InSights

Improving teaching in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education: Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

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1.0 Executive Summary

"Our job as educators is to convince the people who control mainstream education that we wish to be included. Until this happens, reconciliation is an empty word and an intellectual terra nullius."

Dr Marika, 1999

This research examined the current and future provision of teacher professional development in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education in consideration of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, in particular Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4, at the National Collaborative level, the State and Territory Government Systems level, and the Local level.

Summary of Literature

The literature review was undertaken in three fields. First, consideration was given to the policy and practice context for teacher professional development and learning in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education. Second, a review of workforce development and system-wide, school reform, change management literature was undertaken in order to develop an understanding of the system-wide dimensions of the change envisaged with the implementation of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST). Third, research that specifically focusses on teacher professional development and learning of relevance to Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4 was reviewed.

This review found that there is an extensive policy framework regarding the provision of education services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians but there is no evidence that these developments are guided by a rights-based, socioeconomic framework even though Australia is a signatory to the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. In consideration of the workforce development literature, there has been no research conducted about workforce development as applied to the Australian education system with respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education but this literature serves as an important body of knowledge to shape successful policy and implementation leadership of this work of teacher professional development.

The growing body of teacher professional development and professional learning research provides insight into what is known in a general sense about how teachers like to advance their professional knowledge and skills base. There is some empirical evidence predominantly drawn from other former British colonial nations, and a few from Australian studies, about the effectiveness of teacher professional development programs designed for improving teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in mainstream education systems, over and above those needs that are understood more broadly within the profession but nothing on how teachers might be supported to champion reconciliation based on their improved understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Regarding Focus Area 1.4, there are two predominant foci in the literature about professional development programs designed to give teachers the skills to teach Indigenous students. These are, first, practical strategies for working with students, including developing culturally inclusive curriculum, improving student behaviour, language and literacy, using new resources, and second, ways to enhance the student-teacher relationship. Regarding Focus Area 2.4, there are three foci in the literature about professional development programs designed to develop general teacher intercultural skills and knowledge or more specifically to give teachers the skills and knowledge to understand and respect Indigenous cultures. These are, first, understanding history; second, learning intercultural or cross-cultural skills involving the development of, or changing of, teachers' personal attitudes, expectations and understandings of the 'other' culture; and, third, creating inclusive, intercultural classrooms or schools.

Summary of Findings: Environmental Scan

National Collaborative Level

The strength of the national collaborative effort is that it is providing opportunity for all State and Territory jurisdictions to work under a common policy umbrella. The policy environment is emergent and is being shaped by policy conversations about school reform, the public funding of education in Australia, improvements in productivity, and the role of the Australian government vis-à-vis the States and Territories. As such, teacher professional development programs are increasingly understood as a key aspect of workforce development, designed to deliver Australian government and COAG policy imperatives in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. Without doubt, if there were not national political and bureaucratic commitment to closing the gap in education attainment between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians, there would not be the accountability measure. Research has provided empirical evidence for the need to address the gap in educational achievement, the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education experts the development of the new Australian curriculum, the need for focussed teacher professional development in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domain through the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, and nor would teachers be structurally encouraged and supported to undertake this work.

Common limitations were reported as:

NCL1: Lack, in most organisations' policies, of a guiding vision statement that recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights and social justice imperatives that shape this work

NCL2: No evidence of structured policy or resourcing commitment across Australia with respect to teacher professional development in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domain as being a workforce development issue

Systemic Level

At the systemic level, the strengths identified were that where there are clear policies, guidelines, and resources available to guide teachers, that the education systems are confident that they will be able to support their teachers in accounting for the aspirations contained in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and, in particular, Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4.

A key finding at the systemic level is that the framework of the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is becoming embedded in schools and bureaucracies and there was evidence that this gives positive support to teachers for them undertaking professional development to improve both their pedagogical skills, their broader understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and their commitment to reconciliation. There were myriad examples provided in the various jurisdictions of professional development workshops, seminars, and resources available at the systemic level to support teachers to develop their professional skills in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education. No evaluation findings were offered to the researchers about these and there is no empirical evidence of their capacity to achieve the same reported successes if they were scaled up and offered at the national level. Cascading down from the national collaborative level, incorporating analysis at the systemic level, common limitations were reported:

SL1: Lack of system in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education as part of workforce development

SL2: There is scant evaluation of formal professional development provisions

Local Level

The local level consultations provided the richest information about what is working and not working in the provision of professional development programs for teachers about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness. The positive aspects at the local level are the IECB Network, RAPs, *Dare to Lead*, and *What Works*.

The limitations are consistent with the issues identified previously. Cascading from the national collaborative and systemic levels, the common issues raised at the local level about teacher professional development and professional learning in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies were that:

LL1: The approach to formal teacher professional development is patchy, ad hoc and lacking in cohesiveness

LL2: There has been a noticeable drop-off in demand for formal PD over the past 12 months for topics associated with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogy focus but not in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness and cultural competency programs, and

LL3: Teachers have fear and resistance about these particular Focus Areas.

Recommended Actions

Findings arising from the interviews undertaken and materials collected, when informed by national and international literature, clearly demonstrate that action needs to be taken at these three levels.

National Collaborative Level

- That the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* be adopted as the guiding framework for the development of a rights-based approach to teacher professional development in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

- That a communication strategy be led and developed by SCSEEC and AITSL to further principal and teacher understanding of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* and its importance in the field of Indigenous Education

- That consideration be given to the feedback from participants about the limitations of *Dare to Lead* and that it be redeveloped under the new policy framework to guide principals in their support of teacher professional development in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, linking to the new Professional Standard for Principals

- That national, collaborative research be commissioned to undertake a longitudinal study of teacher response to Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4 and the development of teacher professional development in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education

Systemic Level

- That there be a coordinated, multi-level workforce development strategy established for teachers that involves all national and systemic level stakeholders under State and Territory jurisdictions

- That there be commitment of time and resources that will support and encourage teachers in the work over and above the current arrangements

- That programs that have been found to be effective be scaled up and trialled across the national education community in order to broaden and deepen the research base in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and improve the skills and confidence of teachers to implement such programs

Local Level

- That AITSL progress the work of consultation with educators and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples regarding the development of a reliable knowledge base with respect to the skills and knowledge that teachers will need in order to account for Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4. including:

- Programs of study that will bring teachers up to 'Proficient Level' and beyond in Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4 that could be developed through:

- Consultation with key stakeholders to develop the core curriculum for Focus Area 1.4 (notionally 70 per cent) with 30 per cent to be undertaken locally

- Consultation with AIATSIS, the NCIS, the IECBs, the universities' Directors of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, and Reconciliation Australia to develop principles and guidelines for the core curriculum for Focus Area 2.4 (notionally 70 per cent) with 30 per cent to be undertaken locally

- A revised *What Works* as a sequential program of study (with online and blended learning opportunities) addressing Focus Area 1.4 specifically (with attention to Focus Area 2.4) with 4 levels that reflect the different roles suggested by the terms 'Graduate', 'Proficient', 'Highly Accomplished' and 'Lead' Teacher. We envisage that some of this work will be a reorganisation of current materials and that this will identify new materials that will need to be developed.

2.0 Introductory Framing

Australia is a signatory to the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Professor James Anaya, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, visited Australia in August 2009. In his report, he noted that despite some recent advances, Australia's legal and policy landscape must be reformed. He recommended:

> "The Commonwealth and state governments should review all legislation, policies, and programs that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, in light of the Declaration.
>
> The Government should pursue constitutional or other effective legal recognition and protection of the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a manner that would provide long-term security for these rights."
>
> *Human Rights Council, 2009*

As part of a broader reframing of Australia's policy provision with respect to the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the role of education has become a key proving ground. It is the Australian Government's intention that all teachers will have, as a minimum, a graduate level of demonstrable professional expertise in both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, and measures are being introduced in pre-service teacher education programs nationally to support this intention. This study concerns itself with the approximately 291,000 teachers currently employed in Australian primary and secondary schools, sixty-four per cent of whom are working in government schools and thirty-six per cent who are working in non-government schools (ABS, 2011b). Given the focus of this study is on teachers working in all sectors of the education system rather than on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are more highly concentrated in the government school sector, it is important to recognise that many teachers do not teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and arguably as a profession have little or no appropriate qualification with regard to either the teaching and learning needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students or in the broader cognate area of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

This research is predicated on the view that there is an emerging consensus internationally regarding the rights of Indigenous peoples, and that this bundle of international rights mechanisms, to some of which Australia has become signatory, provides useful guidance with respect to orienting our discussion of the professional learning and development needs of Australian teachers, in order for them to be able to account for their professional expertise in the education of Australia's children under the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL], 2011).

The rights-based approach together with a raft of Australia's policy commitments to social and economic justice for all Australians has created a very positive environment in which to consider school reform and teacher workforce development needs with respect to Indigenous matters. The Centre for Economic and Social Justice (2011) provides a useful aspirational framing for this discussion saying:

> "*The ultimate purpose of economic justice is to free each person to engage creatively in the unlimited work beyond economics, that of the mind and the spirit.*"

We have argued elsewhere (Ma Rhea and Anderson, 2011) that standards-based education in Australia has established benchmark expectations for academic achievement nationally, allowing for the measurement of the efficiency and effectiveness of education services provision to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. It has also, through its accountability frameworks such as the annual reports produced by the Productivity Commission (SCRGSP, 2011) exposed statistical differences in academic achievement between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students in Australian schools. If Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are not achieving the expected standard, then there are serious consequences for them in achieving their rights, and social and economic justice, for themselves and their families.

Together these big picture policy mechanisms, and the new Australian Curriculum, provide an ideal catalyst to engage and support teachers to develop their skills and knowledge of the needs and rights of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Whilst many teachers would say that this is a given for all students, what they often do not realise is that economic justice and success is something that they are socialised into from an early age; whereas Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are socialised with skills to combat and navigate a racist social structure, and into the value of maintaining culture and familial obligations in the face of these obstacles for personal wellbeing.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are now included in discussions when planning reform in the education system at the highest levels, which in turn filters down into the classroom. This has become a matter of course for all planning in Australia under the federal government's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultation processes. But what seem to be lacking are real, tangible outcomes in terms of educational and economic improvements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Senior Indigenous government advisers such as Rigney (2011) are concerned that the gap is widening. High quality Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education is recognised as a key determinant in improving the quality of life for Indigenous Australians. Despite considerable effort over that past 40 years, the gap in educational attainment between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians has remained seemingly intractable. VAEAI (2012, pp. 11-12) notes that since 1975, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been making strong representation to governments, pressing for improvements in pre-service teacher training and teacher professional development.

By 1979, the Australian Education Council had endorsed the principle that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies should be a core unit in all pre-service and teacher education programs. In 1991, as an outcome of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, Recommendation 295 gave unambiguous direction to government on the need for teachers to be better educated about Indigenous matters and that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be involved in pre-service and teacher education. Spanning nearly 20 years, the Hobart, Adelaide and Melbourne Declarations all had goals that implied that teachers needed to be doing more to improve their knowledge and skills in the education of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and to also guide their students, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous towards a better understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies. Under the umbrella of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), momentum has been gathering for the coordination of efforts to provide a nationally agreed framework for policy governing, fiscal arrangements for, provision of, and measurement of the effectiveness of education services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

Many education initiatives across the system, large and small, have attempted to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Australian government-funded programs such as *Dare to Lead, What Works, Stronger Smarter,* and *Teach Remote* have aimed to develop professional knowledge networks and curriculum materials which have begun the task of codifying successful approaches to, and barriers which exist to prevent the successful provision of, education in the Indigenous domain. State and Territory governments have implemented numerous programs to attempt to 'close the gaps' in educational achievement between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students under their jurisdictions. These programs are selectively offered and accessed across the Australian education system.

Even though it is acknowledged that one of the enduring impacts of colonisation is that control of the education of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples was wrested from the traditional teachers, parents, grandparents, aunties, and uncles and that attempts were made to assimilate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children through western-styled education, many non-Indigenous teachers consider that it is their choice as to whether they focus on developing their formal professional knowledge in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. This final report recognises that being a teacher in Australia in the 21st century is being shaped by changing societal expectations and international professional conversations about what a teacher should be and that teachers, employed under different circumstance, are under-skilled when compared with their newly graduated colleagues, even though they may have more teaching experience.

This research considered national collaborative, systemic, and local level responses to teacher professional development and professional learning being mindful that many teachers in Australia are expressing concern about how they will be able to validate their expertise in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and are asking for clear guidelines and expectations to bring them up to 'proficient' level. We hope to provide some useful recommendations that might assist to satisfy complex needs and enable Australia to fulfil its obligations both internationally and domestically.

3.0 Methodological Approach

Research Approach

Partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples: Our Commitment

This research acknowledges that we live and work on the country of Aboriginal traditional owners. In the spirit of reconciliation, Monash University recognises that in Australia it is situated on country for which the Kulin Nations in Greater Melbourne and the Gunai Kurnai Nation at Gippsland have been custodians for many centuries and on which they have performed age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal. We acknowledge their living culture and unique role in the life of this region and offer our deep appreciation for their contribution to and support of our academic enterprise.

With respect to our work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, we affirm that:

The Faculty of Education is committed to building respectful and equal partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, working together to create a culturally safe environment where educators, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous, will make significant contribution to the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in teaching and research. By developing culturally appropriate partnerships, positive role models and through the preservation and maintenance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lifeways in the Australian education system, the partnerships will support the economic and social sustainability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the development of the faculty as a national and international leader in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education teaching and research.

We are committed to a partnership approach in this research that works within NHMRC and AIATSIS guidelines on the protocols for the conduct of research and evaluation with Aboriginal people and to undertake research that is approved by Monash University Research Human Ethics Committee. We are also committed to developing meaningful partnerships with AITSL, the Project Steering Group, and other key stakeholders to ensure that our conduct is at all times culturally sensitive, guided by Aboriginal people, that there are accessible consultation opportunities, and that Aboriginal views on all aspects of this work are represented accurately in our reporting.

Key Research Questions

This research has been undertaken using qualitative research methods. The approach is a critical interpretative empirical study. The key research question guiding this research is:

What are the strengths and limitations of provisions for the professional development of teachers in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in Australia with respect to the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the development of teachers' knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, languages and cultures?

The sub-questions are:

• What research evidence is available internationally and nationally regarding the effectiveness of provision for the professional development of teachers in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education with respect to the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the development of teachers' knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, languages and cultures?

• What are the current practices and mechanisms, if any, at the Federal, State and Territory government levels for the provision of the professional development of teachers in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education with respect to the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the development of teachers' knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, languages and cultures?

• What are the current practices and mechanisms, if any, at the regional education departmental level for the provision of the professional development of teachers in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education with respect to the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the development of teachers' knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, languages and cultures?

• What are the current practices and mechanisms, if any, at the individual school level for the provision of the professional development of teachers in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education with respect to the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the development of teachers' knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, languages and cultures?

Phase One: Literature Review and Document Analysis

An exploratory mapping process was undertaken in the first instance to gather relevant national and international research literature and where possible professional literature on the topic and nationally recognised best practice in the provision of professional development opportunities for teachers in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. The summarised findings of this review are found in the next section.

Phase Two: Environmental Scan

Ethical Approval and Methods of Data Collection

Ethics approval was sought from Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC). We were also guided by AIATSIS (2012) Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies and the Australian Code for the Conduct of Responsible Research (NHMRC, 2007). The project was granted approval by MUHREC (Approval number LR CF12 0265 2012000114). Members of the research team then contacted the identified stakeholders, seeking agreement from them to be involved in the research. Arrangements were then made to conduct face to face and/or telephone interviews using the set of thematic questions identified from the research literature and approved by MUHREC.

