# Australian National University

*Narragunnawali Research Report #10 – Revisiting Visions for Reconciliation – May 2019*

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# Contents

# Abstract

Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education is a national program designed and implemented by Reconciliation Australia. The aim of this paper is to summarise and present the analysis of a set of statements related to the Vision for Reconciliation statements prepared by a large sample of schools and early learning services as part of their Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) development process. We relate these Vision for Reconciliation statements (using computational text analysis) 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.

# Acknowledgements

# Overview of Narragunnawali and outline of paper

Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education 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, the Traditional Custodians of the Land on which Reconciliation Australia's head office stands, meaning alive, wellbeing, coming together and peace. The Narragunnawali 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.

Reconciliation Australia aims to support teachers to responsively engage with the Australian Curriculum (in particular through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority) and the AITSL Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (in particular Focus Area 2.4). It also aims to support early childhood educators to meet the principles, practices and outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework and as well as the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority National Quality Standard. Reconciliation Australia's existing workplace Reconciliation Action Plan framework of developing *relationships*, showing *respect* and seeking mutual *opportunities* has been applied in schools and early learning services through classroom teaching and learning, the school or early learning service's culture and ethos, and the links with local community through Narragunnawali's various components. These are outlined below.

## Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs)

Schools and early learning services are provided with a model for action using the three pillars of Reconciliation Australia's existing workplace Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) framework (*Relationships, Respect, Opportunities*), combined with a whole-school and early learning service planning model that incorporates actions *In the Classroom* (teaching, learning, curriculum), *Around the School or Early Learning Service* (the ethos within the gate) and *With the Community* (The links beyond the gate).

A Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is a formal statement of commitment to reconciliation. A school or early learning service can develop a RAP using the Narragunnawali online platform to register existing initiatives or to begin a new journey. The key steps for developing a RAP are:

- Establish a RAP Working Group: A diverse Working Group ensures the responsibility of implementing reconciliation initiatives does not sit with one person. A Working Group can include teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, students and community members.
- Complete the Reflection Survey: To assist with planning, the Reflection Survey gives a snapshot of reconciliation in the school or early learning service.

- Write a Vision for Reconciliation: A Vision clearly communicates the school or early learning service's commitment to reconciliation to the community. A Vision for Reconciliation is an overarching, aspirational statement that provides an opportunity to publicly articulate to the wider community what reconciliation means to a school or early learning service, and what it is that motivates the school or service's commitment to reconciliation.
- Add RAP Actions: There are 39 RAP Actions to select from, including 14 that are considered minimum requirements for driving reconciliation in a whole-scale sense.
- Submit the RAP: RAPs are submitted to the Principal or Director for approval and then to Reconciliation Australia for final review and publication.

A RAP will generally have a lifespan of 12 months after publication, at which stage it will be reverted to draft to give the school/early learning service the opportunity to "refresh" the RAP. All data from the previous version of the RAP will be retained even when it goes back into draft form, in case the school/service would like to continue to keep any inputted RAP details that will be relevant for the next 12 months ahead. The minimum requirements in the refresh process include re-completing the Reflection Survey to track and reflect on progress/learnings made over time, and then re-submitting the RAP to both the Principal/Director of the school/service and to Reconciliation Australia. Schools and early learning services also have the opportunity to update to their RAP Working Group details, their Vision for Reconciliation statement and/or their RAP Actions/Goals/Deliverables.

RAPs are not compulsory and participation in Narragunnawali – whether inside or outside of the RAP development context specifically – is entirely voluntary, and comes at no financial cost to individuals or school/early learning service communities. Narragunnawali RAPs are created on a largely self-guided and self-paced basis through an online tool. The RAP development process, through Narragunnawali, incorporates web-based project management and provides whole-school or early learning service Actions that are used to build a RAP. For schools and early learning services, the online tool facilitates the development of plans to communicate with relevant local organisations and communities, and provides a suite of Actions to choose from. (Freely) signing up to the Narragunnawali online platform also allows access to resources including professional learning and curriculum materials and links to relevant bodies and organisations, regardless of whether or not the User is formally connected to a school or early learning service, or attached to a RAP Working Group.

## Curriculum Resources

With the introduction of the Australian Curriculum, and the Early Years Learning Framework, teachers in schools, and educators in early learning services, are required to engage in meaningful programming focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions. In response to these national curriculum frameworks and requirements,

Narragunnawali promotes the use of curriculum resources which are simultaneously aligned to the Australian Curriculum and/or Early Years Learning Framework, as well as to one or more of the RAP Actions that schools and early learning services can select to commit to when developing a whole-scale Reconciliation Action Plan.

The goal is to support teachers and educators to better understand and engage with the selected RAP Actions, by providing quality teaching and learning resources. These resources work to complement the professional learning strategy, and by association, teachers' and educators' engagement with their school or early learning service's RAP. While these resources are made available as part of the Narragunnawali platform, they are freely available to all teachers, educators and community members, regardless of whether they are involved in the development of a specific RAP.

## Professional Learning

Reconciliation Australia is continuing to develop Narragunnawali's professional learning component. It aims to up-skill teachers and educators already taking the lead on reconciliation in their schools and early learning services, to build confidence in celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions. The professional learning component aims to assist teachers and educators in meeting the National Quality Framework and Standard and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, the latter of which explicitly calls on teachers and educators to "understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians". As well as being aligned to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, each of the professional learning resources on the Narragunnawali platform are also aligned to one or more RAP Actions. As part of professional learning, Narragunnawali has, since 2018, also continued to run regular webinars about reconciliation in education.

## Updates and Narragunnawali Awards

In early April 2017 Reconciliation Australia launched an updated version of the Narragunnawali platform.[1] The updated version of the platform included a number of new features compared to the original platform. This included 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' and more flexible and dynamic ways to engage with such resources, regardless of whether or not a User is involved in the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan, and indeed regardless of whether or not a User is formally connected to a school or early learning service environment.

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[1] https://www.narragunnawali.org.au/about/news/32/introducing-the-updated-narragunnawali-platform

Alongside the launch of the updated platform, 2017 also saw the launch of the inaugural Narragunnawali Awards – the first national awards program designed to recognise exceptional commitment to reconciliation in the education sector. Two winners in each category (Schools and Early Learning) have been awarded for the 2017 Narragunnawali Awards.

It is planned that the Narragunnawali Awards will continue on a biennial basis. The 2019 Narragunnawali Awards were launched earlier in the year (https://www.narragunnawali.org.au/awards), with more than 100 nomination submissions received across the two award categories – Schools and Early Learning. Finalists and Winners in each of the 2019 Narragunnawali Awards categories will be announced at a Presentation Event in November 2019.

