**ABSTUDY guide for providers: Travel for orientation activities transcript**

NARRATOR: Choosing a high school can be a daunting time for families living in remote communities. Many have to send their children thousands of kilometres away to boarding school. ABSTUDY can make that transition process easier by paying for travel for students and schools for orientation activities. Eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can travel with a family or community member to visit high schools, as early as year five or six.

SHALEAH: They can do multiple trips down to the school for orientation travel might be to, to meet teachers and for an interview. And then another, like I said, for a boarding experience, so that will get the student feeling comfortable and supported before they start their journey in high school following year.

RICHARD: Our role is to work with kids, to work with families, to work with communities and in particular, to work with our boarding providers, to give kids the best possible experience of transition. And from that the best possible chance of finishing Year 12.

NARRATOR: ABSTUDY can also pay for school or hostel staff to travel to communities, to meet with students and their families, where there are six or more ABSTUDY students. Townsville boarding facility, Cowboy's House uses orientation travel to meet their new students every year. They also bring families to the city to give them a taste of boarding away from home.

LEIGH: We do an orientation where we do walkthrough here at the house. They'll stay a night. They'll also work with our education team, our transition team, our wellbeing team and our boarding team as well to ensure that we have all the information for them to be successful.

KYLIE: We might go and get their school uniforms with them while their family's with them, we'll show their families what school they're going to and give them sort of a rundown of our 24 hour kind of timetable here at the house.

NARRATOR: St. Patrick's College also brings their families to their school in Townsville for orientation. New students get the chance to go to school, meet the teachers and students, and get used to the place which will become their new home.

KATIE: Our intention is to get the girls, so the new year sevens come in to come in for a week in early term three, but they'll attend as a day student and coming in spending some time in the classroom, but also spending some time with boarding sisters, just a little bit of a touch taste, but also the ability to go home to their family member in the evening, just to sort of debrief and have a bit of time to reflect and chat and also have familiarity in the evenings.

NARRATOR: It gives both the students and their families’ confidence that they'll be safe and happy during the school year.

SARAH: I think being able to visualize where your daughter is going to be, meet the people that they're with and who will be looking after them for most of the year, I think that's very, very comforting for them to know.

JOANNA: They're 11 and 12 year old young women. So the more time that they can have on campus, the more it will help their transition. So, you know, it's, it's a big deal going from a small, perhaps rural community into, you know, a city, a boarding college, a college with 600 other students. And so we like to make sure that they’re as prepared as possible.

NARRATOR: St. Patrick's College has also taken their principal and other staff to remote communities to talk about what it's like to live and learn in Townsville.

KATIE: Last year, there were two different times during the year we sort of had an official community visits week, one visit within the Cape region, one out to sort of more Western Queensland and another up to the Torres Strait. And really the major sort of point of the whole visit was just to have time to sit around and have a juice and have a sandwich and have a yarn really, those times were invaluable.

RICHARD: That builds enormous trust in our, in our remote communities. When you think of it to send an 11 year old away, often on a journey of two or three thousand kilometres on the part of parents and guardians involves significant trust being placed. If there's face to face contact, if families see that staff make the effort to visit them in their own home community that builds the trust that underpins so much of boarding.

NARRATOR: For more information, visit servicesaustralia.gov.au/abstudyproviders, call the National Business Gateway or email ABSTUDY travel.