



Independent Evaluation of *Connecting to Country*

Final report

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Communities

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Acknowledgments

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We consulted with many school staff, community members and students who participated or were impacted by the *Connecting to Country* program. We thank them for their time and insights and trust we have adequately captured the issues pertinent to this research.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AECG	Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
AEO	Aboriginal Education Officer
AE&CE	NSW Aboriginal Education and Community Engagement (formally the Aboriginal Education and Training Directorate)
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
C2C	<i>Connecting to Country</i> program
DEC	New South Wales Department of Education and Communities
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
HS	High school (secondary school)
LIG	Local Implementation Group
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
NMS	National Mean Score
NSW	New South Wales
PLP	Personalised Learning Plan
PS	Primary school (public school)
ToR	Terms of Reference

Executive summary

This report presents the findings of a comprehensive independent evaluation by ARTD Consultants of the *Connecting to Country* program, which the evidence shows is a highly successful professional learning program for teachers and principals.

The evaluation covers the delivery of the program from its inception in 2011 to the end of December 2012, where 344 teachers and 95 principals or delegates, from 109 NSW schools participated in 27 cultural immersion workshops, 12 teacher and 9 principal professional learning workshops held across the State.¹

Connecting to Country

The *Connecting to Country* program was funded by the Commonwealth Government as an initiative under the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) Closing the Gap strategy.

Connecting to Country focuses on developing teachers' and principals' willingness and ability to establish relationships with Aboriginal students based on learning about their cultural, linguistic and family backgrounds, and then transferring that knowledge to inform classroom practice and pedagogy and engaging with the local community. The program is expected to promote quality teaching, enhance Aboriginal student engagement in schools and contribute to improved educational outcomes for Aboriginal students.

Connecting to Country is a five-day professional development program that begins with a three-day cultural immersion workshop, *Being Culturally Aware, Becoming Culturally Inclusive: A Pathway to Cultural Competence*. This intensive in-the-field workshop was developed by the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) and is planned and facilitated at the local level by regional and local AECGs.

Following on from the three-day cultural immersion experience participants undertake a two-day professional learning workshop to build on and strengthen their capacity to plan, develop and implement culturally inclusive programs and school leadership practices. Principals and teachers engage in separate workshops, which are delivered by the NSW Aboriginal Education and Community Engagement (AE&CE) Unit in conjunction with Regional Aboriginal Education Teams.

Participating schools

The schools were located in urban, regional and rural localities covered by nine

¹ The 34 remaining targeted schools in New England and Western NSW are expected to attend cultural immersion workshops organised by their local AECGs in Semester 1 2013.

New South Wales Department of Education and Communities (DEC) regions; 60% of schools were primary public schools and 40% secondary schools/ central schools. These schools were grouped into 14 clusters for reporting purposes. The proportion of Aboriginal student enrolments by cluster ranged from 12 per cent of the student population to as high as 62 per cent of students.

Many schools were already implementing a variety of programs to better engage Aboriginal students and other students in learning and improving their educational outcomes.

Even though the NAPLAN (National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy) scores vary somewhat, Aboriginal students in *Connecting to Country* schools are consistently achieving lower than average scores than their peers across all years tested and testing points for reading, writing and numeracy outcomes. Attendance rates also vary but remain fairly consistent within clusters of schools across the three years (2010 to 2012). Attendance rates for Aboriginal students are generally lower than their non-Aboriginal peers.

The evaluation methods

The evaluation used a mixed methods design, drawing on qualitative and quantitative data from

- site visits to 18 school communities participating in the program where qualitative data was collected from 18 principals, 57 teachers, 110 Aboriginal community members and 141 Aboriginal students
- telephone interviews with an additional 13 school principals or delegated executive staff member
- interviews with 5 key informants from the service delivery partners
- analysis of a before and after survey of participants, administered by AE&CE; 182 teachers pre- and 83 post-/ 57 principals pre- and 34 post- returned completed surveys
- observation by ARTD researchers of three cultural immersion workshops and two two-day workshops
- a review of 21 school plans
- an analysis of student performance indicator data and other administrative education data.

Strength of the evidence

The methodology was able to be applied effectively and we have strong evidence about the achievement of short term outcomes, with some evidence about medium term outcomes. Data from the different sources were able to be triangulated to provide evidence about the extent and degree of impact of the *Connecting to Country* program.

Caution is needed in interpreting the results from the pre- and post-surveys of school staff because of a possible bias introduced by a relatively low response rate to the post-survey. Participants from schools in 6 of the 14 reporting clusters did not return any surveys or had only completed the cultural immersion workshop and pre- and post-surveys were not completed as yet. Community groups did not go ahead at 5 of the 18 school sites visited so the community perspective is missing at these sites.

Although student performance indicator data were provided—NAPLAN and attendance rates between 2010 and 2012—these data were not used to assess the short and medium term impacts of the program. *Connecting to Country* is a quality teaching initiative that reached only some of the teachers at each school and only some students are likely to be directly impacted by changes to teaching practices in the short term. Changes in students' learning outcomes are likely to be influenced by many other factors and NAPLAN data are not appropriate indicators of the success of a single professional learning program.

Attendance data are given for Semester 1 of each year from 2010 to 2012, but the majority of schools (80%) did not participate in a workshop until late 2011 or 2012. As a result, we would not expect to observe changes in these data.

Summary of key findings

Connecting to Country is a very well-conceived program, successfully delivered and largely achieving its objectives of increasing most teachers' willingness and capacity to engage with Aboriginal students, families and communities and to integrate and apply what they had learnt from the program in the school and classroom.

The cultural immersion workshops were considered a safe place to learn about Aboriginal culture and history. At its best, the training came from the heart and reached the heart of the teachers and principals or delegates who attended, increasing their awareness, appreciation and empathy for the Aboriginal students, families and communities at their school. In this way, the training increased participants' motivation to learn and discuss Aboriginal history and culture and improved their confidence to try to implement new approaches and activities to include and engage Aboriginal students and families.

For many teachers and principals the cultural immersion workshop component in particular was simply the best professional learning experience they had ever had in regards to Aboriginal culture and history. Many recommended that every teacher and school leader in NSW should have an opportunity to attend the training.

The two-day professional learning workshops were not as successful and should be revisited to provide more practical advice about how to translate the improved understanding of Aboriginal culture and history into classroom practice and instructional leadership.

***Connecting to Country* training successfully increased most teachers' and principals' awareness and understanding of local Aboriginal cultures, histories and perspective**

At least three levels of history were addressed during the three-day cultural immersion training: national history, local history and personal or family history. The cultural immersion training was effective in increasing teachers' and principals' knowledge of all aspects of Aboriginal history and culture covered.

The style of the training offered an invitation to participants to learn about Aboriginal culture and history from Aboriginal people. The feeling of welcome is important, as one of the barriers to enquiry into Aboriginal history and culture can be a sense of trespass. At some of the cultural immersion workshops there was a strong message to teachers to have a go at introducing elements of Aboriginal culture or perspective in their classrooms, without being too afraid of getting it wrong. Teachers who received this message felt a sense of empowerment to include what they know of Aboriginal culture in their classrooms, whether it be a few words of language, a story that is off country, an art or craft technique or some local history.

***Connecting to Country* has been a catalyst for schools to renew efforts and try new approaches to establish respectful and effective relationships with Aboriginal students, parents and communities**

Connecting to Country has given many teachers and principals insights into Aboriginal peoples' experiences of schools and ways of relating, which has renewed schools' efforts to engage with their Aboriginal students, parents and communities. The cultural immersion workshops also gave teachers, especially, a better understanding about how to make connections (and who with) in the Aboriginal community and a greater confidence to do so. For schools, the greatest benefits came from meeting local Aboriginal Elders and representatives of local services and gaining a greater awareness and understanding of local Aboriginal culture and the needs of their families. Importantly, schools could build relationships with local people.

However, the history of relationships between schools and Aboriginal communities, and individual school staff and Aboriginal families and students, is a complex one with missteps and successes alike. As such, the impact of the program on teachers' and school leaders' capacity to engage was broadly positive but variable in the degree of change seen, with many teachers and principals making small positive steps to create connections and others building on their skills and strengthening existing good relationships.

Teachers spoke about the challenges they face in engaging some Aboriginal students, although many felt that they related fairly well. Some teachers had made small but significant changes in their classroom practice, such as breaking up assessment tasks to prevent students being overwhelmed by large amounts of work at a time; or

demystifying assessments so the students can see that they have the skills and knowledge to complete them.

Connecting to Country is a pathway for schools to develop cultural competence and changing the quality of relationships and school culture is a slow and incremental process. *Connecting to Country* is one strategy amongst many that the DEC and individual schools are putting in place. It is too early to expect substantial changes in the quality of relationships where these have been challenging. For substantial change to be seen consistent actions over a long time would be needed, especially in situations where families are facing considerable socio-economic disadvantage.

Connecting to Country has changed many teachers' and principals' willingness and capacity to integrate and apply what they have learned in their school leadership and classroom teaching practices

Whether in a school leadership role, responsible for setting the overall direction and tone of the school and guiding its whole-of-school activities, or classroom based with responsibility for adapting the curriculum and developing strategies for engaging students in learning, the *Connecting to Country* program is making an impact on how people in schools are thinking, planning and carrying out their work.

The extent of changes in behaviour varies across schools and individuals. Broadly speaking, teachers are feeling more motivated and confident to act, and attribute this to the training received at this program. Principals are supporting teachers to make changes and for schools to be better connected with families and communities.

Connecting to Country is making a positive contribution to efforts to improve the quality of Aboriginal education in participating schools but more change is needed

The training has contributed to positive changes in classroom teaching and is building teachers' capacity to improve the quality of their teaching of Aboriginal students. However, for some teachers, the training did not provide enough time for sharing of practical ideas, or developing and adapting units of work. Teachers spoke of needing time to reflect on and develop new material for their courses, and would like to know more about what others are doing and have found successful.

Principals are supporting the changes teachers are making and are aware that more professional development is needed to foster this.

AECGs are empowered to provide leadership in Aboriginal education

Facilitation of the cultural immersion workshops has resulted in a growth in confidence and has empowered many local AECGs and other community members to work with schools and share planning for improving the schools' efforts. AECGs are now more often successfully supporting Aboriginal education in schools, mainly because schools

have a greater appreciation of the value they can provide. AECG members and some community members spoke about feeling more empowered to work with their local schools and feeling more respected and valued. This is a significant outcome, especially as having a bad experience when they were at school is a common experience amongst Aboriginal people.

The delivery partnership—an effective use of community and education sector resources and expertise

The delivery partnership between the NSW AECG and the DEC modelled a shared leadership approach for Aboriginal education that was repeated at the local level in the organisation and delivery of the two types of workshops. The NSW AECG provided culturally appropriate support for local and regional AECGs and the Department system support for the regional professional development component. The delivery partnership was integral to the outcomes achieved by the training.

The partnership marshalled the resources of the community and the DEC to provide comprehensive training for school staff at two levels—cultural awareness, and pedagogy and school leadership.

The partnership gave the training status amongst school staff and gave the DEC, through the AE&CE, the ability to strongly encourage the attendance of targeted schools. Funding for relief, distributed by the Department was vital in enabling schools to release staff for the five days needed.

The main challenge for the partnership was in scheduling workshops within the anticipated time period whilst allowing sufficient time for community processes to occur. This implementation challenge created some tensions between the Department and the AECG but the Department was persuaded that local AECG members needed time to build enough confidence to facilitate the training.

The most effective elements of cultural immersion training were being locally relevant, community-led and the active learning approaches used

Being community-led was a key success factor for the cultural immersion workshops. This meant that the information was directly relevant to the Aboriginal students in the participating schools, that local Aboriginal perspectives were given prominence, and it allowed relationships to be built and strengthened between teachers, principals and local community members.

The success of the cultural immersion workshops was also directly related to having clear and effective program guidelines, whilst allowing enough flexibility to adapt the agenda to reflect local needs and interests. Another key success factor was the structure of the training, which was based on active learning principles and dedicated sufficient time for teachers to become immersed in the content and feel comfortable about

revealing their uncertainties. Sessions usually left time for discussion and there were opportunities for informal networking through meal breaks and before and after the training. These elements helped consolidate participants' knowledge and understanding and allowed them to make connections with the AECG and other members of the community.

Two elements of the training were particularly effective in helping teachers and principals better appreciate local Aboriginal culture and history and understand the spiritual links Aboriginal people have with their country, the learning country site visits and the personal stories. The making connections components of the training were also perceived as being useful by all those involved because they made teachers and principals aware of relevant welfare and health services that can assist students when needed.

Even so, around one-third of the schools we spoke to, and community members at three sites, expressed some frustration about certain aspects of the organisation of the workshops, the amount of notice given for workshop dates and sessions starting late.

The professional learning workshops were most effective when participants had the opportunity to collaborate with their peers, learn what works in other schools and share ideas for adapting curriculum work units

The two-day professional learning workshops were intended to build on and strengthen teachers' and principals' capacity to plan, develop and implement culturally inclusive programs and school leadership practices.

The focus of these workshops varied across regions, as did the extent they met the professional learning needs and expectations of teachers and principals. In some cases the workshops were perceived as being too policy-focused and disconnected from the cultural immersion training and not giving enough practical assistance or direction to assist teachers to develop curriculum materials and resources. The AECG has recognised the need for structured local work units covering local Aboriginal history and has secured funding to develop these in 2013.

Lessons for future delivery

The experiences of the teachers and principals who participated in the evaluation offer insights into any future delivery of *Connecting to Country*. No changes to the content or structure of the cultural immersion workshops are needed, which was adaptable, working well in urban and rural locations.

- *Connecting to Country* has wide applicability, and teachers and principals from schools across NSW should be encouraged to include the training program as part of their professional learning program. The AE&CE and the AECG should actively promote the program across NSW. If access to training has to be limited then newly

appointed and new scheme teachers should be given precedence. In practice, school principals must make their own decisions about who on their staff would gain most benefit.

- A user pays approach is an option for sustaining and expanding the coverage of the cultural immersion component because the fee to cover the cost for local AECGs to facilitate the workshop is relatively low. Funding for teacher relief could come from each school's own professional development budget and/or from other relevant State programs that provide these funds.
- Local is best—schools want to meet local people and learn about local Aboriginal culture and history and gained the greatest benefits from doing so. This also provides an opportunity for local Aboriginal people to take a leadership role in the cultural education of teachers. Schools gained lesser benefits from regionally based cultural immersion workshops where not all the information was directly relevant to their students or families.
- Ongoing AECG support for delivery is needed to support local AECGs where members may be inexperienced at facilitating and/or anxious about public speaking. There may be a role for the AECG to improve facilitation skills either through training or mentoring. Being able to reach people on an emotional level is a great strength of the program and in most instances successfully increased cultural awareness and motivated participants to be more culturally inclusive. However, in two workshops the teachers reacted defensively to the communication styles of the presenters, which they perceived as being angry about and dwelling on the past, and in another workshop to a film about the impact of past policies on Aboriginal people. In the latter case, the presenters weren't skilled enough to facilitate a debriefing discussion afterward, or even be aware it might be needed. If reactions are not handled sensitively and skilfully then there is little chance of increasing cultural awareness.
- Three training days for the cultural immersion workshop is appropriate and needed. The three days of training is a significant commitment for schools and did throw up some challenges in sourcing relief and some principals would prefer the training to be reduced to two days. However, the three days is needed to cover the agenda and allow time to raise awareness and consolidate cultural understanding.
- Better specification of the two-day professional learning workshop is required. The professional learning workshop for teachers and principals should be more focused on assisting teachers/ school leaders to integrate Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum and school improvement strategies. These workshops should use adult learning approaches, that is, active learning, that specifically addresses individual teachers' and principals' needs and provides practical strategies and advice.
- Improve the consistency of the two-day professional learning workshop by using a dedicated team.
- More warm-ups should occur prior to training. There appears to be a role for more information to warm-up participants prior to attending the training. For example,

providing information about what is being done and why and it may be useful to provide some cultural pointers about timetabling and communication styles.

- Follow up professional learning is important. Teachers and principals will need to continue to access professional opportunities to reinforce, consolidate and expand their understanding of what is quality teaching in Aboriginal education. Indeed, many teachers and principals suggest that follow-up forums would be useful to discuss how they have applied the learning in practice and what else could be done.

1. Introduction

This is a report of an independent evaluation of the *Connecting to Country* program for the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC), conducted from September 2012 to April 2013.

The evaluation aimed to understand and describe the impacts of the program for principals and teachers, Aboriginal students, their families and communities.

The evaluation will also fulfil the DEC's obligations to report on the impacts of the program under the funding agreement with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and contribute to evidence for the future sustainability of the program.

1.1 The Terms of Reference

The Aboriginal Education and Community Education unit (AE&CE) set eight Terms of Reference for the evaluation.

The Terms of Reference and where these are addressed in this report is shown below.

Term	Where addressed in report
a. Identify and assess the impacts of <i>Connecting to Country</i> on participating teachers' and principals' understanding of local Aboriginal cultures, histories and perspectives.	Chapter 4
b. Identify and assess the impacts of <i>Connecting to Country</i> on participating teachers' and principals' willingness and capacity to establish respectful and effective relationships with Aboriginal students, parents and communities.	Chapter 5
c. Identify and assess the impacts of <i>Connecting to Country</i> on participating teachers' and principals' willingness and capacity to integrate and apply what they have learned in their school leadership and classroom teaching practices.	Chapter 6
d. Identify the broader impacts of <i>Connecting to Country</i> on participants and assess the contribution of these in promoting quality teaching, enhancing	Chapter 7

Term	Where addressed in report
Aboriginal student engagement in schools and improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal students.	
e. Identify and assess the broader impacts of <i>Connecting to Country</i> on Aboriginal communities, especially in terms of empowerment and capacity building.	Chapter 7
f. Identify the benefits of the <i>Connecting to Country</i> implementation/ project delivery partnership between the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group and the NSW Department of Education and Communities and assess the extent to which it was integral to the overall impact of the project.	Chapter 3
g. Identify the most effective aspects/ components/ elements of <i>Connecting to Country</i> in – enhancing teachers' and principals' understanding of local Aboriginal cultures, histories and perspectives – increasing their willingness and capacity to establish respectful, effective relationships with Aboriginal students, parents and communities – increasing their willingness and capacity to integrate and apply what they have learned in their school leadership and classroom teaching practices.	Chapter 3
h. Analyse data relating to – 2010–2012 NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy outcomes for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in participating schools (% at and above national minimum standard and mean scale scores for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, as appropriate) – 2011–2012 attendance rates for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in participating schools – number of Aboriginal students with a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) in participating schools in 2011–2012 – staff-trained turnover data – teacher and principal pre- and post-<i>Connecting to Country</i> survey data.	Appendix 1. Analysis of DEC performance indicator data. Tables showing NAPLAN, attendance rate data, % students with PLPs, staff retention rates (not just staff who participated in training). Appendix 5. Tables showing teacher and principal survey data as indices. Also referenced where relevant in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

1.2 The *Connecting to Country* program

1.2.1 Background

Established in 2005 as a direct response to the Aboriginal Education Review, the AE&CE unit coordinated a number of key actions to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes and attendance and retention rates for Aboriginal students. The *Connecting to Country* program contributes to AE&CE's work to support the provision of professional development of Aboriginal education workers and targeted Department staff. Planning and delivery of the program has been a joint effort with DEC and AECG.

Connecting to Country is a new and innovative program for teachers and principals in New South Wales. The program is a quality teaching initiative, which focuses on developing teachers' and principals' willingness and ability to establish relationships with Aboriginal students based on learning about their cultural, linguistic and family backgrounds, and then transferring that knowledge to inform classroom practice and pedagogy and engaging with the local community. It is intended to promote quality teaching, enhance Aboriginal student engagement in schools and improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal students.

The program is funded by the Commonwealth Government as an initiative under the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Closing the Gap strategy. Across New South Wales, 143 schools are expected to participate in the program between 1 July 2011 and 30 April 2013 (originally December 2012). Principals from all 143 schools have or are expected to attend, along with two to five teachers from each school (depending on the number of Aboriginal students enrolled). As at December 2012, 109 schools had participated.

Teachers were selected by the school principal and are generally new scheme or newly transferred teachers. Attendance was not compulsory.

1.2.2 Delivery model

The initiative consists of a five-day professional development program supported by follow-up forums and access to a community mentor (if requested). The five-day professional development program begins with a three-day cultural immersion component where participants develop a true and deep understanding of who their students are and what their stories involve. The immersion *Being Culturally Aware, Becoming Culturally Inclusive: A Pathway to Cultural Competence* is an intensive in-the-field program developed by the AECG. It is planned, implemented and facilitated at the local level by regional and local AECGs.

Following on from the three-day cultural immersion experience participants undertake a two-day professional learning workshop to build on and strengthen their capacity to plan, develop and implement culturally inclusive programs and school leadership

practices. Principals and teachers engage in separate workshops, which are delivered by the AE&CE in conjunction with Regional Aboriginal Education Teams.

To support the five-day program, follow-up forums are held for principals by Dare to Lead and for teachers by the Aboriginal Studies Association. In addition, the NSW AECG will link schools with Aboriginal community members who can act as community mentors.

1.2.3 *Connecting to Country schools*

The 143 schools involved in the *Connecting to Country* program are located in urban, regional and rural localities covered by 14 reporting clusters (figure 1). They include primary schools (60%) and high schools/ central schools (40%).

The proportion of Aboriginal students in schools varied widely, and when reported for clusters of schools involved in local workshops ranged from 12 per cent to as high as 62 per cent of students.

Many schools are implementing a variety of programs to better engage Aboriginal students and other students in learning, and improve their educational outcomes. For example, principals mentioned programs such as early assessments of competency in speech, Smarter Schools National Partnership programs, Young Black and Ready for School (for pre-schoolers), 8ways pedagogy and mentoring programs.

Even though the NAPLAN data vary somewhat, Aboriginal students in *Connecting to Country* schools on average are consistently achieving lower scores than their peers across all years tested and all testing points for reading, writing and numeracy outcomes (appendix 1). However, scores of Aboriginal students in cluster 1 and 2 schools tend to be closer to, and in a few tests the same or higher than, their peers. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in clusters of schools with the highest proportions of Aboriginal students (clusters 7 and 10) tend to achieve lower scores on average than their peers. These schools are located in rural areas, which are relatively disadvantaged compared to other locations.

Attendance rates also vary across clusters but remain fairly consistent within clusters across the three years. Attendance rates for Aboriginal students are generally lower than their non-Aboriginal peers.

