Narragunnawali Research Report #7 – Engaging with Narragunnawali 2.0 – September 2017

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Abstract

In early April 2017 Reconciliation Australia launched an updated version of the Narragunnawali platform. The updated version of the platform includes a number of new features, including a greatly expanded set of professional learning and curriculum resources to 'support the development and implementation of reconciliation initiatives in the classroom, around the school or early learning service, and with the community.' The aim of this paper is to update the descriptive statistics for the number and types of schools engaging with Narragunnawali, as well as differences in characteristics between the new and the old platform.

Acknowledgements

Overview of *Narragunnawali*

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 RAP (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 fourth report (*Narragunnawali Research Report #4 – The process of developing Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs)*) provided an overview of the factors associated with completing the requirement for the RAP. Most of the analysis for this project has focused on whether the school or early learning service had commenced a RAP. However, 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, create a Vision for Reconciliation, then identify and undertake a set of Actions, including at least 14 that are considered a minimum requirement. Once this has occurred, the RAP is recorded as being complete. There were some factors associated with the probability of completion (for those who have commenced). Catholic and Independent schools (in particular) are more likely to have completed than Government schools. Primary schools are more likely to have completed than secondary schools. There were, however, no differences by the area in which the school is located, or the State/Territory.

The fifth report (Narragunnawali Research Report #5 – Preliminary data collection findings) presented preliminary findings from the data collection outlined in Research Report #3. The aim of that report was to document the initial findings from the Baseline Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning Services Survey and to summarise the initial findings from the qualitative interviews of RAP participants and stakeholders. Across the case studies (and the interviews with educational institutions) there was a generally and genuinely positive view towards *Narragunnawali* and RAPs. It was felt that they either provided a framework to embed and expand on existing activities, or as an impetus to undertake activities that had been seen as important, but for which those involved in the school or early learning service did not know how to get started. There were, however, a number of barriers to a more successful engagement with *Narragunnawali* that were identified as part of the interviews. The most common of these were no knowledge of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander families that were attending the school or early learning service; difficulty in bringing together a committee with staff buy-in needed; personal beliefs of individual staff members, with some seeing RAPs as 'another thing' they have to do; not knowing how they can embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories throughout the curriculum, and a

repeated fear of getting it wrong, or not doing it respectfully; and a lack of time to develop the RAP.

The sixth report (Narragunnawali Research Report #6 – Visions for Reconciliation) used a mix of qualitative and quantitative analysis of the Vision for Reconciliation statements, provided as one of the activities within a RAP by 633 schools and early learning centres. Analysis of the sample text identified three main sets of themes and ideas that occurred frequently: Respect and recognition; Partnerships and relationships; and Learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. There were five additional themes that sometimes appeared, and two important themes and ideas that rarely appeared. In this report, I outline changes to Narragunnawali with the introduction of a new platform, as well as how the characteristics of schools and early learning services have changed during the 'refresh.'

Growth and change in engagement of schools and early learning services

Narragunnawali became available to schools and early learning services in 2014, with a gradual uptake from a small number 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. On April 6th 2017, an updated version of the online platform for *Narragunnawali* was launched (Version 2.0). At that stage there were 1,230 schools and early learning services engaged, whereas by the 4th October 2017 when data for this paper was made available, this had increased to 1,684 schools and early learning services (see Figure 1).