## Evaluation and Monitoring reports

In 2015, the Australian National University (ANU), through the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) and in partnership with the Social Research Centre, was commissioned by Reconciliation Australia to provide an Evaluation and Monitoring Framework and subsequent evaluation of Narragunnawali. The first phase of the evaluation resulted in seven research reports, and a final summary report.[2] In April 2018, the ANU was commissioned for another two and a half years to continue the evaluation, update findings, and identify and analyse new insights.

Phase 2 of the evaluation incorporates both a quantitative and qualitative component to provide ongoing monitoring and analysis of the following key areas:

- growth, uptake and usage;
- information sharing and within-institution knowledge;
- effectiveness of resources;
- teacher knowledge and confidence;
- community interaction and engagement;
- student experience; and
- expansion of Narragunnawali.

Detailed evaluation reports covering specific aspects of the above areas will continue to be produced throughout the evaluation. In addition, throughout Phase 2 of the evaluation, regular monitoring reports will be produced, updating findings on the number and types of schools and early learning services that are engaging with Narragunnawali. In addition, analysis will be provided on the stage at which schools and early learning services are currently engaged with Narragunnawali, as well details and experiences of the individual

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[2] https://csrm.cass.anu.edu.au/research/projects/evaluation-narragunnawali-reconciliation-schools-and-early-learning

users of the platform. The monitoring reports will also include a continually updated summary of the research reports.

# Findings to date

In the first 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.

The 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) about 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 continued evaluation of Narragunnawali. The quantitative data collection was to be combined with a randomised promotion design in order to identify as best as possible the

effects of the program. The qualitative interviews were to 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 requirements for developing a RAP through to published stage. Most of the analysis for the project until then had 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 minimum requirements. Once this has occurred, the RAP is recorded as being holistically developed and can be reviewed and published accordingly. There were some factors found to be 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.'

The seventh report (*Narragunnawali Research Report #7 – Engaging with Narragunnawali 2.0*) provided a summary of a major change to the platform, as well as a reflection on how those changes related to participation in the program. One of the biggest changes between Narragunnawali 1.0 and 2.0 (the previous and updated version of the Narragunnawali online platforms) was that it was 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 platform '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). The launch of the updated 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.

The eighth report (*Narragunnawali Research Report #8 – First phase evaluation summary report*) summarised the main findings from the first phase evaluation, and provided some analysis of longitudinal data from the platform itself, as well as the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children. The report summarised very strong evidence for the program to be having an effect on schools, early learning services and teachers. Looking at the Reflection Surveys, there are very few schools and early learning services who are engaging with the program that reduce the number of activities that they engage in through time. Even more positively, those RAP Working Groups that had reported that they were not sure or were not undertaking an activity in the initial surveys had a very high probability that they were undertaking that activity in a later follow-up. To put it another way, those schools and early learning services engaged with Narragunnawali maintain the activities that they are already doing, and increase the activities through time. There is even stronger evidence for the positive effects of Narragunnawali from the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC). Those teachers of Indigenous students who are in schools with a RAP are much more likely to feel that their school is engaging in a range of positive activities than those teachers in other schools. The teachers themselves are also more likely to be engaging in a range of positive reconciliation activities.

In September 2018 the Social Research Centre (SRC) prepared a report that summarized findings from an incentivized online discussion board with 30 schools and early learning services. Representing Wave 1 of the Qualitative component of the Phase 2 evaluation, questions and responses touched on the program itself, including: user experience in developing and implementing a RAP; using the platform, professional learning resources, and curriculum resources; and interaction with Reconciliation Australia. The report also

covered self-reported outcomes since the implementation of a RAP, with the vast majority of respondents reporting a positive improvement. The main outcomes discussed were:

- Providing an approach to drive change;
- Raising cultural awareness across whole of school/early learning service;
- Increased confidence in understanding and taking positive action towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs/education; and
- Improved relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families/community members.

In addition, respondents gave a number of recommendations for improvements to the program. While they may not all be practical or within the budget available for the program, they do point to future options and considerations, or at least a further articulation of what the focus of the program should be. Recommendations include:

- Reconciliation Australia to play a greater role in facilitating interactions or in linking early learning services and schools to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- Greater sharing of best practice across schools and early learning services;
- More user-friendly documentation of school and early learning service RAPs, especially for printing and sharing; and
- Greater notification of updates and activities (including Awards);

In a CSRM Working Paper for the project (*Narragunnawali Research Report #9)* titled *The importance of reconciliation in education,*[3] we undertook a thorough literature review of the existing evidence around reconciliation in Australia. In addition, we analysed data from the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC) that showed the negative estimated effect of exposure to racism and discrimination for Indigenous children. There was a particularly large negative effect estimated for a student's self-perception and their mathematics test scores.

In this paper (*Narragunnawali Research Report #9*) we update and extend the analysis from *Report #6* and return to the analysis of Vision for Reconciliation statements (VSs). These statements are intended to allow a school or early learning service to articulate what reconciliation means in their context, to recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are connected to the oldest continuing cultures on the planet, and to demonstrate an active awareness of the relative recentness – yet intergenerational impacts – of European colonisation that can be addressed through the reconciliation process. The statements also enable schools to demonstrate an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in their location as a dynamic and continuing presence rather than a historical fact.

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[3] http://csrm.cass.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/2019/5/CSRM-WP-RECONCILIATION-1-2019.pdf)

According to Reconciliation Australia:

> "A Vision for Reconciliation is an overarching, aspirational statement that forms part of a RAP, and that provides an opportunity for schools and early learning services to publicly articulate to the wider community what reconciliation means to the school or early learning service, and what it is that motivates their commitment to reconciliation.
>
> To support schools and early learning services in the development of their Vision for Reconciliation statements, and ensure that these statements are well prepared for review by Reconciliation Australia before a RAP is published, schools and early learning services are encouraged to engage with the Narragunnawali 'What is your Vision for Reconciliation?' professional learning resource,[4] as well as the guide to using respectful and inclusive language and terminology."

All RAP VSs are reviewed by Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali team before a RAP is published and, where relevant, schools and early learning services will be provided with feedback or suggested updates for consideration prior to the RAP's publication. Such feedback is generally in alignment with the Narragunnawali *Guide to Including Respectful and Inclusive Language and Terminology*[5] (which provides guidance on matters such as acknowledging diversity; referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; use of capitalisation; avoiding deficit and dichotomous language; and recognising currency and continuity), the language of *The State of Reconciliation in Australia* report, or opportunities for strengthening the structural clarity of the RAP document and the clarity of expression within it.

This report analyses three important aspects of RAP VSs. Firstly, the report analyses which schools or early learning services are likely to have commenced drafting their VSs and/or to have had their VSs published. This analysis will address two questions:

1.  Which types of schools or early learning services are more likely to successfully draft and publish VSs?
2.  What barriers to drafting and publication exist?

