



More Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander Teachers Initiative

# Final Report

Professor Peter Buckskin, MATSITI Project Director

September 2016



University of  
South Australia

## Document control

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## Related documents

- Funding Agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the University of South Australia regarding funding for the MATSITI Project (June 2011)
- 2012–15 MATSITI Project Plan: [www.matsiti.edu.au/about/plans](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/about/plans)
- MATSITI Annual Work Plans: [www.matsiti.edu.au/about/plans](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/about/plans)
- MATSITI Evaluation Report: [www.matsiti.edu.au/evaluation](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/evaluation)
- MATSITI Project Website: [www.matsiti.edu.au](http://www.matsiti.edu.au)

### Project Sponsor

This project is funded by the Australian Government through the More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (MATSITI).



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## List of acronyms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
ACDE	Australian Council of Deans of Education
AESOC	Australian Education Senior Officials Committee
AEU	Australian Education Union
AIEW	Australian and Islander Education Worker (various terms are used across States and Territories)
AILITEA	Australian Indigenous Lecturers in Initial Teacher Education Association
AITSL	Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership
ATRA	Australasian Teacher Regulatory Authorities
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (until September 2013, former sponsor of MATSITI project)
DET	Department of Education and Training (Australian Government)
DPM&C	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (MATSITI Project sponsor, 2013–2016)
FTE	Full-time equivalent
IECB	Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies (various terms are used across States and Territories)
IEU	Independent Education Union
IHEC	Indigenous Higher Education Centres (various terms across universities)
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
MATSITI	More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative
MCEECDYA	Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (now known as the Australian Education Council)
NAEP	National Aboriginal Education Policy
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
NTWD	National Teaching Workforce Dataset
PAI	Principals Australia Institute
TEMAG	Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group

# Foreword

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The MATSITI Final Report provides an appraisal of the More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (MATSITI) achievements against the stated objectives of the project. The report outlines the achievements in the MATSITI Project Plan 2012–2015 and Annual Work Plans, and builds on findings and recommendations of the 2016 MATSITI independent evaluation.

I am pleased to advise that over this period there has been an overall increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in Australian schools, with a growing proportion working in leadership positions. MATSITI research has revealed that most employment growth was achieved by a small number of school jurisdictions, rather than being evenly distributed across Australian employers.

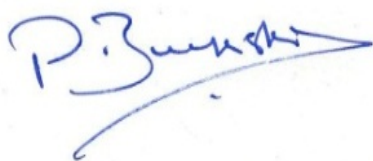
A major factor in the supply of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers is their completion of initial teacher education. The MATSITI-funded project undertaken by the Australian Council of Deans of Education revealed alarmingly low rates of completion by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students. While the reasons are well documented, they will only be remedied by effective engagement and retention strategies by faculties and schools of education.

MATSITI's efforts in ascertaining an accurate picture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation as teachers and student teachers were hampered by limited visibility of workforce data on the part of government, Catholic and independent school jurisdictions and universities across Australia. Accordingly, we recommend implementation of effective data collection systems, having regard for privacy provisions and the cultural safety of teachers identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Many government policies during the last five decades have committed to increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers to achieve improved student outcomes. Yet progress remains slow due to low levels of implementation, monitoring and reporting; and lack of accountability on the part of responsible entities. Unless school and teacher education stakeholders take action to fulfil these government commitments, change from the current situation is unlikely to take place at any appreciable rate.

I thank the project partners and governance groups and sponsors for their efforts in progressing these workforce reforms for our people. Project partners designed and implemented many exciting and effective initiatives that addressed all stages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples becoming, being employed and remaining as teachers, and progressing in their careers as educators and leaders. Project partners' commitment to the aims of MATSITI has grown and been strengthened through forming networks and becoming a part of a national network of Indigenous education and employment advocates. In many cases, their financial co-contributions have led to the integration of their learnings into revised practices that will increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers at all levels.

A clear message of this report is that the collaborative networks arising from this project are determined to seize future opportunities to leverage its findings and achievements. I call on continued government leadership to build on these achievements and support stakeholders in implementing the report's recommendations and ensure that the momentum and impact of progress made over the last five years is not lost.



Professor Peter Buckskin PSM FACE  
Director: More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative  
University of South Australia  
September 2016

# 1 Executive summary

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*The learning needs of a culturally diverse student population will be better served by a more diverse teaching workforce.<sup>1</sup>*

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The \$7.5 million<sup>2</sup> More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (**MATSITI**) was a national five-year collaborative project with the Australian education community – planned, implemented and evaluated in four annual phases.

The following MATSITI Report outlines progress during 2011–2016 against the key project deliverables specified in the Funding Agreement between the Australian Government and the University of South Australia, with activities outlined in the 2012–2015 Project Plan and annual Work Plans.

The 3 key deliverables for the MATSITI project were:

1. qualitative and quantitative research reports on factors and effectiveness of strategies to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers
2. a series of partnerships and co-investment agreements with school authorities, university schools of education and other agencies to increase recruitment, retention and leadership in teacher training and in schools
3. national community engagement and marketing strategies to promote teaching as a career option for secondary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The purpose of this final report to the Australian Government is to:

- comment on the significance of the MATSITI project and its outcomes
- link MATSITI achievements to the Commonwealth Government's stated policy priorities for improved educational and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- connect learnings from the MATSITI initiative to recommendations in the Project Evaluation
- provide evidence and directions on strategic investments for project sponsors, stakeholders, government departments and education advocacy groups, so that teacher workforce reforms may be progressed.

The activities specified in the Funding Agreement and Work Plans were designed to increase:

- a. the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in professional teaching positions in schools; and
- b. retention of professional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in teaching positions in schools.

The MATSITI project was led by Professor Peter Buckskin, Dean: Aboriginal Engagement and Strategic Projects, University of South Australia, with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education Reference Group of Indigenous members and a Working Party to provide strategic direction and management for the initiative.

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<sup>1</sup> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teacher Workforce Analysis, MATSITI, 2014

<sup>2</sup> With additional interest on revenue, total MATSITI project funding was \$8.08m

## 1.1 Key findings

### A catalyst for change

An independent evaluation<sup>3</sup> of the MATSITI initiative in 2015–16 demonstrated that participation through formal agreements raised project partners' awareness of the connection between increasing the number and capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and leaders, and achieving positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students.

Funded by MATSITI, a report<sup>4</sup> commissioned by the Australian Council of Deans of Education revealed that only 33% of commencing Indigenous teacher education students graduate as teachers. Some university schools of education saw for the first time the importance of engaging with their Indigenous Higher Education Centres (IHECs) and working together to take a client-focused approach to their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and develop retention strategies to address the reasons for their low rates of completion.

The evaluation of the MATSITI project revealed a heightened commitment of government, Catholic and independent school sectors, universities and other agencies across Australia to achieving the aims of MATSITI. In many cases, project managers began to seek out, recognise, listen to and support their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff for the first time. Some revised their human resources processes to enable identification as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander staff and systematic collection of these data.

Over 1000 delegates from all states and territories attended five national conferences<sup>5</sup> and a range of additional targeted forums on teacher education, employment, data analysis and project evaluations.

At the final National MATSITI conference in 2015, delegates issued a formal declaration<sup>6</sup> for ministers to recommit to a more equitable ratio of teachers to Indigenous students and support the first priority of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy: Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development.

### Increasing numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers

Between 2012 and 2015, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers increased by 16.5% due to recruitment and improved levels of Indigenous identification.

The government schooling sector is by far the most dominant employer with 94% of all Indigenous teachers. Growth in the number of teachers was also unevenly distributed between jurisdictions, with New South Wales public schools accounting for the greatest increase during the reporting period.

The MATSITI Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teacher Workforce Analysis<sup>7</sup>, is a comprehensive, yet still incomplete, dataset due to the reluctance of some jurisdictions, government and non-government, to provide access to their administrative datasets, even under the most stringent privacy protocols.

There appears to be sufficient data, however, to draw some comparisons between the data published for the 2012 collection and the more recent 2015 collection.

In summary, there were:

- 1660 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.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.matsiti.edu.au/evaluation](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/evaluation)

<sup>4</sup> [www.matsiti.edu.au/acde-2012-report](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/acde-2012-report)

<sup>5</sup> [www.matsiti.edu.au/events](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/events)

<sup>6</sup> Tarndanya Declaration, 2015: [www.matsiti.edu.au/tarndanya-declaration](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/tarndanya-declaration)

<sup>7</sup> [www.matsiti.edu.au/teacher-workforce-analysis](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/teacher-workforce-analysis)

This represents 3100 teachers in the 2015 dataset who identified as Indigenous, compared with 2661 in 2012, a net increase of 439 teachers or 16.5%.

Encouraging aspects of the workforce data include:

- 83% of Indigenous teachers are classroom teachers, 7% are deputy principals and 3% are principals
- 575 of Indigenous teachers work in primary schools, 32% in secondary schools and 11% in combined primary/secondary schools
- the Indigenous teachers new to the 2015 collection are better qualified academically
- 233 (14%) of Indigenous teachers and executives from the 2012 collection had been promoted by 2015, with 40 of those to principal.

## Promoting teaching as a career of choice

MATSITI project partners managed a range of initiatives that promoted teaching to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Jurisdictions with highly effective promotional campaigns mentored others, which then also developed effective campaigns.