Figure 1   Number of schools and early learning services engaged with a RAP – September 2015 to September 2017
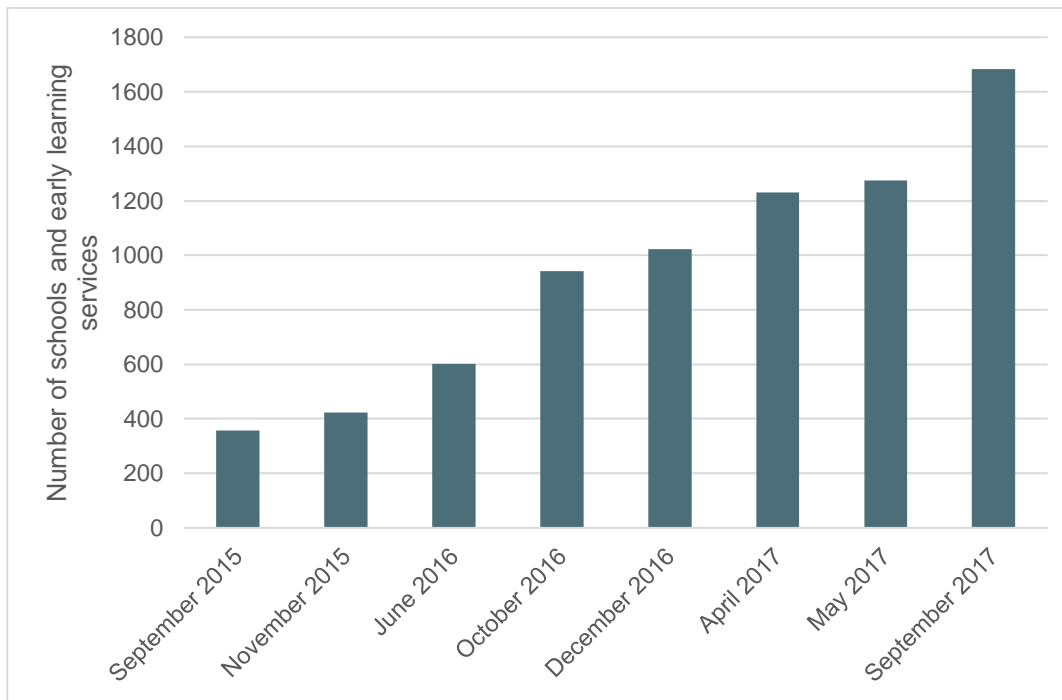
One way to understand the change in schools and early learning services that have been participating in *Narragunnawali* is to re-run the analysis on the factors associated with participation using the most recent data (from September 20th 2017), as described below. Like with the previous analysis, the dependent variables 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 Independent schools are more likely to be Secondary schools than Infants/Primary schools. In our analysis, we look at whether Catholic or Independent 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, the results from Research Report #4 (October 2016) is available in the fifth and sixth columns, results from just before the updated *Narragunnawali* online platform went live

(April 2017) in the two columns that follow, with the final two columns giving results from September 2017.

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.

The results show a general level of stability in the factors associated with participation in *Narragunnawali*, as measured by schools or early learning services developing or having completed a RAP, at least since mid-2016. The factors associated with participation had not changed markedly from previous analysis, with higher rates of participation amongst: Catholic schools (as opposed to Government Schools); Child care Centres (as opposed to preschools)[1]; Boarding Schools; those in areas with relatively high Indigenous populations; those in relatively advantaged areas; and schools and early learning services in South Australia, the ACT, and Queensland.

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[1] There is some uncertainty around the difference between a preschool and a child care centre, with the distinction often hard to make at an individual early learning service. In general, preschools have a greater focus on the delivery of early learning curricula and tend to deliver services to children in the year or two before full-time schooling. Child care centres tend to provide services to a greater age range of students, over a greater number of hours per day. It should be noted, however, that many child care centres deliver preschool programs for older age children.