Second, the report descriptively summarises the content of the VSs, by outlining the common words used in the statements, and commenting on what that tells us about the views of schools and early learning services towards reconciliation. In the third and final part of the report, we analyse more systematically the content of the VSs. In guidance given to schools and early learning services before completing their RAP VS, Reconciliation Australia provides guiding principles in the form of the five integral and interrelated dimensions of reconciliation – race relations; equality and equity; unity; institutional integrity; and historical acceptance – outlined in the *The State of Reconciliation in Australia* report. These

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[4] https://www.narragunnawali.org.au/professional-learning/34/what-is-your-vision-for-reconciliation
[5] https://www.narragunnawali.org.au/about/terminology-guide

dimensions are important tools of evaluation, in that RAP VSs should contain some of the content of these dimensions. Two research questions follow from this:

1. Which dimensions are most often reflected in school or early learning service VSs?

2. Do schools or early learning services with published VSs differ from schools with submitted and draft form VSs in terms of their length and their inclusion of dimensions of reconciliation content?

# Factors associated with drafting and publishing Vision for Reconciliation statements

## Data

The sample characteristics of educational institutions that have begun a RAP are different from the general population of schools and early learning services in Australia. This has been the focus of regular (monthly) monitoring reports. For context, these reports have shown relatively high rates of participation amongst: Catholic Schools (compared to Government Schools); Child Care Centres (compared to Preschools); 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 Australian Capital Territory, and Queensland.

This analysis focuses only on those schools and early learning services that have already begun a Narragunnawali RAP. It is therefore important to briefly describe the characteristics of this sample before further analysis. Firstly, in terms of State and Territory representation, while RAPs came from all jurisdictions, Victoria, when compared with other states, was significantly under-represented (in terms of percentages). The Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory, whilst having similar populations to each other, were markedly different in terms of RAP participation (with much higher rates in the ACT). It also appears that Tasmania and Western Australia were somewhat under-represented as of February 2019.

**Table 1     Distribution of Narragunnawali RAPs by State/Territory as at February 2019**

| State | Frequency |
|-------|-----------|
| NSW   | 1243      |
| ACT   | 126       |
| NT    | 35        |

| | |
|---|---|
| QLD | 939 |
| SA | 367 |
| TAS | 52 |
| VIC | 622 |
| WA | 225 |

Moving to establishment sector, a wide variety of educational institutions are represented in the Narragunnawali RAP program. There are more RAPs from early learning institutions and establishments caring for younger children compared to RAPs for primary or secondary schools.

**Table 2        Distribution of RAPs by institution type**

| Sector | Frequency |
|---|---|
| Catholic School | 282 |
| Child Care Centre | 1724 |
| Early Childhood (not specified) | 18 |
| Family Day Care | 41 |
| Government School | 490 |
| Independent School | 180 |
| Kindergarten | 298 |
| Outside School Hours Care Service (OSHC) | 71 |
| Other | 18 |
| Preschool | 468 |
| Special School | 18 |

## Logistic Regression Models

The first model (below) predicts whether or not a school or early learning service has drafted a VS as part of their wider RAP development process. This could be any form of draft, ranging from a published statement to an incomplete statement that has yet to be submitted for review/publication. As of February 2019 when the data for this report was made available,

there were 3,608 educational institutions with a Narragunnawali RAP – whether a published RAP or a RAP in development. Of these, 1,933 (53.5 per cent) had at least begun a draft VS within their online Narragunnawali RAP accounts.

The model used to analyse the factors associated with having commenced a VS is a logistic regression and the table reports raw coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Positive coefficients indicate a higher probability of drafting a VS, while negative coefficients indicate a reduced probability. In order to calculate the model, two factors are removed (institutions in NSW and Catholic institutions) to be used as a baseline due to them being the most common category. Coefficients can be interpreted by comparing to the baseline.

**Table 3        Factors associated with having drafted or having published a VS**

| | Drafting | Publishing |
|---|---|---|
| (Intercept) | -1.324 *** (0.320) | -3.053 *** (0.459) |
| Sector: Child Care Centre | 0.188 (0.140) | 0.750 ** (0.232) |
| Sector: Family Day Care | -0.163 (0.407) | 0.575 (0.585) |
| Sector: Government | -0.466 ** (0.160) | -0.383 (0.288) |
| Sector: Independent | 0.063 (0.203) | 0.512 (0.313) |
| Sector: Kindergarten | 0.335 (0.187) | 1.132 *** (0.272) |
| Sector: Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) | -0.269 (1.236) | -11.139 (308.317) |
| Sector: Other | 12.189 (196.968) | 16.092 (535.411) |
| Sector: Preschool | 0.226 (0.165) | 1.258 *** (0.252) |
| Sector: Special | -1.614 * (0.767) | -0.263 (1.058) |
| ACT | 0.567 ** (0.212) | 0.298 (0.290) |
| NT | -0.306 (0.421) | -0.811 (0.761) |
| QLD | 0.559 *** (0.114) | 0.209 (0.155) |
| SA | 0.501 *** (0.144) | 0.265 (0.205) |
| TAS | 0.184 (0.330) | 0.362 (0.470) |
| VIC | 0.081 (0.123) | -0.022 (0.170) |
| WA | -0.043 (0.185) | -0.392 (0.307) |
| Regional | 0.098 (0.100) | -0.010 (0.141) |
| Remote | 0.191 (0.289) | 0.673 (0.383) |
| Socio Economic Area | 0.009 *** (0.003) | 0.007 (0.004) |
| N | 2912 | 2912 |
| logLik | -1958.502 | -1210.496 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| AIC | 3957.004 | 2460.992 |

*** = p < 0.001; ** = p < 0.01; * = p < 0.05. Baseline institution is in the Catholic sector in Metropolitan NSW

The results presented in Table 3 show that schools in the Government sector are significantly less likely than Catholic schools to draft a VS, as are Special Schools. Early Learning Centres and Kindergartens are significantly more likely to draft a RAP VS than primary and/or secondary schools. Educational institutions in Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory were significantly more likely than those in New South Wales to begin a RAP VS draft. Drafts are slightly less likely in Western Australia as this coefficient approaches significance at the p < 0.05 level. Finally, those schools or early learning services in relatively advantaged areas were more likely to have drafted a RAP VS.

The second model focuses on the factors associated with publication of a VS. As of February 2019, 20.3% of the sample had a published RAP, which thereby includes a public VS which can be viewed via the interactive 'Who has a RAP?' map on the Narragunnawali platform: www.narragunnawali.org.au/raps/who-has-a-rap. This model indicates that publication is significantly increased among early learning establishments (Child Care Centres, Kindergartens and Preschools) compared to primary or secondary schools. Publication is significantly less likely in Western Australia than New South Wales. Finally, publication in regional institutions is reduced and in advantaged areas increased, though neither are quite significant at 5 per cent level of significance.

