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**More than the Power of Two: Leading School Improvement  
in Indigenous Education**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy (Indigenous Studies)  
in the College of Arts, Society and Education  
James Cook University

September, 2019

## **Statement of Sources**

### **Declaration**

I declare this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other institution of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given. Every reasonable effort has been made to gain permission and acknowledge the owners of copyright material. I would be pleased to hear from any copyright owner who has been omitted or incorrectly acknowledged.

Signature:

Eleanor Louise Wilkinson

Date: September, 2019

## Statement of the Contribution of Others

I acknowledge the guidance and support of my cultural mentors, Aunty Joan (Mrs Joan McKay), Miss Patty (Mrs Patricia Burns) and academic cultural advisor, Mr Max Lenoy prior to, during and since the entire period of my study.

My primary supervisor, Adjunct Professor Brian Lewthwaite, James Cook University and secondary supervisor, Adjunct Professor Sue McGinty, James Cook University have provided ongoing and rigorous scholarly guidance and critical reflection at all stages of my research. Both have also given editorial assistance in their reviews of this thesis. In the first two years of my research, Professor Emeritus Neil Dempster, Griffith University offered timely guidance and provocations about the considerations required to understand and establish my research aims, purpose and research questions. To a lesser but very helpful extent, Dr Lisa Papatraianou, Charles Darwin University and Dr Leah Daniel, James Cook University provided thesis writing advice about methodology including generously sharing their own theses with me for that purpose.

To undertake this study, I received the Australian Government's Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship without Stipend at James Cook University. I also received financial assistance in the first years of my research from the School of Indigenous Australian Studies and in later years, from the College of Arts, Society and Education in accordance with the *James Cook University Minimum Resources Policy*. This contribution to project costs enabled me to travel to schools in North Queensland, to collect data for my case study and to access national and international conferences to present papers in relation to my research.

My employer, the Department of Education, also provided in kind support and assistance though granting me leave as well as provision of advice from the Department's Research Services senior officers and professional development opportunities that are afforded through the Annual Performance Review process for principals of state schools.

Several aspects of this thesis were accepted for presentation at conferences prior to the completion of the thesis and in this way, the work has benefited from academic peer review. These were:

- 5,000 word paper accepted for presentation at 2014 AARE-NZARE Conference 30 November - 4 December in Brisbane, Queensland.

- 2,500 word paper accepted for presentation at 2014 James Cook University (JCU) Graduate Student Symposium, 23 October, 2014 in Townsville, Queensland.
- 5,700 word paper accepted for presentation at 12th Convention of the International Confederation of Principals, 3-6 August 2015 in Helsinki, Finland.
- Application accepted for presentation at 2015 ACEL Conference, 30<sup>th</sup> September - 2nd October 2015, Sydney, New South Wales.
- 3,500 word paper accepted for presentation 2017 AERA Annual Meeting, Thursday, April 27 – Monday, May 1 in San Antonio, Texas USA.
- 7,000 word paper accepted for presentation 2017 AARE Conference, 26 – 30 November 2017 in Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.

Signature:

Eleanor Louise Wilkinson

Date: September, 2019

## **Declaration on Ethics**

The research presented in this thesis was conducted within guidelines for research ethics in Australia. Those outlined by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) in the “National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research” (2007) and, those from the Values and Ethics in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research (2003, 2018). The research methodology for this thesis received ethics clearance from the James Cook University Ethics Review Committee (approval number H4703). I also sought and received approval from the Department of Education, Training and Employment, Queensland with adherence to their *Terms and Conditions of Approval to Conduct Research* in Departmental sites (TRIM reference number 13/279488).

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## Abstract

Australian schools are now under constant pressure to improve their schools for students to have increased achievement and wellbeing outcomes, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners. This thesis has investigated the professional relationships of Indigenous Education Workers/Community Education Counsellors (IEWs/CECs) and principals and how they can lead together to improve their schools for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Until now, their professional relationship has not been well understood or documented. This thesis captures the research that has sought to examine, interpret and transform the ambiguity of the professional relationship between IEW/CEC and principal. On another level, the study has aimed to highlight effective practice, inform future improvements for Indigenous education within the schools studied and for those in the greater region, and finally, provide a call for change of policy and practice within the wider school system of Queensland.

Informed by a plurality of paradigms, that of transformation and pragmatism and a tripartite of theory—critical theory, Indigenous standpoint theory and relationship leadership theory—this investigation was conducted across a large state educational region in Queensland. Using a mixed methods approach, quantitative and qualitative data were concurrently and sequentially collected over two phases in a four-year process. Each phase provided a collection of data that contributed to the separate and integrated, consecutive analysis of the core research questions. In Phase 1, 41 principals and 35 IEWs/CECs were surveyed for the broad analysis of the region's schools and contributed answers to the first core research question. In Phase 2, an instrumental case study was then undertaken in four schools with five exemplar IEW/CEC and principal pairs within the same region. The predominant methodological orientation for the case study was participatory and an adaption of critical participatory action research (CPAR) was conducted in three cycles over three years. Case study data were collected from a partnership assessment questionnaire, nine hours of responsive interviews, school documents and descriptive field notes from 13 site visits. This provided data for a holistic and detailed analysis of the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship to answer all of the core research questions. Overall three rounds of data analysis occurred, multiple logics were employed together, with abduction, deduction and induction of descriptive statistics and thematic analysis of documentation.

Results of this study indicate while similar conditions were experienced by most schools across the region, the IEW/CEC and principal relationship was variable and fragmented for many and the role of IEW/CEC was underestimated and underutilised. The case study pairs presented differently and of the six relational dynamics evident between every pair, the most highly enacted was that of trusting interpersonal communication. Their strong relationships were created through certain personal predispositions and deliberate practices, but these occurred more by chance and less by systemic design. Strong relationships between IEW/CEC and principals showed they could mitigate detrimental contextual features like racism, perceived or actual uncertainty of funding and insufficiency of system support, while they ameliorated school members' capacity so leader agency, student success, parent engagement and staff cultural competency growth could occur. This study revealed that the IEW/CEC and principal relationship was not only microcosmic to school-community partnerships, but was also that of the greater project of national reconciliation.

This thesis provides implications that call for a change of policy and practice within the wider school system in the state of Queensland. It concludes that if educational outcomes for Indigenous students and engagement their families are to be maximised, professional relationships between IEWs/CECs and their principals need to exist and then expand beyond the pair through deliberate and greater systemic support. The position of IEW/CEC needs to be guaranteed in schools, training for Indigenist perspectives must be promulgated and systemic provision of resources for IEWs/CECs and principals in schools to grow their professional relationship must occur. A strong IEW/CEC and principal relationship can lead to less a transactional and different type of leader collaboration, one that creates a 'vorticity' of influence that enrolls others into taking on the responsibility of supporting every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student succeed, something that is more than the power of two.

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.0 Introduction

There is emerging research in Australia that investigates and promotes Indigenous and non-Indigenous educational leadership practices including school-community partnerships that can lead to improvement of educational outcomes for Indigenous students (see, for example, D'Arbon, Fasoli, Frawley, & Ober, 2010; Douglas, 2009; Flückiger, Diamond, & Jones, 2012, p. ii; Frawley & Fasoli, 2012; Kamara, 2009). However, this work has either focused on leadership practices of educational leaders, especially principals, or that of the collaborative relationships more generally between school staff and parents in remote community schools. There is no known scholarship that specifically focuses on the professional relationship between Indigenous education workers and their non-Indigenous principals, particularly in more rural and urban schools with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. My study has set out to examine, interpret and transform this ambiguity of the professional relationship between Indigenous workers and principals as they work together to improve their schools for all students and especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. On another level, the study purpose has been to highlight effective practice, inform future improvements for Indigenous education within the schools studied and for those in the greater region, and finally, provide a call for change of policy and practice within the wider school system of Queensland. This thesis documents what was learnt about this professional relationship as an important consideration for school improvement.

Chapter 1 contextualises the study, makes a case for the significance of the investigation and provides an overview of the thesis. It begins with a background to the study focus including some of the shifts in educational leadership thinking and school improvement trends, especially for Indigenous education. Included are explanations and definitions of the Indigenous education worker roles and terminology that will be used in this thesis. Next, the rationale for the study focus is discussed including my positionality as the researcher and an overview of the study's methodology. This is followed by a reiteration of the study's purpose and aims where I present the core research questions. Finally, I discuss the significance of the study after which an overview of the thesis structure is described.

## **1.1 Background to the study focus**

‘Improving schools to reduce disadvantage and raise achievement’ or ‘closing the gap’ are the much used current phrases within the field of school education in countries with diverse student populations. In a working paper prepared for an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report on this very matter, Faubert (2012) acknowledges the policy shift from fixing the student to improving the school. Consequently achieving equity and excellence for disadvantaged students and making schools better equipped to do this have since instigated many reforms to school policy and practice across the world’s educational jurisdictions (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, 2012, 2015, 2017). Within Australia, this is no less true, “improving education outcomes is critical to future economic and social opportunity” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018, p. 2). In particular, school systems and schools are under increasing pressure to provide equal educational opportunity and improved outcomes for Indigenous students who are perpetually considered the most disadvantaged group in the nation (Langton & Ma Rhea, 2009). Dreise and Thomson (2014) state in their precis of Australian student results from an international assessment program, “Unless educational outcomes for Indigenous young people vastly improve, then the downstream impact and cost in terms of social wellbeing, welfare, health, employment and economic sufficiency will be heavy” (2014, p. 1).

A body of international and Australian investigative, theoretical literature and reports from this past decade including Auerbach (2009, 2011), Schleicher (2018), G. Anderson and Bernabei Middleton (2014); Gomendio (2017), Berryman and Woller (2013); Education Review Office (2016), Baxter and Meyers (2016); Davies and Halsey (2019), Sarra, Spillman, Jackson, Davis, and Bray (2018) all include educational leadership and the relationships schools have with their communities as integral to school improvement for all students and especially Indigenous students. The section to follow provides a synopsis of these particular ‘promising practices’ (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2017), which also provide some background for the study focus.

### **1.1.1 Leading for school improvement**

Educational leadership through the principal can have profound effects on school improvement (Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016). At the same time, over the past decade in the field of education, there has been a move away from understandings of educational leadership as a single act of individuals (‘leader’) or a model to that of a more complex and relational process and of practice, influenced by many within a school (‘leadership’ and ‘leading’), for the

purposes of improving student learning outcomes (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012; Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Robertson & Timperley, 2011). Increasingly it is reported that “Leaders...are often not just the few individuals in a school holding formal administrative or leadership positions. Leadership is often widely shared or distributed with teachers, parents and students also assuming such a role from time to time” (Leithwood, Sun, & Pollock, 2017, p. 2).

This thesis, while acknowledging the role of principal, also focuses on another set of important staff, the ‘many within a school’ who can make a leadership contribution, these are non-teaching staff known as teacher aides, instructional aides or teaching assistants. Some major studies have been conducted in Europe, United States and New Zealand expressly about the teacher aide’s contribution to student learning outcomes (see Cable, 2004; Farrell, Alborz, Howes, & Pearson, 2010; Gerber, Finn, Achilles, & Boyd-Zaharias, 2001; Rutherford, 2011; Webster et al., 2011). Yet within Australia, there is a paucity of empirical studies focusing in this area. In particular, there are too few expressly about non-teaching staff who are Indigenous being specifically employed to support the participation and achievement of Indigenous Australian students and engagement with their families (see, for example Pat Buckskin, Davis, & Hignett, 1994; Cahill & Collard, 2003; Funnell, 2012; Gower et al., 2011; Grace & Trudgett, 2012; MacGill, 2009; Pearce, 2011; Warren, Cooper, & Baturo, 2004).

Statistics reflect that teacher aides as compared to teachers and principals, represent the largest employment group of Indigenous peoples in Australian schools. Results from the 2011 Australian census show that just over 4,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are registered across the country as working in these roles, representing almost six percent of the teacher-aide workforce (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011b). Different jurisdictions have different titles for these Indigenous teacher aide roles. Within Queensland, the site of my study, until recently, a position within state schools was known as ‘Teacher Aide (Identified)’. Originally introduced into a Queensland community school, Cherbourg School in 1972 as ‘Aboriginal aides’ (Queensland Department of Education, 1983), only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people could apply. This specific position continued until it was absorbed into the teacher aid award after an enterprise bargaining agreement process in 2015. There is no longer a specific Indigenous teacher aide position or role description listed for state schools, however for the purposes on this thesis, the teacher aide role is termed as the Indigenous Education Worker (IEW).

Some Queensland state schools, mostly state secondary schools, also utilise a specialised Indigenous student support role known as a Community Education Counsellor (CEC). Growing out of a Department of Education research project in 1975 when “the first

Aboriginal counsellors... were trained to work with a Guidance officer... to develop counselling to services for Aboriginal families” (Queensland Education Department, 1984, p. 15), the CEC position was formalised in state schools in 1980. From 2015, the Queensland Government undertook modernisation of public servant awards<sup>1</sup> and as a result, the CEC position is currently recognised within the award for teachers in state schools. At the present time (September, 2019) their award is being reviewed due to a new round of enterprise bargaining but the outcomes are not yet in the public domain. Their current award provides unique conditions for CECs including: recognition of prior learning; professional development and training; cultural leave; overtime; transfer, travel and work away from usual place of work considerations; and, various other monetary and time allowances. The Department of Education has also determined that there are two types of CEC position, one is ‘Generic’ and one is ‘Identified’. The ‘Identified’ role description reads as, “is a genuine occupational requirement that it be filled by an Aboriginal person or a Torres Strait Islander person as set out in Section 7 of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 for the purposes contained in Section 25 of that Act” (Queensland Government, 2019b, p. 2).

It is important to note at this point, that while the IEW role and the CEC role are indeed different with different remunerations and awards, for the ease of writing, unless specified separately, the term used to describe roles of the non-teaching support staff in schools who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, are referred to throughout this thesis as IEWs/CECs. Please also note, the terms, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples*, *First Nations peoples* and *Indigenous* are also used interchangeably in this thesis, depending on the specificity of the context and all refer to the Indigenous status of the First Peoples of Australia. Generally, I have used the term *Indigenous* to be inclusive of all Indigenous peoples, worldwide. The terms *other Australians* and *non-Indigenous* refer to those Australians who are not Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander. Quotations are given as they appear in the original, excepting where changes to initial capitalisation are required for reasons of style.

Leadership for good school-community relationships and enabling parental involvement in schools are not new ideas (e.g. Franklin, 1956; Locke, 1948; J. Martin, Tett, & Kay, 1999; Road, 1979). Now, more recently in Australia, a nationally recognised school improvement evaluative instrument used in different jurisdictions, including within Queensland state schools, features ‘school-community partnerships’ as one of the important contributing factors to student

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<sup>1</sup> Source derived from the intranet (not publicly available) of the Department of Education, Queensland.

learning and well-being success (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2012; Seifert, Hartnell-Young, & Australian Council for Educational Research, 2015). Within the field of Indigenous education, scholars like Bishop, Ladwig, and Berryman (2014), Masumoto and Brown-Welty (2009) and Styres (2008) have written about the importance of school-home relationships for their respective country's First Nations' families. Research from decades past and present in Australia also similarly confirms that improving engagement, connections and partnerships between schools and their Indigenous community enables Indigenous student learning and well-being success. One of the means by which this has been recommended to be achieved is through the employment of Indigenous people within schools (e.g. see Johnston, 1991b; Ministerial Council for Education Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs and Education Services Affairs, 2010; Productivity Commission, 2016; Watts, 1982).

The contributory role played by IEWs/CECs is reflected in the emerging research regarding leadership practices and their interconnection with community engagement in remote schools cited earlier at the beginning of this chapter. IEWs/CECs, usually come directly from the local community or are accepted by and identify with them and “are frequently the longest serving members of the school staff, making them essential not only for continuity but for inducting new staff and mediating the cultural distance between the non-Indigenous teachers and the local students” (Northern Territory Department of Education, 1999, p. 90). Dr Chris Sarra, who is now Director General of the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP), emphasised their role when he worked as a principal at Cherbourg State School. In “acknowledging and embracing Aboriginal leadership” (Sarrra, 2012b, p. 62 and p.64), Sarra described the role played by ‘Mum Rae’, a long serving teacher aide in the school, who on his arrival, became his “right hand man on school and community matters” (2012b, p. 65). Very recently, Davies and Halsey examined “principals' professional practices associated with their leadership of Indigenous education in rural, regional and remote (RRR) schools” (2019, p. 101) and they describe Indigenous workers as ‘significant assets’ to the work of supporting students to connect with school as well as their own culture as one of their key findings:

Employment of Indigenous people was commonplace in RRR schools and was perceived as an indicator of schools' commitment to improving learning outcomes for Indigenous students. Indigenous employees were commonly described as being caring, committed, supportive and significant assets for the schools. Extending Indigenous workers' roles to assist students to further develop their understanding about their cultural identity, including facilitating time for students to work with a variety of Elders and those from the community who have Indigenous knowledge was identified as worthy practice. (2019, p. 103)

## 1.2 Locating the research

Here lies the focus of my research - at the nexus of knowledge about educational leadership and relationships. Having strong working relationships between IEWs/CECs and principals may not only be advantageous for better educational leadership but also for school improvement. Furthermore, Indigenous students are increasingly present in rural and urban schools (Productivity Commission, 2016) and many employ Indigenous non-teaching support staff who do and could work alongside their principal in a professional relationship. Currently, there is little documented empirical research that focuses specifically on this social phenomenon in less remote school sites. My professional field experience with my emerging knowledge of the literature have caused me to wonder about the transformational opportunities of a strong IEW/CEC and professional relationship.

This curiosity about understanding the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship grew exponentially after my direct involvement for 18 months during 2011-2012 in one of the few recent studies within Australia that features school leadership and relationships with their Indigenous community. The Principals as Literacy Leaders with Indigenous Communities (PALLIC) (G Johnson, Dempster, & McKenzie, 2013; G. Johnson et al., 2014), was a Commonwealth Government funded project, implemented under the auspices of the Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) involving mostly non-Indigenous principals and Indigenous staff working directly together as partners on a school improvement project in 46 pilot schools in a variety of contexts across Australia. These schools were supported by six leader mentors, who were experienced principals seconded from their schools.

I was chosen as one of the leader mentors and worked for the duration of the PALLIC project with nine non-remote (thus, rural and urban) state schools in an educational region in Queensland. Through observation and participant feedback it became apparent to me that the local Indigenous person, usually a teacher-aide who was co-opted to participate in PALLIC, had not previously experienced what it was like to work in an equal leadership-partnership-relationship with their non-Indigenous principal and vice versa. In particular, it appeared to me that the PALLIC researchers may have assumed that the IEW/CEC and their principal would be able to comfortably adjust to this new power relationship shift, move easily into this space and just start working together. Instead it was new ground for both and, at times, difficult to navigate. Here my curiosity continued to grow about understanding the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship, as over the course of my mentorship I noticed some relationships did begin to gel and, some strong partnerships did emerge between the pairs - and others did not.

Co-incidentally at the time of the roll out of PALLIC was the implementation of two major educational policy initiatives into Queensland state schools, namely the state driven, ‘Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools’ (EATSIPS) program (Department of Education, 2011) and the Queensland interpretation of the new Australian Curriculum – Curriculum to the Classroom (C2C) (Department of Education, 2019c). Both policy initiatives explicitly called for schools to apply developed knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and perspectives to improve Indigenous student outcomes. While undertaking my PALLIC work, I also saw firsthand how these initiatives combined to put further demands on principals who were being asked to provide leadership and by the nature of the Indigenous context, so were IEWs/CECs. Yet I still noticed an uncertainty or ambiguity to the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship, even with what implementing PALLIC, EATSIPS and the Australian Curriculum were trying to achieve. Such complex contextual issues, systemic requirements and increasing pressure for school improvement caused me to wonder, what is the nature of their relationship? What could be done to strengthen this? I wanted to know what actually occurred within the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship in non-remote settings. What effective school leadership partnerships could happen in these schools? What happens when there are strong working relationships? What does this mean for future school improvement? I became very curious to know more.

### **1.3 Locating the researcher**

My involvement with Indigenous education actually began much earlier than the PALLIC project, despite an upbringing that was devoid of learning about or knowing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people beyond some faint black and white images in a social science text book or the occasional media coverage of a high profile sports person. Born a non-Indigenous person, the eldest of three from a mother who immigrated to Australia from post-war Netherlands and father of second generation Anglo Saxon/Scandinavian origins, I started my own schooling in the mid 1960’s in a one-teacher primary school in rural Northern NSW, going on to the local state high school and then a College of Advanced Education in Sydney, New South Wales where I graduated as a secondary art teacher in 1982. Throughout those years, I do not ever recall fellow students or staff who were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies as part of any curriculum or have any direct involvement with Indigenous matters. I did not personally know any Indigenous people until I started teaching in 1983 in a south east Queensland state secondary school where one of my classes included one Aboriginal student who I never really got to know and then, in

less than 12 months, I was transferred to a central Queensland state secondary school. There were more Indigenous students who were primarily supported by an Indigenous education worker, but again I did not interact with these students or worker beyond polite congenialities. Outside of my work, I continued to have limited personal interactions with any Indigenous peoples. After six years, I was promoted to a state secondary school in a large regional centre in North Queensland as a Senior Mistress, after which I became a Deputy Principal. There I met and began to work closely for the first time with the school's CEC, a gentle but powerful woman, much respected in her local community, amongst students, staff and others in professional organisations who knew her. There were a lot of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the school, and with her support I began to get to know these students and their families in a less superficial way. This CEC and I become firm friends, and I learnt much from her about her life and family, her work, her view of the world and how to authentically support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families. She passed away in 2008, but her mentorship is an influence for me to this day.

In 1995, I was appointed as a Deputy Principal to another state secondary school in the same locale. It was one of the largest secondary schools in Queensland at the time and had a large and growing enrolment of Indigenous students. That school also had a CEC and I was able to employ some additional Indigenous workers to further support students. Taking on what I had learnt from my previous school, I worked closely with these staff and the school's Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA) committee to help Indigenous students succeed at the school. I formed good relationships with many of the Indigenous parents and students. It was in this role, after experiencing first-hand some of the effects of situations surrounding Indigenous students and their families and at the same time, unprecedented increases in their enrolment, retention and achievement, that I saw the need to understand more through formal studies.

Subsequently, I returned to university in 2001 and undertook a part-time Masters in Indigenous Australian Studies by research. This made me realise just how limited my knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories and contemporary issues had remained. Studying alongside some outstanding Indigenous scholars who shared their life worlds with me, I completed my thesis in 2005 with an increased understanding and deeper appreciation of the broader socio-political context of Indigenous Australia. In the same year I became a principal of a nearby state primary school. There I employed a number of Indigenous teacher aides, many of whom were parents who had already been volunteering in classrooms. One of these aides showed great interest in further study, and I supported her to do

it. In 2010, after gaining a Diploma of Counselling, in recognition of her leadership capacity and the ever-growing enrolment of Indigenous students, this former volunteer and teacher aide became one of only two CEC's in Queensland to be employed in a state primary school. This CEC and I have remained at the same school, and we continue to work closely together as colleagues and confidants. It wasn't until I stepped out of and then came back into my school from the PALLIC project, that I realised what was going on in my school and the way I worked with the school's CEC wasn't necessarily always happening in every other school. I had learnt from my professional field experience just how crucial and significant IEWs/CECs could be to support the principal's role. I thought there was more to be found out about the IEW/CEC and principal relationship through the experiences of other pairs were known to work well together and in 2012, while remaining in employment as a full-time principal, I commenced the study reported on in this thesis. My study proper was part-time and ran from start to finish over eight years (2012-2019).

### **1.3.1 Overview of methodology**

In terms of my particular researcher stance, the theoretical framework informing my study, the approach and design I used and details about participants and setting are explained in Chapter 3. This is reiterated in Chapters 4 and 5. However, it is suffice to say here, that the nature of my study and positionality as a practitioner-researcher have been informed by a tripartite of theoretical paradigms—critical theory, Indigenous standpoint theory to explain the Cultural Interface, and relationship leadership theory—with the dual philosophical paradigms of transformation and pragmatism. These have underpinned the data collection and analysis methods undertaken over a four-year period (2013-2016). My research was conducted in a large state educational region in Queensland with an equivalent land mass to that of the country of Finland. For the purposes of maintaining anonymity for participants, it will be referred to throughout this thesis as 'The Region'. During this period, I conducted a survey of The Region for IEWs/CECs and principals and a case study of IEW/CEC and principal pairs in four state schools from different sectors and areas across the same region. Along with my two study supervisors, I was also supported by three Indigenous colleagues, two who generously served as my cultural mentors and another as an academic advisor.

To better understand the social phenomenon of the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship I drew on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). I used a mixed method approach to provide data for a broad analysis of the region's schools in addition to a smaller scale, detailed case study that ran for three years in four exemplar schools within the same region. This gave me what Onwuegbuzie

and Leech (2005) suggest is a 'bi-focal lens'. I gained insight from the macro and micro levels of their situation - an expansive view from the region and then a more specific view by interacting with several sets of IEW/CEC and principal pairs. With the support of cultural mentors, we agreed that starting from a position of strength (a strong relationship) was likely to yield more for the study purposes. Consequently, the particular pairs who were chosen to be studied were those who already enjoyed an efficacious relationship. This increased the likelihood of noticing positive contextual features and outcomes to provide constructive implications for future policy and practice.

But I also wanted to achieve more from my practitioner-researcher experience. I chose to work alongside the exemplary IEW/CEC and principal pairs in their projects of school improvement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. My case study used an adaption of Critical Participatory Action Research (CPAR). CPAR is about what Kemmis, McTaggart, and Nixon (2014) describe as, "practice-changing practice" (pp. 26-28). The CPAR approach ran in three cycles over the duration of the case study.

Importantly, this study draws on the conception of social justice explained by Fraser (2007) as centring "on the principle *parity of participation*. According to this principle, justice requires social arrangements that permit all (adult) members of society to interact with one another *as peers*" (p. 27). Further, Fraser suggests for participatory parity to be achieved, "at least two conditions must be satisfied" (2007, p. 27). These are firstly, participant 'voice' and secondly, equal respect for all people and equal opportunity to have distinctiveness appreciated, "The result is a two-dimensional conception of justice that encompasses *both* redistribution and recognition, without reducing either one to the other" (Fraser, 2007, p. 28). In this thesis consequently, I recognise injustices as the inequalities of educational outcomes for Indigenous students *and* the undervaluing and limited recognition of Indigenous staff in schools as power imbalances.

My study has as much been about *what* was researched, as was *how* it was researched. It has been about relationships on many levels with a propinquity of research purpose, questions, assumptions, approach and design. I worked *with* the case study IEW/CEC and principal pairs as a colleague in a professional relationship participating in a cyclical process over time, of reflection, then planning, then action followed by reflection, to improve our educational leadership knowledge and practice. All the while observing with care, the six values of the guidelines for research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, namely reciprocity, respect, equity, responsibility, cultural continuity, spirit and integrity (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2003, 2018b). The ongoing support from my two cultural mentors

who themselves worked within The Region as Indigenous education officers and an academic cultural mentor from James Cook University has been invaluable to help me achieve the study purpose. I have done my utmost to respectfully consider, the values and beliefs of all participants when conducting the inquiry and the multiple routes to knowing and practical knowings from co-created findings (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). At no time throughout the study, or in this thesis, do I profess to be speaking for or on behalf of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples who work in non-remote school contexts. Rather, I have wanted to best represent the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship phenomena through the eyes of a non-Indigenous principal who also wants to contribute to the quest of school improvement for state schools, especially those in non-remote locales.

#### **1.4 Study purpose, aims and research questions**

As stated in the opening of this chapter, the purpose of this study has been to examine, interpret and transform the ambiguity of the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship. On another level, their relationship, knowledge of contextual features that can strengthen the relationship and resulting outcomes of a strong relationship were studied to highlight effective practice, inform future improvements for Indigenous education within the schools studied and for those in the greater region, and, finally, provide a call to advance policy and practice within the wider school system in the state of Queensland.

The core research questions were therefore designed to enable action, facilitate investigative processes, gain understandings and also provide evidence that can be used to bring about policy and practice improvements at a school and potentially, system level. The four questions that have driven the phases of this research are confirmatory and exploratory:

- What is the current IEW/CEC - principal relationship?
- How can this relationship be strengthened and what are the contextual features that influence this?
- What are the outcomes of this strengthened relationship?
- What are the implications for practice and policy in schools?

Figure 1.1 captures a diagrammatic explanation of the research purpose and questions as they unfolded during the phases of the research.

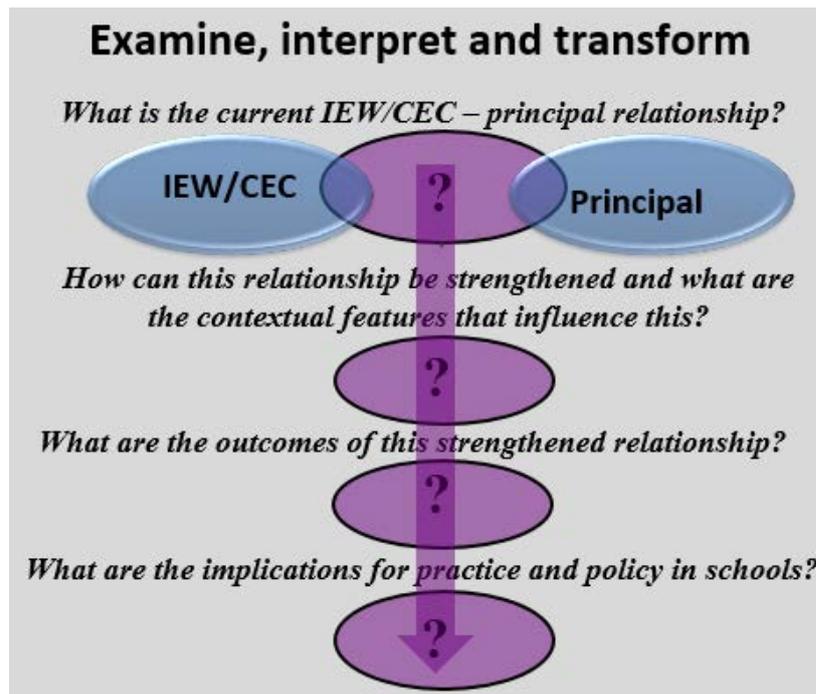


Figure 1.1 Research purpose and core research questions

### 1.5 Significance of the study

The situation of limited research being available from rural and urban contexts in Indigenous education stated in my introduction was noted in a recent publication that features seven systematic literature reviews in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school education (Guenther, Harrison, & Burgess, 2019). The editors comment about this paucity in their introduction:

Not surprisingly given the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia, the role of context emerged as a strong theme across the reviews, highlighting the complexity of meeting the needs of specific communities while identifying effective strategies that can be applied more broadly. It also illuminated the paucity of research in urban locations, thus foregrounding the invisibility of urban students, their families, communities and the specific issues that affect their education. (Guenther et al., 2019, p. 209)

Similarly, Kamara’s (2009) important study about Indigenous principal leadership in remote communities reinforces my contention that context does matter for research into Indigenous education. Her point is that the much of the literature about school community partnerships may not necessarily apply to remote Indigenous contexts, “The context in the Northern Territory Indigenous remote community schools needs a closer examination in order to avoid the pitfalls of generalising discourses relating to school community partnerships”

(2009, p. 3). On the other hand, my study provides knowledge that is not necessarily able to be realised through generalising research from more remote contexts. Instead, my research offers an in-depth investigation of rural and urban school contexts and in particular where success has been achieved. Of note is a recent recommendation from Biddle and Edwards that states, “Much additional work is required to understand the characteristics of the schools that Indigenous students attend that support growth and success” (2017, p. 15). The schools featured in my case study were such schools.

This thesis also does more than represent a study of Indigenous education in schools from rural and urban locations, more importantly, it redresses the limited research about the phenomenon of the professional relationship between IEWs/CECs and principals. They each have a unique role to play in the educational leadership and partnerships necessary to achieve better learning and well-being outcomes for Indigenous students. What they do when they do work together is least understood. It is ambiguous. This thesis paints a definitive picture of their professional relationship, including what are the contextual features that can influence the creation of a strong professional relationship, what are the outcomes of this strong relationship and what are the implications for practice and policy in schools.

To understand this relationship, I reviewed it from a number of perspectives as will be illustrated in Chapter 2. Beginning with the socio-political historical context, I looked at the relationship between Australia and its First Peoples. It is notable there are many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics, educators, activists and community leaders who have made calls to redress Australia’s colonial past and the resultant inequalities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. A term commonly evident in the literature to describe this was, ‘unfinished business’ (Arabena, 2010; P. Dodson, 1996; Yu, 2018). The very roles of IEWs and CECs in schools are themselves products of early attempts by government to do redress ‘unfinished business’ and to improve school-community relationships. This redress strongly links to the push for national reconciliation between Australia’s First Peoples and other Australians (Reconciliation Australia, 2018; Schultz & Phillips, 2018). A summation of the history and progress of the national reconciliation movement and the part played by education was presented. It is apparent from a macro level, that material and interpersonal relationships between Indigenous Australians and non-Indigenous Australians has not been and is not yet strong (M. Dodson, 2009).

Next the educational context was considered especially the literature in the field of education and school improvement for equity and excellence. Examined were considerations of the attempts of current Indigenous Australian education policy to address disadvantage. Moving

closer to the local level, research about leadership as a process and beyond that of the principal was reviewed. Next, the role of IEWs/CECs and the part they play in schools was surveyed and while there is recurring mention as to how vital they are to support Indigenous student success, this not matched by any quantity of specific empirical research in Australia. For instance, the only national review into the IEW/CEC role in schools was over 20 years ago, the Ara Kuwaritjakutu Project (C. Davis, Woodberry, & Buckskin, 1995).

Before then and since, no known research could be found that focuses specifically on the IEW/CEC-principal relationship in Australian schools. Even the PALLIC study while it emphasised the importance of home-school partnerships and acknowledged the ‘pivotal’ role played by the principal and “critical leadership roles of Indigenous Leadership Partners (ILPs)” (T. Riley & Webster, 2016, p. 137), its focus was about leadership and action for the specific task of improving Indigenous student literacy in Standard Australian English and the effectiveness of their ‘PALLIC framework’ in this (T. Riley & Webster, 2016). PALLIC has been instructive research, but instead, my study captures what is and what is not existing within the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship and in particular uses exemplary pairs to illustrate what it is like when they work together to improve their school for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

## **1.6 Structure of the thesis**

This thesis consists of seven chapters. This chapter, Chapter 1, articulates the research focus and my motivations for undertaking it. Presented is a background to the study, an overview of the methodology, the study’s purpose, aims and core research questions followed by an explanation of the study’s significance and explanation of the thesis structure. In Chapter 2, the literature is reviewed. Examined are sources past and present, pertaining to the socio-political, historical, educational and research contexts with a focus on Indigenous education. Chapter 3 is the methodology chapter. Theories and paradigms that underlay the research approach and conceptual framework are discussed along with an explanation of the strategy of inquiry, ethical considerations, validity and limitations of the research. The conceptual framework of the study is introduced. Then follow two findings chapters. Chapter 4 re-presents the conceptual framework of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship to underpin the first set of findings from the first and second phases of the research. A broad picture of The Region and the beginning of a more detailed view from the case study are followed by a coetaneous view comparing and contrasting the findings. All contribute to answering the first core research question. Information is presented in a chronology to reflect the findings as they occurred over the enactment of the phases of the study. At the end of the chapter a diagrammatic summary of

the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship provides findings and the actions undertaken by the case study pairs for the course of the research. In Chapter 5, the conceptual framework of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship is again re-presented and the second set of findings emanating from the case study respond to the next two core research questions. Another diagrammatic summary concludes this chapter, capturing a summation of all findings from both chapters. Chapter 6 interprets and synthesises these findings in light of the study's theoretical foundations and literature review using the study's conceptual framework to answer the first three core research questions. It includes a revised diagrammatical representation of the conceptual model of the thesis set against the responses to the first three core research questions that structure the chapter. Emphasised is the extrapolation that the IEW/CEC and principal relationship can be likened to the national project of reconciliation. The phrase, 'more than the power of two' is examined and diagrammatically presented to describe the most significant transformation found as a result of the strong IEW/CEC and principal relationship. Chapter 7, the conclusion chapter, initially provides a summary of the study and major findings and conclusions. Next, in response to the fourth and final research question, implications for practice and policy in schools are presented. This is followed by a discussion of future developments that give a cause for hope and then, the thesis' contributions to research and suggestions for further research. Final reflections conclude the chapter, and, the thesis

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.0 Introduction**

At the core of this study is relationships, and in particular, the little known social phenomenon of the professional relationship between two key roles in a school, the Indigenous Education Worker/Community Education Counsellor (IEW/CEC) and principal. I have sought to examine, interpret and transform the ambiguity surrounding their relationship. On another level, the project purpose has been to highlight effective practice, inform future school improvement and provide a call for a change of policy and practice within the wider school system of Queensland. To inform these purposes, this chapter contains a critical review of the literature surrounding ideas of relationship along the ‘Indigenous-Western divide’ (Nakata, Nakata, Keech, & Bolt, 2012, p. 132).

Firstly the ‘big picture’ of the relationship, between Australia and its First Peoples, from the past 100 years through to the present situation is considered. This relationship is analysed by comparing and contrasting a selection of aspects of Australia’s socio-economic, historical context to understand what has been a project of recognition and reconciliation in this country. Next, an examination of the constructs and discourse dominating research about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues, especially in the field of education is followed by looking at more recent literature that reframes the relationship question between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous people into more informed discussions.

The second part of the chapter draws on the international and national policy trends on improving schools for equity and excellence before examining the most recent iterations of Indigenous education policy in Australia. Some of the literature about new thinking in educational leadership are discussed as is the part played by those beyond the principal role. Finally, a close up of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship research context is viewed through the small corpus of literature about Indigenous school staff in Australia and the specific empirical studies conducted about them is reviewed. This chapter formulates my conceptual framework which is presented within the following methodology chapter, Chapter 3.

### **2.1 Australia’s current relationship with its First Peoples**

To view the wider socio-political context in order to understand the current IEW/CEC and principal relationship is a challenging one because the history of race relations in Australia

is complex with a shifting and contested ongoing public and academic discourse (Veracini, 2003). Clendinnen (cited in Veracini, 2003, p. 233) suggests viewing this history of Australia in “a crabwise approach, eyes swivelling sideways, backwards, forwards, with equal intensity, because while the past is the past, it is not dead”. For that reason, presented is a broad cross-section of the past 100 years and present day Australian socio-political context, usually, but not always in chronology. This is done through a selection of literature including primary sources and responses from scholars to illustrate the multifaceted situation surrounding the nation’s current relationship with its First Peoples.

### **2.1.1 ‘Unfinished business’**

The term, ‘unfinished business’ tends to be the one most frequently used by many political, community, academic and intellectual Indigenous leaders who advocate to redress the legacy of events from Australia’s past with its First Peoples (as in Arabena, 2010; M. Davis, 2007; P. Dodson, 1996, 2004; Langton, Palmer, Tehan, & Shain, 2004; Middleton, 2017; Pearson, 2005). At the 2018 annual Australian National University (ANU) Reconciliation Lecture in Canberra, Peter Yu spoke directly to the “failure of successive national governments and parliaments to forge pathways to recognise Indigenous peoples in the nation's constitution is a failure of Australia's body politic” and lamented that “without a Reconciled Australia we will be destined to remain trapped in its colonial heritage of unfinished business” (2018, p. 6).

Yu’s commentary about ‘failure’ of successive governments is no exaggeration. Eighty years prior to his lecture are the first publicly recorded urgings to this unfinished business when a deputation of twenty, representing the Australian Aboriginal Progressive Society, approached the Commonwealth on behalf of Aboriginal people on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1938 (Tripcony, 2000, as cited in Quin, 2002). Published in the newspaper, ‘The Abo Call’, in April of the same year, a member of the Society wrote about how their group had met for two hours with Prime Minister Lyons, his wife and the Minister for the Interior to consider their ‘Urgent Interim Policy’ and a ‘Long Range Policy for Aborigines’ consisting of ten points (“Our 10 Points,” 1938). Their requests reflected the state of basic needs including improving housing and that many Aboriginal people, “were being starved to death” (1938, p.1). Called for was the formation of a Department of Aboriginal Affairs, with its aim, “to raise all Aborigines throughout the Commonwealth to full Citizen Status and civil equality with the whites in Australia. In particular, and without delay, all Aborigines should be entitled: (a) To receive the same educational opportunities as white people” (1938, p.1, point 4).

Twenty years later the Federal Council for Aboriginal Advancement (FCAA) was formed from members of organisations around Australia (Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, 2009). In 1962, after much campaigning, ongoing protests and petitions to the government, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were given the right to vote in federal elections. In 1964 FCAA included Torres Strait Islanders in its title and became FCAATSI who, within their demands for equal rights and improved living conditions for Indigenous peoples, campaigned relentlessly for constitutional change (Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, 2009). In 1967, Australians voted overwhelmingly in a national referendum to remove two discriminatory references against Aboriginal people in the Australian Constitution (National Archives of Australia, 2019a). The referendum in essence, firstly, redirected greater authority of the management of Aboriginal affairs from states and territories to the Commonwealth. “The Prime Minister outlined to the Cabinet a proposal for a Council of Aboriginal Affairs, perhaps to be established by statute, to advise the Government in the formulation of policies in relation to aboriginal citizens” (Secretary to Cabinet, 1967, para. 1). Secondly, the referendum result enabled Aboriginal people to be counted in future national census collections (National Archives of Australia, 2019a). The Council for Aboriginal Affairs was established before the end of 1967 and acted as an advisory body to the government of the day, however, because it never became a statutory body, any proposals from the Council had to be made through the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs (National Museum of Australia, 2014).

Five years after the referendum decision, further significant changes to the management of Aboriginal affairs occurred in 1972. Commenting on the plethora of administrative arrangements for Indigenous affairs that occurred after the referendum, Sanders (2018) pinpoints the changes made by the Whitlam government of the 1970’s as the “dawn of the second era of Commonwealth Indigenous Affairs organisation after 1967” (p. 126). A Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) was established and adopted “‘self-determination’ as the central term of Aboriginal policy” (Altman & Sanders, 1994, p. 212). The Department provided policy direction and some funding to State Government agencies, such as education, who were then expected to additionally supplement this with their own financial resources, although it is noted, that state departments were less inclined to do this (Altman & Sanders, 1994). In 1977, Indigenous agency in education was strengthened and the National Aboriginal Education Committee (NAEC) was established after “a recommendation to the Government by the Department of Education, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Schools Commission, after consultation with the Commission's Aboriginal Consultative Group” (National Aboriginal Education Committee, 1977, p. 3). This Committee worked to produce a

number of important national reports of significant influence that directly contributed to the formulation in 1989 of the first National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy endorsed by the governments of the Commonwealth and every state (Department of Employment Education and Training, 1989).

It was also during this period Burrige (2006) notes that Prime Minister Hawke's government consulted with Aboriginal people to determine the feasibility of a formalised agreement, a "makarrata" with them. This however, "the political realities of 1980's state politics squashed any real possibility of a treaty for the bicentenary" (p. 68) in 1988.

The DAA continued to operate under various changes of government until 1990. Sanders (2018) argues that "DAA's demise... was part of a critique that self-determination policy in Australia indigenous affairs had not gone far enough... and the third era of national Commonwealth Indigenous affairs organisation after 1967" (p.128) began when Aboriginal affairs was again reorganised to include a new independent statutory body of elected Indigenous representatives known as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) in 1990. ATSIC was charged with the "primary role of policy making and advocacy for Indigenous people" (M. Davis, 2007, Section 2, para. 1) and overseeing the delivery of commonwealth funded services to states and territories.

It was not until 1991, after the release of a report by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC), that the government took actually further action with reconciliation. RCIADIC took five years and produced of huge volumes of records and an extensive report with 339 recommendations (National Archives of Australia, 2019b). The Royal Commission was conducted in response to the "disproportionate rates of imprisonment and deaths in custody of Indigenous peoples" (P. Dodson, 2016, p. 16) and to provide advice to governments about policy and practice to address this alarming situation. This report declared its 'principal thesis' as making the history surrounding Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians become more known to non-Aboriginal people (Johnston, 1991c). The last of the recommendations in the final report stated:

That all political leaders and their parties recognize that reconciliation between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in Australia must be achieved if community division, discord and injustice to Aboriginal people are to be avoided. To this end the Commission recommends that political leaders use their best endeavours to ensure bipartisan public support for the process of reconciliation and that the urgency and necessity of the process be acknowledged. (Johnston, 1991c, p. 67)

Subsequently, the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (CAR) was established through an act of federal legislation towards the end of 1991. Patrick Dodson, who had been previously appointed to assist with the Royal Commission in 1989 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2002), became the first chairperson of CAR. The rationale for CAR's establishment as stated in the preamble to the *Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Act 1991 No.127 (Cth)*, succinctly reaffirmed the many findings and important implications expressed in the Royal Commission report, including:

(c) to date, there has been no formal process of reconciliation between Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and other Australians; and (d) by the year 2001, the centenary of Federation, it is most desirable that there be such a reconciliation. (p.1)

The Council operated until 2001 and was superseded by an independent, not-for-profit organisation, Reconciliation Australia, established as “the national expert body on reconciliation in Australia” (Reconciliation Australia, 2017a) with the founding co-chairs being Mick Dodson and Fred Chaney. Currently the co-chairs are Professor Tom Calma AO and Melinda Cilento (Reconciliation Australia, 2017a).

Seventeen years after the Royal Commission report, in 2008, Reconciliation Australia set up a unique longitudinal study, an Australian Reconciliation Barometer (ARB) with the objective, “to develop a tool to measure the progress of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians” (Reconciliation Australia, 2013a, p. 5). The ARB “delves into the heart of our nation to identify the attitudes Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians hold about each other, and about reconciliation in this country” (Reconciliation Australia, 2019b, p. 4) and its significance is emphasised because “no similar dataset exists in Australia” (Reconciliation Australia, 2018, p. 20). The development of the ARB was inspired by the work of the South African Institute of Justice and Reconciliation's own South African Reconciliation Barometer (Reconciliation Australia, 2014). Held bi-annually since 2008, there have been five ARB surveys to capture a snapshot of a wide representation of Australian peoples' attitudes, and their underlying values and perceptions (Reconciliation Australia, 2013b).

In 2014, after research that reviewed how other countries were dealing with the aftermath of “ethno-racial conflict and are now building peace” (Reconciliation Australia, 2018, p. 83) and a meta-analysis of definitions of reconciliation from the nations of Cyprus, Rwanda, Canada and South Africa, Reconciliation Australia developed their Reconciliation Outcomes Framework (Reconciliation Australia, 2018). This framework incorporated five dimensions of reconciliation and have served to provide a more holistic and comprehensive way to measure

progress towards reconciliation. These dimensions are: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and, historical acceptance. Reconciliation Australia now determines the concept of reconciliation as multifaceted and one,

that encompasses rights, as well as so-called symbolic and practical actions...our national identity and the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and rights in our nation's history. Reconciliation can no longer be seen as a single issue or agenda and the contemporary definition must weave all of these threads together. (Reconciliation Australia, 2018, p. 3)

Subsequent to 2014, Reconciliation Australia more closely aligned their Australian Reconciliation Barometer (ARB) with their Reconciliation Outcomes Framework and have used the five dimensions of the Framework form the basis of RA's current strategic direction including plans, annual reviews, reports and research.

This discussion now returns to the specific actions of government to progress constitutional change for recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. That reconciliation as proposed in 1991 would happen within ten years in Australia was not achieved. Instead, during that decade, came a raft of other significant developments in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In 1992 there was the Mabo decision by the high court of Australia to overturn the rule of 'terra nullius', that is 'land belonging to no one', that had been invoked by the British "in the year 1770 to claim the territory [of Australia] as it was considered to exist without a state exercising sovereignty over it" (McMillan & Rigney, 2018, p. 762). This decision meant Australia had indeed been colonised and it "was now a matter that should be construed in conflictual terms" (Little & McMillan, 2017, p. 525). Further, in 1993, the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth) (NTA)* was passed in parliament which attempted to resolve and clarify the rights of Indigenous peoples' connection to their lands (Langton et al., 2004). Another important report, handed down in 1997 to the government, *Bringing them Home*, by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission of Australia while contributing to the impetus of reconciliation, also did not hasten the progress of achieving it. The report contained a detailed review of the effects of past government assimilation policies that separated Aboriginal children from their families and provided 54 recommendations that were, "directed to healing and reconciliation for the benefit of all Australians" (Commonwealth of Australia, 1997, p. ii). The Australian government responded with funding and some legislation directed at policy and programs to address the recommendations for the 'Stolen Generations', however it took a further 10 years for the government in 2007 to deliver a formal apology to Australia's First Peoples to acknowledge this part of Australia's history.

In this period and the decades since, have come more changes of national government, even more changes of prime ministers and multiple Indigenous policy implementations. If their focus was on progressing the formalisation of recognition of Australia's First Peoples, their progress has been slow or stalled and no one parliament, politician or policy has yet met the success expected by so many for so long. For example, the Australian Government abolished ATSIC and the associated agency, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services (ASIS) fifteen years after their inception. At the time, this was noted by policy administrators as, "a bold experiment in the administration of Indigenous affairs... seems certain to be drawing to a close" (Pratt & Bennett, 2004, Section 1, para. 1), yet M. Davis (2007), a human rights lawyer and Aboriginal activist observed, that, "ATSIC provided a convenient scapegoat for state and federal governments' failures on Indigenous policy. ATSIC was abolished by the federal Coalition government in 2005 without any consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities" (Section 2, para. 1). The responsibility for ATSIC-ATSIS programs and services such as Indigenous health and housing were transferred to other federal government departments in a process described as 'mainstreaming' (Pratt & Bennett, 2004).

Another example of the pace of progress comes from the Department of Education Science and Training (DEST), as was the nomenclature of the Australian Government's education department during the mid 2000's. It retained prime responsibility for the funding of Indigenous educational programs whether it was directly through specific activities or indirectly through State education systems. In the present day, this same department is known as the Department of Education and operates a similar funding structure for Indigenous education, from early childhood to the tertiary education sector. The last known policy for reforms in Indigenous education was agreed to in 2015 by all state and territory Ministers of Education of the Education Council and is known as, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015 (Department of Education, 2015). It states that "This strategy will be reviewed in 2018, which is a significant year in measuring progress against COAG's *Closing the gap* targets. An evaluation will consider the effectiveness of the strategy as a framework" (Education Council, 2015). As at the time of writing in September 2019, it is known many of the targets set have not been achieved and as yet, there is no new strategy. Yet 30 years prior to this Strategy, the National Aboriginal Education Policy, which became known as the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (NATSIEP), was developed and in the following year, 1990, was endorsed by governments across Australia. It was considered "a watershed in Indigenous education for it was the first policy developed in Australia to specifically address the needs of Indigenous education" (Herbert, 2012a, p. 98). When NATSIEP was reviewed in 1995, it was found "that equity and reconciliation had emerged as

the two major themes in the evidence presented to the Review” (Herbert, 2012a, p. 99), but the equitable outcomes as expected were not achieved.

The next significant government response to the situation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples came in 2008 when Prime Minister Rudd “pioneered a co-ordinated intergovernmental agreement between the Commonwealth states and territories aimed at ‘closing the gap’ on Indigenous disadvantage” (M. Davis, 2018, p. 16). The National Indigenous Reform Agreement, ‘Closing the Gap’, had six specific targets “to close the gap and improve outcomes in education, health, life expectancy, economic participation, healthy homes, safe communities, governance and leadership” (M. Davis, 2018, p. 16). In 2014 a seventh target was added that focused on school attendance (Commonwealth of Australia. Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2019). In 2016 a Closing the Gap ‘refresh’ process commenced “ahead of the tenth anniversary of the agreement and four of the seven targets expiring in 2018” (Commonwealth of Australia. Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2019). It is also noted on the Australian Government’s website explaining Closing the Gap that:

In 2018, a Special Gathering of prominent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians presented COAG with a statement setting out priorities for a new Closing the Gap agenda. The statement called for the next phase of Closing the Gap to be guided by the principles of empowerment and self-determination and deliver a community-led, strengths-based strategy that enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to move beyond surviving to thriving... Significantly, on 12 December 2018, COAG committed to forming a genuine formal partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to finalise the Closing the Gap Refresh (by mid-2019) and provide a forum for ongoing engagement throughout implementation of the new agenda. (2019)

Of those making submissions as part of the ‘refresh’ consultation process, several have expressed concern that unless three key areas are addressed there is a risk that instead of closing the gap, “the current ‘refresh’ will simply ‘paper over the gaps’” (Markham et al., 2018, p. 1). They argue structural reforms must occur, the relationship between government and First Peoples must be addressed as does the issue of measurement focus and approach of reform outcomes (Markham et al., 2018). Without these, “business as usual will continue lead to poor outcomes” (Markham et al., 2018, p. 1). As at early August, 2019, the ‘refresh’ has yet to be finalised and released into the public domain.

Returning again to the discussion about progress of recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, in 2010, an ‘Expert Panel’ was formed by the government to conduct “a broad national consultation and community engagement program to seek the views of a wide spectrum of the community” (M. Davis, 2018, p. 18). In 2012, at the end of its tenure,

the Panel provided its report to the government which significantly influenced the drafting of legislation. Early in the following year, during a sitting of Federal Parliament in the House of Representatives, both the then Prime Minister Gillard and Opposition Leader Abbott spoke in support of a bill, ("Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Recognition Bill 2012 (Cth) (Austl.)."). Abbott said, borrowing from a previous Australian Prime Minister,

Our climate, our land, our people, our institutions rightly make us the envy of the earth, except for one thing—we have never fully made peace with the First Australians. This is the stain on our soul that Prime Minister Keating so movingly evoked at Redfern 21 years ago. We have to acknowledge that pre-1788 this land was as Aboriginal then as it is Australian now. Until we have acknowledged that we will be an incomplete nation and a torn people. We only have to look across the Tasman to see how it could have been done so much better. Thanks to the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand two peoples became one nation. (Commonwealth of Australia. House of Representatives, February 13, 2013, p.1124)

The purpose of the Bill gave formal legislative recognition to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the original inhabitants of Australia and “is part of the process necessary to set up a referendum that aims to amend the Australian Constitution to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples” ("Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Recognition Bill 2012 (Cth) (Austl.).", , para. 2). In 2013 the government set up a tax payer funded public campaign ‘Recognise’ that ran until 2017. Appleby and McKinnon (2017), observe that this campaign,

was largely distrusted by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people because of its vocal support for a reform purportedly on their behalf, the content of which had not yet been determined, and on which they had never been asked their opinion. (p. 36)

In 2014, another panel, a ‘Review Panel’ was set up to report on the progress of the government. In 2015, this Act was amended to extend a further three years, until 28 March 2018 because the intended progress had not been achieved, as Senator Payne noted, “The final report makes clear that we have not yet reached a point where we can proceed immediately to a referendum. But by taking certain concrete steps, we can get there” ("The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Recognition Act 2013 (Cth) No.18. Retrieved from <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2013A00018>," 2015). While this statement may espouse the political will to make change, the reality of 44 referendums conducted in Australia since 1906 with only eight successfully carried, including the 1967 referendum (Australian Electoral Commission, 2012), is not lost. The decisions and actions of the Australian government during period of 2013-2015 were consequently and accurately described by M. Davis (2018) as “one of the worst eras of Commonwealth policy on Indigenous Affairs” (p. 22).

Dismantling of strategies, more reviews and recentralisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, all signalled “the relentless attack on the last vestiges of self-determination and control by Aboriginal organisations depleted the moral of people living in communities” (M. Davis, 2018, p. 22).

Even at the start of this particular period, Patrick Dodson expressed grave concern about the raft of government policy changes that had serious and negative impacts on Indigenous people and lack of real progress for reconciliation in his 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary ANU Reconciliation Lecture, Canberra:

Over the past decade, we saw the dismantling of ATSIC, the mainstreaming of Indigenous Affairs and the staging of the Northern Territory Intervention. All have been disempowering in their effect, and assimilationist in their intent. Rather than partnership and dialogue we have ended up with a ‘coercive reconciliation’, framed not by consultation and respect for the dignity of Aboriginal people, but by punitive paternalism. (2013, p. 6)

In 2015 and 77 years after members of the Australian Aboriginal Progressive Society met with Prime Minister Lyons, 39 key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives met with Prime Minister Abbot and Opposition Leader Shorten at Kirribilli House to discuss their frustrations and rising concerns about constitutional recognition. The representatives presented a statement, known as the ‘Kirribilli Statement’. It acknowledged “the work to date by the Expert Panel (2012), Joint Select Committees on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (2013-15) and, prior to these, the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (1991-2000) in identifying options for recognition” (Referendum Council, 2017, p. 88). Out of this meeting the government formed a new body, the Referendum Council, to conduct twelve Regional Dialogues and an information session expressly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from around Australia (M. Davis, 2018). Citing an excerpt from the final report by the Referendum Council that explains the scope of the consultation process, Megan Davis noted the significance of these Dialogues as, “an unprecedented process in Australian history as Indigenous people were excluded entirely from the 1980s process that led to the Australian Constitution” (2018, p. 43). The Dialogues were conducted during 2016 and 2017 and as explained in the Referendum Council’s final report:

We were required to consult specifically with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on their views of meaningful recognition. The 12 First Nations Regional Dialogues, which culminated in the national Constitutional Convention at Uluru in May 2017, empowered First Peoples from across the country to form a consensus position on the form constitutional recognition should take. (Referendum Council, 2017, p. iv)

What emerged from the convention at Uluru was a significant document known as the ‘Uluru Statement from the Heart’ (Appendix A). This important declaration, while included in the front pages of the Referendum Council’s final report, was specifically written to the Australian people. It was published in every major newspaper in the country and did receive a wide range of media coverage. That it called for a ‘Makarrata’, the term mentioned earlier in this chapter, is not lost. This was the same calling to a previous government almost 40 years prior. Makarrata is a complex word in the Yolngu language of Arnhem Land, Australia. It is used to describe a process of conflict resolution, peacemaking and justice (L. Pearson, 2017). In the Uluru Statement, Makarrata is “the culmination of our agenda: *two parties coming together after a struggle*. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination” (National Constitutional Convention, 2017, May 26). The Uluru Statement from the Heart and the Referendum Council’s final report contained recommendations “that the country embark on a process of truth-telling and agreement making, and that First Nations people be given a Voice to Parliament so they can respectfully and meaningfully engage to achieve better destinies and outcomes” (P. Dodson, 2018, p. 59). Similarly, legal advisors who were present at the Regional Dialogues and Convention at Uluru note, “The statement calls for voice, treaty and truth and, more specifically, a singular constitutional reform: a constitutionally entrenched “First Nations Voice” (Appleby & McKinnon, 2017, p. 38).

The Referendum Council submitted their final report to the government in June 2017. In October of the same year, Prime Minister Turnbull “unilaterally rejected the First Nations people’s call for a Voice to Parliament” (P. Dodson, 2018, p. 59). Another high profile Indigenous Australian leader, Noel Pearson, made his frustration known in a national newspaper the day after the announcement by the Prime Minister, “Turnbull’s rejection was described by Senator Patrick Dodson as a ‘kick in the guts for the Referendum Council and its proponents’. Indeed: this is a kick in the guts for our people and our fellow Australians” (2017). In 2018, after The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Recognition Bill 2012 had lapsed, the government established another committee with Senator Patrick Dodson and Mr Julian Leeser MP as the co-chairs (Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, 2018). The irony of yet another committee to progress recognition for First Nations peoples was not lost on Patrick Dodson who said:

In thirty years, the closest we have come to constitutional recognition or a treaty in this country is another joint select committee. This will be the fifth parliamentary committee on constitutional recognition – the only issue that our parliament has seen fit to dedicate five committees to addressing, with no progress on the ground. (2018, p. 60)

The Committee presented a final report to the parliament on 29 November 2018. In the foreword of the report, the co-chairs make clear the Committee achieved consensus on achieving a ‘Voice’ for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, “The key point of this report is that The Voice should become a reality, that it will be co-designed with government by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s right across the nation” (Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, 2018, p. viii). While there was no express mention of treaty in this section, it is eluded to in this statement, “after the design process is complete the legal form of The Voice can then be worked out” (Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, 2018, p. viii). An entire chapter was assigned to presentation of proposals associated with the terminologies of ‘Makarrata’, ‘formal or informal institutions’ and the use of ‘treaty’ or ‘agreement making’ as well as descriptions of processes that have already or are being explored in different states and territories across Australia in agreement-making and treaty with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as part of the mechanism of Voice. The terms, ‘Voice’ and ‘truth-telling’ do explicitly feature in the foreword:

The commitment to a Voice, and the commitment to co-design of that Voice are significant steps for the Parliament to discuss and consider. They are significant steps towards a bipartisan and agreed approach to advancing the cause of constitutional recognition.

Finally, since the interim report the Committee has heard significant evidence about truth-telling, a matter raised in the *Statement from the Heart*.

We believe there is a strong desire among all Australians to know more about the history, traditions and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their contact with other Australians both good and bad. A fuller understanding of our history including the relationship between Black and White Australia will lead to a more reconciled nation. We have made some recommendations about how this might be achieved. {Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. (Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, 2018, p. vii)

The report made four key recommendations, two of which are in relation to Voice design and the options to formally establish it, the third supports a ‘truth-telling’ process and the fourth is linked to truth telling, “the establishment, in Canberra, of a National Resting Place, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander remains which could be a place of commemoration, healing and reflection” (Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, 2018, p. xviii).

In May, at the 2019 Reconciliation Week Lecture in the Parliamentary Library, Canberra, Professor Tom Calma offered his observations about these recent developments and the latest release of the Closing the Gap Report:

Mr Morrison is the fifth Australian leader to report on Closing the Gap but apparently, it is only now after the many years of advocacy by our leaders has the government acknowledged that a greater voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people might be a prerequisite for success. (Calma, 2019)

Also, in May 2019, sworn in as the Prime Minister to the 46<sup>th</sup> parliament of Australia, Scott Morrison appointed Ken Wyatt to his Cabinet as, ‘Minister for Indigenous Australians’ to oversee to a new portfolio within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. Wyatt is the first Indigenous person to hold such a portfolio. In July 2019, a National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) was established to undertake a number of functions:

- to lead and coordinate Commonwealth policy development, program design and implementation and service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- to provide advice to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Indigenous Australians on whole-of-government priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- to lead and coordinate the development and implementation of Australia’s Closing the Gap targets in partnership with Indigenous Australians;
- to lead Commonwealth activities to promote reconciliation. (National Indigenous Australians Agency, 2019)

As yet, it is too early to say where the latest developments in the Australian project for reconciliation will actually lead to, but the statement about reconciliation made by Commissioner Johnston 81 years ago as a “process of improving community relations – a process which may proceed rather slowly unless nurtured” (1991a, Section 38.4) has proven to be indeed prophetic. It is understandable then, that some scholars are currently arguing that reconciliation in Australia is seen more as a stage in the furthering of the colonial project and “has been conducted on ‘white’ terms” (McMillan & Rigney, 2018, p. 769) and say that, “As a policy of the Australian government, “reconciliation” is forward looking, does not adequately acknowledge the harms of the state, and does not allow the capacity for Indigenous peoples to seek justice through reconciliation post conflict” (McMillan & Rigney, 2018, p. 769). Little and McMillan (2017) posit a ‘contemporary narrative of conflict’ is needed to so there can be a move beyond a “purely historical understanding of transgressions” (p. 530) to challenge the “invisibility of non-Indigenous people [as part of the conflict], and by ensuring governing arrangements are understood as requiring *ongoing* conflict management” (p. 531). They caution

that having a constitutional amendment to advance equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples achieved through a referendum, a contentious topic in present day public debate, might not achieve its intention and rather,

could be viewed as the end of process that resolves the issue, rather than another moment in the recognition of an ongoing conflict over Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations in Australia. ... This requires us to understand reconciliation as a long, enduring (potentially endless) process rather than an atemporal one; something to be captured in a single political or legal act such as a constitutional amendment. (p. 534)

It is clear that redressing the ‘unfinished business’ of Australia continues to endure and Mick Dodson’s conceptualisation of reconciliation, made 20 years ago, that there is ‘material’ and ‘interpersonal’ reconciliation, maintains its currency in the present day:

Where there remain great material inequalities of life experience and a gross differential in life expectancy—it will naturally take a substantial time to reconcile those inequalities. ... They form, if you like, the skeletal structure of reconciliation. Building the soft tissue of reconciliation - reshaping the inter-personal relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians—is just as critical: but it is a less tangible, more amorphous endeavour. (2009, p. 2)

In the following examination, a selection of literature shows how this ‘amorphous endeavour’ and ‘unfinished business’ has been accompanied and potentially boosted by ill-informed constructs and deficit discourses, particularly in the field of education. Although in recent times, there is emerging research that reframes Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships within education in more erudite and strength-based ways.

### **2.2.2 Ill-informed constructs**

Almost a decade before Peter Yu’s speech, Sherwood (2009, 2010) argued colonisation and subsequent government policy positioned Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be the ‘Indigenous problem’. ‘Problematizing’ was defined as something that pertained to:

The construction of Aboriginal peoples as problematic by their colonisers. With *terra nullius* as its founding ideology, the very existence of Indigenous peoples has been a problem for white Australia. This founding tension has fuelled the relentless constructions and misrepresentations of Aboriginal people as problematic on almost every dimension and has become a tradition informed by the writings of experts and through the development of policy that has continued in Australia unabated. It is a product of a colonial mindset and hence has become a way of knowing Indigenous Australians. (2010, p. 19)

The competing ideologies of ‘discovery’ and ‘invasion’ of Australia are therefore contentious and enduring in discourse about this country. Moreover, not only has the hegemonic view of ‘discovery’, the promulgated belief system of peaceful settlement of Australia, been ill-informed, it has been perpetuated in most non-Indigenous Australian’s educational experiences as “a discourse of denial and amnesia” (Sherwood, 2009, p. 25).