The research team travelled to each State and Territory capital to meet with Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies, Traditional Owners, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives with special expertise, key government stakeholders, teachers' unions, teacher associations, teacher registration boards and professional development service providers, within the government, independent and Catholic systems and also independent providers. We gathered information at the Federal, State/Territory, and regional levels. Informants were canvassed regarding their knowledge of professional development service provision in this field within their respective jurisdictions. These informants were also canvassed about their opinion as to the strengths and limitations of current provisions and their recommendations for future provision. Purposive sampling was used to gather data in Phase Two. A matrix was developed to ensure that stakeholder input was sought from all jurisdictions, both from education service providers within the education system (government, independent, and Catholic), and from organisations that hold some form of recognised accreditation and those that do not. A survey data collection tool was developed, with particular emphasis on the examination of the strengths and limitations of current provisions, including course content materials, and drawing on the findings of the analysis of Phase One data. The scope of collection of data has been summarised in general terms by jurisdiction, by type, and by organisation to preserve the anonymity of individual respondents (see Table One).

	Interview summary by type	Interview summary by organisation
National	F2F: 7 Telephone: 3 Groups: 2	Australian Government Teacher Unions Universities National Indigenous Representative Bodies
QLD	F2F: 6 Telephone: 4	Department of Education Independent Schools Indigenous Representative Body Teacher Representative Body Teacher Registration Board Teacher Unions
NT	F2F: 5 Telephone: 6 Group: 1	Department of Education Catholic Education Indigenous Representative Body Teacher Representative Body Teacher Unions University
WA	F2F: 4 Telephone: 1 Group: 1	Department of Education Independent Schools Indigenous Representative Body Teacher Representative Body Teacher Unions University
SA	F2F: 7 Telephone: 2	Department of Education Catholic Education Independent Schools Indigenous Representative Body Teacher Registration Board Teacher Representative Body Teacher Unions University
TAS	F2F: 6 Telephone: 2	Department of Education Indigenous Representative Body Teacher Registration Board Teacher Representative Body Teacher Unions University
VIC	F2F: 7 Telephone: 6 Schools: 2	Department of Education Catholic Education Independent Schools Indigenous Representative Body Teacher Registration Board Teacher Representative Body Teacher Unions University

	Interview summary by type	Interview summary by organisation
NSW	F2F: 8 Telephone: 5	Department of Education Catholic Education Indigenous Representative Body Teacher Registration Board Teacher Represe
ACT	F2F: 6 Telephone: 3 School: 1	Department of Education Independent Schools Indigenous Representative Body Teacher Registration Board Teacher Representative Body Teacher Unions

Table One: Summary of Interviews

Note: F2F = Face to Face

The data collection phase was conducted between February and April, 2012. Overall, 56 face to face individual interviews, 4 group interviews, 3 meetings with schools, and 32 telephone interviews were conducted. Included in this total were three presentations made to national representative bodies, three university groups, one professional association group, and meetings with teachers from three schools. A number of key stakeholder bodies also circulated information to their memberships and we received email submissions with thoughts, concerns, and ideas from teachers.

Phase Three: Data Analysis

Synthesis and analysis were undertaken of available research from literature, internationally and nationally, and from data collected during the environmental scan derived from education authorities, teacher unions, teacher registration boards, teacher professional development providers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and teacher representative organisations, and the profession, scoped nationally.

Qualitative data analysis has been undertaken progressively using the techniques developed by Strauss and Corbin (1990). The research team have undertaken preliminary analysis of these data and have developed this analysis in order to report the findings in general terms and, ensuring that privacy and anonymity of interviewees is protected, delivering a coherent empirical response to the research questions and to make recommendations for further work. The techniques of grounded theory building were employed to collect and analyse the data. Fieldnotes from the face-to-face and telephone interviews were kept. Government policy documents and associated information about available professional development opportunities for teachers were gathered. The agreements to participate in the research made between the parties were always conditional on the full and informed participation of all. A layered analysis was built beginning with an analysis of the content of each interview. Interview notes were transcribed and assigned a coding number. No identifying information was recorded on the electronic copies and the coding book that identified fieldnotes with electronic transcriptions remains in a password protected, encrypted external hard drive only accessible to the research team members. These first level transcriptions were then coded to identify emerging themes. The second level of analysis was then conducted by examining the data according to the emergent themes. The final level, the third layer of analysis, provided the capstone analysis in order to address the central research question.

4.0 Literature Review

The literature review has been undertaken in three fields. First, consideration was given to the policy and practice context for teacher professional development and learning in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education. Second, a review of workforce development and system-wide, school reform, change management literature was undertaken in order to develop an understanding of the system-wide dimensions of the change envisaged with the implementation of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. Third, research that specifically focusses on teacher professional development and learning of relevance to Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4 was reviewed.

Examining the Policy and Practice Context for Teacher Professional Development and Learning

The policy and practice context of this study has been examined in order to understand teacher professional development and professional learning in the Indigenous domain: the international Indigenous rights framework, its operationalisation into Australian government policy, and recent school reform initiatives.

Drawing on the International Rights Framework

> "The value of human rights is not in their existence; it is in their implementation. That is the challenge for the world and for Australia with this Declaration"
>
> *Mick Dodson*

In Australia, we have not yet agreed on the best way for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia to achieve social and economic justice, and specifically the role and responsibilities of education systems, as outlined under the UN *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN DRIPs; see Appendix A) and the International Labour Organisation's *Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples* ('ILO169'; see Appendix B). What we do know is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander citizens are still not equals with non-Indigenous Australians.

With respect to education, most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enter the schooling system with some level of preconceived negative stereotype learned from grandparents, parents and their wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, due to the historically destructive force that schooling has been in the lives of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Recent improvements in education provision for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are insufficient to render past educational experiences of Indigenous Australians as null when developing a solution for the future success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This final report proposes that without a guiding framework arising from UN *DRIPs*, and other mechanisms such as *ILO169*, it will be difficult to achieve consensus on the rights and social justice framework to support the professional development and learning needs of teachers to advance the educational attainments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

International Rights Framework UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	International
Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and the Standing Council on School Education	National

'The Apology'	AIATSIS and Australian Indigenous Studies	Reconciliation Australia: RAPS	Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies	DEEWR	Gonski and School Autonomy	Cultural Competency Framework: Universities Australia	Converging Policy and Practice Landscape

1.4 Practical focus	2.4 Anti-racist Intercultural Inclusive focus	Professional Development and Professional Learning Environment

Diagram 1: Policy and International Rights Framework for Improving Teaching in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

As an international instrument, the Declaration provides a blueprint for Indigenous peoples and governments around the world, based on the principles of self-determination and participation, to respect the rights and roles of Indigenous peoples within society. It is the instrument that contains the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of Indigenous peoples all over the world.

Mick Gooda, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 2012

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (See Appendix A) addresses both individual and collective rights, cultural rights and identity, rights to education, health, employment, language, and others. The text says Indigenous peoples have the right to fully enjoy as a collective or as individuals, all human rights, and fundamental freedoms as recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights law. Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals, and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their Indigenous origin or identity. Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By that right, they can freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, social, and cultural development. They have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social, and cultural institutions, while retaining their rights to participate fully, if they choose to, in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of the state.

ILO 169

The United Nations Development Group *Guidelines on Indigenous People's Issues* (2008) recognises the pivotal importance of the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Convention No. *169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples*. It is 'the foremost internationally legal instrument which deals specifically with the rights of Indigenous and tribal peoples, and whose influence extends beyond the number of actual ratifications' (ILO, 2003: i). Of particular importance to this study, it provides a specific framework for policy development that ensures the rights of Indigenous Peoples are recognised in education (See Appendix B; see also Ma Rhea & Anderson, 2012, for fuller discussion).

Operationalisation into Australian Government Policy

The Apology and 'Closing the Gap'

> "We today take this first step by acknowledging the past and laying claim to a future that embraces all Australians.
>
> A future where this Parliament resolves that the injustices of the past must never, never happen again.
>
> A future where we harness the determination of all Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to close the gap that lies between us in life expectancy, educational achievement and economic opportunity."
>
> *Rudd, 2008*

On 13 February 2008, Prime Minister Rudd read an apology to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who had been taken from their families because of the policies and actions of past Australian governments. As way of moving forward, he placed a particular emphasis on education and its role in achieving reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians. The 'Apology', as it has come to be known, represents a change in Australian Government response to its role in Australian history and the ripple effect of the Apology continues to be felt in policy making and practice in education. In parallel, during 2007 and 2008, there had been a gathering momentum of national collaboration between State and Territory Governments under the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) that culminated in the adoption of six targets to improve the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians over the next five to twenty years. This work has become known as 'Closing the Gap' and its impact has been significant at the systemic level in education.

Reconciliation Australia: RAPS

> "It is not possible to talk meaningfully about reconciliation, and the transformation of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians that it aims for, without reference to human rights …. The treatment of Indigenous peoples throughout Australia's history has not respected these basic principles of humanity."
>
> *Dr William Jonas, Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011*

Since 2006, Reconciliation Australia has guided a national collaborative effort to turn 'good intentions into actions' (Reconciliation Australia, 2012), by providing a strategic planning tool, the Reconciliation Action Plan, commonly known as a RAP. Its impact measurement report (Reconciliation Australia, 2011) says that the RAP program has grown to include 300 organisations ranging from big corporations to community groups and schools. It estimates that nearly 200,000 students study in schools and tertiary institutions that have a RAP (Reconciliation Australia, 2011, p.4).

Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies

"The review team found there is an overwhelming view that IECBs and ISUs are important because of their contributions to Indigenous education. However, the current arrangements and structures do not adequately address the major education policy issues in the States and Territories, and there is potential for the Commonwealth to receive far more useful information than is currently provided in response to the funding agreements with the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science, and Training."

Bin-Sallick & Smallcombe, 2003

In 2003, Bin-Sallick and Smallcombe (2003) undertook the first independent review of the Indigenous Education Consultitative Bodies. Since the establishment of the education system in Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been involved in a variety of advocacy roles in order to attempt to control or, at a minimum, influence the ways that their children were educated. Most commonly, this advocacy occurred at the local level of the school or with an individual teacher. By the 1970s, as outlined above, and more fully discussed by Bin-Sallick & Smallcombe (2003; see also Watts, 1982), the movement in Australian policy toward Aboriginal self-determination saw the development of a more formal, systemic level process of consultation between State and Territory Governments and representatives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Many of the current arrangements continue to be historical artefacts of these early arrangements whereby some Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies are by ministerial appointment, some are incorporated bodies, and some are constituted through the election by members of Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECGs). All have various arrangements with both DEEWR and State and Territory Departments of Education and Training, given available time and resources, and are proactively engaged with advocacy and program delivery, including teacher professional development.

AIATSIS and Australian Indigenous Studies

Ma Rhea & Russell (2012) argue that there is significant difference between the terms 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education' (also known internationally as 'Indigenous Education') and 'Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies' (also known internationally as 'Australian Indigenous Studies') and for the purposes of this research about workforce development in teacher professional standards in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, and given the focus of effort intended for Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4, as discussed below, it is necessary to distinguish the contributions of the discrete cognate areas.

Ma Rhea and Russell (2012) found that Australian Indigenous Studies has emerged as a cognate area in Australian universities, drawing on the specialist expertise about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aspects of large and historically long established fields of research, predominantly in the Arts and Humanities, such as archaeology, anthropology, art, politics, prehistory, and history. In parallel, the development of university-level professionalisation of, for example, education, nursing, social work, policing, law, and health, has raised questions about how to improve the provision of these services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Faculties of Education, in the training of their students at universities, and in their ongoing professional development programs, have needed to draw on two interrelated, but separate, bodies of knowledge when considering the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers. The first comes from their professional, technical knowledge base, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education as *method*. This is about pedagogical approaches, curriculum developments and assessment issues around the learning needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and how to teach non-Indigenous students about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander society. The second knowledge base is found in Australian Indigenous Studies. Lecturers in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education draw on the broad canvas of expert knowledge about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, identities, politics and history in order to ensure that the university training and ongoing development needs of their professionals has the capacity to understand the aspirations and needs of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and clients. They also draw on what is known about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educational philosophy and methods of teaching and learning also including western education traditions in their pedagogical approach.

In summary, there is significant difference between the terms 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education' and 'Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies' and it is necessary to distinguish the pedagogical approaches, curricula and assessment decision, and contributions of the discrete cognate areas in professionalisation efforts focused on improving service provision in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domain.

National Policy Framework

MCEECDYA: ATSIEAP 2010-2014

> Having a strong demand for measurable outcomes, the reform agenda has enabled governments and policy makers to gather the necessary evidence of glaring inequalities in the educational achievements of Indigenous students and, further, to pinpoint where the system is failing
>
> *Australian Government, 2008; DEST, 2002; MCEETYA, 1995; 1996*

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014 (MCEECDYA, Version 2, released 2011) specifies the National Collaborative and System Level Actions that have been agreed by all State and Territory Ministers of Education. Of particular relevance to this study, the commitments made under *Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development* (MCEECDYA, 2011, pp. 22-25) are giving shape to the engagement of the Australian education system with respect to 'closing the gap' between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australian education outcomes.

AITSL: Australian Professional Standards for Teachers Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4

The rights of the world's Indigenous Peoples to control the education of their children are now more fully recognised under international law (see above discussion; see also, for example, discussion of ILO No.169 by Ma Rhea and Anderson, 2011), and cascading down from the broader operationalisation process described above, these expectations have been codified into the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers as Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4:

- Focus Area 1.4: Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

- Focus Area 2.4: Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians

Focus Area 1.4: Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

There has been much discussion about 'closing the gap' in educational achievement between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students and so special emphasis was placed in the Standards on teachers being able to account for their skills and knowledge in this area. The first Standard that refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters is Focus Area 1.4. The expectation of this Focus Area is described according to the four identified levels of teacher professional knowledge, namely Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished, and Lead, and is concerned with strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The descriptors for each level are (AITSL, 2011b, p.9):

At Graduate Level that a teacher can:

- 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.

At Proficient Level that a teacher can:

- Design and implement effective teaching strategies that are responsive to the local community and cultural setting, linguistic background and histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

At Highly Accomplished Level that a teacher can:

- Provide advice and support colleagues in the implementation of effective teaching strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students using knowledge of and support from community representatives.

At Lead Level that a teacher can:

- Develop teaching programs that support equitable and ongoing participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by engaging in collaborative relationships with community representatives and parents/ carers.

Improving teaching in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education: Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, AITSL, 2012

Focus Area 2.4: Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians

Focus Area 2.4 is also described according to four levels and focuses on teacher skills and knowledge associated with understanding and respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians. This is arguably a more complicated Focus Area to measure and address because it is predicated in the personal understanding of, and respect for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies held by each teacher and how this translates into their professional practice in promoting reconciliation. It states (AITSL, 2011b, p. 11) that:

At Graduate Level that a teacher can:

- Demonstrate broad knowledge of, understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.

At Proficient Level that a teacher can:

- Provide opportunities for students to develop understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.

At Highly Accomplished Level that a teacher can:

- Support colleagues with providing opportunities for students to develop understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and Languages.

At Lead Level that a teacher can:

- Lead initiatives to assist colleagues with opportunities for students to develop understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.

ACARA: National Australian Curriculum

For the first time, Australia is undertaking a process of national coordination of what is to be taught in Australian schools. Historically, curriculum has been developed at the State and Territory level. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is now responsible for 'the development of a national curriculum, a national assessment program, and a national data collection and reporting program that supports 21st century learning for all Australian students' (ACARA, 2012a & b). The development of the new Australian Curriculum is guided by two key documents; the Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young Australians and the Shape of the Australian Curriculum. Point 14 of the Rationale for the Australian Curriculum

(ACARA, 2012a) states that:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues are incorporated as a cross-curriculum priority. The ACARA website (ACARA, 2012b) explains:

The Australian Curriculum also means that all young Australians can learn about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, of their contribution to Australia, and of the consequences of colonial settlement for Indigenous communities, past and present. For Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, the Australian Curriculum promotes the importance of pursuing excellence within education settings which respect and promote their cultural identity.

