

Implementing school improvement in Indigenous schools

**Direct Instruction (DI) & Explicit Direct Instruction (EDI)
can be one important part of the solution**

Submission to the House of Representatives Inquiry, reconvening the Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs to further examine and report on *Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students*. The previous Committee in May 2016 provided its *Interim Report: First steps for improving educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students*

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INTRODUCTION: THE COMMITTEE OVERLOOKED EVIDENCE OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DI AND EDI

The previous Committee's [Interim Report](#) published in May 2016 states:

The Committee also received evidence about Direct Instruction in both submissions and hearings. In some instances, serious concerns were expressed by both parents and teachers that Direct Instruction was not effective as a teaching method in their schools.¹

On this basis the Committee made 'preliminary observations' about the effectiveness and appropriateness of DI and EDI, even though the Committee itself acknowledges it 'has not undertaken a comprehensive inquiry into this teaching practice.'

A review of the 61 submissions shows only three express any concern about Direct Instruction,² while others refer positively to Direct Instruction, including an education system owner, the Northern Territory Department of Education.³ A review of the transcript of the previous Committee's hearings also shows a small number of people expressed some negative perceptions and opinions about DI.⁴ We queried whether there was any further feedback on which the Interim Report statements about DI and EDI were based, and the Committee Secretary said 'Some of the evidence that raised concerns regarding Direct Instruction, especially that received directly from individual parents and teachers during the Committee's visits to schools and through its survey, is confidential and cannot be provided.'⁵

The Hon. Andrew Laming MP observed during the Committee's hearings, and this is confirmed by reviewing the transcript and the submissions, that the evidence presented *in support* of the Cape York Academy model, including the use of DI and EDI was

... a more elaborate detailing of the evidence than anyone we have heard so far. We have struggled through this entire inquiry to obtain evidence.⁶

In part, Mr Laming's observation is not surprising. The dearth of evidence available to assist improvement in Indigenous education has been lamented in many reports. However, Mr Laming's observation also highlights that the previous Committee's Interim Report has not engaged with the evidence that is available, and its report is more a product of opinion than evidence which is of great concern when the future of Indigenous education is in play. These opinions may reflect genuinely held concerns, but they do not accord with either the

¹ At p. 24.

² See [submissions](#): Australian Education Union, pp. 26-30; Dr Bill Fogarty and Professor Mick Dodson, pp. 7-8; Ninti One, p. 6.

³ NT Department of Education submission, p. 20; ISQ submission at pp. 7 & 11.

⁴ See Fogarty, W and Dodson M in [Committee Hansard](#), House of Representative Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Wednesday 16 March 2016, Canberra, at pp. 3-5; Godwell, D in [Committee Hansard](#), Friday 5 February, Brisbane; Haythorpe, C and Mulheron, M in [Committee Hansard](#), Tuesday, 22 March 2016, Sydney.

⁵ Email communication, 29 November 2016.

⁶ Lambing, A in [Committee Hansard](#), Monday 7 March 2016, Cairns.

general body of evidence or the specific evidence and experience relating to the introduction of these teaching methods in Indigenous schools.

The impact of differences in education is substantial. If a child's education is poor, their likelihood of achieving positive life outcomes is limited. Conversely, if education is effective there is a much higher likelihood that they will pursue opportunity and achieve their full potential. It is with this view that we argue that providing best-practice education for First Nations children and communities should be prioritised. Education is a powerful response to closing the gap. Indigenous and other disadvantaged children must be transitioned into highly-performing schools either by changing enrolment or by changing school effectiveness — transforming Indigenous schools would appear to be the essential, and feasible, response.

Even though we all share the desire to see an urgent acceleration of outcomes, change does take time. As is acknowledged in the [Stronger Smarter Evaluation](#) there is a conventional expectation in the international literature of a 3-5 year cycle of reform to generate school-level gains, but in Indigenous education an optimal reform cycle for school improvement may be more in the range of 5-7 years.⁷ The Stronger Smarter Evaluation also acknowledges that the 'clarion call by state and federal governments for schools to "close the gap" without further specification of level or area — that is, to improve attendance and test score results across the board — may not be technically possible or at the least extremely difficult within a single cycle of school reform.'

The benefits of DI and EDI are happily being reaped in many other 'mainstream' Australian schools without objection. There is no reason these highly effective approaches should not be one important part of an improved approach for Indigenous schools also. The fervour of the objections to the use of DI and/or EDI programs in Indigenous schools is simply not warranted on the basis of evidence or experience in this country or elsewhere. Myths, misinformation, and misunderstandings continue to mark this controversy.

We are very pleased to have this important opportunity to provide this Committee with further information, including information showing that DI and EDI programs can be an important element of the comprehensive transformation required for Indigenous schools.

STANDARD EDUCATION IS FAILING INDIGENOUS CHILDREN AND STUDENTS

The Australian education system in general is struggling in comparison to other countries across the globe. Australia has systematically gone backwards, both relatively and absolutely. Our results in reading, mathematics, and science have slipped in every testing cycle since the turn of this century in every state across Australia.⁸ Australian education is also marked by inequity. Low performance is strongly associated with the socio-economic status (SES) of students' families and schools. Indigenous schools remain among the worst performing schools in the country.

⁷ At pp. 27 & 44.

⁸ See Hattie (2016), based on Australia's results in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA).

The Indigenous education crisis is difficult. Success has not followed despite substantial investment and dedicated effort over many years. According to the Productivity Commission's latest [Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage report](#) released in November 2016, there is no clear trend in improving achievement despite the focus of all governments on improving literacy and numeracy of Indigenous students since 2002. The Productivity Commission report on [Indigenous Primary School Achievement](#) released in June 2016 similarly concludes:

The education outcomes of Indigenous Australians have been a focus of policy attention for many years, but **there has been no sustained improvement in Indigenous primary school students' literacy and numeracy achievement. This suggests that current policies are not working, and that we need a stronger evidence base about what might work** best to improve Indigenous education achievement. [Emphasis added]⁹

Unfortunately there are very few alternative models in the context of Indigenous education reform. One high profile example is the Stronger Smarter approach that has now been established for over 10 years in many schools across the country. In 2009, then [Education Minister Julia Gillard announced \\$16.4 million](#) of Australian Government funding was being provided to the Stronger Smarter approach. In 2011, [a further \\$30 million of Australian Government support over two years](#) was announced for Stronger Smarter under the Focus School Next Steps Initiative. Unfortunately there is no evidence to suggest the Stronger Smarter approach is working.

The [Stronger Smarter Evaluation](#) concludes that 'there is no statistically significant evidence of improved attendance or test score performance' (Luke et al. 2013 p. 27). The evaluation also concludes that Stronger Smarter schools have not been successful in 'translating "high expectation promotion" into systematic changes in classroom pedagogy that might "close the gap" on Indigenous student achievement' (Luke et al. 2013 p. 30). It states:

The analysis of school level attendance from 2008-2011, school-level NAPLAN gain scores from 2008-2011, and cohort-level NAPLAN gain scores from 2009-2010 show no evidence of positive [Stronger Smarter] effects. (Luke et al. 2013 p. 27).

The evaluation acknowledges that although change does take time,

However, in a large sample of [Stronger Smarter] schools that covers all states and territories, a wide range of demographics and locations, diverse school types and levels – it is reasonable to expect that there would be some evidence of improved outcomes by year 3 or 4 of the reform process. (Luke et al. 2013 p. 27).

While the Stronger Smarter Evaluation found no evidence of any improved attendance or literacy and numeracy performance associated with that approach, like the Productivity Commission report, it emphasised what is most troubling for Australian Indigenous education is the lack of school-level improvement across the entire cohort of schools (that is, whether they were Stronger Smarter schools or not) (Luke et al. 2013 p. 27). Similarly, the

⁹ This report also notes that a small number of studies have identified schools where Indigenous students have had particularly high achievement, but that more recent data suggests the relatively strong performance of even these schools may not have been maintained (pp. 83-4).

[comprehensive review of Indigenous education undertaken in the Northern Territory by Mr Bruce Wilson](#) suggests that ‘...despite substantial effort and dedicated effort ... in some areas the position for many Indigenous children is worse than it was at the time of the last review.’¹⁰

We should all be able to agree that for First Nations children and communities the standard models of education delivery have a damning and ongoing track record of failure. This is true in many Cape York communities, as it is in other communities across Northern Australia and elsewhere. There remains a great deal to be done to ‘close the gap’ for disadvantaged and Indigenous students generally, and in Indigenous schools in particular including in many Queensland state schools such as at Doomadgee, where results remain exceedingly poor.

Between every review of Indigenous education, poor outcomes continue to condemn another generation of Indigenous children to devastation and heartache that could be prevented or ameliorated by highly effective approaches to improve education. Where there are pockets of success and promise it must be embraced, the lessons extracted, and these successes built upon.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT EDUCATION OF DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS IN AUSTRALIA?

Disadvantage is not a good friend. Generally, children who grow up in severely disadvantaged and disengaged households do not develop as quickly as their more advantaged counterparts and will continue to struggle across their entire school experience. It is likely that the effects of being disadvantaged will increase as they age. By the time children begin school at age five in Australia, those from low socio-economic backgrounds, in remote and very remote areas, and Indigenous children, are likely to be delayed across multiple developmental domains considered important for a child’s success at school (i.e. physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communication and general knowledge). Closing these developmental gaps as early as possible before school is of fundamental importance, as this will have benefits throughout a child’s schooling and beyond.

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI)—now called AEDC—shows that a very high proportion of Indigenous children are already developmentally vulnerable by the time they are aged five and beginning Year 1 (see Figure 1), and frequently they are vulnerable in more than one key developmental area.¹¹

Figure 1 describes the distribution of AEDI scores for Indigenous and non-Indigenous children in each state and territory and for Australia. In this chart the percentage of children within each group who score below the 10th percentile of the national AEDI population is indicated by the size of the dark brown section of the bar; the percentage who score between the 10th and 25th percentile is shown by the orange section; and the percentage who score above the 25th percentile is shown by the light ochre colour. To enable these

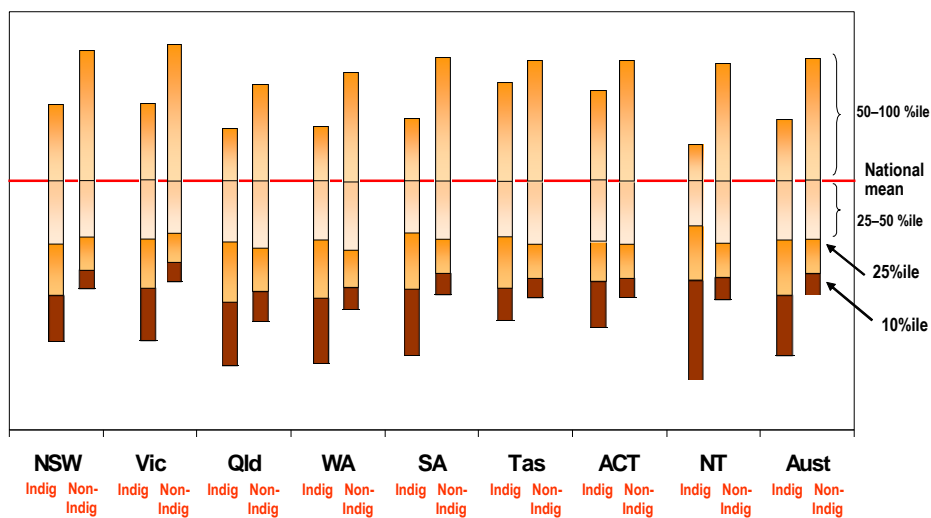
¹⁰ At p. 11.

¹¹ See <https://www.aedc.gov.au/data/data-explorer>

distributions to be compared with one another they have been mapped against the point which corresponds to the median of the national AEDI population, i.e. the score at which 50% of all Australian children score higher and another 50% score lower. For example, in the Northern Territory around 80% of Indigenous children score below the national median, whereas non-Indigenous children have a distribution of scores which corresponds closely with the distribution for all Australian children. In Queensland and Western Australia, there are also a very high proportion of Indigenous children starting school with developmental challenges.

Figure 1: Development of Indigenous and non-Indigenous five year olds in Australia

AEDI developmental scores of 5 year olds: Australia, 2009



Source: Menzies School of Health, from presentation of Professor Frank Oberklaid Director, Centre for Community Child Health, Royal Children’s Hospital/Murdoch Children’s Research Institute

Disadvantaged students start behind, and schools are expected to catch these students up. In general, however, they do not. Typically, disadvantaged students fall further behind each year they are at school.

A 2016 [Grattan Institute report](#) analysing NAPLAN results shows that the ‘alarmingly wide’ learning gaps between Australian students from disadvantaged backgrounds continue to widen throughout their schooling.¹² It shows that:

- The learning gaps grow much larger after Year 3.
- The gap that exists in Year 3 (ten months) triples by Year 9 (thirty months).

¹² The study used parental education as a proxy for a student’s socio-economic status and used Victorian NAPLAN data, although it notes the overall pattern for Australia is likely to be worse as evidence from international PISA tests suggest educational outcomes in Victoria depend less on student socio-economic background than in other Australian states.

- Even if students were doing as well in Year 3, disadvantaged students make one to two years less progress by Year 9 than students whose parents have more education.

The report's authors conclude:

As students move through school, some fall very far behind. Effective learning involves ideas and concepts that build on one another. Early delays in foundational literacy and numeracy skills can affect the ability to catch up later on. Our findings show there are real dangers for students who fall behind in their early years at school. Most will never catch up without effective targeted teaching or specific remedial support that accelerates their learning.¹³

Despite the deep and persistent inequality in the education of disadvantaged students, the news is not entirely bad. Good schools can catch these disadvantaged students up.

It is for precisely this reason that [Laureate Professor John Hattie](#) of University of Melbourne suggests we must develop a stronger focus on the progress made by schools, rather than levels of NAPLAN achievement per se. He argues 'Surely the fundamental purpose of schooling is to ensure that every student gains at least a year's achievement growth for a year's input. This applies no matter where they start, and even those who start above average deserve a year's growth.' He states developing such a focus is the best response to 'the perennial claim that lower achievement is a function of low socio-economic resources in the home, rurality, and parents not seeing the value of schooling.'

In addition to demonstrating progress at home and in community, in Indigenous schools what is required is a sharp focus on implementing effective strategies so that schools help Indigenous students to progress at a far greater rate than is currently the case.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DI AND EDI IS EXCEPTIONALLY WELL PROVEN

There is a very large corpus of evidence supporting DI and EDI that extends back more than 50 years. These are tried and tested teaching methods. These are not new methods, but the programs have been refined over the decades based on student test data and teacher feedback.

It is important to differentiate between direct and explicit instruction, and between DI and EDI programs. These are distinct but highly complementary instructional approaches, underpinned by shared principles. While Direct Instruction may be controversial in some contexts, even though that controversy is not justified by evidence or experience, this is not the case for explicit instruction. Even critics of DI routinely accept that explicit instruction is a well-proven and effective instructional approach. For example, Emeritus Professor Alan Luke in an article entitled [Direct Instruction is not a solution for Australian schools](#), acknowledges nonetheless that for explicit instruction:

¹³ At p. 18.

It is a key teaching method used commonly in schools today that has demonstrated efficacy in the teaching and learning of specific bodies of skills and knowledges. Explicit instruction is, therefore, one key element of effective teachers' repertoire of skills and approaches.¹⁴

Direct Instruction

As explained by [Emeritus Professor, Bill Loudon](#) of the University of Western Australia:

...Direct Instruction breaks each learning task down into its smallest component and requires mastery of simpler skills before proceeding to more difficult skills. Students are grouped according to their achievement, teachers are provided with closely scripted lesson plans, students respond to the teacher orally and as a group, and the group does not move on until everyone understands the material.

DI programs are organized so that skills are introduced gradually, giving children a chance to learn those skills and apply them before being required to learn another new set of skills. Only 10 percent of each lesson is new material. The remaining 90 percent of each lesson's content is review and application of skills students have already learned but need practice with in order to master. Skills and concepts are taught in isolation and then integrated with other skills into more sophisticated, higher-level applications.

The development of every DI program is rigorous and evidence-based. For example, DI's founder Engelmann would not publish a DI program until even the lowest performing students perform 90% or better on the skills taught in field tests of the program (Barbash 2012). This approach to the development of DI programs clearly contributes to the findings of studies that repeatedly show DI's step-by-step approach is more effective than individualized interventions created by teachers, or improvised programs and practices.

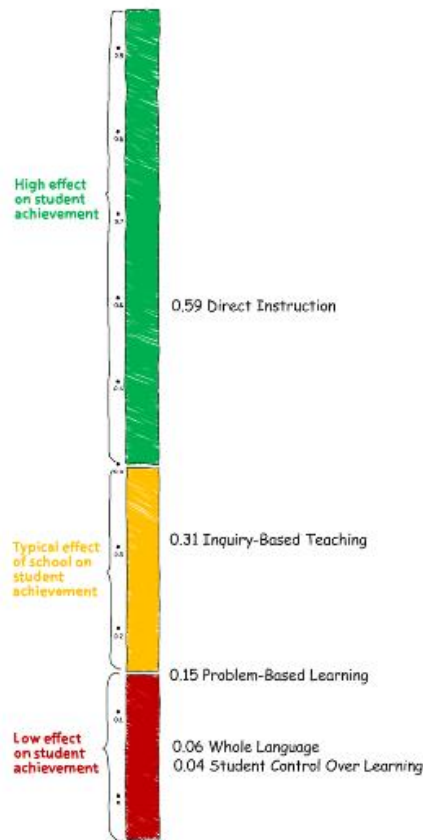
Arguably there is more scientific evidence validating the effectiveness of DI methods than any other approach to instruction.¹⁵ For example:

- In his landmark book, *Visible Learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement* (2009) Laureate Professor Hattie notes that Direct Instruction is one of the most effective interventions in schools. While the average effect size of student learning over one year is 0.40, he found the effect size of Direct Instruction to be 0.59. This means students doing DI can progress one and a half times faster than an average intervention. Hattie's review shows us that DI has twice the effect size of inquiry-based teaching, four times the effect size as problem-based learning and ten times the effect size of whole language (see Figure 2).

¹⁴ See also Dr Fogarty and Prof Dodson in [Committee Hansard](#), House of Representative Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Wednesday 16 March 2016, Canberra at p. 3 and p. 5.

¹⁵ A great deal of further evidence about DI can be found, including by reading the original research summarised in Hattie's *Visible Learning* review of 4 meta-analyses involving 304 studies, in addition to more recent research that confirms DI is an effective teaching method. The [National Institute for Direct Instruction \(NIFDI\) website](#) also provides access to a research including extensive literature reviews and meta-analyses, a Comprehensive Bibliography of the DI literature, and a searchable database of DI related writings, and new research.

Figure 2: Effect sizes of DI and alternative forms of instruction



Source: <http://www.evidencebasedteaching.org.au/direct-instruction-facts-myths/>

- Robert Marzano has also conducted a seminal meta-analysis on the effectiveness of various instructional strategies entitled, *A Theory-Based Meta-Analysis of Research on Instruction*. His review of research reinforces Hattie's findings. Marzano's review actually reveals explicit teaching is the most important teacher controlled factor affecting students' success.¹⁶
- The 2016 Productivity Commission report on *Indigenous Primary School Achievement* lists Direct Instruction first in its section on 'Most effective instructional methods and teaching interventions' (at p. 66).

The evidence about the effectiveness of DI should come as no surprise to those familiar with the broader evidence about how people learn. For example, teaching reading is probably the most researched topic in education. The gold standard consensus, articulated by the US [National Reading Panel](#) and supported by the Australian [Rowe National Inquiry into Reading](#) in 2005, is that the key components of effective teaching of reading are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. DI has all the features of this gold standard consensus, and it provides a method for this gold standard to be delivered consistently by all teachers in a school and across all students in a teacher's classroom. As Louden notes,

¹⁶ See also <http://www.evidencebasedteaching.org.au/robert-marzano-vs-john-hattie/>

In addition to the Direct Instruction approach of ability grouping, scripting, mastery learning and stimulus response teaching, these programs often include characteristics associated with the 'gold standard' for effective reading teaching: relentless attention to the component skills required for understanding the letter-sound relationships in written text, and reinforcement of these components in the context of book reading.

It is the strength of the evidence such as this that triggered the Rowe National Inquiry recommendations to shift toward more structured approaches to teaching reading, and that more recently prompted [Bruce Wilson's](#) 2014 review of Indigenous education in the Northern Territory to recommend that the use of structured skills-based literacy programs be mandated.

