

## Stronger Smarter Institute Response to the Consultation Paper – Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System

The Stronger Smarter Institute (SSI) runs professional development programs for educators with the aim of supporting all Australian schools to provide a better and fairer educational experience for our First Nations students. The work of the Institute is based on the Stronger Smarter Approach™ (SSA)<sup>i</sup>, which provides a strength-based framework<sup>ii</sup> for schools to implement ‘Strong and Smart’ classrooms. Strong and Smart is the belief that a learning environment that supports all students to learn will be culturally responsive while also holding high expectations.

Alumni from our Stronger Smarter Leadership Program (SSLP) have told us that implementing the SSA as an overarching framework across the school creates a shared language and common ethos to focus on wellbeing and high expectations. Our evidence from SSI alumni from programs run over the last 17 years has shown that this supports improved outcomes for First Nations students.

Existing educational policies and frameworks often use the words ‘strength-based’, ‘inclusion’, ‘connectedness’ and ‘relationships’. However, they fall short when it comes to the strategies and tools for educators to turn these ideas into actions in the classroom. We believe that the reason the SSA works is because our framework and PD programs provide both the mindset shift to be ‘tuned-in’ to a culturally responsive, strength-based approach and the tools to build relationships leading to greater inclusion and connectedness.

We believe that embedding the values and principles of the SSA into the National School Reform Agreement and into school wellbeing frameworks is essential to provide a high quality, equitable education system for First Nations students. This needs to be accompanied by equitable funding for disadvantaged schools and consideration of different school and staffing models. It also needs to be supported by PD opportunities to provide educators with the tools to enact the visions of the framework.

In our response to this Consultation Paper, we have drawn on the depth of experience of our alumni shared with us through interviews, survey data<sup>iii</sup>, and during our programs, as well as the expertise of the SSI team.

## Improving student outcomes – including for students most at risk of falling behind

Addressing questions:

1. What are the most important student outcomes for Australian school students that should be measured in the next NSRA? Should these go beyond academic performance (for example, attendance and engagement)?
2. What are the evidence-based practices that teachers, schools, systems and sectors can put in place to improve student outcomes, particularly for those most at risk of falling behind? Are different approaches required for different at-risk cohorts?
6. How can the targets in the next NSRA be structured to ensure that evidence-based approaches underpin a nationally coherent reform agenda while allowing jurisdictions and schools the flexibility to respond to individual student circumstances and needs?

### Measuring student outcomes [Q1]

Our alumni tell us that students seeing themselves as successful learners is key to student attendance and engagement. A Principal from a remote school told us that implementing the Stronger Smarter Approach (SSA) meant that, *Students can articulate what it looks and feels like to be successful as a First Nations student. Staff can articulate their role in developing successful students. Community can articulate what they want to see within the school to support their children as successful learners*’ [2022 Alumni survey<sup>iv</sup>].

Alumni have told us how, when they shift their thinking from the western lens, they start to take a broader view of student success. In doing this, they find ways to ensure that all students are seeing themselves as successful learners in the classroom and describe how this results in better student attendance and engagement.

From our work in remote schools, it is clear that NAPLAN is not always a predictor of student success in terms of future successful pathways to employment and contributing to society. If NAPLAN is the only tool used, and it is incorrectly showing remote students as ‘unsuccessful learners’, then this can contribute to students dropping out of school if they are not seeing themselves as successful.

We believe that it is important to re-thing the measures of success. Attendance and engagement are important as lead indicators that can help predict eventual academic performance. However, we think it is also important to look at measures of academic success beyond NAPLAN, which has a deficit narrative around it. Measuring outcomes beyond NAPLAN opens up the possibility of gaining a better understanding of what is working in schools to ensure student success that may not be visible in NAPLAN results.

## **School models [Q2, Q6]**

Taking a strength-based approach at the policy level also opens up the thinking to different school models. As the Consultation Paper notes, evidence shows that there is a school factor that impacts on the academic performance of students experiencing disadvantage. Students experiencing disadvantage perform better when they attend advantaged schools. Ten years on, the recommendations from the Gonski Review have not been fully implemented. If we are to improve outcomes for students at risk of falling behind, we need to fully implement the Gonski recommendations to ensure all schools are funded equally, and that disadvantaged schools receive the funding they need.

