

# **Narragunnawali\*: Reconciliation in Education.**

## **Research Report #11 – Hearing from schools and early learning services – August 2019**

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*\*Narragunnawali* (pronounced narra-gunna-wally) is a word from the language of the Ngunnawal people meaning alive, wellbeing, coming together and peace. The Ngunnawal people are the Traditional Owners of the Land on which Reconciliation Australia's Canberra office is located and on which the main campus of the Australian National University stands. Reconciliation Australia and the authors of this paper pay our respects and thank the United Ngunnawal Elders Council for giving Reconciliation Australia permission to use the word *Narragunnawali* as a meaningful name for its Reconciliation in Education program. It is an important demonstration of respect for Reconciliation Australia, being a national organisation, to acknowledge and recognise the Traditional Custodians of the Lands on which we live, learn and teach.

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## **Abstract**

This report is the eleventh in an evaluation series for Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education (formally Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning), commissioned by Reconciliation Australia. The current report provides a summary of findings from the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data collected as part of Phase 2 of the Narragunnawali evaluation project. Qualitative data analysed for the current report includes online discussion board data and in-depth interview data. Qualitative data were collected and initially analysed by the members of the Social Research Centre's Qualitative Research Unit. Quantitative data analysed include responses to the Reconciliation Action Plan Reflection Survey. Ultimately, feedback through these qualitative and quantitative mechanisms demonstrate a high level of engagement, and very positive attitudes towards Narragunnawali and reconciliation in education.

## **Acknowledgements**

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Reconciliation in Australia

Reconciliation as a concept has broad support in Australia, by both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous populations. This support is evidenced by the most recent 2018 Australian Reconciliation Barometer in which 90 per cent of the general community reported that the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is fairly or very important (Polity Research & Consulting, 2019). At the same Barometer, 74 per cent of the general community agreed or strongly agreed that 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people hold a unique place as the First Australians'. Furthermore, 86 per cent of the general Australian population indicated that it was very or fairly important for 'for all Australians to learn more about the past issues of European settlement and government policy for Indigenous people' (Polity Research & Consulting, 2019). Despite this considerable support, a singular definition of what is meant by reconciliation in Australia has not been reached. Reconciliation can mean different things to different people and organisations (Biddle & Priest, 2019). It is also important to acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are heterogeneous with diverse histories, cultures, and varying expectations for or understandings of reconciliation. Nonetheless, Reconciliation Australia, our lead national expert body for reconciliation, has developed a working definition (Reconciliation Australia, 2016). At its core, this working definition is about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples, for the benefit of all Australians.

Reconciliation Australia has identified five interrelated and interdependent dimensions of reconciliation: Race Relations, Equality and Equity, Institutional Integrity, Unity, and Historical Acceptance. Within the Race Relations dimension all Australians understand and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous cultures, rights, and experiences. This, in turn, fosters stronger relationships based on trust and respect and that are free of racism. Equality and Equity recognises the need for equal participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a range of life opportunities. Further, that the unique rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are recognised and upheld. The Institutional Integrity dimension acknowledges that active support for reconciliation from our nation's political, business and community structures is needed. Unity is reflected through an Australian society which values and recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage as a proud part of our shared national identity. Lastly, the Historical Acceptance dimension documents the importance of all Australians understanding and accepting the wrongs of the past and their impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Additionally, that Australia makes amends for these past policies and practices, and ensures that they are never repeated (Reconciliation Australia, 2016).

## 1.2 Facilitating Reconciliation in Education: Narragunnawali

Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education (Narragunnawali), is a Reconciliation Australia program designed to address reconciliation in educational contexts. Programs that address reconciliation in educational contexts are an essential component of the broader reconciliation movement in Australia. Such programs are designed to engage all students in learning about the longstanding and continuing significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and

contributions. Improved educational opportunities and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and indeed all Australian students, will likely follow as a result. If effectively implemented, these programs also serve as an opportunity to develop cultural competencies within our young people. As these students then graduate from our educational institutions, they will take these learnings within them and positively effect change within our broader Australian communities.

Increasing reconciliation efforts specifically in relation to education has significant, though not overwhelming, support from the Australian public. The 2018 Australian Reconciliation Barometer, found that 52 per cent of the general community sampled and 70 per cent of the Indigenous people sampled felt that 'Educational institutions' need to do more or a lot more to 'help close the gap between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples in education'. Narragunnawali may assist teachers and the education sector more broadly to work towards these objectives. Reconciliation in education is reflected through each of Reconciliation Australia's 'Five Dimensions of Reconciliation', though perhaps most directly through the Equality and Equity and Institutional Integrity dimensions. Significant inequities in education are experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians when compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts. This is likely, in part, the consequence of schooling systems that historically may not have been welcoming of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, their families, or their cultures (Biddle & Priest, 2019). These hostile aspects of our education systems and subsequent inequalities, can only be fully understood within the broader context of Australia's colonisation. The importance of this historical understanding is additionally reflected through the Historical Acceptance dimension of reconciliation. The Race Relations dimension of Reconciliation Australia's framework is highly relevant when considering reconciliation activities in educational contexts as an opportunity to build stronger relationships based on trust and respect, between the future generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-indigenous Australians. Finally, reconciliation through education is an avenue for instilling pride in our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage as a part of Australian society's identity. This last aspect of reconciliation in education is encapsulated within Reconciliation Australia's Unity dimension.

The Closing the Gap framework was established by the Australian Commonwealth Government in 2008, as the government's core initiative designed to address key areas of inequalities and inequities experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Commonwealth of Australia, 2019, p9). The most recent 2019 Closing the Gap progress report (as with previous reports) provides some insights into progress made towards reconciliation, as well as areas where this progress has not yet been achieved. These insights are reported across each of the key areas of disadvantage identified, one of which is education. One critique of the Closing the Gap framework, made by Fogarty and colleagues from the National Centre for Indigenous Studies (2018) is that, in some regards, the Closing the Gap initiative promotes a deficit discourse in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; with 'Gap' being an articulation of what is missing (Fogarty, Lovell, Langenberg, & Heron, 2018). While focusing primarily on Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander health and wellbeing, their critique may be reasonably generalised to educational contexts. Other academic thinkers have also made this (or similar) observation about the Closing the Gap initiative (examples include: Fforde, Bamblett, Lovett, Gorringer, & Fogarty, 2013; Maxwell, Lowe, & Salter, 2018). Strength or resilience based approaches to Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander health and wellbeing may be more appropriate and

efficacious. Fogarty and colleagues (2018) point to the New Zealand Ministry of Māori Development as a model more closely aligned with this strengths based approach (Comer, 2008). Nonetheless, the Australian Closing the Gap framework is a significant government initiative and highlights the importance of reconciliation in education to the broader process of reconciliation in Australia.

The most recent Closing the Gap report indicates that while some progress has been achieved towards reconciliation in Education, real and continuing barriers to equity persist within our current educational systems. The 2019 Closing the Gap progress report documents that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are less likely to consistently attend preschool and school, compared to non-Indigenous students (Commonwealth of Australia, 2019). While some improvements have been made over the preceding decade, there remains a gap between the literacy and numeracy outcomes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018 - no new data included in 2019 report). The proportion of all Indigenous people aged 20-24 years who have completed year 12 (or equivalent) has increased significantly between 2006 and 2016, from 47.4 per cent to 65.3 percent. Nevertheless these completion rates remain behind those of non-Indigenous peers who completed at rates of 83.8 and 89.1 per cent for the years 2006 and 2016 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018). Notwithstanding notable challenges, First Australians continue to participate and contribute a breath of rich knowledge and cultures to our education systems. Narragunnawali can, in part, facilitate our continued striving towards equity and equality between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students within our education systems.

The Narragunnawali program acknowledges that collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is vital in making progress towards reconciliation. However, Narragunnawali is also designed to position non-Indigenous educators as the primary agents of change for reconciliation within education, and emphasises that the heavy lifting of reconciliation should not be left with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, students or their families. Rather, focus is placed on non-Indigenous educators and, through them, non-Indigenous non-teaching staff, students and families to engage with reconciliation. Importantly, the responsibility of non-Indigenous Australians to engage with reconciliation should not be considered as responsibility *for or over* Indigenous Australians, but as a responsibility *to* Indigenous Australians (Maddison & Stastny, 2016). Resistance from non-Indigenous Australians to engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and with reconciliation remains a challenge (Maddison & Stastny, 2016). Narragunnawali seeks to overcome this challenge, positively shaping the behaviours and attitudes of all of our young people, creating a safer and more equitable environment for the future Indigenous population.

### **1.3 Components of Narragunnawali**

Narragunnawali is a program designed to support all Australian schools and early learning services in developing a higher level of knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions. The Narragunnawali online platform is free to access and provides practical ways to introduce meaningful reconciliation initiatives in the classroom, around the school and with the community. While the platform can be accessed by any individual interested in reconciliation in education, it also provides a framework and aligned resources for driving reconciliation at the whole school or early learning service level. Through the Narragunnawali platform, schools and early learning services can develop a Reconciliation Action Plan

(RAP), and teachers and educators can access professional learning and curriculum resources to support the implementation of reconciliation initiatives.

### **1.3.1 Reconciliation Action Plans**

A Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is a formal statement of commitment to reconciliation. A school or early learning service can use the Narragunnawali platform to register existing initiatives or to begin a new journey towards reconciliation. There are some compulsory and largely sequential key steps in the initial RAP development process. Namely, a RAP Working Group must be established, and can include teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, students and community members. For institutional integrity purposes, and to provide executive-level approval of the RAP prior to its publication, the school or early learning service Principal/Director must be represented on the RAP Working Group. Additional individuals may also be identified as belonging to the school or early learning service's broader RAP support network; though this is not compulsory. As another key step, the completion of a Reflection Survey facilitates a self-assessment as to the current state of reconciliation within the school or early learning service. Each participating school or early learning service then develops their unique Vision for Reconciliation statement – an overarching, aspirational statement that provides an opportunity to publicly articulate what reconciliation means to the school or early learning service, and what it is that motivates the school or service's commitment to reconciliation. Schools or early learning services commit to the 14 minimally required RAP Actions (though there are a total of 39 RAP Actions that may be selected), and can document – through setting specific Goals and Deliverables – how they will implement each of these Actions within their individual contexts.

Reconciliation Australia has developed RAP Actions that focus on strengthening relationships, respect, and opportunities within domains of in the classroom (teaching, learning, curricula), around the school (the ethos within the school or service gates) and with the community (the links beyond the school gates). The relationships, respect, and opportunities framework was adapted from that utilised by Reconciliation Australia's Work Place RAP Framework. The incorporation of the in the classroom, around the school, and with the community domains are an adaptation of the World Health Organisation's Health Promoting Schools approach (WHO, 2017; WHO and UNSECO, 2018).

Draft RAPs can be submitted, via the Narragunnawali platform, to the school Principal or early learning service Director for approval and then onwards to Reconciliation Australia for final review and publication. To ensure that RAPs remains a living document, Working Groups undertake a refreshment process every 12 months after their initial RAP publication. At a minimum, RAP refreshment requires recompletion of the Reflection Survey and re-submission of the RAP for review and republication. As part of the refresh process schools and early learning services may also make updates to their Vision for Reconciliation statement and Action commitments, based on learnings from the previous 12 months.

### **1.3.2 Curriculum Resources**

The Narragunnawali curriculum resources can be used as a part of implementing RAP Actions, or they can be accessed independently as standalone resources. As well as being aligned to one or more RAP Actions, each resource is aligned to the Early Years Learning Framework and the Australian Curriculum (primary and secondary).

### **1.3.3 Professional Learning**

Narragunnawali professional learning resources are designed to build staff awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, and contributions; and to support the implementation of reconciliation initiatives. Each resource is linked to the National Quality Standard (early learning) and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (primary and secondary), and is also aligned with one or more Narragunnawali RAP Actions.

The Narragunnawali platform also includes: a terminology guide (to assist in using respectful and inclusive language); a RAP Working Group Kit; a suite of subject-specific resource guides; an emerging webinar series; reconciliation related news updates; and some information for Initial Teacher Education staff and students.

### **1.3.4 National Awards**

The Narragunnawali Awards were first held in 2017, and represent the first national awards program to celebrate reconciliation excellence in the education sector. These biennial Awards are designed to recognise and celebrate educational environments that have demonstrated exceptional commitment to reconciliation in the classroom, around the school and with the community. There are currently two award categories: one for schools, and one for early learning services.

## **1.4 Overview of the Current Report**

This report is the eleventh in an evaluation series for Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education (formally Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning), commissioned by Reconciliation Australia. This longitudinal evaluation has two phases and several waves of fieldwork over a four-year period (2016-2020). The initial phase of this evaluation research (Phase One) was completed in 2015-2016 (Biddle, 2017a).

The current report provides a summary of findings from the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data collected as part of Phase 2 the Narragunnawali evaluation project. Qualitative data analysed for the current report includes online discussion board data and in depth interview data. Quantitative data analysed included responses to the Reconciliation Action Plan Reflection Survey (RAP-RS). The summary findings for this report are presented against the seven key themes of the Phase 2 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (Biddle, 2017b):

1. Growth, uptake and usage
2. Information sharing and within-institution knowledge
3. Effectiveness of resources
4. Teacher knowledge and confidence
5. Community interaction and engagement
6. Student experience
7. Expansion of Narragunnawali.

