



MATSITI

**More Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander
Teachers Initiative**

**Evaluation of the
More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Teachers Initiative Project**

**Final Report
March 2016**

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Dear Professor Buckskin

I am pleased to provide the final report of the evaluation of the More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (MATSITI) on behalf of the MATSITI Evaluation Panel.

The Evaluation Panel would like to acknowledge the exceptional work of the University of South Australia's MATSITI project team in managing this project under your leadership. It is evident that the project team, through its high level of understanding of the issues impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Australian schools, and the aspirational relationship which many of those students have with their teachers, contributed significantly to the success of the project.

The Evaluation Panel would also like to acknowledge the support and guidance given to the evaluation by the project team, particularly yourself, Emeritus Professor Paul Hughes, Dr Kaye Price, Mark Tranthim-Fryer, Brian Marshall and Kerry Taylor.

As Chair I would also like to acknowledge and thank my fellow Evaluation Panel members, Professor Brenda Cherednichenko and Professor Mark Rose, and our colleague Annie Hollander, who put in many hours analysing data and reports, and challenging the Evaluation Panel through our deliberations.

The Evaluation Panel is of the view that the MATSITI project has made a significant contribution to the inclusion and advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the teaching profession, following many years of successive governments articulating the need to increase their representation as teachers to match their representation in the Australian population. However, it is also the view of the Evaluation Panel that to achieve this will require many more years of committed effort as exemplified by the work of the MATSITI community.

Yours sincerely

Peter Johnson PSM
Chair
MATSITI Evaluation Panel
30 March 2016

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Executive Summary

The More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander project was initiated by the Commonwealth Government and funded for a four year period 2011-2015.

The intent of the project was to increase:

- the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in teaching positions in schools;
- the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers; and
- the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in teaching positions in schools.

MATSITI Context

The MATSITI project emanated from the many reports, plans, research and decisions of recent decades, all articulating a need to deliver on these objectives, in the pursuit of better educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Australian schools and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people more broadly. These include, but are not limited to:

- the National Aboriginal Education Committee and the work of Paul Hughes and Eric Willmot (1982) in setting an aspirational target of 1000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers by 1990;
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (1989);
- the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) discussion paper (2000) *Achieving Educational Equity for Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*;
- the National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training (2001);
- MCEETYA's *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (2008);
- the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) *communiques* (2007 and 2008) on *Closing the Gap*;
- the Australian Education Systems Officials Committee's (AESOC) working party on Indigenous Education *Australian Directions in Indigenous Education 2005-2008* (2006);
- the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs' *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014* (2010); and
- the Education Council's *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015* (2015).

Supporting Literature

Support for the MATSITI initiative is also drawn from the writings of many noted academics and authors, highlighted in Chapter 4 of this report.

Project Governance

The governance of the MATSITI project could be considered to be well structured with transparent decision making and highly visible accountability. The MATSITI team, under the leadership of the Project Director Professor Peter Buckskin, made significant use of the

MATSITI website to clearly articulate the initiative's implementation and to communicate its progress.

Professor Buckskin, was well supported by a dedicated project team within the University of South Australia, a Reference Group and a Working Party drawn from Indigenous stakeholders, who provide general advice and direction.

Project Constraints

The Evaluation Panel identified four factors which may have been constraints on the success of the project or the capacity to adequately evaluate its success. These included:

- the self-nomination of projects by project partners;
- the difficulties of capturing teacher workforce data across the range of school jurisdictions, government and non-government, across Australia;
- legislative and industrial barriers to the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers across those same school jurisdictions; and
- cross portfolio responsibilities relating to the obvious interests of both the Indigenous Affairs and Education and Training portfolios in the success of the MATSITI objectives.

Research

The MATSITI project engaged Dr Kaye Price and Emeritus Professor Paul Hughes to lead its Research Plan, to identify key factors that contribute to the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people entering and remaining in teaching positions in Australian schools.

The MATSITI website features extensive contributions which include academic articles, news articles, reports from conferences and workshops and notices. These were a valuable knowledge bank for MATSITI Project Partners and the broader MATSITI community.

MATSITI Annual Work Plans and Annual Progress Reports

The MATSITI project team outlined their yearly actions and events a series of annual work plans which were subsequently evaluated through annual progress reports. These work plans were guided by the overarching *MATSITI Project Plan 2012-2015*.

The publication of these documents provided a clear and open approach to the work of the project team, as well as a broader understanding of the breadth of the project.

MATSITI Partnership Projects

There have been 57 individual projects conducted by MATSITI project partners supported by funding through the program. Many of the project partners have supplemented project expenditure with in-kind support.

There was a total of \$6.96m originally allocated to MATSITI projects, of which 56.9% was derived from direct program grants and the remainder contributed by project partners.

Projects were categorised as Tier 1 if they had broader national coverage or implications. Many of these were undertaken by organisations with national reach or by significant contributors. Tier 2 projects were more localised in nature.

MATSITI Teacher Workforce Scoping Plan

The NSW Department of Education and Communities was commissioned to produce the *MATSITI Teacher Workforce Scoping Plan*.

The Scoping Plan was intended to enable “*schools and school jurisdictions, university schools of education, professional associations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and community leaders and their networks to develop a coordinated approach to increasing the number and capacities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in government and non-government schools throughout Australia*”.

It provided an excellent resource for school jurisdictions and other potential MATSITI project partners to draw on strategies which could contribute to the overall achievement of the MATSITI objectives.

Tier 1 Projects (\$1,947,142)

There were 6 Tier 1 projects funded by MATSITI, with a budgeted MATSITI contribution of \$1,947,142.

The Tier 1 project partners the National Catholic Education Commission, Catholic Education South Australia, the Australian Council of Deans of Education, the Australian Indigenous Lecturers in Teacher Education, Principals Australia Institute and the Career Development Association of Australia committed to ambitious projects consistent with the level of funding allocated.

The projects covered a broad range of strategies including a more coordinated approach across the Catholic education sector, the engagement, retention and support of students in teacher education programs, the establishment of an association for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education lecturers, mentoring support for new teachers and related career support.

While the level of success of individual strategies varied, the Tier 1 projects laid the groundwork for a substantial contribution to the MATSITI objectives into the future.

Promotional Strategies (\$374,375)

There were 12 projects funded with a focus on the promotion of teaching as a career to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Two of these projects, conducted by Catholic Education South Australia and the Career Development Association of Australia were built into the Tier 1 projects. The budgeted MATSITI contribution for the other projects was in the vicinity of \$374,375, excluding Tier 1 project budgets.

While the major jurisdictions of the NSW Department of Education and the Queensland Department of Education and Training were able to develop successful strategies utilising their access to significant resources, other project partners were able to develop innovative promotional tools which could well be incorporated into larger scale campaigns.

Mentor Strategies (\$155,558)

There were five projects funded with a focus on the mentoring of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students and beginning teachers. One of those projects, conducted by Principals Australia Institute, was embedded in a Tier 1 project. The budgeted MATSITI contribution for the remaining Tier 2 projects was \$155,558, excluding Tier 1 project budgets.

While the outcomes of these projects were limited, it was evident that mentoring programs for teacher education students and early career teachers provides vital support and minimises the risk of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and teacher education students exiting. This is backed by related literature.

Leadership Strategies (\$518,000)

There were ten projects funded with a focus on leadership development among the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher workforce. The budgeted MATSITI contribution for these was \$518,000.

The scope of these projects was broad, encompassing programs across the largest jurisdiction, New South Wales, down to a single school project, Monaro High School. While some of the projects were highly successful, several struggled to achieve their aims.

Larger centrally controlled jurisdictions appear to be advantaged in providing leadership opportunities for teachers participating in these types of programs.

Professional Experience Strategies (\$123,630)

There were only three projects funded with a focus on the professional experience component of teacher education programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The budgeted MATSITI contribution was \$123,630.

The institutions which conducted the two completed projects have each contributed to the research around this area and the need for programs of this nature to be effectively supported by the profession, with clear communication.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers to Teachers (\$194,510)

There were five projects funded with a focus on strategies to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers to transition to careers as teachers. The budgeted MATSITI contribution was \$194,510.

These projects tapped into a known supply for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher workforce, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers, and in doing so contributed to the level of awareness among the target group of the opportunities available in teaching.

School to University Pathways (\$198,000)

There were four projects funded with a focus on the utilisation of school to university pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students. The budgeted MATSITI contribution was \$198,000.

The projects acknowledged the need to provide pathways alternate to the traditional school to university transition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, particularly those in remote areas.

Teacher Education Student Exit Factors (\$95,875)

There were two projects funded with a focus on identifying the exit factors for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in teacher education programs. The budgeted MATSITI contribution was \$95,875.

While each project identified key factors which led to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students exiting programs, there would be benefit in the project owners working with other lead organisations such as the Australian Council of Deans of Education and the Australian Indigenous Lecturers in Teacher Education.

Other Projects (\$262,771)

There were nine other projects funded by MATSITI which did not fit into the above categories mentioned above. The budgeted MATSITI contribution for these projects was \$262,771.

These projects included forums and networking, scholarships, early career development, remote teacher education, the use of technology and connection with community. Through their varied success they demonstrate the value of their inclusion in more comprehensive strategies.

Data Capture

The capture of data, whether it be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students or teachers, is problematic, given the constraints on this data in higher education institutions, the dispersed nature of many school jurisdictions and the quality of data held centrally by most school jurisdictions.

While the use of Ernst and Young as contractors to collect and collate teacher workforce data maximised the opportunity to capture a more complete dataset, there were still significant gaps.

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in teacher education programs increased from 1610 to 2459 between 2001 and 2014. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students remained below 2 percent of the total teacher education cohort for that period, with 1.87 percent in 2014.

The number of teacher identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander increased from 2,661 to 3,100 between 2012 and 2015. These included 743 teachers who were captured in both collections but only identified in the 2015 collection. It also included 697 teachers who appear to have joined the teacher workforce after 2012.

Other highlights from the data are:

- the median age of Indigenous teachers is 40 years;
- 75 percent of Indigenous teachers are female;
- 83 percent of Indigenous teachers work full-time;
- 83percent of Indigenous teachers are classroom teachers, 7 percent are deputy principals and 3 percent are principals;
- 57 percent of Indigenous teachers work in primary schools, 32 percent in secondary schools and 11 percent in combined primary/secondary schools;
- 80 percent of Indigenous teachers are in ongoing/permanent employment, 17 percent on fixed term contracts and 3 percent casual;
- 49 percent of Indigenous teachers are employed in a major city, with 10 percent employed in remote or very remote areas;
- the Indigenous teachers new to the 2015 collection are generally better qualified academically; and
- 233 (14%) of Indigenous teachers and executives from the 2012 collection had been promoted by 2015, with 40 of those to principal.

MATSITI Conferences

The MATSITI project made excellent use of annual conferences to showcase developments in the employment and career development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and leaders and to facilitate valuable networking with the broader MATSITI community.

This culminated in the *#OurMobTeach* conference in Adelaide in 2015 from which the *Tarndanya Declaration* was communicated to the Minister for Education and Training, Simon Birmingham. The text of the *Tarndanya Declaration* is in Chapter 22 of this report.

Conclusions

The Evaluation Panel found that successful engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the teaching profession is an essential contributor to great educational success for children and young people and their families and communities.

It also identified the following factors contributed to successful projects which aim to increase the number and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in the profession:

- the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the leadership of initiatives and projects;
- connectedness of initiatives to wider influences such as school systems, universities, governments and communities;
- sustained engagement and commitment to supporting the project over a number of years so that they can become embedded practices;
- 'one off' projects have a limited impact but when well defined and connected can shift understanding and practices for the future;

- clear project deliverables aimed at attraction, retention and success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in preservice education and the profession and leadership roles which can be reported accountably;
- awareness raising and development of cultural competence accompanied by goals for shifts in practices and outcomes; and
- significant in-kind contributions of partners in projects, not only a sign of their commitment, but may be leveraged to embed practices for the future as normal operations.

Recommendations

The Evaluation Panel is of the view that the evidence and lessons learned over the past four years should be capitalised upon for a more informed and targeted focus in future, with the extension of the MATSITI initiative for a further four year period, 2016-2019.

The value of having a dedicated third party team with significant expertise in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and connections in the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community has been realised through the MATSITI project. The Evaluation Panel is also of the view that an essential element of success has been that such a third party team was under the leadership of noted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics and educational leaders, with access to other experts in this field.

It is arguable that through the awareness raising of the MATSITI project and the implementation of the strategies of the project partners, MATSITI is progressing towards the full realisation of its objectives.

With the period of the MATSITI project being four years and many of the partner projects being much more recent, it is difficult to deduce the true impact of MATSITI. What is evident is that many of the strategies will require much longer to realise their full potential.

The MATSITI Evaluation Panel recommends that:

1. *Priority be given to publicising successful strategies and communicating the broader achievements of MATSITI in a “what works” style campaign across universities, educational jurisdictions, schools and key stakeholder groups in the broader MATSITI community.*
2. *Funding be provided to extend the MATSITI project for a further four years 2016-2019, to be managed by an appropriate third party team with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership, expertise in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and workforce, and connections in the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.*
3. *Projects funded in the period 2016-2019 target specific objectives, draw upon evidence and data from the 2012-2015 initiatives, utilise particular strategies and be managed by project partners with specifically related expertise.*
4. *A sub-project be devoted to embedding the MATSITI objectives into the regulatory framework and operational context of school jurisdictions to ensure the sustainability of the pursuit of these objectives up to and beyond 2019.*

5. *A national strategy of promoting teaching as a career to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples be developed, launched and monitored.*
6. *A comprehensive national leadership strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers be developed and implemented.*
7. *Leadership and teaching positions in schools with significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments be targeted or identified for filling by suitably qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators.*
8. *A national scholarship program of an annual 100 scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students be launched.*
9. *A suite of strategies aimed at significantly increasing the completion rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initial teacher education students be implemented by universities.*
10. *Priority be given to establishing and promoting pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers to transition to careers as teachers and that such pathways be sensitive to the social, cultural and financial support required for success.*
11. *All school employers be required to report on the cultural knowledge and practices they have and are implementing to provide a safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to formally identify as such and for that identification to be formally recorded and maintained by that employer and reported nationally in a de-identified statistical format.*
12. *Teacher regulatory bodies in each state and territory be required to provide an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers to formally identify as such and for that identification to be formally recorded and maintained by that body and reported nationally in a de-identified statistical format.*
13. *Teacher unions and the Commonwealth Government agree in principle to include in future industrial agreements mechanisms by which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers may be provided with priority for employment.*
14. *The Commonwealth Government amend the relevant legislation to provide preference for the employment of appropriately qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers across all Australian educational jurisdictions.*

Evaluation of the MATSITI Project - Final Report March 2016

This report provides an evaluation of the More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (MATSITI) project against its stated objectives. It provides an insight into the various components of the project, as well as findings and recommendations.

1. The More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Project

A Funding Agreement was signed between the Commonwealth of Australia and the University of South Australia, for the More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative on 21 June 2011. The contract has been managed through the office of the Dean, Indigenous Scholarship, Engagement and Research.

Under the funding agreement the intention of the project was to increase:

- the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in teaching positions in schools;
- the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers; and
- the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in teaching positions in schools.

The project was to comprise five stages:

- a. the development of an Initial Project Plan and approval of that Initial Project Plan by the Commonwealth;
- b. the development of a Scoping Plan;
- c. the development of a Project Work Plan and approval of that Project Work Plan by the Commonwealth;
- d. the development of Yearly Work Plans and approvals of those Yearly Work Plans by the Commonwealth; and
- e. the implementation of the Project in a manner consistent with Yearly Work Plans.

Total funding of \$8.19 million has been provided for the completion of the project.

The project concluded at the end of March 2016.

Throughout the life of the project, funding has been provided to project partners for 57 projects from school jurisdictions, universities, Indigenous organisations and constituent members of those entities to complete sub-projects intended to contribute to the delivery of the MATSITI outcomes.

2. Evaluation of the MATSITI Project

The evaluation of the MATSITI project was conducted by an Evaluation Panel, comprising:

- Mr Peter Johnson, formerly Executive Director, People and Services, NSW Department of Education
- Professor Brenda Cherednichenko, Executive Dean, Faculty of Arts & Education, Deakin University and former President, Australian Council of Deans of Education
- Professor Mark Rose, Executive Director of Indigenous Strategy, La Trobe University

The Evaluation Panel was supported by Ms Annie Hollander, formerly Assistant Director, Teacher Recruitment, NSW Department of Education, and by the MATSITI project team of the University of South Australia.

The collection, collation and analysis of Indigenous workforce data was conducted by Ernst and Young, under the leadership of Mr Mike Willett, and made available to the Evaluation Panel.

The scope of the evaluation comprised:

- progress of workforce reforms designed to increase the number and capacity of Indigenous teachers by schooling authorities and teacher education providers;
- the effectiveness and impact of the MATSITI initiative, and effectiveness of the models of workforce interventions through the 57 partnership agreements; and
- recommendations for future Indigenous teacher employment reforms and targets.

The Evaluation Panel also referred to the criteria which were specific to each of the partnership projects when analysing the effectiveness of those projects or groups of projects.

The focus of the evaluation was on the three criteria listed in the abovementioned scope.

The evaluation comprised the following components:

- analysis of project and evaluation reports from individual projects;
- interviews with key project officers from a selection of MATSITI partner projects;
- surveys of key project officers from a selection of MATSITI partner projects;
- empirical analysis of available teacher education and workforce data;
- analysis of various documents, plans and reports published through the MATSITI website;
- feedback from the *#OurMobTeach* Conference 2015; and
- feedback from a workshop of key HR officers from each education jurisdiction.

3. Setting the Scene

There were many key influences on the initiation of the MATSITI project and many have emerged during the life of the project. The Evaluation Panel considered it important to mention some of these influences. While there will be many more not mentioned, it is not the view of the Evaluation Panel that those which were omitted were not important.

Inherent in the MATSITI project is an underpinning that there is a direct relationship between the presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in schools and improvements in educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This is not contested by the Evaluation Panel. Mellor and Corrigan (ACER 2004) acknowledge that this underpinning has held its place in Indigenous education literature and government policy for some time.

3.1 National Aboriginal Education Committee

As Chair of the National Aboriginal Education Committee, Paul Hughes played a major role in the articulation of a goal to significantly increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in Australian schools.

Now Emeritus Professor, Paul Hughes was one of the first Aboriginal teachers employed in Australian schools, in 1965.

Under the leadership of Paul Hughes, in 1979 the National Aboriginal Education Committee conducted research which, among other outcomes, identified the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers employed in Australian schools and recommended a target of 1000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers to be employed by 1990 (Hughes and Willmott 1982).

Emeritus Professor Hughes has played a major advisory and research role in the MATSITI project as part of the team under the leadership of Professor Peter Buckskin, as has Dr Kaye Price, a long-time colleague and acknowledged contributor to the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

3.2 The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (NATSIEP)

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy recognised that:

“Aboriginal people generally seek education that is more responsive to the diversity of Aboriginal circumstances and needs, and which recognises and values the cultural background of students” (DEET 1989).

In articulating a concerted national approach NATSIEP acknowledged that respective governments had acted to support the policy through a range of actions, including “the employment of Aboriginal teachers” (DEET 1989).

NATSIEP also articulated long-term goals which included:

- *“To increase the number of Aboriginal people employed as ... teachers ...”*
- *“To increase the number of Aboriginal people employed as ... teachers ... in technical and further education colleges and higher education institutions” (DEET 1989).*

Parties to NATSIEP also agreed to triennial operational plans relating to “*employment of Aboriginals in teaching*” (DEET 1989). This included education authorities in Australian states and territories and other participating educational bodies.

3.3 MCEETYA Discussion Paper 2000

In a discussion paper in 2000, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) through Goal 4 reaffirmed a commitment to “*increase the number of Aboriginal people employed as ... teachers...*” (MCEETYA 2000).

3.4 National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training 2001

In a report to the Commonwealth Parliament in 2001 it was acknowledged that the proportion of teachers in Australian schools who identified as Indigenous was “*low*” (DEST 2001).

The report cited 1,338 (0.8%) Indigenous teachers in government schools with a student population of 4.5% and 52 (0.1%) Indigenous teachers in Catholic schools with a student population of around 1.5%.

3.5 The Melbourne Declaration

The *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA 2008) of December 2008 gave a clear commitment from all of the nation’s ministers with responsibility for school education.

The Melbourne Declaration recognised that:

“Australian schooling needs to engage Indigenous students, their families and communities in all aspects of schooling; increase Indigenous participation in the education workforce at all levels; and support coordinated community service for students and their families that can increase constructive participation in schooling” (MCEETYA 2008).

The Declaration also committed to:

“working with all school sectors to:... ‘close the gap’ for all young Indigenous Australians ...” (MCEETYA 2008).

3.6 Closing the Gap

At its meeting of 20 December 2007, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) committed (COAG 2007) to addressing significant aspects of disadvantage faced by Indigenous Australians.

In November 2008 COAG agreed (COAG 2008) on a number of targets, three of which related directly to education and a fourth to employment. The agreement was to be formalised through National Indigenous Reform Agreements.

As part of the monitoring process, the Prime Minister delivers a report to the Australian Parliament each year, identifying progress towards meeting the *Closing the Gap* targets and areas in which progress has not been satisfactory.

The *Closing the Gap* targets are:

- close the gap in life expectancy within a generation (by 2031);
- halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five by 2018;
- ensure access to early childhood education for all Indigenous four year olds in remote communities by 2013;
- halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for children by 2018;
- halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 (or equivalent) attainment rates by 2020; and
- halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and other Australians by 2018.

The objectives of the MATSITI project are consistent with and will be expected to contribute to the achievement of the *Closing the Gap* targets.

3.7 Australian Directions in Indigenous Education 2005-2008

The Australian Education Systems Officials Committee (AESOC) working party on Indigenous Education established by MCEETYA in 2005, produced the *Australian Directions in Indigenous Education 2005-2008* (AESOC 2006) in consultation with a range of stakeholders.

Among its many recommendations, the AESOC working party recommended that the MCEETYA:

“7.5 Provide opportunities for Indigenous teachers to develop the skills to become successful school principals and to take up other leadership positions within schools” (AESOC 2006).

“12.4 Commission in 2006 a review and update of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy to include the engagement of students, their parents/caregivers and communities as a key objective and targets for the training and employment of Indigenous teachers” (AESOC 2006).

The AESOC working party identified additional issues which required attention, including:

- “... to support the engagement of Indigenous students. These include the need to:*
- *Increase the number of Indigenous teachers ...”* (AESOC 2006).

3.8 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014

The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs developed the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014* to ensure that it met its commitments under *Closing the Gap* and to ensure that *“all Australian children to have a high-quality, world-standard education to equip them for life in the 21st century”* (MCEECDYA 2010).

The Action Plan acknowledged the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and school leaders in the achievement of the *Closing the Gap* targets.

“The involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at all levels of educational decision-making and the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, teachers, education workers and community members in schools and classrooms provides strong role models ...” (MCEECDYA 2010).

This was further acknowledged in:

“Leaders and researchers agree that increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators is a key factor in fostering student engagement and improving educational outcomes” (MCEECDYA 2010).

A target flowing from this was to:

“increase [in] the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, principals and education workers (Aboriginal and Islander Education Workers (AIEWs) and equivalents)” (MCEECDYA 2010).

3.9 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015

In 2015 the Education Council published the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015* (Education Council 2015) to capitalise on the work of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014* and the subsequent evaluation (ACIL Allen Consulting 2014) of the Action Plan.

The intent of the Strategy was clearly identified as pursuing COAG’s *Closing the Gap* targets (ACIL Allen Consulting 2014).

The Strategy identifies as a priority:

“Further support for the engagement of children, young people and their families is provided by building a well-qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workforce” (ACIL Allen Consulting 2014).

3.10 More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative

The then Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, the Hon Peter Garrett, announced the funding of the More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative in July 2011.

In so doing the Minister stated that it is:

“vital that we find new, practical ways to encourage more Aboriginal people to pursue a career in teaching. Not only will this help provide positive role models for young Indigenous students, but it will also help non-Indigenous students learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, history and culture” (Garrett 2011).

The Minister further confirmed the government’s *“commitment to closing the gap in the education of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.”*

It would be reasonable to state that the objectives of the MATSITI project, particularly to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, have had the support of Australian governments since the late 1970s or earlier.

These objectives have been articulated in numerous reports, plans and strategies at federal and state level, and across educational jurisdictions. The MATSITI project has provided a single avenue for those objectives to be pursued.

4. Brief Literature Context to Achieve MATSITI

For decades, sound thinking about the conditions for and enablers of successful student learning have been endorsed as primarily family and community background (Teese 2003; Teese and Polesel 2005), and then significantly teaching quality (Dewey 1938; Goodlad 1984; Darling-Hammond 2000).

Teaching quality is the capacity of the teacher to respond to and build on the experience and knowledge students bring to the classroom and then to engage young people for learning, through authentic and meaningful curriculum (Darling-Hammond and Sykes 2009). While these principles are true in any learning context across the lifespan of the learner, and for any discipline, it is equally true for young people in schools and especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their teachers.



While it remains critical that schools and educators continuously work to improve the relationship between school, home and communities, it is often seen that the most fundamental impact systems and governments can have to improve learning outcomes is by working with teachers and improving the quality of teachers (Dinham 2014).

There is no argument that education is the single most influential factor in improving socio-economic outcomes for individuals, families and communities. This is equally true for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and their families (Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council 2014).

"It was education, plain and simple, that changed the way I look at the world, it probably changed the way the world looks at me." (Vickie Roach, Aboriginal graduate, SMH 23/5/2009).

Participation rates, in vocational education and training as well as in higher education, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are well below their representation in the community. While the evidence suggests participation is growing under a range of new initiatives to encourage more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and low SES students to enter post-compulsory education (Buckskin, Hughes, Price, Rigney, Sarra, Adams, Hayward, Teasdale and Gregory 2009), still very little progress has been made (Lawrence 2007; Pechenkina and Anderson, 2011; Wilks and Wilson 2015; Auld 2016; Walter 2016; Zacharias et al 2016).

Across the spectrum of Australian education, there is a long held view, backed by solid evidence, that the best way to advance educational outcomes is through significant partnerships (Clark 2014; Epstein 2001; Haebich 2014; O'Faircheallaigh 2003). In the context of the education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, the research is also clear in supporting the partnership approach, but even more strongly focuses on partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (Burton 2004; Lawrence 2007, Price 2012).

In teacher education and teacher professional learning there are numerous examples of quality partnerships which have worked successfully to contribute to educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people (Mahon and Cherednichenko

2007; Jay, Moss and Cherednichenko 2010; Auld, Charles, Dyer, Levy and Marshall 2013, Auld and Dyer 2016; Price 2012).

Importantly, there is further strong evidence that engagement of and leadership by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers provides the cultural quality, safety and respect that drives significantly deeper engagement and better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, a core principle of the work of the Stronger Smarter Institute (www.strongersmarter.com.au).

To enable the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and leaders, the impetus, on government and universities, is to create simple scholarship frameworks with high volume outcomes to support student success (Zacharias et al 2016, p. 8). The Zacharias report found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were “*more likely to be funding their studies without family assistance and also more likely to be the sole provider for dependents*” (Zacharias et al 2016, p.12).

Buckskin (2012) and Perso and Hayward (2015) make a strong case for a number of directions including, addressing barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and the need for advanced bilingual education bearing in mind that for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people English is a foreign language. Perso and Hayward (2015) call for a strong recognition of students’ backgrounds, most especially their cultural heritage and community.

Perso and Hayward (2015) explore strategies that enable the student’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and knowledge to be visible in the classroom and create a safe environment which enables learning and underpins close teacher-student-family relationships for positive classroom management. They contend that a critical issue for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers is the need to stop applying and assuming negative stereotypes and teachers must resist having low expectations of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers are far less likely to hold these pre-dispositions, rather demonstrating excellent role modelling for young people who can associate with their achievements and so build their own aspirations...and dare to dream (Sarra 2007).

Perso and Hayward (2015), in *Teaching Indigenous Students*, argue that it is critical to empower teachers to help halt the cycle of disadvantage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and to effect real change. Their purpose is to provide a foundation and pedagogy which changes the outcomes of schooling.

Eisner’s assumption that effective learning is, “*what students do with what they learn, when they can do what they want to do*” (2001, p. 367), is sadly played out in the study, work and career trajectories of most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia. This is evidence alone that more needs to be done and achieved. Building awareness is a starting point only.

Nicholls, Crowley and Watt (nd) claim that what has gone wrong with the education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children is the flawed belief that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children learn differently to mainstream children. They suggested that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children learn when their interests and experiences are central to the learning experience, as do most people.

Preservice teachers explored these assumptions and reflected on their engagement with the learning of young people in remote and regional communities (Mahon and Cherednichenko 2007). Through dialogue in the communities with colleagues, these pre-service teachers were able to begin to construct their own professional knowledge and beliefs, to inform future actions and continue to develop as teachers whose essential focus is on learning for all students (Sachs 2003). Price emphasises this approach arguing, that for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, “*quality teacher education is absolutely essential to the social and economic security of Australia*” (Price 2012, p. v).

All teachers, including the increasing numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, must have critical knowledge, pedagogical consciousness and professional ontology (Brown 2008, Giddens 1984), so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are central to a rapidly escalating improvement in educational outcomes.

5. Governance of the MATSITI Project

The governance of the MATSITI project was primarily the responsibility of the Project Director, Professor Peter Buckskin, in consultation with a Reference Group and Working Party.

