



mits

Melbourne Indigenous
Transition School



MITS Supporter Update
August 2021



A full return to Melbourne for our growing MITS family

After the challenges and successes of our Darwin Hub in 2020, it has been a joy to return to Melbourne and the many things – big and small – that our students love about the city: passing neighbours at the Rowena Corner Store, cheering the Tigers on at the ‘G and engaging with the cultural richness of the city and the lands of the Kulin Nation.

In 2021, over 80 young Indigenous people are studying at MITS or at one of our Melbourne Partner Schools having graduated from MITS. 46 of these young people are living with us across our Year 7 and alumni boarding houses.

In February we were delighted to announce that the Australian Government will fund the construction costs for a new alumni boarding house which will accommodate a further 40 students. This new boarding house will create a student precinct atop Richmond Hill, with a connected and proud community of young Indigenous people pursuing education in Melbourne.

As we know, COVID-19 continues to challenge us all, and in June our NT students took on the challenge of undertaking their final two weeks of school from inside the Howard Springs Quarantine Facility!

As we grow, the support of our MITS community becomes ever more important. Thank you for continuing to provide opportunities for our students and alumni and for sharing in their vision for a bright future.

Edward Tudor
Executive Director



Watch our 1 minute video update, created pro bono by Fancy Films.



Our Year 7 Class of 2021





Our “pop-up school” in Howard Springs

Our students once again showed how committed they are to their education, wherever that happens to be!

When Melbourne entered a snap lockdown at the end of May, our priority was ensuring our students could continue their studies without interruption, whilst also enabling all students to return home for the mid-year break.

For our NT students, ‘Bush Break’ is a particularly important time of the year, with many cultural events and activities taking place during the beautiful Dry season of the Top End.

In early June, our NT Year 7 and alumni students entered Howard Springs quarantine facility, along with 12 MITS staff. With the support of these staff, all students continued with their education while inside Howard Springs – an incredible achievement, which caught the attention of both the [ABC](#) as well as the [NT News](#).

We were so proud of our students who, yet again, persisted with their learning in spite of the challenges and disruptions caused by COVID-19. While we are hopeful that COVID-19 interruptions become fewer in the coming months, we know that our students and staff will rise to the challenge no matter what happens!



Watch the ABC News story on our “Pop-Up School” in Howard Springs.



Casey studies on the veranda of her donga in the Dry season warmth.





Expanding our Alumni Boarding Program; supporting MITS students throughout their secondary schooling

Our new boarding houses will create a connected community of students on Richmond Hill

The success of our Year 7 program is well established: our Year 7 students experience – on average – two years' academic growth in one year with MITS. Our average student attendance in 2019 and 2020 was 97%, compared with the Australian average of 92% and an Indigenous Australian average of 83%. Over the past three years we have achieved a Year 7 completion rate of 97%.

Since its establishment in 2019, our Alumni Boarding Program has also proven highly successful.

Supported by MITS pathways and boarding staff, it has become clear that those students who live in a MITS Alumni Boarding House are thriving, with a student retention rate of 93%. As a consequence, MITS students now account for 87% of all Northern Territory Indigenous students studying in greater Melbourne.

Most importantly, our parents have consistently told us that they want this opportunity for their children, describing it as the 'best of both worlds'.