Explicit Direct Instruction

Explicit Direct Instruction (EDI) is a strategic collection of research-based instructional practices pioneered by pedagogues and cognitive researchers, such as Hattie, Rosenshine, Marzano, Sousa, Hunter, Goldenberg, and others. EDI strategies apply the combined learnings of all the research to help teachers deliver well-crafted lessons that explicitly teach grade-level content to all students the first time a concept is taught. A vast body of evidence supports the effectiveness of EDI and is readily accessible.¹⁷

EDI lessons do not provide a word-for-word script for teachers to follow but rather include seven lesson design components that research has proved are vital for student learning and long-term retention. EDI provides a framework for lessons that are ready to teach yet still allow teachers to control the pace of the lesson, to modify instruction as a result of real-time assessment of student learning through Checking for Understanding questions, and to include their own engagement strategies to manage the classroom. EDI lessons are 75-80 percent new content and 20-25 percent review of prior knowledge and sub-skills. EDI lessons also include Periodic Review practice pages for review (e.g., five, ten, and 15 days after initial instruction).

INTRODUCING DI AND EDI IN INDIGENOUS SCHOOLS CAN IMPROVE LEARNING

Arguably there are no other, better, evidence-based approaches deserving greater priority for trial and implementation in Indigenous contexts. There is such a large body of evidence in so many contexts proving the effectiveness of DI and EDI, that it must be said that if these methods fail when they are applied in the context of Indigenous schools, the weight of the evidence backing the methods themselves suggests the failure will be one of implementation rather than the failure of the methods themselves. In such circumstances, understanding where these methods are not producing the excellent results that should be expected would be of critical importance.

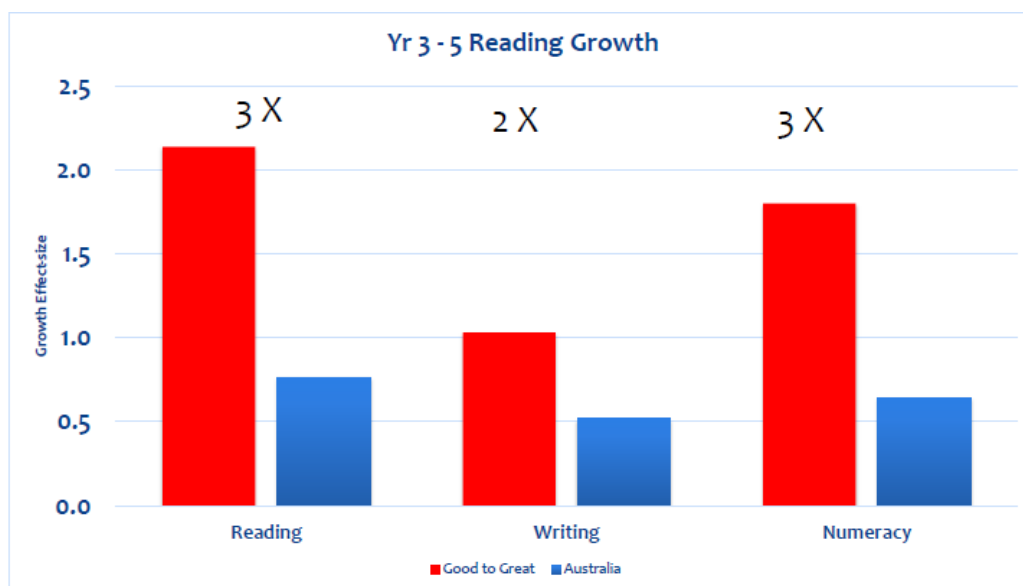
Not only is it the case that the implementation of DI and EDI in Indigenous schools can be justified on the basis of the general evidence, but also on the basis of the specific evidence and experience so far in implementing DI in Indigenous schools. This is what [Laureate](#)

¹⁷ see e.g. Hollingsworth & Ybarra 2009; Marzano 2003; Sousa 2005; Rosenshine 1986, 2012.

[Professor Hattie, stated in the Jack Keating Memorial Lecture, 2016](#) about the performance of Cape York Academy schools:

Noel Pearson’s “Good to Great” schools have made appreciable differences to the learning lives of Aboriginal students. This year, Coen and Hope Vale have recorded the highest attendance of remote-based indigenous Queensland schools. I analysed the data from 122 of his students. Learning growth effect-sizes were calculated for all students where they completed a NAPLAN test over two occasions (Year 3 and 5, or Year 5 and 7). The average effect-sizes are all substantial. **For Years 3-5, there has been greater than the Australian average growth: 181% greater in Reading, 98% greater in Writing, and 181% greater in Numeracy** [see Figure 3]. This is the good news; the program is truly making a difference; but the sobering news is that the students have to make 3+ years growth in a year to catch up. There is more to do, but the nay-sayers want to destroy an evidence based program because it has not performed magic. The performance is a function of the dedication, the hard work, the evidence based cycle of evaluation by the school leaders and teachers in these schools. [Emphasis added]

Figure 3: Reading, writing and numeracy progress of Cape York Academy students compared to other Australian students



Source: Hattie 2016

The highly respected Productivity Commission, that champions evidence based approaches, includes in its 2016 [Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage report](#) some case studies of ‘things that work’, which are ‘actions that are making a difference’ for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.¹⁸ It notes the Cape York Academy is one of the few stand out performers in the Indigenous education area. The Productivity Commission’s most recent Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage report states:

The Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy Initiative (Qld) is a pilot program operating in primary schools in Coen, Hope Vale and Aurukun. An early evaluation found that whilst it was not possible to conclude for the available data whether the Initiative had an impact on

¹⁸ At p. iii and 2.10.

student learning, there was general agreement among school staff and most parents that student literacy was improving.¹⁹

Indeed, the Queensland Government's Director General of Education, Dr Jim Watterston, and the Deputy Director General, Ms Patrea Walton, on more than one occasion have acknowledged the improvements as a result of the changes introduced by the Cape York Academy, particularly in literacy and numeracy results. For example, the Director General Dr Jim Watterston wrote on 17 September 2015 Cape York Academy stating:

I am pleased to note that significant progress in NAPLAN results has been made across all relevant campuses in 2014 and 2015, and commend your commitment to ensuring that all Cape York students get access to high quality educational instruction.²⁰

In 2015, the Northern Territory Minister for Education, Peter Chandler, introduced DI literacy programs into a number of schools. Although it is still very early days, in June 2016 he stated that:

Progressive Achievement Testing data indicates that the government schools that have implemented Direct Instruction in Literacy have seen positive results, particularly for students for Years 1 – 4. On average, Direct Instruction has had an improvement greater than that of similar schools not part of the program.

And that:

The successful implementation and increasingly positive school outcomes in literacy in schools delivering the Direct Instruction program has resulted in further expansion of the program throughout the Northern Territory, with up to eight schools to include Numeracy into the program by the end of 2016.

The previous Committee was presented with more detailed evidence by Good to Great Schools Australia showing the improvements in the five years of evidence since the inception of the Cape York Academy model, which included the introduction of DI and EDI. As is acknowledged in the Committee transcript, the level of evidence provided surpassed that put forward generally to the review. Nonetheless we take this opportunity to both represent some of this evidence, present further evidence and to set out the comprehensive picture of Cape York Academy schools since the implementation of reforms, including the implementation of DI and EDI.

First, however, we respond to the specific concerns that have been raised in the Inquiry process.

ADDRESSING THE CONCERNS RAISED IN SUBMISSIONS AND INQUIRY HEARINGS

A review of the 61 submissions shows that the two submissions of the Australian Education Union, and Dr William Fogarty and Professor Mick Dodson from the National Centre for

¹⁹ At 4.32- 33

²⁰ Letter from Mr Jim Watterston, Director General, Department of Education dated 17 September 2015 to the Good to Great School Australia Co-Chair.

Indigenous Studies (ANU) are the only ones that devote any substantial attention to concerns about Direct Instruction. The Ninti submission makes a single reference to DI, which seems to dispute the evidence that it can effectively improve literacy.²¹

In the inquiry's hearings, opinions on DI are provided by Ms Correna Haythorpe, Federal President of the Australian Education Union and Mr Maurie Mulheron, Deputy Federal President²² and Mr Darren Godwell, CEO of the Stronger Smarter Institute.²³ Some opinions are also provided by Dr Fogarty and Professor Dodson²⁴ although these are not entirely negative as they point out that explicit literacy and numeracy should form part of a good education program.

The Committee Secretary²⁵ also suggested that the following submissions provide 'publicly available examples of evidence that raised serious concerns regarding Direct Instruction or cautioned that more research regarding its efficacy is required':

- The Independent Schools Queensland submission. However, this submission in fact provides a single reference to DI in a positive way in a table that is intended to assist the Committee to identify the strategies and educational models that have been most successful in assisting Indigenous students, under headings of 'best practice models, both domestically and internationally' and 'What is working?'.²⁶
- The NT Department of Education submission. This is in fact a copy of the Wilson review that includes the recommendation for programs such as DI to improve literacy.²⁷

These submissions appear to have been seriously misconstrued.

A number of the Committee members also observed first hand Cape York Academy DI classes in action, and spent a few minutes in a number of classrooms. This experience is said to have led to these Committee members to form views, both negative and positive about particular aspects of the program. It appears that Committee members may have drawn some erroneous conclusions on the basis of these brief observations.

The concerns raised before the Committee are not new, they reflect [common myths](#) about DI in general. We are pleased to have the opportunity to address each of the matters raised in the Interim Report, in submissions and hearings, by providing further information.

²¹ Ninti submission at p. 9.

²² Haythorpe, C and Mulheron, M in [Committee Hansard](#), House of Representative Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Tuesday, 22 March 2016, Sydney.

²³ Godwell, D in [Committee Hansard](#), House of Representative Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Friday 5 February, Brisbane.

²⁴ Fogarty, W and Dodson M in [Committee Hansard](#), House of Representative Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Wednesday 16 March 2016, Canberra.

²⁵ Committee Secretary, email dated 29 November 2016.

²⁶ ISQ submission at pp. 7 & 11.

²⁷ NT Department of Education submission, p. 20.

‘DI isn’t working’

The submission of the Australian Education Union presents some limited NAPLAN data of Cape York Academy schools to suggest the outcomes are poor, and also alleges that the reporting of the results to date has been selective.

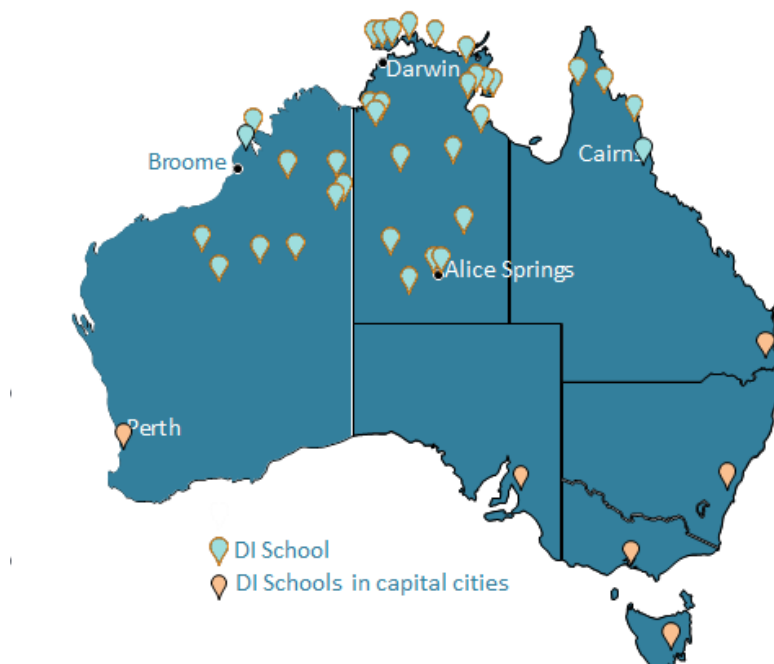
In addition to the evidence presented above, below we present a comprehensive picture of the NAPLAN scores of the Cape York Academy, and other supplementary data to show the clear trajectory of improvement and also a clear pathway for further improvement of Cape York Academy results.

‘These methods are only being used in a small number of schools’

The Committee states in its Interim Report that DI and EDI methods of teaching are only ‘being used in a small number of schools in Queensland, the Northern Territory, and Western Australia.’

Perhaps the Committee was not aware that there are hundreds of schools across Australia, including in metropolitan centres, regional and remote locations that are currently implementing direct and explicit instruction, and DI and EDI programs. McGraw Hill Australia, the distributors of DI programs, supplies the programs to more than 400 schools across the country, including high-performing private schools in Sydney and other Australian capital cities (see Figure 4). Further information is provided in this submission about the use of these approaches in schools such as Broadbeach School on the Gold Coast, Blue Haven Public School in NSW, and Goondi State School and Innisfail East State School in North Queensland.

Figure 4: More than 400 schools throughout Australia use DI programs



It is precisely because of the very strong, and well recognised, evidence base that DI and EDI are increasingly being used in a wide variety of schools, including in ‘mainstream’ schools, independent and state schools, and in disadvantaged areas as well as in relatively advantaged areas. It is logically inconsistent that in the public debate it is only Indigenous schools that appear to be singled out for criticism for implementing DI and EDI as one important part of school improvement.

‘DI and EDI don’t work for all students’, ‘DI is a remedial program’, and ‘DI causes Curriculum narrowing’

The Interim Report suggests DI and EDI cannot ‘deliver improved outcomes for the majority of students’ and queries ‘the effectiveness of this teaching approach for students of all ages and the extent to which it can equip students for future opportunities’. It also states:

While acknowledging that the pedagogy may be of value in the earliest years in literacy and numeracy fundamentals, it appeared to be limiting for older students studying other subjects.²⁸

The transcript of hearings includes statements from some Committee members that during a visit of these members to a Cape York Academy school ‘we saw kids at the back of the classrooms that were clearly not “keeping up” with what the teacher was saying’.²⁹ The Committee Chair says,

with regard to direct instruction, which is from the US originally, we saw little kids using it for phonetics, literacy and numeracy foundation work, and that seemed to be really exciting the little kids, but then we saw it for older classes—didn't we Sharon—and it was a different story again where kids were being invited to tell the difference between morals and themes ...

Moral and themes for an unnamed story. The question was: hypothetically what is the difference between morals and themes? And these poor little students were sort of lost—I think that is a kind way to put it. That was our experience with just that.³⁰

A Committee member also expresses concern during the hearings that DI cannot adequately cater to Indigenous students’ needs, saying ‘One of the problems with this uniform response argument, that this will apply and work, just does not take sufficient account of those differences.’³¹

The Australian Education Union cites academic Alan Luke (2013) in their submission and when appearing at the Committee’s hearings, to claim that it is a mistake to offer DI as a

²⁸ At p. 24.

²⁹ See Perrett in [Committee Hansard](#), House of Representative Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Tuesday, 22 March 2016, Sydney, p. 23.

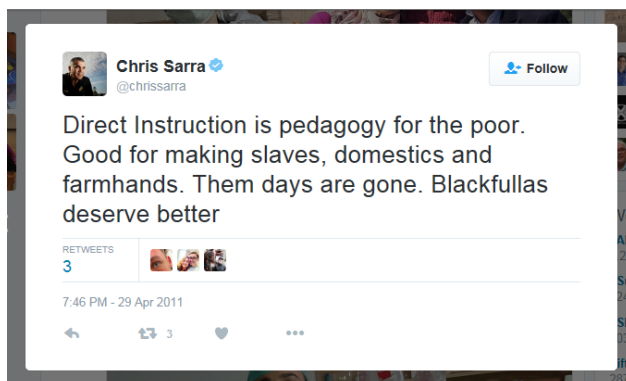
³⁰ See Committee Chair Sharman Stone in [Committee Hansard](#), House of Representative Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Wednesday 16 March 2016, Canberra, p. 3.

³¹ Snowden in [Committee Hansard](#), House of Representative Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Wednesday 16 March 2016, Canberra, p. 8.

‘total curriculum solution’, as it says has been done at Cape York Academy. This is a strange assertion from Luke who is well aware that the Cape York Academy’s ‘5C’ curriculum includes Club and Culture programs that use other pedagogies. Knowing this, Luke’s statement is inexplicable. The Union also claims ‘Curriculum narrowing is certainly a consequence of the model’ because in addition to literacy and numeracy ‘there are other aspects of what needs to be taught in our schools that are important’.³² Mr Mulheron states that:

...in New South Wales school teachers have to create an individual education program for each child. There are 55,000 students and there are 55,000 programs. That involves one-to-one interviews with the teacher and the parent, working out the kids' needs, assessing where they are and developing a plan, so that their individual needs are met and incorporated into class programs. **You contrast that with an off-the-shelf kind of model, where everyone has to fit into it. I am not saying that one or the other is by dint better than the other, but it seems to me—my intuition as a teacher—that no two children sitting in a classroom learn at the same pace and have the same learning needs, and that is one of my concerns with DI.**³³ [Emphasis added]

Although it is unclear whether it influenced the Committee’s statements in the Interim Report, the inquiry also heard from a Stronger Smarter representative that DI was a remedial program and not suitable for all students.³⁴ Indeed, Stronger Smarter founder, the high-profile Indigenous educator [Dr Sarra has criticised Direct Instruction on the basis it is a remedial program](#), and on Twitter has suggested that Indigenous students deserve better.



We would like to draw the Committee’s attention to further information to clarify the appropriate role and scope of DI and EDI in improving schools and learning.

³² Haythorpe, C in [Committee Hansard](#), House of Representative Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Tuesday, 22 March 2016, Sydney.

³³ See Mulheron in [Committee Hansard](#), House of Representative Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Tuesday, 22 March 2016, Sydney, p. 24.

³⁴ Godwell, D in [Committee Hansard](#), House of Representative Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Friday 5 February, Brisbane; see also the Ninti submission, p. 6.

There is very strong evidence that all students will be advantaged rather than disadvantaged by DI. Professor John Hattie,³⁵ University of Melbourne, in his landmark book, *Visible Learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement* (2009) states:

One of the common criticisms is that Direct Instruction works with very low-level or specific skills, and with lower ability and the youngest students. These are not the findings from the meta analyses. The effects of Direct Instruction are similar for regular ($d = 0.99$), and special education and lower ability students ($d = 0.86$), higher for reading ($d = 0.89$) than mathematics ($d = 0.50$), similar for more low-level word-attack ($d = 0.64$) and also for high-level comprehension ($d = 0.54$), and similar for elementary and high school students (Adams & Englemann, 1996). (pp. 206-7)

DI programs in Australia have been embraced in many schools for all students across all primary year levels to provide foundational literacy and numeracy skills. The available DI literacy and numeracy programs map to the Australian curriculum for primary schools years between prep and Year 6. Students receive DI lessons in flexible ability groups, which may cross year level boundaries, and they progress through the levels as they achieve mastery. This means DI programs can be used for older students aged beyond Year 6, where for some reason they have missed out on achieving these foundational levels skills. Conversely, however, there is nothing to prevent younger students progressing more quickly through the DI curriculum and achieving mastery of all their foundational skills before the end of Year 6.

Implementation of DI programs does not necessarily mean there is a narrowing of the curriculum. The reality is, however, there is little value in providing curriculum content if students do not have the foundational literacy and numeracy and other skills needed to cope with it — and unfortunately the research shows that for the vast majority of Indigenous students in Indigenous schools this may be exactly what is occurring as with every year of school the achievement gap is widening. The Cape York Academy school has deliberately devoted additional time to literacy and numeracy to address the significant gap these students have, whilst providing an extended school day to fully address other areas of the Australian curriculum.

No school should apologise for having a central focus on lifting the exceedingly poor literacy and numeracy of students in these highly disadvantaged places — indeed it is the *raison d'être* of every school. The importance of ensuring that no child in a school misses out on acquiring these foundational skills, cannot be overestimated. Literacy and numeracy skills are the critical base of any education, they are the key capabilities which facilitate higher learning — they are a necessary pre-requisite. Although ‘many would (correctly) argue that these are attributes of narrow excellence; they are the building blocks of the wider excellence many aspire towards’ (Hattie 2016). Literacy and numeracy competence is foundational not only for school based learning, but also for children’s behavioural and psychosocial wellbeing, further education and training, occupational success, productive and fulfilling participation in social and economic activity, as well as for the nation’s social and economic future.

³⁵ Professor John Hattie has been voted Australia’s most influential education academic.