Professor Buckskin was supported in the day to day administration of the project by a secretariat within the office of the Dean, Indigenous Scholarship, Engagement and Research, of the University of South Australia.

The Reference Group is drawn from Indigenous stakeholders, who provide general advice and direction. The Reference Group has also monitored the cultural integrity of the project and utilised its own member networks for consultation and support in terms of the project implementation. It comprised:

Name	Organisation
Professor Peter Buckskin	University of South Australia
Ms Dyonne Anderson	The Stronger Smarter Institute
Mr James Atkinson	Koorie Education, Northern Metropolitan Region
Mrs Cindy Berwick	NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
Mr Ned David	Yumi Education Support Service
Emeritus Professor Paul Hughes	MATSITI Project Team
Ms Judith Ketchell	Tagai State College, Queensland
Ms Angela Leitch	Queensland University of Technology
Ms Nicole Major	Australian Education Union
Dr Kaye Price	MATSITI Project Team
Professor Mark Rose	La Trobe University
Professor Konai Thaman	UNESCO

The Working Party was established by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations to support the Commonwealth delegate. It comprised:

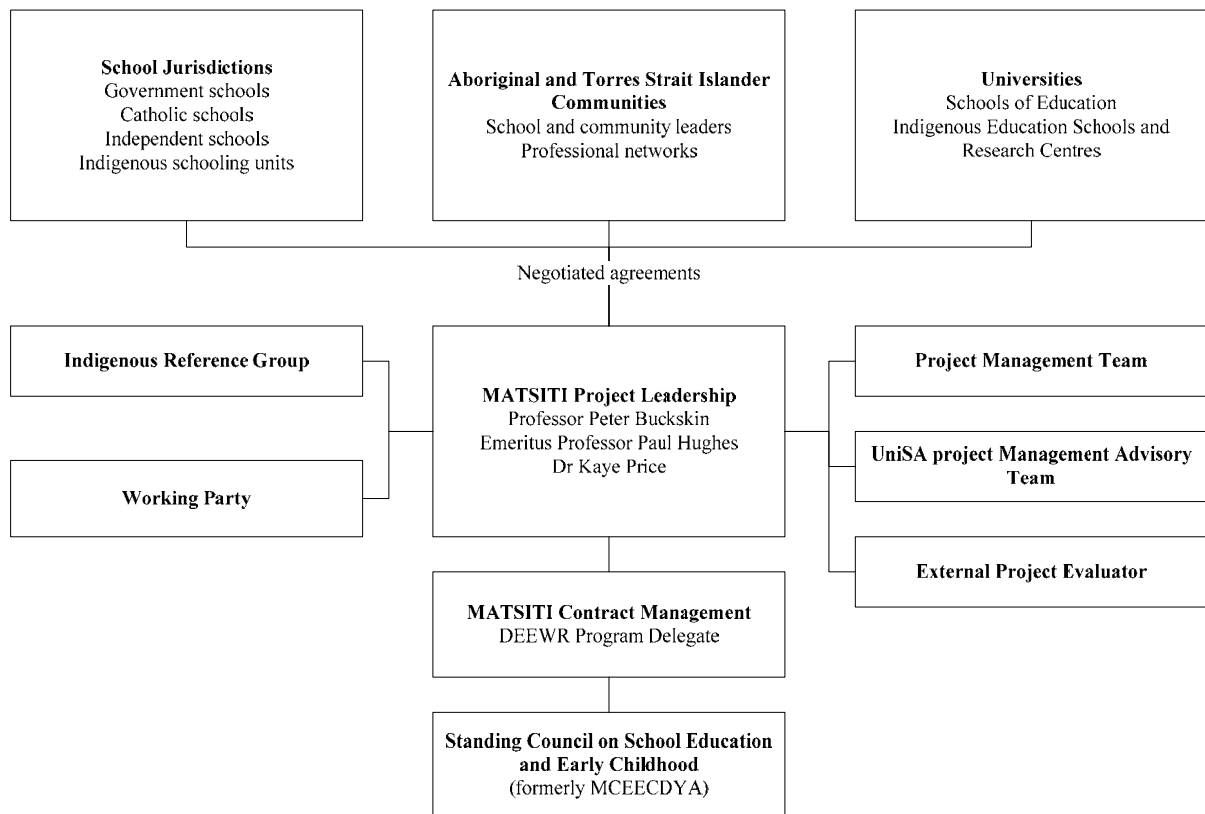
Professor Peter Buckskin	University of South Australia
Professor Paul Chandler	University of Wollongong
Professor Toni Downes	Charles Sturt University
Emeritus Professor Paul Hughes	MATSITI Project Team
Ms Deborah Palmer	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
Dr Kaye Price	MATSITI Project Team
Mr David Templeman	Australian Council of Deans of Education
Ms Anita Torr	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
Ms Vicki Wilson	Department for Education and Child Development

Note: The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet was also represented.

The University of South Australia also provided advice to the MATSITI project team, with particular emphasis of risks and the financial aspects of the project. The University of South Australia managed the formal contracts for project partners and contractors employed by the project.

The governance of the MATSITI project could be considered to be well structured with transparent decision making and highly visible accountability. The team made significant use of the MATSITI website to clearly articulate the initiative’s implementation and to communicate its progress.

Figure 1 – MATSITI Project Stakeholder and Governance Structure



MATSITI Project Plan 2012-15, p14

6. Constraints of the MATSITI Project

It is essential to mention some of the key constraints of the MATSITI project up front, constraints which may have provided a significant risk to the success of the project or the capacity to adequately evaluate its success.

6.1 Self-Nomination of Strategies and Programs

The project relied, for the major part, on interested parties self-nominating to implement strategies and programs which would ideally contribute to the overall objectives of the MATSITI project.

This may have contributed to a bias towards the participation of those parties which already had an interest in or commitment to the promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher employment and development. Alternately it may have also contributed to a number of parties participating, where the level of commitment required was not sufficient to guarantee the completion or the success of their strategies and programs.

While all due diligence was undertaken by the MATSITI project team in assessing strategies and programs nominated by prospective project partners, this aspect still posed a significant risk notably as the MATSITI project team could be responding to interest rather than perhaps able to drive change initiatives with suitable new partners and stimulate dramatic new engagement and outcomes with otherwise disconnected partners.

6.2 Data Capture

One of the most basic key performance indicators for the MATSITI project is to be able to demonstrate an increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in Australian schools and to be able to attribute any increase to the strategies and programs promoted by the project. While this appears to have been achieved, in the very short time frame of the project, the capture of appropriate data has been problematic at several levels.

The National Teacher Workforce Dataset Working Group has been challenged by the capacity of jurisdictions to provide accurate workforce data which adequately characterises the total population of the teaching workforce and which provides a time series to compare the transition of the teaching workforce. These challenges are also evident in other attempts to collect and collate adequate workforce data. If this exercise is further developed it will certainly assist accurate reporting into the future.

The purpose of data capture by jurisdictions varies subject to operational and reporting needs, and is impacted by the maturity of human capital management systems, privacy provisions and internal political or organisational issues.

While most public education jurisdictions are able to contribute detailed data, the quality of some aspects of the data is less than ideal due to the age of the data, the transition of ICT systems and legislation over time, and the size of those jurisdictions.

The fragmentation of the Catholic and Independent education sectors impacts on the capacity to extract complete and consistent data. Without legislative backing or regulatory commitment, it is not possible to compel all non-public sector systems and schools to contribute.

The most basic of all challenges facing data capture is the reluctance or neglect of some jurisdictions, systems, schools or regulatory agencies to ask the essential question – *Are you an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person?* The reasons for this vary and may include simple omission or a perceived lack of commitment. In some cases, the question is asked but due to privacy constraints, real or otherwise, the data cannot be made available for analysis.

In some jurisdictions the accuracy of the data is influenced by the personal motivation of teachers to identify. In a jurisdiction such as New South Wales, where the *Teaching Service Act 1980* provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers with priority for employment, there is a significant incentive for teachers to identify. This may also have the effect of non-Indigenous teachers identifying, subject to the processes in place to prove their Indigenous background.

Some state jurisdictions also have ambitious quotas or targets for the proportion of the workforce representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The continued development of the *National Teacher Workforce Dataset* and complementary datasets such as the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teacher Workforce Analysis* will contribute to a better understanding of the characteristics of the Australian teaching population in the future.

6.3 Legislative and Industrial Barriers

The teacher workforce throughout Australia is employed under a myriad of legislation, awards and agreements. Some of these instruments are governed by state industrial law and others by federal workplace law.

In some jurisdictions the recruitment and appointment of teachers is dictated by strict procedures which may or may not give preference to teachers who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. In at least one jurisdiction, as mentioned previously, New South Wales, this preference has been embedded in the *Teaching Service Act 1980*, the Act which overlays the employment of teachers.

In some jurisdictions, particularly in public education systems, there is direct central control over part or all of the teacher recruitment and selection processes. The degree to which this is localised varies considerably across Australia, as does the capacity to directly influence processes to enhance the employment prospects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through these processes.

6.4 Portfolio Responsibility

Indigenous Affairs at the Federal Government level is the responsibility of the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, sitting within the broader portfolio of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Education and Training is the responsibility of the Minister for Education and Training.

While the MATSITI project essentially has an Indigenous focus, it is intricately associated with higher education and schooling with the intended outcomes to increase the number and capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in schools.

Consequently, there has been a potential risk that traversing two portfolios and two Departments, Prime Minister and Cabinet, and Education and Training, as a result of the 2014 Machinery of Government changes may have led to some conflicting directions and interest in the project. This risk does not appear to have impacted on the outcomes of the project.

7. MATSITI Research

The MATSITI project engaged Dr Kaye Price and Emeritus Professor Paul Hughes to lead its Research Plan, to identify key factors that contribute to the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people entering and remaining in teaching positions in Australian schools.

Under the heading of *Research Articles* the MATSITI website features extensive contributions which include academic articles, news articles, reports from conferences and workshops and notices.

The research contributions cover a broad range of tertiary preparation, recruitment and retention issues as well as reports on MATSITI workforce data. They provide a forum for the dissemination of the contributions of MATSITI project partners and other stakeholders with significant interest in the MATSITI objectives.

The research also informed MATSITI's contribution to the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group and to various conferences relating to the employment of First Nations teachers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

The participation of key MATSITI players in these forums has been beneficial in raising awareness of the project and its objectives.

8. Annual MATSITI Work Plans

The MATSITI approach to planning is a strength of the project, both in its strategic focus and its transparency.

The MATSITI website features work plans for each year of the project with accompanying reports relating to the delivery of those plans. The plans have been updated and published on an annual basis.

The annual work plans are guided by the overarching *MATSITI Project Plan 2012-2015*.

8.1 MATSITI Project Plan 2012-2015

The overarching *MATSITI Project Plan 2012-2015* provides comprehensive details of the purpose of the project, its key deliverables, project scope, governance and management structures and the roles of the various project players.

It also articulates how the MATSITI budget was planned to be utilised over the period of the project.

The staged approach to the project as detailed in the plan could be considered to be well structured and achievable, with intensity maintained for the period of the project through the progressive allocation of funds to project partners.

The plan also identifies two questions through which it anticipated that the MATSITI project would be evaluated:

- a) What are the success indicators and targets for increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in Australian schools?
- b) How effective has the initiative been in increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers?

These questions are consistent with the focus of this evaluation report.

8.2 MATSITI 2012 Work Plan

While the *MATSITI 2012 Work Plan* was reasonably brief, it outlined the project's intention in relation to \$3.024m, around 37% of the eventual MATSITI budget. This indicated a commitment by the project to quickly initiate action to achieve the project's objectives through a combination of research, education sector investment agreements and communication and marketing strategies.

The plan also mentioned the establishment of a risk register to record and mitigate risks to which the project may be exposed.

Significant commitments in the plan were the allocation of \$800,000 to the Tier 1 Australian Council of Deans of Education project and \$600,000 to school authority partners to undertake projects. The initial MATSITI Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and educational leaders forum was also allocated funding.

8.3 MATSITI 2013 Work Plan

The *MATSITI 2013 Work Plan* continued the focus of the project with the allocation of \$2.540m across the range of project components. Significant allocations of \$1.697m to project partners, \$180,400 to workforce research and planning, \$228,400 to communications and marketing and \$105,000 to conferences and events were features of the 2013 budget. These constituted 84 percent of the total MATSITI budget for 2013.

The plan identified as priorities the negotiation of three Tier 1 projects, a second round call for Tier 2 projects and the need to meet with senior Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and workforce officials across four state and territory jurisdictions.

This acknowledged the need for MATSITI to continue to work at both the national and individual jurisdiction level to achieve its objectives.

The plan included a range of conferences and seminars across separate groups of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, senior workforce officials, Deans of Education and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic staff, and final year and recent graduate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers.

8.4 MATSITI 2014 Work Plan

The level of financial commitment increased in the *MATSITI 2014 Work Plan* with a budget of \$2.983m. A significant portion of this increase is attributed to a larger allocation of \$2.070m to project partners. Along with \$172,860 to workforce research and planning, \$204,040 to communications and marketing and \$118,440 to conferences and events, this constituted 86 percent of the 2014 MATSITI budget.

The plan drew attention to the alignment of project partnerships with the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Workforce Scoping Plan* developed for MATSITI by the NSW Department of Education and ‘Collaborative Action 33’ of the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-14*.

The plan also articulated the progress which was anticipated in communicating the MATSITI objectives to a broader audience through a combination of its enhanced website, digital and print resources, direct support for existing marketing in schools, universities and community agencies and through a strong research base.

MATSITI continued to sponsor a range of forums and seminars of key people as well as its national conference, targeted at school leaders.

8.5 MATSITI 2015 Work Plan

The final annual work plan, the *MATSITI 2015 Work Plan*, continued the comprehensive nature of the previous plans, providing guidance on budgeted expenditure and project focus for the year ahead.

The final year budget of \$2.607m, including allocations of \$190,000 to workforce research and planning, \$190,000 to communications and marketing, \$130,000 to conferences and events and \$1.540m to project partners. These comprised around 77 percent of the total MATSITI budget for the year.

The allocations to project partners maintained the focus of the previous year on the Scoping Plan and Collaborative Action 33.

An important aspect of the plan was the 2015 conference which was to consider the major findings of the MATSITI project and to shape the sustainability of the initiative beyond the MATSITI project end date. This was to go hand in hand with appropriate forums, including one to inform this evaluation.

9. Annual MATSITI Progress Reports

The MATSITI project team has published detailed progress reports in each of the years 2011 through to 2014. These progress reports informed the annual review of the MATSITI 2012-2015 Project Plan, through the publication of annual MATSITI Work Plans. The 2015 progress report is to be published at the completion of the MATSITI project.

Each annual progress report outlines the progress of the MATSITI project against key deliverables as categorised by:

- workforce planning and research
- teacher workforce partnerships
- communications and marketing
- conferences and events
- governance
- evaluation.

The progress reports also outline accountability aspects of the project such as income, expenditure and risk and provide up to date analysis of project components.

The publication of progress reports provides a level of transparency to the project, allowing project partners and key stakeholders to assess progress against intended outcomes and to feed into future work plans.

9.1 Progress Report July-December 2011

The initial *Progress Report July-December 2011* was brief due to its timing and its focus on the establishment of the project's governance structure and communication and marketing strategies.

9.2 Progress Report 2012

The *Progress Report 2012* provided more depth, identifying initial achievements and foreshadowing the focus for the forward years.

The project reported establishing solid links with the three main education and community sectors, gaining endorsement from them for the project's future directions.

Project communications matured, with greater use of the MATSITI website and closer contact with key project partners. The first national teachers conference, *Yamaiyamama Paitya: Teachers are Deadly*, consolidated those links and provided the first major opportunity for broad ranging discussion of the project's work.

A range of research projects were conducted under the auspices of the MATSITI research plan to identify pathways and profiles of Indigenous teachers.

A total of \$2,076,456 of project funds was reported as allocated for the year, including 61% for external grants to project partners. One project partner, the Australian Council of Deans of Education, was allocated \$827,272 to conduct a study of retention and completion of teacher education programs by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

9.3 Progress Report 2013

The *Progress Report 2013* capitalised on the initial 18 months of the project, expanding its communication channels, better exploiting the capacity of the MATSITI website and conducting a second national conference, the *Teachers are deadly* forum.

A key aspect of the partnership projects for 2013 was the development of the MATSITI Scoping Plan, providing a comprehensive list of strategies which jurisdictions and institutions could implement to enhance the prospects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and teachers.

A total of \$2,051,798 was reported as allocated in 2013, with 64% allocated to project partners. The total allocation to project partners increased to \$3,027,708 across 35 projects.

In the area of research, preliminary findings were available from the *National Teacher Workforce Dataset* (NTWD) identifying the approximate number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and foreshadowing a major issue in collecting a complete national dataset.

The NTWD project raised the issue of the limited availability of robust teacher employment in schools data being a challenge which needed to be addressed to ensure adequate capacity to measure workforce reforms in this area.

The ACDE project also identified a disturbing statistic from teacher education, with an average national student completion rate of 32% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in teacher education programs.

The breadth of available literature was expanded, contributing to a richer intellectual base from which strategies and programs could be developed.

The progress report identified a need to gather better data on teacher education students, completions and workforce participation, and for datasets to be sustainable, beyond the life of individual projects.

9.4 Progress Report 2014

The *Progress Report 2014* reported a further commitment of MATSITI project funds with an increasing proportion of 68% to project partners, with a total of over \$4m to fund 54 projects to date.

The report revealed that available workforce data had been refined, albeit identifying that the estimated proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers at 1.2% of the total teacher workforce was well below the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Australian schools at 4.9%. The data also identified an alarmingly low employment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers.

Representatives of the MATSITI project continued to present at conferences, with two keynotes at international conferences, and appeared before the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group, making a subsequent submission to that group.

Stakeholder engagement was enhanced in 2014 with increased exposure across all stakeholder groups, wider use of the MATSITI website and e-newsletters, and a more professional approach to the use of social media.

The third national conference, *A Deadly Journey*, provided a further forum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, educational leaders and other workers in schools. This was complemented by the hosting of an inaugural forum for the Indigenous Australian Lecturers in Teacher Education.

The 2014 Financial Statement included in the Progress Report 2014 detailed total income of \$8,149,873 and reported expenditure to date of \$6,678,016. The 2014 budget was underspent by \$539,612, or 18.1% of the year's projected budget of \$2,982,570.

9.5 Financial Statement August 2015

As at August 2015 the MATSITI project had a net operating balance of \$1,591,539.80.

This was derived from total operating revenue of \$8,160,640.97, total operating costs of \$6,194,100.87 and corporate costs of \$375,000.30. This figure is \$108,914.90 below the expenditure detailed in the Progress Report 2014.

9.6 Financial Statement January 2016

A financial report was provided by Professor Buckskin, as Project Director MATSITI, to the Education and Youth Branch of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet in January 2016.

The report detailed project expenditure for 2015 at \$2,392,425. This was \$214,870 below budgeted expenditure for the year.

As at 31 December 2015, MATSITI had received \$8,187,916 in income over the project life and had expended a total of \$7,382,546 with further anticipated commitments in 2016 of \$513,862, for a surplus of \$291,508. It is anticipated that this surplus will increase marginally with the receipt of interest for the first quarter of 2016.

Table 1 - Budget comparison – Anticipated 2011 and Actual 2015

		2011	2015	Variance
Income	Contract Revenue	\$7,189,019	\$7,500,000	
	Interest	\$319,996	\$687,916	
	Interest estimate Q1 2016		\$2,283	
	Total Income	\$7,509,015	\$8,190,199	\$681,184
Expenditure	Total Anticipated	\$7,685,327		
	Total Actual (December 2015)		\$7,382,546	
	Commitments Q1 2016		\$513,862	
	Total Expenditure	\$7,685,327	\$7,896,408	\$211,081
	Balance	-\$176,312	\$293,791	\$470,103

The final income figure of \$8,190,199 (including estimated interest 2016) was \$681,184 over the anticipated figure of \$7,509,015 detailed in the budget set out in the original *MATSITI Project Plan 2012-2015*.

The original budget projected a deficit of \$176,312 in 2011. This has turned around to a surplus of \$293,791.

It could be assumed that discussions will ensue with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to determine whether the surplus is returned to the Department or otherwise utilised in 2016.

10. MATSITI Partnership Projects

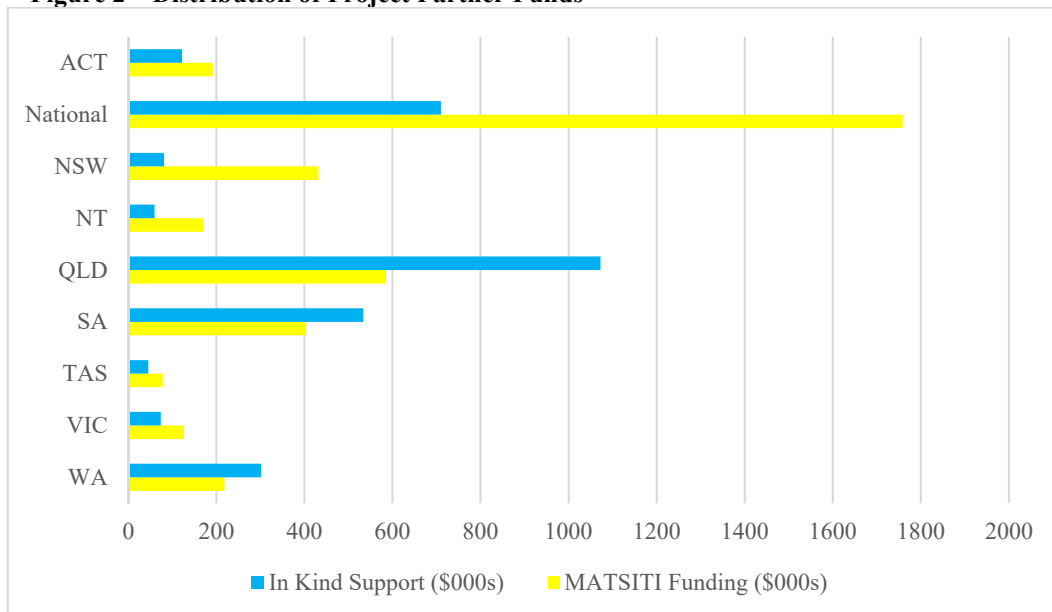
There have been 57 individual projects conducted by MATSITI project partners supported by funding through the program. Many of the project partners have supplemented project expenditure with in-kind support.

Table 2 – Distribution of Project Partner Funds

Scope	Number of Projects	MATSITI Funding (\$)	In Kind Support (\$)	Total (\$)	% In Kind
ACT	1	191,670	121,920	313,590	38.88%
National	9	1,758,272	710,000	2,468,272	28.77%
NSW	11	431,857	81,400	513,257	15.86%
NT	5	170,000	59,482	229,482	25.92%
QLD	13	585,575	1,072,124	1,657,699	64.68%
SA	7	403,624	533,400	937,024	56.92%
TAS	2	77,965	45,455	123,420	36.83%
VIC	3	126,375	73,700	200,075	36.84%
WA	6	218,400	301,600	520,000	58.00%
Total	57	3,963,738	2,999,081	6,962,819	43.07%

There was a total of \$6.96m originally allocated to MATSITI projects, of which 56.9% was derived from direct program grants. Projects with national scope may have been conducted by national bodies or state based organisations, eg, the MATSITI Scoping Plan developed by the NSW Department of Education and Communities was regarded as a national project in terms of scope as it had implications for all jurisdictions.

Figure 2 – Distribution of Project Partner Funds



While the level of in-kind support is questionable and may be substantially inflated by project partners including recurrent costs which would have been engaged regardless of their commitment to a strategy or program, it is evident that the MATSITI project has been responsible for the commitment of significant expenditure in pursuit of the MATSITI objectives.

Project partners submitted proposals to satisfy the selection criteria and generally to address a need within their own organisation. With this process there is a risk that some areas of potential need or strategies with the most potential to influence the desired project outcomes will not be put forward as proposals.

11. MATSITI Teacher Workforce Scoping Plan

The *MATSITI Teacher Workforce Scoping Plan* was published in June 2013, following collaboration between the MATSITI project team and a team within the NSW Department of Education and Communities.

The Scoping Plan was intended to enable “*schools and school jurisdictions, university schools of education, professional associations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and community leaders and their networks to develop a coordinated approach to increasing the number and capacities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in government and non-government schools throughout Australia*”.

The Scoping Plan provided a solid research base, considering practices and experiences in some other countries with significant Indigenous populations, as well as jurisdictions across Australia, and drawing on that evidence to articulate strategies which may be effective in and throughout Australia.

Five Strategic Directions are addressed in the Scoping Plan through Tier 1 and Tier 2 Strategic Actions, each expanded to provide practical initiatives through which the various partners may contribute towards the goals of the MATSITI project.

The Scoping Plan was broadly communicated, through the MATSITI website and through a workshop to representatives of educational jurisdictions. It is too early at this stage to determine the degree to which the strategies have been adopted and whether the Scoping Plan has been a significant influence in delivering the MATSITI goals. This will become more evident over time as new strategies are adopted by universities, school jurisdictions and others with a part to play.

12. Tier 1 Projects

Table 3 - Tier 1 Projects

Organisation	Title of project	Round	MATSITI funding \$
Catholic education sector (1)			
National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) - Catholic Education South Australia (CESA) as lead organisation	Tier 1 project: #Yarning Up! - Teaching Catholic	3	500,000
University sector (3)			
Australian Council of Deans of Education (Phase 1)	Retention and graduation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in initial teacher education	1	827,272
Australian Council of Deans of Education (Phase 2)	Engagement and success	3	191,670
Australian Indigenous Lecturers in Teacher Education (AILITEs)	Establishment of Australian Indigenous Lecturers in Teacher Education (AILITEs) Association	4	50,000
Other (2)			
Principals Australia Institute	School principals mentor newly graduated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers	3	133,200
Career Development Association of Australia	Follow my lead: Careers in teaching	4	200,000

12.1 National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) - Catholic Education South Australia (CESA) as lead organisation #Yarning Up! - Teaching Catholic (\$500,000)

The Expression of Interest for this project dated 8 November 2013, which spans 2014-2015, stated that it aimed to develop a community of sustained support and effective practice around Indigenous learners and educators through a life-long model, transitioning young people from school to university and back into school as teachers through:

- national Catholic Education networks, national marketing, data collation and recruitment strategies
- B.Ed scholarships
- professional experience placements in culturally responsive (Catholic) focus schools
- mentoring support by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and experts
- mentoring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Catholic schools
- promoting Catholic Education (remote, rural, urban settings) as a ‘cultural employer of choice’
- supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students’ successful transition into B.Ed programs at partner universities.

CESA was the lead agency in the project as the signatory to the agreement in collaboration with state and territory commissions. The project sought to bring together national and state Catholic Education services, university and schooling sectors, human resources and Indigenous education services, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander: preservice teachers, teachers, leaders, students from Years 6-12, Elders and experts. The NSW Department of Education agreed to support the project in a mentoring partnership and as a model of good

practice to assist strategic directions and the development of recruitment strategies, national networks and databases.

The schedule to the contract with MATSITI signed by the South Australian Commissioner of Catholic Schools on 23 May 2014 stated its commitment to achieve its stated aims through:

1. National Catholic Education networks
2. National audits and data collation
3. National marketing (and research) and recruitment strategies
4. Direct linkages with state/diocesan based (Tier 2) initiatives which may include the following:
 - a) Bachelor of Education scholarships
 - b) Professional experience placements in culturally responsive (Catholic) focus schools
 - c) Mentoring support by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and experts
 - d) Mentoring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Catholic schools
 - e) Employment as teachers in Catholic Education (remote, rural, urban settings) as a 'cultural employer of choice'
 - f) Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students' successful transition into B.Ed programs to partner Universities.

(Note: in the final report, points 1-4 above were listed as the key deliverables which framed the NCEC MATSITI project.)

The third progress report stated that the Tier 2 initiatives of state Catholic Education commissions were progressing well and tailored to local needs. This report also discussed a plan to develop a new data collection for longitudinal analysis of the Catholic sector Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce, as a joint venture with Ernst and Young, CESA and the University of South Australia. However, no sign off was achieved.

The final report was received in December 2015. Careful analysis revealed insufficient detail in respect of achievements. Given the high level of funding for this project, the MATSITI project leaders and the Chair of the Evaluation Panel sought additional detail. Two meetings were held between Evaluation Panel representatives and Catholic Education representatives, the first in Sydney on 8 February 2016 and the second in Adelaide on 8 March 2016.

In response to a request of the Evaluation Panel on 9 February 2016 for clarification of achievements and evidence of those achievements a substantial document was submitted by CESA on 29 February 2016. As the document did not address many of the issues raised by the Evaluation Panel the second meeting was held on 8 March 2016.

At the meeting of 8 March 2016 the Evaluation Panel representatives requested a final report to clearly state the extent of achievements against stated objectives. In this meeting Evaluation Panel representatives also raised issues in relation to the records presented as evidence of the acquittal of project funds and the timing of those acquittals.

A revised final report was received on 15 March 2016. It stated that agreement between state and territory Catholic Education commissions to develop a Catholic education network to undertake the MATSITI initiative was agreed under the following conditions:

- a light governance structure
- the National Catholic Education project would focus on the proposed goals, activities and outcomes as described in the key deliverables in the April 2014 contract.

(Note: As stated above, contract was signed on 23 May 2014.)