A highly contested process, its implementation in parallel with the implementation of the National Professional Standard for Principals (AITSL, 2011a) and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011b) heralds a significant reshaping of Australian education. Within a broad range of concerns and contestations throughout the system and beyond lies particular anxiety about requirements regarding the education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and of non-Indigenous students about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. Teachers, in particular, are grappling with the implications of new expectations on them in this area.

School Reform Initiatives: Funding and Autonomy

At the time of this research study, there were two significant school reform initiatives influencing the work of ACARA and AITSL to implement a national curriculum and teacher professional standards, initiatives that are also influencing conversations about the professional education needs of teachers and what shape professional development and learning opportunities might take. The first, the Gonski Review, was a review of Funding for Schooling that was conducted by a panel of eminent Australians led by David Gonski (DEEWR, 2011). The Australia government released the report recommendations and its initial response during the data collection phase of this research and its impact was notable (DEEWR, 2012). Of particular interest to this study, Gonski et al (DEEWR, 2011, Recommendation 14, p. xxiv) recommended that there be a new school resourcing standard that would provide baseline per capita funding allocation for each student, recognizing that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students had particular needs that would require, in many cases, additional loading to enable schools to deliver high quality education services to these students. They say (DEEWR, 2011, p. xvi):

These loadings would take into account socioeconomic background, disability, English language proficiency, the particular needs of Indigenous students, school size, and school location.

What is unclear is the extent to which the overall rationalisation of school funding into a nationally agreed approach would increase or decrease the overall funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, given the noted lack of consistency and transparency in current arrangements. The expert panel say (DEEWR, 2011, p. xiv)

When considered holistically, the current funding arrangements for schooling are unnecessarily complex, lack coherence, and transparency, and involve a duplication of funding effort in some areas. There is an imbalance between the funding responsibilities of the Australian Government and state and territory governments across the schooling sectors.

Lively media debate about the review recommendations raised questions about what it would mean for the education system and many education commentators reflected on the potential for inequities to re-emerge (see, for example, Bonner, 2012a) but it will only be possible to assess this concern when, and if, the recommendations of Gonski et al (DEEWR, 2011) are ever implemented.

In parallel, there has been a significant devolution of the governance of schooling from bureaucratic, centralized control towards self-managed schools. Arcia et al (2011) cite Di Gropello (2004, 2006) and Barrera, Fasih, and Patrinos (2009) in defining autonomy as:

> "…a form of school management in which schools are given decision-making authority over their operations, including the hiring and firing of personnel, and the assessment of teachers and pedagogical practices. School management under autonomy may give an important role to the School Council—representing the interests of parents—in budget planning and approval, as well as a voice/vote in personnel decisions. By including the School Council in school management, school autonomy fosters accountability."

Australia has been influenced by international debates about school autonomy and accountability where there is emerging evidence (see for example OECD, 2011, p.1) that:

> "In recent years, many schools have grown into more autonomous organisations and have become more accountable to students, parents and the public at large for their outcomes. PISA results suggest that, when autonomy and accountability are intelligently combined, they tend to be associated with better student performanceArising from changes at the systemic level over the last 10 years towards self-managing schools in Australia, and referred to as the Empowering Local Schools program, it has been argued that this weakens the ability to leverage public monies for changes in the system that are identified at the systemic and national collaborative levels of the Australian education system. With the move towards autonomy, teacher professional development and learning opportunities are shaped increasingly by priorities at the local level. As Bonner (2012b), previously a school principal, notes:
>
> The bigger danger is that we risk losing many equity safeguards. If every school chooses its own teachers, the best will gravitate to those with the more valued location, easier-to-teach students and money. If the financial support for disadvantaged schools doesn't go the distance (literally, in many cases) there are no prizes for guessing which schools and communities will miss out.
>
> The relationship between socioeconomic equity and principal-led school autonomy is extremely complex and it is further complicated when considering how these initiatives might affect teachers and their interest and ability to access appropriate teacher professional development opportunities."

Workforce Development and Leading Successful Change

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines workforce development as 'the comprehensive management of human resources, so as to meet better the demands of a global economy at both the national and local levels, through improving economic competitiveness and social cohesion' (OECD, 2008, p.11). This study recognises that the operationalisation of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers goes beyond the motivation of an individual teacher. Teachers face myriad competing demands, especially in a time of significant policy realignment, and the literature on workforce development and school reform provides a useful context in which to consider teacher performance and how professional development and its planning might proceed in order to achieve the aspirations contained in Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4 (Wortzel-Hoffman & Bolitzar, 2007).

In making sense of what is available to teachers with respect to Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4, and in consideration of how to address their professional development and professional learning needs, we considered change management literature in the context of how to create and lead successful, systemic-level, workforce development. Theorising planned change was begun by Kurt Lewin in 1951. He identified that any change involves understanding a three-step process of *unfreezing, moving, and refreezing.* This simple analysis has become a foundational theory for understanding organisational change. Of particular interest in this current study, we consider Kotter's (2007; see also Kotter and Cohen, 2002; Collarbone, 2005b) eight-step approach for leading successful change as a way of identifying, and beginning to understand, the relationship between policy drivers, positive enablers of change, (Ford & Ford, 1995; Gellerman et al., 1990; Sackmann et al., 2009; Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010) and resistance to change (Erwin & Garmin, 2010; Piderit 2000; Stanley *et al*., 2005). This literature will be drawn on to further the discussion of the findings.

Teacher Professional Development with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Focus

Professional Development and Professional Learning: A Note on Terminology

This research acknowledges Mayer & Lloyd's (2011, p.3-4) decision to employ the expansive definition of professional development, first posited by Day (1999), one that captures both development and learning:

> … all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute … to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives.

Day, 1999, p. 4

In this paper, we find it useful to separate the terms to enable a clearer examination to be made both of the expectations embedded in the new national Teacher Professional Standards as a workforce development proposition and in order to optimise the opportunity for Australian teachers to have access to both professional development and professional learning in order for them to be able to validate their professional skills for Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4 (for fuller discussion, see, for example, Jacobs, 2002; Doecke *et al*., 2008).

We are using the term professional development to mean all those activities that are involved in human resource development of a system – especially formal qualification of a codified body of knowledge and professional learning as all those harder to evaluate but equally important opportunities that teachers create to augment their practice knowledge. Rather than reiterate excellent reviews of literature about what works in teacher professional learning and professional development more generally (Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Timperley, 2011; Gilbert, 2011; Mayer and Lloyd, 2011), this review will examine international and nationally-available research on teacher professional development and learning about the education of Indigenous peoples internationally, and with respect to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples more specifically.

There is some cross-over in the literature between the pedagogical focus of Focus Area 1.4 about effective teaching strategies and Focus Area 2.4 that encourages teachers to seek out knowledge about Indigenous lifeways. Important to note, there are few empirical studies to draw from that focus specifically on teacher professional development in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domain, this being an emerging field of research and much more needs to be done to understand how best to engage and support teachers in this work.

Literature and Documents of Relevance to Focus Area 1.4

There are two predominant foci in the literature about professional development programs designed to give teachers the skills to teach Indigenous students. These are, first, practical strategies for working with students, including developing culturally inclusive curriculum, improving student behaviour, language and literacy, using new resources, and second, ways to enhance the student-teacher relationship.

Practical strategies for working with students

Developing culturally inclusive curriculum

Canada

This research was conducted by Nielsen (2010). The aim of the study was to examine teachers' use of emotionally engaging pedagogies and a culturally-inclusive curriculum with students. Teachers in this project were not required to use a particular framework of imaginative education, but instead received professional development on various models.

Training in culturally inclusive ways of incorporating First Nations history and culture into the curriculum was aided by First Nations educators, as these participants in the project held local knowledge of etiquette and protocols with regards to teaching First Nations content. Practically all of the teachers in the project spoke of feeling empowered by the encouragement and legitimisation of the professional development approach to support them to teach more creatively and to be confident to use First Nations content.

The teachers also reported appreciating being part of an imaginative and inclusive teaching community that validated a systematic approach in which cultural inclusion and creativity are not regarded as merely 'add-ons' but integral to teaching and learning. Where the principal was highly sympathetic, staff seemed to embrace the project with only minor reservations. In schools where the principal had reservations about the focus on First Nations content, teachers came across as slightly more isolated in their endeavour to carry out project intentions.

While the impact on the students varied according to student ability, teachers commented on the increased written output and participation of students who had been only moderately engaged in their learning prior to the professional development program. Also, the community-oriented approach adopted by some teachers reportedly led students to perceive their learning much more positively and to have more enjoyment in completing learning tasks.

In general, parents reported appreciating the intent and efforts of the program. While imaginative education did at times seem foreign to some parents, a majority felt pride in their children learning about their cultural roots and pleased that this was being done in engaging and creative ways. For many of the parents, the program represented a reconciliation process missing in their own schooling, and so they valued, all the more deeply, its presence in their children's education.

Hawai'i

This research was conducted by Chinn (2007). The aim of the study was to explore the views of teachers of secondary science and mathematics about Indigenous knowledge and the role of place and culture in science education from a cross-cultural perspective.

During a 10-day Summer Teacher Institute *Thinking in Math and Science: Making Connections*, presentations were made about Indigenous Hawaiian cultural practices oriented to sustainability to enable participants to explore their views of Indigenous knowledge and the role of place and culture in science education from a cross-cultural perspective. In addition to the sessions, the Institute involved all participants in a math pedagogy overview, presentations on assessment tools and new technologies in math and science, observations of math and science classes including online algebra, and visits to cultural centres.

United States of America

The aim of the Native American Mathematics Education project (NAME, 2001) was to improve mathematics instruction at the Winnebago Public School on the Winnebago Indian Reservation, Nebraska and to provide purposeful interactions between pre-service teachers from Wayne State College and Native American children. Teachers participated in sessions presented by consultants in the field of Native American education. They used curriculum-based evaluations and authentic assessment. Teachers were asked to compare their teaching styles with the learning styles of the students and then make use of the provided instructional mathematics manual for teachers of Native American children. Organised by class grade, the activities presented were interactive, used manipulatives, and related to Native American culture. For example, in accordance with cultural values, competitive activities were used sparingly. In evaluating the findings, students' mathematics scores showed definite improvement.

Improving student behaviour

Aotearoa New Zealand

The study by Carpenter and Cooper (2009) involved group of Year 7 Maori boys who were difficult to manage, not learning, and their behaviour was having a destructive effect on their teachers and peers. The school established and resourced a class designated as the Achievement Group whose aim was to influence the behaviour positively and improve the academic achievement of these at-risk students. Their teachers developed Individual Education Plans through which the study was able to demonstrate an improvement in social behaviour by the majority of the boys. The academic aspect of the study was more elusive. Stanine scores for academic achievement varied, and some boys' scores increased while others decreased. Teacher comments in topic studies were mostly positive. Overall the boys' standard of academic work improved, as well as their ability to stay on task and see projects through to a conclusion.

United States of America

Research conducted by Hamm et al. (2010) reported on the effectiveness of a developmentally based, teacher professional development intervention aimed at improving early adolescent school adjustment. The intervention content was developed to be applicable to teachers of early adolescence, regardless of school configuration, student body composition, or other aspects of diversity within and between schools. The implementation of the intervention was tailored specifically to rural school districts, with distance education features i.e., video-conferencing, online modules. that provide easy and low-cost access for geographically isolated school districts. Even so, there was an expectation that the generic approach would improve the behaviour of Native American students within the school.

The intervention program was developed from basic research and pilot intervention studies that focused on the social and behavioural context of schools serving early adolescents, designed to help teachers to understand the nature of developmental changes during early adolescence and their role in student academic, social, and behavioural adjustment.

All intervention school teachers attended a 2.5-day summer institute. During the school year, between September and April, teachers completed eight online modules covering topics including early adolescent development, student cognition, motivation, classroom management, and social dynamics. During this time, seven hour-long videoconferences with project staff, in which all teachers were involved, were conducted in each intervention school. Thus, each teacher took part in a total of 27 hours of training.

Students in intervention schools improved in achievement, and improved or sustained beginning-of-year schooling dispositions, and perceptions of the school social/affective context, in comparison with evident declines for students in control schools.

Native American students in the intervention schools made significant achievement gains such that the gap in standardised test scores that existed between Native American and White students pre-intervention was markedly diminished post-intervention. Empirical findings underscore the importance of positive teacher–student relations to ethnic minority student success. Native American students, more than their White peers, reported that they perceived their classrooms to be less risky, their peers to be supportive of effort and achievement, and themselves to have a stronger classroom affiliation. In terms of perceiving a sense of belonging and perceptions of the classroom social-academic context, the intervention effect was that Native American students maintained a closer approximation to their sense of belonging at the beginning of the school year compared with decline for their White classmates and Native American and White counterparts in control schools.

Language and Literacy

Aotearoa New Zealand

A study by Phillips et al. (2002) aimed to examine the effectiveness of a program designed to change teachers' beliefs about language, learning and literacy amongst Maori students in New Zealand. It consisted of intensive teaching to help teachers to intervene with early childhood support with literacy and language. Substantial gains in literacy and language acquisition were recorded. The success of this project, however, also depended on the implementation of these teaching strategies where there were smaller class sizes. Teachers were taught about early language acquisition and were taught to observe and respond to children's behaviours in a more specific and focussed way, taking responsibility for student achievement.

Australia

This research was conducted by Taylor (2002). The aim of the study was to examine the effectiveness of professional development in an English grammar module designed to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners; Teaching English as a Second Language to Indigenous Students (TESLIS) (Department of Education Queensland and South Australia, 1997); Fostering English Language in Kimberley Schools Catholic Education, (WA, 1997) and Walking Talking Texts (Northern Territory Department of Education, 1994). What was lacking in these projects, however, was a more solid basis in English grammar.

Academics from the James Cook University developed a two-day intensive course for teachers called, 'How English Works.' This dealt with the basics of grammar, implications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners and related it to relevant Queensland curriculum and pedagogical initiatives. This was developed using a shared leadership model.

Trainers travelled to schools to deliver training, including in remote areas, and principals restructured the day to allow for student-free days, early school closures, or courses on weekends so that all teachers could attend. Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, although demand for the course outstripped supply (Taylor, 2002). The shared leadership model supported and influenced local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators to take on the role of ESL teachers, some of whom work in tri-lingual communities.

Pre-service teacher training courses were, at the time of research, looking to incorporate the course into their programs. This is necessary, according to Taylor (2002) to ensure sustainability. Systematic valuing and further resourcing was noted as essential to the program's success.

Australia

Cooper (2008) addresses the importance of Aboriginal assistant teachers in confronting the challenges of literacy education in school communities where the home language of the students is not English. In evaluating the National Accelerated Literacy Program (NALP) in the Northern Territory, this study argues for the need to support Aboriginal assistant teachers through the provision of professional development and supporting them to become qualified as literacy educators.

Using new resources

Australia

This research was conducted by Helmer et al. (2011). The aim of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the web-based program ABRACADABRA (ABRA) as a tool to complement early childhood literacy instruction in an Australian and Indigenous context. A further component of this research was to monitor the implementation of the program.

Feedback from teachers about the use of this tool was overwhelmingly positive. As expected, implementation fidelity was higher for younger and more recent graduates, who tend to embrace new tools with enthusiasm.

Although participation was high, many of the teachers did not link the use of this computer literacy tool to other elements of their literacy tuition in their classrooms and did not make attempts to assess the learning from it. The successful use of the program was dependent on teachers being competent in classroom management skills, a challenge for many of the teachers in the study. This reflects the findings from the Te Kotahitanga study in New Zealand which found that the program was not successful where teachers lacked fundamental skills not catered for by the program (Savage *et al*., 2011)

Support from the coach who visited the classroom to provide follow-on training had two benefits. It both strengthened the delivery of the lessons and elevated the status of the program in the school.

