest that overall the Core mentees hold positive aspirations and strong sense of school engagement and identity, the question as to whether these results are maybe due to the AIME program are not yet answered. However, this question can be answered by examining the Core mentees' perceptions of the AIME program and associating these perceptions with aspirations, engagement and identity outcomes. At the outset, it is important to understand the Core mentees responses to the AIME specific questions.

Figure 2.6 demonstrates the results for ten key AIME questions, which capture themes such as: liking the AIME program, getting along with AIME staff/mentors, how AIME assists their understanding of being Aboriginal (see Section 4 of Appendix G for all ten questions).

Figure 2.6 Mean scores for 10 AIME specific questions across the Core respondents



Note to figure: dotted line indicates the division between positive and negative mean responses.

As can be seen all Core mentee responses were exceptionally positive, demonstrating that they place a high value on their experiences with AIME. Table 2.3 represents what 10 key questions were significantly associated with the aspiration, engagement and identity outcomes **over and above the effects of** various demographic variables (i.e. gender, age, parental education, home educational resources and school socio-economic status). This suggests that these significant associations cannot be explained away by demographic factors that often feature in deficit discourses (e.g. blaming parent education levels for low levels of student aspirations).

The results in Table 2.3 reveal that the vast majority of questions assessing mentee perceptions about the AIME Core program are significantly associated with aspirational, engagement and identity outcomes in some manner. What is imperative about these findings is that every significant effect identified was not only positive but substantial. What this suggests is that as mentees held positive perceptions about the AIME program, the more likely they would hold positive aspirations, a strong sense of school engagement and identity. In short, these results suggest that the Core AIME program is making a real difference for the mentees.

Table 2.3 Significant predictions from AIME variables to Core outcomes, independent of demographic variables

<b>ASPIRATIONAL OUTCOMES</b>		
<b>AIME Predictor</b>	<b>Outcome Variable</b>	<b>Significant <math>\beta</math></b>
Q6-AIMEYR12	Year 12	.32
Q9-AIMEJOB	Post School	.32
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>		
<b>AIME Predictor</b>	<b>Outcome Variable</b>	<b>Significant <math>\beta</math></b>
Q1-AIMELIKE	Buoyancy	.30
Q2-AIMESTAFF	School Self-concept	.36
Q2-AIMESTAFF	Buoyancy	.49
Q5-AIMEMARKS	School Enjoyment	.29
Q5-AIMEMARKS	Instrumentality	.31
<b>IDENTITY</b>		
<b>AIME Predictor</b>	<b>Outcome Variable</b>	<b>Significant <math>\beta</math></b>
Q1-AIMELIKE	Self-esteem	.41
Q2-AIMESTAFF	Self-esteem	.45
Q7-AIMETAFF	Self-esteem	.47
Q8-AIMEUNI	Self-esteem	.42
Q9-AIMEJOB	Self-esteem	.48
Q10-AIMESELF	Self-esteem	.40

Note.  $\beta$  = predictive beta path

## **2.2 What is the capacity of the AOP as an outreach educational mentoring initiative for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young peoples? (Question 2)**

In assessing the capacity of the AOP as an outreach educational mentoring initiative for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young peoples we define capacity as comprising:

1. The ability of AIME to design and deploy the Outreach program
2. The number of mentees, the location of mentees and mentoring that can be accessed

Discussion of the capacity of the AOP will be discussed under the following headings: Program Design; Program Delivery; and Pedagogy/Methodology.

### **2.2.1 Program design**

The AOP is operated by AIME, which began mentoring between university and school students in 2005. Program design is managed by an established organisational structure with clear reporting mechanisms overseen by the AIME Board of Directors (Brownyn Bancroft, Geoff Lovell, Phillip Clark, Tanya Hosch, Jeff McMullen, Mayrah Sonter, Paul Chandler & Ngiare Brown).

The AOP has emerged from this established organisation and developed from AIME's experience over several years with the Core program. The Core program has been run successfully across over ten university campuses in three Australian states (with further expansion in 2013 to five Australian states and sixteen university campuses).

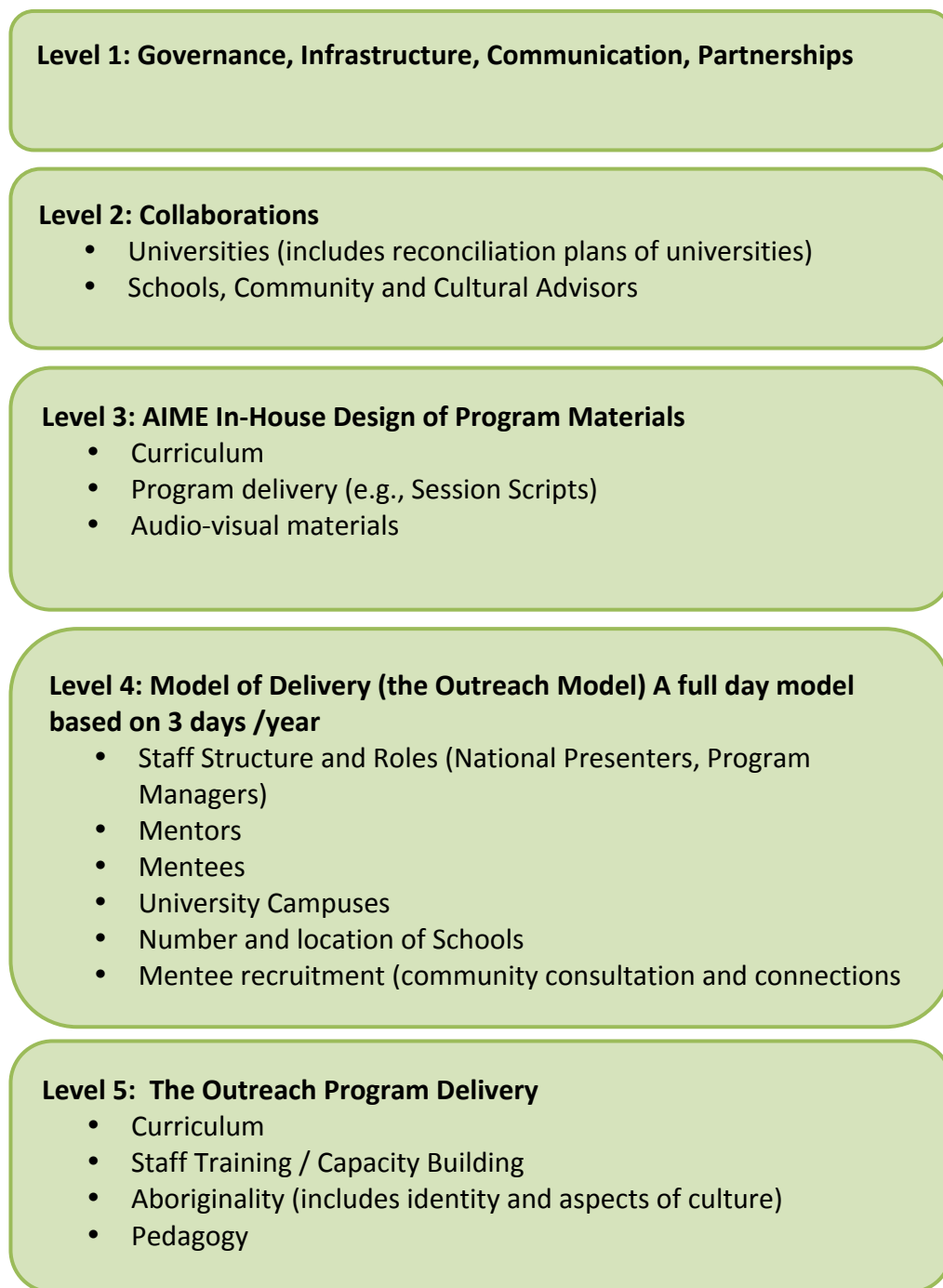
Following the identification of the limits of the Core program for reaching Indigenous school students who are not in close geographical proximity to university campuses, the Outreach model was devised based on experience with the Core program.

### **The AOP and the AIME organisation**

The AOP can be characterised as being nested within the AIME organisation and its infrastructure. This relationship is critical to the success of the AOP and its expansion. The AOP requires this connection to the AIME organisation and its infrastructure.

Figure 2.7 provides an overview of the key features of the AIME organisational structure and program design for the AOP. We have depicted this as comprising five levels that support the final stage of AOP program delivery to the AIME mentees.

Figure 2.7 Overview of AIME organisation structure and the AOP



The above organisational chart provides background to the context of the AOP and to indicate the structures embedded in AIME that support AOP design and delivery.

## 2.2.2 Program delivery

### Cost

The AOP provides a model of university student mentoring that is of comparable financial cost to the Core program. Details are provided in Section 2.5.

### **The Outreach model is attractive to schools and to university student mentors**

A key difference noted throughout the interviews is the day format versus the one-hour per week format in the Core program. Respondents noted benefits of both formats. Respondents that identified benefits of the AOP (AIME facilitators, mentors, teachers and young people) described the benefits of being at the University for the day (as opposed to 1 hour per week). For example:

“Well student engagement is one; the other thing is it keeps the schools a bit happier especially for the Year nines and tens they’re not missing ... generally they miss probably two, two-and-a-half hours of school just to come to the one hour AIME session and they miss that 15 times throughout the year. If that’s in one semester then they’re missing 15 to 30 classes because they’re missing two classes for that time so probably the whole semester. Whereas the Outreach the whole days [are] spread out amongst the year. They’re not really missing as much work to do with maybe a particular class or particular classes.” (AIME Facilitator)

The delivery mode for the AOP also had benefits for mentors in terms of better accommodating their university study commitments. University timetables change between semesters, and this can lead to mentors pulling out of the Core program. The AOP, by contrast, gave mentors the opportunity to plan ahead:

“I think with enough prior warning of the particular date that it’s on, even if it were to conflict with a particular class, if you’ve got say four weeks’ notice which they generally gave us at least four weeks – it meant that you could pre-plan and organise to go to another tutorial. Where the Core program had those 12 consistent weeks over two semesters that created some scheduling difficulties.” (Mentor)

### **The capacity of the Outreach Model to ‘reach’ and engage Indigenous school students**

The AOP is able to reach and engage a wider range of Indigenous High School students at less cost per student. AIME is aware of the need to reach more students, with one staff member telling us “We’re doing this because Core is going to cost too much money to do in every site and we’ve got so many schools and regions waiting” (AIME Facilitator).

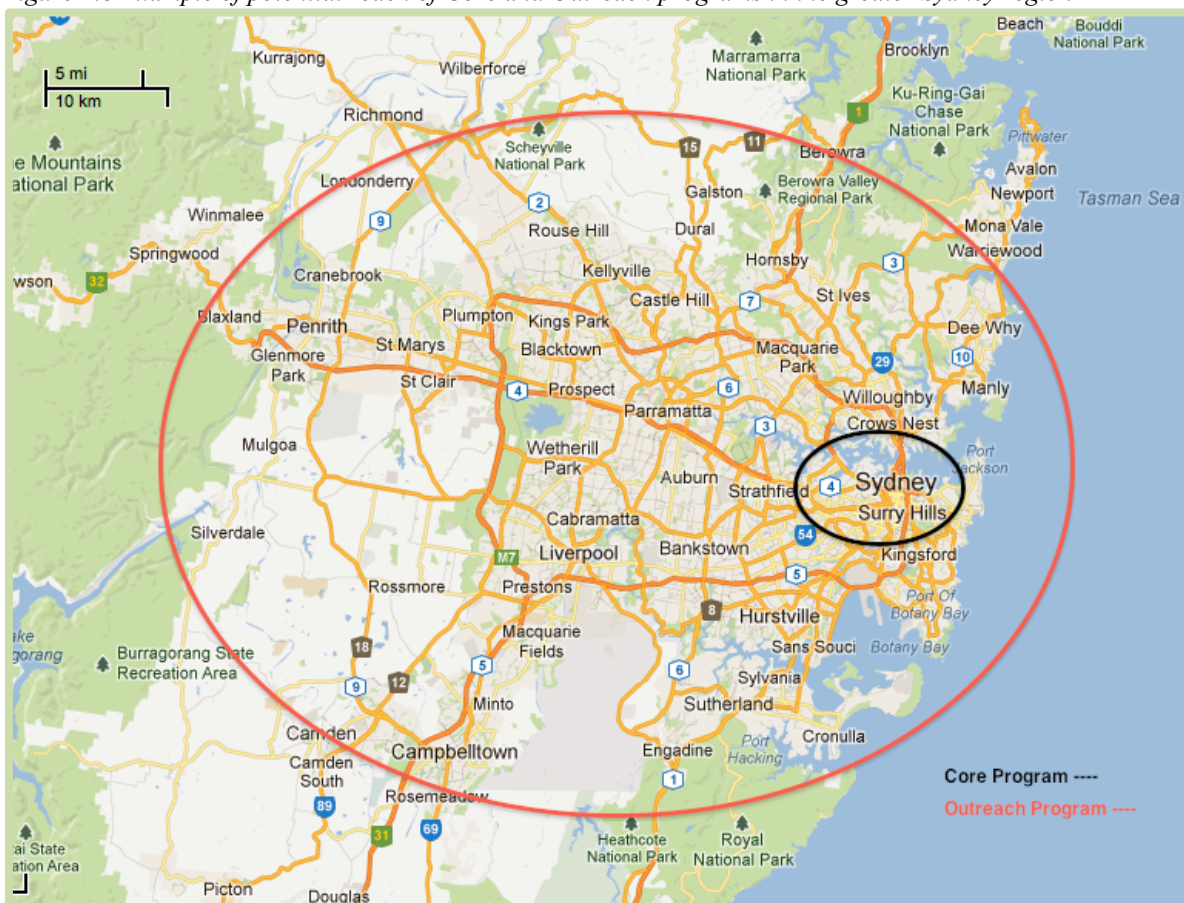
When compared with the Core program, the Outreach program is capable of reaching students who are geographically further from university campuses. The Core program is based on a 1 hour/week model where school students travel to AIME sessions on the

University Campus. This necessarily limits participation to students enrolled in schools within relatively close travelling distance of the participating university, as students are required to travel to and from university during the school day for fifteen one hour sessions. The time required is guided by what is feasible for schools and students to travel. This is usually up to 30 minutes travel time from university campuses.

“The Outreach program allows you firstly to get to these slightly more remote and regional areas and because of that the kids don’t have as many programs and because of that they are just so keen and willing to engage in the program and that’s been amazing to watch.” (AIME Facilitator)

The AOP by contrast can reach students at schools that permit day travel to and from the university campus. This can vary across schools, with the key factor being school and student willingness to travel to the AIME session at the university campus in time for the commencement of morning sessions and return at the close of the day. Travel time is likely to be between one to two hours (with 2 hours a likely upper limit). Depending on the university location (urban city, regional city, regional town) and travelling conditions this model supports access to higher numbers of Indigenous young people. Figures 2.8 and 2.9 provide a representation of the difference in potential reach of the two programs in major city and regional areas. Distances are approximate with the illustration a guide for comparison between the geographic catchment potential of the two programs. See Appendix H for a list of 2012 AOP schools and distances to university campuses.

Figure 2.8 Example of potential reach of Core and Outreach programs in the greater Sydney region





Variations between urban city and regional city university campuses will depend on travelling time within cities and to cities. Travelling time in Australian cities such as Adelaide, Sydney or Melbourne impacts the time restrictions in the Core program, with program capacity consequently restricted to schools within a close radius to participating campuses. With the AOP, students from outlying suburbs of large cities were able to travel to the central city locations of university campuses. Figure 2.8 provides a schematic comparison between the Core and Outreach, showing the greater capacity of access to a larger number of students in the Greater Sydney region.

Figure 2.9 Example of potential reach of Core and Outreach programs for the Wollongong and Illawarra region



The different capacities of the two programs to reach Indigenous students in regional centres with university campuses are demonstrated in Figure 2.9. Students attending AOP sessions at the University of Wollongong are travelling between 77km to 100km one-way to attend the UOW Wollongong campus.

The AOP has the capacity for a greater geographical reach, extending the inclusion of schools in AIME to those that are up to 1-2 hours travelling time by school buses or by public transport. This has the potential to provide access to areas with high numbers of Indigenous young people.

## **Limitations in the capacity of the AOP to reach Indigenous students**

Geographic Limitations: While of greater capacity than the Core program, the AOP is necessarily limited to:

1. The availability and distribution of university campuses;
2. The requirements of high school student travel to the university campuses from their schools, which involves travel to the university campus in the morning and returning in the afternoon. Students outside of these travel zones will be unable to participate in the current model that involves school facilitated day return travel to university campuses.

## **Considerations for AIME staffing, accessing university mentors and university facilities for program delivery in the AOP**

The ability of AIME to deliver the AOP to larger numbers of Indigenous school students is necessarily limited by the capacity of program delivery. There are three key factors that drive estimation of this capacity:

1. The number of AIME Staff required per day session
2. The number of mentors required per session
3. The availability of university facilities (rooms for hosting students)

We have not included curriculum and programming materials in this formula as these are prepared and rolled out within the larger AIME organisational infrastructure.

Thus while the AOP provides an increased capacity to reach a wider distribution of students, the numbers of these students that can be involved will be necessarily restricted to this capacity. This can be increased by universities with multiple campuses such as the University of Wollongong, which has satellite campuses on the south coast of NSW.

### **2.2.3 Pedagogy/ methodology**

The similarities between the Core and Outreach programs point to the strengths of this new program, particularly in relation to AIME curriculum materials and program delivery. These provide the transference of knowledge and experience with the Core program to the design and delivery of the Outreach program.

### **AIME Outreach programs are located on university campuses**

The AOP, like the Core program is premised on the importance of bringing Indigenous school students onto university campuses where they are mentored by university students during structured AIME sessions, delivered and coordinated by AIME. The use of university campuses is a requirement of the AOP and this location is clearly part of the achievements of the AOP, contributing to impacts with the mentees. As both Core and Outreach programs are on university campuses no distinctions can be made regarding location. The importance of the university location was brought home to us in an interview with a mentor who had

volunteered in the Outreach and Core campus based programs as well as in the non-university campus based Tutor Squads.

“Yes, I did like it because university is so different to school. I think sometimes... universities are really scary and stuff like that but when they come I think it’s good that they’re able to see that it’s fun.” (Mentor)

This mentor reported the value of the ‘on campus experience’ for the mentees as compared to the school-based programs.

### **The importance of Aboriginality of staff**

The Aboriginality of AIME facilitators and Project Managers is a significant element of this mentoring program. Our findings demonstrated the importance of Indigenous role models for the mentees.

In this mentoring model the Indigenous AIME facilitators identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander to mentees and model experiences with kinship and Aboriginal culture.

The young Indigenous facilitators work as role models who lead the university mentors, direct the teachers and collaborate with Elders and community members.

“We’re real people, we’re Aboriginal and we’re still young. We’re not the person out the front of the room that’s a teacher and we’re not their mother. We’re like ‘Hey, I’m your friend, I’m going to give you advice’. I really do think that’s what makes it... Being Indigenous, being able to get up and say that you’re Indigenous and you’re wanting to help other Indigenous people, letting the kids know that there are people out there who want to help you, support you. ‘I’m one of those people. If you need me, come to me’.” (AIME Facilitator)

As one AIME facilitator described the relationship “For a lot of them they look up towards us as big sisters or big brothers and aspire to be sort of like us which is random but that’s a lot to do with it.” (AIME Facilitator)

Involvement by AIME facilitators ‘local’ to the area is of value in AIME sessions. Indigenous staff that are from the nearby area helps even more in making connections with the mentees. As one staff member explained: “Any of our presenters would have been great but it just adds that extra level when you have that connection” (AIME Facilitator). In practice this means local AIME facilitators are able to say to the mentees “Hey I’m from your land” (AIME Facilitator).

“We do a lot of constant rehearsal for months before the program begins. So I’ll rehearse with my Communications and Operations Manager and also a previous Program Manager because they’re the ones that have done all the presenting themselves.” (AIME Facilitator)

## Scripted sessions

The AOP sessions (as with the Core sessions) are designed and developed by AIME with session delivery scripted for the AIME facilitators. Sessions are thus developed and tested in-house at AIME. AIME facilitators are trained in the delivery of sessions, which includes in-house monitoring, coaching and feedback, via a supervisory structure with Communications Managers. In this regard there is a high level of quality control on the delivery of AIME sessions. This approach and support structure ensures that key content will remain relatively constant while being delivered across Australia.

Within this scripted model there is also room for AIME presenters to make individualised contributions.

## Facilitating in the AOP

Under the category 'AIME facilitator' we include all of the AIME staff in contact with mentees (other than mentors) during AIME sessions. This category thus includes National Presenters, Program Managers and AIME staff who visit and support mentee sessions. The task of *facilitating sessions* in the AOP is similar to the task in the Core. Session material and delivery is essentially the same, with the difference largely resting in the day format rather than the one session per week format.

We note there are possible differences between the relationships developed by Program Managers with mentees in the Core program as compared to the AOP. In the Core program the Program Managers (based at university campuses) have the opportunity to meet regularly with mentees over a 15 week period. This relationship could include Program Managers visiting schools and supporting mentees outside of AIME. The Program Managers also meet with the teachers. Mentees see the Program Manager at the school, at community events and the Program Manager can get to know some mentees from previous years. The structure of delivery in the AOP might restrict these opportunities for this type of 'extra-session' relationship building.

In the AOP "I have to be more of a facilitator in crowd control whereas at Core there's a university student with every mentee and they help me with the level of noise, distractions etc." (AIME Facilitator)

Where 'extra-session' (or outside of session) relationship building occurred in the Core program AIME staff can develop relationships with school students that resulted in "the quicker the barriers of the kids come down and the more eager they're going to be to learn and the more engaged and actually get into what they have to do" (AIME Staff). This relationship also meant that schools were able to be in contact with AIME and be proactive in seeking AIME support with students.

We were unable to assess this aspect of AIME relationships in this evaluation. However, given the results of these relationships in the Core program, we suggest that attention be given to recognising these as functions of the Program Manager and considering how these can continue to be supported in the AOP.

## **Mentoring in the AOP**

AIME University mentors in the AOP come from diverse backgrounds in terms of subject disciplines, socioeconomic status and cultures. Mentors were predominantly non-Indigenous.

There are differences between mentoring in the Core program and the AOP. In the Core program mentoring is mainly 1 mentor matched with 1 mentee, with the objective that the mentor works with the mentee over a 15 week period. In the AOP the ratio tends to be larger, with 1 mentor to 3 mentees, although in our observations we noted that this varied across university sites (in a Victorian university site there were more mentors than mentees, at another site it was 1 mentor to 5 mentees). In the main however, the mentor to mentee ratio is a small group system in the AOP.

Mentors in the AOP require a greater skill set than the mentors in the Core program. AIME facilitators noted the group skills required of mentors in the AOP compared to the Core program. When there was a higher ratio of mentees to mentors the mentors felt they needed more skills and training. Leading small groups is a different skill set to one-to-one mentoring and AIME needs to factor this into their mentor training design.

The small number of mentors who had participated in both Core and AOP described the difference as being one of approach, with the Core focusing more on the one to one relationship developed over time, while the AOP focused on content in the sessions. Mentors varied in their preferences for the program. Some didn't mind. Some nominated a preference for one to one relationships in the weekly program, explaining they enjoyed the rapport that was developed over the weeks with the mentees and with the AIME Program Managers. Mentors also varied on their preference in terms of the time commitment, with some stating it was easier to come for a day in the AOP.

There is also the need for variety of mentors: "If there are only two uni students then they're only going to think of uni students as one of those two so I'd want a bigger variety." (AIME Facilitator)

### **2.3 Have the objectives of the AOP been achieved? (Question 3)**

One of the measures of the impact of the AOP is whether it increases school grade progression rates for its mentees. In 2012, the first year of its implementation, the AOP had 613 mentees in attendance. Of these, 595 mentees have progression rates reported (progression in grades from year to year). The progression rates of 2012 AOP mentees are expressed as percentages of the sample 'counted in reporting' at Table 2.4

Table 2.4 Progression rates for 2012 AIME Outreach mentees

	<b>Participated once</b>	<b>Counted in Reporting</b>	<b>Progressed</b>	<b>To one decimal place</b>
Year 9 – 10 Outreach Progression	218	209	206	98.6
Year 10 – 11 Outreach Progression	195	191	173	90.6
Year 11 – 12 Outreach Progression	137	133	112	84.2
Year 12 Outreach Completion	63	62	56	90.3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>547</b>	

Criteria used by AIME to track a mentee’s progression are outlined in Section 2.1. For 2012 progression data, Outreach mentees are included in reporting if they attend one day of the Year 9 – 12 AOP. Eighteen (n = 18) mentees who attended the AOP in 2012 were not counted in reporting (613 participants, less 595 counted in reporting = 18 not included in reporting). The participating schools were unable to provide progression data for these 18 students (AIME staff).

Of the 56 AOP mentees who completed Year 12, 16 (or 29%) transitioned to university studies in 2013.

To complement these findings regarding student progression and transition rates, the survey generated data on the achievement and impact of the Core and Outreach programs across three key themes: aspirations, engagement and identity. Where ‘aspirations’ can be thought through as having a clear direction for pursuing post Year 12 options. This section reports on these themes for the AOP.

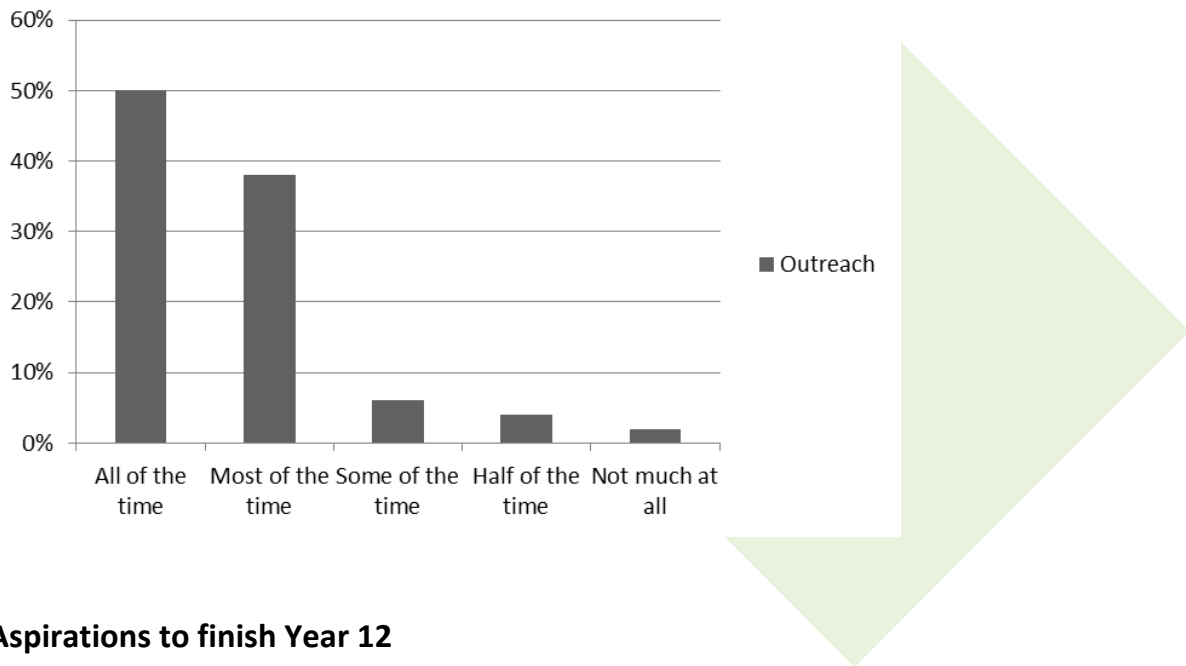
### 2.3.1 Aspirations of mentees in the AOP

The achievements and impacts of the AOP were measured through self-reports of proximal and more distant aspirations; namely, attendance at school, aspirations to complete Year 12 and post-school aspirations.