The most effective career attraction campaigns had a highly visible message aimed specifically at potential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants. The successful NSW Department of Education campaign, Join Our Mob<sup>8</sup>, includes a scholarship program under which 80 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are supported to train as teachers, with a guarantee of an appointment in a preferred location on graduation. In March 2016, a total of 1165 Indigenous teachers were employed in the Department, including 132, or 11.3%, in promotional positions.

In the analysis of the MATSITI-funded projects, a need emerged for a suite of national promotional strategies capable of attracting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout the community, including secondary students and AIEWs. A national strategy should provide inducements such as support while completing a qualification, preferential employment, and effective post-appointment induction.

In addition to school and university career attraction campaigns, MATSITI utilised social media and other online channels to promote teaching as a career of choice. The MATSITI project team posted 360 information and news stories to its website, posted 1250 'tweets' to 1260 Twitter followers and received 3200 'likes' on its Facebook 'OurMobTeach<sup>9</sup>' site.

## Engaging key stakeholders

The MATSITI Final Report is intended to inform and support the work of key Australian departments and agencies with responsibility and advocacy in education, from preschool to teacher education in Australian universities, and the recruitment and professional learning of teachers and leaders in Australian schools.

These stakeholders include Australian Government departments (Prime Minister and Cabinet, and Department of Education and Training), education ministers and senior officials, and authorities responsible for school curriculum, teaching standards and regulation.

Success in policy reforms will only be effective where there are genuine partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community representatives, through Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies or other community consultation channels.

The MATSITI final report serves as a reference point in the deliberations and communications of government departments and the education advocacy groups that are accountable to them. Acting on the recommendations in this final report provides an opportunity for the government to progress the agenda of reconciliation, relationships and respect, for which improved educational and employment

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<sup>8</sup> [www.teach.nsw.edu.au/becomeateacher/aboriginal-people](http://www.teach.nsw.edu.au/becomeateacher/aboriginal-people)

<sup>9</sup> [www.facebook.com/ourmobteach](http://www.facebook.com/ourmobteach)



outcomes for Indigenous students, supported by increasing the number of Indigenous teachers and school leaders, are a cornerstone.

## Alignment with education and employment policies

Current, recent and past government policies for achieving improved and equitable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples recognise the pivotal role of education and increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in attaining this goal. These policies have articulated a range of commitments over five decades.

More recent Indigenous education and employment policies include:

- Australian Directions in Indigenous Education 2005–2008
- Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians 2008
- *Closing the Gap*
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015.

It is time that government commitments to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, by increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, are translated into actions. Continued inaction poses the risk of consecutive governments becoming part of the national shame revealed by the lack of progress in achieving many *Closing the Gap* targets.

The national network of MATSITI advocates is ready, willing and able to act as a conduit for the implementation of actions to fulfil the government's commitments. This collaboration of employers and educators has undertaken the research, supported the projects and gathered the evidence for the most effective ways to increase the number, capacity and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students 'cannot be what they cannot see'. A more powerful mentoring force will be unleashed by more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in Australian schools. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' identities and cultures will be strengthened, and all students will enrich their school experience through more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers.

Lifting the performance of Australia's education systems to achieve greatly improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will lift Australia's performance in both national and international arenas.



MATSITI initial teacher education online promotion, 2016

## 1.2 Recommendations

- *endorse the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy*
- *seek recommitment of the Australian Education Council (ministers) to a more equitable ratio of teachers to Indigenous students*
- *call for an alliance of education and Indigenous partners to implement and monitor the strategy*
- *support the first priority of the strategy: Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development*
- *ensure a robust data, evidence and accountability framework*
- *continue the MATSITI alliance.*

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MATSITI National Conference Tarndanya Declaration<sup>10</sup> from delegates, October 2015

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MATSITI project partners designed and implemented many exciting and effective initiatives that addressed all stages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples becoming, being employed and remaining as teachers, and progressing in their careers as educators and leaders.

The MATSITI Teacher Workforce Scoping Plan<sup>11</sup> provides a policy framework of strategies and actions for implementation at all levels of the Australian education community. It was developed in 2013 on the basis of evidence gathered through an international literature search of successful strategies for promoting teaching as a career, initial teacher education, employment, retention and development of First Nations people as teachers and school leaders. The Teacher Workforce Scoping Plan provides a guide for achieving the following overarching recommendations.

MATSITI Final Report Recommendations	Responsibility
1. Fund MATSITI or equivalent employment strategy for a further four years to sustain current initiatives and leverage investments to date	Australian Government
2. Develop and launch a national campaign for promoting and marketing teaching as a career for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	MATSITI AESOC
3. Increase the profile of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers as leaders through bold affirmative action strategies that provide leadership development, succession planning and targeting of suitable leadership positions to be filled by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants	MATSITI AESOC AITSL PAI
4. Work with public, Catholic and independent education sectors, and universities to develop culturally safe recruitment and employment practices that enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and teacher education students to identify; and effective systems for storing and reporting de-identified study and employment data	MATSITI AESOC AITSL ATRA AEU / IEU
5. Forge stronger links between all Australian universities' schools of education and Indigenous Higher Education Centres; respond to research findings on reasons for the low completion rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students; and implement effective retention strategies to maximise the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher graduates	MATSITI ACDE AILITEA

<sup>10</sup> [www.matsiti.edu.au/tarndanya-declaration](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/tarndanya-declaration)

<sup>11</sup> [www.matsiti.edu.au/scoping-plan](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/scoping-plan)

## 2 Australia's teaching workforce

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*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.<sup>12</sup>*

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### 2.1 Australian schools

In 2015, the profile of Australian schools included:

- 3.28 million teaching staff<sup>13</sup> working in 9404 Australian schools
- considerably more female teaching staff than males – 72% compared to 28%
- a total of 200,563 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, or 5.3% of total enrolments in Australia's schools. The majority of these students (84%) attended government schools, while 10.4% attended Catholic schools, and 5.5% attended Independent schools.
- of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students in Australia, the largest proportion was in New South Wales (32.0%), followed by Queensland (29.9%), and Western Australia (12.9%)
- 2204 Indigenous higher education students were enrolled in teacher education programs in 41 universities, representing 2% of all domestic teacher education students.

### 2.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers

Between 2012 and 2015, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers increased by 16.5% due to recruitment and improved levels of Indigenous identification.

The government schooling sector is by far the most dominant employer with 94% of all Indigenous teachers. Growth in the number of teachers was also unevenly distributed between jurisdictions, with NSW public schools accounting for the greatest increase during the reporting period.

Despite limitations in the workforce collection, there were:

- 1660 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
- 1001 teachers who identified as Indigenous in 2012 were unable to be tracked in the 2015 data and were consequently recorded as no longer teaching.

This represents 3100 teachers in the 2015 dataset who identified as Indigenous, compared with 2661 in 2012, a net increase of 439 teachers or 16.5%.

Encouraging aspects of the workforce data include:

- 83% of Indigenous teachers are classroom teachers, 7% are deputy principals and 3% are principals

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<sup>12</sup> Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians

<sup>13</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics: Schools Australia 2015 (persons, not FTE)

- the Indigenous teachers new to the 2015 collection are better qualified academically
- 233 (14%) of Indigenous teachers and executives from the 2012 collection had been promoted by 2015, with 40 of those to principal.

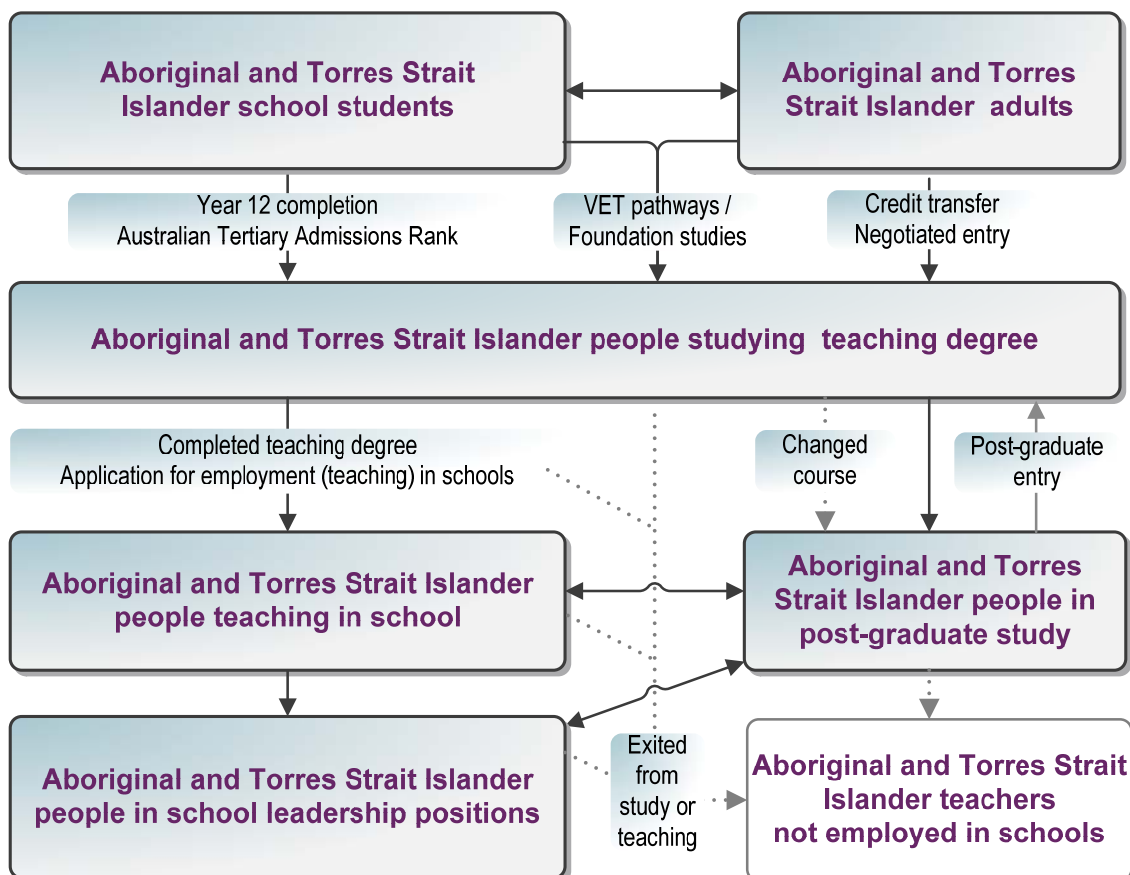
## Employment factors

The MATSITI Project identified key factors that contribute to the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples entering and remaining in teaching positions in Australian schools.