Figure 1. Reporting clusters showing the DEC regions that nominated schools were drawn from by year of participation and Aboriginal student population

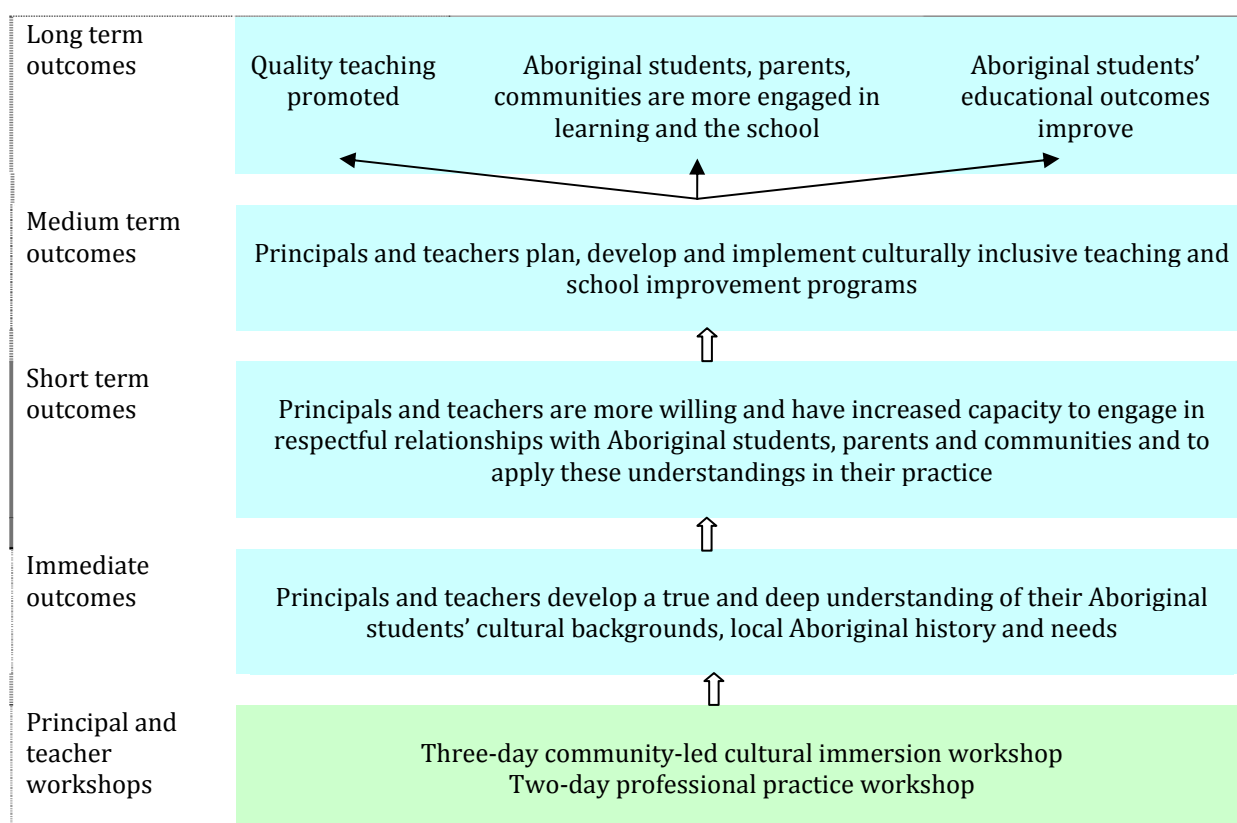
2011	Cluster 1 6 schools Hunter Central Coast 12% Aboriginal students	Cluster 2 9 schools Hunter Central Coast 20% Aboriginal students	Cluster 3 13 schools North Coast 27% Aboriginal students
	Cluster 4 4 schools Illawarra & South East Sydney 25% Aboriginal students	Cluster 5 5 schools South West Sydney 17% Aboriginal students	Cluster 6 14 schools Western Sydney 18% Aboriginal students
	Cluster 7 16 schools New England 62% Aboriginal students	Cluster 8 12 schools New England 33% Aboriginal students	Cluster 9 6 schools Riverina 31% Aboriginal students
2012	Cluster 10 6 schools Western NSW 53% Aboriginal students	Cluster 11 19 schools North Coast 25% Aboriginal students	Cluster 12 6 schools Illawarra & South East Sydney 23% Aboriginal students
	Cluster 13 21 schools Western NSW 35% Aboriginal students	Cluster 14 6 schools Western NSW 58% Aboriginal students	

Notes: Figure 1 shows the DEC regions where schools nominated to participate in the program are based, by reporting cluster. Reporting clusters reflect the roll-out of the workshops, with schools in clusters 1, 2 and 3 participating in 2011, and most schools in clusters 4 to 14, in 2012. Not all schools in clusters 7, 13 and 14 completed the training by December 2012.

1.3 Connecting to Country program logic model

Figure 2 presents a program logic model, which illustrates the *Connecting to Country* program in terms of its intended immediate, short, medium and long term outcomes.

Figure 2. High level outcomes framework for the *Connecting to Country* program



Our operational definitions, that is, how we understand and have measured the program outcomes, are based on the program theory shown in figure 2. Having a greater and shared understanding of local Aboriginal culture and the practical strategies needed to engage students and their families in learning can be expected to increase a teacher's confidence and competence, and help principals lead change across the schools. Our understanding has also been informed by social learning and behaviour change theories.² Many of these theories highlight that change occurs in stages and a person's motivation to change is important. The theories share commonalities, which have been integrated into a stage-based model in which behaviour change is viewed as a cyclical process that involves five stages.

² TravelSmart Victoria, <http://www.transport.vic.gov.au/projects/travelsmart/travelsmart-resources/travelsmart-research-documents>, Theories and Models of Behaviour Change (no attributed author or date).

1. Awareness of the problem and a need to change.
2. Motivation to make a change.
3. Skill development to prepare for the change.
4. Initial adoption of the new activity or behaviour.
5. Maintenance of the new activity and integration into the lifestyle.

Ajzen's³ social psychological model of planned behaviour identifies three motivational factors that influence a person's behavioural intention: the person's attitude towards the behaviour, the subjective norm towards the behaviour, and the person's perceived behaviour controls.

We used these concepts as a basis for designing our interview guides and to help us understand teachers' and principals' responses.

1.4 Key evaluation questions

The evaluation was guided by four evaluation questions based on the Terms of Reference.

1. How well does the program develop principals' and teachers' understanding of Aboriginal students' cultural and family backgrounds, and help them establish better relationships with Aboriginal students and families?
2. How well, and in what ways has the program assisted principals and teachers develop a more culturally inclusive environment for Aboriginal students and implement more culturally inclusive teaching practices?
3. Does the available evidence indicate the program has increased engagement in learning or contributed to improved learning outcomes for Aboriginal students in participating schools?
4. Are there ways that the program could be improved in terms of its focus or implementation?

³ Ajzen Icek (1991). The theory of planned behaviour. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*. V 50, 179-211.

2. Evaluation methods

This section summarises the evaluation methods (table 1). The focus of the data collection was on collecting evidence about the achievement of short and medium term outcomes because of the relatively short time between program delivery and the collection of evaluation data for most schools. Thirteen schools participated in 2011 and ninety-six schools in 2012.

2.1 Evaluation design

The evaluation used a mixed methods design, drawing on qualitative data and quantitative data. Methods used were

- site visits to 18 school communities participating in the program
- telephone interviews with 13 additional school principals or delegated executive staff member
- interviews with five key informants from the service delivery partners
- an analysis of a before and after survey of participants in the program
- observation of five workshops
- a review of school plans
- an analysis of student performance indicator data and other administrative education data.

2.2 Strength of evidence

The methodology was able to be applied effectively and we have strong evidence about the achievement of short term outcomes, with some evidence about medium term outcomes. Data from the different sources were able to be triangulated to provide evidence about the extent and degree of impact of the *Connecting to Country* program.

Caution is needed in interpreting the results from the pre- and post-surveys of school staff because of a possible bias introduced by a relatively low response rate to the post-survey. Participants from schools in 6 of the 14 reporting clusters did not return any surveys or had only completed the cultural immersion workshop, and pre- and post-surveys were not completed as yet.

Community groups did not go ahead at five of the 18 school sites visited, so the community perspective is missing at these sites.

Student performance indicator data were provided—National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and attendance rates between 2010 and 2012. The NAPLAN and attendance indicator data were for all students in a cluster of schools. These data were not used to assess the short and medium term impacts of the program.

NAPLAN data provide information about how well students in the participating schools are meeting educational outcomes in literacy and numeracy. *Connecting to Country* is a quality teaching initiative that reached only some of the teachers at each school and only some students are likely to be directly impacted by changes to teaching practices in the short term. In any case, NAPLAN data are not good direct measures of teaching quality in schools. Changes in student outcomes can be influenced by many factors and NAPLAN data are not appropriate indicators of the success of a single professional learning program.

Attendance data were provided for Semester 1 of each year from 2010 to 2012 but the majority of schools (80%) did not participate in a workshop until 2012. As a result, we would not expect to observe changes in these data. For the 21 schools that participated in the later part of 2011 there is too short a time period (one semester) for any changes to teachers' practices and/or improved relationships to translate to changes in attendance rates.

Table 1. Summary of methods

Data source	Method	Sample Size	Comments
Teachers who had participated in C2C workshops	Semi-structured small interviews, face-to-face	57	Case study sites, 76% response rate
Teachers who had participated in C2C workshops	Pre- and post- on-line surveys administered to all participating teachers	Pre- 133 Post- 55	41% completed pre- and post-, clusters 3, 5, 8, 11, 13
Teachers at C2C schools	Analysis of turnover rate		
Principals or delegates who had participated in C2C workshops	Semi-structured, face-to-face	18	Case study sites
Principals who had participated in C2C workshops	Semi-structured, telephone	13	18 invited, 72% response rate
Principals who had participated in C2C workshops	Pre- and post- on-line surveys administered to all participating principals	Pre- 44 Post- 25	57% respondents completed pre- and post
Aboriginal community members (includes families, the AECG, AEOs)	Focus groups	13 groups 110 community members	Case study sites, five forums did not proceed
Aboriginal students in participating schools	Focus groups	18 groups 141 students	Case study sites
Aboriginal students in participating schools	Analysis of number with PLPs in 2011-2012		Without historical trend data, limits ability to interpret patterns

Data source	Method	Sample Size	Comments
Students in participating schools	Analysis of attendance rates 2011-2012	Not provided	Collated table provided
Students in participating schools	2010-2012 NAPLAN; % students at and above national minimum standard and mean scale scores for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9	Not provided	Collated table provided
Workshops	Observation of workshops by ARTD researchers	3 x 3-day workshops 2 x 2-day workshops	North Coast, Riverina, Western Sydney North Coast, Riverina

Note: C2C = *Connecting to Country*.

2.3 Qualitative data collection—school communities

ARTD researchers visited 18 schools and interviewed the principal or delegated executive staff member. A further 13 principals or delegated executive staff person were interviewed by telephone. Five principals could not be contacted for telephone interviews (five attempts were made) and did not participate in an interview. The demographics of schools who participated in the evaluation by data collection method are shown in appendix 2.

During the school visits 57 teachers were interviewed, and 110 community members and 141 students participated in focus groups. The community groups comprised a mix of parents, Elders and members of the local AECGs who organised and presented sessions at the cultural immersion workshop. All focus groups were recorded and transcribed.

The research team included Senior Aboriginal Associates and ARTD researchers.

2.3.1 Sampling strategy, choosing the schools

Participating schools were chosen at random by ARTD Consultants from schools sorted into a stratified sampling frame (figure 3). The sampling strategy for the field visits and interviews was purposive and took account of a number of factors of interest.

- The program has been rolled out in phases so the sampling frame took account of the timing of *Connecting to Country* workshops and the number of schools involved in the program in 2011, Semester 1 2012 and Semester 2 2012.
- The ratio of primary to high schools/ central schools involved in the program—a split of 60:40 (primary schools: high schools/ central schools) was used, which reflects the ratio of these types of schools involved in the program.
- All 8 DEC regions are represented.
- The number of teachers nominated for the program, which is based on the population of Aboriginal students. Schools nominating four teachers made up 60% of those involved, and in our sample the proportion is 61%. Schools nominating five teachers (8% of all schools and 11% of our sample) were slightly over-sampled, and

schools nominating two teachers were slightly under-sampled (32% of all schools and 27% of our sample). This was somewhat unavoidable after taking account of the other factors.

- The location of the school—metropolitan or regional. The split reflects the larger number of regional schools involved in the first two phases of the program roll-out.

Figure 3. Sampling frame by region, method and program delivery dates

Start 2011	Hunter [6 schools] Primary schools x 2 (visit) High school x 1 (visit) Primary schools x 2 (interview) High school x 1 (interview)	North Coast [6 schools] Primary schools x 2 (visit) High school x 1 (visit) Primary schools x 2 (interview) High school x 1 (interview)
Start Semester 1 2012	Western NSW [6 schools] Primary schools x 2 (visit) Central school x 1 (visit) Primary schools x 2 (interview) High school x 1 (interview)	Sydney [2 schools] Primary schools x 1 (visit) High schools x 1 (visit)
	Illawarra and SE [5 schools] Primary school x 1 (visit) High school x 1 (visit) Primary schools x 2 (interview) High school x 1 (interview)	New England [5 schools] Primary school x 1 (visit) High school x 1 (visit) Primary school x 1 (interview) High schools x 2 (interview)
Start Semester 2 2012	Riverina [2 schools] High school x 1 (visit) Primary school x 1 (interview)	Western Sydney [2 schools] Primary school x 1 (visit) High school x 1 (interview)
	South West Sydney [1 school] Primary school x 1 (visit)	

2.3.2 Theme analysis

The data were analysed using NVivo, specialist qualitative data analysis software. All interviews and focus groups were transcribed and imported into a specifically created NVivo project for *Connecting to Country*. A coding frame was developed and all the interview and focus group transcripts were coded to allow the data to be efficiently managed and organised and in order to describe, compare and relate findings.

The coding frame is shown in appendix 3.

2.4 Qualitative data collection—partner delivery interviews

Representatives of the DEC (x 2) and the AECG (x 3) were interviewed with the focus being on understanding the role of the implementation/ project delivery partnership in the overall impact of the program. The interviews were semi-structured and conducted by telephone and face-to-face.

2.5 Analysis of pre- and post- teacher and principal survey responses

The DEC designed and administered pre- and post- teacher and principal surveys.

2.5.1 Survey data received

The DEC provided ARTD with principal and teacher survey data collected before the respondents participated in the program (pre-program survey) and after they completed the five-day program and any follow-up forums (post-program survey).

A total of 184 teachers and 58 principals completed the pre-survey and 85 teachers and 34 principals completed the post-survey (table 2).

Table 2. Number of survey respondents by cluster

Cluster number	Teachers		Principals	
	Pre-	Post-	Pre-	Post-
1	19	13	6	3
2	22	12	8	6
3	33	13	11	7
5	12	4	4	3
8	23	9	10	8
11	38	15	9	2
12	10	5	6	1
13	27	14	4	4
4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 14	0	0	0	0
Total	184	85	58	34

2.5.2 Survey response rates

About 70 per cent of nominated teachers and 65 per cent of nominated principals had attended the program at December 2012 (table 4, section 3). Survey response rates were calculated as the proportion of the number of survey respondents and the number of teachers/ principals who attended the program. Although 344 teachers and 95 principals across 14 clusters participated in the program, the pre- and post-surveys were completed by teachers and principals from only 8 clusters (table 3). Overall, the pre-survey response rates were almost double the post-survey response rates. The pre-survey was completed by over half (53%) of teachers and 60 per cent of principals while

the post-survey was completed by only 25 per cent of teachers and 36 per cent of principals. The response rates differ however across clusters and between the pre- and post-survey, from no survey respondents (clusters 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 14), to over 80 per cent response rate (clusters 1, 2, 3, 5 teachers and principals pre-surveys).

Table 3. Response rates by cluster—number of survey respondents as a proportion of program attendees

Cluster Number	Teachers' response rate		Principals' response rate	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1	95%	65%	100%	60%
2	81%	44%	89%	67%
3	83%	33%	92%	58%
4	0%	0%	0%	0%
5	86%	29%	80%	60%
6	0%	0%	0%	0%
7	0%	0%	0%	0%
8	58%	23%	100%	80%
9	0%	0%	0%	0%
10	0%	0%	0%	0%
11	64%	25%	60%	13%
12	56%	28%	150%	25%
13	79%	41%	44%	44%
14	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total	53%	25%	60%	36%
Total for clusters with ≥ one survey	73%	34%	84%	49%
Total attended	344		95	

2.5.3 Validated index scores

The teachers' and principals' surveys consist of 40 and 47 questions respectively. A separate analysis of each survey question would have resulted in a descriptive list of participants' agreement or disagreement with a number of statements. To increase the analytical and statistical strength of the evaluation we computed indices relevant to aspects of teaching and engagement such as instructional practices, strength of relationships, understanding of Aboriginal culture and confidence about relating to the

community. For a complete list of questions included in each index see appendix 4. A total of six and eight indices respectively were computed based on teachers' and principals' survey questions.

All indices were validated using the Reliability Analysis command in SPSS v19. For all but two indices the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were larger than 0.7, confirming the internal consistency of the indices.⁴ The two indices that were not validated through this procedure were principals' *teaching practices* (consisting of three questions) and their *confidence about connecting with the community* (consisting of two questions). When indices are computed from a small number of items the correlation analysis of the items is recommended instead of Cronbach's alpha⁵. We found the items (questions) for these indices strongly correlated.

Finally, to assess the impact of participating in *Connecting to Country* on teachers' and principals' levels of understanding of Aboriginal culture, perspectives and protocols, their level of confidence in embedding Aboriginal culture in their teaching and their current practices, we explored the differences in the pre- and post-survey indices.

2.5.4 A sound pre-post survey analysis

When conducting pre-post survey data analysis it is preferred that the pre- and post-surveys are completed by the same individuals and that a unique identifier is attached to each respondent. This allows for the pre- and post-survey data to be linked for each respondent and to assess the change within each respondent due to their participation in the program. The data provided, however, did not include such identifying information and a pre-post repeated (matched) sample analysis was not possible.

The pre-survey was sent to teachers and principals nominated to participate in the *Connecting to Country* program and the post-survey was sent to teachers and principals who attended the program. It is hence likely that the post-survey respondents are a subsample of the pre-survey respondents. Furthermore, although we could not match the pre- and post-survey responses for each individual, both pre- and post-survey responses came from the same clusters (clusters 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 11, 12, 13) making the pre-post change representative of the change within clusters.

Using independent sample t-tests we explored whether the pre-post survey differences in indices are statistically significant. Supplementing the t-test for equality of means, the eta-square effect size statistics were calculated to provide an indication of the magnitude of the differences between groups. An effect size between 0.01 and 0.05 is

⁴ DeVellis R. 2003. Scale Development: Theory and Applications. Applied Social Research Methods #26.

⁵ Briggs SR and Cheek JM. 1986. The role of factor analysis in the development and evaluation of personality scales. Journal of Personality, Vol 54, Issue 1 pages 106-148.

considered small, between .06 and .13 is moderate and the effect size is large if greater than 0.14.⁶

2.6 Analysis of education performance indicator data

The Department provided education performance indicator data for students in participating schools by reporting cluster for 2010, 2011 and 2012—NAPLAN student performance data, attendance rates, PLPs and turnover staffing rates for schools from which teachers attended the training. The data were analysed by the Statistics Unit, Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluations, Strategic Information and Reporting.

NAPLAN

The NAPLAN data provided compared NAPLAN results for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students as a percentage above the national mean score and gave mean scores for reading, writing and numeracy.

Attendance rates

Data was extracted from the Attendance datacube. Attendance rates were for Semester 1 in the three reporting years. Attendance rates covered all grades, including ungraded support students.

2.7 Analysis of school plans

ARTD received copies of school plans from 21 schools pertaining to years between 2009 and 2014. Although most school plans followed a common structure, some used different structures and formats. We developed a coding framework and definitions for counting and categorisation of outcomes and strategies relating to Aboriginal students and communities. School priorities were generally identified from the school priorities explicitly noted in the school plans. Outcomes/ targets were identified from short and long term outcomes and targets noted at the beginning of the plan or in each section. Strategies/ plans for action were identified from strategies noted in each section of the plans. Two staff members reviewed each school plan and entered both tallies and details into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

⁶ Cohen JW. 1988. Statistical power analysis for behavioural sciences, pages 248-247. (2nd Edition). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

3. Implementing *Connecting to Country* training

To understand the kinds of impacts the *Connecting to Country* program has achieved it is necessary to first assess how well the program has been implemented. The two kinds of training were delivered as a partnership between the NSW AECG (three-day cultural immersion workshops⁷) and the DEC (two-day professional learning workshops), with the two organisations having complementary roles and responsibilities. The partnership has been integral to the delivery of *Connecting to Country* training and the achievement of outcomes.

This chapter describes how the training was delivered by the two partners and assesses the extent to which the training has reached the targeted schools and staff, and reports on participants' satisfaction with the organisation and facilitation of the workshops. The chapter also identifies what aspects and components of the *Connecting to Country* training have been successful and what factors have hindered the delivery of the program.

The chapter directly addresses two Terms of Reference.

- f. Identify the benefits of the *Connecting to Country* implementation/ project delivery partnership between the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group and the NSW Department of Education and Communities and assess the extent to which it was integral to the overall impact of the project.
- g. Identify the most effective aspects/ components/ elements of *Connecting to Country* in
 - enhancing teachers' and principals' understanding of local Aboriginal cultures, histories and perspectives
 - increasing their willingness and capacity to establish respectful, effective relationships with Aboriginal students, parents and communities
 - increasing their willingness and capacity to integrate and apply what they have learned in their school leadership and classroom teaching practices.

⁷ Full title is *Being Culturally Aware, Becoming Culturally Inclusive: A Pathway to Cultural Competence*.

3.1 Three-quarters of targeted teachers and two-thirds of targeted principals participated in training by the end of December 2012

Connecting to Country training generally brought together staff from targeted schools located in a local Aboriginal community area and where there was a functioning local AECG. In instances where there was no local AECG functioning (generally urban locations) or the geographic area covered by the regional AECG was small, cultural immersion training was facilitated by the regional AECG.

Between July 2011 and December 2012, 344 teachers and 95 principals or delegates from 109 schools (70% of the targeted schools) participated in 27 cultural immersion workshops held across the State (table 4). The remaining schools in New England and Western NSW are expected to attend cultural immersion workshops organised by their local AECGs in the first semester of 2013.

The DEC regions organised and facilitated the two-day professional learning workshops for teachers and principals. The number of workshops held depended on geographic practicalities; larger regions such as Western NSW tended to hold more professional learning workshops to increase accessibility.

Most of these teachers and principals have had the opportunity to attend one of the 12 teacher or nine principal professional learning workshops held before the end of December 2012.⁸ The AE&CE expects that an additional four professional learning workshops for teachers and principals will be offered in Semester 1 2013.

⁸ There is no data available on the proportion of participants who attended a cultural immersion workshop and also attended a professional learning workshop.

Table 4. School and school staff participation in *Connecting to Country* between July 2011 and December 2012

Cluster	No. schools nominated	No. schools participated @ Dec 2012	% schools attended	No. teachers <u>nominated</u>	No. teachers <u>attended</u>	% teachers <u>attended</u>	No. principals <u>nominated</u>	No. principals/ <u>leaders attended</u>	% principals/ <u>leaders attended</u>
1	6	6	100%	20	20	100%	6	5	83%
2	9	6	67%	28	27	96%	9	9	100%
3	13	9	69%	42	40	95%	13	12	92%
4	4	4	100%	10	8	80%	4	3	75%
5	5	5	100%	14	14	100%	5	5	100%
6	14	14	100%	40	33	83%	14	9	64%
7	16	4	25%	60	8	13%	16	2	13%
8	12	12	100%	39	40	103%	12	10	83%
9	6	6	100%	24	14	58%	6	5	83%
10	6	6	100%	20	18	90%	6	4	67%
11	19	19	100%	58	59	102%	19	15	79%
12	6	6	100%	21	18	86%	6	4	67%
13	21	9	43%	92	34	37%	21	9	43%
14	6	3	50%	25	11	44%	6	3	50%
All	143	109	76%	493	344	70%	143	95	66%

Notes: Clusters 1 & 2=Hunter Central Coast; clusters 3 & 11=North Coast; clusters 4 & 12=Illawarra and South East Sydney; cluster 5=South West Sydney; cluster 6=Western Sydney; cluster 7=New England; clusters 10, 13 & 14=Western NSW; cluster 8=New England; cluster 9=Riverina.