#### Absenteeism at school

In the AOP 50% said they were at school all of the time and 38% said they attended school most of the time (i.e. they only have days off when they are sick). This suggested that 88% of the Outreach mentees show strong levels of attendance at school.

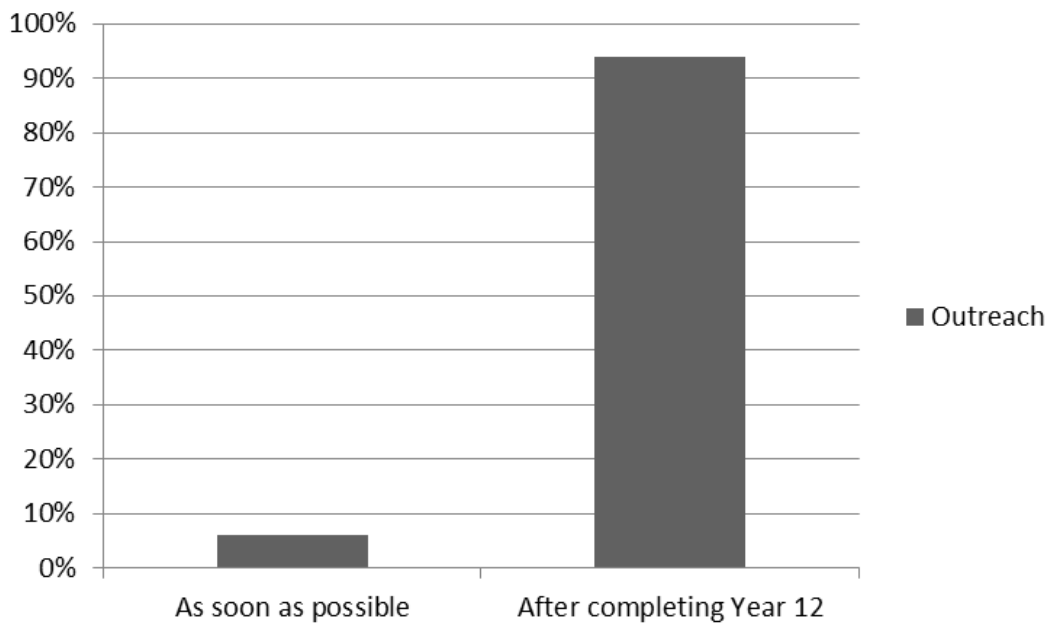
Figure 2.10 Self-reported absenteeism for Outreach mentees



### Aspirations to finish Year 12

With regards to wanting to complete Year 12, for the Outreach mentees, 94% said they wanted to finish Year 12, as opposed to 6% who said they wanted to leave school as soon as possible.

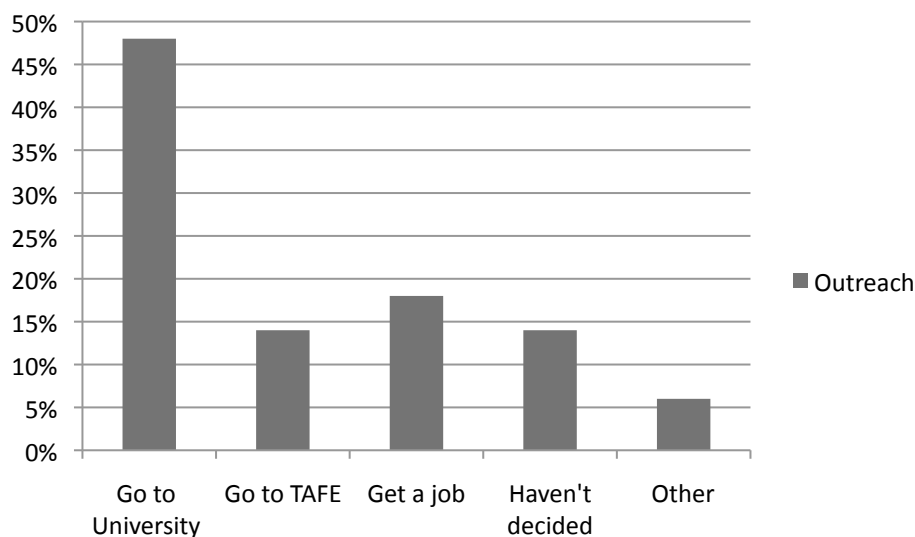
Figure 2.11 Aspirations regarding when to leave school



## Post school aspirations

In terms of university, for the Outreach mentees 48% aspired to go to university directly after school, 14% to go to TAFE and 18% wanted to get a job directly after school. Overall, this indicates that 80% of Outreach mentees had clear post-school aspirations.

Figure 2.12 Post-school aspirations of Outreach mentees

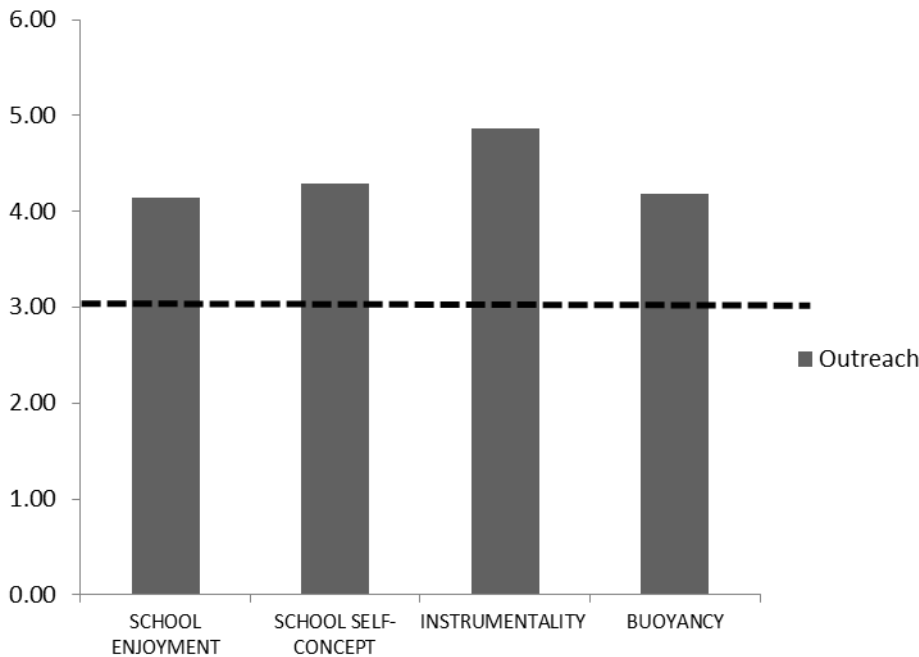


### 2.3.2 Engagement of mentees in the AOP

Engagement was captured by four positive measures encapsulating enjoyment of school (enjoyment), confidence at school (school self-concept), whether school is important for their future goals (instrumentality), and finally resiliency (buoyancy). As can be seen from Figure 2.13, across all engagement measures, the Outreach mentees responded exceptionally positively to the questions, suggesting that they are highly engaged with school learning.



Figure 2.13 Mean scores for school engagement outcome



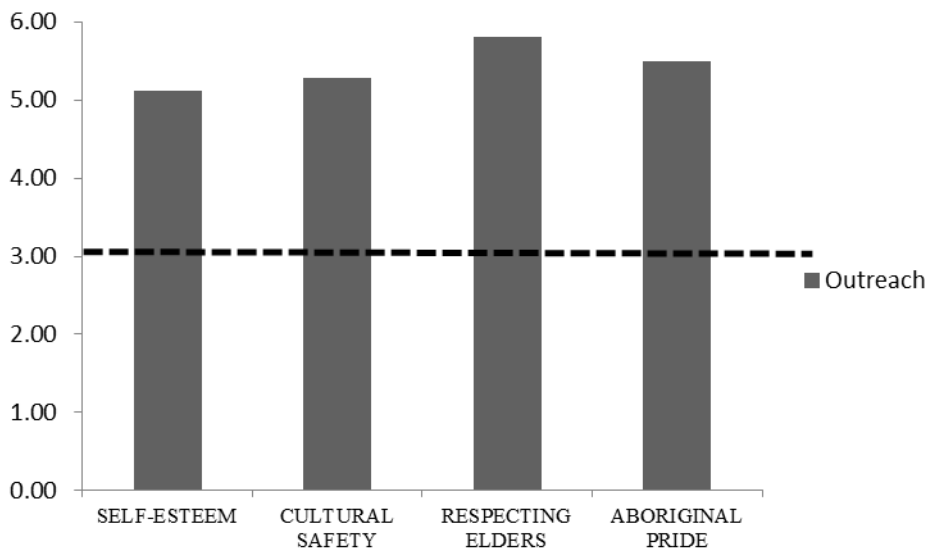
Note to figure – The dotted line indicates the division between positive and negative mean responses.

### 2.3.3 Identity measures of mentees in the AOP

Varying aspects of identity were captured ranging from general self-perceptions to more culturally specific measures, particularly focusing on a positive sense of Aboriginal identity. More specifically, the factors measured were general self-esteem (self-esteem), respecting Aboriginal Elders (respecting Elders), feeling safe about being Aboriginal in school (cultural safety), and finally having an overall sense of pride in being Aboriginal (Aboriginal pride) (Figure 2.14).

Especially for the engagement and identity measures, these findings suggest that the mentees participating in the AOP are highly engaged, not only with their school but their sense of culture. Such findings are critical. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers have long called for stronger links to be made between Indigenous students' sense of identity and their schooling experiences (Sarra 2011; MCEETYA 2006; Schwab 2012).

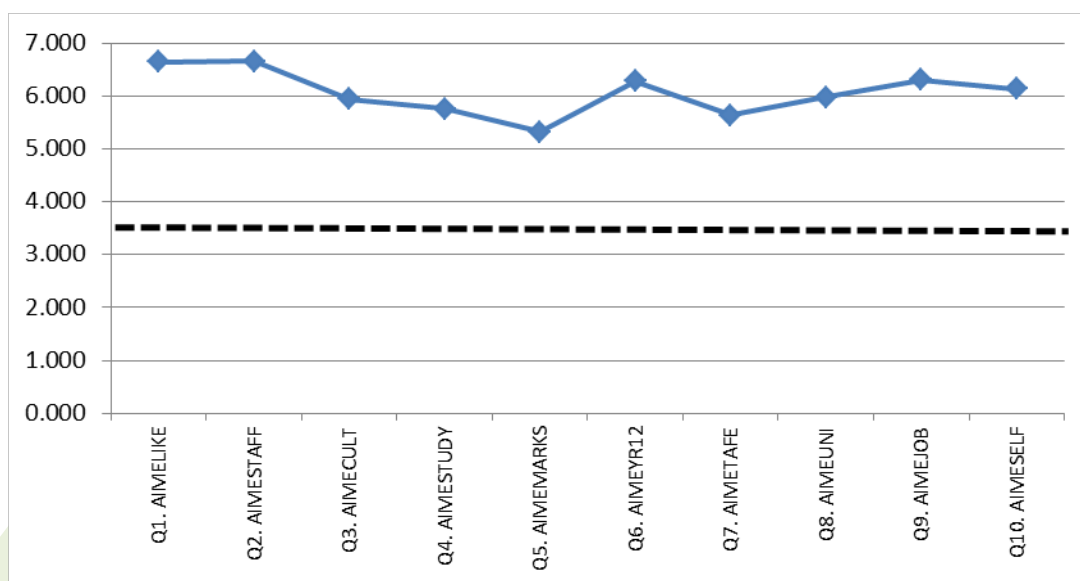
Figure 2.14 Mean scores for identity outcomes for Outreach mentees



Although these findings suggest that overall the Outreach mentees hold positive aspirations and strong sense of school engagement and identity, the question as to whether these results are maybe due to the AIME program are not yet answered. However, as shown with the Core mentees, this question can be answered by examining the Outreach mentees' perceptions of the AIME program and associating these perceptions with aspirations, engagement and identity outcomes. At the outset, it is important to understand the Outreach mentees responses to the AIME specific questions.

Figure 2.15 demonstrates for the results for ten key AIME questions, which capture themes such as: liking the AIME program, getting along with AIME staff/mentors, how AIME assists their understanding of being Aboriginal (see Appendix G for all AIME questions).

Figure 2.15 Mean scores for 10 AIME specific questions across the Outreach mentees



Note to figure – The dotted line indicates the division between positive and negative mean responses.

As can be seen all Outreach mentee responses were exceptionally positive, demonstrating that they place a high value on their experiences with AIME. Table 2.5 represents what 10 key questions were significantly associated with the aspiration, engagement and identity outcomes **over and above the effects of** various demographic variables (i.e. gender, age, parental education, home educational resources and school socio-economic status). This suggests that these significant associations cannot be explained away by demographic factors that often feature in deficit discourses (e.g. blaming parent education levels for low levels of student aspirations).

Table 2.5 Significant adaptive predictions from AIME variables to Outreach outcomes, independent of demographic variables

ASPIRATIONAL OUTCOMES		
AIME Predictor	Outcome Variable	Significant $\beta$
Q8-AIMEUNI	Absent	-.20
Q6-AIMEYR12	Year 12	.65
Q4-AIMESTUDY	Year 12	.40
Q5-AIMEMARKS	Year 12	.56
ENGAGEMENT		
AIME Predictor	Outcome Variable	Significant $\beta$
Q4-AIMESTUDY	School Enjoyment	.57
Q4-AIMESTUDY	Instrumentality	.41
Q5-AIMEMARKS	School Enjoyment	.46
Q5-AIMEMARKS	Instrumentality	.40
Q6-AIMEYR12	Instrumentality	.51
Q8-AIMEUNI	School Enjoyment	.42
Q8-AIMEUNI	School Self-concept	.28
Q8-AIMEUNI	Instrumentality	.44
IDENTITY		
AIME Predictor	Outcome Variable	Significant $\beta$
Q3-AIMECULT	Self-esteem	.39
Q3-AIMECULT	Cultural Safety	.40
Q3-AIMECULT	Aboriginal Pride	.32
Q4-AIMESTUDY	Self-esteem	.33
Q4-AIMESTUDY	Cultural Safety	.35
Q5-AIMEMARKS	Self-esteem	.34
Q5-AIMEMARKS	Cultural Safety	.37
Q6-AIMEYR12	Self-esteem	.36
Q6-AIMEYR12	Cultural Safety	.47
Q7-AIMETAFAE	Self-esteem	.33
Q8-AIMEUNI	Self-esteem	.51
Q8-AIMEUNI	Cultural Safety	.39
Q9-AIMEJOB	Self-esteem	.47
Q10-AIMESELF	Aboriginal Pride	.27

Note:  $\beta$  = predictive beta path

The results in Table 2.5 reveal that the vast majority of questions assessing mentee perceptions about the AOP are significantly associated with aspirational, engagement and

identity outcomes in some manner. What is imperative about these findings is that every significant effect identified was not only positive but substantial. What this suggests is that as mentees held positive perceptions about the AOP, the more likely they would hold positive aspirations, a strong sense of school engagement and identity. In short, these results suggest that the AOP is making a real difference for the mentees.

## 2.4 What are the achievements and impacts of the AOP for participants (mentees)? (Question 4)

Analysis of the qualitative data, mentee grade progression data and survey data has yielded findings that respond to this question. Considered together, these results corroborate indicators that the AOP is achieving positive results for participants that are favourably comparable with the Core program.

A comparison of the Core and Outreach mentee progression data shows comparable progression and completion outcomes for mentees, especially mentees in Year 9, 11 and 12 (see Table 2.6). Table 2.6 demonstrates that a lower proportion of Year 10 students in the AOP (90.6%) progressed to Year 11, compared to their Core program counterparts (99.0%). Despite this, it is important to note that the Year 10 students in the AOP still have proportionately higher progression rates from Year 10 to Year 11 compared to the national averages of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Table 2.6 Comparison of progression data for Core and Outreach mentees in 2012

	<b>National* (Non-Indigenous)</b>	<b>National* (Indigenous)</b>	<b>Core</b>	<b>Outreach</b>	<b>Combined Outreach &amp; Core**</b>
Year 9 – 10 progression	99.4	91.5	98.6	98.6	98.6
Year 10 – 11 progression	90.2	74.0	99.0	90.6	93.6
Year 11 – 12 progression	84.6	66.7	85.2	84.2	84.7
Year 12 completion	99.2	71.8	91.9	90.3	91.1

\* The 'national' progression rates are from the *National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training*, 2008 cited in the AIME 2011 Annual Report (AIME 2012a, p.8).

Analysis of the qualitative data and survey responses received also yielded findings that enable us to respond to this question. These results indicate that the AOP is achieving positive results for mentees that are comparable with the Core program.

Differences between the programs aside, it is critical to note that across all outcome variables (aspirations, engagement, identity) and the perceptions of AIME questions, no significant differences were identified between the Core and Outreach mentees. This suggests that the positive perceptions of AIME are equivalent across programs (see Table 2.7). Although it may be argued that such consistency was also observed across gender and year level, some

interactions (see Appendix A) suggests that males may be slightly more responsive to the AOP and females slightly more responsive to the Core program. Despite these interactions it should be remembered that the vast majority of mentee responses were exceptionally positive, regardless of gender by program differences.

Table 2.7 MIMIC testing for outcome variables and AIME questions across program, gender and scholastic year

KEY SCHOOL OUTCOMES							
	CORE MEAN	OUTREACH MEAN	C/O	Gender	Year	C/O by Gender	C/O by Year
Absenteeism	1.71	1.70	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Year 12 Aspirations	.83	.94	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Post School Aspirations*	.68	.80	ns	ns	.16	ns	ns
English Grades	3.62	3.24	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Math Grades	3.14	3.07	ns	ns	.25	ns	ns
ENGAGEMENT & IDENTITY OUTCOMES							
	CORE MEAN	OUTREACH MEAN	C/O	Gender	Year	C/O by Gender	C/O by Year
SELF-ESTEEM	5.16	5.12	ns	ns	ns	-.20	ns
SCHOOL ENJOYMENT	4.34	4.14	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
SCHOOL SELF-CONCEPT	4.05	4.30	ns	ns	.28**	ns	ns
INSTRUMENTALITY	4.70	4.86	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
BOUYANCY	4.56	4.18	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
DISSOCIATION	2.13	1.81	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
CULTURAL SAFETY	5.45	5.28	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
REPECT FOR ELDERS	5.83	5.80	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
ABORIGINAL PRIDE	5.45	5.50	ns	ns	.18*	-.20*	ns
AIME QUESTIONS							
	CORE	OUTREACH	C/O	Gender	Year	C/O by Gender	C/O by Year
Q1. AIMELIKE	6.51	6.64	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Q2. AIMESTAFF	6.73	6.66	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Q3. AIMECULT	5.93	5.94	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Q4. AIMESTUDY	5.68	5.76	ns	ns	ns	-.20*	ns
Q5. AIMEMARKS	5.34	5.32	ns	ns	ns	-.26**	ns
Q6. AIMEYR12	6.12	6.28	ns	ns	ns	-.23*	ns
Q7. AIMETAFAE	5.68	5.64	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Q8. AIMEUNI	6.17	5.98	ns	ns	ns	-.26*	ns
Q9. AIMEJOB	6.37	6.30	ns	ns	ns	-.28**	-.21*
Q10. AIMESELF	6.17	6.14	ns	ns	ns	ns	Ns

Note: C/O is the AIME program Type where Core = 0 and Outreach = 1; Gender is coded as Male = 0 and Female = 1. Year is coded as Years 9 and 10 = 0 and Years 11 and 12 = 1.

Overall it can be noted that for both the Core and Outreach programs, not only were mentees' perceptions of AIME itself exceptionally positive but also their levels of school engagement and sense of identity were also positive. With regard to the AIME specific questions it can be noted that varying aspects of AIME are positively associated with aspirations, engagement and identity are over and above key demographic variables (see Table 2.5). It may be of interest to highlight that the Outreach group showed a greater number of positive associations between their perceptions of AIME and the outcome variables (aspirations, engagement, identity), when compared to the Core mentees (see also

Table 2.3). In this sense the AOP could be seen as having a stronger positive impact on mentees than the Core program.

### 2.4.1 Impacts for mentees

We identified seven important – and connected – impacts for AIME mentees. These are: confidence; being proud; remembering respect; making cultural connections with Indigenous peers, role models and culture; dealing with racism; aspiring to finish school and beyond. Mentees emphasised feeling greater confidence and pride through their participation in the AOP. They also described wanting to remain in school.

#### Feeling more confident

##### *The AIME curriculum<sup>2</sup>*

There are a number of aspects of the curriculum and associated documents that support AIME pedagogy that build confidence. These include

1. Overarching principles in the AIME curriculum and associated documents (such as session scripts) that target building confidence in the mentee participants. These include:
  - i. *There is a sense of activism throughout the documents.* For example, “...you can achieve anything in this world with hard work and belief. If you are willing to work hard then we will be there every step of the way, right alongside you. Time to step up and take your chance” (IW-9, p. 5 IW-10, p. 5).
  - ii. *Sessions begin with an issue/challenge and workshop it to empower mentees to succeed.* For example, in S-PM1 the background to the session explains “...to engage them with Australia’s political history, but more importantly an opportunity to create visions for the future”.
  - iii. *Lots of scripted encouragement from the Program Manager for mentees to continue.* For example, “You have all been great so far today, unbelievably mature. Keep it up” (S-Rac). “PM to give speech about how impressed they are with the students” (LDSG-8).
  - iv. *Importance of the ability to communicate.* For example, “If you can communicate, you can win wars, lead people and change the world” (S-PM1).
  - v. *Mentees need specific skills.* For example, “We want to give them the skills to overcome personal challenges” (S-Res). Emphasis on communication (S-PM1).
2. There are experiences offered within the program documents that build confidence. For example, the Importance of ‘words’/inspiration/quotes from significant others (IW-9 p. 26).
3. Content is encapsulated within the experiences. For instance, Literary Activities in the Year 10 Content (IT-10) mentees are asked to write their own motivational quotes (p. 27) and to write a speech (p. 36-38).

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<sup>2</sup> Please refer to the table of documents in the previous methods section for the codes for the reviewed AIME curriculum documents.

### *Mentee comments*

An increase in confidence was identified by both AIME mentees and AIME mentors. Mentees remarked on having “stronger confidence” (UOW focus group, Year 10). This change was explained in a number of ways, with mentees’ descriptions suggesting the program positively impacted on their self-awareness and sense of comfort with themselves and others. For instance, one of the younger mentees stated to “not be afraid of yourself or something.” (UTS, Year 9) while another older mentee explained “it's given me a lot more confidence ... just to be who you are, just to be yourself, and to have fun.” (UTS, Year 11). A comment by another mentee expands on this point, making a connection between confidence and relationships with others, “Well we have just like more confidence in yourself and we know that you can trust people with your thoughts and that.” (University of Sydney, Year 11).

Comments also suggest how this confidence building occurs. Mentees cited individual sessions, such as Drama, and AIME program pedagogy (e.g., public speaking and the positivity of the session environment). For instance, one Year 11 mentee stated “To be more comfortable with myself I think, I used to be a bit more quieter, so yeah, again it's the public speaking thing, we're always talking. They also teach you to not be afraid of your answers, nothing's wrong...” (UTS, Year 11). These AIME practices were summed up by one respondent as “putting me out there” (Monash, Year 9) and were viewed as acceptable practices. This young person described herself as “I'm not a very confident person” (Monash, Year 9), indicating a level of self-awareness of confidence and the recognition of the importance of building confidence. The confidence created in the AIME sessions contributed to mentee motivation for remaining engaged in the AOP. Two responses from the AIME (Post-Session) Feedback Forms:

“I kept coming to AIME because I liked the experience and it made me more confident.” (Monash, AIME Feedback Form, Year 11)

“Confidence! Confidence is what made me come back and that's what I got out of the program.” (UTS, AIME Feedback Form, Year 11)

### **What the stats tell us.**

With regard to self-esteem both Core and Outreach students displayed exceptionally positive mean self-esteem scores of 5.16 and 5.12 (out of 6), respectively.

The strongest predictor of self-esteem for the Core group was the degree to which mentees felt AIME showed them how valuable employment is (AIME question 9).

The strongest predictor of self-esteem for the Outreach group was the degree to which mentees felt AIME showed them how important it was to finish Year 12 (AIME question 6).

While a majority of mentees described gaining confidence via the AOP, we note that a minority of students interviewed described already being confident, for instance, “Yeah, we knew, we're pretty confident.” (RMIT, Year 10 & 11 students).

### *Mentor and facilitator comments*

The majority of AIME mentors commented very positively on the impact of the AOP on mentee confidence.

“Well I saw the students on three occasions and I noticed differences in them; I noticed the first time they were excited and it was all very new to them – they seemed a bit nervous and not sure what to do. The second time they were more confident and the third time they were more confident again and also – even in the three month period – they'd grown up a bit and they had a clearer idea of what they wanted to do. For example there was one girl who'd managed to get a hospitality job and this was what she really wanted to do even though she had to make a long bus journey of a couple of hours, getting up very early in order to start a shift that was something like 11.00 am in the morning, nonetheless she was doing it.” (Mentor)

We received feedback from one AIME mentor who raised questions about unintended effects of 'goal setting'. This mentor queried whether mentees are being 'set up to fail' when they write down their goals (such as via their letters to themselves) and revisit these in twelve months' time.

“Of course setting goals is a great idea and everybody should do it but I just wondered whether the changes in people's lives, circumstances or in their expectations or in their plans might be considered as “failures” to them when they revisited what their goals had been... They might feel like they've failed or that they might become obsessive about solving problems and achieving their goals when really their goals might have passed and they might have better goals or readjusted ambitions or something like that.” (Mentor)

By contrast, other mentors commented that the program was “well structured in terms of goal setting and confidence boosting and practical application to help Aboriginal children get along in the world and at university and apply themselves to career prospects” (Mentor). There is evidence that this type of concern is addressed within the AOP by AIME facilitators, who explain to mentees strategies such as “aim high and fail forward” (AIME Facilitator, Field notes), where mentees are taught how to learn from mistakes.

### **Being proud**

“We can be the same as white people.” (UOW, mentee, Year 10)

### *The AIME curriculum*

There are a number of aspects of the curriculum and associated documents that support AIME pedagogy that build pride. These include:



1. Overarching principles in the AIME curriculum and associated documents (such as session scripts) that target building pride in the mentee participants.
  - i. *Owning the personal experiences that led to the development of the sessions.* For example, "...today we get a chance to delve into one of the tougher areas of life that I know I would have loved to talk about when I was in Year 10" (S-Rac).
  - ii. *Planning for the future is emphasized.* For example, in the '365 days' task scripts "the more specific you are, the more chance you have to succeed. Where do you want to end up? Think about it. If you say you want to go to Uni, that is good ..." (SDSG-8) In the Message from the CEO it is stated "this year you will have the chance to step up to a new level of performance, in your school, personally, all round. We will ask you to step up. We will ask you how good do you want to be? How far do you want to go?" (IW-9).
2. Knowledge the mentees 'ought' to have.
  - i. *Script for Project Manager across scripts/running orders promotes casual, informal, colloquial language in interactions with mentees.* For example, the Program Manager script (S-Res) includes "who's up for stepping up and sharing with the group where you wanna go?", "Let's give 'em one hell of a story to tell hey?" In this example the explicit assumption is made that the mentees are able to 'step up'.
3. Experiences offered within program documents
  - i. *Importance of 'story' – "role models", media, personal, Program Manager.* For example, Range of demographics represented in the stories. For example, S-Res has stories about a single father with 3 children.
4. Content encapsulated within the experience. For example, Year 9 Literary Activities - Research an inspirational person (p. 35).