Rose (2012) reinforces this standpoint and contends the deprivation of knowledge about First Peoples by non-Indigenous Australians has been the country’s ‘silent apartheid’ in the classroom. Education in Australian schools has until recently, “overtly suppressed and devalued all aspects of Indigenous knowledge” (p. 68) and this has created generations of non-Indigenous Australians who have little understanding of Indigenous perspectives, histories and culture. Rose stridently contends the lack of these perspectives in school curricula has led to an,

abyss that is ‘silent apartheid’...a gaping hole in the nation’s narrative, that, in the absence of reality – by which is meant authentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge—is filled with half-truths and conceptual concoctions that distort and maim our national identity. (2012, pp. 67-70)

That a new Australian Curriculum was only introduced in 2012 with some content related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures means it is early days into redressing what has never previously been the norm taught in schools. The state of Queensland was the only state at the time to wholly adopt the Australian Curriculum in that year. Implementation timelines and interpretation of the full Australian Curriculum have varied from state to state and territories, however, by 2015 all educational jurisdictions agreed to adopt it. The Australian Curriculum “is an online resource” (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2017a) with now eight Learning Areas for Foundation Year to Year 10. These are: English, Mathematics, Science and Humanities and Social Sciences, the Arts, Technologies, Health and Physical Education and Languages. In the senior secondary curriculum, published are English, Mathematics, Science and Humanities and Social Sciences (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2017b). Across the Learning Areas sit two other dimensions called ‘General Capabilities’ of which there are seven and ‘Cross-Curriculum Priorities’ of which there are three. One of the General Capabilities is ‘Intercultural Understanding’. One of the Cross-Curriculum Priorities is ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures’, and this has been “embedded in the content descriptions and elaborations of each learning area as appropriate” (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2017c para. 4).

In Queensland where this study is situated, in this present day there would be a cohort of students, now in Year 7, who may have had some ongoing exposure in some subjects to some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content since the beginning of their schooling. They would have been taught and are being taught by teachers who are mostly non-Indigenous and, themselves, would similarly be only newly exposed to the Australian Curriculum and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' histories and cultures. Every year level prior to this cohort has had some content and some concepts about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples taught to them since the beginning of their first year of schooling. These are early days indeed.

It is no co-incidence then, that in the same year (2012), many jurisdictions adopted the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APSTs) and the National Professional Standard for Principals (Ma Rhea, Anderson, & Atkinson, 2012). These included some mention of the importance of the knowing and understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their histories and cultures and promoting reconciliation (See Standards 1.4 & 2.4, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2018). Significantly, a major research project was conducted into the provision of professional development of the Standards in 2012. In particular, it focused on the learning necessary for teachers to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education perspectives that were incorporated in particular Focus Areas of the APSTs. The researchers found that at the local (school) level:

The approach to formal teacher professional development is patchy, ad hoc and lacking in cohesiveness

There has been a noticeable drop-off in demand for formal PD over the past 12 months for topics associated with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogy focus but not in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness and cultural competency programs, and

Teachers have fear and resistance about these particular Focus Areas. (Ma Rhea et al., 2012, p. 6)

A number of Indigenous academics have understandably expressed their reservations about the Australian Curriculum and how the capability and priority dimensions are likely translated in practical terms into teaching and learning practice (Lowe & Yunkaporta, 2018; Nakata, 2011; Rose, 2012). At the time of the first iterations of the Australian Curriculum, Rose (2012) and Nakata (2011) both had concerns about how the mostly non-Indigenous teaching workforce would undertake this new work. Importantly Nakata wondered how, "the more detailed guidance teachers and schools might require and no certainty about what sort of assistance the intermediate documentation will provide" (2011, p. 1). Nakata (2011) called for

‘critical re-orientations’ as to how Indigenous students themselves would be taught this curriculum, especially when so many were English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) speakers and promoted considerations of his work in understanding the ‘Cultural Interface’ as a means to do this. Similarly Rose (2012) asked “how well equipped will teachers be, given that they themselves are likely to have been deprived of valid Indigenous perspectives during their studies in compulsory and tertiary years?” (p. 67).

Six years into the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, Lowe and Yunkaporta (2018) conducted a cultural analysis of the specific content relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. They used two Indigenous frameworks to gain ‘breadth and integrity’ and ‘depth’ of Aboriginal perspectives and declared they had ‘serious questions’ about the intentions and capacity of the authority charged with providing the Australian Curriculum, namely the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). Lowe and Yunkaporta summarise their argument as, “the current inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content as weak, often tokenistic and overwhelmingly unresponsive to historical and contemporary realities” (2018, p. 28). Further, several key recommendations are made including the postponement of finalisation of the curriculum documents until Indigenous academics could further appraise and suggest ‘substantial improvements’ and that state jurisdictions were supported to “develop teaching and assessment policies for embedding meaningful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content across the curriculum” (Lowe & Yunkaporta, 2018, p. 29).

Nationally, and within Queensland, there are new attempts to go some way towards achieving the teaching of meaningful content called for. A new framework called the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Curricula Project is being developed with key Indigenous academics including Professor Marcia Langton. The first phase of it, ‘fire, water and astronomy’ involving the learning area of Science has been released online into the public domain (Commonwealth of Australia, 2019). This work shows promise and may well be able to contribute to a reduction of the tokenism of the past. In Queensland state schools there is a resource designed and revised by teachers as a resource for teachers to implement the Australian Curriculum. It is called ‘Curriculum to the Classroom’. In it, for example, is one of the texts that are recommended to use to teach reading comprehension in the Learning Area of English for Year 3, is ‘Stolen Girl’ (Saffioti, 2011), a picture book that is a fictionalised account of the reality of the Stolen Generations. There is a public domain website established by a national not-for-profit company to assist teachers in this book’s authentic delivery in the classroom (see Education Services Australia, 2013). These developments are examples that offer some hope.

Yet the situation remains that present knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, histories and cultures by the wider community is generally limited. This is politely but firmly acknowledged in the Kirribilli Statement of 2017, referred to earlier in this chapter. It suggests the differences in perspective must be considered and understood if real progress is to be achieved:

The words ‘settlement’ and ‘invasion’ are highly charged for both sides of this historic encounter, but there is no use denying these two perspectives. It is understandable why some Australians speak of settlement, and why some speak of invasion. The maturation of Australia will be marked by our ability to understand both perspectives. (Referendum Council, 2017, p. 1)

The ‘principal thrust’ set out by RCIADIC in 1991 remains stalled and 30 years later, Australia has yet to reach ‘maturation’.

In the following section and extending on the notion of ‘the Indigenous problem,’ is an examination of a selection of literature that reflects previously dominant discourse in the field of education and the more recent counters to it, for schooling of Indigenous Australian students.

### **2.2.3 Deficit discourses and reframing the relationship**

Profound educational disadvantage was ‘discovered’ in the late 1960s “in the high rates of educational failure among the generation of Indigenous students to attend state schools, after generations of government policies aimed variously at their segregation and marginalisation” (Gray & Beresford, 2008, p. 197). The problematizing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by non-Indigenous Australians (Sherwood, 2009), mentioned earlier in this chapter has also influenced past research focusing on achievement and engagement of Indigenous students in education. Instead, suggested is a consideration of decolonization to gain “a balance of histories, informing our current political and social context, critical reflexive practice and open communication with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples” (Sherwood, 2009, p. 24).

Early manifestations of the differing ensuing responses and interpretations of the ‘settlement’ vs. ‘invasion’ perspectives were represented in studies during the 1980’s by two academics, Watts (1981, 1982) and Sykes (1986). Watts authored two significant reports of the time, *Aboriginal Futures: Review of research and developments and related policies in the education of Aborigines*, and looked at the period from 1945 to 1967. These provided advice to the government of the day and no doubt were influential in policy formulation. Watts determined the contexts that she believes are, “of central relevance in considering the education of Aborigines” (1982, p. 2). These were:

- Past policies and practices
- Government policies for Aborigines
- The Aboriginal peoples of Contemporary Australia
- The Complex Determinants of School Success, and
- Some recent trends in Australian education. (1982, pp. 2-16)

Watts categorised Aboriginal people (the name under which also included Torres Strait Islanders) as ‘tradition-orientated’ or ‘non-tradition orientated’ and it acknowledged that, “the tradition-orientated communities have been variously affected by the dominant society, its institutions and its representatives” (1982, p. 89). Watts did use the phrase ‘the history of contact’, and the 1981 report recurrently cited C.D Rowley and his 1970 study on Aboriginal policy and practice, *The Destruction of Aboriginal Society*.

However, in a counter to the standpoint of Watts and her review of the studies, Sykes argued that Watts failed to convey a “Black reiteration of pre-British occupation as the standard against which they view their contemporary lives” (1986, p. 15) and instead promulgated a more limited notion that “...only past inequalities of opportunity and educational neglect are of any real concern” (1986, p. 15). Sykes argued this had the effect of projecting, “blacks only in a passive role ...and there is no discussion of the struggle against, nor the impact of, colonialism as a factor in which educational policy is developed or in which education occurs” (1986, p. 16). She also notes it set the scene to view Aboriginal Australians “as mere victims of inequality and neglect. ‘Education’ can be perceived, projected and analysed as part of the ‘welfare’ packet” (1986, p. 16). Despite the argued limitations of the standpoint of the Watts review, its ‘critical issues’ influenced ensuing government policy. Disappointingly it appears not much has changed as many issues echo within Indigenous Education strategic documents of more recent times as will be shown in later discussion within this chapter.

Overlapping the work of Watts was Schwab’s (1995) review of twenty years of policy recommendations for Indigenous education for the period 1975 to 1995 charted the development of Australia’s national Indigenous education policy, analysed three major national reviews and provided future directions for research. This was a more critical analysis that noted from the overall sample of national reviews of Indigenous education, there were over 1,000 recommendations (Schwab, 1995). In particular, reviewed were the 1975 *Education for Aborigines: Report to the Schools Commission*, the 1988 *Report of the Aboriginal Education Policy Task Force*, and the 1975 *National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*. These reports held a total of 140 recommendations which clustered into 27

themes across five broad topic areas: “consultation, responsibility and decision making; curriculum; support structures and instruction approaches; educational staffing; and future research” (1995, p. 9). While the period showed focus and concern of access to and participation in education programs, Schwab (1995) found the third major theme of equity was not addressed to the same level.

Perhaps Queensland Aboriginal elder and academic, Penny Tripcony who made the same point at around the same time, made it more stridently in her 1994 address entitled, *Valuing our histories in schooling and beyond* at an education conference in Brisbane. She spoke about the need for schools to present more than a one-sided Australian history and instead give “a balance of viewpoints about events that have occurred in this country” (p. 25) and she unpacked a range of significant policies and reports that had emerged at the time: the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (1989); the Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling (1989); the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991); and, the National Collaborative Curriculum Project (1990). These formalized the acknowledgement of Aboriginal histories, culture and started the work on including their perspectives into curriculum to redress the injustices of the past. Tripcony noted:

It seems that only one-sided representations of events of the last two hundred or so years are acceptable to the majority of politicians and the media... By their non-acceptance of Indigenous viewpoints, objectors have devalued the stories of our elders and maintained the status quo in terms of Western dominance and beliefs of Indigenous cultural/social inferiority. (1994, pp. 28-29)

During the same period of Tripcony’s commentary and reflective of the situation for Indigenous peoples across the world, a significant document was drawn up in Coolangatta, Queensland in 1993. A task force of Australian and international Indigenous representatives was commissioned on behalf of the 1993 World Indigenous Peoples’ Conference on Education, with the intention to serve “as a stimulus document towards the eventual preparation of an International instrument on Indigenous Peoples’ rights in education” (“Coolangatta Statement on Indigenous Rights in Education,” 1999, p. 53). Called the *Coolangatta Statement*, it was ratified at the World Indigenous Peoples’ Conference on Education in Hilo, Hawaii, 1999:

1.3.1 Historically, Indigenous peoples have insisted upon the right of access to education. Invariably the nature, and consequently the outcome, of this education has been constructed through and measured by non-Indigenous standards, values and philosophies. Ultimately the purpose of this education has been to assimilate Indigenous peoples into non-Indigenous cultures and societies.

Volumes of studies, research and reports dealing with Indigenous peoples in non-Indigenous educational systems paint a familiar picture of failure and despair. When measured in non-Indigenous terms, the educational outcomes of Indigenous peoples are still far below that of non-Indigenous peoples. This fact exists not because Indigenous peoples are less intelligent, but because educational theories and practices are developed and controlled by non-Indigenous peoples. Thus, in more recent times, due to the involvement of Indigenous peoples, research shows that failure is indeed present, but that this failure is that of the system, not of Indigenous peoples.

In this context, the so-called “dropout rates and failures” of Indigenous peoples within non-Indigenous educational systems must be viewed for what they really are - rejection rates. ("Coolangatta Statement on Indigenous Rights in Education," 1999, pp. 56-57)

Also written during the decade of the 1990's, Herbert, Anderson, Price and Stehbens, found much of the literature they reviewed in their *Study of the Factors Affecting the Attendance, Suspension and Exclusion of Aboriginal Students in Secondary Schools*, was, “located within deficit discourses of Aboriginal students their families and Aboriginal culture” (1999, p. 2). Herbert (2012b) later developed this argument in her discussion about what she considers vital for preparing teachers to deliver quality education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Herbert suggested that when there are collaborations between teachers and Indigenous communities, then teachers can begin to reframe their perceptions about their students and,

develop real insights into how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples perceive they have been positioned for ‘failure’ within the Western knowledge system that underpins Australian education services ...the acquisition of such understanding is critical in enabling teachers of Indigenous students to recognise the essentially assimilationist nature of what passes for education in this country. ...and the importance of changing their own discourse around Indigenous education from one of failure to one of success. (2012b, pp. 40-41)

Likewise, Peter Buckskin’s considered reflection of conference proceedings from the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiative Program (IESIP) National Conference, held in Sydney, Australia during November 2000, makes clear the position of Indigenous peoples. He outlined the ‘achievements and challenges’ for Indigenous education in Australia at the time, but opened by saying:

Let me say at the outset, that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are in hot pursuit of better educational outcomes for their children and future generations. We see a sense of urgency in this because we need to be well positioned to determine our own future and to participate fully in the Australian society. (2001, p. 5)

Moving forward into 2007, another review of policy research was published at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University (CAEPR) into Indigenous training and education this time from 1990-2007. Fordham and Schwab (2007), aligned their review to the five domains of the key Indigenous education national strategy of the day, *Australian Directions in Indigenous Education 2005–2008*. Their report, *Education, Training and Indigenous Futures*, seems somewhat ironic given that its title and suggested focus bears some resemblance to that of Watts' 1981 work cited earlier. But the resemblance stops there. Different was a much stronger recognition of the divergent world views of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the need to understand the diversity of their population. It provided substantial contextual information on the demographics, cultural, community and family life, and health of Indigenous Australians and seeks to emphasise getting “the balance right between social capital and human capital development” (Fordham & Schwab, 2007, p. 36).

One year after Fordham and Schwab's work came another review on *Australian Directions*, but this was commissioned by the government. What makes this type of review significantly different from the many others that have gone before is that while the research team were eminent educators and consultants, importantly they were also all Indigenous Australians. Peter Buckskin et al. (2009) made ten recommendations across the original domains as well as four additional recommendations on what were identified as priorities for “future collaborative work to be undertaken by education authorities in the government” (p. 18). These were in relation to teacher education and the need for an updated national action plan spanning five, ten and twenty-five years. The review found that out of the five domains from *Australian Directions*, ‘early childhood education’ had made the most progress, and Buckskin et al., note, “as an area it is ready for collaboration across the sectors” (2009, p. 41). The three domains of ‘school and community educational partnerships’, ‘school leadership’ and ‘quality teaching’ were all found to have not enough representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in strategic positions to advise and influence these programs. Within the last domain, ‘pathways to training, employment and higher education’ Peter Buckskin et al., also clearly acknowledged that “the interconnection between poverty, health and education as social determinants of success must be dealt with” (2009, p. 44), as did the need for “culturally responsive schooling...namely cultural security, cultural integrity and cultural competence must be integrated” (2009, p. 44) into government policy and action (These terms are further defined and explained in Chapter 6). This review also declared its total endorsement of the ‘Stronger Smarter’ philosophy articulated by Dr Chris Sarra (one of the review authors) and argued that this philosophy, “should influence all the domain areas and provides a useful

strategic framework with which to contemplate future directions in Indigenous education” (Peter Buckskin et al., 2009, p. 46). It is at the beginning of the review, when Peter Buckskin writes to the chair of Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA), that the mainstay of their investigations is succinctly made:

The findings of the Review Team indicate that over time there have been a myriad of schemes introduced to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. However, their application and success are uneven and spasmodic with funding limited to short-term solutions. In a complex area like Indigenous Education such factors are problematic. All indicators from our review confirm that success would be achieved if longevity in program funding and monitoring of implementation occurs. In absence of these strategies it is almost impossible to know what works and to put in place long term programs. (2009, p. 3)

From the mid 2000’s an increasing range of Australian scholars and researchers continued to add to greater recognition of the complex and troubled history between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. Their work acknowledged the standpoints that have led to the problematizing of Indigenous educational issues. As such, Gray and Beresford’s (2008) discuss why contemporary Indigenous Australians face the issues they do today and argue it is as a result of the intergenerational impacts of ‘colonialism’. They say that, ‘dispossession, segregation and assimilation have created intergenerational disadvantage and trauma that impede educational progress among most Indigenous students” (p.205). They also put forward that ongoing socio-economic disadvantage, lack of sustainability of school reform and embedded racism all contribute to a deficit discourse. Then in his essay about the ethics of literacy ‘intervention’ for Indigenous students in Australia, Kostogriz (2011), argued that the current trends of reform in schools and the way they are dealing with non-English speaking students, “misrecognises their identities, cultural practices and knowledges” (p.25) and were therefore counterproductive to the intentions of providing an empowering education.

Research about teaching Indigenous Australian Studies in universities by Mackinlay and Barney (2012), explored how the problemitization of Indigeneity as a result of Australia’s colonial past can be transformed by reframing and improving pedagogical practice to more authentically include and embed Indigenous perspectives. They shifted the notion of ‘problem-based learning’ to one that was more strengths orientated: place-based, experiential, anti-colonial, relational and for life-long learning expressed as the acronym ‘PEARL’ (2012).

Importantly, the scholarship of Nakata (i.e. 2002; 2007a, 2010; 2012) and his application of understanding the Cultural Interface, Indigenous standpoint theory, provides a significant contribution to how interrelations between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and

non-Indigenous Australians within the field of education might be reinterpreted and reconstructed. Nakata challenges scholars to move from the binary, 'decoloniality' and closed-minded thinking about the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. In joint work about questioning pedagogical approaches and decolonial priorities in higher education Indigenous Studies, Nakata et.al. also argues that by focusing on the Indigenous theories in relation to those Western and then reconstructing the Indigenous, students will develop an "appreciation of just how intricate and open to interpretation the dance around world view, knowledge and practice is as a result" (2012, p. 113). Advocated for is Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to be taught alongside each other to assist in the "revealing the politics of knowledge production in Indigenous studies" (2012, p. 136).

Influenced by Nakata's work, Yunkaporta and McGinty (2009) discussed an action research-based project in a remote school in western New South Wales, Australia. The facilitator of the project sought to understand how to "operate at the interface between Western curriculum knowledge and Indigenous knowledge" (p. 56) and found 'negative perceptions and discomforts were the greatest barrier to implementing an interface approach" (p. 64). They noticed that, "cultural discomfort in teachers and perceived deficits in students were used not only to justify avoidance of Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum, but also to lower expectations and curriculum standards" (p. 64).

Adding to more informed understandings of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the field of education, is an increasing number of current researchers and practitioners, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, in contemporary Australia and around the world, who see the source of the problem as the solution. Building authentic person-to-person, group to group relationships with schools and the students and families they serve is critical to improving schools for Indigenous students (see, for example Berryman, 2018; Berryman & Woller, 2013; Bishop et al., 2014; J. Davis, 2018; Dube & Jita, 2018; Hall, 2014; Lewthwaite et al., 2015; Lewthwaite, Owen, Doiron, Renaud, & McMillan, 2014; Sarra, 2016; Tunison, 2013). Their work is designed through a better knowing of "the colonial/power dimensions of the political/epistemological relationship between the Indigenous cosmos and the western world" (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008, p. 136) and offers strong examples of research, scholarship and practical solutions that can be achieved in education when deficit discourse is replaced with a reframed understanding of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships and Cultural Interface, "the ways that individuals position themselves, and are positioned by others, impact on the ways they experience and navigate different knowledge systems in their everyday lives and relationships" (Kearney, McIntosh, Perry, Dockett, & Clayton, 2014, p. 340).

Examination of relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians from another angle, is exemplified in the work of Ma Rhea (2012, 2015a). One of her studies examined the application of educational policy in three remote communities through the politic of ‘partnership’ for schooling with colonised peoples. Found was, “it becomes apparent that Indigenous people are waiting for non-Indigenous people to engage in partnerships that are interactive, mutually relational, that allow for trust to be built and established between the parties” (Ma Rhea, 2012, p. 58). Yet within these communities what they actually received was “a business transaction [that] does not attempt any cross-cultural negotiating...gone are the relational behaviours, and instead the space is opened up for impersonal, transactive behaviours” (Ma Rhea, 2012, p. 61). In later work, Ma Rhea argues for a different arrangement of partnership to be one of authentic collaboration and mutuality:

The foundation for the advancement of Indigenous people’s education needs to be in the hands of Indigenous people. Without their ownership, leadership and engagement with schooling, there will be little that the school can achieve. Without being able to see that the institution of schooling has changed in its approach and attitudes to Indigenous people, there is little basis for Indigenous people to want to take ownership, lead or engage with it. Changes need to occur in parallel, with sufficient opportunity for mutual action to develop. (2015a, p. 99)

Ma Rhea’s notion of relationship versus business (2012) strikes at the very nub of issues of reconciliation in Australia. The sooner those in power begin to truly understand what is the ideal kind of partnership required between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians, the better our country will be for everyone.

#### **2.2.4 Section summary**

When an understanding of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship and by extension, the provision of education past and present for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, is viewed through the above discussion, the extent of complexity and conflict becomes clearer when seeking answers to ‘why is it so’? The main contention here is that past inequalities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples caused by Australia’s colonial past, lack of acknowledgement of this and the resulting deficit discourse of those in power have all contributed to the present-day situation. The resulting nature of interpersonal relationships with and between non-Indigenous Australians and the First Peoples has contributed to distorting the development and implementation of educational policy and practices. Reframing worldviews, working together with recognition of difference has to be a way forward. There is a need for deeper knowledge and understanding, of the Cultural Interface and how reconciliation, at an

interpersonal level may be achieved. The next part of this discussion looks at equality of educational outcomes, especially for Indigenous students. It starts with a summary view of school improvement and effectiveness research trends, considers recent key policy and research influences internationally and within Australia before examining the corpus of research on Indigenous school staff and the specific empirical studies that have been conducted about them.

## **2.2 Improving schools for equity and excellence**

The present-day emphasis that has redirected the gaze from blaming the student for not achieving at school to focus on what schools are/are not doing to ensure students achieve, was born out of studies which first emerged in the 1980's in the United States and the United Kingdom. With differing methodological and theoretical approaches, movements known as 'school effectiveness' and 'school improvement' took hold in academia (Chapman et al., 2012, p. 234). Using quantitative methods, Rutter, Maughan, Mortimer, Ouston, and Smith (1979) showed how some secondary schools in London were achieving better results than others with similar students and Edmonds (1981) famously acknowledged "pupil performance is highly correlated with family background," (p. 270) but at the same time declared, "that it is not the family background that determines pupil performance. It is the school response to family background that determines pupil performance" (p. 270). Within initial school improvement studies, early investigations included that of David Hargreaves in 1967 and Kurt Lewin in 1946 (Chapman et al., 2012).

These movements served as a platform for the burgeoning investigations into what effects schools make, what effective schools look like and how they change and can be improved for student learning. Many were premised on the promotion of ideals like equality of educational opportunity, equity and social justice and looking at how to achieve both equity *and* excellence in education, that is, "high excellence' (when all students maximize their potential to learn) and 'high equity' (when environmental circumstances do not detract from any child maximizing their potential)" (Townsend, 2007, para. 90).

Over the recent decade, research with this focus has fed into public and political commentary and debate, institutional reports, government policy and budgets, and in turn, this pressure for school improvement has impacted on the operations of schools across the globe (e.g., Council of Australian Governments Reform Council, 2012; Faubert, 2012; Joseph, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2008, 2012, 2015; Purdie, Reid, Frigo, Stone, & Kleinhenz, 2011).

Sitting amongst the proliferation of international studies on improving schools to these ends, is the work of three world organisations who have conducted large-scale research into school effectiveness and improvement at a system level. Formed out of the post-World War II reconstruction period, the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have human rights agendas that include a focus on improvement of the quality of education for all people across every nation. They have conducted research and produced regular reports on and make recommendations about the state of education from early childhood, youth to adult levels, throughout the world. Member countries to these organisations pay a lot of attention to and use this work to inform improvements for their own education systems and Braun (2008) argues that the OECD and IEA comparative studies have “achieved substantial, if indirect, influence on education policy in many nations” (p.317).

In 2012 the OECD commissioned a series of papers that formed the background material for their comparative report, *Equity and Quality in Education: Supporting Disadvantaged Schools and Students* (OECD, 2012). One of them was a review to assess the literature on empirically supported successful policies and practices that were shown to overcome school failure. Significantly, it showed a return to that which Edmonds (1981) had proposed over thirty years earlier about ‘failure’:

The idea that students fail because of their own personal shortcomings (academic or otherwise) is being superseded by the idea of school failure. The cause of – and the responsibility for – students’ failure is now seen as deficient or inadequate provision of education by schools, and by extension, school systems. More specifically, it is the failure of schools to provide education appropriate to different needs that leads students to fail. In this way school failure is, therefore, also an issue of equity. (Faubert, 2012, p. 3)

In particular, Faubert’s work fed into the five policy recommendations of the OECD report’s Chapter 3: *Improving low performing disadvantaged schools* (2012, p. 103). These “support low performing disadvantaged schools in improving equity in education and reducing school “ (2012, p. 104). The recommendations are:

- Strengthen and support school leadership
- Stimulate a supportive school climate and environment for learning
- Recruit, develop, support and retain high quality teachers
- Ensure effective classroom learning strategies

- Prioritise linking schools with parents and communities. (2012, pp. 142-146)

The research of another influential organisation, a global management consulting firm known as McKinsey and Company, has also attracted much international attention, with praise from some (Caldwell & Harris, 2008; Fullan, 2008, 2011; Ng, 2011) and criticism from others (Braun, 2008; Coffield, 2011; Fleisch, 2011; Schratz, 2008). ). Their report, released at the end of 2010, *How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better* is the follow-up to their 2007 publication, *How the world's best performing school systems come out on top* where they examined the common attributes of high-performing school systems. While Coffield (2011) notes both were more widely read upon their release than many other reports in the field, and believes this report was an improvement on the first, he argues these reports “have quickly hardened into new articles of faith for politicians, policy-makers, educational agencies and many researchers and practitioners, both in this country and abroad” (p. 131).

There are others who also subscribe to a rejection of the simplistic idea that if schools are ‘fixed’ then the problem will be solved. They do acknowledge the shift of focus has moved away from that of students ‘failing’ in school to schools ‘failing’ students, yet this is still just a shift of blame. Darling-Hammond argues, “the achievement gap is in many respects nothing more than an educational manifestation of social inequality” (as cited in Noguera, 2009, p. 64). Noguera also argues, “Any serious attempt to reform public education must be based upon a clear understanding of how the policies enacted should interact with other efforts to further equity (e.g., housing, wages, and health care), to create a social safety net for children, and to expand access to opportunity and mobility” (2009, p. 64). Therefore, schools alone cannot redress the effects of poverty (Gray & Beresford, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2006, 2011; Noguera, 2001; Wrigley, 2006). These internationally shared views – of the effects of ‘fixing schools’ and recognising the need to address the effects of poverty, unemployment and poor health remains the challenge for Indigenous Australian education policy where there is an increasing convergence of both effects.

The same ideas of rights and equality are evident in other international research documenting progress for Indigenous peoples across the world. In 2017, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations (UN-DESA) released the third volume on the *State of the World's Indigenous Peoples: Education*. The first volume was presented in 2009 and the second in 2014 (UN-DESA, 2017). This report came ten years after the United Nations passed the Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which it should be noted, Australia did not agree to until 2009 (Langton et al., 2004). In her discussion about the state of Indigenous

peoples and education in the Pacific region, of Australia, Linda Tuhiwai-Smith (2017) says, “The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders remain subject to extreme ostracisation; and the wide education-related gap between them and the rest of the Australian population is the product of their marginalisation” (p. 167).

These ideas have yet to be truly accommodated into the national direction for schooling in Australia. A long-term shared education agreement among the states and territories and the Australian government, comes in the form of the ‘Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians’. Devised in 2008 by the then Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), its two main goals were:

1. the promotion of equity and excellence in Australian schools
2. that all young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens. (Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), 2008, p. 7)

This agreement was meant to drive the commitment of all governments to improve education in Australia as had its preceding iteration, ‘The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century’ established in 1999 and before that, the founding agreement in 1989, ‘The Hobart Declaration on Schooling’ (Education Council, 2014b). MCEETYA was set up in 1993 within what is known as the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). In 2009, MCEETYA became the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) and in 2013 was streamlined to become known as the Education Council. Their consensus decisions have endorsed and funded educational policies and programs that are expected to be enacted in schools across the country. Their purpose is articulated as:

The COAG Education Council provides a forum through which strategic policy on school education, early childhood and higher education can be coordinated at the national level and through which information can be shared, and resources used collaboratively, to address issues of national significance. (Education Council, 2019a)

This Council has also been responsible for many of the policy reforms for Indigenous education, including the most recent iteration, *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015*. As noted earlier, this strategic policy is under review and yet to be updated. The intentions of the Education Council are noble indeed, yet it has been said the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Their national goals and strategies remain elusive, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Like the National Strategy, the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* in Australia is currently under review. The COAG Education Council has just completed a round of public submissions and consultation events in two major cities are scheduled for later in 2019. The Education Council reports, of the 158 submissions received, 25 were anonymous (Education Council, 2019b). A website in the public domain has been set up for viewing the many submissions from national and state professional educational associations, peak bodies, universities and individual submissions. It is unclear how representative the submissions are of the full range of Australians, although it is reported, “around 92% considered the goals of the *Melbourne Declaration* are still relevant” (Education Council, 2019b) .

### **2.2.1 Current Indigenous education policy**

The marginalisation described above is clearly represented in Partington’s description of the three phases of Indigenous education policy (cited in Biddle & Edwards, 2017, pp. 1-2) from post-1788 and establishment of schooling in Australia until 1960’s. These are the: Mission Era; Protection Era; and, Assimilation Era. Biddle and Edwards (2017) consider policy since the 1960’s as part of the ‘Contemporary Era’ and contend that “historically, there has been a considerable level of policy deliberation relating to the schools that Indigenous students attend. At various times, this is likely to have had the effect of either separating or integrating Indigenous and non-Indigenous students” (pp. 3-4). Many scholars would argue, as did Smith (2017) cited above and Biddle (2010), that even when Indigenous students are separated or integrated, many are still marginalised. What is considered next is a cross-section of literature concerning the two most recent national policy ‘deliberations’ for Indigenous education in Australia.

The immediate past national policy in Australia was the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014* (Education Council, 2014a). In this period, all educational jurisdictions received significant additional funding for the provision of education for Indigenous students in Australian schools. Over a three-year period, annual reports were commissioned with a final evaluation on the Action Plan occurring in 2014 (ACIL Allen Consulting, PhillipsKPA, & Rose, 2014). It should be noted while the former two parties compiling this report are private business entities, Professor Mark Rose, academic and Aboriginal man, was the latter contributing party. The report provided an in-depth view of what was and was not achieved by this ambitious plan for school improvement. Acknowledged was the key roles played by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Working Group (ATSIEWG) and the Indigenous Consultative Bodies (IECBs) from each jurisdiction, although as Hogarth (2018) points out the naming of the ATSIEWG “is discursive trickery. It gives the

illusion that the members of the group are Indigenous” (p. 375). Most members were non-Indigenous, although when invited to attend in 2012, those from the IECBs were able to provide some increased representation of Indigenous peoples. Significantly this report observes, an ‘implementation lag effect’ occurred because of the differing times of introduction of the Action Plan into jurisdictions and there were ‘variable influences’ in schools making judgements of the specific impact of the Action Plan difficult. Equally noteworthy was that:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and support staff were identified as critical for many focus schools to establish relationships with students and their families. They were also important for the broader education of non-Indigenous school staff, many of whom sought more information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, identities and perspectives. (ACIL Allen Consulting et al., 2014, p. ii)

Also observed was a range of other ‘influences’ of the Action Plan: that sharing of practice across and within educational sectors was limited; sustainability of school-wide change was ‘uncertain’; gaps between non-Indigenous and Indigenous student achievement remained ‘persistent’; significant contextual differences occurred across remote, provincial and metropolitan schools; and, there were shortfalls in the intentions of the Action Plan.

Future needs to sustain the momentum of the Action Plan were identified, including more ‘nationally co-ordinated activity’ within what was recognised as the changes to funding arrangements for Australian schools, centralisation program responsibilities to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, new priority areas of school attendance, consideration of remote schools and post-secondary school transitions. While not called recommendations, the report offered nine ‘principles’ to guide future plans and advice from the range of national, systemic and IECB stakeholders. In its summary of findings, the report acknowledged the Action Plan “influenced educational practices at the national, systemic and school levels to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students” (ACIL Allen Consulting et al., 2014, p. 116) with several examples of its influence at those levels, including adding a greater ‘legitimacy’, ‘momentum’ and ‘authority’ to take action and providing consistent policy direction at all levels. What the evaluation also exposed was what happens when there is greater alignment of policy and expectation from the system to the schools, which is “actions were more likely to be pursued at the local level” (ACIL Allen Consulting et al., 2014, p. 116). In the final paragraph of the findings summary the report recognises, “There therefore remains more to do to continue activity started at many focus schools and to engage those schools with Aboriginal and Islander students that had little involvement in the rollout of the Action Plan” (ACIL Allen Consulting et al., 2014, p. 117).

Immediately following the Action Plan was the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015*. As such, it currently remains as the guiding influence for all educational jurisdictions. Released as a ‘new’ strategy, the Education Council chair wrote in her introduction, “Ministers are keen for the strategy to build on the actions underway in pursuing COAG’s Closing the Gap targets and the evaluation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014” (Education Council, 2015, p. 1).

No commissioned reviews or reports specifically for the Strategy are as yet in the public domain, however there have been some Australian parliamentary committees that have conducted inquiries and reports on education. One has been an inquiry conducted within the current period of current Indigenous education policy by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs. Their final report tabled to parliament in December 2017 is titled, *The power of education: From surviving to thriving Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students* (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, 2017). Interestingly there is no mention of the Strategy within the final report document, although the Closing the Gap targets and associated reports were mentioned frequently. The aspects of educational opportunities and outcomes reported on were taken from pre-schooling, boarding school education, different school models for Indigenous students, remote areas, family and community educational service models, ‘best practice’ models and school transitions to further learning or employment (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, 2017).

At the outset, the Standing Committee recognised “the education system is not meeting the needs of Indigenous students” (2017, p. vxi). The Standing Committee made a range of findings that included: that data about attendance and educational achievement were ‘fragmented at best’; that family and community wellbeing was being affected by poor housing, health and financial situations; that cultural safety was an ‘essential foundation’ but still not embedded within education and support programs; that successful engagement programs had strong school-community and services relationships; lack of gender equity with greater funding allocated to boys rather than girls; that teachers continue to grapple with cultural understandings and knowledge of local Indigenous communities; and, that there are inconsistencies with application of effective and efficient pedagogies and implementation of the Australian Curriculum (2017, pp. xv-xx).

The Standing Committee also made findings about a pedagogical approach used in some remote schools called “Direct Instruction”, about the practice of sending students from remote communities to “Boarding in schools” and “Funding” including that of ABSTUDY and

private organisations providing scholarship programs to attend independent boarding schools to receive particular improvement recommendations (2017, pp. xviii-xx). Most findings contributed towards the 20 recommendations that the Standing Committee believed would improve educational opportunities and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The committee mounted the case that while schools certainly need the funds to do things better, schools have to do things differently. This is a key point made by another major review *Through Growth to Achievement* into Australian school education led by David Gonski in 2017 said, “While shifting to needs-based funding is levelling the playing field on which schools operate, the choices made about the way funding is used are also critically important to lifting outcomes” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018, p. 6).

A contemporary scholarly and very different view about the shape of the policy agenda for education in Australia is Hogarth’s (2018) important thesis that critically analyses the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015 using the Coolangatta Statement on Indigenous People’s Rights in Education. Hogarth presents a clear argument to make known “how policy discourses influence, maintain and/or challenge institutional and societal constructs” (2018, p. iii). Hogarth used Indigenous Critical Discourse Analysis as a methodological framework to analyse this Australian education policy document. Challenged are the denial of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ agency and rights and the bias against marginalised peoples. Her extensive investigation reveals the power position of the government over Indigenous peoples and how deficit discourse still dominates, “the potential futures and educational attainment of Indigenous students in primary and secondary schooling” (2018, p. 363). Hogarth made several major findings and contrary to what other scholars may have argued, Hogarth importantly found that acknowledging binary constructs could “that enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to speak back and assume a position of power and knowing to counter the hegemonic position of the coloniser (2018, p. 371). It is argued self-determination, agency and rights of Indigenous peoples are not enabled by the Strategy (Hogarth, 2018). Hogarth makes several recommendations with the primary recommendation being, “The voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, parents and communities must be privileged in the production, implementation, recontextualisation and evaluation of Indigenous education policy” (2018, p. 381). This view adds to the idea that schools have to do things differently, and, in doing this, a different but improved relationship must happen between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples.

Hogarth’s study also represents an important culmination of what thousands of others from any number of research studies, reviews and from practitioners themselves have said over

time. One wonders with the evidence and successes that have been yielded from their work, how many more convincing arguments will be enough to create the tipping point to convince government leaders and policy decision makers to actually take action that considers and acts on the wishes of Australia's First Peoples? How many more recommendations have to be made before the respective material and interpersonal divides between Australia's First Peoples and other Australians are equalised and reconciled to the extent that both can walk side by side and forward together? The next section draws down more specifically into the school context and begins to focus in on the actual actors who feature in this study; that is, principals and more specifically, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers.

### **2.2.2 Many within a school**

School leadership is seen as playing a key role in improving schools, but building leadership capacity beyond the principal has come into greater focus and attracted a new generation of research. As explained in Chapter 1, understandings of leadership as a single act of individuals as a model have instead moved to considerations of processes and practices. Leadership is no longer the dominion of just the principal but rather influenced by many within a school (Dinham, et. al. 2011; Hattie, 2009; Leithwood et al., 2017). Leithwood and Seashore-Louis (2012), provide meaning to the term 'leadership' by describing it in terms of what leaders do, as, "two core functions: *providing direction* and *exercising influence*" (p. 4). They then posit that, "Leadership is about direction and influence. Stability is the goal of what is often called management. Improvement is the goal of leadership" (p. 4). Then in another article, Leithwood and Sun, urge, "more attention by researchers, practitioners, and researchers needs to be devoted to the impact of specific leadership practices and less to leadership models" (2012, p. 387).

Moving into the Australian research context, Blakesley (cited in White, Ober, Frawley, & Bat, 2009) points out, "there is an 'absence of an Indigenous cultural lens through which to examine educational leadership'" (p. 85). White et al. (2009) themselves also acknowledge "In the Australian context, educational leadership must take into account the perspectives and aspirations of its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people" (p. 85). In their discussion about "interculturalism and Indigenous education" (2009), White et al. suggest the "Ganma metaphor" (p. 93) as one of the most appropriate representations of "exploring education and curriculum from an intercultural perspective" (p. 93), which in turn, led to a 'both ways' philosophy adopted by the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE; formerly Batchelor College) in the Northern Territory. Sitting within this work is a body of literature and research around culturally responsive schooling with implications for leadership, especially within Indigenous student contexts (Blakesley, 2008; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Pursoe, 2012) and

within that, there are emerging studies about leadership practices that can make the greatest difference with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Australian schools (J. Davis, 2018; Dempster, Lovett, & Fluckiger, 2016; Frawley & Fasoli, 2012; Sarra, 2011).

### **2.2.3 Indigenous education workers in schools**

While there is a significant quantity of research about the role played by principals and teachers on improving schools for student learning and wellbeing, what of the non-teaching support staff, especially those who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander? They have a part to play in leadership by ‘many within a school’. Already mentioned in Chapter 1 was a selection of literature about studies conducted internationally on the employment of non-teaching staff in schools to support improved student learning outcomes. Within Australia, however, there appears to be a shortage of empirical studies on this aspect of school leadership, let alone studies which focus specifically on the role played by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander non-teaching support staff in schools.

The purpose of this section, is to therefore further unpack the current day information and review the literature concerning teacher aides who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employed in Australian schools. As a reminder, for the purposes of this thesis, unless specified separately, the term used to describe these roles, are referred to throughout as IEWs/CECs.

Currently all educational jurisdictions across Australia employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in schools. Very few are teachers or principals (Santoro & Reid, 2006), but a slightly greater number are employed as teacher aides. As mentioned in Chapter 1, nearly 6% of the teacher-aide workforce are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011a). These workers usually come directly from the local community or are accepted by and identify with the local community. They are in an ideal position to offer two-fold assistance to the school, “first, to develop an awareness of Indigenous culture within the classroom; and, second to act as a link between the school and Indigenous community” (Armour, Warren, & Miller, 2014, p. 1). In the only known national investigation into this role, their important role is noted in the introductory pages of the report,

they provide a role model, a bridge between family, community and schooling. They often play a 24 hour role for this is not a job that ends at 4 o’clock. Hey speak the community’s language whether that be Aboriginal English, an Aboriginal language or Standard Australian English. (Pat Buckskin et al., 1994, p. 1)

As the setting for this study was located within the state government school jurisdiction, a brief review of the IEW/CEC role descriptions in the present day in each state was undertaken to observe how they and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education were positioned within the public domain, namely through their jurisdiction's website. This information is summarised in a table in Appendix B. What can be seen is that most have had the IEW/CEC roles described by different names across the different states and territories. What can also be seen is that every home page does not have an upfront tab or direct link to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. Only the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Department of Education and New South Wales (NSW) Department of Education home pages had easily accessible drop-down links after running the cursor over the main tab headings. ACT Department of Education had theirs listed as one of the drop-down headings under the main tab heading of 'Support for Students', with its dynamic link being called 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education'. NSW Department of Education had theirs listed as one of the drop-down headings under the 'Teaching and learning' tab. Running the cursor over this revealed a link called, 'Aboriginal education and communities'. In all other government jurisdiction websites, the search function had to be used to navigate a way around the site to try to locate if the jurisdiction had Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education strategic plans or policies or both. Some were very confusing and challenging to navigate through. Despite numerous searches, no strategic plan or policy about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education was easily visible on the Queensland (QLD) Department of Education web site. It is known to me from my professional field experience that as at this time (September, 2019) there are no published specific plans or policies pertaining to Indigenous education for state education in QLD, other than a mention in name only "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander" (twice to be exact) on the main schools strategy document, *Every Student Succeeding State Schools Strategy 2019-2023* (Department of Education. Queensland, 2019c). The South Australian, Victorian and the Northern Territory Departments of Education web sites had clearly 'in-date' Indigenous education plans or policies and the NSW Department of Education website had an Aboriginal Education Policy, dated from 2008 with an annotation it had been updated in April 2018 (Department of Education. New South Wales, 2019b). This information was correct as at the final search conducted 8 September 2019.

Seeking information about the actual role of Indigenous non-teaching staff was equally problematic across all home pages except the ACT Department of Education home page, where, once the 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education' link had been opened, all relevant information was listed and clearly displayed on that page. Even though I am relatively experienced in navigating government web pages, only the ACT Department of Education home

page seemed the most accessible for seeking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander information. This small review in many ways is analogous with what has been shown by the earlier review of the literature in this chapter surrounding progress in policy and plans for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. The various jurisdictions' Department of Education web pages can be seen as manifestations of what is and is not happening at the national level for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and with the exception of one jurisdiction, IEWs/CECs are not visibly well represented either. It could be argued the 'marginalisation' of Indigenous peoples noted by Gray and Beresford (2008) and Smith (2017), is currently also being lived out on the Department of Education home pages across Australia.

#### **2.2.4 What the empirical research says**

Literature searches undertaken at the commencement of the study, using the subject Aboriginal and Islander Education Workers (AIEW) and variations of it, yielded over 400 items, but as some of the literature extended into the health and medical fields, many had to be excluded. The literature was therefore culled to 93 items which specifically referenced non-teaching staff in schools. Nine were international studies about teacher aides or teaching assistants from other countries, 41 items featured AIEWs as part of the greater discussion about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education issues in Australia and the remaining 43 were directly focused on the AIEW as the central topic. Within these 43 items about AIEWs, 25 were journal articles written by mostly AIEW and some teacher practitioners as reflections and recounts of their work in the field and none were written after 2006. Of the remaining 18, four were educational reports on programs running in schools (from 1976 to 1980); one was an on-line information/training programme for AIEWs; one was an online resource produced through workshops in 2007, five were peer reviewed articles and seven were empirical studies that could report some findings. Out of those, only seven were empirical studies in the Australian context and by 2019, when I refreshed the literature, I found four more Australian studies. Of these eleven studies: one was the previously mentioned only national study undertaken in 1994; one was a state level study completed in 2011; seven were smaller research projects undertaken from 2003 to 2016 and two were theses, one dissertation completed in 2009 and the other a Masters' thesis completed in 2011. Appendix C provides a table summary of these studies.

Several recurrent themes emerged from an analysis of this small corpus of literature. The findings of IEW/CECs from Pat Buckskin et al.'s (1994) study, resonated with those in the later studies like that of MacGill's (2009) and Funnell's (2012) studies. The first theme was amorphousness of roles. IEWs/CECs experienced challenging working conditions and received variable remuneration, no matter when or where the studies had been conducted. Secondly,

many studies showed IEWs/CECs were ‘invisible’ and under recognised and under utilised in some settings. In other settings they were over utilised and performed tasks they were not trained or paid to do or both. In other settings they may have been one of the few Indigenous people on staff. Thirdly, IEWs/CECs had a definite centrality to the home-school divide, they were the cultural ‘bridges’ between home and school. Fourthly, IEWs/CECs experienced lack of culturally safe work places and misunderstanding by their non-Indigenous colleagues. More training for the non-Indigenous staff was recommended to assist with this. When IEWs/CECs were recognised by other staff, they were seen as assisting them grow their cultural responsiveness and when IEWs/CECs and non-Indigenous staff worked together, their appreciation of each other grew, barriers were reduced and reconciliation was enacted. Finally, IEWs/CECs were crucial to the participation and achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. They knew their students well, usually spoke the home language and could provide the well-being support needed to boost Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander access to learning opportunities in school.

Methodologically, it is noticeable, all studies involved mostly qualitative research that included case studies, action research and participant interviews. Several of the larger studies included mixed method approaches. Most were located within remote contexts, although the larger studies included participants from across a variety of locales.

What also emerged from these few empirical studies is that there was a scarcity of anything written or researched in relation to the relationships between the IEW/CEC and their supervisor, who is usually the principal. The focus of existing studies has been about the role of IEWs/CECs, their working conditions or about a particular policy, curriculum or technological initiative implementation and the part IEWs/CECs played in that. This gap in the research provides an opportunity for further exploration and enquiry.

### **2.2.5 Section summary**

Shown in this section was the emerging trend in the field of education that schools and systems are what need to change rather than placing responsibility or blame with the student. That said, an agenda of equity and excellence is problematic without a holistic consideration of the situation of all factors that cause disadvantage for students. There are challenges for government to listen to the right people to find the right approaches that can, like a tide, lift all boats. Research reflects how education systems are beginning to recognise how past practices and policies have marginalised and under recognised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the key is to allow greater alignment from the system to schools. Schools also need

continued resourcing and support in how to best use these resources. The literature also showed that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to whom educational policies are directed, need to be better represented in the development and implementation of these policies. This section then presented research that explored the contribution of leadership to school improvement and that this can be done by many in a school, beyond the principal. School support staff, such as IEWs/CECs, can be considered as part of this important work, although the research shows many are still under-recognised or well-utilised and experience limited opportunities for career pathways. Importantly, of the few empirical studies available, IEWs/CECs were found to be integral to the success in Indigenous students in schools but there are gaps in the literature about what is known when IEWs/CECs and principals do work together as leaders alongside each other.

### **2.3 Chapter summary**

This chapter has traced the socio-political complexities of race relations in Australia to begin to understand the past and current state of affairs between Australia and its First Peoples. The concept of unfinished business was explored through examinations of successive attempts to achieve recognition and enable processes of reconciliation, as were the impacts of ill-informed constructs and deficit discourses on relationships and the part education policy has played in this. Then more recent research was identified that reframed understandings about differences of western and Indigenous perspectives to bring about the level of interpersonal reconciliation needed to move beyond the present situation.

Also considered were international research trends on improving schools for equity and excellence and their impact on Australia's national education policy development. Current Indigenous education policy in Australia was examined by reviewing several commissioned reports and a scholarly critical analysis response. Then, moving closer into the local level of school, changing views about educational leadership were identified. It was shown that the work of leadership in schools is now about lead-ing rather than the lead-er and the part played by the many beyond the principal and teachers in schools, namely Indigenous support staff. Information about the existing Indigenous education policy and situation for these workers in educational jurisdictions of the present day as represented in jurisdictional web sites was reviewed before the small body of empirical literature, on the past and present work of Indigenous staff in schools was analysed to show very little is known about the IEW/CEC and principal relationship. Each role has an important part to play in educational leadership for school improvement. Knowing what happens when IEWs/CECs and principals work together on school improvement will add to an evidence-base that can likely be used to bring Indigenous

students closer to achieving their right to better learning and well-being outcomes. The conceptual framework that represents my thinking for this study is presented in the following chapter, Chapter 3. Chapter 3 provides a detailed explanation of the methodology informing this study.

## 3 Methodology

### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter explains the methodology I used to understand the IEW/CEC and principal relationship. It begins by articulating the research theories informing this project followed by the underpinning paradigms and definitions of my researcher-self. Next is a rationale for the research approach, followed by a description of the research design, setting and participants, phases of the research including participant recruitment and data collection. Data analysis throughout the phases of the research are then outlined and this chapter concludes with a discussion of ethical considerations, validity and trustworthiness.

### 3.1 A tripartite of theory

Three key sources of theoretical orientation—critical theory, Indigenous standpoint theory in Cultural Interface and relational leadership theory—inform my research. They coalesce to form a tripartite of theory, a ‘bricolage’ for my choice of theoretical framework, something described as the “conceptual template with which to compare and contrast results, not seen as establishing a priori categories for data collection and analysis” (Mertens, 2015, p. 116).

Importantly and foregrounding the explanation of the framework underpinning my research is critical theory. Defined at its simplest, it is one that challenges inequality and injustice (Freire, 1973) and believes “human nature operates in a world that is based on a struggle for power” (Lincoln et al., 2011, p. 102). This research theory seeks to reflectively assess, change the status quo and advocate for resistance, struggle and emancipation at the local level – the seat of social justice. An ‘ever-evolving criticality’ is recognised with this theory as growing numbers of contemporary critical researchers informed by the ‘post-discourses’ of the Academy, “understand that individuals’ views of themselves and the world were even more influential by social and historical forces than previously believed” (Kincheloe et al., 2011, p. 163). With a lens of criticality overlooking all elements of this research, I have recognised injustices as those that are inequalities between the educational outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and the lack of recognition of the value of Indigenous workers in schools. By examining the professional relationship between IEWs/CECs and principals, the relationship’s contextual features and resulting outcomes, emancipatory

knowledge has been created to inform and transform practice of participants, including my own as researcher and practitioner, as well as provide evidence for change in policy and practice in Queensland schools for Indigenous students.

At a theoretical level, the methodology of this study also aligns closely with what Denzin and Lincoln (2008) have said of more recent critical research, “We seek a productive dialogue between Indigenous and critical scholars. This involves a re-visioning of critical pedagogy, a re-grounding of Paulo Freire’s pedagogy of the oppressed in local, Indigenous contexts. We call this merger of Indigenous and critical methodologies *critical Indigenous pedagogy* (CIP)” (p. 2). They then define CIP by ‘multiple criteria’ as:

Ethical, performative, healing, transformative, decolonizing and participatory. It must be committed to dialogue, community, self-determination, and cultural autonomy. It must meet people’s perceived needs...resist efforts to confine enquiry to a single paradigm or interpretive strategy. It must be unruly, disruptive critical and dedicated to the goals of justice and equity. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 2)

In turn, an understanding of Nakata’s (2007a) Indigenous standpoint theory and concept of cultural interface contribute to and have informed this research project. Nakata describes this interface as “the intersection of the Western and Indigenous domains” (2002, p. 282). He sees it as,

the place where we live and learn, the place that conditions our lives...and more to the point the place where we are active agents in our own lives – where we make decisions – our lifeworld. For Indigenous peoples our context, remote or urban, is already circumscribed by the discursive space of the Cultural Interface... This does not mean we passively accept the constraints of this space—to the contrary— ...the gamut of human response is evident in Indigenous histories since European contact. It is a place of tension that requires constant negotiation. (2002, p. 285)

Nakata suggests Indigenous standpoint theory has three principles that allow him, as an Indigenous person and other Indigenous people to “make better arguments in relation to my position within knowledge, and in relation to other communities of ‘knowers’” (2007d, p. 216). The three principles summarised are firstly, “accounts of communities of Indigenous people in contested knowledge spaces”; secondly, “affords agency to people”; and thirdly, “acknowledges the everyday tensions, complexities and ambiguities as the very conditions that produce the possibilities in the spaces between Indigenous and non-Indigenous positions” (Nakata, 2007d, p. 217). I interpret the term ‘ambiguities’, used by Nakata in his exposition of Indigenous standpoint theory, as that of the myriad of personal experiences and observations made by Indigenous peoples within their day to day lives that are reminders of their perceptions of their

positionality within the Western and then their Indigenous life worlds. Nakata describes this as a feeling of ‘tension’ and ‘tug-of-war’ (Nakata, 2007d). While I endeavour to apply an understanding of Indigenous standpoint theory, the ‘ambiguity’ I seek to make clear relates to the uncertainty and unknown phenomenon of the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship. Until now, little has been documented about what actually occurs between them when they are engaged in co-work to improve their schools for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and when they are drawn together into a space of authentic collaboration. What they think about each other, what is said to each other and how they learn and work together has not yet received much scrutiny or attention. If mention has been made in research, then it is usually from the perspective of one in relation to the other when the other is not present. Up until now, it appears this has been a subordinate concern to researchers who are focussed on different aspects or issues within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. I found Lowe’s research on school and community relationships and engagement, useful to help me further understand Indigenous standpoint theory. Lowe interprets Nakata’s theory as a,

contextually positioned perspective that is the result of these experiences of oppression. The concept of criticality is a key to understanding Nakata’s particular concept of standpoint which he argues sees Aboriginal people’s exercise of their agentic capacity within these everyday experiences with governments and their agencies. (2017, p. 40)

Then, in an earlier discussion paper, McGloin, a non-Indigenous academic, interprets Nakata’s theory as,

a set of parameters whereby analysis of various Indigenous research positions can be tested and where existing knowledge and power relations can be challenged, but importantly, for the purposes of this discussion, Indigenous standpoint theory offers a way of thinking about how to embed Indigenous knowledge into academic disciplines, curricula, into the teaching and learning praxis of universities more generally, and by extension, into public discourse. (2009, p. 40)

Importantly for my study, I have endeavoured to use Nakata’s ideas to challenge the orthodoxy - of power positions and structural authority - so as to move from the binary, the ‘decoloniality’ and closed-minded thinking about relationships between Indigenous and other Australians. Nakata et al. (2012), argue that in Indigenous studies, by both non-Indigenous and Indigenous students,

learning to focus on the conditions of the Indigenous arguments, in relation to the conditions of Western theorising, ... [they] can be led to develop awareness of the limits of various positions, the persistent pervasiveness of ‘all knowing’, ‘taken-for-granted’ Western frames, an awareness of the

reproduction of those frames in Indigenous analysis, and an appreciation of just how intricate and open to interpretation the dance around worldview, knowledge and practice is as a result. (p. 133)

Further, Yunkaporta describes this trend of suspended thinking as a ‘guiding principle’ by arguing, “the deeper the knowledge, the more common ground is found across cultures, or conversely, the shallower the knowledge, the more difference is found between cultures” (2009, p. 60). Developing my own understanding of Nakata’s ideas offers a way forward for me to be reflexive about my “own systems of thought” (Nakata, 2002, p. 288) as I navigate a best way through this study. Particularly as I grapple with the potential structural authority imbalance that may be perceived with me as a non-Indigenous researcher and principal working with Indigenous staff who are participants in this study and all the while seeking to understand the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship from multiple perspectives.

While the third theory considered for this research does not have its origins from an intercultural influence, a consideration of relational leadership theory (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012b), does offer another perspective by which to view the phenomenon of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship. Interwoven in this study with the above theoretical and conceptual frameworks, relational leadership theory adds interpretations of relationality in leadership to allow “viewing of the visible threads that connect actors engaged in leadership processes and relationships as part of the reality to be studied” (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012b, p. 182). In 2006, Mary Uhl-Bien proposes:

Relational Leadership Theory is offered as an overarching framework for the study of the relational dynamics that are involved in the generation and functioning of leadership. Contrary to other studies of leadership, which have focussed primarily on the study of leadership *effectiveness*, Relational Leadership Theory focuses on the *relational* processes by which leadership is produced and enabled...Moreover, Relational Leadership Theory as I present it here is not a theory in the traditional sense of the word. It is an overarching framework for a variety of methods, approaches, and even ontologies that explore the relational dynamics of leadership and organizing. (Uhl-Bien, 2006, pp. 667-668)

In 2012, Mary Uhl-Bien and Sonia Ospina more simply expressed their view of relational leadership as “a view that sees leadership as emerging from social processes and relationships among people” (2012a, p. 12466). Acknowledged is that “studies of relational leadership today fall somewhere between two radically different perspectives, each of which speaks its own language and draws from dissimilar logics of inquiry” (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012b, p. 236). The first is an “*entity* perspective ...[which] considers traits, behaviours and actions of individuals as they engage in interpersonal relationships to influence one another”

(Ospina & Uhl-Bien, 2012b, p. 236). The second is “a constructionist” (Ospina & Uhl-Bien, 2012b, p. 236), or as explained in earlier work by Uhl-Bien, the “*relational*, (multiple realities) perspective...[that] changes the focus from the individual to the collective dynamic (e.g., to combinations of interacting relations and contexts)” (2006, pp. 661-662). Uhl-Bien suggests that relational leadership theory can be used to “gain a measure of integration across numerous methodologies” (2006, p. 666) because she argues “leadership is relational, and cannot be captured by examination of individual attributes alone” (2006, p. 671). In this study, “Leadership is thus about the way actors engage, interact, and negotiate with each other to influence organisational understandings and produce outcomes” (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012a, p. 12508). Similarly Alvesson and Sveningsson (2012) suggest, “Leadership always not a person doing something in splendid social isolation but people acting together ...it is within relationships that leadership is created” (p. 5201). Relational leadership theory is therefore useful to assist in understanding the IEW/CEC and principal relationship.

Importantly, Uhl-Bien and Ospina conclude “Relational leadership acknowledges that leadership processes involve *both* individual and collective elements” (2012a, p. 12195). Uhl-Bien and Ospina also suggest there are “diverse views and research methods that can complement one another and lead to new insights and creative thinking” (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012b, p. 11757) suggesting ‘paradigm interplay’ used by Romani, Primecz and Topcu (2011) in their paper about cross-cultural management research. Paradigm interplay has benefits and enables researchers to “identify the areas of connects, disconnects, tensions and new insights (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012a, p. 11799)” into leadership study. Consequently, this study has endeavoured to use the converging ideas of relational leadership theory, that “relational leadership acknowledges that leadership processes involve *both* individual and collective elements” (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012a, p. 12200). Featured in this thesis are joint examinations of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship as a process with a consideration of the part played by each of the individual actors within the relationship. What I have undertaken is neatly explained by Crosby and Bryson (2012) whose research has led them to suggest:

Leadership aimed at tackling complex public challenges is necessarily a shared and collective phenomenon. At the same time, we have found that the characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses of particular individuals who act as formal and informal leaders significantly affect the outcome of this leadership work. (p. 6976)

Uhl-Bien suggests participatory methods are an appropriate way to conduct relational leadership research, including “action science” (2006, p. 671). It is no accident, therefore, that I have adopted a methodology reflecting “a mixed methods way of thinking” (Greene, cited in

Patton, 2015, p. 317). My choice of a plurality of paradigms and tripartite of theory does make for a complex methodology, however, as already argued above, multi paradigms augur relational happenings, transformation, convergence, where there is overlap and interaction. These all contribute to understand the intricacies and complexities of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship. Brought together are the individual traits of the actors with their “leadership practices”. These collectively created purposive bundles of activities” (Ospina et al., 2012, p. 6059), or ‘relational dynamics’ (Uhl-Bien, 2006) that occur between the IEW/CEC and principal. Scholars in contemporary organisational and cultural discourse call this, the ‘space between’, ‘inter-places’ or ‘powerful places of liminality’ (H. Bhabha, 1994, 2012; Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000; Küpers, 2011; Tempest & Starkey, 2004). In particular, Homi Bhabha’s idea of a ‘Third Cultural Space’ (2004) complements the multiplicity of thinking and methodological choices for this investigation. Notably, Bhabha’s work is acknowledged within a non-mandatory systemic policy implemented in Queensland state schools from 2012 - 2015, called *Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools* (EATSIPS) (Department of Education Training and Employment, 2011a). Of further interest is that implementation of this policy formed some of the co-work of IEWs/CECs and principals of schools featured in my research. Of note, there is specific mention of ‘Third Cultural Space’ in one of the EATSIPS policy documents designed for use by school communities where the authors explain that in adapting this way of thinking to the Australian schooling context it is one that,

recognises that Indigenous communities have distinct and deep cultural and world views — views that differ from those found in most Western education systems. When Western and Indigenous systems are acknowledged and valued equally, the overlapping or merging of views represents a new way of educating. (Department of Education and Training, 2011, p. 9)

### **3.2 A plurality of paradigms and defining my researcher self**

The philosophical methodology paradigms of transformation and pragmatism underpin the nature of this study and the stance of my researcher-self. Originally labelled as the emancipatory paradigm, in agreement with Lather’s 1992 discussion of paradigms, Mertens (2015) has labelled the transformative paradigm as the “third paradigm of research” (2015, p. 117). This was so named “to emphasise that the agency for change rests in the persons of the community working side by side with the researcher towards the goal of social transformation” (Mertens, 2015, p. 9). Mertens defines it, as “a framework for examining assumptions that explicitly address power issues, social justice, and cultural complexity throughout the research

process” (2007, pp. 213-214). As mentioned earlier in this thesis in Chapter 1 during the overview of methodology in Section 1.3.1 and above in my use of a tripartite of theories, I have grappled with ensuring my presence and practices as a practitioner-researcher do not hinder the intentions of this research and instead enable and enhance the very transformation I am seeking.

Also underpinning my researcher-self is an interpretation of pragmatism (Greene & Hall, 2010; Mertens, 2015; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005; Patton, 2015). Pragmatism is not just about ‘what works’ (Denzin, Hall and Greene cited in Mertens, 2015), but rather is a stance that “advances mixing multiple sources of evidence to attain and modify knowledge, which in turn is used to inform potential solutions or varying lines of action and to consider their consequences” (Greene & Hall, 2010, p. 24). Further, Patton (2015) positively describes how this interpretation of pragmatism can inform research:

First is inquiring into practical questions in search of useful and actionable answers. Second is making pragmatic decisions while conducting the inquiry based on real-world constraints of limited time and resources. This means making methods decisions based on the situation and opportunities that emerge rather than adherence to a pure paradigm, theoretical inquiry tradition, or fixed design. (p. 153)

This stance has been shaped by my lived experience as a teacher, deputy principal and then a principal, working alongside IEWs/CECs in several state schools in Queensland over the past 29 years with high proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from low-socio-economic and disadvantaged backgrounds. Together we have advocated for and taken action with these students to enable their equitable and inclusive access to learning opportunities (Gardner & Toope, 2011). For the purposes of this study, my professional colleagues, that is, other IEWs/CECs and principals, have been my informants. It is through them that I have sought to definitively understand the IEW/CEC and principal relationship as they, too, took action for better support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in schools. On a basic level, I also had to consider the management my part-time researcher responsibilities with those of working as a full-time principal in a state primary school.

The basic belief systems (Lincoln et al., 2011) from this plurality of paradigms that describe the position of my researcher-self are provided through the qualitative approaches described in the following subsections.

### **3.2.1 A democratic transformative axiology**

Axiology is the qualitative approach to research that rests on “the role of values in the process of knowledge production” (Leavy, 2014, p. 82). Further, Lincoln et al., cited in Leavy (2014) advise that “axiology is concerned with how values and assumptions of the researcher influence the scientific process, as well as what actions the researcher takes with the research produced” (p. 83). I therefore approached this research from a covenantal ethic; one that is defined by Brydon-Miller as, “an ethical stance enacted through relationship and commitment to working for the good of others” (2009, p. 244). In other words, I undertook my work with the key participants based on well-established relationships, trust and a mutual obligation of respect and desire to make a difference in our schools. They volunteered their time to work with me because of a common set of beliefs that our actions would lead to school improvement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student success. I quickly gained credibility and trust with the key participants at the commencement of the study through long standing prior professional relationships. I made the research process transparent to all participants (i.e. case study member checking of transcripts), used reciprocity (i.e. mutual sharing of useful resources) and used democratic practices that respected participant knowledge about their context and their interpretation of their data (i.e. participants frequently led our discussions). I was very aware of always acting in the best interests of participants and our common belief above my self-interest (Hilsen, 2014). I was also mindful of the effects of my own position as researcher and colleague in the research process (Grant, Nelson, & Mitchell, 2008). The challenges, strategies and skills that were required by me are presented later are the details of the specific ethical considerations for this research.

### **3.2.2 A materialist realist ontology (way of being)**

This philosophical belief system is one where, ‘the real world makes a material difference in terms of race, class and gender’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 14), and “reality is not ‘out there’ as an amalgam of external phenomena waiting to be uncovered as ‘facts’, but a construct in which people understand reality in different ways” (Morrison, 2012, p. 20). As a practitioner- researcher with this worldview I have been analytically aware of my actions because I know these are shaped by my values that have in turn been shaped by my perceptions of reality (Grogan & Cleaver Simmons, 2012). With this awareness of multiple realities (Bassey, 1999; Ivankova, 2015; Mertens, 2015; Stake, 1995), I recognised my perceptions and those of the participants in the same site at the same time could be very different while sharing “an intensity of the experience with the phenomenon” (Patton, 2015, p. 119). I have acknowledged and valued this subjectivity (Leavy 2014).