India

In India, Dyer et al. (2004) undertook a study which found that the local knowledge and expertise of teachers was not being utilised to good effect. The aim of their study was to examine training in District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) and how they have responded to teacher development challenges of working with nomadic peoples. The program was centrally designed and delivered at the local level. Teachers' needs were defined at state or national level and were subject content driven. Training was often provided to inform teachers about new packages, textbooks or resources available to them.

Dyer et al. (2004) argued that the programs had low 'ecological validity' because the professional development was centred on conceptions of what teachers *ought* to be doing rather than on research of what they are doing and what they might do to improve their skills and knowledge. The researchers recommended enhance engagement with the existing knowledge of teachers, particularly around their knowledge of local, Indigenous contexts.

Ways to enhance the student-teacher relationship

Developing culturally responsive teaching

Aotearoa New Zealand

TE KOTAHITANGA is a research and professional development project that aims to support teachers to raise the achievement of New Zealand's Maori students in public/mainstream classrooms. An Effective Teaching Profile, developed from the voices of Maori students, their families, principals and some of their teachers, provides direction and focus for the classroom relationships and pedagogy. The Te Kotahitanga project has been researched by Bishop and Berryman (2009, 2010), and Savage *et al.* (2011).

The professional development aspect of this project involves five stages:

- the induction workshops where teachers are pushed to critically reflect on their positioning in relation to their Maori students and the Effective Teaching Profile is introduced

- classroom observation and feedback sessions

- collaborative sessions where different teachers of the same class problem-solve based on student outcomes

- shadow-coaching sessions, and

- opportunities for 'new' knowledge and professional learning based on the outcomes of the former.

Bishop and Berryman (2010) found that this interrelated process allowed individual teachers to create self-determined goals which led to sharing within the group of teachers of new evidence and the creation of new knowledge. Savage et al. (2011) also found that this structure was beneficial to teachers involved in the process as it allowed for long-term sustained support. Teachers benefitted from peer coaching and generally working collectively.

The Effective Teaching Profile is based on the idea that classroom caring and learning relationships are integral to student success. It is directed to better relationships between teachers and students, culturally responsive teaching, and challenging deficit thinking. In the study from Bishop and Berryman (2009), they argue that for teachers to achieve good student outcomes from the project, improved positive relationships with students depend on them embracing the whole of the ETP. Teachers who aligned with the goals of the project experienced a re-positioning of their views of Maori students (away from deficit perceptions) and also felt it was essential to fully embrace the ETP (Bishop and Berryman, 2009).

Participation in the program raised teacher expectations of students (Savage et al., 2011) Interestingly, however, many students interviewed about the project described it in deficit terms, stating that the project was about improving students' behaviour and learning, rather than teacher practice. Yet, students also noticed a positive change in relationships and could indicate instances where teachers treated them positively as culturally-located individuals (Savage et al., 2011).

Changed learning relationships are outlined by Bishop and Berryman (2009). The traditional classroom structure where the teacher leads pupils in instruction driven activities from a top-down approach was found to be disliked and unsuccessful with Maori students in the ETP. New approaches as part of Te Kotahitanga allowed teachers and students to co-create the content and processes of teaching.

For one of the cohorts researched by Savage et al. (2011), there was successful moderate or high implementation of the ETP in 75per cent of classrooms, with many of the remaining 25per cent of teachers requiring professional development outside the scope of the Te Kotahitanga project. Quantitative results from the Bishop and Berryman (2009) study indicated an improvement in mathematics learning for the students whose teachers were fully aligned with the program and improved literacy for students overall. Their 2010 research correlates the implementation of the ETP with evidence of lessening disparities in educational outcomes between Maori and non- Maori students.

United States of America

Research conducted by Mearns (1999) examines a teacher professional development program designed to inform teachers about sensitive cultural issues that impact Native American student performance. Like Te Kotahitanga, relevant teacher professional development was created out of a needs assessment survey of the intended target group and their parents. The training was delivered to 220 staff participants on 11 different sites. The topics covered Native American students' cultural uniqueness, traditions of relations with the dominant culture, motivational style, and learning styles. This training proved popular with teachers, with ninety-eight per cent of respondents stating that the professional development was, at least, somewhat beneficial.

Literature and Documents of Relevance to Focus Area 2.4

There are three foci in the literature about professional development programs designed to develop general teacher intercultural skills and knowledge or more specifically to give teachers the skills and knowledge to understand and respect Indigenous cultures. These are, first, understanding history; second, learning intercultural or cross-cultural skills involving the development of, or changing of, teachers' personal attitudes, expectations and understandings of the 'other' culture; and, third, creating inclusive, intercultural classrooms or schools.

Understanding History

Australia

This research was conducted by Beveridge and Hinde McLeod (2009). The aim of this program was to change primary teachers' views on the history and culture of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Teachers engaged in action-research projects that began with group meetings. Each teacher engaged with students using stories and books written from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives with multi-modal deliveries including the use of new technologies. Students were supported to develop projects on history and culture based on the books. The project was supported by local AECGs.

By the end of the project, Beveridge and Hinde McLeod (2009) found that teachers had greater historical knowledge, put greater emphasis on portraying historical events more truthfully, and saw the benefits of working with local Aboriginal community groups. The project led to follow-on work where the school children made visits to local sacred sites, continuing to engage with members of the local Aboriginal community.

Canada

Ragland (2007) reports on a 3-year professional development course where history teachers were invited to work alongside practising historians to see how they 'do' history. After learning how to use this process with students, such as gathering source materials and analysing documents, the teachers then went through a process of feedback and reinforcement. The projects were resourced and then documented. The researchers found that both teachers and students began to engage more with local and community contexts in their consideration of history and that more generally, learning was more engaged and student focussed rather than teacher-directed.

United States of America

Tupper and Cappello (2008) researched a professional development project where teachers were supported to use a treaty resource kit that had been commissioned by the Office of the Treaty Commissioner in the region. Although there is little detail about the training teachers received, the outcomes for students are worthy of note. The study found that students had, by the completion of the course, a greater appreciation for the importance of treaties in the history of the community they lived in. It allowed Caucasian students to engage with First Nations perspectives for the first time and, interestingly, the researchers noted that students displayed higher levels of empathy towards First Nations people than at the beginning of the project. The treaty focus of the course meant that students could trace racial divisions through the history of the area. It was found that students who took both this course (as part of 'Native Studies') and the history course offered by the school, experienced dissonance and conflict in their historical views.

Intercultural or cross-cultural skills development involving the development of, or changing of, teachers' personal attitudes, expectations and understandings of the 'other' culture

United States of America and Mexico

Alfaro and Quezada (2010) analysed the experiences of groups of pre-service and existing teachers who went to Mexico on two four-week placements to study pedagogy and to live with local families for three weeks of the program. While in Mexico, the teachers participated in education, language, and culture workshops with Mexican peers, as well as taking classes in language and culture run by Mexican faculty.

Participants in both studies considered above reported that the immersion experience, as well as igniting a greater enthusiasm and passion for teaching, engendered a greater respect for the cultural and linguistic heritage of the students. Immersion in another culture allowed teachers to interrogate their 'outsider' role in response to the new 'insider' culture they experienced during the exchanges. Further to this, the teachers in the US-Mexico exchange study found that their new understandings of the background context of their students forced them to reflect upon and critically engage with their ideological positioning, reportedly a slow and painful process.

Greece

Magos (2007) undertook a study of teachers to examine whether action-research could support educators from the Greek majority culture to develop empathy for their Turkish pupils. Although not an Indigenous population, this study is included to highlight a general approach to intercultural teacher education and changing teachers' personal attitudes similar to the approach taken in the above example. The experimental group consisted of three teachers who attended a two year intercultural professional development program that included a one year action-research project. Two control groups also participated. The first control group consisted of three teachers who attended the intercultural professional development program without being engaged in action-research or involved in any other type of research in their classes. Finally, the second control group was comprised of three teachers who neither participated in the year intercultural professional development program nor were involved in any action-research.

The experimental group reported improvement in their relationship with their pupils and parents. They had reservations about the implementation of the action-research projects because of the conservative nature of the schooling system and all participants expressed prior feelings of frustration and disappointment from their work in minority Turkish schools. These feelings, dominant in the first interviews with the experimental group, were not expressed by them in the final interviews.

Creating inclusive / intercultural classrooms or schools

Aotearoa New Zealand

Baskerville (2009) is a teacher-researcher who developed and implemented a program in his school around Indigenous perspectives in drama. In advance of this, he participated as one member of a group of drama teachers who engaged in a 3-month full immersion teacher professional development experience in Maori cultural protocols and practices. By the end of the immersion period, he had more knowledge of 'things Maori' and, he argues, a disposition to teach differently. His appreciation and respect for the prior knowledge of his students as well as the necessity for him to take responsibility for their learning drove his teaching practice. This long process of experiential learning for the teacher resulted in changes in the learning activities in the classroom. Lessons were organised in ways that promoted collaboration and reciprocal teaching. The interactions of students and teacher was enhanced by an atmosphere of shared understandings, mutual respect and a willingness to clarify any misunderstandings, thereby establishing and restoring quality relationships.

Summary

As noted above, the pedagogical focus of Focus Area 1.4 about effective teaching strategies and Focus Area 2.4 that encourages teachers to seek out knowledge about Indigenous lifeways in order to promote reconciliation are somewhat overlapping in the research studies reviewed here. For example, the *Te Kotahitanga* project in New Zealand (Bishop et al., 2009; Bishop and Berryman, 2010; and Savage et al., 2011) provides the most comprehensive example of effective teacher professional development of relevance to this study, speaking as it does to both Focus Area 1.4 and 2.4 and the research gives empirical evidence of its success.

Studies Related to Focus Area 1.4

There are two predominant foci in the literature about professional development programs designed to give teachers the skills to teach Indigenous students. While there are few studies, there are some principles that can be synthesised from the approaches used and topics covered that might serve as a guide for future research and program development.

The most common approach was to design a professional development program that would provide practical strategies for *teaching Indigenous students*. The topics include developing culturally inclusive curriculum (Canada, Hawai'i, and USA); improving student behaviour (Aotearoa New Zealand and USA); language and literacy (Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia); and using new resources (Australia and India). Within the topic focus, there was opportunity for participants to learn something about Indigenous lifeways. The second approach was to focus the program on ways to *enhance the student-teacher relationship* (Aotearoa New Zealand and USA).

Studies Related to Focus Area 2.4

As with studies related to Focus Area 1.4, there are similarities of approach across the studies examined that relate to Focus Area 2.4 that might provide guidance in the development of teacher professional development programs. These approaches are understanding history (Australia, Canada and the USA); learning intercultural or cross-cultural skills involving the development of, or changing of, teachers' personal attitudes, expectations and understandings of the 'other' culture (Greece and USA); and creating inclusive, intercultural classrooms or schools Aotearoa New Zealand).

Of note, and recognising the paucity of research undertaken in the development of teacher cross-cultural understanding in the Indigenous domain, cultural immersion was a common pedagogical approach for programs that specifically focussed on non-Indigenous teachers learning about an Indigenous culture and for those that dealt with more general intercultural education.

Overall Summary of Review of Literature

This review of the literature both international and national and the associated policy environment in Australia indicates that there is an extensive policy framework that works to guide the development of the provision of education services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians but that there is no evidence that these developments are guided by a rights, socioeconomic framework even though Australia is a signatory to the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. In consideration of the workforce development literature, there has been no research conducted about specifically about workforce development as applied to the Australian education system with respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education but the broader body of research about workforce development serves as an important body of knowledge to shape successful policy and implementation leadership of this work of teacher professional development.

The growing body of teacher professional development and professional learning research provides insight into what is known in a general sense about how teachers like to advance their professional knowledge and skills base. There is some empirical evidence predominantly drawn from other former British colonial nations, and a few from Australian studies, about the effectiveness of teacher professional development programs designed for improving teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in mainstream education systems, over and above those needs that are understood more broadly within the profession but nothing on how teachers might be supported to champion reconciliation based on their improved understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

5.0 Environmental Scan

Introduction

The central research question that framed the environmental scan is:

What are the strengths and limitations of provisions for the professional development of teachers in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in Australia with respect to the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the development of teachers' knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, languages and cultures?

We travelled to each State and Territory to meet with stakeholders at the national, systemic, and local levels. We also undertook telephone interviews and canvassed opinions from teachers via their professional and union organisations. In these discussions, we sought both opinions and examples of materials that could assist us to build a picture of what is currently available for teachers to support them to develop their professional skills in the fields of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. Diagram Two (below), and the discussion following, shows policy and program examples shaping current professional development opportunities for teachers and begins the task of mapping the strengths and limitations of current provisions with respect to Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4.

As Table Two (below) demonstrates, and as discussed above, there is a comprehensive policy context that is shaping the provision of education services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the broader Australian Government aspiration for teachers to be leaders in reconciliation efforts. Analysis of what is available for teachers to assist them to address these expectations will be discussed more fully in the following sections.

National Collaboration Level	Australian Government and Other National Stakeholders with policy focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education	Council of Australian Governments (COAG) SCSEEC: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Education Action Plan AITSL: National Professional Standards for both Principals and Teachers ACARA: Australian Curriculum Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies (IECB Australia) Australian Education Union (AEU) Federal Independent Education Union (Federal) Australian College of Educators (ACE) Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium (NATSIHEC) Reconciliation Australia (RA): Reconciliation Action Plans		
	AITSL Standards	1.4	Both	2.4
	Australian Government Programs	National Partnership Schools Focus Schools	Dare to Lead What Works Stronger Smarter Teach Remote	Parent and Community Engagement (PaCE) program
Systemic Level	State and Territory Government	Closing the Gap (TAS) Prioritising Literacy and Numeracy (NT) ESL in the Mainstream (QLD)	Department of Education and Training RAP (ACT) EATSIPS (QLD) WANNIK (VIC) HR: Orientation (QLD) and Employment (SA)	ASK (TAS DET) Caring for Place, Caring for Country (NSW DET) Aboriginal Education Unit- Regional (WA) Connectedness Index(QLD DETE)
	Catholic Education		HR: Employment (CEO, NT)	Discourse and Discernment (CEO, NT)
	Independent Schools, Consultants and Providers	IECB Network AISWA, AICS Numeracy (WA) Honey Ant Readers Scaffolded Literacy (NT)	IECB Network Connecting to Country (NSW AECG) AISSA PD Calendar	
Local Level	Schools	Reconciliation Action Plans (Public) and School Strategic Plans (IND) Knowledgeable teachers and paraprofessionals Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners and LAECGs		

Table Two: Environmental Scan Policy and Program Examples

Strengths and Limitations of Current Provisions

National Collaborative Level

There is a comprehensive policy environment that is shaping thinking about teacher professional development for Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4. As can be seen from Table Two, all major stakeholders have national policies that guide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education from each perspective. The Australian Government, through DEEWR, runs a number of nationally funded programs that provide a point of entry for teachers into professional development and professional learning opportunities.

Of relevance to Focus Area 1.4, these are the National Partnership Schools and Focus Schools. For 2.4, there is the Parental and Community Engagement (PaCE) program. There are also a number of programs that are relevant to both Focus Areas. These are *Dare to Lead, What Works, Stronger Smarter, and Teach Remote*. All of these programs provide opportunity for teacher professional development. Teach Remote is a relatively new program developed to improve the quality of teaching across northern Australia. It is in its early stages of development and while there was knowledge of its intentions, little else was known about it.

For the other, more established programs, participants reported that the strength of these programs is that they offer teachers an opportunity for professional development through training days, conferences, and individual support, and also an extensive body of materials and resources to use in their teaching. Every teacher in this study has used materials from *Dare to Lead and What Works.* This was also true for many of the participants from other stakeholder groups. Many have also attended conferences, workshops, and training opportunities arranged or auspiced under these programs.