Before presenting the current summary of findings; we first summarise the findings of the Narragunnawali evaluation project to date in section 2. Then in section 3, we present the methods used for data collection and analysis in the current report. In section 4 we document current summary of findings against the key themes. Finally, section 5 provides conclusions and suggested improvements, against the key themes

of the evaluation framework. The Appendix to this report provides some more detailed RAP-RS results.

## **2. Narragunnawali Evaluation to Date**

### **2.1 Phase 1 Evaluation Findings**

Phase 1 of the evaluation commenced in early 2015 and concluded in December 2017. It was completed through a genuine collaboration between the ANU and Reconciliation Australia; using mixed quantitative and qualitative methods. Since the commencement of Narragunnawali in 2014, the evaluation has found it to be a remarkably successful program. Phase 1 evaluation concentrated on important aspects of a program that was in its infancy; focusing on program growth, why particular schools or early learning services are more or less likely to engage in the program, change in engagement patterns across time, and rates of progress through the stages of developing a RAP.

Phase 1 of the evaluation made use of as much existing (administrative and program) data as possible. Broadly, the main evaluation findings can be summarised into the following categories: administrative data; reflection surveys, interviews and other qualitative data, and external datasets.

#### **2.1.1 Phase 1: Administrative Data**

Administrative data findings demonstrated a significant increase in engagement with RAPs from 357 schools and early learning services recorded as having a RAP in September 2015 to 1,230 schools and early learning services in November 2017. This engagement likely demonstrates support for Narragunnawali and reconciliation in general amongst Australian schools and early learning services. Throughout the Phase 1 evaluation period, regression-style analysis of administrative data suggested consistent associations between some demographic type factors and participation in the Narragunnawali RAP development process. For example, higher rates of participation were found amongst: Catholic schools (as opposed to government schools); single sex schools; boarding schools; those in relatively advantaged areas; and schools and early learning services in South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory, and Queensland (compared to New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and the Northern Territory). There were lower rates of participation amongst schools for students with additional needs; those in outer regional and remote Australia (compared to major cities or inner regional areas); and Western Australia. Notably, between November 2015 and April 2017 the percentage of the community (in which a school or early learning service was located) that identified as Indigenous was positively associated with Narragunnawali RAP participation. However, at November 2017, this finding was no longer significant. This is as a particularly noteworthy finding as it is important that the focus of reconciliation programs (especially Narragunnawali) is not assumed to be the responsibility of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people only.

#### **2.1.2 Phase 1: Reflection Surveys**

One hundred and twenty-nine schools and early learning services completed the Reflection Survey in both 2016 and 2017. Analysis of this linked data found there is strong evidence that those schools who continue to engage with Narragunnawali increase the types of activities that the program is designed to support. Specifically, there was some positive change observed across time within these schools for: awareness of Australian Curriculum sections relevant to reconciliation; undertaking reconciliation relevant discussion at staff meetings; participation in National

Reconciliation Week/NAIDOC week activities; facilitation of Welcomes to Country; and consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory groups. There were also positive changes observed for collaborating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in preparing and delivering lessons; Acknowledging of Country; and staff undertaking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency, proficiency or awareness training. Promisingly, there were very few schools or early learning services whose performance on key outcome measures decreased over time.

While acknowledging the encouraging findings of the time-linked Reflection Survey data; single time point data analysis also elucidated areas for improvement. The 2017 Reflection Survey data totalled 447 responses, and analyses indicated that while there was considerable self-reported knowledge of and confidence in incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content within the school or early learning service, Narragunnawali has the potential to do much more in facilitating direct interaction with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, where appropriate. Promisingly, 54% of 2017 respondents indicated that their school or early learning service had an anti-racism strategy; however, 28.2 per cent of respondents were unsure and unable to answer the question as to whether or not their school or early learning service had a specific strategy for taking action against racism. In general, the analysis of 2016 data found considerable uncertainty among the RAP Working Group (who filled out the Reflection Survey) about what RAP Action activities are happening within their school or early learning service.

This Reflection Survey analysis also found that certain school or early learning service characteristics predict reconciliation activities and outcomes. Teachers at Independent schools were less likely to be knowledgeable of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and perspectives and significantly less likely to Acknowledge Country. Schools or early learning services in relatively disadvantaged areas were less likely to display an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander flag. (This may be a resourcing issue.) Teachers in schools or early learning services in areas with a high Indigenous population were more likely to have undertaken cultural competency, proficiency or awareness training.

### **2.1.3 Phase 1: interviews and other qualitative data**

This data included the Baseline Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning Services Survey (Baseline RISELESS), interviews with five schools and early learning services, and an analysis of Vision for Reconciliation statements.

The RISELESS survey was designed for the Narragunnawali evaluation to capture the attitudes and confidence of teachers and others working in schools and early learning services, with a particular focus on reconciliation, and incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in the curriculum. Analysis of Baseline RISELESS data showed that most respondents agreed that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples hold a unique place as First Australians (93.9%), and that their cultures are important to Australia's identity (93.9%), and that respondents feel proud of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures (89.0%). A very large majority agreed that racism against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was a problem in Australia (82.9%), though few agreed that it was a problem in their school or early learning service (13.4%). There was a fairly high self-reported level of knowledge about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures (61.7%) and confidence in teaching about these topics (53.1%).

The analysis of interview data showed that, while participation in reconciliation processes and outcomes were unique in each school or early learning service, there was a genuinely positive view towards Narragunnawali and RAPs. Interviewees reported that the program provided a framework and the impetus to actively progress and sustain reconciliation activities within their school or early learning service. Interviewees also identified a number of perceived barriers to engagement with Narragunnawali, the most common of which were: no knowledge of whether Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students attended their school or early learning service; gaining and maintaining staff 'buy in'; not knowing how they can respectfully embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories throughout the curriculum; and time constraints.

The analysis of Vision for Reconciliation statements included examining statements for 633 schools and early learning services, of which a randomised subsample was extracted for more detailed analysis. While heterogeneous in content, Vision for Reconciliation statements indicated a strong commitment and confidence in the ability of the school or early learning service to achieve its aims. Themes frequently occurring included: respect and recognition; partnerships and relationships; and learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. Vision statements were rarely used to articulate concrete actions to implement the RAP processes. This is in keeping with the programs intention that Vision statements be an overarching aspirational statement for reconciliation.

#### **2.1.4 Phase 1: External Datasets**

Cross sectional analysis of an external data set, the 2015 Release 8.0 Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC), was undertaken to investigate any possible differences in reconciliation based activities undertaken, teacher experience, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student experience between schools that have (or are developing) a RAP and schools that do not have a RAP. LSIC is administered by the Australian Department of Social Services, and data is collected annually from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, their families, and their teachers and educators

Four hundred and fourteen responding teachers (all primary school teachers), in the 2015 Release 8.0 survey, were asked whether the school currently had a RAP. The majority of teachers responded that they did not know (57.6%); and there was a higher percentage that had a RAP or were working on one (26.3%) compared to those that did not have a RAP (16.1%). Schools with (or working on) a RAP were more engaged with Indigenous education aspects of school (e.g. endorsing "(An) Indigenous Education Worker/s is/are employed at the school.").

Findings suggest that there may be an association between schools with (or developing) a RAP, and level of teacher engagement in some reconciliation relevant activities. For schools that have (or are developing) a RAP teachers were more likely (compared with those from schools without a RAP) to: '...have participated in Indigenous community events in the community where I teach'; '...have had a conversation with Indigenous community members outside of school in the community where I teach'; and '...have met with the parent or caregiver of an Indigenous student I teach'. No differences were found for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes. This may suggest that it will take some time before the presence of a RAP may impact Indigenous student outcomes.

## **2.2 Phase 2 Evaluation Findings to Date**

In 2017, Reconciliation Australia commissioned the ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods (CSRМ) and the Social Research Centre's Qualitative Research Unit (QRU) to undertake Phase 2 of the evaluation of Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education (formally Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning).

To coincide with the launch of the updated Narragunnawali platform, an updated Phase 2 evaluation framework for Narragunnawali was developed (Biddle, 2017b). This framework is designed, primarily, to address the aims and objectives of Narragunnawali as articulated by Reconciliation Australia and supported by the five dimensions of reconciliation identified in The State of Reconciliation in Australia report (2016). The updated evaluation framework also takes into consideration the expansion of the program, as well as, key learnings gained from the Phase 1 evaluation.

### **2.2.1 Phase 2: Narragunnawali Research Report #9 – The Importance of Reconciliation in Education**

This report summarises existing evidence and presents new analyses that shed light on the role of reconciliation in education. An analysis of the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC) data (described under Phase 1: External Datasets section above) showed a negative and statistically significant relationship between racism/discrimination and cognitive development among the Indigenous Australian population. There was a particularly large negative effect found for the experience of racism/discrimination on a student's self-perception and on their mathematics test scores. These findings provide evidence for a relationship between racism/discrimination and poorer developmental and learning outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Such findings further impress the needs for reconciliation initiatives in our schools and early learning services.

### **2.2.2 Phase 2: Narragunnawali Research Report #10 – Revisiting Visions for Reconciliation**

This paper presented as analysis of RAP Vision for Reconciliation statements prepared by a large sample of schools and early learning services as part of their Narragunnawali RAP development process. This research updated and extended Phase 1 analysis of Vision statements. Computational text analysis was used to relate these Vision for Reconciliation statements to the five dimensions of reconciliation identified in the 2016 The State of Reconciliation in Australia report –Race Relations; Equality and Equity; Institutional Integrity; Unity; and Historical Acceptance. The words that were found to be most likely used in Vision for Reconciliation statements (community, people/peoples, children, culture/cultures, and respect) are in line with the goals and terminological guidance of Reconciliation Australia. The Equality and Equity dimension was found to have the greatest similarity with the Vision for Reconciliation statements, and the Historical Acceptance dimension was found to be the least similar. The Race Relations, Institutional Integrity and Unity dimensions fell somewhere in between.

### **2.2.3 Phase 2: Narragunnawali Monitoring Reports**

In addition to periodic Evaluation Summary Reports, regular monitoring reports have been and will continue to be produced throughout Phase 2. Monitoring reports provide a brief update on: the number and types of schools and early learning services engaging with the Narragunnawali platform; the stage at which schools and early

learning services are currently engaged; and feedback about individual users experiences of the platform.

## **3. Methods: Data Collection and Analysis**

### **3.1 Qualitative Data**

Qualitative data analysed for the current report includes online discussion board data and in-depth interview data. Qualitative data was collected and initial analysis undertaken by colleagues at the Social Research Centre's Qualitative Research Unit.

#### **3.1.1 Online Discussion Board Data**

Online Discussion Board participant recruitment was completed via an email invitation (developed in consultation with Reconciliation Australia), which was sent to all active users of the Narragunnawali platform who were also members of a RAP Working Group. A subgroup of all individuals who expressed an interest were then invited to participate. A total of 42 individuals were invited and, out of those, 27 participated. Sixteen participants were representatives from early learning services, 10 from schools, and 1 from an out of school hours care (OSHC) service. The majority of participants were educators. Participants were recruited from all Australian states and Territories.

Participants joined an online discussion board and were presented with a range of topics: the RAP development process; putting the RAP into action; using the Narragunnawali platform; using Narragunnawali professional learning and curriculum resources; interactions with Reconciliation Australia; and recommendations for improvements to Narragunnawali. Participants were invited to offer their insight and share their thoughts. Moderators could respond to comments and ask further probing questions to gain more detailed responses. The development of the online topic guide was conducted in consultation with Reconciliation Australia. The topics were released at two time points over the course of the live online discussion board, (23 July – 6 August 2018), to help to ensure respondents would not be overwhelmed by the task, and maintain interest and engagement over the period the boards were live. Using NVivo, an initial thematic content analysis of anonymised data was undertaken within each of the key topics presented to participants.

#### **3.1.2 In-depth Interview Data**

In-depth Interview participant recruitment involved approaching those who had previously participated in the online discussion board, as well as approaching new potential participants. Discussion board participants, who had indicated an interest in further research participation received a personalised email and follow-up phone calls. A broader email invitation was also sent to all active users of the Narragunnawali platform who were also members of a RAP Working Group. Five discussion board participants consented to undertaking an in-depth interview, and eight additional participants were recruited. Two participants were representatives from early learning services, 10 from schools, and 1 from an out of school hours care service. While concerted efforts were made to ensure a balanced sample, the sample has an under-representation of government schools and no representatives from WA or NSW-based schools or early learning services. Participants each completed an audio recorded in-depth semi-structured phone interview (between November 2018 and April 2019). The interview discussion guide was developed in consultation with Reconciliation Australia. The discussion guide focussed on the composition of the RAP Working Group, how RAP Working Groups developed and implemented their Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), what resources they used, any interaction they had with

Reconciliation Australia and its Narragunnawali team, any progress they had observed as a result of the RAP, and barriers to further progress. Interview transcripts were then anonymised and coded, using NVivo. Data were largely coded into the a priori themes identified within the discussion guide, though inductively generated themes were also added as needed.

### **3.2 Quantitative Data**

Quantitative data analysed for the current report are responses to the Reconciliation Action Plan Reflection Survey (RAP-RS). The RAP-RS was designed as a collaboration between Reconciliation Australia and the ANU with the primary aim of facilitating reflection by RAP Working Groups as to the current state of reconciliation within their school or early learning service. RAP-RS completion is one of the compulsory steps in developing a RAP and recompletion 12 months after a RAP's publication is required as part of RAP refreshment process. While the RAP-RS was designed as a tool for schools and early learning services, it also has significant analytical use.

