Are online courses the future of Indigenous higher education in Australia?

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Challenges for Indigenous students

- **Socio-cultural**
  - attitudes, intentions, aspirations, language
  - societal, institutional & family support

- **Institutional and financial**
  - availability, access, affordability
  - socio-economic

- **Individual**
  - previous experience & performance
  - Health, self confidence, self esteem
Spatial inequality

• Uneven distribution of resources & services
  – based on geographical location
• Urban Indigenous participation rates similar to non-indigenous
  – 3 times more likely to attain higher education in urban areas
• Online education one possible solution
  – opportunity to address some of the challenges facing the Indigenous higher education
Change in enrolments

- Increase in online and mixed modes of study
- Indigenous students are more likely to enrol in external and online courses
Barriers to online education

• Socio-technological
  – Indigenous Australians less likely to have access to internet
  – adopting online and digital technologies faster
  – disparities exist at regional and local levels

• Digital divide & exclusion
  – not linked to social exclusion
  – relates to consumer preferences, community norms and practices, availability of broadband
Digital choices

• Preference for pre-paid billing
  – more expensive than post paid
  – unlikely to have reception in remote and very remote areas

• Devices to access internet
  – Availability, access & affordability
Capability framework

• normative framework
  – assessing individual, social and community capabilities

• Debate about applying this to Indigenous issues
  – group norms influencing choices and motivations
  – include multidimensional measures identified by Indigenous people for higher education
Indigenous Futures Program (IFP)

• Developing a new approach to integrated digitally-enabled learning
  – collaborative course designs informed by Indigenous ways of learning and knowledge
  – test new models of online delivery and partnerships

• 3 demonstrator projects
  – Media and creative industries
  – Health and community services
  – Education support
Media & creative industries

• Produce digital media and design qualified creative workers
  – expand the creative economy of the Kimberley and Pilbara
  – meet the need for creative skills in other sectors
  – partnering with Goolarri Media Enterprises (GME)
  – pathway to associate and bachelor degrees in media, communication design or similar
Health & community services

• Produce skilled and qualified Indigenous workers and managers
  – opportunities to engage remote and very remote learners
  – develop and deliver culturally appropriate and locally relevant course and training materials
  – partnering with NT Indigenous not for profit organisations
    • Carers NT, Carpentaria Disability Services, Council for Aboriginal Alcohol Program Services and Human Services Training Advisory Council
  – pathway to associate and bachelor degrees in health and community care or similar
Education support

• online course that recognises prior learning
  – aimed at ATSI education and liaison support workers in schools
  – provide gap training to obtain qualification
  – partnering with Australian Catholic University and Nahri
  – pathway to associate and bachelor degrees in education or similar
Progress to date

• **Partners crucial for IFP**
  – provide expert and locally relevant Indigenous content
  – student recruitment and support, course delivery

• **Course delivery commenced**
  – one in each demo project; more scheduled in November

• **Ongoing data collection from all relevant stakeholders**
Thank you!