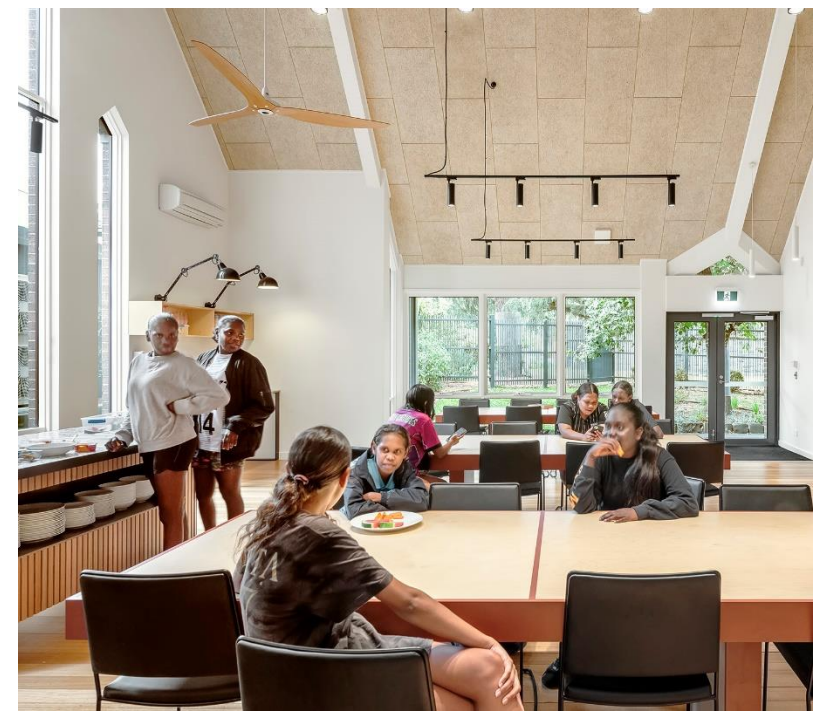
This is why we are scaling the program significantly. Our new Alumni Boarding House at 371 Church Street will provide opportunities for 40 more MITS alumni to live and learn in Melbourne. Together with our existing Alumni Boarding House for Girls, and our Year 7 Lockington Boarding House, they will form a connected community of young Indigenous people pursuing educational opportunity in Melbourne.

[Click here to find out more](#)





Our Alumni Boarding House for Girls on Richmond Hill is now full, with girls attending four different Partner Schools.





Lorraine Kabbini White's care and commitment to MITS students receives special recognition

Lorraine wins IEBA Award

Lorraine Kabbindi White has worked at MITS since 2016, first as a Boarding Coordinator and now House Manager. She is a proud Gunmok woman from Western Arnhem Land and is also an accomplished artist.

In May, Lorraine won the “*Exceptional Contribution to Indigenous Student Boarding Award*” at the Indigenous Education & Boarding Australia Awards. We couldn't be prouder of her!

Lorraine knows exactly what it is like to take on the challenge of schooling away from home. She was the first Aboriginal woman to attend Toorak College in Mt Eliza, where she successfully graduated VCE in 2009. Lorraine is part of the inspiration behind the very creation of MITS itself.

At MITS, Lorraine has been a student mentor, Boarding Coordinator and now runs our Wellington Street House, our pilot alumni boarding house opened in 2019. Earlier this year Lorraine joined the MITS Leadership Team.

Lorraine has demonstrated leadership for her family, community and MITS, particularly in the field of Indigenous boarding, for over 15 years. This award is due recognition of Lorraine's outstanding care for so many MITS students and alumni over the years.

Well done Lorraine!





Where are they now?

Penny Yibarbuk, MITS Class of 2016

Penny has taken her Melbourne education experience back home

Our students go on to do all sorts of incredible things post-MITS. Some will choose to stay in Melbourne, others will return to their communities and take their learnings with them.

Penny Yibarbuk, who was part of our first MITS cohort in 2016, has been busy at work caring for Country. She forms part of a team of Warddeken rangers who reinforce fire breaks around Anbinik forests in West Arnhem Land. Cool fires are lit late in the day during the early Dry season to ensure the forests won't be affected by wildfire.

For Penny, this was the first time she had been on her father's Barradij Country and Penny's first time doing this kind of work. The camp was a great opportunity for experienced bininj (Indigenous) rangers to pass on skills and knowledge to younger daluk (women) rangers. It is a wonderful combination of Traditional ecological knowledge combined with Western science.

When we spoke with her earlier this year, Penny said ***“thanks for giving me the good education to learn both ways (Western and Traditional), two parts of the world and make me understand better”***.

We thank Warrdeken Land Management and Karrkad Kanjdji Trust (KKT) for sharing this story with us.



Penny working on her father's Barradi Country as a daluk ranger



Penny with her father Dean at her MITS graduation in 2016