### *Mentee comments*

Mentees described having pride in their culture and pride in their Indigenous identity. Comments include: "It helped me become more confident as well as more pride in my Indigenous culture" (Southern Cross University, AIME Feedback Form, Year 10). Mentees often emphasised comparisons with non-Indigenous people (such as in the opening quote of this subsection). Other comments included "That even professional people might get jobs because they're like Aboriginal" (UOW, Year 10) and "Yeah, like it's made me like learn like it's not just like other people that can get somewhere, Aboriginals can be just as smart as everyone else" (Monash, Year 10). Such comments reveal the negative experiences of Indigenous identity and culture the mentees have encountered (and may still encounter). The AOP has been effective in creating a positive expression of Indigenous identity, as evidenced by mentee statements from one of our interviews in Victoria:

Interviewer Has AIME taught you stuff about yourself?  
Mentee Yeah, like how I believe in being Aboriginal is good.

(Monash, Year 10)

This mentee explained that he had pride from “where I came from” but at AIME he learnt about rights and had a positive experience about their identity. For example, “Even though we've got different colour skin we can do whatever we want, we can be whoever we want to be ... We're just as important as everybody else out there” (Monash, Year 10).

#### *Mentor and facilitator comments*

In our interviews mentors and facilitators did not explicitly describe mentees as being ‘proud’. However the importance of pride and the onus on mentees to be proud of themselves was evident from other comments. For example, at the opening of one AIME Outreach day an Elder was invited to speak and one of his key messages was, “be proud of yourself and make sure you get your education”. There were also many examples of the facilitators saying they were proud of the mentees:

#### **What the stats tell us.**

For both Core and Outreach mentees pride in being Aboriginal was exceptionally positive, with scores of 5.45 and 5.50 (out of 6) for each group, respectively.

The strongest predictor of Aboriginal pride was the degree to which Outreach mentees felt AIME helped them understand more about their culture (AIME Question 3).

“The university-based AIME coordinator introduces the [end-of-program] presentation session to students by telling them how proud of them she is and by reading a letter to the students that she included in their take-home packs. She got teary reading the letter out. At one point she read, “it’s been great to have such a diverse group of young Indigenous leaders here [at the AOP]” (Field notes).

## **Remembering ‘RESPECT’**

### *The AIME curriculum*

The AIME Respect sessions convey information about teachers, with facilitators explaining the work and effort made by teachers.

1. Overarching principles in the AIME curriculum and associated documents (such as session scripts) that target building respect in the mentee participants.
  - i. *Each session engages mentees in actively expressing themselves in a way where they own their ideas/actions/thoughts and are held accountable for these.* For example, in SDGD-8 mentees are videoed to create their individual passport, in SDGS-9 mentees write themselves a letter with their goals and these are posted to them in 6 months time.

2. Experiences offered within program documents

- i. *Use of Scenarios. For example the teacher scenario in S-Res is akin to problem based learning models*

3. Content encapsulated within the experiences

- i. *Personal Development / Key Content Perspectives. For example, empathy as a tool to help understand where people are coming from – e.g. their teachers. Responding to scenarios shared through story and accompanied by short answer responses (p. 60-65) – Such as the stories of others.*

*Mentee comments*

Mentees mentioned to us the importance of respect, citing the need to respect teachers. Mentee comments reveal the positive effects these sessions have had. For instance:

Interviewer	Has it taught you anything today about education and school?
Mentee	It's taught me about teachers, to think about teachers a bit ... how they deal with people like these students.
Mentee	It makes you understand more about the whole respect about doing stuff in school and teaching. It makes you feel kind of different about it (school and education)

(UTS, Year 9)

Mentees reported that they had developed increased respect for education and teachers. There is confirming evidence of the positive effect these sessions on 'respect' with mentees in the respect session that we observed responding to the session materials and demonstrating empathy with teachers. We also had anecdotal reports by teachers of mentees who attended school only on the days that AIME is run.

Other mentees stated they had learnt from AIME about "A bit more respecting... and learning about stuff." (Sydney University, Year 10).

"I think that they're treated more like adults and in accordance you know, they're actually taught respect as well in this environment which is different to school"  
(Teacher interview)

Remembering respect extended beyond teachers to 'other people', as one young mentee emphasised when she discussed the potential benefits of AIME for her friends (who don't attend): "They'd learn a lot and then I reckon they'd like learn to respect other people and other cultures and stuff" (Monash, Year 9). Respecting other people was noted by a mentee as what they got out of participation in AIME: "I got out of AIME is learning to respect others" (Bond University, AIME Feedback Form, Year 10). In this instance the young mentee has volunteered this feedback in response to a general question about participation in AIME.

### *Mentors and facilitator comments*

Mentors and facilitators also spoke of the importance of respect in the AOP but their comments focused on the notions of respect as a ‘two-way street’, particularly that the facilitators and mentors respected the mentees: “Because I work so consistently with the same kids, they show you that level of respect, you earn their respect, they earn your respect” (AIME Facilitator). The facilitators also often reminded mentees to

be “100% respect” (Field notes) as a classroom management tool (in lieu of negative feedback or punishment) and so as to create a safe, non-judgemental environment where mentees can take risks (such as performing in the Year 9 Drama session) (Field notes).

### **What the stats tell us.**

The highest means scores identified in the survey data were for ‘respecting Aboriginal Elders’, where both Core and Outreach students showed mean scores of 5.83 and 5.80 (out of 6), respectively.

## **Making connections with Indigenous peers, role models and culture**

### *The AIME curriculum*

1. Overarching Principles. For example, mention of “the AIME way” (S-Rac). This includes the motto ‘Indigenous means success’
  - i. *Connection to kinship and community.* For example, “...On your shoulders, you carry the responsibility and weight of generations that are willing you to seize the chances in front of you and step up to the challenge” (IW-10, p. 5).
  - ii. *Sessions begin with an issue/challenge and workshop it to empower mentees to succeed.* For example, in S-PM2 scripting for the session concludes, “remember that you are here for a very real reason, each and everyone of your [sic] are leaders and you need to continue to lead as you head back to your communities”
2. Experiences offered within program documents.
  - i. *Opportunity to engage with Aboriginal cultural material.* For example, didgeridoo playing in the video used in session 8 is a “mix of AIME/Homer/Dell on Didg/KG dancing” (LDSG-8), artwork on the covers of Interactive Textbooks (IT-9, IT-10)
3. Content encapsulated within the experiences
  - i. *Year 9 Content (IT-9):* Exploring Identity of self and others, Aboriginality, Self expression, Identification and exploration of role models.
  - ii. *Year 10 Content (IT-10):* Identity of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person (p. 53).

### *Mentee comments*

Being positive about culture was a key impact of the program on the young mentees and an important achievement of the AOP. As one mentee explained, “I reckon it’s *important* to learn about your culture and when you do you become more positive in it” (UOW, Year 10, emphasis added). Another mentee raised the point that “It’s very important to help your culture, to remember your background” (UOW, Year 10). Learning and being positive about culture was connected by mentees with “learning you can be strong” (UOW, Year 10). Mentees also described learning about Aboriginal history and contemporary experiences as well as participating in artwork activities. One mentee described how what had been learned in AIME transferred to the relationship with family:

“I learned a lot about Indigenous people because me being Indigenous from my Pop we didn’t really mean much because it was hidden from us. Now learning about Aborigines I think that I am going to go on and learn more about Aboriginals.”(UTS, Year 9)

“I think that AIME allows indigenous students to meet other indigenous students and to, I suppose, just spend some time being themselves, getting to know each other and realising that really they can do things – they’re perfectly capable.” (Mentor)

### ***AIME Facilitators - Inspiring role models***

“One of the Outreach kids got in touch with me. She said: “*Hey, you probably won’t remember me at all but you may remember me telling you how she wanted to be a police officer. I applied during my HSC. After an interview I got it and I’ve followed my dream. After hearing you speak I’ve got the confidence I needed to take the fear out of me so I could do the things I dreamed of doing so I just wanted to say thanks for all you’re doing and your story is inspiring.*” (AIME Facilitator)

We found that the connections provided by the AOP *between schools* was a benefit for everyone participating. We note that in instances where mentees are the ‘only Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander’ at their school, such between school connections are an added benefit to Indigenous young people who may experience cultural and kinship isolation in their home schools.

We observed the successes of bringing Indigenous high school students together and running sessions with mixed-school groups. The enjoyment of this connectedness is evident in one young person’s statement of why they enjoyed AIME: “Meeting other people from different schools and learning about how to be accepted, knowing never to have shame and all that kind of stuff yeah” (Monash, Year 10). Meeting and interacting with other high school students was inspiring and helped the mentees to know they weren’t alone in facing adversity or difficulty:

“I keep coming because it inspires people and young students to believe in themselves so they know no matter what they know, somebody is there and so they know they’re not the only person going through a hard time. “ (UOW, AIME Feedback Forms, Year 10)

Connectedness is a draw card for the AOP, attracting mentees to return to the program “I kept coming back because I love interacting with the other school students from different schools and it helped me meet new people” (Bond University, AIME Feedback Forms, Year 9).

#### *Mentors and facilitator comments*

In addition to connections between mentee school peers, during our observations of AOP sessions we noted connections being made between mentees with the Indigenous facilitators, with Elders and with community. These were important impacts that we suggest contributed a positive and engaging emphasis on the importance of culture for the mentees.

Mentors described learning about Aboriginal people through their participation in AIME. For example

“I’ve learned a lot and become a lot more knowledgeable and a lot more understanding of the issues and the key messages...Yes, from AIME about Aboriginality and connections – Indigenous peoples’ connection to their culture and their history and what it means to them. It just explained a lot of things that don’t get explained to non-Indigenous people so I understand those things better.” (Mentor)

AIME facilitators pointed out the importance of making connections by sharing from their lives. Such stories included both negative and positive stories. For instance, one facilitator explained to us how Aboriginality is woven throughout AOP sessions and how connections are made between the lives of AIME staff and those of the mentees.

“I really think it’s the Aboriginality side of things that really is the main thing because in each session – in the Aboriginality session, in the racism session, in the drugs and alcohol session – we all have to share something about our life, an experience that we’ve had or something like that and unfortunately like to say, most of us have had similar... most of the Aboriginal staff have had similar upbringings and have overcome a lot of tragedy and a lot of family problems and things like that and unfortunate to say, but most of the kids will come from that same background. They can see that

#### **What the stats tell us.**

For the measure of ‘cultural safety within school’ both Core and Outreach mentees were very positive in this factor with mean scores of 5.45 and 5.28 (out of 6), respectively.

This suggests that all the AIME mentees are comfortable with their culture when they return to the school environment.

For the Outreach mentees, the strongest predictor of cultural safety within school was AIME’s ability to show them the importance of completing Year 12 (AIME question 6).

“Oh, if this person who is exactly like me ten years ago growing up with domestic violence or alcoholism or things like that and they’re now doing this, that’s awesome.” (AIME Facilitator)

A key achievement of the AIME Outreach program is *Connection across intersecting domains*. We use this term to refer to the intersecting-connections that the AOP makes for Indigenous high school students:

- with Indigenous high school students across different high schools;
- with Elders and Community;
- with AIME Facilitators;
- with AIME Mentors;
- with the university as a welcoming place of learning.

In achieving these connections, the AOP goes beyond conventional youth mentoring which largely seeks to build relationships with older students/adults. This is a key feature of the mentoring approach used in the AOP.

“It must have been really reassuring for them to know that mainstream Australia really believes in them and thinks highly of them and knows they’re capable and doesn’t see them as problem people. It’s helpful to students just to know that when they go into the real world they really can connect with people and that they’re not isolated and weird and different and nobody understands them but actually they can form connections with people who they can understand and who can understand them notwithstanding that everybody is an individual and is slightly different”.

(AIME University mentor)

## Dealing with racism

### *The AIME curriculum*

#### 1. Overarching Principles

- Expectation that mentees have also experienced key themes within the sessions.* For example, “...an experiment conducted in the USA on racism when shopping, which I’m sure many of you kids have experienced”
- Sessions begin with an issue/challenge and workshop it to empower mentees to succeed.* For example, in S-PM1 the background to the session explains “...to engage them with Australia’s political history, but more importantly an opportunity to create visions for the future”

#### 2. Knowledge the mentees’ ought to have

- Ability to reflect and share personal experience.* For example, the Personal Page within workbooks (IT-9, IT-10) where mentees “can use the space below to create your own personal logo or tag for your book. You can work on it during quiet times during the year”. Reflective tasks in Interactive Textbooks – for example, re-telling story activity on p. 71 IT-10

### 3. Experiences offered within program documents.

- i. Activities for mentees to complete are heavily scaffolded with the mentor interaction, the timing, and resources (such as prompts, proforma scaffolds). This structure supports mentee interaction and is particularly important in sensitive topics such as racism.

#### *Mentee comments*

Although questions about racism were not targeted within the interview format, some mentees stated that the AIME program deals with racism, and clearly showed its worth in not only understanding racism, but also teaching how racism may be countered. Mentees stated that in the AOP they had learned about “racism and how to deal with racism.” (UOW, Year 10). This included learning about how to “react to certain racism” and “How to stop stereotypes of certain Aboriginal persons” (UOW, Year 9/10 interviews).

#### *Mentor and facilitator comments*

Fieldnotes from the Racism Session we observed provide an example of the types of interactions that occur in these sessions. Below is an excerpt from a session where an AIME facilitator addressed a class of mentees in the AOP.

“The AIME facilitator – sits on table / very relaxed.

Facilitator explains where he’s from. Uses ‘The Mask’ movie analogy re Irish Father and Aboriginal mum – minority in Catholic schools.

Explains: I ‘Don’t look Aboriginal’ and received flack from school. He shared his experience of racism / not just race hate.

Evaluation Observer notes: “Very fluid transition to ‘racism content’”

(Field notes, Racism Session)

“The facilitator encouraged students to remember that ‘Whatever I do impacts what everyone thinks of my culture’ / reduce racism by positively representing your culture and people... Throughout recess students continued to share racism stories.”

(Field notes, Racism session)

Modelling and providing strategies for dealing with racism is a key impact of the AOP that connects across other impacts and across the delivery of the AOP. Detailed discussion of racism and the components that support dealing with racism is provided in the conclusion of this section (2.4.1).

### **Aspiring to finish school and beyond**

#### *The AIME curriculum*

1. Overarching Principles. For example, encouragement – “Program Manager to give speech about how impressed they are with the students” (LDSG-8).



2. Dedicated sessions such as ‘Window to Fame’, ‘Window to the Future’. In these sessions guest professionals visit the AOP at the university. Mentees are given the opportunities to ask these professionals questions and to find out about different career paths.
3. Experiences offered within program documents. Structure – Program Manager leads/controls the sessions with scheduled opportunities for mentor/mentee interactions
  - ii. *Structured activities within sessions with specific timings indicated.* Each session includes input from PM, mentor and mentee time to complete workbook activities/ engage in discussion, viewing of clips. For example: S-Res – PM input (13mins), mentor/mentee interactions (41 mins), viewing clips (7 mins); S-Rac - PM input (5 mins + final discussion) mentor/mentee interactions (22 mins), viewing clips (8 mins).
4. Exit outcomes emerging from program documents. For example, content is prepared to provide mentees with life skills for success within contemporary society. Expectation mentees will graduate (graduation is scheduled for each year level Outreach schedule CDO).

#### *Mentee comments*

Comments from mentees were positive regarding the influence of the AOP on their aspirations for education. For example:

“It [AIME] gives us Aboriginal kids a good chance of getting into uni and a good view on things.” (UOW, Year 10)

“I haven't always been the school person, like I don't always go to school but it kind of has changed me in a way. But I don't know, I just – I've never really been to school but yeah, they kind of changed my mind and they, like make it more fun and outgoing and stuff so yeah.” (UTS, Year 11)

“It [AIME] encourages you to do more work at school ... Encourages you to get further.” (UOW, Year 9)

“Thank you for helping me take my first steps into the real world, you’re amazing!” (USC, Feedback forms, Year 12)

#### **What the stats tell us.**

The vast majority (83% of Core and 94% of Outreach) did not want to leave school before completing Year 12.

The strongest predictor for wanting to complete Year 12 was AIME teaching the value of high school completion (AIME Question 6) for both programs.

49% of Core and 62% of Outreach aspired to tertiary education after leaving school.

“That if I want something, I need to go and seize it with my own two hands.” (RMIT, Feedback forms, Year 11)

We noted that a number of mentees described having goals for their futures prior to starting the AIME program and that AIME assisted in consolidating goals and pointing to some ways to achieve these. Some mentees mentioned that AIME had caused them to change their aspirations and remain in school. The above quotes are indicative of this feedback, which ranged from changes in attitudes to attending school to increases in application to schoolwork and the articulation of educational and training goals. Our overall impression was that the high school students involved in the AOP have been positively influenced by AIME in relation to their schooling. We observed AIME encouraging them to remain engaged in school.

Mentees spoke to us about their goals to complete year twelve or to secure training. One mentee described how “I was going to leave next year... Now I think I’ll stay longer.” (UOW, Year 10). Another explained prior to AIME she:

“... wasn't really too keen on school but then once I came to the uni and they helped me to build a different look on school and helped me with my experience and my grades and everything I decided... that gave me a whole other outlook on school.” (University of the Sunshine Coast, Year 10).

“... once they’ve [the mentees] done [the outreach program] a couple of weeks they look forward to coming, they feel better about their school stuff. You just hear it in conversations that they’d have with you, with other AIME students; they enjoy the time that they spend at AIME and it makes them feel good about themselves and about what they’re learning at school.” (Mentor)

Examples of what mentees described AIME teaching them about school included awareness of the importance (and usefulness) of school “It’s useful if you want to get somewhere in life and without it then you don’t really get to succeed” (UTS, Year 9). This comment is from a young mentee who had explained that previously “I didn’t really care about my education, but then I want to be a vet and they told me that if I want to be what I want to be I have to do work and believe that I can. In school you learn all that”. (UTS, Year 9).

Mentees also developed understanding of what is needed to remain in and succeed at school (this is in addition to ‘remembering respect’). For instance, mentees explained they had learned to be more “attentive”, that AIME had given “understanding in finishing school and going far with our lives” (SCU, AIME Feedback Form, Year 9) and that “it provided me with the skills and information to create a successful future” (RMIT, AIME Feedback Form, Year 12). This positive attitude to education is demonstrated in the excerpt of an interview with two young mentees (14 years of age).

- Mentee 1 [we need to be] More attentive and to realise what you have of something.
- Mentee 2 Like some people don’t have what we have.

Mentee 1 We should go to school [0:01:15.2].  
Mentee 2 Because we have it just like there.  
Interviewer What do you mean? What do you have?  
Mentee 1 & 2 School!  
Mentee 2 Like we have education.  
Mentee 1 Yes, we have education.  
Mentee 2 Teachers that care and stuff.

(UTS, Year 9)

In our experience as educational researchers, statements such as the above are important to note. These comments are by Year 9 students (an age and year level where students may display disdain or make negative comments about education) from schools in 'difficult areas' (where schooling can be under-resourced). Significantly, Indigenous people have had difficult and painful histories with institutions such as schools. In this regard we see this as evidence indicating the positive impact that AIME has on mentee aspirations for schooling and beyond.

The AOP broadly encourages mentees to consider their goals after school and given that all sessions occurred on a university campus, this privileged further study at university for the mentees. To a large extent, prior to participation in the AOP, the young people didn't know a lot about university. The AOP revealed university to the mentees. A good example of this is in the following quote:

"A bit more about uni and... just all different courses and ways you can get to uni and the ways you can get through uni and just the opportunities. Like, I mean AIME introduced me to the whole uni thing so it really helped me to understand the opportunities so that I can move on from school and you know, like that I can choose and you know, what I choose... or what I want, I don't really know what I want there."  
(University of the Sunshine Coast, Yr 10/12 interview)

Mentees commented on *learning about* opportunities but also that participating in AIME *gives them* opportunities. For example, one mentee described what they tell friends and family about AIME "I tell them about AIME's and that it's interesting and it gives me an opportunity" (Monash, Year 9). Other comments on opportunity included:

"I think I have a lot more opportunities than now that I did at the start of the year ... Like it's just made me open my eyes to the like why stop at Year 12 when you can go on and further your education with uni and other educational stuff." (Sydney University, Year 11)

"The fact that there's all this stuff about uni and how easy it is to like get into it because like we're Aboriginals and, it gives us an opportunity to know what's out there stuff like that." (Sydney University, Year 9)

### *Mentor and facilitator comments*

AIME mentors and facilitators noted the mentees were excited about going onto the university campus.

“I think they were quite excited about the idea of going on campus – it was a new location for a lot of them. I suppose many of them were from country towns or from outer suburbs so uni is quite an unfamiliar and maybe exciting destination for them.” (Mentor)

As reported in Section 2.2.3 (p. 31), one of the mentors who had volunteered in both the on campus sessions and in the tutor squads in schools was asked to compare the two programs (Outreach and Tutor Squad) and comment on the benefit of bringing the young people onto university campus rather than going out into schools. Facilitators also commented on the activity of taking mentees onto the university campus. For example:

“[In] the Outreach program the students are a lot more familiar with the university campus and gives them a more in-depth snapshot I guess of what university is like. It breaks down a lot of the barriers that way.” (AIME Facilitator)

“I think the whole breaking down the barrier of unis – your perception of that – that wouldn’t happen if it wasn’t on a campus.” (AIME Facilitator)

A school teacher also talked about the reaction the mentees had about the program initially – how they considered the city was too far away (one hour) and that most had never been into Sydney before. She saw the opportunity to come on-campus as an ability to broaden their geographic knowledge. (Field notes).

Several examples were relayed to us by teachers, facilitators and mentors of mentees who, since involvement with AIME, had decided against leaving school early. For example, one of the school teachers stated, “One of our students has decided to continue on and complete Year 11 next year, after wanting to leave at the end of Year 10” (Monash University, Teacher comment).

“I think it gives them a chance to express their feelings regarding school and Aboriginality and anything to do with that like what’s going on at home if they feel like “Oh this isn’t working, this is working” – for example a mentee that I had last year was having problems at home and so for him it was really good to be able to come and talk about it. He had a really good relationship with the Program Manager there and they had a lot of close contact with him and sorting it out through the school and I think it worked really well. I don’t know, I think it gives a chance to realise that’s sort of important and if they want to go to university then they need to finish school.” (Mentor)

## CONCLUSION

### *Making connections*

Mentors, AIME facilitators and teachers described the changes in the mentees' confidence and attitudes to schooling. We have identified increasing confidence as a major factor that impacts mentees engaged in the AOP.

We noted these impacts connect. For instance, feeling more confident had a positive effect on being proud. Such impacts build and contribute to increasing other impacts such as aspirations for schooling and further education and training.

Importantly, mentees connected their developing confidence with developing pride "To be proud, not to be shy, they (AIME) even did this with us as well." (RMIT, Year 10, Year 11).

These changes had flow on effects for mentees in their relationships with others: "I can work with people ... I'm not shy." (Sunshine Coast University, Year 10) and also in their motivations for remaining engaged in the AOP:

"I kept coming because it's really fun and teaches you to be respectful and not to be shame. The AIME program taught me that no matter what or who you are you can succeed." (Lismore, AIME Mentee Feedback Form)

### *Strength and resiliency*

Despite the perversity of negative stereotypes that have long been directed at Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Jordan 1984), it may be argued that there has been a growing ambivalence towards both the perversity and impact of racism within recent times (Budarick 2011). Although varying media, legal, and political representations may be cited as contributing to such ambivalence, some research literature has also suggested that the prevalence of prejudicial and racist attitudes directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders may also be on the decline (Pedersen and Walker 1997). Although it cannot be denied that the severity of the nature of overt racism may be diminishing as it becomes increasingly socially unacceptable to express such attitudes, some research does suggest that insidiously subtle racist attitudes and behaviours may be becoming more prominent (Pedersen, Dudgeon, Watt, & Griffiths 2006).

What may be deemed as the most important criticism about the above findings though is the lack of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in articulating the true nature of racism that they may experience. Indeed, Mellor (2003) found that when Aboriginal Australians were interviewed about their experiences of racism, overt/subtle representations were found that to be too simplistic representation. Rather, racism was reported as being verbally (e.g., name calling, jokes), behaviourally (e.g., avoidance, assault), institutionally (e.g., denial of services, over-application of punishment) and macro (e.g., media misinformation, selective views on history) orientated. Furthermore, the frequency in which the participants experienced these forms of racism led Mellor to conclude that:

The argument that there is a cultural norm against racism... may thus be misleading, at least in the Australian context. Not only was it the norm for participants in this study

to have experienced racism in their daily lives but much of the racism experienced was one-on-one, blatant, old fashioned racism (p. 483).

With findings such as this in mind (see also Dunn, Forrest, Pe-Pua, Hynes, and Maeder-Han 2009) it is critical that not only must the impact of racism be understood on the psychological, physical, social, and educational wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (Bodkin-Andrews, O'Rourke, Grant, Denson, & Craven 2010; Priest, Paradies, Stewart, and Luke, 2011; Zubrick, et al. 2005), but that effective strategies increasing the resiliency of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the face of racism also be identified. In a review of racism directed at Aboriginal Australians, Paradies (2005) identified four key themes that may minimise the negative impact racism, and should be used by counsellors, teachers, or mentors:

### **What the stats tell us.**

Both Core and Outreach mentees responded positively to the 'academic buoyancy measure' (e.g. dealing with setbacks), with mean scores of 4.56 and 4.18 (out of 6), respectively.

For the Core group, the strongest predictor of Buoyancy was how positively the mentees felt about their experiences with AIME staff (AIME Question 2).

- **Emphasise the positive:** Ensure that Aboriginal youth be buffered from the negative connotations of racism attitudes and behaviours by maintaining a positive outlook.
- **Emotional distancing:** Ensure that Aboriginal youth do not internalise racist attitudes, and understand that racism is the fault of the racist.
- **Seek social support:** Ensure that Aboriginal youth have someone to talk to so that the burden of racism is not theirs alone to endure.
- **Strong sense of identity:** Ensure that Aboriginal youth remain proud in who they are, and who their People are.

Combined with the positive themes of AIME and its other activities, the effectiveness of AIME as an agency of strength and resiliency for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth should not be denied.

## **2.4.2 Factors that are catalysts for change in the participants (mentees)**

We identified a number of aspects of the AIME program that support change in the mentees.

### **Educating and modelling how to deal with racism**

The AOP implements a program-wide approach to dealing with racism that incorporates a 'cross curricula' youth friendly design. The youth friendly approach incorporates awareness and sensitivity toward the mentees that enables a responsive and inclusive environment.