To this end, when making sense of the data collected I considered where it sat within understandings of the broader social, historical, educational and research contexts (Morrison, 2012; Patton, 2015; Stake, 1995). As mentioned in Chapter 1, I do not profess to be speaking for or on behalf of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples. If I am to be considered as a representative of any group, it would be that of the non-Indigenous principal.

### **3.2.3 A critical transactional or subjectivist epistemology (way of knowing)**

I acknowledge I cannot separate myself from knowledge gained from my professional field experience and my learning from this research as I interacted with participants prior to, during and well after the process. What can be known is inextricably tied to all experiences and all experiences have inevitably influenced this inquiry.

In this research, I also rejected polarised thinking, there is not an ‘either-or’, but instead there was, is and can be a ‘diverse both’. Furthermore an adaption of a lens of critical standpoint epistemology called “*Critical Multilogicality*” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008, pp. 135-156) was attempted in this research. This recognises the “the more we understand about the world, more complex it appears to be. In this recognition of complexity, we begin to see multiple causations and the possibility of differing vantage points from which to view a phenomenon” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008, p. 138). I endeavoured to consider that Indigeneity and Indigenous knowledges “always takes into account the colonial/power dimensions of the political epistemological relationship between the Indigenous cosmos and the Western world” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008, p. 136) and their capacity to inform and assist in transforming an unjust world.

When conducting the inquiry, the values and beliefs of all parties were respected, and I recognised there were multiple routes to knowing. These would be practical knowings from co-created findings (Lincoln et al., 2011). I carefully listened to, and where possible, acted on the thoughts and suggestions of the Indigenous participants as well as the non-Indigenous participants. Over the course of the research, we enjoyed a reciprocity of exchange of ideas, unlearned and learned from and with each other. This also translated into my methodical choices and described later in this chapter is my rationale for a mixed methods approach.

### **3.2.4 A participatory methodology (way of doing)**

The pre-established base of trusting relationships with key participants who I worked alongside as colleague-to-colleague in this study, enabled authentic dialogue, an exchange of ideas and where possible, opportunities for each of us to take action for the benefit of

Indigenous students – “an ‘exchange relationship’ or reciprocity” (Patton, 2015, p. 396). I acknowledged and valued every participant as an agent of change through the process of the research. This way is also consistent with critical and Indigenous theories, which are dialogic/dialectical and committed to action in the world (Lincoln et al., 2011). As outlined in Chapter 1, I was an ‘insider’, a practitioner conducting research and while I retained my personal agenda, (to complete this dissertation), the main aim was very much about research *with* to learn from others (Morrison, 2012; Reason & Bradbury, 2008). Together through a cyclical process over time of reflection, then planning, then action followed by reflection, I worked with the IEW/CEC and principal pairs on improving our leadership practice for better learning outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

### **3.3 Rationale for mixed methods**

As outlined in Chapters 1 and 2, the central focus of this study, the relationship between the IEW/CEC and principal, until now has not been well understood or researched. With the plural philosophical paradigms of transformation and pragmatism and decision to utilise three related theoretical positions, I find myself positioned within what has been called “mixed-multiple emergent-methods discourse” (Denzin, 2010, p. 420). Acknowledging several scholars practising this approach, Denzin asks, “Who can quarrel with an emergent multimethod sequential or simultaneous triangulation design that works out of an empowerment, critical theory paradigm?” (2010, p. 420). My project intention has not only been to examine, interpret and transform this situation, I also wanted to use the results to bring about change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student success in schools. To do this, I sought to best understand relationships, a social phenomenon, by drawing on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). I also sought to understand the IEW/CEC and principal relationship from macro and micro levels. I wanted to gain an initial expansive view of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship across schools in a large educational region and then a more specific view—an in-depth understanding of the relationship by studying several sets of IEW/CEC and principal pairs known to have established working relationships. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) call this a ‘bi-focal lens’ (p. 383). However, as already suggested in my research assumptions, I also wanted more than views, I wanted experiential learning that working alongside IEWs/CECs and principals would bring, as we participated together in projects of school improvement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

In support of the use of multiparadigm studies to maximise understandings (Romani et al., 2011) and, if “form follows function, design follows purpose” (Patton, 2015, p. 37), the

research purpose and resulting questions led to a research orientation situated within the ‘mixed methods’ frame. That of use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Creswell, 2011; Greene & Hall, 2010; Mertens, Bledsoe, Sullivan, & Wilson, 2010; Patton, 2015; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011). I wanted to “utilise the strengths of both techniques in order to understand better social phenomena” (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005, p. 377).

Further, this approach could be defined as a ‘mixed methods social inquiry’, one that, “actively invites us to participate in dialogue about multiple ways of seeing and hearing, making sense of the social world, and multiple standpoints on what is important and to be valued and cherished” (Greene, cited in Greene & Hall, 2010, p. 124). Ivankova (2015) considers the broad application of mixing research approaches as one that generates “knowledge that is socially and mutually constructed within diverse contexts and that has practical value to everyone who is directly and indirectly involved in the process of inquiry” (p. 5). Mixed methods are also considered as very useful to achieve social justice outcomes because, “the use of a single method to determine the need for social change (as in focusing a research study) can yield misleading results“ (Mertens, 2007, p. 214).

Central to this study then, were the core research questions. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) point out that, “for pragmatically orientated researchers...everything flows through and from the research questions” (p. 129) and go onto suggest that research questions in themselves “have interconnected QUAL and QUAN features (e.g., questions including *what* and *how* and *what* and *why*)” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 133). Further, it is described in more detail in Chapter 5, but noted here is that there was a modification to part of the second core research question and this led to a consequent research strategy approach. This is in keeping with what Teddlie and Tashakkori say of the generation of research questions in mixed methods study, “you should allow for a dynamic process in which the component questions are re-examined and reframed as your MM study progresses” (2009, p. 133). Figure 3.1 depicts the research focus and the four core research questions.

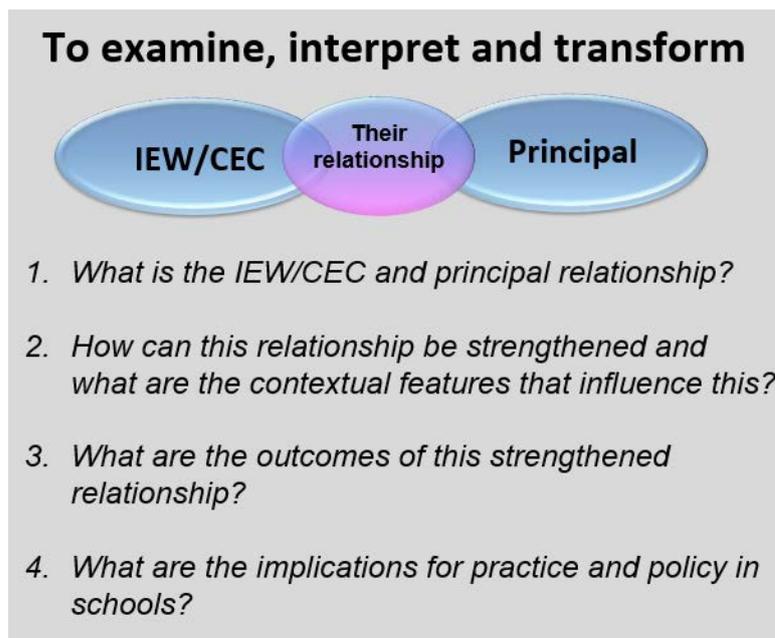


Figure 3.1 Diagrammatic view of research focus and core research questions

### 3.4 Research design

A number of typologies of mixed methods research were therefore considered and what transpired in this study most closely resembles that of a Transformative Design (Creswell, 2014; Mertens et al., 2010). The basic design that “provided the cornerstone for the transformative design” (Creswell, 2014, p. 576) was convergent or conversion (Creswell, 2014; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). That is, quantitative and qualitative data was simultaneously collected, merged and used to understand the research problem. But all are within an overarching transformative framework which is one that,

provides an orientating lens – it informs the overall purpose of the study, the core research questions, the data collection and the outcome of the study. The intent of the framework is to address a social issue for a marginalised or underrepresented population and engage in research that brings about change. (Creswell, 2014, p. 576)

In this research, the priority and weight of the types of data depended on the data collection phase, data method and technique to address the incremental core research questions. In the early phases of the study, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently and sequentially. Each collection of data contributed to analysis that answered the first research question: *What is the current IEW/CEC and principal relationship?* In the latter phases, qualitative data was given priority and greater weight than the quantitative data. These strands were also collected concurrently and sequentially and analysed separately before

findings were integrated to provide answers to the next two core research questions: *How can this relationship be strengthened and what are the contextual features that influence this? What are the outcomes of this strengthened relationship?* Answers to the final research question: *What are the implications for practice and policy in schools* were informed by an integration of all findings. When within the quantitative frame, I worked with numerical data, organising and analysing it (Wetcher-Hendricks, 2011) and when within the qualitative frame, I was the main instrument of inquiry in the field providing rich descriptions of people, their context and their conversations (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). I consider this design approach as ‘methodological appropriateness’, one where “different methods are appropriate for different situations. Situational responsiveness means designing a study that is appropriate for a specific inquiry situation or interest” (Patton, 2015, p. 92). Further, the transformative nature of this research dictates that I use “any research method that produces results that promote greater social justice” (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 87). An adapted diagram from Morse (cited in Creswell, 2014, p. 568) shown in Figure 3.2 provides a graphic illustration of the notation system of data priority or weighting and seriate arrangement of the mixed method design for this research. “Shorthand labels for quantitative (quan) and qualitative (qual) simplify the terms” (Creswell, 2014, p. 568).

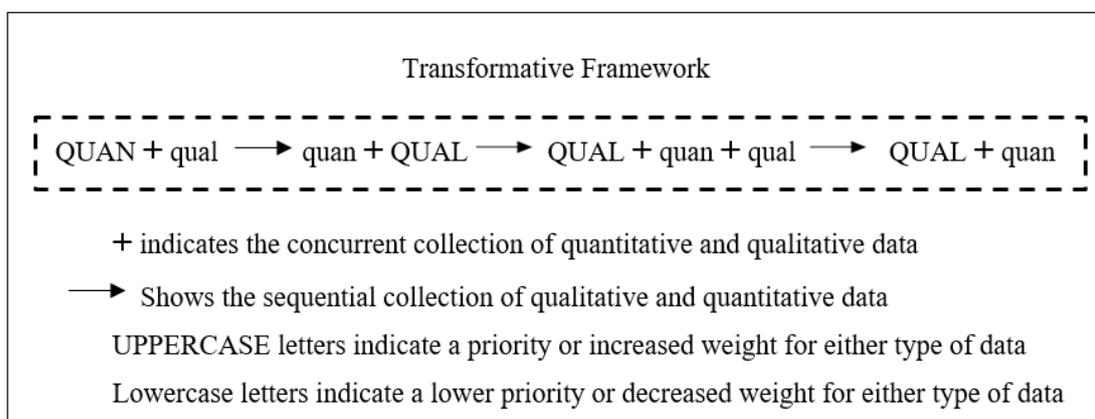


Figure 3.2 Notation system for this study's mixed methods

By providing “both the ‘numbers’ and the ‘stories’ about an issue” (Creswell, 2014, p. 565), the approach to my research allowed for a better understanding of a range of views of the current CEC/IEW and principal relationship, how it might be strengthened, the outcomes of a strong relationship and implications for change to practice and policy to be attained. How the

various forms of data were organised and analysed are provided in further detail in the sections below.

Another feature is that this research has set out to integrate mixed methods (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Ivankova (2015) notes a term used to describe integration in mixed methods was introduced in 2009 by researchers Janice Morse and Linda Niehaus. Their term caught my attention because of its correlation to my study. It is 'point of interface' where the methods can come together,

at the analytic stage when the quantitative and qualitative data are analysed together...or at the results interpretation stage when the findings from the quantitative and qualitative study strands are discussed together in a complimentary manner. Thus, the point of interface, or how and when the two methods are integrated, shapes a mixed methods study design and the relationship between the two strands. (Ivankova, 2015, p. 153)

In this study, the 'point of interface' has happened in both stages or what Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) call at the experiential (Ivankova's analytical) and inferential (Ivankova's interpretation) stages within their research design model, "Conceptualisation stage, Experiential stage, Methodological stage, Analytical stage, Inferential stage" (p. 146).

The point of interface can also produce quality meta-inferences (Johnson and Turner cited in Ivankova, 2015). 'Meta-inference' is defined as "a conclusion generated by integrating the inferences obtained from the QUAL and QUAN strands of a Mixed Methods study" (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 338). Figure 3.3 is a graphic illustration of this study's integrated design featuring the 'points of interface'.

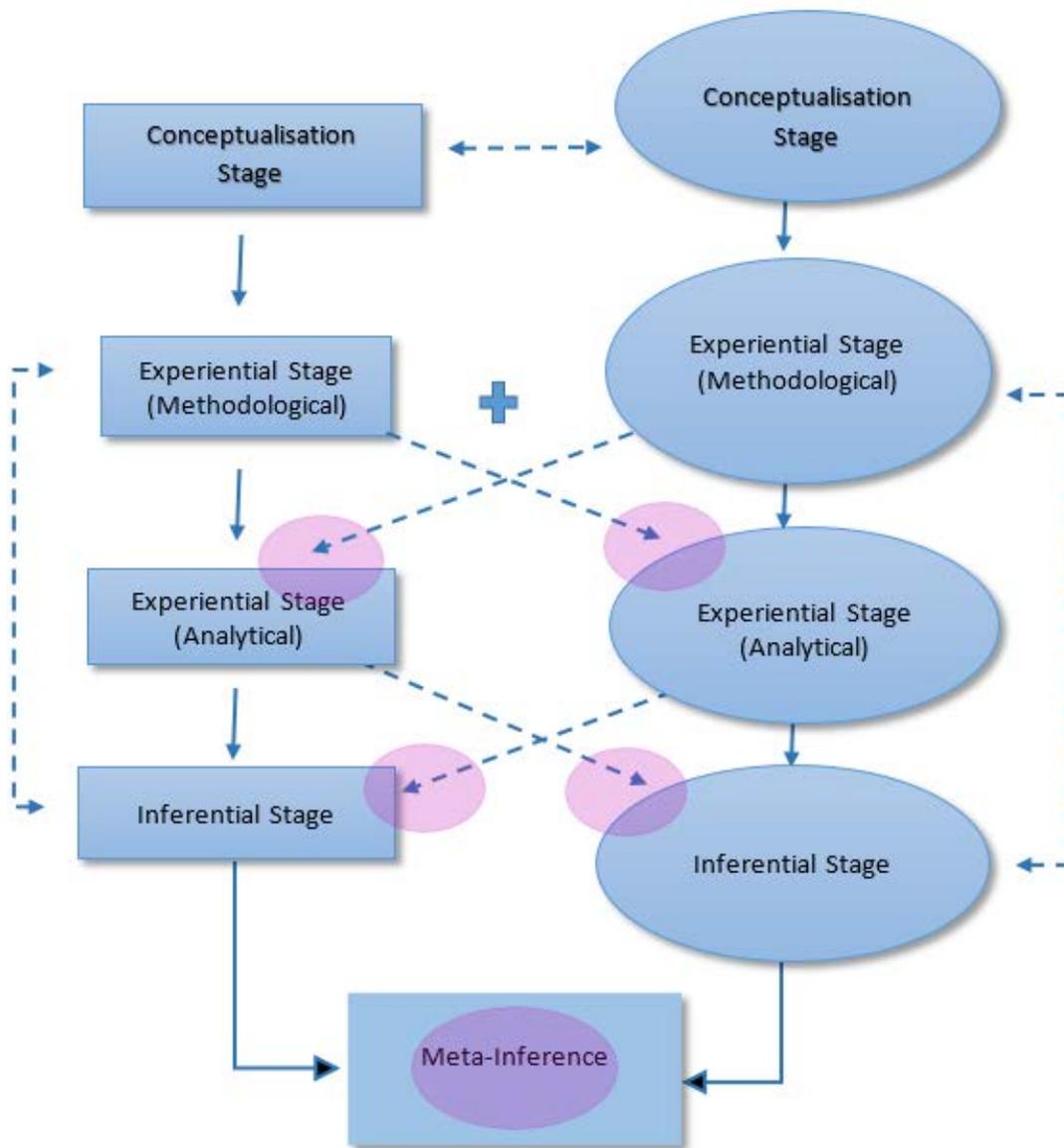


Figure 3.3 Graphic illustration of the integration of research design including 'points of interface'

Also deemed suitable within the choices of research method, was use of case study to provide a holistic description of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship. A case study is defined as one that “has evolved as an approach to research which can capture rich data giving an in-depth picture of a bounded unit or an aspect of that unit” (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013, p. 10). Stake (1995, 2005) categorises an aspect of a unit as ‘*instrumental*’, because there is, “a need for general understanding ...this use of case study is to understand something else” (1995, p. 3), and, “The case is of secondary interest, it plays a supportive role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else. The case is still looked at in depth... but all because this

helps us pursue the external interest” (2005, p. 445). In this research, the case study contained the greater share of findings to answering each of the core research questions.

Further, to deepen the understanding of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship and to add confidence to findings (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014), I conducted the case study on multiple sites with multiple IEW/CEC and principal pairs across different locales. How the participants were selected is addressed in Section 3.6, but noted here is that each pair shared, “a common characteristic or condition ...are somehow categorically bound together ... a ‘quintain<sup>2</sup>’. ...we study what is similar and different about the cases in order to understand the quintain better” (Stake, 2006, p. 6). The ‘something else’, the unit of analysis, the ‘quintain’, was the efficacious nature of these particular pairs’ IEW/CEC and principal relationship. Starting from a position of strength (a strong relationship) was likely to yield more positive contextual features and outcomes to provide constructive implications for future policy and practice. At the same time, I also recognised the complexity of managing the study of the general with that of the particular, something Stake terms as the “case-quintain dilemma” (2006, pp. 7-12). To counter this, I adopted a multiplicity of consideration, paying attention to each IEW/CEC and principal pair, as well as the case study as a whole. In other words, the individual pairs explain the CEC/IEW and principal relationship within each school and each set of pairs offered the commonalities and differences of the CEC/IEW and principal relationship across all four schools in the case study.

The selection of these specific pairs is described as “purposeful sampling: selecting information-rich cases to study, cases by their nature and substance will illuminate the inquiry question being investigated” (Patton, 2015, p. 264). Patton delineates further by categorising the type of purposeful samples so they strategically align “with the inquiry’s purpose, primary questions and data being collected” (2015, p. 264). The purposeful sampling strategy employed for the case study were supported by use of Stake’s (2006) three main criteria for selecting cases: “Is the case relevant to the quintain? Do the cases provide diversity across contexts? Do the cases provide good opportunities to learn about complexity and contexts?” (p. 23). These criteria were applied when choosing case study participants, details of which are discussed in the next section.

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<sup>2</sup> “A quintain (pronounced ‘kwin-ton’) is an object or phenomenon or condition to be studied – a target, but not a bull’s eye. In a multi-case study it is the target collection” (Stake, 2006, p. 6).

Additionally, within this case study, the predominant methodological orientation to inquiry was participatory. To achieve the purpose of the research and to stay true to the tenets of social justice, I enacted a form of participatory action research, critical participatory action research (CPAR). The general term ‘participatory action research’ is defined as “not merely a set of techniques or methods, but rather a commitment to collaboration and partnership throughout the problem-posing, knowledge creation, and action-taking cycles of a project” (Brydon-Miller & Maguire, 2009, p. 88). Further, the significant contributors to the study of participatory action research, Stephen Kemmis and Robin McTaggart have incorporated the dominant feature of action research which was a spiral of cycles of self-reflection (plan, act & observe, reflect, replan, act & reflect, etc.) with seven other key features that are aligned to the work of critical theorist Jürgen Habermas and his ‘Theory of Communicative Action’ (1981). They conceptualised this in collective terms and posit, “if practices are constituted in social interaction between people, changing practices is a social process” (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005, p. 563).

An updated and comprehensive view of CPAR research is provided by Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon who have re-articulated a new overall view of CPAR as “practice-changing practice” (2014, pp. 26-28). They acknowledge a continued use of the applications of the Habermasian concepts of ‘communicative action’, ‘communicative space’ and the ‘public sphere’ described in their earlier work, has “helped to define a new generation of critical participatory action research and the conditions to support it” (2014, p. 34).

My study adapts this evolved CPAR approach to interact with and work alongside key participant IEWs/CECs and principals as colleague-to-colleague. I joined with the IEW/CEC and principal pairs in their planning to assist them on determining a shared focus for future actions. For logistical reasons, I could only feasibly insert myself into the process during the ‘reflect’ stage of each pair’s action plans (see Figure 3.5 in Section 3.7, Phases of the Study). It was during this time that I held discussions with each pair to facilitate “genuine, open dialogue or (better) conversation” (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 35) (‘communicative action’). Together, we made conscious and deliberate efforts to understand each other’s points of view to reach a consensus about what action/s (of school improvement) would be undertaken “with the aim of acting for the best for everyone involved and affected” (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 36) (‘communicative space’). I met on their school site with each pair, usually together as well as sometimes individually (‘public sphere’) to voluntarily discuss a particular situation—their professional relationship and how they worked together in their plans of action to improve support for their Indigenous students. I negotiated to meet with the pairs at mutually agreed

times. Our discussions ranged freely from topics of success to when things were not so good. All participants had equal voice and could freely communicate. They could seek agreement whether that was consensus of decision or an agreement to disagree respectfully (Kemmis et al., 2014). The very act of ‘doing’ this adaption of CPAR assisted in the explanatory and transformative nature of the investigation. This was a collaborative approach within itself, based on effective relationships. Employing such an approach in this study, enabled me to set up authentic dialogue with fellow practitioners, co-participants to, “get together and talk about their work and their lives. They explore whether things are going the way they hope, or whether things would be better if they acted otherwise” (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 33). The IEWs/CECs and principals I worked with were then able to further exchange ideas and take action in school improvement for the benefit of their Indigenous students. It is no co-incidence that *what* was being researched, the IEW/CEC and principal relationship, is interdependent with *how* it was researched. This research has attempted “to invite multiple mental models into the same inquiry space for purposes of respectful conversation, dialogue and learning one from the other, toward a collective generation of better understanding of the phenomena being studied” (Greene, cited in Patton, 2015, p. 317).

Table 1 provides an overview of the relationship between the core research questions, the information used to provide findings to answer them and from where this information was sourced. This is followed by a diagrammatic view in Figure 3.4 that summarises the alignment and interrelatedness of the research paradigms, assumptions, approach and design, all of which have been detailed in the preceding sections. Presented next are the particulars of the research setting and details about the participants within it.

Table 1 Relationship between research data and core research questions

Data sources – method and phase	Data provided	Research questions
<b>Regional Survey -</b> IEW/CEC and principal surveys in Phase 1 and 2	Demographic trends and work contexts for regional IEWs/CECs and principals. Regional participant’s perceptions of their co-work – the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of this.	<i>What is the current principal-IEW relationship?</i>
<b>Case Study -</b> Questionnaire and interviews from Phase 2 CPAR cycle 1	Description of the case study - participants and context. Case study pairs questionnaire responses and resulting conversations. Descriptions of the case study pairs Action Plans for CPAR.	
<b>Case Study –</b> Interviews and assorted other data sources from the case study from Phase 2 CPAR cycles 1, 2 and 3	Descriptions of the state of the case study pairs’ existing relationship. Descriptions of activities participants engaged in within their relationship. Descriptions of happenings in the school environment. Descriptions of the influencing contextual features and determinations of whether they were positive or detrimental.	<i>How can this be strengthened and what are the contextual features that influence this?</i>
<b>Case Study –</b> Interviews and assorted other data sources from the case study from Phase 2 CPAR cycles 2 and 3 and where appropriate from cycle 1	Descriptions of what happened for the case study participants over a twelve-month period: their reflections of happenings for school staff and the school environment, student achievement and in school-community engagement.	<i>What are the outcomes of this strengthened relationship?</i>
<b>Regional Survey –</b> Questionnaires in Phase 1 and 2	Descriptions of what participants said about their future work together. What they said helped and hindered their work. What they said about practice and policy that needed to change, continue or stop.	
<b>Case Study-</b> Interviews and assorted other data sources from the case study from Phase 2 CPAR cycles 2 and 3 and where appropriate, from cycle 1		
Analysis from all of the above including key themes from the literature	A synthesis of current and any new literature of the field with that of my answers to the core research questions. This assisted in positioning the major conclusions within what was already known in the field as well as confirming plausibility of the research.	<i>What are the implications for practice and policy in schools?</i>

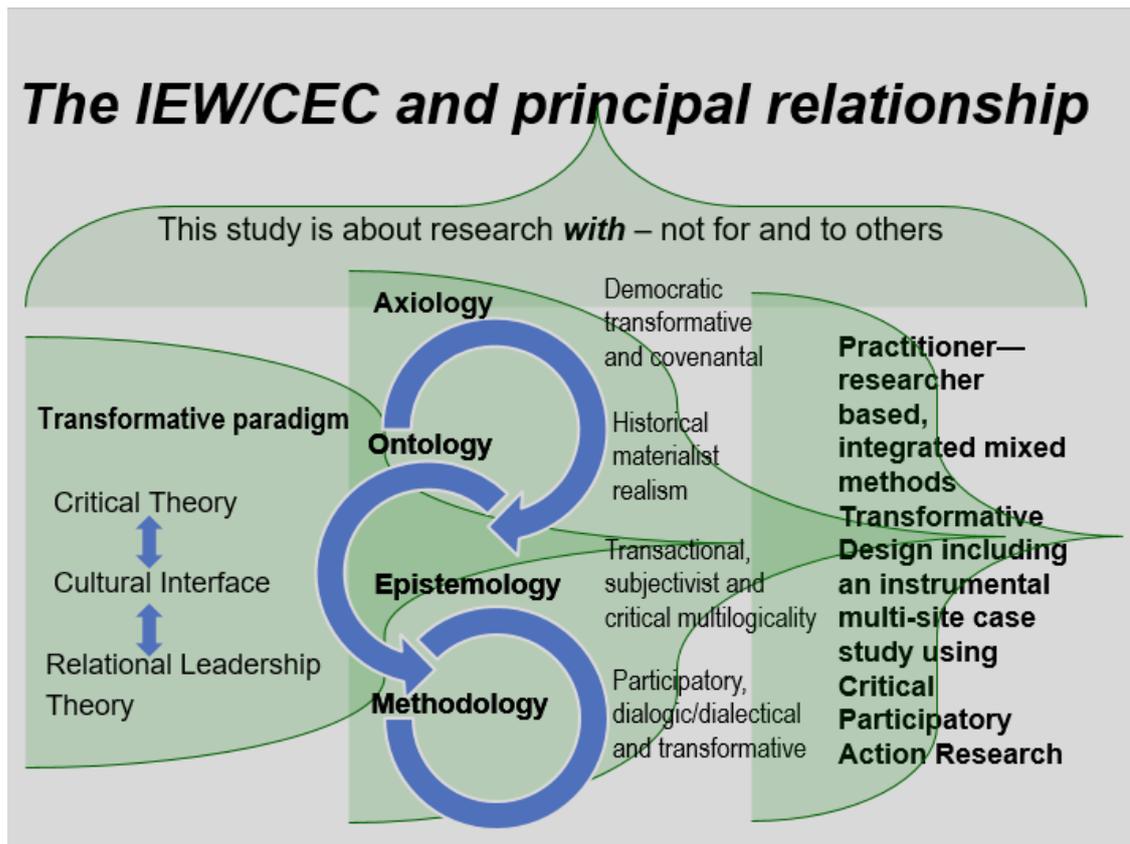


Figure 3.4 Summary of research assumptions, approach and design

After synthesising the literature and given the study purposes, the research assumptions, approach and design, I devised a visually simple but theoretically and methodologically complex conceptual framework that would guide me throughout conducting my research and writing the thesis (see Figure 3.5). In this research, I attempted to locate myself alongside IEWs/CECs and principals, to get a holistic view of how they are operating at the Cultural Interface in schools (A. Price, Jackson-Barrett, Gower, & Herrington, 2017). This was an “inquiry from the inside” (Ospina & Uhl-Bien, 2012a, p. 1411).

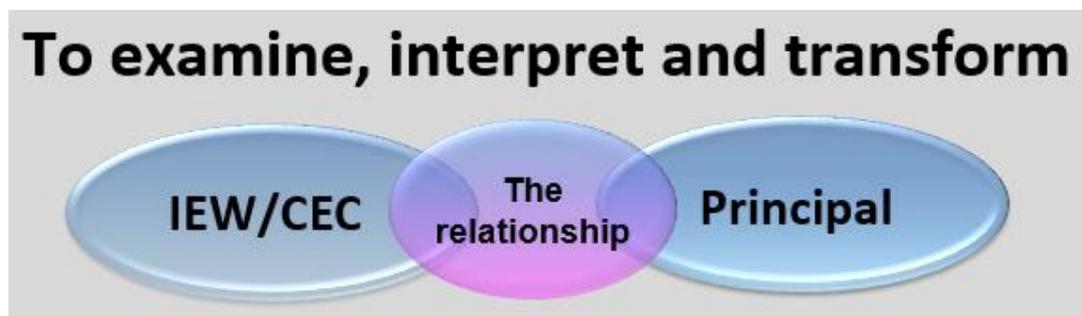


Figure 3.5 Conceptual framework of IEW/CEC and principal relationship

### **3.5 Research setting**

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the participant samples for this research were drawn from state schools within a geographically large educational region in Queensland, Australia. It is one of seven state school regions within the Department of Education in Queensland and all regions have a different configuration to that established by government electoral boundaries. The Region has just over 100 state schools (primary and secondary) located throughout a wide range of geographical locations including urban, rural and remote areas. During the period of my research, The Region had a total enrolment of approximately 33,000 students (Department of Education, 2019b) of which 7,000-8,000 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Department of Education, 2019a). It should be noted that state schools across Queensland have the greatest number of enrolments of Indigenous students than any other sector (Non-State Schools Accreditation Board, 2017).

The IEW/CECs and principals who contributed to the regional survey were from state schools across all areas of The Region. The five IEW/CEC and principal pairs selected for the case study were from four state schools in three larger towns/cities in varying locales of the same region. During the period of my research, their schools had enrolments from just over 200 to almost 950 students with between 5%, 10% or more Indigenous students. Greater detail of the four schools' and participants' characteristics are provided in Chapter 4, Section 4.3 and in Section 3.6.

#### **3.5.1 Context of The Region**

The Region is overseen by a Regional Director with various additional regional support staff who are based in a large regional office. Regional Directors report to the offices of the Director General and Deputy Director General, State Schooling located in Brisbane. Regional Directors lead a number of Assistant Regional Directors who are the direct supervisors of principals within each region. In some regions, Regional Community Education Counsellors are employed to directly support CECs and to a lesser and more informal extent, assist IEWs in their region. IEWs/CECs are usually directly supervised by a classified officer within their own school. During the period of my research and in the present day, in The Region studied, there are over 10 CECs each of whom have been in their position for at least 10 years, including the incumbent Regional Community Education Counsellor for The Region. Since 2013, The Region has had five different people in the role of Regional Director with some longer serving principals having up to five different Assistant Regional Directors as their supervisors in this

period. It is also known to me through my professional field experience, that there are also many more comparatively inexperienced than experienced principals in The Region (English, 2013), whereas most CECs in The Region have remained in the same position in the same school for many years.

In the period 2009-2013, state schools in Queensland experienced a relatively stable period of direction and leadership from central office. The then Director General, Julie Grantham, the first female teacher to become a Director General, had in 2011, set the future direction for the state under its new improvement agenda for state schools, “United in Our Pursuit of Excellence”(Department of Education Training and Employment, 2011b). As a result, schools were expected to set annual targets for NAPLAN results, Year 12 outcomes, Indigenous Education and Attendance and Retention:

I encourage you and your school community to have high expectations for every student’s learning and achieving within a safe, supportive, inclusive and disciplined learning environment and consider this when setting your targets in 2013 and beyond (Deputy Director General, internal email communication to all principals, 6 February, 2013).

Julie Grantham retired in 2013, and shortly afterwards Dr Jim Watterston was appointed as the new Director General for the Department of Education and Training; a position he remained in until October 2017<sup>3</sup>. In 2013, Watterston brought forward a new improvement agenda called, *Every Student Succeeding – State Schools Strategy 2014-2018* acknowledging it was built on the previous work of Grantham. This strategy has withstood the test of time, although it has been renewed and updated in several iterations. In its current form it exists as, *Every Student Succeeding – State Schools Strategy 2019-2023* and continues to be described on the Department’s internal website as, “Queensland’s plan to lift the performance of each state school student, teacher and principal”. All state schools in Queensland are expected to ensure alignment with this plan in their strategic and numerous annual plenary documents while also including annual and quadrennial ‘performance measures’.

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<sup>3</sup> On Jim Watterston’s departure, Deputy Director General Patrea Walton acted in the position until the new Director General, Tony Cook was appointed to what is now called the Department of Education in April 2018. He remains in the position as at September 2019.

While the above describes the relative continuity of direction that was the state level context in the past decade, at the school level, significant change was experienced when it came to implementation of new policy imperatives. Following is a selection of relevant policy that state schools were required to respond to just prior to and over the time of the period of the study. They are explored in a chronology of their implementation.

As previously mentioned in Chapter 1, in 2011-2012 there was the introduction of two major educational policy initiatives into Queensland state schools, namely the state driven, 'Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools' (EATSIPS) program (Department of Education Training and Employment, 2011a) and the Queensland interpretation of the new Australian Curriculum, Curriculum to the Classroom (Department of Education, 2019c). Both explicitly called for schools to learn about and then apply developed knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and perspectives in their practices, policies and pedagogies. As researcher-practitioner I saw and experienced firsthand how these initiatives placed even further demands on the leadership roles and expectations of IEWs/CECs and principals in The Region.

Indigenous education in the state received an elevated status when in 2010 a new directorate was created for the first time, called the Division of Indigenous Education and Training. Headed by an Assistant Director General, it operated within the Department of Education, Training and Employment until its demise at the end of 2012 when a change of government led to subsequent restructuring of a number of government departments including education. In the interim, in 2013 a new action plan for Indigenous Education in Queensland was released called *Solid Partners-Solid Futures*. It was an, "ambitious new approach to closing the gap... to improve outcomes for the state's Indigenous Students (Department of Education Training and Employment, 2013b, p. i) and was included within the Department of Education's improvement agenda. Solid Partners had been born out of a white discussion paper (Department of Education Training and Employment, 2013a), and was the third such action plan of its type with the second being, *Indigenous Education Strategic Directions 2008-2011* and prior to that, the first ever Indigenous action plan and policy framework created for state schools in Queensland called, *Partners for Success Action Plan 2003-2005*. This inaugural plan had outlined the priority areas for action in: attendance, retention and completion, literacy attainment against national benchmarks, workforce and leadership in Indigenous culture. For the first time, the system had mandated targets for Indigenous students. It is noteworthy that as far back as 1978, the then newly formed Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultative Committee (QATSICC) made recommendations to the Director General of

Education at the time for the introduction of target levels and mandatory reporting for schools on Indigenous outcomes. QATSICC ran as an advisory body to the Department of Education until 1990 and after a ten-year lapse, was reprised as the Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Body (QIECB). In 2016, it became known as the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Training Advisory Committee (QATSJETAC). This body is still in operation in the present day.

Midway through 2014, an organisational restructure for state education was created and a new section, Indigenous Education was led by Assistant Director-General (ADG), Selwyn Button, the first Indigenous person appointed to such a position in the Department of Education. Button left for another job at the end of 2018, and, currently, there is an acting ADG, David Hartley, another Indigenous appointee. Since 2014 there has been no new specific policy or action plan to guide Indigenous Education in state schools' development other than those previously mentioned or those statements sitting within the Department of Education's current improvement agenda and strategic plan documentation. The guiding policy at the national level as was described in Chapter 2, remains *The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015*.

To support school improvement nationally, there has been an increase of and more direct allocation of funding for schools. In 2014, the Australian Government released to all states of a four year school funding initiative called, *Students First*. In 2014-2015 Queensland schools received a new additional discretionary funding to their school grant, called 'Great Results Guarantee' (GRG) and then in 2016-2017, it was renamed as 'Investing for Success' (IFS). In 2018-2019, this discretionary funding has continued in Queensland schools and with it, are caveats for principals about how the plan is written and published in the public domain and importantly, accountabilities for its implementation for school improvement.

### **3.6 Research participants**

Groups of participants from The Region were recruited at different stages of the research using two sampling methods. Overall, 41 principals and 35 IEWs/CECs contributed to the initial general aspect of the study with five IEW/CEC and principal pairs contributing to the case study, the specific area of the study. Details of the various approvals I obtained to conduct research in schools and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are outlined in the Ethics section, Section 3.10, later in this chapter.

Firstly, I used a convenience sampling method (Creswell, 2014). In 2013, all principals and all IEWs/CECs from The Region’s state schools, who attended their respective annual regional meetings in that year, were issued a self-administered paper survey that included a recruitment section. The actual paper surveys were titled, “Principal Questionnaire” and “IEW/CEC Questionnaire” (see Appendix D for the IEW/CEC questionnaire and Appendix E for the principal questionnaire). For the purposes of this study and differentiating these questionnaires from the one issued later during the course of the case study, the regional data gathered from The Region’s IEW/CEC and principal questionnaires are referred to as the *regional survey* and their individual paperwork as the *survey* or *surveys*. The case study questionnaire is referred to as the *questionnaire*.

Gaining approval from the senior regional staff convening the respective meetings, I made each group aware of my research intentions through a short presentation that was included as part of the meeting agenda. I then issued and afterwards collected the paper surveys from each group (35 IEWs/CECs and 41 principals respectively returned signed consents and surveys). The final questions within the surveys asked participants if they would, “be willing to participate further in this research project?” The majority of respondents indicated they were willing to participate further, either after more information or if their school’s IEW/CEC or Principal also agreed. Of the IEWs/CECs and Principals from the same eight schools who completed the regional survey, three pairs agreed to further participation. This information contributed to the selection of participants for the next stage of the research. A detailed description of the regional surveys’ are provided in the Phase 1 data collection in Section 3.7.2. In 2015, an opportunity arose to conduct a second sweep of the regional survey. 16 IEWs/CECs consented to and completed the survey. No principals were surveyed. An explanation is provided in the Phase 2 data collection in Section 3.7.3. As the second phase of the research had already commenced, and participants were enlisted there was no need to insert a recruitment question. Table 4.1 in Chapter 4 captures the demographic profile of the IEWs/CECs and principals who returned their questionnaires in all sweeps for the regional survey.

Secondly, as stated earlier in this chapter, the case study participants of this study were purposefully selected using criterion based on Stake’s questions about “relevance” [to the central focus of the study], “diversity” [a variety of school type and geographical contexts] and “good opportunities to learn” [for future practice and policy in Indigenous Education] (2006, p. 23). This could also be considered a homogenous sampling method (Patton, 2015). Importantly, I also used a ‘proper way’ (Bulman & Hayes cited in J. Davis, 2018, p. 186), as after reviewing the regional survey responses, I consulted with one of my cultural mentors, a long-serving state

school senior Indigenous officer from The Region who was familiar with the purposes of my research and had good knowledge of its schools, most principals and many of their Indigenous staff, especially CECs. We agreed that participants to be selected should be pairs of IEWs/CECs and principals who were known to work well together and who appeared actively engaged on improving their schools with better learning outcomes for their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. We also agreed there would be nothing achieved by working with less efficacious participant pairs. Starting from a place of strength and with the endorsement of my cultural mentor who saw their relationship from an Indigenous perspective, would likely prove more fruitful and be “a good source of lessons learned” Patton (2015, p. 16).

We shared our thoughts on who exactly might be the appropriate pairs and as a result, four IEW/CEC and principal pairs from four schools were identified for the case study. I next approached every pair directly to give a detailed explanation of my research. I did know all chosen participants, some for over 20 years. I telephoned each of the selected pairs, calling the IEW/CEC first and then their school’s principal. For those who had not completed the survey, (only two of the chosen pairs had been unavailable at the time to respond to the survey), I explained why they had been identified, what was entailed (the purpose of the study, research design, time it would take and data collection methods) and asked would they consider being a participant. All four case study IEW/CEC and principal pairs agreed, and I was able to proceed by setting up a first meeting date with each pair.

Also mentioned earlier, the participating case study pairs came from a range of school sizes and locales. Two of the pairs worked together in state secondary schools and two case study pairs worked together in state primary schools. One pair was located in a school of over 250 students in a regional city, another pair was from a school of over 560 students in a coastal town and two pairs were from schools with enrolments of over 520 and 940 students, respectively in another regional city. Although only one principal was the direct supervisor of their school’s IEW/CEC, all IEW/CEC and Principal pairs did have experience of working directly together over varying lengths of time - from long term (eight years) to only short term (eight weeks at the first interview). Chapter 4 provides an in-depth description of the case study context and Table 4.5 within the case study section captures the specific demographic profile of every case study IEW/CEC and principal pair.

### 3.7 Phases of the study

In its entirety, the study ran over eight years from 2012 in multiple phases. While this length of time was primarily due to the part-time nature of my doctorate, I also took advantage of this as an opportunity to extend the data collection over time to add depth and validity to the results. Prior to the commencement of data collection in 2013, an initial literature review was undertaken during 2012 - 2013, with a purpose to, “establish a historical perspective on the intended research, provide[s] a vision of the need of the additional research and enable[s] the researcher to develop a conceptual framework for the research” (Mertens, 2015, p. 119). It should also be noted, I did continue to update the literature regularly throughout the research until the present time.

In the early phase of my research, after determining the core research questions and what information to be collected, I planned in advance how best to collect the data. Time played a big part, particularly in my data collection and considerations included:

- balancing what I knew to be the time demands for the participating case study pairs whose work in schools was their core business alongside mine as a part-time practitioner researcher and full-time principal
- timing and availability of access to regional conferences
- logistics of travel to each of the four sites in the case study that were in very different geographic locations within The Region
- professional field knowledge of the length and timing of school terms and school holidays.

A few months after my confirmation seminar, in 2013, I commenced the collection of data by conducting the first sweep of a regional survey which was followed by a second sweep in 2015. Analysis of the data from both sweeps to produce findings was done within a few weeks of each of their return. Following the first sweep of the regional survey, beginning in 2014, I conducted three cycles of the CPAR approach with each school. I originally predicted each cycle would take at least 6 months to unfold. As it transpired, for the very reasons described in the considerations above, in reality, the three cycles took three years to enact (from 2014 to 2016). Figure 3.6 provides a diagrammatic summary of when, within the cycles of the CPAR approach, I conducted the interviews and/or site visits with the IEW/CEC and principal pairs from the case study schools.

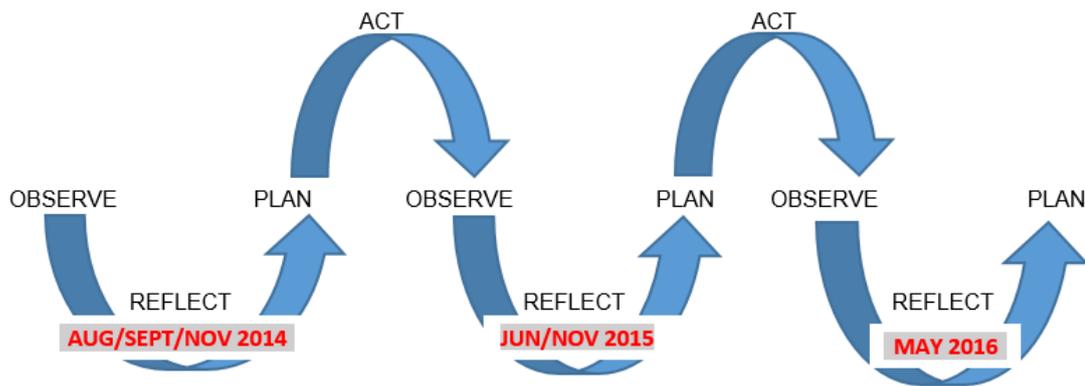


Figure 3.6 Summary of CAPR approach cycles and staging of interviews

In every cycle, aside from occasional contacts like emails or phone calls, regular site visits were undertaken with each case study school. At each visit, a face-to-face interview was held with every pair. All pairs had a minimum of three interviews together and each was audio recorded. Kept throughout the research were descriptive and reflective field notes capturing site visit observations and reflections, records of observations about and discussions held with participants, along with summaries of supervisor meetings and other thoughts in relation to the research. Some school documents were also collected during site visits and school enumeration data were collected during the third cycle from their websites and through email requests. Figure 3.7 provides the diagrammatic detail of all research procedures and phases of the research.

Data from the first cycle of the CPAR approach was analysed for findings shortly after its completion and this was integrated with both sets of survey findings which are presented in Chapter 4. Next, data from the second and third cycles was analysed for findings at the completion of each cycle and the two sets of findings were integrated for presentation in Chapter 5. Synthesis of all findings was undertaken to form meta-inferences and this is presented in Chapter 6.

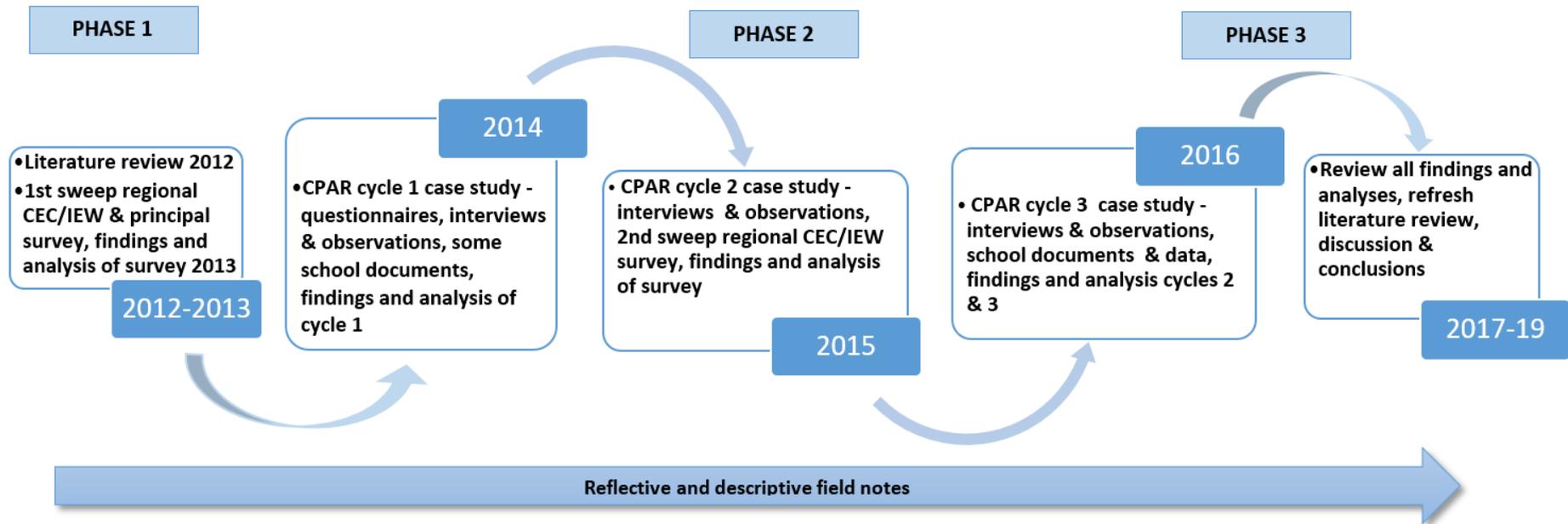


Figure 3.7 Detailed view of the phases and procedures of this research

### **3.7.1 Purposes and focus of methods and actions**

Each data collection method within the phases of the research had a specific purpose. The purpose of the regional survey in Phase 1 was to provide data for a broad analysis of The Region's schools to contribute answers to the first core research question, whereas the main purpose of the case study in Phase 2 was to provide data for a more detailed analysis to answer all of the core research questions. Then within the CPAR approach, there was a specific focus for each cycle of action which was analogous to stages of field work: Entry, Routinization and Closure (Patton, 2015). The first cycle (Entry) assessed the state of each pair's current IEW/CEC and principal relationship using a partnership assessment questionnaire and then facilitated their articulation of specific future action plans of school improvement for their Indigenous students. The second cycle (Routinization) reviewed each school's action plan progress to date and discuss the next round of future actions for the following year. The third cycle (Closure) appraised the overall progress of each school's actions over the three years as well as reflecting on what enabled, what blocked their working relationship and what advice did they had for future policy and practice. The following subsections provide greater detail of the enactment of these methods and participatory actions as they were integrated over the phases of the study.

### **3.7.2 Phase 1 data collection**

#### ***3.7.2.1 Regional survey—first sweep***

A self-administered survey was distributed to all IEWs/CECs and principals in The Region who attended their respective regional conferences in 2013. Due to the large number of participants involved, I wanted the survey to be an efficient and non-obtrusive data-gathering tool. Such a method of data collection ensured, "a high response rate, accurate sampling and a minimum of interviewer bias, while permitting interviewer assessments, providing necessary explanations (but not the interpretation of questions) and giving the benefit of a degree of personal contact" (Oppenheim, 1992, p. 103).

The survey of 2013 existed in two forms (Appendix D and Appendix E); principals completed theirs in August and the IEWs/CECs completed theirs in November. Both had a similar format, although each asked some different questions aimed at determining what each role knew about the other role. In four sections, the survey was designed to provide a representative overview of the situation with IEWs/CECs and principals in The Region. Most of the questions on the survey were closed questions providing the option to select only one or

sometimes multiple responses to pre-coded answer categories. Two questions specifically required multiple responses and two were open-ended questions that allowed opportunity for respondents to provide their perceptions about their work and what work IEWs/CECs and principals did together.

The front and second pages contained the informed consent form and information about my research including purpose and confidentiality undertakings. To this was stapled the actual three-page back-to-back survey with a first section about demographic information. The second section pertained to management and operational procedures and duties of the IEW/CEC. The third section gathered information about what school activities the IEW/CEC and principal perceived they worked on together. The final section sought recruitment of IEW/CEC and principal respondents in the next stage of the main body of research as case study schools in participatory action research. The very last question asked if respondents would like a copy of the survey findings, they could email me to receive one.

The content and structure of the survey were informed by several sources: my professional field experience of working as a principal, the PALLIC project experience mentioned in Chapter 1 and The Department's position descriptions for IEWs/CECs available at the time of the commencement of the research (Queensland Government. Department of Education Training and Employment, 2013). The survey was piloted in early 2013, with copies sent to several principal colleagues from outside The Region, to The Region's senior Indigenous officer and my own school's IEW/CEC, who acted as cultural mentors for me. All provided feedback about time taken to complete and effectiveness of the survey questions. Nominal changes were required. After reviewing the responses on the principal survey, I did further modify the IEW/CEC survey by converting the same question into multiple choice responses rather than free text to reduce completion time and make the question more explicit (see Appendix D, question 13 and Appendix E, question 17).

One hundred and twelve surveys were distributed to principals. Forty three were returned with 41 consenting to and completing their survey. Forty five surveys were distributed to IEWs/CECs and 38 were returned with 35 consenting to and completing their survey. This represented a completion rate of approximately 37% (n=41) of all state school principals and 70% (n=35) of all IEWs/CECs from The Region. The spread of geographic locale of respondents (see Appendix F) and the percentage of return made the respondents a reasonable representation of the population of IEWs/CECs and principals from across The Region. At the time of the initial dispersal of the regional survey, one of my supervisors suggested a future

check for continuity over time and if an opportunity presented itself, a second sweep may prove useful.

### **3.7.3 Phase 2 data collection**

#### ***3.7.3.1 Regional survey—second sweep***

An opportunity did arise with IEWs/CECs at an annual regional conference in 2015, two years after the initial issuing of their survey and I was able to redistribute a second sweep of the survey. Unfortunately, there was no equivalent regional principal event in the same year or at any other time within the time frame of data collection and although the 2015 IEW/CEC conference was smaller, the second sweep of the survey offered potential to provide an additional information about IEWs/CECs and the principal relationship. After I gave a short verbal report at the 2015 IEW/CEC conference about the findings of my research to date, I personally distributed paper surveys to all participants and 16 IEWs/CECs from a variety of schools located across The Region signed consent forms and returned responses. The second sweep survey format was identical to the first, except on the final page, it omitted the recruitment section and instead included two new questions about the IEW/CEC role and activities of work together with their principal (see Appendix G, questions 16 and 17). Further discussion about the second sweep is provided in the research issues and limitations section.

##### *3.7.3.1.1 Partnership assessment questionnaire.*

Questionnaires are considered “a very efficient data collection strategy” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 232). In August – September 2014, the first cycle of the CPAR approach commenced with every case study school. A questionnaire was administered within interviews held in the first cycle and this combination allowed “for the strengths of each strategy to be combined in a complementary manner with the strengths of the other (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 240)”. The purpose of the questionnaire was to provide the pair with an immediate result on the level of agreement they believed they shared about their roles and their work together. I adapted the questionnaire from a pre-existing one with permission from the original authors of an online questionnaire from the Partnership Assessment tool kit developed during the Same Kids Same Goals (SKSG) project known as a ‘Building Leaders, Building Communities’ (Dare to Lead and the Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 2007b; O’Beirne, 2007). This online toolkit was developed after a series of 11 workshops held with focus groups of IEWs/CECs and principals around Australia in 2006, something I had myself participated in with the IEW/CEC from my own school. I thought the partnership assessment questionnaire

was an excellent starting point for my case study work because of its origins. Who helped design it, how it was developed and what it was already seeking to determine all had great interconnectedness with my own research purpose. I also chose it for pragmatic reasons, it was easily assessable and immediately useable (see Appendix H for the first two pages as a sample of the original questionnaire).

After sharing and seeking feedback about my adaptations with one of the original creators, a professional colleague of mine, I piloted the adapted questionnaire format with the very first pair (see Appendix I for the adapted partnership assessment questionnaire). The partnership assessment questionnaire consisted of 44 action statements grouped under ten descriptive headings with each statement requiring a response relating to frequency of occurrence. To make the questionnaire more accessible and to allow for efficient copying and retaining of material, I rewrote the online partnership assessment questionnaire as a paper copy. I asked the first pair to give me feedback about its usefulness and clarity. From their discussion and questions about how they might answer the opinion statements, I was prompted to make only a few changes for use with the remaining pairs. We agreed that it was easier to complete if the frequency terms on the Likert Scale of 'Always', 'Usually', 'Sometimes', 'Seldom' were changed to that of four levels of attitude (agreement with the action statements) - Strongly Agree, Mostly Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. We agreed there should be no fifth choice so that participants could not opt for a neutral response. This type of scale was congruent with frequently used types of QUAN questionnaires (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). I then issued the slightly modified questionnaire to the other remaining pairs in the same manner as the first pair (see Appendix J for the final version of the partnership assessment questionnaire). That is, each participant was given the option as to how they wished to complete the questionnaire. All pairs opted to complete the questionnaire independently, first, as they sat with me around a table (usually in the principal's office). Afterwards, each pair and I discussed and reflected on their answers to the questionnaire and their work in the school. This discussion was very useful in providing extra information about each person's choice of questionnaire response as well as likely helping to further solidify the existing relationship of each case study IEW/CEC and principal. Of note is that no participant selected the 'Strongly Disagree' rating for any response nor was every action statement necessarily discussed at interview, as it was each pair's choice whether they sought to discuss an action statement response or not. On completion of the questionnaire with every pair, I arranged for their school office on site to make an immediate paper copy for me and the participants retained the original for their own records.

### 3.7.3.2 Interviews

The interview is considered an important part of any case study (Mills & Gay, 2016). It is useful as a method ‘to gather descriptive data in the subjects’ own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Equally, Miller and Glassner suggest that,

qualitative interviewing produces accounts that offer researchers a means of examining intertwined sets of findings: evidence of the nature of the phenomenon under investigation, including the contexts and situations in which it emerges as well as insights into the cultural frames people use to make sense of these experiences. (2011, p. 145)

The meetings I held with the case study IEW/CECs and principals were more akin to what Rubin and Rubin (2012) term as *responsive interviewing*. That is, “a specific variety of qualitative interviewing. It emphasises flexibility of design and expects the interviewer to change questions in response to what he or she is learning. Responsive interviewing accepts and adjusts to the personalities of both conversational partners” (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 7). I chose this more conversational approach because I was a participant observer in reflective discussions about school improvement. Every pair always knew the purpose of each meeting, which was pre-arranged so they could come prepared to participate in reflection and then plan for next actions. I listened more than I spoke to leave space for the IEW/CEC and principal to have increased levels of discussion together. This also allowed the pairs “to say what they think and do so with greater richness and spontaneity” (Oppenheim, 1992, p. 81). Details of questions asked and what happened at each interview cycle, are presented below.

As described earlier, these interactions were audio-recorded. I later transcribed the set of interviews verbatim in handwritten form on paper at the end of each cycle. I did this because I could write faster than I could type while listening to the audio recording. Doing the transcribing myself protected the confidentiality of participants and made me reconnect with the content of each interview. Each interview usually ran from 20 to 60 minutes and each pair participated in at least three interviews over the duration of the data collection period. The goal of having multiple interviews, apart from being part of the CPAR approach, was that they increased the accuracy of results (Mertens, 2015). Not all interviews went according to plan and there were some exceptions. It took three site visits in cycle 1 with one of the pairs to complete their interview and partnership assessment questionnaire; with another pair, the intended interview was unexpectedly cut short; and, with yet another pair, a change of principal added a

different dynamic to the purpose of the second cycle interview. How I managed these issues is discussed in Section 3.12.

Because there was always travel involved in the case study school visits (sometimes up to 2 hours), I was usually able to replay the interviews immediately after I departed to reflect on what had been said and listen for key moments that I would look for again when later transcribing the interview. I transcribed every interview from each cycle as a set of four within a month after the last interview from that cycle. Transcribing the set of four interviews at a time, while slow work, allowed me time to reflect on what was said by the different pairs at each particular cycle of CPAR. Table 2 shows the total number and timing of every interview conducted with every IEW/CEC and principal pair in the case study. Almost nine hours of interviews were recorded. Observational notes were written about what happened before, during and after interviews and this also contributed to the data gathered at each site visit. More mention of this is in Section 3.7.3.4 about field notes.

Table 2 Summary of timing and duration of all case study interviews

<b>Interview and purpose</b>	<b>School A</b>	<b>School B</b>	<b>School C</b>	<b>School D</b>
#1 Discuss partnership assessment questionnaire and determine future action plans	28/08/2014	01/09/2014	11/09/2014	21/08/2014
	38 mins	31 mins	60 mins	observation notes only
				11/09/2014 37 mins
				26/11/2014 33 mins
#2 Review previous interview. Discuss and reflect on action plan progress to date	17/06/2015	10/06/2015	05/11/2015	06/11/2015
	23 mins	19mins	60 mins	60 mins
#3 Review previous interview. Discuss past three years of actions, what enables, what blocks work together and suggestions for future systemic consideration	06/05/2016	12/05/2016	19/05/2016	05/05/2016
	32 mins	60 mins	60 mins	38 min

### 3.7.3.2.1 Interview 1

Explained earlier, my initial contact with each pair had explained the research and the time commitment, however at the start of the very first interview, the purpose and scope of the research was re-explained using a one page handout called, 'Proposed PAR plan for 'The Power

of Two' study' (see Appendix K). I then showed each pair the four core research questions and explained the purpose of the partnership assessment questionnaire and that our meeting was to determine the nature of their relationship. After this, each pair was asked to read the information page and then sign the informed consent form for the case study (see Appendix L). Each pair did this without any queries. Next, they were asked to complete the questionnaire in one of two ways – either together or individually. This process was negotiated between the pair. I sat with the IEW/CEC and principal as they completed the questionnaire to respond to any questions or comments they had as they went along. I audio recorded this whole process. Afterwards, we held a discussion, led by the pairs where they shared and compared their responses to the questionnaire and clarified why they had given the answers they had given. Towards the end of their interview, I led the discussion about their future action plans they had proposed for their school in the following year/s. The findings from these interviews and their resulting Action Plans are incorporated into Chapter 4 accordingly.

#### 3.7.3.2.2 *Interview 2*

The second cycle interviews were semi-structured (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). They were pre-arranged with each pair at a mutually convenient time with the purpose to briefly discuss and review the previous interview and then review progress to date on their action plan. Open – ended questions were used to elicit each pair's opinions on what they thought they had achieved and what they planned to do next. The findings from these interviews were combined with those of the third cycle interview and are provided in Chapter 5 to answer the second and third core research questions.

#### 3.7.3.2.3 *Interview 3*

While the strategy for interviewing with each pair had been use of responsive interviewing, the final interviews were more structured. Four evaluative open-ended questions were pre-prepared on one page and emailed to each participant a day prior to the meeting (see Appendix M). While still conducted in a relaxed and responsive way, I deliberately led the facilitation of the interview to achieve the fourfold purpose of review. The questions asked each pair to reflect on (i) what had been achieved over the span of time we had been working together and what they thought were their next steps together; (ii) what enabled them to work together; (iii) what blocked their work together; and, (iv) what changes to systemic policy and practice would they like to see in the future. The findings from these interviews, while contributing to those presented in Chapter 5, also contributed to the answering of the final core research question addressed in Chapter 7.

### **3.7.3.3 School documents.**

Patton notes, “Records documents, artefacts, and archives, what has traditionally been called ‘material culture’ in anthropology, constitute a particularly rich source of information about many organisations and programs” (2015, p. 376).

Some school documents were provided to me by participants through the course of the interviews and most were collected from each school upon my request to the principal either directly when visiting or via email after I had left the site. One principal offered me a copy of her school’s leadership team roles and responsibilities document to show how she had included the school’s IEW/CEC within the leadership team. As a principal myself, I knew what other school documents may be useful to look at to look for evidence of school activity in Indigenous education. The same documents collected directly from each school included: School Data Profile; Annual Implementation Plans; School Strategic Plan and ‘Investing for Success’ Plan. In the spirit of reciprocity, every document I asked for from each case study school, I provided a copy of the equivalent document from my school. Due to right to information legislation, only those documents that appeared on the school’s website (i.e. in the public domain) could be cited in this research. Every school in Australia is required to publish an Annual Report that should only be ‘on click’ away from the front page of the school’s website. I therefore chose to use each school’s 2016 Annual Report which contained some useful quantitative and some qualitative data that I could incorporate into findings for Chapter 5.

### **3.7.3.4 Reflective and descriptive field notes.**

Ortlipp (2008), provides a detailed explanation of how she used a reflexive journal in her doctoral study. She referred to two types, one was a ‘pre-research journal’ and then one she used once her study commenced. I undertook something similar through the phases of my own study. I also had two journals. They contained handwritten records of reflective and descriptive field notes about, what Teddlie and Tashakkori term as, stages of a study:

Conceptualization stage—the sphere of concepts (abstract operations), which includes the formulation of research purposes, questions, and so forth; Experiential (methodological/analytical) stage—the experiential sphere (concrete observations and operations), which includes methodological operations, data generation, analysis, and so on; Inferential stage—the sphere of inferences (abstract explanations and understandings), which includes emerging theories, explanations, inferences, and so on. (2009, p. 145)

The first journal contained two years of notes from the period of 2011-2012, the Conceptualisation stage: The many conversations I had with my various supervisors and advisors; a number of mandatory university training workshops and other professional development; and, my reflections while I was working in the field during my work as a PALLIC coach as described in Chapter 1. It recorded my thinking and actions at preliminary stage of the research. The second journal contained the Experiential and Inferential stage notes spanning the remainder of the period from 2012-2018. It captured notes from supervisor meetings, observational notes from site visits, scheduling and logistic records and general reflective jottings. The reflections in both journals assisted in determining my research approach and design. These journals have contributed to the content of this chapter and where applicable, I have included my reflections and observations as evidentiary data for some of the findings presented in Chapter 4 and 5.

### 3.8 Summary of research strands, data method instruments and types

Table 3 provides a summary of the research strands, the specific data instruments and types discussed in the preceding sections. See also Figure 3.8, which provides an image of the paper documents amassed in the study. At the time of taking the photo (29 October, 2016) and after having laid out all of the documents on my lounge room floor to ‘stocktake’ what I had, did I realise I still had one interview transcript to finish. I completed this shortly afterwards.