While DI programs focus on teaching foundational literacy and numeracy, even within the DI programs a transition and extension starts to increasingly occur once students have the necessary foundational skills. The upper level DI programs (once students are starting to 'Read to Learn') include 40-60% science and social studies content such as interpreting maps, reading passages about ecology.

DI and EDI have been shown to have a relatively unique ability to deliver on the promise of 'No child gets left behind'. Indeed through its key features DI provides a more personalised learning program for students than most approaches used in Australian schools, allowing teachers to differentiate instruction more efficiently:

- DI approaches provide a carefully sequenced curriculum of knowledge and skills, the explicit teaching of that curriculum, flexible ability grouping with children placed where they are at within this curriculum sequence, and close tracking of mastery learning, where children progress to the next level only when they have mastered the level they are at.
- Data is collected on each student's learning levels in every DI subject area. Students are placed in DI programs and flexible learning groups to match these learning needs. Data is analysed by classroom teachers and instructional coaches to review how each student is learning on a weekly basis. Mastery testing occurs for each child every five lessons. This information is used to further personalise the learning program for each student and adjustments are made if students need more or less time on a specific topic. DI in this way provides teachers with a powerful tool to know which students are struggling and need extra support, and which students are flying and how to extend them, on a topic-by-topic and week-by-week basis.
- In DI classes stronger performing students are seated at the back of the classroom to assist with the close tracking of each student's progress.

The combination of DI's characteristics including flexible ability grouping, unison response, and close individual tracking brings DI instruction as close to one-on-one as possible in a group setting.

The features of DI also mean it can cater well to situations where a substantial proportion of the students in the class may have learning or behavioural difficulties, while higher performing students are not held back. On the basis of known risk factors (e.g. alcohol and substance misuse, parental mental illness and exposure to violence and trauma) it is utterly predictable that in Indigenous schools and communities, teachers will face a very high concentration of learning difficulties and disabilities in the classroom. Special needs of Indigenous children (including cognitive impairment and social and emotional difficulties) are often undiagnosed and treated in these settings, and specialist resources are often entirely absent. Regardless of the starting point, however, DI ensures that all students are learning by tracking the progress of every student very closely as they progress through foundational concepts. It ensures that every student will experience success in their next lesson.

Of course First Nations students must be prepared through education to walk in both worlds. Every First Nations student at every school should be able to access the very best mainstream education, but that education must help them to also reap the benefits of being a part of strong and vibrant Indigenous cultures — including by growing up speaking their ancestral language as a mother tongue, and having essential knowledge of their ancestral lands, their peoples and places. Cape York Academy schools are focused on reading and writing, yes. They are also focused on many other aspects of providing a first class two ways education also.

The Cape York Academy schools' extended school day allows time for a focus on 'Club' and 'Culture' programs whereby students can participate in physical education, art, music including instrumental band, and science, as well as highly culturally relevant learning, humanities and social sciences, and the arts. In these programs the Cape York Academy uses a mix of pedagogical techniques, including Explicit Direct Instruction (for Culture), explicit instruction (for Club programs in physical education and music) and inquiry-based learning (for Club programs in science).

DI and EDI are not by themselves a whole solution to the Indigenous education crisis. While the evidence and experience suggests there is every reason to believe that DI and EDI may form an important part of the solution, this is not to say that DI and EDI alone can provide the whole solution to the learning, development and wellbeing crisis that confronts so many Indigenous children and families. Of course this is not the case. DI and EDI simply provide very useful, well-proven tools in a teacher's toolkit to guarantee high quality teaching occurs in the classroom, they do not provide the only tools or the only teaching methods used in any school, even schools that fully embrace the DI and EDI pedagogies.

The Cape York Academy does not, and cannot, claim that the introduction of DI and EDI 'covers the field', and that there are no other improvements still to be made. The Cape York Academy has been 'learning as it goes', and can readily admit that lessons have been learnt and that there is much left to be done. Indeed, one large ongoing focus of Cape York Academy must be to improve the nexus between the health and education of its students, so that the development and wellbeing of every child is optimally supported to make the most of their learning opportunities. We wholeheartedly agree with the discussion during the hearing between the Committee Chair, the Hon. Dr Sharman Stone MP, the Hon. Warren Snowden MP, Dr Fogarty, and Professor Dodson regarding the need for a stronger focus on the impact of trauma on many First Nations students.³⁶

Please find **attached** at Appendix 1 a copy of a recent submission that was made to a Deloitte Access Economic review of disability in Queensland schools which the Committee may find of interest regarding the need for schools to provide a more comprehensive and integrated response to the learning development and wellbeing needs of First Nations students.

³⁶ See [Committee Hansard](#), House of Representative Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Wednesday 16 March 2016, Canberra, pp. 8-9.

‘Kids don’t like it’

The Australian Education Union submission presents one teacher opinion that kids don’t like the DI approach.³⁷ Ms Haythorpe also states in the hearings:

One of the students that I came across up there [in the Northern Territory] actually said to the teacher, 'Are we doing direct instruction today, Miss?' When she said yes, he took off because he did not want to participate in the program. So is it a program that engages our students?³⁸

The Union also suggests that the introduction of DI has been associated with a decline in attendance at Cape York Academy schools, a suggestion that seems to have been picked up by the Committee member the Hon. Warren Snowden.³⁹

No context is provided around the teacher opinion or the anecdote about the comments made by a NT student. Again, it must be remembered that the introduction of DI is not a silver bullet and one would need to understand this child’s attendance history, for example, and that of his schoolmates also and look for any overall change in attendance patterns in order to suggest a link.

There is no evidence presented to support the claim that DI and EDI cause kids to disengage and that kids do not enjoy it. On the contrary, it has been our experience that kids become engaged and excited, not passive, bored or disruptive far more readily direct DI and EDI classes. [This short video of Blue Haven Public School in NSW](#) provides some teacher views suggesting that the recent introduction of direct and explicit instruction is helping to engage children and that the children are enjoying DI.

There is no clear or consistent pattern of either increased or decreased attendance at Cape York Academy schools that can be linked to the introduction of DI and EDI teaching methods (see Table 1 which presents school attendance for Cape York Academy schools as annual averages).

³⁷ See Australian Education Union submission, Box 2 at p. 29.

³⁸ Haythorpe, C in [Committee Hansard](#), House of Representative Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Tuesday, 22 March 2016, Sydney at p. 23.

³⁹ See Australian Education Union submission, Box 2 at p. 26. See also Snowden (Acting Chair) in [Committee Hansard](#), House of Representative Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Tuesday, 22 March 2016, Sydney at p. 24, and McKenzie, L in [Committee Hansard](#), Monday 7 March 2016, Cairns at pp. 6-7.

YEAR	Coen	Hope Vale	Aurukun	
2007	90%	75%	38%	
2008	92%	83%	49%	Cape York Welfare Reform commences
2009	93%	85%	67%	
2010	91%	83%	68%	CYA begins at Coen and Aurukun
2011	89%	80%	69%	CYA begins at Hope Vale
2012	87%	73%	63%	
2013	87%	71%	63%	
2014	91%	77%	58%	
2015	89%	78%	54%	
2016*	90%	77%	49%	CYA exits Aurukun school in May 2016

Table 1: Annual average attendance at Cape York Academy school campuses

Source: Family Responsibilities Commission.

* Term 4 data not yet finalised and included

Improving attendance in Aurukun has continued to be a particular challenge up until May 2016, from which time the Cape York Academy has not been involved in the operation of the Aurukun school. David Marr’s landmark ABC *Four Corners* episode ‘Six Pack Politics’ in 1991, highlights the long legacy of challenges for Aurukun — at this time it had the highest murder rate and lowest school attendance in the country. In 2007, prior to the introduction of reforms, average attendance in Term 4 was as low as 27% at the Aurukun school and there were no success stories produced from the education model that was in place. This history, and the ongoing broader context of what is happening in Indigenous communities, continues to present very real challenges for lifting attendance. Drinking, gambling and fighting are key influences impacting on attendance. Influxes of cash (such as tax returns, which welfare recipients can still receive) that can lead to increased availability of alcohol, parties and sleeplessness that affect students’ attendance in subsequent weeks, also have a notable impact. Other events, such as the Cairns Show which is conducted during the week in a school term, also have a large impact on attendance at many Cape York schools.

We re-present three examples that were also presented to the previous Committee in Figures 5-7. Figure 5 shows attendance in the week of a death in the community involving conflict between community members, and in another week of substantial community violence. It includes a graph separating students into two groups by their general attendance pattern, and it appears to suggest that when serious disruptive events occur, attendance of the high attender group may restore itself more quickly. Figure 6 shows school attendance when tax returns and family reconciliation payments are paid late July/early August, and Figure 7 shows school attendance in the week of the Cairns Show.

Figure 5: Deaths and community violence, and student attendance

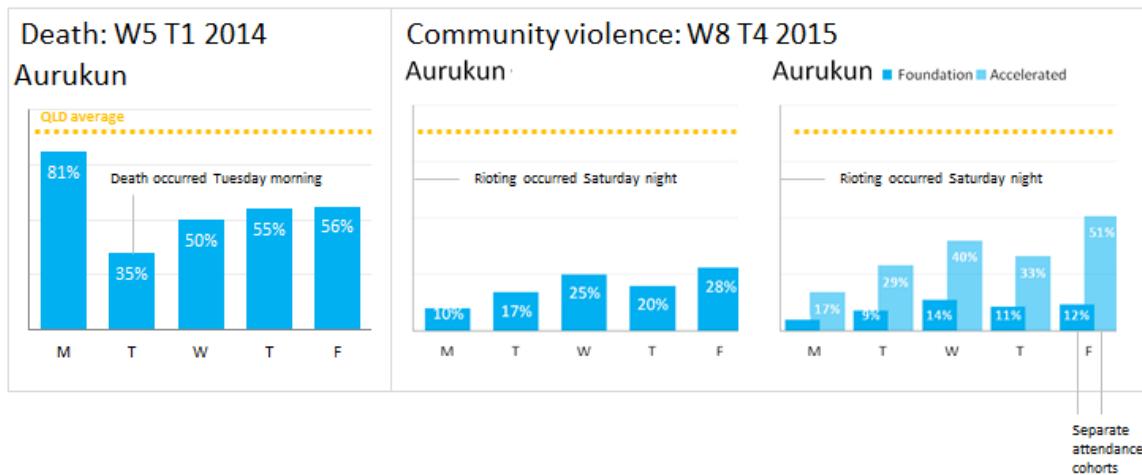


Figure 6: School attendance in Tax Return weeks, 2015 Term 3 Weeks 3 and 4

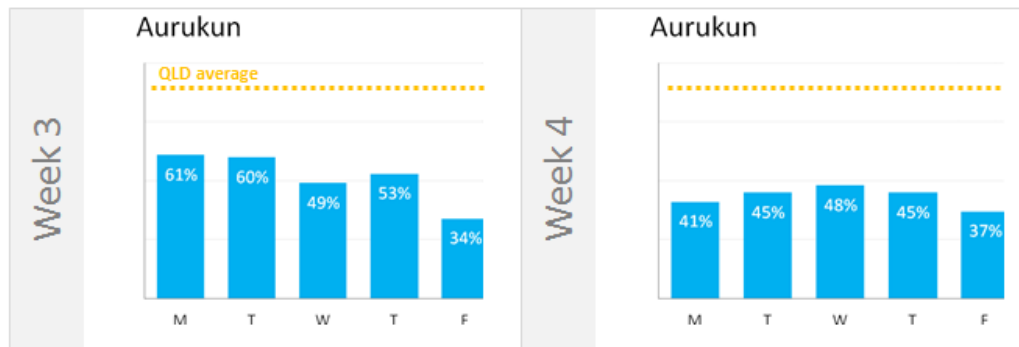
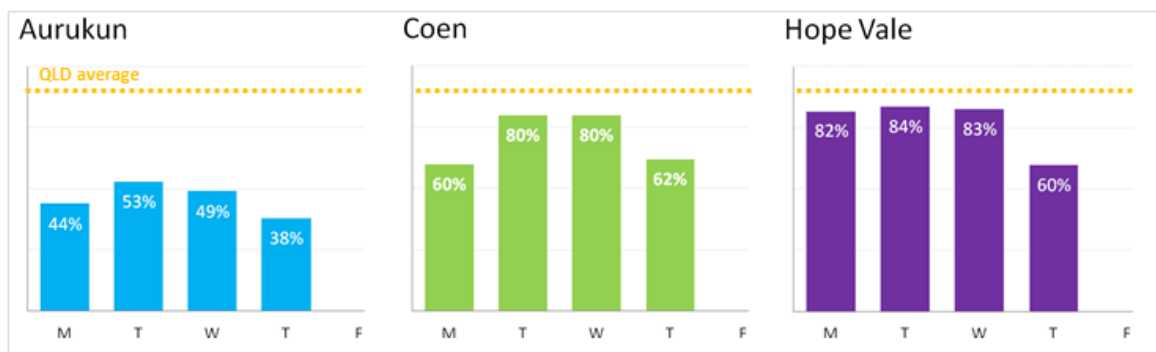


Figure 7: Cairns Show Week 1 Term 2 2015: Cairns Show Public Holiday on Friday



Chronic poor school attendance in Indigenous communities is a complex problem connected to many of the dimensions of severe intergenerational disadvantage. It is simplistic to assert that the use of one highly engaging and effective teaching method for part of the school day is the cause of ongoing attendance problems.

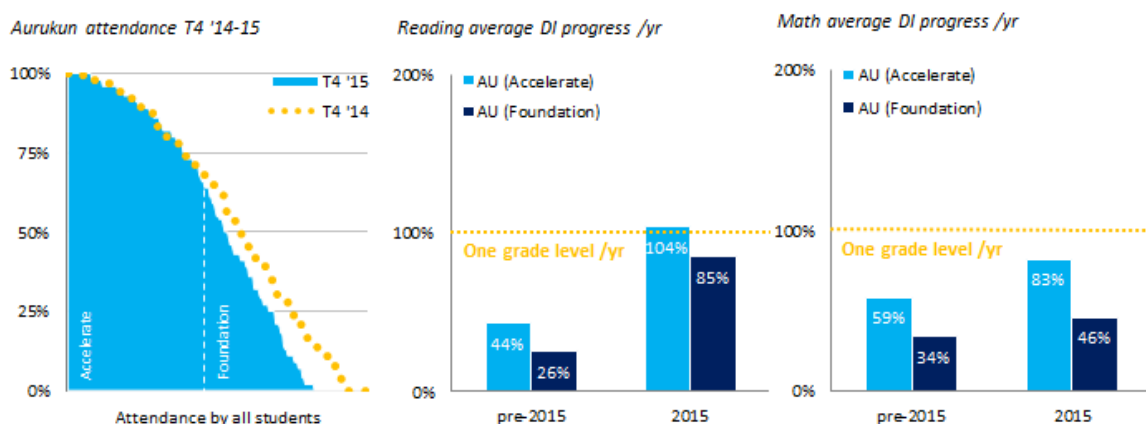
One of the Cape York Academy schools, at Coen, which was visited by the previous Committee, is the highest attended Indigenous school in Queensland. How can it be said that DI has disengaged the Coen students when they attend at such high rates? Coen attendance rates were high and they continue to be high. They have not fallen off, so where is the student disengagement said to be caused by DI and EDI?

The high level of efficiency of DI and EDI programs does, however, mean that even for very poor attenders, when they do attend they can learn from exactly where they left off, and without holding back any others in the classroom. As Hattie (2009) notes ‘The principal objective of Direct Instruction is to provide instruction to accelerate performance of the students; that is, teach more in less clock time, aim at teaching generalizations beyond rote learning, sequence learning and constantly monitor the performance of students as they move to achieve their challenging goals.’⁴⁰ Indeed, just an hour of DI instruction per day is typically enough to significantly improve student performance (Barbash 2012).

Up until May 2016, the Cape York Academy had been refining the implementation of DI in the Aurukun school where attendance has for many, many years been chronically poor. From 2015, whenever possible ‘non-attenders’ (referred to as those students in the ‘Foundation’ grouping) were taught one-on-one when they did attend to ensure that they would be able to ‘Read to Learn’, and not be illiterate, by the time they finish primary school regardless of their excessively poor attendance. Figure 8 shows Cape York Academy DI progress data before and after using this strategy from 2015, chronic non-attenders in the Foundation stream were able to improve their rate of progress through the DI reading and maths programs (getting through 85% and 46% of a year’s program in reading and maths respectively), meaning that they would achieve all-important but basic levels of literacy and numeracy by the time they graduate from primary school — for example, they would be able to ‘Read to Learn’. Figure 8 shows those students with higher attendance (students in the ‘Accelerate’ grouping), also improved their pace of learning since the implementation of this approach in 2015.

This is clearly not an ideal situation, and work to improve attendance must continue, but every school should consider that teaching every child to read and write is an absolutely necessary (if not sufficient) achievement, even when attendance is very poor. Data was presented to the Committee hearing showing this strategy was working in Aurukun before May 2016.

Figure 8: Reading and maths progress of poor attenders (Foundation) and good attenders (Accelerate) in Aurukun, before and after 2015



⁴⁰ At p. 206.

DI and EDI are great teaching methods to ensure engagement in Indigenous schools. In any classroom, teachers can't teach where a high number of children with learning difficulties or other behavioural difficulties are disrupting the rest of the class. In Indigenous schools in any given classroom, a substantial proportion of the class will have special needs (and often quite complex special needs), compared to perhaps only a small number in a typical metropolitan school. In terms of managing a classroom there is a cascading effect, and the special needs of a number of students may impact the learning of all students. Where there is a higher than usual number of such children in every classroom, such as one should expect in any Indigenous school given the indicators, then ensuring methods are used that can guarantee the engagement of the whole class should be accorded priority.

DI and EDI methods are well suited to ensure every student is very actively engaged in learning. Students experience success at every DI lesson as the lesson will be pitched at the right level for them — just in front of where they are at — which helps to reduce the chance that a student will disengage from their teacher and from learning. One teacher described it like this: 'DI is like using a ball on a string in front of a cat... it provides the micro building blocks to ensure every child in a classroom is engaged and is learning.'

'Teachers/educators don't like it'

The Committee's Interim Report suggests comments it made about DI and EDI were influenced by teacher/educator concerns.

Mr Godwell made some general comments in the inquiry's hearings suggesting 'It is too prescriptive', 'You don't get buy-in', 'It is imposed', but he also says some Stronger Smarter teachers happily use DI 'as it was intended: as a remedial program'.⁴¹ Again, this view reflects the [criticisms levelled by Dr Sarra](#), along with some other educators, that DI takes out 'the human connection between a teacher and a child' or that 'A script doesn't allow for people (teachers) to be exceptional'.

The Australian Education Union submission states that it surveyed its members working in remote communities using DI in Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia, and in its submission it reproduces eight quotes of negative teacher feedback obtained. The Union provides no information about the number of teachers it surveyed, the number of responses received, or whether any other more positive opinions were provided. During the Committee hearings, the Australian Education Union's Ms Haythorpe also recites some negative opinions about DI she heard when talking to some NT teachers, but again there is no other contextual information provided and she is not asked, for example, if she has heard other, more positive, opinions. Ms Haythorpe also raises concerns that about programs of this nature being forced on communities without consultation.

Having a program of DI scripted lessons to ensure all students are taught foundational skills does not interrupt the ability of strong relationships forming between student and teacher, and it does not prevent exceptional teaching practice. There is no evidence to suggest that

⁴¹ Godwell, D in [Committee Hansard](#), House of Representative Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Friday 5 February, Brisbane.

this is the case, there is only supposition. The extensive educational literature simply does not support these negative claims made against DI.

We note that the Committee heard from and saw in action teachers who are strong supporters of the DI and EDI methods, yet there is no reference in the inquiry's Interim Report to these other views to suggest that an appropriately balanced approach has been taken to the range of views the Committee was offered. Given the lack of any contextual information about the negative opinions put forward, the lack of apparent consideration of other opinions allowing for a balanced assessment to be made, and in the absence of any other supporting evidence to support the negative opinions put forward, we would suggest that this re-convened Committee might wish to exercise caution regarding the weight to be placed on these opinions.

DI and EDI programs are attractive in schools that have many inexperienced teachers and high levels of teacher transiency. Large numbers of beginning teachers and poor teacher retention are very real issues in many Indigenous schools, especially in remote areas. This often leads to the perverse situation that some of the most challenging schools in the country rely heavily on teachers with limited experience, and have very high rates of teacher turnover.

In any school, to teach reading (for example) to the entire class and have each child productively develop their literacy skills, requires a very high level of skill and a range of teaching strategies upon which to draw to meet the developmental and learning needs of individual children. Providing the required repertoire of teaching skills has long been acknowledged as a huge challenge for teacher education and for practicing teachers as they assume the responsibility for the literacy learning of a whole class (see e.g. Rowe 2005).