Summary of reported achievements against the four key deliverables as provided in the revised final report of 15 March 2016 are detailed below, with comments from the Evaluation Panel.

1. National Catholic Education networks

CESA reported: The project managers achieved the establishment of a national Catholic education network which met seven times during 2014 and 2015. The MATSITI agenda was promoted to the network members whose consciousness about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues, enhancing educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the rationale for increasing the number and capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers so that they will become effective school leaders, was raised. This is a significant achievement in a system which prides itself on the autonomy of its jurisdictions at state, diocese and school level. The networking activities were reported to commissioners and directors, and involved HR and data staff.

Evaluation Panel Comment: Expenditure on this key deliverable was \$58,896 and covered travel, accommodation, catering, venue hire and facilitators.

2. National audits and data collation

CESA reported: At the June 2014 Network meeting members shared data from their jurisdictions according to guiding questions provided by the project leader. The questions were designed to elicit information about the processes of marketing and recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, leaders and students in Catholic Education Offices and Commissions.

The data collection exercise was viewed as valuable to the Network and Commissioners and highlighted that there was no systematic way to collect and report workforce data across the Catholic sector.

Evaluation Panel comment: The reported data was inconsistent and only provided a broad snapshot of marketing and recruitment practices across the nation. There was no evidence of any form of audits being undertaken.

CESA reported: A draft data sharing agreement was developed by the Network in consultation with the NCEC data strategy Working Party.

Evaluation Panel comment: The data sharing agreements and the data collection being undertaken by Ernst and Young were not endorsed by all Catholic Education Commissions. Consequently, systematic and consistent data sharing between Catholic Education Commissions was not achieved during the life of the project.

This key deliverable was not achieved. Expenditure on it was \$10,000 for participation in the Ernst and Young data collection.

3. National marketing (and research) and recruitment strategies

CESA reported: “Teaching Catholic” was promoted through Tier 2 projects across all jurisdictions in the network. A cultural safety and respect professional learning component (led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander facilitators) was included at each Forum gathering. Artwork and a tagline were developed by an Aboriginal artist. A video was commissioned to promote Catholic Education as an employer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers.

Evaluation Panel comment: The marketing company *We Create* was engaged to provide an initial proposal, conduct research, plan and develop a sustainable national and state based marketing, recruitment and communication strategy. While the revised final report states that this was achieved, there was no implementation. No evidence was provided of any performance criteria to determine whether value for money was achieved or in fact the original terms by which *We Create* was engaged were actually met.

Expenditure on this key deliverable was \$177,843.60 and covered research, products, consultancy and publishing.

4. Direct linkages with state/diocesan based (Tier 2) initiatives

CESA reported: The revised final report states that all state and territory Commissions were invited to submit proposals for grants through Tier 1 funds.

Evaluation Panel comment: Five proposals were submitted, but no details of them were provided in the revised final report. This was left to each individual Commission. Grants were made to NSW, South Australia, Tasmania and Queensland Commissions. The Northern Territory proposal did not proceed.

The use of “*direct linkages*” in the deliverable is ambiguous and gives the impression of a deliberate correlation between the endeavours of the Tier 1 project and each of the individual Commission projects.

Expenditure on this key deliverable was \$113,800 for grants to the four Commissions.

Note on budget:

In addition to the expenditure on the above four key deliverables, additional expenses included \$121,438 for staffing and \$27,415.40, bringing the total expenditure to \$509,393.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

CESA and NCEC have sought to undertake ambitious reforms to increase the number and capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers across a diverse and highly distributed network of Catholic schools, Commissions and Dioceses. The establishment of a national Catholic education network to progress Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and education reforms, bringing together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and human resources officials, was a significant achievement and a positive start to planning and implementing employment strategies. The use of online technologies was an innovative and efficient means to support the network.

Planning for engagement with a broad network of stakeholders including NCEC, teacher education providers and ACU to undertake collaborative activity is also positive, as are commitments to future achievement by continuing to work with the four key deliverables beyond the MATSITI funding period. Members of the Evaluation Panel recognise the challenges in a project of this type to influence decision-makers (some of whom appeared resistant to supporting data collection and/or employment reforms) in order to undertake long-term cultural change within the sector in a limited time-frame.

While this project's reports provided a lot of references to planning, a far greater level of achievement was expected. It is clear that the project experienced a number of delays. For example, the schedule of project activities provided in the contract committed to finalising the marketing strategy by November 2014. Had this been achieved, the strategy could have been implemented from 2015. The strategy was delivered in November 2015, with We Create proposing that it be implemented in 2016, beyond the MATSITI contract period.

Both the MATSITI project team and the members of the Evaluation Panel recognise that obstacles to, or unavoidable delays in, the achievement of stated aims can be encountered during project implementation, in which case a timeline can be varied or a project redesigned. Given that this was a national level project and received the second highest level of MATSITI funding, it is unfortunate that the project owners did not seek to revise its scope when it should have been clear that objectives could not be met in time.

12.2 Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE) Retention and Graduation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Students in Initial Teacher Education (Phase 1) (\$872,272)

This project's aim is to build institutional and collective commitment and capacity within and across Australia's teacher education institutions to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching graduates from 2013 to 2020, by improving retention, success and graduation rates of current and prospective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students.

Key deliverables include:

- A thorough audit of current context, practices and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Australian teacher education institutions
- A literature review, environmental scan, analysis of value and outcomes of various approaches to improving retention and graduation
- Report of factors relating to successful course completion and early career experiences as perceived by current students, recent graduates and those who have recently withdrawn from courses
- Institutional and sectoral networks of senior teacher educators and other relevant institutional leaders (e.g. leaders of Indigenous Student Services, leaders of Indigenous Academic Units)
- Sets of draft institutional plans at the teacher education level that set out short, medium and long term strategies to improve retention, success and graduation rates.

Queensland University of Technology (lead organisation) December 2012 Report

This report provides a useful overview of many research findings about reasons for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students not completing university education. The report acknowledges those areas already thoroughly explored which would contribute to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student success including: support through the university enrolment process; smooth transition into university; support for students' cultural, social, academic and financial needs; flexibility in course progression; professional development and awareness training for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff; awareness of 'walking points', ie when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are most likely to leave: in their first year of study; around exams and assessments; after professional experience.

Areas for future study are identified as: professional experience; positive and negative experiences of online learning; and cultural safety in study.

Indigenous Higher Education Centres (IHECs) play an important role in supporting students, who will benefit most if they become involved in them early in their course. A one day conference of Deans of Education and heads of IHECs led to institutional action plans to target retention and graduation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The report acknowledges the white, western power structures of universities, the consequent under-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff and that, despite the large amount of research having been undertaken in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, mostly by non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics, little has changed over recent decades in respect of enrolment, retention and graduation from universities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Behrendt recommends that improvement in these areas should not be the sole responsibility of IHECs, but be a whole of university responsibility.

Some universities eg Charles Sturt University, have entered into memoranda of agreement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to boost educational links. However, epistemological whiteness is the most important factor to address. Decolonising the academy, Indigenising the academy and decolonising Indigenous education should be the aim of Australian universities.

Motivation, awareness and training are needed for the full incorporation of Indigenous knowledges and knowledge systems into the traditional western structure at all scholarly levels. Surveys indicate that 37-38 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early career teachers are unprepared for teaching particular groups of school students, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

In respect of models of teacher education programs in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are enrolled, cohort and mainstream are discussed. Cohort programs are favoured for their recognition of the importance of identity. The differences between the learning styles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students come down to priorities, for example the importance of relationships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Distance modes should take this into account. In relation to assessments, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students respond well to forms such as personal reflection and writing personal histories.

The notion of institutional deficit was identified. Universities need to value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and knowledges or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will be weeded out. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics have re-educative effects on whiteman, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people need to be on key university committees to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student participation and success.

The data scan provided the alarming statistic that only about one third of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students who commence will complete. Four themes emerged as areas for improvement:

- institutional structures and procedures
- personal, social, academic and financial factors
- course work
- cohort models.

The report states that hardly any universities undertake exit surveys of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. However, reasons for their leaving are identified and explored in detail throughout.

The individual stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students provided many insights. While they are essentially success stories, their journeys were not smooth, some exited at varying stages and many took a long time to complete due to competing needs related to family and community.

In a number of cases the university contacted the students and encouraged them to return under revised approaches which recognised and accommodated their needs. This demonstrates the need for university staff to make it their regular business to engage in genuine contact with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The universities appear to be neglecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student needs out of ignorance.

The individual stories indicate that IHECs and Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme - Tertiary Tuition (ITAS-TT) tutors and mainstream staff who are supportive, warm and friendly are a great help. They also indicate that the professional experience component can be frustrating and damaging if in a school with low levels of awareness among staff. One student expressed a desire for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher as supervisor while on professional experience.

The stories indicate that by and large, universities are not Aboriginal friendly places. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students want to have a profile at university and be visible through, eg, posters and publicity. They feel alone and sometimes unwelcome. One student who did bridging courses prior to a teacher education course was greatly supported from the outset by the network she formed with the other students on the courses. Academic language was cited as a common problem.

The student stories are an important source of information, identifying as difficulties racism, personal circumstances (money, family), the nature of universities and their processes, access to technology and isolation. When universities acknowledge these issues, offer help and take a flexible approach, students get through their studies much more easily. The project got deans of education and heads of IHECs together. The statistics told a story about enrolments and attrition.

The report suggests further areas for research but there is plenty of material here already which can be the basis of action plans. The need for professional development for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic and professional staff, especially in Indigenous Studies subjects, was identified and it is suggested that IHEC staff develop the modules.

Evaluation Report of the Partnership Program between Queensland University of Technology (QUT), ACDE and MATSITI conducted by the School of Education and the Institute of Koorie Education, Deakin University

December 2012

The Evaluation Report addressed the ACDE project processes implemented by QUT and the sustainability of the project as it moves into 2013-2015 phases, in particular, partnerships between schools of education and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Programs staff.

The evaluation commented extensively on the data gathering methodologies of the project, both quantitative and qualitative. In particular, it expressed concerns that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and community Elders were not involved in the construction of the audit instruments. Therefore, the ACDE is positioning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems at the margins of the project, when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges are central to the success of initiatives. The evaluation's methodology involved an Indigenous knowledge position, ie, yarning circles of deans and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Programs staff.

The evaluation further found that community consultation was not evident as a strategy under the project.

There were significant differences about the usefulness of the project between the deans and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Programs staff as shown by questionnaires conducted at national meetings. The responses from the deans were generally positive because the awareness of many was genuinely raised concerning the factors impacting on student retention and graduation. In some universities, discussions between deans and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Programs staff had rarely or never taken place.

In respect of the literature review undertaken as part of the project, the evaluation found that more is needed on institutional racism, better understanding of delivery modes, partnerships with Elders and international perspectives.

The evaluation has made the following recommendations for the ACDE:

- involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at all stages of the project
- communicate all information to all players and invite feedback
- improve data gathering through greater consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and community
- strengthen partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Programs staff
- research international perspectives on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student retention and graduation which are transferrable to the Australian context and ensure they inform action plans
- nurture and strengthen relationships with community Elders to support students

- consult with Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies (IECBs) at national and state levels
- define institutional racism as a factor impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' participation and success
- include MATSITI goals in the selection criteria for deans of education.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

The project represents an important step in acknowledging and addressing the unacceptably low enrolment and in particular graduation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in initial teacher education programs. The project is ambitious and far reaching in its involvement of 39 universities Australia wide.

The project gathered wide ranging data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolment and retention and drew upon the literature to produce a consolidated report which presents comprehensive information in one place. The engagement of Deakin University to undertake an independent evaluation of the project indicates the ACDE's openness to critical friendships and a commitment to better practices.

The stand out achievement of the project is that it has engaged the deans and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Programs staff in discussions about the issues impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. These dialogues appear to have been a genuine eye opener for many of the deans, which at the same time is a cause for concern unless the development and implementation of bold action plans are immediate consequences.

At a MATSITI funding level of \$827,272, it is vital for the credibility of the project that the ACDE build immediately on its momentum. The ACDE's Engagement and Success project (Phase 2) has achieved this. The information in the Project Report and the Evaluation Report contain a wealth of quantitative and qualitative data to form the basis of short, medium and long term action plans and make a conscientious commitment to revise university governance structures through consultation with and accountability to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

A refocussing of universities' activities towards students as clients would create progress. If deans of education and other academic staff made it their core business to excel in producing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers who are strong in their identities and cultures and who can deliver a first class education to school students, they would be meeting the aims of MATSITI. While such a concept appears to be at some distance from the present position, the fact that the deans' involvement in the project has been highly consciousness raising is an important point from which to build.

Deans and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Programs staff need to maintain and strengthen the networks which have formed as a result of participating in the project. Such networks will be a source of support for the challenges presented by the need to embrace Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and wider consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students. The Australian Indigenous Lecturers in Initial Teacher Education (AILITEs) Association, which has also been granted MATSITI funding to strengthen its network, is a vital party to involve.

12.3 Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE) Engagement and Success (Phase 2) – 2014-2015 (\$191,670)

The ACDE's Engagement and Success project (Phase 2) builds on its earlier (2012) project, Retention and Graduation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Students in Initial Teacher Education (Phase 1).

The Engagement and Success project aims to support faculties and schools of education in universities across Australia to attain the goals of MATSITI within the recommendations of the Behrendt Report.

At the end of 2013 there were 21 participating universities with each having nominated one or two staff to take leadership of the project.

The specific aims of the Phase 2 project are to:

- improve the engagement and success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in initial teacher education programs; and
- close the gap between the retention and graduation rates of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

The Phase 2 project is a testament to and builds on the success of the Phase 1 project.

Achievements under the Phase 2 project include:

- establishing communication networks of staff in universities with responsibility for the project
- revising, refining and implementing action plans and collecting baseline data to identify good practice
- holding national meetings to showcase achievements to date, evaluate action plans and plan for 2016
- developing mechanisms for future sustainability.

Under the project a set of scoping items was compiled. The scoping items are strongly reflective of the findings in the key reports relating to the Phase 1 project: QUT December 2012 Report; Evaluation Report of the Partnership Program between QUT, ACDE and MATSITI conducted by the School of Education and the Institute of Koorie Education, Deakin University; and information in the related literature searches. Participants were asked to assess their progress against the scoping items, identify issues to be addressed and update their action plans.

By the end of 2014, about 75% of participating universities had submitted their revised action plans to MATSITI.

A national forum in November 2014 in Melbourne was a significant event with over 40 participants representing schools of education and Indigenous centres. In addition, there were representatives of AITSL and the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) and ten initial teacher education students. The keynote address again emphasised the importance of the relationships between school and centre staff.

The November forum was a vehicle for carrying the project out to a wider audience and gave rise to further plans to showcase achievements through a range of information channels beyond organisations represented by participants.

Recommendations out of the progress report of December 2014 Phase 2 project include:

- produce a discussion paper from the forum
- produce a regular newsletter for ACDE and MATSITI websites
- follow up universities which are yet to provide revised action plans
- conduct focus groups throughout the year with ITE students
- universities with advanced action plans to mentor those in earlier phases.

The final report (December 2015) indicates significant progress was made in the attainment of the project's goals. Focus during 2015 has been on mechanisms to ensure sustainability of the project. Key project outcomes and milestones for 2015 include:

- ongoing national conversation about issues encountered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in initial teacher education
- inclusion in ACDE's Strategic Plan 2016-2018 for a continued commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' education
- ensuring greater Indigenous representation as central to ACDE activities via the inclusion of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' representative on the ACDE Board (Professor Peter Buckskin)
- establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Advisory Committee
- sponsorship and involvement by ACDE in MATSITI's *OurMobTeach* 2015 Conference.

Most faculties/schools now have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' representation on various committees, including faculty/school governance committees and curriculum/program development committees. There is also wider consultation and involvement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on curriculum and event matters.

ACDE also plans to extend its advocacy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education through its other partnerships, including the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE), AITSL and the Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL).

The revised Action Plans have indicated the following developments:

- 75% of responding universities have an explicit commitment to Indigenous reconciliation/education and 12.5% have development of an Indigenous statement or strategy in progress;
- 69% of respondents include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' representation on faculty/school committees and 50% have a committee focusing specifically on Indigenous issues, with 25% in the process of establishing such a committee;
- 63% of respondents have an ongoing collaborative relationship and regular conversation with their institution's Indigenous centre, with 25% having made preliminary contact and working towards establishing such partnership;
- 50% of respondents have well-established external partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders, AECGs and IEBs and 25% are progressing such partnerships;
- 56% of respondents have well-established support mechanisms for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the faculty/school level with a further 38% currently implementing these. These include having a designated person for students to access

individual advice and assistance, mentorship and role models and customised programs and timetables;

- Although only 25% of respondents believe they have well established processes in place to ensure a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff, a further 63% are implanting measures to achieve this, indicating a significant increase in awareness and acknowledgement of the importance of cultural safety and competence. Such measures include the introduction of cultural competence and awareness training for all staff.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

The Phase 2 project, like the Phase 1 project, confirms the importance of thorough research and planning in determining a project's success. All phases of the project were followed up with participants, and the regular meetings, including teleconferences and the national forum, ensured that the momentum was maintained.

The importance of developing and maintaining the national networks of participants was emphasised throughout. In particular, the highest level of importance was placed on the strengthening of the relationships, commenced under Phase 1, between school of education staff and Indigenous centre staff for collaborating on revised processes and protocols. These relationships are particularly significant because prior to the Phase 1 project they were largely unestablished.

Of particular significance has been the involvement of the client group, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students, who were encouraged to give their views on their needs and suggest ways of addressing them so that their chances of completing their qualification would be maximised.

The project experienced setbacks including timelines for the submission of action plans needing to be extended due to university restructures and staff movements. However, analyses proceeded with the available information which enabled further planning for future sustainability, including succession planning.

The ACDE projects focused on stemming high attrition rates in Schools of Education (32% completion in 2011). The initiative would have been strengthened if ACDE had been able to capture more recent completion data in order to monitor the impact of the suite of interventions.

The Phase 1 and 2 projects represent a significant endeavour to address an area of critical need. While the major impacts of the projects will be long term, the regular qualitative and quantitative data gathering will reveal short term progress. It is vitally important that sharing best practice throughout a strengthening network, refining action plans and reporting on outcomes continue.

The information in the final report demonstrates a commitment to the project's sustainability beyond the funding period and is evidenced by:

- inclusion in ACDE's Strategic Plan for 2016-2018
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' representative on ACDE Board
- establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Advisory Committee

- plans to disseminate the outcomes of the Engagement and Success project.

12.4 Establishment of Australian Indigenous Lecturers in Teacher Education (AILITEs) Association (\$50,000)

This project was envisioned as a hand-over and future-orientated strategy into 2016 to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in teacher education. The project has experienced contractual delays with the host university and appointment of a project officer.

The members are seeking support to form an association. The MATSITI funding of \$50,000 is to employ a project officer to set up the association.

AILITEs aim to:

- join up for mutual support and networking
- grow relevant curriculum content in ITE and maintain 3Rs (Reconciliation, Relationships and Respect)
- undertake Indigenous workforce reform especially in collaboration with the the Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE).

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

The value of networking, sharing information and collaborating on the achievement of goals is well documented. Strategic benefits can be expected to flow from the establishment of an AILITEs Association.

The value of the establishment of the AILITEs Association would be maximised if it were to link effectively to other MATSITI funded projects.

AILITEs have stated their aim to collaborate with the ACDE. The Evaluation Panel recommends that the newly formed AILITEs Association be a major player in the ACDE Tier 1 projects. Being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander lecturers, they would have a re-educative effect on school of education staff in participating universities and potentially beyond. Their advice in the development of action plans and liaison with school of education and IHEC staff to strengthen their relationships would be of great value.

The establishment of the AILITEs Association is likely to have many benefits for the success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in ITE. The data indicate that the very low (about 33%) completion rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in teacher education programs requires a concerted effort to close the gap.

12.5 Principals of Australia Institute (PAI) Dare to Lead program: School principals mentor newly graduated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers (\$133,200)

This project was conducted during 2014 and was supported by The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

The project aims to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher graduates early in their career by providing them with mentoring. It also aims for the mentoring principals who are not Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander to add to their own cultural intelligence.

The PAI emphasises that the mentor and mentee relationship is separate from a line management relationship. It planned for up to 20 mentoring pairs to participate in the program. It was anticipated that the bulk of the ‘activity’ would take place in the normal course of school life.

Intended benefits for newly appointed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers include:

- a well-supported transition into a teaching career
- becoming attuned to strengths and potential
- opportunities to share stories and experiences
- additional opportunities to access professional learning
- a close professional relationship with an experienced educator
- insights into school leadership.

It was planned that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people would provide cultural training for mentors.

The timetable for the program in 2014 was:

February:	identify potential graduate/ principal partnerships
March:	conference in Sydney with mentors and mentees (13 pairs attended)
April to October:	mentor/ mentee relationships in place; two webinars
October:	conference in Sydney with mentors and mentees (9 pairs attended)
November:	final webinar and evaluation
February 2015:	report to MATSITI.

The interim report of October 2014 states that Ms Gina Milgate, Indigenous Liaison Officer, ACER, facilitated at the March conference, collected data, undertook evaluations and undertook interviews. Dr Kaye Price attended the conference. This report also included information from an anonymous survey in August 2014, in which mentors provided more positive feedback than mentees. Mentees made many positive comments through other instruments. The final report indicated that mentees’ perceptions of the value of the program became more positive over the time of their participation and that the majority of mentees had been given additional opportunities to engage in professional development.

The mentees greatly appreciated the opportunity to meet other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers from across Australia. Common themes in comments from mentees include: the expectation in their school that they be experts on all matters of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture; and they experienced racism, often in subtle forms, in their schools. Of particular concern is that some mentees were accused of receiving special treatment through having the opportunity of participating in this mentoring program.

The principal mentors gained a great deal of cultural knowledge, including the importance of identity, by mentoring an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander beginning teacher. A very positive impact of this was that the principal was, from a school leadership perspective, able to influence the development of a more respectful and inclusive school culture which takes on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in learning.

The PAI plans to share information about this program through its newsletter and website. For the future, the PAI aims to extend the program, having regard to the difficulties of identifying and therefore contacting newly appointed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, and privacy issues, especially in some jurisdictions. It aims to keep the pair members in contact with each other beyond 2014.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

Mentoring has long been recognised as a positive and usually cost effective form of professional development in many industries worldwide. Educational reforms in Australia make strong connections between teacher quality and retention and a smooth transition from training to employment through effective induction and mentoring.

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) states:
“A nationally consistent approach to induction will ensure that beginning teachers are better supported when they enter the school and the classroom for the first time. Guidelines for induction will also help ensure that teachers are retained for longer through providing a comprehensive process that is focused on continuous learning, growth and improvement of both beginning teachers and their mentors.”

“It is expected that guidelines for nationally consistent induction will be available in 2016.”

In NSW, under *Great teaching, inspired learning* (<http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/our-services/schools/great-teaching-inspired-learning>) from 2014 all permanent beginning teachers in their first year are supported with two hours release time and one hour of mentoring support from an experienced teacher colleague each week. In their second year they are supported with one hour of release time each week. New temporary teachers also receive mentor support.

The literature on mentoring places a high level of importance on the way in which mentors and mentees are matched. Some mentoring programs favour matches based on the choice of the mentee, although this can lead to the mentee not extending their comfort zone sufficiently. In the case of the PAI program, mentoring by a principal was mandatory.

The PAI program was ground breaking in that there is no other example of principals mentoring beginning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, according to a literature search conducted by ACER. The program’s positive features were:

- the mentees’ identities, cultures and knowledges were respected and related to their role as teachers
- the principals gained significant knowledge about Aboriginality, what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers can bring to the education of students and issues faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in the workplace
- schools became more culturally inclusive under the leadership of their more culturally aware principal.

In any future program, the PAI may wish to consider facilitating the matching of mentor/mentee pairs in ways which have the potential to maximise the needs of both pair members, having regard to areas for development, mentor strengths, overall experience, skill sets, location and objectives for the mentorship.

The expansion of induction and mentoring programs for beginning teachers in Australian schools will provide a vehicle for developing programs which best meet the particular needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander beginning teachers.

12.6 Career Development Association of Australia (CDAA)

Follow My Lead: Careers in Teaching

(\$200,000)

This project spans 2014-2015. It has a high level of involvement of MATSITI staff and has had input from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the NSW Department of Education, which has an excellent record of achievement in recruiting and retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers.

Using a proven project model, CDAA aims to promote teaching as a career to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples using the strength and influence of the role model concept. The three Role Model Leaders (RMLs) were required to have experience working in a secondary school environment and identify as, or demonstrate experience in, working with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples in a career adviser capacity.

The RMLs were trained via a train the trainer model to deliver a total of 16 workshops in focus regions for people that guide career choices about encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to consider teaching as a career. Role models include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support staff in schools, careers advisers and community members that have student support, well-being, community liaison and study/career advocacy roles. These role models were trained in role model awareness and to provide information on pathways to a teaching career for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

In identified focus regions where the CDAA is not represented by membership, the RMLs targeted engagement of role models who are in a position to influence career choices (with the support of MATSITI) including principals, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and support staff, students who are studying to become a teacher, student support officers, administrators, trainers, VET instructors or those who are undertaking a range of alternative further education qualifications (university or TAFE) where they demonstrate commitment to further education as a pathway to a professional career.

The CDAA's approach is to create partnerships with local, state and national education bodies, government departments and community leaders through maximising the existing stakeholder connections CDAA has through its National Executive Committee. Partners include:

- Federal Department of Education and Training
- Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)
- universities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education teams in each state
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment units in each state
- MATSITI – leverage its strong relationship with Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE) which represents 39 schools and faculties of education.

One of the aims of the CDAA through this project is to increase awareness among its own members of the MATSITI agenda. Specifically they are seeking to identify and involve their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members.

As at October 2015, the following milestones had been met:

- project established and launched
- target areas identified (SA, NSW, QLD, WA)
- three RMLs recruited
- member survey developed, distributed and responses analysed
- train the trainer professional development day held in Adelaide in January 2015. Attended by Join Our Mob representative from NSW to ensure the development of culturally sensitive product and cultural awareness
- training materials and resources developed
- stakeholder contact commenced
- 16 workshops for 177 role models (exceeding the goal of 150) conducted.

The workshops were conducted in four states: NSW, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia; in urban and rural locations. The final report for the project is dated November 2015.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

This is a well-planned project by a reputable organisation with a high level of experience in the career development field. The project leaders have undertaken relevant activities to ascertain and increase the awareness of their organisation's members of issues in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment, especially as they pertain to teaching in schools.

The CDAA has developed partnerships throughout education jurisdictions and sectors in Australia. With the Follow My Lead project, it is utilising the validity of role modelling for young people and creating a far reaching network of training and influence aimed at attracting young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into pathways which will lead to a teaching career.

Under the current program, the CDAA has sought the engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are connected to education in a range of ways to influence the career choices of young people. Of the 158 role models who completed program evaluations, 24% said they were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and 83% said that they provide career advice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

As stated in CDAA's response to the MATSITI questionnaire, the project officer continues to be accessible to advise those who attended the role model workshop by circulating e-newsletters to assist them to remain updated on pathways to teaching. The workshop handbook developed as part of the package strengthened the aims and objectives of the project by providing a resource for all attendees. The content covers information on pathways to teaching, state scholarship opportunities and direct links to other topics discussed throughout the workshop in order that attendees could explore them in more detail in their own time. Reports, evaluations and follow-up surveys capture information about the relationships developed, levels of knowledge, competency and if workshop information is being utilised.

The Evaluation Panel acknowledges the potential of the project for reaching a large number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who may be encouraged to consider teaching as a career. The participant evaluation information provided in the MATSITI questionnaire indicated a high level of satisfaction and knowledge acquisition.

The Evaluation Panel is of the view that the program would be strengthened by a specific strategy for the role models to take their message to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through activities such as presence at careers fairs or presentations at events where large numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are in attendance. This would shift the focus of the program from the role models to the clients.

The CDAA may wish to consider widening its target groups beyond Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students, to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support staff in schools and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members. A high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students are mature aged and make up a significant proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recipients under the highly successful NSW Department of Education Teacher Education Scholarship Program. Aboriginal support staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community liaison officers are an important source of potential teachers and are recognised as such by the Federal Department of Education and Training.

13. Promotional Strategies

Under the MATSITI evaluation, some projects have been analysed as a part of a group whose members have a similar aim. Projects with a focus on promoting teaching as a career to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are analysed in this way and are listed in the table below.

Table 4 – Promotional Strategies

Organisation	Title of project	Round	Tier	MATSITI funding \$
Public school jurisdictions (4)				
Northern Territory Department of Education	Online living archive of Indigenous teacher stories	2	2	10,000
Nambucca Heads High School	Inspiring leadership and involvement in the teaching profession	2	2	10,000
NSW Department of Education	Join Our Mob careers forum	3	2	49,450
Queensland Department of Education and Training	Deadly teachers make a difference	3	2	49,925
Catholic education commissions (3)				
South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (lead agency for national project)	#Yarning up – teaching Catholic <i>See Chapter 12, Tier 1 projects</i>	3	1	500,000
Catholic Education South Australia	Yarning Up – Teaching Catholic	3	2	50,000
Catholic Education Commission NSW	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers forum	4	2	45,000
Universities (3)				
Flinders University	Videos: Tellin’ the stories of teachers and teaching	1	2	50,000
Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE)	Strong Teachers: Celebrating Indigenous Teachers and Practice	2	2	10,000
Australian Catholic University (Qld)	Pathways into higher education	3	2	50,000
Other (2)				
Yumi Education Inc	Promoting teaching to young people in the Torres Strait	3	2	50,000
Career Development Association of Australia	Follow my lead: careers in teaching <i>See Chapter 12, Tier 1 projects</i>	4	1	200,000

In analysing promotional projects funded by MATSITI, the following factors regarding what makes an effective promotional strategy are considered. Not all of these factors are relevant for each project.