Historically in remote communities there has been a failure to recognise that for many First Nations students, English is a second language. This has important implications for staffing in remote schools. These schools need to be funded and staffed with specialist teachers in the same way that a metropolitan school with a high percentage of refugee students might be staffed.

The current emphasis on sending students away to boarding school results in some teenage students left in communities with nothing to do and no access to secondary schooling. This boarding school model sends a negative message to communities that, 'your best chance of success for your children is for them to leave the community'. The Institute would like to see this message changed to one where we say to students, 'you are located in a magnificent community with sophisticated knowledge and wisdom and a deep connection to country, and we would like to bring education to you.'

The Institute would be interested in partnering with governments to develop the concept of a virtual secondary college that applies the SSA and provides remote students with access to high quality education without having to leave family and country. This would provide a secondary school curriculum that meets the requirements for the Australian curriculum and is designed for excellence, as opposed to current curriculum in remote schools that is still often based around 'baby sitting and killing time.'

## **Strong and Smart - evidence-based practices for at risk students [Q2, Q6]**

Our research with alumni shows that the concept of a 'Strong and Smart' classroom is an essential basis for a learning environment that will support students at risk of falling behind. This is also strongly connected to student wellbeing.

Our alumni report that when they implement 'Strong and Smart' classrooms, they see a greater sense of belonging and stronger classroom bonds. Students take the time to listen to others and are more observant of each other's behaviours, and therefore more appreciative of each other. There is greater student confidence in their own ability resulting in student leadership. Students have a

better attitude to learning, taking on more ownership of their approach to school and responsibility for their own outcomes.

### **Valuing local communities [Q2, Q6]**

The Keeping Kids Safe and Well<sup>v</sup> report indicates a need for post school centres and activities where students can be supported by ‘someone who understands us’. We agree that any post-school centres, or programs for intensive catch up need to be grounded in a non-deficit, culturally responsive approach. The best way to do this is through working with local communities. For example, Community Durithunga, which was set up at an urban Brisbane school, was co-designed with the community as a culturally safe space for First Nations students. This included a Homework Hub which encouraged a focus on cultural recognition and academic excellence<sup>vi</sup>.

### **High-Expectations Relationships [Q2, Q6]**

The Consultation Paper notes that research from AERO shows that schools who are encouraging a sense of belonging have structures and policies to facilitate connectedness between students and the school. A key component of the SSA is High-Expectations Relationships<sup>vii</sup>. While both high expectations and relationship building are taught in pre-service teacher education courses, our alumni tell us that the concepts of High-Expectations Relationships bring a different understanding and provide a tool that works to improve relationships with students. Our evidence suggests that High-Expectations Relationships are an essential tool for student wellbeing and belonging.

Alumni tell us that after completing our Stronger Smarter Leadership Program<sup>TM</sup> (SSLP), High-Expectations Relationships with students is one of the things they most frequently change in their teaching practice. High-Expectations Relationships come from a basis of understanding and challenging institutional racism. Once educators reflect on how the entrenched western lens embedded in our education system can impact on their enactment of ‘high expectations’, their choices about building relationships with students change. Alumni tell us that they use High-Expectations Relationships to raise the student voice and build an emotional bank account with students so that they can hold challenging conversations about expectations.

Stronger Smarter alumni tell us that they recognise that building relationships takes time, but still choose to dedicate time to do this in the classroom because of the positive benefits. One Principal in a remote school said, *‘The main thing in remote communities is that kids can vote with their feet. They’ve got the ability to walk out, to not come to school. If they don’t want to come, they won’t. And the one thing that keeps kids coming back is the positive relationship they’ve got with their teachers’* [SSI Field Note Interviews].

We believe that the concepts of High-Expectations Relationships should be embedded into the National School Reform Agreement, and educators should have access to Professional Development (PD) to support the enactment of High-Expectations Relationships in schools.

### **Culturally responsive professional development [Q2, Q6]**

If educators are to create the Strong and Smart classrooms that will support First Nations students, they need to be ‘tuned in’ to culturally responsive pedagogies. We describe this as a ‘mindset change’ and as educators ‘taking responsibility for change’<sup>viii</sup>. Researchers have commented that out-of-awareness beliefs can be hard to change, and this process requires a means for educators to critically reflect on their own standpoint<sup>ix</sup>. Our research shows that our SSLP has been extremely successful in supporting educators to make this ‘mindset shift’ towards high expectations and supporting students in all equity groups<sup>x</sup>. We believe it is essential for jurisdictions to allocate funding towards effective and ongoing professional development for educators. This needs to include a range of PDs that are led from a First Nations framework.