Table 3 Summary of this study's data methods and types

<b>Quantitative</b>		<b>Qualitative</b>	
<b>Data Method Instruments</b>	<b>Data types</b>	<b>Data Method Instruments</b>	<b>Data Types</b>
Regional Survey, close-ended (multiple choice) questions	Numeric scores	Regional Survey, open-ended (narrative) questions	Text data from transcribed survey responses
Case Study, Questionnaire— Likert Scale	Numeric scores	Case Study, questionnaire— some free text notes	Text data transcribed from questionnaire
Case Study, Annual Report (from school website)	Numeric scores	Case Study, responsive interviews	Text data from transcribed interviews
		Case Study, open-ended observations	Field notes (text) from researcher’s journal
		Case Study, school documents	Text data from school documents
		Case Study, visual materials	Image data from photographs

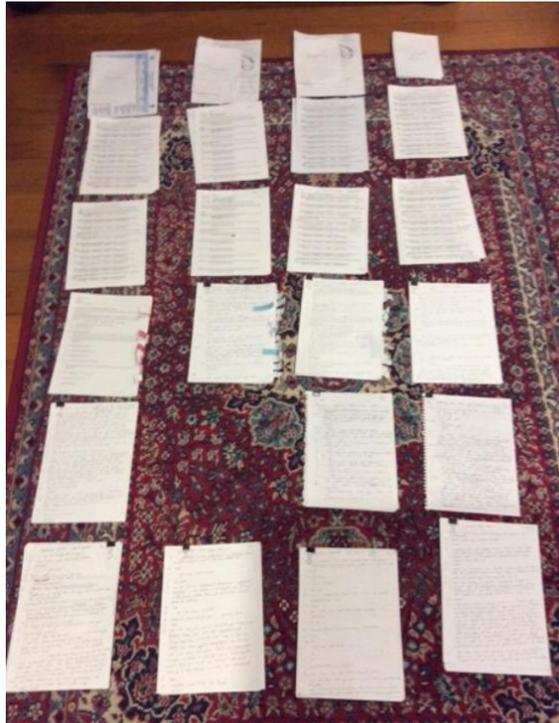


Figure 3.8 All transcripts and documents laid out for checking

### 3.9 Data analysis

Described earlier in the phases of the study, the core research questions were answered sequentially, informed by simultaneous and sequential quantitative and qualitative data collection. Data analysis processes therefore needed to complement and support this procedure. As noted in the circumstances of a mixed methods study, how to analyse the data collected from quantitative and qualitative research is very challenging (Creswell, 2014). Greene (cited in Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009), contends there are,

phases of analysis and analysis strategies that correspond with those phases. Green's four phases are: Data transformation; Data correlation and comparison; Analysis for inquiry conclusions and inferences; and, using aspects of the analytic framework of one methodological tradition within the analysis of data from another tradition (this is referred to as a 'broad idea'). (pp. 263-264)

The analytic framework was consequently multifaceted; possibly resembling what Teddlie and Tashakkori describe as "part or fully integrated mixed data analysis" (2009, p. 280). None the less, at certain stages of data collection I utilised a convergent (Creswell, 2014) or conversion (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) design analysis strategy, one that "seems to converge or compare in some way quantitative data (e.g. scores) and qualitative data (e.g. text)"

(Creswell, 2014, p. 580). In other stages, I employed parallel mixed data analysis which is one that,

involves two separate processes: QUAN analysis of data, using descriptive/inferential statistics for the appropriate variables, and QUAL analysis of data, using thematic analysis related to the relevant narrative data. Although the two sets of analyses are independent, each provides an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. These understandings are linked, combined or integrated into meta-inferences. (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 266)

The chosen strategies aimed to achieve meta-inferences. To this end multiple logics were employed together - abduction, deduction and induction within descriptive statistics and thematic analysis to draw “inference to the best explanation” (Harman cited in Walton, 2005, p. 4). Ho, (cited in Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) explores the use of these three logic processes espoused by philosopher Charles Peirce. Ho posits:

For Peirce, a reasoner should apply abduction, deduction and induction altogether in order to achieve a comprehensive inquiry. Abduction and deduction are the conceptual understanding of a phenomena, and induction is the quantitative verification. At the stage of abduction, the goal is to explore the data, find out a pattern, and suggest a plausible hypothesis with the use of proper categories; deduction is to build a logical and testable hypothesis based upon other plausible premises; and induction is the approximation towards the truth in order to fix our beliefs for further inquiry. In short, abduction creates, deduction explicates, and induction verifies. (Ho, April, 1994)

Overall, three rounds of data analysis occurred. Two data analysis rounds occurred during the Experiential stage – Round 1, during the data collection period, soon after administration of each set of data collection instruments to capture initial information, and then Round 2 after the data collection period ended to further reduce and collate data sets and write the results chapters. Round 3 occurred at the Inferential stage using ‘meta-inference’ to write the discussion chapter. Figure 3.3 provides a graphic illustration of these rounds. I chose do most of the analysis ‘by hand’ and not use a software program like NVivo because of the small data base and because I wanted to be as Creswell says, “close to the data and have a hands-on feel for it without the intrusion of a machine” (2014, p. 264). I did utilise electronic mind maps during Round 2 of the data analysis of the CPAR approach interviews to assist in making the data literally physically smaller and easier to handle as well as to reduce it to assist deeper analysis. This section provides a detailed description of the rounds of data analysis and how these rounds influenced the structure of the findings’ chapters. In Round 3, I used the data before me to write the discussion and conclusion chapters.

### **3.9.1.1 Round 1 data analysis.**

#### *3.9.1.1.1 Regional survey*

The regional survey, as described above, generated both quantitative and qualitative data that was analysed in 2014. Mostly closed-answer questions generated numeric scores within pre-determined categories built into the structure of the survey. These were analysed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software to produce descriptive statistics to provide “summary displays of variables and their frequency (or proportion) of occurrence, which may involve one variable or more than one variable at a time” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 259). The regional survey re-issued in 2015 had such a small sample of respondents that I collated the numeric results manually. Both sweeps of the survey allowed me to provide summary displays of general demographic and work context information about IEWs/CECs and principals in The Region.

There were two opportunities for short answer responses on the survey. They supplemented answers to two questions that had multiple-choice options. Respondents who did take up the free text option wrote with brevity. These were literally only a few words in length (e.g. “Case management of students”). I printed off the partner assessment questionnaire sheet and wrote in every free text response for the two questions. There were very few responses for one of the questions; however, the question about possible co-work actions between an IEW/CEC and principal had a quantity of responses to warrant some simple coding. For instance, I manually coded each set with highlighter pens using Descriptive Coding (Miles et al., 2014). Short answers featuring mention of parents or community like, “Interviewing parents”; “Parent Liaison”; “Community relations” were highlighted pink to represent a description of ‘Parent, community liaison’. I next used these same descriptions to categorise the listed statements. This led to the creation of eight categories that described the types of short answers and listed statements for this question. All responses were collated into these categories. (i.e.: Do not work with the principal; Student engagement and achievement; Staff capacity building; Curriculum; Cultural Activities; Educational Policy; Parent/community liaison; and, Other). The quantity of all response types within each category were then tallied for that category. These numeric values converted into percentage frequencies to provide tabulated information to show the range of response types; the most to least popular choices of categories of co-work undertaken; and, any changes over time of perception of IEWs/CECs about co-work between an IEW/CEC and principal. See for example, Table 9 in the Co-work section in Chapter 4. This table provides an illustration of conversion mixed data analysis

(Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) where qualitative data were (partly) transformed into numerical data.

#### 3.9.1.1.2 *Questionnaire*

A preliminary analysis of the partnership assessment questionnaire happened shortly after the last pair completed it in 2014 and prior to commencing the analysis of the first cycle interviews in 2015. Each pairs' responses on the Likert Scale were tabulated for every action statement. Highlighted were numeric totals of agreements, disagreements and preliminary notes on emerging patterns of commonalities and differences of responses to the action statements. This provided me with initial findings sufficient to write conference papers and provide reports to my supervisors and case study participants at the stage of the study. The next round of analysis for this questionnaire occurred at the end of the data collection period and after I had completed the analysis of the first cycle CPAR approach interviews. That process is described in Round 2 data analysis, Section 3.9.1.2.

#### 3.9.1.1.3 *First cycle CPAR approach interviews*

Following the preliminary review of the questionnaire, I moved to the first cycle CPAR approach interview transcripts, reading and rereading over each interview with each pair, paying particular attention to the dialogue that occurred between the pair when they discussed their responses to a certain action statement. As noted above, every transcription was handwritten, and I did not convert them into electronic documents. I placed mini sticky notes with the action statement number in the margin beside the text to make a tab to signify the location for a discussion of that action statement. Sometimes I wrote other annotations on the same sticky note using In Vivo coding – verbatim words of phrases spoken by the participant (Miles et al., 2014) to capture a key point made about that action statement's discussion. See Figure 3.9 as an illustration of this process.

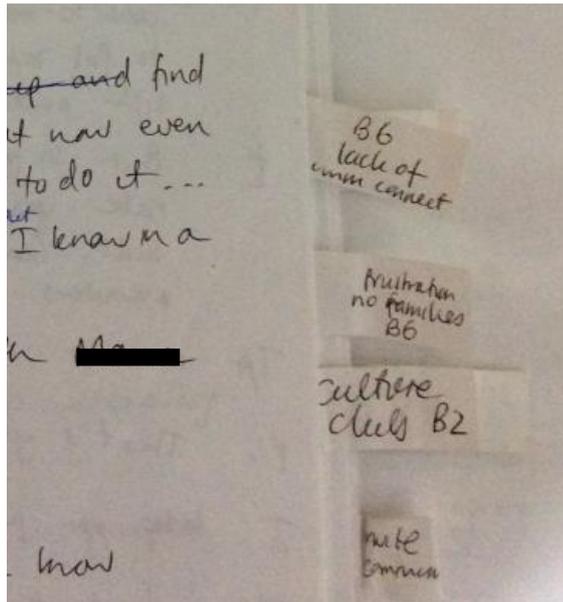


Figure 3.9 Detailed view of a transcript with sticky note labels of action statements

At this point, I left further analysis of the first cycle interview until after all cycles of the data collection period had concluded. The next round of analysis is described in the Round 2 analysis section.

#### 3.9.1.1.4 *Second and third cycle CPAR approach interviews*

The second cycle CPAR approach interviews were all conducted in 2015 and it took the duration of 2016 to transcribe them. This was because, in that same year, I was also conducting the third cycle of CPAR approach interviews, which in turn added to the number of transcripts to write up. In late 2016, at the end of the data collection period, I completed all transcriptions and I was ready to commence reviewing all interview transcripts from the second and third cycles of the CPAR approach. I used thematic analysis, something Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) define as “the analysis of narrative data using a variety of different inductive and iterative techniques, including categorical strategies and contextualising (holistic) strategies” (p. 6).

I commenced a first round of analytic process with the second and third cycle CPAR approach interviews using codes and coding (Miles et al., 2014; Saldana, 2016). I read and re-read each interview transcript in chronological sequence of their occurrence within each cycle of the CPAR approach. On the third read, using an inductive logic, one that *discovers* “patterns, themes and categories in one’s data” (Patton, 2015, p. 542), I looked for sayings in the text that seemed “essential, striking, odd, interesting” (Rapley, 2011, p. 277). I used a coding method

called Eclectic Coding, one that “employs a select and compatible combination of two or more first cycle coding methods” (Saldana, 2016, p. 12). In the first instance I employed two elemental methods of first cycle coding: In Vivo coding to “keep the data rooted in the participant’s own language” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 74) and descriptive coding, “assigning labels to data to summarise a word or short phrase – most often a noun” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 74). I highlighted the word and phrases of interest on the transcript followed by writing the same word or short phrase on a yellow sticky note and stuck it in the margin close to the text site. This sticky note also became a physical tab for future quick access. Figure 3.10 pictures one of my transcripts with some of the yellow sticky notes I refer to.

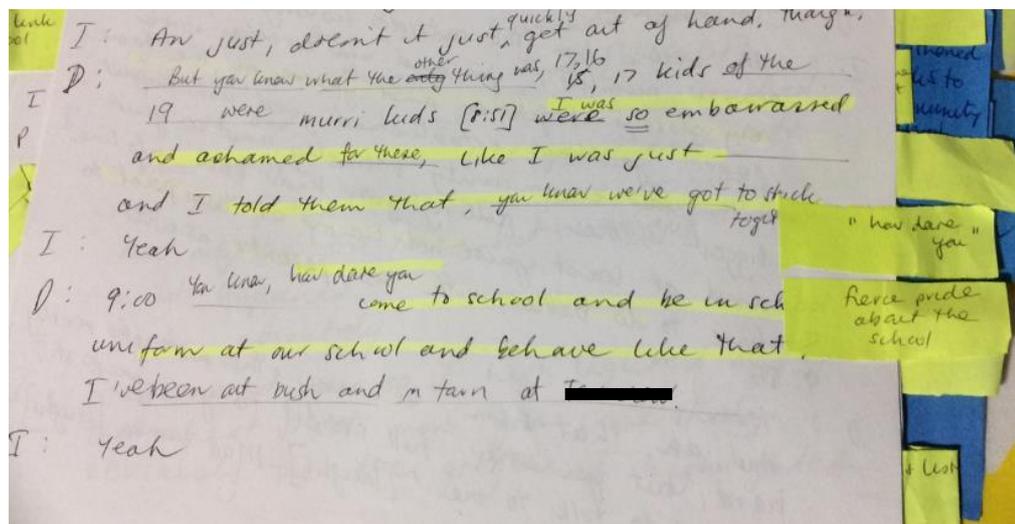


Figure 3.10 Yellow sticky notes used to highlight words and phrases of interest from interviews

I then reread each transcript again in the same order, this time using an effective method of first cycle coding deductively - values coding, which is one that reflects “a participant’s values, attitudes, and beliefs” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 75) – in this study, values about the IEW/CEC and principal relationship and their work in schools. I considered understandings from my professional field experience and knowledge of the literature (the general) whether the text I was reading (the specific) could contribute to answering the core research questions. When I saw text that reflected these criteria, i.e. “it always comes back to the funding”; I wrote the number of the related core research question (i.e. “4” meant Question 4) alongside this phrase on a blue sticky note. These too, formed physical tabs for quick future reference. Figure 3.11 shows an example of applying Round 1 data analysis on a case study interview paper transcript.

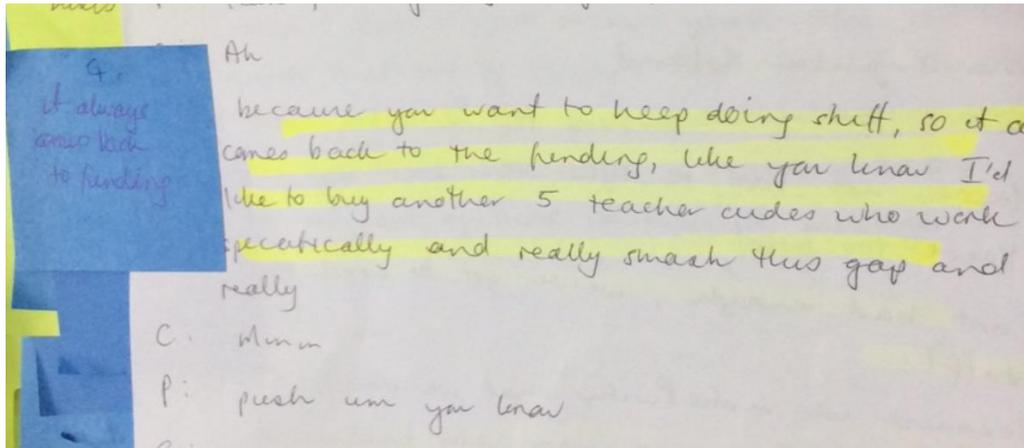


Figure 3.11 Image of a Round 1 analysed case study interview transcript

Once I had completed this process for every interview, I revisited the transcripts, using the sticky notes as the reference point for me to copy the particular text listed on them onto index cards. I copied onto the cards the In Vivo codes, descriptive codes and values codes along with accompanying quotable quotes. On top right hand corner of every card, I wrote the code name for the case study school, date of interview and page number of transcript so I could easily later reference the actual transcript if need be. Figure 3.12 is an example an actual index card taken from the transcript featured in the image in Figure 3.11. It is an example of a values code card with text that was useful to answer core research Question 4 (to assist sorting, I also colour coded each research question. i.e. Question 4 was highlighted as pink). These annotation processes served to re-familiarise me with the content of each interview and prepared me for the process of data reduction in the next round of data analysis. I made a total of 411 index cards.

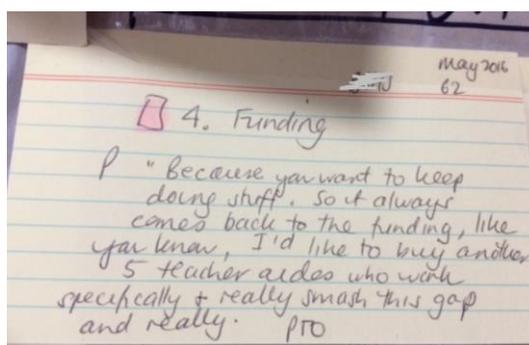


Figure 3.12 Sample of an index card with first cycle coding

### 3.9.1.2 *Round 2 data analysis*

#### 3.9.1.2.1 *Questionnaire and first cycle interviews*

As stated earlier, after Round 1 data analysis of the SKSG questionnaire and first cycle CPAR interviews, I conducted a Round 2 analysis. This was in preparation for the write up of findings for Chapter 4 to answer the first core research question, *what is the IEW/CEC and principal relationship?* The Round 1 analysis of these two data sets had refocused the data somewhat, but because I wanted to utilise both with that of the quantitative data from the regional survey, I sought to further refine and thematically analyse them using categorical strategies for presenting contiguous information (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). I started with the questionnaire.

I reread both sets of data separately and then again together, to refresh my knowledge and understanding of them. I looked at every written response from the SKSG questionnaire combined with the associated discussion by the pair at interview. After reviewing both sets of responses together for each pair and then for all pairs, I chose to rearrange the order they were originally set out on in the SKSG questionnaire so they could be better clustered together into categories of distinctive relationship dynamics common to all five IEW/CEC and principal pairs. Additionally, there was no weighting placed on any relationship dynamic with one not being more important than another. This was for several reasons - to honour the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers and principal participants, the processes they went through, and, the design of the original partnership assessment questionnaire which had no intended hierarchy. Another was that responses by each pair at interview convinced me that they valued and appreciated each action statement in the questionnaire even if they determined they were not yet undertaking the action described. Several made comment about this, “These are really wonderful questions” (IEW/CEC C, Interview 1, p.2); “But they are good questions” (IEW/CEC D1, Interview 2, p.16); and, “But really when you go through this [referring to the partnership assessment questionnaire], there’s so much for us to do together” (Principal D2, Interview 2, p.24). Again, I drew on the conceptual framework of the study, my professional field experience, my knowledge of the theory and research from the literature to regroup them into new and more closely aligned clusters of relational concepts. I literally cut up every one of the 44 statements, re-arranged them into different clusters of like themes and reduced the original headings from ten to six. Figure 3.13 shows a photograph of the cut and pasted statements glued onto sheets of paper and formed into the six new relational dynamic categories

and Figure 3.14 is a close up view of one of the sheets of paper. This took several iterations until I was satisfied that each statement was best fit to its new category.

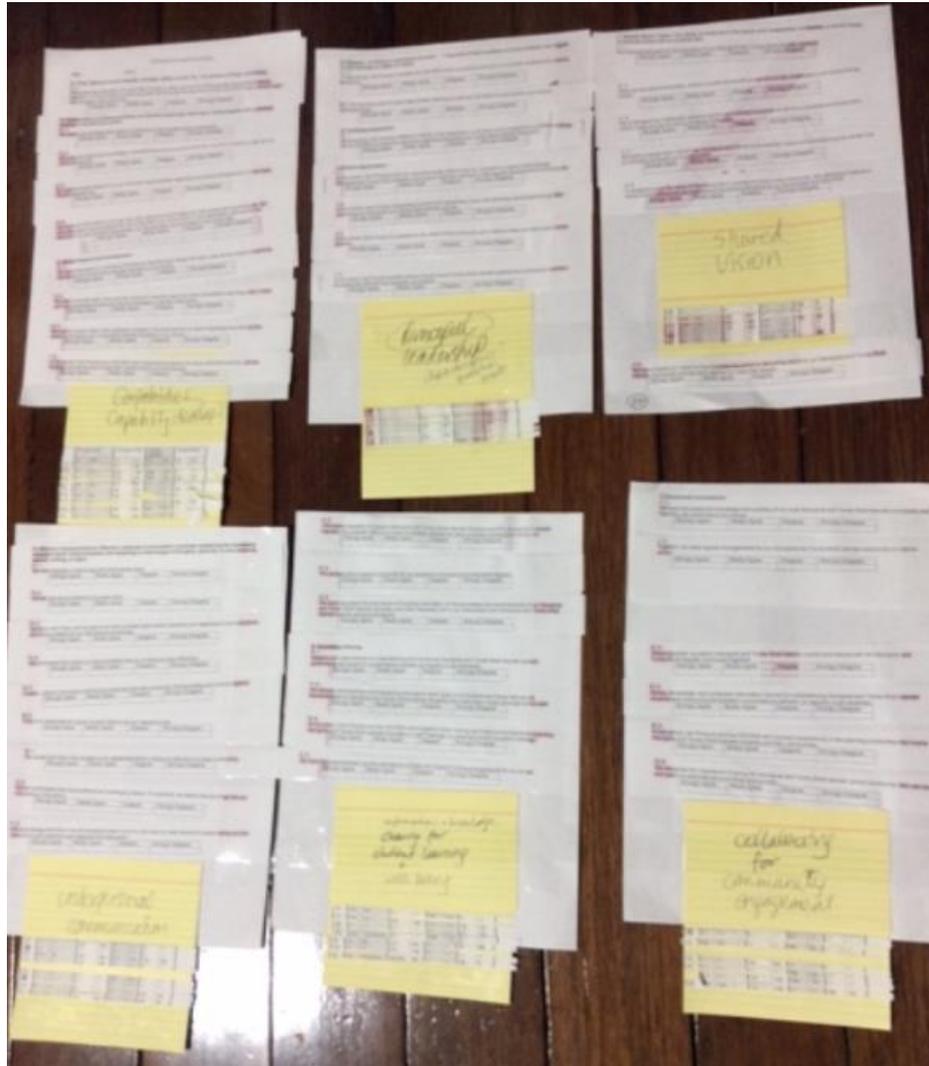


Figure 3.13 Images of cut and pasted documents capturing the six new relational dynamic categories

I then reanalysed the numeric data scores to check the numbers and totals before converting the numbers to percentages so I could quantify the qualitative categories in terms of greatest agreement to least agreement. In Chapter 4 the findings of data gathered during Phase 1, the regional survey, are presented first followed by those of the early stages of Phase 2, showing the questionnaire and first cycle CAPR approach results side by side. In the final section of Chapter 4 aspects of the case study are compared with those of the regional survey.

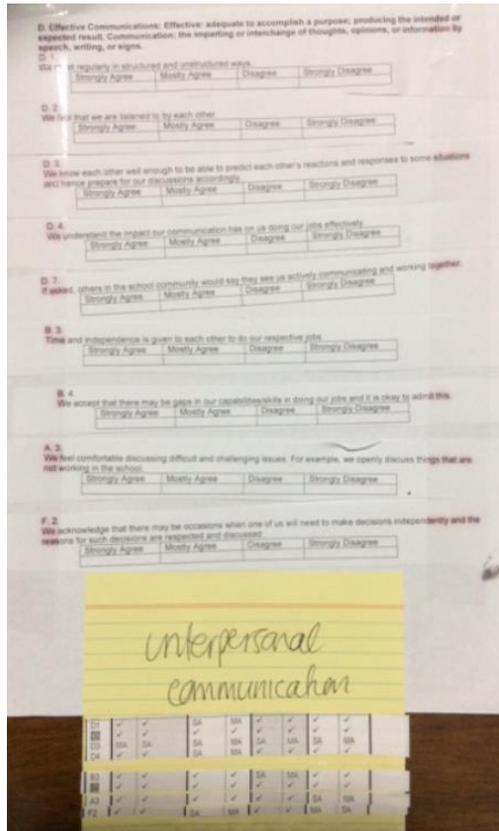


Figure 3.14 Image of a close up of one of the cut and pasted relational dynamic sheets

Such an amalgamation of mixed methods augmented definitive answers to the research question (Creswell, 2014) in Chapter 4 and provided the opportunity for an expansion of the original conceptual framework of the research which is presented at the conclusion of that chapter.

### 3.9.2 Second and third cycle CPAR approach interviews

Analysis of data from Phase 2 of data collection used the second and third cycle CPAR approach interviews to form the bulk the findings for Chapter 5. They were in response to the second and third core research questions, *how can this relationship be strengthened and what are the contextual features that influence this? What are the outcomes of this strengthened relationship?* To this end, further work was required to transform the data into findings.

As a transition from what had been derived from Round 1 data analysis using first cycle coding (Saldana, 2016), I sorted the second and third cycle CPAR approach interview index cards into two types—those that had direct quotes (In Vivo codes) or descriptions (descriptive codes)—and those that directly answered (values codes) the research question. Starting with the In Vivo and descriptive index cards from the second CPAR cycle interviews, I resorted them

into in case study school groups. I then laid them out on my lounge room floor and began a process of sorting all cards for each case study school interview into what appeared to be related groups—something not dissimilar to playing the card game “Happy Families”! (Museums Victoria Collections, 2018). Figure 3.14 is an example of what this process looked like.

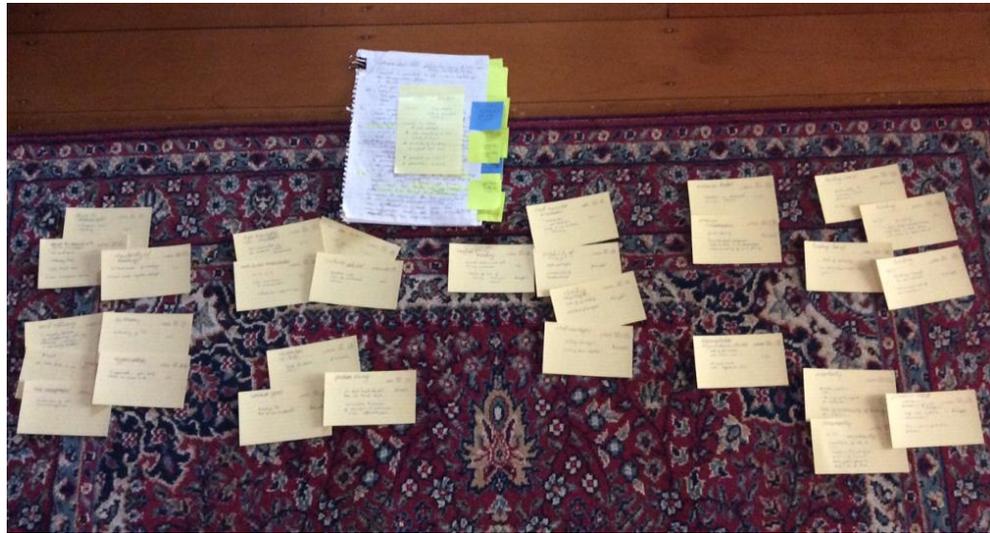


Figure 3.15 Example of index cards sorted into related groups

I did this to cycle back to my first coding efforts so I could “strategically cycle forward to additional coding and qualitative data methods” (Saldana, 2016, p. 211). I looked for meaning from the text while all the while asking myself a question suggest by Saldana (2016) like, “What do I see going on here?” (p. 22). I reviewed the codes that I had used and coded them further “into one lump code ...this technique lends itself to rising to more abstract and conceptual levels of analysis” (Saldana, 2016, p. 229). I used what other researchers might call analytic coding, but what Saldana instead describes as concept coding, “a word or a short phrase that symbolically represents a suggested meaning that a single item or action—a “bigger picture” beyond the tangible and apparent. A concept suggests an idea rather than object or an observable behaviour” (2016, p. 119), I put sticky notes with descriptive words or phrases to summarise the ideas reflected in the text on the card i.e. “mutual trust”; “willingness to try different strategies”; “value of relationship”. An example of this process is illustrated in Figure 3.16.

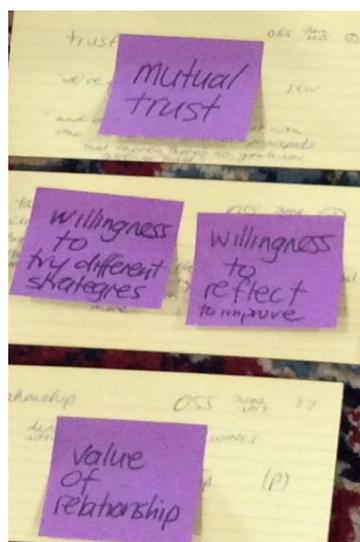


Figure 3.16 Example of sticky note with descriptive annotations

In the next step, I drew on the conceptual framework of this research (see Figure 3.5) to guide the transformation of my codes to themes using pattern coding. Pattern codes “are explanatory or inferential codes, ones that identify an emergent theme, configuration or explanation. They pull together a lot of material from first cycle coding into more meaningful and parsimonious units of analysis. They are sort of a meta code” (Saldana, 2016, p. 236). I clustered the relabelled index cards into happenings for the IEW/CEC; happenings for the principal; and then, what I thought were happenings within their relationship. With them clumped together in this way I determined what categories might best describe them. Slightly differing categories formed from the interviews from each case study pair. Figure 3.16 shows each of the case study schools’ cards assembled into categories.

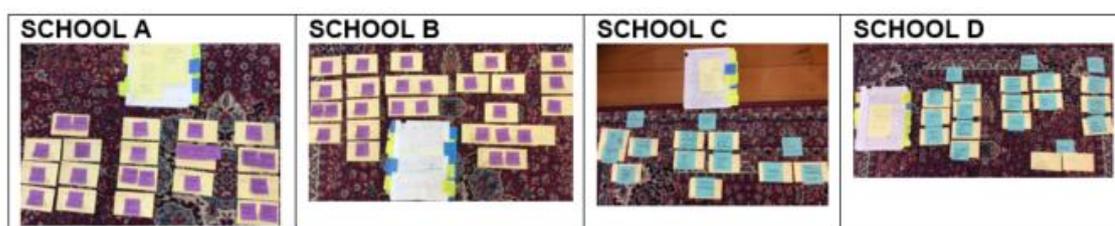


Figure 3.17 Index cards arranged into categories for every case study

While what I had done up until this point was from data within each case study pair, because the IEW/CEC and principal relationship was the focus of the study, and not that of the individual pairs, per se, I reconfigured the organising categories into broader levels of abstraction (Creswell, 2014). These proved to be a better fit for an understanding the IEW/CEC

and principal relationship as a whole. All card clusters were distributed under six overarching categories: IEW/CEC capabilities/qualities; principal qualities; how they work together; ongoing projects; issues; and, next steps. Again, my lounge room floor was used for this process. Once satisfied with the distribution of the cards, I stuck them together on large sheets of butcher's paper that I adorned on the walls of my study for the next 18 months. Figure 3.17 provides images of the stages of arranging the index cards.



Figure 3.18 Arrangement from floor to display sheets of index cards of findings from second cycle of CPAR approach

An identical Round 2 analytic process of coding was used for the third cycle of CPAR approach interviews. The recoded index cards merged into eight overarching categorised groups. These were: Issues facing IEW/CECs and why they stay; IEW/CEC enablers and blockers; principal actions that enable; what they do together that is enabling; external blockers to success; internal blockers to success; success in real terms; and, really good ideas and what schools are grappling with. Figure 3.19 provides images of the grouped index cards from this analytic process.



Figure 3.19 Display of all index cards from Round 2 analytic coding

I used a different analytic process with the second set of index cards containing values codes. I spread them out on the lounge room floor and firstly sorted them into answer groups to the core research questions within their case study school groups. Figure 3.20 shows images of each case study school's index cards that are grouped into responses to the core research

questions. This also assisted me to check on the balance and depth of data sources from across the schools.



Figure 3.20 All index cards of answers to core research questions from each case study school

Then I rearranged the cards into one whole group of clusters of answers to the core research questions. Again, I did this to see the depth of evidence I had to feed into answering each question. The scarcity of text relating to the first research question, was no surprise as the bulk of the evidence for that emanated from the first cycle CPAR interviews. At this point, I made some analytic memos about what I saw in the cards. Figure 3.20 shows the overall view of all cards contributing to all questions and note the six analytic memos at the bottom right of the index cards.



Figure 3.21 All index cards for all core research questions. Six analytical memos visible on bottom right of image

Next, I split the cards up into their occurrence within the cycles of the CPAR approach. i.e. Question 2 had responses from cycle 2 of the CPAR approach and then again in cycle 3 of the CPAR approach. Within the questions from the cycles, I clumped them into like groups of related concepts to answer the question. I stuck these onto large sheets of butcher's paper and made further summary annotations beside them to capture the main concepts from the text. See Figures 3.22 and 3.23 for images of this clumping of cards and summary of concepts for each core research question from the two cycles of the CPAR approach, respectively. I placed this information around my study walls for ease of access and reference.

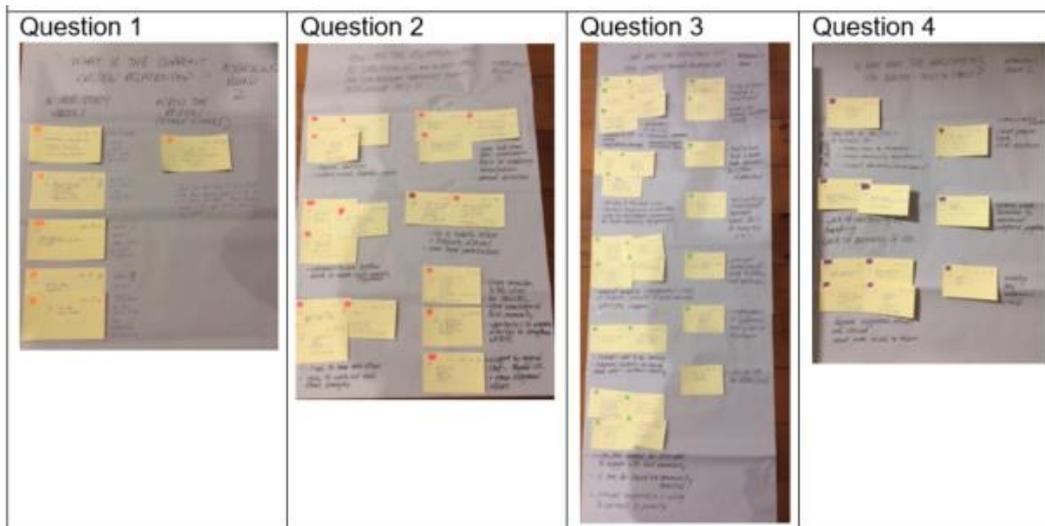


Figure 3.22 All index cards from second cycle CPAR approach

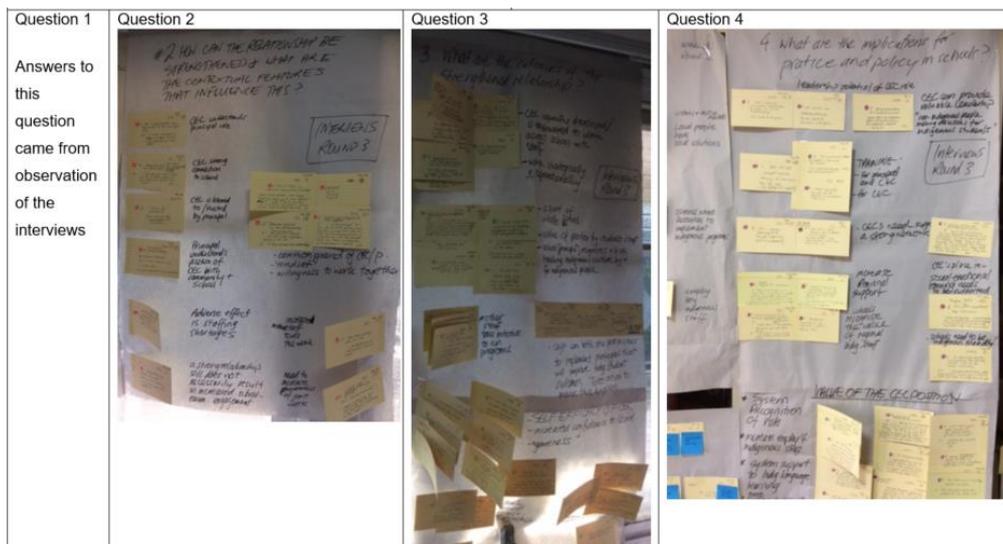


Figure 3.23 All index cards from third cycle of CPAR approach

After amassing a study full of displays of summarised data, I wanted a more portable version and I copied these into mind or ‘mental’ maps (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) using electronic software, CMap (Institute for Human & Machine Cognition (IHMC), 2018) (see Appendix N for a screen snip view of an example of the mind maps I constructed). I copied the key themes, sub themes from the data displays, and combined the two cycles of interviews into one view. The process of doing this enabled me to then further categorise by subsuming “minor themes within major themes and major themes within broader themes...*upward* toward broader and broader levels of abstraction” (Creswell, 2014, p. 275). I moved from the particular to the general inductively to arrive at the broad themes that could provide the structure for the findings chapters. In final preparation to write Chapter 5, a findings chapter that would respond to core research questions 2 and 3, I once again drew directly on the conceptual framework of this research. I conducted one further transformation of the data—I printed off the mind maps, cut them up, and recombined them into mega maps that conceptually resembled the framework. I pulled the butcher’s paper sheets off the wall and cut them up, merged and re-arranged their contents to mirror the structure of the mega maps. All of this material went onto my lounge room floor, along with the actual interview transcripts, which I directly referred to in the course of my write up of findings for Chapter 5. Figures 3.24, 3.25 and 3.26 show photographs of the cut up mind maps, their corresponding re-arranged butcher’s paper/cards and the state of my lounge room.

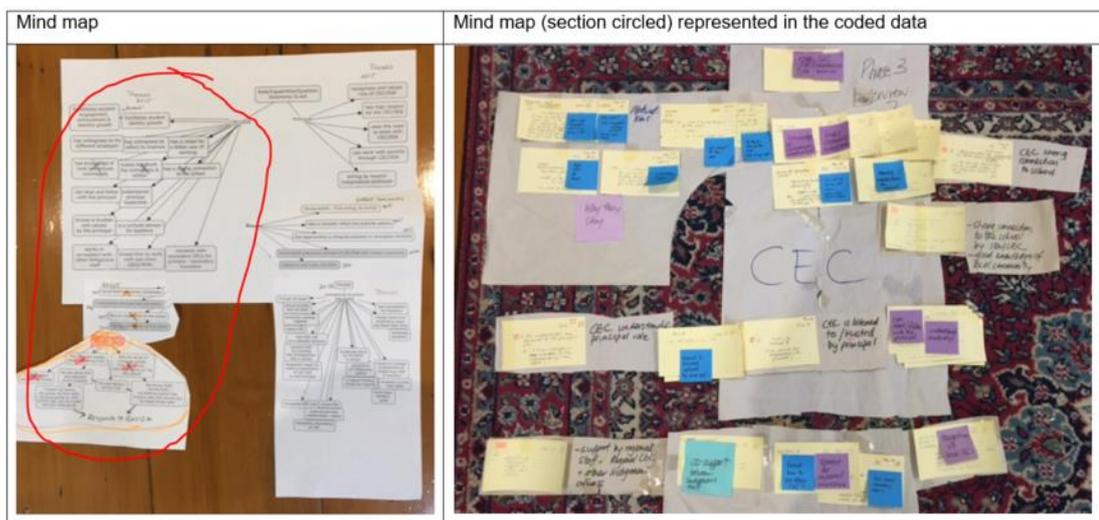


Figure 3.24 IEW/CEC mind map cut and pasted and then the translation of the map into the coded index cards

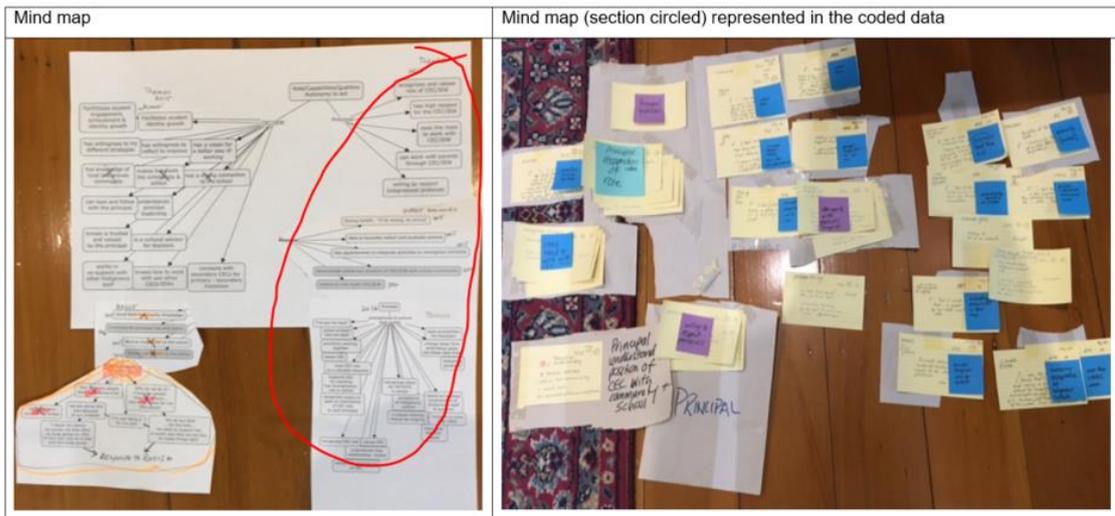


Figure 3.25 Principal mind map cut and pasted and then the translation of the map into the coded index cards



Figure 3.26 View of all coded cards arranged into displays on my lounge room floor

The resulting structure of Chapter 5 created from this information for findings to answers of the second and third core research questions. The process of analysis also enabled the original conceptual framework of the research to be further expanded and presented at the end of each findings chapter.

### 3.9.2.1 Round 3 data analysis

The final round of analysis occurred at the inferential stage of the study after I had written each of the findings chapters and was ready to write the discussion and conclusion chapters. While I had before me all of the information required to populate each of the chapters, I still engaged in iterative processes of going back and forth “between data collection and data

analysis” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). I also ensured the voice of the participants in the case study be deliberately and clearly heard throughout the chapters to elucidate the findings. In Section 3.10.2, I explain how I undertook member checking to enable participants to respond to the data collected.

In writing Chapter 6, the discussion chapter, I sought further analytic categories so as to synthesise the various findings of the research with that of literature in the field. At the forefront of my writing were the research purposes and research questions (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Drawing inferences for this stage of the research required an integration of current and any new literature of the field with that of my answers to the core research questions. This assisted in positioning the major conclusions within what was already known within the field as well as confirming plausibility of the research. I also re-examined the multiple sources of evidence, my findings and preliminary interpretations to substantiate the rationale for use of a mixed methods design - which was to gain a fuller understanding of the little researched IEW/CEC and principal relationship. Foreshadowed in Chapter 6 and confirmed in Chapter 7, I further expanded the conceptual framework that had advanced over the course of presenting the findings to one that reflected the meta-inferences made from the integration of the different strands of the research design. Chapter 7, the conclusion chapter re-examined and integrated key findings and the previous discussion to provide conclusions that addressed all research questions and in particular, Research Question 4: *What are the implications for practice and policy in schools?*

This thesis in itself is representational not only of the major conclusions of the study, but also the assumptions, approach, design and procedures of the research. My thesis has attempted to convey a model within a model. The 'what', the purpose of the study, is also reflected within the 'how', its methodology, and in particular from a perspective of the values that underpin the guidelines for research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018b).

### **3.10 Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations in this research were, “guided by the classic principle of humane conduct: *First, do no harm*” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 56). This research received ethics approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee at James Cook University (approval number H4703 and permission was obtained to conduct research in schools from the Department of Education, which was known at the time of application as the Department of Education, Training and Employment, Queensland (TRIM reference number 13/279488). Presented in this

section are the procedures I undertook to ensure: informed consent, associated confidentiality, anonymity, and ethical behaviour when conducting research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants.

### **3.10.1 Informed consent**

All participants were adults working in schools and informed consent was freely obtained from them at every level of this research. As described earlier in Section 3.6, in the first instance, I approached prospective regional participants through presentations at regional professional conferences for principals and then IEWs/CECs. Explained at these events was an overview of the purpose of the research; what would be required of them if they chose to participate; explanations of confidentiality; potentiality of risk; and, what would happen with the results from the data gathered. I emphasised that their participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw at any time. Also provided was information about the approval processes undertaken prior to approaching participants. Then I personally distributed the information statement and consent forms along with the regional survey.

For the case study participants, I also personally approached them, initially by telephone and then face-to-face, where I explained at length the purposes of the research, what would be required of them if they chose to participate and what would happen with the data I gathered from them. They too, were issued information statements, both from the university and the Department of Education along with the informed consent form. Note that the forms provided to the case study participants were different to those completing the survey because of the differing levels of commitment required.

### **3.10.2 Confidentiality and anonymity**

Participant's rights to confidentiality and anonymity (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) were addressed in several ways. Explained to all participants at the outset was that, while all care would be taken, confidentiality could not be guaranteed if participants worked with others. This was clearly stated on the informed consent form, "if I am working with others in groups, total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed outside the group" and I verbally explained this when recruiting case study participants. That said, within this thesis and in other documents produced by this research, every effort was made to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of all participants. For example, within the case study through use of codes instead of names of persons or schools and reference to places have been made as generic as possible to reduce "likely recognition by national and international audiences" (Wilson, 2015). Any case study

school student data utilised in this study, was de-identified and only sourced from that which was already freely available in the public domain.

### **3.10.3 Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples**

Many of the participants identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and at the time my research was conducted it was designed to reflect the six values in the conception, design and conduct of the research based on those articulated in the *Values and Ethics in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research* (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2003). The values were reciprocity, respect, equality, responsibility, survival and protection, spirit and integrity. These guidelines were very useful in helping me shape my research and I did my utmost to apply them.

One of the actions not described earlier in this chapter but very relevant here, is that in the Conceptualisation Stage of this research, with the support of one of my cultural mentors, a senior officer for state schools in The Region, I attended a regional IEW/CEC workshop to present my research proposal in 2012. Afterwards I asked the attending IEWs/CECs if they would be willing to consider volunteering to be in the research, either as a participant or as an advisor. I provided a letter of support to that effect which numerous people signed. Another action I took after due consideration was to change the wording of my purpose statement. At my confirmation seminar, the study purposes were stated as: *To explore, interpret and transform the ambiguity of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship as they respond to and address implementation issues of 'Closing the Gap' in their schools. On another level the study purpose was to highlight effective practice, inform future improvements for Indigenous education within the schools studied and for those in the greater region, and finally, provide a call for change of policy and practice within the wider school system in the state of Queensland.* Before I commenced the data collection phase, I sought feedback from my cultural mentors and read more literature. It became apparent that the term, 'closing the gap', the terminology for a major Australian government policy initiative was not appropriate. My mentors reminded me that for them this had negative connotations on many levels, including that for some, 'gap' actually has a sexual slang connotation and it was not polite to use. I read comments from Indigenous leaders and scholars who expressed scepticism about the term because of its tendency to perpetuate notions of disadvantage, deficit and the 'problem' agenda in Indigenous education (J. Davis, 2018; Langton & Ma Rhea, 2009; K. Martin, 2017; Pearson, 2009). At a Senate Occasional Lecture in Parliament House, Canberra, Australia, Dr Chris Sarra made this point to the audience of politicians, "the policy rhetoric if you like, often does more to entrench a sense of hopelessness and despair rather than nurture a sense of hope and optimism" (2016, p.

91). Consequently, I dropped the phrase from my purpose statement for conference papers, presentations and this thesis. I replaced it with *as they work together to improve education outcomes for Indigenous students in their schools*, which more explicitly focuses on the phenomenon of the relationship and its links to school improvement which in turn implicates the leading responsible entity is first the school and not the students. My study purposes statement then remained unchanged throughout the conduct of my research and thesis.

I know that over the time of my study the guidelines for research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were updated “to ensure the guidelines are up to date, contemporary and relevant” (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018a). While the only guidelines available to me at the time were those from of health research, it is pleasing to note, “the revised guidelines now apply to all research. The six values concept remains the same, with updates to two values names” (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018a). The two changes are ‘cultural continuity’ replaces ‘survival and protection’ and ‘equity’ replaces ‘equality’. The other values remain the same. I am satisfied that with the supports I built in to conduct my research, I have maintained the expectations for ethical conduct with all people and in particular, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. I am very grateful to have been supported by my cultural mentors. Their timely advice and counsel served me well in this research. I have also been able to provide ongoing updates about my research by invitation to attend annual regional IEW/CEC meetings, which I have done every year since 2012.

### **3.11 Validity and trustworthiness**

#### **3.11.1 Triangulation**

In this research, triangulation, “the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals ...or methods of data collection in descriptions and themes” (Creswell, 2014, p. 13) occurred throughout this study. To gain “confirmation, to increase credence in the interpretation, to demonstrate commonality of assertions” (Stake, 1995, p. 112), the research design utilised several protocols: data source and type, researcher (analyst), theory and methodological triangulation (Miles et al., 2014; Patton, 2015; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

##### ***3.11.1.1 Data source and type triangulation***

Checking for representativeness (Miles et al., 2014) was achieved through acquiring data from several levels of the data source. There was a wide range of IEW/CEC and principal

participants from across geographical areas and state school sectors in the regional survey and the five pairs of IEW/CEC and principal participants in the case study equally represented the geographical and demographical spectrum of those in The Region. The case study participants were also purposefully selected because they shared particular common characteristics unique to the case. This range of sources of data from the same types of participants provided a depth of data source which recognised “the importance of different kinds of measurements, which provides repeated verification” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 299). Within the case study for instance, interviewing the IEWs/CECs and principals as a pair is an example of providing for opportunities for multiple perspectives while simultaneously facilitating shared clarification of meaning. Additionally, by reporting from across all five pairs with evidence from each to support findings and analysis also added to confirmability of assertions made. The decision to utilise different types of data collection methods from different sources is in itself a form of inbuilt triangulation (Flick, 2014; Miles et al., 2014).

Quantitative and qualitative types have different strengths offering complementarity as well as to present opportunities for conflicting findings. Miles et al. argue inconsistencies or conflicts can be seen as “a blessing because the different data collection methods used gather different facets of data, and their combined effects build on each other to compose a more three-dimensional perspective of the phenomenon” (2014, p. 300). Within this research, while the qualitative strand had greater weighting in terms of data contribution to the findings, this did not mean that the quantitative data method had less value. Flick comments on this, “Whether or not the methods are used at the same time or one after the other is less relevant compared to the fact that they are seen as equal in their role in the project” (2014, p. 30). In summary, the multiple sources and types of evidence where converged to clarify meaning, identify the different ways the core research issue was being addressed and to provide validation of answers to the research questions. Table 4 summarizes this process.

Table 4 Data sources feeding into core research questions

<b>Core Research Questions</b>	<b>Interviews (QUAL)</b>	<b>Journal (QUAL)</b>	<b>School Report (QUAL + quan)</b>	<b>Regional survey (QUAL + quan)</b>	<b>Questionnaire (quan + qual)</b>
What is the current principal-IEW relationship?	X	X		X	X
How can this be strengthened and what are the contextual features that influence this?	X	X	X	X	X
What are the outcomes of this strengthened relationship?	X	X	X	X	X
What are the implications for practice and policy in education?	X	X	X	X	X

### ***3.11.1.2 Researcher triangulation.***

Although I was the lone researcher, I was never far from the advice and support of my supervisors and cultural advisors. I regularly consulted with my supervisors, particularly at important junctures of the research, including at the mid-candidature review. There, methodological decisions and changes I made or proposed were discussed, confirmed or amended. They provided written as well as verbal feedback and provocations on all phases of the research, especially on my application of methods and resulting findings. My cultural mentors and academic advisors gave freely of their time, meeting with me where I could show them some of the data collection instruments I was using to give me feedback on appropriateness from an Indigenous perspective. I consulted with academic peers who were also undertaking or had just concluded their doctoral studies. They were particularly helpful in offering advice and skilful suggestions as to ensure trustworthiness of findings. Further, I was able to present reports on my progress through various stages of this research formally at local, national and international conferences and informally with professional work colleagues. In particular, I provided a short update, sought feedback and answered questions each year over the duration of my research with The Region’s IEWs/CECs at their annual regional conference and importantly I gave updated reports to and sought feedback from the IEWs/CECs and principals who participated in case study. At each level I received feedback and advice from

these key people to keep me on track and honest with the process of inquiry. Member checking as another input for triangulation of my researcher decisions and is discussed separately below.

### **3.11.1.3 Theory triangulation.**

Theory triangulation is defined as “the use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data” (Patton cited in Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 75). Earlier in this chapter, I presented a ‘plurality of paradigms’ in defining my researcher-self and offered a ‘tripartite of theory’ because of the “complexity of the fieldwork situation” (Patton, 2015, p. 153). Patton (2015) suggests when a researcher does this they are being “creative, practical and adaptive ... [to draw] on varied inquiry traditions and use of diverse techniques” (p. 153). Additionally, an oft cited term, ‘bricolage’ would describe my research as, “a pieced together set of representations that is fitted to the specifics of a complex situation” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 4). The integration of paradigms, theories, approaches and design derived for the primary reason of achievement of the purpose of this research have also contributed to a multiplicity of perspective. Miles, Huberman and Saldana also advise that,

if-then tests are the workhorse of qualitative analysis...the use of the conditional future tense in the ‘then’ statements helps remind us that we have to look to see whether the ‘then’ has happened. Therefore, if-then statements are a way to formalise propositions for testing. The method of generation predictions involves linking together a large number of ‘ifs’ to a single major ‘then’. If-then statements are just a step away from constructing theories. (2014, pp. 304-305)

In my research analysis, I made several ‘if-then’ statements, I suggested *if* IEWs/CECs are considered crucial to school-community linkages and principals to educational leadership, *then* understanding how these two key roles do and can work together is important to understanding school improvement for Indigenous education. Similarly, considered was *if* the workings a professional relationship between IEWs/CECs and their principal can be understood *then* it this may lead to a better understanding of what are the shared leadership practices for Indigenous student learning and well-being. In addition, *if* this professional working relationship is strong between IEWs/CECs and their principal *then* this can be scaled up to a relationship that can exist within and between the school and the community. Put simply, *if* the IEW/CEC and principal can work better together, *then* it is possible for the school and the community to do the same. The single major *then* in this research has been about transforming the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship as well as highlighting the valuable contribution to leadership from Indigenous workers in schools, and in turn, gather evidence to make change in policy and practice in the field. **Methodological triangulation.**

Already cited in this chapter is Patton's maxim that "form follows function, design follows purpose" (2015, p. 37) and that the research purpose and resulting core research questions determined a mixed methods approach. Much has been written in the literature about mixed methods and triangulation (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009). Triangulation within this research occurred when collecting and analysing the data and positively affected the inference quality and transferability of conclusions (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009). The discussion in subsection 3.9.1.2.2 about Round 3 data analysis is an example to this aspect of research validly and trustworthiness.

### **3.11.2 Member checking**

Member checking, "is a process in which the researcher asks one or more participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account" (Creswell, 2014, p. 283). Having participated as a participant in research myself over the course of my professional field experience, I appreciated how important member checking was. For the case study participants, in particular, I formally and informally consulted with them throughout the period of the research. The longitudinal nature of the research meant that I had time to ask each pair to give me feedback, debrief with me and verify my representations of events, behaviours and phenomena associated with them (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009). For instance, some examples of the member checking procedures I employed included, prior to commencing their interviews I would always give each pair an update on what I had determined about their situation and would summarise our previous conversation. When I had written a transcript, I brought it along to show them what it looked like and gave them opportunities to read over it and respond for feedback. I also provided each pair with a hard and electronic copy of every conference paper I produced and asked them for feedback and ask questions, recommend changes, etc. before I submitted.

### **3.11.3 Checking for researcher effects**

I was very aware of researcher effects, or, as Miles et al. (2014) say about two sources of bias in this situation, "the effects of the researcher on the case and the effects of the case on the researcher" (p. 296). Coming to this research as a practitioner was advantageous because I had easy access to the field, was well known by all participants and I was supported and enabled by my employer to undertake this research. At the same time, this positionality and associated power relations had the potential to be detrimental – something of which I was acutely aware. The inbuilt accountability and responsibility to other colleagues I already had as a practitioner kept me honest as a researcher. I knew that when I left the field as a researcher, I would still be there as a practitioner. I continue to this day to have frequent contact with many

participants from the research and specifically the participants of the case study through professional meetings and conferences. I have been able to maintain and sustain respect, them for me and me for them. The credibility and relationship established prior to my research work has seen me in good stead post my research work and this has been what has guided much of my researcher/practitioner thoughts and actions.

The greatest bias I faced over the course of this research was from my practitioner self. To be able to see the forest from the trees, I deliberately chose to “keep thinking conceptually; translate sentimental or interpersonal thoughts into more theoretical ones” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 298). Triangulation as described above also contributed to reducing any tendency to over zealously pursue being the expert for participants and possibly skew or dominate their discussions. Instead I tapped into my coaching skills to assist participants ask reflective questions that would allow them to seek solutions for themselves. The other issues of time management and dealing with competing priorities that may have tempted me to cut corners with my research, was countered by regular contact with my research supervisors. Table 5 provides a summary of the interrelationships between key aspects of the research methodology.

Table 5 Interrelationships of the research methodology

<b>Core Research Questions</b>	<b>Data sources</b>	<b>Validity, reliability</b>	<b>Analysis</b>	<b>Synthesis</b>	<b>Ethical considerations</b>
<i>What is the current principal - IEW relationship?</i>	Regional Survey	Use of triangulation	Round 1: Raw data. Look for emerging themes for coding within each data source	Combining the individual units of analysis into an integrated whole and incorporate with the literature	Re-identifiable data (identifiers removed and replaced by a code – possible to re-identify by linking of code/data sets)
<i>How can this relationship be strengthened and what are the contextual features that influence this?</i>	Questionnaire	Explanation of transferability to other similar contexts	Round 2: Look for common themes, clustering across data		
<i>What are the outcomes of this strengthened relationship?</i>	Semi-structured and open ended interviews		Round 3: Review Round 2, reduce and link with the themes from literature		
<i>What are the implications for practice and policy in schools?</i>	School Documents				Audio recorded interviews. Recording consent included on informed consent form
	Reflective journal and field notes				Included statement that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus groups on consent form
	Other enumeration data				The voluntary nature of participation or withdrawal at any time explained verbally and in writing at various junctures throughout the study period, starting with the consent form.

### 3.12 Research issues and limitations

A comprehensive description of triangulation processes that served as a major strategy to address limitations in my chosen methodology was provided earlier, however discussed here are some other limitations and issues that I want to acknowledge.

I know that context is an important consideration for school improvement within Australia for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Guenther et al., 2019) and this contributed to my argument to conduct the study in more non-remote locales. That my research was within more urbanised schools may equally make generalisability of findings limited for remote schools. However until more contemporary research in Indigenous education is conducted in regional and metropolitan settings context, this research can be at least used as a foundation for future research opportunities and when generalisability may be better addressed.

I do acknowledge that my capacity as a part-time researcher and ambitious scope of study also had impacts on how it was conducted. The first was the size of the case study. As noted throughout this thesis, to increase the confidence and reliability of results, I worked with five IEW/CEC and principal pairs across in four state schools in different geographical locations. Surveying IEWs/CECs and principals across The Region did serve to provide a broader view to inform the research. With this design, while I was able to obtain some rich sources of data, I acknowledge my research may have been enhanced by greater numbers of participants from the region and possibly within the case study. I also recognise if the opportunity had presented itself, for the second sweep of the regional survey from across the region having a larger number of IEWs/CECs and being able to re-issue the survey to principals would have offered better comparative data.

The second issue is related to the first. Because I elected to have four diverse schools across a number of geographic locations and remain working full time as a principal myself, my capacity to fully participate within the CPAR process had to be adjusted. My personal participation was kept to the 'reflect' and 'plan' phases over the three years of the case study. Consequently I termed the application of CPAR as an 'approach' in my study rather than the processes captured in the study involving long term collaborations for Indigenous education with universities such as the Yirrkala Ganma education project described in Kemmis et al. (2014). That said, the beauty of CPAR is it is inclusive and responsive to the situation at the site of investigation and participants are autonomous to enact phases of the CPAR process. "Critical participatory action research aims at changing three things: practitioners' practices their understandings of their practices, and the conditions in which they practice" p. 63 (Kemmis et

al., 2014). Within the case study, the findings chapters reveal how practices and understandings of practices were changed and conditions that enabled or constrained practice were changed.

As no doubt experienced by many researchers, I also faced some other issues where my best laid plans did not eventuate. Fortunately my professional field experience as a principal prepared me to be quickly adaptive. For instance it took three visits with one particular case study pair to complete the reflect phase of the first cycle of the CPAR approach. The initial meeting in August 2014 involved preliminary discussions only, I had to return two weeks later for the pair to complete a questionnaire interview and due to their and my time constraints, I could not interview them until several months later about their action plan for the next year. In another case study school, a new principal was appointed at the time of the second site visit and I had to quickly readjust my research design to re-establish new relationships and maximise what data I could still collect. With another school, I was unable to do a final face-to-face meeting as planned and instead held a recorded phone interview.

### **3.13 Chapter summary**

This chapter has endeavoured to explain the methodology of this research. It began with the foundation of this research, the tripartite of theories and transformative and pragmatic assumptions informing the study. A rationale for the methodological approach of mixed methods, research questions and conceptual framework were presented. These were followed by an explanation of the research design, the locale of the research, who the participants were and how they were selected. Next, details on phases of the study, including purposes and focus of methods and actions in fieldwork were supplied. A detailed description of the data collection, the analytic framework and how they unfolded were provided. The latter part of the chapter justified the validity and trustworthiness of findings and explained the ethical considerations influencing conduct of this research. Finally research limitations and issues were provided.

Structured around the core research questions, the following two chapters contain the findings. Chapter 4 provides the first set of findings that contribute to the first core research question and Chapter 5 provides the second set of findings that contribute to the second and third core research questions. The final core research question is addressed in Chapter 7.

## 4 The current IEW/CEC and principal relationship

### 4.0 Introduction

In response to the purpose of the research and informed by the social justice research design (Mills & Gay, 2016), findings responding to the four core research questions are presented in this chapter, and Chapter 5, which follows. This chapter, Chapter 4, presents the first set of findings that respond to the first core research question, *what is the current IEW/CEC and principal relationship?* The data are presented in three sections and in a chronology to reflect the findings as they occurred over the enactment of the quantitative and qualitative phases of data collection. The conceptual framework of the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship, presented earlier in Chapter 3, is reproduced again in Figure 4.1 and underpins this chapter's findings.

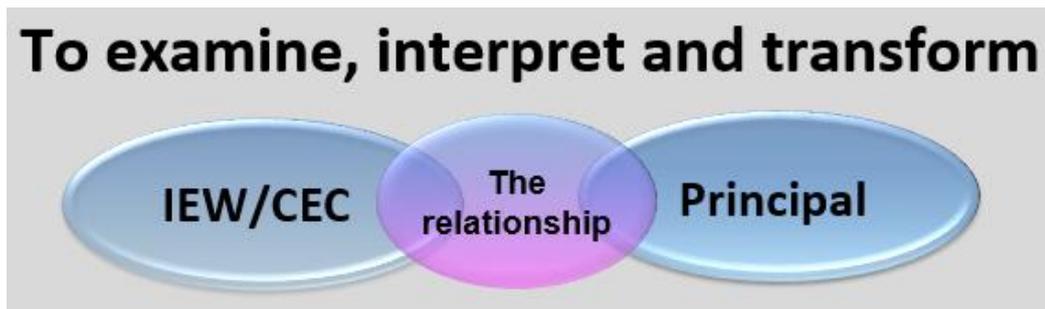


Figure 4.1 Conceptual model of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship

Section 4.1, provides representative overview of the current working relationship context from a general group of IEWs/CECs and principals from an educational region in Queensland. Findings from a large scale survey conducted over two sweeps, the first in Phase 1 and the second in Phase 2 of the research, provide information about IEW/CEC and principal demographics, duties, co-working responsibilities and their research participation interest. Following this, in Section 4.2, a more focused view of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship is informed by initial case study data collected at the beginning of Phase 2 of the research from exemplary IEW/CEC and principal pairs from four schools in the same educational region. At that point in time, two cycles of a critical participatory action research (CPAR) approach had transpired with each IEW/CEC and principal pair. Finally in Section 4.3, a juxtaposed view is offered by way of comparing both sets of findings to shed light onto the professional relationship between the IEW/CEC and principal. Figure 4.2 below presents a graphic view of the chapter data sources, timing and processes, previously explained in Chapter 3, for this

chapter's findings to answer the first research question: *What is the current IEW/CEC and principal relationship?*

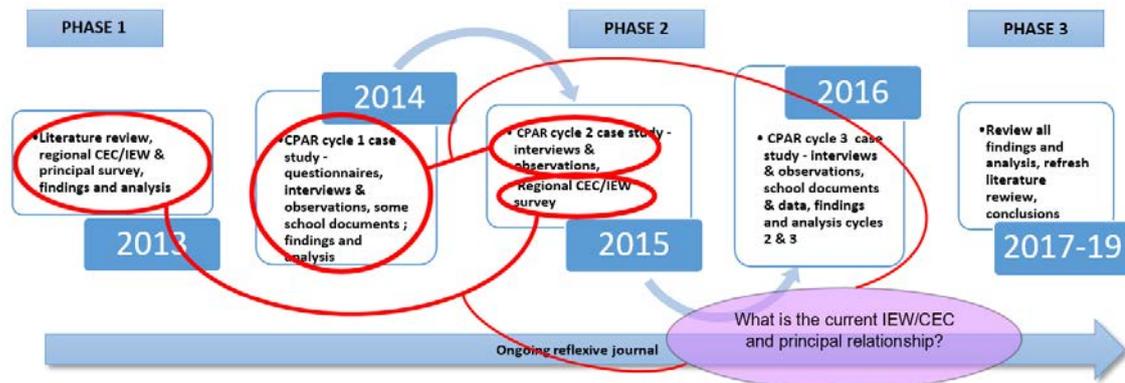


Figure 4.2 Data sources for findings relating to the first core research question

When considering these findings it is important to remember that, as explained in earlier chapters, there are different roles for Indigenous non-teaching staff who can be employed in Queensland state schools to support students, some are IEWs and some are CECs. While they do have different roles and CECs are usually only employed in secondary schools, they can and do have a professional relationship with their principal. For confidentiality of participants, and subsequent ease of writing, these Indigenous non-teaching staff roles have been mostly grouped together and named as IEWs/CECs, but where pertinent, the roles are delineated. As also described in previous chapters, the research is located within one of the seven state school regions within what is now known as the Department of Education in Queensland, Australia and for the purposes of this study, due to the numerous name changes over time, the name of the Queensland state schools education system referred to in this chapter and Chapter 5, will be as The Department and the research focus area, The Region.

#### 4.1 An expansive view

This section contains findings from the regional survey and are presented in categories predetermined by the structure of the survey and resulting data analysis. It features general trends about both groups' demographics and the nature of work for IEWs/CECs - their role and duties; perception tendencies of IEWs/CECs and principals about this work and their work together; and as well, enlistment results for participation in the research project. To this end, the findings are organised into three sub sections under survey categories of, 4.1.1 Demographics and duties; 4.1.2 Co-work; and, 4.1.3 Recruitment.

#### **4.1.1 Demographics and duties**

This sub-section provides findings about some personal characteristics of IEWs/CECs and principals and what the IEW/CEC role entails. General demographic findings are followed by those relating to the IEW/CEC position, in particular, with the latter being further particularised into survey sub-themes of: Work experience, current duties and desired duties. Where applicable, the results from the second sweep of the survey are included with the survey data.

##### ***4.1.1.1 Demographics***

As stated in Chapter 3, 38 IEWs/CECs and 41 principals consented to the first sweep of the survey. In this sweep, the largest group of respondents indicated they lived in a regional city (20 IEWs/CECs and 16 principals), eight IEWs/CECs and 14 principals lived in rural towns with the remaining respondents living in more remote towns (seven IEWs/CECs and 11 principals). In the second sweep, although a smaller sample of IEWs/CECs responded, (16) their residential demographic showed they were also from across different areas of The Region, most lived in a regional city (eleven), three lived in a rural town and five resided in more remote areas (see Appendix F). These results show the respondents were relatively representative of the population, coming from a spread of geographic locales from across in The Region. The number of respondents completing the regional surveys, their gender and Indigeneity demographics are presented in Table 6. Included is the number of those in a CEC role. Differentiating the number of CECs was intentionally done in this instance to highlight two important staffing features of The Region known by me through my professional field experience. The first being, within the period of the issuing of the first and second surveys (three years), there were just over 168 permanent hours for Indigenous teacher aides and 8.2 full time funded CEC positions distributed as fractional staffing amounts across approximately 85 state primary schools and over 20 state secondary schools in The Region (internal email, December 4, 2014).