The integrated focus on educating is woven throughout AIME sessions and into informal interactions with mentees. In practice this means AIME facilitators work across AIME sessions to educate the mentees (as well as the mentors) about how to deal with racism. This educative process is achieved via positive role modelling from facilitators. Examples include the AIME facilitators describing their personal experiences (based on the AIME scripts) and describing their effective responses to racism. Individual sessions dedicated to dealing with racism are provided. These sessions include explanation of racism and opportunities for analysis and discussion between mentees, mentors and facilitators. This approach is not restricted to formal sessions, but is inclusive of the range of contacts with the mentees, where opportunities arise (e.g. lunch, walking to transport or in get together activities at the close of the day).

### **Respecting the mentees**

Mentors and AIME facilitators alike demonstrate respect for the mentees that differs from the more hierarchical relationship between teachers and students in schools. This approach to 'respect' is in keeping with the message about respect conveyed in the AIME sessions and contributes to the 'youth friendly' and culturally safe atmosphere of the AOP.

### **The AIME approach to engagement – making it fun**

AIME is immensely enjoyable for many of the mentees, and this aspect of the program is one of the sources of its appeal for the participants. Mentee enthusiasm is evident in comments such as "It's mad" and "It's just deadly" (UOW, Focus Group, Year 10). The AOP is designed to be fun and engaging for the mentees, encouraging mentees to participate in activities. For instance, one mentee explained,

"I would love it, I would do it, I would have no hesitation about going, if I was sick I would go, university's so much fun, even doing this drama thing, I hate drama but like they're making it fun, they really do, I can be a dinosaur, yeah." (Monash, Year 10)

The AOP approach to engagement brings the mentees, mentors and AIME facilitators together to participate in activities. This places the mentees 'in the middle of it' as one year 11 participant explained:

"Oh it just like gets you out there into the middle of it, it's fun, it's new." (RMIT, Year 11)

The approach to enjoyment and fun was not at the expense of the more serious side of learning and participation. Rather the 'serious content' was incorporated into the program, with mentees commenting on the fun aspects of the program alongside comments about responding to challenges or 'staying in school':

"Because it's enjoyable, and its ok to have fun and that if you want to succeed, you have to get through the hard obstacles in your life first." (UTS, AIME Feedback Form, Year 9)

“Because it’s so good and really fun. It’s important to stay in school” (USC, AIME Feedback Form, Year 11)

The above comments are indicative of mentee enthusiasm for the program, the importance of it being enjoyable and fun as well as their acknowledgement of the importance of ‘staying in school’. The AOP is achieving a balance in the delivery of a fun and enjoyable program that at the same time is engaging mentees in educational activities and goal making.

### **Emphasising the importance of Culture**

The theme of making connections interwoven throughout the AOP is underpinned by an emphasis on connections to Indigenous peoples and to culture. AIME does not deliver an Aboriginal Studies curriculum or focus, rather, it delivers an effective youth focussed emphasis on the *importance of learning about, connecting with and having pride in culture*. A range of Indigenous role models participate in the program and connect with the young mentees to deliver this message (for example, via presentation by Aboriginal Elders who not only use language but also explain their journey to learning about their culture and language). These role models emphasise to the young people the importance of learning and being proud of their culture, doing this with humour and sensitivity, and encouraging them to not be shamed about learning. We observed many instances of AIME facilitators discussing their journeys to learning about culture and identity.

### **Creating a sense of Cultural Safety**

Cultural safety refers to “an environment that is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for people; where there is no assault or challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience of learning together” (Williams 1999, cited in Bin-Sallik 2003). Cultural safety is important because Indigenous students who learn in culturally safe environments have reported improvements to their “confidence, self awareness, feelings of competence; greater skills in communication ... [and being] more optimistic about the future” (Lippman 1974 in Bin-Sallik 2003). Section 2.4.1 of this report demonstrates that the AIME mentees report similar self-improvements resultant from their participation in AIME. This, in turn, suggests that AIME creates a culturally safe environment for their mentoring programs.

Without positing a ‘how to’ formula for creating a culturally safe environment, the Evaluation Team would like to acknowledge the ways that AIME creates a culturally safe learning environment for the mentees. We observed that the AIME program produced an environment that was highly positive for the identity of mentees and for them to explore the importance of their Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander identity. The AOP fostered an environment of respect and shared meaning, with the AIME facilitators and guest speakers (including those shared via in digital media recorded for AIME) leading by example.



### 2.4.3 What works in the AOP

#### AOP fits the structures of schools

The AOP is more suitable to the structures of schools than the Core program. The latter, which operates on a 1 hour per week model over fifteen weeks requires mentees to be absent from school at the same time each week. This can result in missing scheduled school lessons on a weekly basis and could potentially affect ongoing subject participation. The AOP requires mentees miss three full days over three terms. Although this may represent a larger time away from school commitment (approximately 18 hours compared to 15 hours in the Core), the cumulative effect of missing the scheduled subjects is unavoidable in the Core. AOP mentees may have lesser issues with catching up on scheduled classes. When scheduled classes are missed for one day of the AOP it is feasible for teachers to coordinate 'catch-up material' for mentees. In this instance mentees may be missing one to two lessons per subject, as opposed to the cumulative effect in the Core.

"I personally believe that the Outreach is just as valid as the Core Program in reaching those outcomes which is getting kids through to Year 12 and on to uni or full-time work."  
(AIME Facilitator)

#### Facilitators engaging with mentees

Engagement with mentees by the AIME facilitators is a key factor for the AOP. The presentations are highly polished and the facilitators have an effective approach that engages the mentees. This engagement works at a whole group level (across a session of up to 15-20 young people) as well as to smaller groups and one to one.

#### Taking feedback on board to make improvements

Mentors appreciated the feedback mechanism and that AIME was "really interested in the AIME mentors themselves and where they're from". The mentors reported high levels of satisfaction with their engagement with enthusiastic facilitators and pointed out that it built a network for them. In their interviews two mentors commented on lack of responsiveness of AIME staff. We suggest that this may have occurred were AIME staff were under pressure due to time constraints and understaffing which affected their capacity to be responsive to mentors.

#### AIME Indigenous facilitators – Successful, accessible & identifiable role models

The AOP provides young Indigenous mentees with direct access to AIME Indigenous facilitators. Information is presented about the AIME facilitators – about their background, their education, how they experienced education and how they achieved their successes. This information is presented in a lively and engaging way and integrated across the sessions as appropriate. The mentees are able to talk with the AIME facilitators and ask questions. The AIME facilitators are identifiable role models for the mentees that the mentees can relate to and who can be sources of inspiration (refer 'Inspiring Role Models' in 2.4.1).

## Engaging resources (rich media)

The AOP uses rich media resources that are engaging for the mentees (and for the mentors). This includes material produced in-house by the AIME organisation that features, for example, recordings from young Indigenous sporting and Arts identities. Mentors described the good resources that were used with the mentees such as the Drama Video. Mentee comments on the materials included: “You learn about things” and “It’s better education” (UOW, Focus group, Year 10). We received feedback on content that could be improved, such as the need for local content (Australian, not North American). We note that AIME is aware of this point and we understand that this is being addressed.

## 2.5 What are current operational AOP costs and what are the projected costs for expansion? (Question 5)

### The cost of the AOP compares favourably with the Core program.

Discussion of AOP costs is based on AIME Financial costs supplied by AIME.

### Historical Data: Changes to delivery of AIME Core and AOP

There is a trend in AIME’s current program expansion strategies to a reduction in the Core programs and increase in Outreach programs. AIME financial documents provide explanations for this change. Key points are summarised below:

#### *Expansion to new geographic areas and mentor/mentee factors*

“The increase in the number of Outreach program sites is a combination of expansion into new areas and also some existing Core sites shifting to Outreach sites. The shift of Core sites to Outreach sites is [due] mainly [to] being able to match the supply of Mentors and Mentees.” (‘Financial Information Prepared for Researchers’, AIME document)

“They love it because it’s less time out of class for their students, they can assign a chunk of day – it’s cheaper for them as well because they’re not paying an extra teacher for X amount of days throughout the year and the travel in between; they’re just paying the teacher for four set days throughout the year so schools love the model. It comes down to evaluating the outcomes from the model and I’m really, really excited to see what we get over the next probably two to three years as far as progression rates with our students – Outreach compared to Core.” (AIME Facilitator)

#### *A wider geographical range supports access to Indigenous school mentees*

“... At some university sites there is a limited number of Indigenous high school students within a 30-minute radius. For example, at Monash University there [are] very few schools within 30 minutes with significant numbers of Indigenous students. By shifting to the Outreach model we’re able to offer the program to a wider

geographical range of schools to build the number of mentees participating.”  
 ('Financial Information Prepared for Researchers', AIME document)

**Regional universities – High numbers of Indigenous school students, lower university student numbers**

“... At other university sites, particularly regional university campuses there are significant numbers of Indigenous students but smaller university student populations. For example at Coffs Harbor there are large numbers of Indigenous students at [the] surrounding high schools but attracting the number of mentors from a small student population (less than 2000) is not possible. Thus the Outreach program, where a [1:1] ratio is not required, allows a higher number of Indigenous high school students to participate as mentees.” ('Financial Information Prepared for Researchers', AIME document)

**Super Sites – Addressing the range of needs**

“... AIME would ideally like to see more Super Sites developed off the back of the foundations laid with the existing programs that either feature a Full Core, Full Outreach or Outreach 1 at the moment.”  
 ('Financial Information Prepared for Researchers', AIME document)

Table 2.8 Patterns of program delivery change by site from 2012 to 2013

Sites	2012			2013			Net Change**
	Model*	Core	Outreach	Model*	Core	Outreach	
Sunshine Coast	FC	1	1	FO	0	3	+2 O, -1 C
Brisbane	FC	1	1	FC	1	1	NIL
Gold Coast	FC	1	1	FO	0	3	+2 O, -1 C
Lismore	O1	0	1	FO	0	3	+2 O
Coffs	O1	0	1	FO	0	3	+2 O
Sydney	FC	1	1	SS	1	4	+3 O
East Sydney	FC	1	1	Not running AIME program			
Wollongong	FC	1	1	FC	1	1	NIL
North Melbourne	FC	1	1	FO	0	3	+2 O, -1 C
South-East Melbourne	FC	1	1	FO	0	3	+2 O, -1 C
<b>New sites</b>							
Rockhampton				O1	0	1	+1 O
South Coast				FO	0	3	+3 O
Ballarat				O1	0	1	+1 O
Adelaide				FC	1	1	+1 O
							+1 C
Perth North				OO	0	2	+2 O
Perth Central				FC	1	1	+1 O
							+1 C
Perth South				FC	1	1	+1 O
							+1 C
<b>Totals</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>34</b>	

\* Legend of program 'models': FC = Full Core, O1 = Outreach 1, FO = Full Outreach, SS = Super Site, OO = Other Outreach. These models or combinations of program delivery are explained in the ensuing subsections.

\*\* Legend of changes: O = 1 Outreach program, C = 1 Core program

The above represents a significant increase from 2012 to 2013 in the number of Outreach programs run (from 10 to 34) and a slight decrease in the number of Core programs run (from 8 to 6).

### Delivery of the AOP and projected costs for expansion

AIME delivers Outreach and Core programs in five different combinations that vary according to the needs of each location. The combinations are:

- Outreach 1 (O1): only 1 AOP is offered
- Full Outreach (FO): 3 AOPs are offered (and no Core program)
- Full Core (FC): 1 AOP and one Core program
- Super Sites (SS): 4 AOPs and 1 Core program
- Other Outreach configurations (OO): 2 AOPs, no Core program

The basic costing units are: (a) the projected cost of running one AOP = \$120,000 per annum; and (b) the projected cost of running one Core program = \$240,000 per annum.

Table 2.9 AIME projected models for program delivery in 2014

<b>Model</b>	<b>Programs delivered (per site)</b>	<b>Total projected model cost (\$)</b>	<b>Mentees</b>	<b>Mentors</b>	<b>Cost per mentee (= projected cost/mentees)</b>	<b>In kind</b>
Outreach 1 (O1)	1 Outreach 0 Core	120,000	40	30	\$3,000	\$2000
Full Outreach (FO)	3 Outreach 0 Core	360,000	120	80	\$3,000	\$2000
Full Core (FC)	1 Outreach 1 Core	360,000	100	90	\$3,600	\$2000
Super Sites (SS)	4 Outreach 1 Core	540,000	220	170	\$2,454	\$2000
Other Outreach (OO)	2 Outreach 0 Core	240,000	80	60	\$3,000	\$2000

AIME uses historical costs per mentee to establish the best costing model for program delivery. This assumes 60 mentees per Core program and approximately 40 mentees per AOP (40 mentees being calculated on AIME's experience of no less than 30 mentees but no more than 50 being the most cost effective and manageable mentee numbers for the AOP) (AIME staff interview).

*Expansion: From 2014 AIME anticipates being able to fully shift to the '\$360k model' (i.e., the target cost of the Full Core and Full Outreach models) as their infrastructure costs per program reduce (Interview, AIME Staff Member).*

## Costing per mentee

*AIME projected approximate costs for the AOP are \$3000 per mentee plus \$2000 in-kind per mentee*

The \$3000 represents the cost of running one AOP divided by the expected or ideal number of mentees (i.e. \$120,000 / 40 mentees = \$3,000 per mentee). The total program costs represent AIME Expenditure per University Site.

The AIME 5 Year Strategic Plan provides an overview of expenditure per University site. This comprises:

- Program Manager 20%
- Operations and Communications Manager 10%
- Program Operational Costs 20%
- Infrastructure and Support 13%
- Multimedia Communication and IT 15%
- Program Development 7%
- Community Engagement 7%
- Reporting and Research 4%
- Finance, HR and Reporting 4%

The cost per mentee of each model assumes set ratios of mentors to mentees for each of the base costing units (that is, \$240K per Core program p.a. and \$120K per Outreach program p.a.). The Core program is assumed to have 60 mentees, with one mentor per mentee (1:1 mentor to mentee ratio). The AOP is assumed to have 40 mentees with three mentors for every four mentees (3:4 mentor to mentee ratio). These mentor to mentee ratios are important because mentor time is factored into 'in-kind' support that impact the cost per mentee.

### *In-kind costs*

In-kind support to the value of \$2,000 per mentee is generated additionally to the cost-per mentee outlined in the models (in Table 2.9, above). This means the 'real cost' of each mentee is \$2,000 more than what is represented in Table 2.9.

The AIME 5 Year Strategic Plan provides an overview of expenditure in kind costs per University site. This comprises:

- Volunteers – University mentors 50%
- Universities – Office and venue hire 7.5%
- Schools – Transport, teacher relief, venue hire 25%
- Governance – Board, Leadership Council and professional mentors 10%
- Professional Services – Legal audit, multimedia, other 7.5%

We note that the ability to contribute or maintain contribution across different schools and sectors may vary. AOP expansion may be advised to factor in the sustainability of in-kind

costs. For example, some schools may be unable to meet transport costs, given distances required for AOP travel and if costs such as fuel rise in the future.

### *Variables affecting costing*

Important variables to the cost per mentee for each model include:

- Actual mentor to mentee ratios - if this is less than 1:1 for Core and/or 3:4 for the AOP the 'real cost' per mentee increases.
- Attendance – If more than 60 mentees attend the Core or more than 40 mentees attend the AOP, the 'real cost' per mentee will decrease (because the in-kind overheads such as student transport and venue hire remain constant but are distributed amongst more mentees).

### *Outreach 2013*

In the 2013 Calendar Year AIME's budgeted expenses are slightly above the current 2014 model (see Table 2.10).

*Table 2.10 Budgeted expenses for 2013 program delivery, by model and site*

<b>2013 Sites</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Core programs</b>	<b>Outreach programs</b>	<b>Approximate cost (\$)</b>
Brisbane	FC	1	1	376,614
Wollongong	FC	1	1	376,614
Adelaide	FC	1	1	376,614
Perth Central	FC	1	1	376,614
Perth South	FC	1	1	376,614
Sunshine Coast	FO	0	3	376,614
Gold Coast	FO	0	3	376,614
Lismore	FO	0	3	376,614
Coffs	FO	0	3	376,614
South Coast	FO	0	3	376,614
North Melbourne	FO	0	3	376,614
South East Melbourne	FO	0	3	376,614
Rockhampton	O1	0	1	125,538
Ballarat	O1	0	1	125,538
Perth North	OO	0	2	251,076
Sydney	SS	1	4	753,228
<b>Totals</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>5,774,748</b>

In 2013 the base cost units for the models are approximately: (a) \$125,538 for each Outreach program, per annum; and (b) \$251,076 for each Core program, per annum. Assuming the mentee numbers for each of these basic costing units holds true (that is, 40 mentees per Outreach program and 60 mentees per Core program), *the approximate 2013 cost per mentee is \$3,138 for Outreach and \$4,185 for Core programs.*

The above costs per mentee are comparable to the combined cost per mentee for the previous year (considering all AIME programs and mentees in 2012) that was reported as averaging \$3,427. (NOTE: costs per mentee do not take into account the \$2,000 in kind support received for each mentee, thus the 'real' cost per mentee is \$2,000 more than stated).

## **Conclusion**

AIME financial data indicates the AOP favourably compares to the Core. Financial support for the AOP comprises AIME expenditure and in-kind support. The AOP is providing a flexible option for expansion to a wider geographical area and to regional universities.

### **2.5.1 Program expansion considerations / limitations**

AIME has a 5 Year Strategic Plan (2012-2016) that provides an overview of future planning, inclusive of sources of financial support. This includes the AIME Mission Statement:

#### AIME Mission Statement

“Engage 20 university sites across Australia, and secure \$28 Million funding to be able to engage 6000 Indigenous students and 2000 university Mentors annually by 2016. For the Mentors we want to provide the best graduate development program in Australia, and for the kids we want them finishing school at the same rate as every Australian child and achieving 100% transition into further education, employment or training.”

Sources of financial support are planned to be split across three sectors:

- Universities
- Corporate and Philanthropic
- Government

Considerations for AOP expansion are provided below. We note that the AIME organisational structure provides a means to address expansion considerations.

## **Scaling up**

Scaling up interventions such as the AOP requires a number of considerations (The Population Council Inc. 2013). These considerations include:

### *A phased approach*

Procedures and resources required can be identified and adjusted as required. A phased approach enables problem solving to occur, whilst supporting the objective of achieving expansion.

*AIME will need to identify the procedures and resources required to implement the AOP. Changing demands placed on these procedures and resources will need to be planned for to support expansion.*

### *AOP sites and organisational capacity*

Scaling up the AOP will place higher organisational demands on AIME (for example, the provision of staff training, development and ongoing support). AIME will need to have mechanisms in place to identify changing organisational demands and respond accordingly. A phased approach will support this process.

### *Small-scale trials*

Where scaling up the AOP involves expansion into domains previously not accommodated in the AOP (for example, different communities to those usually served by the AOP) small scale trials are an appropriate means to develop and test resources and procedures.

## **Staffing**

AIME have reported that in 2013 the organisation has introduced a structured work-week for all Program Presenters where specific tasks (community consultation, school visits, data entry, mentor engagement etc) are timetabled each day.

- In expanding the AOP it will be important to continue this level of structure and to ensure Program Managers have a balanced workload, and are not overloaded. Program Managers have an important role for the conduct of liaison work with schools and community at each AOP site and this needs to be factored into workload estimates. The time pressures of the Program Manager are likely to increase in parallel with increased distances of school sites from the university.
- There is a need for Indigenous staff for the facilitation of sessions and as Program Managers at AOP sites. This will need to be balanced with program expansion in order to achieve the AIME objective of Indigenous staffing. Capacity building for Indigenous staff is of critical importance to ensuring this objective.
- Local presenters are a clear benefit for sessions, providing connections for the mentees that increase the accessibility of the AOP. As the AOP expands how local presenters can be included in the AOP will need to be explored and developed and plans instituted to support this beneficial feature of the AOP.
- During expansion AIME staff will require additional support. Management will need to identify changes in workload structure and provide supports to staff. It will be important to maintain the 'on the ground' community liaison processes as well as the interpersonal work that Program Managers conduct with school students, teachers and community.



## Importance of ‘proper’ community consultation

Expansion of the AOP will require appropriate community consultation. Factors to investigate and plan for include:

- Differences in Indigenous communities across Australia
- Languages (first language not English)
- Diversity of Indigenous peoples in Australia
- Content – can it be ‘central’ and replicated across diverse communities – what can be replicated, what needs to be changed for different communities?

Expansion of the AOP will need to take into consideration the above points and develop strategies for expansion. It will remain important that forward planning allows for the time required to develop appropriate consultations.

## Importance of forward planning

AIME have reported that the Program and Operations Director and his/her team develop a “high-level operations schedule for the year. This takes into consideration school and university holidays, specific campus semesters, different state school terms etc. For example – The Gold Coast program has already commenced for 2013 yet the other sites don’t commence until April.” (AIME Staff). In 2013 AIME recruited a Government and Universities Relationship Manager whose job it is to deepen the relationships and engagement with universities. This includes “high level planning to decrease any timetable clashes” (AIME Staff).

This level of forward planning will need to be maintained for expansion of the AOP. Planning will continue to require detailed and up to date knowledge of a range of structural considerations with school and university stakeholders. These include:

- *Schools*: Calenders and timing schedules will vary across Australian states and between government, Catholic and Independent school sectors.
  - Macro level: A planning schedule will need to be implemented with key considerations timetabled in (and adjusted as required each year). For example: Year 12 examinations dates (across the year, end of year, mid year, etc).
  - Micro level: variations between schools and between regions.
- *Universities*: University calendars and schedules vary between universities. These can vary between different campuses of a university. Schedules and timetable events include: impacts on mentors such as examination periods and session dates (these are stipulated in advance on university timetables).

## Negotiating with university pressures to get target numbers of mentees

A protocol is required for negotiating with university stakeholder expectations of the AOP, such as the number of mentees engaged in the AOP. This needs to take account of the job responsibilities of the staff, and should relieve Program Managers to ensure their capacity to fully attend to their school, community, and mentor liaison role.

## **Mentors**

AOPs at each university site will need to attract sufficient numbers of mentors and aim to recruit university students from a range of subject disciplines. AIME has reported that this will be achieved by continuing the practices of mentor recruitment which involves “pitching to Mentors across as many faculties as possible” (AIME Staff).

AOPs will need to provide training for mentors, with greater attention placed on group facilitator skills. Techniques for building rapport in day sessions would be of benefit as well as techniques for connecting with mentees new to the program.

In 2012 AIME used paper based pre, interim and post feedback forms. In 2013 AIME will email these in an online survey to mentors. Current AIME practice is to brief mentors before and after the sessions, mentors are invited to talk to the Program Managers if they have any concerns. Program Managers send text reminders to mentors reminding them about sessions. In 2013, AIME is introducing Mentor Hangouts - where mentors and AIME staff will be given the opportunity to get together outside of program time.

AOPs will need to draw on these modes of communication and feedback mechanisms for mentors and develop these as appropriate. The ongoing use of flexible feedback mechanisms will assist mentors to have opportunities to provide feedback to AIME. Specific pre-session communication on the content and objectives of AIME sessions will assist mentors in the delivery of sessions, especially when group work leadership is required.

## **Knowledge of mentees and schools**

The number of schools involved in the AOP is important in order to have enough mentees and for diversity amongst mentees. AIME will need to continue to research sites and maintain up to date knowledge to inform the incorporation of schools into the AOP.

It is also important for AOP facilitators to have knowledge of the social context of the mentees in relation to their school. Program Managers will require advance time to prepare for AOP sessions, with opportunity for liaison with schools and teachers involved in the program.



## **2.6 Conclusions and recommendations**

In this section we address Question 6 of the Evaluation ‘How can the AOP be expanded?’ We provide conclusions and present recommendations regarding expansion of the AIME Outreach program.

### **Conclusions**

Overall the results of the evaluation indicate that the AIME Outreach Program is achieving positive results for participants that are comparable with the Core Program. AIME works successfully in a complex environment to make a difference in education and other associated outcomes for the Indigenous young people engaged in the AIME Program.

### *Is the AOP a replicable program?*

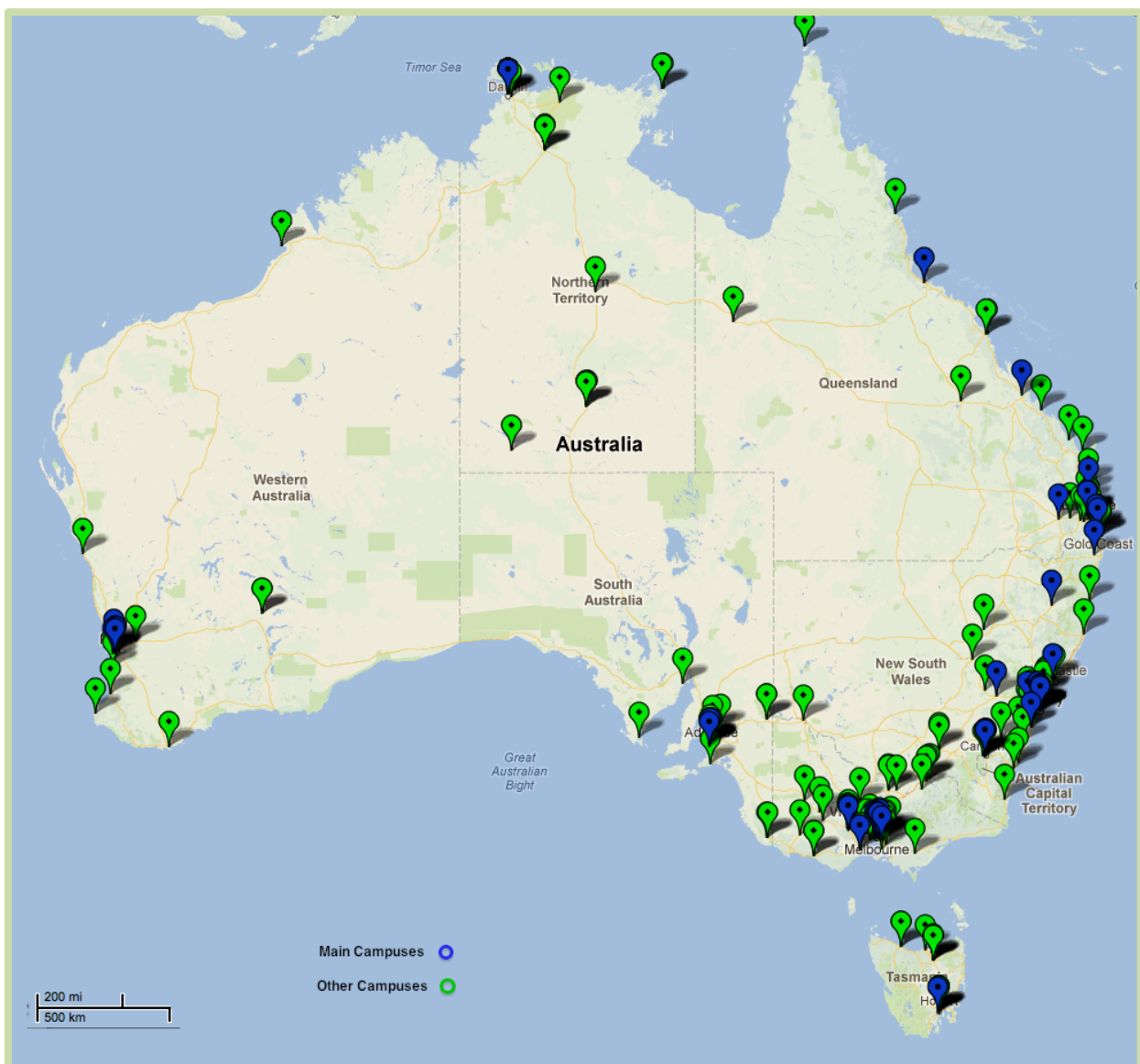
We conclude that, given attention to local variations, the AOP is a replicable program. The AIME infrastructure provides quality assurance for the AOP ensuring that the same program can be run in different sites. There is a cohesive curriculum backed up by curriculum and programming developers experienced in the delivery of the Core program.

