NSW Aboriginal teachers, principals, Aboriginal education officers and school learning support officers join Stronger Smarter Institute staff at the seminar in Lismore.

Seminar helps to produce stronger, smarter teachers

NSW

YUIN (southern NSW) man Peter Hewitt believes working with the More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (MATSITI) through the Stronger Smarter Institute has made him a better teacher and leader.

Mr Hewitt, a teacher at Fig Tree High School in the Illawarra region of NSW, recently attended a seminar with the Stronger Smarter Institute in Lismore, northern NSW, along with other Indigenous teachers.

“It’s been challenging in relation to my sense of selfreflection, where I am so far on my journey of identification,” he said. “We’ve had challenging discussions but in a safe environment.”

Cabbage Tree Island School principal Dionne Anderson said the Stronger Smarter approach helped develop already good teachers into excellent leaders.

“Significant for us”

“We have good quality, solid people transitioning to strong, quality leaders,” she said. “It’s significant for us as Aboriginal educators and support is growing. People find strength they didn’t even know existed and walk away from experiences like this knowing they have opportunities.

“I’m excited about the possibilities.” Mr Hewitt said he’d found solidarity talking with the other educators at the seminar, including Stronger Smarter Institute founder Chris Sarra.

“It can be lonely as an Aboriginal teacher because there are different expectations about what you bring to the table,” Mr Hewitt said.

“But talking with the other teachers here has been inspiring. They are, in a real sense, family.

“We’ve had conversations unpacking frameworks and about leadership, which mean when I get back to the classroom I’ll have more tools to be able to do things well with my students.”