3.2 New scheme teachers and experienced and interested teachers nominated for training

While the program formally targeted new scheme teachers, it appears the rationale for selecting teachers varied somewhat, as did the kinds of teachers chosen and the approach made by the principal to selection.⁹ Teachers had the opportunity to self-nominate for the training in some schools, and in others the principal chose the staff members. One community group indicated that the principal consulted the AECG about which teachers would benefit from the training and were disappointed that these teachers were not all chosen.

Principals and teachers gave some common reasons for selecting specific kinds of teachers (these are listed from most to least common).

- New scheme or recently appointed teachers. Chosen on the advice of the DEC and the AECG and because principals considered this group of teachers would be more open to learning, and benefit from knowing more about local Aboriginal culture and history.
- Teachers with permanent positions and also long term members of staff. Principals wanted more certainty that learning from training would be shared and benefit students because these teachers are more likely to be retained by the school.
- Teachers known to have an interest or are experienced in Aboriginal education. Selected so they could build on their knowledge and to encourage or reward their interest.
- Teachers with student welfare responsibilities, for example Year Advisors. Selected so they could build on their knowledge and strengthen their links with families and the community.
- Aboriginal Education Officers/ Attendance Engagement Officers. Selected because they are in-school experts, and to build on their knowledge and existing linkages.
- Teachers known to have difficulties engaging Aboriginal students. Chosen to build their capacity and improve pedagogy in Aboriginal education.

3.3 Cultural immersion workshops—community-led cultural education an effective approach

The community-led cultural immersion workshops were mostly delivered very effectively. The structure and approach used in the training successfully engaged participants when implemented well. The impacts on participants' understanding of culture, history and family backgrounds, better relationships with local Aboriginal

⁹ There is no systematic information about the proportion of new scheme teachers who attended out of the total numbers of teachers.

community members and families, and integration and application in the classroom (to a lesser extent) can be directly related to certain elements of the training (table 5). These impacts are discussed in more detail in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

3.3.1 Cultural immersions workshops were mostly very well received by teachers and principals—a safe place to learn

The three-day cultural immersion workshops were mostly successfully facilitated, with many participants and presenters enjoying and valuing the experience.

Both new scheme teachers and more experienced teachers found the information relevant to their teaching practice and many gained new insights. There was genuine commitment and interest on the part of most school staff who participated, but there was also a small minority who appeared cynical and exhausted. The majority of teachers believe it is important to consult and engage with Aboriginal families and the community in school planning, developing curriculum materials and teaching in an inclusive manner.¹⁰

Where the workshops were effectively facilitated participants perceived the training as being a safe place to learn. A place where teachers could ask those awkward questions and Aboriginal people could give their perspective and explain the cultural way of knowing. Importantly, participants commonly perceived the training as enabling them to see the world through Aboriginal eyes.

For the small number of schools where teachers and principals were less satisfied with their experience, the training appears to have limited impact. In these cases, it appears that the facilitator or individual presenters had poor facilitation skills or communicated in a language that teachers reacted to negatively. For example, participants said they felt presenters were focused on past wrongs or participants felt uncomfortable with the responses to questions and thereafter kept quiet or were less open to Aboriginal ways of learning and being.

Community members who presented during cultural immersion workshops commonly expressed great satisfaction with being involved and having the chance to ‘teach the teachers’, focus on the present and have an opportunity to improve the experience of school for Aboriginal students. As a result, one unintended impact of the program has been to build the confidence of AECG members in their role in supporting Aboriginal education in schools.

¹⁰ See appendix 5 for survey results. Also discussed in more detail in chapter 5.

3.3.2 The structure of the training and active learning approaches were critical elements in its success

The success of the cultural immersion workshops was directly related to having clear and effective program guidelines, whilst allowing enough flexibility to adapt the agenda to reflect local needs and interests. Another key success factor was the structure of the training.

The three-day cultural immersion workshop provided space and time to allow some teachers to feel comfortable about revealing their inadequacies and uncertainties, for example, about the best ways to engage troubled students and their families. Sessions usually left time for discussion and there were opportunities for informal networking through meal breaks and before and after the training. These elements helped consolidate participants' knowledge and understanding and allowed them to make connections with the AECG and other members of the community.

Box 1 Illustrative quote

It was very moving with what D. did with the teachers. And the biggest impact I thought was his tablecloth. And they even said that in their evaluation with the teachers and the principals. Like he had a yellow tablecloth on the ground out at the rock and like we were putting figures and we were putting twigs and little bits of trees and all that, and then when white man came things started going off and I think with the teachers it made a great big impact with those teachers in letting them know what had really actually happened.
[Community member]

The guidelines provided an agenda for local/ regional AECGs, outlined the philosophy and principles that underpin the agenda but also permitted local groups to adapt the training to better meet local needs and reflect local culture, history and issues.

The cultural immersion training was led by local Aboriginal community members. Local content and facilitation is a clear strength of the training because it allows relationships to be built and strengthened (for example, between principals and local AECG members) and ensures that information is relevant to student needs and issues. Presenters had varied backgrounds; they may be on country or off country. Where teachers and principals perceived that the content was not sufficiently local (for a small number of workshops where schools were joined with other local AECGs or workshops were done at a regional level) they tended to be less satisfied with the experience and perceived the information as being of lesser relevance.

The structure of the training, especially the active learning approaches, was successful in engaging teachers and principals in the training process (table 5). Indeed, many participants had strong emotional responses to the training, such as feelings of guilt, anger and empathy.

The learning country site visits where teachers went to culturally significant sites were the highlight of the training for many. This approach was especially effective in helping teachers and principals better appreciate local Aboriginal culture and history and understand the spiritual links Aboriginal people have with their country. The visits

helped teachers see local land and its features through the eyes of Aboriginal people. Some schools are taking their students to the sites visited or telling them about them, and have continued their relationships with the Aboriginal people who conducted the tours.

The personal stories of the presenters were also a powerful teaching tool. Teachers and principals talked about being profoundly moved by the stories, and the stories having the power to break down stereotypes and bring history to life. Some teachers felt that by hearing the stories they could better understand their students' backgrounds and would be more able to make a personal connection with people in the community.

The making connections component of the training was perceived as being useful by all those involved because it made teachers and principals aware of relevant welfare and health services that can assist students when needed. However, the strength and quality of schools' pre-existing relationships differed from school to school, as does the way schools respond to welfare issues. As such, although we saw many positive impacts on relationships and engagement, some schools are still reporting that they face many challenges in improving relationships and they are taking small steps to improve these (see chapter 5).

Some local AECG members were relatively inexperienced in organising and facilitating training and initially lacked confidence in their ability to do so. As such, the support from the State AECG project officers to explain the agenda and provide other advice and build up AECG members' confidence was very important. As was allowing local AECGs time to consult about the focus of the workshops and who should present and engage community members. The quality and breadth of experience of speakers enhanced the experience for all those present. Speakers were able to work together and support each other.

Even so, around one-third of the schools we spoke to and community members at three sites expressed some frustration about certain aspects of the organisation of the workshops.

- Some principals indicated they did not have enough prior information about the content and nature of the training. More information would have helped staff prepare.
- Short notice for training or changes to scheduled training days. Schools require advance notice of training to efficiently plan for relief staff and change any existing commitments. In a few cases, principals reported they were unable to attend workshops for all three days because of other commitments. Community members at one site indicated the training was organised without adequate time to consult and hence did not involve key people.
- Sessions starting late or long breaks between sessions or presenters not turning up (five sites). From some participants' perspective this created an impression of the training being disorganised and wasting training time. In one workshop observed by the evaluators, the facilitators explicitly explained the reason for certain unorthodox

aspects of organisation such as an agenda without times specified and long breaks. These reflected different cultural approaches to learning and in themselves were a teaching tool.

- Participants being unclear about the location of training sites in advance or where to go when arriving at cultural immersion sites (one site).

3.4 The professional learning workshops—mixed success in meeting needs

The cultural immersion workshops were followed up by separate two-day professional learning workshops for teachers and principals organised by Regional Aboriginal Education Teams. These were intended to build on and strengthen teachers' and principals' capacity to plan, develop and implement culturally inclusive programs and school leadership practices.

The focus of these workshops varied across regions, as did the extent they met the professional learning needs and expectations of teachers and principals. We found many examples of teachers and principals using these workshops to consolidate knowledge and apply the new knowledge in the classroom or in school planning (see chapter 7). For others, particularly teachers, the professional learning workshops represented a somewhat lost opportunity.

Because of the somewhat varying levels of experience in teaching Aboriginal students or leading schools in locations where there are Aboriginal communities, the workshop organisers faced some challenges in making workshops relevant for all participants' interests, experience and professional needs.

Principal workshops—time to reflect, share ideas and plan with peers

Workshops that worked well from the principals' perspectives took a collaborative approach. These workshops provided principals with opportunities to reflect on their experiences, share ideas with their peers and plan how they can best improve Aboriginal education at their school. For example, one regional workshop used yarning circles and others tasked small groups of principals to come up with a plan about how to improve Aboriginal education in their school. For many this was a useful activity as principals have subsequently implemented many of these ideas at their school.

Workshops where principals were less satisfied were said to lack direction (some principals could recall little about the workshops) or be too focused on deficits. One principal indicated that they would have preferred more on improving instructional leadership skills, rather than practical administration.

After the workshops principals were given the opportunity to participate in a collegial situational analysis of Aboriginal education in their schools against eight key indicators. The situational analysis is offered on a fee basis by Dare to Lead, a project of the

Principals Australia Institute. Although only a few schools have taken up the opportunity, more than half had already done so prior to the workshops and one principal wanted to but did not have funds to do so.

Teacher workshops—inspirational for some and disappointing for others

Teachers had different experiences of these workshops and how well these related to the subject they teach or assisted them to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives into their teaching.

For some, the workshops clarified how to translate their new understanding of Aboriginal culture into the classroom (chapter 7). Others gained confidence and skills about developing new curriculum materials or changing teaching strategies. Some teachers would have liked to have been given more practical assistance to develop curriculum materials and resources and remained uncertain about their capacity to do so after the training. The AECG has recognised the need for structured local work units covering local Aboriginal history and has funding to develop these in 2013.

These different outcomes and satisfaction levels appear to be related to the mix and types of presentation and facilitation used. Teachers were most positive when they had the opportunity to collaborate with their peers, learn what works in other schools and share ideas for adapting curriculum work units. Teachers also found presentations on Aboriginal language and developing personal learning plans useful.

Teachers were less satisfied where the content of the presentations was perceived as being focused on policy and procedures and disconnected from the cultural immersion training. The professional learning workshops were sometimes perceived as contradicting the message of being permitted to try things given in the cultural immersion workshop. Teachers talked about the presentations not being practical or specific enough and lacking direction. Some teachers were asked to bring along work units but then were not being given any opportunities to discuss or adapt these.

Teachers commonly seek out appropriate resource materials and work units and were disappointed when these were not provided. However, the DEC expects teachers to adapt work units for local needs.

3.5 Conclusion

Connecting to Country is a very well-conceived program, successfully delivered and achieving its objectives. Local and regional AECGs facilitated training, which engaged teachers and principals or delegates in learning about local Aboriginal history, culture and needs. The two-day professional learning workshops were relatively less successful and should be revisited to provide more practical advice about how to translate the improved understanding of Aboriginal culture and history into classroom practice and instructional leadership.

Table 5. Effectiveness of different aspects of the delivery model for the *Connecting to Country* program and the assessment of impact on participants

Component of C2C	Understanding culture, history, family backgrounds	Better relationships	Integration and application to school leadership and classroom practice	Comments
Becoming Culturally Aware, Becoming Culturally Inclusive: A Pathway to Cultural Competence (3-day workshop)				
Learning country	<i>High positive</i> Significant change pre- and post- in understanding Aboriginal culture and history (teachers and principals)	<i>High positive</i> Linked Elders conducting tours with school staff, many schools have continued these relationships in a range of guises	<i>High positive</i> Some teachers incorporating visits to country as activities, information about sites	Highlight of training for many. Common view that visits to country helped participants better appreciate local Aboriginal culture, history Engaging and effective approach
Personal stories	<i>High positive</i> No teachers who reported better understanding of local needs and issues Significant change in understanding about how to engage Aboriginal students and community	<i>High positive</i> Linked staff with key community members, strengthened relationships, local Aboriginal people have become a resource for the school AECG and other community members giving feedback about the school	<i>Small to moderate positive</i> Some teachers asked presenters to assist in the classroom to teach Aboriginal history. Some schools expressed intentions but not actioned Teachers say it's hard to bring stories back to the classroom without written resources 1 community group says schools can do better at involving Elders	Highlight of training for many: some of the words used to describe the training; <i>powerful and moving, breaking down of stereotypes, bringing history to life</i> At 2 locations participants felt focus was critical, resulted in negative reactions, no changes. 1 location, school had been unsuccessful in attempts to involve presenter

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Component of C2C	Understanding culture, history, family backgrounds	Better relationships	Integration and application to school leadership and classroom practice	Comments
National and local history	<i>High positive</i>	<i>High positive</i>	<i>High positive</i>	More aware of needs, local issues, some schools greater focus on welfare, developing relationships
Making connections	<i>Moderate positive</i>	<i>Moderate to high positive</i> Some schools contacted services after workshops, others strengthened links	<i>Moderate positive</i> Improved school welfare responses in some schools	Transformational process and some schools still describe challenges in engaging the community. These schools are seeking a greater focus and discussion on ways/ strategies to engage families in the school Communities see this strategy as a strength because it increased awareness of services to assist their children
Consolidating knowledge	<i>High positive</i>	<i>High positive</i>	<i>High positive</i>	Acknowledges the past and focuses on the future, seen as a strength. In the small number of workshops where the focus was perceived to be mainly on the past, then outcomes in understanding and building relationships were not achieved Opportunities for discussion helps consolidate knowledge and at some, making knowledge explicit helps consolidate knowledge Where film and art used these were very effective strategies

Component of C2C	Understanding culture, history, family backgrounds	Better relationships	Integration and application to school leadership and classroom practice	Comments
Professional learning workshops				
Pedagogy workshops and forums	Not focus of training	Not focus of training	<i>Mixed</i> No change in principals' ratings of leadership practices pre- and post-. But many principals talk about changes, refinements, insights they have made; increased proportion of principals plan for success of Aboriginal students Significant change for teachers in rating of confidence in adapting the curriculum. 3 teachers had developed new work units, others intend to, others making refinements to practice, how they relate to students, some done nothing Increased proportion teachers: develop PLPs with families and incorporate Aboriginal context and perspectives, some teachers have not or remain uncertain about adapting work units	Variable standard of delivery of 2-day workshop, within a context of variation in existing activities and skills A lot of commentary around PLPs and challenges faced in keeping these relevant and useful, especially a challenge for HSs Inconsistency across teacher workshops in whether there is sufficient focus on adapting work units Some teachers want more practical assistance/ resources, good examples Communities want teachers to sit down and discuss developing units more often

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Component of C2C	Understanding culture, history, family backgrounds	Better relationships	Integration and application to school leadership and classroom practice	Comments
Dare to Lead forums	Not focus of training	Not focus of training	<i>Moderate positive (13 forums)</i> Only 2 schools have taken up offer for collegial situational analysis	Half of the schools had done situational analysis with Dare to Lead prior to program. Dare to Lead recommends long term coaching is needed to embed change and improve leadership skills

Community mentors

Advice and support	<i>High positive</i>	<i>High positive</i>	<i>High positive</i>	Appears to be informal arrangements, unclear the extent these have been established
Professional learning	<i>High positive</i>	<i>High positive</i>	<i>High positive</i>	10 schools have done or are planning follow-up training, shorter and at school, involving the AECG or community members 2 schools had follow-up training cancelled and others unsuccessful at planning

4. Impacts of *Connecting to Country* on awareness and understanding

This chapter shows that the *Connecting to Country* training successfully increased most teachers' and principals' awareness and understanding of local Aboriginal cultures, histories and perspectives.

This chapter addresses Terms of Reference

- a. Identify and assess the impacts of *Connecting to Country* on participating teachers' and principals' understanding of local Aboriginal cultures, histories and perspectives.

4.1 Motivation to learn or change, and to question beliefs

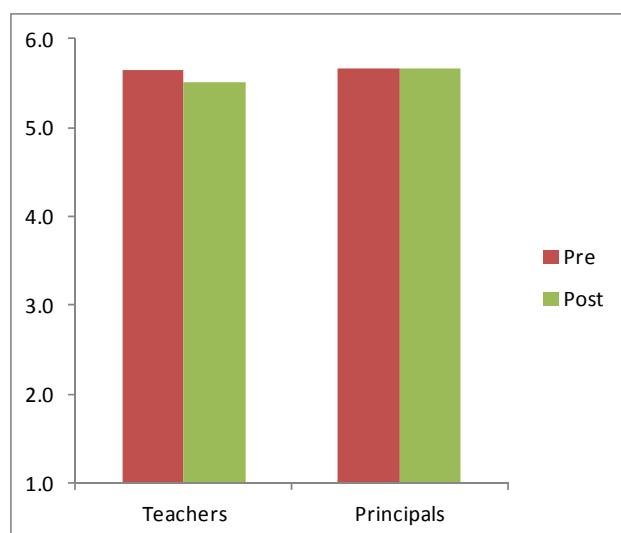
Broadly speaking, the *Connecting to Country* program is a new and engaging approach to raising awareness and understanding of Aboriginal history, culture and perspectives for participants. At its best, the training came from the heart and reached the heart of the teachers and school leaders who attended, increasing their awareness, appreciation and empathy for the Aboriginal students, families and communities at their school. In this way it has increased motivation to learn, discuss and try to implement new approaches and activities to include and engage Aboriginal students and families.

Teachers and principals came to the training motivated to learn about local Aboriginal history and culture, as is shown in figure 4, which provides the index scores that summarise responses to questions about beliefs about Aboriginal education policy and application in the school. For example, 97% of teachers and 98% of principals agreed or strongly agreed with one of the statements that comprise the index, "I want to learn more about Aboriginal culture, perspectives and protocols" in the pre- survey. Interviews showed most participants had increased motivation to learn about and use Aboriginal perspectives.

The style of the training offers an invitation to participants to learn about Aboriginal culture and history from Aboriginal people. The feeling of welcome is important, as one of the barriers to enquiry into Aboriginal history and culture can be a sense of trespass. At some of the cultural immersion workshops there was a strong message to teachers to have a go at introducing elements of Aboriginal culture or perspective in their classrooms without being too afraid of getting it wrong. The importance of respect was emphasised, but also that so much Aboriginal culture and knowledge has been lost, that many Aboriginal people are learning their own history and culture and can't be expected to know everything. The message was it is therefore up to all of us to help learn and then preserve what remains of this heritage. Teachers who received this message felt a sense of empowerment to include what they know of Aboriginal culture in their classrooms,

whether it be a few words of language, a story that is off country, an art or craft technique or some local history.

Figure 4. Beliefs index scores, pre- and post- workshop



Source: Pre- and post- teacher and principal surveys.
Note: No significant differences between pre- and post- scores.

4.2 Increased historical knowledge and appreciation

There were three levels of history addressed during the three-day cultural immersion training—national history, local history and personal or family history.

The cultural immersion training was effective in increasing teachers' and principals' knowledge of all aspects of the local Aboriginal history covered.

The survey results for both principals and teachers show that there was a significant increase in understanding of Aboriginal culture and history following the training (figure 5). Before the training, just 12 per cent of teachers and 21 per cent of principals rated their understanding of local Aboriginal history as being either good or excellent. After the training, this increased to 41 per cent of teachers and 45 per cent of principals.

Box 2 Illustrative quotes

We knew how to teach the curriculum, but this has given more depth of understanding of the regional area, which we didn't know about. [Teacher]

Those 3 days were really worthwhile because we got to learn about the local history...because if we don't know and don't understand the local history, how can we teach it...and expect them to know it? [Teacher]

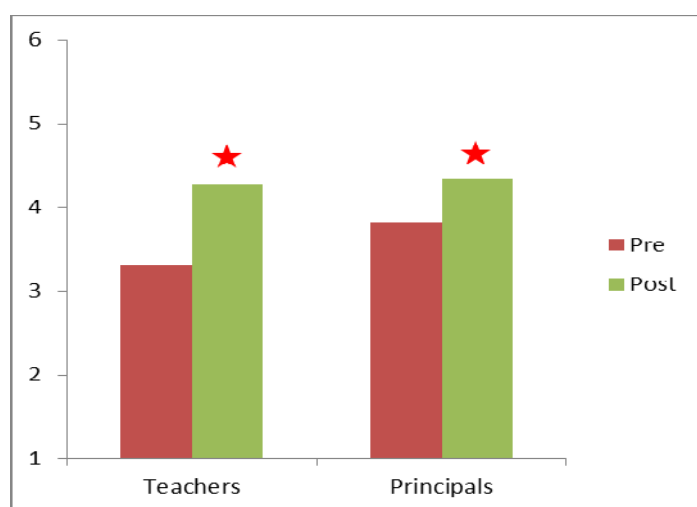
This made me more aware of what's on around the place. And I think...well it made me understand a bit more about where all these kids are coming from and how far they have come and how far they still have to go, compared to lots of other places. [Aboriginal teacher, originally from a different part of Australia]

There was a high interest amongst participants in learning local history. Whether people were new to the area or long term residents it appears that everyone learnt new things about their area through these sessions, which often surprised and pleased them. In some cases where teachers attended a training that was outside their local area, they have been inspired to reproduce some elements of the training in their local community in order to gain the benefits of that experience.

National history was often presented using a film, for example *Lousy Little Sixpence*. There was often a strong response to this part of the training amongst both participants and presenters.

While some teachers were familiar with the documentary films used, many were not so familiar, and the strong response came from being faced with uncomfortable truths about Australia's treatment of Aboriginal people. In at least one case a teacher felt very offended by the film she watched, feeling that she was being personally blamed or attacked for the past behaviour by being asked to watch the documentary. Other people in the same group did not share this response, indicating both the personal interpretation of the material and also the sensitivity of the subject matter. More often, people were moved by the reminders of national history and were reflective in their response to presentations, particularly when personal stories were shared with participants. These stories conveyed a sense of the personal cost of past policies and actions, such as the stolen generations. Some people realised for the first time that families and individuals are still living with the grief and loss or other consequences of those times. The combination of national history and personal story invites a strong empathic response as people connect in a more personal way with Aboriginal history.

Figure 5. Teachers' and principals' understanding of Aboriginal culture and history index scores, pre- and post-



Notes: ★ denotes statistically significant difference/ change (increase) in confidence pre- and post- the training. There is a strong effect size for both teachers and principals in both cohorts.