Our alumni tell us that the experience of attending the SSLP together with the tools and frameworks provides strategies that they can take straight back to the school or classroom. In our 2022 Alumni survey, many alumni told us that the SSLP was the best PD they had done. Comments included:

- *SSI should be a compulsory learning for our young and new educators.*
- *There is no greater professional learning for educators than Stronger Smarter.*
- *The training needs to be available as mandatory training and more affordable for all schools.*
- *The Stronger Smarter Institute should be a compulsory part of every school’s professional learning.*
- *The Stronger Smarter Leadership Program, I feel, should be mandatory training for all educators and even a course through all universities .... to strengthen the knowledge, skills and understanding to support Aboriginal education and the cultural identity for students.*

### **Improving student mental health and wellbeing**

Addressing questions:

8. What does it look like when a school is supporting student mental health and wellbeing effectively? What is needed from schools, systems, government and the community to deliver this?

9. What evidence-based wellbeing approaches currently being implemented by schools and communities should be considered as part of a national reform agenda?

### **First Nations models of social and emotional wellbeing [Q8, Q9]**

We support the idea mentioned in the Consultation paper that it would be ‘useful to apply First Nations models of social and emotional wellbeing more generally’. Nine guiding principles are presented in the *National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017-2023 Framework*<sup>xi</sup>. These need to be understood and embedded into models of social and emotional wellbeing.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health is viewed in a holistic context
- Self-determination is central
- Culturally valid understandings must shape the provision of services and guide assessment, care and management
- The experience of trauma and loss are a direct outcome of the disruption to cultural wellbeing.
- Recognition of human rights
- Impact of racism and stigma
- Recognition of the centrality kinship
- Recognition of cultural diversity
- Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander strength.

We believe that any model of social and emotional wellbeing that will address the needs of First Nations students in schools needs to include the following:

- Embedded – frameworks and strategies need be embedded as part of the school culture.
- Holistic – recognising the importance of connections.
- Cultural identity – cultural identity and the impact of racism are central to social and emotional wellbeing.
- High expectations – holding high expectations play a part in student wellbeing.
- Local context – strategies always need to recognise the local context and be grounded in strong and respectful connections with both students and the local community.

### **Embedded [Q8, Q9]**

We agree with the Consultation Paper that it is important not to reinvent the wheel. We also note that the Consultation Paper describes the current landscape of wellbeing programs as cluttered and fragmented. We believe that wellbeing frameworks need to be woven into the visions, values, and operating frameworks for the school. One School Principal told us, *‘Often it’s a package of things that all work together to make a difference. So an Indigenous program really doesn’t do very much compared to a full piece of the culture of the school ... the culture of the school has to be about making a difference with every kid to reach their full potential’* [SSI Field Note Interviews<sup>xii</sup>].

Many alumni have told us that the SSA provides an overarching framework for an interconnected approach between programs such Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) and other wellbeing

programs in the school. This is important for schools, as it means the SSA is not ‘something else they need to do’ but provides a framework to bring other activities together under a common purpose.

Alumni have told us that implementing the SSA as an overarching framework across the school ensures that the values and behaviours are taught consistently across the school and helps with explaining expectations to parents. Alumni tell us that, quite simply, student support programs and their curriculum work better when they are underpinned by the Stronger Smarter Approach. One Principal told us, *‘If you bring the Stronger Smarter philosophy to everything that you do in schools, it just gets bigger and better.’* [SSI Field Note interviews].

### **Holistic [Q8, Q9]**

The *National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017-2023 Framework*<sup>xiii</sup> states that social and emotional wellbeing for First Nations people is a holistic concept. This results from a network of relationships between family, kin and community, as well as connection to land, culture, spirituality and ancestry. The disruption of the harmony of these relationships will result in ill health.

In schools, this implies that educators need to understand these concepts in order to understand their students. Stronger Smarter alumni tell us that using the strength-based filter of the SSA helps them to build relationships differently and leads to a more holistic approach to student care. This then leads to being more aware of the challenges faced by families, perhaps understanding how the harmony of relationships has been disrupted.