The RAP-RS is comprised of 22 substantive questions across three main domains: in the classroom, around the school, and within the community. Refer to the Appendix to view the full RAP-RS instrument. Respondents indicate how their school or early learning service performs against each question on a Likert-type scale; the structure which varies responsively to the different types of questions asked. Data for the analysis was extracted on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2019 with information available on between 2,219 and 2,273 schools and early learning services, depending on the question. While RAP-RS questions were designed (at face value) to address the three domains, items are analysed on an individual basis, and no total scores are calculated. Descriptive statistical analysis of individual items was undertaken using STATA.

### **3.3 Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Results**

After initial qualitative and quantitative analyses were complete across each of the three data sets (discussion board, in-depth interviews, and RAP-RS), a secondary analysis was undertaken to integrate initial results across each data set and to map them against the themes of the Phase 2 Evaluation Framework. Not all of the Phase 2 Evaluation Framework broader research themes or questions will be addressed by this report. Furthermore, where rich qualitative data are relevant to more than one of the specific research questions within a given theme, these questions will be addressed together (rather than separately). Each of the relevant research questions are listed, followed by the summary of findings that address the question/s. Finally, where qualitative data is relevant across more than one of the broader evaluation framework themes, data is presented in full against one theme and then cross referenced at the other relevant theme/s

Qualitative discussion board and in-depth interview data collection methods were designed such that each dataset broadly addresses the same topics. The two time points of data collection were designed to enable analysis of participant experience with the Narragunnawali program over time. However, there were challenges reengaging online discussion board participants, to complete an in-depth interview at the second time point. Subsequently, a largely new sample of participants was recruited to complete the in-depth interview data collection; limiting the capacity to analyse qualitative data longitudinally.

Through-out the summary of findings, qualitative results are identified as originating from the discussion board and/or in-depth interview data sets. Also identified through-out the summary of findings, are areas of consistency and points divergence between both qualitative datasets. While broadly designed to address the same topics, there are also aspects of the Phase 2 Evaluation Frame work that are more thoroughly addressed by one of the two datasets. In these instances, only the relevant data set may be referred to.

Quantitative RAP-RS results are interwoven though-out, and linked with relevant qualitative results.

## **4. Summary Findings**

In this section we present a summary of findings from the analysis of Phase 2 online discussion board, in-depth interview, and RAP-RS data. Integrated qualitative and quantitative findings are presented against the Phase 2 Evaluation Framework. Not all of the Phase 2 Evaluation Framework broader research themes or questions will be addressed by this report. Furthermore, where rich qualitative data are relevant to more than one of the specific research questions within a given theme, these questions will be addressed together (rather than separately). Each of the relevant research questions are listed, followed by the summary of findings that address the question/s. Where qualitative data is relevant across more than one of the broader evaluation framework themes, data is presented in full against one theme and then cross referenced at the other relevant theme/s.

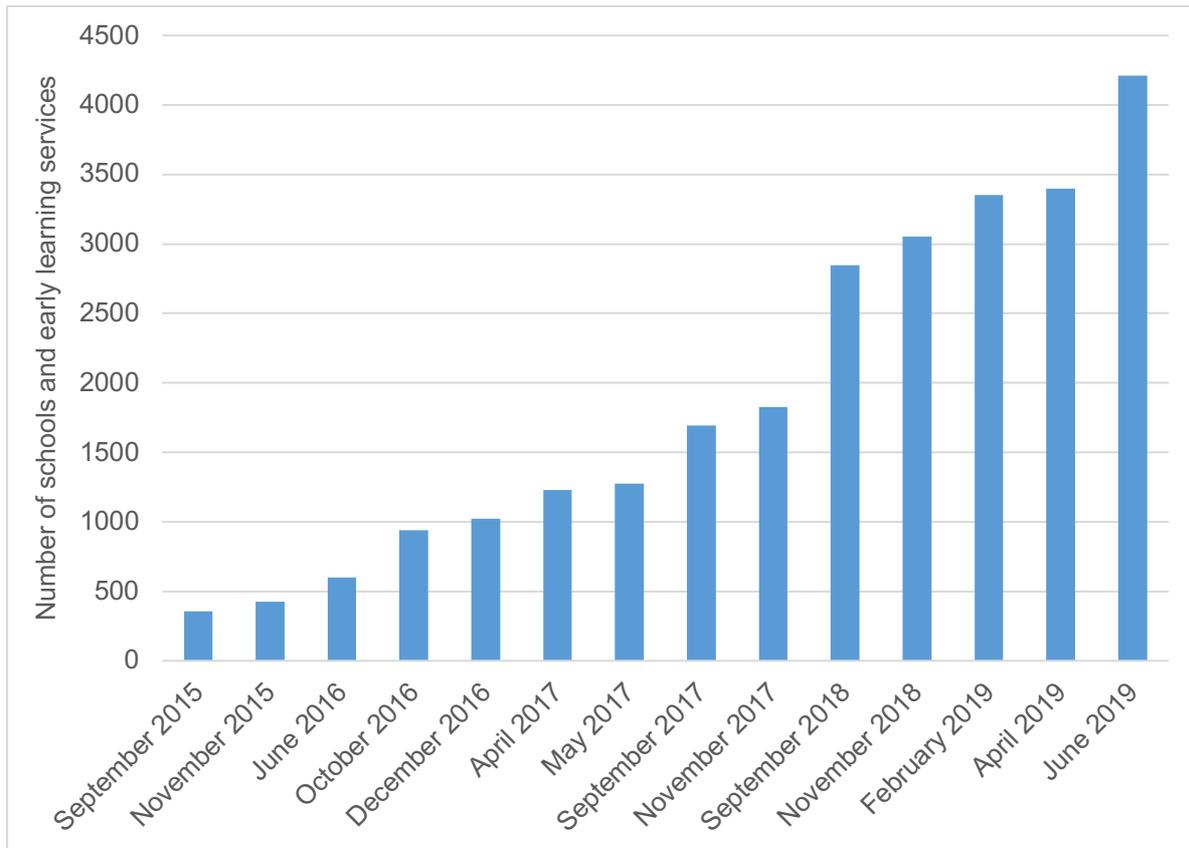
For the qualitative findings, each quote presented is followed by a descriptor indicating: whether it is from the online discussion board or in-depth interview data set (ODB or in-depth); whether the participant represented a school, early learning service, or was associated with an educational peak body. Where the participant was part of a Cluster RAP – a RAP that is shared across more than one individual school or early learning services – this is also indicated.

### **4.1 Growth, uptake and usage**

#### **a. To what extent are new schools and early learning services engaging with Narragunnawali, and what are some of the factors that motivate this engagement?**

At the end of June 2019, there were 4,211 schools or early learning services that had commenced developing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). As shown in Figure 1, this represents a rapid growth since the program's inception, and a continued growth over 2019.

**Figure 1. Number of schools and early learning services with (or developing) a Narragunnawali RAP**



Online discussion board and in-depth interview data elucidated some factors that motivate schools and early learning services to engage with their Narragunnawali RAP. A key motivator outlined at both the discussion board and in-depth interviews related to the presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families within the school or early learning service community. Participants reported that Narragunnawali provides them with a framework for highlighting and incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures into their curriculums. This was understood as an important means of promoting inclusion and addressing reconciliation within their school or early learning service community.

*We're a small school, about 20% of our students are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders. It (the RAP) was just, probably, a good way of putting everything together. (In-depth - school)*

*Some of our Aboriginal parents were feeling that their voice wasn't being heard and that the school wasn't really catering for Aboriginal students. (In-depth - early learning service and school cluster)*

Importantly though, some in-depth interview participants reported they had no Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander identifying students at their school or early learning service; and did not see this as a pre-condition for needing a RAP. Some in-depth interview participants also reported that they had developed knowledge of RAPs

through experiences at a different workplace or via other personal connections; and this motivated their decision to start the Narragunnawali RAP development process at their school or early learning service.

The robustness and quality of the Narragunnawali online platform was another key motivator for a developing RAP for some in-depth interview participants. Finally, a few interview participants were not able to articulate their motivations for engaging with Narragunnawali, instead stating that it was an institutional requirement.

**b. Are existing schools and early learning services continuing to engage after the initial implementation of a RAP, and what are some of the reasons why/why not?**

As a part of continuing engagement with the Narragunnawali RAP development and implementation process, RAP Working Groups are prompted to undertake a RAP refreshment every 12 months after initial publication. There is limited data to draw on at this stage of the evaluation, given that most participants had not yet completed a RAP refresh, due to being relatively newly engaged with Narragunnawali. Online discussion board and in-depth interview data participants did, however, discuss their intentions regarding the RAP refreshment process and any perceived barriers to continued engagement with Narragunnawali. Participants' relatively recent engagement with reconciliation was also reflected through RAP-RS findings, in which 77.24 per cent of respondents indicated it was the first time their school or early learning service had engaged in formal action around reconciliation; and only 15.30 per cent had previously developed a RAP.

The few participants who had refreshed their RAP reported receiving an email prompt and indicated that the process was relatively straightforward. Even so, broader analysis of participant discussions identified some confusion as to what the refreshment process involves and concerns that the 12-month RAP implementation period prior to refreshment is not long enough. Some confused the RAP refresh procedure within the Narragunnawali platform with other separate internal review processes within their schools. One participant stated they would not refresh their RAP when it became eligible, as they mistakenly thought that a refresh required a full rewrite of their RAP. Another participant explained that the frequency of the refresh process was, in their opinion, a key risk-factor for schools disengaging with the Narragunnawali program. The insights described in this paragraph were gained from analysis of the in-depth interview data.

*[The refresh process is] the biggest criticism of the whole [RAP] process... getting people together again to re-do it every year is too soon... What I've noticed is that so many of the schools I've worked with who do their first RAP don't go back to their second. They just drop out. (In-depth - school peak body representative)*

Time constraints was a commonly reported barrier to engagement with Narragunnawali, identified by online discussion board and in-depth interview participants, and emerged at every stage of the RAP process (not only at the refresh process). Participants explained that time management was a key part of any activity or initiative at school and early learning services (and was not a barrier specific to

engagement with Narragunnawali). Time constraints meant it could be difficult to arrange time for the RAP Working Group to meet, let alone implement reconciliation initiatives and communicate with the broader school community. Even so, some innovative means of overcoming time constraints were identified. For example, one discussion board participant explained that they incorporate a component of their RAP into every staff meeting to ensure continuous progress, development, and reflection.

*We take one aspect of the RAP at each staff meeting and dissect it to ensure it meets with our goals and follows our philosophy and policies. (ODB - early learning service)*

Another consistently identified barrier to continued engagement with Narragunnawali was financial limitations and resource availability. Particularly at the in-depth interviews, participants commonly mentioned that their roles were not funded in a way that recognised their RAP responsibilities and, as such, they had no paid time allocated to work on the RAP. Some participants also described having no or a low budget to remunerate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultants and that this impacted negatively on their school or early learning service's RAP development and implementation. This barrier was somewhat mitigated for those whose school or early learning service had a remunerated role dedicated to advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and reconciliation more broadly. A participant with insight into multiple schools' RAPs (as a peak body representative) reflected that schools disengaging with the Narragunnawali program over time tend to be those with less financial resources.

*Mostly, the schools that keep refreshing [and stay with the program], they probably are the schools with more money and schools that have less money are less likely to do it... Some schools give people who manage the project... [paid] time... schools that have more resources are more in a position to do that than schools that have less resources... If you're going to release teachers [from their teaching responsibilities], you actually have to pay for that. So, what's a [teacher] worth a day? Is it \$400 now? So, if you're going to release three teachers, that's \$1,200. If you're going to do it for half a day which is probably [what] you need to renew a RAP. (In-depth - school peak body representative)*

These qualitative findings are somewhat consistent with the RAP-RS results. The RAP-RS results indicated that 89.99 per cent of respondents' school or early learning services do support staff (e.g. through leave or financial reimbursement) to participate in cultural awareness/competence training. However, only 52.82 per cent of respondents' schools or early learning services had a service budget which included specific provision for reconciliation initiatives (for example, for Elders or Traditional Owners to deliver a Welcome to Country).

**c. What is the depth of engagement of schools and early learning services?**

Qualitative data collected through online discussion board and in-depth interviews provide rich information regarding the depth and quality of engagement with each of the Narragunnawali RAP development and implementation stages.

### Establish the RAP Working Group

Participants, across both online discussion board and in-depth interviews, reported mixed RAP Working Group sizes and compositions. Some described large groups (of up to 20 individuals) and others smaller Working Groups. At interview, some participants voiced a preference for a smaller number of RAP Working Group members, which were in turn advised by a broader collection of RAP Support Network members (though participant definitions of Working Group member and Support Network member were variable). Overall, the size and composition of the RAP Working Group did not seem to impact or reflect the school or service's commitment to their RAP.

During in-depth interviews, participants indicated that, in most instances, they had one person who acted as the lead of their RAP Working Group keeping momentum across the development stage of the RAP process. Online discussion board participants also emphasised the importance of getting buy-in from the Principal or Director as a part of the initial development stage, but also to support RAP implementation.