In summary, these models indicate a clear increase in VS drafting and publication among pre-school and child care institutions when compared with other educational institutions.

# Describing statements within Narragunnawali

One of the key steps within the Narragunnawali RAP development process is for the RAP Working Group (RAPWG) to draft a Vision for Reconciliation statement (VS). For this paper, we had VS data for 1675 schools and early learning services, which collectively contained a total of 221,616 words. The following word cloud (where the size of words is weighted by the frequency of their appearance), gives a visual representation of the content of the VSs.

**Figure 1**    **Top 100 words contained in Vision for Reconciliation Statements**

Not surprisingly, some of the most commonly used words in the VSs were 'Aboriginal', 'Torres Strait Islander', and 'reconciliation'. Other common words that were identified were more instructive. This includes 'community' (2304 times), 'people'/'peoples' (2692), 'children' (1759), 'culture'/'cultures' (1562) and 'respect' (1228). The most common verbs are 'work' (appearing 567 times), 'can' (525 times) and 'aim' (454 times).

Despite these common themes, the VSs were heterogeneous in terms of length (keeping in mind there is a 2,000 character limit), structure, and content (themes, specificity, etc.). We will return to the content of the VSs in the section that follows. However, the distribution of total word length (from the subset of VSs analysed) is outlined below:

**Figure 2     Distribution of Vision for Reconciliation Statement lengths**
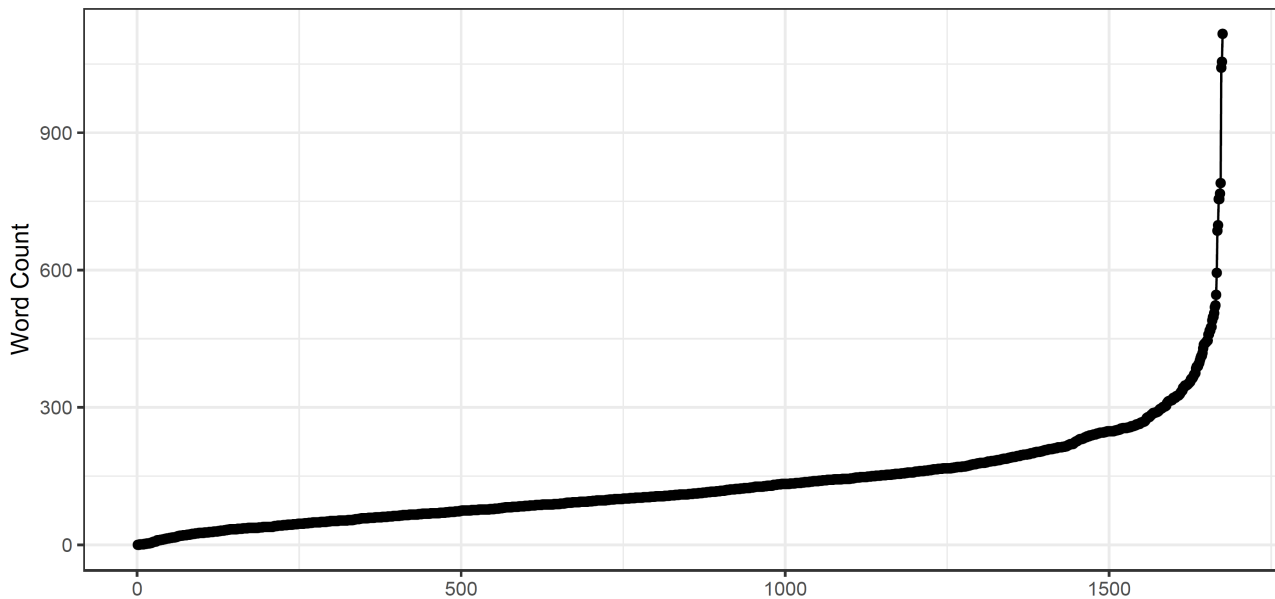


VSs need not be either long or short, with statements at either end of the spectrum still able to articulate the goals and aspirations of the school or early learning service. For example, VSs that had been published at the time of writing for Early Learning Services in a similar location that are at different ends of the total word length spectrum are:

- Example of a shorter published VS:
    - 'Our vision for reconciliation is about hearing and listening, trying to understand, being respectful and valuing the histories, cultures and stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples of Australia.'
- Example of a longer VS:
    - 'At <Name of Early Learning Service>, reconciliation means making meaningful and respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and celebrating their cultures and ways of life. All children should have access to education and feel a sense of belonging.  <Name of Early Learning Service> hopes to foster equal and equitable educational opportunities for all children, ensuring that they are offered every opportunity to develop and succeed.
    A reconciled Australia is one where all Australians can be proud of who they are and accepting of others. A country where skin colour does not influence what you think of a person; a country where all Australians receive equal and equitable opportunities and access to schools, services, jobs and assistance. At <Name of Early Learning Service>, we hope that one day prejudices can be eradicated.  We believe this is achievable through the education of children, however we need to connect with the families and community to guide their values as they have considerable influence.  A unified, free Australia would be a land where all co-exist with equal and equitable

opportunities, which would benefit the country in all aspects from relationships to productivity.  It would be a country where the Traditional Land Owners are admired and respected which would allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and all people, to prosper.

Through our journey thus far, we have found that all educators believe in reconciliation, and we will continue to work towards this shared goal of reconciliation. Staff, children and families all understand the significance of making an effort to drive the reconciliation process forward. The RAP Working Group are passionate about the cause and will continue to influence others to accept responsibility for past behaviours and make changes now. Moving forward, we recognise that we need to engage more with our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and community to respectfully expose children to their wonderful culture and provide children with opportunities to listen and learn more. We will focus on providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in all aspects of curriculum planning and intentional teaching.

We will inform all families and community associates of our RAP goals and what we want to achieve. The ultimate outcome is acceptance, understanding, equity, and love.'

# Similarity between Vision for Reconciliation Statements and Dimensions of Reconciliation

Vision for Reconciliation statements (VSs) represent an institution's articulation of their personalised and localised approach to, and aspirations for, reconciliation, guided by Reconciliation Australia's principles,  recommendations and support resources. This section examines how closely school and early learning service's RAP VSs reflect  the five integral and interrelated *dimensions of reconciliation* (DoRs) identified in *The State of Reconciliation in Australia* report and summarised in the table below.