Participants reported a range of views regarding the limitations of these programs and their ideas to improve current offerings. With respect to the National Partnership and Focus School programs, if a school finds that it is involved in both then it receives no additional funds but if it is a Focus School only, and not involved with the National Partnership Schools program then it receives additional funds. While raised as a specific concern to do with these programs, there was widespread agreement that there was high demand and expectation placed on schools to improve but it was often a juggle to find the necessary resources to meet these expectations. Conversely, one participant argued that there was such a systemic level of racism that the only reason that many schools wanted to be involved in these programs was that additional funds were made available to them. His experience as both a principal and as a senior bureaucrat suggested that there was significant work to be done in the system to change the teacher mindset that immediately asked for money when faced with meeting the needs of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student in their classroom. Another suggested that on occasion, interest in programs might simply be based on a desire for the funding targeted for Aboriginal people. With respect to PaCE, there was concern raised across the IECB that the PaCE collaborations between DEEWR, the local AECGs and the schools put significant pressure on the local AECGs who were often not resourced to undertake the work expected of them by the schools and the system.

Dare to Lead was well-regarded owing to its past impact, particularly because of its approach to principals as school leaders. As one participant said, 'Nothing happens without the principal's support'. There was common agreement that the role of the principal had been a key driver in supporting teachers to develop their skills in the Indigenous domain. Participants reflected that Dare to Lead had changed significantly over the past years because of losing most of its operating fund. The logic of its changed business model assumed that principals were organised into regionally-based communities of learning and influence and that they would continue to be self-generating of the impact previously experienced. Unfortunately, for many this has not been the case. The lack of centrally-driven impetus, with its conferences and organising efforts, has meant that it has lost its cutting-edge relevancy to the system. Participants reported that they would still send someone to the Dare to Lead website as a first port-of-call but that even that was less dynamic and vibrant than a few years ago.

There was common comment that with the huge changes facing the system, *Dare to Lead* should be rethought to go beyond principals to include a wider school leadership group approach, supporting school and regional-based collaborative change coalitions. There is a new Principal Professional Development initiative currently being developed that is responding to this concern. There was also the idea expressed that the 'Highly Accomplished' and 'Lead' teachers who will be emerging in the new system should also be a focus for any new program that supports leadership development in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

What Works was reported as having substantial and on-going impact as a valuable resource for teachers facing new teaching contexts and challenges. The common complaint across all stakeholder groups was that it needed to be developed beyond its current form to engage teachers who, as one teacher said, 'already have the basics'. There is a potential synergy of the needs of teachers to be able to account for their skills and knowledge to the four levels of Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished, and Lead and a revision of the *What Works* program to meet their needs as they advance in their skills and knowledge. There is also a need for teacher professional development to include cultural competency.

There was substantial confusion amongst stakeholders about Stronger Smarter. Everyone referred to the impact of Chris Sarra's principalship at Cherbourg on thinking about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education but there was less understanding of the role of the new Stronger Smarter Institute as both a provider of school leadership training and as a broker for various government programs such as Next Steps and its involvement with Hub Schools. Participants questioned the local relevance of what was seen as its 'one size fits all' allure and there was both substantial praise for, and criticism of, the approach used. A highly experienced Indigenous academic interviewed felt that Stronger Smarter is less relevant in certain jurisdictions and not in urban environments. Even so, a number of stakeholder organisations participate in its programs and find them very useful.

Summary

The strength of the national collaborative effort is that it is providing opportunity for all State and Territory jurisdictions to work under a common policy umbrella. The policy environment is emergent and is being shaped by policy conversations about school reform, the public funding of education in Australia, improvements in productivity, and the role of the Australian government vis-à-vis the States and Territories. As such, teacher professional development programs are increasingly understood as a key aspect of workforce development, designed to deliver Australian government and COAG policy imperatives in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

Without doubt, if there were not national political and bureaucratic commitment to closing the gap in education attainment between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians, there would not be the reform and accountability measures that have been introduced. The empirical evidence demonstrates the need to address the gap in educational achievement and provides impetus for the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education experts the development of the new Australian curriculum. This research clearly reveals the need for focussed teacher professional development in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domain now highlighted through the implementation of the NPST Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4, and within this nationally co-ordinated focus there is the capacity within policy frameworks to structurally encourage and support teachers to undertake this work.

Common limitations were reported as:

NCL1: Lack, in most organisations' policies, of a guiding vision statement that recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights and social justice imperatives that shape this work

NCL2: No evidence of structured policy or resourcing commitment across Australia with respect to teacher professional development in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domain as being a workforce development issue

The overarching limitations that became evident in the analysis of national collaborative efforts were that there is lack of recognition in most organisations' policies of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights and social justice imperatives that shape this work. There is also no evidence of structured policy or resourcing commitment across Australia with respect to teacher professional development in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domain as being a workforce development issue. As noted previously, there are approximately 291,000 teachers currently employed in Australian primary and secondary schools, sixty-four per cent of whom are working in government schools and thirty-six per cent who are working in non-government schools. They need to know that this work is seen as important at the national level, is properly funded, and is being done for the right reasons. If there is no recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights and socioeconomic justice principles underlying the work then there is no guiding mechanism that is sufficiently robust in the face of resistance from education systems. The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples provides such a mechanism. Many teachers in this study have been actively involved in reconciliation activities over the years and see the power of such activities as the now famous walks across Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Sea of Hands as helping them to feel that they are part of making something happen that is supported in the wider society.

Systemic Level

In the traditional governance arrangements between the Australian Government and the States and Territories, each jurisdiction is responsible for its own provision and funding of most education services. These systems have until recently operated independently under federated arrangements. While all States and Territories in the Australian mainstream education system have some form of policy framework guiding their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education efforts, the provision of education to Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander citizens has been less straightforward as previously observed (Langton & Ma Rhea, 2009). After the 1967 Referendum, the Australian Government began offering financial incentives to the States to pay additional attention to their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, over and above their usual activities. Over time, as was also explained by one of the participants, this came to be interpreted that if anything special was to be done in the extra provision of education services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students that it was a federal responsibility. Thereby, many Australian Government education initiatives have been brought into the work of education as special arrangements, or 'bolt-ons', to the State or Territory system. An outcome of this arrangement has been that the fortunes of the provision of appropriate education to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students has been dependent on a complex mix of politics, the skill of the federal government to influence the States, and the willingness of variously engaged State and Territory Departments of Education to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education challenges.

Increasingly, COAG has coordinated the provision of government services nationally and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education has been a key area of focus under the 'Closing the Gap' strategy. The participants in this study all described the impact of these changing arrangements from their perspective. Of note, many identified that there is a governance issue between the intent of federal funding and how it is ultimately used. Overall, research participants' views reflect that some States have a longer history of reflecting older arrangements. While all jurisdictions receive monies for National Partnerships, Focus Schools, PaCE and other Australian Government programs designed to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, there appear to be different levels of integration of these programs at the systemic level. In addition to these arrangements, the Catholic Schools systems and the independent schools also have access to these programs but the observation regarding the integration of these programs is the same.

Analysis of discussions about the integration of Australian Government programs at the systems level suggests that historical differences in approach are coming to the fore under attempts to standardise the Australian Curriculum (ACARA), the National Professional Standard for Principals (AITSL), and Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL). Some States consider their approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education to be set to a higher standard of expectations than what is being developed as the standard nationally. This confidence is, to some degree, questionable when the academic results for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students under NAPLAN continue to provide evidence that there is a significant gap in achievement between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students across the country, despite some improvements for particular cohorts (for example, metropolitan primary school students). It was also noted that department of education provided programs in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domain is commonly assessed on the basis of perceived system-level need rather than end-user perception and this can tend to bias evidence about the effectiveness of such programs.

The Eastern States and Territories

The Queensland Government offers an extensive and integrated framework, under their RAP, for teachers, in terms of focussing their professional development needs. This is despite the fact that at the time of writing, there remain industrial relations questions with respect to the implementation of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and their impact on teachers' work. This jurisdiction is responsible for both mainland provision of education services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and also to schools in the Torres Straits.

The Department of Education, Training, and Employment (DETE) has an overarching *Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools* (EATSIPS) framework that includes comprehensive guidance for teachers to develop their skills about the education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. There are numerous programs that teachers can access to improve their skills in teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students that are coordinated by regional Indigenous Schooling Support Units (ISSUs) such as 'ESL in the Mainstream' and English as an additional language/dialect (EAL/D). There are HR programs that provide an orientation program for new teachers in remote communities focussing on effective teaching strategies, community engagement, and cultural awareness. There are extensive resources available to teachers to support them to work more closely with the families and communities of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (for example, *Connectedness: Improving Indigenous student outcomes by building connected schools*). The Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Committee (QIECC) and the Torres Strait Islander Regional Education Committee (TSIREC) provide expert advice to the state and commonwealth ministers responsible for education and training portfolios. QIECC provides advice to government policy makers that have direct effect on schools. In partnership with Griffith University (Indigenous Research Network), they are conducting research about community engagement with schools (funded by PaCE). The QIECC has a number of priority areas including all facets of education from early childhood through to higher education and employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Importantly for this research, they are often called to provide advice to teachers about questions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, language, identity, and history through their network of regional representative bodies. The QIECC has a strong belief, and continues to hear this message from the community, that professional development in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency should be mandatory for all employees in the education system and that this should be conducted prior to the school year commencing. TSIREC is proactive in the provision of advice, advocacy, orientation and cultural competency programs to non-Torres Strait Islander teachers, working in partnership with Queensland DETE.

Arrangements in both NSW and Victoria are similar. Both have policies that guide the development of Indigenous education, in NSW the *Aboriginal Education and Training Policy and Wannik in Victoria,* including teacher professional development. Of note in both cases is the strong presence and influence of IECBs, NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) and the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI), in the formulation and implementation of these policies. Both are incorporated bodies that work with government to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and both have historically worked closely with schools and teachers. Similar to other IECBs, they are a first port-of-call for many

teachers. NSW AECG in collaboration with the NSW Department of Education and Training (Aboriginal Education and Training Directorate) has developed an extensive teacher cultural immersion program *Connecting to Country and the Centre for Aboriginal Language Development involving local language networks spanning the state.* There are courses offered to teachers from Focus Schools such as the *Effective EAL/D Pedagogies for Aboriginal Students* course that provides teachers with strategies and understandings to assist Aboriginal students to develop competencies in using Standard Australian English in academic and school contexts. Another is *No Gap No Excuse* Module 2 that takes participants though an overview of the journey of the Indigenous peoples of Australia. It helps participants understand the broad outlines of Aboriginal experience, especially its relevance to Aboriginal identity, Aboriginal diversity and the commonality of Aboriginal experiences. It has been developed as a joint venture between the Department and the Aboriginal community.

VAEAI develops programs according to its mission. It also collaborates with both the Australian Government and the Victorian Department of Education in the provision of numerous programs such as PaCE, the Languages in Schools Web 2.0 project, the ACARA Australian Curriculum developments in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, parental literacy programs, and the *Embedding Koorie Cultures program*. Their combined expertise provides invaluable resource for policy makers, teacher, schools, and the wider community.

Tasmania, as another older State, faces significant challenges that are reflected in the interviews with teachers and others there. There is a State policy, *Closing the Gap in Aboriginal Education Outcomes 2010-2014*, and under school improvement plans there is a reminder to schools that although autonomous, they should consider addressing the needs of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Participants spoke of the still contested history between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Tasmanians and the fraught nature of Aboriginal identity in the state. They explained that teachers have a variety of commonly negative responses to any initiative to attempt to engage them in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. The State's engagement with the issues faced by its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were reported to be both *ad hoc* and undertaken with selective consultation and with little evident accountability back to Indigenous people.

One common point made in a variety of interviews was that many teachers believe, for example, that there are only a few Aboriginal people who remain in Tasmania and all the focus on them is unnecessary and distracting to other more important and pressing issues. Statistics suggest that Aboriginal students comprise approximately eight per cent of the total student population and, as a cohort, they present particular challenges to teachers. Participants in Tasmania felt that professional development for teachers that is unrelated to wider frameworks would not be helpful as attitudes towards Aboriginal people in Tasmania are very hostile generally. Issues of identity, as a historical legacy of colonisation, have been a pivotal concern in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies for many years and it was apparent that these debates need to be framed in a different way in order for teachers to overcome their concerns and hostilities toward engaging in the sort of professionalisation envisaged in Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4. The Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation for Education (TACE) is an incorporated body and works with all levels of government and across all sectors to provide high-level advocacy and advice and to work collaboratively to develop programs, and resources. Like others,

they are involved in an array of programs and have extensive experience of working in the education system. The main issues that they identified as challenges facing teachers in Tasmania were: a lack of understanding of an Aboriginal perspective; not knowing where to start; not wanting to get it wrong; and, a lack of consensus on resources about Aboriginal Tasmanians, especially the history, and that differences of opinion are as entrenched within the Aboriginal community as they are in the non-Aboriginal community. Their view was that this makes it very difficult for teachers, even with the best intentions.

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) has a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and its Department of Education is engaged in working with its Australian Government counterparts to develop programs for teachers. Many schools in the ACT also have RAPs and one school, discussed below, uses the same rights-based approach. The cascade effect from top-level policy, through the state level system into the individual school is showing positive impact. This framework, like that which exists in Queensland, provides straightforward guidance to teachers about their professional development and professional learning needs. Like Tasmania, the questions about identity were a common thread but there was marked difference in response and outcome by teachers from the ACT in their engagement with improving their professional knowledge, attributed to the support provided at the systems level.

The Western States and Territories

Western Australia, South Australia, and the Northern Territory, three distinct education systems, share responsibility for the people living in half the geographical landmass of Australia but with a significantly smaller population size than the eastern states. In the provision of education services, generally, resources are stretched. In addition to the geographical distances involved, these states have within their borders numerous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that experienced a later period of colonisation and settlement than the eastern states. The State and Territory education systems face the challenge of providing education services to metropolitan, regional, remote, and very remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Historically, like other states, there has been considerable provision of education undertaken by the Catholic education systems and independent schools, often following missionary involvement with these communities. More so than other states, the provision of contemporary education is sometimes still only available through these systems, often only at primary level, with there being no equivalent government school in a community.

In the Northern Territory, the Catholic education system has been engaged for many years in this work, under a social justice approach, has developed programs for teachers to support them to develop their skills and knowledge as envisaged by Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4. It has a strong *Growing Our Own* employment and teacher development strategy for Aboriginal people who are already working in the education system and wish to become teachers. Part of this program, for example, focuses on professional development support for the Aboriginal teacher aides so they can take on the teaching where the need arises, as the turnover rate of (non-local, non-Indigenous) teachers is very high. They work in partnership with the government, the Northern Territory Indigenous Education Council (NTIEC), and a university to develop this work. They also have a well-established program of engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the NT called *Discourse and Discernment* that provides the basis for collaborative governance, policy development, and planning. This engagement involves a group of four people who go to schools and to communities and talk, but mainly listen to what members of the communities are saying and asking for. They have found that communities are generally asking for two things: career support and training for empowering the community. Human resource development and employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers are similarly key foci for South Australia.