These factors are complex and extensive, including:

- aspirational and learning achievement factors, support and career counselling prior to considering a teaching career and meeting university entrance requirements
- universities' approaches to attracting and retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students and adults in initial teacher education programs
- education employers' approaches to attracting and retaining qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples into teaching and leadership positions in schools
- individual circumstances that contribute to or hinder study and career pathways into teaching
- the effectiveness of incentives, support, scholarships and other programs.

The range of interventions to address these factors is extensively covered in the independent evaluation of MATSITI, March 2016.



Study and career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers

## 3 The MATSITI initiative

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*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.<sup>14</sup>*

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The Australian Government funded the More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (MATSITI) for the period 2011–2015, subsequently extended to June 2016.

The aim of the MATSITI project was to increase:

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

The purpose of this final report to the Commonwealth Government is to:

- comment on the significance of the MATSITI project and its outcomes
- link MATSITI achievements to the Commonwealth Government's stated policy priorities for better educational and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- connect learnings from the MATSITI project to recommendations in the Evaluation
- provide evidence and advice on strategic directions for communications between project sponsors, stakeholders, government departments and the education advocacy groups that are accountable to them, so that the work of MATSITI may be progressed and its recommendations implemented.

### 3.1 Project assumptions

The MATSITI project was based upon the following assumptions:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers are significantly under-represented in teaching positions in schools relative to the proportion of Indigenous students.
- Increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers is a key factor in fostering student engagement and improving educational outcomes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.
- Progress over the previous decade to increase the number and professional capability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers has been patchy across Australian schools, school systems and universities, compounded by limited visibility of education workforce data.
- There is widespread agreement by all stakeholders that increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers is a crucial reform, with much work still to be done.
- An ambitious reform agenda to improve recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers will be effective only through national collaborative action and co-investment by schools and school authorities, university schools of education, teacher unions, professional associations, and Indigenous community support and advocacy.

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<sup>14</sup> Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–14

## 3.2 MATSITI plans

The MATSITI Project Plan<sup>15</sup> 2012–2015 provides details of the purpose of the project, its scope and the following deliverables:

1. comprehensive qualitative and quantitative research reports on contributing background factors and the effectiveness of current strategies in increasing the number and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers
2. a series of partnerships and co-investment agreements with school authorities, university schools of education and other agencies to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander: teacher recruitment, retention and leadership in schools; and student retention in pre-service teacher education
3. a national community engagement and targeted marketing strategy to promote teaching as a career option for secondary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and adults.

The Project Plan formed the basis of annual work plans that further detail project activities, responsibilities, schedule and budget for each calendar year (2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015).

### MATSITI Teacher Workforce Scoping Plan

The MATSITI Teacher Workforce Scoping Plan<sup>16</sup> provides a blueprint of strategies and actions for implementation at all levels of the Australian education community. It was developed in 2013 based on evidence gathered through an international literature search of successful strategies for promoting teaching as a career, initial teacher education, employment, retention and development of First Nations people as teachers and leaders.

The Teacher Workforce Scoping Plan reflects **Tier 1** (national) and **Tier 2** (local) implementation and funding levels, including five overarching strategic directions:

1. increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students completing school and qualifying for enrolment in teacher education programs
2. promote teaching as a career of choice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
3. develop, facilitate and maintain opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to access and complete teacher education programs
4. recruit, develop and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in schools
5. achieve lasting reform in outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through strategic partnerships at all levels of the education community aimed at enhancing the recruitment, retention and leadership capabilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers.

Sponsors, stakeholders and education jurisdictions, including teacher employers and universities, are encouraged to read, discuss and analyse the Teacher Workforce Scoping Plan and use it as a guide for implementing relevant strategies and actions that increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers.

The Teacher Workforce Scoping Plan was developed having regard to the wide range of educational settings throughout Australia and includes strategies that can be applied at individual school level through to government level. A summary of the MATSITI Teacher Workforce Scoping Plan is outlined in Appendix 5.

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<sup>15</sup> [www.matsiti.edu.au/about/plans](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/about/plans) subsequently extended to June 2016

<sup>16</sup> [www.matsiti.edu.au/scoping-plan](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/scoping-plan), separate to a MATSITI 'Scoping Plan' developed as part of the Australian Government funding agreement in 2011

### 3.3 Project expenditure

Total expenditure of funding for the MATSITI project over the five-year period was \$8.08 million<sup>17</sup>, of which over four million dollars was allocated for specific projects upon application and in accordance with their capacity to meet MATSITI's aims. Project partners included individual schools; teacher employers such as state or territory government departments of education, or the Catholic education sector; university schools of initial teacher education (ITE); or private agencies with a central interest in teaching as a career.

Expenditure by Activity	Total 2011–2016
Education partnerships	\$4,507,745 <sup>18</sup>
Research and evidence	\$797,486
Career marketing and communications	\$706,998
Conferences and events	\$493,920
Evaluation	\$247,964
Governance	\$67,234
Project management	\$885,711
University of SA administrative levy	\$375,000
<b>Total Project Expenditure</b>	<b>\$8,082,058</b>

The MATSITI Project has been acclaimed for the high level of transparency of funding and activities – outlined in publicly available annual reports. Appendix 2 further describes project expenditure in accordance with projections included in annual work plans.

### 3.4 Funding partnerships

The MATSITI project team at the University of South Australia designed a project model that placed responsibility for project design and delivery with the project (subcontract) grant recipient. The project partner model included inbuilt accountability for expenditure of grants and delivery of outcomes. Project partners were expected to make a co-contribution towards their project, and these co-contributions totalled \$3.0 million. The project model was therefore an innovative departure from the more usual direct grants from governments and is considered to be a factor in MATSITI's success.

The MATSITI project team was supported by an Indigenous Reference Group and a Working Party of key stakeholders to provide guidance and an active role in the governance and funding of the project.

Project partners submitted their project proposals to the project team over four annual rounds from 2011 to 2014 (for implementation from 2012 to 2015). They were required to demonstrate: knowledge of and experience in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workforce development; plans for engaging Indigenous people in project design, development and delivery; project management skills; relevant experience of staff; alignment of the proposal with the strategic directions of the MATSITI Teacher Workforce Scoping Plan; identification and management of risks; detailed project budget; and schedule and milestones for expected outcomes. The MATSITI team monitored projects through partners submitting progress and final reports.

MATSITI Project grants were classified as:

**Tier 1:** national in scope, accelerate workforce reform, leverage existing investments by governments, lead to long-term sustainable change and require higher levels of MATSITI funding

<sup>17</sup> Project value comprised \$7.5m in Australian Government funding and interest on revenue

<sup>18</sup> Subject to resolution of audit report on one MATSITI subcontracted partner

**Tier 2:** innovative solutions to local teacher attraction and retention, support a commitment to sharing success and challenges to inform workforce reforms in other states and territories, and focus on long-term opportunities and capacity building of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the school workforce.

The project team members maintained regular contact with project partners and provided support and advice as required. The project team conducted five national conferences<sup>19</sup> and a range of additional targeted forums on teacher education, employment, data analysis and project evaluations.

The MATSITI website<sup>20</sup> demonstrates the high level of transparency that has underpinned the project's management. The website has been continuously updated with wide-ranging information, including forum presentations, completed projects, teacher education, financial allocations and frequently asked questions sections.

### 3.5 Independent evaluation

An independent evaluation<sup>21</sup> of the MATSITI project was completed in March 2016 and provided to the MATSITI Project Director and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPM&C). The evaluation provided analyses of 57 projects funded under the initiative and conclusions that could be drawn from the comprehensive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher workforce data project<sup>22</sup> supported by Ernst and Young.

The evaluation process included questionnaires and face-to-face interviews with project partners. These instruments and project reports showed that a significant result of participation in the MATSITI project was the raising of project partners' awareness of the connection between increasing the number and capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and leaders, and achieving positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students. This was particularly noticeable in the university sector, where, as a MATSITI-funded project, a report<sup>23</sup> commissioned by the Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE) revealed that only 33% of commencing Indigenous teacher education students graduate as teachers. Some university schools of education saw for the first time the importance of engaging with their Indigenous Higher Education Centres (IHECs) and working together to take a client-focused approach to their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and develop retention strategies to address the reasons for their low rates of completion.

The evaluation of the MATSITI project revealed strong evidence of the engagement of government and Catholic school sectors, universities and other agencies across Australia to achieve the aims of MATSITI. In many cases, especially in the Catholic schools sector, project managers began to seek out, recognise, listen to and support their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff for the first time. Some revised their human resources processes to enable identification as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander staff and systematic collection of these data. In the relevant Catholic school sector entities, this represents a significant cultural change.