*The writing was mainly done by the Team Leader and then shared with the whole RAP [Working Group] for feedback... We had a small team, and everyone in the team was really proactive. Our Team Leader kept the momentum going, and we had a couple of really dedicated parents on our team too. The Principal was a driver too, this certainly helped. (In-depth - School)*

Particularly at in-depth interview, staff changes and turnover were identified as a key challenge to establishing and maintaining the RAP Working Group. In some cases, this could negatively impact the school or early learning service's continued engagement with RAP activities. Soliciting expressions of interest for vacant positions at staff meetings, maintaining a flexible approach to RAP Working Group membership, and utilising generic role descriptions when registering RAP Working Group members on the Narragunnawali platform to more easily incorporate rotating staff; all assisted in mitigating the challenge of staff changes. In-depth interview participants also identified that, overall, the number of members within a RAP Working Group reduced over time. This was not necessarily understood in negative terms, nor as a reduction in depth of engagement with the program, but seen as a function of the RAP development and implementation process.

### Complete the Reflection Survey

Participants mostly viewed the Reflection Survey as a valuable process. Participants, particularly at interview, indicated that it had provided helpful baseline data to guide RAP development. Quite a few participants at both online discussion board and in-depth interview, explained that the Reflection Survey was also a valuable monitoring tool for implementation stages of the RAP; identifying any gaps where RAP Actions could be undertaken or better operationalised.

*[The Reflection Survey] in itself has been priceless for me really to sit back and go 'looked great there', 'oh didn't get to that'. So it made at very clear what I need to bring to the front or arrange some conversations. (In-depth - school P-12 cluster)*

*Reflection Survey was a great tool to find out our starting point and see how far we have come. (ODB - early learning service)*

A small group of interview participants expressed some specific criticisms of the Reflection Survey. These related primarily to the use of closed-ended questions which may have limited the ability to capture contextual information specific to the experiences at an individual school or early learning service. Also at interview, a few participants explained that it was challenging to assemble all appropriate representatives in order to accurately complete the Survey. This last point is reflected through the RAP-RS finding that only 21.92 per cent of Reflection Surveys were completed by 'All of the RAP Working Group', 26.45 per cent by 'Some of the RAP Working Group', 28.44 per cent by 'The RAP Working Group Chair', 19.97 per cent by 'A RAP Working Group member', and 3.22 per cent by 'Other'.

#### *Write a Vision for Reconciliation*

Writing the Vision for Reconciliation was seen as a valuable process by the vast majority of participants. For many of the in-depth interview participants, the process was quite involved, with several interviewees explaining that they were determined to get a meaningful and specific Vision that aligned with the broader values of their school or early learning service. Many explained that the development of the Vision was a time-consuming and collaborative process.

*We very much came from [Religious Organisation] RAP, and so we started there. We had a look then at ... [School Name] core values that are listed out on everything we do ... we actually went into those and picked out three that we felt most closely aligned to our RAP vision I suppose, what we want to achieve and so that was love, justice and community... we wanted to make sure that it was genuine and real and not too fluffy you know, [we wanted something] we were really going to achieve. (In-depth - school P-12 cluster)*

Some in-depth interview participants described the process as onerous; though a few highlighted how much they enjoyed the experience. In contrast, several other in-depth interview participants stated they developed their Vision for Reconciliation quite quickly. This seems more consistent with the majority experience of online discussion board participants, who felt that writing their Vision for Reconciliation was a fairly easy process. Even so, discussion board participants did report developing their Vision collectively as a RAP Working Group and, in some cases, through engagement with other staff and parents.

*When writing our vision we designated a whiteboard in the staff room and encouraged all staff to add their thoughts and ideas. We kept adding for one month then reviewed all notes at a staff meeting. After this I wrote our first draft which was again reviewed by staff. After the second draft was completed we submitted. (ODB - early learning service)*

At interview, a few participants indicated that they rarely looked at their Vision and did not use it to guide their RAP on a regular basis. While others stated they frequently re-read their Vision and were engaged in continuing conversations regarding their Vision for Reconciliation.

### Add RAP Actions

There are 14 Actions that all schools and early learning services must commit to in order to develop a RAP through to the published stage, though there are a total of 39 different Actions that schools and early learning services may choose to commit to.

In-depth interview participants discussed the process of developing and implementing RAP Actions in some detail. Most of these participants explained that their school or early learning service had only committed to the 14 minimally required RAP Actions. They felt that this represented a significant, yet manageable, commitment and an appropriate starting point. A couple of interviewees explained that initially the process of setting up the RAP felt relatively overwhelming, but that they gained confidence along the way, and may consider adding new Actions in the future. Activities related to Actions 'Around the School', were reported as being more easily and successfully implemented compared to those situated within the 'In the Classroom' or 'With the Community' components of the Narragunnawali RAP framework. Activities related to 'Actions 'Around the School' typically included 'Acknowledgement of Country', 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flags', and 'Celebrate National Reconciliation Week' activities. This is somewhat reflected in the RAP-RS findings. For example, 71.23 per cent of respondents indicated that their school or early learning service permanently displays of flies either or both the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander flags. The discussion board and in-depth interview data suggest that the 'Teach about Reconciliation' and 'Curriculum Planning' RAP Actions, associated with the 'In the Classroom' domain, were more challenging to implement and will be discussed in further detail under the 4.3 Effectiveness of Resources section below. The RAP Action 'Build Relationships with Community', associated with the 'With the Community' domain, was another commonly cited challenge and will be addressed under the 4.5 Community Interaction and Engagement section below.

A number of online discussion board participants expressed a desire for additional functionality within the Narragunnawali platform to enable more flexible interaction with the platform and more in-depth documentation of progress towards RAP actions.

*I would prefer a more interactive document that can serve as a diary of progress, as opposed to just marking objectives as completed etc. We actually developed our own working document as a sister RAP to the Narragunnawali one which we chart or constant progress and goals on. (ODB - OHSC)*

*I would like to be able to add evidence of what we have been doing within an area of our RAP. (ODB - early learning service)*

### Refresh the RAP

As previously noted, most participants had engaged with Narragunnawali relatively recently and so had not yet completed a RAP refresh. However, a few in-depth interview participants did discuss refreshing their RAP. After initially starting with and sufficiently progressing the 14 minimally required Actions, some felt ready to expand and included other Actions within their RAP. The decision to add extra Actions was motivated by the perceived value of particular activities within their educational context, as well as a desire to build on what had already been established.

#### **d. What are some of the clear – quantitative and qualitative – outcomes of engaging with Narragunnawali, and reconciliation in education more generally, over time?**

Quantitative outcome data will be incorporated into future evaluation summary reports. In this report though, it is possible to document a number of qualitative findings related to the outcomes from engagement. Both online discussion board and in-depth interview participants reported that the Narragunnawali program provided a scaffolding for them to use, which increased their confidence in addressing reconciliation and driving meaningful change within their schools and early learning services. Engagement with Narragunnawali provided a formalised means of delivering students, staff and families with regular opportunities to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. Engagement with Narragunnawali also encouraged the forging of new relationships between schools and services, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

*The RAP is the platform to drive change and reconciliation. The current generation is so removed from what occurred in the past to the Aboriginal [and Torres Strait Islander] peoples, without a formal plan, much of what occurred in our school was one-off and fleeting. (ODB - school)*

Several interview participants reported that the positive outcomes and progress on their RAPs had exceeded their expectations. The peak body representative quoted below had oversight of RAPs in several schools and had been overwhelmed by the positive response.

*There has been a shift in the schools that I've been working with over this time that is greater than I could've ever anticipated... their understanding of the injustice, in their respect for Aboriginal people... It's interest and awe and fascination, curiosity and genuine partnerships, real collaboration and friendships and mutual respect and a really good vibe. I'm not aware of any pushback from parents in the community, in the schools or teachers... this moment in time seems to be quite potent. It seems that these changes are*

*going through and this culture is being promoted without opposition. (In-depth, school peak body representative)*

**e. What are some of the key indicators and measures of reconciliation excellence in the education sector, and to what extent does the Narragunnawali framework and resources align with, and support, these measures?**

The second round of Narragunnawali Awards Finalists were announced in 2019 and these Awards will be a feature of future reporting. Online discussion board and interview participant feedback about the Narragunnawali Awards was minimal, with very few participants aware of the Awards. Of the two participants who were aware of the Awards, both expressed uncertainty that their school was 'good enough' to warrant involvement.

**f. How does the above (findings for each research question within the Growth, uptake, and usage theme) vary by the type of school and early learning service, and what are some of the factors that may explain this variation?**

Qualitative analysis tentatively suggest differences in depth or quality of engagement with Narragunnawali for institutions that are connected to a shared Cluster RAP and for OSHC services. Narragunnawali offers 'Cluster' schools and early learning services, such as P-12 schools or early learning services with multiple sites, the option of developing a Cluster RAP (one RAP which spans all services). As reported through the online discussion board, some institutions engaging with Narragunnawali through a Cluster RAP experienced specific challenges in providing accurate Reflection Survey responses that represented all sections of the school and/or early learning services. At interview participants with Cluster RAPs described difficulties in developing actionable goals that appropriately bridged all age groups, as well as tracking progress and communicating the RAP to staff and parents across all sections of the school and early learning service. This was particularly so where Working Group members were located across multiple sites. The only OSHC service participant to complete an in-depth interview reported that RAP implementation was specifically challenging for their institution. They only had a short timeframe with students, they did not have the resources to organise larger events (such as Welcome to Country), and the wide range of ages attending the OSHC service meant that it was difficult to develop age-appropriate activities.

## **4.2 Information sharing and within-institution knowledge**

**a. (How) Can participation in Narragunnawali increase the level of knowledge within schools and early learning services about the types of reconciliation activities being undertaken?**

Both online discussion board and in-depth interview qualitative data suggests that Narragunnawali does facilitate information sharing and improve within-institution knowledge relating to reconciliation. The Narragunnawali RAP framework and the features of the Narragunnawali platform more generally, as well as the specific processes of establishing and renewing RAP Working Groups, and the sharing of Vision for Reconciliation statements are some aspects of the program that may be supportive of this.

A comparison of current Phase 2 RAP-RS data to RAP-RS analysed in Phase 1, suggest some decline in the proportion of respondents that were unsure as to what reconciliation activities were being undertaken within their school or early learning service. For example, at Phase 1, 13.8 per cent of respondents were 'unsure' as to 'How many teachers and educators regularly collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in preparing and delivering lessons'. However, at Phase 2, only 3.20 per cent of respondents were 'unsure' about the similar question of 'In the last year, how many teachers and educators collaborated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to prepare and deliver lessons?' We will return to this issue in future reports by looking at whether individual schools and early learning services are becoming surer the longer they are engaged in the Narragunnawali program.

Phase 2 RAP-RS findings, however, also show a number of aspects of reconciliation where there were still relatively high level of uncertainty. Approximately a third of respondents (33.6 per cent) were unsure whether the school or early learning service had '...an employment strategy to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to apply for teaching and non-teaching positions' and around a quarter (25.3 and 22.5 per cent respectively) were unsure whether their institution's budget included 'specific provision for reconciliation initiatives' or whether their school or early learning service has an 'anti-racism strategy'.

Phase 2 RAP-RS findings also show a relatively high percentage of respondents, at 18.47 per cent, who were unsure whether 'Aboriginal histories, cultures, and perspectives [were] discussed at Parents and Citizens (or equivalent) meetings'. This is particularly salient given that qualitative online discussion board and interview data suggests implementation of the RAP Action 'Building Relationships with Community' is a common challenge.

Returning to the qualitative data, many participants, particularly via the online discussion board, reported that having a formalised approach to reconciliation was imperative to the bringing-in of all stakeholders and to ensuring that reconciliation knowledge and activities are embedded respectfully and meaningfully throughout their school or early learning service. Overall, these participants felt Narragunnawali provided this framework.

*The [Narragunnawali] site is comprehensive and provided our school with a focus for our reconciliation practices. Activities and events as well as curriculum offerings have been developed with the school's RAP in mind. The understandings and cultural knowledge developed through an intensive program with our youngest students will permeate through the school as these students move up through the years and influence progressively the teachers of these informed students. We will continue to foster and promote new and innovative practices throughout the school supported by the RAP team. Our student RAP Ambassadors will have an increasing role to play as their own expertise develops and grows. (ODB - school)*

Online discussion board participants focused on the perceived need for RAP Working Groups to have a more formalised structure, strong leadership, and buy-in from the early learning service Director or school Principal to ensure RAP implementation does not stall. Whereas in-depth interview participants emphasised flexibility and collaboration in RAP Working Group roles and organisation. They reported that flexible RAP Working Group arrangements helped to incorporate a diverse range of voices and perspectives (staff, students and community members). The rotation of team members into and out of RAP Working Group roles and responsibilities, was seen as an opportunity to further disperse knowledge throughout the staff community. Interview participants emphasised that conversations about the RAP could be shared on an ad hoc basis, at a convenient time and place.