**Table 4        Dimensions of reconciliation**

| Dimensions | Text |
| --- | --- |
| **Race Relations** | Race Relations:  All Australians understand and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous cultures, rights and experiences, which results in stronger relationships based on trust and respect and that are free of racism.  Goal: Positive two-way relationships built on trust and respect exist between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians throughout society.  Action: Overcome racism |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Equality and Equity** | Equality and Equity: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples participate equally in a range of life opportunities and the unique rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are recognised and upheld.  Goal:  Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians participate equally and equitably in all areas of life until we have closed the gaps in life outcomes and the distinctive individual and collective rights and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are universally recognised and respected.  Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are self-determining.  Action: Renew focus on Closing the Gap |
| **Integrity** | Institutional Integrity: The active support of reconciliation by the nation's political, business and community structures.  Goal: Our political, business and community institutions actively support all dimensions of reconciliation.  Action: Capitalise on the RAP Program to create a wider range of opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. |
| **Unity** | Unity: An Australian society that values and recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage as a proud part of a shared national identity.  Goal: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and rights are a valued and recognised part of a shared national identity and, as a result, there is national unity.  Action: Achieve a process to recognise Australia First Peoples in our Constitution. |
| **Historical Acceptance** | Historical Acceptance: All Australians understand and accept the wrongs of the past and their impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Australia makes amends for past policies and practices ensures these wrongs are never repeated.  Goal: There is widespread acceptance of our nation history and agreement that the wrongs of the past will never be repeated until there is truth, justice, healing and historical acceptance.  Action: Acknowledge our past through education and understanding. |

The analysis presented in this section quantitatively analyses the content of each of these DoRs and compares them to the content of school and early learning service's VSs drafted or published within the Narragunnawali platform using cosine similarity. The procedure compares the content of each text to the content of each DoR and returns a 'similarity' score.[6]

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[6] Cosine similarity is a measure of distance between two vectors in multidimensional space. The theoretical range of cosine similarity is continuous between -1 and 1. 1 indicates perfect similarity or an internal angle of 0° indicating that the vectors are the same; a value of 0 indicates orthogonality or an internal angle of 90° in which the vectors share no characteristics. A value of -1 indicates perfect dissimilarity (an internal angle of 180°), in which all the values of vector A are reversed in vector B. In text analysis applications, each dimension of the vector is a word frequency measure (for example the number of times the word "reconciliation" is mentioned in document vector A). Since it is not possible to count a negative number of words in a document, the lowest score in this application is 0. Formally, cosine similarity is calculated as the dot product of two vectors

Before analysis, the text was pre-processed by removing punctuation, stopwords (words that contain no substantive information by themselves such as 'the' and 'and'), and numbers. One important commonly occurring combination of words ('Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander') was combined as a single 'word' feature before analysis to prevent the analysis from treating each of these words separately, since the co-occurrence of these words refer to a coherent concept.

The first figure compares the similarity distributions of the VSs across each of the five DoRs in the form of a violin plot. The mean of each distribution is denoted with a red dot and labeled. For instance, the mean cosine similarity of VSs to the *race relations* DoR is 0.12. To assist in the comparison of the representation of DoRs in VSs, pairwise difference of means tests were calculated, with significant differences indicated by brackets with their respective p values annotated above.

The results suggest that the DoRs are represented comparably across VSs but that two DoRs stand out. The *equality and equity* DoR has more similar content to the average VS than do all other DoRs. Conversely, *historical acceptance* is less similar to the typical DoR, suggesting that institutions overlook this DoR (or at least the precise words  pertaining to this DoR – noting that there may be other words – such as "acknowledging past wrongs" or "recognising colonial injustices directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout history" –  to describe what is effectively meant by the "historical acceptance" DoR) when drafting their VS. This corresponds to a frequently arising issue with submitted VSs, that statements seldom mention the *continuing* histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in contemporary Australia, or the continuing, often intergenerational impacts of colonial injustices on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

**Figure 3     Average similarity between RAP Vision for Reconciliation statements and the Dimensions of Reconciliation**

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(numerator) over the product of the length of each vector: $\cos(\theta) = \frac{A \cdot B}{\|A\|\|B\|} =$