4.3 Increased cultural knowledge and appreciation

Broadly speaking, teachers came away from the cultural immersion training with new or deeper insights into the local Aboriginal culture.

The survey results for both teachers and principals show that there was a significant increase in understanding of Aboriginal culture following the cultural immersion training (figure 5 and individual survey questions). Before the training, just 11 per cent of teachers and 21 per cent of principals rated their understanding of local Aboriginal culture as being either good or excellent. After the training, this increased to 42 per cent of teachers and 48 per cent of principals.

Box 3 Illustrative quotes

I realised that it's important to go through Elders when you want to teach something Aboriginal—e.g. woodcarving—because it has a spiritual significance. You can't just get anyone in to teach it. That was a new and important understanding. Therefore, the importance of patience and more listening than talking.
[Principal]

I've been fishing in this river for fifteen years, and I've never seen it before.
[Principal]

Some presentations emphasised the view that Aboriginal children and young people may have different learning styles and strengths than non-Aboriginal classmates. For example, they may learn more easily through practical activity and discussion rather than more abstract presentations. They may be more productive working with others and talking and sharing as they work rather than working alone. Yarning circles were used at some training days to illustrate traditional approaches to negotiation and consultation, offering an alternative approach to classroom organisation and group process.

Kinship relationships were introduced and discussed at some training sessions. Through this, some teachers gained insights as to why children or young people may use more than one residence as their home, with implications for school attendance, homework completion or carrying the books and equipment needed for class.

Presentations were made at some training sessions (more often at the two-day follow-up workshop) on the English spoken at home by many Aboriginal families as being a form of dialect, frequently misunderstood and punished by teachers as wrong. This presentation challenged teachers to respond and teach with a broader understanding and appreciation for the child's home and community life and its intersection with mainstream education. At some community forums it was clear that this new appreciation was making a difference that could be discerned by the community.

Commonly accepted protocols were introduced and explained, such as Welcome to Country ceremonies and acknowledgement of Country. Also, the protocols of gaining community participation through approaching Elders and other ways of working skilfully with the community were presented and discussed at the trainings. Teachers appreciated the opportunity to hear about these and to ask questions. They also learnt

that Aboriginal people can have different perspectives and interpretations on some of these matters, for example the use of the word Aboriginal or Indigenous.

4.4 Deeper appreciation of Aboriginal peoples' perspectives

Training workshops generally drew on many community members from different professional backgrounds, life experiences and home country. As such they provided many windows into local Aboriginal communities and perspectives. Over the course of the three days of cultural immersion training participants had opportunities to hear and interact with many different presenters and

Box 4 Illustrative quote

Going on the training was helpful to find out more about the families' culture and see things from their perspective, e.g. the timetabling and our times are not something they might consider to be important. [Teacher]

guests, with multiple points of view. This could be confusing, but also had the potential to be empowering as it provided space for interpretation and negotiation. For example, while some presenters may offer a hard line on the teaching of Aboriginal language (only by Aboriginal people from that language group), others may encourage teachers to use and teach whatever words they know to stimulate interest in and respect for Aboriginal culture. Some teachers became more aware of stories being local (on country), or off country, meaning from some other part of Australia. One teacher told how she uses a thunder story from the Northern Territory, and while she is still using it she is also curious to try and find a local equivalent story to share with her classes.

Some teachers also expressed appreciation and interest towards Aboriginal spiritual beliefs. The Aboriginal presenters' openness and willingness to share made a strong impression. For example, at one training one of the organisers told some participants that during their visit to the bush he had seen his grandfather's totem animal a number of times. This had pleased him, as it showed his grandfather's approval of what he was doing. The fact that he shared this, and it was heard, appreciated and remembered, suggests a level of shared trust and understanding between the presenters and participants.

At least one of the trainings had a non-Aboriginal man lead the site visit and discussion of local history and culture. He has worked closely with local Aboriginal Elders for more than twenty years, and has been entrusted by them with preserving and sharing what he has learnt. This provided a powerful example of shared responsibility for Aboriginal culture and the mutual respect and cooperation that is possible to achieve.

4.5 Conclusion

The *Connecting to Country* training is designed to increase the awareness and understanding of teachers and school executives of local Aboriginal cultures, their histories and perspectives.

Broadly speaking, the evidence gathered by the evaluation shows that this program is successful in achieving these outcomes with teachers and principals.

One of the key features of this training is that it is local. In general, and other things being equal, the more local the training is the more powerful it is and the greater its impact on the participants. Many participants expressed surprise and pleasure at learning new things about their local area, whether this was its past history, its plant and animal life, its landforms or a new way of seeing familiar places.

5. Impact on schools' willingness and capacity to engage Aboriginal students, families and community

Establishing respectful and good relationships between school staff and Aboriginal students, their families and communities is necessary to successfully support Aboriginal students' education.

This chapter describes the many positive impacts *Connecting to Country* has had on increasing schools' willingness and capacity to engage with Aboriginal students, families and community.

The chapter addresses the Terms of Reference

- b. identify and assess the impacts of *Connecting to Country* on participating teachers' and principals' willingness and capacity to establish respectful and effective relationships with Aboriginal students, parents and communities.

5.1 Relationships fairly good between the majority of schools and communities, but room for improvement

The majority of schools involved in the evaluation reported they had fairly good relationships with Aboriginal families before the training (figure 6), opinions that were largely confirmed by community members attending the forums. However, both school stakeholders and community members also talked about the kinds of challenges they face relating to each other and often recognised that relationships could be stronger. Principals of two high schools said they had made considerable efforts to engage Aboriginal families and community members in school activities, without much success.

School principals or their delegates tended to rate the strength of relationships between the school and Aboriginal families and community higher than did individual teachers. Primary school principals and teachers were more often positive about the strength of their relationships with Aboriginal families and community than were high school staff members. High schools face challenges engaging all parents and

Box 5 Illustrative quotes

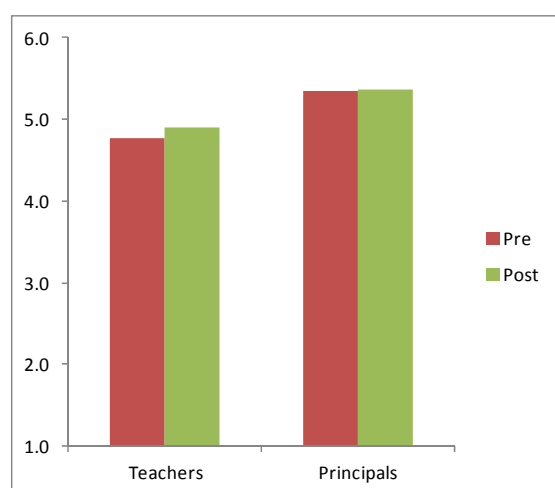
And what I picked up from the cultural training was someone said, "You can't have a connection without a relationship. And you cannot have a relationship without conversation."...chance for conversation and once those relationships start forming, then we've got a better chance of sort of being on the front step and driving the education together.
[Teacher]

It takes a lot for a parent to come up to a school. Until you start getting that one-on-one connection and start building those relationships and then maybe they might start coming.
[Community member]

parents in general are often more involved with primary schools. As such, these findings are not unexpected.

The evidence shows that the quality of relationships between schools and the community had not changed to any great extent in the relatively short time since the training (figure 6 and table 6), although the nature of interactions has changed and may be expected to help build or maintain relationships over the longer term (section 5.4).

Figure 6. Strength of relationships index scores, pre- and post- workshop



Note: Differences pre- and post- not significant. There was a small effect size for teachers who did training in 2011.

Table 6. A comparison of schools' views (teachers and principals) of their relationship with Aboriginal families and the local Aboriginal community before and after the training

	After training			
Before training	Positive	Tentative	Challenging	Conflict
Positive	8	0	0	0
Tentative	0	1	0	0
Challenging	0	0	1	0
Conflict	0	0	0	1

Notes: Source of ratings. This table only includes the eleven schools where respondents (teachers and principals) expressed clear opinions about the quality of relationships before *as well as* after the training. In schools where different respondents had different views, we reviewed the content and documented the type of relationship that was most common according to the respondents.

Definitions of relationship ratings. Positive: Comments reflect a positive and effective relationship between the school and the community. Families and community members are engaged in educational and cultural activities at school. Tentative: A mixed and somewhat uncertain relationship between the school and community. Challenging: Schools face consistent challenges in engaging families and the community in educational and cultural activities. Conflict: Comments revealed one or more areas of active conflict between a portion of the local community and the school.

The research provided evidence that *Connecting to Country* is addressing the right issues and areas, and aspects of teaching and leading schools. Across the case study schools,¹¹ strong relationships existed where schools employ Aboriginal education staff and these officers are seen as effective, and where schools acknowledge Aboriginal culture in the classroom and in art and important community events. One important characteristic of schools that were well regarded by community members is where principals or delegates and teachers are seen as proactive and responsive in sorting out problems for Aboriginal students and importantly, where they listen to and understand families' points of view.

Relationships were weaker when Aboriginal families and community members perceived that principals or delegates or individual teachers lacked respect for and understanding about Aboriginal culture and ways of engaging. Where community members talked about this issue, they especially highlighted the tone and kind of language used to their children in the classroom, and their perceptions that Aboriginal students were being treated differently (more harshly) than other students for misdemeanours. A few community forums talked about having problems contacting and gaining appointments with school leaders to discuss their child's problems, or students with behaviour problems being suspended and lacking support from the school to address these students' problems. From the perspective of school staff the community lacked trust in the school and commented that they face significant barriers to contacting families (especially where the families are transient) and that the local communities are often in crisis and disadvantaged.

5.2 Most teachers and principals believe it is important to close the gap and teach Aboriginal students in ways that are respectful and inclusive

Relationships between Aboriginal students, families, community and schools are more likely to flourish if teachers and leaders believe that Aboriginal students can succeed and do well academically. Also, that it is important to teach in ways that are respectful and inclusive. Relationships flourish when these beliefs are communicated to students, families and the community in the way the school interacts with them.

The evidence indicates that most teachers and principals in participating schools supported the broad range of positive strategies and education policy related to Aboriginal education prior to and after completing the *Connecting to Country* training (captured in the Beliefs index score, figure 4). The training appears to have reinforced,

¹¹ The community forums included a mix of parents and community members who may or may not have any involvement or knowledge about the *Connecting to Country* program, therefore many community members commented more generally about their relationships with their local school and were unable to comment on the value of the training.

rather than changed beliefs, as well as giving teachers and principals or delegates ideas about how to better put these beliefs into practice (chapter 6).

Teachers (95% agree or strongly agree) and principals (93% agree or strongly agree) largely reported that they have high expectations of and for Aboriginal students, prior to the program. Most principals (92%) indicated in the pre-survey that they are taking actions to ensure Aboriginal education and training is core business for the school. The high rates of agreement to this question did not change in the post-survey. A high proportion of teachers and principals also indicated they value and want the input and involvement of Aboriginal families and community in their school and classrooms.

5.3 Teachers and principals motivated to engage with Aboriginal students, families and community and overcome barriers to engagement

Schools value and want the input of Aboriginal families and communities.¹² Most teachers and principals indicated in the survey and interviews that they were already willing to engage with Aboriginal students, families and community before the training but sometimes felt frustrated in their attempts to do so.

The training appears to have given many teachers a greater sense of purpose about making the effort to overcome any barriers to engaging Aboriginal students and families (box 6). For some, especially inexperienced teachers, the training has helped overcome a fear of doing the wrong thing or inadvertently offending families or community members. Inexperienced teachers commonly said that because of the training they are no longer hesitant or anxious about contacting Aboriginal parents (box 6).

Principals and teachers commonly indicated they are now more willing to try different approaches to engage Aboriginal families, and many recognised that informal rather than

Box 6 Illustrative quotes

I think we'd like to think we were re-energised and re-committed...I mean, the big message I got from Connecting to Country...I mean, I'd heard it all before...but the importance of those connections with the community, the importance of getting family members down to the school. [PS teacher]

In terms of trying to get wider community or parent involvement, that was, and I think still is, quite a big issue. And for me, I don't think I could understand why they weren't wanting to come in and why they weren't wanting to be more involved with their kids' kind of education. Because I came from a completely different background...And then the training kind of went through a lot of those cultural values and perspectives that I, of course, didn't have so it kind of did make me go 'that's why they don't like coming into the school', 'that's why they prefer to have smaller focus meetings with community members such as AECG members or their own kind of smaller meetings because it can be daunting and things like'. So that kind of really stuck with me. [HS teacher]

Connecting to Country confirmed we are trying to do the right thing as far as Aboriginal parents. We tried the parenting courses through Barnardo's and Mission, we tried BBQs, we tried adult classes to improve their literacy. We tried yarnning circles through Red Cross. Doesn't matter what we try we get no response. [PS principal]

¹² Survey results show that a high proportion of school staff say they value/ want input and involvement of Aboriginal families and community pre- (96% agree or strongly agree) and post- (91% agree or strongly agree). This shows no significant difference between pre- and post- responses.

formal opportunities would help Aboriginal parents be more comfortable and assist in forming good relations. A key message that teachers and principals took away from the cultural immersion workshop was of having a sense of permission to engage more with families and the community. Some schools felt affirmed that they were using the right approaches although they had not always broken through and the workshops went some way to encouraging them to keep trying.

A key motivating factor for some teachers appears to be the realisation that teachers' actions will be supported by parents and that Aboriginal parents are just as interested as any other parents in their children doing well and enjoying being at school. This realisation came from the opportunity to meet community members and parents during the cultural immersion workshop and hear their stories and points of view. Many teachers were also motivated to make greater efforts to engage parents because they gained a better understanding about why some parents may be reluctant to get involved in the school. They learnt that Aboriginal families who had bad memories of their time at school can feel uncomfortable about visiting a school and speaking with teachers.

5.4 Positive changes seen in schools' capacity to engage with Aboriginal students, families and community

There is strong evidence of increases in the capacity of schools to engage with Aboriginal students, families and community as a result of the training. There is some evidence that the nature of interactions between teachers and families (especially) are changing. However, the degree of change varied across schools and individuals. Some teachers and principals have changed how they interact, others are contemplating changing and others are not yet ready to change or perceive they do not need to change.

The following sections describe how capacity to engage has increased and the kinds of changes being made by some schools and individuals and how the community views these changes.

5.4.1 Schools increased their understanding about who and how to approach Aboriginal families and community members and are more confident about engaging

The workshops covered protocols about who and how to approach Aboriginal families and the community. Teachers' and principals' understanding of these protocols increased after the workshops (58% teachers/ 61% principals

Box 7 Illustrative quotes

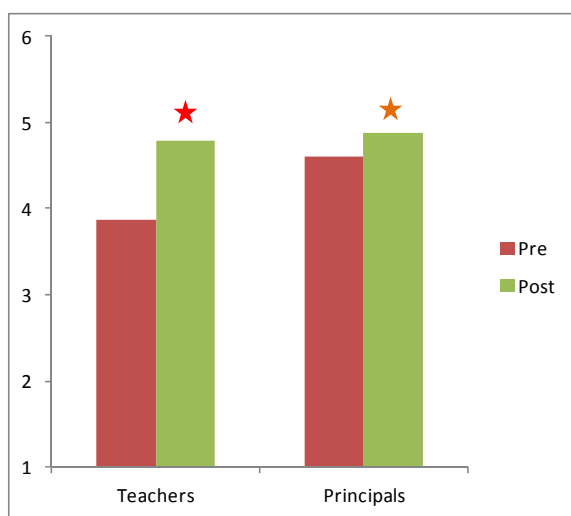
Before training I was hesitant to introduce myself to parents but I have noticed this year I've gone out straight away and introduced myself to the parents both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike. [PS teacher]

Since the training I have increased confidence with ringing parents now knowing that they're going to give us their support. Simply because in Connecting to Country we met so many of the community members and heard their stories about what it was like for them to get an education and what an education meant for them. And also through this process I got a better understanding of how our Aboriginal community is really supporting us. [HS teacher]

rated their understanding as moderate or good or excellent pre- compared to 78% teachers/ 87% principals after the training).

Both teachers and principals were also more confident in their ability to engage with Aboriginal students, families and community after the workshop (figure 7). Figure 7 shows that there were moderate to large differences in the index scores measuring teacher and principal confidence in engaging the community after doing the training, compared to scores before the training.

Figure 7. Confidence in engaging the community index scores, pre- and post-training



Notes: ★ denotes statistically significant difference/ change (increase) in confidence pre- and post- the training. Teachers: large effect size in 2011 and in 2012. Principals: large effect size in 2011 and small to moderate effect size in 2012.

The increased confidence appears to stem from better understanding of protocols and having met key community members and changed perceptions about communities' role in the school. Simply getting the opportunity to meet and get to know each other during the workshops has helped schools and community members start to build new relationships, cemented others and broken down stereotypes. School principals and teachers have felt more able to call up an Elder or other community member and invite their input in the school or seek advice. Teachers talked about knowing the appropriate community member to approach to arrange a meeting with parents about their children and help address behaviour and welfare issues that are affecting a student's ability to learn or engage with school.

Being on Aboriginal 'turf' was important, too. Community members who had presented in the cultural immersion workshop expressed a common view that the experience of teaching-the-teachers helped them feel more valued and more comfortable about engaging with school staff in the future. Some school principals and individual teachers are placing more value on, and recognising just how much local AECGs can contribute to

the school's efforts to improve Aboriginal students' experiences and academic performance (see also chapter 6).

5.5 Changing how schools relate to Aboriginal students, families and community

The increased understanding and confidence about engaging has manifested itself in behaviour changes across schools in a range of ways, although there is mixed evidence about the extent to which schools and individual teachers have started to change the way they relate to Aboriginal students, family and community. More schools have started to make changes than those that stated that nothing had changed, even though relations were not the best. Some schools are continuing to interact in a respectful and positive way as they have always done, and commented that the training had confirmed they were using the right approach.

5.5.1 Teachers and principals introduced to support agencies and services, which has facilitated access to support services

The cultural immersion workshops included sessions to introduce local agencies and services to teachers and principals.

Teachers and principals valued the opportunity to meet key contacts and find out about their services.

This appears to have facilitated a widening of networks amongst some principals and some teachers. Indeed, school principals talked about Aboriginal services becoming a valued resource for the school to assist them to support Aboriginal students' welfare, and teachers are starting to make their own connections with services. School stakeholders also said it was useful for service providers to have a better idea of who to contact in the school.

Teachers and principals gave many examples about using service providers to support students or school planning after the workshop, such as

- Aboriginal health workers visit the school and speak to girls about female health issues
- liaising with Out of Home Care placement workers
- working with the local Aboriginal medical services.

Box 8 Illustrative quote

Facilitators gave us contact details of different services and groups, easily contactable by phone or email. Has made a real difference and improved contact with services. [Teacher]

5.5.2 Many schools are opening their doors to Aboriginal people as a resource for schools—strengthening and building relationships with local AECGs

A common insight amongst teachers and principals who attended the workshops was about the potential for Aboriginal people to become a resource for schools and of the value and knowledge of local AECG members. The workshops reinforced the message that involving Aboriginal Elders and other community members can improve Aboriginal education and help engage Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in learning.

The workshops facilitated contact with and created relationships with Elders, Aunties and Uncles and Aboriginal organisations such as members of local Land Councils. As a result, 13 of the schools we spoke to had followed up with Aboriginal people they had met at the workshop and invited them into their schools in a range of roles, and many are also working more actively with local AECGs. For example,

- developing a program with a local Aboriginal organisation to reduce suspensions of students and better support students who are suspended
- introducing parenting programs
- inviting Elders to teach classes about Aboriginal culture, local fauna and flora
- taking students on guided excursions to significant sites
- inviting Aboriginal people to give their perspective when certain historical events are being discussed, for example Mabo or the Stolen Generation
- inviting an Aboriginal Elder to create educational resources for the school
- seeking advice from Elders about how to best support students, for example one Aboriginal student in a single parent family has been linked to an Aboriginal Elder to provide mentoring and a connection to culture
- inviting the AECG members to provide follow-up professional learning for teachers (chapter 7).

However, a small number of schools commented that they had been unsuccessful in getting community members they met to visit the school, as yet.

Box 9 Illustrative quotes

As a teacher who hasn't been involved a lot in Aboriginal education before, you start, where do I go? Now I know there's a whole lot of resources out there within our own community that can be used to support the kids.

[Teacher]

Actually getting to know the Elders was very valuable. Not having a close relationship before and their knowledge was very impressive.

[Teacher]

5.6 How some individual teachers are changing the way they interact with families and community

Some teachers and principals are changing the nature of the way they interact with Aboriginal families, or thinking about doing so. However, it is also apparent that many teachers are not directly interacting with the Aboriginal community, or are only doing so occasionally. Just over half of the teachers in the post- survey agreed or strongly agreed they interact with the local Aboriginal community, up from 41 per cent in the pre-survey. By comparison, 92 per cent of principals agreed or strongly agreed with this proposition before and after the training.

Teachers and principals who had made changes to how they relate to Aboriginal families and community talked about

Box 10 Illustrative quotes

Since the training the school is learning to form relationships differently with Aboriginal communities..starting with informal conversations. [Principal]

Biggest thing I learnt was listening to the whole story. [Teacher]

Since the C2C training my personal relationships have improved. If I am downtown I will cross over to talk for a while...before I would just be polite. And I think that is really important. [Teacher]

Since the teachers went away to that, the school just feels more accepting and opening and welcoming. It's a lot more relaxed. [Community group]

- approaching families and community more often and being more proactive, especially in informal settings, for example speaking to parents in the car park
- paying more attention to listening to parents' views and stories to better understand their students' behaviours
- joining the local AECG and attending meetings
- holding meetings with small groups of parents rather than having one big parent teacher night.

These changed approaches have been noticed and were commented on and appreciated by a few community members in the forums.

5.7 How some teachers are changing the way they relate to students

For the most part teachers felt they related fairly well to their students although they commonly faced challenges in improving student performance and managing students with serious behaviour issues. Teachers mainly talked about changing teaching practices to engage students in learning rather than how they relate to Aboriginal students. The kinds of changes are discussed in chapter 6.

Even so, teachers and principals commented that gaining a better understanding of the issues and needs that some students and families face has been very helpful and some teachers have higher expectations of their Aboriginal students following the training. This can be a result of meeting and listening to community members speak about their hopes and expectations for their young people's achievements. One high school teacher

was very impressed and moved by presentations explicitly addressing the point that Aboriginal communities want exactly the same things for their children as the teachers want for their own children. Often this is not a message that teachers perceive from parents. For this teacher it gave her a feeling of permission to push the young people to achieve and to hold them to high standards, which she hadn't felt before.

Also helpful has been students recognising that teachers are interested in and know something about Aboriginal history and culture and have a connection to Aboriginal community members. Some teachers had discussed their experiences in the training with students, and their new understanding of culture with their students, and had very positive reactions. For example, a teacher using a coffee cup with an *AECG* logo sparked a conversation with an Aboriginal student about the training and the community members the teacher had met. The teacher noticed that the student became more engaged and involved in the class as a result. The case story below describes a similar case.

For their part, students in only a couple of focus groups had noticed changes in how teachers relate, for example one group said their teachers are now more relaxed.