Western Australian Aboriginal Education and Training Council (WAAETC), as the IECB, consults extensively across its network to provide information and request feedback from its members regarding the significant changes in the provision of education services. It is also involved in the provision of many local initiatives designed to improve the standard of education to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The Western Australian Department of Education develops an range of teacher professional development opportunities and is embedding new approaches in its *Aboriginal Innovation Schools* initiative, focussing particularly on professional learning in with English as an additional language/dialect (EAL/D) where schools will have access to new curriculum materials and high quality professional learning to extend the skills and understandings of teachers to address the needs of students with EAL/D. In common with the Northern Territory, Queensland, and the Torres Strait, one strong regional focus for teacher professional development is in EAL/D and a significant body of professional practice knowledge is emerging

from this work. It will be important to strengthen this work with sound research evidence to ensure that the professional training being offered to teachers helps them to account for their skills and knowledge in a confident manner, based on improved learning outcomes for their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

From a systemic level perspective, many participants in these jurisdictions commented that to achieve the aims embedded in Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4, there needed to be a significant investment made in increasing the number of Indigenous teachers. Many commented positively on the new *More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative* (MATSITI) that has been specifically tasked with furthering this goal. Some participants from these jurisdictions work in regionally based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education units that are responsible for supporting teachers and schools and they noted that the current provisions for teachers in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education are poor and that teachers needed much more training and cultural awareness than they had. They were unanimous in agreeing that there were not enough Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the education system to change non-Indigenous teachers' attitudes one by one and that there needed to be more resources and time allocated if the government really wanted teachers to change. Some interviewees argued that the paraprofessional education workers (variously called teaching assistants, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officers/ Australian Indigenous Education Workers), some of whom aim to become teachers, should also be a part of the implementation of 1.4 and 2.4.

Summary

At the systemic level, the strengths identified were that where there are clear policies, guidelines, and resources available to guide teachers, the education systems are confident that they will be able to support their teachers in accounting for the aspirations contained in Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4.

A key finding at the systemic level is that the framework of the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is becoming embedded in schools and bureaucracies and there was evidence from both Queensland and ACT that having a State Government RAP gives positive support to teachers in undertaking professional development to improve their pedagogical skills, their broader understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and their commitment to reconciliation. In many ways, ACT and Tasmania share similar experiences with respect to ongoing tensions about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity that impact at the systemic level. However, unlike ACT, the Tasmanian Department of Education and their schools do not have a RAP as their overarching commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In the absence of this sort of overarching mechanism, there was little to report about teacher professional development initiatives within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domain.

There were myriad examples provided in the various jurisdictions of resources available at the systemic level to support teachers to develop their professional skills in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. In addition to those discussed, a brief note will be made of examples that have developed in partnership collaborations: the *Aboriginal Sharers of Knowledge* program, a Tasmanian Department of Education collaboration with TACE; a numeracy program developed by the Association of Independent Schools Western Australia (AISWA) consultants who work with the Aboriginal Independent Community Schools (AICS); and, the *Honey Ant Readers*, a partnership between the Association of Independent Schools (NT) and a private educational resources linguist. These examples might be useful to consider in relation to Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4. No evaluation findings were offered to the researchers and there is no empirical evidence of their capacity to achieve the same reported successes if they were offered at the systemic level but the principles underlying these examples make them worthy of consideration to be adapted more broadly.

Tasmanian participants reported positively on the *Aboriginal Sharers of Knowledge (*ASK) program run by DET (TAS) as something that could be adapted in other jurisdictions because it involved engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into the program in a way that valued their knowledge as Ambassadors and provided them with proper financial recognition, unlike many other programs that they said gleaned the input from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people without due reference or recompense for their knowledge. The Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania website says:

"The Aboriginal Sharers of Knowledge Program (ASK), designed specifically for schools, has Ambassadors available with a wide range of knowledge and expertise in Aboriginal culture and history which complements curriculum in Tasmanian schools."

Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania, 2012

Another is the numeracy program developed by AISWA consultants who work with the AICS. The project coordinator argues that this program was developed to bridge the gap between the learning needs of the students and their cultural knowledge and that care should be taken not to allow the two Focus Areas to become freestanding without reference to one another, a point raised by a number of other experienced teachers.

In another example, a private provider, a linguist educator, in partnership with AIS (NT) has tackled the enduring issue of scaffolding Aboriginal student literacy development by producing a literacy resource, the *Honey Ant Readers* (2012), that moves from a bilingual approach using home language through the transition to Aboriginal English and then on to Standard Australian English. Previously, except for those who had been trained in bilingual/bicultural education methods, teachers who were not linguists or had no background in ESL/EFL had little to support them in developing their students' literacy where the home language is an Aboriginal language except for broad guidelines such as are found in the NT Department of Education and Training's *Prioritising Literacy and Numeracy* (2010). The new resource, the *Honey Ant Readers*, developed for Central Desert languages, has an underlying developmental structure that is amenable to adaptation by linguist educators who are speakers of other Aboriginal languages. A teacher professional program is also in development.

In the final example, a number of participants in this study spoke very positively of an immersion program in NSW run by the NSW AECG called *Connecting to Country* that involves teachers in a three day cultural awareness immersion program followed up by two days of learning how to turn their new knowledge into quality teaching within their schools and classrooms. It is the sort of program that, with the necessary discussions and permissions, could be used to form the basis of similar programs in all State and Territory jurisdictions.

Cascading down from the national collaborative level, incorporating analysis at the systemic level, common limitations were reported:

SL1: Lack of systemic level planning for teacher professional development in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education as part of workforce development

SL2: There is scant evaluation of formal professional development provisions

There were a number of limitations identified at the systemic level. First, there is scant cross-sectoral professional development undertaken by teachers. Those in the public sector tend to go to department planned events and conferences and to their local teachers' unions for workshops and conferences. Those in the Catholic and Independent sectors have their systems of professional development that have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific and more generic programs that include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives on the topic. Across the system nationally, there has been a reported drop off in teachers attending professional development generally and often there are now no specific opportunities available that focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. Where there is specific professional development offered, it appears that there is a strong focus on cultural awareness and cultural competency workshops (Focus Area 2.4) rather than on programs that would support Focus Area 1.4. An advocate group in the Northern Territory felt that the quality of the Department of Education and Training programs around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education is extremely poor. They felt that the success of the professional development approach and opportunities for staff was very dependent on the principal.

What is happening more commonly is that PD is being conducted about the learning needs of, for example, disadvantaged learners and mums with kids, or topics such as substance abuse, bullying, child protection that claims to include specific attention to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It was difficult to ascertain the quality of PD in general because of the lack of evidence-based evaluation that has been conducted about such programs. A number of participants in this study raised concerns that there is no quality control occurring and that this development in the way that teacher PD is being provided has marginalised the input of knowledgeable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. One participant, a member of an IECB, takes it upon herself to attend teacher professional development events (and invited the researchers to accompany her) and she reports that from the way the presenters covered the topics, their knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters was limited. Firstly, she monitors who facilitates the programs and what their qualifications are. Secondly, she looks to who does the quality control of the programs and argues that this should be controlled by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. She regularly reports presenters to the Department of Education in her jurisdiction for failing to deal with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues appropriately in their workshops.

Another group questioned who would judge the demonstration and competence of teachers for meeting the Focus Areas. There is an issue about how the knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is included into approaches that would enable teachers to demonstrate Focus Area 2.4, about who owns such knowledge, wanting to avoid handing over that knowledge to be packaged and used by non-Indigenous people without accountability back to the original knowledge holders. This has happened in the past and is a fear of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It was felt that holders of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge must be provided with routes towards accreditation as trainers and providers of professional development for the NPST Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4.

On the matter of quality control, most organisations that participated in this study perform a brokerage role rather than developing their own programs for teacher professional development in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. As reported by these organisations, while there is evaluation done of the presenter and the level of satisfaction with the workshop of the participants on the day (known as 'single loop' evaluation or 'happy sheets') there is little more developed quality assurance undertaken and therefore no opportunity for 'double loop' learning, the foundation of organisational development. As noted, the lack of participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in evaluating the efficacy of teacher professional development and learning marks Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as consumers of education rather than drivers of systemic improvement for their children.

Local Level

The analysis of the data suggested that teachers, first and foremost, are accessing professional development according to their individual, identified needs and that training opportunities in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education for either Focus Area is patchy. There are many approaches. There is very little agreement as to what should be in the Australian Curriculum and little consensus on how to guide teachers. In this environment, teachers reported abandoning organised programs in favour of seeking out Aboriginal people who could help them. Members in the IECB network report increasing numbers of teachers asking them for help, pointing out that they are not resourced for such increased demand but are trying their best to help these teachers.

Discussions at the local level with teachers, members of the IECB network, and school leaders pointed to a consensus that, as one teacher said, there will be a strong expectation that 'teachers will be up to speed and they will not be given a choice about the Standards in general and these Focus Areas in particular'. A common theme at the local level was the sense that teachers are being mandated to take on this work and not being given a choice. Another teacher emphasised that, '…there has to be professional respect in how this is done'. One interviewee from a representative organisation felt teachers should be surveyed and asked what *they feel* are the gaps in their knowledge to allow teachers to demonstrate their knowledge.

A union representative in Queensland felt the Standards should be linked to incentives for teachers. Otherwise, she warned, they would be seen as a 'nightmare' and not suitable for experienced teachers. Another participant from one of the Teacher Registration Boards felt that if the professional development is not mandated, with an expectation of increased number of hours and a focused workforce development strategy, then teachers will just see it as part of their usual professional learning and may or may not select to become competent in it.

There was considerable fear and concern expressed about whether these Focus Areas would be linked to teacher promotion opportunities. In particular, a number of teachers asked how they would be able to demonstrate their proficiency in Focus Area 1.4 if they did not have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in their classes. There was also significant resistance expressed in some places. For both ACT and Tasmania, and to some extent, Victoria, the fact that most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not 'cosmetically-apparent' Aborigines (Holt in Jopson, 2000) allows teachers and the broader schooling system to question the extent of the importance of the issue.

Across Australia, the common view expressed by IECB members was that it is hard for Aboriginal people to believe that something can be done as they are repeatedly being kept out of the system. In particular, end users feel they are not involved enough in the system set up to meet their particular needs. One experienced Aboriginal teacher said that they believed that AITSL has to step up and ensure minimum standards, in conversation with Aboriginal people, as it was their kids who were suffering. This was a consistent finding from the data that there are generally high hopes among the Aboriginal community that AITSL will step up and enforce at least these minimum standards.

A school leader said:

"There is no professional learning available for 1.4 and 2.4 currently which aligns with the national plan. Some work is being done at school level, but there is no cohesiveness. The Aboriginal Education Services Unit provides programs focusing on cross-cultural awareness which work with teachers at the curriculum level."

It became evident that up until now the decision to engage or not with being a skilled teacher in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education has rested with the individual teacher in a system that has, by and large, permitted a 'conscience vote' on the matter. Within this picture of fear, resistance, concern, and a degree of hope, there were a number of common themes that emerged from the data:

Reconciliation Action Plans and School Strategic Plans

As discussed at the systemic level, a successful method that is being employed to assist principals and schools in overcoming the evident patchiness and lack of cohesiveness in professional development opportunities for teachers in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education is the use of Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs). Many participants spoke in favour of RAPs and teachers who were working in a RAP school felt that their work was part of a bigger picture that was supported by the school. As was noted above, some Departments of Education, and governments have committed themselves to RAPs and teachers who were working within this framework appeared to be more focussed in their articulation of where they saw their contributions. More importantly for this study, teachers were also able to identify, in conversation with their principals and other school leaders, how to focus their professional development and how to engage with the families and communities of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

One of the Aboriginal participants gave tentative support for the RAPs in schools but cautioned that it has to be done from a rights perspective and the community has to be partners in its development or otherwise this approach might do more harm than good. Certainly the teacher participants in this study all spoke positively about RAPs even though it was not information that was directly sought through the interview questions.

Other teachers and schools spoke about their school strategic plans and how they were able to focus the professional development needs of teachers through engaging them in the development of such plans if there was a whole of school commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

Knowledgeable teachers and paraprofessionals

A significant concern that was raised across the data was about the status of Aboriginal teachers within the system. Many asked how these changes would impact them, with a common concern expressed that they would be the ones in the school that everyone would expect to come up with the answers about everything to do with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. Certainly, at the school level a number of school leaders said they were lucky that they had teachers who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander to whom they could refer their staff when a problem arose. But, asked one Aboriginal teacher:

"What about my professional development needs? I don't know everything about how our kids learn but I am expected to solve all the white teachers' problems. They blame me if things don't get fixed quickly and that puts a lot of pressure on me."

Teachers and paraprofessionals who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander commonly reported facilitating non-Indigenous colleagues to make contact with the families and communities of their students and into the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, often through the IECB network of local Aboriginal Education Consultitative Groups (LAECGs, discussed more fully below).

An important question was raised in these discussions about whether such highly skilled and knowledgeable teachers and paraprofessionals who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander would be recognised as specialist 'Highly Accomplished' and 'Lead' teachers in the new system or would there be yet another reinforcement of their marginal status in them seeing non-Indigenous people climb the ladder before them? As one Aboriginal ex-senior government bureaucrat and Elder commented:

"Some of these teachers should be given lead teacher status as soon as possible so they can lead the change. If Indigenous-identified teachers are not in lead roles, Indigenous professionals who hold this knowledge will be swamped (again) by non-Indigenous people."

When asked the question about where one would send a teacher who wanted professional development in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, a common response was 'the principal'. If the principal was a *Dare to Lead* principal then participants felt that there was some chance that they would be able to point the teacher in the right direction. If not, they usually knew someone in the system who could help. Many participants felt that the *Dare to Lead* program had been a great first point for information but that it had lost its way because of lack of funding for support staff and because the program as it is being run by Principals Australia takes a goodwill approach rather than the rights-based approach that participants believe is needed for it to be successful. A number of participants commented that they were frustrated that there was very little to go to after accessing the website. One teacher said that *Dare to Lead* has changed significantly. She observed that they have a lot of resources but that it has died off a bit and that although many people are involved in the network, she felt that much of it is in name only. A school leader said that Dare to Lead is not seen as cutting edge anymore, but rather it seems institutionalised and needs shaking up.

This point leads to a broader discussion about materials and resources that are available to teachers. There are myriad, produced by departments of education, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, and independent educational publishers. For example, in Queensland, the ISSU has a library dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resources that is utilised by schools all across Queensland. Many teachers report accessing information on the web ranging from lesson plans to more extensive and detailed information. An important source of information for teachers has been *What Works*. As discussed previously, this is an Australian Government program, based on a range of findings arising from an Australian Quality Teaching project in the 1990s, and developed into a set of materials and resources for teachers.

As discussed previously about Dare to Lead, many teachers reported using *What Works* at one time or another but that they wanted the materials to be developed further. One teacher said *'What Works* is good, but it only has one level and no follow on. It needs to be updated and given some depth'. Another commented that '*What Works* needs different levels'. And another said: 'I used the *What Work*s questionnaire and maybe you can go back and do it again as a kind of audit of how you are going but it needs more levels and should involve follow-up activities'.

Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners and LAECGs

From the analysis of the data, without doubt the IECB network is the most informed organisation in this study about the strengths and limitations of current provisions for teacher professional development. At both the national and systemic levels, they are the knowledge-holders about how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, their families, and their broader communities see the education system, schools, government efforts, and of particular relevance to this study, teachers, and teacher professional development needs. They report that they are, in addition to their advisory and advocacy roles, a common point for teachers, government officials, and parents, seeking information and advice about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and for schools seeking speakers and professional development opportunities. Schools approach them to assist them in the development of their RAPs. There was consensus across IECB (Australia) that knowledgeable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must be involved in developing programs and materials to support teacher professional development in both Focus Areas and noted that with the increased demands being placed on the network and there is already strain on their available resources.

Summary

The local level consultations provided the richest information about what is working and not working in the provision of professional development programs for teachers about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness. The positive aspects at the local level are the IECB Network, the RAPs, *Dare to Lead* and *What Works.*

The IECB Network performs an often unrecognised role of being the glue that holds it all together, holding important knowledge at the local level of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community experience of the education system, of what teachers are telling them that they need, and are in a position in some States and Territories, and within the Australian government, to provide high level systemic and national collaborative advice. They are also ideally placed to work in partnership with universities and other teacher professional development providers to lead and teach into new programs that are aligned to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

RAPs are proving very helpful to teachers in encouraging them to be interested in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters. Significant effort is made at the local level by Aboriginal people to engage with schools and teachers. There is no data available to provide evidence of the effectiveness of this work but anecdotally, across the country, it is Aboriginal people who are keeping the lines of communication open with schools and government bureaucracies about the education of their children.