In Indigenous schools the already substantial challenges confronting a teacher responsible for teaching a whole class to read, are likely to be greatly amplified. Rather than risk long term deleterious effects where a child misses out on some foundational literacy or numeracy skills, DI provides a published gold standard program for every teacher to teach children to read, according to their flexible ability grouping. Teachers are not required to have the knowledge to try to produce their own individual version of a gold standard program that caters to the spectrum of needs of every child in their classroom (Louden 2014). Another benefit is that if a teacher leaves, the next teacher will be able to take up exactly where the previous teacher left off, without causing any disruption to a child's learning of foundational skills.

In this way, DI and EDI programs provide greater assurance for every already disadvantaged student, that every teacher at a school will be able to teach them effectively. DI and EDI also provide teachers in the most challenging of circumstances with a method that ensures that every child will learn foundational literacy and numeracy skills.

Of course teacher opinions will vary, and all teachers will not agree. Indeed in our submission here we have included teacher views that are utterly at odds with those cited by the Australian Education Union. However, as with any teaching method, DI will not suit every teacher.

It must also be said that almost every teacher using DI for the first time is sceptical at best. This has been the consistent experience of the Cape York Academy. This is understandable: most teachers have never been exposed to direct or explicit instruction, would not have learned anything specific about it in their teacher education (other than the standard negative memes referred to by Professor Hattie in *Visible Learning*), and will never have taught DI before. Whilst the instructional theory and evidentiary base for DI provides useful support for such teachers, it is only ever the response and performance of the students that persuades the teachers. 'Buy in' does not happen at the beginning, but by the end of the first term scepticism is replaced by a real experience. Teachers know when their students are responding and learning. It is the learning that convinces the sceptical teacher.

This is the [testimony of Ms Kiriana White](#) who began as a first year teacher at the inception of the Cape York Academy at the Hope Vale campus. She began teaching a group of 15 Year 6 and 7 boys who had the week before been placement tested at a prep reading level, and whose behaviour and disengagement was challenging at the start. When she arrived on the first day, most of the boys were on the roof. Kiriana initially said she 'hated it' and she expressed her serious concerns about the DI programs but was convinced to stick with it for one term. The results she and her students were able to achieve changed her view. Six years later Kiriana is now an expert teacher coach in DI.⁴²

Please find also attached as **Appendix 2** a copy of a recent letter received from a Principal, Mr Stephen Carroll, of Christ the King Catholic School Djarindjin Lombadina in Western Australia that is implementing DI. The letter notes that Aboriginal teacher aides have been elevated in status and in confidence with the implementation of the program as they are able to reap the benefits of teaching parts of the program.

Finally, with regard to concerns that DI has been imposed, Hattie (2016) labels discussions about the need for autonomy as 'distracting' and he argues 'When the various influences are considered it becomes obvious that so many of the most debated issues in schools across Australia concern those nearer the bottom of the list of impact. These include autonomy (d=.00)... We love to debate the things that matter least.'

'Parents don't like it'

The Committee says in the Interim Report that its statements regarding DI and EDI are based on concerns, including parental concerns. It is not clear what parental concerns the Committee's is referring to, however, as the transcript and submissions do not reveal any. The Committee did conduct a [survey](#), which was open for parents and teachers, but the results have not been referred to or reported.

Negative parent opinions about DI and EDI often appear to be foregrounded in arguments opposing DI and EDI being used in Indigenous contexts, which is notable. In fact it should be expected that at any school, and every approach, will elicit a mix of views from any parent community. Understandably the teachers and parents of First Nations students have ongoing anxieties about the issues that students, families and the school are confronted

⁴² [The full talk](#) is available on You Tube.

with. Of course, even with the introduction of DI and EDI along with other reforms under the Cape York Academy model, the situation remains far from perfect.

Negative parent and community opinions about aspects of other models have been widespread, for example, the [Stronger Smarter Evaluation](#) reports about that model that:

... the reported experience of many in Indigenous communities [with Stronger Smarter schools] is one of marginalisation from schools that, they report, treat them and their children as deficit. They call for substantive, informed and sustained engagement between schools and communities characterised by mutual respect, with the aim for shared decision-making and collaborative governance at all levels of the educational enterprise. Without exception, their view is that, at present, this is not occurring. (at p. 11)

Parents and teachers clearly have a vital role in educating a child, and a very important role to play in providing input to improve school. The opinions of parents and teachers should be of critical importance when it comes to determining how to improve relationships, information flow and satisfaction within a school's community. But parents may not know which education initiative will benefit children the most, and there is a duty to communicate the best available evidence to them. To ensure that the very best education model is available to First Nations children the evidence must be considered, and a balanced approach taken to the diverse views of Indigenous parents (and teachers) themselves.

'It's an American program'

A number of comments made during the Inquiry suggest suspicion about the fact that Direct Instruction is an American program.⁴³

The first answer to this alleged problem is that teachers are trained to make automatic conversions of American spelling and terminological conventions to Australian standards (e.g. money and measurement). Teachers are trained and provided guides that enable the translations to be identified and made. This is truly a non-issue, and objections to this aspect of DI are shallow – and yet it is a perennial issue for detractors. The fact is that many, many educational programs, readers, textbooks and learning resources in Australian schools are American, English, Canadian and New Zealander. Indeed the superior achievement of Asian schools in international tests should not make Australian educators shy about learning about effective approaches utilised in these systems as well. However, it is completely understandable that English language learning resources are sourced from English-speaking countries. American and English learning materials have been in Australian schools throughout the twentieth century, and new programs – not the least web-based programs like [Khan Academy](#) – which are often used international resources.

Secondly, the reality is that even in Indigenous communities, students are part of a global world. Most of the television and pop culture content of their lives also derives from an

⁴³ See Haythorpe, C in [Committee Hansard](#), House of Representative Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Tuesday, 22 March 2016, Sydney at p. 23. See [Committee Hansard](#), House of Representative Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Wednesday 16 March 2016, Canberra, at p. 3.

American base. Both the students and teachers are readily able to grasp the differences in culture and language; indeed Indigenous students are relatively skilled at understanding and negotiating the concept of such cultural differences. Indeed, the American content at times provides for a point of discussion that may well help Indigenous students to understand the wider world that they are part of.

It is notable that at the high performing Broadbeach State School that uses DI and EDI (described below), when the Principal was asked what the parents of the 800 or so students at the school thought of DI's American origins or content, he replied that none had expressed any concern.⁴⁴

'It treats students as empty vessels', 'It doesn't teach them critical thinking', and 'Too much rote learning'

The Committee heard concerns that DI does not teach kids "to think and learn". To reason. To rationalise things. To be logical. To be critical.⁴⁵ It also heard that DI treats students as 'empty vessels' when kids 'are not nincompoops who come with nothing. They come with something. That has to be appreciated and that has to be in the mix, in the way in which education is delivered to kids.'⁴⁶

Siegfried Engelmann, the pioneer of DI, believed that the mind of every child is an incredible thinking machine gifted with extraordinary powers to learn. In *Theory of Instruction*, he states 'We know that the intellectual crippling of children is caused overwhelmingly by faulty instruction—not by faulty children.'

Engelmann's theory is that a child's mind is entirely logical in the way it learns, and that what or how much it learns depends on how logically it is taught. 'The learning process is the same for all learners,' he says. The mind does not construct its own private knowledge of fractions, or sentences, or the qualities of a chocolate bar, without data about the details of these concepts. Computation, comprehension, and candy all possess their own unchanging features, which must somehow be taught to learners of diverse abilities and starting points. Failures thus derive from technical problems the teacher can readily correct: ambiguous communication, the learner's lack of necessary background knowledge, or inadequate practice to master what is presented. Fix these problems and the mind will learn. It is wired to do so. (Barbash 2012 at p. 10)

In Australia the analysis of Helen Hughes and Mark Hughes (2012) rejected the usual explanation of 'indigeneity' as the root problem of poor outcomes, and identified that 'School failure is the problem'. Indeed in our view, DI's mantra 'If the student hasn't learned, the teacher hasn't taught' is a fitting antidote in Indigenous schools that have been plagued by low expectations.

⁴⁴ Personal communication, 9 June 2016.

⁴⁵ Fogarty, W and Dodson M in [Committee Hansard](#), House of Representative Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Wednesday 16 March 2016, Canberra, at pp. 3-4.

⁴⁶ See Fogarty, W and Dodson M in [Committee Hansard](#), House of Representative Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Wednesday 16 March 2016, Canberra, at pp. 3-5.

It is a false dichotomy to suggest there is a strict divide between Direct Instruction and critical thinking. Direct Instruction does involve practice, but that is not a bad thing. Spaced practice (whether within DI or not) has a powerful impact on student learning. While DI programs recognise the importance of teaching foundational knowledge and basic skills, students are also taught about higher-level concepts and how to apply their learning to unfamiliar situations. Furthermore, children learn how to generalise – a key aspect of deep learning. This is why a great deal of research shows that Direct Instruction improves both basic and higher-order skills and understanding.

It is important also that DI as a pedagogy be considered not just at the micro level of the lesson, which does involve practice and can appear to emphasise rote. But one must also consider DI at the macro level, where the sophisticated design of DI programs ensures children are exposed to examples, learn logical rules, make deductions and inferences, and learn to extrapolate and generalise to new examples — that is, it teaches the elements of critical thinking.

‘The evaluation is inadequate’

The previous Committee’s Interim report expresses concern about the evaluation of the introduction of DI literacy programs in NT and WA Indigenous schools that is being conducted by the Centre for Program Evaluation, Melbourne Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne. The Interim Report states the Committee is:

concerned that this evaluation is not comprehensive or independent from the organisation delivering the pedagogy, and notes that the evaluation focuses more on the delivery of Direct Instruction rather than its effectiveness or comparisons with other teaching methods.⁴⁷

The Committee states there is a need for a ‘truly independent evaluator’, with comprehensive terms of reference that incorporate comparative studies and longitudinal measures of its effectiveness. In its reasoning it suggests that ‘Phonics instruction, which is a key component of Direct Instruction but not the entirety of the pedagogy, was last reviewed by the Australian Government in 2004-2005’ in the [Rowe Inquiry](#).⁴⁸ Finally, a number of comments made in the Committee hearings also suggest that the cost of DI and EDI programs is excessive.⁴⁹

The Centre for Program Evaluation is part of the Melbourne Graduate School of Education that has been ranked number three in the world in the discipline of education.⁵⁰ It is among the world’s best, with Harvard Graduate School of Education coming in at number one, and the University of Cambridge at number two. With this ranking the Melbourne Graduate School of Education has achieved the highest rank of all disciplines, at any Australian university. The school continues to have consistently high rankings on the world stage, and

⁴⁷ At p. 25.

⁴⁸ At p. 25.

⁴⁹ See [Committee Hansard](#), House of Representative Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Monday 21 February, Newcastle at p. 7 and [Committee Hansard](#), Tuesday 22 March 2016, Sydney at p. 23.

⁵⁰ In the QS World Rankings by Subject 2013, see <http://www.topuniversities.com/subject-rankings/2013>

this reflects the school's team of highly talented and distinguished staff and is an endorsement of their outstanding work across research, teaching and engagement. There can be no serious suggestion that this Centre is not a highly appropriate research facility in Australia to evaluate the program, or that their independence is anything other than absolute.

As is acknowledged in the Committee's own report, the evaluation is an outcome evaluation and will assess the rate of student progress and achievement. The nature of any such outcome evaluation requires comparisons to be made. That is, all outcome evaluations must seek to generate a counterfactual — to create a situation where we can tell what would have happened to a particular outcome (e.g. the rate of student progress and achievement) had the program not been introduced. There are numerous ways of doing this but they all involve constructing a control group or baseline or both. It is not clear why the Committee suggests that a further evaluation is needed to incorporate comparative studies.

In terms of the Committee's apparent suggestion that the 2005 [Rowe Inquiry](#) might be outdated — this would seem an extraordinary claim for an inquiry like this to make. We would like to bring the Committee's attention to the fact that Professor Hattie updated his list of 138 effects to 150 effects in *Visible Learning for Teachers* (2011), and more recently to a list of 195 effects in *The Applicability of Visible Learning to Higher Education* (2015). His research is now based on nearly 1200 meta-analyses – up from the 800 when *Visible Learning* came out in 2009. According to Hattie the story underlying the data has hardly changed over time even though some effect sizes were updated and there are some new entries at the top, at the middle, and at the end of the list.

We agree with the Committee about the importance of comprehensive evaluation to determine where there is success and to drive further improvement of efforts. Evaluations of interventions that show clear and convincing outcomes in Indigenous affairs are few and far between, and this is certainly true in terms of Indigenous education. The evidence about 'what works', including for whom, under what circumstances, at what cost, and why, remains scant. As Gary Banks (2013) has noted the greatest tragedy of policy and regulatory failure is failing to learn from it, yet this 'seems to be the predominant history of Indigenous policies and programmes'.

It is not just DI and EDI that require rigorous and comprehensive evaluation, but where the default approaches are being delivered in schools, and are receiving funding, including additional allocations, these approaches should also be subject to rigorous scrutiny. For example, of the \$170M in National Partnerships funding provided to Queensland low socio-economic schools, of which \$7.4 M was allocated to the Cape York Academy, we are not aware of evaluations applying scrutiny to the schools that received the other \$162M — of course such evaluations are needed to build a better understanding of what has worked and what has not.⁵¹ Indeed, the conclusion of the [national evaluation](#) of this funding is that in Queensland there has not been any clear pattern of improvement as a result of these additional funds, but 'mixed results' and 'no significant differences between student gains in

⁵¹ See progress reports at the Australian Government Department of Education and Training website, <https://www.education.gov.au/national-partnerships-low-ses-schools-literacy-and-numeracy-and-improving-teacher-quality>

Low SES NP and non-NP schools'. The evaluation concludes 'Although changes in achievement at NP schools were found to be similar to those observed in non-NP schools, a number of case studies indicated significant improvements in certain schools.'⁵²

Finally, with respect to whether DI and EDI offer value for money — it is only on the basis of rigorous cost-benefit analysis that an accurate judgment can be made about whether the cost of DI and EDI programs represent value for money. A school's success or failure in ensuring a child is learning will have a very powerful and lasting impact on a child's later life. Consistent with the maxim that 'the best Crime Prevention Department is the Education Department', a school's approach is key to preventing poor outcomes across a huge range of areas in life as diverse as welfare dependency, unemployment, suicide, mental illness, health, teen pregnancy, and alcohol and substance abuse. First Nations children and students are in the midst of an intergenerational crisis on these very fronts, and if our education systems can effectively disrupt this crisis there will be a very strong economic argument that the investment represents excellent value. The education costs associated with the usual models that we know are failing are very substantial. A true comparison of the costs and benefit of the default approach and any other alternative model would be most welcome.

THE BROADBEACH SCHOOL: DI AND EDI BENEFITS ALL STUDENTS AT A HIGH PERFORMING SCHOOL

There is evidence and a great deal of experience of DI and EDI being successfully used in a wide range of contexts throughout the primary years including in 'mainstream' schools, and in relatively high performing and advantaged schools. The Broadbeach Independent Public School in Queensland provides a story of the introduction and success of DI and EDI in a relatively advantaged, relatively well-performing, 'mainstream school'. It shows that direct instruction and explicit direct instruction programs can improve the results of students across the board, even older students and even those who are already performing very well.

The Broadbeach School is across the road from the beach at the Gold Coast and it has around 800 P-6 students with a high level of diversity. Students come from around 62 different nationalities. Although it is relatively advantaged school compared to Indigenous community schools, students do come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds — the school draws students from the well-known 'Millionaires Row' of nearby Hedges Avenue, as well as servicing families that are not well off.⁵³

Tables 2-5 show the NAPLAN results⁵⁴ of the Broadbeach School prior to its implementation of DI and EDI. The red areas indicate results below the national average, blue is average, and

⁵² At p. 154.

⁵³ ICSEA is a scale which allows for fair and reasonable comparisons among schools with similar students. ICSEA stands for the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage. ICSEA is set at an average of 1000. The lower the ICSEA value, the lower the level of educational advantage of students who go to this school. The higher the ICSEA value, the higher the level of educational advantage of students who go to this school. The Broadbeach school has an ICSEA value of 1047, whereas Yarrabah for example has an ICSEA value of 601.

⁵⁴ See <https://www.myschool.edu.au>

green is above average.⁵⁵ Broadbeach was a good school prior to the introduction of direct and explicit instruction programs. The performance of the Broadbeach School in terms of NAPLAN results was mostly average prior to Principal, Mr Michael Roberts' decision to introduce direct and explicit instruction programs. In a few learning areas at various points its performance was above average, and in a few learning areas at various points it fell below average. In almost all learning areas, the vast majority of students were already meeting the National Minimum Standards (NMS) (see Tables 2-5).

Despite the fact that Broadbeach was already a good school, Principal Roberts wanted to make it a better school. In fact, he set himself a personal challenge to make the Broadbeach 'the best school ever.'

Principal Roberts became aware of two schools in the Innisfail area south of Cairns, which were unexpectedly amongst the nation's better performers despite being disadvantaged schools. In 2013, The Weekend Australian published an article entitled, [Cane country schools teach a lesson in how to defy disadvantage](#) which highlighted the strong performance of the Goondi State School and Innisfail East State Schools against the odds,⁵⁶ based on an analysis of NAPLAN data from across the country carried out by the Grattan Institute. Roberts took it upon himself to try and find out what was driving the success of these more disadvantaged schools, and arranged to visit the schools. It was this experience from which his own commitment to introduce DI and EDI to the Broadbeach school developed.

Table 2: 2010 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Broadbeach School (1381)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		414.3	44.3	93.9	418.6	47.1	95.5	399.2	38.7	91.0	416.9	46.7	92.0	395.4	32.3	94.3
	5		487.4	28.7	91.3	485.2	23.8	93.1	487.1	27.6	92.0	499.7	34.9	92.2	488.8	26.4	93.7
	7		546.0	29.5	94.9	533.5	23.4	92.6	544.7	30.6	92.9	535.1	25.6	91.6	547.8	29.6	95.1
Queensland	3		393.0	34.2	92.1	402.4	38.6	93.8	371.5	26.1	85.6	398.2	38.4	89.7	378.5	22.7	93.4
	5		468.7	19.9	88.2	471.6	18.4	90.4	467.9	17.8	89.1	483.3	26.7	90.1	474.1	18.4	92.6
	7		537.5	24.3	94.6	531.2	22.5	92.2	535.5	25.5	91.9	529.4	22.8	90.8	546.2	28.7	95.4
Broadbeach State School (1381)	3	37	392.4	32.4	91.9	417.9	48.6	97.3	373.8	29.7	91.9	398.0	40.5	89.2	389.9	30.6	97.2
	5	69	491.6	33.8	89.7	510.9	34.8	97.1	501.5	36.2	95.7	525.6	49.3	98.6	487.8	26.5	97.1
	7	82	534.4	20.3	98.7	531.2	24.1	92.4	542.8	27.8	97.5	510.7	15.2	87.3	540.2	22.0	100.0

Table 3: 2011 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Broadbeach School (1381)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		415.7	44.7	93.8	415.9	46.1	95.3	405.9	40.6	92.8	421.2	48.1	93.1	398.1	33.3	95.6
	5		488.1	28.6	91.5	482.6	22.6	92.5	484.1	25.7	91.3	499.1	34.6	92.0	487.8	24.8	94.4
	7		540.2	26.6	94.7	529.1	22.6	91.1	537.7	25.8	92.4	532.4	23.0	92.8	544.6	28.9	94.5
Queensland	3		399.9	37.6	92.8	404.1	39.1	94.3	387.7	32.2	90.5	406.8	42.0	91.7	384.6	26.3	95.2
	5		469.4	19.8	88.6	470.9	18.6	90.2	465.6	16.8	88.7	485.0	28.0	90.0	470.3	15.4	93.4
	7		533.5	22.9	94.3	532.9	24.4	91.6	528.6	21.5	90.9	524.4	18.5	92.2	538.7	25.6	94.6
Broadbeach State School (1381)	3	77	409.3	39.0	97.4	412.9	43.8	100.0	398.1	42.5	94.5	402.7	39.7	90.4	388.3	31.6	97.4
	5	76	485.6	27.3	96.1	498.9	33.8	96.1	496.0	32.5	97.4	525.7	48.1	94.8	488.1	25.0	96.1
	7	99	532.4	22.4	96.9	546.2	30.3	94.9	528.1	29.6	93.9	526.9	19.4	91.8	534.1	21.0	96.0

⁵⁵ These are statistically significant results determined by using 95% confidence intervals.