We support the call from Dr Tracy Westerman<sup>xiv</sup> that it is essential for wellbeing frameworks and policies to recognise that First Nations people may need support with dealing with Institutional racism and culture bound syndromes. Dr Westerman explains that racism impacts in the same way as trauma, and it is possible to teach the skills for students and communities to understand what risk looks like and the ways to help manage an over-reaction leading to conflict or impulse control issues.

This has significant implications for how school wellbeing programs are framed and funded. As Dr Westerman explains, if school psychologists fail to understand the issues facing First Nations students, they can unwittingly get the assessment wrong which then means the treatment is wrong. In the same way, educators may also misunderstand the causes of student behaviours and fail to provide the best responses. We support Dr Westerman’s call for funding to increase the number of First Nations school psychologists who already have a First Nations world view, as well as to ensure that non-Indigenous psychologists have greater training in cultural empathy to better understand the risk factors for First Nations students.

### **Cultural identity [Q8, Q9]**

As the Consultation paper states, there is a positive cycle in the classroom where wellbeing supports learning, and learning in turn reinforces good mental health. The concept of a ‘Strong and Smart’ classroom is anchored in the view that a learning environment that promotes a positive cultural identity is an essential component of student wellbeing required for academic achievement. This is just as important in a metropolitan school as in a remote school.

Stronger Smarter alumni describe the following elements of a school when they are delivering a culturally inclusive learning environment. Firstly, the visible appearance of the school clearly embraces the local First Nations culture. When schools are doing this successfully, it goes beyond the tokenistic and involves local Elders. This might include local language classes, cultural activities throughout the year, and outdoor learning spaces. An Acknowledgement of Country process becomes a discussion with students about high expectations with students creating and delivering their own Acknowledgement of Country. One school described a process to change the school logo from a mining symbol involved working with local Elders to create a new symbol with the stories and knowledge behind the symbol embedded in the school culture.

The visible appearance of the school is supported by a Stronger Smarter ethos across the school that values the voices and knowledges of First Nations students. This can also involve bringing Indigenous Knowledges into the curriculum. As one Principal described, *“it goes beyond the traditional things of developing spaces and welcome boards and is getting down more into ‘how can we have that every day expression or connection of identity as a school community’”* [SSI Field Note Interviews].

Stronger Smarter Alumni tell us that when they make these changes, they see how it builds pride and esteem for First Nations students, and they see greater motivation with students more likely to believe in themselves and see education as important. It is essential that positive cultural identity is a clear element in any school wellbeing framework.

### **High expectations [Q8, Q9]**

The concept of ‘Smart’ or high expectations has a strong wellbeing focus in that having a teacher believe in your ability to achieve promotes wellbeing. While high expectations are a part of all pre-service teacher education courses, our experience is that this doesn’t always translate into schools, particularly in remote settings. Stronger Smarter alumni have described to us how, in remote schools, there can be an acceptance that some students don’t come to school, and that no-one in the school bothers to find out why. Or that it’s acceptable for students to come to school and sit on the grass all day instead of being in class.

Alumni describe how this lowering of expectations, while usually coming from a desire to be supportive of students in difficult situations, is failing students. Alumni have told us that when high



expectations are applied across the school in a standard way, then this becomes a positive wellbeing strategy. Students feel safer, they feel more valued because they see teachers caring about their learning, and the community see staff working hard for their children and perceive the school differently. It does, however, need to come from a strength-based approach that recognises community strengths, and acknowledges that every parent wants their child to be successful. Building the relationships with students and community ensures that everyone understands what is needed to meet the school's high expectations. Alumni tell us that improving the school culture in this way also helps with staff retention.

*As one alumnus told us, 'It's about impacting on that environment in the classroom. That's the challenge that Stronger Smarter puts out – that it is always possible for you. That high expectations for kids rather than of them' [SSI Field Note Interviews].*

Even in metropolitan schools, high expectations can impact. One Principal described to us how Stronger Smarter challenged him to put the rhetoric of high expectations into action for the First Nations students in his school. In this case, it involved lifting the profile of First Nations students and giving them a voice in the school.

### **Local context [Q8, Q9]**

Building relationships with the local community need to be a key component of any wellbeing framework, as the implementation will depend on the home life, backgrounds and culture of students. Stronger Smarter alumni tell us how they have used the strategies of High-Expectations Relationships to build better relationships with their local communities.