It is common practise that many schools supplement their system allocation of IEWs/CECs with other funding to make it up to a full time or larger part-time position, while some schools just used the provided allocation only. I also knew that other schools absorbed the IEW/CEC allocation into their general teacher aide staffing because the amount was too small to use for the specific employment of an Indigenous teacher aide.

Table 6 The Region's IEW/CEC and principal demographics

Survey Role	Female	Male	Aboriginal	Torres Strait Islander	Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Indigenous	CEC role
Sweep 1 IEW/CEC	31	4	21	5	1	8	17
Sweep 2 IEW/CEC	15	1	10	3	3	0	11
Sweep 1 principal	23	18	0	0	0	41	0

Given that there are more than 100 schools with between 7,500 to 8,000 Indigenous students spread across a very large geographic area in The Region, the amount of system funded allocations for specific Indigenous staffing offers an Indigenous staff to Indigenous student ratio of 1:1,000. Evidence of the practice to supplement a school's staffing allocation for Indigenous staff is captured in Table 4.1. It shows 17 out of the 35 IEW/CEC respondents in the first sweep of the regional survey and 11 out of 16 IEW/CEC respondents in the second sweep indicated they were CECs. This is well above the systemic allocation.

The second is, at the time of the regional survey, principals were not permitted nor had the delegated authority to make the temporary portion of the IEW or CEC position in their school into a permanent position. In hindsight, it would have been helpful to include an additional survey question asking IEWs/CECs what part of their position was temporary and what part was permanent. In any case, this staffing situation is notable, as at the issuing of the first and second sweeps of the survey, many more CECs were employed in a temporary capacity above the systemic allocation of permanent staffing for this position in The Region. It is reasonable to conclude that these schools saw the need for this position and were prepared to fund it accordingly over the long term, even though it was mostly a 'temporary' position. The situation of tenure of the IEW/CEC position comes into greater play in the next chapter during presentation of further case study findings and resulting discussion.

In terms of gender demographics, Table 6 **Error! Reference source not found.** indicates that in the first sweep, across The Region, significantly more women than men worked

in IEW/CEC roles in schools. For principals, the distribution of men and women in their role was relatively evenly spread. In the second sweep, all IEWs/CECs except one were female. In terms of Indigeneity, all principals (41) indicated they were non-Indigenous, another regional trend. Conversely, the great majority of IEWs/CECs in the first and second sweeps indicated they were Indigenous and mainly of Aboriginal descent, although interestingly eight IEWs/CECs in the first sweep responded that they were non-Indigenous. While there is no survey data to provide a likely explanation for a situation where a non-Indigenous person can work in the IEW/CEC role, it is known to me through my long term professional field experience in The Region that some of these non-Indigenous IEWs/CECs may have had Indigenous partners and Indigenous children of their own and/or they had been accepted by their local Indigenous community and/or were selected to be employed by their school to work with Indigenous students.

#### ***4.1.1.2 Duties: Work experience***

The responses relating to the work experience of respondents in the first sweep of the survey showed several trends. The principal group had more experience working within The Department than IEWs/CECs. On the other hand, almost twice the percentage of principals had less than one year in their role and school than did IEWs/CECs. A greater percentage of IEWs/CECs had served for six or more years in their schools than had principals. These differences in work experience are highlighted blue in a table displayed in Appendix O.

#### ***4.1.1.3 Duties: Current duties***

In both sweeps, all IEW/CEC and principal respondents were asked what types of duties IEWs/CECs performed. Eight multiple choice duty descriptors with a ninth 'Other' were presented for selection. The descriptors were created by combining my professional field experience knowledge with those from various role description statements available at the time about Teacher Aides, CLOs and CECs (Department of Education Training and Employment, 2014, p. 67; Queensland Government. Education Queensland, 2014). In the first sweep, all 35 IEWs/CECs and 29 out of the 41 principals gave responses to this question. In the second sweep, all 16 IEWs/CECs completed this question. Using the conceptual framework of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship (Figure 4.1), to make meaning of the descriptive statistics of the survey, the difference of percentage frequencies of responses of both groups was considered. This determined similar or different perceptions of duties performed in the IEW/CEC role, i.e. little difference between the IEW/CEC percentage frequency response and the principal percentage frequency response = a high agreement or shared perception between

the IEW/CEC and principal; a large difference = low agreement or different perception between the two groups. Presented in Table 7, these perceptions of duties provide some understanding of what IEWs/CECs think they work on and what principals think IEWs/CECs work on.

In the 2013 sweep, Table 7 shows there was agreement between both sets of respondents on three duties performed by IEWs/CECs. These primarily related to provision of information, advice and assistance to school staff. Specifically, the high agreement or shared perception (i.e. 5% or less of a gap and highlighted green in Table 7) of both sets of respondents in the 2013 sweep showed IEWs/CECs undertook current duties that:

- Provide information to school staff about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander social and cultural protocols and issues
- Provide advice to the school leadership team about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community matters relevant to the school student
- Provide assistance to teachers on welfare matters relating to their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Beyond these duties, there was a greater range of difference in perception. The current duty that showed the lowest agreement or greatest difference of perception between IEWs/CECs (74%) and principals (47%) in 2013 was that IEWs/CECs:

- Provide appropriate welfare support and/or counselling for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students (27% variance highlighted purple in Table 7).

The 2013 sweep's current duties question also revealed a much greater percentage of IEWs/CECs than principals indicated their current duties were associated with monitoring attendance, providing educational support and welfare support, liaising / home visits with families, with the liaison role the second highest current duty for IEWs/CECs and much less recognised by principals (three such duties are highlighted yellow in Table 7). Paradoxically one of these duties, 'Provides educational support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students', also attracted the highest percentage of responses from both groups (highlighted pink in Table 7). Even though the greatest number of respondents from both groups in 2013 indicated this was a current duty of IEWs/CECs, there was still a notable percentage agreement gap (15%).

Overall, answers to this question in the first survey indicated there were more differences than similarities in across group perceptions between IEWs/CECS and principals

about the work of IEWs/CECs. In other words, it could be seen that IEWs/CECs perceived what they did in their job was generally different from what principals thought IEWs/CECs did. Interestingly IEW/CEC school-community liaison work was less recognised by principals.

With no second sweep for principals in 2015, there was no across group comparison possible with this particular question about current duties. However, within the group of IEWs/CECs from the 2013 to the 2015 sweep, some trends did emerge. Remarkably, four duties still scored similarly in percentages from 2013 to 2015. That is, on both IEW/CEC survey sweeps, the majority of IEWs/CECs had percentage responses in these current duties that were almost the same (within a 4% or less variance). Highlighted blue in Table 7 these duties were:

- Provide advice to the school leadership team about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community matters relevant to the school students
- Provide assistance to teachers on welfare matters relating to their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Organises various activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Provides appropriate welfare support and/or counselling

Table 7 Perception of what duties IEWs/CECs performed 2013 and 2015

<b>Duty</b>	<b>IEW/CEC responses 2013</b>	<b>principal responses 2013</b>	<b>IEW/CEC responses 2015</b>	<b>% gap between IEW/CEC 2013 &amp; principal 2013 responses</b>	<b>% gap between IEW/CEC 2015 &amp; IEW/CEC 2013 responses</b>
Provides information to school staff about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and cultural protocols and issues	68%	69%	81%	1%	+13%
Provides advice to school leadership team about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community matters relevant to students	65%	69%	62.5%	4%	-2.5%
Provides assistance for teachers on welfare matters relating to their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	77%	72%	81%	5%	+4%
Provides information and assistance to teachers about Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum	68%	58%	50%	10%	-18%
Organises various activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	74%	62%	75%	12%	+1%
Liaises with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families on student and school matters	80%	65%	87.5%	15%	+7.5%
Provides educational support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	91%	76%	75%	15%	-16%
Monitors Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander attendance including doing home visits	74%	55%	81%	19%	+7%
Provides welfare support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	74%	47%	75%	27%	+1%
Other	34%	22%	44%	11%	+10%

It would appear that over this period, IEW/CEC perceptions about these specific duties did not seem to change.

It is noticeable however, that there are some greater decreases as well as increases between the 2013 and 2015 sweeps in IEW/CEC perceptions about the remaining current duties. The two greatest decreases in current duties responses were in relation to the responses, 'Provides information and assistance to teachers about Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum' (-18% from 2013 to 2015) and 'Provides educational support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students', (-16% from 2013 to 2015). The greatest two increases in current duties responses were 'Provides information to school staff about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and cultural protocols and issues' (+13% from 2013 to 2015) and 'Other' (+10% from 2013 to 2015).

These variations, particularly in the current duties mentioned above across the two sweeps of the regional survey within the groups of IEWs/CECs, are not easily explained without taking into account the potential of systemic influences in The Region at the time. As discussed in Chapter 1, by 2014, it was known through my professional field experience that many schools in The Region had undertaken non-mandatory professional development in The Department policy known as, Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools (EATSIPS) and it was likely they were taking action to embed these perspectives into their school policy and practices. It is argued a possible flow on effect may have been that while inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum would have been expected to occur, it is likely that IEWs/CECs may have been increasingly called upon by staff to provide them with more information, especially about the local area in relation to Australian Indigenous cultures' social and cultural issues and protocols. With more time spent doing this, IEWs/CECs may have had less time to give educational support to students. Such a shift may clarify some of the variations in IEW/CEC responses about current duties from the first to the second sweep of the regional survey. Results in the following sub section of co-work also serve to confirm this proposition.

In relation to the responses of 'Other' as current duties, twelve IEWs/CECs and eight principals provided free form text answers in the 2013 sweep. Of the IEW/CEC responses, these were predominantly student-centred activities with a strong emphasis on student well-being and a slightly less but similar mention of duties related to student vocational attainment. Lesser again, was mention of liaison with community for the school, with only one IEW/CEC indicated they did a current duty of giving advice to teachers about student support. Principals

also gave responses that were mostly about operational student-centred duties, like monitoring attendance or those related to contacting families.

When comparing between IEW/CEC and principal responses in the first sweep of the regional survey for ‘Other’ current duties performed, IEWs/CECs seemed to be involved in more and a wider range of duties than principals realised. At the same time, it also shows that principals considered duties that were not recognised by IEWs/CECs, such as, “Provides feedback of emergent community issues” and “A voice and advocate for the people”. This again shows differences of perception about the scope of the position by both groups. It appears that both groups had different perceptions of the duties of IEWs/CECs indicating there is not congruence of shared perception of duty (see Appendix P). It would also seem there was an underestimation by both groups of the extent of the IEW/CEC role.

In the 2015 sweep, seven IEWs/CECs provided answers to ‘Other’ current duties. Their answers were also student centred and most frequently reflected duties related to liaison with external agencies and those for vocational education for students. Some recorded specific answers about Indigenous celebration duties and some for student well-being (see Appendix Q).

#### ***4.1.1.4 Duties: Desired duties***

In the 2013 sweep, both IEWs/CECs and principals were asked a question about identifying what IEW/CEC duties they would like to see done but were not doing currently and why. Most IEW/CEC responses included a desire to work more with Indigenous students in various ways, others wanted to increase their decision-making input, and others wanted to increase local area understanding and cultural awareness of teachers (See the table presented in Appendix R).

Principals had less variation in responses and most indicated a desire for IEWs/CECs to better support students, especially with attendance. One principal wrote the following comment about wanting their IEW/CEC to work more in, “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols; Curriculum perspectives”. Two principals showed an understanding of underlying issues in local communities citing barriers to undertaking the desired duties as, “family issues” and “tensions between families”. Both sets of respondents most frequently mentioned time as the greatest barrier to prevent the IEWs/CECs to undertake their desired duties. For principals, newness to the school limited their responses to this question (see the table presented in Appendix S). This same question about desired duties was also asked in the second sweep of the regional survey in 2015. Verbatim responses of what the same IEWs/CECs answered in

2013 to 2015 followed by those who only responded in the 2015 IEW/CEC survey are presented in Table 8.

The 2015 responses are not dissimilar to those in 2013 where IEWs/CECs wanted more input into decision making, to work more with teachers, to increase support of Indigenous students and in one case, work better with parents. Lack of time, was again cited by several IEWs/CECs as a common reason that stopped them from undertaking their desired duty. One respondent's comments in 2015 (Respondent 3) were not clearly decipherable, but they could be inferred as a desire to work more with teachers to grow their cultural competence.

Several other 2015 responses to this question give insight to the IEW/CEC and principal relationship. One IEW/CEC wanted to, "Educate teachers my way" and the reason why not being, "blockage at the top" (Respondent 5). This likely reflected a frustration with leadership of the principal and a possible sense of marginalisation and prompted me to wonder, what could be the IEW/CEC and principal relationship in this school? Another IEW/CEC wanted to participate in student behaviour management meetings to provide Indigenous perspectives, but did not offer a reason as to why this was not happening (Respondent 1). Yet another IEW/CEC wanted two duties, to provide more service to the school's Indigenous students by offering homework classes and a dedicated space for Indigenous education in the school. This IEW/CEC gave a reason for not being able to undertake her first desired duty, punctuated with an exclamation mark, "Been advised that I can't due to funding – I would volunteer my time!" (Respondent 8). This could likely be another example of similar frustration with leadership decisions and may show the level of (dis)functionality of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship in this school.

Table 8 IEW/CEC desired duties and preventing reasons

<b>2013-2015 same IEW/CEC verbatim responses</b>		
<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Duties would like to do</b>	<b>Reason/s why currently not doing</b>
1	2013: Be more involved in the decision making on a leadership and school level in relation to Curriculum, Policy; Student Support at school level	2013: Nil
	2015: Behaviour management team meetings to provide ATSI perspectives	2015: Nil
2	2013: In-class assistance and observation of student performance	2013: because I don't get enough time
	2015: EATSIPS in the curriculum	2015: Nil
3	2013: Make sure all teachers know something about the place or community	2013: Nil
	2015: Will teacher will take now good Advise	2015: the teachers will look at us for morrow help
4	2013: not too sure	2013: Nil
	2015: Parent and community engagement. Learn how to better engage parent and community members	2015: Nil
5	2013: Nil	2013: Nil
	2015: Educate teachers my way	2015: Blockage at the top
6	2013: Nil	2013: Nil
	2015: Focus on attendance - to improve overall data	2015: Nil

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**2015 only IEW/CEC verbatim responses**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Duties would like to do</b>	<b>Reason/s why currently not doing</b>
7	2015: Spending quality time with younger students	Due to limited hours unable to work alongside younger students. Time is spent dealing with hard case students
8	2015: I would like to do homework classes  2015: Have a cultural/resource room that parents, carers, community and Elders can access. Display the school's Indigenous artefacts, trophies, awards, information, pamphlets to various services	Been advised that I can't due to funding – I would volunteer my time! Cannot because I've been told there's no room for one
9	2015: Engage more with hub schools and finish work early and during school times	Time is very limited
10	2015: Spend quality time with Prep – Yr. 3	Too busy

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#### 4.1.1.5 Sub section summary

The findings in this sub section reveal more differences than similarities in workforce characteristics and perception tendencies about the working relationship of IEWs/CECs by IEWs/CECs and principals. Figure 4.3 provides summary of these contextual features.

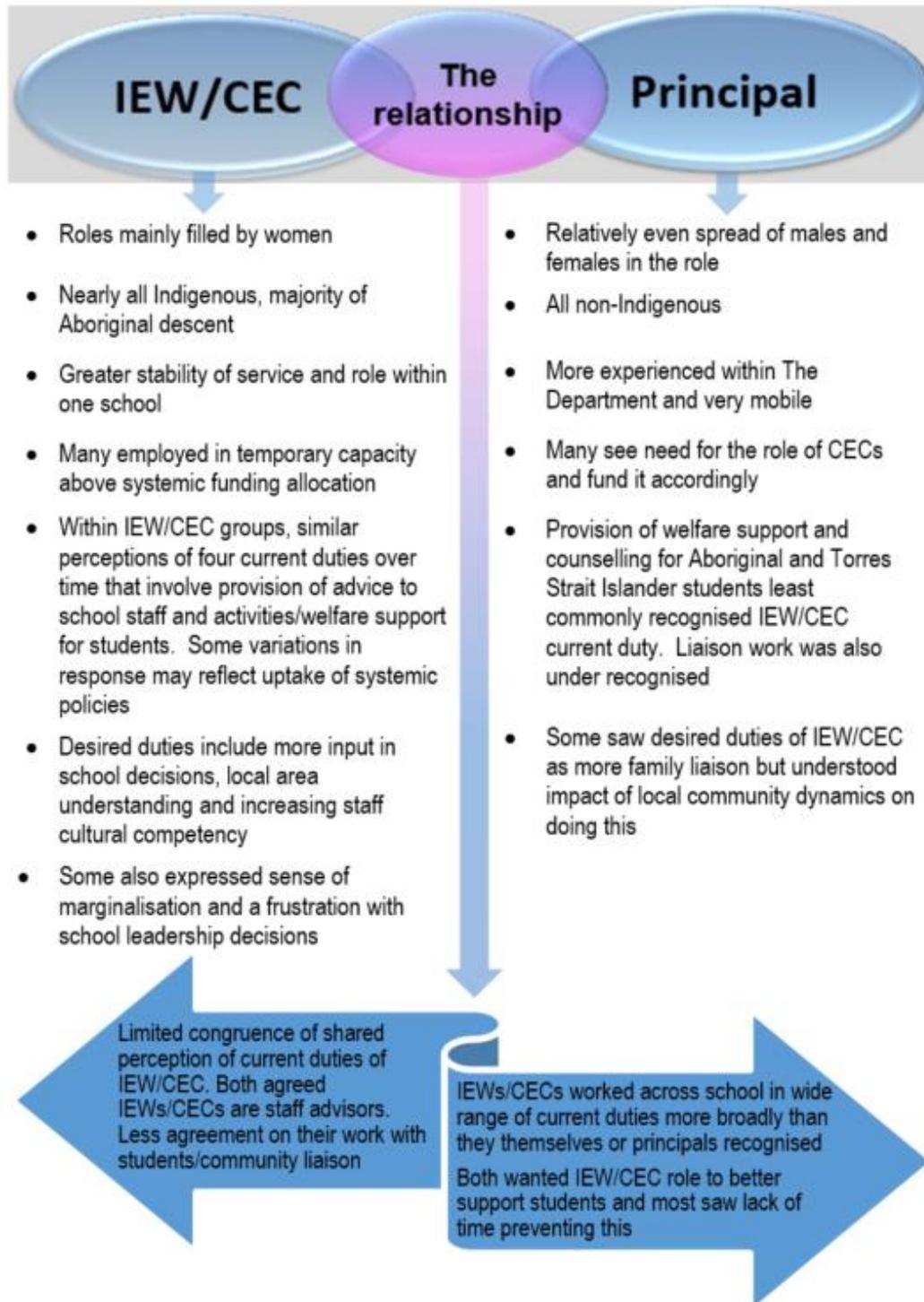


Figure 4.3 Summary of The Region's IEW/CEC and principal contextual features

#### 4.1.2 Co-work

This next sub-section provides findings from the survey about the work IEWs/CECs and principals perceive they undertake together are presented under thematic headings of Shared Events/Activities; Supervision, Role Value and Ideal Co-work. They bring IEW/CEC and principal working relationships in The Region into closer focus.

##### 4.1.2.1 *Shared events/activities*

Both respondent groups were asked in the 2013 sweep to indicate what school events/activities they worked on together and how often they did this using a suggested list to choose from. Of the principals, 27 completed this question offering 75 responses and 30 IEWs/CECs who gave 145 responses. In 2015 the same question about co-work was asked, this time presented as nine multiple choices, with 15 IEWs/CECs giving 55 responses. Responses from both sweeps were collated under seven categories of: Do not work with principal; Student engagement and achievement; Staff capacity building; Curriculum; Cultural activities; Parent/community liaison; and, 'Other'. These were then converted into numeric (percentage) frequencies for that category to show trends of occurrence and are presented in Table 4.4 below.

Standing out in both sweeps about perceptions by IEWs/CECs on what they saw as their co-joint activities with their principals related to cultural activities. The 2013 and 2015 IEWs/CECs responses with the greatest congruence of agreement and least disagreement gap (.6%) was about 'NAIDOC', which stands for National Aboriginal Islander Day of Celebration (National NAIDOC Secretariat, 2018). Noticeably, this particular activity was also frequently listed by principals in 2013 and selected in both sweeps of IEWs/CECs (highlighted green in Table 4.4). As well, in the 2015 sweep even more IEWs/CECs responded to this as co-work. The frequency of this co-work was mostly annually.

The next most common co-work indicated in the 2013 sweep between IEWs/CECs and principals was the implementation of educational policy – EATSIPS, mostly at the frequency of 'as required'. Next was agreement by both IEWs/CECs and principals that in 2013 some IEWs/CECs were not supervised by their principals (both highlighted blue in Table 4.4). The EATSIPS findings can be corroborated by those in the previous subsection about current duties where the same trend was seen. A number of IEWs/CECs are not supervised by their principals and that this increases in 2015 are shown in the next set of results under the heading of Supervision. In the 2013 sweep, one principal commented about their school's NAIDOC celebrations, "DP does this, as principal I do this in intermittent/casual ways".

In 2013 a few IEWs/CECs (5.2%) also mentioned co-work activities as “Other”. These were all different and one-off responses, but could be considered as student-focused, mostly operational and conducted in varying frequencies ranging from weekly, to annually, to as required. Examples of responses included: “ARTIE program”; “tracks to success mentoring program”; “ATSIAP”; Developing Senior Education and Training Plans; and, “School based traineeships”. In the second sweep, 7.6% of IEWs/CECs responded in the “Other” category, again providing student related examples with varying frequencies: “Art project mural”; “On class”; “ARTIE program”; and, “Hearing Health check, One Sight eye check”.

The aspect of co-work that paradoxically had the highest percentage score across both groups in the first sweep (highlighted yellow in Table 9), but the least agreement, was related to student engagement and achievement. In 2015 the greatest percentage of IEW/CEC responses was also in this category (highlighted yellow in Table 9). In both sweeps, more IEWs/CECs (37.2%) thought they undertook this work with principals, than did principals (29.2%). This difference is highlighted pink in Table 9. A similar trend of mismatch of perceptions was also seen earlier in the previous sub section’s findings about current duties.

While the reason for these different perceptions between IEWs/CECs and principals is not easily explained, the reason for a high percentage may be systemically driven. Improving completion of Year 12 and all student attendance, especially for Indigenous students, became high priorities of the Department and consequently The Region from 2015 (Department of Education and Training, 2016) and this policy emphasis may also explain the difference in IEW/CEC responses from the first sweep to the second sweep of the survey.

There was a big change with between group congruence of IEWs/CECs where a 9.6% variation (decrease) occurred from 2013 to 2015 on their perception of co-work they did with their principals relating to parent and/or community liaison (highlighted pink in Table 9). Ironically in 2013, this was the third highest agreed co-work between IEWs/CECs and principals. Principals seemed to recognise the liaison duties of EWs/CECs when it was co-work, but not when it was just the individual duty of IEWs/CECs as was shown in the current duties section above.

Table 9 The Region's IEW/CEC and principal perceptions of their co-work activities

Response types	Category	% IEW/CEC 2013 responses	% principal 2013 responses	% IEW/CEC 2015 responses	% gap IEW/CEC 2013 principal 2013 responses	% gap IEW/CEC 2013 IEW/CEC 2015 responses
Student leadership Personalised Learning Plans Welfare and Discipline Attendance	Student engagement and achievement	37.2%	29.2%	40%	8%	↑2.8%
NAIDOC, other cultural events	Cultural Activities	20.6%	20%	21.8%	.6%	↑1.2%
Community liaison Home visits Indigenous Reference Group	Parent, community liaison	18.6%	22.4%	9%	3.8%	↓9.6%
EATSIPS	Educational policy	10.3%	10.9%	5.4%	.6%	↓4.9%
Professional development Developing Performance Plan	Staff Capacity Building	7.5%	10.9%	9%	3.4%	↑1.5%
Various one-off responses	Other	5.2%	0%	7.6%	5.2%	↑.4%
Do not work together	Not applicable	.6%	2.6%	7.2%	2%	↑6.6%
Literacy, numeracy programs	Curriculum	0%	4%	0%	4%	0%
Response totals		100%	100%	100%		

This variation and reduction is also not easily explained without further research. Equally difficult to determine is that across both sweeps of the survey, no IEW/CEC thought they worked with their principals on aspects of curriculum and yet in 2013, some principals had indicated they thought they did this work with their IEWs/CECs.

The findings in the following part of this subsection in relation to supervision of IEWs/CECs may provide some insight to these variations.

#### **4.1.2.2 *Supervision***

When asked in the first sweep who was their direct supervisor, 15 out of the 35 IEW/CEC respondents (43%) indicated their principal, with most meeting ‘as required’, and only two IEWs/CECs indicated they met weekly or fortnightly. Only one IEW/CEC in a secondary school was supervised by their principal. The remaining IEWs/CECs were supervised by other classified officers in the school such as the Deputy Principal (twelve), Business Services Manager (three) or ‘Other’, usually a Head of Department (five). The second sweep of IEWs/CECs revealed an even smaller percentage of IEWs/CEC were directly supervised by their principal (23.5%), all of whom were in state primary schools. Some of the same IEWs/CECs who responded in 2013 and then again in 2015, showed a shift from their principal supervising them to another classified officer. This low and then reduced supervision by the principal could likely explain why there are findings of mismatches in perceptions by principals about IEW/CEC duties as well as perceptions of co-work between IEWs/CECs and principals.

Interestingly, another co-work aspect that attracted low responses and a difference in perception in both survey sweeps for IEWs/CECs was related to annual performance development plans (APDPs) for IEWs/CECs, a requirement for all staff in The Department (Department of Education and Training, 2017). In 2013, only 10.9% of principals indicated they worked with IEWs/CECs on their APDPs and 7.5% of IEWs/CECs indicated they worked with their principals on “Discussing your Developing Performance Plan”. Two other IEWs/CECs wrote a question mark (?) beside this option, a third wrote “I do everything with DP, not principal” and two more wrote the comments, “not yet – haven’t reviewed and discussed” and “hasn’t happened at all in 4 years”. In 2015, a slightly larger group (9%) of IEWs/CECs indicated they co-worked on their APDPs with their principal and yet one other wrote this comment, “never happened in the 6 years @ my school”. Whether principals worked with IEWs/CECs or not, what is evident is that few IEWs/CECs were provided with ongoing guidance and feedback about their work performance.

#### **4.1.2.3 *Role value/Ideal co-work***

As described in Chapter 3, the second sweep format of the survey was identical to the first, except it omitted the recruitment section and instead included two new questions about the IEW/CEC role and activities of work together with their principal (see Appendix G). The two new questions revealed further insight to IEW/CEC perceptions of their role and working relationships with their principals.

In the first new question, IEWs/CECs were asked to indicate if they felt their role was valued in the school and to provide a short-answer response about by whom and why they felt this way. The majority (13) of IEWs/CECs indicated 'Yes' and all except two provided some short answers to the next parts of the question. The most commonly mentioned people IEW/CECs felt valued by, were teachers and "Admin staff". Only one IEW/CEC specifically mentioned the principal. Five IEWs/CECs indicated they felt valued by all in the school, with one IEW/CEC indicating, "half of the staff". Two IEWs/CECs also mentioned students, parents and the community as those who valued them. Reasons for feeling valued included job satisfaction, receiving positive feedback and being consulted in decision making. Of note, three of these IEW/CEC respondents also indicated 'No' on their survey. The reasons they provided were, "Sometimes I feel of no value to the school"; "Having issues with staff I feel I'm on my own and my voice is not being heard to resolve the issue"; "Sometimes I don't get consulted with decisions". Additionally there were three IEWs/CECs who indicated just a 'No' response with one offering a comment, "Principal does not mention whom the CEC or inform students of CEC job". These responses and comments reflect a likely sense of isolation.

The second new question attracted nine responses about ideal co-work ranging from lists of significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander celebration days to specific school activities such as an early childhood program, enrolments of new Indigenous students, suspension re-entry interviews and going on excursions relating to EATSIPS. Of those few who provided a reason as to why this was their ideal, answers included comments about wanting to incorporate Indigenous events more within the school and that more networking between school and parents could better support their students.

#### **4.1.2.4 *Sub section summary***

The findings above reveal a general lack of agreement between the IEW/CEC and principal groups on what they perceived they did together. This gives a further indication on the

state of the working relationship. Figure 4.4 provides an outline of IEW/CEC and principals individual characteristics and their shared perceptions of their co-work.

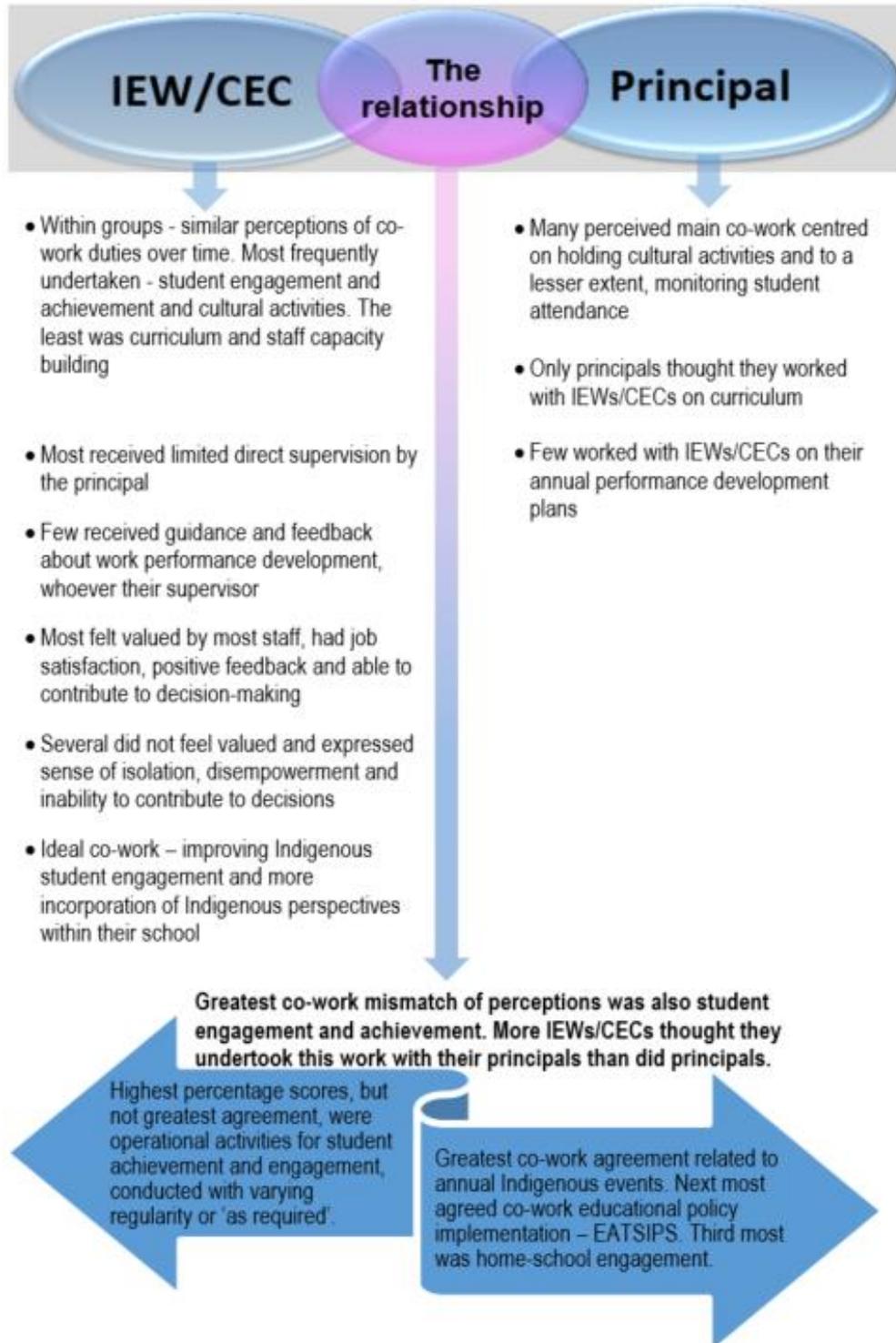


Figure 4.4 The Region's IEW/CEC and principal characteristics and shared perceptions of co-work

### **4.1.3 Recruitment**

The final question in the first sweep asked would respondents, “be willing to participate further in this research project?” As explained in Chapter 3, the majority of respondents indicated they were willing to participate further and mentioned above, there was no recruitment question in the second sweep of the survey.

### **4.1.4 Section summary**

The regional survey provides a broad representational view of what is generally happening in the working relationship for IEWs/CECs and principals across schools from remote communities to those within regional and urban contexts in The Region. Participant responses indicated more differences than similarities relating to demographics, perceptions about IEW/CEC duties and the co-work performed by IEWs/CECs and principals.

IEWs/CECs are mostly Aboriginal and tend to have worked for longer in their school than principals who tend to be very mobile and all were non-Indigenous. Perceptions of the current duties of the IEW/CEC role varies between the respondent groups; that is, what IEWs/CECs perceive they did was generally more and different to what principals thought IEWs/CECs did, while at the same time, principals identified duties that were not recognised by IEWs/CECs. This likely suggests an underestimation of the role and duties of IEWs/CECs by both groups.

IEWs/CECs and principals did have shared agreement that one of the current duties of IEWs/CECs was to advise staff about Indigenous culture, community matters and student welfare. Both also shared a similar view that it would be desirable for IEWs/CECs to better support students, but a lack of time was the most commonly mentioned barrier mentioned by both groups to achieve this. A few principals also showed an appreciation of the complexities of local community life situations as another influencing barrier to IEWs/CECs achieving this duty.

In the second sweep of the regional survey, being consulted in decisions was a positive contributor to IEW/CEC job satisfaction for the majority of IEWs/CECs, however there continued to be a number (six out of 16) IEWs/CECs who indicated they were not consulted and had an inability to contribute to decisions. These IEWs/CECs also expressed they were undervalued, isolated and disempowered. Such responses and comments reflect a likely sense of marginalisation and frustration with leadership decisions. Also in the second sweep, ideal duties

cited by many IEWs/CECs included improving Indigenous student engagement and more incorporation of Indigenous perspectives within their school.

An examination of current co-work also showed differences of perception and where there was agreement, the activities undertaken between the IEW/CEC and principal appeared limited. These included the ‘one-off’ Indigenous annual events like NAIDOC or mostly operational activities for students requiring parent involvement (i.e. disciplinary matters or attendance). EATSIPS, was the one whole-school developmental activity that was seen as co-work by many respondents.

Finally, potential to develop the capability of IEWs/CECs within the school seemed inadequate. Most IEWs/CECs were supervised by others rather than the principal and very few reported they undertook ongoing work performance development processes with their supervisor, whoever this was. Figure 4.5 provides a visual summary of what has been presented above as the broad view of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship as found across The Region.

With this expansive picture in mind, the next section of this chapter will now concentrate on a case study comprising of a purposeful sample of exemplary pairs of IEWs/CECs and principals who were known to work well together in four different schools from across varying locations within The Region. With a more specific view, the case study findings take this research closer to reducing the ambiguity of the working relationship between an IEW/CEC and principal and contribute to a deeper understanding to the answer of the first research question: *What is the current IEW/CEC and principal relationship?*

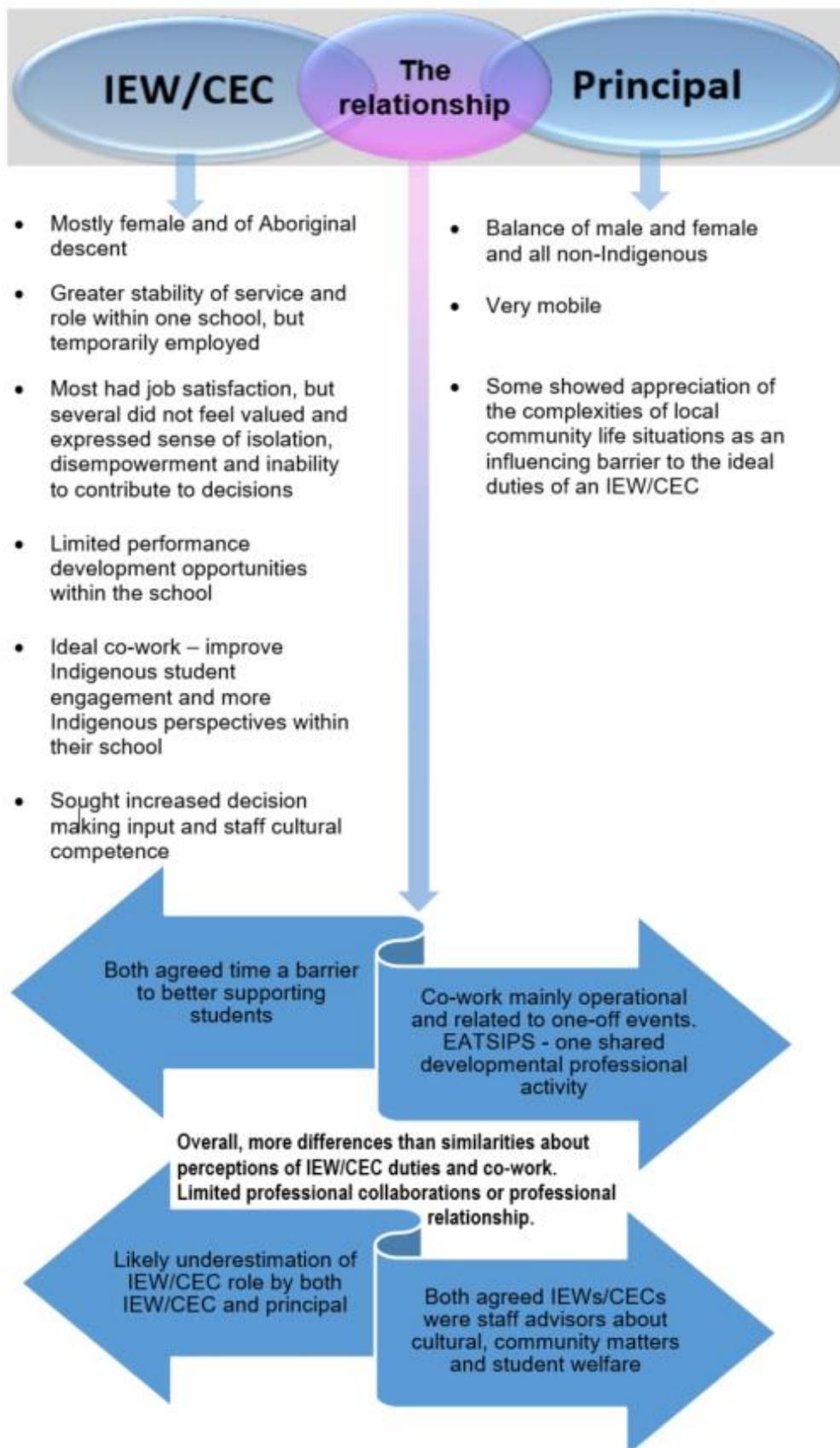


Figure 4.5 Summary of The Region's IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship

## **4.2 A specific view**

This section begins with a description of the case study, the general demographic context of the four schools and their exemplary IEW/CEC and principal pairs are provided. Following the description is a set of categories referred as relational dynamics (RDs). These emerged from analysis of data gathered during Phase 2 (2014-2015) of the research and, specifically, the first cycle interviews for all four schools (2014) and the second cycle interview for School D (2015) of the case study. Finally, an outline is provided as to what each pair identified at the first cycle interview as future actions (Action Plans) for improving Indigenous education in their school.

### **4.2.1 Description of the case study**

It should be noted, that in this section - for reasons of confidentiality, both groups of participants are named only by their generic roles and a letter to coincide with that of the school they work in (i.e. IEW/CEC A works with Principal A in School A) and when the IEW/CEC and principal are named as a pair, for ease of writing, they are named as Pair A. With this in mind, as mentioned above and earlier explained in Chapter 3, there was a change in participant members within the three year period of the research. As such, School D changed principals in early 2015 and so the two are delineated as Principal D1 (2014) and Principal D2 (2015-2016). While the IEW/CEC in School D, IEW/CEC D1 did not change, for the purposes of this study, the IEW/CEC and principal pairs are identified as Pair D1 and Pair D2. It should also be noted that throughout 2015, Principal D2 remained as acting principal and not until after a merit selection process later in the year, was Principal D2 permanently appointed to the school for the commencement of 2016. Additionally, Principal D2 invited another teacher aide who was Indigenous to join in our interviews during the second and third cycle site visits (2015-2016). This participant is identified as IEW/CEC D2. Following is an overview of demographics all case study pairs within their school context during the period 2014 - 2016 (see Table 4.7).

Each school's Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) is also listed to provide further insight into school context complexity. ICSEA is defined on the My School website as,

Key factors in students' family backgrounds (parents' occupation, school education and non-school education) have an influence on students' educational outcomes at school. In addition to these student-level factors, research has shown that school-level factors (a school's geographical location and the proportion of Indigenous students a school caters for) need to be considered when summarising educational advantage or disadvantage

at the school level. ICSEA provides a scale that numerically represents the relative magnitude of this influence, and is constructed taking into account both student- and school-level factors. (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2017d)

Table 10 shows all participants in this case study are predominantly female, especially the IEWs/CECs. All IEWs/CECs were from an Aboriginal cultural background and all principals were non-Indigenous. All participants have a range of work experiences in terms of time served, from that in their school, in their current role and to that within The Department in general. In 2014, two IEWs/CECs (IEW/CEC B and IEW/CEC C) had worked in their school longer than their current principal, although at the same time, three of the four principals had longer careers in The Department than their IEWs/CECs. In 2015 this trend of IEWs/CECs working longer in their school than their principal was reflected when School D had a new principal appointed upon the departure of Principal D1. Principal D2, came with a long career in other roles in The Department.

It can also be seen in Table 10 that all studied pairs had worked together for varying timespans. In 2014, Pair A had been in the same school together for almost 10 years, Pair B were very new to each other (6-10 weeks), with Principal B newly appointed to the school mid-year, Pair C and Pair D1 had been working together for about 3 years. In 2015, all pairs continued working together except Pair D2 where their working relationship was less than six months old at the time of their first interview. In 2016 all pairs continued to work together with no changes to participants.

The four schools in the case study were reasonably representative of those from across The Region: a range of ICSEA ratings (low to high); varying total student enrolments (from small to larger schools); varying Indigenous student enrolments (from low to high); were in different sectors (primary and secondary); and, were in differing locales of The Region (rural, coastal, town or city).

Table 10 Case study school and IEW/CEC and principal demographics during 2014-2016

School	School type	ICSEA	Total enrolment	% Indigenous students	Current role, gender, Indigeneity	Time in school	Time in current role	Time in The Department	Time worked together
A	Primary	>1000	550 - 600	5 -10%	IEW/CEC A, female Indigenous, Aboriginal	6-10 years	6-10 years	6-10 years	6-10 years
	Regional city 1				Principal A, female non-Indigenous	6-10 years	6-10 years	21-30 years	
B	Primary	<850	270-320	60 - 65%	IEW/CEC B, female Indigenous, Aboriginal	16-20 years	1-5 years	16-20 years	6-10 weeks
	Regional city 2				Principal B, female non-Indigenous	6-10 weeks	6-10 weeks	16-20 years	
C	Secondary	>950	950-1000	10 -15%	IEW/CEC C, female Indigenous, Aboriginal	6-10 years	6-10 years	6-10 years	1-5 years
	Regional city 1				Principal C, male non-Indigenous	1-5 years	11-15 years	21-30 years	
D	Secondary	>900	600 - 650	15 - 20%	IEW/CEC D1, female Indigenous, Aboriginal	1-5 years	1-5 years	1-5 years	1-5 years
					Principal D1 (2014), female, non-Indigenous	1-5 years	6-10 years	21-30 years	
	Coastal town				IEW/CEC D1, female Indigenous, Aboriginal	1-5 years	1-5 years	1-5 years	< 6 months
					IEW/CEC D2, female Indigenous, Aboriginal	6-10 years	6-10 years	6-10 years	
Principal D2 (2015-16), female, non-Indigenous	< 6 months	< 6 months	21-30 years						

Not included in the table, but equally noteworthy are two other characteristics already known to me through prior professional field experience. These are corroborated through the above findings from the regional survey and were noted at the first site visits of the case study schools. The first characteristic is organisational and is related to the funding of the IEW/CEC role. Over the 2014 - 2016 period, two out of the five IEWs/CECs worked full time, three worked part-time. In three schools the roles were partly systemically funded (through a portion of the regional permanent allocation for CECs or other regional staffing) and partly school funded so as to top them up to work more days in the week. The latter portion was as temporary staffing. The other school had to wholly allocate school funds to support the IEW/CEC role and this was also as temporary staffing. All case study school principals had therefore allocated some school funding to enable the IEW/CEC role to function in an ongoing capacity, albeit at temporary rates.

The second characteristic is related to local area familiarity and connection to the school by the IEW/CEC. It was found all IEWs/CECs knew the local area well, having lived in it for over ten years and had worked as long as, if not longer at the school than their principal. One IEW/CEC had extended familial connections to the local Aboriginal community. Three IEWs/CECs had prior further connection to the school through their own children who had attended there. For two of these IEWs/CECs, having their own children enrolled was the way they began their work at the school. They reported they had started attending the school as a volunteer parent “I was volunteering, the time before that” (IEW/CEC B, Interview 1, p.10) and then as time went on, were offered paid work as a non-teaching staff member.

The above description of the participating schools and participants in the case study sets the backdrop to a specific view of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship. The next subsection provides findings as revealed by answers to and discussion about a questionnaire administered during the first site visit interviews with each pair. These findings provide a detailed insight into the state of the professional relationship that was found to exist between every case study IEW/CEC and principal at the commencement of the study’s CPAR approach.

#### **4.2.2 Relationship dynamics**

As noted in Chapter 3, during the first cycle of interviews IEW/CEC and principal pairs from each school met with me and the IEW/CEC and principal independently responded to a paper partnership assessment questionnaire adapted from an online tool kit developed during the Same Kids Same Goals project. In the situation of School D, due to the change of

principals, IEW/CEC D1 completed the same partnership assessment questionnaire twice – once with Principal D1 and then again with Principal D2.

Equally of note was that all pairs, no matter how long they had worked together, gave identical written responses on the questionnaire to two action statements. That is, all five pairs indicated they, ‘Strongly Agreed’ to these statements,

B4: We accept that there may be gaps in our capabilities/skills in doing our jobs and it is okay to admit this.

I2: In this school, the Principal recognises the skills and capabilities of the CEC/IEW that are formed through their experience (of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture).

Almost all pairs, except Pair B where IEW/CEC B had indicated ‘Mostly Agree’ with an annotation of a plus sign, identically indicated ‘Strongly Agreed’, to this action statement:

A1: We appreciate what each of us can offer to bring a better outcome for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. i.e. the principal provides guidance and educational expertise and the CEC/IEW brings cultural insight and linkages to the community.

Table 11 captures a numeric summary of the paper partnership assessment questionnaire agreement responses for all case study pairs. It shows there was high agreement between each pair. The next level of agreement, where a majority of action statements attracted combinations of ‘Strongly Agreed’ and ‘Mostly Agreed’ by each pair member, also gives indication of the high correlation of perception between and across all pairs. This means with almost every pair there were very high levels of common agreements, except Pair D2, who had slightly less identical agreeing perceptions and slightly more disagreeing responses than the other pairs. Even so, they too, in the main, had high agreement.

Table 11 Summary of paper questionnaire responses

<b>Written responses to the action statements</b>	<b>Pair A</b>	<b>Pair B</b>	<b>Pair C</b>	<b>Pair D1</b>	<b>Pair D2</b>
Identical ‘Strongly Agree’	20/44	10/44	28/44	11/44	15/44
Identical ‘Mostly Agree’	9/44	10/44	2/44	10/44	2/44
Identical ‘Disagree’	2/44	0/44	0/44	4/44	3/44
Total identical responses	31/44	20/44	29/44	25/44	20/44
Differing but still agreeing (combinations of ‘Strongly and Mostly’)	11/44	23/44	13/44	15/44	15/44
Total of all identical or similar responses	42/44 95.4%	43/44 97.7%	42/44 95.4%	39/44 88.6%	35/44 79.5%
Total and number of who in the pair disagreed with the action statements	2/44 CEC (2)	1/44 P (1)	2/44 P (2)	5/44 CEC (2) P (3)	9/44 CEC (5) P (4)

Analysis of these partnership assessment questionnaire responses led to a creation of six categories of relationship dynamics: Trusting Interpersonal Communication; Community Engagement Collaboration; Shared Vision and Values; Role Agency and Solidarity; Indigenous Education Advocacy and Knowledge Sharing; and, Capability Development. They emerged as evidence of the key ingredients for a productive and positive professional relationship between the case study IEWs/CECs and principals.

Findings about these dynamics, while they were each considered as equally important by every case study pair, are presented in order of the most to the least enacted by all pairs. The percentage average of all pairs’ agreement to undertaking actions stated in the action statements determined this order. Under each heading, table summaries of all pairs’ written responses are included and are colour coded according to agreement type: ‘Strongly Agree’ and ‘Mostly Agree’ are shades of green; ‘Sometimes’ and ‘Disagree’ are shaded pink and red respectively and the two unanimous identical strong agreements across all pairs are shaded blue. Explanations are also provided within each table about the agreement type coding used and the percentage scores of the various agreements are included.

The written questionnaire responses were corroborated at interview by comments provided by pairs when they reflected on their written answers. Additionally, some participants adjusted their written responses after the discussion. These findings are presented below in detail under each relationship dynamic. The order of the most agreed undertakings within each relationship dynamic by the case study pairs were:

1. Trusting Interpersonal Communication (97.8% agreed undertaking)
2. Community Engagement Collaboration (94.4%)
3. Shared Vision and Values (92%)
4. Role Agency and Solidarity (88.9%)
5. Indigenous Education Advocacy and knowledge sharing (77.2%)
6. Capability Development (75%)

#### ***4.2.2.1 Trusting interpersonal communication.***

Nine out of the 44 action statements were found to all have characteristics relating to trusting interpersonal communication. This relationship dynamic attracted the highest percentage of identical or a combination of agreed undertakings in the written questionnaire statements with all five pairs (97.8%). The longest working together pair, Pair A had the most identical agreements (seven out of nine) with IEW/CEC A indicating ‘Strongly Agree’ and Principal A indicating ‘Mostly Agree’ in the other two statements. The newest pair, Pair B had a slightly smaller number of identical agreements (four out of nine) than all pairs, but they did not record disagreements with any of the nine statements. Table 12 provides a summary of written partnership assessment questionnaire responses and findings for the relational dynamic of trusting interpersonal communication.

Table 12 Trusting interpersonal relationships questionnaire responses

Key Relationship Dynamic	Statement	School A		School B		School C		School D		I/C D1	P D2
		I/C A	P A	I/C B	P B	I/C C	P C	I/C D1	P D1		
Trusting Interpersonal Communication	A3	SA	SA	MA	MA	SA	SA	MA	SA	SA	SA
	B3	SA	SA	MA	SA	MA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA
	B4	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA
	D1	MA	MA	SA	MA	SA	SA	MA	MA*	MA	SA
	D2	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	MA	SA
	D3	SA	MA	MA+	SA	MA	SA	MA	SA	D	MA
	D4	SA	SA	MA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA
	D7	SA	MA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	MA*	MA	SA
	F2	SA	SA	MA	SA	SA	SA	SA	MA	SA	SA

SA = Strongly Agree; MA =Mostly Agree; D = Disagree; \* = written comment added; + = an arrow indicating movement to ‘Strongly Agree’.

Identical Agreements 28/45 = 62.2%; SA/SA 25/45 = 55.5%; MA/SA 16/45 = 35.5%; MA/MA 3/45 = 6.6%; D/D 0 = 0%; 1D 1/45 = 2.2%; Agreed Undertaking = 97.7%.

#### 4.2.2.1.1 A3: Discussing difficult and challenging issues.

Four out of the five pairs, aside from Pair D1, had identical written agreements about their willingness to discuss difficult and challenging issues. Pair D1 did have agreement, but it was not identical. At interview, while the other pairs chose not to comment about this particular statement, Pair A did mention they were comfortable to have hard conversations. IEW/CEC A and Principal A had both marked their questionnaire with ‘Strongly Agree’. At interview they acknowledged they agreed with the statement,

Researcher: But I think, you know, if there’s an elephant in the room, can you discuss it?

Principal A: Yeah

IEW/CEC A: Yeah

Principal A: Definitely

IEW/CEC A: Yeah (Pair A, Interview 1, p. 4).

#### 4.2.2.1.2 *B3: Time and independence.*

Statement B3 related to role autonomy and it was apparent at interview all participants within pairs enjoyed this aspect of their work. IEW/CEC A commented that she believed she was self-sufficient and had ready access to her principal, preferring to speak with her rather than use emails,

IEW/CEC A: Yeah, sometimes emails are

Principal A: [Cuts in] tricky

IEW/CEC A: Yeah

Principal A: [Laughs]

IEW/CEC A: They are and they're um but if I see her I'll say, I've got to tell you something or I've got to ask you something (Pair A, interview 1, p.10).

IEW/CEC C indicated 'Mostly Agree' for her written response and at interview expressed she had high autonomy. She explained her thinking behind this answer and her other answers which was not related a lack of autonomy, but rather issues of occurrence and time. IEW/CEC C believed she had a good working relationship with her principal and they thought on the same level:

Well you know there was probably a few that I had Mostly Agree but that's because I think it's just um, time management or the opportunity doesn't arise. Um but not because it doesn't [pause] it's not like we don't agree or something. Similarly it's not because we're not thinking on the same level (Pair C, Interview 1, pp. 3-4).

Pairs B, D1 and D2 did not make comment about this statement at interview.

#### 4.2.2.1.3 *B4: Acceptance of each other*

Mentioned above, statement B4 was one of the two statements that shared an identical response of shared strong agreement by every pair on the questionnaire. This is a significant result and likely reflects why all pairs had high agreements for many of the other statements in the questionnaire. Interestingly, no commentary was made in the interview by any pair.

#### 4.2.2.1.4 D1: Regular meetings

Statement D1 referenced regular meetings with each other and all indicated on the written questionnaire they did meet. The nature and frequency of these meetings were better understood at interview, and for two pairs, keeping to regular meetings was an apparent issue. Pair A said at interview it was on a “need to basis” and “we’re unstructured more than structured” (IEW/CEC A, Pair A, Interview 1, p.15). Pair B, newly formed, met fortnightly at a scheduled time after school, “we’re unpacking a lot of issues and concerns and aligning [IEW/CEC B]’s role to give her clarity. So that’s what we’ve been doing” (Principal B, Pair B, Interview 1, p.7). Pair C indicated on the questionnaire they both ‘Strongly Agree’ they met regularly, but Principal C said of the time they have, “We don’t get near enough” (Pair C, Interview 1, p.18). Pair D1 identically agreed on the questionnaire they met, but Principal D1 wrote a comment on her questionnaire against this statement, “Meeting times not working very well” and at interview said, “I put mostly agree but our meeting times aren’t working very well, [name of IEW/CEC D], are they?” (Pair D1, Interview 1, p.25) then shortly afterwards they spoke about their lack of meeting opportunity and agreed they had to have more scheduled meetings:

Principal D1: It’s just been a disaster. I mean we still talk a lot mostly more unstructured but I really don’t know, and we need to get back into those structured meeting times because that’s um, where we really,

IEW/CEC D1: We really did more stuff

Principal D1: Yeah, when we were doing them regularly, we were really good

IEW/CEC D1: We stayed on track (Pair D1, Interview 1, pp. 25-26).

Principal D2 and IEW/CEC D1 had ‘Strongly Agree’ and ‘Mostly Agree’, respectively, on the questionnaire, but made no comment at interview.

#### 4.2.2.1.5 D2: Listen to each other

Statement D2: *We feel that we are listened to by each other*, had four out of the five pairs with identical ‘Strongly Agree’ responses. Pair A were very much in agreement and said:

IEW/CEC A: Like I said, I trust what I say to her, that she’s going to understand it to her affect and [if] she doesn’t understand it, she’ll ask me...

Principal A: [Cuts in and finishes the sentence off for the IEW/CEC] questions. Yes.

IEW/CEC A: Yes and how that will impact and do this and everything (Pair A, Interview 1, pp. 15-16).

Principal A then also reinforced her high level of trust and autonomy of the IEW/CEC when she said, “yeah, that’s right and [name of IEW/CEC A]’s great because she uses her initiative and that’s a really, makes it easy then” (Pair A, Interview 1, p.16). The other pairs did not specifically give comment about this statement.

#### 4.2.2.1.6 D3: *Know each other well*

Statement D3: *We know each other well enough to be able to predict each other’s reactions and responses to some situations and hence prepare for our discussions accordingly*, was also agreed by every pair with either ‘Mostly Agree’ or ‘Strongly Agree’, except IEW/CEC D1 who had in 2014 ‘Mostly Agreed’ with Principal D1 but in 2015, disagreed with Principal D2. Recognising this difference gave Pair D2 an opportunity to speak honestly with each other. IEW/CEC D1 expressed tentativeness about the principal and Principal D2 acknowledged that others in her previous schools had been similarly initially cautious:

IEW/CEC D1: D3. I, I disagreed on that one

Principal D2: Yeah. I was a bit um, [reads out statement D3]

IEW/CEC D1: I’m, I’m going to be honest here [laughs]

Researcher: Yeah, that’s good

IEW/CEC D1: There are sometimes I see [name of Principal D2] and I don’t know how to approach her,

Principal D2: [Laughs]

IEW/CEC D1: I get a bit scared [this was said with a smile]

Principal D2: [Laughs]

IEW/CEC D2: And I don’t know why [laughs] Not because...

Principal D2: [Cuts in] Where I do, I, you know, not because [name of IEW/CEC D1]’ll be alright about that and we’ll just go and have a talk to her and go and find out

IEW/CEC D1: It’s not because how she looks or anything, it’s just, you know I’m just a bit scared

Principal D2: And other people have said that to me before... (Pair D2, Interview 2, pp. 27-28).

Then IEW/CEC D1 agreed that she wanted more time to better know the principal,

I'm a bit like that at the moment and it's probably because I'm still trying to get to know [name of Principal D2]. Yeah, I'd like to fully know her first more before I'm really open (Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 28).

4.1.1.1.1 *D4: Understanding impact of communication on job effectiveness*

Statement D4 reflected a level of self-awareness of the effect of behaviour on others and each other. All principals indicated 'Strongly Agree' as did all IEWs/CECs, except IEW/CEC B, who indicated 'Mostly Agree' on the written questionnaire. IEW/CEC A gave a short and simple response at interview when this statement was read out and she said, "Always" (Pair A, Interview 1, p. 17). No other participant made comment about this action statement at interview which could be due to their recognition of shared agreement.

4.1.1.1.2 *D7: Seen actively communicating and working together*

Statement D7 related to the IEW's/CEC's and principal's work together in the eyes of the school community. Pair B, the newest pair, agreed the parent community saw them working co-operatively and then they discussed that staff saw them in the same way:

IEW/CEC B: Staff have said, "You're getting on with [name of principal] aren't you?"

Principal B: Staff have? Who has?

IEW/CEC B No just staff.

Principal B: Staff in general

IEW/CEC B: Yeah. Here. "You're getting on with [name of principal], eh?"

Principal B: That's good. That's good they are sayin' that! (Pair B, Interview 1, p. 2).

Pair D1 had both indicated on the questionnaire that they agreed with the statement. However Principal D1 also put a question mark after the statement and wrote this comment, 'Some don't necessarily know what we do'. At interview their resulting discussion emphasised that while the community may know what they do together, they had doubts as to whether the school staff knew what they did together,

Principal D1: But I just said, I don't know that others always know what we are doing. You know like our, the advisory meeting, most of the staff, it's

on our calendar, but I think we probably need to invite staff to come to that more, you know I don't think, not that

IEW/CEC D1: I've asked them

Principal D1: Yeah, but I don't think they necessarily know [emphasising the word know].

IEW/CEC D1: I asked HOD's to come. Head of Department to come to our meetings. You know just to meet some of the parents and talk about, you know, what they do in the curriculum and all that sort of stuff. That's what I'd like (Pair D1, Interview 1, pp.27-28).

Principal D1 and IEW/CEC D1 reflected further and their comments showed a growing realisation that while they worked together with the local community, their work together was not as visible with the staff:

Principal D1: But things like, um when we worked at NAIDOC, but I don't know that everybody else really knows that we do that, like we work, you know, that's just what I'm thinking. Not that you know, I don't know that they always know what we do

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah, that's right, because we do work together like for NAIDOC and all that sort of stuff with the community, but the teachers don't know that [laughs] like fundraising for culture camp [laughs]

Principal D1: But you know that's nice, I think for the community and the community they see us working together. So the community knows

IEW/CEC D1: Knows how we work together

Principal D1: Together

IEW/CEC D1: Yep

Principal D1: But I don't know about the staff (Pair D1, Interview 1, pp. 28-29).

In particular, Principal D1 reflected that she needed to change the strategy about staff attending the school's Indigenous community advisory group meetings:

I think, I think we've said they've been invited, but nobody's turned up. And even if we say we want you to come and present something, you know like present how SOSE is doing really well, um, a lot of Indigenous perspectives so if they've got something, a reason to be there, that might actually put them on the spot a bit, if they have to turn up and then once they come, I mean, the meetings are so much nicer than our P&C meetings! [Laughs] (Pair D1, Interview 1, p. 30).

Pair D1's increasing awareness of how their actions were at the exclusion of staff and inadvertently led to a lack of engagement, became even more apparent during discussion of the final action statement, J5. Interestingly, such a realisation was also similar for Principal D2 when she reflected on the statement J5 at her interview with IEW/CEC D1. Dialogue that shows this important realisation by both pairs is captured in the final part of subsection 4.4.2.3.3 Shared Views and Vision within the findings about interview discussions for statement J5.

#### 4.1.1.1.3 *F2: Respect for decisions*

All pairs had written agreements with this statement F2: *We acknowledge that there may be occasions when one of us will need to make decisions independently and the reasons for such decisions are respected and discussed.* At interview IEW/CEC A said, "Yes, coz if something's happened in the afternoon, I've already gone, um, [name of Principal A] will deal with it and come and let me know the next day what's happened and, um, go from there" (Pair A, Interview 1, p. 26). IEW/CEC C also made reference to this at interview when she was describing how she had set up a transition program with her school and a nearby feeder state primary school, "I made a decision that, but I did not involve my boss [looks at the principal and laughs] just made the decision and told him afterwards [laughs]" (Pair C, Interview 2, p. 32).

#### 4.2.2.2 *Community engagement collaboration*

Six out of the 44 action statements, with their associated written and interview responses, all related to collaboration between the IEW/CEC and principal for school community engagement. This relationship dynamic attracted the second highest level of identical or a combination of agreed undertakings in the written questionnaire with all five pairs (94.4%). Table 13 provides a summary of the written partnership assessment questionnaire responses and findings for the relational dynamic of community engagement collaboration.

Noteworthy is that while all pairs did have a majority of agreements, their written responses indicate more that were 'Mostly Agree' and not as many were 'Strongly Agree'. That said, the only pair to have written disagreement about actions of the IEW/CEC and principal to engage the community was Pair D2. At interview, discussion about the varying types of agreement and disagreement enabled reflection and led each pair to recognise this was an area requiring further development. The findings about their discussions for this relationship dynamic are presented next.

Table 13 Collaboration for community engagement questionnaire responses

Key Relationship Dynamic	Statement	School A		School B		School C		School D			
		I/C	P	I/C	P	I/C	P	I/C	P	I/C	P
		A	A	B	B	C	C	D1	D1	D1	D2
Community Engagement Collaboration	B2	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	MA+*	SA	SA	MA	SA
	J3	SA	MA	SA	SA	SA	MA*	MA	MA	MA	SA
	D6	MA	SA	MA	SA	SA	SA	SA	MA	SA	SA
	E2	MA	MA	MA	MA	SA	MA*	MA	MA	MA	SA
	J1	MA	MA	MA	MA	SA	SA	MA	MA	MA	D
	G3	MA	MA	MA+	SA	SA	SA	MA	MA	D	D
	J2	SA	SA	MA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	MA	SA

SA = Strongly Agree; MA = Mostly Agree; D = Disagree; \* = written comment added; + = an arrow indicating movement to ‘Strongly Agree’.

Identical agreements 21/35 = 60%; SA/SA 11/35 = 31.4%; MA/SA 13/35 = 37.1%; MA/MA 10/35 = 28.5%; D/D 1/35 = 2.8%; 1D 1/35 = 2.8%; Agreed Undertaking = 94.4%.

#### 4.2.2.2.1 B2 and J3: Co-operatively plan for activities for Indigenous students

Statements B2 & J3 were grouped together because they both emphasised the co-operative nature of planning required between the IEW/CEC and principal to increase engagement of Indigenous students and their communities. Pair A had agreements with these action statements and at interview talked about an important regular school activity called ‘Culture Club’ that grew out of them together recognising that some Indigenous students in their school did not know about their cultural family history, “She [a student] was disconnected, you know, she was starting to ask a lot of questions about her, you know, culture” (Principal A, Pair A, Interview 1, p.8). IEW/CEC A described that she ran their Culture Club for 45 minutes every Friday at the end of the month:

IEW/CEC A: And then when we get together there are kids that have that lack of cultural background because they still live the Indigenous life, but they, and these kids will come up with these questions like, “Oh, but why?” “Oh but why?”

Principal A: Um yeah

IEW/CEC A: Because we do [pauses]. So and that's what this is all about.  
Learning and [pauses]

Principal A: Yeah

IEW/CEC A: Asking and finding out

Principal: [Cuts in] more questions (Pair A, Interview 1, p. 9).

Pair A agreed they work together to invite parents to the school, but they had not “had anything this year” (Principal A, Pair A, Interview 1, p. 33) because the principal had received positive feedback about this from a recent review into their practices and policies with Indigenous education. The feedback they received from a cross section of Indigenous parents was that they were, “happy with what we were doing” (Principal A, Pair A, Interview 1, p.34).

Pair B both indicated ‘Strongly Agree’ to these statements but did not elaborate about them at interview. Pair C also indicated ‘Strongly Agree’ for both statements and Principal C made annotations on his questionnaire about both statements. In B2 he indicated ‘Mostly Agree’ writing, ‘could be more!’ and drew an arrow pointing to ‘Strongly Agree’. With J3 he indicated ‘Mostly Agree’ and wrote, ‘Where possible’. Pair C did not make comment at interview about this. Pair D1 and D2 also had shared written agreement with these statements but did not specifically discuss them at interview.