$\frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} A_i B_i}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{n} A_i^2}\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{n} B_i^2}}$, where $i$ indexes word frequency measures in word vectors A and B.
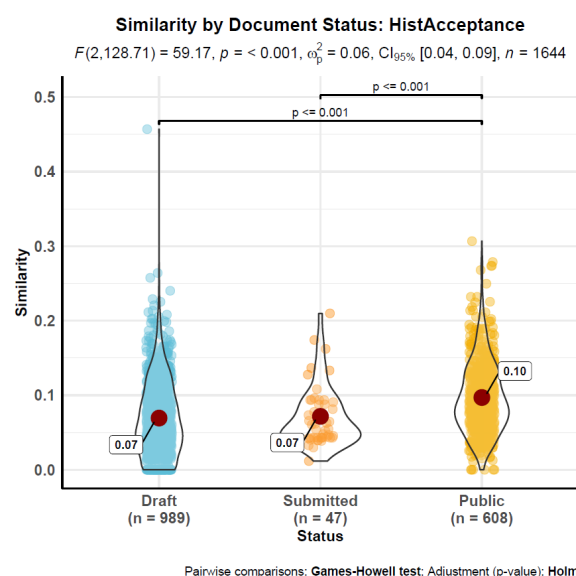
$F(4,4116.48) = 290.57$, $p = < 0.001$, $\omega_p^2 = 0.08$, $CI_{95\%}$ [0.07, 0.09], $n = 8375$
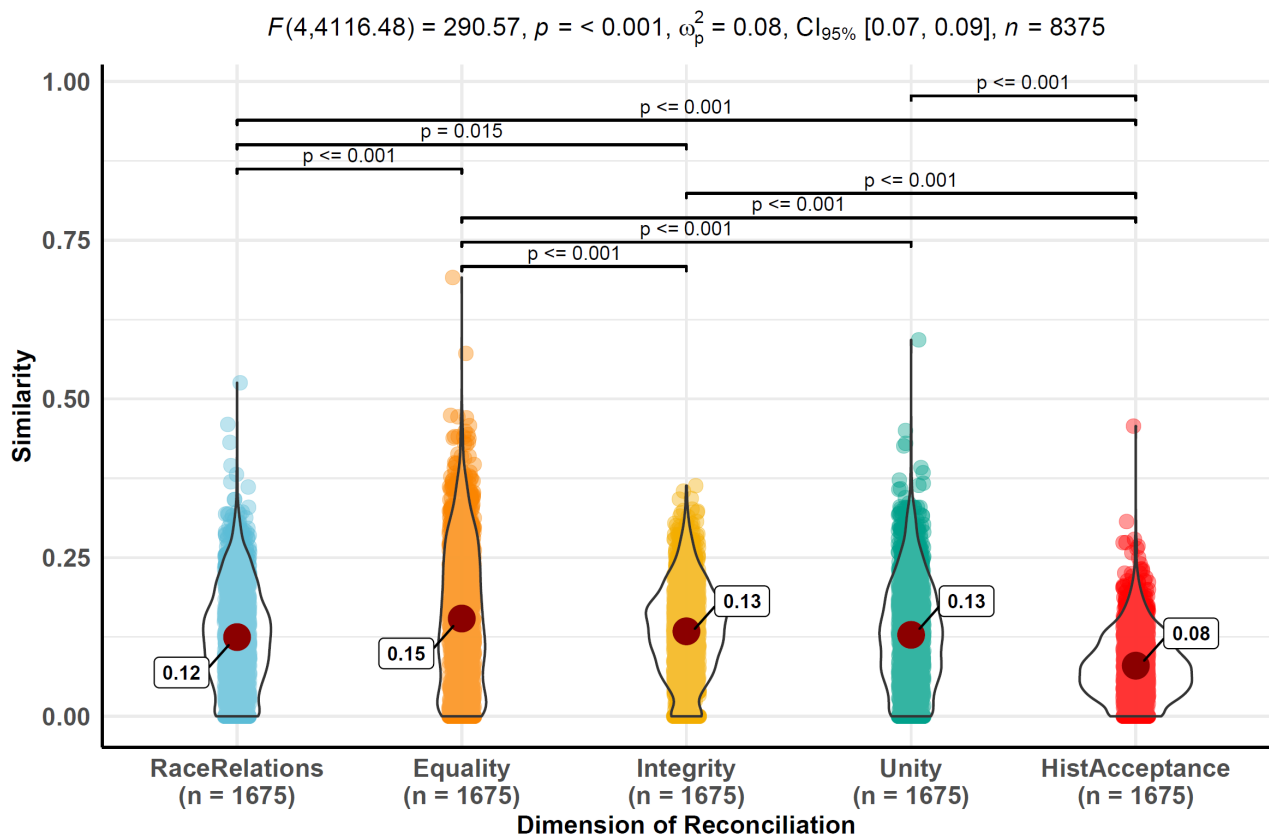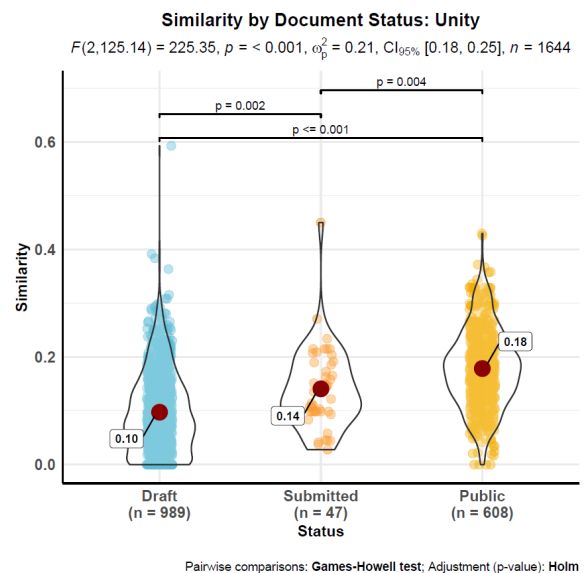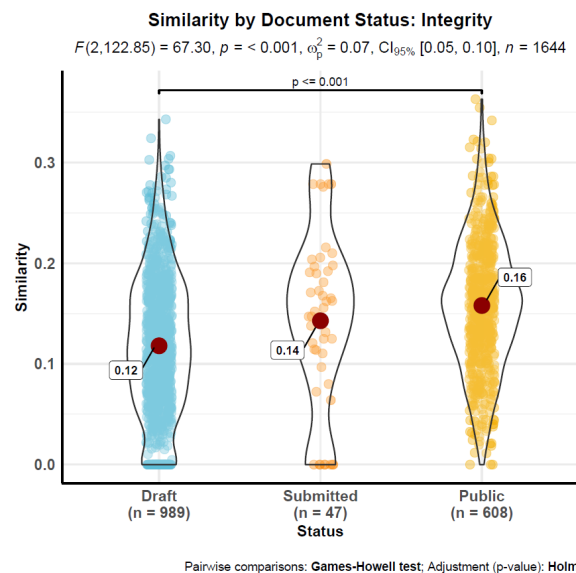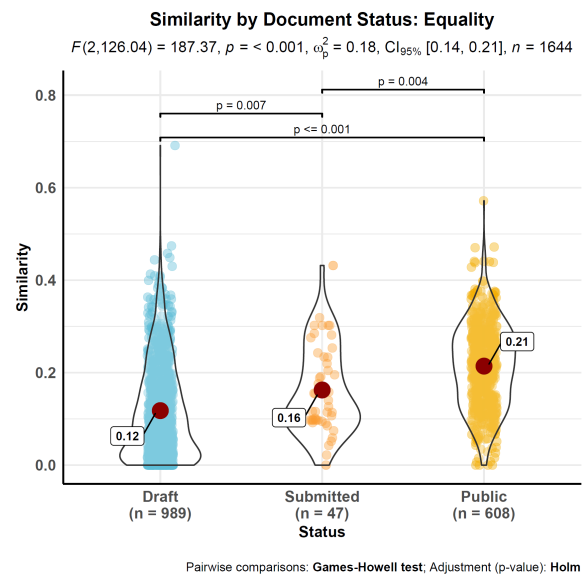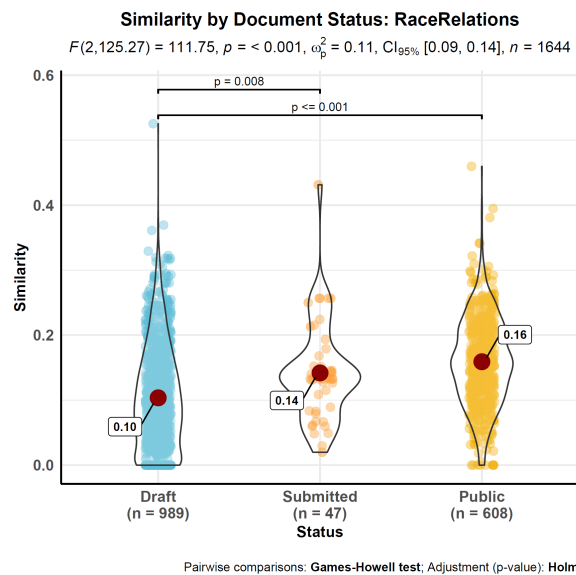
## Analysing RAP document status

An important component of the evaluation of VSs is understanding the vision statement review and publication process, introduced by Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali team in April 2017. All RAP VSs are reviewed by Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali team before a RAP is published and, where relevant, schools and early learning services are provided with feedback or suggested updates for consideration prior to the RAP's publication. Such feedback is generally in alignment with the Narragunnawali Guide to Including Respectful and Inclusive Language and Terminology  (which provides guidance on matters such as acknowledging diversity; referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; use of capitalisation; avoiding deficit and dichotomous language; and recognising currency and continuity), the language of The State of Reconciliation in Australia report, or opportunities for strengthening the structural clarity of the RAP document and the clarity of expression within it. The focus of this review process is less on the content of the VS, and more on the language used.