Focus groups with students showed that the training is targeting the things that matter to them—being treated respectfully, having teachers understand them, doing practical things at school and having Aboriginal history and culture visible within the school and in classroom discussions.

Box 12 Case story: Illustrating the impact of *Connecting to Country* on teachers' capacities to establish respectful relationships with students for a school—doing okay but still learning

The context: A country high school with a relatively high proportion of Aboriginal students, which in the last few years has established good links with Elders and Aboriginal welfare services and has active AEOs. The school has many students who are socio-economically disadvantaged. Community groups are concerned about the number of suspensions involving Aboriginal students and the difficulties solving serious mental health issues of two young people they know of. Teachers were generally highly motivated about engaging Aboriginal students and not experiencing significant barriers in doing so. Most say they treat Aboriginal students just like other students. Nevertheless, the teachers indicated that *Connecting to Country* has helped them better understand their students' culture, needs and families and also ways to gain their students' trust and respect. Students say that they like most of their teachers, especially the ones who listen to them, and they also enjoy the cultural activities at school.

One teacher explains what made a difference for them in gaining the respect of an Aboriginal student—when he demonstrated to a student that he, the teacher, was interested in and was aware of Aboriginal culture and history. *Not long after we actually had the cultural experience, I had a Year 8 sport group and it was one of the boys, Aboriginal boys, who has a few behavioural—well has a few issues in general. He decided to take himself well away from everyone else where he shouldn't have been. And I'd gone over there and tried to get him to come and he just flatly refused. He wouldn't engage in conversation. And that day I just happened to have an AECG pin on, that we'd been given on the workshop and I had that on my tie. And after a little bit, he asked me where I got it from and I told him. And the next thing I know I've said nothing more about getting him to come—he's getting down off the table and he's starting to walk back over with me and then he's just gone in and joined in with the group. And I had done nothing except wear a pin on my tie. And that was, you know, I think that kids, they see, especially if you're not an Aboriginal yourself—they look at you and go well what do you know about my experience. What do you know about my life and where I'm coming from and you should...Yeah. And just by seeing the staff involved in those things and going maybe they do know something. Even if it doesn't come up in conversation but they know that you've got some awareness. That was one incident that really stuck in my head. Just the difference it would make where the kid thinks that you might know something about certain things after all. It was a really positive experience that came directly out of that program.*

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter shows that *Connecting to Country* has given many teachers and school leaders insights into Aboriginal peoples' experiences of school and ways of relating, which has renewed schools' efforts to engage with their local Aboriginal families and communities. The workshops have also given teachers and leaders a better understanding about how to make connections (and who with) in the Aboriginal community and a greater confidence in doing so. However, the history of relationships between schools, Aboriginal communities, individual school staff and Aboriginal families and students is a complex one with missteps and successes alike. As such, the impact of the program on teachers' and leaders' capacity to engage was broadly positive but variable in the degree of change seen, with many teachers and principals making small positive steps to create connections and others building on their skills and strengthening existing good relationships.

Connecting to Country is a pathway for schools to develop cultural competence, and changing the quality of relationships and school culture is a slow and incremental

process. *Connecting to Country* is one strategy amongst many that the DEC and individual schools are putting in place. It is too early to expect substantial changes in the quality of relationships where these have been challenging. For substantive change to be seen would need consistent actions over a long time, especially in situations where families are facing considerable socio-economic disadvantage.

6. Impacts on willingness and capacity to integrate and apply what was learnt

This chapter describes the work being done by principals and teachers to integrate what they have learnt and understood from the training into their school and classroom practices.

Whether in a school leadership role responsible for setting the overall direction and tone of the school and guiding whole-of-school activities, or classroom-based with responsibility for adapting the curriculum and developing strategies for engaging students in learning, the *Connecting to Country* program is making an impact on how people in schools are thinking, planning and carrying out their work.

The extent of changes in behaviour varies across schools and individuals. Broadly speaking, teachers are feeling more motivated and confident to act, and attribute this to the training received at this program. Principals are supporting teachers to make changes and for schools to be better connected with families and communities.

This chapter addresses Terms of Reference

- c. Identify and assess the impacts of *Connecting to Country* on participating teachers' and principals' willingness and capacity to integrate and apply what they have learned in their school leadership and classroom teaching practices.

6.1 Principals are supporting staff development and whole-of-school activities

Pre- and post- surveys completed by school principals show a significant increase in their confidence in leadership skills related to developing and including Aboriginal culture and perspectives in school policies and practices (figure 8).

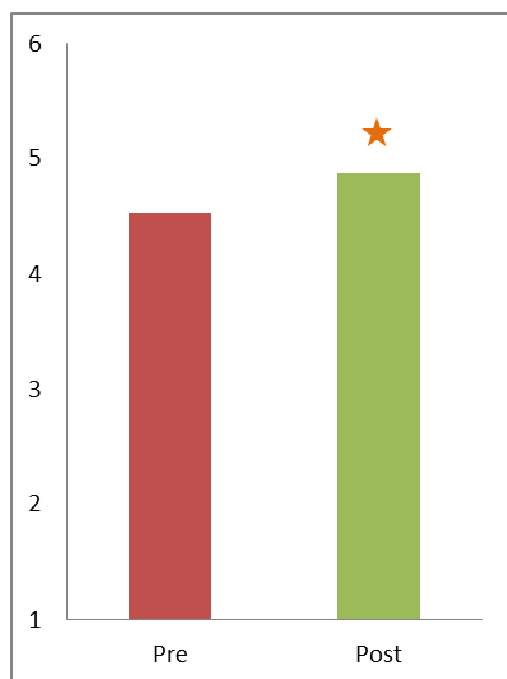
6.1.1 Training has been extended to other school staff

At least 15 of the schools that were interviewed have conducted or planned professional development for school staff based on the *Connecting to Country* program. Ten schools used a staff development day to offer a full day of training for all teaching staff. One primary school included all staff in the training day and also ran a separate full day program for the children.

One school was disappointed in its efforts to offer an extension of the training for staff. Despite several efforts to book a suitable time with a local Aboriginal presenter the arrangements kept falling through. On the day of the training the presenter was once

again unavailable and sent another person to the school, but they were unprepared for the task and so the training could not go ahead.

Figure 8. Principals' confidence in leadership skills index scores, pre- and post-



Notes: ★ denotes statistically significant difference/ change (increase) in confidence pre- and post- the training. Strong effect size in 2011 and small to moderate effect size in 2012.

6.1.2 Aboriginal cultural activities are part of most schools

Aboriginal art is visible at many of the schools we visited, and is appreciated by the students we spoke with. Acknowledgement of Country is done at some school assemblies, and at least in one school we visited is done by the students, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal and includes some local Aboriginal language. A couple of primary schools told us that they play the national anthem with didgeridoo accompaniment. On one level this shows that there is some degree of cultural visibility in schools, but as both teachers and community members pointed out, there must be some continuity and depth to this cultural display to ensure it is not merely tokenistic.

Cultural activities that bring the school and local communities together in celebration of Aboriginal culture include NAIDOC week, Didgi Week and Bilby Bash. In some schools these activities are growing and improving, while in others they seem to be declining (e.g. reduced to half a day, or students are not attending). It was noted by one school that the ideas for these celebrations need to be kept fresh in order to maintain interest and involvement of all concerned.

One school has started a regular boys' cultural club where the boys do weekly activities with the Aboriginal Education Officer (AEO), such as fishing, canoeing and carving. Another school is planning to take students on a visit to national parks.

6.2 Increased motivation to improve Aboriginal education

The experience of many teachers is summed up in the words of one teacher talking about the training: *It engaged me, re-motivated me, focussed me—brought it to the forefront of my mind.* This energy and attention has translated into actions in different ways across the schools.

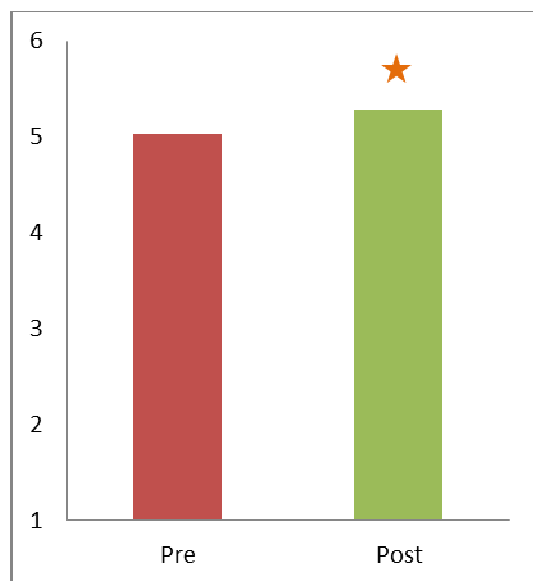
At one school the principal has led the staff in a reflection program over several weeks on what the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan (ATSIEAP) looks like at a school level, and at the classroom level, and then future focus. Membership and participation in the AECG and Aboriginal Education Teams has increased in some locations following the training. Some teachers formed new committees or groups following the training as a forum to discuss and share ideas and understanding.

Box 11 Illustrative quote

We were pretty motivated after the training, and formed an Aboriginal Committee straight away which meets every fortnight. It's grown from 3 people to about 18 people. [Teacher]

Discussions are happening at some schools about how to include families, including grandparents, in transition programs to primary and from primary to high school. One primary school with a positive and dynamic relationship with the local community operates a Learning and Community Centre staffed by a Community Engagement Officer. The principal explained that this resource was integral to all of the school's extension work.

Figure 9. Principals' understanding of ways to improve Aboriginal education index scores, pre- and post-



Notes: ★ denotes statistically significant difference/ change (increase) in confidence pre- and post- the training. Moderate effect size.

6.2.1 Providing supportive spaces for meeting and discussion

Providing a supportive space on the school site for Aboriginal students and staff members to meet is an important feature at some schools.

Yarning circles

A number of schools have established yarning circles, some from before the *Connecting to Country* program, but others in response to their experiences at the training. Some principals described how the circle is used for discussion and consultation with family and community members, as well as in classrooms.

A teacher spoke about using yarning circles in the classroom after the training, but said it hasn't been maintained, partly for practical reasons, having to move the furniture around. They acknowledged the benefits of using different strategies in the classroom so that all different types of students are engaged. Another is having success with them: "We've all implemented learning circles in the mornings—sharing how [the kids] feel and what's happening in their life" (primary school teacher).

Box 12 Illustrative quote

[We] hold monthly yarn-ups with parents and community, with a good transfer of information. Numbers are increasing. They express their concerns and we discuss them. [Principal]

The yarning circle was one of the best things that we did. Each class has a yarning circle every day, following the training. It's working well. We would like to extend this to our parent meetings next. [Principal]

Community members from three schools talked about the yarning circles, some of whom were involved in building circles at their local school. They spoke about them as active places, with students using them to talk, to share their problems and try to sort them out, and also bringing Elders there to talk. Some are also bringing together Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. Some community members spoke of the intention to use yarning circles as part of the suspension process, but this wasn't happening yet.

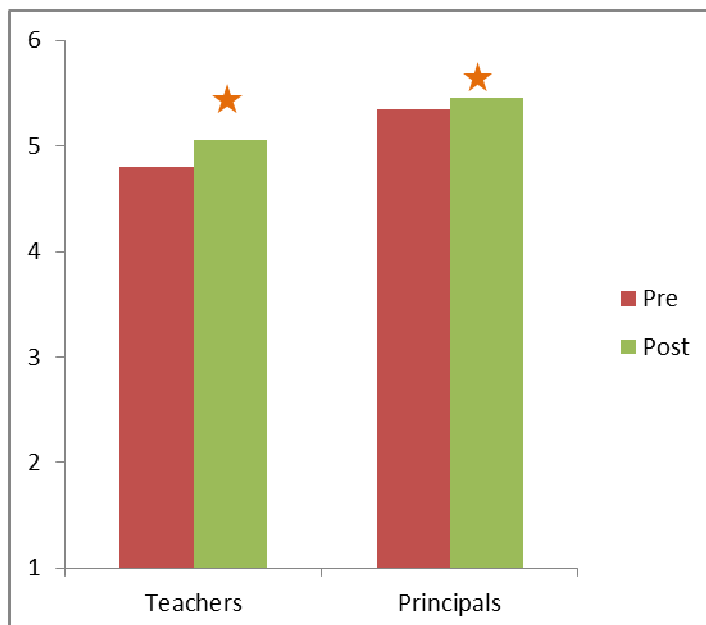
Box 13 Illustrative quote

All the young fellas, if there's a personality clash with the teacher, it becomes very personal and that sort of translates to a social justice issue and with a lot of these young fellas, they think they're being hardly done by, it's very hard to overcome. They sort of carry that and harbour that and that sort...like issues will arise when there's not a great deal behind it, just because of that previous grudge. [Community member, during discussion about yarning circles and the types of issues addressed]

Koori room

Some of the schools have a dedicated space on campus as an Aboriginal or Koori room, which is often a staff room for AEOs as well as a gathering place for students or a meeting space for families when they come to the school. While some students and community members spoke positively about this space, one noted an unintended consequence was that it seems more of an escape or crutch rather than building resilience: "The caring is good, but it's become more welfare based than education based." At least two of these spaces were not being funded in 2013.

Figure 10. Teachers' practices and principals' instructional leadership practices index scores, pre- and post-



Notes: ★ denotes statistically significant difference/ change (increase) in confidence pre- and post- the training. Teachers: moderate effect size in 2011, small effect size in 2012. Principals: small effect size in 2012.

6.3 Increase in teachers' confidence to use and incorporate Aboriginal history and culture within their classes

Several teachers said that the training has given them greater confidence to include Aboriginal cultural material and history in their programs. Principals also observed this change in attitude, saying that teachers were including things that they would have hesitated about in the past. They are also consulting more with AEOs, and making better use of their contributions.

One principal acknowledged the need to look more closely at the school's curriculum and what they are teaching about Aboriginal identity, culture and history. The program has opened up discussion opportunities in staff meetings, which will facilitate this happening. For others, the program confirmed that they are working in the right direction.

6.3.1 Overcoming the fear of offending or of getting it wrong

A majority of teachers say that they have changed some aspects of their practice since the training. This is largely due to a shift in confidence so that they are willing to try things rather than hesitating due to uncertainty over protocols or fear of causing offence.

Some teachers said that the training confirmed that they are doing a good job. For others, the discussion of protocols clarified questions about how far to go with teaching Aboriginal content. One teacher commented that they feel much more at ease with bringing in links to Aboriginal culture or history throughout different lessons. Another, who teaches physical education, has often included traditional Aboriginal games in her classes and for gala days but now feels a greater sense of permission and confidence to deliver this. Also, when teaching the history of sport she

Box 14 Illustrative quotes from teachers

Because everyone's scared to teach... Can girls learn to play the didgeridoo? Is a white kid allowed to learn the language?

Well, no, because I didn't feel confident beforehand about trying to teach someone else's culture. And because you don't want to get it wrong because then you get into trouble if you get it wrong. You get into trouble if you don't do it at all. And I had absolutely...wasn't filled with confidence at all.

And non-Indigenous teachers were... I guess, they have a level of sensitivity, they don't want to say the wrong thing. And so sometimes you don't say anything... So they were able to say "well, in this situation, what should I do? What should I say? How should I address people?" So those sorts of things came through.

For me, I think a really big issue for teachers is the fact that they don't feel comfortable. They feel like every time they say something it's wrong, it might be wrong... That's why I like [our AEO] because I never feel like I've said something wrong. And even if it's not quite correct what I might be saying, she doesn't make me feel like I've said something that I shouldn't have, because to be honest, I'm just trying to learn.

now takes the history back to before the First Fleet.

One teacher said that her confidence to work with Aboriginal students is greater now, and she is able to include their knowledge in her lessons, including where it goes beyond her own knowledge.

6.3.2 Adapting the curriculum

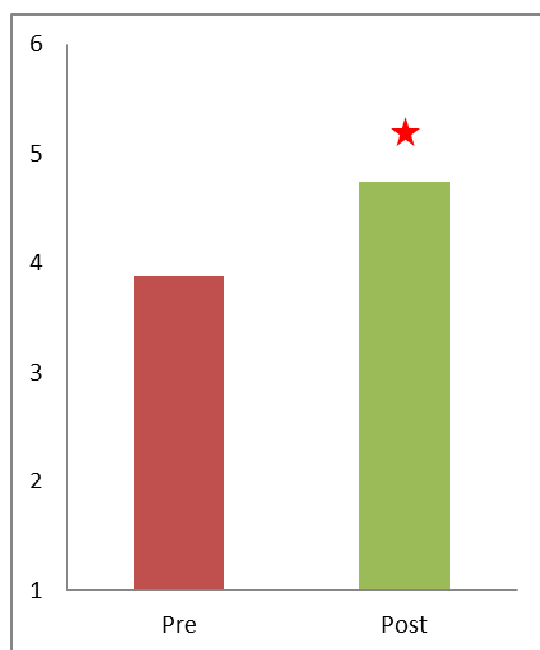
Survey responses showed a significant increase in teachers' confidence to make appropriate changes to the curriculum for their Aboriginal students following the training (figure 11).

Box 15 Illustrative quotes

I think what I found was that door opening so we can push forward. Sometimes for whatever reason, non-Aboriginal people feel reluctant to headlong participate in stuff because they think, "Oh, I don't know enough about it or I could be stepping on somebody's toes." So now that this has opened the door for us, we can embrace it, say, "Now, I've experienced the 5-day course, I've been told I'm allowed to go headlong in and make some plans and make some arrangements and I don't have to wait to step on anyone's toes." I can just go and say I can tap into this, the resources here, it's our local community for our local children and the families of the non-Aboriginal children as well to get that awareness and understanding, so it's that protocol gets taken care of. It's like I'm locked in. [Teacher]

I've asked 'would you like to stand up and would you like to actually explain this because you can probably do a better job than me'. And they've responded really well to that. [Teacher]

Figure 11. Teachers' change in the curriculum index scores, pre- and post-



Source: Pre- and -post teacher surveys. Notes: ★ denotes statistically significant difference/ change (increase) in confidence pre- and post- the training. Strong effect size.

Principals talked about their schools' involvement in Aboriginal education before the *Connecting to Country* program, including offering classes in language, art, dance and didgeridoo. AEOs have been very active within some schools, running Aboriginal-focused programs. One principal outlined their plans to offer 10 new units using the new national curriculum and incorporating Aboriginal content across different courses.

Teachers in most of the schools said that they have done new Aboriginal-focused educational activities with students since the training, and are more aware of Aboriginal-focused resources. Three have completed new Aboriginal-focused units and have used activities that were part of the training days. Others are planning new units of study for their students.

Box 16 Illustrative quote

We were very excited when we came back because we felt like the waters had cleared...We are writing our plan, we think we're doing the right thing and then we realised those units are so old, let's get some fresh ones and the locations are gorgeous and let's do this and we can get that person help us with that. [Teacher]

Teachers report that they are engaging in more research to find suitable material to use with their students across different curriculum subjects. Some have attended further professional development in the area, for example teachers from two schools joined together to do training on 8 Ways of Learning, to help improve the curriculum approaches for Aboriginal students.

Students at most schools generally seemed happy with the level of Aboriginal-focused learning and said that it was important to them to learn about their culture.

Primary school students mentioned substantial Aboriginal-focused activities at their school, noting visits from local Elders, language lessons, reading books about Aboriginal history in class and Aboriginal cultural activities such as painting, dancing and didgeridoo. Students commonly mentioned that the school celebrated NAIDOC Week.

Older students (at high schools and central schools) had mixed reports about how much Aboriginal content there is in their studies. Students at several high schools noted that they have Aboriginal Studies either as an elective or as a regular lesson, several times a week. Students in one high school said that they have Aboriginal Studies for one period every day.

Box 17 Illustrative quote

...sitting down with somebody, Aboriginal people in a room like this, a common room or something, and building a perspective into their units of work. It's not hard, and especially if you've got an Aboriginal person in attendance or a couple of Aboriginal people. You know, we talk about empowering our parents but not many schools do that. Not many schools acknowledge the skills and the knowledge and cultural knowledge that people can bring to a situation. [Principal]

Students at one school said that they have had excursions focused on local Aboriginal history and even a men's business activity group. A community member at one forum commented that students would like excursions with an Aboriginal focus to be for all students, so that they could attend them along with their non-Aboriginal friends.

Community members from some communities were very pleased with the language programs being offered at local schools, and the increased uptake of these programs in the area. Some had observed an increased interest by teachers in incorporating Aboriginal content into the curriculum and that they had sought help from community members to develop this work.

6.3.3 Challenges

Some teachers spoke about the challenge of sharing new perspectives with students or with other teachers if they are not open to hearing this message.

Other teachers raised the pedagogical challenges in trying to bring together the suggestions from the training about more active modes of learning with the timeframes imposed by the curriculum.

Another teacher raised the challenge of being criticised by parents for teaching Aboriginal history or culture, and realising that they themselves don't know much of their own background or history, and so wondering how best to respond and handle such criticism.

Some teachers were unhappy at a perceived expectation that they receive AECG approval for units of study with Aboriginal content. This was partly related to questions of professional qualification and partly to a practical consideration of the time it may take to gain such approval.

A small proportion of the teachers we spoke with were overwhelmed by the challenges at their school and struggled to see how they could do things differently.

Some said that there was widespread disengagement by the students of their rural high school, who didn't really see the point of school, or have any great ambitions. Others argued that the student welfare and wellbeing needs were at a much more fundamental level than culture, meaning they may not have a stable home life or regular meals. And another questioned some assumptions of the training, such as the interest in traditional culture, or the bush, saying that in their experience the farm children were more at ease in the bush, while the Aboriginal children were irritated by it.

Box 18 Illustrative quotes

A challenge is keeping the kids open to hearing about and respecting Aboriginal culture. As a teacher you take risks, and try things. And maybe the kids don't engage.
[Teacher]

It's challenging to bring Aboriginal culture, language and values together with curriculum demands and timeframes. It becomes a question of how to link things so that there is understanding, when we can't take a longer, slower route to learning.
[Teacher]

In the room theoretically it sounded great and I left feeling like yes I've got...information but when we got back to school and reality hit I just feel like our eight Aboriginal kids have no culture reflective of what was taught at all. Like they just had complete disconnect from their culture.
[Teacher]

Box 19 Case story: A school taking action after the C2C training

Context: A small school, around 40 per cent of students are Aboriginal. The holistic response to the training within the school provides an exemplar.

Before they participated in the *Connecting to Country* program the school's principal and small team of teaching staff felt they were doing what they could to engage Aboriginal families and support Aboriginal students in their learning. But they came away from the program feeling their efforts had been tokenistic up to that point, and that they needed to completely rethink their approach if they were to genuinely engage and improve things for Aboriginal students at the school.

In the 8 months since the training this small team has successfully introduced a range of multi-targeted strategies to engage parents, improve the health and wellbeing of students and address students' learning needs.

Child wellbeing was at the centre of their approach. Seeing the role of nutrition as an important factor in children's health and capacity for learning they run a vegetable garden in which classes grow, harvest and cook food. Recipes are published in the newsletter so children and parents can easily cook them at home. They run a breakfast club and provide lunches for children at parent's request. One staff member indicated that while in the past some children might not have attended school in order to avoid shame associated with having no lunch, now some parents are ringing to let the school know their child needs lunch.