Alumni describe how they can improve outcomes in schools through processes of listening to communities about what they want to achieve for their children, and what they expect from the school. Some alumni have told us how they needed to challenge some of the norms about acceptable standards for student conduct, attendance, attitudes, and behaviours. That can sometimes involve challenging conversations. These conversations are easier to have when community members believe they will be listened to, and they know that the school is working to provide a quality education for their students. One Principal told us that when he started to hold difficult conversations with the local community, *'I found that the techniques that Stronger Smarter had given me helped me through it.'* Another Principal said, *'It takes so much time to build that trust in that relationship. But that's what Stronger Smarter has given me - the tools to do that genuinely and authentically'* [SSI Field Note Interviews].

## Our current and future teachers

Addressing questions:

16. What change(s) would support teachers to remain in the profession?

20. What can be done to attract more First Nations teachers? What can be done to improve the retention of First Nations teachers?

21. What reforms could enable the existing teacher workforce to be deployed more effectively?

### Supporting teachers to remain in the profession [Q16]

To support teachers in remote schools, the education system needs to take a more strength-based approach to working in a remote community. This means a change in thinking from the fly in fly out model of teachers 'doing their time' in a remote school. We would like to see an education system where every educator considers it an honour to have the chance to work in a remote school with the opportunity to engage with a community with 60,000 years of knowledge that they are willing to share.

As the Consultation Paper suggests, schools where students achieve regardless of circumstance have staff who are working together to pursue an explicit improvement agenda. We note that the Consultation Paper suggests that reasons for leaving the profession early include student behaviour and negative relationships with staff.

Our evidence from alumni suggests that schools are better places to work at when they bring in the SSA as a framework and ethos across the school. Several alumni have told us how after attending the SSLP they used tools learnt in the program to bring staff together as a more cohesive team focussed on working towards a common goal. One Assistant Principal told us how initially staff tended to keep to themselves, and it was rare to see anyone in the staffroom. After using Stronger Smarter processes to work with staff, he told us the results were, *'now when you go into the staffroom everybody's there, everybody's laughing... when we leave the staff room, we walk out in a good mood ready to go and keep working with the students'* [SSI Field Note Interviews].

A teacher told us that at one remote school, the principal made sure that all the staff were working together. *'We work together and once you've got that, then we build on everything else. And I feel like the whole school was a lot more cohesive and, personally enjoyable to work at and I think the wellbeing of the students was at front and centre because of that philosophy'* [SSI Field Note Interviews].

A deputy principal in a remote school told us that Stronger Smarter was the vehicle for them to genuinely talk about their organisational culture. *'I don't think there would have been anywhere near as good*

*traction without being able to talk about the Metastrategies, to talk about cultural action planning or having the term High-Expectations Relationships being part of our school's metalanguage. So it's been very important, and it's been very exciting. The positivity of it has been unbelievable'* [SSI Field Note Interviews].

### **Increasing the First Nations teacher workforce [Q20, Q21]**

It is essential to have more First Nations teachers and school leaders as role models and to help break down misinformation and stereotypes. We believe there are several strategies that could be considered to support increasing the First Nations teacher workforce. Firstly, the Institute would like to see a national policy initiative around better valuing and supporting local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Schools need to recognise the expertise of Indigenous Knowledges that Indigenous education workers bring to the classroom. Policies should also ensure equality in reimbursement and support (e.g. housing) for Indigenous education workers, who may, in some remote communities, be doing the work of a fully trained teacher.

Policies also need to be improved to support Indigenous education workers to train as teachers. This should include a greater formal recognition of prior knowledge for both the Indigenous Knowledges and teaching knowledge they already hold to ensure that they can complete their studies.

The government funded Teachers of STEM Initiative, run by the Institute, has shown that a combination of scholarship support and First Nations mentoring is successful in supporting First Nations students to complete teaching degrees. We believe that this type of program, run by First Nations staff, is essential to increasing the First Nations teacher workforce. In this model, the Institute provides mentoring beyond the academic support provided by universities and brings students together to provide a support network. A key component of the mentoring support is discussions around how Indigenous Knowledges can be incorporated into STEM teaching.