Involvement in MATSITI inspired project partners and their organisations to act as part of a community with a common goal of increasing the number and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in Australian schools. Project partners demonstrated a strong understanding of the long-term nature of MATSITI and the importance of building and maintaining their efforts and commitment if MATSITI's aims were to be achieved.

MATSITI endorses the 14 recommendations of the independent Evaluation Report. Commentaries on these recommendations are outlined in Appendix 1.

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<sup>19</sup> [www.matsiti.edu.au/events](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/events)

<sup>20</sup> [www.matsiti.edu.au](http://www.matsiti.edu.au)

<sup>21</sup> [www.matsiti.edu.au/evaluation](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/evaluation)

<sup>22</sup> [www.matsiti.edu.au/teacher-workforce-analysis](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/teacher-workforce-analysis)

<sup>23</sup> [www.matsiti.edu.au/acde-2012-report](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/acde-2012-report)



## 4 Project deliverables

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*An ambitious reform agenda to improve the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers will be effective only through national collaborative action and co-investment by schools and school authorities, universities, professional associations, and Indigenous leaders and community networks.<sup>24</sup>*

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The three deliverables under the MATSITI Funding Agreement and Project Plan were:

1. Research, evidence and workforce planning
2. Project partnership agreements
3. Promoting teaching as a career of choice.

### 4.1 Research, evidence and workforce planning

#### MATSITI Project Deliverable #1

*Comprehensive qualitative and quantitative research reports on factors and effectiveness of strategies to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers*

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#### Project achievements

MATSITI has invested significant effort into undertaking and publishing research and evidence pertaining to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, including strategies to enhance their numbers, retention and development. This research enables evidence-based workforce planning.

The research section of the MATSITI website features extensive contributions that include academic articles, news articles, notices, reports from MATSITI project partners, conferences and workshops. The research contributions cover a broad range of tertiary preparation, recruitment, retention, professional development and leadership issues.

The research also includes comprehensive workforce data reports. Using 2012 data, Ernst and Young was contracted by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations to develop the National Teaching Workforce Dataset (NTWD). From these data, in 2014 Ernst and Young published the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Analysis. The dataset and its analyses were limited by some state education and Catholic and independent jurisdictions not collecting or not making available data on teachers' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status.

A number of the MATSITI projects focused on research into a range of areas that included: pathways to teaching; engagement, success, retention and graduation in initial teacher education; professional experience; transitioning AIEWs to qualifying for entry into the teaching profession; and leadership.



#### Priority 1: Workforce Research

[www.matsiti.edu.au/evidence](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/evidence)

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<sup>24</sup> MATSITI Project Plan 2012-2015 [www.matsiti.edu.au/about/plans](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/about/plans)

## Future directions

It is clear that for jurisdictions to undertake effective workforce planning regarding the employment and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, improved data systems need to be implemented. Improved data systems must include providing opportunities for teachers to identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and to feel safe in doing so.

Recommendations 11 and 12 in the MATSITI Evaluation Final Report state:

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.

## 4.2 MATSITI project partnership agreements

### MATSITI Project Deliverable #2

*A series of partnerships and co-investment agreements with school authorities, university schools of education and other agencies to increase recruitment, retention and leadership in teacher training and in schools.*

### Project achievements

The 57 MATSITI-funded projects submitted by project grant recipients explored initiatives which addressed:

- initial teacher education
- teacher recruitment
- career and leadership development
- promoting teaching as a career of choice.

The majority of the projects were of a high standard and provided a range of approaches, which included strong project management and the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in project design, implementation and evaluation. A 'what works' page on the MATSITI website<sup>25</sup> is currently under development to showcase the most successful models of employment interventions demonstrated by these project partnerships. This achievement is in accordance with Recommendation 1 of the MATSITI Evaluation Final Report which states:



**What works**

**Priority 2: Effective Practice**  
[www.matsiti.edu.au/what-works](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/what-works)

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.

<sup>25</sup> Refer prototype archive website in Appendix 3

## Future directions

At the final National MATSITI conference<sup>26</sup> in 2015, delegates issued a formal declaration to:

- endorse the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015
- seek recommitment of the Australian Education Council (Ministers) to a more equitable ratio of teachers to Indigenous students
- call for an alliance of education and Indigenous partners to implement and monitor the Strategy
- support the first priority of the Strategy: Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development
- ensure a robust data, evidence and accountability framework
- continue the MATSITI alliance.

With respect to partnerships, it is important to continue to build on project partners' achievements and avoid their impact being lost. Future directions informed by project findings are embodied in the recommendations of the MATSITI Evaluation Final Report. Recommendations 2, 3 and 4 state:

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.

With respect to school leadership and development, recommendations 6 and 7 in the MATSITI Evaluation Final Report state:

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.

With respect to initial teacher education, recommendations 9 and 10 in the MATSITI Evaluation Final Report state:

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.

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<sup>26</sup> Tarndanya Declaration, 2015 [www.matsiti.edu.au/tarndanya-declaration](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/tarndanya-declaration)

## 4.3 Promoting teaching as a career of choice

### MATSITI Project Deliverable #3

*A national community engagement and marketing strategy to promote teaching as a career option for secondary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*

### Project achievements

Project partners submitted and managed a range of projects that promoted teaching within their jurisdictions and which may be applied by other organisations. A broad range of communication strategies was adopted including student career workshops, marketing campaigns in the Indigenous press, social media presence through Twitter and Facebook and an Indigenous events calendar distributed to all Australian schools and universities.

Jurisdictions with highly effective promotional campaigns mentored others which then also developed effective career attraction strategies. The most successful of these projects will be included in the forthcoming MATSITI 'what works' site.

In addition to jurisdiction and university career attraction campaigns, MATSITI and project partners effectively utilised social media and other online channels to promote teaching as a career of choice. MATSITI posted 360 information and news stories to its website, posted 1250 'tweets' to 1260 Twitter followers and received 3200 'likes' on its Facebook 'OurMobTeach<sup>27</sup>' site.

Profiles of individual teachers attracted the most attention, with over 20,000 people reached for some stories posted during the project period.

### Future directions

In the analysis of these projects, there emerged a need for a suite of national promotional strategies with the power to attract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout the community, including secondary students and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers (AIEWs).

It was clear from the MATSITI Evaluation and from research undertaken in the development of the MATSITI Teacher Workforce Scoping Plan that AIEWs provide an excellent source of future teachers to be targeted by promotional strategies. In many locations within Australia, including remote, they are the mainstay of the school and are vital to forming and maintaining links with the wider community. A national strategy for promoting teaching should: provide inducements for the people it attracts, such as scholarships and other support while completing a qualification; guarantee employment upon meeting requirements; articulate both the tangible and intangible rewards of becoming a teacher; emphasise support structures for newly appointed teachers including location allowances and other incentives, mentoring and professional development; and provide nationally consistent pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, in particular AIEWs, to train as teachers.

Recommendations 5 and 8 in the MATSITI Evaluation Final Report state:

5. A national strategy of promoting teaching as a career to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples be developed, launched and monitored.
8. A national scholarship program of an annual 100 scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students be launched.



### Priority 3: A Career of Choice

[www.matsiti.edu.au/promotion](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/promotion)

<sup>27</sup> [www.facebook.com/ourmobteach](http://www.facebook.com/ourmobteach)

# 5 Project stakeholders

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## *Leadership, Quality Teaching and Workforce Development*

*Action is taken to ensure children and young people are taught by skilled educators who are culturally competent in the local context. 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.<sup>28</sup>*

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The MATSITI Final Report to the Commonwealth supports the work of key Australian departments and agencies and with responsibility and advocacy in the area of education – from preschool to teacher education in Australian universities, and the recruitment and professional learning of teachers and leaders in Australian schools. These stakeholders include:

- Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet: project sponsor, 2013–16
- Australian Government Department of Education and Training (DET, formerly DEEWR): project sponsor, 2011–13
- Australian Education Senior Officials Committee (AESOC), responsible for school education, early childhood and higher education
- Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Education Council, Forum for Ministers to coordinate strategic policy on school education, early childhood and higher education at the national level
- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), with responsibility for national curriculum, assessment and reporting from Foundation to Year 12
- Principals Australia Institute (PAI), provides advocacy to government in the areas of school leadership and professional development
- Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), responsible for Australian professional standards for teaching and school leadership
- Australasian Teacher Regulatory Authorities (ATRA), facilitates collaboration across Australian and New Zealand jurisdictions in the regulation of the teaching profession.

It is important that DET, AESOC/COAG Education Council, ACARA, PAI, AITSL, ATRA, and the Indigenous Affairs Group within DPM&C note this final report and enable its findings to impact on their work. While their missions include improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in education and other fields, evaluations of major policies such as *Closing the Gap* indicate a need for progress underpinned by urgent action. It is vital that the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples do not become lost in the mainstream.

MATSITI recommends that issues impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples be strongly and separately voiced and be an integral factor on which the performance of responsible entities is assessed.

While this final report links to a range of comprehensive reports and documents, it can serve as a reference point in the deliberations and communications of government departments and the education advocacy groups that are accountable to them. At the opening of the 45th Parliament on 30 August 2016, the Prime Minister confirmed the government's commitment to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as partners, while Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' organisations called for a new relationship with the government.

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<sup>28</sup> Education Council: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015

Acting on the recommendations in this final report provides an opportunity for the government to progress the agenda of reconciliation, relationships and respect, for which improved educational outcomes for Indigenous students, supported by increasing the number of Indigenous teachers and school leaders, are a cornerstone.