*Projects from the RAP can be, and are, the responsibility of all staff, however the staff mostly responsible for implementing the RAP is myself, the chairperson, and those on the RAP committee. The way we decide and achieve goals is through the monthly meetings, progress is tracked before goals are discussed and timelines for achievements set. (ODB– OSHC)*

*The writing was mainly done by the Team Leader and then shared with the whole RAP [Working Group] for feedback... We had a small team, and everyone in the team was really proactive. Our Team Leader kept the momentum going, and we had a couple of really dedicated parents on our team too. The principal was a driver too, this certainly helped. (ODB – school)*

*At the start of the year we'll be looking at reshuffling our committee a bit and possibly getting some of the people who've been involved in the implementation coming off and new staff coming on so that it, we can spread the understanding through staff a bit more. (In-depth- early learning service and school P-6 cluster)*

*... people are really busy, and they don't want to commit to doing this ... they think that sounds like a lot of work, I don't want to do it. Whereas 'can I have a chat to you about this?' then they would have ideas and be into the RAP and weren't necessarily part of the official Working Group. (In-depth - school P-12 cluster)*

While not unanimously, participants generally described including a range of relevant people and having multiple view-points shared and incorporated into the drafting of their Vision for Reconciliation statement.

*So we started just with that small group and got some ideas of what we wanted in the vision and then we took it to that one parents night that we had, ... it kind of went through about three different editing processes ... I was particularly*

*pedantic about having the right voices heard in terms of our vision (In-depth-school P-12 cluster)*

*We just had a bit of a brainstorm and then from there we just worked together to write our vision...There was a lot of really rich conversation around that, but I can say really easily that the vision was written very heavily by the students and it is very much their ideas. (In-depth – early learning service and school P-12 cluster)*

Several participants believed that, once they had finished developing their RAP, it was not possible to print the RAP actions specific to their school or early learning service. This was a particularly frustrating barrier for participants in being able to communicate the goals of their RAP with their school or early learning service and broader community. As of January 2019, this printing capability has been enabled within the Narragunnawali platform.

*...each schools' specific Actions need to be articulated for them, because we then print those out...and send it or frame them and they would hang in the staffroom or hang in the office when people were coming because it's a statement of what we do here. (In-depth - school peak body representative)*

*The main difficulty we struck was not being able to add in to the final printed plan the Deliverables we have written. (ODB – School)*

**b. (How) Can participation in Narragunnawali increase the level of knowledge within schools and early learning services about the experience of both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and teachers, particularly with regard to their knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions?**

This report does not focus on the effect of Narragunnawali on knowledge within schools and early learning services. This research question will be picked up in a future paper that utilises longitudinal data. However, there are some findings that give some small insights into the potential effects.

Cultural awareness and competency training is one way to increase information sharing within educational institutions about the experience of both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and teachers, particularly with regard to their knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions. Of those schools and early learning services who answered the RAP-RS, 25.62 per cent said that most (more than 75%) of staff had completed such training, alongside 20.72 per cent who said that half (around 50%) had done so. There is no definitive data for schools and early learning services that are not currently participating in developing a Narragunnawali RAP, but this appears to be a relatively high per cent. However, there remains scope for a much greater number of staff in schools and early learning services to receive such training.

RAP-RS results suggest that the percentage of staff having completed cultural competence training is positively correlated with the percentage of staff who regularly and confidently incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, perspectives and contemporary issues into curriculum planning and teaching. In schools and early learning services where most staff (more than 75%) had received cultural awareness or competence training, 42.9 per cent of respondents reported that most teachers or educators (more than 75%) were able to ‘regularly and confidently incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, perspectives and contemporary issues into curriculum planning and teaching.’ This fell to 10.9 per cent of respondents in schools where no staff had received such training, and 12.7 per cent where only some staff (less than 25%) had participated in such training.

### **4.3 Effectiveness of Resources**

As outlined at the previous section 1.3 Components of Narragunnawali, Narragunnawali resources include: RAP development resources, professional learning and curriculum resources, reconciliation relevant news updates, and webinars. Working Group members can also interact directly with the Narragunnawali team including via LiveChat, email, live webinars, workshops, by phone and, more recently, via the Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education closed Facebook group.

#### **a. Which resources and what type of resources within Narragunnawali are being utilised and engaged with, and why? What are some of the impacts/outcomes of engaging with these resources?**

Online discussion board and in-depth interview participants were asked about their experiences with the resources available via the Narragunnawali online platform. Most online discussion board and in-depth interview participants stated that, overall, the Narragunnawali platform simple to navigate.

*I was impressed with the platform... it was scaffolded so well that it was easy for you to do. It was clear about how many steps you needed to complete before you actually had the RAP and it covered a variety of different things (In-depth - school P-6)*

*The website is simple to navigate and everything I required to find was easy to locate when needed. (ODB - OSHC)*

Though a few participants, particularly at interview, did indicate some difficulty navigating the platform. This was due in part to the large amount of detailed information included, and also the need to log-in to access resources in their entirety.

Both discussion board and in-depth interview participants, generally spoke positively about the quality of the professional learning and curriculum development resources; highlighting that it was reassuring to have “trustworthy” resources available.

*There are so many amazing resources, but I also know from my perspective that if it's on there... as a teacher myself, I just know that it's going to be good quality, it's going to fit with National Curriculum... It's been promoted on the*

*Narragunnawali side, I trust it as a – it's a trusted resource embedded by Indigenous people. (In-depth - school beak body representative)*

Online discussion board participants, mentioned that staff at their schools or early learning services were actively encouraged to access the Narragunnawali online platform resources. Though, even with this encouragement and general positive consensus regarding the quality of the resources, most participants (both discussion board and interview) reported that, in practice, they did not frequently access the professional learning and curriculum resources available. Many interview participants indicated that these materials had been helpful when developing their RAP, but that resources had been used infrequently apart from this. Both discussion board and interview participants, tended to acknowledge the importance of these resources, felt that they should be a priority, and stated that they were useful when accessed. However, they also found it difficult to make time to fully utilise these resources alongside other their competing demands.

*This is reminding me to promote these to our school leaders as they would be extremely useful for teacher PD. It is very comprehensive and a great guide. I recall I explored this site last year and thought yes, use it, but it's easy to get bogged down with multiple things happening and constantly re-prioritising, I guess this has been a missed opportunity that now can be rectified. (ODB - school)*

*This is an under-utilised resource and several activities could be used as a framework to document what is happening in our school. (ODB - school)*

*I probably haven't accessed the resources other than when I was actually writing the RAP. I think it's something I probably need to go back to so I can share with staff at meetings... that's probably an area I didn't use. (In-depth - school P-12 cluster)*

While, overall, the underutilisation of professional development and curriculum resources was reported; a couple of the online discussion board participants did report actively using the professional development resources to inform holistic and iterative staff development activities. Furthermore, the discussion board and interview participants who did actively engage with the curriculum resources, were positive about having a specific resource pool that supported their individual RAP Actions.

*We take one resource and get a different group to present it to the group at staff meetings. This way we get a good representative of ideas and subject matter and each group own the journey and outcomes. (ODB – early learning service)*

*We have used some of the resources with our kindy children and we use different aspects to present ideas as part of our curriculum and program. When*

*children are showing interests in new and different things, we check the list to see if any link to their interests so we can scaffold using the new information. Sometimes we just use the resources for intentional teaching as well. (ODB – early learning service)*

The Narragunnawali platform resources include a Guide to Using Respectful and Inclusive Language and Terminology. Awareness and use of this resource was relatively low across both discussion board and interview participants. The few interview participants and one discussion board participant who indicated they used the Guide, reported that it was a useful resource. Aligned to the Guide, the Narragunnawali team has also developed a specific professional learning resource that supports the development of Vision for Reconciliation Statements (the “What is Your Vision for Reconciliation?” resource). None of the participants mentioned that they had utilised this resource when developing their Vision.

Most online discussion board participants had contacted the Narragunnawali team during the RAP process or for general help with the Narragunnawali platform. Several interview participants also noted having direct interaction with the Narragunnawali team. A couple of these participants stated the feedback they received was more detailed and critical than expected. Nonetheless, reported interactions between Narragunnawali team staff members and RAP Working Group members were overwhelmingly positive. No particular barriers to communicating with Reconciliation Australia and its Narragunnawali team were noted by participants.

**c. Are there gaps in the availability of resources that could be filled by new or updated resources developed for, or acquired by, Reconciliation Australia?**

Some participants, particularly at interview, identified areas for improvement of the Narragunnawali platform professional development and curriculum resources. Several felt that the materials were too dense, requiring quite a lot of time to read through and therefore were not user-friendly for all teachers; particularly for those who may access the platform infrequently or face significant time pressures.

*I found a lot of the resources I think on the website to be a little bit too wordy... I was trying to find resources that the classroom teachers could just pick up and use straight away without having to just go through lots and lots of pre-amble and reading... they just don't have the time in reality. (In-depth – early learning service and school P-12 cluster)*

A number of online discussion board and interview participants felt there were not enough curriculum resources targeted towards younger students. During in-depth interviews, this criticism was largely related to the minimally required RAP Actions ‘Take Action against Racism’ and ‘Explore Current Affairs and Issues’. In the case of taking action against racism, one early learning service participant explained that the violent nature of Australia’s history meant that they preferred to focus on positive aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. This participant was also concerned that discussing racism with young children might be counter-productive and effectively introduce the concept to them, when they were previously unaware of it.

While these participants were able to adapt activities to be age-appropriate, it took additional effort for staff to consider how to do this and, some appeared to be concerned that they were not meeting the requirements of the Action despite their best efforts.

*The resources are great, but it would be great to have some more Early Childhood resources or links to other useful websites (this may exist, I might not have seen it!). (ODB - school)*

*We're not really talking about the violent history... it's just too violent. Yes we teach about reconciliation, yes we challenge biases, yes we engage in all the positive Aboriginal culture, and engaging the right people to teach the culture...we're doing a lot, but just sort of at the level and age appropriateness of this age group, which is birth to five. (In-depth – early learning service multi-site cluster)*

A couple of interview participants requested more locally specific resources, enabling them to better tailor their RAP and teaching resources to reflect local needs, histories, and cultures. Through the online discussion board a small number of participants suggested that checking the relevance and availability of links to external resources would be beneficial. One discussion board participant suggested it would be useful to have notifications when new resources became available.

*I have tried accessing the play school videos featuring Indigenous artists but the link only takes me to play school videos that have no significance to reconciliation. Also, have tried accessing the videos on Mother Tongue and they don't seem to be accessible either - 'vimeo cannot be reached'. It might be good to include links/ suggestions to use the 'Little J and Big Cuz' program in early childhood. (ODB - early learning service)*

Participants, particularly at interview, also mentioned that they used a wide variety of resources outside of the Narragunnawali platform (including alternate websites and general searching on platforms such as Google and YouTube).

#### **4.4 Teacher Knowledge and Confidence**

##### **a. (How) Does participation in Narragunnawali impact on the attitudes of teaching and non-teaching staff within schools and early learning services?**

A few in-depth interview participants explained that the process of developing a RAP had raised unexpected negative staff attitudes about reconciliation, and provided a forum for staff to discuss and ultimately challenge these views in a positive and supportive environment. One online discussion board participant raised the difficulty they experienced in encouraging other staff members to share in the vision of those on the RAP Working Group.

*[A private consultant] came in and she talked to our entire staff from our groundsmen to our teachers to our Principal, we were all there and she talked about what it was like to be Indigenous today in Australia and it was absolutely amazing and there was some confronting conversation at the end... [which] helped the people [staff] who are really emotional [with negative views about reconciliation] to get over it and move on and I don't know be more open to talking about it from there. (In-depth - school P-12 cluster)*

*The group has further been challenged in getting approval for recommendations. As permission needed to be sought from the school leadership team who did not share our knowledge or vision, several were rejected. As a result, the RAP team is investigating alternate activities and/or calendaring recommendation for review again in 2019. (ODB - School)*

**b. (How) Does participation in Narragunnawali impact on the level of confidence and competence of educators within schools and early learning services when it comes to facilitating learning and action around reconciliation, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions?**

For some online discussion board and interview participants, the initial process of setting up the RAP was a daunting prospect. However, participants seemed less daunted once they began engaging with the process. Discussion board participants seemed more likely to find the process overwhelming if the school or early learning service had no connections with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples to help inform RAP development.

*Developing our RAP seemed like a fairly daunting process to start. However, once we logged on to the Narragunnawali platform things started to become clearer, focusing our discussions and making the task more manageable. (ODB – early learning service)*

Participants, particularly at online discussion board, identified increased confidence and understanding of how they would address reconciliation within their school or early learning service as a key outcome of engaging with Narragunnawali.

*I don't feel that we would yet have a formal RAP in place it really gave us the confidence to put together a basic plan upon which we can now build and expand and add to. (ODB - early learning service)*

Several participants, particularly at interview, described the progress of staff engagement and RAP implementation as initially slow. Progress was slow as staff began to understand what the RAP entailed and who was coordinating the RAP. On the whole, these participants felt that staff awareness was now increasing, resulting in greater engagement and momentum with the RAP.

*We have been chipping away at our Action Plan and the Actions for maybe 18 months ... staff are getting more confident in being able to teach about it... and*

*people that are passionate about it start to creep out of the wood work and want to get involved. (In-depth - early learning service and school P-12 cluster)*

Challenges in implementing the 'Teach about Reconciliation' and 'Curriculum Planning' RAP Actions, reported by interview participants were attributed, in part, to a lack of teacher confidence.