The Institute's programs also support First Nations educators to move into leadership positions. One Aboriginal Education Officer told us that, for her, the SSLP was lifechanging, saying, *"I always tell people that's where I found my courage and my voice that I still use to this day"* [SSI Field Note Interviews]. When the Institute ran focussed programs to support First Nations educators to become leaders, the majority of participants were promoted to greater leadership positions. Fiona Kelly who completed one of these programs is now a school Principal. She says that she had been thinking of leaving teaching, and the SSLP renewed her passion and confidence. After attending the SSLP she decided that she wanted to become a school Principal<sup>xv</sup>. In our 2022 Alumni Survey, another First Nations Principal told us, *"Stronger Smarter is a huge part of the reason I am currently a principal. The leadership training was transformational, and I'll be forever grateful to the life changing impact it's had on me, personally and professionally"* [2022 Alumni Survey].

Finally, the Strong and Smart classrooms and school culture we have described previously are also essential for cultural safety to ensure that First Nations teachers feel safe to come into the profession.

In summary, we believe that in order to provide a better and fairer education system, the values and principles of the SSA need to be embedded into the National School Reform Agreement. This means changing the thinking from ‘putting in programs to support First Nations students’ to embedding a range of principles into the frameworks that are grounded in First Nations world views. This needs to be accompanied by funding structures, school models and professional development to support schools to enact these strategies.

Our experience shows that this can be done by using the SSA as an overarching framework in schools, embedded into the school vision and culture. Our alumni tell us that this improves school engagement and learning for at risk groups, and can make schools better places to work, supporting teacher retention. We believe that if every school in Australia can be supported to enact the SSA, this will provide the essential foundation to support other initiatives for wellbeing and improving student outcomes.

## About us

The Stronger Smarter Institute has over 5,000 alumni across the country who have attended our face-to-face programs. These alumni include Aboriginal Education workers and other support staff, principals, teachers, education department staff, community members and members of other organisations associated with education.

We are in regular contact with our alumni to understand how they implement our framework, the SSA in schools. We have run alumni surveys and interviews for over 10 years, allowing us to explore how alumni have implemented the SSA over time.

Dr Chris Sarra  
Chair, Stronger Smarter Institute

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<sup>i</sup> Stronger Smarter Institute. (2017). *Implementing the Stronger Smarter Approach*. Stronger Smarter Institute Position Paper. [Stronger Smarter Approach | Stronger Smarter](#)

<sup>ii</sup> Stronger Smarter Institute (2020). *Stronger Smarter: A strength-based approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education*. Stronger Smarter Institute position paper.

<sup>iii</sup> Stronger Smarter Census reports. [Stronger Smarter Reports - Stronger Smarter](#)

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- <sup>iv</sup> Stronger Smarter Institute (2022). Alumni survey. Unpublished data.
- <sup>v</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission (2021). Keeping Kids safe and well – your voices. Australian Government, Department of Social Services.
- <sup>vi</sup> Davis, John & Woods, Annette (2019) Durithunga Boul: A pattern of respectful relationships, reciprocity and socially just literacy education in one urban school. In Rennie, J & Harper, H (Eds.) *Literacy Education and Indigenous Australians: Theory, Research and Practice*. Springer, Singapore, pp. 51-69.
- <sup>vii</sup> Sarra, C., Spillman, D., Jackson, C., Davis, J., & Bray, J. (2020). High-Expectations Relationships: A Foundation for Enacting High Expectations in all Australian schools. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*. 49(1), pp32-45. Published online in 2018. First View. doi 10.1017/jie.2018.10
- <sup>viii</sup> Stronger Smarter Institute (2020). *When Challenged, how do you respond? Educators taking Responsibility for Change*. Stronger Smarter Institute position paper.
- <sup>ix</sup> Jackson, C. (2019). A mindset change: How the Stronger Smarter Leadership Program supports educators to enact high expectations in Indigenous education. Stronger Smarter Institute report. [REP SSLP changing-mindsets final-1.pdf \(strongersmarter.com.au\)](#)
- <sup>x</sup> Stronger Smarter Institute High-Expectations Relationships Behavioural Index (HERBI) surveys and post-program surveys. Unpublished data.
- <sup>xi</sup> National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017- 2023. Australian Government
- <sup>xii</sup> Stronger Smarter Institute. Field note interviews. Unpublished.
- <sup>xiii</sup> National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017- 2023. Australian Government
- <sup>xiv</sup> [Academic Publications - Indigenous Psychological Services \(indigenoupsychservices.com.au\)](#)
- <sup>xv</sup> <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-08-27/teachers-face-new-closing-the-gap-indigenous-education-targets/12588574>  
<https://education.nsw.gov.au/news/secretary-update/every-student-podcast-fiona-kelly>