### *Potential for Expansion and Limitations*

AOP delivery is restricted to access to university campuses within a reasonable day-return travel distance to schools. The potential for expansion can be summed up by considering the geographical spread of university campuses across Australia (see Figure 2.16).

The AOP expands on the location-based limitation of the Core program, extending the reach of AIME programs.

*Figure 2.16 Location of Australian universities and satellite campuses (source: Universities Australia, 2010)*



The limitations imposed by distance from universities necessarily means Indigenous school students beyond the AOP site radius are unable to participate. Given this limitation, future planning for expansion of AIME program delivery could investigate alternative mechanisms for accessing these school students. This may include, for instance, the use of tele-mentoring or overnight visits to university campuses.

### *The AIME organisational structure*

The AIME organisational structure provides infrastructure that currently supports AOPs in different sites. The expansion of AOPs would be supported by key facets of this infrastructure (such as curriculum development, communication mechanisms and experienced staff). Modifications will be necessary to develop operations to support a larger network of AOP sites. AIME will need to identify operational requirements within the AIME structure to support expansion of the AOPs.

### *The AIME brand*

The AIME Brand is developed and well-known by stakeholders such as universities and schools. This will provide a strong basis for expansion to new regions where stakeholders and communities will be less familiar with AIME.

### *Indigenous staff*

AIME facilitators are key in terms of the importance of their stories, their connections and their kinship. To address this important part of the AIME program, AIME has implemented a model where there is an Indigenous Program Manager or non-Indigenous Program Co-ordinator at each site. In the case of a site having a non-Indigenous Program Co-ordinator, an Indigenous National Presenter is available for sessions. We note that there is the need for AIME to develop strategies to ensure the continuation of the AIME model of Indigenous facilitators

### *Staff training and development*

AIME provides innovative training to its presenters, including external training such as that offered by NIDA (National Institute of Dramatic Art) and in the form of training videos, coaching and rehearsals and program manuals. AIME Staff development incorporates cultural development. AIME has structured staff camps that typically run for three days, four times per year. Staff Camps provide extensive training to all AIME staff that includes instruction from AIME partner organisations.

### *AIME volunteer mentors*

AIME has recruited over 3000 university mentors since the program began in 2005. AIME has strategies in place for mentor recruitment and communications and in preparation for each session provides pre and post session briefs for mentors. AIME pre-session briefs occur in two ways - as well as fifteen minutes before each session, an email also gets sent to mentors a few days before the sessions giving an overview of the content in the form of written and audio-visual material.

Modifications for the AOP expansion noted in this report are:

- *Assessment of best practice models for recruitment and communications with mentors.* For example, given the nature of the time schedules of the AOP, it may be difficult for mentors to maintain and develop relationships with the Program Managers. A strategy to support such relationship building between AOP Days would be beneficial for mentors and possibly for mentor training.
- *Preparation for multi-sessions in AOP days.* With several sessions delivered in the course of one day, planning will be required to incorporate pre-session briefs that cover all sessions.
- *Assess and adapt the training and utilisation of mentors in the AOP.* Group facilitation in the AOP requires a different set of mentor functions and so a different skill set, compared to mentoring in the Core program. A system could be developed for: (i) identifying mentors' capability for group leadership; and (ii) where feasible, matching mentor expertise with sessions (for example, creative arts students with Year 9). Or, if mentors already have particular high-level skills such as group work leadership they could be teamed with new mentors.

#### *AIME strategic plan and expansion strategy*

AIME has developed a Strategic Plan and Expansion Strategy through to 2016. This will need to be continued and revised as expansion plans change. The Expansion Strategy will need to align with the AIME Organisational Structure and continue to identify operational considerations, continue to address scalability considerations, as well as describe mechanisms of support for staff.

A Planning Framework for the AOP needs to incorporate four components:

- *Forward planning:* Required to engage in appropriate consultation with communities.
- *Organisational Planning:* Required to identify organisational considerations and implement strategies to support staff and to maintain the integral features of the AOP.
- *Relationship Planning:* Required for ongoing development and liaison with teachers and schools, with mentees, with community and with mentors. AIME has in place mechanisms to support this process such as: 'School Principal Roundtables', 'School Visits', 'Mentor Outings'.
- *Capacity Building Planning:* Required to maintain key elements of AIME program and AIME organisation (leadership and participation by Indigenous staff).

We suggest AIME review the expansion currently in progress in 2013, which involves new AOP sites in the South Coast of NSW, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia.

### *The AIME Outreach program*

AIME has a suite of resources (inclusive of curriculum, resources and program scripts) that have been trialled and reviewed. The model is scalable and reproducible and is advantageous for quality control and testing.

AIME currently researches location data prior to commencement of AOP sites. This will need to continue with an emphasis on the variation between sites. Up to date knowledge of site-to-site differences between universities and between main and satellite campuses and how these impact session ratios (e.g. room or mentor availability).

### *AOP session ratios*

The most effective ratio of mentors, mentees and staff are provided in Table 2.11.

*Table 2.11 Recommended range of people per session / site*

<b>Year 9</b>	<b>Year 10</b>	<b>Year 11/12</b>
Facilitator	Facilitator	Facilitator
Program Manager (1)		
Support Staff - 1	Support Staff – 1	Support Staff – 1
Mentors 1:1 to 1:3		
Mentees – Maximum 20	Mentees – Maximum 20	Mentees – 15 to 20

### *AIME Outreach program delivery*

In the Core program one session is delivered at a time. In the AOP a facilitator is sometimes required to speak for longer period due to the 'back to back' structure of sessions (one session closes, another commences). We recommend revising the structure and pedagogy of session delivery to better consider the day-long sessions as opposed to weekly one-hour sessions.

While the AOP is designed for mentees to attend three days of Outreach sessions (spread over three terms), it operates from the inclusive premise that attending one session is beneficial. Mentees that attend all of the scheduled days will receive more content, however there is provision for mentees to 'join in' to the AOP and there is some provision for students to catch-up. For example, if a mentee misses a day of the Yr 11 Leadership program, there is the possibility that they can catch up on the Leadership activity.

Given there is a long time between AOP days compared with the Core program it may be practicable to explore technology-assisted alternatives to maintain support. For example, is it feasible for the mentees to be connected with the mentors, facilitators and other mentees in a virtual environment or could social media be used, or texting?

### *AIME Outreach program – AIME pedagogy for teaching 'goal setting'*

Goal setting with mentees is integral in AOP. AIME provides a structure for adjusting to changes in goals such as via modeling the ideal 'aim high and fail forward' (AIME Facilitator, Field notes). As AIME expands to larger numbers of school students there will be a continued need for AIME to factor into delivery the acknowledgement that goals change for mentees. It is likely that AIME facilitators are already role-modelling changes in goals and responding to changes. We suggest this becomes a clearly embedded message in the delivery of the AOP

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Recommendation 1: AIME continue to develop the strategy for expansion of the AIME Outreach Program**

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The strategy for expansion will need to address the following considerations:

*1.1 Expansion of the AOP will need to draw on the lessons learnt to date, including the findings discussed in this evaluation report.*

*1.2 As AIME moves forward with intended AOP expansion a rationale will need to be established for AOP expansion to regions that is based on knowledge of communities and on appropriate consultation with these communities. In recognition of regional and community variation a specific rationale will be required for each region. A 'uniform' expansion strategy may not be appropriate, with investigation required to identify any local needs and requirements and strategies adapted accordingly.*

*1.3 The AOP needs to be contextually and geographically relevant with particular reference to the recruitment of AIME facilitators from the local area. Participation in AOP sessions by AIME facilitators from the local area is beneficial for the mentees and local knowledge and materials are important for the relevance of sessions.*

*1.4 Consult with local communities and create opportunities for Program Managers to build relationships with community members. The AOP will need to maintain community consultation processes. Opportunities will need to be provided for Program Managers to maintain ongoing liaison with local communities. This is a key task for Program Managers and provides valuable connections between the AOP, the mentees, the community and the schools. Continued operational support for Program Managers will be required. For example: negotiating matters such as target numbers of participants with universities. This will free up Program Managers to liaise with communities, mentees and schools. **Recommendation:** AIME develops a mechanism at an organisational level with the universities to support Program Managers with their important community liaison role.*

*1.5 Balancing Response Time with Planning and Consultation Processes. AIME is responsive to community requests (for example quickly responding to mentee high school student requests for in school student mentoring). This is commendable, However, the requirements for advanced planning, consultation, training and preparation will need to be balanced against the delivery of quick response times. **Recommendation:** As the scale of the AOP expands, response times will need to be strategically managed to ensure the integrity of the AOP model is maintained.*

*1.6 Drawing on mentee networks to assist in connecting with local communities. Mentee networks may provide a useful mechanism for increasing knowledge about*

AIME in new communities. *Recommendation:* Explore and expand on the mentees' capacity to 'market' the AOP via communication with family and friends about their participation.

*1.7 Capacity Building for Indigenous Staff.* AIME has a record of nurturing the development of Indigenous staff. Examples include recruiting cadets from AIME mentors / mentees with individuals developing skills (and completing university) and taking AIME positions such as Program Managers. To accommodate AOP expansion an ongoing commitment to capacity building for Indigenous staff will need to be implemented. Increases in the AOP and the spread to new regions will require renewed efforts in capacity building and the identification of novel methods for establishing this in regions that are distant from AIME Headquarters in Redfern, Sydney. *Recommendation:* Staffing capacity building structures need to be implemented and included as part of the costing in funding models for supporting AIME.

## **Recommendation 2: AIME staff training, development and support**

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Continue to train, develop and support AIME staff ensuring that all training requirements are met prior to the program expansion, and that training and development is consistent across programs. This needs to:

*2.1 Establish mechanisms for the AOP at the organisational level to ensure support for Program Managers and for ensuring ongoing knowledge of site to site differences between universities and between main and satellite campuses and how these impact sessions.*

*2.2 Provide mechanisms for the training, development and ongoing support of AIME staff at AOP sites that is sensitive to the needs imposed by geographic distance and potential isolation (including cultural and collegial).*

*2.3 Continue to provide a culturally safe working environment for AIME staff and implement planning to support such an environment at AOP sites.*

## **Recommendation 3: AIME volunteer mentor training**

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Continue to train and develop AIME volunteer mentors (university students) and that training is consistent across sites. This needs to:

*3.1 Recognise the specific skill sets required by mentors for delivering the AOP (i.e. group based interaction as opposed to 1:1 mentoring). AOP Mentor training will need to reflect these differences.*

*3.2 Identify and draw on the full range of mentor expertise and proficiencies.*



3.3 Consider replicating the ‘rehearsal’ approach of training Program Managers and National Presenters with the mentors, to ensure consistency of the mentoring experience for mentees, across AOP sites.

## **Recommendation 4: Curriculum and program delivery**

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Recommended changes to curriculum and program delivery to accommodate the AOP include:

- 4.1 *‘Catch-up’ strategies in the AOP. Recommendation:* The AOP design needs to factor in structures to support mentees newly coming into the AOP (after days have commenced) and consider support / catch up opportunities for mentees who have missed a session.
- 4.2 *Session structure and delivery. Recommendation:* Some session scripts may need to be revised to accommodate AOP sequencing.
- 4.3 *Goal setting and negotiating change. Recommendation:* Include content on the need to ‘negotiate change’ to better balance the emphasis on ‘goal setting’.
- 4.4 *Schedule AOP days to accommodate school and university requirements. Recommendation:* Ensure scheduling of the AOP considers important school commitments such as state examinations, university requirements and mentors’ university commitments.
- 4.5 *Increased number of AOP days per year. Findings from 2012 AOP indicate mentees and facilitators identified the need for an increase in the number of sessions. In 2013 AIME has moved to a 4-day model for the AOP. Recommendation:* Assess the impact and efficacy of the increased 4-day model.
- 4.6 *Technology and social media. Recommendation:* Evaluate the ways in which technologies and social media might be incorporated

## **Recommendation 5: Building knowledge about the AOP**

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Conduct ongoing research and evaluation that continues to critically engage with the program and which is conducted independently. Knowledge about the AOP will assist with AIME development and expansion. This will be valuable for AIME and for the communities and stakeholders connected with AIME.

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# APPENDICES

## 4 Appendices

### 4.1 APPENDIX A: AIME STATISTICAL RESULTS

#### Background

The following results consist of a series of statistical analyses designed to explore mentee perceptions of the AIME program, and how such perceptions may be associated with desirable schooling outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Before exploring the measures and methodologies utilised, it is critical that one be aware of the lack of trust many Aboriginal communities and researchers in Aboriginal education hold towards the use of Westernised statistical models in attempting to understand the diverse lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Penman, 2006). Ranzijn, McConnochie, and Nolan (2008) explain that such mistrust is justified through the early (and arguably continual) misuse of quantitative methodologies that either supported early Social Darwinist models popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (e.g., culturally invalid IQ testing), or more recently, see a continuation of deficit orientations designed to 'solve' the 'Aboriginal problem'.

Although it may be argued that today, Aboriginal Education research may have been largely purged from Social Darwinist perspectives, and that there has been a considerable movement away from deficit orientations, a Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (2006) report into future directions within Indigenous education warned that:

While this 'deficit' view is now contested, the perception that Indigenous students are to blame for their poor educational outcomes lingers on. Disparity in educational outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students has come to be viewed as 'normal' and incremental change seen as acceptable (p.16).

It is here one can note that, even today, the failure of quantitative statistics within Aboriginal Education is characterised by its inability to effectively contribute research that will point to a more positive future for Aboriginal students. Walter (2010) summarises these alleged limitations of quantitative research, and argues that they stem not necessarily from the methodology itself, but rather the lens, or axiological framework, from which quantitative analyses are conducted. Although Walter listed a series of means by which quantitative data may misrepresent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (e.g., simplistic representations, ideological biases), she does suggest that quantitative data should move away from a problematic positioning of Aboriginality, and instead focus towards the development of a positive social change that respects the identities and voices of Aboriginal Australians. Such an approach was earlier espoused by in a review in Indigenous research by Mellor and Corrigan (2004, p.48), who firmly stated that:

The orientation of research into Indigenous education outcomes must not simply adopt a deficit or reactionary approach. Research must be forward-looking, proactive and ultimately strive to obtain social justice – equal opportunity and equitable education outcomes for Indigenous students.

Within the Aboriginal Education research context, it may argued that quantitative researchers are now standing at a junction between repetitive and continually divisive deficit orientations, and a movement towards a more positive and inclusive framework that ensures

the voices and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are heard, and more importantly acted upon. It is well past this juncture where the following set of analyses seeks to place itself, in that care was taken not to move towards the worn path of the deficit mentality, but instead to capture positive voices and successes of the AIME Core and Outreach programs.

As clearly demonstrated within the qualitative findings, positive themes such as stronger levels of confidence, pride, personal and interpersonal respect, identity, aspirations, and engagement (or lack of fear) emerged clearly within both the AIME Core and Outreach programs. Based on a combination of prior research using measures validated within the Aboriginal educational format (e.g., Bodkin-Andrews, Ha, Craven, & Yeung, 2010), and measures designed specifically from AIME consultations, the quantitative component of the Outreach and Core evaluation report shall further explore the benefits of AIME from a differing methodological perspective.

### ***Methodology***

A comprehensive set of self-report measures, capturing the voices of AIME mentees, were utilised for this investigation (see Appendix G). The measures were designed and selected in careful consultation with AIME's Relationship Manager (Reporting and Research), and were ultimately derived from a mixture of prior research reporting positive quantitative findings in Aboriginal education (e.g., Bodkin-Andrews, Dillon, & Craven, 2010), and questions specifically tailored from earlier qualitative findings emerging from the voice of AIME mentors and mentees. The survey instrument was approved by the UOW Human Research Ethics Committee (ethics approval HE12/433). In total 610 surveys were posted to potential mentee participants on Monday 17 December 2012. The nature of the measures included direct reports on varying demographic variables, perceptions of the AIME program, and a series of established multi-item variables designed to capture self-reports of self-esteem, academic confidence, identity, and engagement to school. The survey was administered to all students participating in the study (see design and procedures below). In the following section, a brief description of each instrument's purpose and subscales, is provided along with specific item examples.

### ***Demographic Variables***

Key demographic variables to be assessed include gender, age, Year-level, parental education (high school and university), 10 home educational resources (e.g., a desk to study on, educational software, internet connection), and the socio-economic index for the mentees' schools (as obtained from the my-school website).

### ***AIME Variables***

In careful consultation with AIME's Relationship Manager, a total of 10 questions were formulated (see Section 4 of Appendix G) to capture student's perceptions of their experiences in the AIME program. The measures centred on overarching feeling about AIME (e.g., Overall, what has your experience with AIME been like?), whether AIME has influenced students understanding of culture (e.g., AIME has helped me understand more about my Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander culture), educational skills (e.g., AIME has shown me how to study better for school), and aspirations (e.g., AIME has shown me how valuable University can be).

### ***Multi-item Self-Perceptions Variables***

*Academic Self-concept and General Self-Esteem Scales (Marsh, et al., 2005):* Two factors drawn from the larger Self-Description Questionnaire II- Short Version), and designed to capture

students' positive feelings about themselves (I have a lot to be proud of) and confidence within school (I am good at most school subjects). Answers ranged from False (1) to True (6).

*School Enjoyment Scale (Craven, et al., 2005)*: A five item measure designed to measure the degree to which students enjoy being at school (e.g., I like school). Answers ranged from False (1) to True (6).

*Cultural Safety Scale (Craven, nd)*: a four item measure assessing the extent to which Aboriginal students feel confident about their culture within the schooling and classroom environment (e.g., I feel comfortable with being Aboriginal in school). Answers ranged from False (1) to True (6).

*Aboriginal Pride and Respect for Elders (Bodkin-Andrews, et al., 2012)*: Two factors drawn from the larger Aboriginal Identity Measure designed to measure the degree of positive affective attachment Aboriginal students feel towards their culture (e.g., Being Aboriginal gives me strength), and the respect for their Elders (e.g., I have respect for the teachings passed onto me by Aboriginal Elders). Answers ranged from False (1) to True (6).

*Perceived Instrumentality (Miller, et al., 1999)*: a five item measure designed to capture the extent to which school is important for students' long term future goals (e.g., I do the work in school because learning the material is important for obtaining my future dreams). Answers ranged from False (1) to True (6).

*Academic dissociation (Bodkin-Andrews, nd)*: a four item measure examining the degree to which students may be disengaging from the school (e.g., I think school is of no value to me). Answers ranged from False (1) to True (6).

*Academic Buoyancy (Parker & Martin, 2009)*: a four item measure of academic resiliency framed within a positive psychology reference, where students express an ability to overcome everyday hassles (e.g., "I don't let study stress get on top of me"). Answers ranged from False (1) to True (6).

### **Key School Outcome Variables**

A series of single item measures were utilised to capture attendance (i.e., How often do you attend school), aspirations (i.e., When would you like to leave school), and achievement (e.g., In 2012, what do you think your final grade was for English?)

### **Statistical Analyses**

A variety of statistical techniques will be utilised to glean the most information from the data available. This will include not only simple frequency and descriptive (e.g., means) analyses of the data to give a general indication of students responses to the data, but also more advanced inferential statistics to aid in increasing confidence in the validity of the variables (where possible), identify significant relationships between variables, and identify important group differences. Following is a description of the more advanced statistical procedures:

*Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA)*: A series of one-factor CFAs were conducted to validate each multi-item measure's factor structure (see Bodkin-Andrews, Ha, et al., 2010 for a more detailed description). These models will be assessed according to the goodness-of-fit criteria of the Comparative Fit Index (estimates must be above .90) the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (estimates must be below .08), and also factors loadings where the estimates must be significant and above .30 (Coote, 2004; Hills, 2007). In short, CFA allow researchers to be confident that the measures accurately reflect the overarching factor representing the combination of items (Byrne, 2012).

*Multiple Indicator Multiple Cause Modelling (MIMIC):* MIMIC is considered a stronger statistical technique than traditional multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and multiple regression techniques as it simultaneously estimates the underlying factor structure of the instrument (whether it be discreet and/or continuous variables) in addition to determining the extent to which *multiple* observed or grouping variables (e.g., Core & Outreach, male & female) may influence the multiple factors (e.g., school enjoyment), and even the extent to which multiple grouping variables may interact with a factor (Marsh, Ellis, et al., 2005). Within this report, particular attentions will be placed on differences observed between Core and Outreach Students, male and female students, and middle (Years 9-10) to later year (Years 11-12) students.

*Correlational and Multiple Regression Analyses:* Correlational multiple regression analyses will be run to determine the extent to which each of the 10 AIME questions are not only related to the measures of schooling outcomes (e.g., absenteeism, aspirations, achievement) and the engagement and identity measures (e.g., school enjoyment, instrumentality, Aboriginal pride), but also whether such relations exist over-and-above the effects of the demographic variables (home education resources, parental education, school socio-economic index). Figure 1 reveals the two stage approach for the regression models.

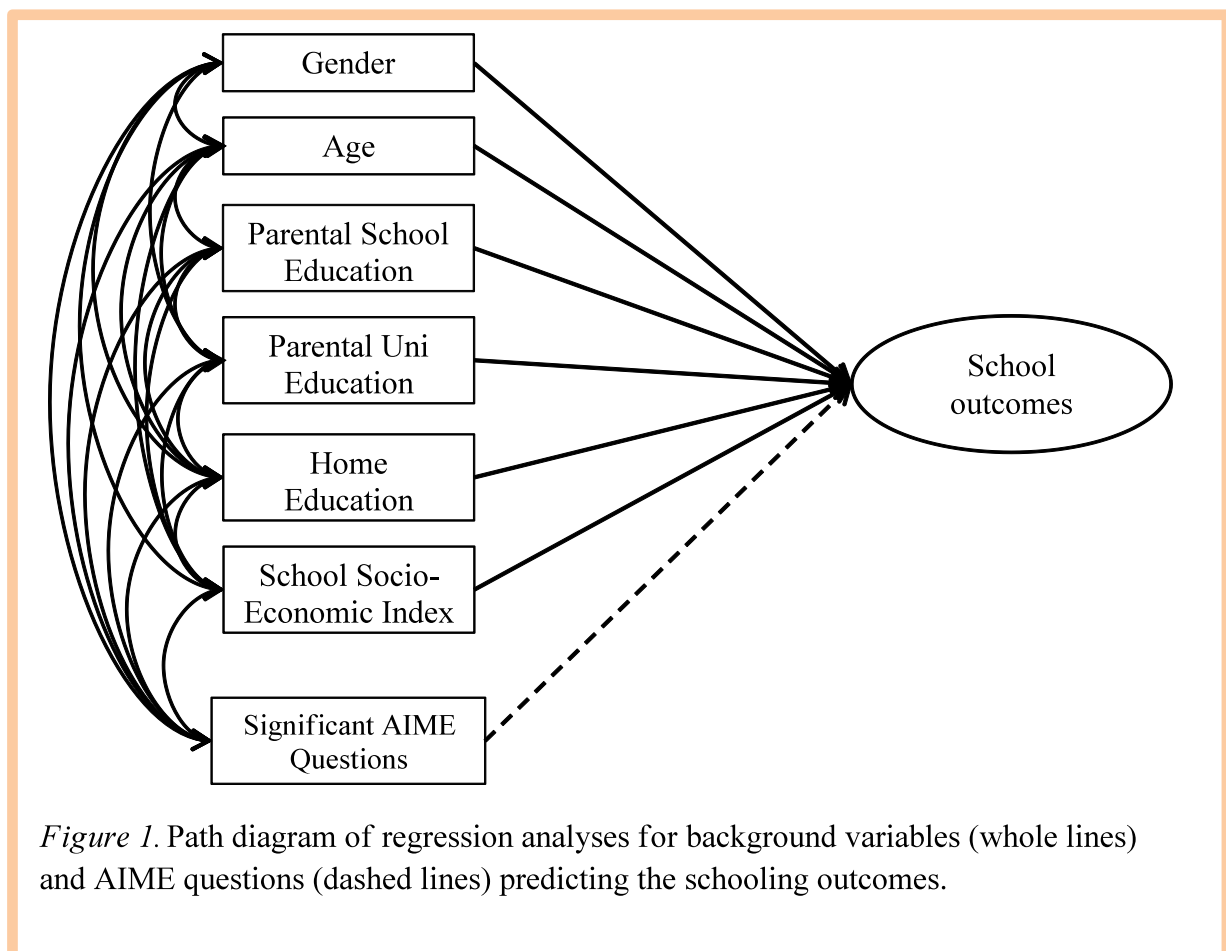


Figure 1. Path diagram of regression analyses for background variables (whole lines) and AIME questions (dashed lines) predicting the schooling outcomes.

### Results

The following preliminary analyses shall be split into *Sample Statistics* (description of the sample), *Key School Outcomes* (overall responses for all AIME participants for basic school outcomes, e.g., absenteeism), *Core Program* (statistics on perceptions of AIME by Core



participants), *Outreach Program* (statistics on perceptions of AIME by Outreach participants), *Difference Testing* (to determine if across all the measures utilised within this investigation, do the responses differ significantly for AIME Core and Outreach participants) and *Relational Analyses* (to determine if the AIME experiences are associated with positive schooling outcomes) .

### Sample statistics

To date, a total of 91 mentees have returned completed surveys, 50 participating in the Outreach program and 41 participating on the Core program. Of the Outreach participants:

- 18 were male and 32 were female;
- The average age was 15.92 years
- 6 were in Year 9, 13 were in Year 10, 18 were in Year 11, and 13 were in Year 12;
- Their average School Socio-economic Index was 973.30 (with a national average of 100).

Of the Core participants:

- 28 were male and 13 were female;
- The average age was 15.67 years
- 9 were in Year 9, 18 were in Year 10, 6 were in Year 11, and 8 were in Year 12;
- Their average School Socio-economic Index was 980.43 (with a national average of 100).

### Key School Outcomes

Across the Key Outcomes, initial data will be presented in frequency tables that provide an indication of how the total sample (including all AIME mentees) is responding for self-reports of absenteeism, desire to leave school, post-school aspirations, and final grades in 2012. This will be followed by a series of more advanced CFA analyses across a series of multi-item factors capturing subjective outcomes surrounding identity and school engagement.

#### Absenteeism

Figure 2 reveals that for both the Core and Outreach AIME mentees, the majority of respondents attended school either “All of the time” (42% for Core and 50% for Outreach) or “Most of the time” (49% for Core and 38% for Outreach). This finding is exceptionally strong as it indicates that the vast majority of AIME mentees students (91% for Core and 88% for Outreach) were only likely to have days off when they were sick, as opposed to taking regular time off school.