Understanding this process allows us to evaluate the effect of interaction between Reconciliation Australia and the school or early learning service on the relationship between VSs and DoR. Methodologically, the analysis presented in this sub-section extends the VS/DoR similarity scores by comparing the difference between draft, submitted, and published VSs along each DoR. The figures below are configured as above, but with

pairwise comparisons between document status instead of comparisons between DoRs. It should be noted that the sample size for the submitted statements is reasonably small (47 VSs).

**Figure 4      Similarity between Vision for Reconciliation Statements and Dimensions of Reconciliation by RAP document status**

**Similarity by Document Status: RaceRelations**

$F(2, 125.27) = 111.75$, $p = < 0.001$, $\omega_p^2 = 0.11$, $CI_{95\%}$ [0.09, 0.14], $n = 1644$



Pairwise comparisons: **Games-Howell test**; Adjustment (p-value): **Holm**

**Similarity by Document Status: Equality**

$F(2, 126.04) = 187.37$, $p = < 0.001$, $\omega_p^2 = 0.18$, $CI_{95\%}$ [0.14, 0.21], $n = 1644$



Pairwise comparisons: **Games-Howell test**; Adjustment (p-value): **Holm**

**Similarity by Document Status: Integrity**

$F(2, 122.85) = 67.30$, $p = < 0.001$, $\omega_p^2 = 0.07$, $CI_{95\%}$ [0.05, 0.10], $n = 1644$



Pairwise comparisons: **Games-Howell test**; Adjustment (p-value): **Holm**

**Similarity by Document Status: Unity**

$F(2, 125.14) = 225.35$, $p = < 0.001$, $\omega_p^2 = 0.21$, $CI_{95\%}$ [0.18, 0.25], $n = 1644$



Pairwise comparisons: **Games-Howell test**; Adjustment (p-value): **Holm**

**Similarity by Document Status: HistAcceptance**

$F(2, 128.71) = 59.17$, $p = < 0.001$, $\omega_p^2 = 0.06$, $CI_{95\%}$ [0.04, 0.09], $n = 1644$



Pairwise comparisons: **Games-Howell test**; Adjustment (p-value): **Holm**

The first figure displays comparisons for the *race relations* and *equality and equity* DoRs. On both dimensions, the mean level of similarity increases as documents move from draft to publication, indicating that the review process has made significant progress in improving

the adherence of VSs' content to the language of the DoR. In the case of *equality and equity,* average similarity almost doubled between draft and published statements and published statements were on average one third more similar than pre-reviewed submitted statements.

A highly consistent pattern of results is also found in similarity between VSs and the *institutional integrity*, *unity* and *historical acceptance* DoRs (below). There is a consistent increase in similarity to the DoRs as documents progress through the review process, again indicating that VSs are improving in a positive direction.

Comparison between document status and similarity to the *unity* DoR displays an almost two-fold increase in mean similarity after the review process, with significant pairwise increases at each stage of the review process, while less pronounced but still positive results are evident elsewhere. Taken together, these results suggest that the review process is consistently effective in improving the substantive focus of VSs towards Reconciliation Australia's meanings and measures of reconciliation.

The case of the *historical acceptance* DoR presents one caveat, however, to the generally positive effect of the interaction between schools' and early learning services' RAP VSs on adherence to the DoR. Specifically, it would seem that there is an even wider gap across the DoRs for published VSs compared to VSs in the drafting process. The relative similarity between the VSs and the DoR of *historical acceptance* seems to have declined during the review and publication process. Specifically, for drafted VSs, similarity between the VSs and the *equality and equity* DoR was 1.71 times the similarity between VSs and *historical acceptance* DoR. For public VSs on the other hand, this difference in similarity was 2.1 times. We would recommend that Reconciliation Australia pays particular attention to the *historical acceptance* DoR both in instructions for the drafting of VSs, but more specifically in the review process. As mentioned previously though, noting that there may be other words – such as "acknowledging past wrongs" or "recognising colonial injustices directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout history" – to describe what is effectively meant by the "historical acceptance" DoR

## Predictors of Vision for Reconciliation Statement and Dimension of Reconciliation similarity

The final analysis in this section examines the factors that predict similarity between VSs and DoRs. A regression analysis of similarity scores for each of the DoRs using ordinary least squares shows that different institutional contexts lead to different emphasis on themes of reconciliation.

The dependent variable in each regression is the similarity score across each DoR (summarised above in Figure 3). The set of explanatory variables includes the sector, state and regional/remote variables included in the models in the first section. It also includes VS status (as the previous section demonstrates how similarity varies consistently across these factors), the natural logarithm of the total full-time enrollment of each institution (logged to

compress the range of the data to account for very large schools, which introduce outliers), and finally the number of sentences in the VS, since document similarity and document size are correlated.

**Table 5    Factors associated with similarity between Vision for Reconciliation Statements and Dimensions of Reconciliation**