## 5.1 Australian Government

### Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPM&C) was the project sponsor for the MATSITI initiative from 2013 to 2016. The previous project delegate for the initiative was the former Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) – now Department of Education and Training (DET).

DPM&C includes four separate ‘groups’ including the Indigenous Affairs Group. The responsible minister is Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion, Minister for Indigenous Affairs.

The DPM&C’s website states that Indigenous Affairs remains a national priority for the Australian Government and that the Indigenous Affairs Group is committed to improving the lives of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Prime Minister is supported by the Indigenous Advisory Council, whose role is to advise government on practical changes to enhance outcomes for Indigenous peoples. At the Prime Minister’s second meeting with the Indigenous Advisory Council in February 2016, he reiterated that Indigenous advancement is a priority for every minister in all portfolios. He advised that he will encourage ministers across the Australian Government to have greater engagement to build understanding and commitment to improving Indigenous outcomes through their respective portfolios.

The Prime Minister has emphasised the importance of identifying local solutions by working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to ensure development and ownership of approaches at the local level.

Priority areas for the Indigenous Advisory Council in 2016 in education include:

- improving school attainment
- early childhood and education workforce development
- identifying levers for accountability for improved educational outcomes
- ways to strengthen community.

### Department of Education and Training

The Department of Education and Training (DET) is responsible for national policies, programs and strategies that help Australians access child care and early childhood education, school education, higher education, vocational education and training, international education and research. DET works with states, territories and the non-government sector to drive the national education agenda, which aims to provide an overarching framework for Australian education and training delivery.

DET’s portfolio responsibilities include funding of schools, skills training, VET reform and oversight of higher education research, as well as carriage of the 2015 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy.

The distinction in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education portfolio responsibilities is sometimes characterised as within the school gate (DET) and outside the school gate (DPM&C).

Greater communication and coordination between the two departments is essential to ensure that the relevant education and employment policy objectives are achieved.

As the original sponsor of the MATSITI project, DET (as DEEWR) provided the funding for project partners’ initiatives and support from the University of South Australia from 2011 to 2013.

## 5.2 Schooling sector

### AESOC

AESOC is a group of senior officials with responsibility for school education, early childhood and youth affairs. AESOC is the main source of support for the COAG Education Council which comprises ministers for education in Australian states and territories, and New Zealand. AESOC is directly responsible to the Education Council for providing it with policy advice and executing its decisions.

As chief executives of Australian state and territory departments of education, AESOC members are in a pivotal position for recognising and addressing the need for more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in Australian schools. Evaluation of the MATSITI project and meetings of project partners have revealed wide gaps in the progress being made between state and territory authorities. A constructive starting point in communications between AESOC members would be to refer to the MATSITI Teacher Workforce Scoping Plan and commit to implementing strategies appropriate to each jurisdiction.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Analysis is an important tool for chief executives of states' or territories' departments of education that are more advanced with their Indigenous teacher workforce data to influence their colleagues to implement improved workforce data systems.

Again, the evidence provided by the data is irrefutable. In 2012, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers comprised 1.2% of all teachers in Australian schools, well below the 2011 Australian Bureau of Statistics estimate of 3% for the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the whole Australian population. At the same time, Indigenous students formed 4.9% of all students.

Australian ministers for education have committed education providers to make progress towards an equitable ratio of Indigenous staff to students (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014, MCEECDYA 2010). AESOC accordingly has a responsibility to carry out this commitment and support the necessary steps for its achievement, starting with promoting teaching as a career to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, working with AITSL and university schools of education to ensure improvement in their completion rates, and supporting them into and during their careers as teachers and leaders.

### COAG Education Council

The COAG Education Council, which is made up of ministers for education in Australian states and territories and New Zealand, provides a forum through which strategic policy on school education, early childhood and higher education can be coordinated at the national level and through which information can be shared, and resources used collaboratively, to address issues of national significance. The Education Council has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Advisory Group.

The Education Council's policy responsibilities are wide ranging. They include The National Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) School Education Strategy, action against bullying and violence, release of the NAPLAN report, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy (September 2015).

The Education Council commissioned ACIL Allen in collaboration with Phillips KPA and Professor Mark Rose from La Trobe University (who was also a member of the MATSITI Evaluation Committee) to undertake an evaluation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014. The Action Plan comprised 55 actions to 'assist education providers to accelerate improvements in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educational outcomes and contribute to the achievement of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) *Closing the Gap* targets'.

The evaluation's findings included:

- Action at the school level is driven primarily by local contextual needs, in combination with systemic policies, rather than as a direct result of national plans.
- Where the Action Plan was embedded in systemic policies, actions were more likely to be actively pursued at the local level.

These findings indicate that high-level organisations that include the COAG Education Council, AESOC, AITSL and DPM&C have the ultimate responsibility for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their representative organisations to ensure improved outcomes in a range of areas – of which education is arguably the most important, as improved health and employment flow from there. Working towards achieving a more diverse teacher workforce regarding a representative proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers is a vital step in achieving *Closing the Gap* targets.

## ACARA

ACARA is an independent statutory authority established under the Commonwealth Government's *ACARA Act 2008*. ACARA aims to improve the learning of Australian school students through effective curriculum, assessment and reporting. ACARA receives directions from the Australian Government, and state and territory ministers for education through the Education Council.

ACARA has a potential role in:

- ensuring that the Australian curriculum is culturally relevant and culturally sensitive to ensure that Indigenous students achieve their full potential at school and see careers in education as positive options (bearing in mind that they may be the first in their family to do so)
- influencing Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group's (TEMAG) initial teacher education initiatives by driving the link between school curriculum and teacher education.

## Principals Australia Institute

Principals Australia Institute (PAI) provides leadership and advocacy to government in the areas of school leadership, professional development and Australian Principal Certification to help raise the profile and reputation of principals in the community. PAI works with state and territory principals' associations to promote and implement strategies for Indigenous school leadership development.

The need to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers includes the need to increase their number at all levels. PAI is in an influential position to ensure that its aims include the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers as school leaders.

## Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies

The network of Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies (IECBs) are the peak community-based agencies representing the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples since the 1970s. Four IECBs are still functioning after being defunded by the Australian Government in 2014.

For workforce reforms to be effective, it is crucial to support sector peak bodies that represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professionals and community-controlled services, through IECBs or alternative consultative mechanisms. Reinstating funding to IECBs would be a start to have real and meaningful partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

## Education Unions

The Australian Education Union (AEU) represents educators who work in public schools, colleges, early childhood and vocational settings in all states and territories of Australia. The AEU and its associated state bodies have a long history of advocacy in Indigenous education and employment. Teachers working in the non-government schooling sector are covered by the Independent Education Union of Australia (IEU).

Education unions are in an influential position to advocate for preferential employment practices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in future industrial agreement negotiations.

Recommendation 13 of the Evaluation Report states:

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.



### 5.3 Initial teacher education

The Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) was established in 2014 to provide advice on how teacher education programs could be improved to better prepare new teachers with the practical skills needed for the classroom.

While the focus of TEMAG was on producing better quality teachers, any reforms need to address that initial teacher education effectively excludes Indigenous teacher education students at almost twice the rate of all students. The link between quality teachers and teacher workforce diversity<sup>29</sup> could form another theme in TEMAG's role as it works with universities.

An institutional framework for assessing the readiness and capacity of teacher education providers to support Indigenous students is outlined in Appendix 4.

#### AITSL

The government's response to TEMAG's *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers Report*<sup>30</sup> indicates broad support for its recommendations. It has placed responsibility for their implementation within the work of AITSL and nationally agreed standards for teaching.

AITSL produced *Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia, Standards and Procedures*, December 2015, which was largely informed by TEMAG's report. These standards and procedures set out the requirements that an initial teacher education program must meet to be nationally accredited. The document includes the National Program Standards (for ITE course accreditation) and the Graduate Teacher Standards under the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. These Graduate Teacher Standards make reference to teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students as follows:

Standard 1 – Know students and how they learn	
Focus Area 1.4	Graduate level
Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of the impact of culture, cultural identity and linguistic background on the education of students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds
Standard 2 – Know the content and how to teach it	
Focus Area 2.4	Graduate level
Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians	Demonstrate broad knowledge of, understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages

The Australian Government, on behalf of the Education Council, has tasked AITSL with leading the:

- development of assessment criteria (for providers and panels) for Graduate Teacher Standards 1.4 and 2.4
- provision of advice to Initial Teacher Education assessment panels on how to assess competence against Graduate Teacher Standards 1.4 and 2.4.

<sup>29</sup> MATSITI submission to the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group, 2014 [www.matsiti.edu.au/temag](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/temag)

<sup>30</sup> Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers [www.studentsfirst.gov.au/teacher-education-ministerial-advisory-group](http://www.studentsfirst.gov.au/teacher-education-ministerial-advisory-group)

Advice on these actions will be provided to the Education Council in 2016. AITSL is well positioned to raise the profile of the need for more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers as an aspect of quality teaching in schools. Its close connection to universities' schools of education enables it to have an impact on course promotion and delivery to be more welcoming and inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students.

The work of the ACDE as a primary MATSITI project partner, as described in the evaluation of the MATSITI project, reveals an urgent need for schools of education to implement reforms for the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in their teacher education programs.

The evidence base for the positive impact of Indigenous teachers on outcomes for Indigenous students cannot be ignored. Education bodies and the government need to work together to forge this link more strongly if they are to make effective their broader strategies such as *Closing the Gap*.