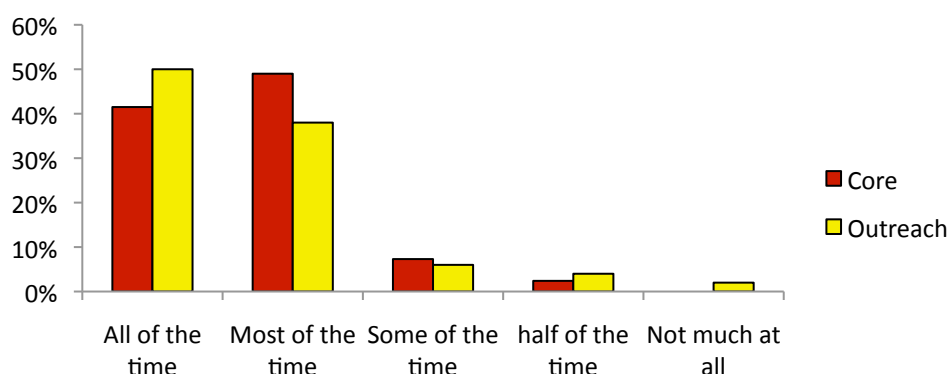


Figure 2. Self-reported Absenteeism for Core and Outreach AIME respondents

#### Desire to Leave School

Figure 3 reveals that for the Core and Outreach AIME mentees, the majority of respondents reported positive aspirations to complete Year 12 (83% for Core and 90% for Outreach).

Outreach) as opposed to expressing a desire to leave school as soon as possible (17% for Core and 10% for Outreach).

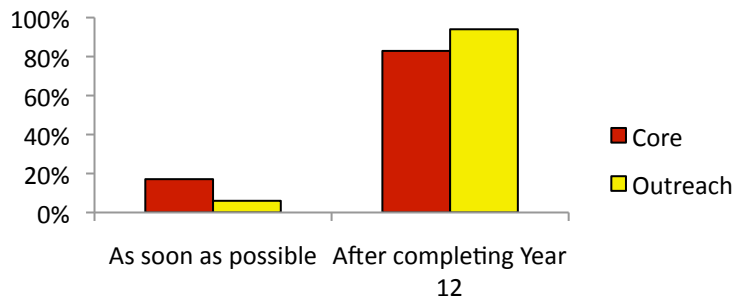


Figure 3: Self-reported Desire to Leave School for Core and Outreach AIME respondents.

### Post-School Aspirations

Figure 4 reveals that for the Core and Outreach AIME mentees, the greatest number of respondents reported a desire to go to university after school (39% for Core and 48% for Outreach). With regard to clear post-school aspirations, 20% of Core and 18% of Outreach respondents aspired to get a job, and 10% of Core and 14% of Outreach aspired to go to TAFE. Overall, these results clearly show that the vast majority of AIME respondents have clear post school aspirations (69% for Core and 80% for Outreach).

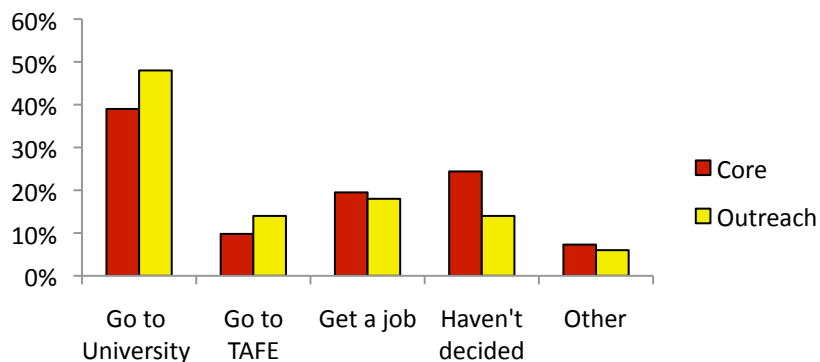


Figure 4: Self-reported Post-School Aspirations for Core and Outreach AIME respondents.

### Self-Reported Final Grades

Within Figure 5, the self-reported grades of the 2012 schooling year are displayed for both English and Math. Overall, it can be seen that the majority of AIME respondents reported either good (44% for Core and 30% for Outreach), or satisfactory (29% for Core and 40% for Outreach) English. For Math, the AIME respondents largely reported either good (27% for Core and 26% for Outreach) or satisfactory (44% for Core and 40% for Outreach) results.

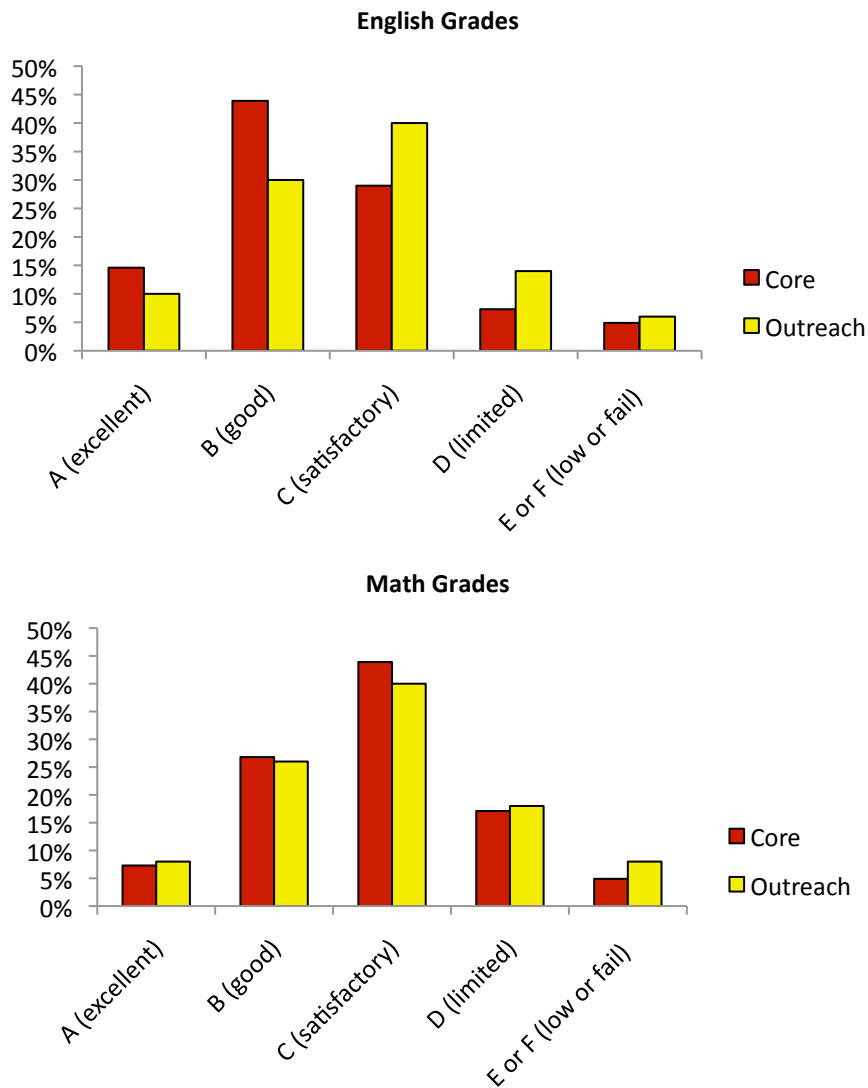


Figure 5: Self-reported grades in English and Math for Core and Outreach AIME respondents.

### *Confirmatory Factor Analyses across Identity and Engagement Measures*

Although the frequency estimates across the key schooling outcomes are positive, little can be said as to the validity of the measures, and it is here where quantitative research has too often failed Aboriginal education research (Bodkin-Andrews, Ha, et al., 2010; Ranzjin, et al., 2008). As a result, a series of multi-item measures surrounding the theme of school engagement and identity were drawn from recent research in Aboriginal Education. What is important to note about this research is that unlike previous practice, many of the measures underwent strict validation processes for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal school students (Bodkin-Andrews, 2008). What follows within Table 5 is a series of structural validity estimates (CFA statistics) that allow confidence as to whether the items within any one factor are coming to capture a meaningful construct.

Table 1. Validity estimates across multi-item school engagement and identity measures.

	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	SMR	CFI	FL range	Validity met	Core Mean	Core Mean
SELF-ESTEEM	8.38	9	.03	1.00	.31-.90	Yes	5.16	5.12
SCHOOL ENJOYMENT	5.70	2	.02	.98	.72-.90	Yes	4.34	4.14
SCHOOLSELF-CONCEPT	5.81	2	.03	.98	.67-.93	Yes	4.05	4.30
INSTRUMENTALITY	31.50*	5	.03	.95	.74-.97	Partial	4.70	4.86
DISSOCIATION	3.81	2	.02	.99	.67-.97	Yes	4.56	4.18
BOYANCY	3.16	2	.03	.99	.61-.87	Yes	2.13	1.81
CULTURAL SAFETY	.89	2	.01	1.00	.73-.89	Yes	5.45	5.28
REPECT FOR ELDERS	1.11	2	.01	1.00	.78-.90	Yes	5.83	5.80
ABORIGINAL PRIDE	2.67	2	.02	1.00	.60-.95	Yes	5.45	5.50

Note.  $\chi^2$  - Chi-square, *df* degrees of freedom, SMR= Standardized Root Mean Square Residual, CFI = Comparative Fit Index, FL = Factor Loadings.

Table 1 offers the structural validity results for each of the engagement and identity measures, and across every factor the varying validity estimates were met (Instrumentality did not achieve a favourable Chi-square statistic, but did meet multiple other goodness of fit indices). This allows for an increased level of confidence that the scales utilised in this investigation hold a level in accuracy of their meaning for the AIME mentees. In addition, the mean results to each factor were also presented, and across each factor, on average the AIME mentees responded in a highly positive manner to each factor. Figure 6 provides a pictorial representation of these results.

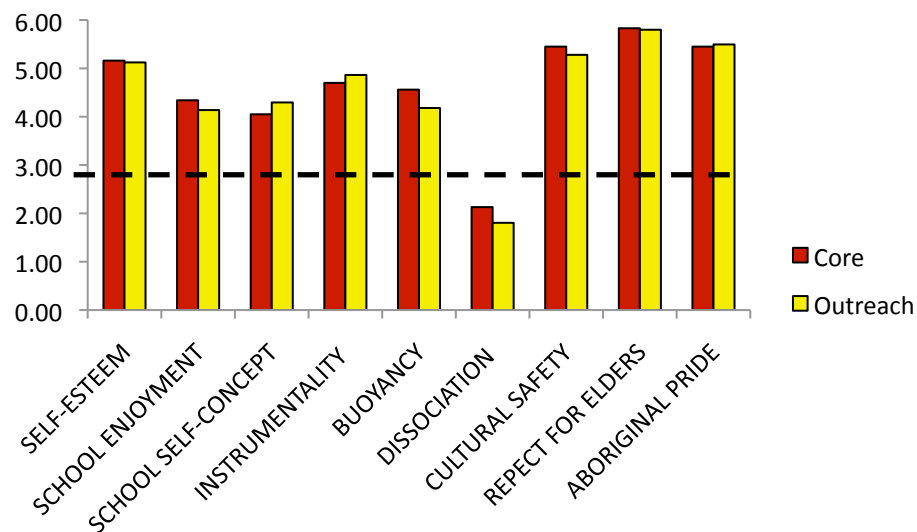


Figure 6. Mean Scores for engagement and identity outcomes for Core and Outreach AIME respondents. Note. The dashed black line indicates the division between positive and negative responses

The results presented in Figure 1 suggest that on average, across the both the Core and Outreach AIME respondents, the mentees possess strong levels of self-confidence and engagement within school (the low scores for dissociation suggest that the mentees disagree with disengaging from school). The two most positive mean responses though can be seen for the Respect for Elders and Aboriginal Pride measures, suggesting that the AIME mentees are strongly connected to their culture.

### Conclusion

Overall, across the key schooling outcomes and the engagement and identity measures, the results for the total sample indicated that the majority of AIME respondents reported positive responses. These findings are exceptionally strong considering that numerous national reports and articles have highlighted patterns of lower achievement, and engagement (both aspirational and behavioural in orientation) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to school (Bodkin-Andrews, Dillon, & Craven, 2010; DEST, 2008; Schwab, 2012). In addition, with repeated emphasis being placed within the Aboriginal education literature on the need to support and strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' sense of identity within the schooling system (McRae, 2000; Sarra, 2011), it is exceptionally promising that the AIME students are strongly connected to their culture.

### The Core Program

Although the overall results for the AIME mentees were exceptionally positive, it is critical that the data be explored more closely with regard to the merits of both the Core and Outreach programs. To more carefully examine this issue, 10 AIME specific measures were formulated to capture the beliefs and experiences of the AIME mentees with regard to the nature of the program they participated in. Figure 7 provides a display of the mean results for the CORE respondents and reveals that across each of the 10 questions, the responses were exceptionally positive and supportive of the AIME program. The most positive response can be seen for Question 2, where the Core respondents overwhelmingly suggested that their experiences with AIME staff (e.g., mentors) were good (6) to very good (7).

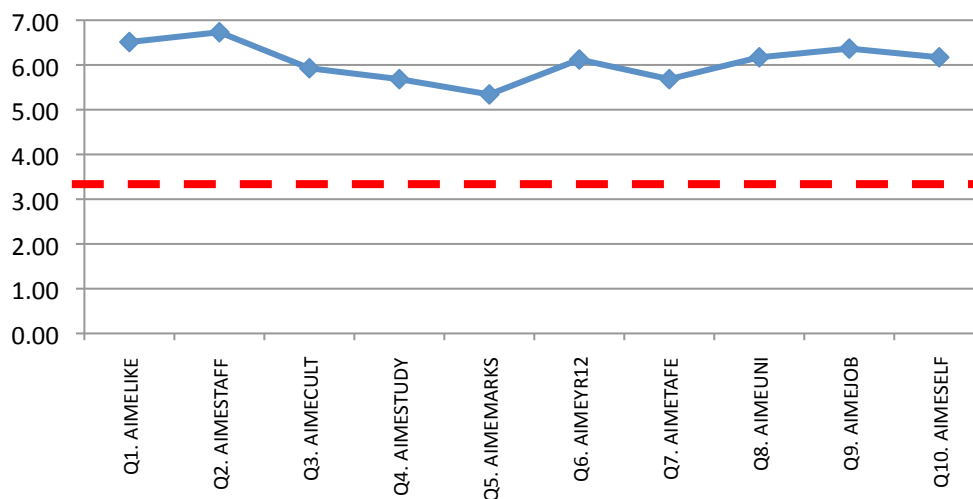


Figure 7. Mean Scores for 10 AIME specific questions across the Core respondents  
Note. The dashed red line indicates the division between positive and negative responses

### The Outreach Program

The same 10 AIME specific questions were asked to the Outreach participants, and Figure 8 provides a display of the mean results across the questions. As with the Core respondents, the responses were exceptionally positive and supportive of the AIME program, and the most positive response again was for question 2 which suggested that their experiences with AIME staff (e.g., mentors) were good (6) to very good (7).

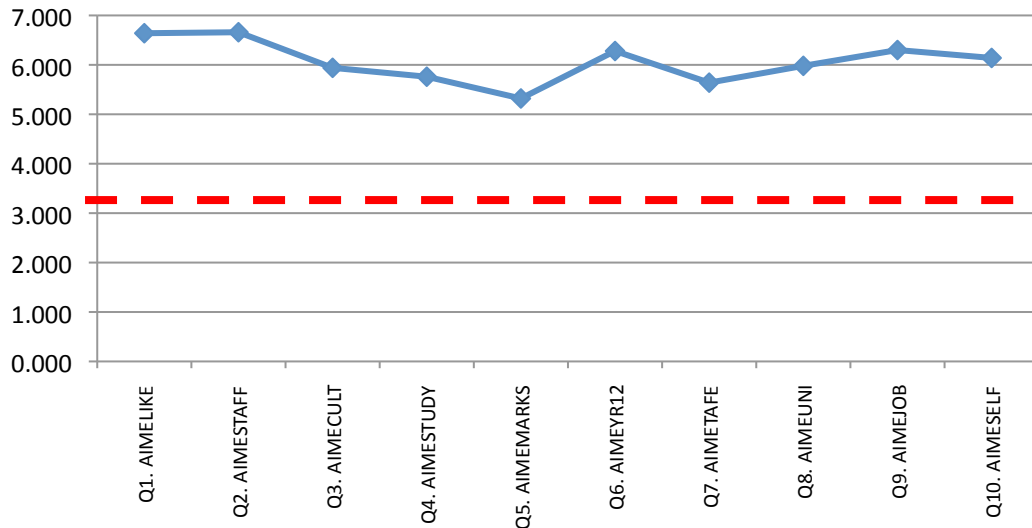


Figure 8. Mean Scores for 10 AIME specific questions across the Outreach respondents  
 Note. The dashed red line indicates the division between positive and negative responses

### Difference Testing

A set of significant questions still remain with regard to the positive findings that emerged across the total AIME sample and the key schooling outcomes, schooling engagement and identity factors. That is, do the Core and Outreach groups differ significantly across these measures, and also across the AIME specific questions? Table 6 offers the mean scores across each measure, and also offers the results for the MIMIC difference testing. More specifically, the MIMIC testing sought to identify not only differences across Core/Outreach (C/O), gender, and Year, but also interactions between gender and Year with the Core/Outreach respondents.

Table 2 reveals that across every measure, no significant differences were identified between the Core and Outreach respondents, or the gender of the respondents. From this result, it may be argued that the benefits of the AIME program are equivalent across the Core and Outreach respondents, as measured by respondent's schooling outcomes (e.g., perceived grades), their engagement (e.g., school enjoyment), their sense of identity (e.g., Aboriginal pride), and their perceptions about their experiences within AIME. Four significant differences were identified across the Middle (Years 9 and 10) to Later Year (Years 11 and 12) sample splitting, suggesting that mentees in Years 11 and 12 were more likely to possess definitive post-schooling aspirations (uni/work/job), higher math grades, higher school self-concepts, and a stronger sense of Aboriginal Pride than Years 9 and 10 students. Considering the seniority of these students, and their proximity to their post-schooling years, such results may not be surprising.

Of particular interest was the number of interaction effects identified, especially across program (Core/Outreach) by gender (male/female), although one interaction effect was also identified across program by Year-level. Table 3 offers an indication of these interactions in pictorial format, with the first seven figures displaying the significant program by gender interactions.

Table 2. MIMIC Difference testing across all measures for Outreach/Core groups and Covariates.

KEY SCHOOL OUTCOMES							
	CORE MEAN	OUTREACH MEAN	C/O	Gender	Year	C/O by Gender	C/O by Year
Absenteeism	1.71	1.70	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Year 12 Aspirations	.83	.94	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Post School Aspirations*	.68	.80	ns	ns	.16*	ns	ns
English Grades	3.62	3.24	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Math Grades	3.14	3.07	ns	ns	.25*	ns	ns
ENGAGEMENT & IDENTITY OUTCOMES							
	CORE MEAN	OUTREACH MEAN	C/O	Gender	Year	C/O by Gender	C/O by Year
SELF-ESTEEM	5.16	5.12	ns	ns	ns	-.20*	ns
SCHOOL ENJOYMENT	4.34	4.14	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
SCHOOL SELF-CONCEPT	4.05	4.30	ns	ns	.28*	ns	ns
INSTRUMENTALITY	4.70	4.86	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
BOUYANCY	4.56	4.18	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
DISSOCIATION	2.13	1.81	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
CULTURAL SAFETY	5.45	5.28	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
REPECT FOR ELDERS	5.83	5.80	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
ABORIGINAL PRIDE	5.45	5.50	ns	ns	.18*	-.20*	ns
AIME QUESTIONS							
	CORE	OUTREACH	C/O	Gender	Year	C/O by Gender	C/O by Year
Q1. AIMELIKE	6.51	6.64	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Q2. AIMESTAFF	6.73	6.66	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Q3. AIMECULT	5.93	5.94	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Q4. AIMESTUDY	5.68	5.76	ns	ns	ns	-.20*	ns
Q5. AIMEMARKS	5.34	5.32	ns	ns	ns	-.26**	ns
Q6. AIMEYR12	6.12	6.28	ns	ns	ns	-.23*	ns
Q7. AIMETAFFE	5.68	5.64	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Q8. AIMEUNI	6.17	5.98	ns	ns	ns	-.26*	ns
Q9. AIMEJOB	6.37	6.30	ns	ns	ns	-.28**	-.21*
Q10. AIMESELF	6.17	6.14	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns

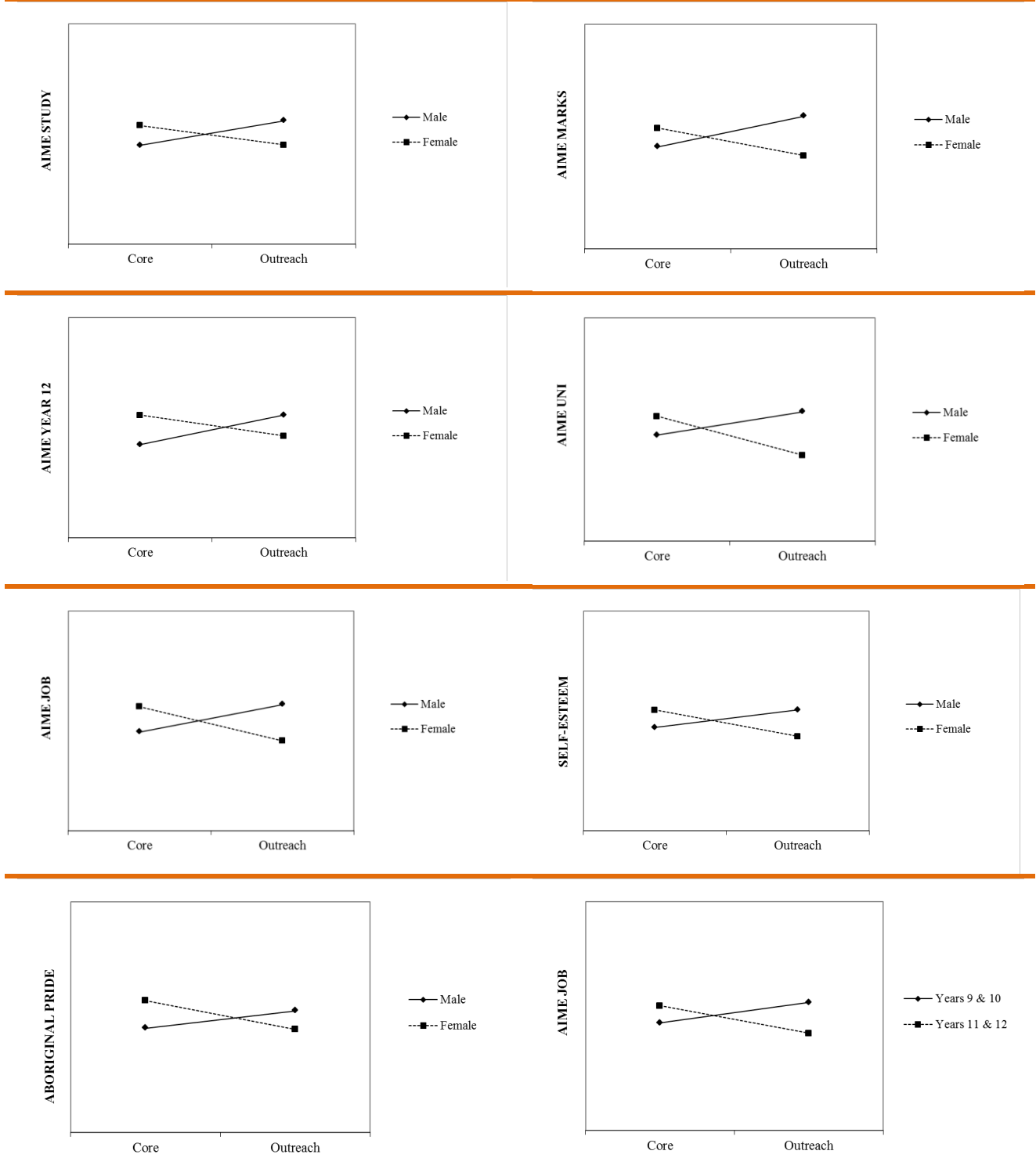
Note. Post School Aspirations was recoded to 0 = no plans and 1 = aspirations to go to university, TAFE or get a job.  
\* =  $p < .05$

The figures within Table 3 reveal a consistent trend for the program by gender interactions. That is across every measure in which the program by gender interaction occurred (e.g., AIMESTUDY, Self-esteem), it can be noted that males seemed to respond more positively to the Outreach program, and females responded more positively to the Core program. For the one program by Year-level interaction, it can be seen that Year 9 and 10 students responded more positively to AIME revealing the importance of getting a job within the Outreach program, whereas Years 11 and 12 students responded more positively to this question within the Core program. It is critical to note though that for each of these significant interaction effects, they took place in the upper bounds of positively for the variables. This suggests that although certain types of respondents may have responded more positively to the questions compared to others, all types of students, on average were positive in their responses (just some more positive than others). Thus regardless of the Core or Outreach programs, on average all respondent groups (regardless of gender or Year-level) were positive in their outcomes.

### Conclusion

The overarching result to emerge from the difference testing was that no significant differences emerged between the Core and Outreach programs. Although some significant interaction effects did emerge, the substantive nature of the mean responses suggest that regardless of the gender or Year of the AIME respondents, both the Core and Outreach programs were beneficial.

Table 3. Significant MIMIC interaction effects across all variables.





Note. These figures display the nature of the interaction only, not the magnitude. It should be noted that all interactions were identified within the positive range of the outcome variables (e.g., Self-esteem, AIMEJOB).

### Relational Analyses

The final section of the quantitative report shall examine the extent to which the Core and Outreach mentees' perceptions of the AIME program are associated with schooling outcomes (e.g., aspirations, engagement, and identity). Firstly, basic correlations between the 10 key AIME questions and the schooling outcomes will be examined for both the Core and Outreach respondents. The significant results identified will then be analysed as to whether significance can be maintained once the explanatory power of the mentee background variables (i.e., gender, age, home educational resources, a parent completing high school, a parent completing university, school socio-economic index) have been accounted for. If significance is maintained, then it is inferred that the effects of the AIME programs act over-and-above what the mentees may bring into their schools and the AIME programs (see Rowe, 2003, and Hattie, 2009, for similar arguments).

Table 4. Correlational analyses across the AIME questions with the aspirational and achievement outcomes

CORE					
	Absent	Year 12	Post School	English	Math
Q1. AIMELIKE	.01	.16	.07	.11	.20
Q2. AIMESTAFF	-.02	.16	.05	.13	.15
Q3. AIMECULT	.05	.04	.08	.07	-.02
Q4. AIMESTUDY	.04	.22	.20	.19	.25
Q5. AIMEMARKS	-.08	.18	.10	.23	.14
Q6. AIMEYR12	-.06	.42**	.02	.20	.19
Q7. AIMETAFFE	-.21	.05	.01	.14	.07
Q8. AIMEUNI	-.04	.17	-.05	.25	.24
Q9. AIMEJOB	-.10	.11	.31*	.34*	.16
Q10. AIMESELF	-.10	.14	.10	.34*	.16
OUTREACH					
	Absent	Year 12	Post School	English	Math
Q1. AIMELIKE	.05	.25	.03	-.05	-.08
Q2. AIMESTAFF	.07	.13	.05	-.06	-.21
Q3. AIMECULT	.04	.06	.06	-.17	-.22
Q4. AIMESTUDY	-.18	.33*	-.20	-.08	-.11
Q5. AIMEMARKS	-.16	.44**	-.17	-.02	-.15
Q6. AIMEYR12	-.19	.46**	-.01	.03	-.05
Q7. AIMETAFFE	.17	.13	-.11	-.08	-.21
Q8. AIMEUNI	-.30*	.51	-.08	.06	-.04
Q9. AIMEJOB	-.13	.17	.11	-.07	-.13
Q10. AIMESELF	.03	-.14	-.09	-.14	-.32*

Note. Post School Aspirations was recoded to 0 = no plans and 1 = aspirations to go to university, TAFE or get a job.