| | Race Relations | Equality and Equity | Integrity | Unity | Historical Acceptance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Intercept) | 0.026 (0.042) | -0.001 (0.056) | 0.054 (0.037) | -0.003 (0.041) | 0.023 (0.025) |
| RAP Status: Draft | 0.008 (0.020) | 0.040 (0.026) | 0.004 (0.017) | 0.017 (0.019) | 0.002 (0.012) |
| RAP Status: Public | 0.063** (0.020) | 0.133*** (0.026) | 0.040* (0.017) | 0.100*** (0.019) | 0.031** (0.012) |
| RAP Status: Submitted | 0.050* (0.025) | 0.084** (0.033) | 0.045 * (0.021) | 0.067** (0.024) | 0.007 (0.015) |
| Number of sentences | 0.004*** (0.001) | 0.004 *** (0.001) | 0.006*** (0.001) | 0.004*** (0.001) | 0.003*** (0.000) |
| Sector: Child Care Centre | 0.017 (0.016) | 0.007 (0.021) | -0.009 (0.014) | -0.006 (0.015) | -0.003 (0.010) |
| Sector: Family Day Care | -0.033 (0.076) | -0.062 (0.100) | -0.080 (0.066) | 0.129 (0.074) | -0.033 (0.046) |
| Sector: Government School | -0.025 (0.017) | -0.030 (0.022) | -0.024 (0.014) | -0.042* (0.016) | -0.025* (0.010) |
| Sector: Independent School | -0.003 (0.020) | -0.013 (0.026) | 0.005 (0.017) | -0.030 (0.019) | -0.027* (0.012) |
| Sector: Kindergarten | 0.013 (0.019) | 0.010 (0.025) | -0.001 (0.016) | 0.001 (0.018) | -0.005 (0.011) |
| Sector: Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) | 0.000 (0.078) | 0.041 (0.104) | 0.089 (0.068) | 0.046 (0.076) | 0.108* (0.047) |
| Sector: Preschool | 0.015 (0.018) | -0.002 (0.024) | -0.010 (0.016) | -0.001 (0.018) | -0.005 (0.011) |
| Log (Enrollment + 1) | 0.006 (0.005) | 0.007 (0.007) | 0.006 (0.004) | 0.008 (0.005) | 0.004 (0.003) |
| Remote | -0.006 (0.024) | -0.038 (0.031) | -0.009 (0.021) | -0.036 (0.023) | 0.024 (0.014) |
| Regional | -0.003 (0.007) | 0.003 (0.009) | 0.007 (0.006) | -0.002 (0.006) | -0.004 (0.004) |
| ACT | 0.024 (0.014) | 0.049 ** (0.018) | -0.008 (0.012) | 0.022 (0.013) | 0.019* (0.008) |
| NT | 0.042 (0.039) | 0.021 (0.051) | -0.036 (0.034) | 0.020 (0.038) | -0.025 (0.023) |
| QLD | 0.002 (0.007) | 0.004 (0.010) | -0.004 (0.006) | 0.007 (0.007) | -0.003 (0.004) |
| SA | 0.009 (0.010) | -0.008 (0.013) | -0.005 (0.009) | -0.004 (0.010) | -0.008 (0.006) |
| TAS | -0.020 (0.025) | -0.035 (0.033) | -0.006 (0.021) | -0.019 (0.024) | -0.012 (0.015) |
| VIC | 0.001 (0.008) | -0.002 (0.011) | -0.009 (0.007) | 0.006 (0.008) | 0.001 (0.005) |
| WA | 0.023 (0.014) | -0.002 (0.018) | -0.002 (0.012) | 0.004 (0.014) | 0.001 (0.008) |
| Socio-economic Disadvantage (SEIFA) | 0.002 (0.002) | 0.004 (0.003) | 0.003 (0.002) | 0.005* (0.002) | 0.003 (0.001) |
| N | 959 | 959 | 959 | 959 | 959 |
| R2 | 0.159 | 0.208 | 0.162 | 0.285 | 0.163 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| logLik | 1144.456 | 874.702 | 1277.118 | 1166.343 | 1628.308 |
| AIC | -2240.913 | -1701.405 | -2506.236 | -2284.685 | -3208.616 |

*** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$. Baseline institution is in the Catholic sector in Metropolitan NSW

Beginning with the *race relations* DoR, we note that government schools are less likely to emphasise *race relations* in their RAP VSs, reducing the mean similarity score by approximately 0.03 from the intercept (0.06), a reduction of roughly 50% compared to the baseline institution. This difference was almost, but not quite significant at the 5 per cent level of significance. In the case of the *equality and equity* DoR, VSs from the Australian Capital Territory displays significantly increased similarity, as they do with *historical acceptance*.

Cosine similarity to the *institutional integrity* DoR is decreased in government institutions and also in the states of Queensland and Victoria. Conversely, schools with larger enrolments score higher on *institutional integrity*, indicating a focus on bureaucratic structures more common in larger institutions. *Unity* DoR similarity scores are substantially decreased among government institutions, while larger institutions' VS similarity to the *unity* DoR increases slightly.

Finally, similarity scores for the *historical acceptance* DoR show that, similarly to previous models, government schools' VSs are less similar to the DoR than the baseline institution. This is also the case for independent schools, institutions in regional areas, and in the states of Queensland, South Australia and Victoria. A significant increase in *historical acceptance* DoR similarity is shown for VSs from the Australian Capital Territory.

In summary, the most consistent findings from these are as follows: Government schools, net of other factors, are less likely to submit VSs that contain much of the lexical content of the DoRs, while the reverse is true for schools and early learning services from the Australian Capital Territory. Analysis of predictors for the *historical acceptance* DoR similarity show that a significant proportion of the shortfall in similarity with this DoR driven by government schools, educational institutions in regional Australia, and educational institutions in the states of Queensland, South Australia and Victoria. While not consistent, coefficients for the size of an institution's enrolment show increased similarity with DoRs as the size of an institution increases.

Agreement with Reconciliation Australia's principles – including the meanings and measures of reconciliation captured by the five integral and interrelated DoRs outlined in *The State of Reconciliation in Australia* report – is partially a function of institutional capacity. Larger schools tend to score higher, as do those in more socioeconomically advanced areas, while schools in the government sector (perhaps due to stretched resources) tend to score lower.

# Summary of findings

The results presented in this paper have shown that most schools and early learning services that are engaged with Narragunnawali spend a considerable amount of time and effort articulating their vision for reconciliation. A very large proportion of schools and early learning services have published their Vision for Reconciliation statements in the context of a wider published RAP, though there is some variation in completion by characteristics of the institution. While there is substantial variation in word length, the words that are most likely to be used in the Vision for Reconciliation statements (community, people/peoples, children, culture/cultures, and respect) are in line with the goals and terminological guidance of Reconciliation Australia.

Of the Dimensions of Reconciliation that Reconciliation Australia are focusing on, *equality and equity* has the greatest similarity with the Vision for Reconciliation statements, with *historical acceptance* having the least similarity. *Race relations*, *institutional integrity* and *unity* fall somewhere in between.

One of the changes to the Narragunnawali RAP development model since the launch of the updated Narragunnawali online platform in April 2017 has been the publication of Vision for Reconciliation statements online, as well as a review of draft Vision for Reconciliation statements by Reconciliation Australia prior to publication. Comparing the Vision for Reconciliation statements that we analysed in a previous report (*Narragunnawali Research Report #6: Visions for Reconciliation - May 2017*), the readability of the currently published Vision for Reconciliation statements is subjectively much higher, which could potentially be attributed to the review process.

Our results also show that Vision for Reconciliation statements that have been reviewed and published by Reconciliation Australia are much more closely aligned with the Dimensions of Reconciliation identified in the *The State of Reconciliation in Australia* report. There still appears to be an under-representation of words and concepts that explicitly align with the *historical acceptance* dimension. We would recommend that Reconciliation Australia keep this in mind when reviewing Vision for Reconciliation statements and when supporting schools and early learning services with drafting their visions and teaching/learning about the context and concept of reconciliation in Australia more generally.