



mits

Melbourne Indigenous
Transition School



MITS Supporter Mid-Year Update
July 2020



Your commitment to MITS has been vital during this most extraordinary year for our students

Your support of MITS and our students is now more important than ever

Thank you for your support of MITS and our students so far in 2020. Through your generosity – your donations, your volunteer hours, your sponsorships and your advocacy for our school – our students have excelled as they have taken on the challenge of pursuing a great education.

Of course, 2020 has presented us all with immense challenges far beyond the norm. For our students – who have chosen to pursue education away from home – those challenges have been particularly pronounced.

In response to all that has occurred in 2020, our students and staff have demonstrated resilience and agility that are hallmarks of MITS. During late Term One and throughout Term Two we ran a highly effective remote learning program which kept students engaged in their learning and continuing to grow academically and personally.

In Term Three we have made the decision to move our operations to a Darwin Hub. This significant move will allow both our Year 7 and alumni students to recommence in-person learning, to reconnect with their peers and to benefit from the rich extracurricular program that MITS provides.

With each new challenge that arises we remain steadfast in putting our students at the centre of our decision making. Our temporary Darwin Hub is evidence of this. To enable us to maintain this commitment to our students, we are reliant on you – our supporters – to ensure that we have the resources and funds necessary to make bold, high-impact changes.



Thank you for continuing your commitment to MITS and our students. Your support has never been more important than it is right now. Through your generosity, you are creating bright futures for our students and for our nation.

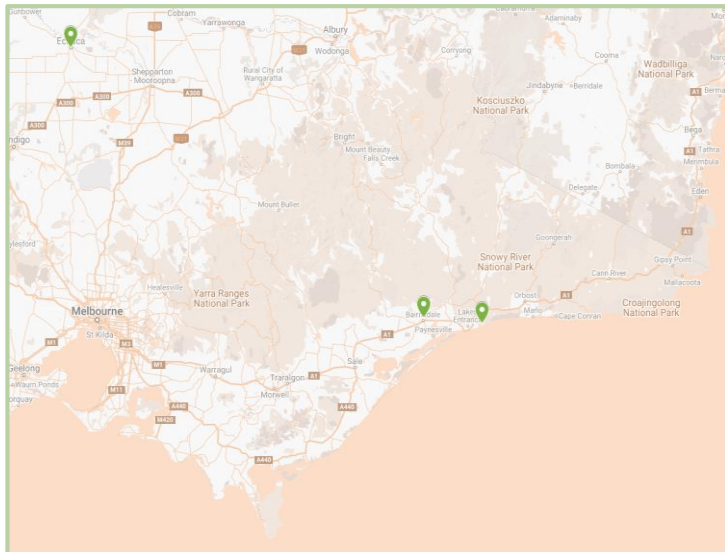
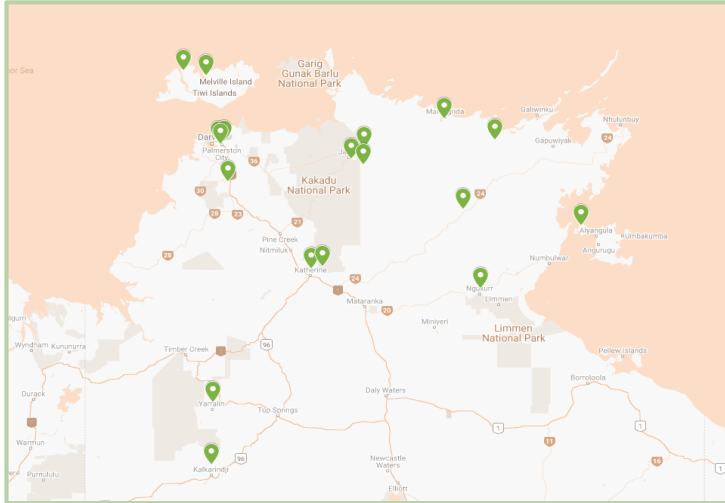
We are excited to share updates from our Darwin Hub with you over the coming weeks and months.

Edward Tudor
Executive Director



We continue to build trusting relationships with more Top End communities and regional Victoria

Class of 2020 Communities – NT and VIC





Online learning has demonstrated to us all the courage and resilience of our students and their communities

Semester One presented our students and MITS community with a challenge like no other

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic required a fundamental shift in the way we work with our students. Our priority, as always, was to keep our students and their communities safe. For this reason, all students returned home safely in mid-March.

For the remainder of Term One and all of Term Two, MITS delivered online learning to our Year 7 students and supported our alumni students to do the same via our Partner Schools. Our Victorian students were able to return to in-person learning for the last three weeks of Term Two.

With generous help from King & Wood Mallesons, Coles and Telstra, our students had the stationery and technology they required to continue with their education while closer to home.

The incredible work of our teaching staff saw our students show strong engagement and commitment throughout this heavily disrupted school year. We have been so pleased to see the peer-to-peer support between our students, as they have shown great care and maturity in overcoming the challenges associated with remote learning.