1. How many people is the strategy capable of reaching?
2. To what extent has development and implementation of the strategy involved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?
3. On what locations do the strategy and any promotional activities focus and how are target locations determined?
4. What types of promotional materials or resources have been developed? What range of media do they utilise?
5. Is the strategy a one off or continuing? Is the strategy embedded in the organisation’s HR function? Is the strategy visible in the organisation’s structure?
6. What if any incentives does the strategy offer for the people it succeeds in attracting?

7. How visible is the strategy and the people responsible for implementing it? Does it have an identifiable face or is it mostly a back room function?
8. How much money is allocated to the strategy?
9. Does the strategy have the commitment of leaders at the highest level of the organisation?

13.1 Public School Jurisdictions

13.1.1 Northern Territory Department of Education (NTDE)

Online living archive of Indigenous teacher stories (\$10,000)

The main aim of the project was to capture, record and archive Indigenous teacher stories and knowledge for future generations in an accessible online database. It enables schools to acknowledge the contributions of Indigenous teachers as leaders in their communities and informs leadership development initiatives. It contributes to the preservation of both written and oral language, thus providing a bridge between language and western education. The archive guards against valuable stories being lost over time.

The archive promotes teaching as a career for secondary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The teachers whose stories are contained in the archive are role models for prospective Indigenous teachers. Further, the archive provides prospective teachers from all locations and jurisdictions with insights into Northern Territory public schools from an Indigenous perspective.

The archive utilises the purpose built Community Stories software operated by the Northern Territory Library (NTL) which facilitated a two day training program in its use for four Indigenous NTDE staff (one senior consultant and three teachers) who worked with communities to gather the stories. Also, 15 educators from seven remote communities received three days of IT training, enhancing their own skills while contributing to the archive.

Through the archive, community members are able to annotate and comment on individual items and collections and build a searchable and flexible information base. They will have ownership over local historical and cultural records. The collection will grow as material is donated. Through personal stories about their schools, language, culture and community and walking both worlds, communities can recognise and celebrate the teachers who have modelled strong education values and achievements. This project raises the profile of Indigenous teachers in Northern Territory public schools.

A total of 26 teacher stories from 16 communities were documented in the online living archive.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

The project acknowledges and satisfies a local need by making effective use of technology which assists communication within and between remote communities. The project links effectively with Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education's (BIITE) Strong Teachers: Celebrating Indigenous Teachers and their Professional Practice, and together the two projects promoted collaboration between the NTDE, NTL and BIITE. The results of this collaboration included innovative solution based approaches and effective resource

management. Further, the professional learning with which participants engaged under these projects resulted in accredited training in two units from the Batchelor Institute's Indigenous Land and Knowledge course.

Finding

The online living archive represents value for money. It serves as a promotional tool appropriate in the remote teaching and learning community context.

13.1.2 Nambucca Heads High School (NSW) Inspiring Leadership and Involvement in the Teaching Profession (\$10,000)

This project was the production of a short film about an inspiring and innovative Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary teacher, Garry Cattanach, with a long career, significant achievements and strong community connections. It focuses on the change, opportunity and fun a career as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher has provided him. It profiles his family background and details how difficult it was for him as a child, as it is for many at some point. It describes his journey of how life has evolved for him and his family in a small disadvantaged coastal community on the mid north coast of New South Wales.

The project's aim was to promote to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people teaching as a career, motivate new and existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, and stimulate leadership and retention of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers. The film sought to:

- provide a comprehensive 'how to' online resource to support connectedness between school and community to encourage participation and leadership
- impart knowledge amongst students and adult learners about the change that one person can bring about by choosing teaching as a profession, in one's own life, to the life of the person's family and to the broader community, both now and in the future
- impart enthusiasm to Indigenous students and help them realise that they too can become teachers and leaders
- utilise the success of one teacher by showcasing him as a role model and mentor for Indigenous students
- help students and adult learners understand that recognition will come to those that choose teaching as a profession. They will be leaders and change agents within their communities.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

The 11 minute film *Change, opportunity and fun: Inspiring leadership and involvement in the teaching profession* is ambitious in its aims. Given its focus on one person, its appeal may be variable among its intended audiences. It can be accessed on the MATSITI website at <http://matsiti.edu.au/change-opportunity-fun/>.

Finding

This resource may be most effective within a suite of initiatives to promote teaching as a career.

13.1.3 NSW Department of Education Teaching is Deadly - Join Our Mob Careers Forum (\$49,450)

In 2014, the project took careers forums to locations with schools with significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments. Targeting students in years 8-12, locations included Dubbo, Nowra/Moruya, Tamworth, Redfern and Mount Druitt. These locations leverage the advantages of significant numbers of permanent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and leaders and strong relationships with universities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, leaders, teacher education students and community members shared their journeys with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students in order to promote teaching as a career.

While the Department had previously delivered careers forums, 2014 was the first year that any targeted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The careers forums were promoted through Koori Radio and other media, including social media which played a significant role in attracting significant numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from rural and remote schools. A working party of partners including the AECG was established to plan, promote and deliver the forums.

The Department's promotional strategies are effective through being one of a suite of initiatives to attract and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff including teachers, and through a highly visible commitment to the employment, retention and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at the highest levels of the organisation. These initiatives include:

- implementation of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Human Resource Development Plan which complements the Department's other key planning documents
- establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Career Initiatives team with five identified positions driving change and innovation
- provision of 80 teacher education scholarships annually for Aboriginal people
- teach.nsw Join Our Mob campaign.

At 3.2%, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the Department exceeds the NSW government target of 2.6%. In March 2016, there are 1,165 (2.5%) identified permanent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and leaders in NSW public schools.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

The careers forums had a high level of involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at every stage. More than 800 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and community members, and 80 service providers, attended. The careers forums were an important avenue for promoting the Department's scholarship program, which provides successful applicants with \$5,000 per year of full time study, a \$3,000 appointment allowance and a permanent teaching position on successful completion of their teaching qualification. More than 90 applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were received for the 2014 program.

Finding

The teach.nsw website is a highly visible, effectively branded initiative. Programs to promote teaching, including those which target Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, are embedded in the Department's human resources function and structure. The teach.nsw team has been active in sharing its initiatives and providing a range of support to jurisdictions throughout Australia as part of the MATSITI community.

13.1.4 Queensland Department of Education and Training

Deadly teachers make a difference

(\$49,925)

This project builds on existing programs by creating content specific to the recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in the Make A Difference - Teach and Teach Team initiatives. It aims to increase the number and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in Queensland public schools, enhance perceptions of teaching within Indigenous communities and strengthen the capacity of schools to engage in a more culturally responsive pedagogy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

A permanent presence on the existing Make a Difference – Teach website has been established to share information with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are interested in a career in teaching. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers are encouraged to share their stories of their journey into and through teaching and their impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. These stories are published through the website and other media including established social media channels. The website also promotes pathways into teaching and links to induction and resources to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander preservice teachers transitioning to beginning teacher.

A range of digital resources including photographs and video interviews of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, and printed materials for use at teaching career events, has been developed. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers attend the career events.

The Teach Team has expanded to include seven new Indigenous teachers as Ambassadors who provide targeted presentations to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary students and preservice teachers to promote teaching as a career and provide guidance regarding employment opportunities and pathways.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

This project derives sustainability through its integration into existing programs to promote teaching. The responsible team works closely with the Department's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education unit. With its focus on outcomes, the team is building a business case for maintaining *Deadly teachers make a difference*. Information in the project's final report indicates a commitment to enhancing and building on this successful suite of strategies.

Finding

Through a rechanneling of efforts into the attraction, retention and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as teachers within an established framework, this project has the potential for continued success.

13.2 Catholic Education Commissions

13.2.1 Catholic Education South Australia (CESA)

Yarning Up – Teaching Catholic (\$50,000)

The aim of this Tier 2 project reflects that of the Tier 1 National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) project of the same name: to develop a community of sustained support and practice around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and communities through a life-long model that transitions young people from school to university and back into school settings as educators.

The project targets Years 6-12 students who identify tertiary aspirations in the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) process and/ or are identified by teachers, family and/or community members.

The project also aims to recruit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander B Ed students, inviting them to undertake professional experience in culturally responsive focus schools and to mentor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, with goals for mentees' successful transition into the tertiary sector and mentors' employment as educators in CESA.

According to the progress and final reports, achievements include:

- key personnel identified
- mentor relationship formed with NSW Department of Education
- governance structure established
- 14 focus schools including five boarding schools identified and data base of school and university Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students developed
- Taste of Teaching program aimed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander B Ed students developed
- whole school professional learning program on Indigenous perspectives across the curriculum and culturally aware/ cultural competence training developed
- negotiations between CESA and universities and placement of three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander B Ed students in three Catholic schools.

Information in the progress and final reports indicates a shift in emphasis towards school staff training in a range of aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education including enhancing the cultural safety of schools, literacy and language. Some of this was achieved through funding from the Tier 1 project. The series of planned 'Taste of Teaching' workshops for secondary Indigenous students not delivered.

Information in the final report indicates that successes of the project include:

- Catholic Education Office engaged in a two year cultural safety and respect program
- deeper connections with Australian Catholic University and three locally based universities

- programs target across the spectrum of CESA staff, students and community.

CESA has stated that their project is sustainable due to support by executive leadership as part of the restructure of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Team. CESA has committed to rolling out programs beyond the focus schools, integration of the MATSITI agenda in its HR function, improved data collection, enhanced connection with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and better marketing and recruitment.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

A positive aspect of the CESA Yarning Up – Teaching Catholic is that it has made significant efforts to achieve cultural change by making staff more culturally aware and competent and aiming for its schools to be culturally safe. It has developed a range of materials for a variety of purposes including promoting teaching as a career to Aboriginal people, relevant curriculum materials for teachers and information aimed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members to encourage enrolment of their children in Catholic schools.

The final report is descriptive in nature and would benefit from the inclusion of hard data. Considering the original aim of recruiting more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, while the promotional materials are attractive, no indication has been given as to how it was used and the audiences it reached.

Finding

Final reports need to be clear in reporting of achievements in order to convince the target audience that stated aims were met with MATSITI funding.

13.2.2 Catholic Education Commission NSW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers' forum (\$45,000)

This project aimed to hold a forum of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers from both Diocesan and independent Catholic schools from across NSW.

Teachers would be provided with professional learning on mentorship. The theory and practice of mentoring could then be applied to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff. Teachers would also be invited to share their stories of: what attracted them to teaching in Catholic schools, the value they add as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, the barriers and challenges to employment, and the positives about teaching in Catholic Education. These stories would then be used for the development of marketing materials to attract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to teaching in NSW Catholic schools.

This was an inaugural forum of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in NSW Catholic Education. The pre forum data capture and needs analysis of Aboriginal teachers revealed important information about their roles and the issues they see as relevant for their careers and their schools. Sixty Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers were identified in the data capture and an additional five have been employed since. The project supported 22 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers to attend the forum. About two thirds of these teachers are participating in online forums established under the project, and contact between

the State Coordinator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and diocesan leaders of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education has increased. Video materials have been produced for promoting teaching as a career in NSW Catholic schools to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

New HR processes that will ensure improved reliability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher workforce data into the future are a lasting reform resulting from the project. A self-identifier has been included in employment forms and annual staff update processes. All 11 NSW Catholic school authorities have agreed to implement these reforms.

The project benefited from a high level of involvement by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the education community, both as committee members managing the project and as forum presenters.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

The project's final report acknowledges the significance of involvement in the MATSITI community for raising awareness in the Catholic Education sector of the need to develop and implement strategies to attract and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers. It also acknowledges the importance of effective data gathering and maintenance in achieving this goal.

This project sought to link mentoring as a development strategy to promoting teaching as a career. While promotional activities are yet to be launched, a positive aspect of the project is that its owners have had firsthand experience of communicating directly with its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members. The project's recommendations signal a commitment to undertaking the necessary actions to achieve sustained growth in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers working in Catholic schools in NSW, including refining workforce data collections, exploring ways of funding the project beyond MATSITI funding, developing and maintaining websites for continued networking and interaction, and conducting relevant research.

Finding

This project is a good example of a low cost strategy achieving significant synergies and forging a path for future reforms to achieve the aims of MATSITI.

13.3 Universities

13.3.1 Flinders University

Videos: Tellin' the stories of teachers and teaching (\$50,000)

This project aimed to create and disseminate a digital historic archive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and ways of knowing teacher education to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and advisers.

Tellin' the stories is a series of digital stories and resources about teachers and teaching by the Yunggoendi First Nations Centre at Flinders University.

This digital resource includes:

- video stories of six Indigenous student teachers, three classroom teachers, five lecturers and three education leaders
- posters about teaching as a rewarding career for Indigenous people, and practical tips on how to become a teacher for schools and community
- project background and the influences on choosing teaching as a career.

Video production was supported by Indigenous students undertaking screen studies at Flinders University.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

Tellin' the stories of teachers and teaching was posted on the MATSITI website on 24 April 2013. Its 17 stories tell about a diverse range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on their journey to becoming a teacher and choosing related careers beyond teaching. The story tellers are role models for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at various stages of life. The website includes information which can be used by family members, community members and schools. The website also includes information about pathways to and applying for entry into teacher education through Flinders University.

Finding

This project with its high level of involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at all stages has resulted in a comprehensive website which may serve as a model for other universities or groups of universities.

13.3.2 Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE)

Strong Teachers: Celebrating Indigenous Teachers and Practice

(\$10,000)

This project celebrates the learning journey of 12 Indigenous educators who completed the fourth year of a teaching qualification through BIITE's Indigenous Teachers Upgrade Program (ITUP). The Strong Teachers publication tells their stories and how these stories and the teachers' ways of working align with the Australian Professional Teaching Standards. This resource can be used by teachers and leaders for discussion and planning.

The publication was converted to an e-book for sharing and for highlighting the achievements of Indigenous teachers. It can be used for promoting teaching to secondary school students. Six of the Strong Teachers attended a three day workshop to explore further the Australian Professional Teaching Standards from an Indigenous perspective, develop their ICT skills and create online resources. The ICT skills included capturing and manipulating audio, visual and movie files.

The workshop culminated in a Celebration of Indigenous Educators event at Parliament House, attended by over 100 educators and stakeholders. This event included people involved in the related MATSITI project, the Northern Territory Department of Education's Online Living Archive of Indigenous Teachers Stories.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

This project acknowledges and showcases the contributions of Indigenous teachers and has provided these teachers with the opportunity to develop digital skills through a project of which they have ownership. The project links effectively with the Northern Territory Department of Education's *Online Living Archive of Indigenous Teachers Stories*, and together the two projects promoted collaboration between the NTDE, NTL and BIITE. The results of this collaboration included innovative solution based approaches and effective resource management.

The Strong Teachers project represents value for money. It is an important resource for schools and serves to promote teaching to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students.

Finding

This project demonstrates the value of collaboration and respect between key players in the Northern Territory education environment, particularly Indigenous teachers, in developing teaching and learning resources relevant to today's learning communities.

13.3.3 Australian Catholic University (Queensland) Pathways into higher education (\$50,000)

This project aimed to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working in schools by developing culturally appropriate ICT resources on pathways to teacher education programs for students and community members in urban, rural and remote settings. It also aimed to address community and social impacts that restrict parental engagement, and to assist people to make informed choices by providing clear information about support during study and a teaching career.

The project occurred over a number of stages, each with a specific milestone and key date:

1. concept development consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, teachers, parents and their communities in urban, rural and remote contexts – July 2014
2. universities participation confirmed – August 2014
3. ICT resources designed and developed – December 2014
4. resources trialled and evaluated at three sites: urban, rural and remote – June 2015
5. resources trialled and evaluated at participating universities sites – June 2015
6. resources adjusted if required – August 2015
7. dissemination of *Pathways* resources – October 2015

All of these stages were completed.

Under this project, communities were engaged to design a smart phone application and website. The development of the application included direct input from emerging and experienced teachers which enhanced their IT capacity and professional development. Teacher profiles and stories featured in the promotional material.

The Indigenous Teacher Education Web provided a powerful content management backend, allowing effective updates to all devices.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

The project's final report includes recommendations for: disseminating the app to schools and guidance officers for distribution to Indigenous students; including it in tertiary admissions information; and releasing it through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander networks and key education forums. The app and website may extend their reach if they were readily accessible through the mainstream channels.

Finding

Positive aspects of this project include the high level of consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and their involvement in developing the application and website. The project has harnessed technology which is vital for effective communication with young people and people in remote locations.

13.4 Other organisations

13.4.1 Yumi Education Inc

Promoting teaching to young people in the Torres Strait (\$50,000)

This project aimed to help promote teaching as a career to young people in the remote communities of the Torres Strait by:

- expanding the teacher education options delivered locally in communities by raising the awareness of teacher education courses, including alternative entry options, for people from the Torres Strait under 35 years of age
- identifying Torres Strait Islanders under 35 years of age who may be interested in or demonstrate the appropriate aptitude for completing a teacher education course
- increasing the number of Cert III Education students from the 17-campus Tagai State College who go on to enrol in teacher education courses
- increasing the number of Cert III Education students from Tagai State College who go on to enrol in teacher education courses
- increasing the number of students from the Torres Strait under 35 years of age who enrol in teacher education courses
- developing a number of no cost and low cost strategies, in partnership with Tagai State College and James Cook University, that can be implemented by the region's schools and universities to promote teaching as a career for young people from the Torres Strait.

MATSITI funding assisted with the employment of a project officer to work part time for 12 months. The role was to work within an existing partnership with Tagai State College, James Cook University and Torres Strait Islanders' Regional Education Council (TSIREC) and to:

- establish a working party with representatives from Tagai State College, James Cook University and TAFE North Queensland
- map entry level requirements for teacher education courses, including alternative entry pathways
- collate information on teacher education initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, including scholarships, tertiary experience programs, tuition support and bursaries.

Project outcomes include:

- 36 aspiring/prospective education students identified (16 by referrals, 20 by social media) – all females
- new referrals to James Cook University’s tertiary preparation course for 2015 (alternative pathway to entry into the Bachelor of Education course)
- six existing teacher aides enrolling in a pilot alternative entry course to a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education
- 68 direct enquires at careers market (current and past secondary students)
- 15 past education students contacted, three of whom are looking to re-enrol for 2016, and seven who will be enrolling in university in 2016 but not in teaching
- over a 100 “likes” on social media campaign
- sponsorship of two annual Torres Strait career markets.

In addition, several working networks were established between education and community groups, and a range of promotional activities was undertaken. The final report for the project included recommendations to enhance promotional activities and acknowledged the effectiveness of community referrals, including via social media, to engage students to commit to university study.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

This project has launched its promotional activities in a range of effective ways. Its leaders have undertaken the necessary research for effective targeting of strategies. They have consulted with relevant groups and have engaged both education providers and community groups. Continued implementation of these strategies has the potential to increase the number of locally based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers.

Finding

This project owes its success to the commitment of a number of organisations working together and reaching out to individuals to encourage them into a teaching career in this unique location.

14. Leadership Strategies

Under the MATSITI evaluation, some projects have been analysed as a part of a group whose members have a similar aim. Projects with a focus on developing leadership skills among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers are analysed in this way and are listed in the table below.

Table 5 – Leadership Strategies

Organisation	Title of project	Round	Tier	MATSITI funding \$
Public school jurisdictions (3)				
South Australia Department of Education and Child Development	Dr Alitja Rigney Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Scholarship Pilot	1	2	75,000
NSW Department of Education	Rural leadership program	3	2	49,600
Monaro High School (NSW)	Less talk more action leadership network	4	2	24,000
Catholic education commissions (2)				
Catholic Education Western Australia	Leaders pilot project	3	2	45,400
Catholic Education Commission Victoria	Leadership for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and Koorie education workers	4	2	50,000
Universities (1)				
Charles Darwin University	Professional learning approaches that support Indigenous school leadership	1	2	50,000
Other (4)				
Yumi Education Inc	Yumi as leaders	1	2	50,000
Stronger Smarter Institute	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals leadership project	4	2	50,000
Stronger Smarter Institute	Proud, skilled and deadly leaders	4	2	50,000
Principals Australia Institute	Dare to lead	4	2	74,000

14.1 Public School Jurisdictions

14.1.1 South Australia Department of Education and Child Development Dr Alitja Rigney Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Scholarship Pilot Program (\$75,000)

This project funded two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers to gain leadership skills through a structured pathway program which ran over 2013 and 2014. Participants were supported by outstanding school leaders. The project was supported through partnership with the Australian Education Union and principals associations, which program managers stated should be strengthened in future programs. Program managers commented on the effectiveness of the partnership with MATSITI.

During the first phase of the program, participants were provided with 0.4 release to develop leadership skills with a mentor, for one school year. During the second phase, participants were appointed to an online leadership role supported by mentoring and an individual professional development plan.

The program was evaluated highly by both participant teachers and principal mentors. While the participant teachers valued the generous release time, they did not fully utilise it because of difficulties in finding replacement teachers. Program managers are considering a different model of block release. Participant teachers appreciated the access to relevant professional development, respect for their cultural knowledge and safety, identification of a suitable mentor and their growing confidence in applying for leadership roles. Both participants were provided with the opportunity to undertake a one term supported leadership role.

The final report states that the South Australian Institute of Educational Leadership will lead the implementation of a broader Dr Alitja Rigney Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Scholarship Program for up to ten participants. The first stage will include 360 degree feedback and psychometric testing of leadership strengths which will inform the creation of a professional development plan.

In the second stage, up to four applicants will continue on a funded pathway of accredited leadership development such as a diploma, advanced diploma or graduate diploma. Mentoring and shadowing may be incorporated.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

The program managers have identified strengths and weaknesses in the model used in the pilot and have mapped a positive plan for the future. They have demonstrated a commitment to ensuring the program's sustainability after the MATSITI funding period.

Finding

This project is well poised to build on its success through careful evaluation and planning. Its commitment to expansion is positive.

14.1.2 NSW Department of Education Rural School Leadership Program (\$49,600)

The Rural School Leadership Program provides mentoring and leadership opportunities for up to 20 early career Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers with at least three years teaching experience in rural and remote locations. Participants must demonstrate leadership capabilities and aspirations. Participants are matched with a current school leader who supports their professional development and assists in developing a detailed career plan.

The targeting of this program to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in rural and remote locations assists in teacher retention, enhanced student outcomes and connection to country.

Fifteen teachers participated in the 2015 program. The program fostered strong partnerships between participants, school leaders and members of the NSW Deadly Teachers Alliance. It also strengthened the existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders teachers mentoring network and is encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers to take on leadership roles.

The commitment of many staff in the NSW Department of Education has contributed significantly to the sustainability of its programs to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and school leaders which has reached a critical mass for continued growth and expansion. The Department has a robust mechanism for supporting its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers including mentoring, follow up and attendance at regional meetings by members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Career Initiatives team.

Strong working partnerships have developed with the Secondary Principals' Council, whose members are aware of what the leadership journey means for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, including the need to balance community obligations and professional responsibilities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders are involved in the promotional program. Eighteen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals and the Department's two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander directors attended an event for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deputy principals and aspiring leaders.

The Department has seen significant growth in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders at the mid executive level and is beginning to see increases at the higher levels of deputy principal and principal. It is also implementing an initiative of rotating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers through three senior education officer positions. There is now a growing level of confidence among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers to put themselves forward for relieving in higher positions. The Department's involvement with MATSITI has provided it with opportunities to showcase its achievements and its involvement in the national MATSITI community has inspired its leaders to attain MATSITI goals.

The teacher education scholarship program, while not a leadership program, is the cornerstone of the Department's achievements in increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and leaders because of the high numbers being supported to train as teachers each year. As a result, the Department has many success stories about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and school leaders. These stories encourage principals to encourage their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers to aspire to leadership roles.

The following tables provide information about numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, executives and principals, and numbers of all teachers, executives and principals, in the NSW Department of Education.

These figures in Tables 6 to 8 below show that:

- 2.5% of teachers in NSW public schools are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (cf 2.9% of NSW population, and 3.0% of the national population. Source: ABS 2014)
- 3.3% of primary teachers are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, exceeding the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the NSW and national populations
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers are underrepresented in both primary and secondary promotional positions, with the exception of secondary principal (2.0% cf 1.9%).

Table 6 - Primary teachers

Level	All Primary Teachers	% of Total Primary Teachers	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Teachers	% of Total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Teachers	% of All Primary Teachers Who Identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Classroom teacher	18,866	76.1	716	88.8	3.3
Executive	4,160	16.8	72	8.9	
Principal	1,754	7.1	18	2.2	
Total	24,780	100	806	100	

Figure 3 – Primary Teachers

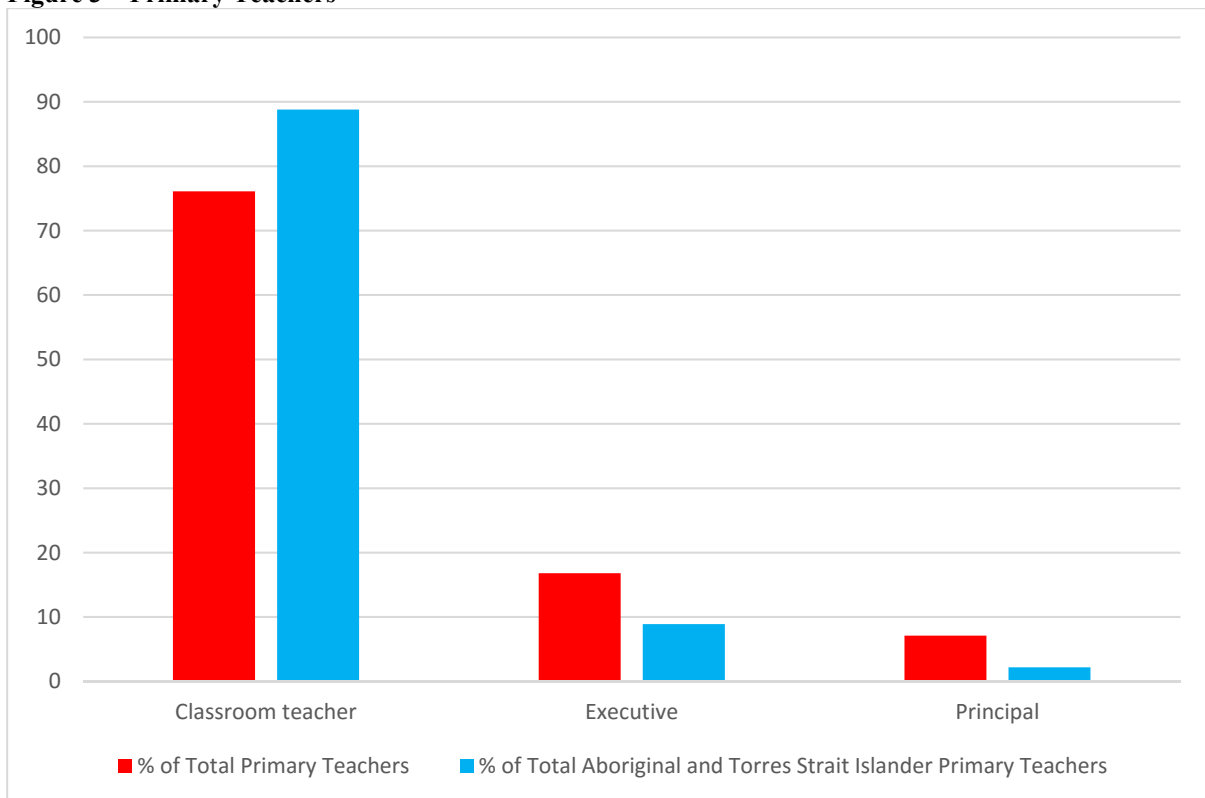


Table 7 - Secondary teachers

Level	All Secondary Teachers	% of Total Secondary Teachers	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Secondary Teachers	% of Total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Secondary Teachers	% of All Secondary Teachers Who Identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Classroom teacher	17,752	78.1	317	88.3	1.6
Executive	4,556	20.0	35	9.7	
Principal	426	1.9	7	2.0	
Total	22,734	100	359	100	