They introduced yarning circles into classes each morning, where everyone indicates how they are feeling and why. Teachers report these to be effective. They give teachers some of the information they need to help in settling children into the classroom, for example if they have had breakfast or are not feeling well, and they provide a process that engages all children in the class. *So it's all about what's going on in their lives and making a connection with them so that they can trust us to then move on to the next level which is 'now we're going to try and learn something'. So I think that's worked amazingly in my class.*

Having identified that a lot of Aboriginal children were starting school with up to two years language delay, the school realised their expectations of them were very unrealistic. Since the program the school has arranged for speech pathologists to attend weekly to test and give speech lessons to children. They also extended their Kinder orientation program to 8 weeks and teachers have pushed expressive language, talking more often to the children.

Teachers' key learning from the training was to make Aboriginal culture part of everything they do, and reflect culture right throughout the curriculum. To this end, they worked with a Local Implementation Group (LIG) to develop cultural curriculum materials. The LIG have now developed a cultural lesson per week covering a 2-year period.

The school asked parents the best way to communicate with them and parents indicated this was via the internet, so they put up information and games on their website so that parents could play with their children at home. They ran programs to directly engage parents, including an afternoon outreach program to link parents to information or staff at the school, and a program for parents aimed at building child resilience. Staff still feel that engaging parents is an ongoing challenge they have not yet really succeeded with, but their focus remains on student learning, and they are heartened by what they see as gradual improvements in learning outcomes. *I think sometimes we get a little bit defeated because we feel it's all give. We're trying but then I think okay, we've got to do this for the kids because if we don't, that's a lost opportunity. And as I say to all the kids, education is the key that opens lots of doors. And I think probably we've never—we've always maintained a standard, and we expect our kids to do this. And you know what? They do, whether it's behaviour, academic achievement. We expect what we would expect anywhere. And I think we've seen real progress with that. We've been together 3 years and our NAPLAN results this year have been fantastic.*

6.3.4 Personal Learning Plans

Almost all schools are completing a high proportion of PLPs, although a small number have only recently decided to focus on these. Most face some challenges in making these documents relevant and useful. Challenges include having a three-way conversation between the teacher, student and family. Some schools are trying several strategies to help this to happen, with some success.

Another challenge is to reduce the length of the document so that it is understood and used. A couple of schools spoke about creating one-page PLPs, and at one school these are displayed on the walls of the classroom.

There are differences between primary and high schools. In primary schools, where a student has one teacher throughout the year, the teacher is more often the one who coordinates the PLP with the student and family. In high schools the task seems to be delegated to specific teachers, such as Year Advisors or PLP mentors. Sometimes an Aboriginal teacher, Community Liaison Officer or Aboriginal Education Officer also appears to have a key role in contacting families and organising the creation of PLPs.

Communication about the purpose of the PLP helps to reassure families about visiting the school to discuss them. Part of the learning curve for teachers is understanding the barriers that families may face in attending school (such as negative experiences during their own education, fear of being criticised, competing demands, including younger children or other family commitments, lack of transport). One teacher commented on the very different and unexpected goals that parents had for their children, such as being a good dancer, while another teacher commented that all of the parents had expectations for their children to complete Year 12.

There were mixed views on the impact of the training on PLPs. One principal said there is no change to PLPs resulting from the *Connecting to Country* training, although some other training on pedagogy has had an impact on how they are done. On the other hand, one school reported a big increase in PLPs following the training, due to ideas from other schools and discussions with other teachers. Through this, teachers came to a firmer realisation that they are necessary, and can be achievable. Other teachers confirmed that they are using PLPs more since the training, sometimes in a more focused way, with more goal setting.

A few teachers question the need for PLPs, while others thought they were needed by all students, not just Aboriginal students, who are achieving at all levels within the school.

Some suggestions included using electronic PLPs with scanned work samples, not just hard copies, and linking high schools with the PLPs from primary feeder schools.

Box 20 Illustrative quote

It used to be hard to get parents to come to a meeting about PLPs as they thought you were going to accuse them and put them on the spot. We spent three staff meetings looking at the content, taking examples from other schools and what we got from the follow-up session, deciding what we'd put in there. It worked very well.
[Teacher]

6.3.5 Student engagement in learning activities

Engaging Aboriginal students in learning is a challenge that all schools face, and that teachers are meeting in many different ways, with varying degrees of success. One school has tried using incentives, such as receiving an iPod at the end of term, but this had only short term impact. One noticed a difference when trying to engage students who are not from the local area, as opposed to those who are. Another teacher who isn't from the local area finds that the more she knows about the area, the more the students seem willing to talk with her.

While some expressed confidence in their ability to engage Aboriginal students, a small number commented that they generally have a very hard time doing this. An art teacher observed that it is generally easier to engage students in art classes rather than English or Maths.

One major challenge faced by primary teachers is the communication difficulties that stem from lack of support in early life. Teachers explained that some students come to Kindergarten and Year 1 without the basic language and social skills that are necessary for any engagement in learning. Some teachers noted that a verbal focus in learning leading to difficulty translating verbal learning to written assignments contributes to loss of interest and engagement. This appeared to be especially problematic for Maths lessons.

Other significant factors in student lack of engagement were seen to be low self-esteem and lack of belief that they can succeed and that there's not any point trying, as well as mental health issues.

Regardless of the challenges faced teachers understood that developing a strong rapport and ongoing connection with students is imperative to engaging them in class. Some commented that when students feel like teachers have respect for Aboriginal knowledge it encourages students to engage and participate in class. One teacher felt that having students come to school regularly is a great development in itself (section 5.7).

Before the *Connecting to Country* program schools had several strategies in place, at different levels, for improving Aboriginal students' engagement in learning. These included working with families of Kindergarten children; using mentors to work with students and families around particular issues; reserving places for Aboriginal students in selective or opportunity classes; offering school-based, part-time traineeships, for example TAFE programs; and Aboriginal tutors. One principal commented that the installation of Smartboards had greatly increased the engagement of Aboriginal students.

Following the *Connecting to Country* program, teachers reported trying various new strategies of student engagement. Some of the activities with an Aboriginal focus that were being run at schools at the end of 2012 included large artistic projects, such as a wall mural, dance groups and special interest groups, such as a boys cultural group. Other project ideas (e.g. fashion, science) are in the planning stage.

Others spoke about making small but significant changes in their classroom practice, such as breaking up assessment tasks so the students receive bits at a time and it's not overwhelming, or demystifying assessments so the students can see that they have the skills and knowledge to complete it.

Another spoke about keeping paper and pens in the classroom for students to use if they don't have their equipment. They can paste their work into their book later, rather than redo it. This is a skilful way of helping students with disorganised lives to settle and work during class time.

Several teachers spoke about making learning tasks more active or directly relevant to students' lives and understanding their students' backgrounds more. For example, when working on fairy tales in class, which didn't interest the Aboriginal students, this teacher asked the Aboriginal students in the class about stories they knew and then directed them to do the writing exercise based on their own story, which worked really well.

Several teachers spoke about the link between student engagement in learning, rapport with a teacher and behaviour issues. One primary school teacher emphasised the need to sort out the behavioural and emotional issues so that they are ready to learn, using hands-on activities and praise to keep them on task. Another commented on the importance of managing behaviour without being too hard on the student, and making them lose face, especially the effectiveness of speaking to the student on their own.

Box 21 Illustrative quotes

So I did a bit of research after the Connecting to Country into how Aboriginal children learn. And there's a 8 Pathways site. So I looked into that and it was talking about how Aboriginal people need to have the whole picture and then broken down. Whereas we, as white people, tend to learn the pieces and then put the pieces together. Like the jigsaw. They need the whole picture so Accelerated Literacy works from one text and it brings it down from the text. And I'm finding that the kids are really engaged. [Teacher]

[We have] Aboriginal kids and non-Aboriginal kids working with Aboriginal people on a rich project, and authenticating Aboriginal knowledge, Aboriginal science or whatever... And when I've talked to the kids—and if you want to find out how it's going, I go ask the kids—they're very excited about it. [Principal]

From the training, learnt that learning style of Aboriginal students is more based on listening and talking, rather than reading and writing. I'm using that in my classroom and finding more of my boys responding more to this approach. [Teacher]

They don't think that they're going to be judged or anything like that. They can talk about going out into the bush with me and doing whatever they did, and then you can relate that to times tables and say 'well how many pigs did you get times that by how many dogs did you have' or whatever. And that's what I do with...in Maths lessons I do that. That's since doing this. [Teacher]

I just told them to put it—like because we live near the sea—put like sea culture in their Maths and stuff. And the teacher seen me do this one day and she couldn't believe this kid caught on so well. [AEO]

6.4 Conclusion

Overall, the evidence collected shows that there has been an increase in the willingness of teachers and school leaders to work towards improving the standards of educational achievement by Aboriginal students.

While acknowledging the challenges that they face, most teachers appear to have had a sufficient boost to their confidence and interest, reinforced by support from executive and community, so that they feel empowered and able to begin making real changes in their presentation of curriculum. Many have also come away from the training with some fresh ideas for engaging students in learning, and are finding success with these.

7. Broader impacts of the program

This chapter directly address two Terms of Reference

- d. Identify the broader impacts of *Connecting to Country* on participants and assess the contribution of these in promoting quality teaching, enhancing Aboriginal engagement in schools and improving educational outcomes.
- e. Identify and assess the broader impacts of *Connecting to Country* on Aboriginal communities, especially in terms of empowerment and capacity building.

This chapter also includes a case story of a high school, which describes the impacts of the program on teachers and the community and how the learning has been integrated into teaching practices.

7.1 *Connecting to Country* is making a positive contribution to efforts to improve the quality of Aboriginal education in participating schools, but more change is needed

The training has contributed to positive changes in classroom teaching and is building teachers' capacity to improve the quality of their teaching of Aboriginal students. The case study below provides a good illustration of ways in which the program has impacted on participants and community stakeholders.

However, for some teachers, the training did not provide enough time for sharing of practical ideas, or developing and adapting units of work. Teachers spoke of needing time to reflect on and develop new material for their courses, and would like to know more about what others are doing and have found successful.

Principals are supporting the changes teachers are making and are aware that more professional development is needed to foster this. They are motivated to provide programs and encourage practices that will close the gap in educational outcomes for Aboriginal students and many are implementing a range of programs in schools to support this.

This training is aimed at making cultural shifts within schools, which could bring significant improvements in the educational outcomes for Aboriginal students. The currently available attendance statistics do not show any changes from 2011 to 2012, but it is still too soon to expect to see any impact on attendance from these trainings.

Box 22 Case story: Benefits of training for teachers, principals, families and community

Context

This site is a high school within a small regional town. There is a sizable Aboriginal population and some negative history between the school and community.

Community members we spoke with reflected on experiences of racism and exclusion from the school. For example *I did leave school when I was 15½ but I always said I was going to do something. I didn't know what but I knew I didn't belong in that class.* Relationships between the school and community members have been slowly improving over some years, aided by a long-standing principal at the school. In general though, community members we spoke with felt that few teachers had knowledge or understanding of Aboriginal people's culture or historical experience, and teachers largely agreed.

Community perspective on training

Community members were generally positive about the training and thought it had raised teachers' awareness of their local history and culture. *Very eye opening... And also about mission life. They had no idea it was controlled by managers. Actually no idea. And some of them didn't realise that (the boys' home) was down there* [Community Member]. They also valued the links to local services and resources and the personal connections the training brought to school staff. One community member also thought it had benefited the community, *It gave (Elders) an opportunity to talk about themselves and some things we may have forgotten, the Elders that know a bit more history. That was really good that.*

School perspective on training

School staff members were unanimously positive about the training and identified a range of benefits it had brought. Like community participants, the principal and teachers valued the personal connections it gave them, *I've got connections with the Elders and the community members to come and jump on board and help me. Knowing where to get that support from is sometimes (hard), you start with 'where do I go?' and other than that nothing came to mind before I'd done the course. Now I know there's a whole lot of resources out there within our own community, not just distant DEC ones, that can be used to support the kids.*

One teacher thought the most important outcome was their realisation that everyone—the school, families and community—all want the same outcome for their children, to do well at school. *It dispelled a lot of misnomers. Like it made everything a lot clearer as a teacher, to sort of see that we all were working together.* One presenter described the local aspect of the training as a crucial element. *Because it was on country and it was our community; it was our people, our kids' people.* [Teacher]

Integration and application to practice

Each of the teachers we spoke with could identify ways in which the training had influenced them in the classroom. For the most part they had made changes to make it easier for Aboriginal students to succeed. For example, breaking down assessment tasks into more manageable chunks and giving progressive feedback, so students could stay on track rather than be overwhelmed. *It's decoding, demystifying that this assessment task isn't something outside their realm of knowledge. And that way, I'm getting more assessment tasks in, rather than all of them going into bags and bins.* Another was providing lined paper and a pen so students without their workbook could glue their work into their book at home. *And that's a lot easier than rewriting it or trying to catch up. And I've got a lot more handed in now. And once they realise that they can succeed, that if they get that piece of paper to the book and it's glued in and then they get the book marked and it's all there when they want to revise and stuff like that then their confidence is going up. And it just keeps coming up all the time. It's still a struggle to get those sheets to the book but they're getting a lot better at it.*

The program achieved a deep change in the attitudes and confidence levels of these teachers. *It empowered me to be pushy about their education...coming into a community where you don't know all the background stories, it is quite scary but having...I felt I could step out now and step out of my comfort zone. And take on all these things that I wanted to change, but wasn't sure how to.*

7.2 Local and regional AECGs empowered to provide leadership in Aboriginal education

Facilitation of the cultural immersion workshops has resulted in a growth in confidence and capacity of many local AECGs and other community members to work with schools and share planning for improving the schools' efforts. AECGs are now more often successfully supporting Aboriginal education in schools, mainly because schools have a greater appreciation of the value they can provide. AECG members and some community members spoke about feeling more empowered to work with their local schools and feeling more respected and valued. This is a significant outcome, especially as having a bad experience when they were at school is a common experience amongst Aboriginal people. However, it appears that growth in the capacity of AECGs to work with local schools has been somewhat variable from region to region.

We are seeing the strengthening of connections, and schools accessing AECGs and other community members more often. Schools are seeing the community and the AECG as a human resource for schools to help them improve Aboriginal education.

AECG members are more valued and sought after by schools. Local AECGs now have a service they can offer schools and the extent of follow-up training shows that schools are drawing on this service. Some teachers have joined the local AECG.

8. Lessons for future delivery

The experiences of the teachers and principals who participated in the evaluation offer insights into any future delivery of *Connecting to Country*.

8.1 The cultural immersion component has wide applicability—all teachers should do it

Participants and presenters held equally strong views that all teachers and school leaders would benefit from doing the cultural immersion workshop. No changes to the content or structure of the cultural immersion workshop are needed, which was adaptable to, and worked well, in urban and rural locations.

If access to training has to be limited then principals and teachers considered that newly appointed and new scheme teachers should be given precedence. By contrast, members of two community groups suggested targeting long term teachers who they consider are “stuck in their ways”.

Stakeholders also nominated other groups who would benefit from the training.

- All schools, not just those targeted.
- AEOs, because they work with both teachers and the community to improve student welfare and engagement in school and could gain insights into teachers’ issues.
- School Administrative Officers because they are often the first contact point for families in the school and have the ability to make families and community members feel respected and welcomed or not into the school.
- Senior Education Directors in DEC regions.
- Parents and families in the local area.
- Trainee teachers, as part of their course work.

8.2 User pays an option for sustaining and expanding the coverage of the cultural immersion component

The relatively low cost of facilitating the cultural immersion workshop for local AECGs means that it may be possible for schools to pay local AECGs to hold the workshops. Funding for relief would come from each school’s own professional development budget and/or from other relevant State programs that provide these funds.

8.3 Local is best—schools want to meet local people and learn about local Aboriginal culture and history

The conceptual framework for the cultural immersion workshops asserts that Aboriginal community peoples at the local level should be afforded full opportunity to take a leadership role in the cultural education of teachers. The guidelines also recognise that delivery could be by local or regional AECGs. In practice, the cultural immersion workshops were delivered by local AECGs wherever feasible or otherwise by adjoining AECGs or regional AECGs depending on how well the local AECG was functioning or the size of the target schools. In remote schools, workshops were joined up to achieve the minimum number of participants to achieve the desired group dynamics.

For schools, the greatest benefits come from meeting local Aboriginal Elders and representative of local services and gaining a greater awareness and understanding of local Aboriginal culture and the needs of their families. Importantly, schools could build relationships with local people.

Schools gained lesser benefits from regionally based workshops where not all the information was directly relevant to their students or families.

8.4 Ongoing State AECG support for delivery

Participants came from different backgrounds and were more or less open to the process of being immersed in another's culture.¹³ Presenters brought their own often bad experiences of school and many had suffered social injustice in their lives. Some presenters were inexperienced at speaking in public or anxious about revealing their personal stories.

Presenters and participants alike reacted emotionally to the training process. Many teachers were deeply affected by hearing the personal stories and visiting culturally significant sites, heightening the impact of the training. Presenters were affected by the strength of teachers' reactions. For example, one person giving an account of Aboriginal culture before colonisation revealed more than he expected to because he was encouraged by the teachers' reactions. Indeed, increasing awareness at a profound level so that "realisation of a deeper level of consciousness in knowing, perceiving, understanding and responding"¹⁴ is a guiding motivation of the training. And part of the aim of the program is for the AECG to better understand teachers' issues and problems.

Being able to reach people on an emotional level is a great strength of the program and in most instances successfully increased cultural awareness and motivated participants to be more culturally inclusive. However, in two workshops the teachers reacted

¹³ One reason for targeting new scheme teachers who are more likely to be open to other's perspectives.

¹⁴ NSW AECG Inc (2008). *Being Culturally Aware, Becoming Culturally Inclusive: A Pathway to Cultural Competence*, page 25.

defensively to the communication styles of the presenters, which they perceived as being angry about and dwelling on the past, and in another to a film about the impact of past policies on Aboriginal people. In the latter case, the presenters weren't skilled enough to facilitate a debriefing discussion afterward, or even be aware it might be needed. This shows that local AECGs will continue to need State AECG support and suggests there may be a greater role for the AECG in supporting facilitation, either through training or mentoring.

8.5 Three training days for cultural immersion component is appropriate

The three days of training is a significant commitment for schools and did throw up some challenges in sourcing relief, and some principals would prefer the training to be reduced to two days. However, the three days is needed to cover the agenda and allow time to raise awareness and consolidate cultural understanding. Teachers and presenters need time to reflect and form relationships so those awkward questions can be asked.

8.6 Better specification of the two-day professional learning component

The professional learning workshops for teachers and principals could be better specified as to the content and the use of adult learning principals—more active learning that specifically addresses individual teachers' and principals' needs and provides practical strategies and advice.

The professional learning training might be more feasible for schools if it was reduced to one or one-and-a-half days, as was commonly suggested by teachers and principals.

The training may also be delivered more consistently if there was a designated team.

8.7 More warm-up prior to training

There appears to be a role for more information to warm-up participants to the training, for example, providing information about what is being done and why. It may be useful to provide some cultural pointers about timetabling and communication styles.

8.8 Follow-up professional learning important

Connecting to Country is a valuable addition to professional learning for teachers about engaging and understanding Aboriginal culture and history and ways to include Aboriginal perspectives in education. However, teachers and principals will need to continue to access professional opportunities to reinforce, consolidate and expand their

understanding. Indeed, many teachers and principals suggest that follow-up forums would be useful to discuss how they have applied the learning in practice and what else could be done.

Appendix 1 Analysis of DEC performance indicator data (ToR h.)

This appendix presents the result of the analysis of

1. 2010–2012 NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy outcomes for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in participating schools (% at and above national minimum standard and mean scale scores for years 3, 5 7 and 9, as appropriate)
2. 2011–2012 attendance rates for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in participating schools
3. number of Aboriginal students with a PLP in participating schools in 2011–2012
4. teacher retention rate/ turnover data
5. teacher and principal surveys. The results of the analysis of pre- and post-teacher and principal survey data are also shown in relevant sections of the chapters.