We have relied on local Northern Territory and regional Victorian schools to provide a space for our kids to learn in, and their communities' support combined with the generosity of our MITS donors has seen our students' growth continue throughout 2020.

You can watch two videos we put together on our remote learning program by clicking the images on the right of this page. These videos were generously created pro bono by Fancy Films.





Two of our students reflect on a term like no other

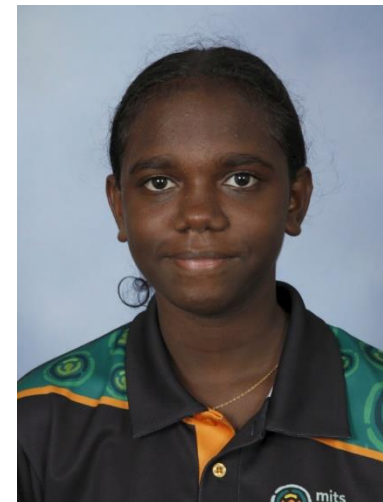
“When we went to do home school, I was struggling a bit and found it hard to concentrate. I have learned that if you want help, you have to show respect and help other people and treat people the way you want to be treated. I am grateful for my teachers, family and friends who have supported me and want me to succeed.”

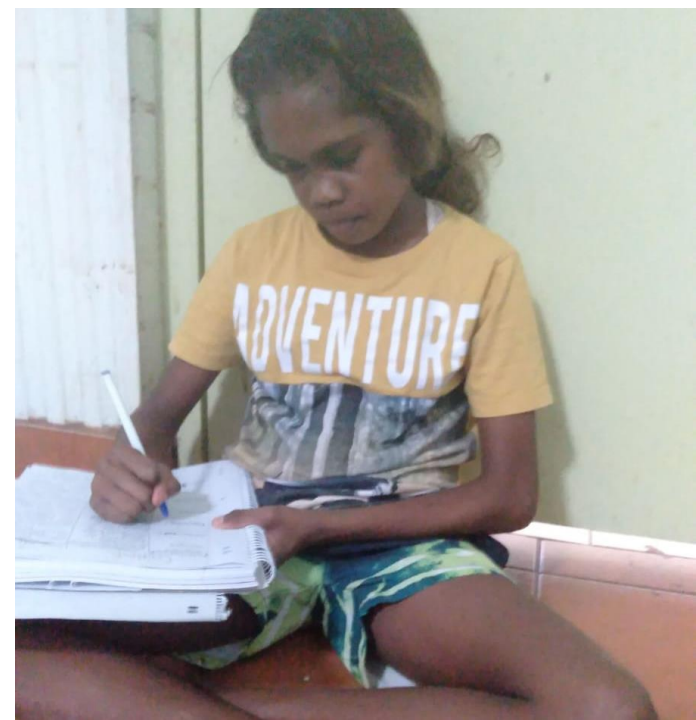
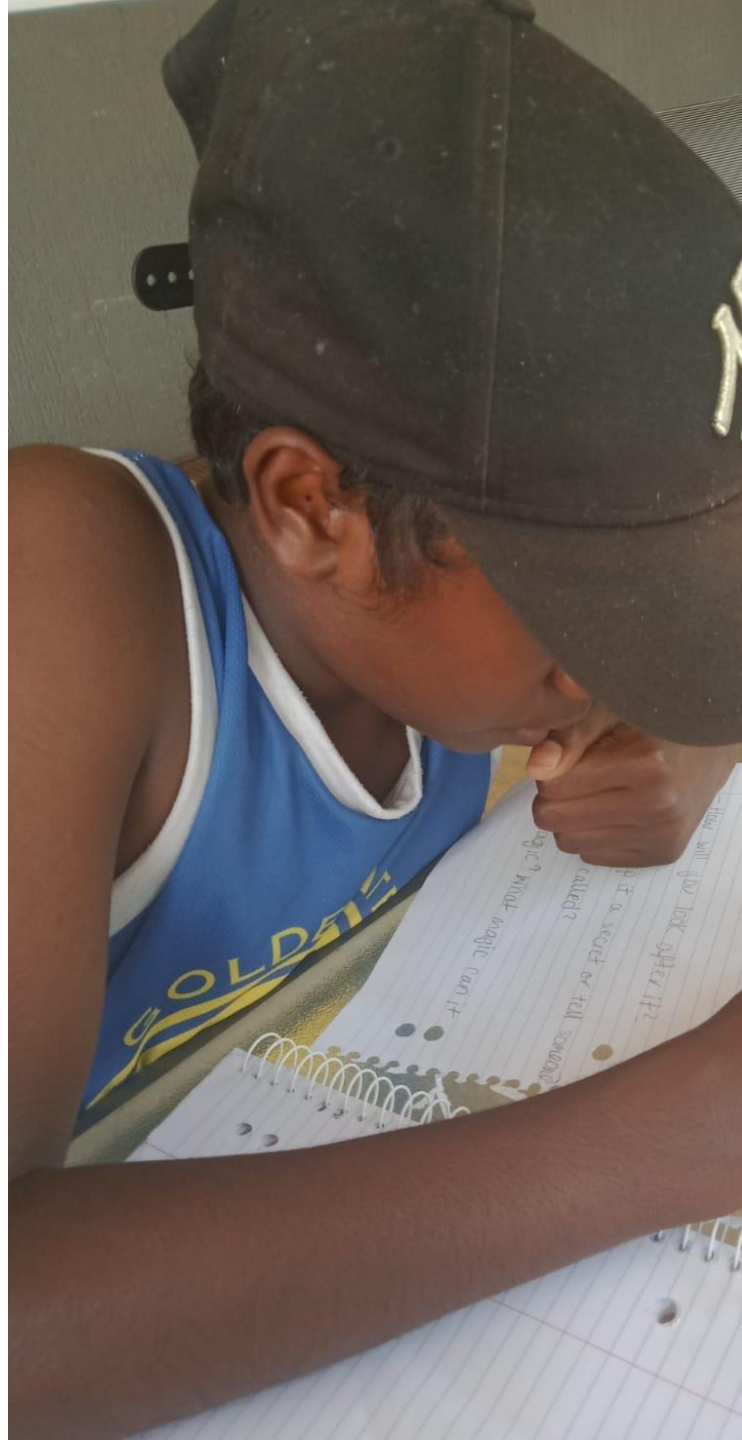
James, Lake Tyres VIC