Figure 4 – Secondary Teachers

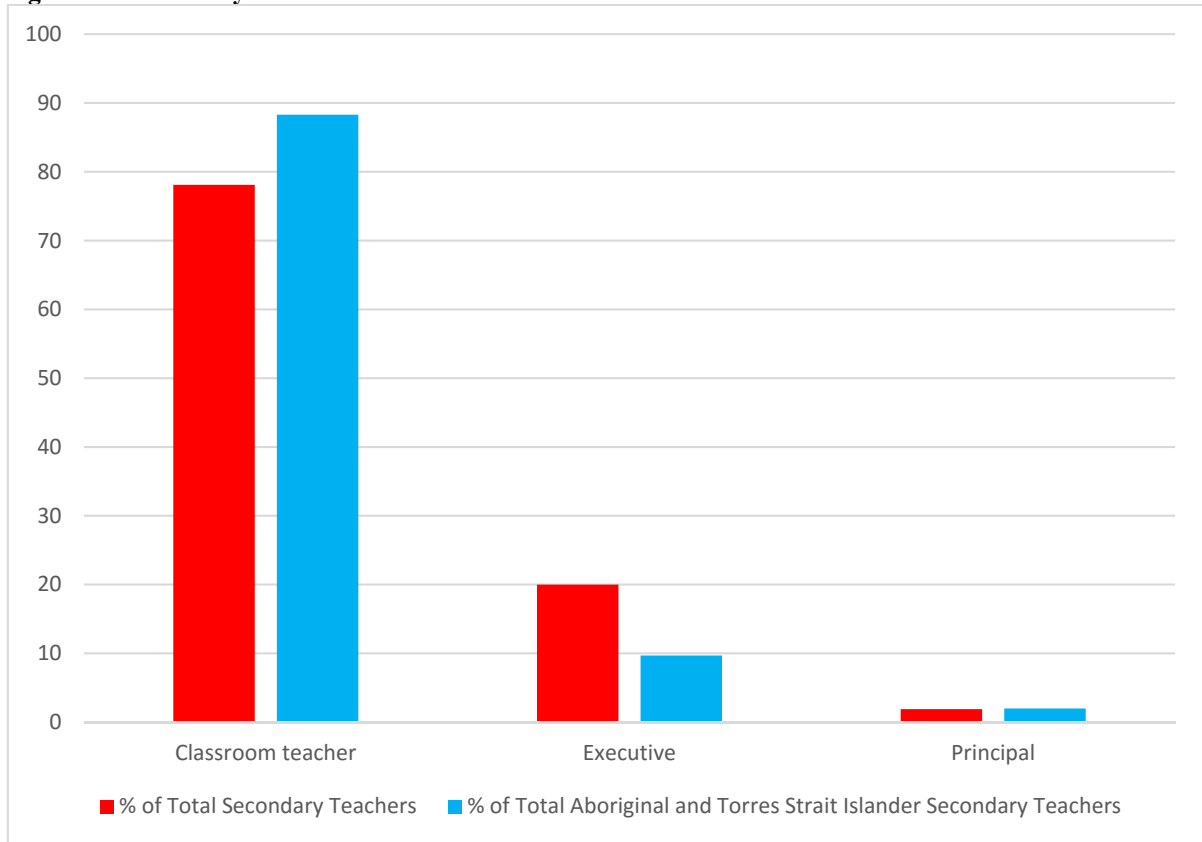
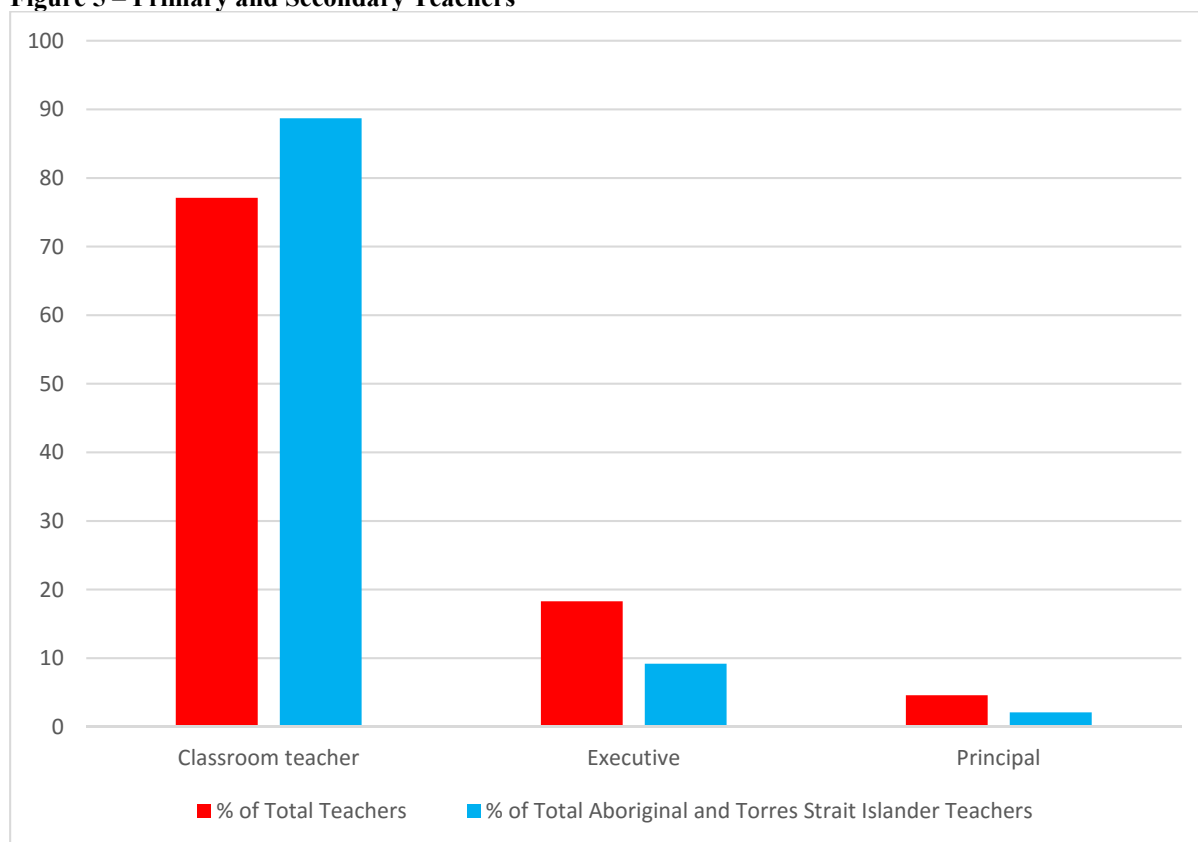


Table 8 - Primary and Secondary Teachers

Level	All Teachers	% of Total Teachers	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers	% of Total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers	% of All Teachers Who Identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Classroom teacher	36,618	77.1	1033	88.7	2.5
Executive	8,716	18.3	107	9.2	
Principal	2,180	4.6	25	2.1	
Total	47,514	100	1165	100	

Figure 5 – Primary and Secondary Teachers



Sources:

- All teachers: NSW Department of Education Annual Report 2014.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers: People and Services Directorate, NSW Department of Education, 2 March 2016.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

The project managers have reported that there has been more success with the Rural School Leadership Program in the secondary area than in the primary area. The Department is in a strong position to build on its achievements and increase the number of participants in the program.

The Department may wish to consider removing the restriction of participants needing three years teaching experience and being open to inviting applicants who meet the criteria of strong performance and leadership aspiration. Given that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers were mature aged scholarship applicants, some with extensive school experience as Aboriginal Education Officers, it is likely that some will be ready to embark on the leadership journey earlier. Further, the requirement for three years teaching service may disadvantage teachers needing to take leave to care for others, including female teachers taking maternity leave.

Finding

Due to the increasing number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers employed in the Department, this program is well poised to build on its successes and address the under representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in leadership positions.

14.1.3 Monaro High School

Less Talk, More Action Leadership Network (\$24,000)

The project coordinator is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary principal in a NSW public school. The project aims to increase the number of Aboriginal teachers in secondary executive positions via a sustainable methodology. In particular, the project aims to connect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and executives in NSW secondary schools through the formation of effective networks through which aspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders may be coached and mentored.

The project seeks to leverage the strong position of the NSW public school system which leads the nation in strategies to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers. While strategies are in place to enhance the leadership capabilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, they remain underrepresented in executive and principal positions in secondary schools.

The project entails:

- Co-opting mentors from the NSW Secondary Principals' Council (NSWSPC) and Deputy Principals Association, and relevant state office directorates
- Training Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals and executives in formal executive training
- Fostering career development plans for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary teachers and executives
- Influencing policy positions within the Department and professional associations towards a commitment to a long term strategy for increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in secondary leadership positions.

The project's final report dated November 2015 lists the following achievements:

- A model of action has been developed in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, members of the NSWSPC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Reference Group, and People and Services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Programs and Community Engagement, and Leadership and High Performance directorates

- Professional learning conference was conducted in term 2, 2015 with targeted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, executives and principals
- A mentoring model was implemented in term 3, 2015.

Actions yet to be completed are:

- Report back from professional learning conference held 26-27 November 2015
- Submission and proposal to the Department.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

The Evaluation Panel acknowledges the importance of enhancing the leadership skills of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers so that their numbers in key positions of influence in schools increase. The NSW public education system is in a powerful position to achieve this through its already high number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and their high retention rate. The Less Talk, More Action Leadership Network has been launched at an opportune time.

The Evaluation Panel acknowledges the commitment of the project coordinator and the support he has gained from high level Department staff and influential professional associations.

Being a Round 4 project which has run for only one school year, its full impact has yet to be realised.

Finding

This project demonstrates the value of the efforts of individuals within a supportive system in achieving the aims of MATSITI.

14.2 Catholic Education commissions

14.2.1 Catholic Education Western Australia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander School Leadership Pilot Project (\$45,400)

At the time of submitting its final report to MATSITI in August 2015, Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) had 31 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, out of a total approximately 5,500 teachers. Of the 31 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, none was in the position of principal, deputy principal or assistant principal. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander School Leadership Pilot Project (ASLP) was a response to these statistics, and to the fact that very few Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers applied for leadership roles.

Under the ASLP which ran from June 2014 to July 2015, 15 teachers were invited to participate and ten accepted. Activities under the program included:

- Support in assuming whole school responsibilities
- Mentoring and executive shadowing
- Coaching
- Enrolment in a Masters Degree
- Personal capacity building including cultural reflection.

The program included four two-day learning modules. Although it was planned that participants' principals be mentors, the participants expressed a preference to choose their own mentors, having regard to the nature of the mentor-mentee relationship and the purpose of mentoring.

By July 2015, eight of the ten participants had commenced a Masters Degree at the University of Notre Dame.

All participants planned and implemented at least one problem based learning project with a whole school or part school responsibility.

Participants' principals were supportive, despite the program requiring significant time away from their schools. Participants from remote locations required even longer times. Participants developed between them a collegiality through which they acknowledged their own skills which built their confidence as potential leaders.

Program successes include:

- One participant successful in her application for a Head of Department position in a senior secondary regional school and accepted into the Beginning Leaders Program 2015 offered by CEWA
- One participant successful in her application as Literacy Coordinator in a rural primary school
- One participant successful in her application as Early Childhood Coordinator in a remote community school and accepted into the Emerging Leaders Program 2015 offered by CEWA
- One participant successful in applying for a Head of Year in a senior secondary regional school.

The project managers reported how difficult it was to convince teachers to participate in the program. Even those who participated required a lot of encouragement. Generally, teachers felt they were not ready for the program, despite those who did participate acknowledging their extensive knowledge and skills as a result of the program. These issues demonstrate why leadership development programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers are necessary.

The challenges faced by the program managers and the participants from remote locations were great, including large distances, travelling times and infrequent flights. To remedy these challenges, program managers recommend conducting some learning modules in school vacation times.

The program required a great deal of commitment from the program managers, the participant teachers and their principals and school colleagues. The program managers have acknowledged the support from the home schools in ensuring the completion of school based projects.

The intersection between CEWA's two projects, ASLP and Here to Teach - Pre service and Early Career Teacher Development Program, is enabling continuous engagement and capacity building of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers from early career to leadership, allowing for an association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in CEWA schools.

A leadership consultant in the School Improvement Directorate has the responsibility for supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers on leadership pathways in their professional learning, using a case management approach.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

As with many other MATSITI funded projects, CEWA reported that MATSITI funding provided the impetus to establish the ASLP. While the allocated MATSITI funding was for five participants, the CEWA provided an additional \$40,000 in funding to enable ten participants. The success of the ASLP has resulted in it being integrated within the range of leadership programs offered by the CEWA. It is planned to conduct the ASLP every two years.

From the conduct of the ASLP pilot, the program managers have identified a range of ways in which the program can be improved and made sustainable. MATSITI has raised the consciousness of staff in CEWA regarding MATSITI objectives, including the need to boost the level of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school leaders which will enhance community engagement, improve student outcomes and encourage more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to consider a career in teaching.

Finding

The success of this project demonstrates the value of careful planning to achieve a comprehensive leadership program, linking with other programs, supportive principals and continuous evaluation enabling adjustments to the program where and when necessary.

14.2.2 Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Leadership for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers and Koorie Education Workers (\$50,000)

This leadership project is aimed at providing leadership training for the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria's (CECV) 15 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and eight education workers. At the time of application there was only one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary teacher in a leadership position, namely vice principal. The project was to employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic staff to provide the leadership training to enhance the skills and confidence of these staff to apply for leadership roles in their schools.

The training program consists of five days spread throughout the year as two two-day sessions and one one-day session, with action research through the year.

Positive outcomes of the project as stated in the final report include:

- Establishment of a partnership between CECV and Australian Catholic University for accreditation of this and future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education professional learning activities
- Enrolment of four participants in one unit of study towards a Masters qualification
- Establishment of a CECV Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teacher Network for 2016
- Greater readiness for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to identify

- Embedding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, history and culture into the curriculum
- Increased awareness on the part of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues generally.

The final report also states that the MATSITI funding provided a new opportunity to set up this leadership program, which in turn has led to networking and sharing of stories. An enthusiasm and momentum has been achieved which will sustain the program into the future.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

The Evaluation Panel acknowledges the achievements of the CECV which have resulted from this one year program. As is the case with many of the MATSITI funded projects, it has given a new voice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and raised awareness amongst non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues.

While a total of 23 staff were targeted for participation, the progress report states that 15 expressed interest.

To maximise the success of this and other leadership development programs, the CECV may wish to consider ways of broadening its reach and encouraging leadership aspirations of participants beyond their school.

Finding

The networks established through the National Catholic Education Commission should assist states to implement more effective local strategies to increase the number and capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers.

14.3 Charles Darwin University

Professional learning approaches that support Indigenous school leadership (\$50,000)

This collaborative action research project conducted over 2012-2013 sought to explore four leadership models used in originally four, but finally two, government school communities in the Northern Territory. The four models involve and support local Indigenous educators and community leaders. The research explored approaches to professional development and mentoring for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators to inform future approaches. The following four leadership models were to be explored:

1. co-principalship – a local Indigenous school principal and a local non-Indigenous co-principal
2. Educational Governing Board – Indigenous education board and non-Indigenous school principal
3. non-Indigenous school principal and Indigenous DET employed Senior Cultural Consultant working in partnership
4. non-Indigenous school principal, Indigenous staff and community members working in partnership.

Case studies were developed for the following school communities:

- Gunbalanya School – West Arnhemland
- Yirrkala School and Yirrkala Homelands School – East Arnhemland.

The final report provides commentary on the first of these models, and on community membership on school councils and in decision making. Distinct commentary on the four models did not emerge.

The research:

- Reviewed and analysed school leadership development in the school communities
- Undertook ‘research conversations’ with community members, principals and Indigenous school leaders and Directors of School Performance
- Identified and analysed factors of attraction and retention of Indigenous people in leadership positions in Northern Territory schools.

The following issues were identified from the research:

What models of school leadership meet the needs of Indigenous communities?

The final report states that Model 1 was identified as beneficial in Gunbalanya and could work at Yirrkala as an interim step prior to Yolgnu school principals leading their schools outright. School councils were seen as important in school communities as a way of involving the local community in school decision making and helping community members to understand western ways of decision making.

What professional learning and mentoring do Indigenous teachers need in the first five years to build education careers?

In the study every staff member was expected to be undertaking some form of professional development or study ranging from VET to masters qualifications. Other approaches identified as beneficial included:

- whole school learning to help staff engage with the community
- involving parents in the classroom and school
- regular and frequent meetings between teachers and support staff to increase teachers’ understanding of community and support staff’s understanding of eg student assessment
- pairing people for support.

Mentoring was identified as helping teachers build career paths.

What professional development and mentoring support Indigenous teachers to move into leadership roles?

In an answer to this question the study identified:

- building a school culture which promotes student attendance and engagement;
- creating meaningful positions in schools to develop career paths for students and community members;
- Indigenous teachers learning from non-Indigenous leaders who are role models;
- professional learning and support for certain leadership responsibilities such as budget management, decision making, curriculum and assessment; and

- undertaking programs at the Centre for School Leadership, Learning and Development at Darwin University.

The final report states that the findings were presented at the Australian Curriculum Studies Association Conference, Darwin, 2013, and that a journal article was being prepared for the Australian Journal of Indigenous Issues.

The final report states that:

- factors which inhibit Indigenous educators from becoming leaders include funding uncertainty, lack of acceptance of viability of remote communities and high staff turnover; and
- factors which support Indigenous educators becoming school leaders include respect, community involvement, both-ways and bilingual education, mentoring and professional development, and high expectations of staff and students.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

The Evaluation Panel is aware that a great deal of research exists on many aspects of education in Indigenous communities. This research project identified nothing of substance in addition to widely promoted principles of effective schools and their relationship to effective leadership.

Finding

The aims of MATSITI may have been better served by exploring what works with Indigenous school leaders who have undertaken the development journey and successfully lead schools, particularly in remote communities.

14.4 Other organisations

14.4.1 Yumi Education Inc.

Yumi as Leaders (\$50,000)

The YUMI as Leaders project emerged from the recognition that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers are underrepresented in leadership positions. While 64% of the multi campus Tagai State College and Northern Peninsula Area teaching workforce is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, less than 22% of educational leaders are Indigenous.

Conversely, 87% and 84% of education support and ancillary staff respectively are of Torres Strait Islander background. Historically, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders are retained substantially longer in their leadership positions within the region than non-Indigenous leaders.

The higher retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, and their unique cultural experience, knowledge and skills make their engagement as leaders fundamental to education success in this region.

Barriers to the attainment of leadership positions and roles by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers include:

- lack of availability of relief staff;
- low enrolment and retention in post graduate programs;
- high cost of travel for teachers and mentors; and
- lack of recognition by employers of the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders.

The YUMI as Leaders project undertook over 18 months with the engagement of a professional mentor:

- mapping of aspiring leaders;
- mapping of leadership roles and career paths;
- individualised leadership plans for three teachers and three leaders; and
- development of a summer school program focusing on leadership skills, educational management and the selection process as formal training or a post graduate qualification.

The approach included working with participants' spouses as they are key to supporting the teachers and leaders in achieving their goals. The approach also recognised the unique challenges which are often faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders including family commitments, health, women as leaders in a patriarchal society even though teaching is a female dominated profession in the Torres Strait and the Northern Peninsula Area, language and remote service.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

Being a Round 1 project, the final report for YUMI as Leaders is dated January 2014. While the program's approach is sound in both its structure and its accommodation of the cultural needs of its participants, the report makes no specific comments about sustainability. While outcomes for most participants are positive in that they are actively exploring options, pathways and applying for positions, information about how the program has continued over the following two years would be of value and of interest.

Finding

This project has good potential for continued success, given the project owners' analysis of the current situation, recognition of barriers to access to leadership positions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in this unique location, and a commitment to change.

14.4.2 Stronger Smarter Institute

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principals Leadership Project (\$50,000)

This project is a partnership between the Stronger Smarter Institute, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principals Association (NATSIPA) and the Australian Education Union (AEU). It provides five scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals to undertake the Stronger Smarter Leadership Program. The program's emphasis is on leadership development, identity, culture and contemporary schools. This seven day program includes five days in Cherbourg and two days in Brisbane, and regular contact with Dr Chris Sarra.

Indigenous people are engaged at all stages of project management and implementation. NATSIPA membership is open to Indigenous people working in education across Australia.

The Stronger Smarter Institute is an Indigenous led organization which honours difference and diversity, reflected in the composition of the Stronger Smarter team. The team has both male and female, Indigenous and non-Indigenous members, some with teaching and principal experience and others with community experience.

All are committed to the Stronger Smarter approach and share a strong commitment to ensuring successful life outcomes for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The Stronger Smarter Institute and NATSIPA have broad networks and partnerships with Indigenous organisations and groups at local, state and national levels. Program evaluation includes follow up of participants for up to two years. Strategies for sharing the program's outcomes include the five scholarship holders sharing their experiences with peers and throughout their jurisdictions, with a view to expanding the project beyond the initial year, with jurisdictions supporting NATSIPA members' participation.

This program aims to assist in increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander middle managers and aspiring leaders in schools with the intention of influencing jurisdictions throughout Australia to commit to a focus on supporting Indigenous leadership opportunities.

The progress report of December 2014 stated that the expression of interest process was underway. The first five day phase of the program was to take place in June 2015.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

The Evaluation Panel sees strong value in this program, both for its stated aims and for the high level of expertise amongst its leadership team which includes a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. The program's emphasis on culture and identity in a current school leadership context, coupled with its national partnership and networking platforms, will ensure its relevance for participants.

These comments are made in the absence of a final report having been submitted for this project. The Stronger Smarter Institute was funded under MATSITI for a second project, *Proud, Skilled and Deadly Leaders*, for which a final report was submitted. The identical report was submitted for *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principals Leadership Project*. This shows a lack of care on the part of Stronger Smarter Institute staff whose responsibility it was to demonstrate their organisation's accountability for efficient and effective expenditure of the funds.

Finding

Final reports need to be clear in reporting of achievements in order to convince the target audience that stated aims were met with MATSITI funding.

14.4.3 Stronger Smarter Institute Proud, Skilled and Deadly Leaders (\$50,000)

MATSITI funding of \$50,000 was allocated for this project.

The project is a collaboration between the Stronger Smarter Institute and the NSW Deadly Teachers Alliance, supported by the NSW Teachers Federation and the NSW Department of Education.

Proud, Skilled and Deadly Leaders is a professional learning experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, focussing on leadership development.

Based on the Institute's successful *Stronger Smarter Leadership Program* and under Dr Chris Sarra's leadership, the program is facilitated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people including principals and community leaders. It includes a five day professional learning program, two day workshop and regular contact with the project team.

The program aims to:

- Support leadership development and aspirations for 25 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, executive and principals;
- advance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers' careers; and
- provide a platform for ongoing collaboration among the key organisations, embedding innovative practice in workforce development in NSW and other education jurisdictions.

The Stronger Smarter Institute is an Indigenous led organization which honours difference and diversity, reflected in the composition of the Stronger Smarter team. The team has both male and female, Indigenous and non-Indigenous members, some with teaching and principal experience and others with community experience.

Program evaluation includes follow up of participants for up to two years. Strategies for sharing the program's outcomes include reports on websites, newsletters and at national conferences.

The progress report of December 2014 stated that the expression of interest process was underway. The first five day phase of the program was to take place in March 2015.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

The Evaluation Panel sees strong value in this program, both for its stated aims and for the high level of expertise amongst its leadership team which includes a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. The program's emphasis on culture and identity in a current school leadership context, coupled with its NSW partnership and networking platforms, will ensure its relevance for participants.

However, the final report was low on content and provided no substantial information about outcomes for participants or their views on the program.

Finding

Final reports need to be clear in reporting of achievements in order to convince the target audience that stated aims were met with MATSITI funding.

14.4.4 Principals Australia Institute Enhancing Leadership in Schools (\$74,000)

The aim of this project was for a small group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and aspiring leaders to enhance their leadership skills by participating in a three day training program in which non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers also participated. A further aim was for cultural perspectives on leadership to be shared. Participants were drawn from all over Australia. The first component of two consecutive days took place in Sydney in April 2015 and the one day component took place in June 2015. The participants undertook action research in the intervening period.

Of the 23 participants, 12 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and 11 were non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators were included on the facilitation team. The majority of participants were female, primary based, not in a leadership position and from metropolitan or regional city schools. Participants were from both government and non-government schools, from seven states and territories.

Participants responded to a survey prior to the two day activity and again prior to the one day activity. This approach was intended to measure the ‘distance travelled’ as a result of the two day activity and the action research in their school. Survey respondents were asked to rate themselves on a five point scale in responding to six questions relating to influencing and leading colleagues on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues and perspectives, engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and enhancing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The survey results indicated significant growth in almost all areas. The question ‘How would you rate your ability to understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural perspectives?’ showed the least change, but it was the question to which responses were most positive before the program.

The final report provided a sample of positive comments from participants. Some (not known how many) provided a numerical rating of 1-5, with the average being 4.4.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

The Evaluation Panel is supportive of the model implemented through this project. There is value in the sharing of perspectives and there is a clear need for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, leaders and aspiring leaders to enhance their knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues in education, in particular the importance of identity, culture and respect. Travel and accommodation costs for participants accounted for the largest single item of expenditure. The model could be applied in local contexts and be delivered at lower costs.

Finding

While the Evaluation Panel acknowledges the importance of cross-cultural leadership development, it questions the use of MATSITI funds for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants. The Evaluation Panel is of the view that limited MATSITI funds should be targeted to its aims which are to increase the number and capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and leaders. If half the funds could have been raised from an

alternative source to cover the costs of the non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants, MATSITI's priorities would have been better supported.

15. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers to Teachers

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers (AIEW) undertaking teaching qualifications and becoming teachers

Projects which focus on supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers in schools transition to a teaching career are listed in the table below.

Table 9 – Projects featuring AIEW to Teacher Strategies

Organisation	Title of project	Round	Tier	MATSITI funding \$
Public school jurisdictions (3)				
Western Australia Department of Education	Transitions to teaching for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in schools	1	2	20,000
Western Australia Department of Education	Classroom Intensive program 1 (2014)	3	2	55,000
Western Australia Department of Education	Classroom Intensive program 2 (2015)	4	2	42,000
Catholic education commissions (1)				
Catholic Education Commission NSW	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher internships	4	2	45,000
Universities (1)				
University of Tasmania	Research and support transition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers into teaching	3	2	32,510

15.1 Public school jurisdictions

15.1.1 Western Australia Department of Education

Transitions to teaching for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers (AIEWs) in schools (\$20,000)

The Western Australia Department of Education in partnership with Curtin University and Challenger Institute of Technology commissioned an action research project undertaken by Nexus Network consultancy into the effectiveness of current initiatives to assist AIEWs to transition to teaching.

The Nexus Network focussed on:

- the Bachelor of Education Conversion Course (BECC)
- coaching program for graduates of the BECC
- scholarships to TAFE to undertake Certificate III or IV in Education Support, Diploma of Education Support or to university to undertake a Bachelor of Education.

In April 2012 the Nexus Network produced a comprehensive report, *MATSITI: Review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teacher Education Programs for the Department of Education*, in which it made wide ranging recommendations. This report is an important guide for building on achievements to date.

Bachelor of Education Conversion Course

The BECC commenced in 2002 and continued until 2010. A review of the program in 2005 stated that while it was important to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, and that AIEWs were an important source to this end, the quality of the graduates should not be compromised. In 2011 the BECC was replaced with the four year Bachelor of Education Rural and Remote (BERR).

Coaching program for graduates of the BECC

Under the coaching program for graduates of the BECC, six coaches occupying five full time positions were trained and engaged. This program is in line with current practice on a national level to provide all early career teachers with mentor support.

Scholarships

The scholarship program provides support for AIEWs to undertake formal training to increase their effectiveness in their current role or to progress to, or undertake a teaching qualification. Feedback about the scholarship program includes:

- a need for stronger promotion of the BERR
- more effective mentoring if more mentors were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- more effective programs if there were more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff visible in leadership positions.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

The Australian Professional Teaching Standards provide a framework for ensuring the quality of teachers. Regardless of the pathway taken by AIEWs into a teaching career, the requirement for all teachers to attain and maintain the standards will help to ensure that only those who are classroom ready will be employed as teachers.

The *MATSITI: Review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teacher Education Programs for the Department of Education* made 18 recommendations. Broadly, these state that:

- teaching as a career and scholarship programs be strongly promoted to AIEWs;
- AIEWs undertaking teacher training be closely monitored as they progress through their course;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander beginning teachers be given support;
- cultural awareness in schools be enhanced; in particular principals of schools with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff receive training to build a culturally inclusive school environment;
- the Department and universities work together to recruit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary teachers; and
- the Department look to other high performing jurisdictions in order to enhance their practices in respect of increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers.

Finding

The Department has taken into consideration findings of this review to develop its Classroom Intensive program over 2014-2015, which is reviewed below.

15.1.2 Western Australia Department of Education Classroom Intensive program 1 (2014) and 2 (2015) (\$97,000)

The Classroom Intensive program supports current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in their fourth year of a Bachelor of Education. It funds the release of participants from their employment for one term before their final professional experience to enable them to gain additional classroom teaching experience and to focus on their final year study commitments.

Under the program, participants undertake classroom observation and are provided with mentor support. A survey of the participants, principals and mentors was to be conducted. The progress report for the 2014 program states that there were five participants in term 1, 2014. Of these, three completed their final year professional experience. The two others, who deferred, intended to complete their program in term 1, 2015.

The phase 1 survey was completed in April 2014. The progress report said that the responses were positive but no other information about the surveys was included. The phase 2 survey was completed in October 2014. A consultancy was to be established to analyse the phase 1 and 2 survey data for the final report.

The progress report for the 2015 program states that there were two participants. It is not clear whether these two were those from the 2014 program who deferred. Of these, one completed their final year professional experience and the other deferred till term 1 2016. Another participant undertook the program in term 4, 2015.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

Participant numbers are low at a maximum of eight over the two years, but it could be only six. The program's principles are sound and if it could extend its reach it could be effective in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in gaining teaching qualifications.

Finding

The Classroom Intensive program needs review to enhance its effectiveness and efficiency.

15.2 Catholic Education Commission NSW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher internships (\$45,000)

Under this program, four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers (AIEW) were to be supported through a one term internship in the final year of their teaching qualification by mentoring. The program takes place within the Australian Professional Teaching Standards.

