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Narragunnawali Research Report #4 –
The process of developing
Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) –
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Abstract

Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning is a national program designed and implemented by Reconciliation Australia. The aim of this current paper is to update the analysis of the factors associated with participation in a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), as well as outline the factors associated with the process of developing a RAP.

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Overview of *Narragunnawali* and outline of paper

Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning is a national program designed and implemented by Reconciliation Australia. *Narragunnawali* (pronounced narra-gunna-wally) is a word from the language of the Ngunnawal people meaning alive, wellbeing, coming together and peace. The program is 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 program is designed to be delivered at the whole-school or early learning service level, with benefits for all students and staff, as well as for the wider community.

In a previous set of analysis (*Narragunnawali Research Report #1 - Factors associated with developing a RAP*), the ANU looked at the factors associated with whether a school or early learning service has commenced a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) as of November 19th, 2015. The aim was to identify types of schools and early learning services that may not have engaged at the same rate as other schools or early learning services (all else being equal) and therefore areas where Reconciliation Australia might consider focusing additional attention. At the time of the report, educational institutions that engaged at a slower rate included infants/primary schools, preschools, education institutions outside of major cities, those in areas with high migrant populations or low Indigenous populations and those in relatively disadvantaged areas. There were, however, no differences between Independent schools and Government schools once other characteristics had been controlled for, although both had lower probabilities than Catholic schools.

A second report (*Narragunnawali Research Report #2 - Reconciliation in the classroom, around the school or early learning service, and with the community*) focused on those schools or early learning services that had commenced a Reconciliation Action Plan (a key focus of *Narragunnawali*), and analysed the responses to an initial whole-school or early learning service Reflection Survey (RS). A number of key findings emerged from the analysis. First, there was a considerable degree of uncertainty amongst the RAP Working Group (who filled out the survey) and what was happening within the school or early learning service. A second major finding was that there was a strong relationship between some of the key measures. For example, those schools or early learning services that display a flag are much more likely to have teachers that have completed cultural competency, proficiency or awareness training and are more likely to Acknowledge Country at events at the school or early learning service. Those schools or early learning services where teachers feel knowledgeable about local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures are more likely to be involved in activities with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The final finding was that there are other characteristics that predict reconciliation activities and outcomes. These point to areas of existing strength, as well as where things can be built on.

The third report (*Narragunnawali Research Report #3: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning – Preparing for data collection*) updated some of the previous analysis and outlined a data collection strategy to augment the analysis of data collected as part of the process of developing a RAP. That report highlighted a very rapid growth in participation in the program, as well as some changes in the factors associated with participation in a RAP. That paper also outlined a proposal for qualitative and quantitative data collection as part of the evaluation of *Narragunnawali*. The quantitative data collection will be combined with a randomised promotion design in order to identify as best as possible the effects of the program. The qualitative interviews will focus on the implementation of the program and associated early learnings.

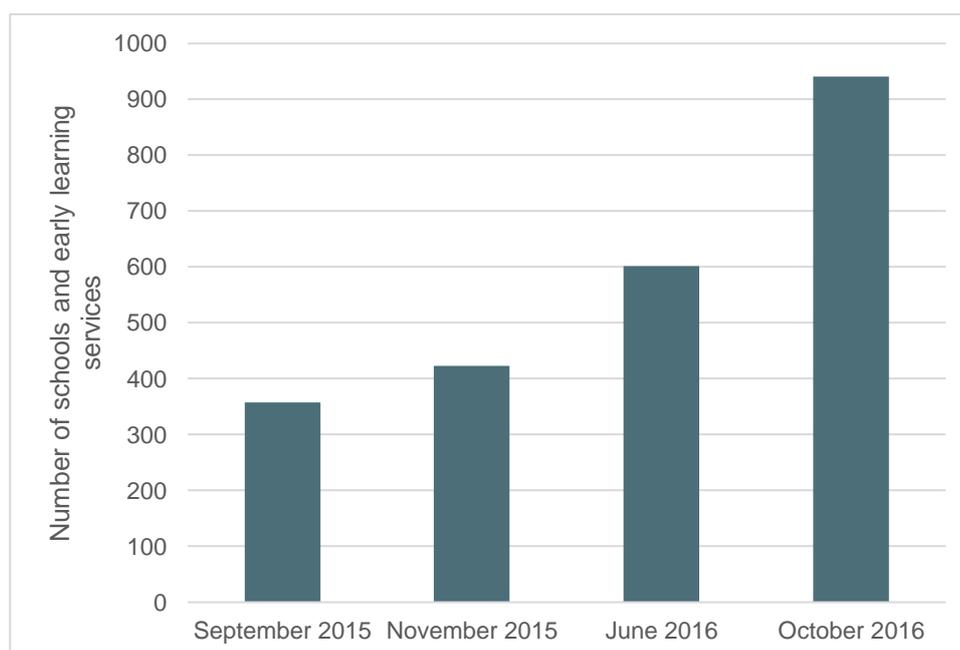
The aim of this current paper is twofold:

- To provide an updated data analysis (as of October 2016) of who is participating in *Narragunnawali*; and
- To document the factors associated with the stage of the RAP development that the school or early learning service is at.

Growth and change in Narragunnawali schools and early learning services

Narragunnawali was introduced in 2014 to a small number of schools and early learning services. Analysis for this project commenced in September 2015 at which time there were 357 schools and early learning services that were recorded as having engaged with a RAP. By October 2016 when data for this paper was made available, this had increased to 941 schools and early learning services (see Figure 1). This is a very rapid growth in participation in the program.

Figure 1 Number of schools and early learning services engaged with a RAP – September 2015 to October 2016



One way to understand the change in schools and early learning services that have been participating in *Narragunnawali* is to re-run the analysis on the factors associated with participation using the data from October 2016. Like with the previous analysis, the dependent variable is binary – taking on a value of one if the school or early learning service has commenced a RAP and zero if it has not.

Like with previous analyses, in order to analyse the factors associated with commencing a RAP, a regression-style analysis is used. Specifically, we consider whether a particular variable is associated or correlated with having a RAP whilst holding constant or abstracting from all other variables in the model. For example, we know that Catholic or Private schools are more likely to be Secondary schools than Infants/Primary schools. In our analysis, we look at whether Catholic or Private schools are more likely to have a RAP than a Government school regardless of whether the school is an Infants/Primary or Secondary one. Similarly, we look at the association between the Indigenous share of the area and having a RAP for a given level of remoteness. This is not quite a causal relationship, as there are other unobserved characteristics that aren't in the model. But it is getting closer to a direct association.

We present the results in Table 1 as marginal effects or the difference in probability of having a RAP compared to a school or early learning service with the base case characteristics. Results from Research Report #1 (November 2015) are presented in the first two columns, the results from Research Report #2 (June 2016) data is available in the third and fourth columns, and the results from the current analysis (October 2016) is available in the fifth and sixth columns.

The base case characteristics are described underneath the table. The marginal effects for the binary variables are then expressed as the difference between a school or early learning service with that characteristic and a school or early learning service with the base case characteristics whilst holding all else constant. The marginal effects for the continuous variables are expressed as the difference in probability from a one-unit change in that variable. The statistical significance of the relationship is given in the final column, as described underneath the table.

Table 1 Factors associated with engagement with a RAP – Early and new adopters

Variable name	November 2015 results		June 2016 results		October 2016 results	
	Marginal effect	Significance	Marginal effect	Significance	Marginal effect	Significance
Catholic school	0.0135	***	0.0154	***	0.0161	***
Private school	-0.0027		-0.0038		-0.0055	
Special school	-0.0084		-0.0129	*	-0.0115	*
Child care centre	0.0022		0.0025		0.0134	***
Preschool	-0.0087	***	-0.0104	***	-0.0053	
Combined year levels	0.0253	***	0.0339	***	0.0314	***
Secondary school	0.0142	***	0.0196	***	0.0221	***
Single sex school	-0.0001		0.0046		0.0084	**
Boarding school	0.0272	***	0.0301	***	0.0324	***
School in inner regional Australia	-0.0021		0.0015		0.0039	
School in outer regional Australia	-0.0101	***	-0.0127	***	-0.0130	***
School in remote or very remote Australia	-0.0097	***	-0.0140	***	-0.0172	***
Per cent of area identified as being Indigenous	0.0003	*	0.0004	**	0.0004	*
Per cent of area born overseas	-0.0002	*	0.0000		0.0001	
SEIFA advantage/disadvantage percentile of area*	0.0001	***	0.0002	***	0.0001	**
Victoria	0.0015		-0.0048	**	0.0009	
Queensland	0.0131	***	0.0079	**	0.0112	***
South Australia	0.0284	***	0.0343	***	0.0581	***
Western Australia	-0.0023		-0.0097	***	-0.0081	**
Tasmania	-0.0045		-0.0118	*	-0.0117	*
Northern Territory	0.0159		0.0057		0.0045	
Australian Capital Territory	0.0757	***	0.0719	***	0.0671	***
Predicted probability of base case	0.0138		0.0213		0.0244	
Pseudo R-Squared	0.0771		0.0609		0.0514	
Sample size	19,953		19,953		19,961	

