A DEADLY CAREER!

Forum Report Summary

www.matsiti.edu.au
This report is a summary of outcomes and actions from the second More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers (MATSITI) National Forum *A Deadly Career!* in Adelaide on 14-15 October 2013.

The Deadly Career Forum was designed to engage the hearts and minds of our people and supporters to consider teaching as a career of choice – for young people, for adults considering a career change or to further develop their current education career.

The forum included over 100 attendees, 20 presentations and workshops, with a further 30 people logging in to the webinar on 21st century Indigenous education.

Some of the Forum content and discussions can be viewed at:


**Where to next?**

Forum delegates made a number of great suggestions on future attraction strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to consider teaching as a career of choice, including:

- A suite of national promotional campaign templates and resources to attract our people into teaching – adaptable to local context, using digital media with face-to-face events and strong positive messages. MATSITI is currently scoping the elements of such a campaign.
- Social media channels such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn have great potential to amplify messages and connect individuals and agencies – Luke Pearson will be supporting MATSITI in this work.
- Further engaging our community leaders and organisations to advocate for education and increasing our presence and influence in the education workforce.

MATSITI will be investing $3 million in 2014-15 to help attract and retain *our mob* into a successful teaching career - your advice is welcome to shape and strategise ideas generated at the workshops.

On behalf of the ‘BHP’ team and forum host Dr Chris Sarra, I invite you to continue to engage with this agenda, talk up teaching in your area of influence to make a significant difference to the education and employment outcomes of our people.

**Professor Peter Buckskin**  
*PSM FACE*  
Project Director | More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (MATSITI)  
Dean: Indigenous Scholarship, Education and Research  
University of South Australia
Recommended actions and ideas

Action planning workshops

Action planning workshops at the MATSITI forum were designed to enable delegate contributions to national and local communications strategies and resources to promote teaching for and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. There were 3 workshop groups: employers, community and teacher education. Forums were asked to consider strategies for a 2014-15 marketing campaign, and devise a list of suggested actions for growing the Australian Indigenous education workforce.

Employer actions

School jurisdictions are the employers of teachers and help shape career aspirations of school students in their care. There are currently approximately 2300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers working in Australian schools, nearly 1% of the total teaching workforce.

The employer groups recommended the production of a range of promotional materials and templates for use throughout Australia. The major recommendation was for the creation of an overarching national marketing strategy/campaign that could include digital, TV, radio and face to face marketing strategies.

MATSITI, in partnership with jurisdictional representatives would work with partners to develop a promotional media template that would be applied locally with localised messages. Further ideas and points for this strategy are:

- Include local hero/figures in campaigns
- Promotional material should feature both schools and universities
- Account for the diversity of specific age groups – i.e. include younger children (i.e. years 7 and 8) as well as senior secondary
- Creation of parallel online forums (Twitter/Facebook/Google Hangouts/LinkedIn), IndigenousX
- Creation of a HUB App that uses a QR code that could be used by students to access information
- Use of both mainstream and localised Aboriginal media
- Need to celebrate the stars within the community – not just the people who are already teaching and those at university
- To be updated regularly is essential – particularly with the rapid movement of social media
- Creation of excitement – to facilitate the “what’s in it for me?” generation (what’s the incentive?)
- Purchasing of place-based advertisements e.g. billboards/bus shelter advertising
- This campaign to give their stories of the positive impacts of Aboriginal teachers (thought provoking/assisting positive change)
- Develop a template for school visits or teenager-friendly ‘roadshow’.

There needs to be further discussion of seeking funding to support the localised rollout of the national marketing strategy. A supplementary strategy raised by this group was the question on building the capacity of both Aboriginal Education Officers and Career Advisors within schools to understand and communicate the pathways into teaching.
Teacher education actions

University schools and faculties of education train teachers for the future, currently graduating nearly 300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers each year. Most faculties have developed an action plan to improve engagement and success of their Indigenous students enrolled in teacher education.

The teacher education forum looked at issues wider than marketing teaching as a career. They also considered some of the barriers that may deter Indigenous teacher education students from becoming teachers. Suggestions included:

- Investigate models for future delivery of teacher education programmes to Indigenous students. In particular, the group raised the benefits of a Cohort Model which existed in the 1970’s.
- It was suggest that jointly MATSITI and Australian Council Deans of Education (ACDE) document the options and models of teacher education delivery which are currently used across Australia.
- Identify reasons why Indigenous students do not complete their teacher education programmes and Identify methods for improving (Indigenous) student engagement, retention and success, and consider strategies to improve the relationship between University Indigenous units and teacher education departments to improve student experience and support. (Note: MATSITI and ACDE have undertaken considerable work on these issues www.matsiti.edu.au/tag/acde )
- Consider how students can be better supported whilst on Professional Practice
- The need for teacher education departments to employ senior indigenous staff
- Revisit the message given by the target of “1000 teachers by 1990” with an aspirational target such as 10,000 teachers. I.e. not only celebrate existing Indigenous teachers but clearly state that the number of Indigenous teachers is inadequate and indefensible.