The program aims to enable participants to:

- experience teaching before they have the responsibility of being teachers;
- learn how to be a reflective practitioner with the support of a mentor;
- articulate their understanding of the teaching standards as they relate to their practice; and

- open doors to employment in Catholic schools with high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments.

The final report states that three AIEWs accessed the internships, and that three of the 11 NSW Catholic Education authorities are promoting teaching through the further offering of internships. The final report also talks about the autonomy of the 11 authorities, the consequent difficulties in mandating actions to build on the project, and that information is not being shared on the website because of organisational review.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

Clear articulation of the program's benefits for participants and its conduct within the Australian Professional Teaching Standard are positive. As with many MATSITI projects, the project managers state that the project has led to an increased awareness within the organisation of the need to attract and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and the benefits of doing this.

Finding

The Catholic Education Commission NSW would maximise the impact of this project if it were to influence the 11 authorities to work as a team and achieve greater synergies.

15.3 University of Tasmania

Research and support transition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers (AIEWs) into teaching (\$32,510)

This project seeks to identify and overcome barriers to AIEWs undertaking a teaching degree by obtaining the views of AIEWs through interview. It also aims to identify strategies for encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students to complete their secondary schooling and undertake further education.

The project involves the Department of Education's Aboriginal Education Unit, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation for Education and the University's Riawunna Centre. The interviews are individual and focus groups use Yarning Methodology.

The research project was guided by three key questions:

- What factors motivate, support and encourage AIEWs in Tasmania to enrol in a teaching degree?
- What are the barriers to AIEWs in Tasmania enrolling in a teaching degree?
- What are the views of AIEWs in Tasmania on factors influencing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student engagement and success in Tasmania?

A comprehensive report has been produced about the research and its findings, which are as follow:

Motivations to undertake teaching:

- flexible delivery modes and entry and exit points or to achieve a qualification eg AIEW certificate;
- a quota of teaching positions to ensure employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching graduates;
- AIEWs are good role models when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values are embedded in the education system; and
- financial support eg scholarships.

Barriers to undertaking teaching:

- economic;
- lack of information about pathways to a teaching qualification;
- lack of job security getting in the way of planning for the future; and
- negative perspectives of the education system by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reduce motivation to become teachers.

Good practice to foster student engagement:

- positive student-teacher relationships assisted by AEIW support;
- inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the curriculum;
- principals showing leadership in the integration of Aboriginal perspectives and respect for culture and identity;
- communicating pathways to teaching to students as early as possible;
- awareness of particular support needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; and
- role model and mentor support.

Key recommendations:

1. Provide AIEWs with information about existing teaching courses and pathways;
2. Provide AIEWs with professional development and paid study leave;
3. Establish an 8 per cent quota of teaching positions for AIEWs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who qualify as teachers;
4. Consider recognition of prior learning for AIEWs enrolling in teaching;
5. Increase cross-institutional communication among the Department of Education, the University of Tasmania, Faculty of Education and Tasmanian Institute of Learning and Teaching;
6. Increase support for AIEWs in the Department of Education and Tasmanian Catholic Education Office;
7. Provide funding, including scholarships, to overcome inequity which disadvantages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people gaining access to university; and
8. Make professional development on Australian Professional Teaching Standards 1.4 and 2.4 compulsory for teachers.

Sharing of project findings

In addition to MATSITI, this report will be distributed to the following entities:

- Department of Premier and Cabinet, Tasmania
- University of Tasmania Faculty of Education
- Aboriginal Education Services
- Department of Education
- Tasmanian branch of the Australian Education Union
- Tasmanian Principals Association
- Catholic Principals Association Tasmania
- Principals Australia Institute.

Sustainability - lasting benefits after completion of the project

- AIEWs have been connected to University of Tasmania diplomas and degrees as a result of yarns and become aware of support available.
- Some AIEWs have attended ‘tunapri teaching’ information sessions at University of Tasmania.
- Four AIEWs who participated in individual yarns have enrolled or are planning to enrol in undergraduate degrees at University of Tasmania (Bachelor of Education (2), Bachelor of Social Work (1), Bachelor of Fine Arts (1)).

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

This comprehensive report provides in-depth information in respect of its key focus questions. While the research project’s findings include little which is new, it is useful for them to be concisely written in one paper which can be used by a range of organisations to assist them to work together more effectively in order to get more AIEWs to become teachers and more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to finish school and go on to further study.

The yarning methodology and the respect shown to participants have connected AIEWs and inspired some AIEWs to undertake further study. The involvement of key players including the Department of Education, and the University’s Faculty of Education and the Riawunna Centre is likely to promote connections which will produce synergies for achieving the aims of MATSITI.

Finding

This project’s greatest strength is common to many MATSITI projects – that by undertaking the project, awareness of the need to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and their role in motivating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students has been heightened.

16. Mentor Strategies

Projects with a focus on mentoring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers are listed in the table below.

Table 10 – Projects featuring Mentoring Strategies

Organisation	Title of project	Round	Tier	MATSITI funding \$
Catholic sector (1)				
Catholic Education NT	Early career support for Indigenous teachers	3	2	50,000
Universities (3)				
University of Wollongong	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander teacher mentor program	1	2	30,000
University of Queensland	Mentoring program for Indigenous preservice teachers	3	2	44,678
University of Sydney	Indigenous teachers' alumni mentoring program	4	2	30,880
Other (1)				
Principals Australia Institute	School principals mentoring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers <i>See Chapter 12, Tier 1 projects</i>	3	1	133,200

16.1 Catholic sector

16.1.1 Catholic Education Northern Territory (CENT)

Early career support for Indigenous teachers (\$50,000)

CENT provided considerable in kind support for this two year project, conducted from 2014-2015, including funding the program coordinator for 2015 and supporting the English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD) and ICT education officers. The program builds on CENT's successful partnership with Charles Darwin University to deliver the onsite Growing Our Own teacher education program in schools in five remote locations. Graduands from the program are supported by the program coordinator to transition from assistant teacher to full teacher registration through mentoring, establishing networks and providing ongoing professional support.

While the program was implemented in three of the five locations, it is on the agenda of the other two as meeting a recognised need. The teachers were asked to identify, in consultation with their principal, their own professional learning interests and the mentor program was tailored to each individual accordingly. A total of 16 teachers were supported under the program.

The program managers were flexible in their approach and accessed support from a range of sources to meet individual needs including Catholic Education staff, university staff, school curriculum coordinator and experienced teachers.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

The opportunity to develop and implement the program with MATSITI funding has raised the employer's awareness of its responsibilities to early career teachers. Learnings from the program have contributed to its sustainability by developing CENT staff's commitment to continue it.

Finding

This project has taken into account the challenges for Indigenous teachers in the remote context and has recommended the establishment of a strong network which understands community leadership expectations of these teachers.

16.2 Universities

16.2.1 University of Wollongong

Teacher mentor program (\$30,000)

This project was conducted during the second half of 2012 and continued for 2013. Its aim was to mentor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander beginning teachers and develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers' network in order to ensure the retention of the teachers. A further aim was for mentees to stay involved with mentors and become mentors themselves. Mentors gained accreditation for professional learning in being a mentor. The University of Wollongong and the NSW Department of Education worked together to identify program participants.

The program comprised a two day intensive workshop, six months mentee/mentor relationship and a final intensive workshop. Ten mentee teachers participated. Where possible, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mentors were paired with the mentees. Where this was not possible, mentors demonstrated an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

The program was evaluated by asking the same eleven questions of both mentees and mentors. The responses were positive.

Information provided by the University of Wollongong in its response to the MATSITI questionnaire indicates that the program did not continue beyond 2013 due to MATSITI funding ceasing and university staff involved in the project moving on. In 2013 the number of mentees and mentors participating had increased to 36.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

A positive outcome of the program has been the strengthening of the relationship between the School of Education and the Woolyngah Indigenous Unit. Also, the School of Education continues to support the sustainable Djinggi pathway program for senior secondary students which has increased the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students at the University.

Finding

While the program ceased due to staff moving on, it appears to have contributed to a strengthening of relationships which will continue to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students.

16.2.2 University of Queensland Mentoring program for Indigenous preservice teachers (\$44,678)

This project builds on a pilot and entails Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pre-service teachers participating in a mentoring program on a weekly basis with an experienced teacher mentor. It aims to address University of Queensland's low participation rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in teacher education programs by building and sustaining their participation in tertiary education programs, their effectiveness as teachers, their professional identity and their readiness to teach. The project ran during 2014, within existing partnerships between the School of Education, University of Queensland and Queensland state schools.

The program was well planned in six stages including: a meeting of the reference group comprising the Head of the School of Education, university Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education staff, principals of the two mentor schools (one primary and one secondary) and program managers; selection of mentees in consultation with the University's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education staff and professional development of both mentors and mentees; mentoring in schools from April to October 2014 on a weekly basis with ongoing evaluation; second reference group meeting; feedback and celebration by and for the mentees and mentors and encouragement of mentees to continue with a view to becoming mentors in the future; and final meeting of the reference group, reporting and future planning.

The project's final report shows that research for the program was extensive and went beyond mentoring in an Indigenous context. It also included readings on the teacher education student experience, initiatives for closing the gap, the impact of disadvantage, schooling for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and ways of learning.

A total of five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students participated in the program as mentees.

Research was qualitative, phenomenological and narrative based, in that it was framed around mentoring as an experience and communicating that experience through personal and collective story telling. Data was collected from:

- evaluation of the professional development
- pre-interviews with mentees and mentor teachers
- weekly mentee and mentor teacher reflective audio diaries completed during the eight-week mentoring program
- mentor teachers' post-reflection questionnaires.

Data were analysed using NVivo software around the themes of Being, Belonging and Becoming.

Feedback from the mentees indicates that the approach taken within the program ensured their cultural safety and increased their confidence about undertaking their professional experience, which they acknowledged was a high risk potential walking point for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students. The mentoring program included being given valuable practical experience and assistance, such as being taught marking systems and undertaking some teaching, which the mentees valued greatly. Further, the mentor schools valued what the mentees' Aboriginality could bring to their teaching role. They made strong links with their school communities and gave celebrations such as NAIDOC week greater significance.

Mentees' comments indicate that their experiences as mentees were so positive that they are determined to complete their studies and embrace their teaching careers. It would be useful to follow up the mentees over a number of years to see where their journey as educators takes them.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

The significance of this mentoring program is that it occurs while the mentees are teacher education students. While mentoring is in the process of being mainstreamed for all early career teachers, for some this would be too late.

The program managers intend to secure ongoing internal funding to enable to program to continue and spread to other universities.

Finding

Providing an opportunity to participate in a culturally sensitive mentoring program at the critical stage of preservice could well lead to more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers.

16.2.3 University of Sydney Indigenous teachers' alumni mentoring program (\$30,880)

The project's intent was to utilise the skills and experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and leaders to support early career teachers. The project stages are:

- establish a pool of experienced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and leaders to be mentors to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early career teachers;
- develop a culturally appropriate mentoring program in consultation with the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG);
- pilot the program in urban and rural locations;
- evaluate the program; and
- publicise and publish findings through Indigenous media such as The National Indigenous Times, The Koori Mail, Tracker and NITV and also in specific Education journals.

The program recognises that early in a teacher's career is a critical time during which mentoring can be of great value in developing skills and helping to ensure teacher retention. The proposed program aligns with the University of Sydney's Indigenous strategic plan (Wingara Mura Bunga Barragu).

The project was to be managed within the Faculty of Education and Social Work by staff who are members of the Indigenous Research Collaboration. The project was to have the AECG, Aboriginal Studies Association and the Department of Education as governing partners. The final report was received on 9 February 2016. Of the above project stages, those which were achieved were development and piloting of the program. Two teachers in one school were mentored and the Northern Illawarra AECG was a partner.

The grant budget was only partially expended.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

A contract condition was that the project owners liaise with the ACDE to see if there are potential synergies with its Engagement and Success project. There is no mention of such liaison. Further, the project owners have provided no information about the mentor or mentees, or what the program achieved. These matters and the fact that there were so few participants indicate that the project's impact is low.

Finding

Final reports need to be clear in reporting of achievements in order to convince the target audience that stated aims were met with MATSITI funding.

17. School to University Pathways

Projects which focus on providing pathways to a teaching qualification are listed in the table below.

Table 11 – Projects featuring School to University Pathway Strategies

Organisation	Title of project	Round	Tier	MATSITI funding \$
Public school jurisdictions (2)				
Queensland Department of Education and Training	MurriTech - VET in schools pathway	1	2	50,000
Queensland Department of Education and Training	Expansion of RATEP new offsite delivery model with TAFE Queensland North (QN)	3	2	50,000
Universities (1)				
University of Queensland	Scoring Goals	3	2	50,000
Other (1)				
AFL Sports Ready	TITAN - Taking Indigenous Teaching Actions Now	4	2	48,000

17.1 Public school jurisdictions

17.1.1 Queensland Department of Education and Training

MurriTech – VET in schools pathway (\$50,000)

Under this project, which was to run over the two years 2012-2013, Queensland DET in partnership with TAFE QN sought to provide opportunities for senior high school students to undertake an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level III qualification. Successful students would gain automatic entry into the Rural Areas Teacher Education Program (RATEP) or could articulate into a teacher education degree at a range of universities. The project aimed to build on the successes of the RATEP.

The project includes a research component to explore student participation in VET, the value of e-learning and residential delivery, good practice in training which could feed into other areas of skills shortages, acceleration of students into teaching, student socialisation and peer support. The MATSITI funds were to cover the cost of the action research, project evaluation, environmental scan of the relevant literature and research into the pattern of senior school studies being pursued by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in years 11 and 12.

Under the project, Queensland DET was to fund and support up to 60 students over two years to undertake a relevant Certificate III program. It sought to unlock the teacher employment potential of Queensland’s young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population to become teachers in a high demand environment.

The progress report indicates that a variation request was submitted to vary the original project due to resource constraints associated with incoming Liberal National government in Qld and departure of key staff. Agreement was granted. The new agreement was to:

- Amend action research methodology to give greater importance to scoping and scanning aimed at laying better foundations for the project; and
- Vary the implementation date of training from December 2013 to February 2014.

The final report, produced by an independent contractor, is titled *An Analysis to Support a Queensland Response to MATSITI* and is dated 5 May 2013.

The final report provides a range of data regarding commencement and completion rates into relevant Certificate III programs at TAFE. It makes a range of suggestions for improving completion rates including activities to build cultural identity and emphasises the importance of promoting teaching as a career.

The action research included visits to 13 schools to explore issues and determine which schools offered any Certificate III programs which could provide a pathway to teaching. Action research also included interviews with staff from universities, TAFE and members of the community. A workshop was held with key stakeholders to provide them with preliminary findings and the opportunity to explore options, responses and actions for the future.

The final report made the following recommendations:

1. establish trials to explore different models to increase the number of senior (years 10-12) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students pursuing a career in teaching;
2. undertake action research to document progress of trials and inform future action;
3. continue to build an appropriate database of student selection and completion of VET courses during years 11 and 12 and monitor the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students continuing on to tertiary study towards a teaching qualification;
4. establish systemic targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers being employed in the system as teachers and in leadership positions;
5. establish a marketing strategy using an identified “Champion” or “Champions” to promote teaching as a career;
6. build on the current initiatives such as “Aspirational Leadership Camps”, “I Dream” and the “Supporting [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander] High Flyer initiative” to develop a suite of activities across the state to identify, motivate, support, provide socialisation experiences and build cultural identity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; and
7. continue to monitor and contribute to current research through initiatives such as MATSITI.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

The final report is the only tangible product of this project. The emphasis in the recommendations is on continued research, monitoring and setting of targets, with one recommendation to promote teaching as a career to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. While the report identifies difficulties faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, the recommendations do not have a strong student focus. It is not clear how the final report will be used by Queensland DET, schools or TAFE.

No information is available as to whether Queensland DET supported the (up to) 60 students to undertake the VET pathways to teaching following the funding period.

Finding

Research is most useful when findings are disseminated to staff and community members who can implement its findings. Project owners have a responsibility to undertake appropriate and effective follow up activities.

17.1.2 Queensland Department of Education and Training Expansion of RATEP new offsite delivery model with TAFE Queensland North (QN) (\$50,000)

The project proposal was to fund 0.5 of a full time TAFE QN teacher's position to support the continuation and planned expansion of RATEP's new offsite delivery model within Certificate IV in Education and Diploma of Education courses. The model allows non-qualified Indigenous people to study from a school location where an onsite RATEP centre does not exist. The model incorporates interactive virtual classroom e-sessions, online assessment, course content and mobile technologies. Teacher-learner relationships are enhanced by offsite students having regular access to a full time, Education Queensland offsite teacher coordinator who provides additional tutorial, pastoral and administrative support to offsite students.

RATEP is a community based Indigenous teacher education program comprising teaching and management staff from TAFE QN, James Cook University (JCU) and Education Queensland (EQ) who work in close partnership with Indigenous community organisations. The collaboration's core business is to provide direct pathways of study in regional, rural and remote areas of Queensland in order to increase the pool of registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and paraprofessionals across the state schools system. All RATEP staff have extensive experience in working with Indigenous adult learners in the area of teacher education.

The model's planned expansion aimed for up to an additional student 20 places. It also assists Education Queensland to accelerate their workforce reforms by increasing the pool of teachers and paraprofessionals beyond the RATEP onsite delivery model which requires a RATEP centre to have at least 7-10 students to be viable. At the time of the expression of interest, the trial of the offsite delivery model had allowed Indigenous paid and volunteer staff to study as offsite students from a wide variety of locations such as Burketown, Hervey Bay, Laura and Irvinebank. The expression of interest states that a student retention rate of 64% has been achieved since inception of the new delivery model.

In 2014, 30 applications from 23 locations had been received. Of these, 18 applications were successful (nine Certificate IV and nine Diploma of Education). Eight full time students completed on time and only one of the remaining students withdrew due to gaining a full time promotion position in Canberra.

In 2015 there were 18 applicants from 12 locations (10 Diploma of Education, four Bachelor of Education and four Certificate IV).

The program and its successes have been widely promoted through a range of media, publicity for the graduation ceremony, TAFE QN Facebook page and the Queensland Department of Education and Training State Schooling website.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

This project has successfully built upon the trial of an offsite model for RATEP. It has harnessed appropriate technology and has ensured that well qualified staff were available to provide support for the students, having regard to the issues in offsite delivery and the remote living of many of the students. The program's low attrition rate is a testament to its success.

The traction gained by the RATEP offsite delivery model will contribute significantly to its sustainability.

Finding

This project owes its success to its owners' awareness of and responses to difficulties faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in completing their studies, especially those living in remote locations. Responses include a sophisticated use of technology, involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and ongoing support to students.

17.2 Universities

17.2.1 University of Queensland

Scoring Goals (\$50,000)

Through four sport-related pathways, University of Queensland's (UQ) Indigenous Youth Sport Program, Pathway to Success NRL program, school-based traineeships and school (sport) scholarship programs, Indigenous young people will be mentored into the UQ Bachelor of Health, Sport and Physical Education (BHPSE), possibly via a tailored UQ College Tertiary Preparation Program (TPP). Once in the BHPSE, students will receive a range of support to meet their specific needs through the UQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Support Unit. Success will be judged in terms of recruitment into, and completion of, the BHPSE.

The TPP, in its third year in 2013, is a pathway for Indigenous students into UQ, although to date the number of Indigenous participants has been small. For Indigenous students from or outside of the four above pathways, the TPP provides an option for bridging into the BHPSE. The TPP has been designed to provide credit for this kind of student, and had up to 50 Commonwealth-supported places available in 2014 and 2015 for Indigenous students from the four pathways.

Indigenous HPE teachers in schools can play a critical role in fostering health literacy in Indigenous populations (National Health and Hospital Reform Commission, 2009). Given the evidence base related to the possibilities offered by sport for Indigenous students, this project will direct this interest into teaching careers in HPE and Junior Science. In shaping this project, early mapping with partners suggest *Scoring Goals* should generate:

- approximately 10 students per cohort in the BHPSE in 2015 and beyond;
- successful cohorts who are supported by the UQ ATSI Unit and Associate Professor Tony Rossi (Faculty of Health, School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences);
- Indigenous BHPSE students who act as mentors for students in the *Scoring Goals* feeder pathways; and

- Indigenous graduate teachers who are skilled at taking academic leadership roles in their school in the classroom, inspiring participation in school and community sport and promoting the health of Indigenous young people in the schooling context.

The progress report of December 2014 indicates that the project experienced some delays resulting in a project officer being appointed in November 2014, six months later than anticipated. However, the project owners undertook other preliminary work.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

This program may be an effective pathway to teaching for some students. An update on progress by way of a final report would enable the Evaluation Panel to comment further.

17.3 Other

17.3.1 AFL SportsReady

TITAN - Taking Indigenous Teaching Actions Now (\$48,000)

AFL SportsReady has been in operation across Australia for around 20 years providing a range of employment and education opportunities for young people. The company operates as both a Group Training Company and a Registered Training Organisation, SportsReady Education.

AFL SportsReady has a well-established Indigenous Employment Program which, at the time of the expression of interest, supported more than 200 traineeships in schools, the community sector, corporate partners and individual businesses.

This project aimed to develop and deliver a bespoke Certificate III in Education Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people post year 12 and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support staff. The program is to articulate to direct university entry pathways in each state. It aims for 60 trainees over 2016-2018. Graduates of the program qualify as teachers' aides as a career starter.

The progress report of December 2014 indicates achievement of:

- establishment of TITAN project team;
- development of traineeship information;
- commencement of engagement of school partners and Indigenous organisations and networks; and
- determination of core and elective subjects for the Certificate III in Education Support.

The project has had a high level of involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and according to information in the final report, its owners have consulted widely throughout Australia with state governments and education providers and the Catholic education sector. There was a determination for modules to be written by suitably qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, however difficulties in accessing their services in time has delayed the project. The final report states that production of modules, which aim to reflect preferred learning styles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, will be complete in April 2016 with hopes of being approved for registration by mid year.

Due to the delays, there is no measure of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people undertaking this bespoke Certificate III. The project owners claim a near 100% of graduates from their mainstream 2014 program going into full time work or study.

Because AFL SportsReady has a long history of developing and implementing pathway programs, the bespoke Certificate III program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is likely also to be sustainable once in operation.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

While some key milestones have been met, the following have been delayed by one year, provided new expected timelines are met:

- complete writing of modules;
- engage careers advisers across states;
- recruit trainees;
- program orientation; and
- traineeships begin in schools.

The last of these is now set to commence at the start of 2017, with the others due for completion during 2016.

While the program has many positive aspects, its incompleteness makes it difficult to assess its worth. The delay in finding appropriate course writers led to the whole program being delayed.

Finding

An aspect of effective project management is to recognise potential roadblocks and put in additional effort to overcome them. With AFL SportsReady's many connections throughout the education and training industry Australia wide, it is surprising that qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander course writers could not be found and engaged.

18. Professional Experience Strategies

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students and professional experience

Undertaking professional experience teaching in schools can be a ‘walking point’ for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students. Projects which focus on professional experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students are listed in the table below.

Table 12 – Projects featuring Professional Experience Strategies

Organisation	Title of project	Round	Tier	MATSITI funding \$
Universities (2)				
Australian Catholic University	New approaches to professional experience	3	2	49,908
University of the Sunshine Coast	Recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the Australian Workforce	3	2	45,347
Other (1)				
Worawa Aboriginal College	Student teacher placement program	3	2	28,375

18.1 Universities

18.1.1 Australian Catholic University New Approaches to Professional Experience (\$49,908)

This pilot aims to arrange culturally appropriate and welcoming professional experience placements for away-from-base (AFB) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students by exploring the strategic interface with schools and students leading to ideas for new partnerships with key school personnel, state authorities, Catholic Diocese authorities and the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group.

The aims include:

- analyse issues in professional experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student teachers;
- develop models of professional experience and implement appropriate curriculum models
- compile case studies; and
- develop meaningful stakeholder engagement.

A three phase approach was adopted.

Phase 1:

- engage research assistant to undertake literature review;
- identify cluster areas to conduct yarns in NSW and Queensland (these two locations are where AFB students attend ACU pre-service teacher education programs). For this project only primary schools and Bachelor of Education Primary students will be engaged;

- develop and distribute a questionnaire to all stakeholders including current pre-service teachers in the AFB program who have completed their professional experience program (PEP); and
- develop a Moodle or equivalent site for ongoing discussion and feedback on issues as they arise.

Phase 2:

- analyse issues from questionnaires and literature review;
- conduct yarns, analyse data and write report;
- provide feedback to stakeholders; and
- develop models and discuss with stakeholders.

Phase 3:

- trial and evaluation of developed models; and
- final report including case studies developed.

Outcomes

A total of 71 yarns were conducted, in six locations in NSW and Queensland, with 106 participants.

In 2015, 215 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in seven campuses were supported under the pilot.

The project experienced some delays. There was difficulty in engaging the research assistant for the literature search and ethics applications were time consuming. Also, insufficient questionnaire results were returned. The planned Moodle site was not set up but the program managers stated that it will be part of a new web space. No new models for professional experience were developed, although through the research process, the project managers became aware that one size does not fit all and suggest the research findings should be used to develop local models.

The project managers have developed a generic framework of elements for best practice for PEP which can be adapted to each local context.

The literature review is comprehensive. Research has identified that the main factors constituting barriers to successful completion of PEP for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students include:

- financial and family matters, especially if PEP undertaken away from home;
- racist attitudes on the part of teachers in some schools, including belief that programs undertaken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students are different or easier and of less value, making such schools not culturally safe; and
- expectations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander preservice teachers in schools with significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments, especially in rural locations where the school and community are enmeshed.

Sharing of project outcomes and sustainability

The project managers:

- will produce academic journal articles;
- will develop an on-line component which will be a part of a larger ACU PEP web page;
- will work with stakeholders to enhance the PEP experience for AFB students based on findings;
- have presented research to staff in the NSW School of Education and Arts. Staff have indicated a willingness to engage in the revised approach to PEP for the AFB students; and
- will revise the way they deliver PEP to AFB students.

Recommendations

Several recommendations have been made, some for implementation by the Australian Catholic University and others for consideration by jurisdictions throughout Australia. The main recommendations are:

1. ACU formally engage and train a core group of culturally appropriate university supervisors, including AFB graduates, for AFB students, ensuring consistency and sustainability;
2. AFB BEd Program be marketed more effectively to schools and educational authorities through establishing a Graduate Ambassadors program;
3. ACU Faculty of Education and Arts develop a product that celebrates its teacher education graduates which can be used as an on-line resource;
4. ACU develop an online space to promote, facilitate and engage external and internal stakeholders with its PEP experiences. This could involve a Community of Scholars;
5. AFB curriculum course work focus more attention on particular aspects to ensure students are ready for PEP, including syllabus, professionalism, literacy and numeracy in the primary setting, programming in each KLA and managing racism;
6. ACU further develop the AFB program so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have choices about pre-service training opportunities and so that the program becomes the benchmark in AFB teacher education programs;
7. ACU staff develop more formal and informal relationships with Diocesan Offices, State and Territory Departments to provide a greater choice of schools for PEP and unique circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students be discussed and considered with a view to overcoming barriers to successful completion of PEP;
8. ACU acknowledge the importance of cultures and Country in the AFB programme offering 'on Country' experiences for students in the AFB programme and their supervisors;
9. ACU Faculty of Education and Arts develop regional hubs to work in a flexible and responsive partnership with stakeholders to enhance the PEP experience of AFB students and all other stakeholders. The 'model' for this will be dependent on the relationships forged;
10. ACU develop a Professional Experience Advisory Group with membership representation from National Principles Association, government and non government school sectors, AECG, University PEP team, First Peoples and Equity Pathways Directorate, AFB Co-ordinator and AFB student, to meet twice yearly pre and post PEP; and
11. university staff engaging in PEP undertake cultural Awareness training.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

This research study contains comprehensive information about the PEP experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students, identifies obstacles to successful completion and makes a range of recommendations for improvement. Like all research studies, its value can only be realised if its content is taken on by stakeholders who need to be committed to change.

Finding

With the final report being 60 pages long, the program managers may wish to develop a more concise document which can be referred to easily by the stakeholders.

18.1.2 University of the Sunshine Coast Recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the Australian Workforce - School-University Partnership for Professional Practice (\$45,347)

The project has established sustainable partnerships between the University of the Sunshine Coast, schools and early learning centres to facilitate student professional experience placements. The partnerships support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initial teacher education students and their Indigenous and non-Indigenous mentors and supervisors to explore: identity, the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and support staff in schools and the community and ways to support initial teacher education students on placement.

The specific aims of this project included:

1. establishing a network of schools with a commitment to the development and support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initial teacher education students, the teachers and support staff. Consulting with these groups to identify the professional development and mentoring needs of initial teacher education students and their mentors;
2. developing and delivering a professional development program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initial teacher education students that explores identity and the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in schools and the community; and
3. developing and delivering a mentoring professional development program for Indigenous and non-Indigenous teacher supervisors/mentors interested in working with and mentoring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initial teacher education students.

These aims were achieved.

The professional development program for semester 2 2014 focussed on working with the Indigenous teacher education students. Six students participated to varying degrees with weekly meetings at the Buranga Centre. Students sought assistance for a wide range of support during the sessions including: reassurance about processes for professional experience, the opportunity to share their experience, discussions about coursework from university, sharing about events and activities in the community. They also wanted an online environment for staying in touch with each other and elders.

During semester 2 2014 Elders, education staff and students also presented a conference paper at the World Indigenous Education Conference in Hawaii on work placements and partnerships and presented at a roundtable discussion at the Engagement Australia Conference.