#### 4.2.2.2.2 *D6 Recognise need for Indigenous community to have own time and space to celebrate success*

Statement D6 attracted ‘Strongly Agree’ by all principals except Principal D1 who indicated ‘Mostly Agree’. IEW/CEC D1 indicated ‘Strongly Agree’. Interestingly this was a statement that none of the pairs gave specific comment to at interview.

#### 4.2.2.2.3 *E2 and J1: Shared conversations about understanding Indigenous students & community*

Statements E2 and J1 were grouped together as statements because they both showed how the IEW/CEC brings first-hand knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and histories, especially those of the local community, to assist the principal grow their own knowledge and understanding of the same. Both statements were also examples of how to better engage families with the school. Pairs A, B and D1 all indicated ‘Mostly Agree’ to both statements. At interview, Pair A expressed their frustration with being

unable to entice Indigenous families to become more involved and in commenting about statement J1, they lamented:

Principal A: We have, but we just haven't been able to do much [laughing]

IEW/CEC A: You know, we're even calling on parents that, that don't have kids in the school! (Pair A, Interview 1, p. 33).

Pair B and C did not specifically comment about these statements at interview, although Principal C wrote the words, 'Not enough' under statement E2. Both he and IEW/CEC C indicated 'Strongly Agree' for statement J1.

On the questionnaire Principal D2 indicated 'Disagree' with statement J1. She clarified her reasons at interview attributing the lack of doing this was her fault, "Yeah, I don't think, I've done, yeah I don't think I've done that any justice" (Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 10) and a few moments later said, "Really, I've only touched the surface of it. I should have put that, put that in my answer". IEW/CEC D1 acknowledged this and added her thoughts, "No, it's because [name of principal] hasn't been here long enough" (Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 10) and went on to talk about if Principal D2 was successful as winning the position as a permanent principal, IEW/CEC D1 would introduce her to the local Indigenous community, "And like, you know, if she's going to stay on, well then I'm going to take her out, into the community so she can really [voice fades]" (Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 10).

#### 4.2.2.2.4 G3: *Jointly attend events*

Statement G3 reflected the visible partnership that is possible between an IEW/CEC and a principal when they interact together with their local community. All pairs, except Pair D2, agreed with identical responses that they did this, either mostly or strongly. Pair A identically responded 'Mostly Agree' and talked about their work together out in the community,

IEW/CEC A: And um, except for things, like if there's any workshops,

Principal A: [Cuts in] or, anything out in the community, we go to certain things (Pair A, Interview 1, p. 28).

Pair B, C and D1 did not make specific comment at interview. Pair D2 did not comment as to why they had not yet undertaken this activity, but they did see the humour in their identical response of disagreement,

Principal D2: What have you got next?

IEW/CEC D1: G3?

Principal D2: Yes, we agree on that one! We agree to disagree [laughs]  
Smashed that one, [name of IEW/CEC]!

IEW/CEC D1: [Laughs] (Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 40).

#### 4.2.2.2.5 *J2: Principal listens to and where possible actions community views*

Statement J2 reflected an important aspect of leadership for school-community engagement and, again, all pairs agreed the principal listens to and where possible acts on community views. Interestingly, all principals strongly agreed on the written questionnaire they did this. Principal A said at interview, “Yes, I try to” (Pair A, Interview 1, p.33) and Principal B said at interview she was looking to work closely with the school community to assist in refining the school’s EATSIPS plan:

Principal B: I want them to have a voice. And that’s what, that’s what I said to them last morning tea, I said to them, look I value your opinion and we’re only going to get a strong voice if we stand united. So I want to know your opinions and that’s when I said we were looking at the EATSIPS plan and our first port of call we’ll be doing an audit, um, and we’ll do it with them, [name of C2], in the

IEW/CEC B: [Nodding] yeah

Principal B: [cuts in] mornings [pauses] but we need to reword it (Pair B, Interview 1, p.9).

On the questionnaire, three out of the five IEWs/CECs strongly agreed. IEW/CEC B indicated, ‘Mostly Agree’ and when in Pair D2, IEW/CEC D1 also indicated ‘Mostly Agree’. No other specific comments were elicited over this statement at interview.

#### 4.2.2.3 *Shared views and vision*

Five out of the 44 action statements all reflected shared views and a vision for school improvement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educational outcomes. This relationship dynamic attracted the third highest level of identical and a combination of agreed undertakings in the written questionnaire with all five pairs (92%). Table 14 provides a summary of written partnership assessment questionnaire responses and findings about the relational dynamic of shared views and vision.

Having shared views and a vision for their school attracted twelve identical written responses across pairs, although no one statement attracted identical responses from every pair. Statement C5: *We have a shared vision about how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and perspectives are woven into our school’s curriculum and environment*, almost had identical ‘Mostly Agree’ responses for all pairs, except Principal C who marked his paper questionnaire between Strongly and Mostly Agree. Only Pair C and Pair D1 had disagreements in one statement, J5: *We have shared our views on how to make the school a welcoming place for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and we work together to make that happen*. The findings from their written questionnaire and interview comments and those of the other pairs in relation to this relationship dynamic are presented next.

Table 14 Shared views and vision questionnaire responses

Key Relationship Dynamic	Statement	School A		School B		School C		School D			
		I/C A	P A	I/C B	P B	I/C C	P C	I/C D1	P D1	I/C D1	P D2
Shared Views and Vision	C1	SA	MA	SA	MA	SA	SA	MA	SA	SA	SA
	C3	SA	MA	MA+	SA	SA	SA	SA	MA	M A	SA
	C4	SA	SA	MA+	SA	MA	SA	SA	SA	M A	SA
	C5	MA	MA	MA	MA*	MA*	SA-MA	MA	MA*	M A	M A
	J5	MA	MA	MA	MA	MA	MA-D*	MA*	D*	SA	SA

SA = Strongly Agree; MA =Mostly Agree; D = Disagree; \* = written comment added; + = an arrow indicating movement to ‘Strongly Agree’.

Identical agreements 12/25 = 48%; SA/SA 6/25 = 24%; SA/MA 11/25 = 44%; MA/MA 5/25 = 20%; DD 0 = 0%; D 2/25 = 8%; Agreed Achievement = 92%.

#### 4.2.2.3.1 C1 and C3: Shared goals & stories

Statements C1 and C3 reflected common goals for education shared by both the IEW/CEC and principal and a sharing of perceptions of the work they do at school. All pairs had agreements with these statements either, ‘Strongly Agree’ and ‘Mostly Agree’, or identical responses of agreement. Pair A’s and Pair B’s responses at interviews in general discussion showed they shared a common view for improving their school for their students with an emphasis on working more closely with families to ensure student well-being and attendance.

IEW/CEC B also drew an arrow pointing towards ‘Strongly Agree’ beside her written answer on the questionnaire. Pair C did not specifically respond at interview to this statement, but IEW/CEC C made it clear she and her principal were on the same page, “That’s always, just what we want for our kids and what we want for the school and for the betterment of the community” (Pair C, Interview 1, p. 2). Pairs D1 and D2 were in agreement through their responses on the questionnaires but did not comment specifically about these statements at interview.

#### 4.2.2.3.2 *C4 and C5: Share vision on embedding Indigenous perspectives and overcoming challenges*

Statements C4 and C5 both emphasised a shared vision for strategies to improve the school’s curriculum and learning environment for their Indigenous students and overcoming the challenges to achieve these. All pairs shared agreement with these statements on the questionnaire and at interview most referenced how implementing EATSIPS had enabled them to achieve this. Pair A had identical answers to both statements. IEW/CEC A commented about statement C4 that they were able to share their vision by, “Yes, yes. A lot of talking” (Pair A, Interview 1, p. 13). Interestingly IEW/CEC A showed she had a different view but appreciated the principal’s big picture view of the school:

Yes, [name of Principal A] has a different vision to what I have but I follow her vision because that’s, she’s got the overall school and um if the vision then impacts on the Indigenous kids then, then I’m brought into it and I’m aware of what’s going to happen and everything else like that (Pair A, Interview 1, pp. 13-14).

Pair B did not comment specifically at interview, but IEW/CEC B drew an arrow pointing towards ‘Strongly Agree’ beside her written answer for statement C4 on the questionnaire and Principal B wrote these comments beside her answer to statement C5, ‘EATSIPS, Curriculum, special celebrations (NAIDOC)’.

Pair C had shared agreements and both annotated statement C5. IEW/CEC C wrote this on her questionnaire, “I think [name of Principal C]’s ideas are more grander than my simplistic view, but never the less I love his vision!!” showing her appreciation and support of her principal’s leadership. Principal C drew an arrow pointing to ‘Mostly Agree’ on his statement C5 answer. They did not comment at interview specifically.

Statement C5 also prompted Pair D1 to reflect they needed to do more with EATSIPS in their school:

IEW/CEC D1: And we mostly agree because

Principal D1: Yeah, um [pause] but we've just got a bit slack in the EATSIPS stuff, well, I know that you've, we've got lot of things embedded and that you're doing but we haven't been reviewing it much

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah we haven't been reviewing EATSIPS, I know that there is stuff happening within the curriculum (Pair D1, Interview 1, p. 13).

They went on to talk about plans they had to build a “cultural garden down the back” (IEW/CEC D1, Pair D1, Interview 1, p.14) to make the school more inviting for Indigenous students. In this discussion IEW/CEC D1 also mentioned an issue where local Indigenous community members were reluctant to go to the front office:

Coz one of the community members have spoken about [pause] sometimes they don't feel welcome through that front office because it's very cold um reception and you know like it's not very welcoming (Pair D1, Interview 1, p. 14).

IEW/CEC D1 suggested that the office staff, “might need cultural awareness training” (Pair D1, Interview 1, p. 15) to which the principal agreed they should do this and IEW/CEC D1 cautioned, “Just got to be careful and mindful how we do it in a respectful way, yeah” (Pair D1, Interview 1, p.18). The pair also commented that there had been considerable staff turnover in other parts of the school and this resulted in many not yet having done the school's Crossing Cultures training, “but we've had a lot of staff changes since then, so we probably really need to do that again with them” (Principal D1, Pair D1, Interview 1, p.19).

Principal D2 recognised that improving curriculum and the learning environment for Indigenous students was also an aspect of her work with the IEW/CEC that she needed to improve, “there's gaps with us working together and that was really evident here, yeah, particularly around curriculum and um, student data and growth in that data” (Pair D2, Interview 2, p.24). She also recognised the need to have more regular and scheduled meetings with key staff to progress the school's improvement agenda for Indigenous education. She believed a lack of meetings contributed to slow progress, “not an excuse, but it's probably some of the reason why I haven't made as much traction as I would really, yeah, yeah.” (Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 25).

4.2.2.3.3 *J5: Share views and jointly act on making school welcoming for Indigenous community*

Statement J5 referenced a sharing of views to make that school welcoming. The responses of four out of the five pairs showed this was an action that they had not engaged in as much as they would have liked to. J5 was the final statement in the questionnaire and consequently came at the end of each interview. Discussions about it drew some considered responses from some pairs, demonstrating they were willing to reflect on the effectiveness of their joint work. It was here in these discussions interesting conclusions were made by some of the pairs. For instance, Pair A identically indicated ‘Mostly Agree’ on their questionnaires and at interview discussed their actions around trying to increase parental engagement with the school. They talked about that despite many efforts to try different things, parents still would not attend their activities,

IEW/CEC A: Yeah we’ve tried to, you know

Principal A: We’ve tried a couple of ideas ah, do new things

IEW/CEC A: We even, we even sent out a questionnaire, how would you like to come together and do you want to speak one on one or would you like to do that as a group?

Principal A: It’s amazing like, that [name of Indigenous artist] thing, I really thought we would get millions of people, you know [laughs]

IEW/CEC A: Just come and see what we had painted and it wasn’t only his painting he got in

Researcher: You mean your beautiful murals?

IEW/CEC A; Yes and out the front, he did, he did

Principal A: He did the substation

IEW/CEC A: And we got most of our Indigenous kids, went out

Principal A: [Cuts in] and the kids had a fabulous time

IEW/CEC A: ...but the community didn’t get a part of that, they didn’t get any bit of it (Pair A, Interview 1. pp. 37-40).

Mentioned earlier within findings about statement D7, each the different principals in School D arrived at similar conclusions after discussing statement J5. Following is what ensured for Pair D1 and then, Pair D2.

In 2014, IEW/CEC D1 wrote on her questionnaire, ‘This is still work in progress through the RAP’ and Principal D1 circled ‘Disagree’ with a question mark. At interview, Pair D1 talked about how they had been working with their school’s Indigenous community advisory group to set up a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for the school. IEW/CEC D1 said, “this is still a work in progress” (Pair D1, Interview 1, p. 43) and Principal D1 agreed, “yeah, that’s the stuff around the office, yeah. And we’ve talked about it, but we haven’t done anything about it really” (Pair D1, Interview 1, p. 43). Later in the interview they continued to reflect on their progress and formulated their future actions for their school Action Plan:

Principal D1: Well a lot of the things’re growing out of the RAP aren’t they? Things like this office stuff, you know, and we can start doing stuff around that could be written into our RAP and we can also start putting in some plans in motion for about how we can make those things work.

IEW/CEC D1: And cultural awareness training for new staff

Principal D1: Yep

IEW/CEC D1: That was put in the RAP last night and um

Principal D1: There’s three things actually. What you talked about, that you talked about, role and all of this [indecipherable] applications [indecipherable]

Interviewer: Mmm. So writing down, [interviewer writes and speaks at the same time] role, welcoming and cultural awareness (Pair D1, Interview 1, p. 45).

Pair D1 next reflected on past activities that had run unsuccessfully as they tried to embed Indigenous perspectives in the school culture. Principal D1’s comments showed she had just come to a realisation (almost epiphany-like) that their work had to include more staff and IEW/CEC D1 agreed:

Principal D1: Everybody hasn’t taken on the business, you know

CEC/IEW D1: Mmmm

Principal D1: Um, which we need to work on that,

CEC/IW D1: Yeah

Principal D1: So it’s not just you and I

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah

Principal D1: But other people, who are you know, like you said more of the leadership team, take on more responsibility, but we still need to be very visible at the time, and I'm happy to be always there, but it's about making sure everybody values it as well

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah, because I think that the most people that value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture mainly is [name of Principal D1] and [name of one other staff member], that's', that's it

Principal D1: Mmm

IEW/CEC D1: Because they're the two that support us in everything

Principal D1: Yeah

IEW/CEC D1: You know it's, and I think where's the other staff? (Pair D1, Interview 1, pp. 48-49).

After more discussion about how only so few staff supported Indigenous education in the school, Principal D1 articulated a realisation she had about another unsuccessful school event. She came to the conclusion that while they had to make Indigenous education everyone's responsibility, in many ways, their own actions had excluded others. She believed it was their 'fault' and IEW/CEC D1 concurred with her own insights about staff professional development not running well:

Principal D1: it's not until something goes wrong like that Sorry Day thing that you realise that nobody else is buying into this, you know? And you just go, oh! You know, you think everyone thinks it's important but when it comes down to it they have other things, that they let get in the way and I just thought, wow it was a wakeup call to me, we're not really doing this well [pauses] we're doing it well in one way, you know, there's a ceremony and all the rest of it, but yeah, we're not showing as a school, like [sighs heavily]

IEW.CEC D1: And, and do they really, do they really value, you know, the school implementing a RAP? You know just from [name of principal D1 and another staff member] but the other staff members, because a Reconciliation Action Plan is about everybody

Principal D1: Mmm. And I think that's, that's our big challenge, it's about

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah

Principal D1: And I think part of it is our fault in a way

IEW/CEC D1: Yep. Yep

Principal D1: We do organise, we organise things, we get things done

IEW/CEC D1: Yep. Yep

Principal D1: And we do it and we don't really bring other people in and we've gotta do that, that more

IEW/CEC D1: And I s'pose that's where the EATSIPS thing has broken down, cause we haven't included people that have volunteered to yeah I want to be part of EATSIPS and all that sort of stuff (Pair D1, Interview 1, pp. 50-52).

Principal D1 concluded this part of the discussion with a plan of action. She commented they needed to set up better process structures to intentionally engage more staff members:

You know, the leadership team are going to come to the advisory meeting on these dates so it's all, you know, we need to be more structured around it, instead of being wishy washy with those things. I mean we've got the key things, you know, Sorry Day, NAIDOC, you know all those that we do but, it's that intentional, um getting other people involved [pauses] you know even with our RAP, you know we've been, yeah, we'll, we'll present it to staff, often we think about we're going to do it but, we, we haven't planned our whole year, this is when we are going to do that, this is when we are going to do it with staff, this is when we are going to do that and this is when we're doing it with the kids and anyway, we need to. There's our agenda for our next meeting! (Pair D1, Interview 1, pp.53-54).

Notably in 2015, IEW/CEC D1 and Principal D2 indicated 'Strongly Agree' with statement J5. At interview, Principal D2 came to the same realisation as had her predecessor, that she had to step up her work with the IEW/CEC to make the school a welcoming place for all students, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, "yeah, but I think, you know, we can, we can, um it might be strongly agree but I think, I reckon we can do a lot more work around that too and get it out there, you know" (Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 12). Of note was that Principal D2 too acknowledged this work was more than just her and IEW/CEC D1:

It's just that it's not [name of IEW/CEC D1] and me you know, It's just not us three here you know, like yeah, we're good and we have a lot of banter and stuff, but you know its serious stuff. It's high stakes and, yeah, it's getting more staff on board and um all of our children, as well you know, Indigenous children (Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 12).

Towards the end of their interview and on further reflection about the statements in the questionnaire and discussion of this final statement, Principal D2 made a comment. She articulated a realisation of the scale of work she wanted to do with IEW/CEC D1 to improve Indigenous education in her school:

Yes, what I, yes just going through this, what I found [is] that its shown me, gaps, you know, in, in, you're right, I talk to [name of a teacher aide], I talk

to [name of IEW/CEC D] and we've done some work around in different areas, but really when you get through this, there's so much more for us to do together (Principal D2, Interview 2, p.p. 23-24).

Principal C's response on the questionnaire for the statement J5 indicated he disagreed that he had done this with the IEW/CEC. IEW/CEC C had indicated, 'Mostly Agree'. Both did not comment at interview. Additionally Principal C marked his questionnaire with an 'x' on the line between 'Mostly Agree' and 'Disagree' as he had done for statement J4, which referred to how the principal and IEW/CEC greeted visitors. He also placed a question mark beside statement J5. Pair B had identical agreements of 'Mostly Agree' on the questionnaire but did not discuss statement J5 at their interview.

#### ***4.2.2.4 Role agency and solidarity***

There were eight out of the 44 action statements with associated written and many interview responses that best reflected human agency in the roles of IEW/CEC and principal as well as the level of camaraderie or solidarity between these roles when working to improve schools for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Table 15 provides a summary of the written responses and findings for the partnership assessment questionnaire responses to role agency and solidarity. This relationship dynamic had the fourth highest level of identical or a combination of agreed undertakings with all five pairs in the written questionnaire (88.9%).

Of note is that nearly all statements for this relationship dynamic were framed through the actions of the principal and at the same time, reflected a valuing and significance of role agency of the IEW/CEC. This characteristic enjoyed the highest level of identical agreement between four out of the five pairs, whether that agreement was 'Strongly Agree' or 'Mostly Agree'. Principal C, IEW/CEC D1 and Principal D2 had three disagreements on their written responses, but these were mostly clarified at interview. Findings about the congruence of opinion on the IEW/CEC and principal relationship and how pairs viewed IEWs/CECs and the principal as champions for Indigenous education in their school are presented below.

Table 15 Role agency and solidarity questionnaire responses

Key Relationship Dynamic	Statement	School A		School B		School C		School D			
		I/C A	P A	I/C B	P B	I/C C	P C	I/C D1	P D1	I/C D1	P D2
Role Agency and Solidarity	A1	SA	SA	MA+	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA
	G1	SA	SA	MA+	SA	SA	MA*	SA	SA	MA	D
	B6	SA	SA	MA	MA*	SA	SA	D	MA	SA	SA
	F1	SA	SA	MA	SA	SA	SA	SA	MA*	SA	SA
	G4	MA	MA	MA+	SA	SA	SA	MA	MA	D	MA
	I2	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA
	I3	SA	SA	MA+	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	D	SA
	J4	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	MA-D*	MA	MA	SA	MA

SA = Strongly Agree; MA = Mostly Agree; D = Disagree; \* = written comment added; + = an arrow indicating movement to ‘Strongly Agree’.

Identical Agreements 27/40 = 67.5%; SA/SA 23/40 = 57.5%; MA/SA 8/40 = 20%;

MA/MA 4/40 = 10%; DD = 0; D 5/45 = 11.1%; Agreed Undertaking = 88.9%.

#### 4.2.2.4.1 A1 and G1: Appreciation of each other’s expertise and contribution

Statement A1 and statement G1 were associated with how the IEW/CEC and principal understood and appreciated each other’s roles and capabilities. Statement A1 specifically related to appreciation of each other’s expertise and four out of five pairs had identically indicated ‘Strongly Agree’. At interview IEW/CEC A made a comment about the high level of confidence she had to approach her principal because she believed they knew each other’s position on aspects of the school:

That’s how we’d rate it. No, I agree we know where we, um stand. If I’m doing something, [name of Principal A] I feel trusts me to go ahead and do it and if there’s any hassles, I’ll come and let her know (IEW/CEC A, Interview 1, p.1).

IEW/CEC B was the only IEW/CEC with a different response to the others. She drew an arrow at ‘Mostly Agree’ pointing towards ‘Strongly Agree’ on her written response and Principal B had indicated ‘Strongly Agree’. At their interview Principal B described a major incident with a misbehaving student, using it as an example of she really valued and involved

the IEW/CEC B in her work. She had been very surprised to discover this was not an accepted way of working for others in the school:

And then I said to [student's name] "I'm getting Miss [name of IEW/CEC B]. How dare you shame your family in this school? I'm getting Miss [name of IEW/CEC B]. And he straight away an' went, "No, no you don't get Miss [name of IEW/CEC B], she don't have no say". I said "Oh yes she does!" So but that's what I mean – even the kids didn't even think she had a say. So then I rings [name of IEW/CEC B], [name of Deputy Principal] rings [name of IEW/CEC B]. [Name of IEW/CEC B] came in coz she knew that I was chasin' him and I've sort of just done the nod. So [name IEW/CEC B]'s jumped on board straight away and I thought thank goodness, thank god for that. And [name of IEW/CEC B] straight away, And I'm going to get your mother and if you go swearin' at your mother, see this is the police number and they'll, I'm going to ring the police'. But [name of IEW/CEC B] knew the background of the family so she knew he that was going to swear at mum so she primed him up, 'If you come in here, this is what's going to happen'. So when mum come, he was as good as pie. But can't believe that, she hadn't been part of that whole thing. So I've had to work with next door [nods with her head in the direction of the Deputy Principal's office next door] as well as the whole school community so anything to do with behaviours and discipline with Indigenous kids in particular that [name of IEW/CEC B]'s aware of, I get [name of IEW/CEC B]. And I've done that probably 4 or 5 times now (Pair B, Interview 1, p.13).

Statement G1 related to joint acknowledgement of each other's contribution to the broader school community. IEW/CEC B drew an arrow at 'Mostly Agree' pointing towards 'Strongly Agree' on her written response. Pair B did not discuss this at interview.

While IEW/CEC C chose 'Strongly Agree', Principal C selected 'Mostly Agree' and wrote this under the statement on his questionnaire, 'Could be a lot more!' He did make comment about his response at interview, but IEW/CEC C spoke about the high regard her principal had for her role and that she underestimates the impact of her work:

[Name of Principal] thinks I'm too humble in my approach an' that, I don't do it because I don't want the accolades. it's not for me, its for the kids [pause] and he, he's always growling me for that. But actually he thinks that I don't take enough of the accolades! (IEW/CEC C, Interview 1, p.4).

In 2014 IEW/CEC D1 and Principal D1 had both strongly agreed with statement G1, but in 2015 IEW/CEC D1 had indicated 'Mostly Agree' and Principal D2 selected 'Disagree' with this statement. While Pair D1 did not discuss this statement at their interview, Pair D did. Principal D2 commented that she did not acknowledge the school's IEWs/CECs enough in a range of forums and expressed disappointment with herself in neglecting to do it:

Principal D2: Yeah, I don't think I have done that well, um, acknowledge each other's contribution to the broader school community

IEW/CEC D1: What do you mean?

Principal D2: Well, I mean, I, you know, I talk about [name of IEW/CEC D1] and [name of Indigenous community advisory group] and [name of IEW/CEC D2] and [name of another staff member] and, but I don't do it probably in an open forum that I should and acknowledge their contribution, I don't think I do that

IEW/CEC D1: But I don't think you've had an opportunity with that yet, to do that yet, not properly

Principal D2: Umm, I think I missed a couple of opportunities that I could have nailed it in

IEW/CEC D1: Oh well

Principal D2: [laughs] when I reflect on it. Ah, I do when, you know, I talk to different people (Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 37).

Then shortly after this exchange, IEW/CEC D2, who was also in attendance at the interview, commented on the working relationship between Pair D2. She believed it was developing positively and acknowledged the importance of having the principal supporting Indigenous education in the school,

IEW/CEC D2: But that's good because I think, once you do that, well that will make them think, eh? That she's backing those girls and the rest of them

Principal D2: Yeah

IEW/CEC D2: And you're at the top

Principal D2: Yeah

IEW/CEC D2: I think that will go a long way

Principal D2: Yeah (Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 38).

The next part of their discussion revealed how challenging it could be in some schools who were wanting to advance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. The principal recounted an incident where she was compelled to speak to a staff member who had questioned why they had to undertake cultural awareness training. Principal D2 expressed her surprise that this had happened, "Why a question would be asked, 'why'd we have to do that?', and I was like, [speaking loudly] what rock do they live under?!" (Pair D2, Interview 2, p.39).

#### 4.2.2.4.2 B6: *Contrary school decisions jointly explained to community*

Statement B6 is indicative of the level of solidarity of the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship, especially when facing a difficult situation of disagreement between the school and the local community. Four out of the five pairs (Pair A, Pair B, Pair C and Pair D2) had identical agreement in this statement. Pair A both strongly agreed on the questionnaire and at interview admitted they had not yet experienced such a situation. Both agreed they would do this if they had to, “We would, yeah” (Principal A, Pair A, Interview 1, p. 11). Pair B did not specifically discuss their identical responses to this statement, but Principal B wrote an annotation beside her statement on the questionnaire, ‘At morning tea time’. In their interview, Principal B spoke about using the morning tea held after the weekly assembly as a time where she and the IEW/CEC could together meet with parents to discuss issues and ask for feedback:

Principal B: Yeah. Yeah. I’m the same. Yeah. Question B6 here. [Reads out B6 statement:] ‘In situations when the views of the school are in contrary to those in the community, any decisions made as a result of such differences are explained to the community jointly by us, as principal and CEC/IEW’. We, we have at the morning tea told we’re going to be doing EASTIP.

IEW/CEC B: [Nodding yes] uh huh mmmmmm (Pair B, Interview 1, p.1).

Principal D1 cited an example where she and IEW/CEC D1 had worked successfully together with families to explain their students were not allowed to attend the senior formal because they had not paid school fees. IEW/CEC D1 then recounted a different incident, one that occurred when the principal was away and she had not been included in a meeting with the parents of a student. She explained the opposite situation had happened for her:

I couldn’t be part of that process, to talk about my role and what I’d done and I felt like that I was, I sort of felt alone in my position at that time, because I should have been part of that discussion. That’s, that’s, what I felt that I should’ve been part of that discussion to, to say, you now that I did (IEW/CEC D1, Pair D1, Interview 1, p. 5).

IEW/CECD D1’s next comments exposed the impact this situation had on her wellbeing and how she had developed coping mechanisms to deal with the pressure of her job, “I sort of just, took some stress leave and then came back and started all over again. Just forgot about it, which I usually try to do” (IEW/CEC D1, Interview 1, p. 7). Pair D1 continued their discussion about statement B6. They showed they did have a deep regard for each other and when they had an issue, they could ‘work it through’:

IEW/CEC D1: Um so yeah, you know, I, I think that um we have got a good a, a good relationship to be able to talk to community... I know that [name of principal] is always mindful of including me and stuff, yeah.

Principal D1: Sometimes I forget!

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah

Principal D1: [Laughs] we can talk to each other!

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah

Principal D1: I mean when, we've been here in tears some days, haven't we? Like when

IEW/CEC D1: [Cuts in] yeah

Principal D1: [Continues] something's happened. But we know we can work through it, you know

IEW/CEC D1: And I, I always like to be open and honest to [name of principal] about how I am feeling and she respects me for that and I respect [name of principal] for listening to me (Pair D1, Interview 1, pp. 8-9).

Pair C and Pair D2 had identical 'Strongly Agree' opinions about statement B6. Both groups did not discuss this statement at interview.

#### 4.2.2.4.3 *F1: Principal decisions consider advice of IEW/CEC*

All pairs mostly or strongly agreed with statement F1, which related to empowered listening – where the principal considers advice from the IEW/CEC. Pair A both chose 'Strongly Agree'. IEW/CEC A shared a story about how she felt empowered to have her say with the principal about happenings at the school, that she was listened to and that she trusts the principal to make the best decision:

But even on my bad days, I can come in and sort of bang my head about this kid, I can't work it out, what can we do, you know this has happened, this has happened or I'll just basically come in and say, look I got a phone call like from a parent, like I'm letting you know what the case is just making you aware if there's any ah, roll on effect from that and, ah, I trust her (Pair A, Interview 1, pp.25-26).

Pair C also both indicated 'Strongly Agree' to statement F1. IEW/CEC C expressed how she felt empowered to make an important decision on behalf of her principal because she shared his views. She did this when she described what she did at a regional meeting about a new significant vocational program for Indigenous students. IEW/CEC C used her initiative to

nominate the school, “So I sort of sneakily, ahh, pick me, pick me, coz I know [first name of Principal C] wants it, pick me! Luckily we got in before [name of another nearby secondary school]” (Pair C, Interview 2, p.2). It transpired that the school was selected to run the program and it was implemented from the beginning of 2015.

Although IEW/CEC D1 had strongly agreed with this statement, Principal D1 chose ‘Mostly Agree’ and wrote this comment under the action statement on her questionnaire, ‘Sometimes in the busy-ness of work I will make an ill-considered decision but can talk about it and reflect’. Their resultant discussion at interview showed they had a robust working relationship which allowed them to manage ‘ill-considered decisions’ and each viewed the other in high respect. This was particularly evident when Principal D1 recounted a story about how she set up a program in a room that inadvertently displaced the school’s Indigenous community advisory group who met there and the fallout from that:

Principal D1: ...and I hadn’t consult, hadn’t spoken to [name of IEW/CEC D1]

IEW/CEC D1: And the kids came to me, “Aunty”

Principal D1: [Cuts in] and the kids came to [name of IEW/CEC D1]

IEW/CEC D1: I don’t know and that, and they’re angry [laughs] I just get frustrated and I wasn’t told about it

Principal D1: Yeah so it’s about, it’s about yeah, I need to think sometimes before I act, but you know at least we know we can talk about it afterwards and we sort it out

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah

Principal D1: You know and that’s the, and I guess that’s the important thing. We all make mistakes

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah, yeah

Researcher: And she’s still learning

[All laugh]

IEW/CEC D1: and I’m still learning [Laughs]

Principal D1: [Laughs] Stop trying to train me! [Laughs]

IEW/CEC D1: [Laughs heartily] (Pair D1, Interview 1, pp. 33-34).

#### 4.2.2.4.4 *G4: Stand together for announcements*

Statement G4 is another example of solidarity within the IEW/CEC and principal relationship, that is, literally the side-by-side leadership partnership that can exist between an IEW/CEC and principal. IEW/CEC B drew an arrow at ‘Mostly Agree’ pointing towards ‘Strongly Agree’ on her written response and all pairs, except Pair D2 indicated ‘Strongly Agree’ or ‘Mostly Agree’ with this statement. In 2014, Pair D1 made no comment at interview. In 2015, IEW/CEC D1 disagreed with Principal D2 on their questionnaire responses and at interview Pair D2 talked about their difference of opinion. They recognised their relationship would grow over time and Principal D2 apportioned some blame to herself for not doing this better with IEW/CEC D1:

Principal D2: And then I’ve got, um G4, you’ve got disagree and I’ve sort, yeah and where I’ve ticked that too, I’m like yeah

Researcher: That’s OK and that’s about time

IEW/CEC D1: That’s still growing

Principal D2: And that links with that other one that I said I didn’t do very well, too. I think

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah (Pair D2, Interview 2, p.7).

A few moments later in this interview, Principal D2 reflected on her situation as an acting principal with a desire to get the job permanently so she could do some good work with IEW/CEC D1, “But I think if I get the opportunity, actually and I think we’ll do some really good things [pauses], um we will, [pauses] together” (Principal D2, Interview 2, p. 7).

#### 4.2.2.4.5 *I2: Principal recognises uniqueness of IEW/CEC formed through experience*

Statement I2 reflected how the principal values the lived experience the IEW/CEC brings to the role for Indigenous education. It is significant because this was the second and only other statement where every pair had an identical ‘Strongly Agree’ response. Newly appointed Principal B showed she had an understanding of what the IEW/CEC role brings to a school when she said, “She is the connection between home and school and she’s got that cultural knowledge” (Pair B, Interview 1, p. 15).

All other pairs did not comment specifically about this statement.

#### 4.2.2.4.6 I3: *Special link recognised of IEW/CEC to students and community*

Statement I3 describes recognition of the role agency of the IEW/CEC - both by the principal and the IEW/CEC themselves. It also acknowledges the unique link an IEW/CEC can have with students and the local community because of their shared history and experiences. Four out of five pairs had strong agreement about it.

Pair A succinctly expressed their identical agreement with this statement:

Researcher: [Reads out I3 statement]

Principal A: Absolutely

IEW/CEC A: Uh huh (Pair A, Interview 1, p. 32).

Principal B had definite views about how closely she wanted to work with the school's IEW/CEC, especially when supporting students on their school's student support team (she referred to it as the 'SS team'). Principal B very clearly saw the contribution made by the IEW/CEC in their school-community engagement work. She used the term, 'missing link' when describing the IEW/CEC role. At interview she declared she wanted the IEW/CEC and her to be seen as a 'united front' and was determined to support IEW/CEC C to have a strong role in the school. Principal B would not let others sabotage this:

Principal B: I want them to see us as a united front

IEW/CEC B: Yeah

Principal B: They're not gunna pit you against me

IEW/CEC B: Yeah

Principal B: Coz I am going to support what you are going to do in this school and I've put it out there, [gesticulating quotation marks] '[name of IEW/CEC] is the missing link between home and family and this school'

IEW/CEC B: And they're getting it

Principal: [Name of IEW/CEC] is the missing link. I still can't believe you weren't in our SS [Student Services] team meeting, but I'll get over it

[Both laugh]. (Pair B, Interview 1, p. 3).

Later in the interview, Principal B re-iterated her determination to include IEW/CEC B as part of school leadership:

because [name of IEW/CEC B] would see the minutes and it would have, “[name of IEW/CEC B] will [pause]; [name of IEW/CEC B] will [pause]; [name of IEW/CEC B] will [pause]”, but didn’t have a voice and a say. And I had a conversation with the Guidance Officer over an EAP that needs to be done and she can’t get it done now because this student’s being held back because of hearing and I said to her, “[name of GO], the missing link has been [name of IEW/CEC B]. I’m telling you right now and that’s why this child can’t go through the EAP process because [name of IEW/CEC B] wasn’t involved in the whole process”. So that’s where I’m heading with [name of IEW/CEC B] at the moment and just get her back up into full functionality of what she should be doing (Pair B, Interview 1, p. 15).

IEW/CEC D1 disagreed with this statement yet Principal D2 strongly agreed and while no comment was made about this particular statement at the interview, Principal D2’s comments showed she was working appreciatively with IEW/CEC D1 but because she was new, she was still learning:

There’s been a good six months for me getting to know everyone, I’m getting to understand the programs and um, how we work with the community and [name of local Indigenous community advisory group] and that purpose and what happens up there, what the advisory group does (Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 24).

#### 4.2.2.4.7 J4: *Principal greets parents alongside IEW/CEC*

Statement J4 was another statement that literally reflected a strong side-by-side professional relationship between an IEW/CEC and principal. Yet only two out of the five principals indicated ‘Strongly Agree’ with this statement. Principal C marked his written questionnaire with an ‘x’ (in all prior statements he had used a tick mark) on the line between ‘Mostly Agree’ and ‘Disagree’. He wrote a question mark beside this statement. At interview, IEW/CEC C who had indicated ‘Strongly Agree’ commented that her principal had stood beside her when greeting parents, “Coz I’m just thinking yeah, that has happened and it was good” (Pair C, Interview 1, p. 11). She went on to describe a time when she brought an Indigenous artisan into the school and introduced this person to the principal and his positive response to that. Within this story IEW/CEC C also made comments about her understanding of the timidity that can exist for some Indigenous community members when they visit a school and how she acted as an intermediary in this instance to enable school-community engagement:

‘Some of, some of our, um, my guests will come in through the back way and not come through this front office coz they, they are still are frightened of coming through the front office so, they know where my office is and they’ll come most of the time through the back. So [pauses], but you know, its, so it’s probably, it’s not for lack the lack of not wanting to, it’s just having the opportunity but also just knowing whether it’s the right time for,

for my guest to be introduced to them depending on how they're feeling” (Pair C, Interview 1, p.p. 11-12).

IEW/CEC D1 when in Pair D2, had indicated ‘Disagree’ on her questionnaire and Principal D2 had indicated ‘Mostly Agree’. At interview they clarified this through discussion and IEW/CEC D1 changed her answer on the questionnaire to ‘Strongly Agree’ because, “I shouldn’t, I shouldn’t have put that in my answer. No, it’s because [name of Principal D2] hasn’t been here long enough” (Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 10).

#### ***4.2.2.5 Indigenous education advocacy and knowledge sharing***

There were seven out of the 44 action statements with associated written and many interview responses related to the relationship dynamic of Indigenous education advocacy and knowledge sharing of information. Both are important for school improvement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student learning outcomes. This dynamic did not enjoy the same high levels of identical or a combination of agreed undertakings with all five pairs as had the previous four relationships dynamics. The case study IEWs/CECs and principals indicated a 77.2% of agreement that they were undertaking these actions. Noticeably this relationship dynamic also had the lowest percentage of identical agreements of pairs. Table 16 provides a summary of summary of written partnership assessment questionnaire responses and findings relating to the relational dynamic of Indigenous education advocacy and knowledge sharing.

Pairs A, B, D1 and D2 did have some variation in perception, particularly with statement E3 which showed a differing of opinions between them. This relationship dynamic also had the most annotations on the written questionnaire. Eight participants wrote comments beside their answers. These are discussed below within the reflections on what IEWs/CECs and principals think about their advocacy and knowledge sharing for Indigenous Education.

Table 16 Indigenous education advocacy and knowledge questionnaire responses

Key Relationship Dynamic	Statement	School A		School B		School C		School D			
		I/C	P	I/C	P	I/C	P	I/C	P	I/C	P
		A	A	B	B	C	C	D1	D1	D1	D2
Indigenous Education Advocacy and Knowledge sharing	A2	MA	SA	MA	MA	SA	MA*	MA	MA	SA	SA
	E1	ST	MA	MA	MA	SA	MA+	MA	MA	MA	SA
	C2	SA	MA	MA	MA*	MA	SA	MA	SA*	SA	SA
	D5	ST	ST	MA	MA	SA	SA	MA	D	MA	SA
	E3	ST	SA	MA	D*	SA*	SA*	D	SA	D	MA
	F3	MA	SA	MA+	SA	SA	SA*	MA	D*	MA	MA
	I1	SA	SA	MA	SA	SA	SA	SA	MA	MA	SA

SA = Strongly Agree; MA =Mostly Agree; D = Disagree; ST = Sometimes; \* = written comment added; + = an arrow indicating movement to ‘Strongly Agree’.

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Identical agreements 15/35 = 42.8%; SA/SA 7/35 = 20%; MA/SA 13/35 = 37.1% ; MA/MA 7/35 = 20%; DD 1/35 = 2.8%; D 7/35 = 20%; Agreed Undertaking = 77.2%.

4.2.2.5.1 A2 and E1: Information (student data) shared regularly

Statements A2 and E1 are both related to sharing important data so that both the principal and IEW/CEC are aware of trends and progress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students within their school. Pair A had both indicated ‘Sometimes’ on their written response. At interview, Pair A explained it was not because the principal did not want this to happen. Principal A attributed her lack of action in this area as more related to the limited employment funding available for the IEW/CEC and that they did share information, especially about students with attendance issues. IEW/CEC A said she didn’t need to look at ‘data’ to understand her students because she knew already them and she used her own time to do it:

IEW/CEC A: No. I wouldn’t know. But I know of the students, that um, the problem students, but um

Principal A: And in your role last year, you had more of a handle on it because

IEW/CEC A: Yes

Principal A: Because we had extra funding and you were able to do that

IEW/CEC A: Yeah and I could find out, well, I'm still doing that now even though I'm not getting paid to do it [pauses] if teachers says to me, to, but, but I know in a roundabout way

Principal A: Yes. And we always liaise with [name of IEW/CEC A] in terms

IEW/CEC A: [Cuts in] yes

Principal A: Of what we need you to know, particularly those students who are non-attenders where as those who do attend (Pair A, Interview 1, p.p. 2-3).

They discussed this further and Principal A acknowledged they did actually share information, "Like I know we always share if there's something's, we get hold of information...we share a lot" (Pair A, Interview 1, p. 3). In relation to Statement E1, at interview, IEW/CEC A's response revealed how well she knew her students. She said, "because I'm here in all of the classrooms with the other kids, I know, I know how they work and I know that they can achieve because I've seen them" (Pair A, Interview 1, pp. 21-22). Pair A also agreed that when doing work in their school on EATSIPS the previous year, they had shared more student data. Then Principal A recognised sharing data was something she could do more of, "but we don't sit down, in fact, you know, it's probably worth us doing that, it's probably one of the things we can improve on is to sit down and I can show you the Indigenous data" (Principal A, Interview 1, p. 23). Interestingly, shortly after that comment, IEW/CEC A talked about what really mattered to her was the student, not the data, because she already knew her students:

For me I know that that child isn't, um, good at reading – I know that. I know that child isn't good at maths. I know that because I am working with them so to have the numbers and the figures would mean nothing because I know that child (Pair A, Interview 1, p. 24).

Principal C wrote the following comment beside his 'Mostly Agree' response to Statement A2, 'not where it should be at?' IEW/CEC C was satisfied they did share and indicated 'Strongly Agree' for her response. With Statement E1, Principal C drew an arrow pointing towards 'Strongly Agree' from his indication of 'Mostly Agree'. Again, IEW/CEC C indicated 'Strongly Agree'. At interview, IEW/CEC C discussed how she was working with a new way to display and monitor data of her senior students, "We are very excited about instigating and formulating our own data wall, [indecipherable] something that I am organising, too" (Pair C, Interview 2, p. 4). The other pairs did not expressly discuss their responses to these action statements.

#### 4.2.2.5.2 C2 and D5: Student achievement agreed outcomes and celebrated

Statements C2 and D5 were combined because they both reflect the actions of reviewing, celebrating student achievement and publicising student success. At interview Pair A did not make specific comment beyond agreeing on their responses for Statement C2. For Statement D5 they had both indicated ‘Sometimes’ as the frequency of timing to discuss and publicly share Indigenous student achievement and success along with those of other students. Pair A expanded their response to say they do review student achievement together, albeit irregularly:

Principal A: So we have [reads out statement D5 quickly], we’ve more than discussed, we do it, but it’s not...

IEW/CEC A: [Cuts in] it’s not regular so sometimes...

Principal A: [Cuts in] it’s when an activity happens

IEW/CEC A: Yes, yes (Pair A, Interview 1, p.19).

Principal A followed this comment by saying at their school, they recognise achievements of other groups in the school, not just Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, “You know it’s inclusive. But it might be that the spotlight is on them at that particular time, it’s not necessarily flagging them all the time” (Pair A, Interview 1, p. 20).

Pair B did not comment specifically at interview, although Principal B wrote this annotation, ‘Assembly / Newsletters’ beside statement C2 with her response of ‘Mostly Agree’ in the questionnaire.

Pair C did not specifically comment at their first interview about these statements, but it became evident at their second interview that they knew about and had aspirations for the achievement of the school’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander senior students including increased participation in subjects that lead to tertiary entrance scores. IEW/CEC C wanted to ensure more students completed Year 12:

I have the smaller numbers but this year, we, we just have seven of our Indigenous students graduate in year 12...next year we have nineteen Indigenous students and out of those nineteen, there are eight of them who are OP eligible (IEW/CEC C, Interview 2, p.17).

Principal D1 circled the word ‘celebrated’ and wrote a question mark on her questionnaire, indicating ‘Strongly Agree’ to Statement C2. At interview, Pair D1 agreed they could improve this aspect of their school:

Principal D1: I thought we mostly, um, review like our achievements, but I am not sure if we celebrate them enough, but we do some celebrations like, you know

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah, we could probably improve a lot

Principal D1: Do that better (Pair D1, Interview 1, p. 10).

IEW/CEC D1 next commented how pleased she was with the achievements of their Year 12 Indigenous students who were the first in their families to graduate Year 12:

There’s three students that have come through Year 12 and they’re the first ones in their families to do that and one’s a baby of his family. And he’s the first, I said, do you realise you have broken a cycle of your family for your nieces and nephews to go and say that education is important for your future, would you look at it that way? (IEW/CEC D1, Interview 1, p. 11).

In 2014 for statement D5, Principal D1 indicated ‘Disagree’ on her written statement with IEW/CEC D1 choosing ‘Mostly Agree’. They did not discuss this in the interview. In 2015, for statement D5, Principal D2 had indicated ‘Strongly Agree’ but at interview when she noted IEW/CEC D1 had ‘Mostly Agree’, she acknowledged this was an area they could do more work in together:

Yeah, you know particularly around curriculum and um, student data and growth in that data and like we, we talk we pick up when there’s problems and we are looking in that data around attendance and so forth so we are dealing with the problems and reacting, but yeah, there’s more work we can do together (Principal D2, Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 24).

#### 4.2.2.5.3 E3: Funding implications known

As noted earlier, statement E3 attracted the most variations in agreement. It is about the discussion of important organisational information, in this case, State and Federal Government funding arrangements for Indigenous education in their school. Pair A had differing but still agreeing agreements on their questionnaire, but at interview, it was evident they had discussed the systemic allocation of money to their school over time for Indigenous education:

Principal A: Yes, when we had the um Focus School money, that’s probably the only other money we have, um,

IEW/CEC A: Yes. Yes and that gave me better... um awareness of what it involved and what needed to happen and , um, things like that, yeah it changes over the years, it doesn't matter what you are doing (Pair A, Interview 1, pp. 24-25).

Principal B commented at interview about this statement although she had left her response blank on the questionnaire. She admitted a discussion about allocation of funding wasn't something she had done yet:

Principal B: The only thing I haven't done is that Federal funding coz I haven't [pauses]

Researcher: No one knows that anyway

Principal B: Yeah, so I put 'Not Yet'.

Researcher: OK

Principal B: Didn't mark anything, so I just, so I haven't, haven't even touched that so [pauses] (Pair B, Interview 1, pp. 10-11).

Pair C both wrote annotations on their questionnaires to this statement. They both indicated 'Strongly Agreed'. IEW/CEC C wrote, 'Sadly, this has been a huge dilemma'. Principal C wrote, 'What we know'. They did not pass comment about it at interview. IEW/CEC D1 indicated 'Disagree' to this statement in both questionnaires, contrary to Principal D1 ('Strongly Agree') and Principal D2 ('Mostly Agree') but this was not discussed at either interview. These responses could likely reflect what was also known to all case study principals and me, through our professional field experience, that at the time of these interviews, there had been no indication to schools in Queensland what the allocative budget for Indigenous Education for the following year was going to be.

#### 4.2.2.5.4 F3: Policy and procedure flexible/adapted and publicised

Statement F3 reflected how the pair could work together to make school policies and procedures responsive to the needs of Indigenous students and how they shared this information with staff. Pair A had differing but still agreeing responses and at interview were certain they did do this, "for all students" (Principal A, Pair A, Interview 1, p. 26). IEW/CEC A said, "Yes, even, the, even the mainstream kids that are the low readers and low level attendance. Things are adapted for them" (Pair A, Interview 1, p.26). Pair B did not specifically discuss this at interview, nor did Pair C, although Principal C wrote the comment, 'Not enough' on his questionnaire. Principal D1 put a question mark on her questionnaire beside her tick in the

'Disagree' box. IEW/CEC D1 indicated 'Mostly Agree' on both questionnaires for this statement.

Pairs D1 and D2 did not comment at interview.

4.2.2.5.5 *II: Principal acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture for students learning*

Statement II referenced the advocacy of the principal to embed Indigenous perspectives in the school. All pairs had agreement this happened for them. All principals chose 'Strongly Agree' except Principal D1 who chose 'Mostly Agree' which was interesting because IEW/CEC D1 had indicated 'Strongly Agree'.

This statement prompted Pair A to have a discussion about how they acknowledged annual significant celebrations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. IEW/CEC A explained at their school they celebrated NAIDOC week differently, "Instead of having NAIDOC on only one day I said to [name of Principal A], right one day a week we'll have one Indigenous educator or someone come in and talk to the kids" (IEW/CEC A, Interview 1, p. 30). IEW/CEC A said the principal agreed and she organised for different key Indigenous role models from the community to visit the school to speak with students over a five week period, "So every week there was somebody different, and um, some of those kids still come up to me and sort of say, 'Ah, I saw such and such'" (IEW/CEC A, Interview 1, pp.31).

Pair C had both indicated they strongly agreed with this statement on the questionnaire. While not specifically mentioning the principal at their first interview, IEW/CEC C did speak about how teachers in her school openly acknowledged Indigenous culture as an important element in learning and development of all students. She recounted an instance where an English teacher invited her into the class while discussing the novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. IEW/CEC described how 'lucky' she was to be approached to do this. Teachers were 'genuinely interested' for her 'input':

She just wanted to make sure that they were careful, you know, that they had my perspective for the non-Indigenous students and she said they love it when you come in. I'm thinking, yeah, well I [indecipherable] professional in it but it's great because it gives me an opportunity to give that perspective and that's where I'm, I'm feeling very lucky in this school that a lot of teachers will ask for my input. Not to, not to, to watch, you know, to watch around back or anything, because, it's because they're genuinely interested in what I have to say (IEW/CEC C Pair C, Interview 1, p.17).

The other pairs did not specifically discuss this statement in their interviews.

#### **4.2.2.6 *Capability development***

Eight out of the 44 action statements with associated written and many interview responses related to the relational dynamic of developing professional know-how. That is, capability development of the IEW/CEC, the principal and other school staff. This dynamic is the final in the list of themes that are seen as the main ingredients of the relationship between the case study IEWs/CECs and principals. It was last in the list because it attracted the least agreed undertakings in the written questionnaire across all pairs (75%). Interestingly, at the same time their responses reflected that the pairs still had high congruence of shared views. Table 17 provides a summary of written partnership assessment questionnaire responses and findings for the relational dynamic of capability development.

Pair B and Pair C enjoyed the most agreement responses to statements in the written questionnaire. At interview IEW/CEC B explained why she had marked three of her responses on the questionnaire with arrows at 'Mostly Agree' pointing to 'Strongly Agree':

IEW/CEC B: I haven't disagreed on anything. I've gone mostly agreed with an arrow heading towards...

Researcher: Strongly Agree?

IEW/CEC B: Yeah, I've sort of marked it in that area where...in the box closer to strongly agree or halfway.

Researcher: Yeah

IEW/CEC B: Coz things we're working on, you know? (Pair B, Interview 1, p. 11).

Pair D1 had identical written disagreement with half (four) of the statements in this KRC and Pair D2 had two identical written disagreements. Their written responses about what actions they agreed were not yet undertaken gave them an opportunity at interview to reflect and then determine future actions for improvement. Also of note was that IEW/CEC D1 had varying written responses from one questionnaire to the next in this KRC. These points are presented in the findings below.

Table 17 Capability development questionnaire responses

Key Relationship Dynamic	Statement	School A		School B		School C		School D			
		I/C A	P A	I/C B	P B	I/C C	P C	I/C D1	P D1	I/C D1	P D2
Capability Development	B1	ST	ST	SA	SA	SA	SA	D	D	MA	SA
	B5	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA+	MA	SA	SA	SA
	G2	MA	MA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	MA	SA	MA
	G5	SA	SA	SA	MA	SA	MA	SA	MA	D	MA
	G6	MA	MA	MA+	SA	MA	SA*	D	D*	MA	D
	H1	MA	SA	MA+	SA	MA	MA*	D	D	D	D
	H2	MA	SA	MA+	SA	MA	MA*	D	D	D	D
	H3	SA	SA	MA	SA	SA	SA	M A	SA	D	SA

SA = Strongly Agree; MA =Mostly Agree; D = Disagree; ST = Sometimes; \* = written comment added; + = an arrow indicating movement to ‘Strongly Agree’.

Identical Agreements 22/40 = 55%; SA/SA 11/40 = 27.5%; MA/SA 15/40 = 37.5%; MA/MA 4/40 = 10%; DD 7/40 = 17.5%; D 3/40 = 7.5%; Agreed Undertaking = 75%.

#### 4.2.2.6.1 B1: Principal includes IEW/CEC at induction

Statement B1 referred to the training offered to new staff in a school which included the IEW/CEC. Three out of the five pairs agreed this was currently happening in their schools, with the other two pairs recognising this was something that they needed to do in the future. Pair A identically chose ‘Sometimes’ and Pair D1 identically chose ‘Disagree’ because they acknowledged that while they conducted induction of new staff, including the IEW/CEC at that time was not something they did systematically. Earlier in the interview, Pair A had said the role of the IEW/CEC was mentioned to new staff, but the IEW/CEC themselves did not deliver professional development for new staff, “no, I don’t do that” (Principal A, Pair A, Interview 1, p. 4). This same statement provided Pair D1 with an opportunity to consider future practices:

IEW/CEC D1: [reads out statement B1] at this school, the principal includes the IEW/CEC when conducting induction of new staff, students and parents to school.

Principal D1: Yeah, I disagreed with that, too

IEW/CEC D1: Is that right?

Principal D1: Yeah, we're not doing that. Well, I don't even induct the new kids. The Deputies do that and sometimes they don't even introduce them to me. So I sort of, you know, we need, that's something we need to work on (Pair D1, Interview 1, p.1).

Principal B wrote 'needs basis' beside this statement in her questionnaire. The pair identically selected 'Strongly Agree' for this statement, as did Pair C. Both pairs did not discuss statement B1 at the interview. For Pair D2, Principal D2 who had arrived to the school only a few months prior, had made an assumption that IEW/CEC D1 was involved in induction at the beginning of the year:

Principal D2: Mostly agree, then I, then I strongly agreed

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah

Principal D2: Yeah, because probably from my experience um with CECs, you're so much more involved in that process, the enrolment process, um and getting to know the families as they come into the school, so my perspective of it is that you strongly agree, but I'm using it probably from past experience. And yeah, it's a great process in the school. And I think when that's not followed and you're not part of that process, that there's a gap there

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah

Principal D2: Yeah, isn't there?

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah (Pair D2, Interview 2, pp. 21-22).

When IEW/CEC D1 told Principal D2 that this did not always happen, Principal D2 then realised the school should do more and not just for staff, but for students:

Principal D2: And I think there's room there, even you know for [name of IEW/CEC D1] to be involved in the transition program more, you know, with our little Year 6's coming over for Year 7 and then I think there's a gap there that we

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah

Principal D2: Can probably fill

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah

Principal D2: With there, hey?

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah (Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 23).

#### 4.2.2.6.2 *B5: Principal builds own cultural understanding*

Statement B5 denoted that the principal used their interaction with the IEW/CEC to build their own understanding of Indigenous culture. While four out of the five IEWs/CECs strongly agreed and IEW/CEC D1 mostly agreed, what is significant is that all principals indicated they strongly agreed with this statement. It would seem all principals recognised the benefits of this role to understanding Indigenous culture. A case in point was that Principal C marked his questionnaire paper to the left of ‘Strongly Agree’ box, making it greater than strongly agree to show just how important this interaction was to him. It was the only statement he did this with.

#### 4.2.2.6.3 *G2: Recognition of IEW/CEC’s knowledge, understandings and community connections*

Statement G2 acknowledges both the IEW/CEC and principal understand the uniqueness of the IEW/CEC role and as such have discussed this between them. At interview, it was apparent that the principals did recognise distinctive qualities the IEW/CEC role brought to their school community but they had just not necessarily actioned the discussion about this. All pairs did agree they had mostly or strongly undertaken this action. All IEWs/CECs indicated ‘Strongly Agree’, except IEW/CEC A, who circled, ‘Mostly Agree’ beside this action statement. At interview, IEW/CEC A explained she had not highly agreed because she was not from the local community. However, she showed she understood protocols and knew how to liaise with the local Indigenous community when working for the school:

Well, um, I’ll openly say that this isn’t my community. So I’ll go out and I’m new to it. I’ll go and find the right places and the right things and the right people and um whether that be from [name of Principal A] or might be from one of the teachers when they want to find out some information (Pair A, Interview 1, p. 27).

IEW/CEC B and Principal B both indicated “Strongly Agreed” on their questionnaires. At interview, in discussion about this statement, their congruence was apparent as they both agreed this was something they did together:

IEW/CEC B: See G2? I’m going to say, ‘Strongly Agree’. You have a look [Directing her comment to Principal B by gesturing to look at that page]. Sorry to discuss this [name of researcher]

Researcher: No, that’s the whole idea

IEW/CEC B: I want [pauses]

Principal B: You have discussed it with me, yeah

IEW/CEC B: [Reads out statement G2:] “We have discussed what knowledge, understandings and connections that the CEC/IEW uniquely brings into the school community” Well, I’m strongly agreeing with that

Principal B: Yeah I am too

IEW/CEC B: We, we’ll be working on community events so that’ going to be um...

Principal B: Yep (Pair B, Interview 1, p. 5).

Principal B also reiterated her goal to ensure IEW/CEC B was recognised in the school, repeatedly using the term she coined as “the missing link”:

Principal B: You know so um, um [name of IEW/CEC B] had that knowledge but I didn’t know about the care situation, I didn’t know about any of that. So that’s where I see [name of IEW/CEC B] as the missing link, like the BIG [emphasising big] missing link. So I guess for me where I sit is um, re-establishing [name of IEW/CEC B] in her role in the school, um as a force to be reckoned with, but an important person like coz I tell everyone “[name of IEW/CEC B]’s the missing link”. She is the connection between home and school and she’s got that cultural knowledge (Pair B, Interview 1, p. 15).

None of the other pairs made comments at interview.

#### 4.2.2.6.4 G5: *Individual responsibilities*

Interestingly all IEWs/CECs indicated on the questionnaire they strongly agreed they had discussed their individual responsibilities in regards to the school’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programmes, while all principals mostly agreed. The responses by Pair B and Pair D2 gave an indication that it was their newness to the school that reduced their agreement to the statement. Throughout their interview, Principal B had made it clear she was determined to re-establish the IEW/CEC role in the school, for which the IEW/CEC was very grateful. They commented:

IEW/CEC B: We have discussed G5 because...

Principal B: it’s still a work in process, it’s not refined but [name of IEW/CEC B] now has a place in the school.

Researcher: Good

Principal B: [repeats] [name of IEW/CEC B] now has a place in the school.

IEW/CEC B: “That’s still [indecipherable] work on there, eh? That, [pauses] yeah what we’ve discussed you know, but, [pauses] thank you (Pair B, Interview 1, p.15).

When completing the questionnaire in 2015, IEW/CEC D1 chose ‘Disagree’ while Principal D2 chose ‘Mostly Agree’. At interview, after some discussion, they accepted this difference and recognised that regular meetings would address this:

Principal D2: and this one, before [referring to the statement G5] and it [pauses] we really haven’t nussed out [pauses]

IEW/CEC D1: and it’s only because we haven’t met regularly

Principal D2: made that commitment, eh? (Pair D2, Interview 2, p.41).

The other pairs did not discuss this statement at interview.

#### 4.2.2.6.5 G6: *IEW/CEC role is site specific and publicised*

Statement G6 referred to having a clearly defined role statement that is communicated to staff. Pair A agreed they communicated the role of the IEW/CEC to staff, “And that’s part of our induction policy, you know, see this person if you’ve got this and that sort of thing” (Principal A, Pair A, Interview 1, p.27), but they did not have a specific written job description, “But, even a job description, sometimes that has to be adopted in different ways for different kids and what I did five years ago I don’t do now” (IEW/CEC A, Pair A, Interview 1, p. 29). Principal B provided the researcher with a document she had only recently developed titled, *School Administration Roles and Responsibilities* which included IEW/CEC B as a member of the school’s leadership team. Principal B recounted a meeting with IEW/CEC B and then her supervisor about devising this document:

I said to [name of IEW/CEC B], “You’re not on this but you’re going to be”. So I gave her the one that didn’t have her name and I said, “I want you to go and pencil everything you see yourself doing in these areas.” So, um I gave her the weekend to do that and she brought it back to me the next time we met and when [name of principal supervisor] came in on the Friday, I said to him, “Look, I’m working on this but it’s just for you to know I’m going to include the CEC Officer” and he went, “Oh, oh I never thought of that.” I said, “No, but she’s going on there”. So, so that’s how it kind of evolved, hey, [name of IEW/CEC B]? (Pair B, Interview 1, p. 8)

Principal C indicated ‘Strongly Agree’ and wrote this comment on his questionnaire, ‘Does everything’, but he did not comment at the interview.

Both IEW/CEC D1 and Principal D1 indicated ‘Disagree’ with this statement and Principal D1 wrote, ‘Not written, prospectus not reviewed’ on her questionnaire and their subsequent comments at interview confirmed this:

Principal D1: I thought we haven’t really developed, no well, probably yeah, I would agree, we don’t have a site specific, we do have like a written thing in the prospectus, to say what we do, that’s only really, sort of small.

IEW/CEC D1: Actually that was brought up at the meeting, last night, too. Oh its part of the um, prospectus, there could be more information about my role.

Principal D1: OK. See in there, it is in there though, isn’t it? We said we were going to review it.

IEW/CEC D1: [laughs] The Community Education Counsellor is mentioned, but there is nothing else.

Principal D1: Oh, OK I thought there was a [pauses}

IEW/CEC D1: Uh, I don’t know, I didn’t see it myself (Pair D1, Interview 1, p. 34).

After this exchange Pair D1 then reflected on the work they were doing with their local Indigenous community advisory group over constructing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for their school and how they can include mention of the IEW/CEC in the prospectus and IEW/CEC D1 added the updated prospectus idea was, “a part of the RAP, too” (Pair D1, Interview 1, p.34).

Interestingly, in 2015 IEW/CEC D1 again indicated ‘Disagree’ with this statement, yet her new principal, Principal D2 had ‘Mostly Agree’, because she had assumed the IEW/CEC was involved at induction. At interview, this difference was clarified because the IEW/CEC explained she wasn’t. Principal D2 then acknowledged, “there’s a gap there” (Pair D2, Interview 2, p.22).

#### 4.2.2.6.6 *H1, H2, H3: Individual professional development needs addressed and supported*

Statements H1, H2 and H3 are grouped together because they were all connected to professional development. They also reflected an ethic of care for and active support of each other to do this work. Pairs A and B agreed that this was occurring in their schools and both Pair D1 and Pair D2 agreed that they were not doing this. Pair C was the only pair with identical

levels of agreements and additionally Principal C wrote these comments, for H1, ‘not at level needed’ and for H2, ‘not where it should be’.

At interview, IEW/CEC B shared how she had felt about working with the new principal compared to how she had been treated in the past, “and that’s why probably I can see a light there. I knew my role, I knew what was required of me, yet I was being [pauses] not taken seriously, you know” (Pair B, Interview 1, p. 7). Later in the interview, Principal B confirmed this role renewal when she described how she was working to help extend IEW/CEC B’s capability using the system’s Developing Performance Plan (DPP) process:

My next step with [name of IEW/CEC B] is to take her through the DPP process too. Once we get all of this, sort of ironed out, I want to know what her goals are. I mean, I think I know what they are in my head. I’ve made a couple of assumptions this morning with white coffee [laughs] but um, um, I’ve just, just from having the outside and talking to [name of IEW/CEC B], and I think there’s been that lull for a couple of years, um as soon as I saw a PD that I thought she would be interested in, I flicked it straight away. [Name of IEW/CEC B] I think you need to do this. And she went, ‘yep, yep, yep – I’ll go to that’. But she hasn’t been to PD. She hasn’t been to any sort of stuff so I think that’s a need for [name of IEW/CEC B] and I think that’s something I’m going to be continually looking out for, to either build her capacity, her skills even beyond the CEC role, but the one that she’s going to is about drug and alcohol one – all that sort of stuff. That’s in our community so I’ve got a perception she’s out there doing community relations and talking to families and you know, pickups and all that sort of stuff. She needs to have that social background as well as to come with that so um, she’s going on a PD shortly (Principal B, Interview 1, p. 16).

At interview Pair D1 acknowledged they had not yet completed their annual performance development plans, “we haven’t really done ours” (Principal D1, Pair D1, Interview 1, p.42) but that they had discussed professional development needs:

Principal D1: We’ve probably talked about our professional development stuff

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah

Principal D1: Data and the, you know, like we’re always doing stuff (Pair D1, Interview 1, p.43).

### **4.2.3 Action plans**

Towards the conclusion of the first interview with each pair, after a process of reflection and discussion, each looked at what they could work on together in the future. This

next subsection reveals what the case study pairs determined as next step actions for improving their school for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

During their interview, Pair A lamented that despite their best intentions and actions to attract local members of the community into the school, they had experienced limited participation, “Yeah and we’ve tried different things, we’ve discussed different things, but um, nothing’s really been successful” (Principal A, Pair A, Interview 1, p. 41). Together they decided that for their context, increasing community engagement was something they still wanted more success in and were willing to commit to take some actions to achieve this. Later in the interview Principal A said, “...so our purpose is community and bringing the community in” (Interview 1, p. 45).

Pair B were focussed on two areas, “we’ll be working on community events” (IEW/CEC B, Pair B, Interview 1, p. 5) and “I guess for me, my main agenda now is um, to get [name of IEW/CEC B] to have a place in the school...and a purpose in the school and for the teachers to know her role” (Principal B, Pair B, Interview 1, p. 12).