*It's probably a confidence thing with teachers....I guess, [its] a bit daunting...they want to be respectful...not saying the right things or not knowing the resources that they can use, and I've tried to work with some...(but) it's been hard to try and catch up and work together to plan and program with those teachers. (In-depth - school P-6)*

*The challenges we had was resistance/fear from some staff who felt they did not know enough about Australian history other what was taught at school which is minimal. (ODB - early learning service)*

Combined online discussion board and interview data suggests that the confidence of teachers to successfully implement effective changes to teaching practices and curriculum planning may be linked to the cultural competence of staff and the extent of time pressures on staff. This finding is also consistent with the, afore mentioned, RAP-RS finding that suggest the percentage of staff having completed cultural competency training is moderately and positively correlated with the percentage of staff who 'regularly and confidently incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, perspectives and contemporary issues into curriculum planning and teaching'.

*Initially the challenge was staff fear they did not know enough, we came together and provided access to Cultural Awareness training, Cultural competency training and through Cultural self-assessment... If staff have an understanding and can self-assess their own morals/beliefs and are encouraged to educate themselves more via training or discussion with other staff, it empowers them to work together to achieve the same goal. (OSB - early learning service)*

There was also a concern expressed that, if teachers are not knowledgeable enough about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, then attempts to include such content in the classroom may be done in a tokenistic fashion.

*Things can be done in a tokenistic way... it [needs to be] linked to a bigger concept. It might be power. It might be the economy.... It might be democracy... The story of our nation's First Peoples is interwoven into what is the Australian story and that means our teachers need to know enough about it that they can do that... non-*

*Aboriginal Australians don't know a lot about the history of the last 200 years, 300 years from our First Nations peoples' perspective[s]. We still have a great deal to learn. (In-depth - school peak body representative)*

**c. (How) Does participation in Narragunnawali impact on the teaching plans or delivery methods used by educators within schools and early learning services?**

Some participants, particularly at interview, explained that it was difficult encouraging some classroom teachers to practically implement the 'Teach about Reconciliation' and the 'Curriculum Planning' RAP Actions, because of pre-conceived ideas about the importance of and pedagogy for teaching about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions.

*Teachers do have a mindset whether they have to teach a block of Aboriginal studies or Indigenous studies rather than continual integration into the curriculum through everything you do. (In-depth - School P-6)*

*Teachers' main focus is teaching and the more that you add to that, the more resistance you can sometimes come up against ... we have had to be constantly aware of [that] and to find clever ways to kind of naturally embed[ding] things like having Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the classroom, rather than that being an additional thing. (In-depth - early learning service and school P-12 cluster)*

A few interview participants described the methods they used to respectfully embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures into their class room teaching.

*So just [a matter of] finding ways it fits, you know? But if you're not confident in it can be a bit confronting. (In-depth, School P-12 cluster)*

*Teachers' main focus is teaching and the more that you add to that, the more resistance you can sometimes come up against ... we have had to be constantly aware of [that] and to find clever ways to kind of naturally embed[ding] things like having Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the classroom, rather than that being an additional thing. (In-depth – early learning service and school P-12 cluster)*

Several participants, especially interview participants, explained that teachers were inspired by the RAP process to meaningfully adapt their teaching practices.

*Some teachers [are] just more than happy to adapt the content of what they are teaching to incorporate ... Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history or culture in certain areas. So, one teacher was looking at poetry for example, so she just changed the sorts of poems she was looking to or she got the boys to look at art, Aboriginal artworks and write a poem about the artwork. (In-depth - early learning service and school P-12 cluster)*

Returning briefly to the RAP-RS results, only 60.78 per cent of respondents indicated that teachers and educators at their school or early learning service were ‘...aware that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures are a priority within the Australian Curriculum and the Early Years Learning Framework’. Furthermore, only 53.04 per cent of respondents indicated that teachers and educators at their school or early learning service were ‘actively engaged with meeting or maintaining proficiency in the AITSL Australian Professional Standards for Teachers Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4 (for primary and secondary schools) and the ACECQA National Quality Standard (for early learning)’. While there is no data available to allow for a comparison between institutions not engaged with Narragunnawali; these percentages appear to be quite low. This is aligned with qualitative finding that some teachers find it challenging to implement the ‘Teach about Reconciliation’, ‘Curriculum Planning’ and ‘Embed Cross-Curriculum Priority’ RAP Actions. These RAP-RS results are also consistent with the qualitative finding that, overall, Narragunnawali Professional Learning and Curriculum Resources are likely underutilised by teachers and educators. This is despite teachers and educators acknowledging the importance of these resources, and their effectiveness when utilised (as discussed at section 4.3 Effectiveness of Resources above).

#### **4.5 Community Interaction and Engagement**

- a. What is the level of knowledge of parents/carers about Narragunnawali and its components?**
- b. What is the usage of components of Narragunnawali by parents/carers?**
- c. What is the attitude of parents/carers towards Narragunnawali, and towards reconciliation in education more generally? What factors might explain these attitudes?**

Rich qualitative data are relevant to more than one of the specific research questions within this theme of the evaluation framework. As such data addressing specific questions a), b), and c) of the Community Interaction and Engagement theme will be presented together.

Online discussion board and in-depth interview participants spoke about their school and early learning services’ interaction and engagement with parents/carers of students. Almost exclusively, participants discussed interaction with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. Analysis of both qualitative data sets did not provided significant information relating to engagement and interaction of non-indigenous parents and families with the Narragunnawali RAP development and implementation process.

Both online discussion board and interview participants, generally described parent/carer engagement as an important and valuable part of the Narragunnawali RAP processes and of reconciliation more broadly. Some participants described meaningful engagements that enriched RAP processes, while others discussed the challenges they experienced in developing these relationships.

Interview participants, in particular, reported some modest but meaningful positive changes in interactions with parents/carers. This was particularly amongst parents of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students already attending the school or early learning service. In one instance an interview participant explained that parents of Aboriginal students had become more engaged in the school activities as a result of their school's involvement with Narragunnawali.

*We've noticed huge progress through the school... we only have nine Aboriginal students and the parents of those students have really noticed a difference in our approach... The families are more involved in the school as well, as a result of it I think. (In-depth, school P-6)*

Though some interview participants also reported that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families did not want to be in the spotlight and were often reluctant to become involved in RAP activities.

*We have a very small identified Indigenous population in our school... and I think that's where I feel we have the more difficult job to do... [these] families... we find there is a reluctance to become involved. (In-depth - school P-12 cluster)*

While not always successful, interview participants recognised regular and genuine communication and consultation with parents and families of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students as an important means of forging links with the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

**d. What is the level of knowledge of Indigenous community members about Narragunnawali and its components?**

**e. What is the usage of components of Narragunnawali by Indigenous community members?**

**f. What is the attitude of Indigenous community members towards Narragunnawali, and towards reconciliation in education more generally? What factors might explain these attitudes?**

Rich qualitative data are relevant to more than one of the specific research questions within this theme of the evaluation framework. As such data addressing specific questions d), e), and f) of the Community Interaction and Engagement theme will be presented together.

Data does not directly address Indigenous community members' knowledge of, usage of, or attitudes towards Narragunnawali. However, data does provide insights into school and early learning services' experiences of engaging with Indigenous

community members as a part of their Narragunnawali RAP development and implementation processes.

Inclusion of Elders was broadly identified as important, by both discussion board and interview participants, to the RAP development process. Online discussion board participants, in particular, emphasised that Elders were invited, where possible, to give their thoughts on the proposed Vision for Reconciliation. However, some also highlighted that this was not always straightforward, especially when they did not have an existing connection with an Elder or local Aboriginal or Torres Strait community member and did not know how to begin to establish that relationship. Further, only a few in-depth interview participants indicated they had Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Working Group members

*We wrote our Vision fairly broadly to fit with all seven sites, and always had local Aboriginal Elders check what we had written to see whether our vision was a vision that they wanted for us too. (ODB - early learning service)*

*Our RAP started with our Cultural Liaison and Engagement officer as the key person in our organisation and she wrote a draft and formed a committee/working party including a corporate volunteer. We invited local Aboriginal Elders and community members to be a part of our working party to review and give us culturally appropriate advice. (ODB - early learning service)*

*I wish we had been able to engage a local Elder in the development of our RAP, perhaps some information/points to consider before starting the RAP process? (ODB - School)*

The RAP Action 'Build Relationships with Community' was a commonly cited challenge, especially among in-depth interview participants. While challenging and time-consuming, participants understood that establishing genuine rapport and trust over time with First Peoples, is crucial to successful RAP implementation. Links with the broader community were often forged through initial relationships with parents and families of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Joining community organisations was another strategy that a small group of in-depth interview participants also reported using. However, this approach often required RAP Working Group members to work outside of their usual hours as they were unable to take time out of their day-to-day teaching responsibilities.

*I then joined the [local] Reconciliation Group, which is a local not-for-profit group. I thought this could be really a great place to meet local Aboriginal families and likeminded people... I attend a meeting in my own time and I'm now one of the executives on this committee... [the group] has really helped for us to bring in the right people to teach. (In-depth - early learning service multi-site cluster)*

Several participants, particularly at interview, discussed difficulty in identifying and approaching suitable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and/or organisations for support. For some this barrier was simply not knowing which organisations to approach in their local area but for others there were not suitable local organisations available to assist (in remote locations). Some online discussion board participants suggested that Reconciliation Australia could play a more active role in linking schools and early learning services with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

*I think the hurdle of making contact with the Aboriginal community is massive if you don't have any Aboriginal families attending services. When we made contact with Aboriginal people through [community organisations], the communication was fantastic and the conversations were great but the ongoing relationship seems to be difficult to establish we would really like to have an Elder or someone from the community who is able to commit to an ongoing relationship with the service perhaps a database of people from the community who are willing to commit to a casual ongoing arrangement with a service would be good. (ODB - early learning service)*

One interview participant, who sat on several RAP Working Groups and advised various schools on the RAP process, identified that negotiating internal community politics was a barrier to maintaining meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This participant explained that:

*If they [teachers or school staff] don't know who they go to, [who they] people are in that community and they haven't been involved in the process, they could find themselves in difficult waters if they get the wrong content, or they engage the wrong people, which then has the opportunity to really take things back tenfold in regards to relationships and, you know, people in the community to get upset... (In-depth, school peak body representative)*

A different interview participant explained they felt uncomfortable organising a Welcome to Country and engaging local Aboriginal communities, as a part of their RAP implementation, due to the contested nature of the Land on which they lived.

Consistent with qualitative findings, RAP-RS results also show that teachers and educators experience difficulty engaging with community members for the purpose of inviting them to contribute to teaching and learning in the classroom. Only 13.80 per cent of respondents indicated that most (more than 75%) of the teachers and educators at their school or early learning service 'collaborated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to prepare and deliver lessons' within the last year. A further 12.43 per cent reported half (around 50%); 43.15 per cent reported some (less than 25%); and 30.63 per cent reported none of the teachers and educators at their institution collaborated with community members in this way. Furthermore, only 5.14 per cent of respondents indicated that in the last year their '... school or early learning

service invite [d] Elders or Traditional Owners to deliver a Welcome to Country at significant events' regularly (5+ occasions). For this item, 7.35 per cent indicated often (3-4 occasions), 30.90 per cent indicated sometimes (1-2 occasions), and 56.61 per cent indicated never.

While the qualitative findings suggest that schools and early learning services recognise the importance of engagement with community, the RAP–RS show that, in practice, they may not be regularly reaching out and inviting community members or organisations into their institutions. Only 10.23 per cent of respondents indicated that in the last year their institution regularly (5+ occasions) invited 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, businesses or organisations to be involved in activities at your school or early learning service'. For this item, 14.27 per cent indicated often (3-4 occasions), 43.76 per cent indicated sometimes (1-2 occasions), and 31.75 per cent indicated 'Never'.

While acknowledging the real challenges that schools and early learning services have experienced in meaningfully engaging Indigenous community members, the findings do also demonstrate some modest positive changes in participants perception of their educational institutions' engagement with community. This was particularly evident for engagement with parents of Aboriginal students already attending the school.

One interview participant reported that new parents looking to enrol their Aboriginal children had been attracted to the school because of the high visibility of reconciliation.

*We've got the three flags raised every single day, we've got the maps of language groups in each of the foyers, so even just visually we're a more welcoming and inclusive centre... And actually one of our families, they came for a tour and saw that and said, yep 'just book our child in' because they know that. And one of the other Aboriginal families we've got joined because they knew we had a RAP... they said, yep absolutely [I want to enrol my child here].*  
(In-depth - early learning service multi-site cluster)

The quote below, also from an interview participant, describes an Aboriginal Elder's (and student family member) response to a RAP initiative which involved children learning games that she used to play as a child. To see these games played in a formal educational setting was a heartening surprise to this woman and helped show how much attitudes had changed since she was a child.

*One of the Aboriginal women came in and said, my God, I never thought I'd see the day my kid is learning to play knucklebones in the classroom, that my grandma taught me in the Land. (In-depth – early learning service multi-site cluster)*

Several participants, particularly at interview, spoke about having dedicated Aboriginal staff employed to deploy initiatives within the school and consult with local community. Overall, these participants reported a smoother process for building relationships with community as a part of implementing their RAP.

- g. What is the level of knowledge of other community (non-Indigenous) members about Narragunnawali and its components?**
- h. What is the usage of components of Narragunnawali by other community (non-Indigenous) members?**
- i. What is the attitude other (non-Indigenous) community members towards Narragunnawali, and towards reconciliation in education more generally? What factors might explain these attitudes?**

Rich qualitative data are relevant to more than one of the specific research questions within this theme of the evaluation framework. As such data addressing specific questions g), h), and i) of the Community Interaction and Engagement theme will be presented together.