## Australasian Teacher Regulatory Authorities

ATRA was established to facilitate collaboration across the Australian and New Zealand jurisdictions in the regulation of the teaching profession. Its members include teacher registration authorities in Australian states and territories. These registration authorities are in a position to play a pivotal role in improving teacher data collections that will provide more accurate counts of Australia's Indigenous teachers.

The role of improved Indigenous teacher data in achieving the goals of MATSITI and monitoring outcomes of strategy implementation has been emphasised throughout a wide range of MATSITI publications, including the *Teacher Workforce Scoping Plan* and the *MATSITI Evaluation Final Report*.

Recommendation 12 of the Evaluation Report states:

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.

Any future work of MATSITI will include working with ATRA to achieve a uniform system of Indigenous teacher data collection in all Australian states and territories.

## 5.4 Stakeholder conclusions

There are obvious links between DPM&C, DET, AESOC, ACARA, PAI, AITSL, AEU/IEU and ATRA. All work towards providing quality education for students in Australian schools and all see quality teaching as integral to achieving their aims.

Yet progress in improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is slow and patchy. These organisations need to refocus their commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and ensure that their work and their outputs place these students at the forefront. It is not sufficient to ensure that their work is inclusive of 'all students' as this does not guard against cultural bias. Nor does it encourage the development of insight and understanding among Australia's most powerful education representatives of issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, including respect for their knowledges and cultures, ways of learning and often intergenerational social disadvantage. Until this occurs, little will change.

The DPM&C is in the most powerful position to influence peak education bodies to ensure that Indigenous students enjoy the same rate of success at school as their non-Indigenous learning colleagues. It has stated its commitment in a range of forums. It will require wide-ranging reform, and increasing the number of Indigenous teachers is central to this reform. It is a long-term goal, but if the momentum of the work of MATSITI is not harnessed, the goal is in danger of becoming unreachable.

# 6 Education and employment policies

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*To increase the number of Aboriginal people employed as educational administrators, teachers, curriculum advisers, teacher assistants, home-school liaison officers and other education workers, including community people engaged in teaching of Aboriginal culture, history and contemporary society, and Aboriginal languages.*

Long-Term Goal Number 2, National Aboriginal Education Policy<sup>31</sup>, 1989

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The recommendations in the *MATSITI Evaluation Final Report* are informed by and support current, recent and past government policies for achieving improved and equitable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These policies recognise the pivotal role of education in achieving this goal and the importance of increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers for greater student retention. These policies have articulated a range of commitments over five decades, and are summarised on pages 3–7 and 122–124 of the *MATSITI Evaluation Final Report*.

Commitments in more recent government policies include:

## 6.1 Australian Directions in Indigenous Education 2005–2008

The Australian Education Senior Officials Committee (AESOC) working party on Indigenous Education established by MCEETYA in 2005, produced the *Australian Directions in Indigenous Education 2005–2008*<sup>32</sup> (AESOC 2006) in consultation with a range of stakeholders.

Among its many recommendations, the AESOC working party recommended that 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.*

*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.*

## 6.2 Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians

In 2008 MCEETYA gave a clear commitment from all of the nation's ministers with responsibility for school education.

The Melbourne Declaration<sup>33</sup> 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.*

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

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<sup>31</sup> <https://docs.education.gov.au/node/36633>

<sup>32</sup> [www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/\\_resources/Australian\\_Directions\\_in\\_Indigenous\\_Education\\_2005-2008.pdf](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/Australian_Directions_in_Indigenous_Education_2005-2008.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> [www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/\\_resources/National\\_Declaration\\_on\\_the\\_Educational\\_Goals\\_for\\_Young\\_Australians.pdf](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf)

## 6.3 Closing the Gap

The 2015 *Closing the Gap* report<sup>34</sup> 2015 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.*

*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 *Closing the Gap* report of 2016 provides information on progress in closing the gap in a range of areas including:

Target	Progress Report, 2016
Halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for children by 2018.	Not on track. Progress will need to accelerate.
Halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 (or equivalent) attainment rates by 2020.	On track, with increase from 45% in 2008 to 58.5% in 2012/2013.
Halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and other Australians by 2018 <sup>35</sup> .	Not on track with no progress since 2008.

While *Closing the Gap* report 2016 emphasises the importance of quality teaching, it makes no mention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and the need to increase their numbers as an aspect of quality education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

## 6.4 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan

The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) developed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014<sup>36</sup> to ensure that it met its commitments under *Closing the Gap* and to ensure that “all Australian children 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 the statement “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).

<sup>34</sup> <http://closingthegap.dpnc.gov.au>

<sup>35</sup> MATSITI has captured comprehensive employment trend data of Indigenous people working in schools in 2012 and 2015, and recommends a third collection in 2018 to measure education sector contribution to the Closing the Gap 2018 employment target.

<sup>36</sup> [www.scseec.edu.au/archive/Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-Education-Action-Plan.aspx](http://www.scseec.edu.au/archive/Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-Education-Action-Plan.aspx)

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.*

## 6.5 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy

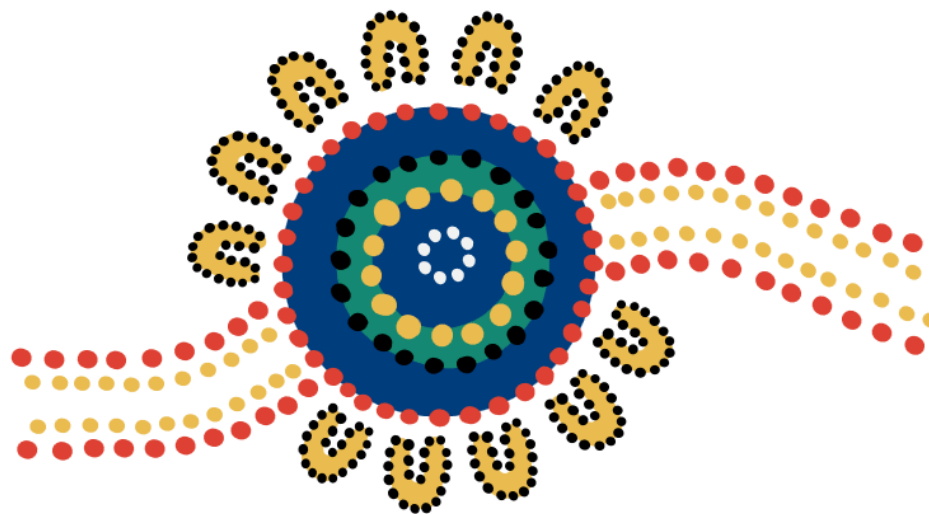
In 2015 the Education Council published the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015<sup>37</sup> (Education Council 2015) to capitalise on the work of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014 and the subsequent evaluation<sup>38</sup> of the Action Plan.

The strategy sets out the commitment of education ministers to the education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people

The intent of the Strategy was clearly identified as pursuing COAG's *Closing the Gap* targets.

The Strategy identifies Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development 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).*



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**NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EDUCATION STRATEGY 2015**

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<sup>37</sup>[www.scseec.edu.au/site/DefaultSite/filesystem/documents/ATSI%20documents/NATSI\\_EducationStrategy\\_v3.pdf](http://www.scseec.edu.au/site/DefaultSite/filesystem/documents/ATSI%20documents/NATSI_EducationStrategy_v3.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> ACIL Allen Consulting 2014 [www.scseec.edu.au/archive/Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-Education-Action-Plan/ACIL-Allen-Evaluation-Report.aspx](http://www.scseec.edu.au/archive/Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-Education-Action-Plan/ACIL-Allen-Evaluation-Report.aspx)

# 7 Conclusion

It is time that these government commitments, stated in a wide range of policy documents over a long period, be translated into actions or risk becoming part of the national shame revealed by the lack of progress in achieving many *Closing the Gap* targets.

The national network of MATSITI advocates is ready, willing and able to act as a conduit for the implementation of such actions. This collaboration of employers and educators has undertaken the research, supported the projects and gathered the evidence for the most effective ways to increase the number, capacity and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers.

MATSITI has built transparency and credibility throughout the Australian education community, from early childhood to tertiary providers. MATSITI is a trusted entity that will support its partners to drive forward the agenda of greatly improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through building a quality teaching workforce that includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and leaders at all levels and in numbers reflecting their representation in the Australian population.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students ‘cannot be what they cannot see’. A more powerful mentoring force will be unleashed by more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in Australian schools. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students’ identities and cultures will be strengthened, and all students will enrich their school experience through more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers.

Funding of MATSITI or an equivalent employment strategy for a further four years would sustain current initiatives and ensure that investment to date is leveraged. Any future work of MATSITI would build on the findings from the qualitative and quantitative evidence gathered from 2012 to 2015, target specific objectives that have emerged as priority areas and link to recommendations in the MATSITI Evaluation Final Report as per the following table.

## 7.1 Recommendations

Specific objectives, responsibility and related evaluation recommendations		
1. Fund MATSITI or equivalent employment strategy for a further four years to sustain current initiatives and leverage investment to date	DET DPM&C	1, 2, 3, 4
2. Develop and launch a national campaign for promoting and marketing teaching as a career for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	MATSITI AESOC	5, 8
3. Increase the profile of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers as leaders through bold affirmative action strategies that provide leadership development, succession planning and targeting of suitable leadership positions for filling by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants	MATSITI AESOC AITSL	6, 7
4. Work with public, Catholic and independent education sectors, and universities to develop culturally safe recruitment and employment practices that enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and teacher education students to identify; and effective systems for storing and reporting de-identified study and employment data	MATSITI AESOC AITSL ATRA AEU / IEU	11, 12, 13, 14
5. Forge stronger links between all Australian universities’ schools of education and Indigenous Higher Education Centres; respond to research findings on reasons for the low completion rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students; and implement effective retention strategies to maximise the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher graduates	MATSITI ACDE AILITEA	9, 10

# 8 Appendices

## 1. Independent evaluation recommendations

With the period of the MATSITI project having been five years, and many of the projects having commenced in the third and fourth years, it is clear that more time is needed to realise MATSITI's impact. The following strategies have emerged from a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of MATSITI projects and provide clear directions for future activities.