This analysis also found that the Australian government programs *Dare to Lead* and *What Works* are still seen as an important first port of call for teachers looking for information.

The limitations are consistent with the issues identified previously. Cascading from the national collaborative and systemic levels, the common issues raised at the local level about teacher PD in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness were that:

LL1: The approach to formal teacher professional development is patchy, ad hoc and lacking in cohesiveness

LL2: There has been a noticeable drop-off in demand for formal PD over the past 12 months for topics associated with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogy focus but not in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness and cultural competency programs, and

LL3: Teachers have fear and resistance about these particular Focus Areas.

Key Findings Arising from the Environmental Scan

- The IECB network provides invaluable service for policy makers, schools and teachers. However, the increased demands being placed on its members because of the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and the new professional standards for principals and teachers are putting real strain on their available resources

- Schools are implementing RAPs and School Strategic Plans that focus on a whole of school approach to engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and improving how they educate their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This framework seems to be supporting teachers to be able to identify their professional development needs more clearly and also to feel that their school is supporting them to do so

- Experienced teachers who identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent need clear indication of how their expert knowledge will be recognised under Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4

- Teachers are looking for individual opportunities for professional development, preferring to seek out knowledgeable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people rather than take an organised professional development training that might not meet their specific needs

- There has been a noticeable drop-off in demand for formal PD over the past 12 months for topics associated with teaching strategies with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focus

- Teachers have fear, resistance, and concern about these particular Focus Areas

- *What Works* is regarded very positively but is widely regarded as needing to be developed and given depth. Its current format is frustrating for teachers who are looking to further their professional skills

- The *Dare to Lead* program has been an important source of information and encouragement to principals to provide positive advice and encouragement for teachers to pursue professional development in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education but it seems to have become less influential in recent times

6.0 Discussion of Findings

Current Provision of Teacher Professional Development for Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4

To tease out this question in the interviews, we commonly began with the question of where a teacher would go if they wanted to undertake some professional development in either Focus Area 1.4 or 2.4 and which aspects were covered in their professional development program. While there are positive examples of exciting and interesting work being done across the country, the overall picture that emerges from the analysis of responses from the national collaborative, systemic, and local levels is that the current provisions for teacher professional development in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education generally, and more specifically, to meet the expectations of Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4 of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, is that much more could be done to improve what is being offered. The findings suggest that there is:

At the National Collaborative Level

NCL1: Lack, in most organisations' policies, of a guiding vision statement that recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights and social justice imperatives that shape this work

NCL2: No evidence of structured policy or resourcing commitment across Australia with respect to teacher professional development in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domain as being a workforce development issue

At the Systemic Level

SL1: Lack of systemic level planning for teacher professional development in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education as part of workforce development

SL2: There is scant evaluation of formal professional development provisions

At the Local Level

LL1: The approach to formal teacher professional development is patchy, ad hoc and lacking in cohesiveness

LL2: There has been a noticeable drop-off in demand for formal PD over the past 12 months for topics associated with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogy focus but not in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness and cultural competency programs, and

LL3: Teachers have fear and resistance about these particular Focus Areas.

Discussion

Lack, in most organisations' policies, of a guiding vision statement

Teachers gave a variety of reasons that might be used to motivate teachers to be positive about improving their professional knowledge and skills with respect to Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4. Some spoke about social justice imperatives and others about the pragmatic reality of being a teacher in the system. What was stark in these discussions was the absence of any appeal to the international Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights mechanisms such as the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* or Australia's responsibilities arising from its signatory status to this Declaration. There were a few comments about Rudd's Apology but as something arising from his personal conviction rather than because of Australia's responsibilities. By far the most prevalent responses about motivation came from initiatives coming out of COAG's 'Closing the Gap' agreements and the accountability measures being introduced through NAPLAN and the *My School* website.

The analysis of data suggests that the weight of motivation being towards the 'stick' of compliance rather than the 'carrot' of aspiration and reconciliation, together with a lack of consensus about how to tackle the issues facing the education system in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters is having a negative impact on teacher attitudes to Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4. There appears to be systemic and local ignorance about international aspects of the policy and practice context that guides senior Australian government ministers and officials in their framing of the national collaborative effort in education under the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014* (MCEECDYA, 2009). There needs to be a concerted education campaign conducted at the national collaborative level moving beyond a compliance approach to ensure that teachers, the wider school community, and the State/Territory education systems all understand the internationally recognised rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in education. Without such effort to create the context for cohesion, as outlined under the Declaration and ILO 169, teachers will continue to regard requirements to improve their professional knowledge and skills in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domain as more of a 'conscience vote' than as a requirement of service. There are also a number of knock on effects that arise because of a lack of overarching framework: much of the leadership for this work will fall to principals under the new funding and autonomy reforms, and it was shown by this data that the motivational role of the principal is key to teacher attitudes to this work. If principals are not convinced to support these Focus Areas then their teachers will struggle to attract the necessary resources to access professional development opportunities, even if they are personally willing. These data suggest that many teachers are not yet understanding why they should take on this responsibility and any lack of conviction by principals makes it easy to do nothing. A lack of consensus for teachers to do this work, and the lack of dedicated resources to do so, will also mean that teacher professional education providers will have little motivation to develop programs that support this work. Most important, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants to this study reiterated that without a fundamental commitment to a rights-based approach teachers will struggle to win the trust of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families, given the past history.

Little evidence of structured policy or resourcing commitment across Australia

Analysis of these data at the national collaboration and systemic levels pointed to a distinct absence of discussion about taking a workforce development approach to the work. Given the fact that there are 291,000 teachers who currently have very little formal knowledge of theory, pedagogical practice, and curriculum in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, these findings suggest that it will not be possible to achieve the aspiration that all teachers will be able to account for their skills and knowledge regarding Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4 in their work across the four identified levels of the Standards without the education system taking a workforce development approach. The magnitude of this change requires organisational development not individual teacher willingness, although that becomes a necessary ingredient. In addition to developing an overarching framework for the change that will focus teacher motivation, there will need to be resources and time allocated to support teachers to do this professional development work.

Scant Rigorous Evaluation

Focus Area 1.4

There was no evaluation or independent evidence offered for any teacher professional development program discussed as part of this study. There is therefore no research evidence base on which to assess the effectiveness of these programs. From a provider perspective, organisations reported that there was a fairly regular uptake of programs about aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education with teachers looking for practical skills to help them with lesson plans, individual learning plans, issues about ESL and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners and they continued to provide these programs based on numbers. The feedback constituted post-workshop evaluations, mostly about the quality of the presenter and the satisfaction of the participant with the program. No evidence was given to us about these data except verbally to report that normally participants were positive. It was also mentioned often that teachers only really sign up for programs that interest them so they were generally a self-selected audience that in itself skews the reliability of their feedback as a source of evidence about the effectiveness of these programs.

Focus Area 2.4

Similar to the previous section, there was no research or evaluation data offered about these programs. Even so, many participants who either provide these programs or who have participated spoke very positively of the approach and content for achieving the aim of helping teachers to understand more about Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to strengthen their understanding of the need for reconciliation. It was commonly noted that this places a significant burden on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and that some mechanism might need to be developed to give all teachers a basic understanding before they undertake a RAP and/or an immersion-style PD program.

Variety of Approaches and Content

Focus Area 1.4

It was not possible within the constraints of this study to gather a coherent understanding of the pedagogical approach to, or content of, the various PD offerings available to teachers. Anecdotally, many participants spoke of programs relying on the knowledge transfer approach with some exceptions (for example, the numeracy program developed by AISWA).

There was reported some opportunity to attend conferences, to do one-off activities, to develop individual learning plans or lesson plans, and of sharing of resources but scant evidence of follow up or a coherent program of knowledge development such as exist for other areas of professional learning such as maths, science, history, or English. Many commented on the potential impact of the Australian Curriculum and that teachers were wondering how they were going to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content in their teaching.

Possibly the most important finding of this research, the analysis of these data found that there is little research-based evidence on which teachers can rely in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. It is possibly the nature of the field but it does seem to attract an array of very strong opinions about what would be needed to 'fix the problem' and how easy it would be if everyone simply did X or Y or Z, with arguments strongly divided on the basis of partial or no evidence. Teachers reported little or no confidence in the information they were given at conferences and in professional development programs about how to teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. A review of the literature supports the findings showing no consensus on how to do this work, apart from it needing to be practical. Teaching solutions, both in the literature and these data, are presented as shying away from the more complicated aspects implied by, for example, the rights-based and socioeconomic justice approaches.

Remarkably, teachers reported that they most often relied on personal trial and error in preference to trying something that they did not trust. They also reported finding information that was available through internet search engines such as Google to be as useful as information that they had gleaned from formal professional development programs. This has significant implication for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners who are the subjects of this trial and error approach, done by teachers who have no formal professional grounding in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education as a distinct teaching method and Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies for reliable content knowledge.

Focus Area 2.4

Similar to the discussion above, little is documented about either the approach or content of PD designed to develop teachers' understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and how to become leaders for reconciliation. Even though there is a diversity of ideas about what teachers need to know about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in Australia, there was evidence of a far greater consensus on how to go about doing this work. The preferred methods commonly spoken about were to support a teacher to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan and the use of the immersion method. In most cases in this study, both were being used by the same groups of people, both methods being regarded as mutually supportive of the same goal.

Analysis of data suggests that being a RAP school gives teachers a confidence about how to go about developing their understanding of reconciliation and developing partnerships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and the wider community. The second approach, strongly favoured by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander providers of this sort of PD is the immersion method where a teacher is immersed in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander expert for a period of time, undertaking various activities and having the opportunity to speak with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and listen to them.

There were a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educator participants who also have consultancy businesses running immersion-style workshops for teachers. There is little written about the content of this work and they report that their approach is to make it highly personal for the teacher because, as one consultant explained:

> "*…most teachers I work with say they have never met an educated Aboriginal person and it makes me mad. All my family is well educated and most of my friends' families too. Things have changed under the noses of these teachers and they haven't kept up with us.*"

There was a consensus that non-Indigenous teachers have little knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander society whether historical or contemporary and there was concern expressed that without making teachers 'go back to school' there was little hope that they would ever be able to catch up with all the things they didn't know. The common view was that Aboriginal people could do so much but the sheer numbers involved made it very labour intensive to try to convince each teacher one-by-one. Even so, one Aboriginal educator cautioned:

> "*…yes OK! Get them to go back and do some more book learning but don't forget to make them come back and talk to Aboriginal people. Talking with us is the real secret. That's what makes them change their attitudes to us. If they never have to speak to us, to look us in the eye, and listen to us, then they can keep pretending they know things when they really don't. And then they are ashamed. And then they take it out on our kids. So make them sit down and talk with us.*"

Lack of Cohesiveness or a Developmental Plan

Focus Area 1.4

Following the literature review, our review of PD offerings for Focus Area 1.4 focussed on those designed to develop teachers' effective practical skills to teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students or to develop relationships with them. We found the range of opportunities nationally, at the systemic level or even locally was very patchy. Most often aimed at new teachers and offered early in the year, there was no evidence of the application of any specific skills development planning or focus, particularly for more experienced teachers.

There was positive opinion about the capacity of the education system to 'roll-out' teacher PD for 1.4 if there could be an agreed body of professional knowledge about Focus Area 1.4 and there was lively discussion about what this might look like and how it might be done. Many experienced teachers and teacher representative bodies argued that there was very little available once you had done a few programs. Most of those interviewed had accessed the *Dare to Lead* website, had used *What Works*, and some had done the *Stronger Smarter* program. Many had gone to conferences and one-off PD days about topics of interest to them. A common criticism was that there was nowhere to go for higher level PD in this area once you had covered the obvious sources of information.

Focus Area 2.4

Following the literature review, our review of PD offerings for Focus Area 2.4 focussed on those designed to develop teacher's understanding of history, their intercultural or cross-cultural skills (anything involving the development of, or changing of, teachers' personal attitudes, expectations and understandings of the 'other' culture, of creating inclusive / intercultural classrooms or schools), about being explicitly anti-racist in their teaching, about reconciliation, or specifically addressing teacher professional development in understanding about Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, cultures and identities.

Again, we found the offerings to be very patchy, with lack of coherence at the national collaborative, or systems-levels, but strong at the local level. Teachers spoke of taking the initiative to contact a local Aboriginal Traditional Owner, their Local Aboriginal Education Consultitative Group, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Cooperative, or other representative body and to organise PD for themselves and their colleagues. There has been strong and sustained argument made by knowledgeable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education experts that information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledge should be local and kept within the control of local groups.

There was little positive opinion about the capacity of the education system to 'roll-out' teacher PD for Focus Area 2.4 although there was lively discussion about what this might look like and how it might be done. The most commonly favoured approach was the immersion method. As one informant said:

> "*They just have to come and talk to us. That's all. What we know they cannot learn from their books. Spend time with us. Get to know us. That's how things will change.*"

A Drop-off in Demand?

There was a view that was commonly quoted among the research participants and in particular within some teacher professional development provider groups that teachers have, in the past 12 months, undertaken less PD overall and in particular in topics related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. Interestingly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander providers did not report experiencing this in relation to their cultural competency and immersion programs.

This raises the issue of what constitutes teacher professional development and professional learning and what teachers are accessing to support themselves in this work. When seeking to understand why there is a perception that there has been a drop-off in demand, a consistent response has been that once you have done what is offered there is nowhere else to really go to get the formal PD opportunities. It was suggested that teachers seem to be relying on web-based information or seeking out their own specific, tailored PD opportunities, sometimes in a cluster school, regional or learning community rather than bothering with formal PD. It was also consistently reported by the teacher participants and their unions and representative bodies that they are facing the pressures and demands of the National Curriculum and most reported that it was this, rather than the Focus Areas that was most pressing for them in deciding on their professional development needs. Of notable impact on teachers, there seems to be a growing trend towards teachers using RAPs in their classrooms and schools. The fact that DEEWR, the ACT government, a number of universities, and many schools have implemented RAPS seems to be having a positive effect across the system, giving teachers better guidance on where to focus their professional development. Possibly, it is the lack of interest in one-off programs and an emerging preference by teachers for sustained localised learning opportunities that gives the impression that teachers are not doing PD.

Fear and Resistance

During the interviews with teachers, there was fear and resistance expressed about what the new Focus Areas would mean for them. Given the lack of actual or perceived consensus on an overarching commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights and social justice, a lack of a systemic workforce development approach to this work, of consensus on what constitutes the agreed body of knowledge needed by teachers to meet these Focus Areas, and that professional development opportunities are patchy, ad hoc and lacking in cohesiveness, and that teachers are facing a new curriculum to teach, it is unsurprising that fear and resistance are being expressed. The challenge will be to establish positive enablers and strategies to address teacher fear and resistance.

Future Provision of Teacher Professional Development for Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4

To explore this question in the interviews, we asked what teachers would need in the future that would support them to be able to account for their professional practice to Proficient level in Focus Areas 1.4 or 2.4. Focussing on teachers, the overall picture that emerged from the review of literature and analysis of data arising from the environmental scan is that the future provision for teacher professional development in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education will require three actions across the national collaborative, systemic and local levels of provision of teacher professional development and professional learning programs: first, that a rights-based framework be embedded in the general approach; second, that it be undertaken as a workforce development program; and third, that teachers be supported to undertake appropriate and on-going professional development.

Embedding the Rights Framework

This study has found that there needs to be a clear statement of intent from Australian ministers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experts and government officials that this work is guided by the UN *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Otherwise, every level and individual teacher in this complex education system will decide what the guiding principles are. Some will be motivated by the stick and some will wait for the carrot. There needs to be a clear commitment to provide both time and resources to create the necessary critical mass for change in improving the educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and supporting the Australian society to move towards reconciliation between its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous citizens.