Data does not directly address non-indigenous community members' knowledge of, usage of, or attitudes towards Narragunnawali. However, data does provide insights into school and early learning services' experiences of engaging with non-Indigenous community members as a part of their Narragunnawali RAP development and implementation processes.

The in-depth interview quote below highlights one RAP Working Group's experience. This participant anticipated some community push-back as result of their school's decision to pursue a RAP, but were pleasantly surprised to find that the RAP was broadly accepted despite racial tensions in the community.

*Look I'll be brutally honest... there are often racial tensions in our town. I kind of thought there might be a little of that that comes out, like why do we need this... But it actually didn't at all, which was lovely... There is a little bit [of racial tension] in school sometimes, but it's less and less I think. And I think the RAP has helped with that to a degree as well. (In-depth - school P-12 cluster)*

However, it is important to note that a few participants, also at interview, discussed community racism as a barrier to engaging their broader communities with RAP development and implementation processes.

*I know there are kind of murmurs about why do we need an Indigenous program at our school, do we even need to have Indigenous students at our school? And that's something that I had to report on and battle this year. (In-depth- early learning service and school P-12 cluster)*

Participants, particularly at online discussion board, reported that developing relationships with other schools and early learning services as beneficial to those embarking on their RAP journey. School and early learning service communities shared their valuable insights for the practical development and delivery of RAP Actions.

*What assisted our school beyond the Narragunnawali site was making connections with other schools and discussing with teacher and student from these schools what they are doing. Being a relatively new RAP school seeing*

*what other schools have achieved over time has been invaluable. Their insights, what worked and didn't work plus how they approached specific actions has been insightful and encouraged us to move forward. (ODB – school)*

A few interview participants described consulting with other (non-Indigenous) trusted individuals or leaders within their community when developing their RAP. For example, advice was sought from religious leaders for schools with a religious affiliation.

*I spent a bit of time talking to...our [local religious leader], because we're a [religious] school... and [he/she] was pretty excited about it (in-depth - school P-12 cluster)*

## **4.6 Student Experience**

- a. What is the level of knowledge of Indigenous/non-Indigenous students about Narragunnawali and its components?**
- b. What is the attitude of Indigenous/non-Indigenous students towards Narragunnawali, and reconciliation in education more generally? What factors might explain these attitudes.**

Rich qualitative data are relevant to more than one of the specific research questions within this theme of the evaluation framework. As such data addressing specific questions a), and b), of the Student Experience theme will be presented together. Data provides insights into school and early learning services' observations of how their students interact with their institution's Narragunnawali RAP.

Positive outcomes in students' awareness and attitudes towards Narragunnawali emerged from analysis of online discussion board and in-depth interview data. Interestingly, participants did not report that any students expressed negative attitudes towards the program. Participants described growing enthusiasm and respect amongst students towards learning about reconciliation. This enthusiasm extended from young children in an early learning service to senior students in high school and across both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students.

*The site is comprehensive and provided our school with a focus for our reconciliation practices. Activities and events as well as curriculum offerings have been developed with the school's RAP in mind. The understandings and cultural knowledge developed through an intensive program with our youngest students will permeate through the school as these students move up through the years and influence progressively the teachers of these informed students. We will continue to foster and promote new and innovative practices throughout the school supported by the RAP team. Our student RAP Ambassadors will have an increasing role to play as their own expertise develops and grows. (ODB - school)*

*The children [co-wrote the Acknowledgement to Country and so] had ownership of it, like when we say [it] every day in the room, the children lead it. We just copy the children... A child [from one class] has come in and said that she [even] says the Acknowledgement [to Country] before she goes to bed. (In-depth –early learning service)*

*Last year we had a bit of an Aboriginal student leadership group that kind of set in some ideas and yeah just some ideas about how we can promote it better within our school. So [as a result of their ideas] we have got some new signage this year, which is going to up around the school, like some Aboriginal place names. (In-depth - school 7-12)*

**c. What is the effect of Narragunnawali on Indigenous/non-Indigenous students and children whilst they are in schools or early learning services?**

Data provides insights into school and early learning services' observations as to how their students are impacted by their institution's Narragunnawali RAP.

Particularly at the online discussion board, some participants identified improved relationships between their school or early learning service and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families, as a beneficial outcome of engagement with Narragunnawali.

*For our Aboriginal students and their families, the changes in our school as a result of the RAP, are viewed as positive and affirm that the Aboriginal culture within our school is valued and acknowledged. The pride of our Aboriginal cohort has escalated and they readily talk to groups within the school about their culture and heritage. (ODB - school)*

Especially at in-depth interview, some participants were surprised at the level of interest and collaboration between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students at their school or early learning service.

*I had never anticipated such collaboration... between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students to promote reconciliation and how fiercely and respectfully the non-Aboriginal students support and listen to and advocate for the Aboriginal students. It makes me feel very hopeful about the future. (In-depth - school peak body representative)*

## 5. Conclusions and Suggested Improvements

### 5.1 Growth, uptake and usage

The number of schools and early learning services engaged with Narragunnawali has continued to increase since the program's inception. Overall, those who participate in Narragunnawali appear to feel that it has increased user confidence in addressing reconciliation and driving meaningful change within their schools and services. Engagement with Narragunnawali provides a formalised means of delivering students, staff, and families with regular opportunities to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

While not always the case, a key motivating factor for engagement with the program appears to be the presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students within a school or early learning service community. Collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is vital. However, for reasons presented at the report introduction, the Narragunnawali program posits that the primary agents of change for reconciliation within education should most often be non-Indigenous educators/staff, students, and families. Further, that reconciliation in education benefits all young people (Indigenous and non-Indigenous). Although the Narragunnawali team already does so, there is an ongoing need to re-emphasise the importance of non-Indigenous change agents and the benefits of reconciliation in education to all Australians (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) within their resources and communications. This message should also be reinforced from outside the Narragunnawali/Reconciliation Australia team, including from policy makers and school/early learning service administrators.

The high quality and usability of the Narragunnawali platform and resources generally encourages engagement with the program. However, for participants that have not yet completed the RAP refresh process, there appears to be some confusion surrounding what this process involves and also an opinion held by some participants that one year is not a generous enough RAP publication period prior to refreshing. Notably, those that have completed a RAP refresh appeared not to have any particular difficulties with the process. It is possible that, as the program continues to mature and more schools and early learning services complete RAP refreshes, uncertainty around the process will diminish. However, particularly in light of the continuing uptake of the program, the Narragunnawali team may wish to consider whether any changes to information provided about the refresh process would be beneficial. More specifically, whether to include the refresh process as a 'key step' under the 'What is a RAP?' information ([www.narragunnawali.org.au/raps/what-is-a-rap](http://www.narragunnawali.org.au/raps/what-is-a-rap)) so that users may have a greater level of understanding about the refresh process from the beginning of their RAP journey. Additionally, it may also be beneficial to examine administrative data to determine more quantitatively whether the RAP refresh is a point at which schools and early learning services are vulnerable to disengagement with the program. Finally, consider lengthening the timeframe in which the refreshment process is required so as to reduce the administrative burden on the RAP Working Group and to allow additional time to implement actions and observe progress.

Some participants expressed a desire for additional functionality within the Narragunnawali platform to enable more flexible and in-depth documentation of progress towards RAP actions. If technically feasible, the Narragunnawali team may consider enabling a 'case note' or 'diary entry' style functionality within the platform so

that users may document specific steps, and/or upload supporting evidence for progress made towards each RAP Action. It is likely this functionality may foster a greater depth of engagement with the program. This functionality would be in addition to the existing 'Deliverables' tool, which currently enables RAP Working Group members to add, edit and check off step-by-step tasks against individual RAP Action.

A reasonably small group of participants expressed some specific criticisms with regards to the Reflection Survey; relating primarily to the use of closed-ended questions. Particularly if relatively easy to implement, the Narragunnawali team may consider including additional open ended items or more simply space for users to provide additional open text information within the reflection survey process. Alternatively, such open ended responses could be collected through a different mechanism, potentially as part of the current evaluation. Either way, a greater scope for open ended responses would allow these users (and possibly others) to provide additional information specific to their particular school or early learning service.

While the Narragunnawali program and online platform is itself entirely cost-free, time and funding or resource availability constraints appear to be the primary perceived barriers to uptake and continued engagement with school or early learning service-based reconciliation initiatives. Participants generally also acknowledged that these constraints are encountered across different programs and initiatives within educational environments and are not specific to Narragunnawali. It seems that these constraints are largely outside of Reconciliation Australia's scope to be able to directly address. Nonetheless, strategically notifying schools, early learning services and individual users when there are new resources available may be useful in periodically renewing awareness of (and prompt engagement with) the curriculum and professional learning resources.

When commenting on the implementation of specific RAP Actions, activities related to the 'Around the School' component of the Narragunnawali RAP framework were typically reported as being more easily and successfully implemented, while the 'Teach about Reconciliation', 'Curriculum Planning' and 'Embed Cross-Curriculum Priority' RAP Actions related to the 'In the Classroom' domain were often identified as more challenging to implement. This may be an area for greater support from the Narragunnawali team.

Awareness of the Narragunnawali Awards was low. The Narragunnawali team, no doubt will continue to build greater awareness of and community engagement with this relatively new initiative.

Qualitative analysis tentatively suggested differences in depth or qualities of engagement with Narragunnawali for schools or early learning services connected to a cluster RAP and for OSHC services. While some information is already provided, the Narragunnawali team may consider communicative or logistic changes when making the cluster RAP model available to potential users. One change could be to review the RAP-RS to explore ways of redesigning the survey such that it better caters for Cluster RAP users. Any changes may increase the likelihood that users choose the RAP type that best meets the needs of their institution and also improve the responsiveness of the different RAP options.

## 5.2 Information sharing and within-institution knowledge

Overall, Narragunnawali appears to facilitate information sharing and improve within-institution knowledge relating to reconciliation. The Narragunnawali RAP framework more generally, as well as the specific processes of establishing and renewing RAP Working Groups, and the sharing of Vision for Reconciliation statements are some aspects of the program that may be supportive of this.

A comparison of current Phase 2 RAP-RS data and Phase 1 RAP-RS data, suggest some decline in the proportion of respondents that are unsure as to what reconciliation activities are being undertaken within their school or early learning service. However, Phase 2 RAP-RS findings also show relatively high levels of uncertainty for some reconciliation activities (including whether schools of early learning services have an anti-racism strategy, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategy, or a budget with specific provision for reconciliation initiatives). This suggests that there is still significant work to be done in the sharing of within-institutional knowledge about reconciliation activities. One improvement might be to incorporate additional functions within the Narragunnawali platform that facilitate information sharing and gathering outside of RAP Working Group members.

The Narragunnawali team may consider continuing to develop the functionality of the Narragunnawali platform to facilitate improved sharing of RAP relevant information within educational institutions (and also with the broader community). After the completion of data collection for this report, the Narragunnawali team did make available a downloadable resource containing a copy of the RAP-RS questions. This resource enables Working Group members to distribute the RAP-RS to diverse members of their school or early learning community and then enter aggregate survey responses into the online Narragunnawali RAP account. Further improvements in this vein will likely increase the capacity of the Narragunnawali platform to facilitate within-institution information sharing and knowledge transfer. One possible improvement could be providing templates for print, online, and email communications that schools and early learning services can use to disperse information through-out their staff and student body. Another possible improvement could be to incorporate a 'SHARE' function within the Narragunnawali platform for finalised Vision Statements and RAPs (inclusive of unique goals and deliverables) to improve interoperability between the Narragunnawali platform and other online platforms used by schools and early learning services to share information (e.g. social media, institutional websites, email).

Introduced in 2019, the 'RAP Working Document' enables Working Groups to print their complete RAP, including Goals and Deliverables, within a single file. Prior to this platform update, RAP Goals and Deliverables were able to be printed for each RAP Action individually. Nonetheless, printing and sharing this document was viewed as a challenge by some. The Narragunnawali team may consider increasing visibility and usability of currently available sharing options for this documents (as well as investigating new sharing functionalities).

Interestingly, online discussion board participants focused on the perceived need for RAP Working Groups to have a more formalised structure, strong leadership, and buy-in from the early learning service Director or school Principal to ensure RAP communication and implementation does not stall. Whereas in-depth interview participants emphasised flexibility and collaboration in RAP Working Group roles and organisation as important to dispersing knowledge throughout the staff community.

The available data do not suggest that a focus on either approach is more or less effective. It is a requirement of the Narragunnawali program that the school Principal or early learning service Director be listed on the RAP Working Group in order for a RAP to be approved. After completion of data for this report, the Narragunnawali team has published an additional resource to the Narragunnawali platform which provides further guidance on establishing RAP working groups.

### **5.3 Effectiveness of Resources**

Even though school and early learning service staff were encouraged to use the Narragunnawali professional learning and curriculum resources and there was a general positive consensus regarding the quality of these resources; most participants reported that, in practice, they did not frequently access them. Participants found it difficult to make time to fully utilise these resources alongside other their competing demands. However, those participants who did actively engage with the curriculum resources were positive about having a specific resource pool that could be mapped back to their individual RAP Actions. Ultimately, making additional time available to use such resources is beyond the control of Reconciliation Australia and the Narragunnawali program, apart from encouragement and discussion with those who administer school and early learning systems.