Pair C had an ambitious agenda with several future actions involving EATSIPS and a new joint project with local tertiary institutions to provide a training pathway to university, “Miss, it will be really good for our school” (IEW/CEC C1, Pair C, Interview 2, p. 7, recounting how one of her students reacted to her when she told them their school was undertaking this new joint project).

Pair D1 and then D2 also focused on increasing staff capability with EATSIPS, “but, it’s that intentional, um, getting other people involved” (Principal D1, Pair D1, Interview 1, p.53) and “[name of Principal D2]’s agreed to, um, for us to do our cultural awareness training for our pupil free day” [IEW/CEC D1, Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 410].

Table 18 captures a summary of what action plans each pair determined for their school. This formed the basis of their future actions and provided the focus of discussion in the ensuing case study interviews in the latter cycles of the research.

Table 18. Identified future projects/actions of the Case Study schools

<b>Case Study Schools</b>	<b>Identified future projects/actions</b>
A	Increase community engagement - build a Yarning Circle Garden; possibly hold a Smoking Ceremony.
B	Increase responsibility and give greater clarity to the role of IEW/CEC on staff; scheduled/regular IEW/CEC-Principal meetings; increase community engagement and open up school
C	More Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools (EATSIPS) training for staff; more visible signs of recognition – i.e. murals; become a training centre offering pathways to university; scheduled/regular IEW/CEC-principal meetings.
D	More EATSIPS training for staff, especially middle management; increase school-community links; scheduled/regular IEW/CEC-principal meetings.

#### 4.2.4 Section summary

Findings of the case study from cycle 1 and cycle 2 of Stage 2 of the research provided a specific view into the characteristics and actions of five IEW/CEC and principals pairs as they worked together in their schools. Importantly six distinctive relationship dynamics emerged from the partnership assessment questionnaire as well as the related interviews and these were used to investigate the relationship situation between the case study IEWs/CECs and principals. Listed in order of frequency of their enactment by all pairs, these relationship dynamics included: Trusting Interpersonal Communication; Community Engagement Collaboration; Shared Vision and Values; Role Agency and Solidarity; Indigenous Education Advocacy and Knowledge Sharing; and, Capability Development. Within these relationship dynamics detailed findings were about the identified features of the exemplary pairs' professional relationship. Significantly one pair had a realisation that their work had to include more staff and another wanted to reinstate the role of IEW/CEC to have more of a leadership presence in the school. This foreshadows a shift in their perception of their work together. A summary of the major findings from the relationship dynamics are presented in Table 19.

Table 19 Major findings of the relationship dynamics between the case study IEW/CEC and principal pairs

<b>Relationship Dynamic</b>	<b>Major Findings about the IEW/CEC and principal relationship</b>
Trusting Interpersonal Communication	Most highly enacted (Agreed Undertaking = 97.7%). There was a universal high acceptance of each other; they listened to each other; and, both understood the importance of communication for job effectiveness. It was acknowledged by almost all pairs that more regular meetings together, strengthened their co-work, “we need to get back into those structured meeting times because that’s um, where we really...when we were doing them regularly, we were really good” (Principal D1, Pair D1, Interview 1, p 25). One statement in this relational dynamic relating to a genuine acceptance of each other’s limitations received identical 100% high levels of agreement from every case study pair.
Community Engagement Collaboration	This dynamic was the second highest most enacted dynamic (Agreed Undertaking = 94.4%). It was also one in which each pair recognised it needed further development and more co-work to be done. All pairs agreed the principal listens to and where possible acts on community views, “I want them to have a voice...” (Principal B, Pair B, Interview 1, p.9).
Shared Vision and Values	Sharing vision and values was also highly enacted by all pairs and sat closely behind the above characteristics (Agreed Undertaking = 92%). Each IEW/CEC respected and supported the whole school vision of the principal. Significantly, one pair recognised the work of improving their school for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was bigger than the both of them, “Everybody hasn’t taken on the business, you know... we need to work on that... so it’s not just you and I” (Principal D1, Pair D1, Interview 1, p.48). This pair, Pair D1, accepted their current situation was partly created by them, “and I think part of it is our fault in a way... we do organise, we organise things, we get things done...and we do it and we don’t really bring other people in and we’ve gotta do that, that more” (Principal D1, Pair D1, Interview 1, pp. 51-52). Increasing the responsibility and understanding of all staff to work effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students gave impetus for this pair in their future school improvement work.

Role Agency and Solidarity	<p>This was the fourth next highly enacted characteristic (Agreed Undertaking 88.9%). While nearly all statements were framed through actions of the principal, many interview discussions reflected how pairs view IEWs/CECs and the principal as both being champions for Indigenous education in their school. Case study principals did not underestimate the capacities of the IEWs/CECs, but some IEWs/CECs did of themselves, “[Name of Principal] thinks I’m too humble in my approach...It’s not for me, it’s for the kids [pause] and he, he’s always growling me for that. But actually he thinks that I don’t take enough of the accolades! (IEW/CEC C, Pair C, Interview 1, p.4). Optimism to do the work with confidence and solidarity between the IEW/CEC and principal were very important, “But that’s good because I think, once you do that, well that will make them think. Eh? that she’s backing those girls and the rest of them” (IEW/CEC D2, Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 38, speaking about how the principal supports Indigenous staff and students). This is the second and only other relational dynamic to receive identical 100% high levels of agreement from every case study pair. It was in relation to the principal deeply appreciating the skills and capabilities brought to the job by the lived experience of the IEW/CEC.</p>
Indigenous Education Advocacy and Knowledge sharing	<p>Recognised as just as important but with lesser enactment (Agreed Undertaking = 77.2%), this characteristic had lower percentages of identical agreements. All principals recognised their role as a school leader to advocate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. Also evident was that while all IEWs/CECs did not necessarily know whole school data like their principals, IEWs/CECs did know their individual students well, “I know that child isn’t good at maths. I know that because I am working with them so to have the numbers and the figures would mean nothing because I know that child” (IEW/CEC A, Pair A, Interview 1, p. 24).</p>
Capability Development	<p>While just as important as the other dynamics, this was least acted on (Agreed Undertaking = 75%), particularly for IEWs/CECs. There was high agreement this dynamic required attention, with time management being a blocker to this. One IEW/CEC was actively working with their principal on their DPP process. Principals keenly recognised how IEW/CEC helped to build their understanding of Indigenous cultures and histories and were a ‘missing link’ between school and the local community, “So that’s where I see [name of IEW/CEC B] as the missing link, like the BIG [emphasising big] missing link... She is the connection between home and school and she’s got that cultural knowledge” (Principal B, Pair B, Interview 1, p.15).</p>

The pairs' responses also revealed that no matter the length of time they had worked together, they were in the main, of like minds about improving their schools for the benefit of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Where there was variation of perception, this was explained at interview with the resulting discussions providing an opportunity for greater clarification that brought the pairs to a closer shared understanding of what they are doing well and what might be their next steps.

All case study pairs determined action plans that could be the focus of the CPAR approach for the duration of the research. In 2014, both state secondary school pairs indicated they wanted to do more EATSIPS work with staff in order to build better understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories. One of the secondary schools wanted to increase its capacity so as to become a training centre offering pathways to university. Both secondary school pairs also recognised they needed to meet more regularly to progress this work. In 2015-2016, their plans continued even though one of the schools underwent a change of principals. Both state primary school pairs maintained their focus from 2014-2016 where they wanted to increase community engagement through creation of physical school-site projects. One of the primary principals also wanted to strengthen the role of their school's IEW/CEC. Figure 4.6 captures a diagrammatic view of what has been presented above about the focused view of what was found about the case study IEW/CEC and principal relationship and their action plans.

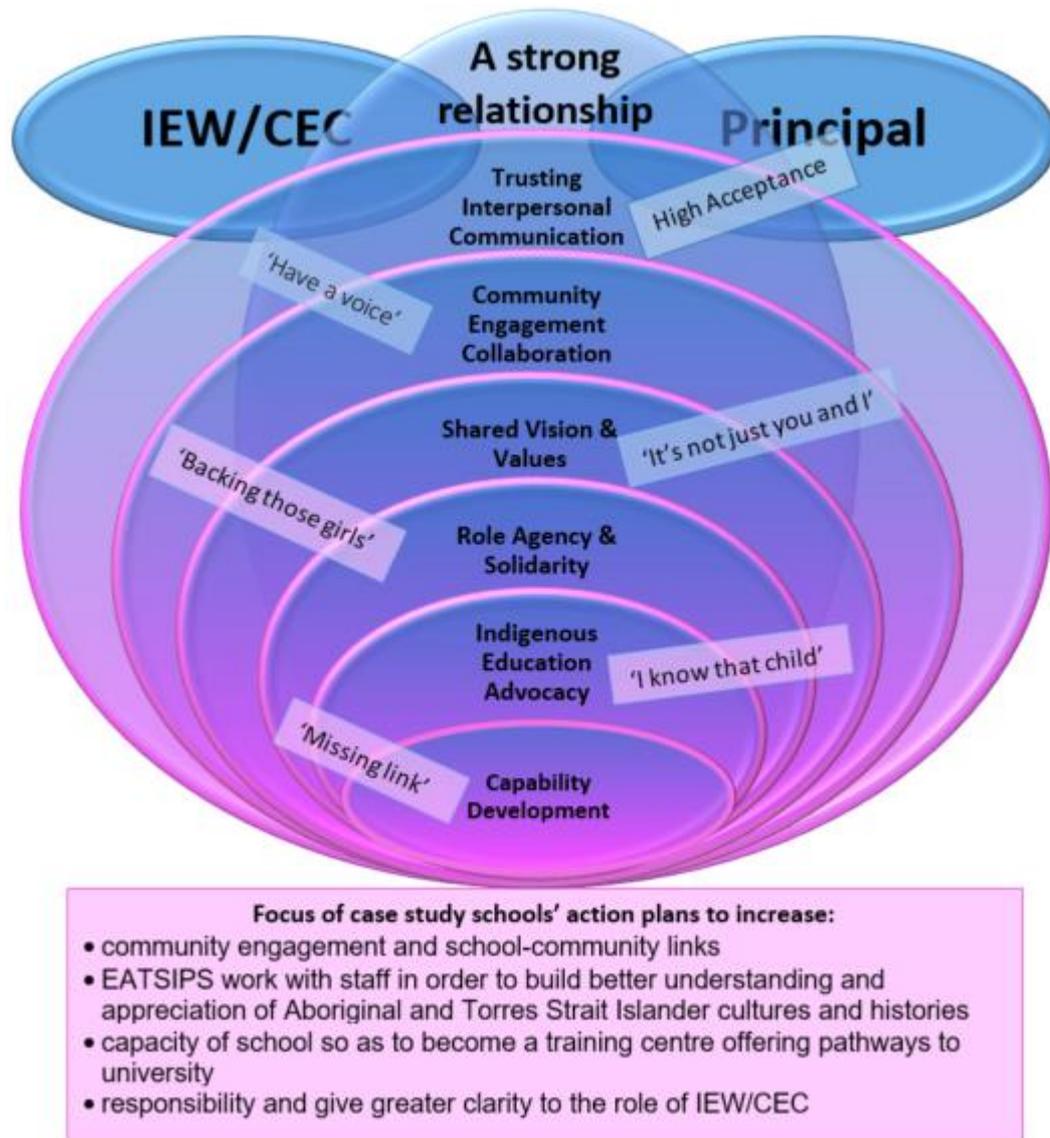


Figure 4.6 Summary of the case study IEW/CEC and principal relationship and their school action plans

### 4.3 A coetaneous view

To further add to the understanding of what is the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship, this final section of Chapter 4 juxtaposes the findings from the broad view of The Region to the specific view of the early stages of the case study. While there can be no easy comparison between the specific relationship dynamics provided by the deeper view of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship and those in The Region, findings about participant demographics, IEW/CEC current duties and IEW and principal co-work from The Region are

regarded alongside those of the pairs in the case study. This contributes to a reframed view of the first research question, *what is the current IEW/CEC and principal relationship?*

#### **4.3.1 Demographics**

In regards to both sets of findings relating to participant demographics, that is gender, Indigeneity, mobility and work experience, it was confirmed that IEWs/CECs and principals in the case study schools shared a similar profile with that of The Region's IEWs/CECs and principals. Both sets of findings revealed those who worked in IEW/CEC roles were usually female and Indigenous, with the majority being Aboriginal. IEWs/CECs had a greater stability of time served the same role within the same school than their principal. The regional trend that a majority of IEWs/CECs were long term members of the local community and in some instances, connected to the local traditional custodian group, was also highlighted by the case study schools. There was also the common trend that both males and females were appointed as principals with almost all being non-Indigenous. Both The Region's and the case study principals were more experienced within The Department than the IEWs/CECs, but many were more mobile and newer to the school. Principals worked full time and many were permanently in this position. For example, within the case study, one on the schools changed principals and a new one was appointed in an acting capacity and shortly afterwards won the permanent position on merit. This was not the situation for IEWs/CECs. Instead The Region's and case study IEWs/CECs shred very different conditions of employment to principals. In many schools in The Region and nearly all in the case study, employed IEWs/CECs above the systemic allocation of permanent staffing, with any expansion of their role staffed in a temporary capacity. Their tenure was much more limited. While there was no data from the regional survey about the mix of permanent and temporary hours that every IEW/CEC worked, it is known that for the case study IEWs/CECs, two out of the five IEWs/CECs worked full time, three worked part-time and these positions were contingent upon funding allocations.

#### **4.3.2 Current duties**

Viewing both regional and case study findings about perceptions of current duties performed by IEWs/CECs also shed light onto the IEW/CEC and principal relationship. The general agreement from the regional survey that IEWs/CECs played an advisory role for staff about Indigenous culture, community matters and student welfare was replicated in the case study schools. Beyond these duties, however, there was a widening of difference in perception in the regional survey. There were more differences than similarities in across group perceptions between IEWs/CECS and principals about the work of IEWs/CECs. What

IEWs/CECs perceived they did in their job was generally different from what principals perceived. The findings from the case study were the opposite. Each case study principal had good knowledge of the IEWs/CECs current duties. For instance, within the case study, the relationship dynamic of Role Agency and Solidarity had an action statement *I2: In this school, the Principal recognises the skills and capabilities of the CEC/IEW that are formed through their experience (of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture)*. Every IEW/CEC and principal across all five pairs identically strongly agreed with this statement. Such an extraordinary level of agreement suggests case study IEWs/CECs knew that their principals had good knowledge of the distinctive unique advisory/liaison qualities that the IEW/CEC role could bring to a school community. In another example, there was notable disparity between perceptions of those in the case study and those in The Region about community liaison work undertaken by IEWs/CECs. The case study principals certainly recognised this capacity of the IEWs/CECs with high acknowledgement. One of the other action statements in the same relationship dynamic example above was, *I3: Special link recognised of IEW/CEC to students and community*. Nearly all pairs scored high agreement with this and with the one pair that disagreed, this was acknowledged in the pair discussion and seen as a matter to be addressed by the principal. The relationship dynamic of ‘Community Engagement Collaboration’ was the second most highly enacted co-work of IEWs/CECs and principals. While there was relatively common levels of agreement about community liaison as co-work for IEWs/CECs and principals in The Region’s results, the case study pairs appeared to be much more active in this work together.

Not mentioned earlier, but included here, is further evidence that corroborates the depth of knowledge the case study pairs had about current IEW/CEC duties compared to those in The Region. That is, when revisiting the regional survey’s results to write this section of the chapter, I was reminded that two of the case study pairs had also completed the first sweep of the regional survey. Their answers in the regional survey about current duties showed a strong congruence of perception on what they thought was the work of the IEW/CEC. Each pair had identical answers to the questions that referred to current duties performed. I then compared their results with those from the regional survey who I knew through my professional field experience to be IEWs/CECs and principals from the same schools in The Region. The trend of general difference of perception about current duties between all surveyed IEWs/CECs and principals in The Region from those in the case study schools was again mirrored in their results.

Interestingly, when also reviewing the two case study pairs' responses in the first sweep of the regional survey there was one comparable finding from the regional survey in relation to current duties of the IEW/CEC. That is, it would seem some underestimation of the extent of the IEW/CEC role came from the IEWs/CECs themselves. While the regional survey results showed many principals may underestimate the scope of the IEW/CEC role, on the other hand, several principals understood IEWs/CECs did work across school in wider range of current duties more broadly than IEWs/CECs themselves recognised. Interestingly this was mirrored by one of the case study principals in their responses in the regional survey, who along with identical current duty responses to their school's IEW/CEC, had also added two important school-based duties that had not been listed by the IEW/CEC. That is, the case study principal wrote, 'monitors Indigenous students' academic achievement & attainment of QCE' and, 'runs Indigenous advisory group' on the survey. The school's IEW/CEC had left her survey blank in that section. Additionally it has already been noted above in the case study findings and in the case study section summary, that one IEW/CEC mentioned her principal was 'always growling' her for not being more self-appreciative, "But actually he thinks that I don't take enough of the accolades!" (IEW/CEC C, Pair C, Interview 1, p.4). Such results likely reflect a very strong appreciation by the case study principal of the reach and influence of the IEW/CEC role.

#### **4.3.3 Co-work**

Another way to understand the IEW/CEC and principal relationship is to look at a comparison of perceptions of the IEW/CEC and principal co-work. There were two common threads of co-work activities that are woven through the regional and case study findings, one is that IEWs/CECs and principals in the main, do work together on 'one off' annual activities like NAIDOC week and the other, a more ongoing process, is that IEWs/CECs and principals undertake co-work around the implementation of a systemic policy, EATSIPS. The similarities generally stop there, as across The Region both groups mentioned other co-work that was largely in operational policies and school routine, with the co-work of school-home engagement the next most common co-work. More IEWs/CECs than principals in the regional survey thought they undertook co-work with their principals in activities chiefly related to student engagement and achievement. Whereas in the case study schools, both the IEW/CEC and principal had shared agreements about their co-work which went beyond this and covered a number of school improvement activities such as induction of staff, professional development of staff, parent engagement and celebrating Indigenous student success. The difference between The Region and the case study when it came to parent engagement has already been noted above in the coetaneous view section about current duties.

Meeting regularly together was seen as important and enabling factor of their co-work by the case study pairs, even if the IEW/CEC had another direct supervisor. However, across The Region, such meetings were infrequent and not usually between the IEW/CEC and principal. Of IEWs/CECs in The Region at the time of the survey, few received direct supervision by the principal or guidance and feedback about work performance development, whoever their supervisor. It is recognised that this could likely explain why there are findings of mismatches in perceptions by The Region's principals about IEWs/CECs. This was not the situation within the case study schools, where the IEW/CEC and principal worked more closely together in a productive and positive way and clearly knew what work they did together, what work was their role responsibility and could give feedback and guidance to each other. This was exemplified in the relationship dynamic of 'Trusting Interpersonal Communication' which had an action statement *B4: We accept that there may be gaps in our capabilities/skills in doing our jobs and it is okay to admit this*. Every IEW/CEC and principal across all five pairs identically strongly agreed with this statement.

Case study principals were strong advocates for and articulated an appreciation of the IEW/CEC role. This was not noted as a trend in the survey responses of those principals from The Region. In the regional survey, professional development for the IEW/CEC role was limited and few IEWs/CECs received guidance and feedback about work performance development, whoever their supervisor. Case study principals on the other hand, wanted to strengthen the IEW/CEC role to better support the challenging work of school improvement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. No more evident was this in the relationship dynamic of Capability Development where the case study pairs had high congruence of shared views, but recognised this was the least enacted of their work together, something replicated by the results in The Region. Professional development of IEWs/CECs in The Region appeared inadequate. While time was cited as the greatest blocker to undertaking formal supervision for case study IEWs/CECs, one of the case study principals had commenced the annual Developing Performance Plan (DPP) process with their IEW/CEC.

Most of the case study schools included the IEW/CEC with induction of their new staff and where they didn't, they recognised this as a future action to be taken. In one case study school, where the role had previously been underutilised, the new principal saw the centrality of the IEW/CEC to help them forge stronger links between the school and the community. She described her determination to re-instate the role as she saw it as a 'missing link' of communication and advice between home and school. Another case study pair recognised their actions together may have come at the exclusion of others and they were formulation how they

could expand their work. Significantly, all case study principals strongly agreed that their interaction with the IEW/CEC built their own understanding of Indigenous culture.

#### **4.3.4 Section summary**

The coetaneous view of the findings for the regional survey and case study show similarities in relation to demographics, some current duties and some co-work of IEWs/CECs and principals. However, there were generally more differences between the two views and these particularly occurred in perceptions about other current duties and co-work not only between the regional survey participant groups, but also between participants in the regional survey and the case study. This dual view clarified that while the case study IEWs/CECs and principals can professionally collaborate very effectively and interdependently, this was not yet common practice across the region. Case study principals had good knowledge of their IEW's/CEC's current duties and case study pairs had shared perceptions of what they worked on together which extended beyond that of the operational or one off events of their regional colleagues. That the case study pairs had identical high levels of agreement of enactment about two different statements within the relational dynamics of 'Trusting Interpersonal Communication' and 'Role Agency and Solidarity' is indicative of their interdependence. Case study pairs interacted frequently and saw the importance of regular meetings. Capability development of IEWs/CECs was limited for those in The Region and while some pairs did not engage in this aspect of their work as actively as they would like, each pair saw capability development, not just of themselves, but of other staff as equally important as a way to improve their school for Indigenous students.

An interesting finding from the coetaneous view was one that was common between most participants in both views of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship, was the underestimation of the reach and influence of the IEW/CEC role. Both groups in the regional survey showed this tendency but principals in the case study had higher appreciation of the IEW/CEC role, how they worked for school-home linkages and how the interactions with the IEW/CEC built the principal's own understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories. Some case study IEWs/CECs were modest and while they were knowingly the facilitators of growing the cultural responsiveness of non-Indigenous staff, some did not quite realise the extent of the influence of their own work. Figure 4.7 provides a diagrammatic summary of what has been summarised here as the coetaneous view of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship.



**Between The Region and the Case Study**

**Similar**

- Same varied demographics
- Similar inadequate conditions of IE/CEC employment
- IEW/CEC are key staff advisors
- IEWs/CECs underestimate their reach and influence
- Some co-work is on annual school celebrations and a systemic policy, EATSIPS.
- Capabilities development of IEWs/CECs is least actioned

**Different**

Case study IEWs/CECs and principals could professionally collaborate very effectively and interdependently. They had:

- identical perceptions about two key statements of relational dynamics, one each from: *Trusting Interpersonal Communication* and *Role Agency and Solidarity*
- good knowledge of the IEW's/CEC's current duties, including student engagement and achievement
- shared agreements on co-work which went beyond operational policies and school routine

Case study principals advocated for and articulated an appreciation of the IEW/CEC role, especially for school-home links

All case study principals strongly agreed that their interaction with the IEW/CEC built their own understanding of Indigenous culture.

Figure 4.7 Summary of coetaneous view between The Region and the case study

#### 4.4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, findings were presented for the first research question, *what is the current IEW/CEC and principal relationship?* A broad, regional view of this relationship was shown followed by a more specific view provided by the early phases of the case study. In particular, this focused view revealed six key relationship dynamics common across all participants in the case study. Notably some IEWs/CECs showed modesty about the influence of their role and some realisation that the work of the IEW/CEC and principal needed to broaden beyond themselves to enrol others to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The broad and specific views were then compared and contrasted to show a reframed view of the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship, one that can be productive and positive and forms a foundation of significant endeavours in Indigenous education. Figure 4.8 provides a diagrammatic summary of what has been presented in this chapter about the IEW/CEC and principal relationship. It depicts the coetaneous view of The Region as compared to the case study and highlights the relationship dynamics with some significant findings from the case study. Featured is an emerging realisation by one of the case study pairs that their joint work had to extend beyond others to better improve their school for Indigenous students. The following chapter, Chapter 5 presents findings that contribute answers to the next two core research questions: *How can this relationship be strengthened and what are the contextual features that influence this? What are the outcomes of this strengthened relationship?*

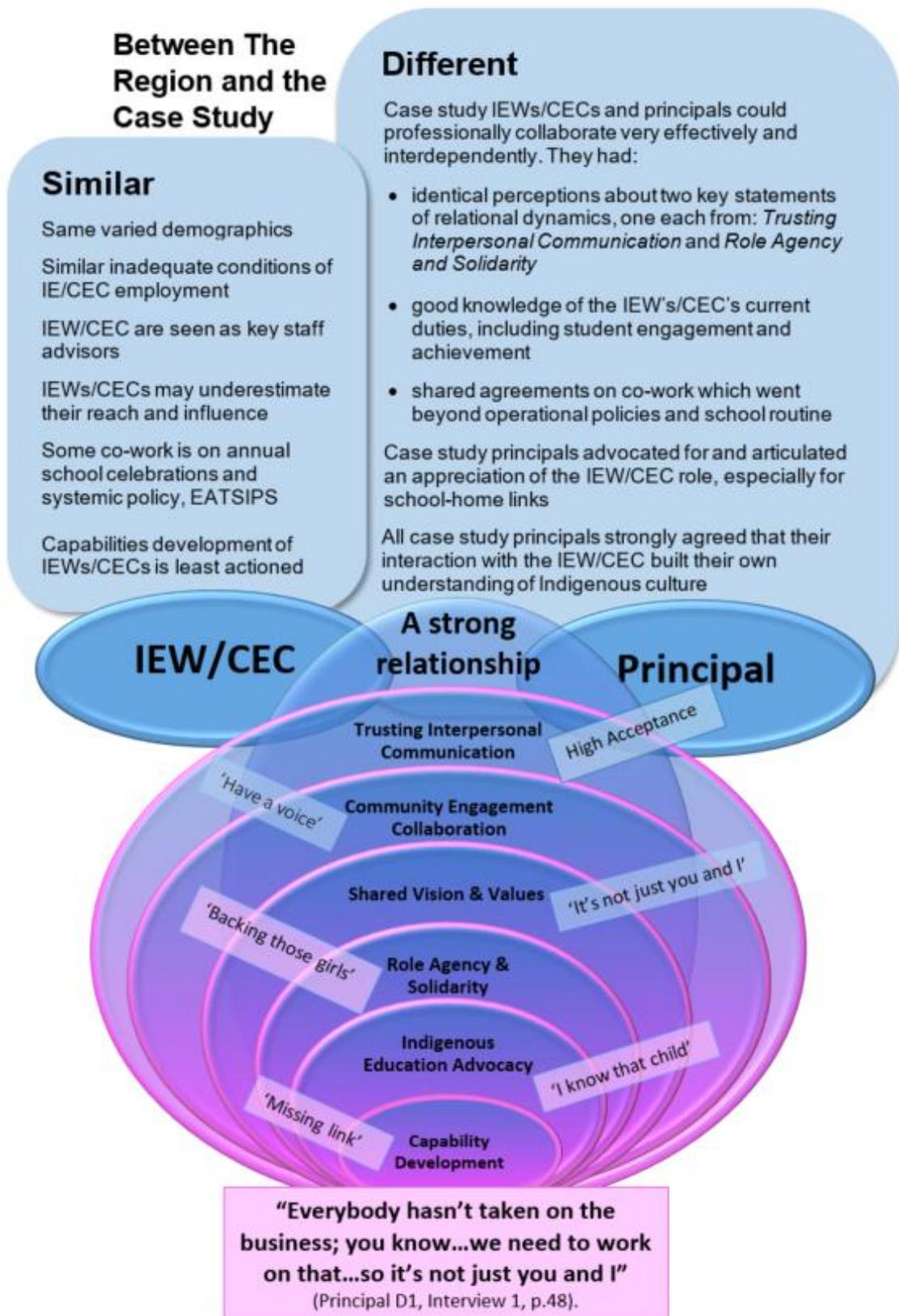


Figure 4.8 Summary of Chapter 4 and the first core research question: What is the current IEW/CEC and principal relationship?

## 5 Influences and outcomes of a strong IEW/CEC and principal relationship

### 5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter, Chapter 4 provided the first set of findings from data gathered during Phase 1 and the early stages of Phase 2 of the research in response to the first core research question, *what is the current Indigenous Education Worker/Community Education Counsellor (IEW/CEC) and principal relationship?* It began by painting a broad picture of professional relationships between IEWs/CECs and principals in schools across a large educational region in Australia with survey findings indicated these relationships were underdeveloped and underpinned with more differences than similarities in regards to participant's perceptions of both the IEW/CEC role and their collaborative working roles. Next, a more detailed view of these roles was captured from five exemplary IEW/CEC and principal pairs who worked within the region. Each pair were found to have an effective professional relationship that could be described through six common distinguishable features, referred to as relational dynamics. Finally, a coetaneous view of the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship compared and contrasted the regional findings with those from the case study. It clarified that while the case study IEWs/CECs and principals can professionally collaborate, this was not yet common practice across the region and there was some underestimation of the IEW/CEC role by those in the region and by some case study IEWs/CECs. One of the important findings that emerged from the case study came from one of the schools. There was a growing realisation between the IEW/CEC and principal that the responsibility for improving Indigenous education needed to shift beyond what the pair could do together and expand more broadly into the school including other staff, so they too can take on the core business of improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes.

The intention of Chapter 5 is to make known the second set of findings that respond to the next two core research questions, *how can this relationship be strengthened and what are the contextual features that influence this? What are the outcomes of this strengthened relationship?* The final core research question will be covered in Chapter 7, *what are the implications for practice and policy in schools?* Findings in Chapter 5 are organised into three sections and like those in the previous chapter, they are descriptive and explanatory, with the conceptual framework of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship (Figure 5.1) continuing to underpin the presentation of information.

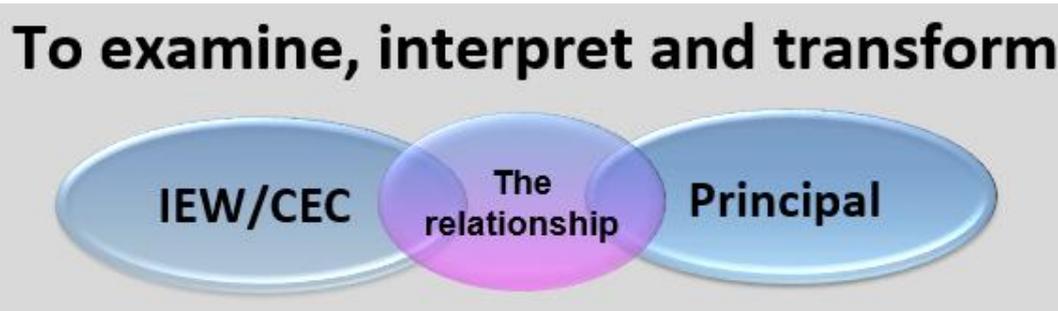


Figure 5.1 Conceptual framework of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship

The first section of this chapter, Section 5.1, addresses the second core research. It draws attention to and foreshadows the significance of the nature of the exemplary pairs' professional relationship, presenting findings not evident in Chapter 4. Sub-section 5.1.1 focuses on the first part of the second core research, which asks: *How can this relationship be strengthened?* An explanation is provided for shifting the focus of the question to: *Why is this relationship already strong?* Findings are taken from analysis of data gathered while working with each pair during the opening stages of the case study and are presented in a chronology of the enactment of the first cycle, Cycle 1 (2014) of the Critical Participatory Action Research (CPAR) approach. Sub-section 5.1.3 presents additional results about the strength of the relationship over time, based on analysis of data gleaned from the second cycle, Cycle 2 (2015) followed by the third cycle, Cycle 3 (2016) of the CPAR approach. Section 5.2 follows with a focus on the second part of second core research question that asks: *What are the contextual features that influence this?* Analysis of all data from the latter two cycles of the CPAR approach and where appropriate from the first cycle, provide findings that show multiple contextual features, either beneficial or detrimental to influencing a strong professional relationship between and IEW/CEC and principal. The third section, Section 5.3 addresses the third core research question: *What are the outcomes of this strengthened relationship?* It provides findings also predominantly from the analysis of data from the latter two cycles of the CPAR approach, showing outcomes for each role and between the pair as well as including what can happen when others take on 'the business' of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. Finally, the representational diagram of the summary of findings about the IEW/CEC and principal relationship presented at the end of Chapter 4, is further expanded and re-presented at the end of this chapter to capture a summary of all findings for both chapters.

Figure 5.2 is a graphic view of sources and processes informing the Chapter 5 findings that answer the second and third research questions.

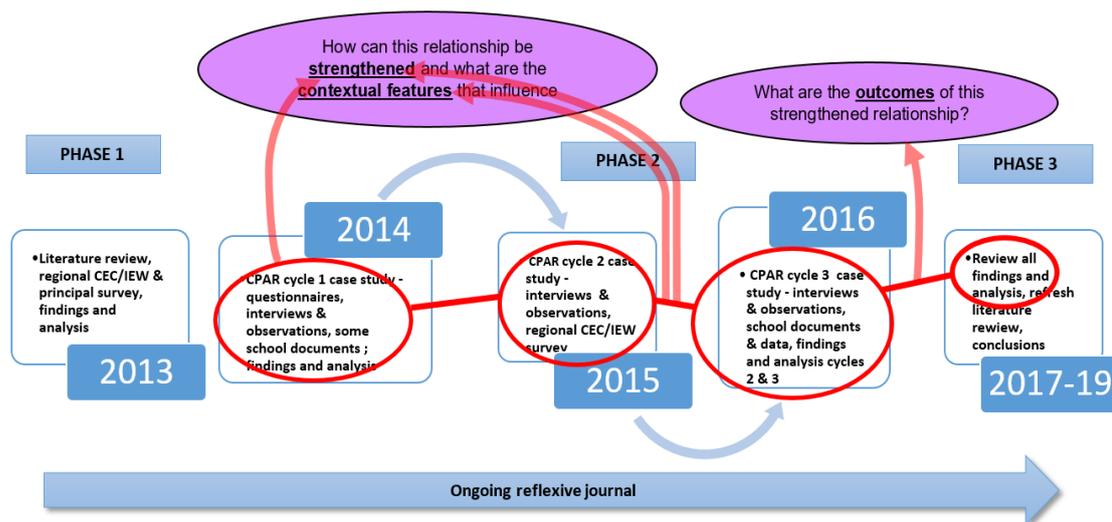


Figure 5.2 Sources and processes for Chapter 5 findings

The conventions protecting the confidentiality of participants in the research are continued in this chapter. That is, the IEW and CEC roles, while separate and with different job descriptions/remuneration, are grouped together and named as IEW/CEC, the locale of this study is known as The Region and the Queensland state system is referred to as The Department. Case study participants are named by a letter to correspond with the school they work in (i.e. IEW/CEC A works with Principal A in School A) and when the IEW/CEC and principal are named as a pair, they are named as for example, Pair A. As stated earlier and in previous chapters, School D experienced a change of principals in 2015, hence the new principal is known as D2. The IEW/CEC in School D did not change and remained known as IEW/CEC D1, but as a pair, they are known as Pair D2. A second Indigenous staff member at School D participated in interviews in 2015 and 2016 is referred to as IEW/CEC D2.

### 5.1 Significance of the case study pairs professional relationships

With the focus of this study to examine, interpret and transform the ambiguity of the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship, it was anticipated from the outset that professional collaboration between these roles could be strengthened. The results of Phase 1 of the research confirmed there was scant strong collaboration between many IEWs/CECs and principals across The Region. Noteworthy, is that in the course of interviewing case study participants, some offered unsolicited but similar views about the professional relationship situation between many IEWs/CECs and principals across The Region:

IEW/CEC A: And it's sad when I see that with other teacher aides and CECs with their principal,

Principal A: Mmmm, [nodding in agreement]

IEW/CEC A: that there's, there's no, you know, there's no trust. (Pair A, Interview 2, p. 2).

I honestly believe I'm one of the minor few CECs that stand-up at every meeting and say my relationship with my teachers, um you know admin staff and the students as a whole is absolutely fantastic (IEW/CEC C, Pair C, Interview 3, p. 2).

At the same time, as I approached Phase 2 of the research, I did expect findings about the case study pairs may be different because they were selected for the very reason they were known to have more efficacious relationships than many of their regional colleagues. My expectations were reflected in the phrasing of the working title for the thesis, which at my confirmation seminar was stated as, "The power of two: Collaboration for urban Indigenous educational leadership". That said, it was still planned one of my researcher actions within the CPAR approach could be to assist in further strengthening the case study pairs' relationship. This idea of relationship strengthening was also reflected in the second and third core research questions.

It was not until the first interviews were actually conducted with each pair, however, that I could see a relationship strengthening intention was not as necessary for them beyond what was achieved by completion of the partnership assessment questionnaire and resulting discussion about the questionnaire. The positive and respectful way they spoke and listened to each other convinced me they were already or well on the way to being active collaborators who enjoyed professional work partnership. I could see no benefit on pursuing my relationship-strengthening intention. This was a significant early finding in itself and as discussed in Chapter 3, I took another inquiry route to answering the first part of the second core research question: *How can this relationship be strengthened?* Instead, I determined that by understanding *why* this relationship was already strong for the case study pairs, the emerging findings could then explain how a relationship could be strengthened. This changed my participatory focus and instead of putting energy into assisting the pairs strengthen the way they worked together per se, I focused on assisting them with their actions to improve their school for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. I determined that I could better understand the case study pairs' working relationship through my participation in taking action alongside each pair and at appropriate intervals, asking them to reflect on how their professional relationship developed over time.

This section therefore reflects the subsequent findings from the new route of action. It goes beyond the case study findings presented in Chapter 4, which provided specific descriptions about distinguishing features of congruent IEW/CEC and principal professional relationships. Instead, emphasised here are different findings, those that are generally about the *significance* of the strength of the case study pairs' professional relationship. They capture what was additionally noticed beyond the direct responses to the first interview questionnaire to rather the interaction conversations and behaviours observed with each pair from the very first encounter and then from those throughout the case study. This section is therefore organised into two subsections, beginning with a presentation of early evidence of the existing strong nature of the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship, followed by findings from the latter stages of the research.

### **5.1.1 A strong relationship from the start**

As described in previous chapters, the Cycle 1 meetings with each pair occurred within a three-week period during Term 3 and 4 of the school year in 2014. It was during each of these encounters with every pair that I noticed the strength of their professional relationship. That is, each pair spoke positively and respectfully about and to the other, they attentively listened to each other and equally contributed to discussions. Their body language and verbal interactions showed they were comfortable in each other's company. They frequently spoke with humour, candour and understanding.

Not presented in Chapter 4, but reported now are these early contact findings about what was observed with each pair that convinced me they had a strong relationship from the outset. What I found changed my research trajectory. Findings are explained through excerpts of interview transcripts and early observational annotations from my reflexive journal in chronological order of my encounters with each pair.

Pair C was the first pair I interviewed in Cycle 1. I made observational notes only at the first meeting and the following is an annotation I made at the time about the response of the pair to my proposition they participate in my study, "We went through the consent form. Both CEC and principal seemed committed to want to do it". My overall impression from this first visit was that the IEW/CEC and principal had strong positive regard for each other. At the time, they had been working together for just over two years. One week later, I made a further note about them in my reflexive journal after I had attended an annual dinner hosted by The Region for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island students. I wrote, *Observed how [name of IEW/CEC C] gave her principal a hug when he arrived.* At the second site visit in Cycle 1, Pair C completed

the questionnaire independently with some brief discussion afterwards. Principal C completed his questionnaire quite quickly and excused himself for a few minutes to briefly attend to another matter. IEW/CEC C continued to work on her responses to the questionnaire and spoke about the usefulness of the statements as she worked through them. She mentioned how this helped her think about her working relationship with her principal, although she made a self-depreciating comment about her not doing enough in their work together:

IEW/CEC C: these are really wonderful questions

Interviewer: yeah, they've been put together by principals and CECs

IEW/CEC C: Uh huh. [Continues working on the questionnaire, says quietly] definitely

IEW/CEC turns over the last the page of the questionnaire

IEW/CEC C: Really good. Wow they're really good questions, like questions I might have never ordinarily thought of. I s'pose I'll just reflect on the way our relationship has evolved and how it needed to evolve [indecipherable word] they were great. They were quite good, I mean [pauses] I think when I was thinking, well that's probably *me* [emphasising 'me'] doesn't do more or you know, coz I couldn't disagree on anything (Pair C, Interview 2, pp. 2-3).

I shared with IEW/CEC C what I had observed about their responses to the questionnaire as they had been filling it out, "but I was looking a little bit and he and you are thinking quite similarly. And that's good that explains then maybe why your relationship is good. I see you are on the same page" (Researcher, Pair C, Interview 1, p.5). IEW/CEC C responded in agreement that their relationship was strong because she believed they shared the same view for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, "Well [pauses] that's always just what we want for our kids and what we want for the school and for the betterment of the community" (Pair C, Interview 1, p.5). Principal C returned to the room and the discussion turned to a recent situation where IEW/CEC C had spoken at a school assembly to students in support of a fundraising drive by the school's Parents and Citizen's Association. IEW/CEC C reflected that what she had said to the students to motivate them to participate, "was a bit harsh" (Pair C, Interview 1, p.19). Principal C's response to this showed he held IEW/CEC C in high regard, "No, I'll reflect back on you mate, I actually had comments from the staff and I, with the feedback coz I told them, to see you personally, they said, that was bloody fantastic" (Pair C, Interview 1, pp.19-20).

Pair A were the second pair to be interviewed in Cycle 1. They were the longest working together pair (over eight years) and at time of their first interview in August 2014, I

could immediately see by the proximity and position they sat beside each other that they were very comfortable in each other's company. They negotiated to work through the questionnaire together. I articulated my immediate impressions about what I thought of their professional relationship towards the end of the interview as they discussed future projects and actions. I told them I thought they had a good working relationship. They concurred with my summation of the strength of their relationship and agreed as to how I might assist them as they worked on improving school-community engagement:

Principal A: We've got plans!

Researcher: Yes

Principal A: (Laughs)

IEW/CEC A: Yes!

Researcher: That's a perfect, already authentic thing that you're already working on

Principal A: Yeah, yeah, that you might be able to come along

Researcher: Yeah, I'd like to do that and it's like it's not then maybe so much about *your* [emphasising 'your'] relationship [pointing to them both] but it's about your relationship *with* [emphasising 'with']

Principal A: [Cuts in to finish researcher's sentence] the community

IEW/CEC A: Yes, yes

Researcher: Is the part that you want to

IEW/CEC A: [Speaks at the same time as Principal A] yes, yes

Principal A: [Cuts in to finish researcher's sentence] work on, yeah

Researcher: Looks like you've more or less got each other sorted out [laughs]

IEW/CEC A: Yes [smiling]

Principal A: Yes [smiling]

Researcher: But it's *what* [emphasis on what'] you do together and pull together

Principal: Yeah (Pair A, Interview 1, p. 41).

I wrote the following observation in my reflexive journal immediately after I left their school: *They believe they have an OK relationship but decided that what they would need to work on together is their relationship with the local community which is very itinerant and mobile.* I then made some other annotations about my learning from the process of administering the questionnaire, followed by this observation about the positive nature of the relationship between Pair A: *[Name of IEW/CEC A] has a strong respect for [name of Principal A] and vice versa.*

Pair B were the next and third pair interviewed. At the time of my first site visit with them, they were the newest pair, being together for just seven weeks as at September 2014. When we met, they chose to do their questionnaire independently and then discuss their responses. During this process, Pair B behaved very positively, honestly and respectfully towards each other. Their collaboration was particularly demonstrated during the following exchange, when Pair B recounted a critical incident that had occurred a few weeks' prior involving them and a misbehaving student. The new principal had automatically included the IEW/CEC in assisting her to work with the student, assuming this was the process used at the school. She retold how she became aware this was not something the IEW/CEC had been allowed to do with her previous principal. They both realised what they were doing together was a new way of working:

IEW/CEC B: I said to [name of Principal B], "Thank you for involving me in that, thank you".

Principal B: And I said "What are you doing?"

IEW/CEC B: And I said, "Thank you" And it didn't sort of drop until I came over and then I seen you, eh? I said, "No I've never been involved before".

Principal B: Coz I just assumed [name of C2] would be involved so I went, "Get [name of C2]."

IEW/CEC B: Oh, when it became difficult that's when I got involved. When it became [emphasis] REALLY difficult. So it wasn't here [made a low hand gesture] so it didn't get to there [made a high hand gesture]

Researcher: Yeah, yeah. Good, good.

Principal B: Yeah so I came in with that understanding that's what you did [laughing] 'cept that's just what I [emphasis on 'I'] did!

IEW/CEC B: I was dumbfounded and I said, “Thank you for letting me get involved”, and that. You know, I could tell in her voice, “What are you going on about?” (Pair B, Interview 1, pp.13-14).

Towards the conclusion of their interview, I commented to the pair that I thought they had already established a good working relationship which would grow over time and that my participation could instead be more about assisting with strengthening the activities they had planned:

Researcher: Probably I’m thinking the relationship will keep building as you go, its one conversation at a time and there will be times when you agree or disagree with [name of Principal B] and vice versa, but I s’pose the one thing you will try together and [name of Principal B] has signalled one thing she wants to work on is um, re-establishing in a formal way, a very explicit way, what your job is in the school? And um so that’s what I am hearing. So is that what you want to work on with [name of Principal B] on that too? Is that [pauses]?

IEW/CEC B: Absolutely and I want to work on my own goals, too. And I feel with [name of Principal B] steering, I will be able to do that. Rather than be left over there and just, “[name of IEW/CEC B]” come over here when... [voice trails off] (Pair B, Interview 1, pp. 15-16).

Observational notes from this meeting in my reflexive journal included these comments about the pair’s positive working relationship: *What struck me was that [name of IEW/CEC B] and [name of Principal B] have only been working together for 7 weeks but they had worked each other out.*

Pair D1 were the fourth pair I interviewed in Cycle 1. At the time, they were the second longest working together pair, having been at the same school together for three years. It appeared to me that this pair enjoyed the same type of considerate and strong professional working relationship as their case study colleagues. This was evidenced through the positive manner in which Principal D1 interacted with IEW/CEC D1. There was high positive mutual regard. For instance, at the outset of their interview, when we were negotiating how they wanted to complete the questionnaire, Principal D1 immediately deferred to IEW/CEC D1 and said, “Um, do you want to do each section, like ourselves, and then just compare?” to which IEW/CEC D1 straightaway agreed. They worked through the questionnaire this way and the mutuality of their appreciation continued throughout. This was clearly evident when they were discussing their responses to a questionnaire statement that reminded them of a situation where there had been disagreement between the school and the community on a matter. Their comments reflected a deep respect and acceptance of each other:

Principal D1: And she forgives me, don't you?

IEW/CEC D1: [laughs]

Principal D1: [Laughs] I ask you a lot for my mistakes

IEW/CEC D1: That's why I go and do these bible studies [pauses] to help me [laughs]

Principal D1: to help you deal with me?

IEW/CEC D1: [Laughs] Yep!

Principal D1; [Laughs]

Interviewer: [Looking at Principal D1] So you say forgive me mother for I have sinned and you [looking at IEW/CEC D1] go, yes my dear!

IEW/CEC D1 and Principal D1: [Loud laughter]

Principal D1: Ahhh you know my intentions are good, don't you?

IEW/CEC D1: Yes [chuckling] I do (Pair D1, Interview 1, p.9).

Four months later, when I telephoned School D for a catch up and to set up the Cycle 2 site visit, I could only speak with IEW/CEC D1 as Principal D1 was away. IEW/CEC D1 told me the principal had accepted a promotion as principal of another school out of the region and would be leaving by the end of Term 1. My reflexive journal notes from that conversation recorded IEW/CEC D1's unhappy comment: *Don't know what to do – do I apply for another job?* This IEW/CEC was particularly distressed because her position was only as a contract. She had not yet been made permanent and she was anxious the new principal might not want to keep her on. I wrote: *getting nervous about staying*. Although IEW/CEC D1 told me her preference to stay at the school. At the time I recall I urged IEW/CEC D1 to stay on and trust that there would be a good replacement principal found that she could work with. A few days later I was able to telephone the departing principal. I recorded this reassurance from the principal: *[name of IEW/CEC D1] will be OK*.

I conducted my second site visit to School D in November 2015 and IEW/CEC D1 had remained in her job on a continued contract. The new principal, Principal D2 had been in the school for just over six months and she was acting in the position. They became the newest working together pair in the case study. Pair D2 willingly consented to participate in my research and during my visit, completed the same questionnaire as did the other pairs. Principal D2 also invited another Indigenous worker into the interview, IEW/CEC D2. Within a few

minutes of the commencement of the interview, it was apparent to me by the respectful way the three of them responded to each other that in the short time the new principal had been there, a positive rapport was forming between the Indigenous staff and the principal. Their body language was relaxed and the tone of their interactions was friendly and calm. As the interview progressed, Pair D2 recognised they had differing responses to some of the questionnaire statements (only IEW/CEC D1 and Principal D2 completed the questionnaire and while this was occurring, I chatted with IEW/CEC D2). The pairs' divergent views were respectfully discussed as they sought to understand why they had written what they had written. For instance, Pair D2 spent some time discussing their responses to one of the statements in the questionnaire, *D3: We know each other well enough to be able to predict each other's reactions and responses to some situations and hence prepare for our discussions accordingly.* IEW/CEC D1 who had previously experienced completing the same questionnaire and interview with her former principal, used the opportunity to speak her mind, "I, I knew that we was having this meeting, so I've said, oh well, I can say that" (IEW/CEC D1, Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 29). A few moments later, after they discussed their responses to Statement D3, Principal D2 reflected on their professional relationship and indicated she wanted to work co-operatively with IEW/CEC D1:

Principal D2: No, no. It's OK and it has to be, you do, it has to be authentic and genuine support not just that face value, you know when, it's when things get tough that's when you need support but not everything's great either, yeah. You know, our working together, that's yeah

IEW/CEC D1: yeah and you do, you have to wait and see how the other person's gonna sort things out

Principal D2: Yeah, absolutely (Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 30).

This clarification appeared to help Pair D2 clarify how they could work together in future. Their comments throughout the remainder of the interview showed a positivity about each other and a willingness to work together even though they were yet to really know each other well.

### **5.1.2 Sub-section summary**

In summary, the findings of this sub-section suggest that each time a pair was encountered during the case study, they demonstrated respectful interactions and a positive attitude towards each other. Each showed they valued the other as important and necessary for the work of school improvement, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. Their comments at interview displayed an enthusiasm and willingness to enact strong working

ties no matter the length of time they had worked together. The newest pairs give the impression they enjoyed a comparable level of professional relationship to those who had worked together for longer and it could be seen the longer a pair worked together, the deeper their relationship. Their relationships appeared to be well functioning and productive and not in need of strengthening as predicted. The behaviours of all pairs already offered real life examples of the potential of IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship, one that justified the idea that this relationship could be known as, ‘the power of two’.

The case study findings presented in the next sub-section emanate from the latter cycles of the CAPR approach and further corroborate this initial finding. They highlight the significance of the strength of the case study pairs’ relationships from the newest working together pair to the most well established pair.

### **5.1.3 A sustained and deepened relationship over time**

Mentioned previously, at the time of their first interview Pair D2 had only been working together for a short period and the new principal had yet not secured tenure in the school. However, by the third and final site visit to School D, eight months later in 2016, the principal had been permanently appointed and by then they had been working together for eighteen months. Pair D2 were working effectively and respectfully together, united by common mindsets and a shared vision to improve their school for their students:

Principal D2: Well, I think we have, a, a, I think we have a common purpose. That we really have the students, you know

IEW/CEC D1: Mmm [nodding in agreement]

Principal D2: we want them to improve, um

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah

Principal D2: I really think we probably have the same mind set

IEW/CEC D1: Mmm [nodding in agreement]

Principal D2: um, and there’s a lot of respect there for each other and as well

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah

Principal D2: and there’s a lot of trust between us

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah (Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 27).

The interactions of Pair B at the second site interview in 2015, who by then had been working together for about 10 months, likewise reflected a continuing strong mutual respect. After I had recapped what had been said in the first interview, I asked the pair to talk about what they had been doing since, Principal B immediately looked at IEW/CEC B and said:

Principal B: Do you want me to respond? Or do you want to [pauses]?

IEW/CEC B: You respond and then I'll jump in (Pair B, Interview 2, p. 1).

Then later in this same interview, I commented on how I had observed the pair working well together, "You've worked out how to work each other out!" (Researcher, Pair B, Interview 2, p. 16). The immediate response from IEW/CEC B showed she enjoyed a high functioning working relationship with her principal:

Um, there's been things, when [name of principal] writes in applications or when we do something she gets me over and we sit there and nut out words and typing's not the best but you'll forgive her for that [looking at the principal and laughing], she'll smack me later on! No, you know, well like there's things that we [pauses] and I always say to her, you know she's really good with words, it just, it just comes out and it just seems to flow and keep going with whatever we are applying for or putting in for, so yeah...(IEW/CEC B, Interview 2, p. 16)

In their final interview, conducted over the phone twelve months later in 2016, Pair B commented insightfully on their working relationship. IEW/CEC B described what their relationship was like for her at the outset and summed it up as, "And that's what, you know, and that just didn't, like it just felt like that we just clicked" (IEW/CEC B, Interview 3, p.11). This would suggest that both approached the relationship with openness and willingness, including Principal B who had prior knowledge of what was possible with the role of the IEW/CEC. Principal B then added her perspective on how well she had got to know the IEW/CEC and described the level of interdependence she thought they had reached:

Principal B: yeah, but even if you... [pauses] like I could name, I don't know whether I can say, but [name of IEW/CEC] can nearly read me like a book

Researcher: Yep

Principal B: and I can probably now read her like a book, I take one look at her and know exactly when the day is shit, it's all gone to crap, you know then I know she needs that support, like with bringing [name of another IEW/CEC] out earlier this year (Interview 3, p.11).

Pair C had been working together for three years at the outset of the study in 2014. During a site visit in 2015, I saw their professional relationship had remained strong with continued honest and open communication. At the beginning of the interview with Pair C, IEW/CEC C shared what she believed the principal thought of her work, “I, I appreciate that you um have value on what I do” (IEW/CEC C, Interview 3, p.3). In their final interview, a mutuality of respect and congruence of understanding of each other was evident. It is exemplified this following exchange about use of technology to reduce the impact of teacher shortages which led into a discussion about the importance of having the IEW/CEC position in their school:

IEW/CEC C: You need that personal interaction

Principal C: And I use that term flippantly to what’s happening but its only surface response where as a teacher walking around a room ...is a gazillion times better. You can’t walk a camera around

IEW/CEC C: But that’s, but that’s even relevant to even my position

Principal C: Well I was actually going to say that transfers to yours

IEW/CEC C: It’s exactly the same thing (Pair C, interview 4, p.16).

Pair A, who by the second interview in 2015 had already been working together for almost ten years, drew a comment at the beginning of the interview from me about the longevity of their relationship. I explained to them what I had heard during replays of their first interview recording when writing up the transcript:

Researcher: You two have been together so long, [looking at IEW/CEC A then Principal A] you’d start a sentence and you’d finish it!

[Both IEW/CEC A and Principal A look at each other and laugh]

Researcher: [Looking at Principal A then IEW/CEC A] you’d start a sentence and you’d finish it!

IEW/CEC A: We’re on the same track! [Laughing] (Pair A, Interview 2, p. 1).

In their final interview, eleven months later in 2016, Pair A, in particular IEW/CEC A summed up their strong relationship with some levity and insight. Her comment at the very end of the excerpt of transcript below neatly illustrates a key factor observed with all pairs—a shared willingness to listen for understanding and mutual respect:

IEW/CEC A: Well, we're both from [name of a nearby town], so that's a good start [laughs] Common grounds! As soon as I found out, ah she's from [name of a nearby town] [laughs] it's OK!

Principal A: I think it's about the relationship

IEW/CEC A: Yeah it is. Yes. Yeah we didn't come in butting heads and saying,

Principal A: No

IEW/CEC A: I want this and I want this

Principal A: No

IEW/CEC A: We both came in to listen (Pair A, Interview 3, pp. 28-29).

#### **5.1.4 Section summary**

Significantly, all pairs in this case study consistently demonstrated indicators of an ongoing mutual respect, unity of mindset and a shared vision for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. They were honest, open and had a willingness to listen to each other when they worked together. These relational factors showed the case study pairs enjoyed a professional relationship that was already or was well on the way to being collaborative and interdependent and that broadened and deepened over time. It is suggested that each pair was able to work collaboratively whether this be a recently established or longer term situation because they showed they understand the need for and were willing to enact strong working ties. Remarkably, their level of working relationship was not matched by that of their counterparts in The Region and it was found the case study pairs were able to sustain and deepen their relationship over time. Of note is that their strong relationships substantiated what was possible in a school when there is a 'power of two' (see Figure 5.3).

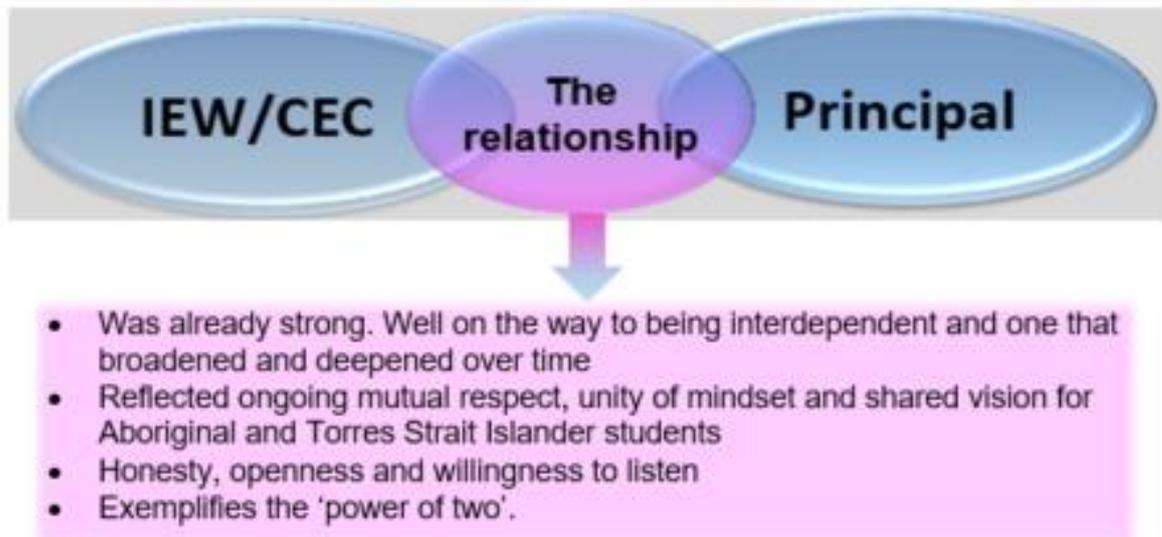


Figure 5.3 Significance of the case study IEW/CEC and principal relationship

## 5.2 Influences on a strong professional relationship

With the significance and magnitude of the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship becoming clearer, the next set of findings respond to the second part of core research question, *what are the contextual features that influence this?* These describe important contextual features influencing a strong professional relationship between an IEW/CEC and principal. Furthermore, the following findings contribute to understandings of why such a strong relationship can come into being.

Presented under headings of beneficial or detrimental contextual features, the findings relate to a mix of sources: some that are predispositions and deliberate practices of the case study pairs as well as those associated with attitudes and actions of other staff and some that are existing organisational processes and structures.

### 5.2.1 Beneficial influencing contextual features

Findings in this section relate to certain influencing contextual features that enabled the professional relationship of every case study IEW/CEC and principal pair and their work actions together. Presented are the common individual personal characteristics of firstly the IEWs/CECs and then the principals followed by consistent relational practices between the pairs and deliberate organisational arrangements found in every case study school.

### ***5.2.1.1 IEWs/CECs are school-community intermediaries and passionate advocates***

As shown in Chapter 4, the case study IEWs'/CECs' backgrounds mirrored most of those from across The Region; that is, they were themselves Indigenous and had lived locally and worked at the school for longer than the usually mobile, non-Indigenous principal. Three of the four case study IEWs/CECs had an additional strong personal connection to the schools as parents, with their own children having attended their respective case study schools. Their firsthand experiences and knowledge of community and the schooling system positioned them to be natural intermediaries. Case study IEWs/CECs each showed they saw benefits in linking the local community more closely to the school and vice versa. As the case study research progressed, also noticed was another unique but common predisposition interplaying with why each case study IEW/CEC did their job. That is, they were passionate advocates for the advancement of Indigenous students. Case study IEWs/CECs themselves came from a place of being, knowing and living the Indigenous worldview and highly valued education. This particular combination of predispositions, positioned them to work well alongside their principal.

Firstly, all case study IEWs/CECs used their knowledge of and capacity to interact with the local community to reach out to/bring them into their schools. For example, as part of their Action Plans for the duration of the research and noted earlier in Chapter 4, two case study pairs had school-community engagement projects which included developing physical spaces within the school site.

IEW/CEC A spoke about the usefulness of home visits to connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families to assist in the enactment of their project:

Um, I get to see a lot of them, who you know, weekly visits or whatever and to get to know that family that you know brothers here, sisters there and whatever and now it's just to get to meet the kids to say to the kids its, hey, how about mum and dad? Meet mum and dad because everybody lives in different ways around the place (Pair A, Interview 2, pp. 15-16).

IEW/CEC B utilised her knowledge of key people and connections with the local community to progress their Action Plan project that likewise featured an outdoor garden space containing a yarning circle. She was able to persuade a former student of the school who she knew to help with the garden design and described how they had incorporated the Indigenous cultural background of every student who attended the school:

[She read the names of several Aboriginal language groups represented by students in the school] um, [turning pages] there's a lot overlapping, [reading out two more names], I've got started, it, [reading out two more names] so I've started on that so we don't [pauses] we've got this lady who is doing the art coming in to do the pavers and seal them and then place them in the walkway (Pair B, Interview 2, pp. 14-15).

IEW/CEC C equally recognised the importance of outreaching to families at home to help them engage with the school. She spoke about how she and an IEW/CEC from a nearby state primary school, conducted home visits to local Indigenous parents of primary students to promote transition to high school and introduce herself to them:

and then the other day [first name of another IEW/CEC] and I went for a drive, we went off, Thelma and Louise and off we went, we're drivin' around the community and we went and met families, and you know what? It was good because, I said to [first name of another IEW/CEC], coz I said "look, I'm not going to wait for them to come to us", I said "you and I are going to get in the car and we're going to meet them on their doorstep". She said, "ah do you really think?" I said "this is what we're going to do..." I was a bit, because they need to know who I am, I said "what a better way to do it too, to go to their houses", so off we went (Pair C, Interview 2, pp. 33-34).

IEW/CEC D1 used her local connections and knowledge about the resident Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to set up a local Indigenous reference group called the [local Indigenous language name] Response Action Group. With endorsement from Principal D1 and then Principal D2 a process of, "mediation with community, when you need, get to do any mediation with the community, the parents" (IEW/CEC D1, Pair D2, Interview 2, p.1) was established to better consult over behavioural or academic or other matters relating to the school's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families.

All case study IEWs/CECs also used their local understandings of the schooling system to position them as intermediaries to work with another group – the staff in their school, who in the main, were non-Indigenous. In particular, they showed a respectful appreciation for the principal role.

IEW/CEC A had made it clear early into the case study that she respected Principal A. During the first cycle visit, after I had interviewed Pair A, IEW/CEC A took me on a tour of the school to look at murals and see the site they were going to build their planned yarning circle garden. I made notes in my reflexive journal of what I saw as we walked and talked and I wrote the following as the last sentence for that visit: *She does have respect for [name of Principal A] the principal.*

IEW/CEC B demonstrated this during Pair B's final interview. She expressed her respect for the principal when explaining her frustrations about trying to address the attendance rates at their school:

IEW/CEC B: That's what I'm saying, the demands that you've got, you know, I, I know, you just can't come here and just sit in your office all day. I know what goes on and it's the understanding and the respect

Researcher: Yep

IEW/CEC B: That I have for you guys (Pair B, Interview 3, pp. 47).

In the same way, IEW/CEC C was appreciative and understood how important it was to work with staff. She articulated with pride how she did this:

I always let the whole staff know, you know, because I think they need to be proud of our Indigenous kids because the teachers are the ones who teach our kids. I want them to feel that they have had a bit to do with it as well, it's not just because I'm the CEC, that black person that gets black kids, it's about how we work collectively as a whole and I'm really proud of that and I love that (Pair C, Interview 2, p.3).

In School D, at the second site visit when discussing their responses to the questionnaire statement about joint acknowledgement of each other's contribution to the broader school community, IEW/CEC D2 made her appreciation of the principal's support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education known. She pointed out how important she thought it was for the Indigenous staff and students to have the principal's 'backing':

IEW/CEC D2: But that's good because I think that, once you do, well that will make them think, eh? That she's backing those girls and the rest of them

Principal D2: Yeah

IEW/CEC D2: And you're at the top

Principal D2: Yeah

IEW/CEC D2: I think that will go a long way (School D, Interview 2, p.38).

IEW/CEC D1 likewise expressed her respect and willingness to work with the principal as leader because she saw this as a means to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students succeed within school, "I respect [name of principal D2] because she is the leader" (IEW/CEC D1 Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 47).

Secondly, the other predisposition displayed by all case study IEWs/CECs was they each had deep seated advocacy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and consequently the advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in their schools. The case study IEWs/CECs were remarkably altruistic about their work. They mixed their intermediary skills with their passion for advocacy.

IEW/CEC A articulated how she supported her students through building relationships with them, “I’ve got to know a lot of kids just by sitting down and talking to them and listening to them and asking them subtle questions” (Pair A, Interview 2, p.37) and acknowledged their transformation, “I’ve seen kids grow” (Pair A, Interview 3, p. 1). When asked what it was that she thought she did with students, IEW/CEC A described a scenario where she worked with a very quiet and reserved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student who had struggled with numeracy, “she clicked one day and I saw it in her face. ...Oh yeah, and now she’s doing NAPLAN next week now if we’d’ve done it six weeks ago or whenever, she wouldn’t have been, now she’s ready” (Pair A, Interview 3, p. 2). IEW/CEC A reflected that the response of this student is the type of thing that motivates the IEW/CEC to do her job:

She’s able to learn to do these things and because she’s more confident with herself, she’s now more vocal in the class and people like to see her and like to talk to her and want to get to know her. So when you’ve got that, you sort of think, OK, then there’s others here that can do the same thing (Pair A, Interview 3, p. 3).