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

Table 4 reveals that with regard to the aspirational (absenteeism, desire to complete Year 12, and post-school aspirations) and achievement (English and Math) self-reports, four significant correlations emerged for the Core respondents (all adaptive), and five significant correlations emerged for the Outreach respondents (four adaptive, one maladaptive). Although these

significant relations won't be examined in detail as yet (more attention will be paid in the regression results), it is important to note the diversity of AIME questions that had at least some positive impact for one or both program groups. That this, these results suggested that AIME activities relating to teaching of study strategies, getting better marks, finishing Year 12, the importance getting a job, and feeling good about oneself, all to varying degrees may have some positive impact over the AIME mentees.

Within Table 5, significant (all adaptive) correlations can be identified for both the Core and Outreach respondents, with 15 adaptive associations identified from the Core group and 29 identified for the Outreach group. Two of the most striking features about these significant associations are that across both groups, a large number of significant associations were identified for the general self-esteem outcome, suggesting that a variety of AIME activities are beneficial for self-perceptions, and also every AIME question has at least one significant and adaptive association to either the engagement or identity outcomes.

Table 5. Correlational analyses across the AIME questions with the aspirational and achievement outcomes

CORE									
	ESTEEM	ENJOY	SCHOOL SC	INSTRU	BOUYANCY	DISSOC	CULTSAFE	ELDERS	PRIDE
Q1. AIMELIKE	.45**	.13	.24	.12	.36*	-.09	.07	.30	.10
Q2. AIMESTAFF	.42**	.15	.35*	.05	.40**	.03	.06	.35*	.00
Q3. AIMECULT	.30	.11	.13	.15	.25	-.12	.25	.11	.14
Q4. AIMESTUDY	.22	.13	.17	.31	.00	-.36*	.15	.04	.06
Q5. AIMEMARKS	.30	.32*	.07	.32*	-.03	-.33*	.07	-.04	.08
Q6. AIMEYR12	.15	.18	.22	.14	.15	-.23	.04	.04	.05
Q7. AIMETAPE	.47**	.15	.18	.14	.15	-.12	.11	-.25	.19
Q8. AIMEUNI	.48**	.30	.28	.29	.17	-.28	.05	.06	.18
Q9. AIMEJOB	.53**	.20	.29	.31	.22	-.16	.15	.03	.16
Q10. AIMESELF	.50**	.39*	.29	.28	.21	-.24	.03	.12	.05
OUTREACH									
	ESTEEM	ENJOY	SCHOOL SC	INSTRU	BOUYANCY	DISSOC	CULT SAFE	ELDERS	PRIDE
Q1. AIMELIKE	.27	.02	.05	.23	.08	-.29*	.18	.34*	.14
Q2. AIMESTAFF	.14	-.10	-.15	-.01	.06	-.15	-.03	.25	.03
Q3. AIMECULT	.31*	-.01	-.06	.23	.13	-.09	.33*	.25	.32*
Q4. AIMESTUDY	.47**	.44**	.21	.30*	.21	-.34*	.31*	.15	.19
Q5. AIMEMARKS	.37**	.35*	.18	.31*	.17	-.32*	.31*	.09	.15
Q6. AIMEYR12	.47**	.14	.22	.35*	.11	-.38**	.34*	.21	.10
Q7. AIMETAPE	.32*	.07	-.01	.17	.18	-.06	.24	.19	.17
Q8. AIMEUNI	.54**	.36*	.29*	.37*	.20	-.40*	.35*	.28	.13
Q9. AIMEJOB	.37**	-.08	.04	.11	.08	-.10	.18	.15	.04
Q10. AIMESELF	.28	.18	.09	-.08	.28	.01	.11	.36*	.30*

Note. Esteem – self-esteem, enjoy = school enjoyment, SC = self-concept, dissoc = academic dissociation, cultsafe = cultural safety, Elders = respect for Elders, Pride = Aboriginal Pride.

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

Although the correlational analyses provide a large number of significant and adaptive correlations for both the Core and AIME participants, little can be said about the meaningful nature of these results unless they are contrasted against varying important student background variables. For example, are the significant correlations 'explained away' by the likes of parental education, varying socio-economic status indicators, and so on? Beginning with the aspirational and achievement outcomes, Table 6 offers the multiple regression results for the background variables, whilst Table 7 offers results for the additional regression paths across each of the nine

significant associations (four Core, five Outreach) identified in Table 4 (with the background variable regression paths already accounted for).

Table 6 reveals that although none of the background variables explain any significant variance in the outcomes for the Outreach respondents, greater access to Home Educational Resources (HER) significantly predicted higher Year 12 aspirations and English grades.

Table 6. Background regression analyses across the AIME questions over the aspirational and achievement outcomes

CORE					
	Absent	Year 12	Post School	English	Math
Age	-.15	.14	.24	.04	-.02
Gender	.11	.23	-.07	.06	.06
Parent Sch	.10	.04	-.17	-.19	-.07
Parent Uni	.00	.15	.04	.22	.24
HER	-.23	.28*	.24	.52**	.22
SCH-SES	-.17	.12	-.23	-.25	.10
OUTREACH					
	Absent	Year 12	Post School	English	Math
Age	-.03	.09	.10	.12	.03
Gender	.15	-.01	-.05	.10	.06
Parent Sch	.15	-.10	.17	.09	-.21
Parent Uni	.07	-.06	.21	.12	.12
HER	-.13	.08	.03	.19	.08
SCH-SES	.13	-.01	-.00	-.07	-.21

Note. Post School Aspirations was recoded to 0 = no plans and 1 = aspirations to go to university, TAFE or get a job, Parent Sch = At least one parent completing school, Parent Uni = At least one parent finishing university, HER = Home educational resources, SCH-SES – School socioeconomic status.

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

Table 7 reveals the regression paths estimated from the nine significant correlations originally presented in Table 4. The paths emanating from the AIMEJOB and AIMESELF questions over English did not reach significance for the Core groups, suggesting that the background variables (most likely HER) better explained these effects. All other predictive paths for both the Core and Outreach groups maintained their significance, suggesting that their predictive power over the outcomes was independent of the background variables.

Table 7. Significant AIME question regressions over the aspirational and achievement outcomes once background variables have been accounted for

CORE			
AIME Predictor	Outcome Variable	Correlation	Final Prediction
Q6-AIMEYR12	Year 12	.42	.32*
Q9-AIMEJOB	Post School	.31	.32*
Q9-AIMEJOB	English	.34	.24 (ns)
Q10-AIMESELF	English	.34	.17 (ns)
OUTREACH			
AIME Predictor	Outcome Variable	Correlation	Final Prediction
Q8-AIMEUNI	Absent	-.30	-.20*
Q6-AIMEYR12	Year 12	.46	.65**
Q4-AIMESTUDY	Year 12	.33	.40*
Q5-AIMEMARKS	Year 12	.44	.56**
Q10-AIMESELF	Math	-.32	-.33*

Note. Post School Aspirations was recoded to 0 = no plans and 1 = aspirations to go to university, TAFE or get a job.

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

For the engagement and identity outcomes shown in Table 8, a variety of adaptive and maladaptive predictions emerged for both the Core and Outreach respondents. This suggests a level of complexity for home and environmental factors that may contribute to patterns of school engagement and strength of cultural identity for the AIME mentees.

Table 8. Background regression analyses across the AIME questions over the school engagement and identity outcomes.

CORE									
	ESTEEM	ENJOY	SCHOOL SC	INSTRU	BOUYANCY	DISSOC	CULT SAFE	ELDERS	PRIDE
Age	.19	.10	.32*	.11	.20	-.11	.04	.06	.23*
Gender	.27	.08	.10	.06	-.03	-.06	.23	-.07	.29**
Parent Sch	-.08	-.09	-.00	-.28	-.23	-.04	-.43**	-.34*	-.14
Parent Uni	.26	.14	.14	.01	.34*	.18	.05	.40**	-.29*
HER	.15	.39**	.53**	.36**	.10	-.45**	-.18	-.04	-.19
SCH-SES	-.10	.24	-.12	-.20	-.13	-.09	-.23	.39*	-.19
OUTREACH									
	ESTEEM	ENJOY	SCHOOL SC	INSTRU	BOUYANCY	DISSOC	CULT SAFE	ELDERS	PRIDE
Age	.05	.11	-.15	-.07	-.04	-.10	.02	.14	.23
Gender	-.30*	-.03	-.23	-.10	-.04	.08	-.14	-.18	-.25*
Parent Sch	-.13	-.08	-.05	-.12	-.18	.01	-.31*	-.02	-.32*
Parent Uni	-.13	.00	-.06	.07	.02	-.05	-.06	-.37**	-.22
HER	.05	.13	-.14	.15	-.14	-.06	-.14	-.05	-.19
SCH-SES	-.05	-.07	-.09	-.09	-.25	-.12	-.03	.22	.20

Note. Esteem – self-esteem, enjoy = school enjoyment, SC = self-concept, dissoc = academic dissociation, cultsafe = cultural safety, Elders = respect for Elders, Pride = Aboriginal Pride.

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

Despite the number of significant and complicated predictions the background variables held over the engagement and identity outcomes, Table 9 reveals that 40 of the 43 predictive paths maintain their levels of significance across the Core and Outreach groups (once the background variables had been accounted for). More importantly, *each of the 40 significant predictions were adaptive in nature*, in that as Core and Outreach mentees responded more positively to the questions relating to their AIME experiences, the more likely they would hold stronger levels of engagement (and lower levels of dissociation) and a stronger sense of self and Aboriginal identity.

### Conclusion

The findings amongst the relational analyses were exceptionally positive with all ten AIME questions being in some way positively and significantly associated with varying schooling outcomes, whether they were aspirational, achievement, engagement or identity orientated. The strength of these findings can be further highlighted in two ways. Firstly, of the 52 significant associations identified, only one was found to be negative (more positive ratings in AIMESELF were associated with lower ratings in math achievement). This overwhelmingly suggests that both the Core and Outreach mentee experiences with AIME were positive. Secondly, of the 51 significant positive associations, 46 remained significant after accounting for the mentee background variables. This finding adds a substantial level of confidence to suggestions that the AIME

programs, whether they by Core or Outreach, may be making a meaningful and positive difference for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander taking part.

Table 9. Significant AIME question regressions over the engagement and identity outcomes once background variables have been accounted for.

CORE			
AIME Predictor	Outcome Variable	Correlation	Final Prediction
Q1-AIMELIKE	Self-esteem	.45	.41**
Q1-AIMELIKE	Buoyancy	.36	.30*
Q2-AIMESTAFF	Self-esteem	.42	.45**
Q2-AIMESTAFF	School Self-concept	.35	.36*
Q2-AIMESTAFF	Buoyancy	.40	.49**
Q2-AIMESTAFF	Respect Elders	.35	.25 (ns)
Q4-AIMESTUDY	Dissociation	-.36	-.34*
Q5-AIMEMARKS	School Enjoyment	.32	.29*
Q5-AIMEMARKS	Instrumentality	.32	.31*
Q5-AIMEMARKS	Dissociation	-.33	-.35*
Q7-AIMETAFAE	Self-esteem	.47	.47**
Q8-AIMEUNI	Self-esteem	.48	.42**
Q9-AIMEJOB	Self-esteem	.53	.48**
Q10-AIMESELF	Self-esteem	.50	.40**
OUTREACH			
AIME Predictor	Outcome Variable	Correlation	Final Prediction
Q1-AIMELIKE	Dissociation	-.29	-.39*
Q1-AIMELIKE	Elders	.34	.22 (ns)
Q3-AIMECULT	Self-esteem	.31	.39*
Q3-AIMECULT	Cultural Safety	.33	.40**
Q3-AIMECULT	Aboriginal Pride	.32	.32*
Q4-AIMESTUDY	Self-esteem	.47	.33*
Q4-AIMESTUDY	School Enjoyment	.44	.57**
Q4-AIMESTUDY	Instrumentality	.30	.41**
Q4-AIMESTUDY	Dissociation	-.34	-.40**
Q4-AIMESTUDY	Cultural Safety	.31	.35*
Q5-AIMEMARKS	Self-esteem	.37	.34*
Q5-AIMEMARKS	School Enjoyment	.35	.46**
Q5-AIMEMARKS	Instrumentality	.31	.40**
Q5-AIMEMARKS	Dissociation	-.32	-.35*
Q5-AIMEMARKS	Cultural Safety	.31	.37*
Q6-AIMEYR12	Self-esteem	.47	.56**
Q6-AIMEYR12	Instrumentality	.35	.51**
Q6-AIMEYR12	Dissociation	-.38	-.51**
Q6-AIMEYR12	Cultural Safety	.44	.47**
Q7-AIMETAFAE	Self-esteem	.32	.33*
Q8-AIMEUNI	Self-esteem	.54	.51**
Q8-AIMEUNI	School Enjoyment	.36	.42**
Q8-AIMEUNI	School Self-concept	.29	.28*
Q8-AIMEUNI	Instrumentality	.37	.44**
Q8-AIMEUNI	Dissociation	-.40	-.46**
Q8-AIMEUNI	Cultural Safety	.35	.39*
Q9-AIMEJOB	Self-esteem	.37	.47**
Q10-AIMESELF	Respect Elders	.36	.26 (ns)
Q10-AIMESELF	Aboriginal Pride	.30	.27*

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

## General Discussion and Future Directions

The analyses presented within the quantitative report provided a series of distinct and clear findings:

- Overall, both Core and Outreach mentee responses to the AIME questionnaire were exceptionally positive regardless of whether the measures were capturing their experiences with AIME, their educational and post-school aspirations, their perceptions of their achievement, their levels of engagement, and their sense of self and identity;
- Across the Core and Outreach programs, no meaningful and significant differences could be identified across all the schooling outcomes and AIME perceptions measured, suggesting both programs may be equally effective;
- Where possible, strong validity estimates were identified, suggesting that the questionnaire was well understood by the AIME mentees, and the items were measuring what they were designed to measure;
- Although some interactions were identified suggesting males were more responsive to the Outreach program, and females more responsive to the Core program, these differences were well within the positive range of responses for both genders. This suggests that the differences were within the upper bounds of the positive impact of AIME, and that no student was disadvantaged by the program;
- A large number of positive and significant associations were identified (51 in total) between the AIME mentee experience questions and the schooling and identity outcomes for both the Core and Outreach groups; and
- Of the 51 positive associations, 46 remained significant after controlling for student background variables, suggesting that AIME is making a real difference.

Despite the quantitative findings within this report being exceptionally positive, care must be taken to recognise the limitations within this research. Firstly and most pressing is the issue of causation. Although associations identified within this report were over-and-above the potential impact of student background variables, statistically speaking, it is unknown whether AIME caused more positive schooling outcomes or whether students with more positive schooling outcomes took part in the AIME programs. For future reference, such limitations can be addressed utilising a carefully organised combination of longitudinal and experimentally based research designs. That is, AIME mentees should be given the survey prior to commencing AIME, during the AIME program, and after the completion of the AIME program to more fully and accurately assess the impact of AIME over time. In addition, 'control schools' should also be recruited as a point of comparison to ensure the effects of AIME are not simply developmental in nature (ethically speaking the AIME program should be administered at a later date to ensure the control school participants do not miss out on the benefits of AIME). The requirements of longitudinal research raises a second limitation within this report, and that is the small sample size of participants (91 in total) would not be suitable to take advantage of the increased power offered in some longitudinal analytical techniques (e.g., causal modelling - Marsh, Byrne, & Yeung, 1999). If it would be possible to include survey questions as part of the AIME program itself (as opposed to completing the survey in their own time), a larger and suitable sample size may be obtained. Finally, although the survey focussed on a wide range of schooling and identity outcomes, future research may seek to capture further outcomes that may align more closely with the diversity of AIME activities (e.g., anti-racism, leadership).

In conclusion, despite some reservations due to the limitations within this investigation, the overarching positivity to emerge from this quantitative report should not be ignored. The evidence, especially when combined with the qualitative findings, strongly suggests that the AIME

program is effective in strengthening and solidifying the mentees' aspirations, sense of engagement, and sense of identity, regardless of whether they are taking part in the Core or Outreach programs. This firmly places this report, and more importance AIME itself, as a proactive agent of strength much needed in Indigenous education research (Mellor & Corrigan, 2004; Walter, 2010).

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## 4.2 APPENDIX B: Case studies

### Tom's Story

Tom, while reluctant to speak initially, soon opened up and explained why coming to the AIME Outreach program had been a positive experience. For Tom, he enjoyed *"getting to know like about the culture and like meeting new people and making friends yeah, just having fun"*.

It wasn't that Tom did not already have a strong sense of his own Aboriginal culture, explaining: *"it [Aboriginal culture] is pretty strong, we don't really usually talk about it too much [at home]"* attending AIME brought that sense of culture and identity to the forefront of his mind as he explained how AIME was *"a*

*good place to go to find who you really are and what, find things about stuff that you didn't know about before and find things out about cultures and heritages and stuff like that"*. He reflected how AIME had taught him something about himself, something quite fundamental: *"Yeah, like it's made me like learn there, like it's not just like other people that can get somewhere, Aboriginals can be just as smart as everyone else"*. Tom was completing Year 10, enrolled in a High School in the outskirts of Sydney and attending the Outreach program at a city university. As we sat outside during morning tea, he laughed as he told me that this was the first time he had travelled into the city by train, himself and his mates did not venture into central Sydney preferring to stay in the local area. This was also the first time Tom had been on a university campus and he described how while *"it was big and with lots of people, I thought it would be scary and it's not at all"* and also how *"You get to walk around and no one really bothers me or anything like that"*.

**"Getting to know like about culture and like meeting new people and making new friends yeah, just having fun"**

The best part of the program for Tom was undoubtedly being offered the opportunity to perform the rap. He was initially very nervous but the fact that his mates and the mentors were all doing it persuaded him to get involved. Once he started, he realised the fun: *"The hip-hop and the rap, that was amazing, that was the best part of it, it's taught me a lot about who I am as a person*

*and it's just a really, really good vicinity to be in, I'm loving [it]"* He was keen to have more days doing the Outreach program, for him three days just wasn't enough and he suggested: *"Bit more of the rap days, make the day longer and the hip-hop day...more days"*. He also wished that his friends and other members of his family could attend, but not everyone: *"some of*

*them, some, some like are not mature enough for it and they just take Jack out of it but then there's a few that I'd bring if I could trust them"*. He had talked about the program at home with his family and *"told them that it's so fun and like I wish they were here with me as well though. I reckon they'd like learn to respect other people and other cultures and stuff"*. As we moved inside to start the next session, I asked Tom what was the main thing he had learnt from attending, he thought for a moment before simply saying: *"Even though we've got different colour skin we can do whatever we want, we can be whoever we want to be"*.

### Vicky's Story

*"I liked that the students get to interact with people and share their experience with them, if they ever have sort of trouble or difficulty with school or anything, anything really they – they're always there, it's much like a family outside of home"*. Vicky is in Year 9 and this is the first year of her participation in the AIME Outreach program, which has just

commenced at a large university in Queensland. Vicky lives on the outskirts of Brisbane and is the only Aboriginal student in her small rural high school. She talked a little about herself and her family: *“Well my mum and dad went to Year 10 and then they dropped out, they went to TAFE, well my mum went to TAFE and my dad was out of work.”* Vicky explained that she is the youngest of three children, her two older brothers both left school in Year 10, one is working in a traineeship whilst the other is seeking employment in the hospitality field. Like Tom, Vicky has a strong sense of her Aboriginal heritage: *“I like, get to know who my Aboriginal family is from Queensland and then my uncle, he looked after me when I was little and tried to explain to me what Aboriginal means and showed me the Aboriginal flag and like ...”* but continues by explaining *“...It's still hard though, and being Aboriginal with red hair you get asked a lot of questions and get teased a lot and it's very hard and it just gets so bad”*.

Vicky laughed as she tells me that one of the most unexpected outcomes from her participation in the program was that she *“learned that I'm related to one of the mentors yeah”*. Aside from this, Vicky also explained how her participation has helped her *“to not care what people think”* and increased her sense of pride: *“I have pride anyway from where I came from but to know that we have rights as well and that's why it was good to be who you are”*. When asked to reflect upon any negatives of the program, Vicky did explain that she had a lot of work to catch up on when returning to school but qualified this by explaining: *“Yep, even though I have a lot of catching up to do, it still means that I can still do this and catch up later and without this, I reckon I'd be nowhere”*. As we walked to the school bus at the end of the day, I revisited this theme again asking Vicky what she feels she gets from participating in the program, she

explained how: *“It helped me a lot with group work, like when I meet new people I'm shy with them, so like I think with AIME, because I've got a lot more in common, like well Aboriginal students and well, like ... that helps me with like confidence a lot more, it helps me get to know people and just to help me to realise that not everyone is the same”*.

Pausing for a moment she continued: *“Yeah, because you create friendships between them because like you see them three times a year and you talk to people all the time and you just like learn so much about them and their own Aboriginality”*.

*“I learned to be loud and proud, about you need to like love your culture and who you are and just, just embrace everything”*

As Vicky climbed aboard the bus, she turned to me and concluded by stating: *“I learned to be loud and proud, about you need to like love your culture and who you are and just, just embrace everything.”*

### **Josh and Mike's Stories**

Sitting in the second session of the day, Josh and Mike regaled stories and laughed with other students at their table, all of whom have come from a range of schools north of Melbourne. Their teacher sat close by and smiled as the two Year 11 boys laughingly described some of their exploits at the job they share at a local restaurant. Josh teases Mike, accusing him of *“stealing”* the favoured waiter role from under him, leaving him to struggle with dish washing. As we move to the next room, I asked the two boys how they are enjoying the program and what they were getting out of it. Without hesitation, Josh replied *“I just like the interaction of it*

and getting to spend time with other Aboriginal students from other Aboriginal backgrounds, other schools and it's just a great experience". Taking longer to reply, Mike paused and said: "I'm a bit more motivated to go somewhere in life" after a moment he continued: "since coming to AIME I've realised why stop learning, I mean there's so many things to do out there and learn, why stop at the end of Year 12?" Both boys agreed that a major part of their enjoyment of the program related to the mentors, with Mike explaining how "They're really themselves and you can relate to them and they respect you". Josh elaborated: "Really they're like, well they're like us, they have the same interests sometimes and they're practically, like well they act like us in some ways too and I get along with them really well so that's really good too".

The two boys were the only students who have come from their particular school and have also enjoyed the time they have spent with the teacher whilst travelling to and from the Outreach location. When asked about the future after school, the boys highlight clear career paths; Josh intends to join the navy while Mike is interested in becoming a mechanic. For Josh this plan had been in place prior to his involvement with AIME: "I've always known that I will finish Year 12, but kind of finding out from AIME that not many Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islanders, they'll find out that not many Aboriginal children in Australia finish Year 12 or even finish school entirely. So that kind of made me want to do that, so it's a bit like the people who complete ... help the community because I have skills that will help". Mike reflected upon the new knowledge he has acquired from his participation in AIME and how this will assist him to achieve his career goals: "it's actually given me a more of a back door kind of thing and if that my Tech course or anything goes downhill for some random reason and I could just take the backdoor through that through uni and stuff, especially for a career... it's been a lot of help and too, seeing that that's not the only way that you can get into uni, because like there's other options and I never knew that until I came".

**"Since coming to AIME I've realised 'why stop learning?', I mean there's so many things to do out there and learn, why stop at the end of year 12?"**

With the new session about to start, I asked them both what appealed to them about AIME; Mike thinks for a while before stating: *I wouldn't have people like this normally in my life trying to help me out, I enjoy just like hanging out with people that I know that can help me kind of get through anything and can help me with like school and about getting a job after school and stuff like that".* Nodding his head, Josh added *"the actual leaders that are here, they gives us the sense of like, a sense of belonging kind of feeling yeah, like they all know that we're Indigenous and that we belong here and that we are all accepted here, that's what I like most about the place."*

### 4.3 APPENDIX C: Comparison of Core and Outreach models<sup>3</sup>

<b>Key Points</b>	<b>Outreach</b>	<b>Core</b>
<b>Session Format</b>	3 day-long sessions over three terms	15 weekly hour-long sessions over two terms
<b>Distance from university</b>	Up to 90-120 minute drive radius	Within 30 minute drive radius
<b>Relationships between mentors and students and between AIME facilitators and students</b>	-ve Only 3 days to build relationships. Can be harder for facilitators to build relationships with mentees. Can be harder for mentors to get to know mentees.  +ve Full day to develop relationship is beneficial	+ve relationship building in the Core as see the Core mentees ‘all the time’. Mentors get to know the kids better, more rapport. Mentees and mentors get to know Program Managers
<b>Time considerations</b>	-ve Less time with mentor can mean reduced opportunity for building trust. Questions raised about the long time between Outreach sessions  +ve Positive impact of a ‘whole day’ at university with mentors.	+ve Time with the same young person spent over a longer period supported development of rapport and trust between mentors and mentees.
<b>Mentor and Program Manager relationships</b>	No comments recorded.	Greater opportunity to get to know Program Managers.
<b>Continuity of relationships with mentees</b>	Variable continuity between mentors and mentees; variable mentor attendance at sessions.	More continuity. One mentor paired with one mentee over all visits to university More availability of Program Managers to mentees over time.
<b>Mentee relationships between schools</b>	Emphasize connections between schools (especially with the group work emphasis)	Focus on 1:1 relationship between mentee & mentor
<b>School and student timetable requirements</b>	+ve One day release for teachers Less catch up work for students.	-ve More resource intensive for schools (release time / bus travel etc). More catch up work for students.
<b>Mentor mentee ratio</b>	1:3 – 1:4 for Year 9 1:7 for Year 11/12 (requires less mentors)	1:1 (requires more mentors)
<b>Mentor time requirements and university timetabling</b>	Some mentors preferred organising a whole day off uni (e.g. changing tutorials for the week) rather than having to commit to the same time weekly.	Mentors can’t forward plan for timing clashes with university timetables between semesters.
<b>Mentoring skills required</b>	Group work skills required	Working 1:1 with mentee
<b>Attendance (missing sessions)</b>	Question about the benefits of variable attendance rates (missing a whole day).	Variable attendance may be less of an issue (missing an hour).
<b>Problems or issues addressed</b>	Tends to address general topics e.g. What course am I going to get into and study skills.	More specific e.g. Mentees may have school subject problems and the mentors explain how to tackle these problems.

<sup>3</sup> Note: All AIME Facilitators interviewed had experienced the different formats. A small number of mentors and a smaller number of mentees had experienced both formats. Data was analysed using Nvivo software to detect themes across the AOP and Core programs.

#### 4.4 APPENDIX D: Comparison of original and re-worded and re-ordered research questions

<b>Question</b>	<b>Original</b>	<b>Current / in use</b>
Question 1.	What are the achievements and impacts of the Core Program?	What are the achievements and impacts of the Core Program?
Question 2.	What are the outcomes for participants in the AIME Outreach program?	What is the capacity of the AOP as an outreach educational mentoring initiative for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young peoples?
Question 3.	Have the objectives of the Outreach Program been achieved?	Have the objectives of the AOP been achieved?
Question 4.	What is the capacity of the Outreach Program as an outreach educational mentoring initiative for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young peoples?	What are the achievements and impacts of the AOP for participants (mentees)?
Question 5.	What are current operational Outreach Program costs and what are the projected costs for expansion?	What are current operational AOP costs and what are the projected costs for expansion?
Question 6.	How can the Outreach Program be expanded?	How can the AOP be expanded?