2010-2012 NAPLAN data in participating schools

Table 7. NAPLAN Reading results for students in participating schools 2010, 2011, 2012

Cluster		2010				2011				2012			
		Reading				Reading				Reading			
		% at or above NMS		mean		% at or above NMS		mean		% at or above NMS		mean	
		Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal
Cluster 1	Yr 3	94.7	96.2	397.4	422.5	83.3	88.2	363.9	410.3	83.3	93.2	389.0	416.1
	Yr 5	83.3	88.1	460.6	470.7	56.5	87.2	411.2	468.9	83.3	89.3	450.9	488.6
	Yr 7	82.5	90.8	494.7	517.4	93.1	94.6	501.7	515.4	80.0	88.2	485.7	503.6
	Yr 9	75.6	84.2	534.3	546.1	91.5	88.7	553.9	552.0	77.4	86.7	541.2	552.4
Cluster 2	Yr 3	72.7	89.7	342.2	381.8	74.2	83.3	322.1	332.8	87.5	91.4	356.7	361.6
	Yr 5	69.6	80.0	401.0	450.3	70.8	63.0	416.1	414.5	69.6	85.7	419.3	460.3
	Yr 7	75.3	90.2	472.9	515.7	89.5	92.7	487.2	515.3	72.1	90.3	475.6	512.6
	Yr 9	73.0	87.7	515.5	555.8	83.9	91.7	530.5	558.4	69.9	84.8	503.1	544.8
Cluster 3	Yr 3	78.2	88.1	337.8	393.4	75.3	83.7	327.7	374.8	78.9	84.3	329.1	379.9
	Yr 5	53.8	77.7	395.0	454.1	60.9	76.6	399.2	458.7	62.4	74.0	422.1	467.7
	Yr 7	68.6	91.1	468.4	529.8	82.8	94.7	467.6	515.6	74.7	91.9	468.2	516.7
	Yr 9	67.6	92.9	506.9	563.7	72.1	91.3	514.2	564.7	71.6	88.7	519.7	560.2
Cluster 4	Yr 3	60.0	89.4	320.5	385.0	83.3	91.3	318.5	376.5	60.0	96.3	306.4	389.4
	Yr 5	66.7	87.0	419.0	483.0	66.7	86.1	419.1	463.9	62.5	84.6	439.2	461.7
	Yr 7	94.1	97.5	482.0	538.5	83.3	97.3	475.6	517.7	75.0	86.4	469.0	515.4
	Yr 9	60.0	89.9	492.9	566.1	76.9	91.2	511.7	561.5	90.9	92.5	531.2	567.4
Cluster 5	Yr 3	84.6	90.4	341.1	373.6	75.0	86.4	336.9	378.4	87.0	87.5	352.2	379.1
	Yr 5	76.2	87.6	428.1	486.4	68.8	87.7	426.8	482.3	72.7	81.8	442.7	479.4
	Yr 7	76.9	95.4	456.7	541.2	78.9	100.0	479.0	534.8	88.2	80.9	468.6	542.6
	Yr 9	69.2	90.3	499.8	552.3	57.9	87.0	496.6	571.0	70.0	76.4	504.4	561.5
Cluster 6	Yr 3	82.0	83.7	349.1	363.1	78.7	78.9	327.7	340.6	70.5	82.0	326.6	354.8
	Yr 5	58.9	73.4	405.2	427.9	59.5	72.3	410.8	423.8	52.6	71.3	411.5	434.3
	Yr 7	67.9	77.4	454.7	480.0	82.4	85.8	460.8	484.5	66.1	84.1	456.2	485.5
	Yr 9	54.8	73.2	484.7	518.7	74.1	75.6	510.1	522.2	44.2	70.9	479.9	518.7
Cluster 7	Yr 3	73.3	95.7	304.9	405.2	77.6	95.9	315.3	406.5	44.6	88.2	306.2	388.2
	Yr 5	48.7	80.5	383.4	448.6	52.9	81.9	391.9	459.6	50.4	83.1	390.6	465.2
	Yr 7	71.0	92.2	459.3	523.6	74.3	92.0	458.8	516.9	64.4	91.1	452.5	521.5
	Yr 9	56.1	83.4	490.2	550.2	65.4	92.8	499.0	561.2	52.5	84.8	484.9	549.6
Cluster 8	Yr 3	84.2	87.8	337.7	384.9	82.7	90.2	326.1	390.0	77.4	91.0	314.6	386.6
	Yr 5	64.9	78.7	403.6	457.8	68.9	85.0	409.5	468.3	64.6	79.7	406.7	456.5
	Yr 7	73.6	94.8	473.2	538.8	80.9	94.5	471.1	528.9	71.4	90.1	473.8	531.6
	Yr 9	67.2	89.3	508.5	567.4	65.5	91.1	513.2	564.9	67.5	90.4	508.1	573.7
Cluster 9	Yr 3	78.4	87.4	341.6	391.6	87.2	91.5	337.9	384.5	82.4	89.5	323.4	385.3
	Yr 5	72.3	80.0	424.9	461.6	66.7	88.2	395.9	463.8	47.7	77.4	393.9	476.6
	Yr 7	75.8	85.9	470.7	510.0	82.1	93.3	459.4	503.8	75.0	77.8	480.9	483.3
	Yr 9	60.0	80.6	494.3	543.8	66.7	86.7	517.0	541.3	58.1	85.5	493.8	552.3
Cluster 10	Yr 3	73.1	85.7	299.5	375.7	64.7	87.1	287.6	362.1	74.1	80.0	305.5	349.6
	Yr 5	52.8	78.3	399.5	441.9	52.9	78.6	345.8	456.4	58.1	62.5	393.6	441.4
	Yr 7	70.4	97.1	454.5	553.2	69.6	97.8	429.8	509.8	75.9	94.4	442.7	524.7
	Yr 9	50.0	90.9	479.1	571.9	35.7	87.5	461.2	552.1	47.4	94.4	482.5	574.6
Cluster 11	Yr 3	79.5	89.5	327.3	388.4	78.2	90.4	325.7	380.6	76.9	89.7	335.4	382.3
	Yr 5	67.9	83.3	419.1	466.8	64.0	82.7	402.2	466.6	53.9	88.2	395.6	477.9
	Yr 7	77.9	93.4	475.7	532.4	79.1	95.2	474.1	525.8	77.6	91.5	484.3	526.2
	Yr 9	68.7	89.6	511.9	563.8	75.9	91.4	520.7	568.5	59.0	90.2	504.9	561.8
Cluster 12	Yr 3	81.1	85.9	360.8	366.9	81.1	80.7	337.3	359.3	81.0	81.1	333.1	353.9
	Yr 5	57.1	80.4	409.3	454.6	72.5	80.6	416.0	448.1	62.9	75.0	430.6	441.4
	Yr 7	92.0	90.4	482.7	512.2	87.5	90.3	478.5	505.2	70.2	87.9	484.5	517.4
	Yr 9	84.4	85.6	527.8	552.3	84.8	90.0	526.2	558.0	69.2	84.7	510.4	549.5
Cluster 13	Yr 3	80.1	88.4	332.4	384.5	84.7	88.1	330.4	382.1	74.0	86.8	314.6	382.6
	Yr 5	63.3	81.2	406.2	464.4	66.3	85.8	409.9	457.3	59.1	82.6	402.0	466.6
	Yr 7	79.4	93.1	475.8	527.6	80.7	93.1	462.3	517.4	75.0	87.6	471.6	516.4
	Yr 9	62.2	85.3	508.6	553.9	68.8	89.5	511.5	557.7	66.5	88.7	505.5	558.1
Cluster 14	Yr 3	62.7	98.0	294.1	387.9	79.7	87.0	321.0	363.5	67.3	88.9	308.4	390.0
	Yr 5	63.3	82.8	394.4	450.4	55.9	77.4	386.7	455.7	50.8	84.6	397.4	461.3
	Yr 7	53.6	95.8	419.6	541.1	66.7	80.8	439.4	488.1	67.7	86.2	447.6	513.1
	Yr 9	52.4	74.2	484.4	527.6	65.6	81.0	506.1	557.6	48.3	80.8	477.3	552.6
Overall CTC	Yr 3	77.8	88.6	329.1	384.8	79.7	86.8	325.8	374.7	83.2	94.3	352.9	423.7
	Yr 5	61.5	80.6	405.3	457.6	62.5	81.2	402.1	455.8	71.2	89.9	434.7	496.0
	Yr 7	75.8	91.0	470.3	522.1	81.0	93.2	468.6	515.5	78.6	92.0	484.7	538.7
	Yr 9	64.6	86.2	505.4	553.8	72.1	89.2	515.3	557.2	71.8	89.3	519.5	571.3
		2010				2011				2012			
		Reading				Reading				Reading			
		% at or above NMS		mean		% at or above NMS		mean		% at or above NMS		mean	
		Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal

Table 8. NAPLAN Writing results for students in participating schools 2010, 2011, 2012

Cluster		2010				2011				2012			
		Writing (Narrative)				Writing (Persuasive)				Writing (Persuasive)			
		% at or above NMS		mean		% at or above NMS		mean		% at or above NMS		mean	
		Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal
Cluster 1	Yr 3	94.7	95.6	408.5	427.9	94.7	91.4	384.8	413.4	88.9	95.5	398.6	417.2
	Yr 5	88.9	93.1	469.9	470.1	83.3	93.1	454.9	474.1	83.3	92.9	450.2	477.2
	Yr 7	90.5	91.8	492.3	508.5	87.1	90.1	478.2	499.7	78.7	85.6	467.9	490.4
	Yr 9	70.5	80.5	521.9	526.0	60.0	71.9	492.6	519.8	60.9	66.6	505.1	517.8
Cluster 2	Yr 3	90.5	84.1	365.3	376.5	87.1	86.4	353.4	349.5	100.0	94.4	383.8	375.9
	Yr 5	60.9	83.3	404.5	444.9	56.0	81.7	400.2	445.2	71.4	85.5	429.0	448.4
	Yr 7	68.1	90.6	450.6	501.5	81.7	88.9	475.8	488.0	61.4	81.1	430.2	478.8
	Yr 9	68.8	81.9	490.1	528.5	57.8	70.6	495.1	520.4	38.1	63.1	463.7	508.6
Cluster 3	Yr 3	76.3	88.4	345.7	400.5	76.8	82.0	337.7	378.9	84.1	87.6	333.2	389.3
	Yr 5	69.5	86.1	405.8	454.6	69.3	82.7	388.6	454.0	66.3	74.7	407.7	441.9
	Yr 7	77.8	89.1	465.7	501.9	65.9	87.6	440.2	491.6	60.9	80.0	427.3	477.3
	Yr 9	65.1	88.9	478.0	549.5	45.7	70.9	479.0	521.8	48.7	63.2	481.1	512.0
Cluster 4	Yr 3	100.0	95.3	365.1	401.3	91.7	93.8	356.0	376.1	68.8	96.2	342.8	393.3
	Yr 5	50.0	89.6	377.7	468.0	70.8	91.0	419.4	465.3	62.5	87.2	386.4	452.8
	Yr 7	66.7	90.0	426.2	502.1	66.7	93.6	437.2	501.2	75.0	73.7	398.5	479.6
	Yr 9	77.8	89.7	519.5	555.1	50.0	75.3	494.6	540.0	80.0	77.7	510.8	535.3
Cluster 5	Yr 3	84.6	91.9	345.1	389.1	91.7	93.5	366.6	411.4	88.0	91.6	382.5	395.0
	Yr 5	69.6	91.2	410.7	478.7	68.8	90.5	404.5	478.6	81.8	90.4	433.4	469.3
	Yr 7	67.9	95.5	460.0	525.9	78.9	90.4	457.5	512.4	77.8	82.9	444.5	533.1
	Yr 9	72.0	86.9	488.2	552.8	44.4	70.6	449.9	534.8	45.5	70.4	463.3	559.9
Cluster 6	Yr 3	73.8	84.3	342.7	377.7	82.8	86.6	344.9	370.4	78.2	87.5	347.1	375.3
	Yr 5	76.8	82.6	420.2	441.6	67.2	79.4	412.6	439.6	57.9	77.4	398.1	438.3
	Yr 7	56.6	78.8	432.0	479.2	74.6	83.3	444.6	476.2	69.5	71.7	410.3	454.0
	Yr 9	56.1	73.5	461.8	509.8	43.6	61.4	457.5	493.5	26.8	52.2	419.0	487.6
Cluster 7	Yr 3	80.2	94.2	335.7	426.5	74.5	95.9	316.2	421.4	64.8	93.4	294.2	387.2
	Yr 5	54.8	86.8	376.9	456.7	59.2	88.0	384.7	462.7	56.1	86.3	379.1	455.2
	Yr 7	56.6	85.2	416.1	501.1	55.2	85.7	421.7	487.9	41.4	79.6	383.5	476.5
	Yr 9	57.1	82.6	465.3	530.1	29.7	74.0	437.4	525.7	24.2	57.5	402.6	500.5
Cluster 8	Yr 3	77.6	94.0	356.6	405.1	80.0	94.0	342.6	398.2	83.3	93.7	330.0	392.2
	Yr 5	75.3	89.2	425.0	471.5	68.4	88.3	418.0	459.7	72.8	81.5	396.9	445.9
	Yr 7	73.3	90.6	471.8	518.1	64.7	88.2	435.3	498.1	69.5	83.8	444.4	492.1
	Yr 9	58.0	86.0	476.0	547.8	45.5	71.3	456.9	522.6	41.4	72.1	457.8	525.5
Cluster 9	Yr 3	82.5	89.1	360.1	398.9	82.5	93.9	347.7	386.7	84.4	93.8	345.6	403.6
	Yr 5	74.5	87.6	432.7	463.0	65.1	94.4	394.0	479.3	65.9	79.8	407.9	450.1
	Yr 7	81.8	83.5	473.4	485.8	61.3	75.4	423.4	463.0	59.5	64.3	446.0	452.6
	Yr 9	46.2	75.8	473.6	521.1	37.0	46.9	447.9	482.9	35.5	64.3	462.0	506.0
Cluster 10	Yr 3	60.7	80.0	282.2	371.9	58.1	83.1	282.0	349.1	66.7	90.0	318.1	359.5
	Yr 5	51.4	78.3	376.1	452.9	44.8	71.9	339.0	436.8	60.7	72.7	374.9	416.6
	Yr 7	32.1	95.7	371.8	521.3	35.0	80.0	376.6	471.6	50.0	90.0	391.4	479.1
	Yr 9	40.0	88.9	416.2	547.4	16.0	64.4	401.1	517.2	0.0	76.9	372.5	536.9
Cluster 11	Yr 3	76.4	93.1	342.5	398.5	87.1	95.0	352.7	403.3	87.0	95.2	359.5	388.6
	Yr 5	78.5	89.2	432.4	462.8	66.7	88.3	403.3	465.2	62.5	88.0	385.0	457.7
	Yr 7	73.6	90.8	459.4	507.3	67.4	88.5	442.9	495.9	61.4	87.4	439.8	491.4
	Yr 9	55.9	84.2	467.8	537.1	50.4	73.8	465.4	522.8	43.3	67.7	461.9	520.2
Cluster 12	Yr 3	83.8	79.2	374.3	360.5	89.5	82.7	347.3	366.8	70.7	90.1	327.4	377.4
	Yr 5	77.3	85.9	401.6	457.3	60.0	81.9	410.7	449.6	65.7	71.2	404.4	426.5
	Yr 7	76.5	89.5	453.1	495.9	66.7	78.5	443.6	472.5	55.7	80.6	428.9	479.7
	Yr 9	66.7	77.1	486.8	523.0	42.9	61.6	456.3	499.4	38.3	57.4	459.6	506.0
Cluster 13	Yr 3	81.2	89.3	349.3	397.3	82.7	89.5	340.1	385.6	81.9	89.3	332.0	381.1
	Yr 5	78.5	90.6	425.0	461.7	66.7	87.4	411.2	457.3	65.9	81.0	400.8	446.0
	Yr 7	70.6	88.4	451.7	504.7	71.6	83.9	443.8	485.8	62.0	78.6	431.3	474.0
	Yr 9	59.8	79.6	472.5	528.4	39.2	65.1	437.5	507.0	42.7	65.1	438.2	515.1
Cluster 14	Yr 3	80.0	96.0	337.5	387.9	79.4	95.7	326.9	380.2	88.0	100.0	345.3	407.4
	Yr 5	71.4	88.1	403.1	445.5	54.2	80.6	365.2	442.9	56.9	82.7	391.6	440.4
	Yr 7	53.3	92.3	404.8	520.5	41.5	80.8	395.7	459.5	42.9	89.7	416.9	492.8
	Yr 9	35.0	71.0	421.7	517.8	20.0	81.0	407.9	546.2	26.9	50.0	411.8	513.9
Overall CTC	Yr 3	79.4	89.6	346.4	395.0	81.3	90.3	338.9	388.7	87.4	96.1	364.0	422.0
	Yr 5	71.1	87.7	412.2	459.2	64.6	86.1	399.9	458.5	75.8	92.2	425.2	483.1
	Yr 7	69.1	89.1	449.0	503.5	67.4	86.8	440.7	490.0	67.7	88.7	445.6	512.2
	Yr 9	59.8	82.1	473.8	532.5	43.3	69.1	456.7	515.9	44.6	74.5	465.2	544.7

Table 9. NAPLAN Numeracy results for students in participating schools 2010, 2011, 2012

Cluster		2010				2011				2012			
		Numeracy				Numeracy				Numeracy			
		% at or above NMS		mean		% at or above NMS		mean		% at or above NMS		mean	
		Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	non-Aboriginal
Cluster 1	Yr 3	94.7	93.9	365.0	395.2	100.0	90.3	380.3	399.9	77.8	90.9	363.4	385.7
	Yr 5	88.9	92.5	477.9	473.1	66.7	91.9	422.9	469.0	83.3	90.2	458.5	489.9
	Yr 7	86.2	91.0	489.6	513.1	82.9	92.5	495.3	511.9	82.8	88.7	485.7	503.6
	Yr 9	72.9	87.1	535.6	555.2	80.8	85.3	546.0	545.5	85.7	91.4	541.2	552.4
Cluster 2	Yr 3	89.5	89.7	321.1	353.6	80.6	83.8	334.2	327.4	87.5	88.9	337.6	356.9
	Yr 5	56.5	82.4	393.0	440.6	79.2	71.6	426.2	431.1	90.0	84.3	436.0	446.8
	Yr 7	72.5	91.9	471.7	513.9	84.0	88.2	482.0	509.3	72.4	90.1	470.2	502.9
	Yr 9	78.8	89.2	535.7	554.4	81.0	89.0	525.1	556.1	77.8	89.6	521.2	549.8
Cluster 3	Yr 3	77.9	88.2	341.5	379.6	78.8	85.7	330.5	368.5	71.8	82.6	319.7	361.4
	Yr 5	71.3	87.7	407.7	461.5	77.4	85.4	416.7	461.9	61.9	79.9	408.1	465.3
	Yr 7	73.3	93.0	469.6	527.7	71.6	91.9	470.1	515.4	75.9	90.4	455.8	508.9
	Yr 9	78.1	92.3	516.1	571.0	69.4	88.2	516.3	561.3	76.1	93.2	515.9	567.1
Cluster 4	Yr 3	80.0	89.3	335.1	376.0	91.7	96.3	320.6	367.3	71.4	92.6	322.9	370.1
	Yr 5	73.3	88.2	431.4	481.3	87.5	94.9	438.0	470.2	62.5	92.2	436.5	477.5
	Yr 7	100.0	97.5	481.1	526.8	81.3	95.5	473.8	514.6	62.5	92.7	445.7	506.4
	Yr 9	55.0	92.4	507.2	569.3	76.9	91.4	517.0	551.2	69.2	92.2	511.7	561.2
Cluster 5	Yr 3	84.6	87.1	327.6	368.5	100.0	86.5	340.3	375.3	80.0	85.7	347.5	367.0
	Yr 5	87.5	91.2	439.0	492.9	81.3	92.1	458.6	503.1	81.8	85.8	442.7	479.4
	Yr 7	82.1	86.5	454.2	579.0	78.9	83.9	472.9	569.4	68.8	83.8	462.4	587.6
	Yr 9	79.2	85.5	509.8	579.1	77.8	82.2	495.9	600.7	80.0	88.6	499.3	615.5
Cluster 6	Yr 3	75.4	80.8	322.1	342.5	77.0	82.8	333.2	348.1	72.4	79.1	322.3	341.0
	Yr 5	73.6	81.1	424.5	436.3	65.8	79.2	419.1	433.4	69.0	787.3	423.0	443.8
	Yr 7	62.7	79.9	450.4	481.4	69.0	80.9	455.3	484.2	63.8	80.9	456.2	485.5
	Yr 9	59.4	77.7	493.0	527.2	67.9	73.3	507.7	526.1	64.1	77.6	492.8	520.6
Cluster 7	Yr 3	67.9	95.7	303.4	408.9	81.1	95.9	319.3	411.4	62.1	88.0	305.2	380.0
	Yr 5	63.5	88.3	398.6	468.2	62.6	90.4	401.1	475.6	61.3	89.3	407.0	468.7
	Yr 7	72.8	93.1	462.0	524.1	73.7	93.3	461.0	521.5	67.9	90.7	448.3	511.9
	Yr 9	65.9	91.3	497.1	556.0	66.0	91.7	497.6	560.0	69.0	90.8	505.1	558.2
Cluster 8	Yr 3	81.6	88.1	323.2	372.0	86.5	89.1	333.5	377.1	74.7	91.4	312.7	386.6
	Yr 5	77.8	85.9	415.7	469.8	71.2	90.6	419.9	474.1	78.2	82.8	419.5	454.0
	Yr 7	74.2	93.9	472.0	527.3	73.9	92.7	468.7	524.9	82.7	93.0	468.3	517.7
	Yr 9	62.7	90.3	513.8	567.5	70.1	91.2	506.6	557.7	80.5	95.0	518.7	571.1
Cluster 9	Yr 3	89.7	90.8	346.7	383.7	75.0	93.2	327.0	375.9	84.4	91.2	317.7	370.3
	Yr 5	66.7	84.1	419.7	463.2	74.4	92.9	413.1	464.6	63.6	82.1	409.3	476.5
	Yr 7	74.3	89.8	463.1	511.1	79.3	90.6	458.5	495.5	63.6	68.4	464.5	478.3
	Yr 9	63.0	75.3	501.6	545.6	64.3	78.8	507.0	534.9	55.2	90.8	489.3	550.8
Cluster 10	Yr 3	72.0	82.1	290.1	367.9	80.6	85.2	323.7	352.9	85.7	83.7	331.1	339.9
	Yr 5	52.9	84.7	392.9	453.4	46.7	78.6	356.5	443.8	51.6	77.4	399.0	448.1
	Yr 7	69.2	95.7	441.2	553.4	68.4	100.0	448.5	522.2	74.1	97.2	451.0	544.2
	Yr 9	58.6	98.1	497.5	576.4	42.9	90.2	481.4	558.4	46.7	96.3	487.1	597.6
Cluster 11	Yr 3	73.6	90.6	310.8	366.0	89.1	93.6	338.8	370.1	76.2	91.1	333.0	371.2
	Yr 5	75.0	91.3	429.5	469.6	70.7	93.2	415.4	471.2	71.3	91.9	417.3	473.1
	Yr 7	76.3	93.5	481.3	528.5	81.6	93.2	470.1	524.0	82.9	94.1	478.4	519.5
	Yr 9	73.1	92.7	518.2	568.2	78.6	92.7	523.8	564.9	72.4	93.7	519.0	565.1
Cluster 12	Yr 3	82.9	89.7	344.0	354.1	84.2	88.0	337.5	358.8	73.2	89.0	319.2	352.5
	Yr 5	75.6	83.4	422.0	450.5	82.9	86.8	427.3	456.8	67.5	78.8	429.3	443.6
	Yr 7	76.8	90.8	479.0	514.1	78.4	91.3	473.8	505.4	67.2	90.3	479.3	509.3
	Yr 9	82.4	86.0	528.7	556.2	71.7	91.0	519.6	556.5	82.1	90.0	513.3	552.9
Cluster 13	Yr 3	74.1	88.5	312.2	367.0	84.7	89.9	332.8	372.9	73.3	85.2	314.9	361.2
	Yr 5	77.6	88.9	416.5	464.1	72.2	88.9	420.5	467.0	67.1	87.7	409.4	466.5
	Yr 7	79.0	92.2	465.3	522.6	80.4	90.1	463.8	515.7	76.8	88.4	464.2	503.5
	Yr 9	76.0	90.1	517.3	559.0	69.9	89.1	509.5	554.4	76.5	92.6	511.9	559.2
Cluster 14	Yr 3	74.1	96.2	299.9	354.7	85.5	94.1	323.4	352.0	63.8	95.5	297.1	374.7
	Yr 5	59.6	90.0	387.0	450.7	55.0	85.5	390.7	447.3	54.9	84.3	387.7	447.7
	Yr 7	48.1	96.2	437.8	526.4	73.2	84.6	450.1	486.6	66.7	85.2	438.4	528.0
	Yr 9	52.4	73.3	487.2	545.1	66.7	90.5	499.7	554.2	66.7	80.8	497.0	555.7
Overall CTC	Yr 3	76.3	88.4	318.3	367.9	83.6	89.1	331.8	368.8	81.5	93.9	339.9	423.7
	Yr 5	71.5	87.3	414.5	461.9	69.9	87.8	414.3	462.8	77.4	92.6	435.0	497.2
	Yr 7	75.2	91.4	468.0	519.3	77.3	90.6	467.8	513.9	78.8	92.9	475.3	540.3
	Yr 9	71.5	88.7	514.1	558.7	71.7	88.0	513.7	554.6	80.8	93.2	524.4	588.8

Student attendance rates for participating schools 2011-2012

Table 10. Attendance rates for *Connecting to Country* schools, Semester 1 2010 to 2012

C2C Reporting Cluster	2010		2011		2012		C2C workshops held
	Aboriginal students	Non-Aboriginal students	Aboriginal students	Non-Aboriginal students	Aboriginal students	Non-Aboriginal students	
1	87.0	89.8	88.5	89.9	88.0	90.8	2011
2	82.2	86.9	81.8	85.7	81.2	86.6	2011
3	82.2	89.7	79.5	88.5	80.4	88.1	2011
4	85.0	90.2	84.6	89.8	83.8	90.5	2012
5	83.6	92.7	84.4	92.6	83.9	92.4	2012
6	81.1	88.3	81.7	88.6	82.1	87.7	2012
7	79.0	89.4	79.3	88.9	78.9	88.2	2012
8	83.3	90.4	83.7	90.2	82.0	89.5	2012
9	84.1	91.0	83.5	91.4	86.5	88.6	2012
10	75.5	89.7	74.0	89.3	76.5	90.9	2012
11	84.5	89.6	83.0	89.1	83.1	89.5	2012
12	84.4	89.8	82.5	87.6	83.9	89.0	2012
13	84.0	90.4	84.2	89.7	83.3	89.2	2012
14	81.0	91.6	81.6	91.3	82.6	91.2	2012
Average all clusters	82.6	89.6	82.3	89.1	82.3	89.0	N/A

Source: Statistics Unit, Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluations, Strategic Information and Reporting. Data extracted from the Attendance datacube.