The MATSITI Final Evaluation Report can be accessed at [www.matsiti.edu.au/evaluation](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/evaluation).

Evaluation Recommendation	MATSITI Comment
<p>1. <i>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.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Archive of MATSITI website in progress highlighting evidence, successful interventions and marketing strategies</li> <li>• Significant benefit at low cost in communicating project findings to stakeholders</li> </ul>
<p>2. <i>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.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant appetite by stakeholders to continue the momentum of employment and teacher education strategies during 2012–2015</li> <li>• A school jurisdiction with track record of effective strategies, along with national Indigenous reference structure could lead this work in school employment</li> </ul>
<p>3. <i>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.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity now exists for much more targeted employment reforms based on evidence and identification of effective interventions supported by MATSITI – e.g. promoting teaching, university completion, AIEWs to teachers, targeted positions, leadership development.</li> </ul>
<p>4. <i>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.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper to be put to AESOC, aligned with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015–2018</li> <li>• MATSITI Teacher Workforce Scoping Plan prepared by NSW DET with five strategic objectives provides a robust policy framework</li> </ul>
<p>5. <i>A national strategy of promoting teaching as a career to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples be developed, launched and monitored.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several school jurisdictions and some universities have mature and effective attraction and recruitment strategies that could be built upon and implemented elsewhere</li> </ul>

Evaluation Recommendation	MATSITI Comment
<p>6. <i>A comprehensive national leadership strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers be developed and implemented.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MATSITI identified many successful strategies to build capacity of Indigenous teachers to take up leadership positions</li> <li>• Approach to be made to Principals Australia Institute, state/territory associations &amp; AITSL based on these findings</li> </ul>
<p>7. <i>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.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2012 Indigenous teachers comprised 1.2% of the teacher workforce and are unevenly distributed across schools and school jurisdictions – employment growth also varies widely across jurisdictions. Considerable opportunity for employment growth exists in the non-government sector, starting from a low base.</li> <li>• Targets for schools with larger numbers of Indigenous enrolments (or other means of encouragement) could drive employment of Indigenous teachers, particularly in the non-government sector where employment decisions are made locally</li> <li>• Also see Recommendation #14</li> </ul>
<p>8. <i>A national scholarship program of an annual 100 scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students be launched.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scholarships are demonstrated to be effective when coupled with other strategies such as considered placements and early career support – NSW Department of Education is the standout of all jurisdictions in employment growth strategies</li> <li>• This recommendation was adopted by Labor in recent federal election</li> </ul>
<p>9. <i>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.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considerable work is still required by schools of education in lifting completion rates, and there is appetite for continued advocacy by the Australian Council of Deans of Education</li> <li>• Completion rate at the beginning of MATSITI averaged 33%. Obtaining more recent completion data continues to be an obstacle to measuring the success of interventions in teacher education</li> <li>• An institutional framework for assessing the readiness and capacity of teacher education providers to maximise the engagement and success of Indigenous students – refer Appendix 4</li> </ul>

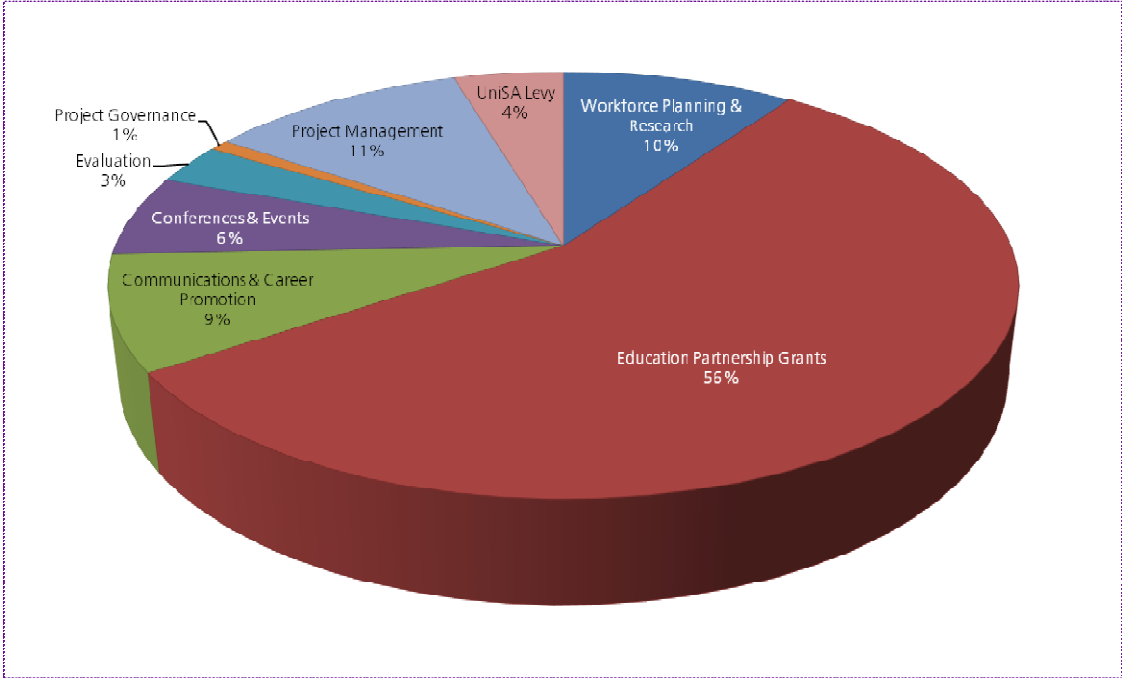


Evaluation Recommendation	MATSITI Comment
<p>10. Priority be given to establishing and promoting pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers to transition to careers as teachers and that such pathways be sensitive to the social, cultural and financial support required for success.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several jurisdictions adopted effective strategies to enable pathways from AIEWs to teachers</li> <li>• Visibility of the numbers of AIEWs and other para-professional Indigenous staff in schools across the country remains low</li> <li>• A broader employment and education program across all classifications would contribute to addressing <i>Closing the Gap</i> employment targets in 2018</li> </ul>
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MATSITI leveraged the 2012 National Teaching Workforce Dataset and repeated with a similar granular collection instrument in 2015</li> <li>• A repeat of the 2012 and 2015 comprehensive and robust collection process in 2018 will enable a 6-year employment trend analysis and an accurate measure of education contribution to the 2018 Closing the Gap target</li> <li>• Nearly all government and non-government school jurisdictions and teacher regulators supported the two workforce data collections, with the exception of NT Department of Education and WA Teacher Registration Board</li> </ul>
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Australian teacher regulatory authorities supported the collection of de-identified employment data in 2015 except WA TRB</li> <li>• Paper to be put to Australian Teacher Regulatory Authorities (ATRA) to consider. Most ATRA members indicated support for the Indigenous workforce collection in 2015</li> </ul>
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Australian Education Union representatives have been engaged in MATSITI governance and activities</li> <li>• Review future cycles of enterprise agreements with jurisdictions</li> </ul>
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment policy and preferences varies widely across jurisdictions</li> <li>• Transparency of Indigenous employment in non-government sector is limited in non-government sector due to school-based recruitment (also see Recommendation #7)</li> </ul>

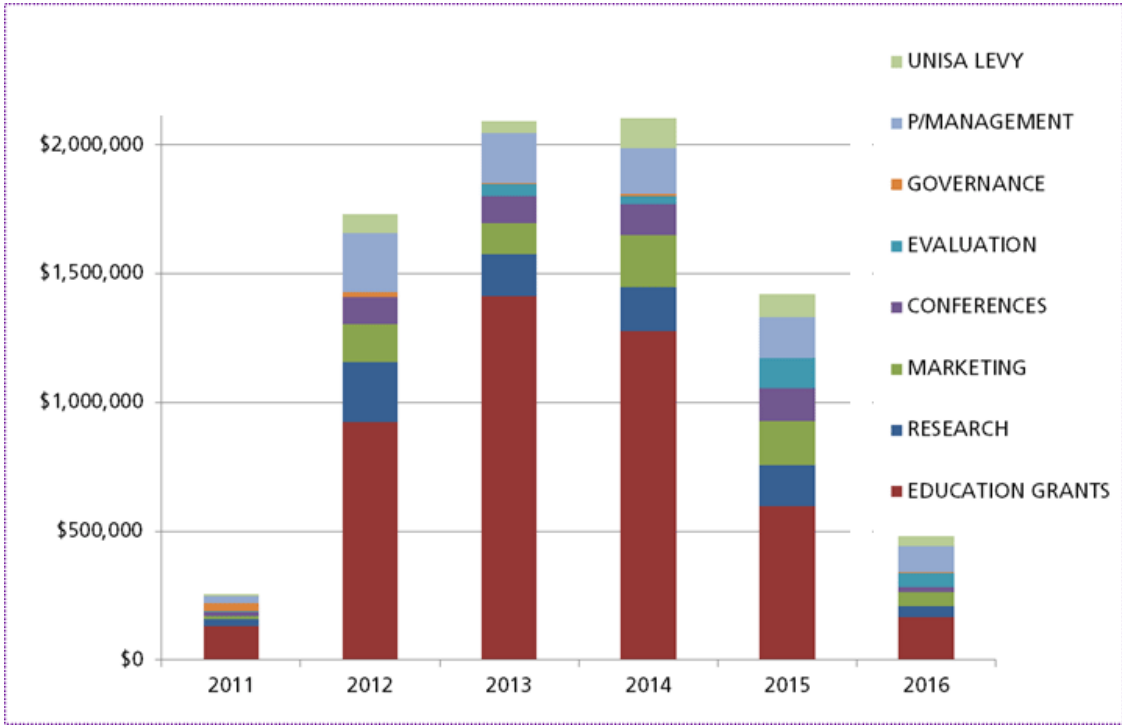
## 2. MATSITI expenditure

Total expenditure of funding for the MATSITI project over the five-year period was \$8.08 million of which over four million dollars was allocated for study and employment project grants.

