

## 2020 Winter Research Program

<b>Project title:</b>	<b>Understanding the challenges faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' transitioning to secondary school</b>
<b>Project duration:</b>	3-4 weeks
<b>Description:</b>	<p>The transition from primary to high school can be a challenging time for students. For those already struggling academically, this transition and accompanying changes to school routine, structure, friendship groups and social dynamics can compound matters, significantly increasing the risk of disengagement from education sooner rather than later. Transitioning to high school also comes at a time in children's lives when they are entering adolescence and experiencing significant personal change, sometimes triggering worries about being the youngest in high school, not fitting in and/or being bullied. Such fears can see young adolescents' self-worth plummet, grades drop, and their school attendance affected.</p> <p>For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, concerns about starting high school and continuing their education can be far more pronounced. Risk of disengagement is high as those from regional and remote communities are moved away from their families to unfamiliar surrounds for the purposes of secondary studies. Even for those still living at home, the loss of primary school connection and changing structures of school can be challenging.</p> <p>This study seeks to understand the challenges faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students during the transition phase from primary to secondary school. Additionally, the study aims to identify social support mechanisms that can avert student loss and disengagement, and support ongoing educational engagement and achievement. The study will test the feasibility of a co-designed peer mentoring program in which highly engaged First Nations students in years 10 and 11 develop supports with younger First Nations students before, during and after their transition from primary to high school.</p>
<b>Expected outcomes and deliverables:</b>	<p>Scholars will be given an opportunity to contribute to the publication/s of this project – with relevant and appropriate acknowledgement/authorship – hence helping them establish their research skills and research track record. Conducting a preliminary analysis will assist the team in presenting a strong case in our ARC Linkage proposal.</p> <p>Students may also be asked to produce a report or oral presentation at the end of their project.</p>
<b>Suitable for:</b>	This project is open to applications from students ideally with a background in Social Sciences or a similar discipline (for example sociology, public policy or economics).
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