The program has supported approximately 165 teachers or pre-service teachers. There is a register of 25 teachers who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or non-Indigenous teachers who have undertaken the 'Developing a culture of learning through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges' professional development program and plans are to grow this number. These teachers can now be matched to the 33 student teachers.

The professional development program for teacher mentors has been delivered twice during 2015, with 24 participants who developed further their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, history and perspectives in the curriculum.

Outcomes of this project have been shared internally within the University of the Sunshine Coast in School of Education staff meetings and Education Academic Advisory Committee meetings. Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the team have been invited to participate in the reference group and the working party at the University level on "Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledges and Perspectives in Curriculum." A range of presentations has also been made in external forums.

This project is an innovation for the University of the Sunshine Coast in its being a comprehensive program of relevant professional development involving university staff, schools and teacher education students with a strong connection with the Buranga Centre. Prior to the implementation of the MATSITI project, there were isolated activities rather than coherent and sustained work in this area. The development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander subcommittee was established as an outcome of the University's first action plan developed in conjunction with the Australian Council of Deans of Education project.

The sustainability of this project has been established by the development of an ongoing mechanism for students to opt into the program for support via the online community and matching with teachers who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or those who have engaged in professional development to understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and culture.

The project maintains its sustainability through the engagement of the University's Education Academic Advisory Committee, the Professional Learning Sub Committee and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Sub Committee. Regular reports and advice from these groups have been essential to maintain open lines of communication. In addition the recognition at the university level of the work currently being undertaken and the invitation to participate as members of the reference group and working party for the Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledges and Perspectives in Curriculum demonstrates a level of commitment to achieving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students as part of a whole community.

The project includes a recommendation to allocate, as part of teaching workload, the ongoing management of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander program for Preservice Teachers to a member of the education academic staff who will:

- regularly communicate with program coordinators and professional learning course coordinators about the program so that they can promote it to students in their courses and programs
- regularly communicate and engage with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Sub Committee
- maintain the online site to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student communication with each other, Elders and education academic staff
- regularly communicate with teachers on the register to maintain their engagement with the university and the development of their professional knowledge about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and culture.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

The success of this program is a testament to careful planning, consultation and commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students' successful completion of their qualifications and their empowerment as teachers. The project has a high level of involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, staff and the students themselves. Substantial effort has been made to share the project's findings in a range of forums and its sustainability has been carefully planned within a robust support structure.

Finding

This project demonstrates the importance of people working together and communicating effectively to achieve meaningful development of mentors and teacher education students through authentic experiences which enhance the teaching profession and outcomes for students.

18.2 Other

18.2.1 Worawa Aboriginal College Student teacher placement program (\$28,375)

Worawa Aboriginal College is a private school for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls in years 7-10.

This project aimed to support over two years two female Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students per annum (four in total) for their five week professional experience in order to address barriers to becoming teachers, including finding a placement, financial and accommodation concerns. Student teachers were to be provided with a mentor. The intention was to partner with RMIT and other universities to implement the pilot. No final report is available. The progress report of December 2014 states that planning commenced with several meetings having taken place with RMIT, University of New England and Deakin University. However, staff movements and restructures have stalled the project's progress.

The project managers have recognised the importance of wider involvement and the risks associated with a reliance on too few contacts. The project managers have stated that any future project will be promoted through networks established through MATSITI.

The progress report stated that none of the funding had been expended.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

This is likely to have been a worthwhile project. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students would have been supported to complete their professional experience and would have had the potential to be positive role models for the students at the school.

Finding

It is regrettable that a way forward in the face of the difficulties encountered was not found.

19. Preservice Teacher Education Student Exit Factor Projects

Projects with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student exit factors are listed in the table below.

Table 13 - Preservice Teacher Education Student Exit Factor Projects

Organisation	Title of project	Round	Tier	MATSITI funding \$
Universities (2)				
University of New England	Quantitative and Qualitative Exit Survey	3	2	50,000
University of Southern Queensland	Student exit factors	3	2	45,875

19.1 University of New England Quantitative and Qualitative Exit Survey (\$50,000)

The aim of this project was to determine reasons for the high attrition rates of external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students. A further aim was to apply the findings to strategies to support external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students in their studies, to completion as graduating teachers.

The project owners have developed from their findings a comprehensive retention strategy which can apply to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students.

The data were collected through surveys, blogs and focus groups. In order to minimise white bias and dominance in the questioning, survey development had a high level of input from a local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elder to ensure the comfort and safety of respondents. Survey results were connected to the blog forum to give respondents ownership of the responses and the opportunity to interact with other project participants in relation to them, even before they were analysed by the researchers. The blog forum was an innovation which allowed the participants to discuss responses and views with family and community.

The data collection was completed by early 2015. It comprised 25 survey results, 80 blog posts and an unspecified number of transcripts from focus group participants.

A key finding was that information which surprised the researchers did not surprise the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants. This demonstrates a distinct lack of communication between staff in the School of Education and this particular client group.

In November 2015 the project owners submitted to a publisher a draft for a book which will include project findings and information on a wide range of support which can be accessed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students.

The study was an opportunity to create engagement across student populations, the Oorala Centre and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support staff to attract and retain more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teaching students. In terms of retention, over 60% of the participants felt that they had the necessary academic skills for successful completion of their degrees.

The study revealed that the main reasons for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students withdrawing from their studies were financial concerns (63%), personal problems (emotional, relationship and family) (56%) and workload (56%). An outcome of this finding was to communicate to the School of Education and to the students' avenues for financial assistance and deferment options.

The researchers learned more than they anticipated in respect of working together, what was currently working well at UNE, barriers to equality being faced by students and differences in perspectives.

Sustainability has been established through the creation of ongoing online communities. The learnings from the project are being disseminated to community members and the School of Education through presentations, the blog site and a written report. These learnings have enabled the next steps of strategy development to increase retention and success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students and lead to more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in Australian schools. The final report indicates that at some stage the project was renamed *Improving Services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students* which demonstrates a broadening of the original scope.

The project has highlighted the need for higher education institutions to adopt an active, holistic approach, which considers cultural and personal factors, to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The final report included the following recommendations:

- universities actively promote available supports to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through orientation materials and online websites including (at UNE) the Oorala Centre, TRACKS program, Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support officers;
- universities (including lecturers and teachers) promote increased awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander diversity, acknowledging the many peoples who make up this group nationally and locally, and their stewardship of specific areas and stories. At UNE Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students include local Anaiwan people, Kamilaroi, Wiradjuri, Bundjalung and Tharawal;
- universities and education faculties consider the complex needs of mature age Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, many of whom work and balance a range of family or other obligations with study, by trialling flexible learning and block programs to support non-traditional learning options;
- university educators (including lecturers) take a role in early intervention and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students experiencing difficulties. Where students are disengaged, UNE educators put Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in touch with academic supports and staff at the Oorala Centre. Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students feel they have the ability to complete their work but some may need skill development programs, or consideration for contextual factors influencing their success;
- universities and schools work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to develop programs/ training that combat cultural insensitivity from some staff and services, and students and local schools;
- universities promote and publicise financial aid opportunities including scholarships, computer/ laptop loan programs, internet fee and accommodation support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students;

- university educators include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and perspectives in their teaching; combat racism; and engage the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education community in classroom work; and
- university education faculties help facilitate networking opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with peers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals and teachers, and former students. The blog site has begun to enable this.

MATSITI Evaluation Committee conclusions

As is the case with many of the MATSITI projects, this project has greatly increased awareness among UNE's School of Education staff of many aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students, including their views and ways of life, obstacles to their completing their studies and the isolation they can feel through university practices which appear neutral in their impacts. The final report's conclusion paid tribute to and appreciation of the participants' candidness, insights and advice. The project owners have dedicated the book, yet to be published, to them.

The strength of this project is that its owners have seen the need for the exit survey to be complemented by a retention strategy.

Finding

The project owners would maximise the project's findings and recommendations if they were to team with the ACDE, whose project made Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student retention a prime focus, and AILITEs.

19.2 University of Southern Queensland Student Exit Factors (\$45,875)

The aims of this project were to:

- Identify factors impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students exiting programs of study; and
- Increase retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students and new teachers.

While the project owners acknowledge and quote the large body of research on this topic, they felt that it was important to hear the voices and the stories through exit interviews and focus groups. The project team worked with the University's Indigenous Support Unit, the Centre for Aboriginal Indigenous Knowledges (CAIK) and the Centre for Indigenous Studies, Education and Research (CISER). The team included an Indigenous researcher, Elders were advised and aspects of cultural safety were observed in the interviews (narrative inquiry) and venues. Actions for 2016 include implementing recommendations of the final report, communicating results to participants and community and broader disseminations of outcomes.

The final report indicates that during 2015 the projects findings were presented at:

- International Conference on Higher Education, Montreal
- Yapaneyepuk, Melbourne
- MATSITI, Adelaide
- NATSIEC, Melbourne.

Emerging themes included:

- Cultural safety, identity and belonging
- Enhancement of Indigenous content
- Need for Indigenous lecturers
- Quality of professional experience
- Financial issues
- Family and community issues
- Engagement of Elder support.

A total of 14 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from three campuses participated in the interviews.

One of the researchers undertook a Masters degree through this project.

Outcomes of the project which contribute to sustainability include:

- increased understanding of factors impacting retention, completion and transition to teaching for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pre service students;
- identification of ways to enhance systems, process and courses to increase completion rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; and
- enhanced collaboration and communication between the School of Education, CISER and students.

The final report includes the following recommendations for implementation by schools of education in Australian universities:

- provide ongoing holistic support to students who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander;
- implement a retention strategy from application to graduation, including orientation and monitoring, and follow up of students not participating or experiencing difficulty with mentoring, and if they exit, interviews;
- provide additional orientation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with Elders, Indigenous staff and students to establish cultural connections, safety and belonging;
- promote and extend inclusion of Indigenous content in courses;
- develop guidelines for professional experience placements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students including pairing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mentor teachers;
- provide and extend opportunities for low cost placements in regional and remote locations and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mentor teachers;
- increase employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in universities;
- increase engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with Elders;
- consider initiating an Elder in Residence program to enhance cultural support and knowledge;

- enhance opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to engage more fully in university life, eg as Ambassadors, decision making and representation on committees; and
- display language maps and art works to create environments of cultural belonging.

MATSITI Evaluation Committee conclusions

As is the case with many of the MATSITI projects, this project has increased awareness among the University of Southern Queensland's School of Education staff of many aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students, including their views and ways of life, obstacles to their completing their studies and the isolation they can feel through university practices.

While the recommendations are positive, they do little to address the financial and personal or family issues, which were identified as emerging themes from the interview data, and which can impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tertiary students completing their course of study. The University of New England, whose MATSITI project also was concerned with student exit factors, made recommendations for more flexible study patterns and ensuring that students were aware of financial assistance available.

Finding

The project owners would maximise the project's findings and recommendations if they were to team with the ACDE, whose project made Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student retention a prime focus, AILITEs and the University of New England whose MATSITI project was also focused on student exit factors.

20. Other Projects

Under the MATSITI evaluation, some projects have been analysed as a part of a group whose members have a similar aim. The projects in the table below do not fit neatly into any of those groups.

Table 14 – Projects Featuring a Range of Other Strategies

Organisation	Title of project	Round	Tier	MATSITI funding \$
Public school jurisdictions (2)				
Queensland DET Darling Downs South West	Two day forum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers	3	2	24,750
Mullewa District High School	Geraldton Indigenous Teacher Network	4	2	6,000
Catholic education commissions (2)				
Brisbane Catholic Education	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Scholarship	1	2	25,000
Catholic Education Office of WA	Here to Teach - Pre-service and Early Career Teacher Development Program	4	2	50,000
Universities (5)				
Charles Darwin University	Pathways to Teacher Training in remote Indigenous Communities	1	2	50,000
University of South Australia	iLearn with iPads (regional student network)	2	2	8,547
University of Newcastle	Aspire to Inspire	3	2	48,019
University of South Australia	Video Clip Development for School of Education Homepage	3	2	5,000
University of Tasmania	Tunapri Teaching – To Know Teaching	4	2	45,455

20.1 Public school jurisdictions

20.1.1 Queensland DET Darling Downs South West

Two day forum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers (\$24,750)

The project owners proposed conduct a two day conference and forum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers within the Darling Downs South West Education Region and final year teacher education students from the University of Southern Queensland. This conference and forum was designed to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers to establish, maintain and sustain culturally supportive networks and promote leadership opportunities and pathways. This was to be done through a variety of mediums including culturally motivated speakers, workshops and yarning circles.

The project aims to:

- develop leadership capabilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and provide career pathways;
- support graduating teachers through a network with cultural foundations and assist in their retention in their early years of teaching through mentoring, networks with cultural foundations and online forums;
- increase teacher capacity within the education system by assisting with curriculum, connecting theory to practice and pedagogical frameworks through a culturally supportive approach; and
- establish concrete data regarding the retention of teachers in the classroom.

The Indigenous Teachers Forum was conducted on 7-8 May 2014. There was a high level of involvement of Indigenous staff and presenters. It was evaluated highly on a range of measures by the 25 participants (22 teachers and three RATEP students).

Project outcomes include:

- establishment of an Indigenous Curriculum Reference Group with seven forum participants engaging in regional directions;
- creation of a community across three regions;
- an Assistant Regional Director taking carriage of Indigenous education initiatives and regional accountability;
- development of Indigenous Teacher Pedagogical Framework and Indigenous Teachers Resilience Framework. This framework was well-received at the 2015 #OurMobTeach conference;
- developing a OnePortal site to create an online forum and information sharing for participants; and
- sharing of program successes through local newspaper, regional newsletters, OnePortal, regional yarning circles and executive meetings.

The project owners are confident that the project outcomes will ensure its sustainability through increased capacity and reduced isolation of participants and a high degree of buy in at the regional level.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

Information in the final report indicates that the project was successful, even though the project owners were hoping for larger numbers of participants. There is a commitment on the part of participants and project owners to continue to grow and conduct the Indigenous Teacher Forum in different regions annually.

Finding

The project demonstrates the importance of careful planning, involvement of Indigenous educators at different career stages and commitment at higher levels of the organisation in achieving stated aims which in this case were the retention and development of Indigenous teachers.

20.1.2 Mullewa District High School Geraldton Indigenous Teacher Network (\$6,000)

The idea for the network arose from a two day conference in Perth which was to examine the draft Cultural Competencies and Culturally Responsive Schools Framework, and the National and State Education Directions. The network Community Connect for Aboriginal Teachers was established and at the time of the expression of interest, had a stated 68 members. Its main interests were support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, student success, leadership development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and assisting with support for schools to implement the Cultural Competencies and Culturally Responsive Schools Framework.

\$500 of the funding was intended as seeding to formalise the network which would be sustained through support from the principals' leadership group and school and regional funds. The remaining funds were to pay for two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers to undertake seven leadership modules through the Institute of Professional Learning.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

No comments can be made as no progress or final reports are available.

20.2 Catholic Education Commissions

20.2.1 Brisbane Catholic Education

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Scholarship (\$25,000)

This project sought to establish teacher education scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff who qualify for enrolment in a teaching qualification. The scholarships were valued at \$18,000 per participant (for four years of study). Only two were awarded (one student, one staff) for completion of six units at QUT and USQ respectively. Very few applications were received due to the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and teachers in Brisbane Catholic Education being very low.

Of the allocated funds, \$8,470 was spent on consultancy fees for a report which provided recommendations on improving the scholarship program, as well as other strategies that could be adopted to enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in Brisbane Catholic Education.

The report made the following recommendations for student scholarships:

- increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments across all Brisbane Catholic Education schools and colleges by conducting local campaigns;
- improve the way teaching is promoted as a career option to students in Brisbane Catholic Education schools and colleges;
- extend the student scholarship program to colleges run by Catholic Religious Institutes outside Brisbane Catholic Education;
- provide opportunities for scholarship holders to undertake part-time employment over semester breaks in Brisbane Catholic Education schools and offices; and
- invite student scholarship holders into the Brisbane Catholic Education Indigenous Staff networks once they commence their tertiary study.

The report made the following recommendations for staff scholarships:

- raise the profile of the staff scholarships among principals who are appointing staff, so that more Aboriginal and Torres Strait employees can be employed in non-teaching positions, which makes them eligible for the teaching scholarship;
- increase the promotion of the scholarships to staff; and
- provide a paid leave provision within the staff scholarship to allow staff to dedicate blocks of time toward their study.

In terms of project sustainability, Brisbane Catholic Education has established an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy Working Party to oversee the improvement of the scholarships program and to develop and implement strategies to increase the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Brisbane Catholic Education. This Working Party is chaired by the Manager, Employment Services and Strategic HR.

According to the final report dated July 2013 Brisbane Catholic Education offered staff and student scholarships again in 2013 for studies commencing in 2014, and intends to continue offering the staff and student scholarships into the future. No information beyond that in the final report is available.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

While the number of scholarships taken up was very low at two, the awarding of scholarships to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people including school leavers is positive. Brisbane Catholic Education will have greater success with this strategy if it adopts the recommendations in the report.

Findings

Strategies to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, such as scholarship programs, will make a significant impact only if they are well promoted each year and if promotional activities are designed to have a wide reach, for example on a state or national level.

20.2.2 Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA)

Here to Teach – Preservice and early teacher development program (\$50,000)

This two pronged initiative provides support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators at two critical times – during their preservice and post appointment to a Catholic school.

The preservice initiative (PSI) provides mentoring, coaching and paid work experience to address low retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander preservice teachers at university and help ensure they are job ready upon graduation. Partner universities are Notre Dame, Curtin, Edith Cowan and Murdoch, with positive relationships being built with their Indigenous support units. The early career teacher initiative (ECTI) supports newly appointed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers' transition into teaching.

There were ten participants in the PSI, including two from regional locations, placed in ten schools in which they were supported by the principal and a mentor teacher. Eight teachers participated in the ECTI. They were supported by a mentor and completed learning modules which included cultural reflection and affirmation. Three of the participants are supported by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) through the Indigenous Cadetship Support (ICS) program. A further three cadets will be sponsored by CEWA in 2016.

The project has involved a range of areas within CEWA and has strengthened relationships. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and community have been involved throughout the project.

Sharing of the project's successes has taken place through presentations at meetings of a range of committees within CEWA. The MATSITI funding has enabled the integration of a number of programs which will form the Here to Teach suite. Ideas for the future include PSI and ECTI participants assisting in promoting teaching to interested school students and adding a leadership phase which has been piloted under the MATSITI funded CEWA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander School Leadership Pilot project.

The project will achieve sustainability through the appointment of a designated program coordinator and embedding the PSI and ECTI into the draft CEWA Aboriginal Education Strategy. CEWA plans to build on the success of this project by developing a seamless program which commences with promoting teaching to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students, supporting them through their preservice and early career, and developing their capacity as school leaders.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

This project recognises the need to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander preservice and early career teachers in order to increase their chances of graduating, being employed and being retained in employment. The project also recognises the importance of developing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers as leaders and the value their cultural identity brings to the teaching profession and to students.

Finding

This project demonstrates the synergies which can be achieved through a wide perspective which involves gaining commitment from within the organisation and beyond with range of partners including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Sustainability of the project will be achieved through its inclusion in planning and reporting mechanisms and building on it in responsive ways.

20.3 Universities

20.3.1 Charles Darwin University

Pathways to Teacher Training in remote Indigenous Communities (\$50,000)

This project is a partnership between Charles Darwin University, Northern Territory Department of Education and the Yolngu people of East Arnhem Land. Research was undertaken through conversations, workshops, literature review and listening to the people who are teaching on country, who stated that they have been consulted on education many times in the past but have seen no real change. This project represents a new commitment to listen to the Yolngu people and take on board what they say.

The project addresses the issue of pathways to teacher training for Indigenous teachers in remote Indigenous communities in far north Australia. Information gathered was to guide the development of a resource to share with partner agencies.

This project aims to:

- assemble past and current teacher training initiatives, current Indigenous workforce profile and pathways to success;
- develop a resource to share with partner agencies and to guide further action research;
- inform work with communities and capacity building initiatives to strengthen central Australian Indigenous teaching infrastructure and pathways;
- review potential for shared resources across the package of Northern Territory submissions addressing remote teacher training; and
- identify the literature on pathways to teacher training in remote Indigenous communities and publish in one place.

Project deliverables include exemplars of training pathways, funding models, program characteristics, employment strategies and 'sense of ownership' practices which should become 'business as usual' in mainstream teacher education.

A range of reports was produced from this project, including:

- listening differently: an exploration of grey literature about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education in the Top End of the Northern Territory (24 pages);
- pathways for Yolngu teachers: rethinking initial teacher education on country (>74 pages);
- pathways for Yolngu teachers: rethinking initial teacher education on country – key messages and Yolngu responses (20 pages); and
- pathways for Yolngu teachers: rethinking initial teacher education on country – key messages for systems, teacher education institutions and educators (8 pages).

Yolngu teaching starting points are connected to relationships, language, land, culture and family which shape education for children. Acknowledging these starting points forces a rethink of pathways and support structures for 'Yolngu Teachers' living and learning on country.

The following key findings are contained in the fourth of the above documents.

- The term 'remote' is a value judgement. The Yolngu way of life is central to education, not remote from it.
- Becoming a teacher on country involves multiple negotiations undertaken in the context of community and cultural responsibilities. Management of teacher education programs and curriculum development is often disconnected from the community in which the school is located. Teacher education institutions need to build more sustainable approaches to initial teacher education on country.
- A range of employment practices support Yolngu people becoming registered teachers but these are often linked to short term funding cycles. This and an apparent disregard for Yolngu knowledge practices lead to Yolngu rejecting programs and pathways as inadequate responses to community needs or impractical for preservice teachers trying to navigate them.
- Turnover of Yolngu Teachers is low compared to non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers. However there can be unevenness in salaries, conditions and benefits. For example, incorrect spelling of names and timely activation of contracts hampers employment.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

This project has produced comprehensive research about teaching on country. While it points out the wide cultural gaps between Yolngu educators and the providers of initial teacher education, it offers some important ways forward including the need for respect of the Yolngu knowledges and cultures which can only come from continued and careful listening.

Finding

The value of this research may be realised through relevant follow up activities with initial teacher education providers, employers and people living on country. Such activities need to aim for providing a complete education for children and young people living on country.

20.3.2 University of South Australia

iLearn with iPads

(\$8,547)

University of South Australia School of Education worked with the Department of Education and Child Development (DECD) to connect to four rural and five Adelaide preservice teachers employed in DECD through the use of iPads. The iPads were the foundation for building a professional learning community, and to enhance the capacity of the preservice teachers in their use in order to support their study and integrate their use in all aspects of learning and teaching.

The iPads provided the preservice teachers with many opportunities to engage with university staff and develop their skills in reflection and critical thinking in a supportive online learning environment. It also strengthened the relationship between the students who shared their journey of online network-based learning.

The preservice teachers used the iPads to help them develop their understanding of course content and pedagogy, to stay organised and stay connected to other students on a personal, social and professional level. The project also helped to make them job ready as teachers in a teaching and learning environment where technology is widely used and relied upon.

Student feedback indicates that they learned a lot about accessing applications to make many aspects of their studies easier and be connected with other learners. They participated in forums and set up a private Facebook page.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

This low cost project has provided preservice teachers with vital skills which will help them in their studies and their teaching careers. There would be value in ensuring that all preservice teachers had access to iPads.

Finding

This project is a good example of positive outcomes resulting from innovation and commitment.

20.3.3 University of Newcastle

Aspire to Inspire

(\$48,019)

This project aimed to encourage senior high school students to become teachers. The project targeted 80 Year 11 students from a number of schools and was conducted by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in Newcastle University's Wollotuka Institute. The project was informed by the Wollotuka Institute's cultural standards and provides a culturally safe environment for potential teachers who have become culturally disconnected.

The project's emphasis was on identity in accordance with advice from Elders, expert knowledge holders and community that such a program is the missing link between teacher education programs and becoming a teacher.

The program aimed to link participating students to the university, professional bodies, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, education agencies, Elders and current students to provide a holistic viewpoint.

The program encountered a number of challenges as follows.

- Some schools agreed to meetings and then failed to follow through and be available for the project manager who had often travelled long distances to attend
- Some schools were not sufficiently responsive resulting in the project manager making repeated calls and emails
- Reluctance of a majority of students to engage with the cultural side of the program although they appreciated and engaged with the study support. Three schools engaged the Project Manager to extend the study support to Year 12 students
- Cancellation of a camp, which was to be a major activity, at short notice.

As a result of the camp cancellation, the project manager delivered workshops in the schools and produced a booklet with relevant information for the students to take into Year 12. The booklet became the major resource for connection, to pass on knowledge and maintain consistency of the project outcomes. Connections were made with relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations such as the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence (NCIE) and Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) to ensure long term engagement. The NCIE was very open to feed into a program that encouraged teaching as a profession and provided preparatory information to assist students in their tertiary studies and as teachers.

The project was able to achieve the following through schools visits and enrolling students into the Community of Excellence where they continue to have ongoing support if required:

- goal setting and time management based on the cultural standards which are components of the IBelieve workshops offered in the School 2 University (S2U) pathways program;
- partnerships based on connecting to culture through the relationship with Wollotuka and the cultural standards and an ongoing relationship with the Community of Excellence (NCIE) which provides positive role models and support through a safe secure online environment;
- engagement with the local and regional AECGs so that students developed an understanding of their roles and the importance of these networks to their future as educators;

- engagement with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Councils and the Teachers Federation as sources of information related to their local communities and country; and
- linking with Wollotuka Nguraki (Elders in Residence) to ensure a community cultural connection is maintained. Most students were very comfortable seeking guidance from the Nguraki to whom they have ongoing access.

The program was able to work consistently with 48 students from Year 11 and 17 from Year 12 in eight schools who have shown interest in teaching. Wollotuka will continue to track and engage with the Year 11 students through the S2U program.

Schools all indicated that the material covered both with the framework of the cultural standards and goal setting had not been delivered before to students. All indicated that students had gained a lot of information because of the practicality of the program.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

Information in the final report indicates that processes have been actioned to incorporate core parts of the program into Wollotuka's S2U pathways program. These actions are likely to promote the program's sustainability.

Information in the final report indicates that significant success had been achieved in spite of some major obstacles. It is commendable that the project owners persisted and appeared to have achieved changes in attitude of students who grew to accept and value assistance from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and organisations within the Wollotuka Institute's cultural standards.

Finding

The success of this project affirms the importance of identity, culture and respect in shaping the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers of the future.

20.3.4 University of South Australia

Video Clip Development for School of Education Home Page (\$5,000)

This project aimed to increase the numbers of Indigenous people enrolling in the University's teacher education programs. The development of the video clip was part of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategic Plan for the School of Education, which focuses on increasing Indigenous staff numbers, increasing the numbers of Indigenous students in higher degrees, professional development for academic staff concerning Indigenous knowledges and integrating resulting learnings into their courses to reflect the Australian Professional Teaching Standards.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel findings

The video was completed and can be viewed on MATSITI website at <http://matsiti.edu.au/unisa-welcome/>

20.3.5 University of Tasmania Tunapri Teaching – To Know Teaching (\$45,455)

This project conducted by the University of Tasmania's (UTAS) Tasmanian Institute of Learning and Teaching (TILT) aimed to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students to consider teaching as a career by inviting them and parents or caregivers to a two day workshop which would affirm their cultural identity, immerse them in aspects of university life and provide them with detailed information about studying teaching and working as a teacher. The program anticipated 40 student participants, with final numbers comprising 30 students, six AIEWs and four parents or carers. The project involved participants meeting other students and addresses by lecturers and students. Ongoing reinforcement would be maintained through contact with the Pathway Planners and a Facebook page.

The final report states that there are only 14 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander teachers of 2000 teachers employed by the Department of Education in Tasmania. It further states that 2.5% of students enrolled in Bachelor of Education: Early Childhood; Primary; and Health/PE are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Two separate Tunapri Teaching workshops for students and parents were delivered: the first in November 2014 for years 8 – 10 and the second in May 2015 for years 11 and 12. A further outcome was the production of a pathways booklet, *Tracks Into Teaching*, for distribution to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in years 9 to 12. This resource will also be available for future students via the Tunapri Facebook site. This site provides access to role models, information and inspirational readings. It also provides a ready mechanism to advise of upcoming events such as the UTAS scholarships and enrolments days.

Media coverage in local newspapers, *Koori Mail*, on the UTAS website and through the Tunapri Facebook page has enabled broad promotion of events associated with the project. These have also been shared on the MATSITI website. Presentations were made at the following conferences: MATSITI in Adelaide on 30 September 2015, NATSIEC in Melbourne on 11 November, 2015 and International Humanities and Arts in Hawaii 9-12 January, 2016.

The final report indicates that the goals of the project were met and surpassed culminating in the establishment of a strong collaborative relationship between TILT and the Faculty of Education which has assisted in developing an alternative pathway into teaching through the delivery of the Associate Degree in Education Support commencing in 2016 along with the provision of 20 HECS scholarships for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.

Project recommendations include:

- continue the strong cultural element within the program with involvement of Elders and community members;
- conduct at least two sessions annually, being mindful of key dates for year 12 students;
- provide an annual recall day for year 12 students to complete UTAS applications for enrolment and scholarships; and
- maintain contact with students and continue to provide information relevant to teaching via the Tunapri Facebook site.