⁵⁶ The Goondi State School has an ICSEA value of 910, and Innisfail East State School has an ICSEA value of 814.

Table 4: 2012 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Broadbeach School (1381)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		419.6	47.0	93.6	415.8	46.6	95.3	414.3	43.8	94.0	423.9	49.7	92.9	395.5	33.4	93.9
	5		493.6	31.3	91.6	477.0	19.3	92.1	494.9	31.4	92.8	491.0	30.6	90.5	488.7	26.7	93.3
	7		541.5	27.6	94.1	518.3	18.3	89.9	543.4	28.6	93.2	546.2	29.0	95.1	538.1	25.3	93.8
Queensland	3		408.5	42.5	92.7	403.3	39.0	94.7	398.3	36.3	93.1	411.3	44.4	91.8	380.9	26.1	92.7
	5		480.3	25.0	89.1	457.7	12.1	88.3	479.0	23.2	90.6	477.5	24.7	87.9	476.1	20.4	91.7
	7		532.7	22.6	93.3	511.7	15.3	88.8	533.9	23.4	91.9	539.8	25.7	94.4	532.0	21.8	93.8
Broadbeach State School (1381)	3	74	420.2	42.5	98.6	429.4	60.8	100.0	443.2	62.5	98.6	449.6	56.9	98.6	412.3	40.3	98.6
	5	41	467.7	14.6	87.8	455.3	12.2	90.2	477.3	19.5	92.7	478.6	12.2	87.8	474.6	12.5	95.0
	7	69	554.0	37.7	94.2	549.4	33.8	95.6	568.5	45.6	94.1	551.5	32.4	95.6	546.0	29.4	100.0

Table 5: 2013 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Broadbeach School (1381)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		419.1	45.8	95.3	415.6	46.7	95.0	410.8	42.6	93.8	428.2	51.1	95.3	396.9	31.9	95.7
	5		502.3	32.8	96.1	477.9	20.0	91.7	494.2	30.3	93.1	500.6	33.1	94.8	485.8	25.1	93.4
	7		540.6	26.0	94.2	517.0	17.6	89.3	549.3	31.7	93.7	535.1	26.5	90.8	542.1	26.6	95.0
Queensland	3		407.7	40.1	95.1	406.2	41.6	94.3	396.3	35.4	92.8	419.4	46.7	95.4	386.2	25.7	95.8
	5		497.0	29.9	96.2	469.8	17.5	90.0	485.6	25.9	92.5	494.8	30.6	94.4	481.1	22.6	93.6
	7		533.5	22.2	93.6	514.9	16.8	88.8	542.5	27.6	93.1	531.5	24.8	90.2	538.5	24.3	95.4
Broadbeach State School (1381)	3	86	415.0	41.4	96.6	432.5	54.7	98.8	431.7	46.5	98.8	455.1	59.3	98.8	417.5	42.5	98.9
	5	87	499.4	32.2	97.7	474.3	18.0	89.9	510.7	36.4	96.6	513.5	46.6	92.0	498.6	27.9	95.3
	7	82	545.3	29.6	98.8	514.4	19.5	90.2	566.9	43.9	96.3	540.7	34.1	89.0	547.2	28.2	98.7

Goondi State School caters to around 420 P-6 students. Its Principal since 1994, Arthur Sclipa, has long been committed to implementing direct and explicit instruction approaches. We are not aware of any controversy surrounding Goondi's direct and explicit approaches to instruction. In fact Goondi's great results have led to other schools in the Innisfail area adopting direct and explicit instruction. The Goondi State School's Education Queensland 2013 [Teaching and Learning Audit Executive Summary](#) states:

Direct instruction and explicit teaching are embedded throughout all classrooms and staff members are supported in the acquisition of skills through unambiguous documentation and resources, group and individual coaching, mentoring, and regular feedback from the Principal. The consistent approach has been credited with attainment of very positive student data from both internal and external sources...

The expertise in explicit teaching of staff members has been recognised beyond the school leading to regular observations from teachers and leaders from other schools. The success of the methods has led to the adoption of key practices as standard for all schools in the region.

Principal Roberts too was impressed by what he saw at the Goondi School, and also at Innisfail East where direct and explicit instruction programs had been more recently introduced. He returned to Broadbeach and began to implement DI and EDI throughout the school across all year levels. *The Broadbeach School uses exactly the same direct instruction programs that are used in Cape York Academy schools.*

Tables 6-8 show the NAPLAN results of the Broadbeach School for each year from 2014 when it began implementation of direct and explicit instruction programs until 2015. Again,

red areas would indicate results below the national average, blue is average, and green is above average.⁵⁷

Broadbeach is no longer a pretty good school characterised by average results in most learning areas, it is now consistently performing above the average across almost all learning areas. There are now many areas in which 100% of its students are achieving at NMS, and the proportion of students achieving in the top two NAPLAN bands has increased. The Broadbeach School is now among the best performing schools on the Gold Coast and it competes largely with expensive private schools for the best results.

Table 6: 2014 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Broadbeach School (1381)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		418.3	46.2	93.5	402.2	39.1	93.8	411.8	43.7	92.7	426.0	49.9	93.6	401.8	36.2	94.6
	5		500.6	34.5	92.9	468.3	15.5	90.2	497.6	33.6	92.7	503.8	36.6	92.8	487.6	25.9	93.5
	7		546.1	29.0	94.9	511.6	15.5	88.5	545.1	30.6	92.4	543.1	29.2	93.0	545.9	28.6	95.1
Queensland	3		409.4	42.1	93.4	390.4	31.8	93.1	400.5	38.7	92.1	421.2	48.1	93.8	393.4	31.9	94.6
	5		496.1	32.2	92.8	457.3	12.9	87.4	489.5	28.5	92.7	500.2	35.1	92.7	481.7	22.9	93.1
	7		541.6	26.4	94.4	505.4	13.9	85.8	536.6	26.2	91.5	540.6	27.8	92.5	543.6	27.3	95.3
Broadbeach State School (1381)	3	77	410.4	40.8	94.7	402.7	47.4	92.1	418.1	50.6	98.7	438.1	57.1	98.7	409.0	40.8	97.4
	5	79	523.4	46.2	97.4	502.7	32.1	98.7	535.5	51.9	100.0	558.7	72.2	98.7	523.7	39.2	100.0
	7	37	540.6	25.0	97.2	504.3	21.6	86.5	566.3	48.6	97.3	554.7	32.4	100.0	554.2	33.3	97.2

Table 7: 2015 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Broadbeach School (1381)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		425.8	48.2	94.6	416.3	46.8	95.5	409.2	41.1	93.1	432.7	51.8	94.5	397.8	33.6	94.4
	5		498.2	33.4	93.1	478.1	19.1	92.3	498.1	32.6	93.4	503.8	36.2	93.1	492.3	27.5	95.1
Queensland	3		418.2	44.7	95.1	405.8	40.3	95.1	396.5	34.9	92.7	430.4	50.8	95.2	392.8	30.9	94.9
	5		494.6	31.3	93.7	470.2	17.3	90.6	489.2	27.8	93.1	499.9	34.1	93.6	485.9	23.7	95.5
Broadbeach State School (1381)	3	113	450.9	61.3	100.0	446.2	70.5	100.0	442.1	58.0	100.0	495.9	72.3	98.2	437.4	56.6	100.0
	5	106	518.7	44.8	99.0	513.3	42.2	98.0	528.8	49.5	99.0	540.3	55.2	98.1	529.5	49.1	100.0

Table 8: 2016 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Broadbeach School (1381)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		425.7	49.4	95.1	420.5	48.6	96.4	420.1	46.5	94.3	436.3	52.8	95.4	402.2	35.7	95.7
	5		501.7	35.2	93.1	475.4	17.4	93.3	492.9	29.6	92.9	505.0	36.3	93.8	492.9	28.2	94.6
Queensland	3		420.2	46.9	95.8	409.4	41.1	96.7	410.6	42.4	94.8	432.8	51.4	96.6	398.8	33.1	96.5
	5		500.0	34.5	93.8	465.9	13.9	92.6	485.8	25.8	93.4	506.1	37.3	94.8	488.2	25.6	95.2
Broadbeach State School (1381)	3	99	464.9	69.7	100.0	454.2	66.7	100.0	474.5	69.7	100.0	513.9	77.8	100.0	452.2	63.3	100.0
	5	89	517.6	41.4	97.7	496.8	30.6	96.5	516.0	43.7	96.6	562.6	59.8	100.0	516.9	37.1	100.0

Table 9 presents effect sizes⁵⁸ of the Broadbeach School changes relative to the nation. The effect sizes show the progression of cohorts from Years 3 to 5. The 2016 NAPLAN results are not yet available in Table 9; however, we understand that preliminary consideration shows that the strong pattern of performance of the Broadbeach School has continued in 2016.

⁵⁷ These are statistically significant results determined by using 95% confidence intervals.

⁵⁸ Effect size is a simple way of quantifying the difference between two groups that has advantages over the use of tests of statistical significance alone. Effect size emphasises the size of the difference rather than confounding this with sample size.

Table 9: Effect Sizes for Broadbeach School Relative to Nation

Effect Size Gain (new methodology)							
Year Levels	Strand	2012-2014		2013-2015		2014-2016	
		This School	Qld State Schools	This School	Qld State Schools	This School	Qld State Schools
03-05	R	0.29	0.08	0.31	0.10	0.31	0.10
03-05	W	0.30	-0.02	0.28	0.01	0.33	0.06
03-05	S	0.12	0.10	0.11	0.08	0.23	0.04
03-05	G&P	0.36	0.13	0.13	0.09	0.57	0.08
03-05	N	0.28	0.12	0.24	0.07	0.24	0.05
05-07	R	0.29	0.15		-0.03		-0.01
05-07	W	0.19	0.15		-0.04		-0.04
05-07	S	0.53	0.11		0.06		0.04
05-07	G&P	0.32	0.16		0.01		-0.02
05-07	N	0.31	0.14		-0.03		-0.01

Effect Size Gain: How much the school/state has gained in performance against the nation expressed in Standard Deviation units. **Positive numbers** indicate that the school/state has gained more than the nation. **Negative numbers** indicate that the school/state has gained less than the nation. Based on the whole cohort enrolled at the school for each test occasion. For year levels 07-09, Effect Size Gain is not currently calculated for secondary schools.

Effect Size Gain (ESG) scores provide comparisons of growth (or change) across schools, states, and the nation. For any single line in Table 9 the following explanation applies. If one uses the Years 03-05 transition and the Writing (W) Strand as an example (2nd row of data) we can assume the following:

1. The Queensland State Schools average change for the 03-05 2012-2014 cohort is lower than that of the nation and the difference represents 0.02 standard deviation units.
2. The Broadbeach School average change for the 03-05 2012-2014 cohort is higher than that of the nation and the difference represents 0.3 standard deviation units.
3. Taken together this indicates the progress achieved at the Broadbeach school for this cohort is superior to that of the State relative to the Nation.

The assumption that improvement at Broadbeach is superior to that of the Nation and comparatively greater than the State is replicated in all of the possible comparisons suggesting positive outcomes from the use of DI and EDI. These results appear to validate the Principal's decision to make these changes.

[This short video of Broadbeach School](#) provides some teachers' views about the use of direct and explicit instruction, and it appears to confirm what can be seen in the data, that DI has been effective for all students.

Although attendance at Broadbeach School has always been high, it has risen in the period since the implementation of DI and EDI approaches.

The Broadbeach experience adds to the very substantial body of evidence and experience suggesting that DI and EDI programs are very effective at improving the learning of students across the board, including both low and high performers, and those from disadvantaged and advantaged backgrounds.

CAPE YORK ACADEMY SCHOOLS: A CLEAR TRAJECTORY AND A PATHWAY FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT

Working with small numbers: the problem of ‘missing data’

Analysis of small numbers will raise statistical issues concerning sample size, accuracy, and thus generalisability, of the data and the results. As each of the Cape York Academy campuses is very different, and the size of the cohorts within year levels at each campus is small, individual change will drive fluctuations in the data. Generalising from these results must be approached cautiously. The need to preserve privacy and data confidentiality is also a real issue with small numbers.

Criticism has been levelled at the Cape York Academy in the submission of the Australian Education Union because the early 2013 evaluation of by the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) noted that NAPLAN data could not be used to measure the impact of the Cape York Academy programs on literacy and numeracy achievement of students due to the amount of missing data.⁵⁹ Left without an explanation, people may think that ‘missing data’ from Cape York Academy schools means that data is not being collected. To the contrary, the data gathered by the Cape York Academy is enormous and constant. The problem of ‘missing data’ is an artefact of the small size of the school and attendance issues. The cohorts are too small to be included, especially where attendance is low — the statistical rule applied is that no more than 20 per cent of data can be missing, to avoid any bias being introduced into the results. The ACER recognised this problem, but the evaluation does not explain that it is a function of the small size of schools and poor attendance.

On the other hand, working with small numbers also presents opportunities for analysis. There is a need to better understand the relationships and interactions between factors such as attendance, behaviour, development, environment, and education outcomes that should lead to increased demand for information about small populations. Often it is the case that questions concerning education outcomes must be considered within small subgroups, because many activities to improve education affect relatively small numbers of students at the school level or year level populations.

The Cape York Academy has been able to conduct analysis considering DI results, NAPLAN data, attendance, and cognitive and social and emotional assessments in some cases, to develop a rich understanding of factors impacting on learning progress. These kinds of

⁵⁹ At p. 26.

analysis can help us to understand the mechanics of changes occurring at the individual, school and community level over time, and to generate strategies to refine our approach and continue to improve its results. It is in this way that the Cape York Academy has been able to explore, and begin to explain ‘what works’ for whom, when, where and why — such analysis develops a level of understanding that allows us to get inside the ‘black box’ of education outcomes on an ongoing improvement journey.

Indeed before we consider the Cape York Academy’s NAPLAN performance, it is useful to understand some features of the distinct profiles of students in each of the Cape York academy communities.

Developmental issues impacting on Cape York children

The developmental issues faced by Cape York children must be considered to be a very real, longstanding, and fully visible risk for all Cape York schools. At the outset of this submission we set out some general statistics from across all states and territories showing high levels of developmental challenge that face Indigenous children when they begin school. Information more specifically about children in Cape York confirms the devastating picture on Cape York.⁶⁰

Due to the longstanding concerns about disengaged youth in Cape York Welfare Reform communities, and ongoing attendance, behavioural, and learning challenges in Cape York schools, in 2014-15 the Cape York Academy engaged Dr Jeff Nelson to undertake a program of assessment and reporting with specific focus on identifying students’ cognitive, social, and emotional status (proficiency and developmental age) to inform strategies to optimise education and developmental outcomes. The program was completed in three Cape York communities with funding support from the Royal Flying Doctor Service.⁶¹ This is the only exercise of this kind of which we are aware that provides a relatively comprehensive picture of special needs of First Nations students in some of Queensland’s Indigenous communities. The assessments revealed:

- That in two of the three locations in which students were assessed roughly one quarter of students met the criteria for diagnosis of intellectual impairment and subsequent Education Queensland verification. These numbers are consistent with educational outcome measures collected independently and with reports from teachers of large numbers of troubled, struggling children, in their classes and communities.
- A further 42% were situated within the borderline intelligence category (see Figure 9). Adults who fall into this range are over-represented in crime and incarceration statistics, chronic health reporting, and in many indicators of poor life outcomes such as

⁶⁰ See <https://www.aedc.gov.au/data/data-explorer>

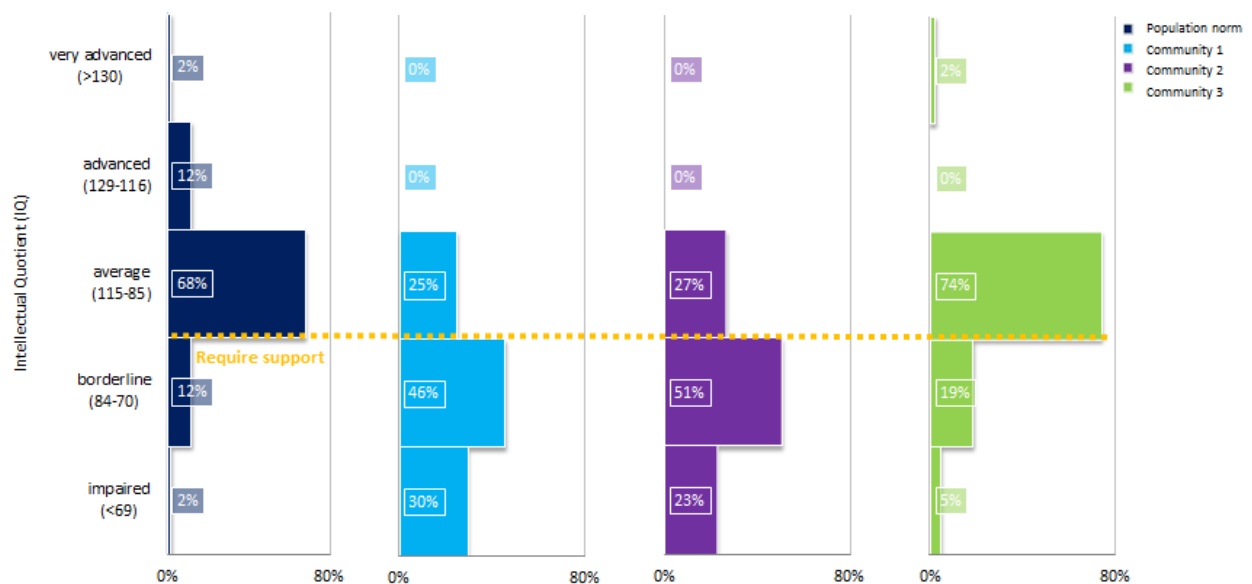
⁶¹ Both cognitive testing and adaptive functioning/behaviours were tested, including through a combination of testing and interview and observation: Differential Abilities Scales 2nd edition (Elliott, 2007) – ‘DAS-II’; Teacher’s Report Form for Ages 6-18 (Achenbach, 2001) – ‘TRF’; Social Skills Improvement System Rating Scales (Gresham & Elliott, 2008) - ‘SSIS’; Behaviour Rating Inventory of Executive Function (Isquith & Gioia, 2000) – ‘BRIEF’; Developmental Neuropsychological Assessment 2nd edition (Korkman, Kirk & Kemp, 2007) – ‘NEPSY-II’

disadvantage, engagement with services, school completion, relationship health, and many others.

This picture of cognitive development delay is extraordinarily high.

Assessment in the Cape York communities also showed that older children were less cognitively proficient for their age than their younger counterparts. When the cohort was grouped into three, averages across the groups differed (at statistically significant levels⁶²) with the younger group demonstrating higher proficiency than the middle group, which in turn was higher than the oldest group. The likely explanations include that: 1) the effects of early life impairment are being compounded through ageing, 2) continued exposure to difficult life environments and experiences are limiting development, and 3) education being provided is not supporting age-typical levels of knowledge and skill acquisition. It is not important in the current context to argue the validity of one account over the other; it is important, however, to accept that intervening at younger ages in this cohort is likely to be more effective than either not intervening or waiting until students age.