Community actions

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are the cultural bedrock for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are teaching or considering a teaching career in the future.

The following were listed as potential activities from the community perspective:

- Indigenous organisations should promote teaching and educational leadership
- Community-based mentors are needed to support people through the transition from student to teacher
- Community support is needed to retain and build resilience for new Indigenous teachers in schools
- A strategy should be developed to encourage ex-Indigenous teachers to reconnect with schools
- There needs to be “stepping stones” with small steps for Indigenous people to progress from being a member of the school community into the classroom. That is, from parent and volunteer helper to teaching assistant or aboriginal education officer to teacher. Ensuring people can make this journey together and be supported.

Do these statements reflect the views expressed by your group?
How could these and other ideas be sharpened up and strategised to make a difference?
Have your say by emailing info@matsiti.edu.au, telephoning the project team on 08 8302 0562 or using social media conversation (eg @MATSITI)
Forum quotes

- Making a positive impact on the lives of young people. I want to show my students that education is empowering and possible for them. /Ash
- I love teaching because every day is different and I can help make a difference in lots of little ways. .../ Keryl
- I choose education because I liked the idea that it’s a profession I can travel with. /Maygen
- As an Indigenous teacher I have the power to be a strong role model & show the kids they can be successful.
- Teaching influences everyone! /Gail
- Education is about empowering people to dream to make change! /Julie
- For the magic moments when working with learners! /Ian
- I wanted to become a teacher to follow the learning journey of my family. /Grace
- A student asks you when you will return to school, and says you are the only teacher who gave a stuff about us koorie. /Cath
- Because you can make a positive influence in the lives of our students. /Rebekah
- Our kids need teachers who ‘know’ their experience intimately in order to engage them. /Kym
- Teaching is such a rewarding profession. I love teaching a lesson & seeing the students feel success when they understand a new concept. /Liz
- In 1974 I wrote in my school paper ‘I have a dream... to be an Aboriginal Teacher. /Ingrid
- Hearing a student say “you make school fun & make me feel like I can do anything, Miss.” Inspiring & working with our mob. /Jessa
- Because you can work at different styles of schools like Montessori, State, Flexi Schools & Catholic. /Nicky
- The relationships you build with students; having students believe u truly care about them and who they are! /Heidi
- Because we can be a positive role model, understand our kids, give our kids a voice. I can be a part of closing the gap. /Bindi
- You cannot have legal sovereignty without an education revolution! /Irabinna
- My favourite part is where the kids achieve more than they thought they could. @IndigenousX
- To create and engage critical thinking in our deadly kids to have extremely successful futures. /Michelle
- Sharing of knowledge and experiences as a part of teaching is moorditj (deadly). /Robyn
- I love how as an indigenous teacher we are able to disprove the discourses and stereotypes placed on not just our people but everybody. /Phil
- I love how as an indigenous teacher we are able to disprove the discourses & stereotypes placed on not just our people but everybody. /Heidi
- Teaching is a great career because you can help decolonise the minds of Aboriginal students. /Nicky
- Teaching is deadly because: It provides me with the opportunity to bring about change to our people and our community & to have fun. /Garry
- To help one child or one parent at the end of the day I know I am making an impact. /Pam
- Everyday is challenging, adventurous and fun because I am allowed to spend my days with the future. Our future leaders. /Bojames
Delegate feedback

Feedback from delegates was overwhelmingly positive, with comments ranging from inspirational, connections with amazing people, empowering and opportunity for networking.

Feedback was also collected on individual workshops - also positive and informative.

Some improvements were suggested to forum timing and format and these will be taken on board for future events.

Forum delegate feedback: Did the forum meet your expectations?

- Thankyou, thankyou, thankyou!!!!
- Would love to have more choices of forums that were highly varied rather than similar. This is my second MATSITI forum. I have really enjoyed it. It met all my expectations, looking forward to have MATSITI forum next year. Well done!!!
- Awesome – engagement at its best – now a “twit” lol.
- Passionate discussion – overall we are all here for the same reasons.
- Met expectations? Very, very useful. I feel so privileged to be a part of it! So much food for thought and extremely effective networking.
- Very broad concepts and focus at times, but good to get you thinking. Good to hear from Peter regarding the HR support.
- Closer management of group interaction to ensure all information is presented – had to rush for time, therefore didn’t get to hear/see everything.
- Yes it was great! I expected there to be more students and I think universities should ‘promote’ young teachers to come to future MATSITI conferences.
- Yes, beyond my expectations. As a speaker for people new to the career – our stories need to be heard by people thinking of taking up the journey of teaching not just students already in teaching degrees.
- Yes, it was a really worthwhile conference. Thank you.
- Thank you MATSITI team for your planning – I am glad I managed to get myself here because I would have missed out waiting for work to sponsor me.
- I feel extremely privileged to have had this experience. There are so many concepts and ideas that I will bring forward with me on my deadly teaching career…
- MATSITI offered me more than I could have ever imagined.
- Complete Deadly Career feedback report is available upon request.

Delegates and presenters, A Deadly Career Forum, 2013
Opening by Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion, Minister for Indigenous Affairs