At the local level, the rights agenda can be embedded by using two mutually reinforcing approaches that would support teacher: first, that schools sign up to be RAP schools and develop their RAP plans; and second, that schools proactively contract with their local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Australia, funding them to develop and provide teachers with opportunity to undertake a cultural awareness immersion program, developed by the local community and recognised as counting towards teacher professional development and professional learning hours with respect to these Focus Areas.

Leading Successful Workforce Development

A common concern expressed across the interviews and the analysis of such data was that this work be regarded as needing a workforce development strategy established and properly resourced in order to encourage teachers to update their professional skills in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. One PD provider for a sector summarised it in this way:

> "*If the PD is not mandated in some way, with an expectation of increased number of hours and a focused workforce development strategy, then teachers will just see it as part of their usual professional learning and may or may not select to become competent in it.*"

Analysis with Respect to Kotter's Eight-Step Change Model

Kotter (2012) proposed an eight-step model as a way to achieve a successful organisational reform process as discussed above in the review of the literature about workforce development. Kotter's work was foundational in recent school reform in Britain (see for example, Collarbone, 2006 & 2005a) and its relevance to this research is described below. The first four steps provide a useful starting point for discussion about how to move from a situation where 291,000 individual teachers are asked to motivate themselves to meet Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4 without any guidance into a system level workforce development response that guides, encourages, and supports teachers. The following discussion draws on the first four of the eight step model by way of opening the pathway for a workforce development approach to be considered.

Step One: Establishing a Sense of Urgency

Kotter identifies a sense of urgency as a key motivator for a system to make change. His analysis suggests that 75 per cent of a system needs to be committed to a change for it to effective. He suggests a number of strategies to build this sense of urgency: identifying potential negative consequences if change is not made quickly, showing what could happen in the future if successful change was achieved, and, starting system-wide discussions to get people talking and thinking. His findings suggest that there needs to be extensive, system-wide discussion about the reasons for change for teachers to engage in this work with the necessary sense of urgency.

Step Two: Creating the Guiding Coalition

Kotter's next step argues for strong, system-wide leadership in creating opportunities for collaborative change coalitions to form. His analysis suggests that this is best achieved through identifying leaders in the system, asking for emotional commitment from them, providing opportunities for them for input into strategic planning and operationalisation, encouraging internal team-building, and ensuring a good mix of people from different parts of the system are engaged.

Step Three: Developing a Change Vision

Kotter considers the third step as an essential, but often overlooked step. He found that it is necessary to determine the values that are central to the change and to create a vision of the future that incorporates these values, to create a strategy to execute that vision, and to ensure that the collaborative change coalitions can carry the message into the system. His findings are reinforced by Logan's (2010) research that suggests that clearly communicating the values underpinning the change are key to its successful implementation.

The issue arising from the findings of this study is that there is a tension between what we know about successful teacher professional development and professional learning and the ability of a system to require teachers to do something that they previously would have regarded as a personal choice. As the UN Special Rapporteur recently observed, despite some recent advances, Australia's legal and policy landscape must be reformed and there are teachers who are negative about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families and they continue to hold the sort of negative views that led the UN envoy to speak as he did. We do not yet have consensus on the values underpinning Australia's adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and this step, achieving a values consensus, needs to form a significant part of the national collaborative effort within education in order to convince education systems and teachers of the need to act.

A role of government is to lead and manage the development of consensus about matters of state about which there is concern and conflict of interests. In the case of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights in particular, there has been little public discussion arising from Australia becoming signatory to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and, as noted above, no individual teachers or teacher representative bodies in this small study spoke of their professional responsibilities in terms of the rights-based approach. Teachers are part of Australian society and their opinions as to these rights are as varied as the broader population, one that has a poor historical record of racism and hostility towards its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inhabitants. Given the lack of overarching policy framework addressing the rights agenda, and the fact that so few teachers have undertaken any formal study in either the teaching and learning needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students or in a school or university course on Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, it is perhaps unsurprising that teachers seem to regard it as a choice as to whether they develop expertise in these areas or not.

In this new era of significant policy convergence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education under both Australian government and State/Territory jurisdictions, teachers are increasingly expected to support and promote the government's commitment to the rights of Indigenous peoples as a requirement of their employment. This presents a unique workforce development challenge. Requirements for teachers to renew their registration ask them to demonstrate such aspects as recency, currency, and a prescribed amount of formal professional development in addition to also being engaged in professional learning opportunities. Currently the requirement for formal learning is very small. There was agreement across the participants in this study that for teachers to engage with increasing their professional development and learning in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies there would need to be a nationally coordinated, appropriately funded (for both costs and teacher release), systemic level professional development program developed, that moved it beyond teacher choice to a more strategically aligned requirement.

Step Four: Communicating the Vision for Buy-In

As yet, there is no clear message being given to teachers about Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4. There needs to be a nationally co-ordinated campaign and communication strategy that allays fears and addresses the resistance that currently exists in order to motivate teachers to approach the implementation of these Focus Areas positively. Like any workforce development initiative, communication is a key element in ensuring that the changes required are successfully achieved. Each level of the education system will need to contribute to creating the vision. At the local level, in particular, it will be important to provide opportunities for teachers and the broader system to talk about concerns and anxieties. If this work can be done in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as this research found with the development of RAPs and using the immersion approach, many of the fears and resistance drop away as teachers become more confident in their engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Formal Qualifications in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

The biggest issue at the local level is that there is, as yet, no agreed body of knowledge and skills that constitutes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies and this was evidenced in the widespread frustration expressed by participants in this study. The second related issue is that the current bodies of knowledge have commonly been developed as a 'One Size Fits All' and this research has found that there needs to be a developmental approach to scaling up teachers' knowledge and skills. Current programs such as *Dare to Lead* and *What Works* are generally viewed as being trustworthy sources of information and also providing networking opportunities but many participants in this study reported frustration about what to do next. The third relates to scale. Many small programs that have been developed at the local level are not yet known to be effective when scaled up to meet the demands at the systemic level. The analysis of data from this study suggests that teachers need to undertake professional development in both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies with a balance of a core body of knowledge (notionally 70 per cent) and a complimentary body of knowledge (notionally 30 per cent) that is nuanced to the needs of the local context for both Focus Area 1.4 and 2.4.

Teachers need to draw on two interrelated, but separate, bodies of knowledge when considering the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their communities. The first comes from their professional, technical knowledge base. In education, this is about pedagogical approaches, curriculum development, assessment issues, and relationship building around the learning needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (broadly NPST Standard One). The second knowledge base is found in Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, ideally drawing on the broad canvass of expert knowledge about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, identities, politics and history (broadly NPST Standard Two). This cannot happen without a workforce development strategy cascading from the national collaborative level (statement of intent, policy, principles and guideline, and funding) to the systemic level (strategic planning, HR coordination, funding, teacher release, course development, planning, and operationalisation) and into the local level of school and teacher professionalisation.

Focus Area 1.4

Teachers are asking for a mix of professional development that guides them in a core set of knowledge and skills that will enable them to demonstrate what they know and do (formal professional development) and less formal professional learning opportunities that they find useful with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and with their peers in their professional associations.

Teachers and their professional representative bodies and unions all report concern about how they will validate their achievement of Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4. There was a common view that specific skills and knowledge need to be clearly identified and then framed within system and school policies that support and recognise their development. The analysis of data suggests that there also to be an appropriate course of study developed in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education as a method, such as at university Graduate Certificate equivalent that will enable teachers to demonstrate their formal knowledge to Proficient level in Focus Area 1.4.

Reflecting what is also known from the literature, there was consensus that professional development in this Focus Area would need to:

- Be focussed

- Be practical

- Acknowledge what the teacher already knows

- Provide opportunity for understanding of the international Indigenous rights framework

- Offer clear interpretations of the links between international undertakings, national policies, systemic policies, local policies, and practice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in schools

- Provide a means for existing teachers who have not done so, to demonstrate knowledge and skills development, at both the Graduate and Proficient levels, and

- Provide advanced options for already experienced teachers to enable them to demonstrate skills appropriate to the new Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher levels.

Focus Area 2.4

Again, the absence of an agreed body of knowledge to rely on was a common theme. Teachers are asking for reliable information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and are seeking it out individually in many cases. Given the large number of teachers that will be seeking this knowledge, and the demand that the development of RAPs and developing and leading cultural awareness immersion programs places on local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the analysis of data suggests that there also needs to be an appropriate course of study developed in Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, at university Graduate Certificate equivalent, that will enable teachers to also demonstrate their formal knowledge to Proficient level in Focus Area 2.4.

Reflecting what is also known the literature, there was consensus that professional development in this Focus Area would need to:

- Be explicitly anti-racist

- Provide opportunity for understanding of the international Indigenous rights framework

- Offer clear interpretations of the links between international undertakings, national policies, systemic policies, local policies, and practice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in schools

- Include opportunity for understanding the history between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians

- Include intercultural or cross-cultural skills development involving the development of, or changing of, teachers' personal attitudes, expectations and understandings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures

- Include strategies to create inclusive / intercultural classrooms or schools, and

- Link issues relating to the preservation and maintenance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity and lifeways, including languages and traditional practices to contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aspirations and practices.

7.0 Recommendations

Establishing the Book Ends

The analysis of data for this study revealed that there are significant workforce development issues to address if the aspirations contained in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4 are to be met by teachers. There were questions about why these Focus Areas were included, why they were important, how their implementation would be managed, and what consequences there would be for non-compliance. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues asked who would be responsible for establishing and ensuring a minimum standard with respect to these Focus Areas, knowing the levels of concern that have been expressed about how teachers might meet them.

We have employed a *Book Ends* metaphor to describe the data as depicted below.

Aspirational, rights based, reconciliation approach

Minimum compliance approach

Diagram One: Approaches to the Work: The Book End Concept

This image (Diagram One, above) depicts the concept that we consider needs to guide the development of the strategic process for leading the successful implementation of these Focus Areas. The left hand Book End represents the minimum, compliance approach and the right hand Book End represents the aspirational, rights-based, reconciliation approach to the work.

Minimum compliance approach

Diagram Two: The Minimum Compliance Approach

The second image (Diagram Two, above) shows the Minimum Compliance Approach. It suggests that while there is important work to be done to establish the minimum standard below which no teachers' skill and knowledge should be.

After establishing the minimum standard, there needs to be effort made at the national, collaborative and systemic levels to create the 'push' for change as discussed above by working through the steps for achieving successful change and workforce development.

Aspirational, rights based, reconciliation approach

Diagram Three: The Aspirational, Rights-based, Reconciliation Approach

The third image (Diagram Three, above) shows the Aspirational, Rights-Based, Reconciliation Approach. It suggests that, at the other end of the scale, there are schools and teachers that should be recognised for their expertise and commitment to the aspirations of Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4 and are already actively engaged in the sorts of best practice that are going to provide leadership and a proving ground for the imagined changes. While working within the Standard, these schools and teachers will provide the 'pull' for change as discussed above in the section on developing the processes for workforce development.

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Recommended Actions

Findings arising from the interviews undertaken and materials collected, when informed by national and international literature clearly demonstrate that action needs to be taken. This final report provides the following recommendations.

National Collaborative Level

- That the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* be adopted as the guiding framework for the development of a rights-based approach to teacher professional development in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4

- That a communication strategy be led and developed by SCSEED and AITSL to further principal and teacher understanding of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* and its importance in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education

- That consideration be given to the feedback from participants about the limitations of Dare to Lead and that it be redeveloped under the new policy framework to guide principals in their support of teacher professional development in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education

- That national, collaborative research be commissioned to undertake a longitudinal study of teacher response to Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4 and the broader implementation of teacher professional development in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education

Systemic Level

- That there be a coordinated, multi-level workforce development strategy established for teachers that involves all national and systemic level stakeholders under State and Territory jurisdictions

- That there be commitment of time and resources that will support and encourage teachers in the work over and above the current arrangements

- That programs that have been found to be effective be scaled up and trialled across the national education community in order to broaden and deepen the research base in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and improve the skills and confidence of teachers to implement such programs

Local Level

- That AITSL progress the work of consultation with educators and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples regarding the development of a reliable knowledge base with respect to the skills and knowledge that teachers will need in order to account for Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4. including:

    - Programs of study that will bring teachers up to 'Proficient Level' and beyond in Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4 that could be developed through:

        » Consultation with key stakeholders to develop the core curriculum for Focus Area 1.4 (notionally 70 per cent) with 30 per cent to be undertaken locally

        » Consultation with AIATSIS, the NCIS, the IECBs, the universities' Directors of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, and Reconciliation Australia to develop principles and guidelines for the core curriculum for Focus Area 2.4 (notionally 70 per cent) with 30 per cent to be undertaken locally

- A revised What Works as a sequential program of study (with online and blended learning opportunities) addressing Focus Area 1.4 specifically (with attention to Focus Area 2.4) with 4 levels that reflect the different roles envisaged by the terms 'Graduate', 'Proficient', 'Highly Accomplished' and 'Lead' Teacher. We envisage that some of this work will be a reorganisation of current materials and that this will identify new materials that will need to be developed.

Appendix A: Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Articles of Relevance to Education)

Article 14

1. *Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.*

2. *Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.*

3. *States shall, in conjunction with Indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for Indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.*

Article 15

1. *Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories, and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information.*

2. *States shall take effective measures, in consultation and cooperation with the Indigenous peoples concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among Indigenous peoples and all other segments of society.*

Article 21

1. *Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.*

2. *States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of Indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.*

Appendix B: ILO 169
(Articles of Relevance to Education)

Article 26

1. *Measures shall be taken to ensure that members of the peoples concerned have the opportunity to acquire education at all levels on at least an equal footing with the rest of the national community.*

Article 27

1. *Education programs and services for the peoples concerned shall be developed and implemented in co-operation with them to address their special needs, and shall incorporate their histories, their knowledge and technologies, their value systems and their further social, economic and cultural aspirations. They shall participate in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of plans and programs for national and regional development which may affect them directly.*

2. *The competent authority shall ensure the training of members of these peoples and their involvement in the formulation and implementation of education programs, with a view to the progressive transfer of responsibility for the conduct of these programs to these peoples as appropriate.*

3. *In addition, governments shall recognise the right of these peoples to establish their own educational institutions and facilities, provided that such institutions meet minimum Standards established by the competent authority in consultation with these peoples. Appropriate resources shall be provided for this purpose.*

Article 28

1. *Children belonging to the peoples concerned shall, wherever practicable, be taught to read and write in their own Indigenous language or in the language most commonly used by the group to which they belong. When this is not practicable, the competent authorities shall undertake consultations with these peoples with a view to the adoption of measures to achieve this objective.*

2. *Adequate measures shall be taken to ensure that these peoples have the opportunity to attain fluency in the national language or in one of the official languages of the country.*

3. *Measures shall be taken to preserve and promote the development and practice of the Indigenous languages of the peoples concerned.*

Article 29

The imparting of general knowledge and skills that will help children belonging to the peoples concerned to participate fully and on an equal footing in their own community and in the national community shall be an aim of education for these peoples.

Article 30

1. Governments shall adopt measures appropriate to the traditions and cultures of the peoples concerned, to make known to them their rights and duties, especially in regard to labour, economic opportunities, education and health matters, social welfare and their rights deriving from this Convention.

2. If necessary, this shall be done by means of written translations and through the use of mass communications in the languages of these peoples.

Article 31

Educational measures shall be taken among all sections of the national community, and particularly among those that are in most direct contact with the peoples concerned, with the object of eliminating prejudices that they may harbour in respect of these peoples. To this end, efforts shall be made to ensure that history textbooks and other educational materials provide a fair, accurate and informative portrayal of the societies and cultures of these peoples.

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