Figure 9: Students' cognitive development in some Cape York communities

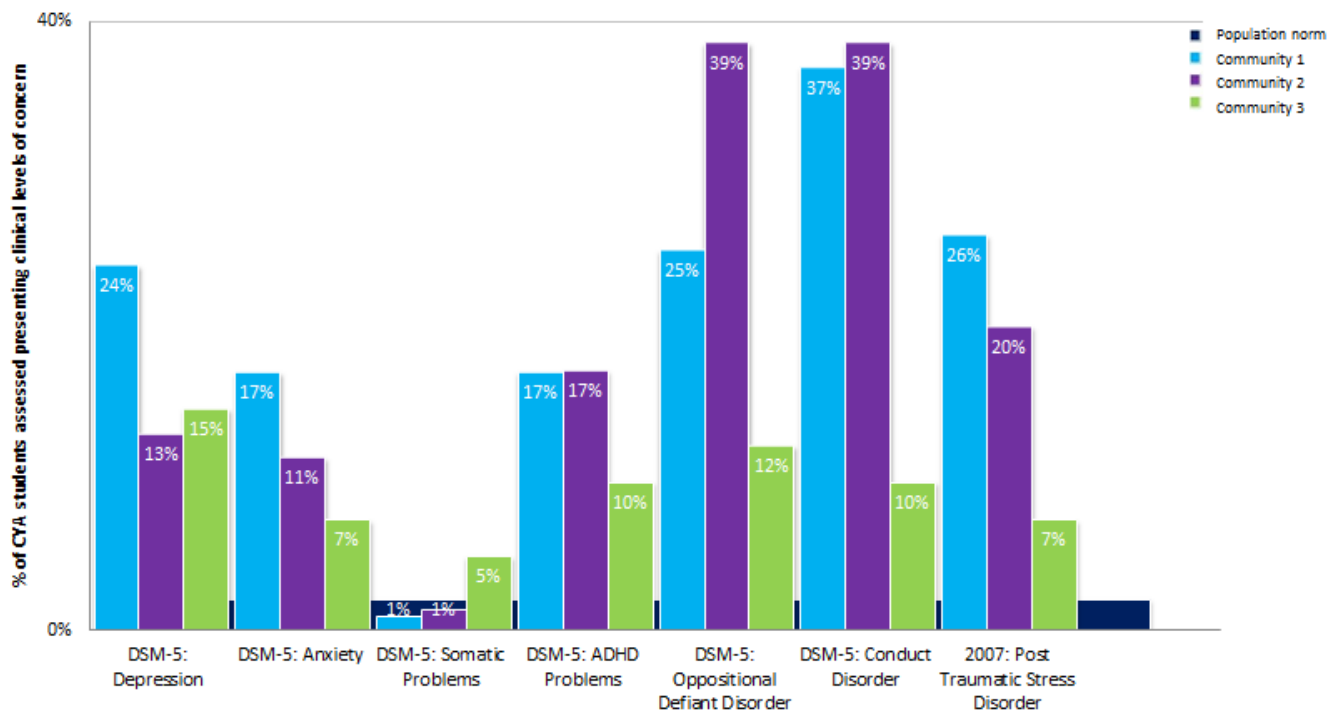


Source: Internal Cape York Academy assessment of school students, Psychology and Wellbeing Ltd, DAS-II 2014-15

It should be noted that eligibility for verification and funded support begins at IQ < 70 +/- standard error of test, which is the case of the Differential Abilities Scales is 2.9. This means that students scoring <72.9 are potentially eligible for funding assistance.

⁶² $p = .001$ to $.004$

Figure 10: Students’ social and emotional disorders in some Cape York communities



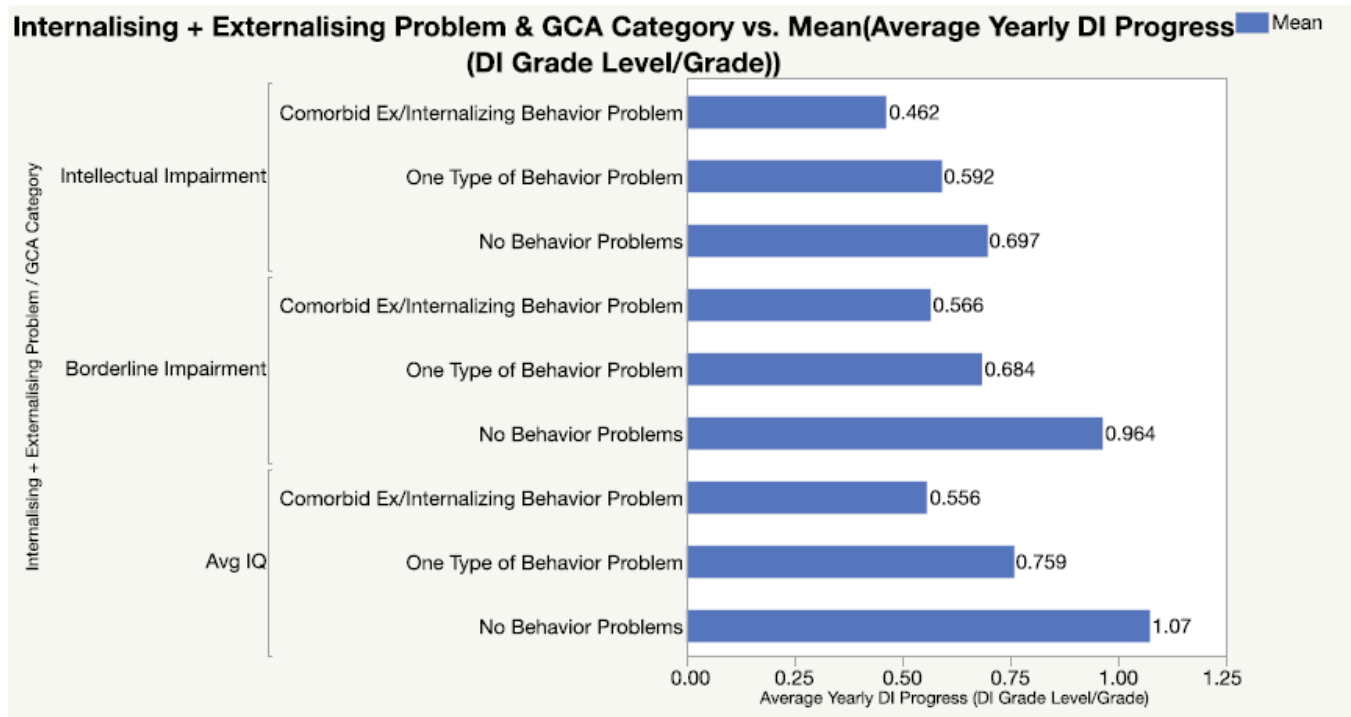
Source: Internal Cape York Academy assessment of school students, Psychology and Wellbeing Ltd, TRF 2014-15

Prevalence rates of disorders consistent with DSM5 diagnoses are presented in Figure 10.

The prevalence rates presented in the Figure are exceptionally high but do not formally constitute a diagnosis. Further consultation would be required prior to that process. The overall picture presented in the Figures is nonetheless highly troubling and supports arguments for immediate intervention informed by evidence of condition and effectiveness. The information presented in graphs also paints a picture of the difficulty that teachers will be having managing class behaviour and completing their lessons in a way that optimises learning. This is likely to be especially the case if the teachers are inexperienced. Direct Instruction provides a framework that insists on predictability and consistency and formalises classroom processes and this is indeed a saving in schools with high levels of disability and students with comparative inability to control behaviour and thinking.

The following graph (see Figure 11) brings the previous two together and shows how individual differences in cognitive ability (IQ) interacts with levels of social and emotional difficulty (presented in the graph as externalising and internalising from the Teacher Report Form).

Figure 11: Cognitive ability, levels of social and emotional difficulty, and rate of DI progress



The graph shows average yearly progress within DI testing as a function of IQ score and emotional wellbeing. The graph shows the effects on progress at a number of levels. The first is that having an IQ at or below the verification threshold is associated with much lower learning progress. The second is that the reduction in progress as a function of presence or otherwise of internalising and externalising behaviours is negligible when considered within the context of individual differences in IQ. The third is that having a behavioural problem will cost the student roughly 30% of potential progress (as a function of measured intelligence) within a DI year. When the reader is reminded that social and emotional problems are primary causes of students’ intellectual delay/disability the importance of providing a safe predictable learning environment becomes more obvious. DI does this by its very nature. It supports students with executive dysfunction, reduces the likelihood of emotional dysregulation, and teaches students at levels informed by proficiency testing. For the cohorts of the Cape communities that were assessed it is unlikely that an alternative pedagogy would achieve comparable effects on students’ overall development.

The distinct profiles of students in each of the Cape York Academy communities helps us to understand the schools overall performance across all NAPLAN learning area results.

Coen

The Coen campus is considered very remote, and it has an ICSEA value of 713.⁶³

⁶³ See My School website

<https://www.myschool.edu.au/SchoolProfile/Index/102938/CapeYorkAboriginalAustralianAcademy/50482/20>

Tables 10-16 show 2010-2016 NAPLAN results of the Coen campus since the commencement of the Cape York Academy and its implementation of DI and EDI from 2010.⁶⁴ As with Broadbeach, the red areas indicate results below average, blue is average, and green would show above average.⁶⁵ Table 17 presents the effect sizes⁶⁶ of the Coen school changes relative to the nation. The effect sizes show the progression of cohorts from Years 3 to 5. The 2016 NAPLAN results are not yet available in Table 17; however, we understand that preliminary consideration shows that the pattern of performance of the Coen campus has continued a positive trajectory in 2016.

Coen was a poor school at the outset. The performance of the Coen campus in NAPLAN in the first year of these data was mostly below average. In some learning areas at various points its performance was average, and in most learning areas a very substantial proportion of students were not meeting the National Minimum Standards (NMS), and there was only one learning area in which there was a level of student achievement in the upper two bands.

The overall trajectory over the following years is one of steady improvement. In 2016 the results indicate that Coen has moved from a poor school, and is on the right trajectory to become a good school. In all but two learning areas the proportion of students achieving NMS is now on par with other schools in Queensland and Australia and there are now students achieving in the upper two bands across all learning areas. While the performance of the Coen campus using DI and EDI remains far below that of the Broadbeach School, it started from a far lower base and is far more disadvantaged.

Assessments of student cognitive, and social and emotional assessments at Cape York Academy schools reveal a relatively 'average' profile at Coen, although there were three students at the school that have been assessed as meeting the Education Queensland criteria for the verification of special needs. The trajectory of improved results after the introduction of DI and EDI appears largely to reflect this underlying profile, and from 2015 the Coen campus of the Cape York Academy has worked to increasingly ensure that where children with special needs have been identified through professional assessments, the school is in a position to provide these children with extra one-on-one teaching support. This has been possible largely because of the small size of the Coen campus and small number of students involved. The Coen campus has also been able to introduce in 2016 a resilience program to respond to the social and emotional difficulties that have been identified.

The Coen community is also a relatively strong one in that there has for many years been a high value placed on education of children, and school attendance is the highest for any

15. Note all the Cape York Academy locations have been given a single ICSEA score although each location would vary.

⁶⁴ NAPLAN commenced in 2008 but we do not have the Coen summary results tables for NAPLAN prior to 2010 when the Cape York Academy became involved in the operation of the school.

⁶⁵ These are statistically significant results determined using 95% confidence intervals.

⁶⁶ Effect size is a simple way of quantifying the difference between two groups that has advantages over the use of tests of statistical significance alone. Effect size emphasises the size of the difference rather than confounding this with sample size.

Indigenous community in Queensland. While Coen is not without serious social problems, these problems have not impeded school improvement at levels that are consistent with the general evidence indicating the importance of effective instruction and the efficacy of DI and EDI programs.

Table 10: 2010 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Coen campus (1480)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		414.3	44.3	93.9	418.6	47.1	95.5	399.2	38.7	91.0	416.9	45.7	92.0	395.4	32.3	94.3
	5		487.4	28.7	91.3	485.2	23.8	93.1	487.1	27.6	92.0	499.7	34.9	92.2	488.8	26.4	93.7
	7		546.0	29.5	94.9	533.5	23.4	92.6	544.7	30.6	92.9	535.1	25.6	91.6	547.8	29.6	95.1
Queensland	3		393.0	34.2	92.1	402.4	38.6	93.8	371.5	26.1	85.6	398.2	38.4	89.7	378.5	22.7	93.4
	5		468.7	19.9	88.2	471.6	18.4	90.4	467.9	17.8	89.1	483.3	26.7	90.1	474.1	18.4	92.6
	7		537.5	24.3	94.6	531.2	22.5	92.2	535.5	25.5	91.9	529.4	22.8	90.8	546.2	28.7	95.4
Coen Campus of CYAAA (1480)	3	5	323.6	25.0	75.0	292.9	0.0	60.0	308.0	0.0	80.0	158.8	0.0	20.0	240.8	0.0	60.0
	5	6	328.7	0.0	0.0	392.0	0.0	66.7	354.0	0.0	33.3	290.2	0.0	16.7	330.4	0.0	20.0
	7	9	442.6	0.0	66.7	472.0	0.0	77.8	516.8	11.1	88.9	416.8	0.0	33.3	442.8	0.0	66.7

Table 11: 2011 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Coen campus (1480)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		415.7	44.7	93.8	415.9	46.1	95.3	405.9	40.6	92.8	421.2	48.1	93.1	398.1	33.3	95.6
	5		488.1	28.6	91.5	482.6	22.6	92.5	484.1	25.7	91.3	499.1	34.6	92.0	487.8	24.8	94.4
	7		540.2	26.6	94.7	529.1	22.6	91.1	537.7	25.8	92.4	532.4	23.0	92.8	544.6	28.9	94.5
Queensland	3		399.9	37.6	92.8	404.1	39.1	94.3	387.7	32.2	90.5	406.8	42.0	91.7	384.6	26.3	95.2
	5		469.4	19.8	88.6	470.9	18.6	90.2	465.6	16.8	88.7	485.0	28.0	90.0	470.3	15.4	93.4
	7		533.5	22.9	94.3	532.9	24.4	91.6	528.6	21.5	90.9	524.4	18.5	92.2	538.7	25.6	94.6
Coen Campus of CYAAA (1480)	3	3	299.3	0.0	66.7	290.9	0.0	66.7	268.8	0.0	33.3	239.4	0.0	33.3	296.1	0.0	100.0
	5	7	374.9	0.0	67.1	317.3	0.0	42.9	413.3	14.3	57.1	376.9	0.0	57.1	328.2	0.0	16.7
	7	7	441.7	0.0	65.7	432.9	0.0	57.1	462.3	0.0	71.4	402.2	0.0	42.9	427.2	0.0	42.9

Table 12: 2012 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Coen campus (1480)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		419.6	47.0	93.6	415.8	46.6	95.3	414.3	43.8	94.0	423.9	49.7	92.9	395.5	33.4	93.9
	5		493.6	31.3	91.6	477.0	19.3	92.1	494.9	31.4	92.8	491.0	30.6	90.5	488.7	26.7	93.3
	7		541.5	27.6	94.1	518.3	18.3	89.9	543.4	28.6	93.2	546.2	29.0	95.1	538.1	25.3	93.8
Queensland	3		408.5	42.5	92.7	403.3	39.0	94.7	398.3	36.3	93.1	411.3	44.4	91.8	380.9	26.1	92.7
	5		480.3	25.0	89.1	457.7	12.1	88.3	479.0	23.2	90.6	477.5	24.7	87.9	476.1	20.4	91.7
	7		532.7	22.6	93.3	511.7	15.3	88.8	533.9	23.4	91.9	539.8	25.7	94.4	532.0	21.8	93.8
Coen Campus of CYAAA (1480)	3	4	390.8	50.0	100.0	400.8	25.0	100.0	354.7	25.0	100.0	370.1	25.0	100.0	335.0	0.0	100.0
	5	5	465.4	0.0	100.0	417.4	0.0	75.0	508.7	0.0	100.0	507.3	25.0	100.0	401.6	0.0	60.0
	7	6	420.7	0.0	33.3	433.1	0.0	50.0	485.0	0.0	100.0	441.8	0.0	83.3	458.2	0.0	100.0

Table 13: 2013 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Coen campus (1480)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		419.1	45.8	95.3	415.6	46.7	95.0	410.8	42.6	93.8	428.2	51.1	95.3	396.9	31.9	95.7
	5		502.3	32.8	96.1	477.9	20.0	91.7	494.2	30.3	93.1	500.6	33.1	94.8	485.8	25.1	93.4
	7		540.6	26.0	94.2	517.0	17.6	89.3	549.3	31.7	93.7	535.1	26.5	90.8	542.1	26.6	95.0
Queensland	3		407.7	40.1	95.1	406.2	41.6	94.3	396.3	35.4	92.8	419.4	46.7	95.4	386.2	25.7	95.8
	5		497.0	29.9	96.2	469.8	17.5	90.0	485.6	25.9	92.5	494.8	30.6	94.4	481.1	22.6	93.6
	7		533.5	22.2	93.6	514.9	16.8	88.8	542.5	27.6	93.1	531.5	24.8	90.2	538.5	24.3	95.4
Coen Campus of CYAAA (1480)	3	3	393.0	33.3	100.0	348.0	0.0	100.0	384.7	33.3	100.0	390.8	33.3	100.0	383.2	33.3	100.0
	5	5	378.9	0.0	50.0	329.9	0.0	60.0	395.7	0.0	60.0	335.3	0.0	60.0	377.9	0.0	60.0
	7	7	424.2	0.0	42.9	381.6	0.0	42.9	467.2	14.3	57.1	388.4	0.0	26.6	430.4	0.0	71.4

Table 14: 2014 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Coen campus (1480)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		418.3	46.2	93.5	402.2	39.1	93.8	411.8	43.7	92.7	426.0	49.9	93.6	401.8	36.2	94.6
	5		500.6	34.5	92.9	468.3	15.5	90.2	497.6	33.6	92.7	503.8	36.6	92.8	487.6	25.9	93.5
	7		546.1	29.0	94.9	511.6	15.5	88.5	545.1	30.6	92.4	543.1	29.2	93.0	545.9	28.6	95.1
Queensland	3		409.4	42.1	93.4	390.4	31.8	93.1	400.5	38.7	92.1	421.2	48.1	93.8	393.4	31.9	94.6
	5		496.1	32.2	92.8	457.3	12.9	87.4	489.5	28.5	92.7	500.2	35.1	92.7	481.7	22.9	93.1
	7		541.6	26.4	94.4	505.4	13.9	85.8	536.6	26.2	91.5	540.6	27.8	92.5	543.6	27.3	95.3
Coen Campus of CYAAA (1480)	3	4	269.6	0.0	25.0	176.3	0.0	25.0	270.0	25.0	25.0	235.3	0.0	75.0	304.4	0.0	75.0
	5	5	398.7	0.0	80.0	425.1	20.0	60.0	465.7	20.0	100.0	373.1	0.0	40.0	411.6	0.0	80.0
	7	3	495.2	0.0	100.0	539.0	0.0	100.0	566.9	66.7	100.0	502.7	0.0	66.7	462.3	0.0	100.0

Table 15: 2015 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Coen campus (1480)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		425.5	48.2	94.6	416.3	46.8	95.5	408.8	41.2	93.0	433.2	52.2	94.5	397.8	33.5	94.4
	5		498.5	33.5	93.3	478.1	19.1	92.3	498.1	32.6	93.5	503.1	35.9	92.9	492.5	27.8	95.1
Queensland	3		418.4	44.8	95.0	405.8	40.3	95.1	395.7	34.6	92.4	430.5	51.2	95.2	392.2	30.3	95.0
	5		494.5	31.4	93.8	470.2	17.3	90.6	489.2	27.7	93.1	499.8	34.2	93.3	486.0	24.0	95.5
Coen Campus of CYAAA (1480)	3	11	336.2	9.1	72.7	321.1	0.0	90.9	376.2	36.4	100.0	367.1	18.2	100.0	416.5	54.5	100.0
	5	4	427.7	0.0	100.0	397.9	0.0	50.0	439.1	25.0	75.0	397.6	0.0	75.0	436.1	0.0	100.0

Table 16: 2016 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Coen campus (1480)

For All Students

(Preliminary Data for 2016)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		425.7	49.4	95.1	420.5	48.6	96.4	420.1	46.5	94.3	436.3	52.8	95.4	402.2	35.7	95.7
	5		501.7	35.2	93.1	475.4	17.4	93.3	492.9	29.6	92.9	505.0	36.3	93.8	492.9	28.2	94.6
Queensland	3		420.2	46.9	95.8	409.4	41.1	96.7	410.6	42.4	94.8	432.8	51.4	96.6	396.8	33.1	96.5
	5		500.0	34.5	93.8	465.9	13.9	92.6	485.8	25.8	93.4	506.1	37.3	94.8	488.2	25.6	95.2
Coen Campus of CYAAA (1480)	3	5	378.0	40.0	80.0	376.4	20.0	100.0	403.4	40.0	80.0	404.9	40.0	100.0	374.3	20.0	80.0
	5	4	400.1	0.0	50.0	379.3	0.0	50.0	417.4	25.0	75.0	461.2	50.0	75.0	431.3	0.0	100.0

Table 17: Effect Sizes for Coen campus Relative to Nation⁶⁷

Effect Size Gain (Relative to the Nation)

Effect Size Gain (new methodology)							
Year Levels	Strand	2011-2013		2012-2014		2013-2015	
		This School	Qld State Schools	This School	Qld State Schools	This School	Qld State Schools
03-05	R	-0.11	0.18	-0.94	0.08	-0.57	0.10
03-05	W	-0.34	0.03	-0.40	-0.02	-0.19	0.01
03-05	S	0.58	0.12	0.37	0.10	-0.45	0.08
03-05	G&P	0.24	0.13	-0.95	0.13	-0.84	0.09
03-05	N	-0.08	0.10	-0.22	0.12	-0.60	0.07
05-07	R	-0.05	0.18	-0.33	0.15		-0.03
05-07	W	0.39	0.10	1.15	0.15		-0.04
05-07	S	-0.16	0.16	0.11	0.11		0.06
05-07	G&P	-0.32	0.15	-0.76	0.16		0.01
05-07	N	0.67	0.20	0.05	0.14		-0.03

Effect Size Gain: How much the school/state has gained in performance against the nation expressed in Standard Deviation units. Positive numbers indicate that the school/state has gained more than the nation. Negative numbers indicate that the school/state has gained less than the nation. Based on the whole cohort enrolled at the school for each test occasion. For year levels 07-09, Effect Size Gain is not currently calculated for secondary schools.

