

# PARTNERSHIP BROKERS

## SCHOOL + BUSINESS + COMMUNITY

### GROWING YOUNG WOMEN

#### Purpose:

To inspire and support young women enrolled in Tiwi College to achieve their potential.

#### Partnership Members:

- Mission Australia
- The Smith Family NT
- Tiwi College
- Tiwi Education Board
- Top End Health Development, NT Health

### Context and Goals

Young women growing up on Tiwi Islands inherit a proud cultural history reaching back thousands of years. Young Tiwi women may however experience poor housing, poor health outcomes, and stress. They generally have low school attendance and are unlikely to finish year 12. Indigenous young women in the NT are five times more likely to be teenage mothers than non Indigenous females, less likely to be employed after they leave school, more likely to be the victim of violence and less likely to own their own home. They may often be required to care for young siblings or other family members rather than attend school, and may be the subject of low expectations and racism in the broader community.

The Partnership Broker identified the need for a collaborative approach to address the needs and interests of young Tiwi women.

### The Partnership's Approach

The *Growing Young Women* Partnership was established to provide the girls of Tiwi College with a broader range of learning experiences and to motivate them to aspire to education, career and life goals. Specific goals in 2012 are:

- a) Improved school attendance & engagement
- b) Improved retention from years 7-12
- c) Improved personal development knowledge & skills
- d) Assist the girls to acquire appropriate interpersonal and 'mainstream' living and social skills
- e) Establish women's reference group
- f) Strengthen partner and program capacity

Each partner brings their own contribution to the partnership. The Tiwi Education Board brings cultural and

educational strategic direction and governance. Tiwi College brings time and commitment of staff and houseparents, together with facilities for the Girls' Room, assistance with logistics, data collection and information. Mission Australia (the regional Youth Connections provider) and The Smith Family bring programs and activities which seek to broaden students' experience, build new skills and confidence, and link back into educational success. Top End Health Development brings health education and promotion capacity.

The partnership adopted an action learning approach, with a program cycle and annual action plan, reviewed quarterly.

*"This partnership is just what we need – it fills a huge gap in the College program."* Tiwi Education Board

### Benefits

- Young women are benefitting from a broader range of experiences contributing to school connection and retention, such as 'experiential mentoring'
- Attendance of senior female students has improved by 24%.
- Tiwi College has more resources available for young women's education.

### Next Steps

A group of Tiwi women and local service providers is now taking steps to extend the intent of this partnership across the Tiwi Islands, commencing with a Tiwi Families Day to involve families and community members, raise the profile of family support for education, and provide information about support services.

### Support from the Partnership Broker

The Partnership Broker scheduled and facilitated meetings with all parties and assisted partners at Tiwi College to design an MOU and an action plan, as well as supporting the development of review and evaluation mechanisms for the partnership. The broker also convened discussions over several months with Tiwi women and service providers to consider the issues and develop and coordinate local responses.

#### TOP TIP

**A conceptual model and action cycle helps to ground and express the intent of the partnership.**