MATSITI Evaluation Panel conclusions

The final report indicates that feedback on the program was positive. Its strengths include involvement of parents or carers, Elders and community members, and affirmation of identity. It is a practical program which will help to demystify for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students what is involved in undertaking tertiary education. Its aim to encourage and inspire these students appears to have been fulfilled.

The development of a new pathway into teaching and the provision of scholarships are bonuses.

Finding

This project has exceeded its aims through productive collaboration between different areas of UTAS.

21. Data Capture

While it may be premature to ascertain whether the MATSITI project has contributed to an increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in Australian schools, a close look at available data is essential to determine if there is potential, at both the university and school level, and whether inferences can be drawn.

As mentioned in a previous chapter, the capture and reporting of accurate data relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and teacher education students is problematic.

In the collection of any data relating to Indigenous status, there is always a margin for error, given the nature of self-identification and the many factors related to it and influencing it.

The data provided by the universities to the Commonwealth were no exception.

The *Indigenous Teaching Workforce* (EY C3 2016) data collection collated by Ernst and Young, as contractors to MATSITI, is not a complete dataset due to the reluctance, unwillingness or inability of some jurisdictions, government and non-government, to provide data.

There does, however, appear to be sufficient data to be able to draw some comparisons between the data published for the 2012 collection and the more recent 2015 collection.

21.1 Higher Education Students

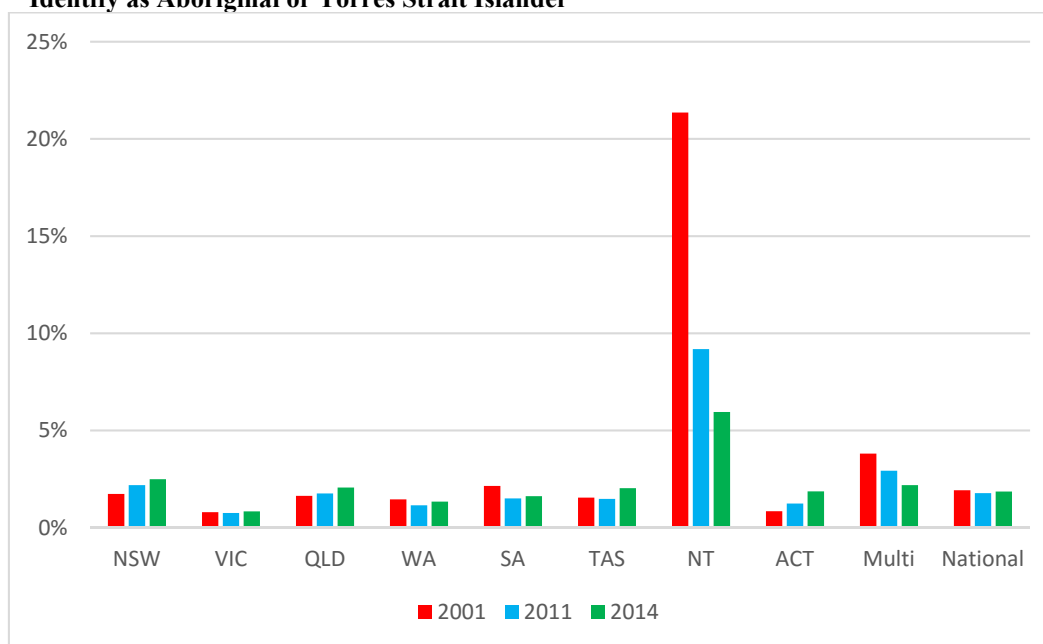
An analysis of the proportion of teacher education students in Australian Higher Education Institutions who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander reveals relative stability nationally between 2001 and 2014.

There have been significant increases in New South Wales (1.74% to 2.49%), Queensland (1.64% to 2.07%), Tasmania (1.55% to 2.03%) and the ACT (0.85% to 1.87%). However, these have been balanced by stability or decline in the other states and territory.

Table 15 – Proportion of Teacher Education Students in Higher Education Institutions who Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

	2001	2006	2011	2012	2013	2014
NSW	1.74%	1.84%	2.19%	2.26%	2.45%	2.49%
VIC	0.80%	0.82%	0.76%	0.82%	0.92%	0.84%
QLD	1.64%	1.69%	1.76%	1.85%	1.93%	2.07%
WA	1.46%	1.17%	1.15%	1.42%	1.42%	1.34%
SA	2.15%	1.95%	1.51%	1.62%	1.59%	1.62%
TAS	1.55%	2.15%	1.48%	1.90%	1.55%	2.03%
NT	21.36%	10.74%	9.19%	7.61%	6.92%	5.95%
ACT	0.85%	1.02%	1.24%	1.39%	1.64%	1.87%
Multi	3.81%	4.47%	2.93%	2.50%	2.22%	2.19%
National	1.93%	1.84%	1.78%	1.82%	1.86%	1.86%

Figure 6 – Proportion of Teacher Education Students in Higher Education Institutions Who Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander



A closer analysis of the raw figures gives a better understanding of the progress being made in this area.

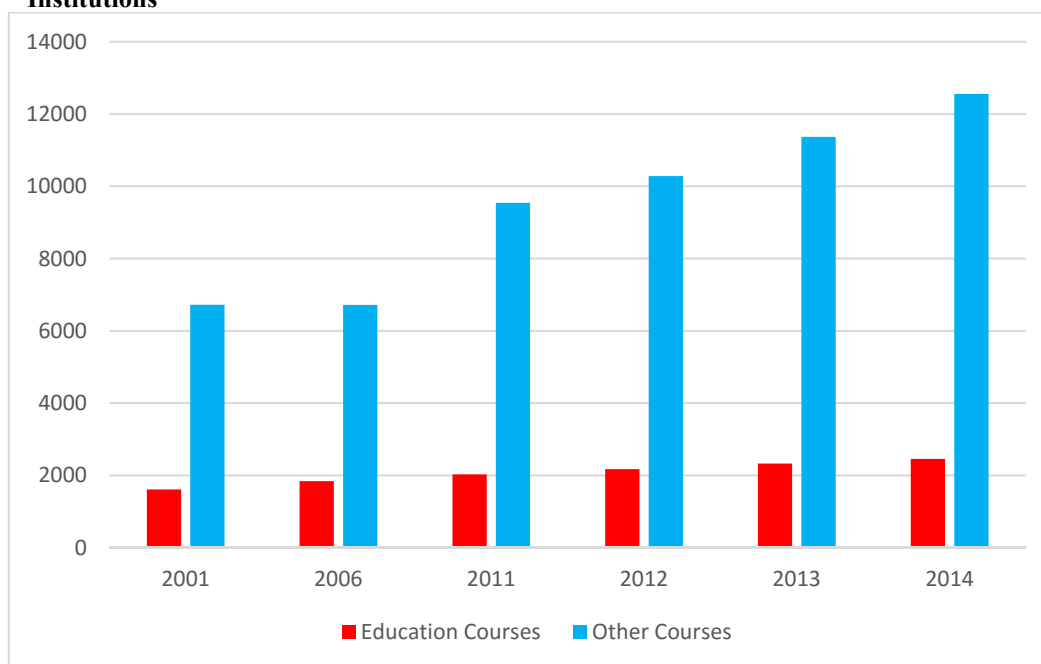
There has been a 53% increase in the number of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students in teacher education between 2001 and 2014, increasing from 1,610 students to 2,459 students. This compares with an 80% increase in Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students across all courses, including teacher education, from 8,333 students to 15,014 students.

While this increase has continued consistently throughout the period of the MATSITI project, it would be difficult to attribute it to the project, given the short timeframe. It is, however, evident that progress continues to be made in this area.

Table 16 – Number of Students in Higher Education Institutions

		2001	2006	2011	2012	2013	2014
Non-Indigenous	Education	82014	98258	111496	117229	122839	130059
	Other	800374	934749	1160402	1192089	1243970	1298133
	Total	882388	1033007	1271898	1309318	1366809	1428192
Indigenous	Education	1610	1841	2026	2175	2328	2459
	Other	6723	6716	9544	10281	11370	12555
	Total	8333	8557	11570	12456	13698	15014
TOTAL	Education	83624	100099	113522	119404	125167	132518
	Other	807097	941465	1169946	1202370	1255340	1310688
	Total	890721	1041564	1283468	1321774	1380507	1443206

Figure 7 – Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students in Higher Education Institutions



21.2 Indigenous Teaching Workforce Dataset

The MATSITI project team, in conjunction with Ernst and Young as contractor, approached all jurisdictions, government and non-government, in an endeavour to obtain a complete workforce dataset.

Face to face meetings were held with representatives in every state and territory, accompanied by a written request outlining the purpose of the collection and the nature of the data to be collected.

While the data should be approached with caution, it is evident that the number of Indigenous teachers nationally did increase between 2012 and 2015.

The analysis used key characteristics of individual teachers such as name and date of birth to compare the 2015 cohort of teachers with the previous 2012 cohort. This enabled the tracking of those teachers who appeared in both cohorts or only one of those cohorts. It also enabled the tracking and comparison of those teachers who identified in one or both of the collections.

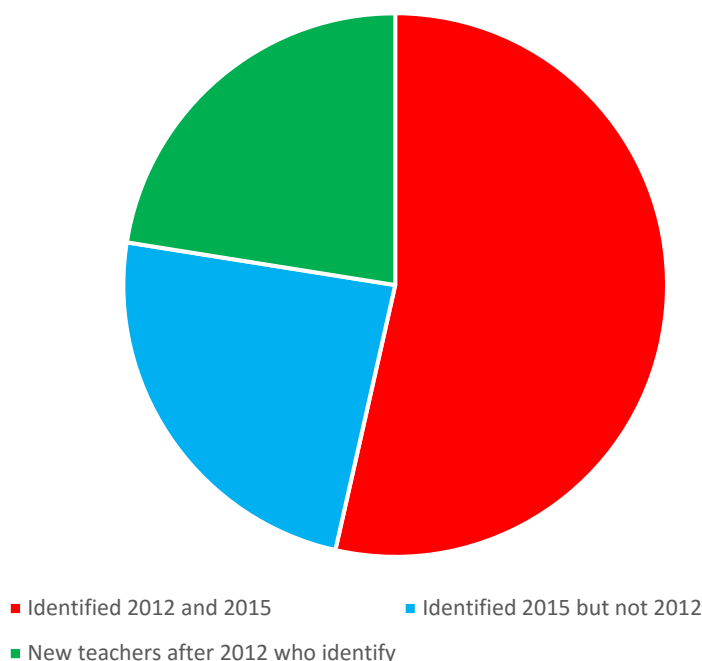
Assumptions relating to Indigenous teachers who “left” should be regarded as indicative only, as some of these teachers may still be teaching and not able to be compared across datasets due to name changes, incorrect birth dates in one set or other issues.

It is important to note that the confidentiality of individuals has been maintained with the de-identification of the data in reporting and restrictions on the size of data cells reported.

In summary, there were:

- 1,660 teachers identified as Indigenous in both the 2012 and 2015 collections
- 743 teachers who did not identify as Indigenous in 2012, reported as Indigenous in the 2015 collection
- 697 teachers who commenced teaching after the 2012 collection who also identified as Indigenous
- 1,001 teachers who identified as Indigenous in 2012 who were not able to be tracked in the 2015 data and were consequently recorded as no longer teaching.

Figure 8 – Teachers who Identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in 2012 or 2015 Data Collections



This represents 3,100 teachers in the 2015 dataset who identified as Indigenous, compared with 2,661 in 2012, an increase of 439 teachers or 16.5 percent.

Some encouraging aspects of the workforce data from a MATSITI point are:

- the median age of Indigenous teachers is 40 years;
- the median age of the Indigenous teachers new to the 2015 collection is 28 years, compared with 43 years for the Indigenous teachers continuing from the 2012 collection;
- 53 percent of the Indigenous teachers new to the 2015 collection are under 30 years, compared with 12 percent of Indigenous teachers continuing from the 2012 collection;
- 75 percent of Indigenous teachers are female, compared with 77 percent of new Indigenous teachers;
- 83 percent of Indigenous teachers work full-time;
- 83percent of Indigenous teachers are classroom teachers, 7 percent are deputy principals and 3 percent are principals;
- 57 percent of Indigenous teachers work in primary schools, 32 percent in secondary schools and 11 percent in combined primary/secondary schools;
- 80 percent of Indigenous teachers are in ongoing/permanent employment, 17 percent on fixed term contracts and 3 percent casual;

- 49 percent of Indigenous teachers are employed in a major city, with 10 percent employed in remote or very remote areas;
- the Indigenous teachers new to the 2015 collection are generally better qualified academically; and
- 233 (14%) of Indigenous teachers and executives from the 2012 collection had been promoted by 2015, with 40 of those to principal.

21.2 MATSITI Impact

One of the main objectives of MATSITI was to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in the Australian teacher workforce.

Observations from the data over the MATSITI period show that the number of identified Indigenous teachers has increased by 439. The increase in the number of Indigenous teacher education students by 433 between 2011 and 2014 demonstrates a potential continuation of this trend. Whether this can be attributed to MATSITI is a moot point at this stage.

What is evident is that the heightened awareness of the need to employ more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, the collective efforts of major jurisdictions and the concentrated efforts of universities is contributing to the realisation of increased numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers. Other factors may also be better systems allowing teachers to identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and the collation of those data, as well as teachers feeling more comfortable with identifying in a culturally safe environment.

22. MATSITI 2015 Conference *#OurMobTeach*

The MATSITI project hosted conferences in each of the four years of the project, providing an opportunity for Indigenous and non-Indigenous education stakeholders from throughout Australia to come together to have input into the MATSITI agenda.

The conference themes and summary objectives were:

2012 *Yamaiyamarna Paitya / Teachers are deadly!*

An opportunity to influence sustainable reforms for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers:

- successful pathways into teaching
- effective career development and leadership
- targeted Indigenous workforce planning

2013 *A Deadly Career!*

Aimed at staff responsible in schools, communities or teacher education programs for promoting and marketing teaching opportunities as a career of choice.

2014 *A Deadly Journey – Promoting our people into school leadership*

Designed to connect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school leaders from across Australia and New Zealand to discuss and shape a leadership agenda for our people.

2015 *#OurMobTeach*

Intended to bring together four years of project reforms and celebrate the diversity and successes of our mob and our teachers and leaders making a difference in Australian schools.

While each of the conferences had their successes, the ultimate intention of the 2015 conference, *#OurMobTeach*, was to showcase the work of project partners and to attempt to reach consensus on the way forward, given the imminent end of the four year MATSITI project.

There were in excess of 170 delegates at the *#OurMobTeach* conference representing 92 universities, schools, school jurisdictions, government departments, professional and industrial associations, and other interested stakeholder groups.

The major outcome of the *#OurMobTeach* conference, the Tarndanya Declaration, summarised the views of the delegates in terms of a way forward, beyond the end of the current MATSITI project. It stated:

1. Delegates welcome the 2015-18 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy and its first priority on leadership; quality teaching and workforce development; and underpinning principles of cultural recognition, partnerships and accountability.
2. Delegates seek recommitment of the Australian Education Council to a more equitable ratio of teachers to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students they teach, as agreed by all Australian Education Ministers in 2010.

3. Delegates call for an alliance of school employers, universities, AITSL and school leadership agencies in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders to design, implement and monitor the four-year strategy.
4. The First Priority Area of the Education Strategy; *Leadership, Quality Teaching and Workforce Development* should focus on the following actions:
 - i. Attracting more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to consider teaching as a career of choice;
 - ii. Significantly increasing graduation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participating in teacher education programs at Australian universities;
 - iii. Positive employment and recruitment strategies, by the three sectors of schooling, to halve the gap in employment outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and non-Indigenous teachers;
 - iv. Ensuring there is a robust data, evidence and accountability framework to implement and review priorities outlined within the 2015 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy.
5. Delegates applaud the high level of industry and stakeholder engagement achieved to date by MATSITI and the many significant actions taken to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people teaching and leading in Australian schools.

Delegates recognise that there is much unfinished business to close the gap in Indigenous education and employment outcomes, and therefore seek an extension of three years to continue the MATSITI initiative, in partnership with Australian governments, schools, universities, and community and education advocates.

It is evident from the Tarndanya Declaration that there is a strong desire, at least from conference participants, to continue the work of the MATSITI project in some form into the future.

The Tarndanya Declaration was communicated to the Minister for Education and Training, Senator Birmingham, by the project Director, Professor Buckskin.

23. Conclusions and Recommendations

The Evaluation Panel found that successful engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the teaching profession is an essential contributor to great educational success for children and young people and their families and communities.

It also identified the following factors contributed to successful projects which aim to increase the number and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in the profession:

- the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the leadership of initiatives and projects;
- connectedness of initiatives to wider influences such as school systems, universities, governments and communities;
- sustained engagement and commitment to supporting the project over a number of years so that they can become embedded practices;
- 'one off' projects have a limited impact but when well defined and connected can shift understanding and practices for the future;
- clear project deliverables aimed at attraction, retention and success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in preservice education and the profession and leadership roles which can be reported accountably;
- awareness raising and development of cultural competence accompanied by goals for shifts in practices and outcomes; and
- significant in-kind contributions of partners in projects, not only a sign of their commitment, but may be leveraged to embed practices for the future as normal operations.

23.1 National priorities

Under *Closing the Gap* and the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015*, premiers, chief ministers and ministers for education speak to the people of Australia with one voice about their determination to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve enhanced outcomes in all areas of life. MATSITI has translated that voice into action on the ground in respect of the prime aim of getting more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to complete their schooling through building a well qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workforce.

Under the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015*:

“Education ministers commit to having visible plans or approaches for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. Ministers have collectively identified seven priority areas that will inform local approaches, and national collaborative actions to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.”

The Strategy’s priority areas exemplified by the work of the MATSITI community are:

- Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development
- Culture and identity
- Partnerships
- Transition points including pathways to post school options.

The recommendations in this report support achievement in these priority areas.

The Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) established in 2012 under the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) stated in the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014*:

“Leaders and researchers agree that increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators is a key factor in fostering student engagement and improving education outcomes.”

Closing the Gap states:

“Because we know the value of mentoring, we also need to increase the number of Indigenous professionals ... who will be role models for the next generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.”

Under the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014*, National Collaborative Action 33 states:

“[We] will develop a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Educator Workforce Strategy to assist education providers to make progress towards an equitable ratio of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to students. The Strategy will support aspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education leaders, include initiatives to attract more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians into the education workforce and bureaucracies and provide pathways through the workforce.”

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Analysis* published by MATSITI in 2014 indicates that while the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in schools is 4.9%, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers is 1.2%. While this is far from the commitment under National Collaborative Action 33, statistics obtained under the MATSITI-commissioned Ernst and Young research show a strong correlation between the increase, since 2012, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and the implementation of MATSITI funded initiatives with its project partners.

MATSITI’s contribution to this increase may primarily be two-fold. The first is an actual increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people entering the teaching profession and senior positions in schools, due to the strategies used by project partners and the work of MATSITI itself.

The second may be attributed to an increased confidence in existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers that they may identify as such in a more culturally safe environment in schools and the broader education community, due to the work of MATSITI and its project partners.

Of the \$8.16 million in MATSITI funding for implementation over the four years 2012-2015, \$3.96 was expended on projects, with a total partner co-contribution of \$3.00 million. Projects included: promoting teaching as a career; leadership development; mentoring; pathways to teacher training; and, critically, research on issues relating to the high rate of

attrition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in initial teacher education (completion rate of 32%).

In the broader budget context an investment of around \$2 million per year on an initiative as important as MATSITI could be considered minimal and certainly value for money.

Closing the Gap states:

“All universities have targets in place for increasing Indigenous staff and student numbers. It is important that universities are engaged at the highest level to improve higher education outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.”

The Evaluation Panel concludes that further funding for MATSITI is vital to build on achievements to date and to avoid any of the cumulative assets gained over 2012-2015 being lost. The Evaluation Panel sees a need for further investments to be tightly targeted in accordance with the information which has emerged from the assessment of the projects and to reflect the range of national commitments to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Evaluation Panel also believes that it would be prudent to continue to utilise the intellectual capital and professional credibility of key players within the current MATSITI team in the next phase of this vital initiative.

Under the MATSITI funding agreement the intention of the project was to increase:

- the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in teaching positions in schools;
- the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers; and
- the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in teaching positions in schools.

The data capture exercise undertaken by Ernst and Young demonstrated that the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers increased through the period of the MATSITI project. It is arguable that this may have been due to the awareness raising of the MATSITI project and the strategies implemented by the project partners.

Similar assumptions may be applied to the increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in leadership positions in schools.

It is difficult to deduce whether Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers are remaining in teaching longer without benchmark against which to compare the most recent figures.

With the period of the MATSITI project being four years and many of the partner projects being much more recent, it is difficult to deduce the true impact of MATSITI. What is evident is that many of the strategies will require much longer to realise their full potential.

23.2 Recommendations

Consistent with the conclusion above, the Evaluation Panel is of the view that the evidence and lessons learned over the past four years should be capitalised upon for a more informed and targeted focus in future, with the extension of the initiative for a further four year period, 2016-2019.

The value of having a dedicated third party team with significant expertise in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and connections in the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community has been realised through the MATSITI project.

It is recommended that:

- 1. Priority be given to publicising successful strategies and communicating the broader achievements of MATSITI in a “what works” style campaign across universities, educational jurisdictions, schools and key stakeholder groups in the broader MATSITI community.***
- 2. Funding be provided to extend the MATSITI project for a further four years 2016-2019, to be managed by an appropriate third party team with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership, expertise in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and workforce, and connections in the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.***
- 3. Projects funded in the period 2016-2019 target specific objectives, draw upon evidence and data from the 2012-2015 initiatives, utilise particular strategies and be managed by project partners with specifically related expertise.***
- 4. A sub-project be devoted to embedding the MATSITI objectives into the regulatory framework and operational context of school jurisdictions to ensure the sustainability of the pursuit of these objectives up to and beyond 2019.***

It is further recommended that:

- 5. A national strategy of promoting teaching as a career to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples be developed, launched and monitored.***

In 2002 the NSW Government launched the highly successful *Teach – and Make a Difference* campaign comprising inspiring television and radio advertising, outdoor and print media with eye-catching materials, an engaging and informative website and a vibrant walk-in shopfront. Any similar strategy today would make use of social media in addition to a high profile presence capable of reaching communities throughout Australia, including the most remote. The NSW campaign generated a large number of inquiries about teaching and increased significantly the number of initial teacher education students.

It is important that any promotional campaign is accompanied by the chance of a reward for the people it attracts. In 2003, the NSW Department of Education implemented its teacher education scholarship program, under which a total of 150 scholarships were allocated per annum, with 124 being for teacher education students in secondary shortfall areas and 26 being for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary or secondary teacher education

students. The number of scholarships increased over the years to 300 with the number for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students increasing to its present level of at least 80 per annum. The scholarships pay \$5000 per annum of full time study or equivalent and \$3000 on appointment.

A national strategy for promoting teaching as a career should provide nationally consistent pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander non-teaching staff in schools to train as teachers.

6. A comprehensive national leadership strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers be developed and implemented.

It is vital that efforts to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers are matched with simultaneous efforts to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school leaders, especially principals. School principals are in the best position to undertake actions to maximise the success of their students. They are in the best position to form strong links with and throughout the community and ensure parents and carers that the school is a culturally safe place. They are in the best position to make their school a place where children and young people want to be and learn.

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in leadership positions are role models to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers at all career stages. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education leaders are in the best position to design curriculum in consultation with the community to best meet the needs of the students in a culturally strong learning environment, nurture their sense of identity and empower them to make positive choices.

A comprehensive leadership strategy for aspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and a resulting increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals and leaders who can influence outcomes will help to achieve the aims of the MATSITI movement in ways which are sustainable when MATSITI ceases to exist as a formal entity.

7. Leadership and teaching positions in schools with significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments be targeted or identified for filling by suitably qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators.

Targeted Positions are mainstream positions that are filled using advertising and recruitment strategies designed to maximise applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. During the recruitment process, the job advertisement should clearly indicate if a position is being targeted for the recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Advertisements for targeted positions should state:

“This is a Targeted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Position. Preference will be given to suitable applicants of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.”

In some cases it may be appropriate for leadership or teaching positions in schools with significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolment to be identified for filling by suitably qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators. For identified positions, Aboriginality is a genuine occupational requirement. Applicants need to demonstrate knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures, as well as the ability

to communicate sensitively with Indigenous Australians. Only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are eligible to apply for positions identified for Aboriginality.

Targeting or identifying leadership or teaching positions in schools with significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments would boost Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher employment at all levels in Australian schools. Further, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, in particular principals, are likely to be in the best position to engage local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members in the life of the school and boost engagement and outcomes for the students.

This strategy may play out in different ways depending on the characteristics of the various government and non-government education jurisdictions throughout Australia and whether they implement centralised or local employment strategies.

8. *A national scholarship program of an annual 100 scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students be launched.*

A national scholarship program should draw on successful models. Scholarships may be allocated to the states and territories on a pro rata basis and be in addition to any already offered by state jurisdictions. Consideration may be given to either maintaining the national scholarships, or implementing them for a set period, after which states and territories fund them from their education budgets.

9. *A suite of strategies aimed at significantly increasing the completion rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initial teacher education students be implemented by universities.*

There is a large body of research about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' experiences in higher education and the factors which contribute to their success. Under MATSITI, the Australian Council of Deans of Education undertook two major projects, Retention and Graduation, and Engagement and Success.

The ACDE, under MATSITI, has made significant inroads to getting schools of education and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support units in universities to work together to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student retention. This is an important first step towards developing and implementing a suite of retention strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students. Such strategies, as explored by some MATSITI funded projects, could include greater flexibility in course completion times, ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are aware of financial support available, university staff being swift to support students who are struggling or at risk of disengaging, and school of education staff working strongly and closely with staff in university Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander centres to maximise support for students.

Success in this area would increase significantly the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in Australian schools.

10. Priority be given to establishing and promoting pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers to transition to careers as teachers and that such pathways be sensitive to the social, cultural and financial support required for success.

Several MATSITI project partners implemented strategies to assist experienced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers to transition to careers in teaching.

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers demonstrate significant capabilities consistent with those of the teaching workforce and would bring to the profession substantial experience working in an educational environment. They are an important source of supply in any strategy to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in Australian schools.

It is evident from feedback relating to some of the MATSITI strategies that there are barriers constraining many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers from undertaking the additional study required to become a teacher. Many of these workers provide vital financial support to their families and play an important role in the life of their family and community. Dislocation from their family and community while studying is a critical issue.

There are also employment issues relating to appropriate paid study leave and recognition of the additional load required when combining work and study.

Flexible modes of study, flexible leave arrangements and financial support while studying would be of distinct benefit.

11. All school employers be required to report on the cultural knowledge and practices they have and are implementing to provide a safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to formally identify as such and for that identification to be formally recorded and maintained by that employer and reported nationally in a de-identified statistical format.

The collection and collation of basic data identifying the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in each education jurisdiction has been challenging and incomplete, despite the efforts of the MATSITI team and the contractor Ernst and Young.

It is evident that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to identify as such in a culturally safe environment where cultural knowledge and practices are valued.

The reluctance and inability of some parties to participate in the collection of data is problematic and one which is considered to warrant regulatory action.

Schools and school jurisdictions currently have to meet certain contract requirements in accepting funding from the Commonwealth Government. It is considered that the recording and reporting of data relating to the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers should be included as a contract requirement.

Effective data collection would help support the attainment of government targets, for example those set under Closing the Gap.

12. Teacher regulatory bodies in each state and territory be required to provide an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers to formally identify as such and for that identification to be formally recorded and maintained by that body and reported nationally in a de-identified statistical format.

Teachers in all states and territories, with the exception of NSW, currently have to be registered to teach in their state or territory before they can be employed as a teacher in a school. NSW is in the process of extending accreditation of teachers with the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards to all teachers in NSW. This will be a requirement in NSW from 2018.

The capture of detailed teacher data, including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, is crucial to measuring the progress of these and other national initiatives.

With teacher regulatory authorities capturing this data in each state or territory by 2018, it would be beneficial to require those bodies to report the data nationally to enable a more accurate picture to be obtained.

13. Teacher unions and the Commonwealth Government agree in principle to include in future industrial agreements mechanisms by which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers may be provided with priority for employment.

In NSW the Teaching Service Act 1980 provides for the Secretary of the Department to appoint an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander teacher to a teaching position ahead of an equally qualified non-Indigenous teacher. This is also supported by an industrial agreement on the staffing of schools between the NSW Department of Education and the NSW Teachers Federation.

While it may be considered to be a “bridge too far” to introduce corresponding legislation at the Federal level, it is appropriate for the Commonwealth Government to negotiate an in principle agreement with the two major teacher unions, the Australian Education Union and the Independent Education Union.

This will provide leverage for the appointment of more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers to permanent teaching positions, even within those jurisdictions which do not have central control over appointments.

14. The Commonwealth Government amend the relevant legislation to provide preference for the employment of appropriately qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers across all Australian educational jurisdictions.

In considering the various strategies to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in Australian schools, the Evaluation Panel were of the view that an appropriate legislative mechanism, similar to that which exists in the NSW *Teaching Service Act 1980* would be of significant benefit.

The Evaluation Panel considers this “bridge too far” as well worth crossing.

This action would be an acknowledgement of the enormity of the issue and the vast number of reports, recommendations, declarations and communiques which have been published over recent decades articulating support for the MATSITI objectives of increasing:

- the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in teaching positions in schools;
- the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers; and
- the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in teaching positions in schools.

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