A number of participants felt there were not enough curriculum resources targeted towards younger students. This was largely related to RAP Actions 'Take Action against Racism' and 'Explore Current Affairs and Issues'. Some participants felt that resource materials were too dense, requiring quite a lot of time to read through and therefore were not highly user-friendly. The Narragunnawali team may wish to consider 1) developing additional resources, 2) amending current resources, or 3) adjusting the Narragunnawali platform to help users locate resources (particularly for young students) in order to help to address these identified user needs. It is acknowledged that the Narragunnawali platform does currently provide at least one early learning specific resource tagged against each RAP action.

There was some interest in more locally specific resources which may help schools and early learning services to better tailor their RAP to reflect local needs, histories, and cultures. The Narragunnawali team may further consider ways that it is possible to meet this user need within the context of delivering a nationwide program.

### **5.4 Teacher Knowledge and Confidence**

For some participants it was difficult to encourage classroom teachers to practically adopt the 'Teach about Reconciliation' and the 'Curriculum Planning' RAP Actions. This was reportedly because of teachers' pre-conceived ideas about the importance of and pedagogy for teaching about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions; as well as a lack of teacher confidence. Nonetheless, the Australian Curriculum and Early Years Learning Frameworks require teachers to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures across all subject areas and year levels. In addition, Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and National Quality Standard (for early learning) require that educators maintain proficiency in teaching about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions. The findings of this report suggest that a relatively low percentage of educators are aware of these requirements.

Tentatively, the confidence of teachers to successfully implement effective changes to teaching practices and curriculum planning may be linked to the cultural competence of staff and the extent of time pressures on them. There was also a participant who expressed concern that, if teachers are not knowledgeable enough about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, then attempts to include such content in the classroom may be done in a tokenistic fashion. The Narragunnawali program already includes 'Cultural Competence for Staff' as a minimally required RAP action and has developed a specific 'Tackling Tokenism' professional learning resource. Nonetheless, continuing to improve upon the cultural competence and confidence of staff is likely a key aspect of strengthening reconciliation in education. Where school or early learning service staff are not confident about engaging with and teaching students about reconciliation, progress was generally limited to more basic Actions (such as introducing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and Acknowledgment to Country at assemblies or in other forums). Likewise, staff that have cultural competence and confidence were more likely to reach out and engage with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Notwithstanding the real challenges identified, some participants did report increased confidence and understanding of how they would address reconciliation within their classroom as an outcome of engagement with Narragunnawali curriculum and professional development resources

Reconciliation Australia may consider ways in which to further emphasise the link between Narragunnawali's curriculum resources and the Australian Curriculum and the Early Years Learning Framework. Similarly, the link between Narragunnawali's Professional Learning resources and AITSL Australian Professional Standards for Teachers/ACECQA National Quality Standard could be given further emphasise and visibility. It is possible that doing so may increase both awareness of these professional development and curriculum standards, and utilisation of Narragunnawali's resources. Tentatively, this, in turn, may improve implementation of the more challenging RAP Actions ('Teach about Reconciliation' and 'Curriculum Planning') and broader progress towards reconciliation within these schools and early learning services. However, as stated, this recommendation is tentative and appropriate further evaluation would be needed to measure the impact of any such changes.

In a few instances, the process of developing a RAP raised unexpected negative staff attitudes about reconciliation, yet ultimately provided a forum for staff to discuss and challenge these views in a positive and supportive environment.

## **5.5 Community Interaction and Engagement**

Almost exclusively, when participants spoke about their intuition's engagement with parents/carers of students, they discussed interactions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. Qualitative data provided no significant information relating to engagement and interaction of non-Indigenous parents and families with Narragunnawali RAP development or implementation. As discussed above under conclusions and recommendations for the Growth, Uptake and Usage theme, the Narragunnawali team may consider finding additional means of messaging the importance of non-Indigenous change agents and the benefits of reconciliation to all Australians (Indigenous and non-Indigenous).

Some participants described meaningful engagements with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members that enriched their RAP processes, while others discussed the challenges they experienced in developing these relationships. Findings suggest that, in practice, the rate at which teachers and educators invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be involved in classroom and other activities is relatively low. Some participants described difficulties they encountered in making contact with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations. Guidance is provided by the Narragunnawali team in RAP Action resources including: 'Build Relationships with Community', 'Elders and Traditional Owners Share Histories and Cultures', 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in the Classroom', and 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Representation on Committees'. However, as none of the participants mentioned these resources, it may be beneficial to more heavily promote these as sources of guidance when developing a RAP and/or looking to establish or strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations

The Narragunnawali team do not actively link schools or early learning services with specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, precisely because of the imperative for schools and early learning services to build their own personal, contextually meaningful and sustainable relationships with community over time. Nonetheless participant challenges in this area may indicate that it could be beneficial for the Narragunnawali team to continue strengthening its engagement, at a high level, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations. Making these organisation better aware of the Narragunnawali program's existence, purpose, and approach. In doing so, these organisations may feel better prepared for approaches by schools and early learning services.

While acknowledging the challenges schools and early learning services experience in meaningfully engaging Indigenous community members, the findings do also demonstrate some modest positive changes in participants perception of their educational institutions' engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community engagement. This was particularly evident for engagement with parents of Aboriginal students already attending the school or early learning service.

When discussing engagement with the broader non-Indigenous community, it is important to note that a few participants identified community racism as a barrier to engaging their broader communities with RAP development and implementation processes. This is an area of work beyond the Narragunnawali team, and requires a whole-of-sector approach.

## **5.6 Student Experience**

Positive outcomes in students' awareness, attitudes, and enthusiasm towards Narragunnawali emerged from the qualitative data analysis. This enthusiasm extended from young children in an early learning service to senior students in high school and across both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students. Interestingly, there was no report of any negative student attitudes towards the program. Some participants reported surprise at the level of interest and collaboration between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students at their school or early learning service. This student experience will be a feature of future evaluation reports.

## **6. Final comments**

This paper has provided a detailed summary of findings from qualitative interviews with schools and early learning services, as well as analysis of responses to the RAP Reflection Survey. There were a number of specific recommendations that came from respondents, or from researchers on the projects based on the data analysis summarised earlier. Ultimately, feedback through the qualitative data collection and responses to the Reconciliation Action Plan Reflection Survey demonstrate a high level of engagement, and very positive attitudes to Narragunnawali, and reconciliation in education.

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## Appendix

### Reflection Survey: Descriptive Statistics

#### In the classroom

	% of responses for participants who were sure of their answer				% of all responses where participants were unsure of their answer
	Most (more than 75%)	Half (around 50%)	Some (less than 25%).	None	Unsure
<b>Question 1</b> How many teachers and educators are aware of the Country on which your school or early learning service stands?	71.26	13.74	13.83	1.16	1.72
<b>Question 2</b> How many teachers and educators regularly and confidently incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, perspectives and contemporary issues into curriculum planning and teaching?	24.47	29.39	41.49	4.65	1.90
<b>Question 3</b> In the last year, how many teachers and educators collaborated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to prepare and deliver lessons? For example, inviting local Elders or Traditional Owners to talk to students and children about local histories and cultures.	13.80	12.43	43.15	30.63	3.20

## In the classroom continued

	% of responses for participants who were sure of their answer			% of all responses where participants were unsure of their answer
	Yes	Somewhat	No	Unsure
<b>Question 4</b> Are teachers and educators at your school or early learning service aware that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures are a priority within the Australian Curriculum and the Early Years Learning Framework?	60.78	36.03	3.18	2.35
<b>Question 5</b> Are teachers and educators actively engaged with meeting or maintaining proficiency in the AITSL Australian Professional Standards for Teachers focus areas 1.4 and 2.4 (for primary and secondary schools) and the ACECQA National Quality Standard (for early learning)?	53.04	38.44	8.52	6.99

## Around the school

	% of responses for participants who were sure of their answer		% of all responses where participants were unsure of their answer	
	Combined Responses for: Either or both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags	No	Unsure	
<b>Question 6</b>				
Does your school or early learning service fly or display the Aboriginal flag and the Torres Strait Islander flag permanently?	71.23	28.77	0.85	
	% of responses for participants who were sure of their answer		% of all responses where participants were unsure of their answer	
	Yes, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures are visible	Yes, but we would like to do more	No	Unsure
<b>Question 7</b>				
Aside from flags, does your school or early learning service demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures through other permanent, visible symbols? For example, plaques, playground markings, paintings, and sculptures.	27.08	60.44	12.48	0.98

## Around the school Continued

	% of responses for participants who were sure of their answer				% of all responses where participants were unsure of their answer
	Most (more than 75%)	Half (around 50%)	Some (less than 25%).	None	Unsure
<b>Question 8</b> How many of your staff members have undertaken some level of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness/competence training?	25.62	20.72	44.49	9.17	5.78
	% of responses for participants who were sure of their answer		% of all responses where participants were unsure of their answer		
	Yes	No	Unsure		
<b>Question 9</b> Does your school or early learning service support staff (e.g. leave or financial reimbursement) to participate in cultural awareness/competence training and other professional learning around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and perspectives?	89.66	10.34	12.09		
<b>Question 10</b> Does your school or early learning service budget include specific provision for reconciliation initiatives? For example, for Elders or Traditional Owners to deliver a Welcome to Country?	52.82	47.18	25.34		
<b>Question 11</b> Does your school or early learning service have an anti-racism strategy?	77.67	22.33	22.47		

## Around the school Continued

	% of responses for participants who were sure of their answer				% of all responses where participants were unsure of their answer
	At each meeting	At most meeting	At some meeting	Never	Unsure
<b>Question 12</b> How often in the last term (approximately 10 weeks) were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and perspectives discussed at staff meetings?	12.42	17.73	49.39	20.46	4.49

	% of responses for participants who were sure of their answer				% of all responses where participants were unsure of their answer
	Regularly (10+ occasions)	Often (6-10 occasions)	Sometimes (1-5 occasions)	Never	Unsure
<b>Question 13</b> How often in the last term (approximately 10 weeks) did your school or early learning service acknowledge Country? For example, at regular events such as assemblies and meetings.	49.89	14.40	24.12	11.60	2.15

## With the community

	% of responses for participants who were sure of their answer				% of all responses where participants were unsure of their answer
	Regularly (5+ occasions)	Often (3-4 occasions)	Sometimes (1-2 occasions)	Never	Unsure
<b>Question 14</b> How often in the last year did your school or early learning service invite Elders or Traditional Owners to deliver a Welcome to Country at significant events?	5.14	7.35	30.90	56.61	6.51
<b>Question 15</b> How often in the last year were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, businesses or organizations invited to be involved in activities at your school or early learning service?	10.23	14.27	43.76	31.75	6.26

	% of responses for participants who were sure of their answer				% of all responses where participants were unsure of their answer
	Each year (5 years)	Most years (3 or 4 years)	Some years (1 or 2 years)	Never	Unsure
<b>Question 16</b> Even though it usually falls outside of term dates, how often in the last 5 years did your school or early learning service celebrate and promote NAIDOC Week?	54.37	20.38	19.26	5.98	3.87
<b>Question 17</b> How often in the last 5 years did your school or early learning service celebrate and promote National Reconciliation Week (NRW)?	37.30	21.57	29.00	12.13	6.04

## With the community Continued

	% of responses for participants who were sure of their answer				% of all responses where participants were unsure of their answer
	Regularly (10+ occasions)	Often (6-10 occasions)	Sometimes (1-5 occasions)	Never	Unsure
<b>Question 18</b> How often in the last term (approximately 10 weeks) did staff, students or children visit local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sites and/or attend events in the community as part of school or early learning service activities?	2.54	5.08	38.23	54.15	7.54

	% of responses for participants who were sure of their answer		% of all responses where participants were unsure of their answer
	Yes	No	Unsure
<b>Question 19</b> Does your school or early learning service engage in learning—or learning about—the First Language(s) of your local area through an inside or outside of hours program delivered or supported by your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community?	22.60	77.40	8.80

## With the community Continued

	% of responses for participants who were sure of their answer				% of all responses where participants were unsure of their answer
	At each meeting	At most meeting	At some meeting	Never	Unsure
<b>Question 20</b> How often in the last term were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and perspectives discussed at Parents and Citizens (or equivalent) meetings?	4.43	5.70	28.85	61.02	18.47
	% of responses for participants who were sure of their answer			% of all responses where participants were unsure of their answer	
	Yes	No	Unsure		
<b>Question 21</b> Does your school or early learning service have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory group or equivalent?	28.35	71.65	11.88		
<b>Question 22</b> Does your school or early learning service have an employment strategy to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to apply for teaching and non-teaching positions?	48.78	51.22	33.57		

## Survey Information

	% of responses for participants who were sure of their answer				% of all responses where participants were unsure of their answer
	Yes	No, we previously developed a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)	No, we have a reconciliation strategy, group or committee	No, other	Unsure
<b>Question 23</b> Is this the first time your school or early learning service has engaged in formal action around reconciliation?	77.24	15.30	3.96	3.50	3.07

	% of responses for participants who were sure of their answer				
	All of the RAP Working Group	Some of the RAP Working Group	The RAP Working Group Chair	A RAP Working Group member	Other
<b>Question 24</b> Who completed this Reflection Survey?	21.92	26.45	28.44	19.97	3.22