The MATSITI project certificate of audit was provided by the University of South Australia to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in July 2016.



MATSITI Total Expenditure by Project Activities 2011–2016



MATSITI Project Expenditure (Draw-downs) 2011–2016

### 3. MATSITI web archive

During the course of the initiative, the MATSITI team posted 360 news and information articles on the project website at [www.matsiti.edu.au](http://www.matsiti.edu.au), including:

- evaluation summaries of MATSITI-supported workforce projects
- examples of innovative and effective practices
- video profiles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and school leaders
- career marketing campaigns and media resources to promote teaching
- Indigenous teacher workforce publications, research, data analysis and evidence
- Presentations from MATSITI conferences and events
- Planning, reporting and financial details of the project.

Project materials will be available as a 'what works' archive for an extended period beyond completion of the initiative – refer evaluation recommendation number 1.

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

Project Archive 2011-2016

Home About Teaching Research News archive Past events Search

### Archive: More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative.

**The evidence**

In 2012, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers comprised **1.2%** of all teachers in Australian schools.

At the same time, Indigenous students comprised **4.9%** of all students.

**Priority 1: Workforce research**

Qualitative and quantitative research and evidence to inform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher employment and workforce planning.

**What works**

**Priority 2: Effective workforce practice**

School and university strategies and interventions to increase cultural diversity in the workforce of teachers and school leaders.

**Promoting teaching**

**Priority 3: A career of choice**

Marketing strategies and campaigns to support the aspirations of Indigenous people to pursue studies in teaching and a career in teaching.

**The MATSITI Initiative 2011-2016**

MATSITI was a national employment initiative in 2011-2016 to increase the number and professional capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in Australian schools.

**Recommendations**

Key MATSITI project findings and recommended actions.

**Teacher employment**

Recruitment and career development in schools.

**Teacher education**

Engagement and success in initial teacher education.

**MATSITI Publications**

Reports from MATSITI and project partners.

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MATSITI What Works project archive (prototype<sup>39</sup>)

<sup>39</sup> [www.matsiti.edu.au/archive](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/archive) to be migrated to MATSITI home page when completed




## 4. Teacher education review framework

An institutional framework<sup>40</sup> for assessing the readiness and capacity of teacher education providers to maximise the engagement and success of Indigenous students was developed by the Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE) in 2013.

The framework includes two categories of scope items:

1. **general scope items** are those outside the parameters of the MATSITI project, but necessary as infrastructure to support achievement of the project objective; and
2. **student-specific scope items** refer to those things specifically identified as being critical to improving engagement and success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Schools and faculties of education have used the scoping instrument to assess their institutional action plans against the following continuum:

	Early stages/Foundational (activities planned, but yet to be implemented)
	Activities identified in Institutional Action Plans, currently in progress
	Well-established processes in place

### General scope items

1. Public/explicit statement of commitment to Indigenous Reconciliation/Education – communicated internally, externally and to students:
  - a. Reconciliation Statement;
  - b. Indigenous education strategies;
  - c. Recruitment and employment strategies.
2. Indigenous research.
3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' representation on Faculty Leadership and Governance groups and committees.
4. Standing Committees (of courses, learning and teaching, student experience etc.) that specifically focus on educational issues pertinent to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
5. Internal partnership with Indigenous Support/Education Units:
  - a. Shared understanding of relationship/signed agreements/long term relationship.
  - b. Specific point-to-point contact between relevant academic and Indigenous Support Unit staff.
6. External partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders, Aboriginal Education Consultation Groups, Indigenous Education Boards etc.
7. Teacher education curriculum that includes relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content/units developed and taught in consultation/collaboration with relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff/community:
  - a. Incorporation of relevant graduate attributes for cultural competence of all students.
8. External partnerships for building aspirations/capabilities:
  - a. Promotional media

<sup>40</sup> Further details on the ITE institutional capacity framework: [www.matsiti.edu.au/ite-plans/](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/ite-plans/)

## Initial teacher education student-specific scope items

### Student experience

- Access to individual advice
- Direct written contact with beginning students
- Customised programs and timetables
- Events
- Mentors and role models
- Recognition (of identity)

### Academic services

- Skills development
- Designated Academic Advisors
- Personalised Learning Plans
- Tracking
- Professional placement

### Academic programs

- Enabling
- Bilingual
- Cohort
- Pathways

### Scholarships and prizes

### Employer sponsorships/cadetships

### Policies and practices

- 'Walking points'
- Targets
- Monitoring and review
- At-risk policies/practices
- Exit interviews

### Culturally safe environment and spaces

- 'Go-to-staff'
- Staff training (induction/orientation/professional development) – cultural awareness through to cultural competence
- Inclusive learning and teaching centres
- Physical space

### 3. MATSITI Scoping Plan

Strategic Directions	Strategic Actions			
<b>Strategic Direction 1</b> Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students completing school and qualifying for enrolment in teacher education programs	<b>Tier One Strategic Actions</b>			
	<b>Strategic Action 1</b> Expand options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to undertake vocational education and training (VET) courses which can lead to teaching		<b>Strategic Action 2</b> Increase the availability of credit transfer from school and TAFE studies to TAFE and universities for VET courses with relevance for teaching	
	<b>Tier Two Strategic Action</b> <b>Strategic Action 1</b> Strengthen partnerships between schools with significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, TAFE and local communities to encourage study of VET courses which can articulate into teaching			
<b>Strategic Direction 2</b> Promote teaching as a career of choice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	<b>Tier One Strategic Actions</b>			
	<b>Strategic Action 1</b> Promote teaching as a career of choice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students	<b>Strategic Action 2</b> Promote teaching as a career of choice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support staff in schools, liaison officers and community members	<b>Strategic Action 3</b> Develop and implement a range of national scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to undertake teacher training	<b>Strategic Action 4</b> Promote teaching in schools with significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments to attract and retain quality staff including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and support staff
	<b>Tier Two Strategic Action</b> <b>Strategic Action 1</b> Promote teaching as a career of choice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at local levels			
<b>Strategic Direction 3</b> Develop, facilitate and maintain opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access and complete teacher education programs	<b>Tier One Strategic Actions</b>			
	<b>Strategic Action 1</b> Develop and maintain teacher education programs and support structures which foster successful completion by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people		<b>Strategic Action 2</b> Explore a range of flexible tertiary entry pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access teacher education programs	
	<b>Tier Two Strategic Actions</b> <b>Strategic Action 1</b> Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher support staff and other paraprofessionals to become teachers			
		<b>Strategic Action 2</b> Collaborate with universities' teacher education schools to expand teacher education programs which are delivered locally in remote communities		

Strategic Directions	Strategic Actions			
<b>Strategic Direction 4</b> Recruit, develop and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in schools	<b>Tier One Strategic Actions</b>			
	<b>Strategic Action 1</b> Develop and implement initiatives for the effective transition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander final year teacher education students into their role as teachers	<b>Strategic Action 2</b> Develop and implement teacher recruitment practices which maximise opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers to be appointed to and remain in teaching positions in schools	<b>Strategic Action 3</b> Provide system level support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander beginning teachers and ensure their ongoing professional development	<b>Strategic Action 4</b> Implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teacher Executive Development Program in every Australian school jurisdiction
	<b>Tier Two Strategic Actions</b>			
<b>Strategic Action 1</b> Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in their early years of service	<b>Strategic Action 2</b> Enhance the capabilities and support the career aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support staff in schools		<b>Strategic Action 3</b> Raise awareness among all school staff and community members of the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and support staff in schools and the community	
<b>Strategic Direction 5</b> Achieve lasting reform in outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through strategic partnerships at all levels of the education community aimed at enhancing the recruitment, retention and leadership capabilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers	<b>Tier One Strategic Actions</b>			
	<b>Strategic Action 1</b> Develop and implement systems for gathering national data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s commencement and completion of teacher education programs, and recruitment, retention and career progression as teachers in schools		<b>Strategic Action 2</b> Establish partnerships between industries, school communities and post school education providers to channel suitable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students into a teaching career	
	<b>Tier Two Strategic Action</b>			
<b>Strategic Action 1</b> Establish local level partnerships between schools and industries to promote teaching as a career to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities				

Scoping Plan developed by MATSITI and NSW Department of Education, full plan available at [www.matsiti.edu.au/scoping-plan/](http://www.matsiti.edu.au/scoping-plan/)



More Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander Teachers Initiative  
[www.matsiti.edu.au](http://www.matsiti.edu.au)