Note: The base case school is a Government, Infants/Primary, that is co-ed and does not provide boarding and located in a major city. The base-case school has the average values for the three continuous variables from Table 1 in Research Report #1. A higher value for the SEIFA advantage/disadvantage index represents a more socioeconomically advantaged area. Those coefficients that were statistically significant at the 1% level of significance are labelled ***, those significant at the 5% level of significance only are labelled **, and those significant at the 10% level of significance only are labelled *.

There have been three major changes in the factors associated with participation in *Narragunnawali* since the previous report for this project. Compared to schools, early learning services are now significantly more likely to have commenced a RAP, with the difference largest for childcare centres (as opposed to preschools). This reflects a rapid growth in engagement for this type of educational institution since June 2016.

The second major change is that single sex schools are now significantly more likely to have engaged in a RAP than co-educational institutions. Previously, single sex schools had a positive marginal effect, but the difference was not statistically significant. The final major change is that schools and early learning services in Victoria are now more likely to have commenced a RAP than those in NSW (the base case).

Analysing the factors associated with RAP stage

In this and previous reports, the analysis has focused on whether the school or early learning service had commenced a RAP. It should be kept in mind, however, that this is only the first step in the engagement process. Once a Working Group has been created, the school or early learning service should then undertake the Reflection Survey (analysed in Report #2), create a Vision for Reconciliation, then identify and undertake a set of Actions. Once this has occurred, the RAP is recorded as being complete. This does not, however, signify the end of the engagement with *Narragunnawali* as schools and early learning services are encouraged to revisit their RAP Working Group membership, Reflection Survey, Vision and Actions, as well as continue to make use of the learning resources available on the *Narragunnawali* website.

Of the 862 schools and early learning services for which information on RAP stage is available, 154 or 17.9 per cent had completed the requirements for the RAP. Of the remaining schools and early learning services:

- 144 or 16.7 per cent were at the initial stage of convening a RAP Working Group;
- 57 or 6.6 per cent had convened a RAP Working Group and were undertaking the Reflection Survey; and
- 413 or 47.9 per cent had completed the Reflection Survey and were undertaking the Action selection process as part of the RAP.¹

Not surprisingly, completion of the RAP takes time. However, the relationship between the time since the RAP was created and the probability of completion is highly non-linear. To understand this time to completion, we estimate a model similar to that outlined above with regards to participation, but focused only on those who had commenced a RAP.

¹ There are 14 minimum required Actions that must be selected in order for a RAP to be 'complete'

The first model does not include co-variates, and simply includes the time between the date of extraction (October 6th) and the time of commencement. From this model, after one week it is estimated that 11.2 per cent of schools or early learning services will have completed a RAP. By 14 weeks, this probability has increased to 15.2 per cent, with it taking another 18 weeks till the probability reaches 20 per cent. Even after 18 months, however, the probability does not go beyond 24 per cent. This highlights the need for continuous interaction with schools and early learning services to encourage the completion of the suggested Actions.

There were some factors associated with the probability of completion (for those who have commenced). The largest association is within schools (as opposed to early learning services), and particularly by school sector. Catholic and Independent schools are significantly and substantially more likely to have completed their RAP than Government schools. A Government school with the base case characteristics in Table 1 (above) that commenced their RAP 18 weeks previously has a probability of completed of 0.1389. The probability for a Catholic school is 0.2304, or a marginal effect of 0.0916. For an Independent school, on the other hand, the probability is 0.5581, or a marginal effect of 0.4192. So, while Table 1 shows that these schools are slightly less likely to have commenced a RAP, the analysis of completion shows that they are much more likely to have completed.

The analysis also shows that Secondary schools are less likely to have completed than Primary schools, with a marginal effect of -0.0800. There were, however, not differences by the area in which the school is located, or the State/Territory.