Table 17 shows higher inconsistency across years, cohorts, and strands and much higher variability from year to year than was the case for Table 9 Broadbeach. The reader should, however, interpret the results presented in Table 17 cautiously due to the small number of students. Having very small samples in comparison studies magnifies the impact of students who demonstrate high variability across testing situations and this table must be interpreted with caution.

Hope Vale

The Hope Vale campus is considered remote, and it has an ICSEA value of 713.⁶⁸

Tables 18–23 provide the 2011-2016 NAPLAN performance summaries for Hope Vale since the commencement of the Cape York Academy and its implementation of DI and EDI.⁶⁹ The 2011 NAPLAN summary table shows Hope Vale at the inception of the Cape York Academy.

⁶⁷ Cohort sizes are very small, ranging from 3-4 students.

⁶⁸ See My School website

<https://www.myschool.edu.au/SchoolProfile/Index/102938/CapeYorkAboriginalAustralianAcademy/50482/2015>. Note all the Cape York Academy locations have been given a single ICSEA score although each location would vary.

⁶⁹ NAPLAN results for 2008 and 2009 are not considered to be reliable for this school.

The performance of the Hope Vale school was poor. Table 24 presents the effect sizes⁷⁰ of the Hope Vale school changes relative to the nation. The effect sizes show the progression of cohorts from Years 3 to 5. The 2016 NAPLAN results are not yet available in Table 24; however, we understand that preliminary consideration shows that the pattern of performance of the Hope Vale campus has continued a positive trajectory in 2016.

From 2011-2014 the Hope Vale campus was generally heading in the right direction and progressing from being a poor to fair school, although the NAPLAN performance in 2013 was poor. From 2014 this steady progress is no longer evident, and the Year 3 cohort that performed well in 2014, can be seen to have not performed as well again by Year 5 in 2016. The Cape York Academy has closely considered all these results, including at an individual student level in order to understand what is going on.

Assessments of student cognitive, and social and emotional assessments at Cape York Academy schools reveal high levels of concern at Hope Vale, and the trajectory of results after the introduction of DI and EDI appears to reflect this underlying profile. There were 22 students who were assessed as meeting the Education Queensland criteria for verification of special needs. The Hope Vale campus of the Cape York Academy is larger, meaning that where children with special needs have been identified through professional assessments, it has not been as easy as in Coen for the school to provide these children with extra one-on-one teaching and other support required without additional teaching and specialist special needs resources. The Hope Vale community continues to be seriously impacted by serious social problems which have a direct impact on student's attendance and performance.

In terms of the cohort that performed well in Year 3 NAPLAN in 2014, but who appear to have slipped by Year 5. There has been a high level of transience within this cohort, with around half of the original Year 3 cohort leaving the school and others arriving before Year 5. In addition, a number of students at Hope Vale whose performance has decelerated between Year 3 and Year 5, we are aware have become involved in relatively serious drug misuse, including the drug ice.

The trajectory of the Hope Vale school is a more difficult one than Coen, although there have been signs of improvement at levels that are consistent with the general evidence indicating the importance of effective instruction and the efficacy of DI and EDI programs, particularly in the early years, the introduction of DI and EDI has not been sufficient to overcome the difficulties associated with the level of special needs, behavioural issues and social problems in the community that continue to impact on students learning, development and wellbeing.

⁷⁰ Effect size is a simple way of quantifying the difference between two groups that has advantages over the use of tests of statistical significance alone. Effect size emphasises the size of the difference rather than confounding this with sample size.

Table 18: 2011 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Hope Vale School (0243)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		415.7	44.7	93.8	415.9	46.1	95.3	405.9	40.6	92.8	421.2	48.1	93.1	398.1	33.3	95.6
	5		488.1	28.6	91.5	482.6	22.6	92.5	484.1	25.7	91.3	499.1	34.6	92.0	487.8	24.8	94.4
	7		540.2	26.6	94.7	529.1	22.6	91.1	537.7	25.8	92.4	532.4	23.0	92.8	544.6	28.9	94.5
Queensland	3		399.9	37.6	92.8	404.1	39.1	94.3	387.7	32.2	90.5	406.8	42.0	91.7	384.6	26.3	95.2
	5		469.4	19.8	88.6	470.9	18.6	90.2	465.6	16.8	88.7	485.0	28.0	90.0	470.3	15.4	93.4
	7		533.5	22.9	94.3	532.9	24.4	91.6	528.6	21.5	90.9	524.4	18.5	92.2	538.7	25.6	94.6
Hopevale Campus of CYAAA (0243)	3	16	290.6	0.0	46.2	288.5	0.0	68.8	276.8	0.0	43.6	109.8	0.0	12.5	290.6	0.0	73.3
	5	13	367.7	0.0	38.5	256.9	0.0	16.7	391.8	7.7	69.2	351.7	0.0	30.6	377.4	0.0	54.6
	7	15	410.2	0.0	40.0	324.6	0.0	16.7	415.3	0.0	33.3	348.3	0.0	8.3	415.2	0.0	35.7

Table 19: 2012 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Hope Vale School (0243)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		419.6	47.0	93.6	415.8	46.6	95.3	414.3	43.8	94.0	423.9	49.7	92.9	395.5	33.4	93.9
	5		493.6	31.3	91.6	477.0	19.3	92.1	494.9	31.4	92.8	491.0	30.6	90.5	488.7	26.7	93.3
	7		541.5	27.6	94.1	518.3	18.3	89.9	543.4	28.6	93.2	546.2	29.0	95.1	538.1	25.3	93.8
Queensland	3		408.5	42.5	92.7	403.3	39.0	94.7	398.3	36.3	93.1	411.3	44.4	91.8	380.9	26.1	92.7
	5		480.3	25.0	89.1	457.7	12.1	88.3	479.0	23.2	90.6	477.5	24.7	87.9	476.1	20.4	91.7
	7		532.7	22.6	93.3	511.7	15.3	88.8	533.9	23.4	91.9	539.8	25.7	94.4	532.0	21.8	93.8
Hopevale Campus of CYAAA (0243)	3	8	242.1	0.0	28.6	220.6	0.0	25.0	258.7	12.5	50.0	82.8	0.0	12.5	245.3	0.0	42.9
	5	5	371.3	25.0	25.0	272.3	0.0	20.0	351.0	20.0	40.0	382.1	20.0	40.0	398.2	25.0	25.0
	7	16	387.3	0.0	31.3	321.6	0.0	8.3	415.6	0.0	28.6	431.3	0.0	57.1	422.2	0.0	37.6

Table 20: 2013 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Hope Vale School (0243)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		419.1	45.8	95.3	415.6	46.7	95.0	410.8	42.6	93.8	428.2	51.1	95.3	396.9	31.9	95.7
	5		502.3	32.8	96.1	477.9	20.0	91.7	494.2	30.3	93.1	500.6	33.1	94.8	485.8	25.1	93.4
Queensland	3		407.7	40.1	95.1	406.2	41.6	94.3	396.3	35.4	92.8	419.4	46.7	95.4	386.2	25.7	95.8
	5		497.0	29.9	96.2	469.8	17.5	90.0	485.6	25.9	92.5	494.8	30.6	94.4	481.1	22.6	93.6
Hopevale Campus of CYAAA (0243)	3	12	297.0	0.0	53.8	254.2	0.0	50.0	252.7	0.0	16.7	261.6	0.0	33.3	303.1	0.0	76.9
	5	14	399.6	7.1	57.1	345.4	0.0	40.0	382.7	7.1	42.9	367.0	0.0	64.3	362.1	0.0	23.1

Table 21: 2014 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Hope Vale School (0243)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		418.3	46.2	93.5	402.2	39.1	93.8	411.8	43.7	92.7	426.0	49.9	93.6	401.8	36.2	94.6
	5		500.6	34.5	92.9	468.3	15.5	90.2	497.6	33.6	92.7	503.8	36.6	92.8	487.6	25.9	93.5
	7		546.1	29.0	94.9	511.6	15.5	88.5	545.1	30.6	92.4	543.1	29.2	93.0	545.9	28.6	95.1
Queensland	3		409.4	42.1	93.4	390.4	31.8	93.1	400.5	38.7	92.1	421.2	48.1	93.8	393.4	31.9	94.6
	5		496.1	32.2	92.8	457.3	12.9	87.4	489.5	28.5	92.7	500.2	35.1	92.7	481.7	22.9	93.1
	7		541.6	26.4	94.4	505.4	13.9	85.8	536.6	26.2	91.5	540.6	27.8	92.5	543.6	27.3	95.3
Hopevale Campus of CYAAA (0243)	3	11	353.5	18.2	100.0	238.3	0.0	46.9	351.2	18.2	90.9	314.9	9.1	63.6	412.0	54.5	100.0
	5	6	395.6	0.0	66.7	369.1	0.0	33.3	431.2	16.7	83.3	366.1	0.0	33.3	375.1	0.0	33.3
	7	4	438.7	0.0	100.0	340.1	0.0	0.0	411.6	0.0	25.0	421.5	0.0	25.0	459.8	0.0	75.0

Table 22: 2015 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Hope Vale School (0243)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		425.5	48.2	94.6	416.3	46.8	95.5	408.8	41.2	93.0	433.2	52.2	94.5	397.8	33.5	94.4
	5		498.5	33.5	93.3	478.1	19.1	92.3	498.1	32.6	93.5	503.1	36.9	92.9	492.5	27.8	95.1
Queensland	3		418.4	44.6	95.0	405.8	40.3	95.1	395.7	34.6	92.4	430.5	51.2	95.2	392.2	30.3	95.0
	5		494.5	31.4	93.8	470.2	17.3	90.6	489.2	27.7	93.1	499.8	34.2	93.3	486.0	24.0	95.5
Hopevale Campus of CYAAA (0243)	3	27	297.8	0.0	61.9	264.4	7.4	55.6	286.4	11.1	48.1	304.8	3.7	66.7	299.2	0.0	74.1
	5	15	363.6	0.0	62.5	349.4	0.0	31.3	377.6	0.0	62.5	376.6	0.0	56.3	365.1	0.0	42.9

Table 23: 2016 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Hope Vale School (0243)

For All Students

(Preliminary Data for 2016)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		425.7	49.4	95.1	420.5	48.6	96.4	420.1	46.5	94.3	436.3	52.8	95.4	402.2	35.7	95.7
	5		501.7	35.2	93.1	475.4	17.4	93.3	492.9	29.6	92.9	505.0	36.3	93.8	492.9	28.2	94.6
Queensland	3		420.2	46.9	95.8	409.4	41.1	96.7	410.6	42.4	94.8	432.8	51.4	96.6	396.8	33.1	96.5
	5		500.0	34.5	93.8	465.9	13.9	92.6	485.8	25.8	93.4	506.1	37.3	94.8	488.2	25.6	95.2
Hopevale Campus of CYAAA (0243)	3	18	283.9	0.0	64.7	299.7	0.0	76.5	268.1	0.0	58.8	311.9	0.0	82.4	301.5	0.0	88.9
	5	12	308.1	0.0	25.0	298.2	0.0	16.7	355.9	0.0	41.7	261.3	0.0	33.3	330.3	0.0	25.0

Table 24: Effect Sizes for Hope Vale School Relative to Nation⁷¹

Effect Size Gain (Relative to the Nation)

Effect Size Gain (new methodology)							
Year Levels	Strand	2011-2013		2012-2014		2013-2015	
		This School	Qld State Schools	This School	Qld State Schools	This School	Qld State Schools
03-05	R	0.35	0.18	0.95	0.08	0.09	0.10
03-05	W	-0.07	0.03	1.36	-0.02	0.50	0.01
03-05	S	0.24	0.12	1.06	0.10	0.52	0.08
03-05	G&P	2.56	0.13	2.52	0.13	0.48	0.09
03-05	N	-0.23	0.10	0.55	0.12	-0.49	0.07
05-07	R	0.62	0.18	0.22	0.15		-0.03
05-07	W	1.86	0.10	0.44	0.15		-0.04
05-07	S	0.58	0.16	0.14	0.11		0.06
05-07	G&P	0.41	0.15	-0.17	0.16		0.01
05-07	N	0.16	0.20	0.06	0.14		-0.03

Effect Size Gain: How much the school/state has gained in performance against the nation expressed in Standard Deviation units. Positive numbers indicate that the school/state has gained more than the nation. Negative numbers indicate that the school/state has gained less than the nation. Based on the whole cohort enrolled at the school for each test occasion. For year levels 07-09, Effect Size Gain is not currently calculated for secondary schools.

Table 24 again must be interpreted cautiously due to the comparatively small number of students contributing to the dataset. The results presented in the Table do, however, provide reason for optimism. Hope Vale is not a privileged school and its students are

⁷¹ Cohort sizes are small, ranging from 11 to 15 students.

affected by a range of developmental issues, social and emotional instability, and community conditions not typical of State or National averages. A review of the Table shows that progress at the Hope Vale School was superior to the State and Nation in 18 comparisons and only lower in 7 of the 25 possible contrasts.

There are some very substantial positive effect sizes in many learning areas, meaning that the progress being made in these areas is exceeding that being made in general in Queensland and Australian schools. This is not yet the case consistently across but this is exactly the kind of progress that Low SES schools need to show to catch-up kids who start behind, and keep their learning at pace.

Aurukun

The Aurukun campus is considered very remote, and it has an ICSEA value of 713.⁷²

Tables for 2010-2016 NAPLAN performance summaries for Aurukun show results since the commencement of the Cape York Academy and its implementation of DI and EDI. The 2010 NAPLAN summary table shows Aurukun at the inception of the Cape York Academy and the introduction of DI and EDI when performance of the Aurukun school was poor. Over time there is progress evident, as there is an increase in student achievement in the upper two bands.

Again, the Cape York Academy has closely considered all these results, including at an individual student level in order to understand what is going on. Students at the Aurukun school start well behind the average Australian school student when they commence their schooling, even with the accelerated learning DI and EDI provides the acceleration is not enough to catch-up Aurukun students by the time of the first NAPLAN test in Year 3.

Assessments of student cognitive, and social and emotional assessments at Cape York Academy schools reveal high levels of concern at Aurukun, and the trajectory of results after the introduction of DI and EDI appears to reflect this underlying profile. Forty-five students were assessed as meeting the Education Queensland criteria for verification of special needs.

The Aurukun campus of the Cape York Academy is also larger, meaning that as with Hope Vale where children with special needs have been identified through professional assessments, it has not been possible to provide these children with extra one-on-one teaching and other support required without additional teaching and specialist special needs resources.

The Aurukun community continues to be seriously impacted by serious social problems which have a direct impact on student attendance and performance.

⁷² See My School website

<https://www.myschool.edu.au/SchoolProfile/Index/102938/CapeYorkAboriginalAustralianAcademy/50482/2015>. Note all the Cape York Academy locations have been given a single ICSEA score although each location would vary.

The trajectory of the Aurukun school is the most difficult one, although there have been signs of improvement at levels that are consistent with the general evidence indicating the importance of effective instruction and the efficacy of DI and EDI programs, particularly in the early years, the introduction of DI and EDI has not been sufficient to overcome the difficulties associated with the level of special needs, behavioural issues and social problems in the community that continue to impact on students learning, development and wellbeing.

Table 25: 2010 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Aurukun School (0274)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		414.3	44.3	93.9	418.6	47.1	95.5	399.2	38.7	91.0	416.9	46.7	92.0	395.4	32.3	94.3
	5		487.4	28.7	91.3	485.2	23.8	93.1	487.1	27.6	92.0	499.7	34.9	92.2	488.8	26.4	93.7
	7		546.0	29.5	94.9	533.5	23.4	92.6	544.7	30.6	92.9	535.1	25.6	91.6	547.8	29.6	95.1
Queensland	3		393.0	34.2	92.1	402.4	38.6	93.8	371.5	26.1	85.6	398.2	38.4	89.7	378.5	22.7	93.4
	5		468.7	19.9	88.2	471.6	18.4	90.4	467.9	17.8	89.1	483.3	26.7	90.1	474.1	18.4	92.6
	7		537.5	24.3	94.6	531.2	22.5	92.2	535.5	25.5	91.9	529.4	22.8	90.8	546.2	28.7	95.4
Aurukun State School (0274)	3	11	283.5	0.0	72.7	171.9	0.0	0.0	226.1	0.0	0.0	225.9	0.0	9.1	210.7	0.0	0.0
	5	14	330.7	0.0	0.0	186.6	0.0	0.0	316.7	0.0	15.4	320.5	0.0	15.4	282.1	0.0	0.0
	7	11	403.6	0.0	0.0	287.0	0.0	10.0	374.5	0.0	0.0	293.2	0.0	0.0	408.9	0.0	27.3

Table 26: 2011 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Aurukun School (0274)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		415.7	44.7	93.8	415.9	46.1	95.3	405.9	40.6	92.8	421.2	48.1	93.1	398.1	33.3	95.6
	5		488.1	28.6	91.5	482.6	22.6	92.5	484.1	25.7	91.3	499.1	34.6	92.0	487.8	24.8	94.4
	7		540.2	26.6	94.7	529.1	22.6	91.1	537.7	25.8	92.4	532.4	23.0	92.8	544.6	28.9	94.5
Queensland	3		399.9	37.6	92.8	404.1	39.1	94.3	387.7	32.2	90.5	406.8	42.0	91.7	384.6	26.3	95.2
	5		469.4	19.8	88.6	470.9	18.6	90.2	465.6	16.8	88.7	485.0	28.0	90.0	470.3	15.4	93.4
	7		533.5	22.9	94.3	532.9	24.4	91.6	528.6	21.5	90.9	524.4	18.5	92.2	538.7	25.6	94.6
Aurukun State School (0274)	3	26	291.2	0.0	69.2	192.1	0.0	20.0	270.2	3.8	57.7	245.2	0.0	80.0	296.3	0.0	60.9
	5	16	352.6	0.0	12.5	308.7	0.0	18.8	371.2	6.3	43.8	347.3	6.3	31.3	374.3	0.0	35.7
	7	23	422.3	0.0	50.0	297.3	0.0	8.7	406.1	0.0	39.1	375.7	0.0	8.7	403.8	0.0	25.0

Table 27: 2012 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Aurukun School (0274)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		419.6	47.0	93.6	415.8	46.6	95.3	414.3	43.8	94.0	423.9	49.7	92.9	395.5	33.4	93.9
	5		493.6	31.3	91.6	477.0	19.3	92.1	494.9	31.4	92.8	491.0	30.6	90.5	488.7	26.7	93.3
	7		541.5	27.6	94.1	518.3	18.3	89.9	543.4	28.6	93.2	546.2	29.0	95.1	538.1	25.3	93.8
Queensland	3		408.6	42.5	92.7	403.3	39.0	94.7	398.3	36.3	93.1	411.3	44.4	91.8	380.9	26.1	92.7
	5		480.3	25.0	89.1	457.7	12.1	88.3	479.0	23.2	90.6	477.5	24.7	87.9	476.1	20.4	91.7
	7		532.7	22.6	93.3	511.7	15.3	88.8	533.9	23.4	91.9	539.8	25.7	94.4	532.0	21.8	93.8
Aurukun State School (0274)	3	13	280.9	0.0	27.3	167.9	0.0	27.3	240.1	0.0	18.2	257.8	0.0	36.4	242.6	0.0	15.4
	5	14	328.9	0.0	18.2	197.5	0.0	0.0	312.3	0.0	7.1	261.3	0.0	0.0	327.3	0.0	0.0
	7	17	407.7	0.0	17.6	279.7	0.0	0.0	399.7	0.0	18.8	392.8	0.0	37.5	398.5	0.0	11.8