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

Variable name	November 2015 results		June 2016 results		October 2016 results		April 2017 Results		September 2017 Results	
	Marginal effect	Significance	Marginal effect	Marginal effect	Marginal effect	Significance	Marginal effect	Significance	Marginal effect	Significance
Catholic school	0.0135	***	0.0154	***	0.0161	***	0.0172	***	0.0363	***
Independent school	-0.0027		-0.0038		-0.0055		-0.0025		-0.0040	
Special school	-0.0084		-0.0129	*	-0.0115	*	-0.0127	*	-0.0188	**
Child care centre	0.0022		0.0025		0.0134	***	0.0149	***	0.0155	***
Preschool	-0.0087	***	-0.0104	***	-0.0053		-0.0046		-0.0035	
Combined year levels	0.0253	***	0.0339	***	0.0314	***	0.0265	***	0.0293	***
Secondary school	0.0142	***	0.0196	***	0.0221	***	0.0226	***	0.0224	***
Single sex school	-0.0001		0.0046		0.0084	**	0.0091	**	0.0285	***
Boarding school	0.0272	***	0.0301	***	0.0324	***	0.0383	***	0.0544	***
School in inner regional Australia	-0.0021		0.0015		0.0039		0.0045		0.0003	
School in outer regional Australia	-0.0101	***	-0.0127	***	-0.0130	***	-0.0124	***	-0.0149	***
School in remote or very remote Australia	-0.0097	***	-0.0140	***	-0.0172	***	-0.0183	***	-0.0221	***
Per cent of area identified as being Indigenous	0.0003	*	0.0004	**	0.0004	*	0.0004	**	0.0002	
Per cent of area born overseas	-0.0002	*	0.0000		0.0001		0.0000		0.0001	
SEIFA advantage/disadvantage percentile of area*	0.0001	***	0.0002	***	0.0001	**	0.0001	***	0.0002	***
Victoria	0.0015		-0.0048	**	0.0009		0.0011		-0.0002	
Queensland	0.0131	***	0.0079	**	0.0112	***	0.0133	***	0.0361	***
South Australia	0.0284	***	0.0343	***	0.0581	***	0.0669	***	0.0902	***
Western Australia	-0.0023		-0.0097	***	-0.0081	**	-0.0070	**	-0.0128	***
Tasmania	-0.0045		-0.0118	*	-0.0117	*	-0.0118	*	-0.0041	
Northern Territory	0.0159		0.0057		0.0045		0.0024		-0.0055	
Australian Capital Territory	0.0757	***	0.0719	***	0.0671	***	0.0639	***	0.0788	***
Predicted probability of base case	0.0138		0.0213		0.0244		0.0251		0.0380	
Pseudo R-Squared	0.0771		0.0609		0.0514		0.0533		0.0584	
Sample size	19,953		19,953		19,961		19,961		20,057	

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 has been a reasonably consistent set of explanatory variables that have been associated with participation in *Narragunnawali*, at least since 2016. One very notable exception though is the per cent of the area that identifies as being Indigenous. Between November 2015 and April 2017, the association with this variable was consistently significant (and positive). Schools where the surrounding area had a high Indigenous percentage were more likely to have engaged with *Narragunnawali*. The initial interpretation for this was that schools with a relatively high proportion of students who were Indigenous may have seem the program as being of more relevance to them. For the latest set of data, however, the size of the coefficient dramatically reduced, and it is no longer statistically significant, implying that this assumption may no longer be holding.

Narragunnawali 2.0

As mentioned earlier, in early April 2017 Reconciliation Australia launched an updated version of the *Narragunnawali* platform. The updated version of the platform includes a number of new features, including a greatly expanded set of professional learning and curriculum resources to 'support the development and implementation of reconciliation initiatives in the classroom, around the school or early learning service, and with the community.'

One of the biggest changes, however, is that it is now much easier for those outside of a participating school or early learning service to access the resources and networks within the platform. According to the new website 'Anyone—staff, students, parents and community members—can freely access the resources and networks within the platform, regardless of whether your school or early learning service has started a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).'

As was shown in Figure 1, the launch in the new platform coincided with a dramatic increase in the number of schools and early learning services, as well as individual users that have engaged with the platform. When the platform was updated, schools and early learning services with an existing Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) were encouraged to refresh their RAP, and an updated Reflection Survey was designed and made available. This refresh involved two new required Actions, and a new approval process for the RAP to be made publicly available. Those that completed a RAP recently before the new platform was launched were told that their RAPs would be considered valid for a year since completion date (though they wouldn't appear on the public 'Who Has a RAP?' map).

It is possible to test whether the characteristics of the schools and early learning services that have engaged with the new version of Narragunnawali for the first time are different to those that engaged previously. This is summarised in Figure 2, which gives the proportion of three sets of schools or early learning services with a particular characteristic. The first set of schools (in black), are those that first engaged with Narragunnawali through Platform 1. The second set of schools (in dark grey) where those that first engaged through Platform