These minor changes were made to make the report easier to read.

## 4.5 APPENDIX E: Data collection rationale

- The evaluation team interviewed a total of 108 participants. A breakdown of this by type of participant and compared to research proposal targets is at Table 1.1.
- Table 1.1 – Interview data by participant type and research proposal targets

<i>Participant Type</i>	<i>Number Interviewed</i>	<i>Target Number to Interview</i>
Mentees	87	40 to 100
Mentors	10	18
AIME Staff	4	6
Incidental interviews (teachers, social workers, industry partners)	7	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>64 to 100</b>

- The total number of interviews secured (n108) exceeded the total target number of interviews (64 to 100). Whilst the reasons for not reaching the target number of interview participants vary most of these ‘shortfalls’ are primarily due to (i) reflexively changing methodology to suit the operational needs of AIME and the Outreach program, and (ii) the timing of the project and the limited time we had access to participants.
- Using the descriptive statistics function of QSR NVivo™, we can offer a breakdown of mentees and mentors interviewed by site, gender and (in the case of mentees) year level. We offer this type of analysis at the level of transcript (not interviewee) because of the functionality of NVivo software and because there was often more than one participant per interview (especially in the mentee data). Figures 1.1 and 1.2 describe the data in this way.

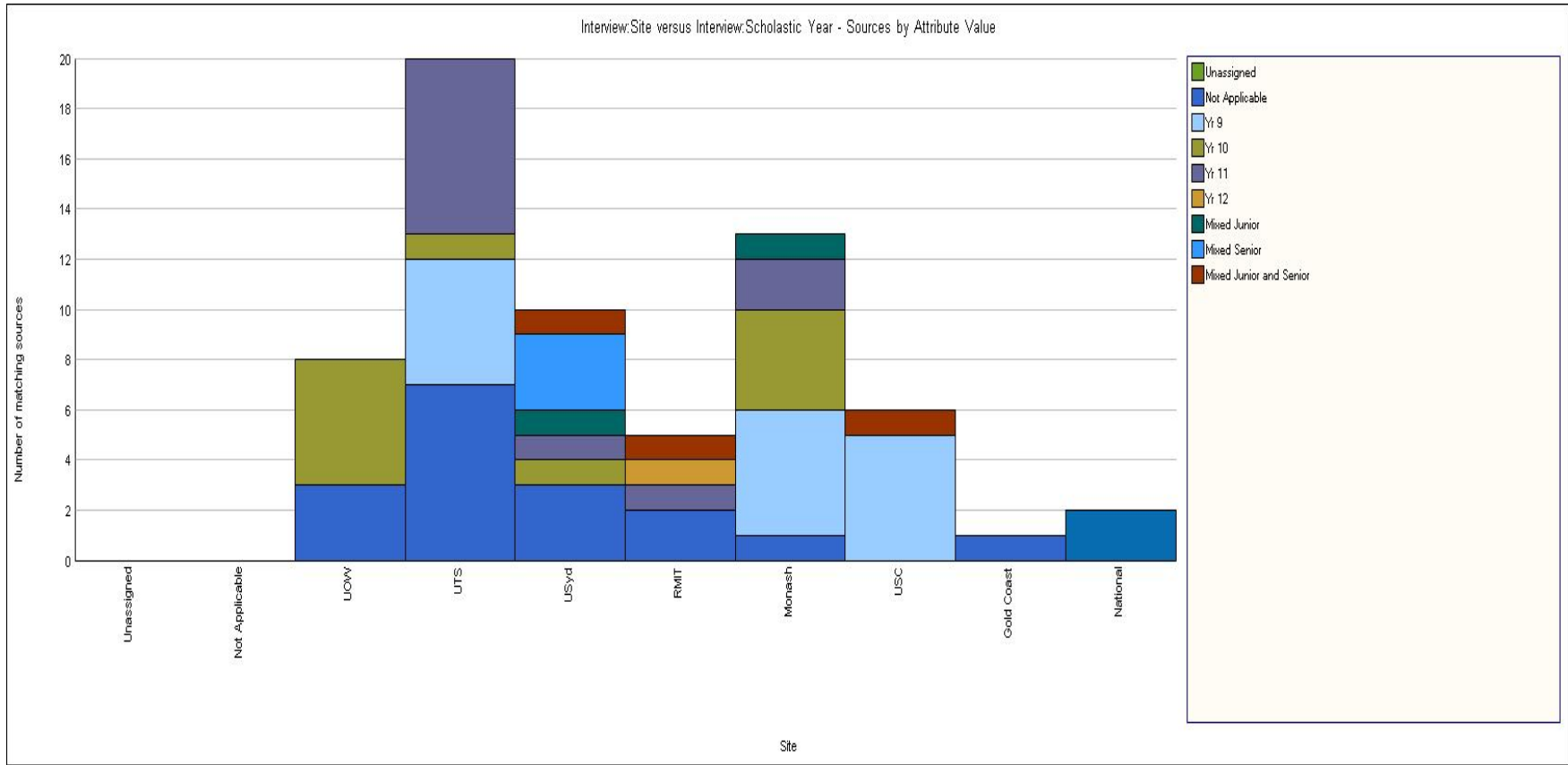


Figure 1.1

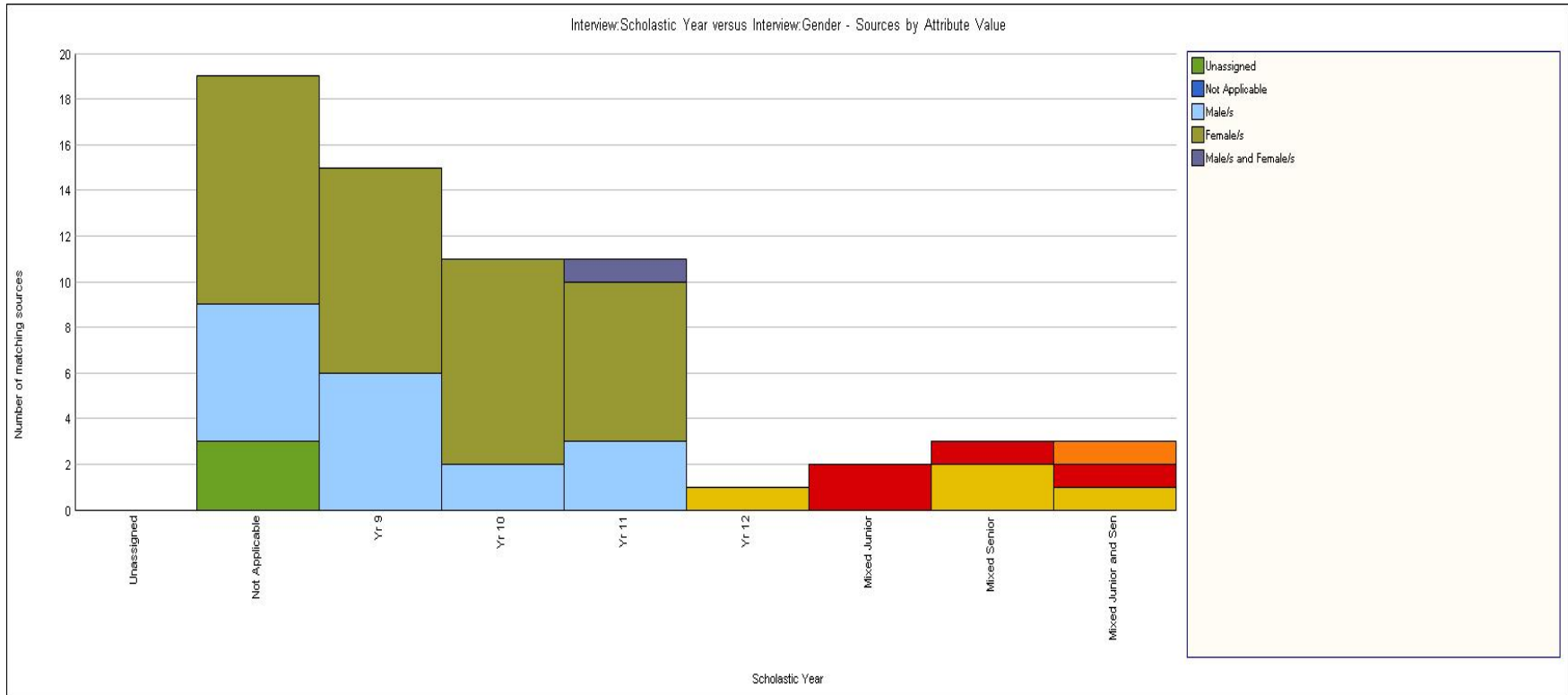


Figure 1.2



- The overall interview responses were numerous enough to demonstrate consistency in their comment on outcomes and achievements and on the AIME program. Because, at times, these interviews were necessarily brief (to suit the tight program schedule), we would suggest it would be of benefit in future research to find out more about what the mentees have to say, via perhaps more in-depth interviews and longitudinal work and/or qualitative surveys.
- Interviewed 87 mentees, in both individual, paired and small group interviews, across six sites. This data collection milestone falls within the overall target range proposed in the research proposal (that is, speaking with ‘between 40 to 100 mentees’). Table 3.1 offers a breakdown of number of mentees interviewed at each site.

Table 1.1 – Number of mentees interviewed at each site

<b>Site</b>	<b>Mentees</b>
Monash	12
RMIT	5
Sydney University	11
University of Wollongong	27
University of Sunshine Coast	10
UTS	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>

While the data in Table 2.1 does not represent the original target of hearing from 8- 16 mentees per site, when less than 8-16 mentees per site were interviewed this was due to renegotiating use of focus group methodology. Renegotiating the use of focus group methodology resulted in a reduced number of participants per site. At the two sites with the highest numbers, UOW (n=27) & UTS (n=22) two UOW researchers were on site to conduct interviews. UOW, the only site where focus groups were conducted, has the highest number of interviewees. At the remaining sites where focus groups were not incorporated into the running sheet for the observed Outreach days, researchers relied solely on sourcing interviews with mentees during recess and lunch breaks. Thus, time restrictions necessarily set down by AIME impacted the number of mentees it was possible to interview. *This methodological change was appropriate and underscores the fundamental importance of prioritising AIME programming and mentee needs and consequently for any future research being required to adapt ‘on the ground’ and be sensitive to the requirements of this unique setting.*

The total of 87 mentee interview participants has provided a sufficient spread of data across (i) sites; (ii) age groups to generate in-depth analysis that will inform and complement the other components analysed in this evaluation.

The team has also interviewed ten mentors from five sites, as outlined in Table 3.2

Table 1.2 – Number of mentors interviewed per site

<b>Site</b>	<b>Mentors</b>
Monash	1
RMIT	2
Sydney University	2
University of Wollongong	1
University of Sunshine Coast	-
UTS	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>

We approached 27 mentors who agreed to participate in telephone interviews, but only 10 participated. This is not representative of the researchers proposal to interview 3 mentors per site. However, all bar one site are represented in the mentor data and half of the target sites (RMIT, Sydney University and UTS) are represented by  $\pm 1$  of the target number of 3 per site. Moreover the poor response rate from mentor participants can be attributed to the time of year (exam period and then summer break).

- The team has also interviewed four facilitators on AIME’s staff. AIME provided the names of 6 staff members for interview but two of these staff members were not able to schedule and participate in an interview during the data collection timeframe due to work and leave commitments.
- Amendments to the survey methodology were made over the course of the project to maximise response rates. By the 21<sup>st</sup> of January (a month after the mail-out) we had only received 30 survey responses. To increase the response rate several additional strategies were employed. First, the ‘return date’ for the prize draw was extended, to allow more mentees to participate and be eligible for the related prize draw. Secondly, AIME staff contacted the Outreach mentees via telephone and encouraged them to complete and return their surveys. This had a moderate effect and doubled the sample size to 70. Concurrently, the research team requested an amendment to their ethics approval so that the survey could be made available online. This was subsequently approved and the online survey went ‘live’ 20 February 2013. In total, 91 (comprising 50 Outreach and 41 Core) survey responses informed the quantitative analysis of the report.

## 4.6 APPENDIX F: Attributes assigned to qualitative data uploaded in NVivo (per document / transcript)

An NVivo File was created (with capacity to classify and allocate attributes for various data sources, including primary documents, interviews and focus groups, journal articles, other literature). Each document was allocated a classification (interview, focus group, observations, document review) and attributes. These attributes were decided by the qualitative data team at the initial qualitative data debrief meeting.

<i>Attribute</i>	<i>Values</i>
Interviewee	Mentee Mentor Facilitator Teacher / Teacher's Aide Corporate Partner Social Worker
Gender	Male/s Female/s
Scholastic Year	Male/s and Female/s Not Applicable Year 9 Year 10 Year 11 Year 12 Mixed Junior (9 and 10) Mixed Senior (11 and 12)
Site	Mixed Junior and Senior UOW UTS USyd RMIT Monash USC Gold Coast
Setting	National Metropolitan Regional
Program Experience	National Outreach only Outreach and Core Outreach and Tutor Squad All three programs

This means we can search the qualitative data for text or themes within a combination of these parameters, for example we can narrow the search to Year 9 girls in regional areas etc.

## 4.7 APPENDIX G: Survey Instrument

### AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS MENTORING EXPERIENCE SURVEY

#### Purpose

The purpose of this survey is to help AIME find out:

- What you think and feel about the AIME program;
- What you think and feel about school;
- What you think and feel about your culture.

The results of this survey will help AIME to identify ways of improving their mentoring experiences for not only yourself, but future Aboriginal students.

#### Taking Part

Please remember:

- This is not a test, there are *no right or wrong answers*. It is about what you feel is best.
- Read the questions carefully, but don't take too much time to answer each question. Remember it is what you think and feel is right is all that counts.
- Taking part in this survey is voluntary, so not completing it will not affect your relationship with AIME or anyone else.
- If there are some questions you don't like or can't answer, it is fine to not answer them.
- Your responses will be kept completely confidential and will only be seen by the researchers. They will not be shown to AIME representatives, or anyone else.
- Overall results will be presented in general reports and articles that will not identify you or anyone participating in the survey
- The AIME researchers will remove the consent form you sign below and store this separately to help ensure your confidentiality.

If you would like to participate, AIME would appreciate your help.

#### Parental Consent

**Please do not complete this survey unless you have the permission from your parents/guardians**

Student's Name (please print):

\_\_\_\_\_

**I agree to my child participating in this study**

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

#### Your Consent

**I agree to Participating in this research study**

Your Name (please print):

\_\_\_\_\_

**I agree to participate in the study**

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

## Section One: Your Background

1. How old are you now? (e.g., 15 years) \_\_\_\_\_ years

2. Are you male or female? Please tick one box.

1  Male

2  Female

3. What grade are you in at school? (e.g., Year 8) Year \_\_\_\_\_

4. How often do you attend school (tick only one box)?

All of the time (Mostly I attend 5 days a week)

Most of the time (I only have days off when I am sick)

Some of the time (I mostly have a day off each week)

Half of the time (I am mostly away 2-3 days a week)

Not much at all (I am often away most days of the week)

5. Do you have any of these things at home?

A room of your own	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
A desk for study	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
A quiet place to study	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
A computer	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Internet connection	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Educational software	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
A dictionary	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Books to help study	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

6. Did either of your parents finish high school?  Yes  No

7. Did either of your parents go to university?  Yes  No

8. On average, please tick how many hours you spend each week on homework?

- No time
- less than 1 hour
- around 1 - 3 hours
- around 3-6 hours
- more than 6 hours a week

*(including the weekend)*

9. When would you like to leave school?  
9. Please tick what you would like to do after you leave school?

- As soon as possible     After completing Year 12
- Go to university
- Go to TAFE
- Get a job
- Haven't decided
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

10. This year, what do you think your final grade was for English?

- A (Excellent)
- B (Good)
- C (Satisfactory)
- D (Limited)
- E or F (Low or Fail)

11. This year, what do you think your final grade was for Math?

- A (Excellent)
- B (Good)
- C (Satisfactory)
- D (Limited)
- E or F (Low or Fail)

## Section Two: School, Study, and Yourself

The remaining sections are all in the same format to make it easier for you to answer. Each question can be answered in six possible ways - "False", "True", and four answers in between. You simply have to pick the number that best represents your answer. For example:

	F					
a		Mostly	More	More	Mostly	True
l		False	False	True	True	
s			Than	Than		
e			True	False		
I like to watch TV	1	2	3	4	5	6

The person who circled 6 for "True" really likes to watch TV.

**If you want to change an answer you have marked, simply cross it out and circle a new number on the same line.**

## Section Two: School, Study, and Yourself

		F a l s e	Mostly False	More False Than True	More True Than False	Mostly True	True
1	I like school	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	I think School is of no value to me	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	I am happy when I am at school	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	I don't let a bad mark affect my confidence.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	I feel good about being Aboriginal when I am in school	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	I don't let study stress get on top of me	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	I learn things quickly in most <b>SCHOOL SUBJECTS</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	I think School is a waste of my time	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	I enjoy being at school	1	2	3	4	5	6
10	I do the work assigned in school because my achievement is important for obtaining my dreams	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	I do school work because doing well will play a role in achieving my future goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12	School is a lot of fun for me	1	2	3	4	5	6
13	I am proud of being Aboriginal when I am in school	1	2	3	4	5	6
14	I'm good at dealing with setbacks (e.g., bad mark, negative feedback on my work)	1	2	3	4	5	6
15	I am good at most <b>SCHOOL SUBJECTS</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6
16	I do well in tests in most <b>SCHOOL SUBJECTS</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6
17	I do the work assigned in school because it is important for becoming who I want to be	1	2	3	4	5	6
18	I think there is no point in going to School	1	2	3	4	5	6
19	I enjoy sharing things about being Aboriginal in my school	1	2	3	4	5	6

20	I get a lot of value out of coming to school	1	2	3	4	5	6
21	I think I should not have to care about school	1	2	3	4	5	6
22	I think I'm good at dealing with schoolwork pressures	1	2	3	4	5	6
23	I get bad marks in most <b>SCHOOL SUBJECTS</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6
24	I get on well with most of the teachers at school	1	2	3	4	5	6
25	I do the work assigned in school because the learning it plays a role in reaching my future aspirations	1	2	3	4	5	6
26	<b>I listen to what my teachers says in class</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6
		<b>F a l s e</b>	<b>Mostly False</b>	<b>More False Than True</b>	<b>More True Than False</b>	<b>Mostly True</b>	<b>True</b>
27	I sometimes look for excuses to skip school	1	2	3	4	5	6
28	I feel comfortable with being Aboriginal in school	1	2	3	4	5	6
29	I do work assigned in school because learning the material is important for obtaining my dreams	1	2	3	4	5	6
31	I respect most of my teachers at school	1	2	3	4	5	6
32	I think School has no meaning	1	2	3	4	5	6

### Section Three: Being Aboriginal

		<b>F a l s e</b>	<b>Mostly False</b>	<b>More False Than True</b>	<b>More True Than False</b>	<b>Mostly True</b>	<b>True</b>
1	I have respect for the teachings passed onto me by Aboriginal Elders	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	Being Aboriginal makes me feel good.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	Overall, I have a lot to be proud of	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	I have respect for Elders who know a lot about Aboriginal ways	1	2	3	4	5	6



5	Being Aboriginal makes me feel proud	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	Overall, most things I do turn out well	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	I do things as well as most people	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	Being Aboriginal makes me happy	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	If I really try I can do almost anything I want to do	1	2	3	4	5	6
10	I have respect for my Aboriginal Elders	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	Being Aboriginal gives me strength	1	2	3	4	5	6
12	Most things I do, I do well	1	2	3	4	5	6
13	Overall I am a failure	1	2	3	4	5	6
14	I have respect for what the Elders tell me of being Aboriginal	1	2	3	4	5	6

### Section Four: Your AIME Experiences

The following and final section is about you experiences with AIME and whether they were BAD or GOOD.

1. **Overall, what has your experience with AIME been like?**

Very Bad	Bad	A little bad	Neither bad or good	A little Good	Good	Very Good
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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2. **Overall, how do you feel about your experiences with the AIME staff?**

Very Bad	Bad	A little bad	Neither bad or good	A little Good	Good	Very Good
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please answer the following questions by DISAGREEING or AGREEING as to whether you feel AIME has changed your knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours in any way.

3. **AIME has helped me understand more about my Aboriginal culture**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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4. **AIME has shown me how to study better for school**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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5. **AIME has helped me to get better marks at school**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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6. **AIME has shown me how important it is to finish Year 12?**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
7. <b>AIME has shown me how valuable TAFE can be?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. <b>AIME has shown me how valuable University can be?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. <b>AIME has shown me how valuable getting a job can be?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. <b>AIME has helped me feel better about myself?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!**

Breakdown of Factors

## Section Two: School, Study, and Yourself

### School Cultural Self-concept Scale (Seeding Success Research Team, 2010)

I feel good about being Aboriginal when I am in school  
 I enjoy sharing things about being Aboriginal in my school  
 I feel comfortable with being Aboriginal in school  
 I am proud of being Aboriginal when I am in school

#### Academic Self-concept (Marsh, et al., 2005)

I get bad marks in most **SCHOOL SUBJECTS**  
 I do well in tests in most **SCHOOL SUBJECTS**  
 I learn things quickly in most **SCHOOL SUBJECTS**  
 I am good at most **SCHOOL SUBJECTS**

#### Academic Dissociation (Bodkin-Andrews, 2008)

I think School is of no value to me  
 I think I should not have to care about school  
 I think School has no meaning  
 I think there is no point in going to School  
 I think School is a waste of my time

**Academic truancy**

I sometimes avoid school for no good reason  
I sometimes look for excuses to skip school  
I sometimes pretend I'm sick so I can skip school

***School Enjoyment Scale***  
***(Craven, et al, 2005)***

I enjoy being at school  
I like school  
I am happy when I am at school  
I get a lot of value out of coming to school  
School is a lot of fun for me

**Academic Buoyancy**  
**(Martin and Marsh, 2008)**

"I'm good at dealing with setbacks (e.g., bad mark, negative feedback on my work)".  
"I don't let study stress get on top of me".  
"I think I'm good at dealing with schoolwork pressures".  
"I don't let a bad mark affect my confidence".

***Perceived Instrumentality (Miller, et al., 2005) items***

I do work assigned in school because learning the material is important for obtaining my dreams  
I do the work assigned in school because understanding the content is important for becoming the person I want to be  
I do the work assigned in school because my achievement is important for obtaining my dreams  
I do the work assigned in school because the learning the content plays a role in reaching my future aspirations  
I do the work assigned in school because m achievement plays a role in achieving my future goals.

**Section Three: Being Aboriginal**

**Aboriginal Pride (Bodkin-Andrews, et al., 2012)**

Being Aboriginal makes me feel proud  
Being Aboriginal gives me strength  
Being Aboriginal makes me happy  
Being Aboriginal makes me feel good.

**Respecting Elders (Bodkin-Andrews, et al., 2012)**

I have respect for my Aboriginal Elders

I have respect for Elders who know a lot about Aboriginal ways  
I have respect for what the Elders tell me of being Aboriginal  
I have respect for the teachings passed onto me by Aboriginal Elders

**General Self-esteem (Marsh, et al., 2005)**

Overall, I have a lot to be proud of  
Overall I am a failure  
If I really try I can do almost anything I want to do  
I do things as well as most people  
Overall, most things I do turn out well  
Most things I do, I do well

## 4.8 Appendix H: 2012 AOP Schools and distances to university campuses

University	Schools	Distance to uni	Number of kids
Sunshine Coast University	Beerwah State High School	24.6KM/ 25 mins	53 for whole site
	Gympie State High School	83.1km/ 1 hour	
	James Nash State High School	85.2km/ 1 hour	
	Sunshine Beach State High School	45km/ 45 mins	
	Coolum State High School	34.5km/ 30 mins	
Queensland University of Technology	Caboolture State High School	47.2 km/ 40mins	73 for whole site
	Loganlea State High School	31.7km/ 30 mins	
	Morayfield State High School	45.5km/ 40 mins	
	Tullawong State High School	51.3/ 36 mins	
Bond University	Kingscliff High School	34.4km/ 30 mins	72 for whole site
	Tweed River High School	26.6km/ 23 mins	
	Helensvale State High School	29km/ 26 mins	
Southern Cross University (Lismore)	Ballina High School	31.2km/ 34 mins	52 for whole site
	Casino High School	33.9km/ 31 mins	
	Lismore High School	450m/ 45 seconds	
Southern Cross University (Coffs Harbour)	Bishop Druitt College	4.5km/ 8 mins	75 for whole site
	Coffs Harbour High School	5.8km/ 9 mins	
	Coffs Harbour Senior College	On campus	
	Grafton High School	91.6km/ 1 hour 15 mins	
	Orara High School	8.3km/ 12 mins	
	Toormina High School	4.3km/ 7mins	
	Woolgoolga High School	32.5km/ 34 mins	
University of Sydney	Blacktown Girls High School	43.2km/ 40 mins	71 for whole site
	Doonside Technology High School	47.6km/ 43 mins	
	Evans High School	34.8km/ 40 mins	
	Mitchell High School	33.2km/ 38 mins	
	Northmead High School	34.1km/ 34 mins	
	Quakers Hill High School	43.7km/ 41 mins	
	Riverstone High School	51.5km/ 49 mins	
	Seven Hills High School	38.5km/ 38 mins	
	Wyndham College	46.3km/ 40 mins	
University of Technology Sydney	Colo High School	66.6km/ 1 hour 3 mins	46 for whole site
	Cranebrook High School	58.6km/ 55 mins	
	Ingleburn High School	42.9km/ 40 mins	
	Plumpton High School	42.7km/ 41 mins	

University	Schools	Distance to uni	Number of kids
	Knox Grammar	29km/ 34 mins	
	Lorreto Normanhurst	30.1km/ 30 mins	
University of Wollongong	Nowra Anglican College	76.6km/ 59 mins	79 for whole site
	Shoalhaven High School	83.4km/ 1 hour 8 mins	
	Vincentia High School	106km/ 1 hour 27 mins	
RMIT	Bayside College	32.4km/ 32 mins	53 for whole site
	Galvin Park Secondary College/Wyndham	56.3km/ 45 mins	
	Hume Central Secondary College	18.5km/ 23 mins	
	Kurunjang Secondary College	48.8km/ 43 mins	
	Lakeview Senior College	20.9km/ 33 mins	
	Laverton Secondary College	43.7km/ 36 mins	
	Manor Lakes P- 12 College	61.9km/ 53 mins	
	Melton Secondary College	59.2km/ 45 mins	
	Staughton College	60.2km/ 47 mins	
	Point Cook College	50.2km/ 40 mins	
Monash University	Dromana Secondary College	59.1km/ 46 mins	21 for whole site
	Elisabeth Murdoch College	34.2km/ 30 mins	
	Frankston High School	32.4km/ 30 mins	
	McClelland College	33 km/ 30 mins	
	Monterey Secondary College	30.3km/ 28 mins	
	Mount Eliza Secondary College	38.1km/ 36 mins	
	Mount Erin Secondary College	34.3km/ 31 mins	
	Rosebud Secondary College	68.9km/ 52 mins	
Somerville Secondary College	41.3km/ 36 mins		