Table 28: 2013 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Aurukun School (0274)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		419.1	45.8	95.3	415.6	46.7	95.0	410.8	42.6	93.8	428.2	51.1	95.3	396.9	31.9	95.7
	5		502.3	32.8	96.1	477.9	20.0	91.7	494.2	30.3	93.1	500.6	33.1	94.8	485.8	25.1	93.4
	7		540.6	26.0	94.2	517.0	17.6	89.3	549.3	31.7	93.7	535.1	26.5	90.8	542.1	26.6	95.0
Queensland	3		407.7	40.1	95.1	406.2	41.6	94.3	395.3	35.4	92.8	419.4	46.7	95.4	386.2	25.7	95.8
	5		497.0	29.9	96.2	469.8	17.5	90.0	485.6	25.9	92.5	494.8	30.6	94.4	481.1	22.6	93.6
	7		533.5	22.2	93.6	514.9	16.8	88.8	542.5	27.6	93.1	531.5	24.8	90.2	538.5	24.3	95.4
Aurukun State School (0274)	3	34	278.7	0.0	65.6	192.2	0.0	21.2	265.7	2.9	32.4	262.7	0.0	50.0	248.1	0.0	22.6
	5	25	356.6	0.0	56.0	262.4	0.0	15.0	380.1	0.0	44.0	333.2	0.0	28.0	354.0	0.0	20.0
	7	15	415.8	0.0	33.3	262.3	0.0	13.3	411.6	6.7	20.0	346.8	0.0	20.0	419.2	0.0	21.4

Table 29: 2014 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Aurukun School (0274)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		418.3	46.2	93.5	402.2	39.1	93.8	411.8	43.7	92.7	426.0	49.9	93.6	401.8	36.2	94.6
	5		500.6	34.5	92.9	468.3	15.5	90.2	497.6	33.6	92.7	503.8	36.6	92.8	487.6	25.9	93.5
	7		546.1	29.0	94.9	511.6	15.5	88.5	545.1	30.6	92.4	543.1	29.2	93.0	545.9	28.6	95.1
Queensland	3		409.4	42.1	93.4	390.4	31.8	93.1	400.5	38.7	92.1	421.2	48.1	93.8	393.4	31.9	94.6
	5		496.1	32.2	92.8	457.3	12.9	87.4	489.5	28.5	92.7	500.2	35.1	92.7	481.7	22.9	93.1
	7		541.6	26.4	94.4	505.4	13.9	85.8	536.6	26.2	91.5	540.6	27.8	92.5	543.6	27.3	95.3
Aurukun State School (0274)	3	23	252.2	0.0	47.6	199.4	0.0	30.4	247.9	4.3	43.5	277.3	0.0	50.9	268.5	0.0	63.2
	5	12	322.3	0.0	25.0	306.6	0.0	8.3	406.8	0.0	75.0	339.1	0.0	25.0	336.9	0.0	0.0
	7	13	371.0	0.0	9.1	263.9	0.0	0.0	427.6	0.0	46.2	368.6	0.0	30.8	421.4	0.0	45.6

Table 30: 2015 NAPLAN Performance Measures Summarised for Aurukun School (0274)

School	Year Level	Max n	Reading			Writing			Spelling			Grammar and Punctuation			Numeracy		
			Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %	Mean	Top 2 Band %	NMS %
Australia	3		425.5	48.2	94.6	416.3	46.8	95.5	408.8	41.2	93.0	433.2	52.2	94.5	397.8	33.5	94.4
	5		498.5	33.5	93.3	478.1	19.1	92.3	498.1	32.6	93.5	503.1	35.9	92.9	492.5	27.8	95.1
Queensland	3		418.4	44.8	95.0	405.8	40.3	95.1	395.7	34.6	92.4	430.5	51.2	95.2	392.2	30.3	95.0
	5		494.5	31.4	93.8	470.2	17.3	90.6	489.2	27.7	93.1	499.8	34.2	93.3	486.0	24.0	95.5
Aurukun State School (0274)	3	14	334.8	7.7	84.6	275.2	7.1	71.4	279.4	7.1	50.0	215.6	7.1	42.9	239.9	10.0	20.0
	5	28	352.0	0.0	40.0	323.3	0.0	14.3	392.8	7.4	59.3	346.2	0.0	29.6	341.1	0.0	31.6

We do not have access to the Aurukun effect size tables, as have been included above for Broadbeach, Coen and Hope Vale.

WHAT CAN BE CONCLUDED FROM THE CAPE YORK ACADEMY SUMMARY NAPLAN RESULTS?

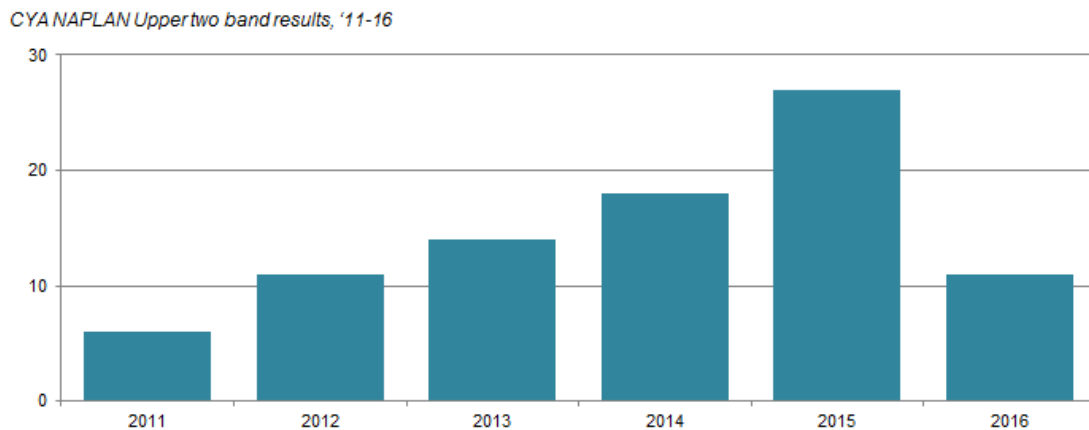
The reforms undertaken, including the implementation of DI and EDI appear to have substantial impact. The Cape York Academy is effective in accelerating learning. However, to further improve the impact of the education provided at these schools to help every child reach their full potential, the Cape York Academy must continue to put in place effective strategies to:

1. Start to put the building blocks of literacy in place in Pre-Prep through explicit instruction
2. Ensure good attendance
3. Manage behavioural issues at the school and in the classrooms
4. Respond to the high level of special needs.

It appears that the greatest acceleration of progress has been made with DI and EDI in the early years, and this appears to confirm that there is a great opportunity to accelerate the learning of foundational skills for kids even earlier on, so that they do not start behind when they arrive at Year 1. Continuing to accelerate students in the earliest years of primary school, including through DI and EDI can then mean that as students grow older the schools can increasingly target comprehension and extension. The Cape York Academy will continue to work to ensure that the acceleration of students learning is sustained in the upper years of primary school.

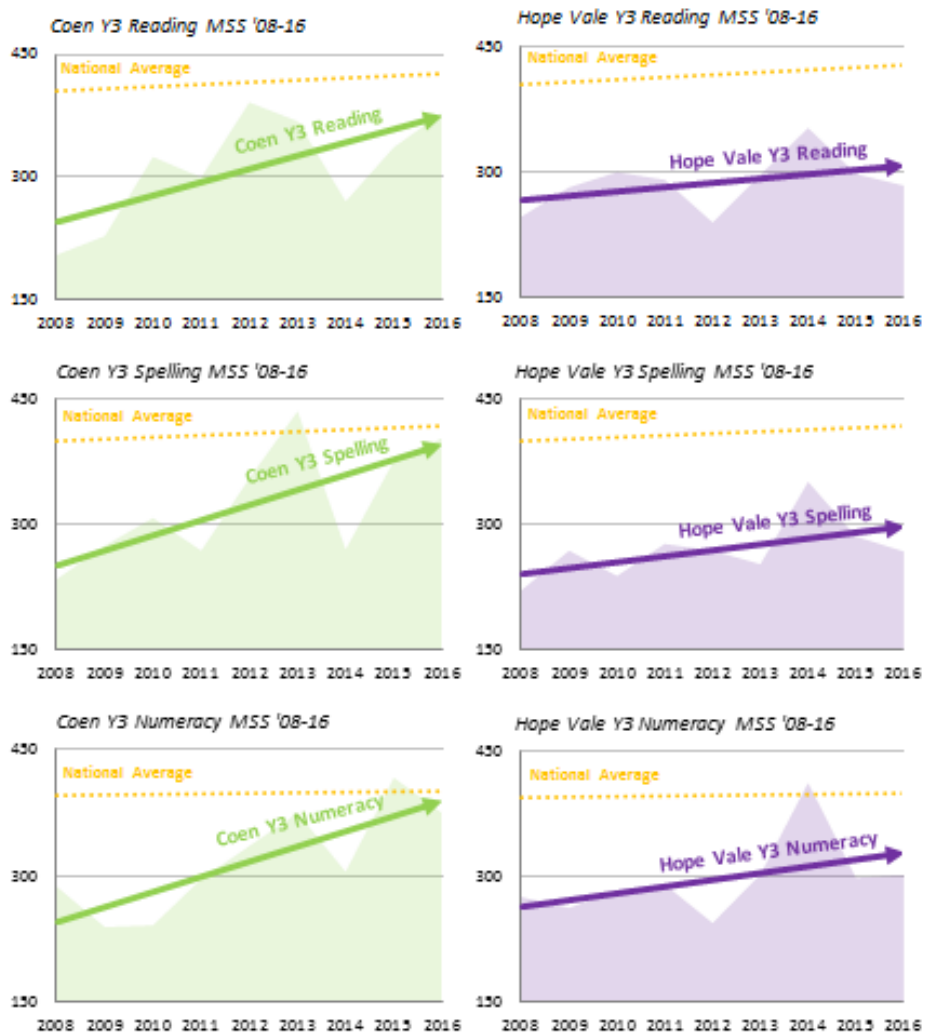
Overall, the Cape York Academy has steadily increased the number of results in the upper two bands, although there has not been a further increase in these numbers in 2016 (see Figure 12). However, as the Aurukun campus was closed during the NAPLAN 2016 testing due to the violence that had been committed outside of school hours in the community but involving school staff, there was a substantial decrease in the number of Cape York Academy students overall that sat the NAPLAN in 2016.

Figure 12: Cape York Academy Upper 2 Bands NAPLAN results 2011-2016



Trends in Mean Scale Scores (MSS) in NAPLAN show that the Cape York Academy’s results have generally continued to improve at a faster rate than the average student across the rest of nation (see Figure 13). In Coen, this trajectory means the school is on track to become the **first Indigenous school** that performs on par with mainstream Australian schools across all learning areas.

Figure 13: Cape York Academy trends in NAPLAN Mean Scale Scores 2008-2016



WAS DI THE CAUSE OF THE CRISIS THAT OCCURRED IN AURUKUN IN 2016?

Since the Committee’s original inquiry and Interim Report, the Aurukun community experienced a significant crisis in May 2016 when a group of teenagers carjacked the school principal at night, leading to the school closure and the evacuation of teachers from the community. [Dr Sarra was quick to suggest that DI led to the Aurukun crisis](#), and he was backed by others who also blamed the Cape York Academy model.

When you reflect upon this immediate connection being made between disengaged older teenagers engaging in crime in the streets of Aurukun, and a pedagogical program in a primary school that was the community’s best chance to produce the next generation of youth who would not be sucked into the vortex of youth disengagement (with failed schooling and neglected special learning needs being drivers of this disengagement) – then it is an astounding connection to make. But it was made.

The offenders responsible for the incident leading to the school closure have now been dealt with by the Courts. Judge Brian Harrison sentenced the 19 year old man, Johnathan Raymond Ngakyunkwokka, the oldest of the group of teens involved in the theft and violence to three years jail. Raymond Ngakyunkwokka's education certainly failed to prevent him reaching this juncture — he was a product of the Aurukun primary school before the Cape York Academy reforms, when it was a Queensland state school implementing the Stronger Smarter approach, under Executive Principal, Mr Ian Mackie (former head of the Western Cape College in Weipa and former principal of Aurukun, and now consultant to Stronger Smarter and one of the three main critics of the Cape York Academy) and his wife, Ms Liz Mackie, who was principal of Aurukun up to 2009 after whom the Cape York Academy was established.

Any suggestion that DI, or the Cape York Academy model, was responsible for the crisis that unfolded in Aurukun is outrageous. This was a crisis with many causes — certainly one of which was the very longstanding failure of the education system that the Cape York Academy model and direct instruction were trying to make inroads into remedying. Indeed the infamous [‘Aurukun 9’ rape case involving youth in Aurukun](#) that gained national attention in 2009 occurred when the Mackies were in charge of the Aurukun school and the Stronger Smarter institute was the program in place.

It would be ridiculous, offensive and wrong to assert that this infamous gang rape incident was the consequence of the Stronger Smarter program at the school or the competence of the Mackies, and yet Dr Sarra was able to assert this in relation to the carjacking incident seven years later.

CONCLUSION

There are three points that should be understood in relation to the use of DI programs in schools that fit the description of ‘Poor’ schools, as per the globally influential [McKinsey framework](#) on *How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better*.

Firstly, students (and teachers) not used to engaging in productive teaching and learning day-in, day-out, immediately find DI very intense and demanding. It is demanding for the students and the teachers, and this can be quite challenging in schools where effective instruction has not been the norm. It takes time to adjust to the volume and pace of the work, and the cognitive attention required of the learners and the classroom management required of the teachers. There is an extent to which both teacher and learners need to build up their ‘fitness’ and stamina to engage in effective instruction.

Secondly, this can lead to behaviour challenges, where students (particularly low attenders who are not building the routines and mindsets for learning) will find the early stages of DI implementation quite challenging. Many students are unused to learning lesson to lesson, every day. Too much of their past school learning has been random and patchy, rather than systematic and progressive. As with all kinds of effective teaching and learning, classroom behaviour management (and its related school-wide behaviour management) is crucial in order to get traction with learning. The highly structured nature of DI (and EDI) with its group engagement through choral responses and individual checking for understanding,

combines well with Positive Behaviour Management to help with student behaviour. Student involvement is built into the design of the DI lessons: no student is left out of the learning routines. So the opportunity for off-track behaviour is very much minimised by the very nature of the program.

Thirdly, students from 'Poor' schools in First Nation settings, but also disadvantaged schools generally, are usually many years behind their mainstream peers. This may be a consequence of ESL, the high prevalence of disabilities occasioned by poor early childhood experiences, and the limited exposure to early childhood learning experiences. As described above the gap is therefore wide at the beginning of their schooling, and usually grows over the course of primary and (if they continue) into secondary. Therefore the instructional time needed to build foundational literacy and numeracy (so they can Learn to Read, and then go on to Read to Learn) is much more, than for students who do not face such a gap. To close this gap as early as possible, more instructional time in DI is needed. What is the point of children going on to curricula that requires them to Read to Learn, when they have not yet Learned to Read? Foundational literacy and numeracy is a pre-requisite for success in the rest of the Australian Curriculum. Therefore the necessary instructional time and attention needs to be focused on this foundational literacy and numeracy. Otherwise schools repeat the old disastrous formula: exposing students to curricula which they are not yet equipped to understand because they have not yet mastered reading. The rest of their schooling just ends up like they are sitting in a foreign language class, where they only grasp a fraction of what is going on in lessons, and if there is learning, it is patchy, random and sporadic.

To effectively remedy the crisis in Indigenous education, promising evidence-based approaches such as DI and EDI must not be dismissed for political or ideological reasons. It is to the detriment of First Nations students that opinion continues to drive most approaches seeking improvement of Indigenous engagement and outcomes. We note that the Interim Report was lacking references, sources of evidence to support statements or assertions, and we hope that the final report will include a more rigorous and evidence-based approach.

The alternatives to DI, including the default teaching and learning approaches of schools, simply do not have any evidence base for effectiveness. Indeed the evidence from sources such as the QUT evaluation of Stronger Smarter and the 2016 Productivity Commission report finds no evidence of the effectiveness of alternative approaches to reform. The fact that DI and EDI pedagogy are being championed by Indigenous leadership in some locations is all the more reason that they should be used and given a 'red hot go' to see if their implementation can help to improve engagement and outcomes.

Approaches that focus on building stronger relationships between teachers and students, their parents, and their local community, can only provide one part of the solution. We need a strong focus on ensuring that efficient and effective teaching takes place in every class so that our students who start behind catch up and keep up, and even fly ahead.

There is such overwhelming evidence of the effectiveness of DI and all forms of explicit and direct instruction, including EDI, that it would be sheer obscurantism to deny it. The open question is whether such an effective program can be competently implemented in Indigenous settings, and whether the complementary interventions and supports (for school

attendance, school readiness, behaviour management and special needs) can also be aligned to support student learning.

The results to date show great promise. As we continue down this path we expect we will see Coen become Queensland's first genuinely good Indigenous school, and then Hope Vale will follow.

However, DI and EDI are simply one aspect of a more comprehensive set of solutions that is needed to help to address the many challenges facing Indigenous education, these include: how to best teach for varying attendance, group students of different abilities, educate students with high needs, maintain fidelity through high teacher/leadership turnover, coach inexperienced teachers to be effective in the classroom, and develop/implement a school improvement agenda.

The Cape York Academy itself has introduced a range of reforms in addition to introducing DI and EDI in its schools, and such an approach must continue. While the Cape York Academy will continue to refine and improve its implementation of DI and EDI, it will also continue to improve its implementation of other strategies and approaches to meet the learning, development and wellbeing needs of its students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We put forward the following recommendations for consideration by the Committee:

1. The need for a Small Schools Teaching and Learning Annual Assessment Tool

1.1 In 2009 the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) developed a tool with Education Queensland called a 'Teaching and Learning Audit' now called a 'Teaching and Learning School Improvement Framework', which is used across Queensland schools every four years. The Framework consists of eight interrelated domains of a school's day-to-day practices:

1. An Explicit Improvement Agenda
2. Analysis and Discussion of Data
3. A Culture that Promotes Learning
4. Targeted Use of School Resources
5. An Expert Teaching Team
6. Systematic Curriculum Delivery
7. Differentiated Classroom Learning
8. Effective Teaching Practices.

1.2 The Northern Territory Education Department utilises a similar framework developed with ACER, but they added an additional domain:

9. School and Community Partnerships.

1.3 It is recommended that the Commonwealth Department of Education engage ACER to develop a similar tool for application to Indigenous schools, particularly all

community schools but also mainstream schools with a minimum cohort of Indigenous students, but which adds a metric for identifying and reporting on Learning Achievement and Growth, and which takes into account student attendance and special needs status. The particular data and statistical challenges associated with small schools, and less than 80% participation rates in standardised testing such as NAPLAN, should be addressed by this Learning Achievement and Growth metric.

1.4 It is recommended that all schools systems — state, territory, church and independent — falling within the definition of these schools, be obliged to implement this tool as part of their receipt of funding from the Commonwealth.

2 Race to the Top Funding School Improvement Program for Indigenous schools and schools with significant number of Indigenous students

2.1 It is recommended that the Commonwealth Government establish a 'Race to the Top' funding program that offers a choice of school improvement interventions that are pre-selected on minimum criteria of:

- a) evidence of effectiveness
- b) implementation capability,

and that there be a process for choosing interventions that involves parent communities and school administrators, which allows for comprehensive information on the various interventions to be provided to enable the choice to be made.

2.2 That the following interventions be considered for inclusion in this Race to the Top funding program:

- a) John Fleming's Explicit Instruction Program
- b) Chris Sarra's Stronger Smarter Institute program
- c) Good to Great Schools Australia program
- d) Kevin Wheldall's MULTILIT program

2.3 That there be annual assessment of progress utilising the School Improvement Tool in recommendation 1 above.

2.4 That there be independent evaluation of progress across the various interventions in every third year of the program.

2.5 That school parent communities, school leaders and system owners be allowed to shift or make adjustments of interventions after each evaluation.

2.6 That the program be available to 200 Indigenous schools.

2.7 That the program be run for 10 years.

3 That the proposed program include Pre-Prep Interventions

It is recommended that the program proposed in recommendation 2 include Pre-Prep interventions to enable school readiness.


4 That such a program include comprehensive attention to Health and Special Needs supports for students

It is recommended that the program proposed in recommendation 2 include interventions that address the health and special learning needs of Indigenous students.

Yours sincerely



Bernardine Denigan
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Good to Great Schools Australia



Duncan Murray
Chief Executive Officer
Cape York Partnership

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