2. The final set of schools (in light grey) are those that have not engaged with Narragunnawali.

Figure 2   Characteristics of schools and early learning services engaged with a RAP – By engagement date
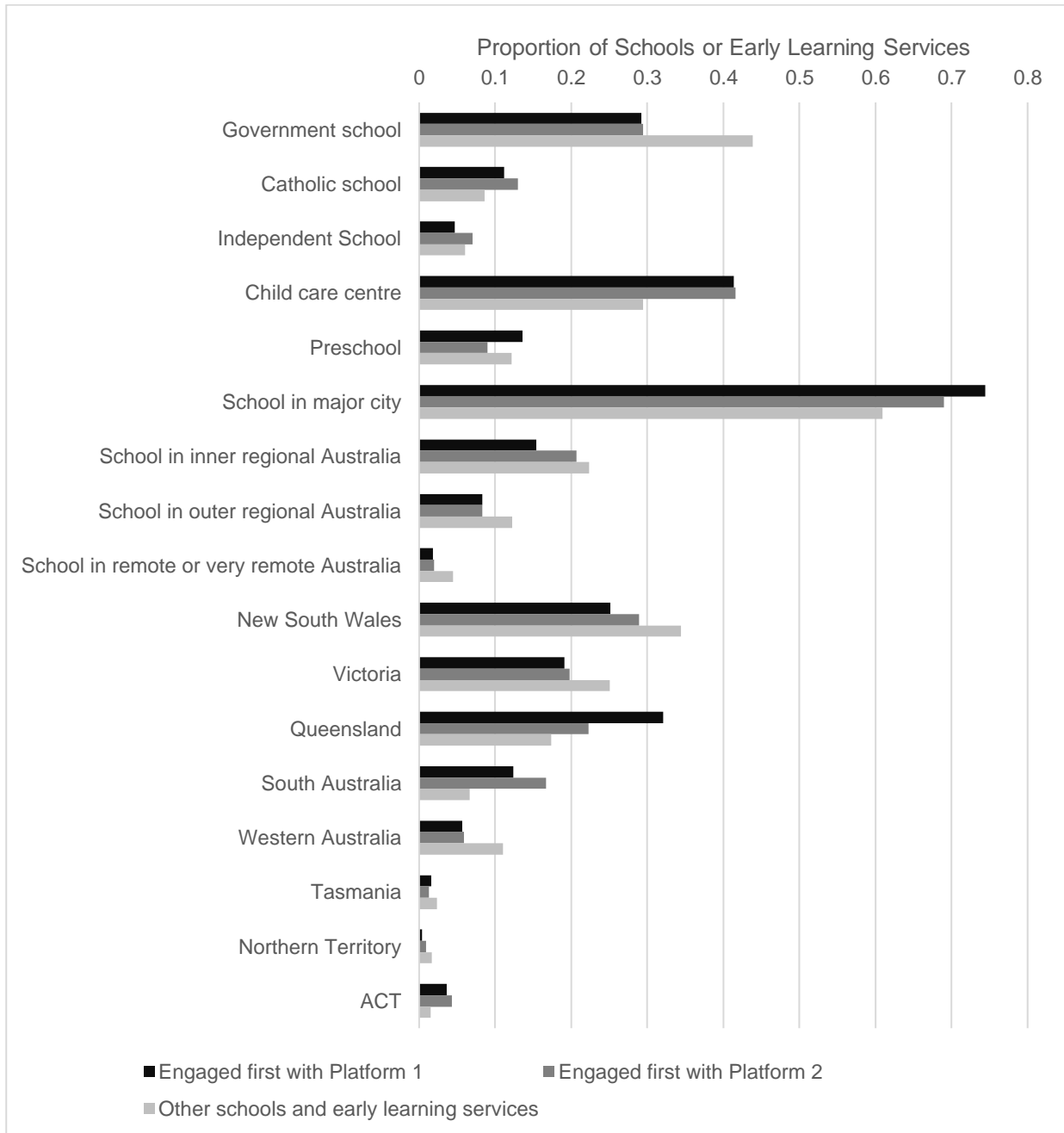
There were a number of differences in the characteristics of schools and early learning services that have engaged with the updated version of *Narragunnawali* compared to those that engaged prior to April 6th (of which there were 1,139 with useful information). That is, the dark grey compared to the black bar. The 492 schools and early learning services that have first engaged with the new platform compared to the previous platform were more likely to be a Catholic or Independent School; less likely to be a Preschool; less likely to be in a major city but more likely to be in an inner regional area; more likely to be in NSW and South Australia; and much less likely to be in Queensland.