Notes: Attendance rates are for Semester 1.

Attendance rates cover all grades, including ungraded support students.

Staff retention rate data

Table 11. Staff retention and turnover in participating schools at December 2012 by reporting cluster

Cluster	No. school staff	No. staff changed schools	No. staff separated from the Department	No. staff not permanent	Total retained	Percentage retained
1	20	2	0	1	17	85%
2	29	1	0	0	28	97%
3	38	4	0	2	32	84%
5	14	0	0	0	14	100%
6	34	0	1	0	33	97%
7	8	2	0	0	6	75%
8	39	0	0	1	38	97%
9	14	0	0	1	13	93%
10	18	0	0	0	18	100%
11	61	1	0	0	60	98%
12	20	1	0	0	19	95%
13	33	1	1	2	29	88%
14	11	0	2	0	9	82%
All	339	12	4	7	316	93%

Aboriginal students Personal Learning Plans

Table 12. The proportion of Aboriginal students in participating schools by reporting cluster and year

Cluster	2011	2012	C2C workshops held
Cluster 1	100%	82%	2011
Cluster 2	91%	81%	2011
Cluster 3	77%	80%	2011
Cluster 4	100%	91%	2012
Cluster 5	98%	92%	2012
Cluster 6	91%	100%	2012
Cluster 7	49%	68%	2012
Cluster 8	75%	94%	2012
Cluster 9	68%	83%	2012
Cluster 10	54%	55%	2012
Cluster 11	95%	91%	2012
Cluster 12	100%	89%	2012
Cluster 13	82%	76%	2012
Cluster 14	82%	86%	2012
Average all clusters	83%	83%	

Table 13. Aboriginal student population of participating schools by cluster

Reporting cluster	Total Aboriginal student enrolments*	Total school enrolments	% student enrolments Aboriginal
Cluster 1	536	4465	12%
Cluster 2	697	3542	20%
Cluster 3	1198	4450	27%
Cluster 4	229	907	25%
Cluster 5	287	1730	17%
Cluster 6	928	5281	18%
Cluster 7	1629	2614	62%
Cluster 8	1264	3870	33%
Cluster 9	509	1668	31%
Cluster 10	415	785	53%
Cluster 11	1576	6291	25%
Cluster 12	614	2649	23%
Cluster 13	2661	7698	35%
Cluster 14	653	1120	58%
All	13196	47070	28%

*Rounded to the nearest whole number.

Appendix 2 Demographics of schools participating in the evaluation

Table 14. Demographics of schools participating in the evaluation site visits

Type school	Location	Region	Cluster	No. teachers attended training	Training year/Semester
Primary	Metropolitan	Hunter CC	1	2	2011
High	Metropolitan	Hunter CC	2	4	2011
Primary	Metropolitan	Hunter CC	2	2	2011
High	Regional	North Coast	3	4	2011
Primary	Regional	North Coast	3	5	2011
Primary	Regional	North Coast	3	2	2011
High	Metropolitan	Sydney	5	4	2012, S1
Primary	Metropolitan	Sydney	5	4	2012, S1
High	Metropolitan	Western Sydney	6	2	2012, S2
High	Regional	New England	8	4	2012, S1
Primary	Regional	New England	8	5	2012, S1
High	Regional	Riverina	9	4	2012, S2
High	Regional	Illawarra and SE	12	4	2012, S1
Primary	Regional	Illawarra and SE	12	4	2012, S1
Primary	Regional	Western NSW	13	13	2012, S1
Central	Regional	Western NSW	14	4	2012, S1
Primary	Regional	Western NSW	14	4	2012, S1
Primary	Regional	Western NSW	14	4	2012, S1

Table 15. Demographics of schools participating in the evaluation through interviews with principals or delegate

Type of school	Location	Region	Cluster	Training year/ Semester
Primary	Metropolitan	Hunter CC	1	2011
Primary	Metropolitan	Hunter CC	2	2011
Primary	Regional	North Coast	3	2011
Primary	Regional	North Coast	3	2011
Primary	Metropolitan	South West Sydney	5	2012, S2
Primary	Metropolitan	Western Sydney	6	2012, S2
Primary	Metropolitan	Western Sydney	6	2012
Primary	Metropolitan	Western Sydney	6	2012, S2
High	Regional	New England	8	2012, S1
Primary	Regional	New England	8	2012, S1
Primary	Regional	Riverina	9	2012, S2
High	Regional	North Coast	11	2012, S1
Primary	Regional	Illawarra and SE	12	2012, S1

Appendix 3 Qualitative data coding framework

The qualitative data were analysed using NVivo, specialist qualitative analysis software.

We created the following case nodes, attributes and sets and a coding framework to assist us to manage, organise and analyse the qualitative data.

Case nodes and classification

- Parent node classification: School
- Child nodes:
 - Principal interview
 - Teacher interview
 - Student group
 - Community group

Attributes

Attributes were used to compare the data across different groups and those working in different contexts and circumstances.

Parent node classification: School

- School level
 - Primary
 - High
- Location
 - Metropolitan
 - Regional/ rural
- Region
- Cluster number
- Year and semester of training

Child node classification: Interview

- Interviewee
 - Principal
 - Teachers
 - Community
 - Students
- School level
 - Primary
 - High
- Location
 - Metropolitan
 - Regional/ Rural
- Region
- Cluster number

- Training year
- Training semester

Sets

Sets of data allowed the analysis to be restricted to a particular group or set. The following sets were created.

- Regions
- Clusters
- Metro
- Regional/ rural
- 2011 training
- 2012 Semester 1 training
- 2012 Semester 2 training
- Principals
- Teachers
- Students
- Community members.

Coding framework

The qualitative data were coded according to the following framework at the paragraph and sentence level, with multiple coding allowed where relevant.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
1. Training	1.1 Selection for training	
	1.2 Organisation	1.2.1 Well organised 1.2.2 Poorly organised
	1.3 Focus/ content	1.3.1 Site visits 1.3.2 Personal stories 1.3.3 Application at school
	1.4 Implementation	1.4.1 Well facilitated 1.4.2 Poor facilitation
2. Cultural understanding	2.1 School context (programs, etc.)	2.1.1 School statistics
	2.2 Knowledge and understanding	2.2.1 Confidence 2.2.2 Local
	2.3 Valuing/ empathy	
	2.4. Shift in attitude	2.4.1 Education valued

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
		2.4.2 Motivation
3. Relationships	3.1 Positive	
	3.2 Tentative	
	3.3 Challenging	3.3.1 Conflict
4. Activities	4.1 Cultural days or events	
	4.2 PLPs	
	4.3 Supportive space	4.3.1 Koori room 4.3.2 Yarning circle
	4.4 Meetings/ committees	4.4.1 Extending training
	4.5 Curriculum	4.5.1 Aboriginal content
5. Resources	5.1 Human resources	
	5.2 Material resources	
	5.3 Lack of resources	
6. Student engagement	6.1 Strategies/ methods 6.2 Absenteeism	
	6.3 Attitude to school	6.3.1 Likes school 6.3.2 Doesn't like school
	6.4 Student experiences	6.4.1 Positive 6.4.2 Negative
12. Extras	12.1 Community members' remarks on training	
13. Good quotes		
7. Seen as	7.1 Strength 7.2 Weakness 7.3 Suggestions for improvement 7.4 Positive change 7.5 Negative change 7.6 No change 7.7 Challenge/ barrier	
8. Timing	8.1 Before training 8.2 After training	
9. Location	9.1 School 9.2 Classroom	

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
	9.3 Community	
10. Who with	10.01 Aboriginal students 10.02 All students 10.03 Principal or executive 10.04 Teachers 10.05 Aboriginal Education Officers 10.06 Families 10.07 Aboriginal community and organisations 10.08 AECG 10.09 DEC 10.10 Training facilitator	
11. Training module	11.1 Immersion training 11.2 Follow-up training 11.3 Overall training	

Appendix 4 Pre- and post- teacher and principal survey results, index scores computation

Table 16. Index computation using teachers' questionnaire

Index	Questions included in the index
Beliefs	Q.8 It is important to me to teach Aboriginal content and perspectives well.
	Q.9 I believe that all students benefit from learning about Aboriginal cultures, histories and contemporary lifestyles.
	Q.10 I believe that the Aboriginal students in my class can succeed and do well academically.
	Q.11 It is important to me to accelerate progress in bridging the achievement gap between my school's Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.
	Q.17 I want to learn more about Aboriginal culture, perspectives and protocols.
	Q.18 It is important to me that Aboriginal students are taught in ways that are respectful and inclusive of their culture and identity.
	Q.20 I have high educational expectations of, and for Aboriginal students.
Strength of relationships	Q.7 I understand why it is important to consult with Aboriginal community members.
	Q.12 It is my usual practice to invite Aboriginal community members into the classroom to help students learn about Aboriginal history and culture.
	Q.13 I interact with the families of my Aboriginal students.
	Q.14 I interact with the local Aboriginal community.
	Q.15 In my school we celebrate special events for Aboriginal people such as NAIDOC week and Reconciliation week.
	Q.16 It is important to me to consult with and engage Aboriginal parents and community members in curriculum development and delivery.
Instructional practices	Q.19 I take action to ensure that all students in my class are educated about Aboriginal Australia.
	Q.21 I value the input and involvement of Aboriginal parents and community members.
	Q.22 I frequently incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives into my teaching.
	Q.23 I work with key partners, such as the local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, to build social inclusion for all Aboriginal students.
	Q.24 I develop and implement Personalised Learning Plans for Aboriginal students in collaboration with students and their parents/ families.
	Q.25 Understanding of local Aboriginal culture.
Understanding of Aboriginal culture	Q.26 Understanding of local Aboriginal history.
	Q.27 Understanding of local Aboriginal community.
	Q.28 Understanding of local Aboriginal protocols.
	Q.29 Understanding of issues for local Aboriginal community members.
	Q.30 Understanding of needs of local Aboriginal families.
	Q.31 Rationale for teaching Aboriginal content and perspectives across the curriculum and units of work.
Change in curriculum	Q.32 Processes and protocols for incorporating Aboriginal culture and perspectives into the curriculum.
	Q.33 How to embed Aboriginal cultural knowledge/ understanding in pedagogy.
	Q.37 Incorporating Aboriginal culture and perspectives into the curriculum and units of work.
	Q.38 Embedding Aboriginal cultural knowledge/ understanding in pedagogy.
	Q.34 Using Aboriginal protocols to establish and maintain respectful, purposeful
Engaging the	

Index	Questions included in the index
community	relationships with Aboriginal parents and community members.
	Q.35 Engaging Aboriginal students in their learning.
	Q.36 Planning for the success of every Aboriginal student.
	Q.39 Using Aboriginal protocols to build respectful, purposeful relationships with Aboriginal parents and community members.
	Q.40 Relating to Aboriginal students in ways that are culturally respectful and affirming of their identity.

Table 17. Index computation using principals' questionnaire

Index	Questions included in the index
Beliefs	Q.8 It is important to me to engage Aboriginal parents and community members in school planning and decision-making processes.
	Q.11 I want to learn more about Aboriginal culture, perspectives and protocols.
	Q.12 It is important to me that my school is a place where Aboriginal culture and perspectives are included, respected and valued.
	Q.17 I believe that the Aboriginal students in my school can succeed and do well academically.
	Q.24 It is important to me to accelerate progress in bridging the achievement gap between my school's Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.
	Q.25 It is important to me that Aboriginal students are taught in ways that are respectful of, and inclusive of, their culture and identity.
	Q.30 Bridging the gap in outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students is a priority in my school.
Strength of relationships	Q.9 I am proactive in seeking to involve and engage Aboriginal parents and community members in school planning and decision-making processes.
	Q.15 I actively collaborate with Aboriginal parents and community members in Aboriginal educational decision-making.
	Q.22 I interact with the families of my Aboriginal students.
	Q.23 I interact with the local Aboriginal community.
	Q.26 In my school we celebrate special events for Aboriginal people such as NAIDOC week and Reconciliation week.
	Q.28 My school promotes high expectations for the learning achievements of and for Aboriginal students.
Instructional leadership practices	Q.7 I take action to ensure that Aboriginal education and training is core business for all school staff.
	Q.10 I take action to create an environment that reflects high expectations of staff.
	Q.13 My school supports staff to implement initiatives to meet the needs of Aboriginal students.
	Q.14 I value the input and involvement of Aboriginal parents and community members.
	Q.16 I take action to ensure that all staff have opportunities to engage in ongoing professional learning about Aboriginal peoples, histories and cultures.
	Q.20 My school is supportive of the involvement of Aboriginal students in junior Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups.
	Q.21 It is my usual practice to invite Aboriginal community members into the school to help students learn more about Aboriginal history and culture.
	Q.27 I take action to ensure all students in my school are educated about Aboriginal Australia.
Teaching practices	Q.29 My school plans for the success of all its Aboriginal students.
	Q.18 My school develops and implements Personalised Learning Plans for Aboriginal students in collaboration with students and their parents/ families.
	Q.19 My school implements Aboriginal student leadership and participation

Index	Questions included in the index
	programs.
	Q.31 My school works with key partners, such as the local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, to build social inclusion for all Aboriginal students.
Understanding of Aboriginal culture and history	Q32. Local Aboriginal culture.
	Q.33 Understanding of local Aboriginal history.
	Q.34 Understanding of local Aboriginal community.
	Q.35 Understanding of local Aboriginal protocols.
	Q.36 Understanding of issues for local Aboriginal community members.
Understanding of ways to improve Aboriginal education	Q.38 Rationale for teaching Aboriginal content and perspectives across the curriculum.
	Q.40 Rationale for engaging Aboriginal parents and community members in educational decision-making.
	Q.41 Process for engaging Aboriginal parents and community members in educational decision-making.
Confidence about relating to the community	Q.44 Using Aboriginal protocols to build respectful, purposeful relationships with Aboriginal parents and community members.
	Q.47 Creating a school environment in which Aboriginal students, parents and community members feel welcome, respected and culturally safe.
Confidence in leadership skills	Q.42 Incorporating Aboriginal culture and perspectives in school practices and procedures.
	Q.43 Using Aboriginal cultural knowledge/ understanding to develop and implement culturally appropriate policies, strategies and interventions.
	Q.45 Effectively applying Aboriginal cultural knowledge/ understanding in school leadership.
	Q.46 Planning for the success of Aboriginal students.

Appendix 5 Pre- and post- teacher and principal survey results, index scores

Notes on the tables

The tables combine and group survey responses into indices denoting a score for questions that asked about similar issues and attitudes.

Scale for this group of questions is 1 to 6, where 1=strongly disagree and 6=strongly agree. The higher the mean score the more teachers have positive beliefs about Aboriginal education/ good relationships with Aboriginal family and the community/ good practices.

Scale for this group of questions is 1 to 5, where 1=no understanding and 5=excellent understanding.

Scale for this group of questions is 1 to 5, where 1= no confidence and 5=high level of confidence.

^2-tailed, equal variances assumed.

* Significant difference between pre- and post-responses.

Effect size

The effect size indicates the proportion of the change in the outcome variable due to change in the group (in this case wave: pre-post). The Eta squared in light green indicates a small effect size, and the ones in darker green a moderate towards large effect size.

0.01 small effect; 0.06 moderate effect; 0.14 large effect.

The asterix *denotes whether the difference is statistically significant or whether there is a significant effect size.

Tables 18 and 19 show the results by cluster (for teachers) and by DEC regions (for principals). Regions were used for principal results because there were insufficient responses by cluster.

Table 18. Principal and teacher surveys by year completed training showing index scores pre- and post- responses, significance and effect size

Teacher training done in 2011									
Domain	Wave	N	Mean score	Std. Devia	Std. Error	SIG (2-tailed, equal variances assumed)			Eta squared
Beliefs #	Pre	74	5.6	0.37	0.04331	0.629		0.485	0.002173276
	Post	36	5.6	0.56	0.09319				
Strength of relationships#	Pre	74	4.8	0.77	0.08957	0.249		-1.16	0.012305936
	Post	36	4.9	0.76	0.12599				
Teaching practices#	Pre	74	4.9	0.84	0.09773			-2.068	0.038090066
	Post	36	5.2	0.68	0.11254				
Understanding Aboriginal culture & history##	Pre	74	3.4	0.85	0.09906	0.000 *		-4.897	0.181697972
	Post	36	4.2	0.76	0.12654				
Confidence in adapting curriculum###	Pre	74	4.0	1.01	0.11701	0.000 *		-3.947	0.126063757
	Post	36	4.8	0.86	0.14307				
Confidence in engaging/ relating to the community##	Pre	74	4.0	0.97	0.11225	0.000 *		-4.393	0.151600032
	Post	36	4.8	0.86	0.14412				
Teacher training done in 2012									
Domain	Wave	N	Mean score	Std. Devia	Std. Error	Mean			Eta squared
Beliefs #	Pre	108	5.6512	0.43696	0.04205	0.129		1.542	0.015303116
	Post	47	5.4	0.86	0.12575				
Strength of relationships#	Pre	108	4.7701	0.72082	0.06936	0.531		-0.627	0.002562885
	Post	47	4.9	0.88	0.1279				
Teaching practices#	Pre	108	4.7685	0.75784	0.07292	0.205		-1.273	0.010480685
	Post	47	4.9	0.92	0.13472				
Understanding Aboriginal culture & history##	Pre	108	3.2269	0.9923	0.09548	0.000 *		-6.482	0.216560767
	Post	46	4.3	0.77	0.1132				
Confidence in adapting curriculum###	Pre	108	3.7796	1.02308	0.09845	0.000 *		-5.234	0.15270656
	Post	46	4.7	0.81	0.11994				
Confidence in engaging/ relating to the community##	Pre	108	3.787	0.98409	0.09469	0.000 *		-5.912	0.186955967
	Post	46	4.8	0.78	0.11432				

Table 19. Teachers' index scores by cluster

		N		Belief	Relationships	Practices	Understanding the Aboriginal culture	Change in curriculum	Engaging the community
Cluster 1	Pre	19	Mean	5.7	5	5.2	3.9	4.5	4.5
	Post	13	Mean	5.7	5.1	5.4	4.4	5	4.8
			Sig.	0.552	0.597	0.529	0.044	0.047	0.0165
Cluster 2	Pre	22	Mean	5.6	4.6	4.8	3.2	4.1	3.9
	Post	12	Mean	5.7	4.8	5	4	4.6	4.7
			Sig.	0.347	0.564	0.529	0.013	0.232	0.036
Cluster 3	Pre	33	Mean	5.6	4.7	4.7	3.2	3.7	3.8
	Post	11	Mean	5.4	4.9	5.2	4.2	4.9	5.0
			Sig.	0.234	0.546	0.079	0.002	0.002	0.001
Cluster 5	Pre	12	Mean	5.8	4.9	5.1	3.4	4.3	4.1
	Post	4	Mean	5.9	5.4	5.7	4.9	5.2	5.2
			Sig.	0.601	0.108	0.081	0.021	0.093	0.071
Cluster 8	Pre	22	Mean	5.5	4.6	4.5	3.0	3.7	3.6
	Post	9	Mean	5.5	4.7	4.6	3.9	4.5	4.4
			Sig.	0.751	0.497	0.636	0.001	0.037	0.013
Cluster 11	Pre	37	Mean	5.7	4.8	4.7	3.4	3.6	3.7
	Post	15	Mean	5.7	5.0	4.9	4.4	4.6	4.9
			Sig.	0.695	0.42	0.476	0.002	0.005	0
Cluster 12	Pre	10	Mean	5.8	4.9	5.0	3.3	4.0	4.0
	Post	5	Mean	4.7	3.9	4.3	4.4	4.8	5.0
			Sig.	0.321	0.269	0.292	0.088	0.087	0.122
Cluster 13	Pre	27	Mean	5.6	4.8	4.8	3.1	3.7	3.8
	Post	14	Mean	5.3	5.0	5.2	4.2	4.7	4.7
			Sig.	0.097	0.448	0.093	0.001	0.004	0.006
TOTAL	Pre	182	Mean	5.6	4.8	4.7	3.2	3.7	3.8
	Post	83	Mean	5.5	5.0	5.1	4.3	4.7	4.8
			Sig.	0.111	0.087	0.009	0.000	0.000	0.000

Table 20. Principals' index scores by region

		N		Belief	Relationships	Instructional Leadership Practices	Teaching practices	Understanding the Aboriginal culture and history	Understanding ways to improve Aboriginal education	Confidence about relating to the community	Confidence in leadership skills
Hunter CC	Pre	14	Mean	5.8	5.5	5.6	5.6	4.1	5.1	4.6	4.7
	Post	9	Mean	5.7	5.6	5.6	5.7	4.2	5.3	5.1	4.9
			Sig.	0.512	0.291	0.831	0.583	0.64	0.366	0.046	0.409
North Coast	Pre	20	Mean	5.7	5.4	5.3	5.3	5.7	5.1	4.6	4.4
	Post	9	Mean	5.6	5.4	5.4	5.2	4.5	5.3	4.7	4.8
			Sig.	0.801	0.756	0.654	0.818	0.042	0.375	0.739	0.189
Sydney	Pre	4	Mean	5.6	5.4	5.4	5.4	3.9	4.7	4.8	4.8
	Post	3	Mean	5.9	5.7	5.5	5.4	4.3	4.7	5.0	4.8
			Sig.	0.374	0.448	0.809	0.945	0.651	1	0.745	1
New England	Pre	9	Mean	5.7	5.2	5.2	5.2	3.8	5.1	4.5	4.4
	Post	8	Mean	5.8	5.0	5.5	5.1	4.4	5.3	4.8	5.0
			Sig.	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.88	0.1	0.5	0.5	0.098
Illawarra SE	Pre	6	Mean	5.5	5.2	5.2	5.3	3.8	5.0	4.7	4.6
	Post	1	Mean	5.6	6.0	6.0	5.7	4.4	6.0	6.0	5.5
			Sig.	no statistics could be computed based on 1 respondent							
Western NSW	Pre	4	Mean	5.4	5.1	5.2	5.2	3.5	4.8	4.4	4.4
	Post	4	Mean	5.3	5.1	5.1	5	4.2	5.2	4.6	4.4
			Sig.	0.654	0.921	0.812	0.780	0.468	0.317	0.693	1.000
TOTAL	Pre	57									
	Post	34									
Missing	Pre	1									
	Post										