“When I first came back home, I was struggling with my work. Working at home and without your teachers is a bit hard, but I kept on trying. I am proud of trying my best and not giving up. Even if I had a hard time, I kept on going!”

Leah, Palmerston NT







MITS has made the significant decision to establish a temporary Darwin Hub to provide face-to-face education

With the COVID-19 situation deteriorating in Melbourne, MITS has moved our program to Darwin for Term Three

After an extended period of remote learning, we were excited to welcome our students back to Melbourne to recommence in-person learning from the start of Term Three. However, as the Victorian COVID-19 situation deteriorated during the winter break, it became clear that this return would not be possible.

While our remote learning program was highly effective, we knew that another term of remote learning would have a very negative impact on the continued engagement and progression of our students. As a result, MITS made the decision to relocate a large number of staff to Darwin so that we can run our school and boarding program from a temporary Darwin Hub.

In mid-July, 15 MITS staff and our three Victorian-based students flew to Darwin and began 14-day quarantine periods across different Airbnb houses. For two of these students, travelling to Darwin was their first time on an airplane and offers a fantastic opportunity for two-way learning in the Top End, living on Larrakia Country and surrounded by their NT classmates.

Based at the Michael Long Centre, our Darwin Hub has now kicked off. We have 21 Year 7 students, 12 alumni students and 15 staff (plus many of their family members) living and learning together each day.



An additional 15 MITS alumni will attend the Darwin Hub as day students (living with family members in Darwin) and will complete their Melbourne Partner Schools' remote learning programs with the support of our Pathways Team. We are maintaining a small staff presence in Melbourne for those alumni students who have chosen to return to Victoria for Term Three.

It was an incredible team effort to enable this significant change to occur. We know that this arrangement will provide our 2020 cohort with the very best chance of achieving strong academic and personal growth over the school year.





Opening our new alumni boarding house for girls has created greater opportunity and support for our students

The boarding house ensured these students had the strongest possible start to the 2020 school year

In 2019, in response to demand from families and an need for accommodation at some of our Partner Schools, MITS commenced planning for the creation of an Alumni Boarding House for Girls.

To provide for our alumni girls in the long-term, MITS secured a 20 year lease on a property on Richmond Hill, adjacent to our current Year 7 boarding house. In March 2019 the Australian Government announced \$2.1 million capital funding to refurbish this property.

Construction works finished in January 2020, and shortly after 13 alumni girls moved in to commence their school year. These students are benefitting from the best educational opportunities in Australia, while returning to the warmth and cultural strength of a MITS-run boarding house each evening. Our parents have described this model as “the best of both worlds”.

We know that this unique model works: we have had 100% retention of all female students accommodated in this boarding house, as well as our MITS-run home in Wellington Street, Kew.

Of course, with the COVID-19 pandemic these students have needed to move to online learning for much of 2020. We look forward to all of the girls returning to life in our boarding house as soon as it is safe to do so.





Tatiana, Marley, Moniquah and Rumarlea (MITS 2019)



Ruth with Fiona (MITS 2016)



Latisha showing her 'Tree of Life' work (MITS 2019)



Naomi (MITS 2017) near Ramingining, NT



Jodie and Janae (MITS 2018) with Sharni Layton (former Australian netball champion)



Shaniya (MITS 2017) on Croker Island, NT



Adam (MITS 2019) at the Annual Family BBQ in February



Thank you