Strong feelings about supporting Indigenous students were evident for IEW/CEC B when she debriefed about a critical incident that had just unfolded in the school a day before the final interview. Her comments showed how an IEW/CEC can connect with Indigenous students and use their understanding of the local community, while at the same time reflecting high expectations about education:

IEW/CEC B: But you know what the other thing was, seventeen of the kids of the nineteen were murri kids. I was so embarrassed and ashamed for these, like I was just [indecipherable word] and I told them that, you know, we’ve got to stick together

Researcher: Yeah

IEW/CEC B: You know, how dare you come to school and be in school uniform at our school and behave like that? I’ve been out bush and in town at [name of School B]

Researcher: Yeah

IEW/CEC B: I said to ‘em I’m ashamed and I’m hurt, you’ve shamed your family

Researcher: Yep

IEW/CEC B: You watch this boil over into the community

Researcher: Yeah

IEW/CEC B: You know?

Researcher: Yep

IEW/CECB: Which could be [indecipherable word] you were hurt by that person [indecipherable word] they will come up and have a go at you, you know (Pair B, Interview 3, pp. 3-4).

IEW/CEC C was proud of her Indigeneity and passionate about her students. She explained this is why she did her job:

Why? Why am I doin’ it? Mmmm. You know why we do it? You know, I love my people, I love my culture, I love the students, like in this school but I think [IEW/CEC C becomes very emotional, her voice wavering] this is my home for me this school and I couldn’t imagine being in any other school (Pair C, Interview 4, p. 3).

Later in the same interview, IEW/CEC C described her level of altruism for Indigenous education and a ‘cultural connection’ that she possessed and saw in other IEWs/CECs:

With Indigenous, in talking to that CEC in [name of nearby town], I mean she is so connected to her community that’s where her personal struggle is and people don’t understand that, that it’s more than just, I’ve got a job, um, you know, it’s just that, connection that cultural connection dare I say, it’s, it’s that um, this is for my people, this is for what I am doing it for (Pair C, Interview 4, p. 39).

IEW/CEC D1 explained she was undertaking further study so that she would be able to assist with the teaching of a local Indigenous language planned to be introduced at the school, “Yeah, and I’m just doing it for the kids ...so I can help them” (IEW/CEC D1, Interview 3, p. 12). Later in the same interview, IEW/CEC D1 then talked about how she saw it as important to let non-Indigenous students know what it is like being an Indigenous person from the local community:

IEW/CEC D1: You know, I do know that I got the respect from some of the kids, you know, some of the non-Indigenous kids, too because teachers have asked me to go and talk to their class and when you go and talk in their class, you can hear a pin drop because they’re just giving you that attention.

Principal D2: But they're interested too

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah

Principal D2: They, they wanna know

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah and it's about personal stuff, you know, you know my upbringing in the community and it's got to do with their curriculum but you speak with passion they listen and when you ask them questions about certain areas in the community they know what you are talking about

Researcher: Yep

IEW/CEC D1: So it's really, really good that you know that you get that respect, just [indecipherable word] get that respect from people, just get that respect from people and you know moving into the community of other Indigenous people (Pair D2, Interview 3, pp. 39-41).

IEW/CEC D2 equally advocated for and with Indigenous students. She described how she helped to 'break down that barrier' and encouraged students to speak up with teachers:

I try to get them to communicate to the teachers, you know, coz they're just so used to trying to get us to do the talking and ask their teachers to come and help 'em. They do, you know, but just to break down that barrier where they can talk to the teachers and ask them to come ...instead of just sittin' behind their books and sayin' they can't. Well, ask the teacher for help, coz they don't know if you don't ask, coz, that's the sort of role that I play (Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 5).

### ***5.2.1.2 Principals are improvement focused and highly value the IEW/CEC role***

The case study principals correspondingly displayed certain predispositions that contributed as beneficial influences on the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship. All case study principals displayed a vision of school improvement—to make their schools better places for every student. Newly appointed Principal D2 was very determined to make a difference in her school. During their second interview, Principal D2 pointed to one of the walls in her office, to a 'data wall' display where business card sized forms contained the photo, attendance and achievement information about every student in the school. These were arranged in clusters under the headings of, 'Exceeding', 'On Track' and 'At Risk' and there were a large number of students placed in 'At Risk':

Principal D2: I think we have a few challenges and we've sort of, we've, you know, I think it's all about really, you know talking about the elephant in the room, [pointing to the data wall] and addressing that and saying this is the direction that we are going and this is why because this is not the story,

this is the data and its telling us, um, we are not just deciding to do this because we think it is a good idea.

IEW/CEC D1: No

Principal D2: Um so it's always got to come back, we are doing this now because of our children.

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah

Principal D2: Um and keep that, you know that front and centre (Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 25).

Principal B, newly appointed to the school, articulated her vision for the school as a place of 'family' for the community to relate to:

One of the big things that's coming through to me from talking to parents and the community is that, um, the generations that have gone through. Most people I have talked to have said to me, "Oh yeah, this is our um, fourth family through, you know, my mum went here, my grandma went here, I went here and now my kids go here". So there's a lot of family connection from that respect, because they see [name of school] as THE school because family went there and that's the commonality that I'm hearing. Even this morning [name of a parent], I think it might have been [name of a parent] was saying to me, um the connections that she's had with the school – she's got three kids in the school at the moment but she went here and yeah, so I said to her, you know, one of the things that I'm gonna start to get out there is, "The [name of the school] Family". You know, we are "The {name of school] Family" because that is what I want to build around it. Let them know we are "The [name of school] Family" because that's where it comes back to grassroots, there's a lot of family history and that's just through talk I've had that (Pair B, Interview 1, p. 10).

The other case study principals articulated the moral imperative underpinning their school improvement actions, one that reflected education for all:

Inclusivity. Um you know at a school level's really important...It's your code of conduct or it's your um ...your, whatever, your values, you know, um and what you promote within the school um so that, you know, we are all here together, to work together (Principal A, Interview 3, p. 34).

And:

Come on, we don't think straight here, we always think bent! ...What's our ultimate goal here? [Tapping the desk firmly several times with his index finger and pauses] achieving the best for the child! It's not just a number on the wall! (Principal C, Interview 4, p. 11).

Within this mindset, all case study principals showed they had developed understandings of, respect for Indigenous histories and cultures. They were well aware of the contemporary issues between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians within the wider context. They did not engage in deficit thinking and wanted this to be something that informed the ways of working in their school. Already noted in Chapter 4, all principals recorded an agreement with the SKSG questionnaire action statement, “The Principal looks for, and encourages staff to look for, occasions to openly acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture as an important element in learning and development of all students”. At the second site visit to School D in 2015, Principal D2 explained that she wanted, “more celebrations of it, not just NAIDOC Week” (Pair D2, Interview 2, pp. 20-21). Later in the same interview, Principal D2 also articulated other the changes she wanted so that a non-mandatory systemic policy known as Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools (EATSIPS) was understood and known by everyone:

we need it [EATSIPS] to be part of our induction program as well as our beginning and returning and new teachers. It’s not part of it ...it’s not part of our um cycle for our staff meetings. ...but we don’t talk specifically about instructional strategies for our Indigenous children and how to engage them and so forth ...Mmm and for me that’s, that’s been some awareness for the way I operate ...I want to change culture in this school so... its part of business ...It’s just part of business” (Pair D2, Interview 3, pp. 33-35).

In the second site visit with Pair B, Principal B likewise acknowledged that embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in her school was something she saw as missing, “there was a lack of EATSIPS in the school that I believed, totally. The plan was very superficial and there was no rigour about the plan” (Pair B, interview 2, p. 1). She later spoke about how she was going to progress it,

and it’s something we did want to do and I have got the, got the things photocopied ready to go, rewriting the EATSIPS plan because, um, I’ve got teachers wanting to be a part of that, but it is on my agenda and radar to do (Pair B, Interview 2, p. 19).

The other case study principals were equally enrolled to support increased Indigenous perspectives in their school. I wrote the following in my reflexive journal at the time: *Principal said to CEC – we can really do some EATSIP’s’ work, this study will serve as the motivation to do it* (annotation during Pair C first interview, 2014). Similarly, Principal A said, “I suppose the only other thing from my perspective is just keeping all this [referring to EATSIPS] on the boil” (Pair A, Interview 3, p. 44).

Another predisposition was that of already having a high value of the IEW/CEC role. This complimented the equity-driven school improvement stance of the case study principals. The case study principals revealed how personal or professional life experiences had shaped their outlook for Indigenous education, which likely influenced their own capacity to work with an IEW/CEC.

At the beginning of the first interview with Pair D2, Principal D2 explained she had attended a leadership development course with the Stronger Smarter Institute prior to coming to the school:

It's very, very good. If I had my chance again [pauses] I didn't really understand what it was about, um I went by myself um and I wouldn't do that again, I wouldn't go by myself, I'd take my leadership team or some of them (Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 2).

The course costs several thousands of dollars and is delivered in several phases requiring participants to undertake a six day residential program with ongoing follow up phases including some further face to face programs over a minimum of a 12 month period. It focuses on a presentation of, "the Stronger Smarter approach and meta-strategies and examines critical elements of practice in schools working to make a difference in Indigenous education" (Stronger Smarter Institute, 2018a). This reflects the level of commitment Principal D2 brought with her to supporting success for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. It is noteworthy for this research from my prior professional field experience, that this principal had undertaken the training, prior to her appointment in School D, while she had been a Deputy Principal in School C with Principal C and IEW/CEC C. The following comments by the Principal D2 showed she brought prior experience of what the IEW/CEC role can do in a school and her vision for what she wanted to do now she was at this school:

Yeah, because probably from my experience um with CECs, you're so much more involved in that process, the enrolment process, um and getting to know the families as they come into the school, so my perspective of it is that you strongly agree, but I'm using it probably from past experience...and yeah [pauses], it's a great process in the school...and I think that when that's not followed and you're not part of that process [referring to IEW/CEC D1] that there's a gap there (Principal D2, Interview 2, pp. 21-22).

Principal C was very passionate about improving his school for the success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. During the first visits to School C, I made the following annotation about Principal C's attitude towards Indigenous education, his response to

this research request and about his personal prior circumstances where he ‘discovered’ his own familial connection to Aboriginal people:

*Principal said this work was important and could be used to argue for permanency of CEC position... Meeting then moved into why they think they ‘get it’ about Indigenous/non-Indigenous education. Principal revealed he found out at 17 his best friend was actually his cousin. His best friend was an Aboriginal person from their home town [name of a QLD country town]. ... It wasn’t until his grandmother had passed that his father had decided to tell him. Both quickly signed the consent forms without hesitation. When I said they could pull out at any time, principal said it would be too embarrassing, this was too important not to do so.*

At their final interview, Principal C declared his commitment to maintaining the IEW/CEC role in his school:

We are doing the process here, but it’s at a cost. And I’m not going to say it’s a negative cost. It’s a cost, that’s all we will call it. We have to make a value that’s what I say...prioritise. If that’s what we’ve got to do, that’s what we’ve got to do (Principal C, Pair C, Interview 3, p. 39).

During their first interview in 2014, Principal B showed she had a prior understanding of the role of the IEW/CEC because she had been repeatedly reminded by her own former principal who himself had worked with IEW/CEC B when he was there as the principal a number of years ago. Principal B explained she came to her new role with a positive attitude towards and understanding of the IEW/CEC role:

Principal B: ...and I guess, you know, considering the history and where I’ve come from it’s been a little bit easier for me to get my head around [name of IEW/CEC B] and what she should be doing because I heard [first name of a principal] talk about her all the time. So I kind of came in with that forethought that knowledge of [pauses] coz he would always say, “Aw, you know, [name of C2]’ll just get them by the ear and you know

IEW/CEC B: [Laughs loudly]

Principal B: [Indecipherable] and [first name of IEW/CEC B]’ll sort ‘em out or, you know, we’d do home visits. But I had that ingrained in me for four years and so I think because I had that and he continually referred to [School B] and what was happening with [first name of IEW/CEC B] and her role (Pair B, Interview 1, pp. 12-13).

I made the following annotation in my reflexive journal at the time about how Principal B gained her appreciation of the IEW/CEC role:

*[First name of Principal B] voiced that @ the questionnaire interview she had been well prepped by [name] her former principal about [first name of IEW/CEC B] so when she arrived she was already in the mind frame of recognising [first name of IEW/CEC]'s very important role. [First name of Principal B] kept referring to [first name of IEW/CEC B] as the "missing link.*

In their final interview, Principal B who had by this time worked with IEW/CEC B for three years showed that her understanding of the importance of the IEW/CEC role had deepened. Principal B said when she left the school she would ensure this was conveyed to the incoming principal:

I would be certainly, be giving any incoming principal behind, you know, in my role, the, the absolute definite heads up around the importance of the linkage and the relationships to have with the CEC officer in the school (Pair B, Interview 3, p. 19).

Principal B re-iterated she could attribute the way she worked with the IEW/CEC because "I can in with that different mindset about what [first name of IEW/CEC B] did and, you know, the value to the school she could be" (Pair B, Interview 3, p. 34-35). Principal B noted when she had handover discussions with the former principal of School B, "not one time did she say [first name of IEW/CEC B] was in a leadership role within the school" (Pair B, Interview 3, p. 35). Principal B once more mentioned that it had been her own former principal who had helped create her 'mindset', "and yet I had been working with this person for four and a half years who had done nothing but rave about the CEC" (Pair B, Interview 3, p. 35).

Principal A did not explicitly reveal what previous life experiences influenced her knowledge and understandings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples or the IEW/CEC role per se. But it was revealed during the second cycle interview that Principal A had previously got to know IEW/CEC A, when IEW/CEC A was a parent of the school supporting her own children to go through. They recalled their discussion at the time when Principal A had offered IEW/CEC A, a job as a teacher aide:

IEW/CEC A: She said, "So why aren't you coming here?"

Principal A: [Laughs]

IEW/CEC A: I have given a commitment to you, one, two, three coz my youngest was in Grade 1 that I would be with them reading all year

Principal A: Yeah

IEW/CEC A: And these are my times and she said, “Couldn’t you change it?” No, that’s a commit I gave those kids

Principal A: [Laughing]

IEW/CEC A: And I said, I’ll give it to you next year and she said, “OK” (Pair A, Interview 2, p. 3).

The pair said that conversation was over ten years ago, and both agreed that since then, “We’ve grown together” (IEW/CEC A, Pair A, Interview 2, p. 2). In the final interview, Principal A showed she truly valued IEW/CEC A and thought their joint work was enabled because, “I think it’s about the relationship” (Pair A, Interview 3, p. 28).

### ***5.2.1.3 Accessibility and mutuality of interaction***

The previous findings presented above showed a strong working relationship could be established from the outset because the IEW/CEC and principal were predisposed to want to work together. The practice of maintaining on-going purposeful contact with each other was also found to be another enabling contextual feature. Previously shown in Chapter 4, in findings about the relational dynamic of Trusting Interpersonal Communication, most pairs indicated that they would like to meet more in structured ways, but they were often time poor. To counter this situation, it was found the case study pairs were very willing to have open access to each other, particularly in the form of frequent informal exchanges as needs arose. This was the distinguishing and common feature about the type of contact they had. And when they did meet it was to jointly problem solve, reflect and evaluate their actions, as well as respond to challenges faced in their schools.

Pair A, the longest working together pair and approached each other as required. It was in their first interview, that IEW/CEC A described their way of working:

IEW/CEC A: Like I said, because we’re opposite ends of the school most of the time, it’s when [name of Principal A] comes to me or I come to her specifically or we are passing, “oh [name of Principal A], I need to let you know...” (Pair A, Interview 1, p. 10).

During my latter visits to their school to talk to them, it was apparent they had remained very comfortable in each other’s company. It was clear they communicated with each other regularly as evidenced by this interaction at the final interview:

Principal A: So you know I think you need that sort of support

IEW/CEC A: [Cuts in and continues the sentence] with the school if there, there's any type of questions about, something, I'll and or [name of principal] and we will say this is what's happening

Principal A: Yeah (Pair A, Interview 3, p. 30).

Pair B the second newest pair, enjoyed a high level of contact with each other and were one of the only pairs who were able to hold weekly meetings with each other, “[first name of IEW/CEC B] and I meet every week and we talk about what our actions are going to be throughout that week so we know exactly where each other's coming from” (Principal B, Pair B, Interview 2, p. 1). Additionally during their final interview Principal B spoke about how she gave priority to any approach from the IEW/CEC:

When [first name of IEW/CEC B] came into me and she said, I was flat out yesterday, busy as a fly in fishing water and [first name of IEW/CEC B] came into me and I just knew by the look on the face, she said “I've got a problem”, I said, “What is it?” so she sits down and she said, “We've got to do something about these kids”, you know a really high target kids, and at the end of the day I stopped what I was doing and I put [first name of IEW/CEC]’s problem at the priority ...so you know, she knows when she comes to me, that I'm going to listen and I know that her opinion is and take it seriously in and value what she has to say (Pair B, Interview 3, pp. 19-20).

Pair C also had ongoing and informal communication with each other. As previously indicated in Chapter 4, during the early site visits they recognised that they did need to make more scheduled meetings (Principal B, Pair B, Interview 1, p. 18). During the Cycle 2 site visit, this situation was discussed again when IEW/CEC C mentioned her principal's busy schedule restricted their meeting opportunities. IEW/CEC C reflected with humour how she could access him if she really wanted to when wanting to explain what she was working on:

I know you are extremely busy and I know your day get organised before you even get here ...Oh I don't know, but you know, I would like to probably because I either rugby tackle him at his car or I come screamin' up here an' throw things at him, but I'm a person, I, likes to explain why I am doing, I know, you know you have faith in me most times in what I am doing and what I'm delivering um because it's always for the school and for our students and I mean I'm a huge advocate of, I'm just so proud of our kids and even the non-Indigenous kids (Pair C, Interview 3, p. 3).

Pair D2 were the newest pair in the latter stages of the research. In their final interview together they talked about how they communicated openly and ‘anytime’. That IEW/CEC D1 would do this was appreciated and expected by her principal, “[First name of IEW/CEC D1] knows she can come down anytime...and she comes in and yeah, which is really good” (Principal D2, Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 27).

#### 5.2.1.4 *Deliberate employment of IEW/CEC*

A fourth enabling influential contextual feature and one relating to accessibility of interaction was the case study schools' staffing policy for the deliberate employment of Indigenous workers. That is, every case study school was structured to staff at least one identified Indigenous worker position. Two out of the four IEWs/CECs, worked full time, five days week throughout the school year. IEW/CEC A worked on average 15 hours per week (A. Day, personal communication, November 12, 2018) and IEW/CEC D1 worked three days per week. As noted in Chapter 4, full time employment of an IEW/CEC was not common practice across The Region. Every case study principal made comment about the importance of having the IEW/CEC role in their school.

Principal A made it clear that if there could be additional systemic funding, she would use the money as, “um the opportunity to have more of [name of IEW/CEC A]” (Pair A, Interview 3, p. 34).

Principal B stressed how significant it was to her school to have the IEW/CEC role, “what I see is, this school would not function without [name of IEW/CEC B] and that link to the community ...and that is such a vital point of reference in this place” (Pair B, Interview 3, p. 39).

Principal C also showed he had a clear view about the value of IEWs/CECs when he commented on the increasing numbers of young people facing problems. Principal C passionately spoke about the need for the right systemic support to ensure IEWs/CECs were employed in permanent positions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student learning and well-being:

See here lies the issue, we do have a problem with young people in [name of large provincial QLD city]. So at what point are we going to break the cycle? Research will tell you high level support and intervention. Sticking 'em in a detention centre is not intervention. We need to try something different. This is not a go away problem. This is now entrenched in our society and unless [pauses and looks at IEW/CEC C sitting beside him], I am not going to kick this one out the door! Until it becomes a permanent position within our school to support young people who have a particular relationship with CEC's, that's your link to the community and there's a substantial base of resource behind that, not just that you've got a warm body in your school, that's irrelevant, the stories we get from the success cases even though they are spasmodic and I'm not going to say you can write a recipe, the examples I've seen in presentation is they've got a support person for the school [looking at IEW/CEC C], this body here! (Pair C, Interview 4, p. 13).

Principal D2 had clear intentions to revitalise and maximise the IEW/CEC role in School D, “And she should, like [first name of IEW/CEC D1] should have a place in our school. It’s a very important part” (Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 38).

One case study IEW/CEC, also spoke expressly about the importance of the full time employment of her role in schools. At the time of their final interview, IEW/CEC C had been working in the role at the school for nine years. She believed her effectiveness to build and sustain working relationships for all members of the school community was linked to the full time nature of her role. IEW/CEC C also recognised how many others in the role in The Region were not able to achieve this because they had much less work time in their schools:

You can’t, I mean, I guess because I am here for the five days is, but I constantly think, you know of the other CEC’s who are, you know, not, not valued as much and only having two days here and three days there and your students, it’s no different to the YSC [Youth Support Co-Ordinator], you can’t build that relationship and keep it sustainable I mean, I mean I, might not have a lot of students like that like me, and that’s neither here nor there but they know I’m here and they know, that I will work with them, the teachers they know I’ll work with the community, they know I’ll work with the families whether they like me or not, to make sure what we are getting is an educational outcome. And that’s my job (Pair C, Interview 4, pp. 16-17).

#### **5.2.1.5 Sub-section summary**

In summary, all case study IEWs/CECs and principals showed they each possessed common positive predispositions in their roles that contributed to a compatibility as pairs and the strengthening their working ties. The findings specifically showed that the case study IEWs/CECs came to their role with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ worldviews; a lived experience understanding of their own culture, history and the realities of the contemporary context making them very motivated for the advancement of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Case study IEWs/CECs had learnt how schools worked through experiential processes, firstly as parents and then employees. They could liaise between the local community and the school because they knew both entities well. Case study principals had also self-developed their sense of wanting to support every student to succeed, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. They came to their job with personal and professional life experiences that gave them deeper knowledge and rich understandings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures and an appreciation of how Indigenous Australians were located within the Australian landscape. This led to a subsequent respect for the IEW/CEC role. The pairs wanted to work together and were willing to have on-going and accessible communication with each other. Case study principals clearly saw the

need for the position in their schools. Each case study school deliberately had the IEW/CEC role as part of their staffing. Overall, the findings in this sub-section contribute to the explanation about influencing contextual features that likely contribute to the creation and longevity of a strong professional relationship between an IEW/CEC and principal, one that clearly exemplifies the ‘power of two’.

## **5.2.2 Detrimental influencing contextual features**

The following sub-section reveals another set of findings about contextual features that negatively influence a strong IEW/CEC and principal relationship. These appeared to be mostly detrimental because they affected the professional relationship directly or each participant personally and obstructed their independent or joint work. The findings are presented in order of those contextual features identified with every case study pair to those that were only found to occur with some of the case study pairs.

### ***5.2.2.1 Uncertainty of tenure for IEW/CEC position and funding continuity***

This contextual feature was of great concern for all of the pairs. Although having a position for Indigenous workers in a school up to five days a week was considered a positive existing environmental factor, paradoxically it also came at a great cost – financially for the schools and emotionally for the case study IEWs/CECs. Such costs also had an indirect flow on effect on the effectiveness of the IEW/CEC and principal working relationship. At the time of the second and third cycle interviews with all case study pairs, each expressed uncertainty about the recurring allocative methodology or levels of annual Indigenous education funding to their schools. As Chapter 4 showed, there were limited permanent IEW/CEC positions systemically allocated across The Region. For every case study school, if they had any permanent staffing allocation, it was only a very small portion (i.e. 1 or 2 days) with school funds supplementing or wholly funding the remainder of IEW/CEC position. It was known to me through my prior professional field experience that industrial regulations in place at the time about the awarding of permanent appointments meant school’s supplementary funding could only be assigned to a temporary position. Concerns about tenure and levels of funding were subsequently recurring features of discussion with the pairs over the course of the latter part of the research. In particular, at their final interview, every case study pair raised this as a blocking contextual feature when discussing their work together.

For instance, Principal A made this comment in their final interview in 2016, “I, I probably see a negative there, that we don’t have enough support um in terms of funding or

anything. ...it comes out of our budget and there's only so much you can do" (Pair A, Interview 3, p. 31). Principal A spoke about how she had maintained her commitment to keep employing IEW/CEC A, even though "we don't have a big population of Indigenous kids anymore" (Pair A, Interview 3, p. 32). IEW/CEC A added that it was not just the level of the funding but the certainty of the funding to schools,

Yeah, just you know, increase funding ...you know something that's, you know, and it's gotta be over ...time. ...So just because there's, you know, an election coming up we don't want you to say give us this, we want it, to know that next year we're going to have that money [tapping the desk with her finger] and the year after and the year after, so everybody gets the benefit (Pair A, Interview 3, p. 43).

Pair B were no different to the other case study pairs in their perceptions about funding concerns for the IEW/CEC position. Mentioned earlier in this chapter, Principal B had declared in their final interview with me that her school 'would not function' without the school's CEC. She then went on to say, "I cannot believe that the CEC position for a school of you know, your school [referencing the interviewer's own school], my school, 60-70 percent Indigenous population with high EAL/D [English as a Second Language or Dialect] isn't allocated that as part of staffing" (Pair B, Interview 3, p. 39). Principal B said the funding for the school's IEW/CEC position also came from the school's own funding. Principal B was determined to retain the position but had to creatively manage program budgets to make this possible:

I really, I really, I grapple with that, I grapple with the fact that you've gotta pay for it, I've gotta pay for it. We are prepared to do that because I not gonna lose that resource but you know in my setting here, I've got to juggle a couple of different things that, [first name of IEW/CEC B] wears two hats on paper you know (Pair B, Interview 3, p. 40).

Principal B then advocated that more schools with high needs students should have this systemically resourced:

I, I just, there's no way known [first name of another principal] at [name of nearby school] would be able to function without his worker. I mean you know I'm on board with what he does, so I don't know anything that happens in any other place but I just know, given the context I believe the context is vital and in that context ...we should all be given a CEC worker so we can maintain those links with community. ...I'd like in an ideal world to have an attendance officer, CEC or whatever someone to take that on board and work with, but I'd like to be able to say that the CEC is allocated to schools that have the contextual environment or those high needs kids in them to maintain...the consistency (Pair B, Interview 3, pp. 40-41).

IEW/CEC B agreed with Principal B's comments and added how the lack of tenure made the IEW/CEC job unappealing,

I see where [first name of Principal B] saying about it should be as, the position should be at schools, but the department needs to show that they are prepared to do a permanent position, not year, by year ...because um to get into these jobs because they have houses, they have cars, they have families ...and there's people here that are casual or on a term by term contract that nobody wants to come anywhere near it (Pair B, Interview 3, p. 41).

Towards the end of the interview, the topic of the allocation of IEWs/CECs to secondary schools only was raised by Principal B who asked, "Where's the equality? Why do high schools be allowed to meet this need when we've got schools like mine with the socio-economic demographic like what we've got and yet we're not considered to have that need?" (Pair B, Interview 3, p. 66). IEW/CEC B agreed this role was also important in primary school to address the rise in student well-being. She said, "it's also social issues. Our kids are experiencing exposure to drugs and alcohol at a higher rate than what they did 25 years ago" (Pair B, Interview 3, p. 67). IEW/CEC B also noticed students were "very blasé about it ...you know, they tell you. There are things that would horrify and shock us. Just, just, it's normal now" (Pair B, Interview 3, p. 67).

Principal C was equally not happy about the allocation of funding to his school. When I spoke with the pair during Cycle 2 of the CPAR process, he said, "our budget got cut to .3 [point three] allocation of CEC. We had to dig and scrape this year" (Pair C, Interview 3, p. 12). This meant that the remainder, .7 (point 7) of the IEW/CEC position, would have had to be school funded. Principal C also made his feelings clear about what would happen if there was further reduction of IEW/CEC services. He spoke passionately about what he foresaw, from his experience as a current member of a local juvenile justice group looking at preventative measures, in the increasing juvenile crime in the area. Principal C spoke about why it was important to retain the 'grass roots' CEC position,

this is fundamental to the change in the future of youth and not just you as an individual, you as a community otherwise you may as well just build another prison beside [name of an existing regional prison] now. That's what god dam's going to happen. Over the hill and double the size, that's what they are going to achieve...the cost of an inmate—put that in a school—they can do something. You are only going to break the cycle if you go back to the grass roots (Pair C, Interview 3, p. 14).

In the same discussion IEW/CEC C added her view, "I don't understand these long term [pauses] if short term we have to fight for it" (Pair C, Interview 3, p. 12). She then

contemplated the impact on the school if the CEC position ceased, “Who is going to support our students?” (Pair C, Interview 3, p. 13) and how she was preparing teachers:

You remove a CEC out of a school or you limit the time they are in a school that puts more and a lot more stress on teachers, to, if they are going to have to go out in the community. I’ve got teachers that say, “There’s no way we can do what you do”. I started preparing them, I said if I’m not here, you are going to have to do that. I’ve got teachers who came to me about bush tucker, “We don’t know what to do” and I said, “Well you’re going to have to go and find it” (Pair C, Interview 3, p. 15).

It transpired that IEW/CEC C was re-employed the following year, but in our final interview together in 2016, both appeared despondent about the employment situation of the IEW/CEC, “You know paying wages is the biggest blocker of all” (Principal C, Pair C, Interview 4, p. 2). IEW/CEC C was very concerned about the lack of surety of funding. It could be seen this was having an effect on IEW/CEC C emotionally when she spoke:

No, I think that puts me in a position and I don’t want to get emotional, um you know, because you sort of think [pauses and begins to cry]. How is this being seen as sustainable? [Starting to cry] How is this good if there is no guarantee? ...How can you affect change? (Pair C, Interview 4, p. 2).

IEW/CEC C was very uncertain about her tenure for the following year but was determined to do her best to deal with this:

IEW/CEC C: I have to be truthful, I had to sort of think do I live every year knowing that I don’t know whether I have a position? All the good that we have worked together collectively as, how’s it going to keep going, you know?

Researcher: Uh huh

IEW/CEC C: I get quite twitchy, I get twitchy when its, you know, how do we, what’s the point? You know, and I guess it’s because we all, you know, personally have that, that the way that we are that, we’ve grown up with the morals [pauses] guidance, well I thank my family for giving me that ethic to keep going on, this is your job, you do it well and you keep going. So I suppose, that’s one of the blockers (Pair C, Interview 4, p. 3).

Principal C was adamant that he wanted better funding to be able to employ a CEC in his school, “stability ...well, stability is a sustainable position. Full stop” (Pair C, Interview 4, p. 28). He went on to make the point funding this was not an overly expensive exercise and should be a standard allocation to a school:

We have a gap. Is that not a problem? Address the damn thing. Does it equal wages? Yes it does equal wages, but then again every time a politician

opens his mouth about something it's about zillions of dollars, and we're not talking zillions of dollars ...because we're talking an individual full stop. ...when a school is opened on Day 1 (Pair C, Interview 4, p. 29).

Principal C also showed he was making every effort to continue the position as full time into the next year, with no success, "I'm digging, and trying, I want something in writing that says, 'yes' to next year, and I can't get that" (Pair C, Interview 4, p. 31). The pair were congruent about the need for permanency of the IEW/CEC role:

Principal C: Just imagine where we would be if your position was permanent and paid for as part of staffing?

IEW/CEC C: Well, it'd, it'd be completely different

Principal C: That's what I'm getting at. When schools have to, [pauses] and I'll call it for what it is, artificially bankroll a position, and they're saying, "oh, you're managing the school", No we are not, this is a, this is a permanent requirement for student support. The federal government recognised it with chaplaincy at \$20,000 for 2 days (Pair C, Interview 4, pp. 32-33).

With School D, at their final interview in 2016, all participants voiced their concerns that better funding and tenure of employment was equally a blocker for them to do the work they wanted to do together. IEW/CEC D1's position was part allocation of permanent hours, "we've only got funding for ten hours" (Principal D2, Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 19) and part temporary hours totalling to make a 3 day a week position (.6). IEW/CEC D2 had temporary employment status only and worked 3 days per week. IEW/CEC D2 in particular, had been at the school for many years in a temporary position and when I asked her what she thought the future held for her in the school she said, "hope they make me permanent. ...not me, the role" (Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 18). Principal D2 was very clear about what she wanted in School D for the IEW/CEC roles, "That to be a full time position, rather than just ten hours... so that intervention has to be targeted at particular children, um, so that's, that's one thing that we would really like full time, really make some gains there" (Pair D2, Interview 3, pp. 19-20) and, "basic permanency ...allow us the autonomy as a school to employ somebody, but give us the money to do that, that bucket of funds to do that" (Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 54). Pair D2 spoke about their annual school cultural camp and Principal D2 clarified that to shore up employment of support staff to offer better intervention for students, they had to cut back on the venue and location of the camp, "We are doing, locally at the moment. ...because we are actually using some of those funds for intervention, yeah so we are going to do a local camp. ...unfortunately we can't go to [name of a southern coastal town]" (Pair D2, Interview 3, pp. 23-24). Principal

D2 also expressed her frustration at not being able to do what she wanted to do with school improvement because of a distinct absence of funding:

Principal D2: Yeah, but you just get frustrated

IEW/CEC D1: Ah huh

Principal D2: Because you want to keep doing stuff, so it always comes back to the funding, like you know, I'd like to buy another five teacher aides who work specifically and really smash this gap and really,

IEW/CEC D1: [Nodding in agreement] Mmm

Principal D2: Push, you know

IEW/CEC D1: Mmm

Principal D2: Push our children, but I, I just haven't got the money, no matter where I look (Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 62).

Principal D2 explained that she was locked into a previous decision that was made before she got to the school and she was living with the legacy of that, "But you can see the challenge there for me" (Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 64).

#### **5.2.2.2 *Racism, prejudice and reluctance***

Another negative contextual feature that all case study pairs talked about affecting their schools, their work or them personally in different ways was racism. Granted, there were policies and procedures in place to prevent racism in every school, but it none the less existed. Individual racism was particularly something the IEWs/CECs experienced on various levels. All pairs shared how they experienced it and then responded to it.

In their final interview, IEW/CEC D2 spoke of a situation where she had been asked to go into a class to talk about cultural matters but felt badly treated by the teacher:

IEW/CEC D2: One of the things I struggle with when I go into class is um when teachers ask you to do something, like on the cultural thing, and then they get up and they undermine you after. And that just knocks me and I thought well stuff you [laughs] I'm not sharing nothing with you because it's the truth you know.

IEW/CEC D1: [Laughs nervously]

IEW/CEC D2: They ask you to do it. And you do it your way, not THEIR [emphasis] way and they come and they, like just wash it out and that's not on (Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 40).

IEW/CEC D2 then described how much that teacher's actions affected her. It appeared this was not the first time she had encountered such a response, "It's because after a while you want to get out of here. I think [starts to cry], [pauses. No one speaks], it's been too long" (Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 44). IEW/CEC D2 regained her composure and went on to explain how she drew on her inbuilt resiliency to keep on working that day:

IEW/CEC D2: Yeah and I don't, and when I went to the next class, I put all that over there [gesticulating by moving one of her hands downwards and to the side].

Principal D2: Yeah, you have to

IEW/CEC D2: I can only do it so often (Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 45).

At this point in the interview, it was also evident just how much the two IEWs/CECs relied on each other for moral support. They voiced what it was like to experience racism. They talked about the toll it took on them along with the challenges of being one of only a few Indigenous persons working in a largely non-Indigenous organisation:

IEW/CEC D2: And it becomes a struggle

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah, but you just [pause] and some days I just have to get out and walk to her [looking at IEW/CEC D2] and I just go and sit there [pause] and she says, 'I can't do it today' [speaking very softly]

Principal D2: Yeah

IEW/CEC D2: [Indecipherable few words in a low quiet voice] and just sat there with her, coz I need somebody that understands me [wavering voice]

Researcher: Yeah

IEW/CEC D2: Coz it was too much for me [sniffles and cries]

IEW/CEC D1: People don't realise how hard it is for an Indigenous person to be worked, um, working in the institution (Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 46).

Linking to their concerns about racism, which clearly frustrated and challenged the work of case study Pair D, was the prejudice of personal attitudes of some staff members. At the second site visit, in 2015, Pair D2 reported an incident where earlier in the year two members of staff were outwardly resistant to learning about the surrounding local area peoples'

cultures and histories. All staff had been provided with professional development at the beginning of the year called 'Crossing Cultures' delivered by one of The Region's Indigenous officers who gave information about the history and culture of a particular group of Indigenous peoples. The staff members had asked the principal, "Why do we have to do this?" Principal D2 exclaimed she was furious at the time, "And I was like, what rock do they live under?! What curriculum are they teaching to our children if you don't understand why you need to do that training?!" (Principal D2, Interview 2, p. 39). Principal D2 went on to explain how she addressed this matter and stridently declared her position on racism:

But anyway. So I addressed it at a leadership, um, and went through it that way and I was really frank and said how disappointed I was and we went through the reasons why and, the other Heads of Department were, like, they were just astonished, like who did it? You could see them, coz, I was just waiting, I was just sitting back waiting, just to have a look to see, you know what I mean? ...I said, "That was disgusting"... You know and it wasn't like I was sticking up for these girls, it was the right thing. And it was the wrong thing that was done and it was never going to be right. If it's wrong, it's wrong, and I, I didn't have any hesitation in um, doing that, um so [pauses] (Pair D2, Interview 2, pp. 39-40).

In their final interview in 2016, Pair D2 and IEW/CEC D2, also raised another concern relating to staff attitudes. Principal D2 reported she had noticed a reluctance of some teachers to engage with their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students because of apprehension and uncertainty. Principal D2 recognised better induction processes and ongoing professional conversations would be necessary to redress this:

There are some that are reluctant to work with our Indigenous children, they're either worried that, I don't know, worried that they are going to offend them or they're unsure of how to approach them. Not all of 'em. But there is and I think it's around our young teachers, now our second and our third and our fourth, fifth year teachers, um which is [pauses]...but it needs to be more than that. It needs to be part of our staff meetings as well (Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 32).

In the ensuing discussion, IEW/CEC D2 added her thoughts, prefacing it with, "It should be so important, I think, but this is me getting' on my thing" (Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 32) which I interpreted as her alluding to getting on a soapbox. She clearly agreed with the principal's comments and then IEW/CEC D2 made the point that she could see the Indigenous students in the school were struggling and not well supported by other staff as students in the special education program (SEP):

but it should be like [first name of Principal D2], it should be brought up to be that important for our kids coz they really don't know our kids and I find,

yeah, ...and I see how some of those poor kids are so struggling with like maths and science and all that across the board. It should be at a staff meeting, it's just so important as the SEP kids, having their flag flown for them, but our kids ain't getting' that really (Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 32).

IEW/CEC D2 went on to describe how Indigenous students would not co-operate with some teachers in class and it was not until she pointed out the reason why that teacher, did they start to see the student differently. She said she changed the attitudes of teachers, "I'd say, excuse me, do you realise that this kid doesn't even know how to do this? ...I said, you know, I'm tellin' you ...I said... they went, 'Ahhhh'" (Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 33). IEW/CEC D2 added that she believed teachers did not know how to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, "Yeah, see and they don't, like, they, they say, well if they're playing up and I said 'Well, they're playing up because they don't understand. You know, there's a reason why'. And I said, 'but how do you approach 'em?'" (Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 33).

At this point in the discussion, Principal D2 then rearticulated her realisation that changing staff attitudes towards and beliefs about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was what she must work on, not only in staff meetings, but also more holistically for, "our induction program as well with our beginning and returning and new teachers" (Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 33).

IEW/CEC C equally spoke about how she enabled teachers to view Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students differently and to have a different mindset when working with them. She described the 'epiphany' she saw teachers have, the sudden understanding and change of attitude about seeing the world differently. This came when she took them along with her to assist with the school's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs. IEW/CEC C said they,

have this epiphany while they are sitting there. And they suddenly look around and they realise, I don't tell 'em, I don't ask 'em to expect it. I don't give 'em any hints, and they, every one of them has come up to me and said, "I know how the kids feel" I said "Oh". I look at them "Oh what do you mean?" "We're the only white person here" and I said, "Hello" [smiling] "Every day in the life of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kid this happens". And it's not until that very moment that they actually appreciate why our kids, some of them feel like they do" (Pair C, Interview 3, p. 6).

In the final interview in 2016 with Pair C, IEW/CEC C also spoke about her personal experiences and she became quite emotional when talking about how she felt as an Indigenous person. She made clear her thoughts about stereotyping and the pain inflicted by the 'taunt' of

racism. IEW/CEC C's comments also gave a similar insight expressed by IEW/CEC D2 about working and living in non-Indigenous dominated settings. She said:

no one knows what it is like to be Aboriginal or Torres Strait unless you are! [Laughs]. It's no different to any other ethnicity, but, you know our fight is um, you know, and [name of Principal C]'s heard me say that, say this a lot more passionately in a conversation, um, you know, you don't know. You don't know what it's like. You know to be constantly judged because of one's colour [starting to cry]...and I can walk around at [local shopping centre] and anywhere else and I'm fine and I, I said to [name of husband], my husband I don't know whether it's because of the way we dress or do I look a lot more different because I don't' look like the typical [making quotation marks with her fingers] Indigenous person? Um, I don't know, but I don't get as much [pauses] taunt as some of my colleagues or some of my, you know, family (Pair C, Interview 4, pp. 25-26).

The issue of racism took another form for Pair B, who talked about how they had tried to work with some disgruntled parents. In their final interview, in 2016 Principal B explained how she felt upset about being accused of being a racist. She showed she was keenly aware of the sometimes precarious position that IEW/CEC B was placed in, to be able to support her local community while at the same time, uphold her school's policy and practices:

Principal B: One of the things that we have had to work against or work around to, um, a belief of community or something and this is where I, I, kind of reflect, that [name of IEW/CEC B] and um, when I did that 337 [letter used by principals to warn parents to cease wilful disturbance in a school] I have had [name of IEW/CEC B] say, or [name of IEW/CEC B] is aware of people saying, "Oh you're on the whitey team"

Researcher: Yep, yep

Principal B: And for me it's not about that

IEW/CEC B: Nah

Principal B: But it never has been and its actually one of my biggest bug bears that people will, will revert to, that racial element when it's nothing to do with, I'm probably one of the most least racist people that you'll ever come across it doesn't even come on my radar. But people will use that as an excuse to try and either make [name of IEW/CEC B] feel bad or try, you know, to get under our skin, you know if there is anything that really gets under my skin, it's when they do that (Pair B, Interview 3, pp. 44-45).

Later in the same discussion, Principal B reiterated her frustration and concern for the difficult situations IEW/CEC B faces in the course of her work especially when trying to enforce the systemic student attendance procedure. Principal B said, "And probably be one of my, my things that does push my buttons because I know it puts [first name of IEW/CEC B]

into an awkward position and she can [indecipherable] that I'm conscious of it" (Pair B, Interview 3, p. 45). IEW/CEC B contributed to the discussion, expressing her own frustration at some parents' responses to the attendance expectations of the school and how she positioned herself. IEW/CEC C used some levity to explain this:

And I actually think, in community the other day, kind of thing, I'm getting very frustrated because I don't know how much more from the school and [name of Principal B]'s point of view she can do with this attendance stuff... I don't know how, and that, it really annoys me, as I said, [first name of principal A]'s just, I do not take that thing away from, I don't, I don't, that's not me, you know, no I am on the *right* [emphasis] side. ...not the *white* [emphasis] side, I am on the *right* [emphasis] side! (Pair C, Interview 3, pp. 47-48).

Pair A did not explicitly talk about racism in their school per se or how it affected their work or them personally, but there were comments by the pair in their final interview that showed they understood the some of the impact of past discriminatory policies on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. They recognised some students in their school did not know much about their Indigenous cultural background and saw the school's, 'Culture Club' as a way to provide a supported and safe environment for them to learn more about and celebrate their cultures:

Principal A: it all started because of a student who was here who needed, we needed to find a way, you know,

IEW/CEC A: [Cuts in] well, she had connectedness to her, her um, her family heritage, her Indigenous side, so she wanted to know more about it so we thought OK well obviously there could be other kids that are the same, and there were. So those that fit in that circle had that family life, taught those that didn't

Principal A: Yeah

IEW/CEC A: And I mean you could teach 'em in certain ways, but unless you live it you don't know but it's good that,

Principal A: Yeah

IEW/CEC A: They are a little community amongst themselves (Pair A, Interview 3, p. 33).

IEW/CEC A also showed her view on the inclusivity and acceptance of others that she subscribed to in her work at the school:

So there's that, that sort of like, 'us and them', that doesn't exist, it's the same with our SEP kids, you know. We are all one, we all have the same

ability to learn, some in different ways, but we all need to respect each other for different things (Pair A, interview 3, p. 35).

### **5.2.2.3 Regional support but limited availability**

All case study pairs in at least one of their interviews mentioned this contextual feature. They all recognised the usefulness and had previously utilised the services of The Region's Indigenous support team. This was for either professional development of staff or for support to the IEW/CEC or both, however interestingly every pair also expressed dissatisfaction over being unable to readily access the team in a timely manner for these purposes and the duration of some of the training offered was problematic. The logistics of a small number of regional officers being able to service such a large region were recognised as a contributing factor. None the less, while not detrimental for their own professional relationship as such, the issues of access and training time demands were considered a blocker to the work they wanted to achieve together and that the support they received was really, "hit and miss" (Principal A, Pair A, Interview 3, p. 45).

In their second interview Pair A had discussed the professional development they had done with staff over the years and recognised it was time to renew and redo training on running yearning circles and Crossing Cultures, that they needed, "someone to come and get us kick started again" (IEW/CEC A, Pair A, Interview 2, p. 7). In their final interview, Pair A again raised the need for further training, but the discontinuation of support for the systemic initiative known as EATSIPS constrained what they wanted to do. Pair A made these observations about what had happened with EATSIPS for their school:

Principal A: The EATSIPS stuff was big, wasn't it...a lot of work, while it was good, but how many of us are continuing the actual EATSIPS?

IEW/CEC A: Because she'd [referring to The Region's EATSIPS support officer] come in and sort of say, say, 'oh I notice you've done this now, I notice you've done this now and well it's up to you, you've come in and you've got us behind it

Principal A: We need someone to know, you know, keep it going...um yeah, so, so maybe someone who can be a consultant or someone who

IEW/CEC A: [Finishes the sentence] is just there to do it

Principal A: EATSIPS, you know, because [first name of The Region's EATSIPS officer] [pauses], oh I know, what I was going to say, it's around the training [first name of interviewer], that's sort of hit and miss (Pair A, Interview 3, pp. 44-45).

Also restricting the pair's work was that they found the length of time prescribed to do staff training like 'Crossing Cultures' was too prohibitive, "So, um and needs to be um, and not six hours of it, you know, we can't do six hours" (Principal A, Pair A, Interview 3, p. 46). Added to that, the pair found it difficult to get the regional staff to come when they wanted them to do the training:

Principal A: Well, that's, that's the problem because you can't do it

IEW/CEC A: No

Principal A: You know

IEW/CEC A: You've got to plan ahead

Principal A: Ah

IEW/CEC A: Well and truly ahead to get them and on a, one PD day that everybody has

Principal A: That's right

Interviewer: Which is rare

Principal A: Yeah

Interviewer: At the beginning of the year and then it's so full with all this other stuff (Pair A, Interview 3, p. 48).

IEW/CEC B recognised her remote geographical location made regular support meetings with The Region's Indigenous support team and her colleagues difficult. Collaboration and networking with other professional workers was something she really wanted:

IEW/CEC B: Um, I know that the CECs in [name of regional city] get together every so often, don't they?

Interviewer; Yeah, well actually in the good old days, they used to get together um at least once a month. And then that cut back to once a term and now sometimes its once a semester. But yes they do meet.

IEW/CEC B: Yeah the logistics of us getting together now is very hard because of the distance and all that

Interviewer: Yeah

IEW/CEC B: You know, we used to, we'd get together here, at school, so we can have a sharing

Interviewer: Yep

IEW/CEC B: Because I drive around with a lady from the neighbourhood centre who works closely with our families of community

Interviewer: Yep

IEW/CEC B: She's said to me, [name of IEW/CEC B] we've got to catch up with each other as we're in the bus. But that's not good enough

Interviewer: No

IEW/CEC B: We should be, you know, we should be able to get together so I would like to see the support workers meet (Pair B, Interview 3, p. 65).

Pair C discussed their concerns about regional support. IEW/CEC C said she lacked the regular contact she sought with her colleagues as well as The Region's senior Indigenous officer,

we haven't for [pauses], it's twelve months, has been awful for CECs, we have not had any connection with, it's been very rare, with [name of senior Indigenous officer] and the rest of the CEC's and I get a little bit bent out of shape and you know I think when some of our teachers, you know, don't see their HOD, you know, I'm thinking, I don't see my CECs, I'm lucky if I see them once a month and even that's hit and miss and um or my regional [senior Indigenous officer], you know (Pair C, Interview 3, p. 7).

Principal C was also concerned about the length of time required for Crossing Cultures training, but because of the need to secure the availability of The Region's Indigenous support team he wanted it booked regardless:

Principal C: Yeah I asked about that and they said, they came back to me and said its only two hours. Because the Aboriginal component is four hours and Torres Strait Islander is two hours and they might've, might've shortened it, I don't know. I didn't get the connection, but they put me onto someone who said, "No, it's only a two hour course, now". I don't mind, I said, book 'em in! But I need that confirmed because

IEW/CEC C: [Finishes his sentence] so we'll start the school year off with cross cultural awareness training (Pair C, Interview 3, pp. 7-8).

Principal D1 spoke about how she felt isolated from ready access to The Region's senior Indigenous officer to help School D with their school-community engagement strategy:

Yeah, we'd like her [meaning the senior Indigenous officer] to come down and be part of our parent advisory committee, you know, our meetings at [name of local Aboriginal corporation centre] and work with us with the community to get them on board as well, I think they're involvement with

us in our school community, you know our, our, yeah our school community, community as well... That should be part of their portfolio, it's part of their brief to come down and work with us on a regular basis and be part of those community meetings (Pair D2, Interview 3, pp. 57-60).

In this discussion, I had explained that the large, geographically diverse nature of the region did make it hard for The Region's Indigenous support team to easily get about. As well, I told the pair that I knew that The Region was running with a new model of support for schools that meant this team had to case manage specific schools that required high levels of support. We spoke about this and the pair recognised how their school was able to continue its work despite the support they wanted:

Interviewer: For instance, yesterday [name of senior Indigenous officer] was um in [name of remote centre] so that's where all of their attention has turned at the moment

Principal D2: Yeah

Interviewer: And then there's [names of two remote Indigenous communities]

Principal D2: Yeah

Interviewer: [name of another very remote Indigenous community school]

Principal D2: We're sort of not a priority

Interviewer: You're not bad enough

IEW/CEC D2: You're too good!

Principal D2: Not bad enough! We've got to wreck some stuff! [Chuckling to herself]

IEW/CEC D1: Because we make do with what we do

Principal D2: Yeah

IEWCEC D1: We try and do our best with what we have got

Principal D2: We've been creative

IEW/CEC D1: And we do, yeah

Principal D2: Really creative

IEW/CEC D1: We work hard (Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 61).

#### 5.2.2.4 *Staff shortages and high turnover effects*

Several of the case study schools were affected by teacher shortages and/or the high turnover of teachers and other senior staff. For instance, Chapter 4 provided findings of high mobility of principals in The Region and this was exemplified by case study schools B and D. Earlier in this chapter it was noted IEW/CEC D1 experienced significant worry because she did not know about the new principal and was uncertain as to what the new principal would do with retaining the IEW/CEC position. Even after the new principal had started IEW/CEC D1 expressed continued uncertainty because the principal was only acting and was yet to secure the job, “I’m still, I’m still, you know, see where ...how much I can rely on [first name of Principal D2] (IEW/CEC D1, Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 29). IEW/CEC B’s role had similarly been affected by the frequent changes of principals she experienced in her school. Through my prior professional field experience, I knew that at least two other principals had been in the school since the principal who had advised Principal B about the capacity of IEW/CEC B. Principal B spoke about what she found at the time of her arrival to the school, she was surprised to discover that IEW/CEC B was not working in the same way as she had been led to expect. This was something Principal B wanted to change”

I kind of, when I came in here, straight away said to [name of IEW/CEC B] “Well tell me what you do?” and she said, “I do playgroup’. And I went, ”you what?!” She said, “I do Playgroup and make sandwiches”. So my first goal was to get her back up into a role, get her a place in the school. Now my objective is to get her as a seen body in the school with a purpose, so the parade today was a first step. The next one was the attendance at [name of School B’s student welfare committee] meetings because [first name of IEW/CEC B] would see the minutes and it would have,”[first name of IEW/CEC B] will..., [first name of IEW/CEC B] will..., [name of IEW/CEC B] will...”, but didn’t have a voice or a say (Pair B, Interview 1, pp. 12-13).

Pair C experienced a different affect. At the time of the second site visit to School C, the principal was visibly distressed over the high mobility of his staff, “Since Easter we’ve got a rotating door of deputies next door” (Pair C, Interview 2, p. 4). He lamented that this had put strain on the operation of the school and likely added pressure to his own work. When asked did he predict if the situation was going to stabilise, Principal C replied,

I would hope to think so, to make it some kind of normality it does have an impact on the school for what it is, behaviour management’s what I’m talking of, it’s, it’s a direct result of consistency from the point of view of the person sitting in the seat. You’ve got someone there for five weeks or whatever, that’s not a picture (Pair C, Interview 2, p. 5).

IEW/CEC C acknowledged another outcome for their school because of ‘a lot of new teachers’ was there was limited understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols and this caused ‘a few issues’:

there’s been a high revolving door with a lot of schools and a lot of teachers and um, so we’ve got a lot of new teachers who don’t know a lot about, um protocol, so we’ve had a few issues but you know most, but most teachers have been really great (Pair C, Interview 3, p. 8)

At their final interview, Principal C expressed his deep concern about continued teacher shortages and vacancies at his school, “That’s a problem way up here [gesticulating with his hand raised]” (Pair C, Interview 4, p. 12). He appeared to be facing a lot of pressure to make hard financial decisions and while he made it known he truly valued the IEW/CEC position, Principal C felt he was forced to prioritise allocation of teachers ahead of funding the IEW/CEC position:

Add this to the mx, [looking at IEW/CEC C] um, you understand my first order of business is to have a teacher in front of kids. I’m not actually meeting that demand right now and it’s not because, anything to do with admin or anything to do with, it’s just, no bodies ...we’ve had, what’s this, version eight of the timetable? (Pair C, Interview 4, pp. 12-13).

#### **5.2.2.5 *Lack of decisional opportunity***

One other contextual feature, which likely affected their professional relationship for the case study school pairs, was participation of the IEW/CEC in decisional leadership. Principal B had restructured her school’s leadership group and intentionally included in documentation, the role and responsibilities of IEW/CEC B. This was not the situation for other pairs in the case study schools and while others did not express they had limited leadership opportunity, IEW/CEC C did share she had a concern about this matter. At their final interview, IEW/CEC C spoke about a lack of opportunity to be part of the school middle management leadership team’s decisional processes. Principal C clarified he did not view the participation of the IEW/CEC as appropriate in that forum. He argued that if he did, he would then have to ask the other members of the student welfare team as well. Principal C clarified that middle management met primarily about curriculum decisions, “I’d have to have the Youth Support Co-ordinator, the nurse, the chappy and all that ...our leadership table tends to sit around the Heads of Department, that’s curriculum ...it’s extremely operational about what’s going to happen, when” (Pair C, Interview 4, pp. 23-24). IEW/CEC C acknowledged Principal C had responded to her request, “I mean [first name of Principal C] has given the directive that I will meet with [first name of one of the Deputy Principals] to discuss that leadership” (Pair C,

Interview 4, p. 24). However, she was clearly not satisfied with his response or her exclusion from decisions:

IEW/CEC C: So I guess to be fair, you've actually given me that and it may not be around the round table of all the white knights but ...I'm not trying to say well I need to be so full of importance that I need to be here, but I, I question that because it was at that time that I didn't feel, well OK, I questioned, well how is all the Indigenous data, Indigenous perspectives and everything discussed and yet there's not one Indigenous person in there?

Principal C: [Nodding] Mmmm

IEW/CEC C: Because it was one thing that I saw was apparent in that forum [referring to a previous event she had recently attended] was that the non-Indigenous people as much as everyone in that room cared and had really, you know, um energetic and passionate, you know, insight, foresight for Indigenous students to get ahead (Pair C, Interview 4, pp. 25-26).

This remained an unresolved matter at School C.

#### **5.2.2.6 Sub-section summary**

In summary, a number of contextual features were found to restrict the way case study pairs do or could work together. Evidence was found with all case study school pairs that they had uncertainty about of the IEWs/CECs tenure and continuity of funding; experienced different levels of racism, including prejudicial and fearful attitudes and beliefs of staff; and, expressed some frustration about limited availability of regional support. Less frequently mentioned but also noteworthy was that several case study pairs faced contextual features that affected their working relationship either directly or indirectly or their work in improving their school for Indigenous student learning such as, teacher shortages and high turnover of school leaders; and, a lack of opportunity for some of the IEW/CEC to participate in educational leadership decisions. Each one of these features challenged to varying degrees, the personal and combined capacity of the case study pairs, and in particular the IEW/CECs, to do their job well.

#### **5.2.3 Section Summary**

This section has provided findings that respond to the second part of the second core research question: *What are the contextual features that influence this?* The findings encompassed two types of contextual features, those that were beneficial and those that were detrimental to the strengthening of the case study pairs' professional relationship. Beneficial features related to predispositions and deliberate practices of affirmative school based policy and practice for the case study pairs. Findings of a more detrimental nature were associated with

systemic organisational strategies, processes and structures as well as the beliefs, attitudes and actions of others. These features provide further explanations about the IEW/CEC and principal relationship, why a strong relationship can be readily established and sustained and why their work as individuals and as a pair are so challenging. Figure 5.4 captures the summary of findings of influencing contextual features.

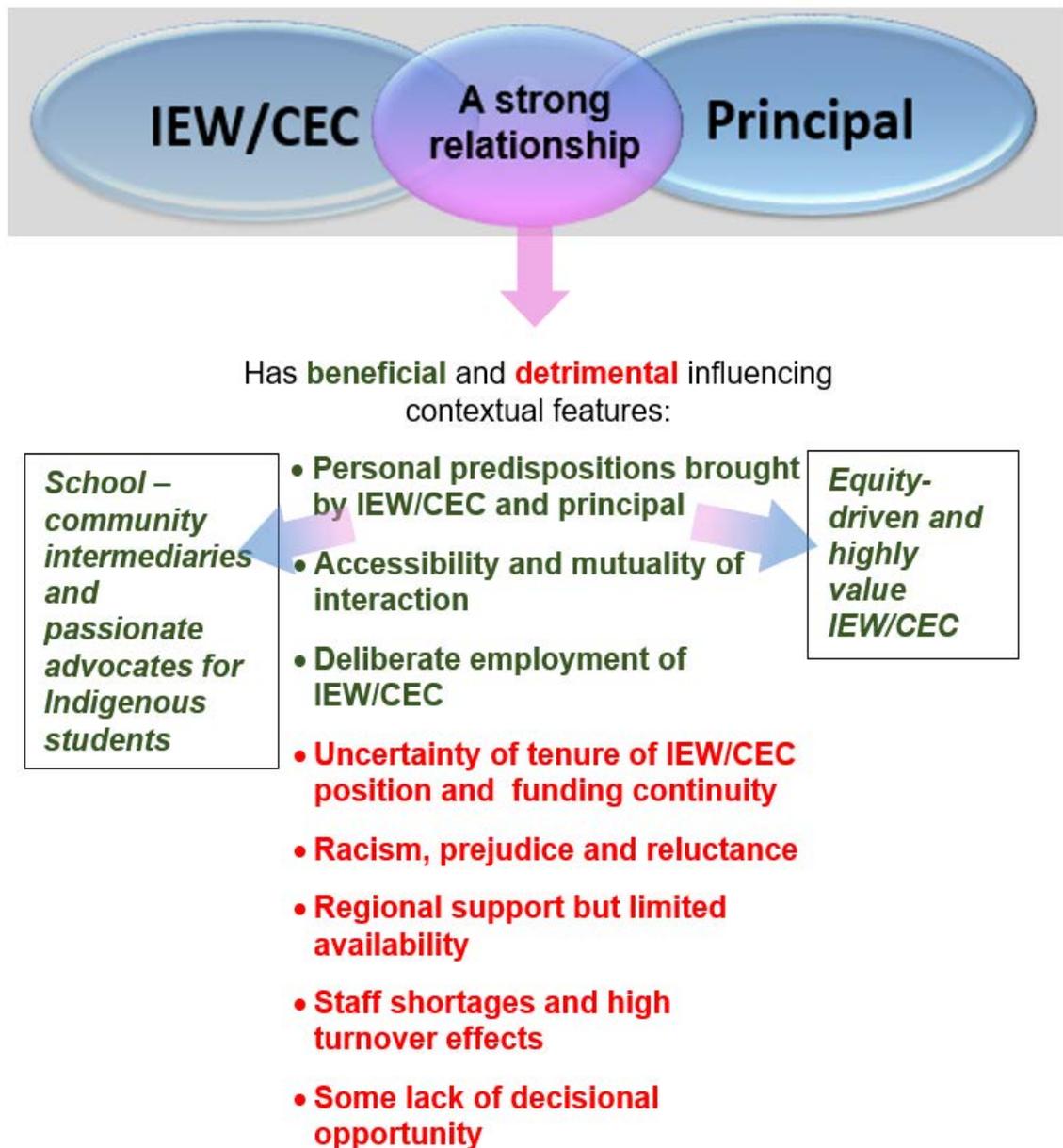


Figure 5.4 Summary of contextual features influencing the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship

### 5.3 Outcomes of a strong relationship

This section provides findings that address the third core research question: *What are the outcomes of this strengthened relationship?* It provides key findings about the impact of a strong professional relationship between an IEW/CEC and principal. There are those noticed as directly relating to each individual, those between the pair or those beyond to the school environment (physical and organisational) or for other people (students, staff and parents) in the school community over time. Findings presented are under headings stated as outcomes for each of the above categories.

#### 5.3.1 For the IEW/CEC: Increased role capacity, self-efficacy and leadership

In Chapter 4, findings already showed all pairs mostly or highly agreed that they each had clear understandings about their ways of working together and within their own roles. This was evidenced through the particular relational dynamics of ‘Trusting Interpersonal Communication’, ‘Role Agency and Solidarity’ and, ‘Capability Development’. The pairs’ responses to three questionnaire statements of: ‘Time and independence’; ‘Appreciation of each other’s expertise and contribution’; and, ‘Individual responsibilities’ showed high congruity of opinion that they undertook these action statements. In the two instances where there was a distinct variation of opinion, it was only for Pair D2 early in their working relationship. Principal D2 recognised shared ways of working with the IEW/CEC as very valuable, however these had not yet been achieved; “there’s gaps with us working together ...there’s more work we can do together” (Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 24); and, “I think I missed a couple of opportunities that I could have nailed it” (Principal D2, Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 37).

What became noticeable in the latter stages of the research was the extent to which all case study IEWs/CECs were supported to build capacity of their role, which led to greater self-efficacy to initiate and lead purposeful projects over time. Following are examples of this outcome for IEWs/CECs found in every case study school.

IEW/CEC A was employed as a literacy and numeracy teacher aide to support students in class. However, she was also enabled to lead arrangements for various annual or ongoing activities in the school to profile Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories and respond to the needs of their students. This included running the monthly ‘Culture Club’, something she had established in the school with the encouragement of Principal A in 2013 after realising there were many students who were “children becoming disconnected with their Aboriginality” (IEW/CEC A, Pair A, Interview 1, p. 7). In their final interview, IEW/CEC A

spoke with pride about the ongoing work she was doing with the school's Indigenous students in 'Culture Club' which by then had been running for four years, "But yeah, and it's, it's good for them" (Pair A, Interview 3, p. 5). IEW/CEC A also talked about another activity that she recently initiated after an initial approach to her from a staff member of a close by early learning centre. IEW/CEC A saw how it could improve school transition. She selected several Year 5 and 6 Indigenous students to visit the centre to interact with the kindy children in their break time. "They go over and they will actually be playing games with the children, so they were sitting down and talking with them and, and just relating to them so when they... come to primary school they've got friendly faces" (Pair A, Interview 2, p. 7). Principal A showed she supported this initiative and saw it as a positive influence for the school when she said, "That's building community" (Pair A, Interview 3, p. 8).

IEW/CEC B undertook CEC duties at her school as well as running weekly family playgroups across a number of school sites in the area and driving the school bus to bring students to and from school who did not have their own transport. In their final interview, IEW/CEC B reflected on how she worked in the school with Principal B. IEW/CEC B mentioned she clearly understood the scope to which to work, 'how hard to go with something', and how to work with her principal because of clear expectations to do her job well:

I will look for, to [name of Principal B] because she has all that policy and procedure stuff. You know, you know, like I may have the community stuff, but I also know where how hard to go with something. And that's when you would just ring up [name of Principal B] to ask her where you go from here because [name of Principal B] has boundaries. She knows those boundaries (Pair B, Interview 3, pp. 16-17).

For IEW/CEC B, this level of autonomy was not something she saw as common for IEWs/CECs in other schools and she spoke about what she believed happens when there no supervision or direction for the role,

and that's the other thing probably need to let you know that I, I want to share with you, that I know my boundaries and I'm very aware that some people in positions very much like mine have been given open rein, you know free run and they're getting themselves in trouble (Pair B, Interview 3, p. 17).

When reflecting on progress of the Action Plan Pair B had undertaken over the course of the case study, IEW/CEC B also commented:

[name of interviewer], you put what was our goal, that was [name of Principal B]'s goal, to strengthen the role of the IEW/CEC on staff? ... Well,

I can put my hand on my heart and tell you that this is the best I have ever felt in this role (Pair B, Interview 3, p. 7).

Principal B concurred and went on to talk about how she had approached working with IEW/CEC B, “and knowing her strengths in community, I have given her um, a bit of empowerment in knowing that, that I trust her work” (Pair B, Interview 3, p. 8). Principal B again acknowledged IEW/CEC B’s increased role satisfaction and reiterated how an IEW/CEC B was acting on her own authority because of ‘empowerment’:

I know when [first name of IEW/CEC B]’s down the bus, she’s not down there havin’ a moan and groan about [name of the school] and that bloody awful principal... I think she’s down there laughing and enjoying her time because she’s got a real sense about what she’s doing and that ownership around her role and the critical link from the school to the community...so I would really say that the big difference around with strengthening the role of the CEC in staff really, that one word, ‘empowerment’ comes to my mind and where that also comes in, like we’ve done a lot of stuff around community and all that sort of stuff (Pair B, Interview 3, p. 9).

IEW/CEC B believed she had increased confidence to work with another new principal and said;

I think this role and how I have grown in it has given me enough will and well, “gameness” I should say probably, to be able to approach a new principal with how I can see we can work together ...yep I’ve got that confidence now to come, so you know, this is how my role is and this is how I will work and this is, you know, how do you think we could work together? I think I have enough confidence to come and have that conversation with the next person (Pair B, Interview 3, pp. 13-14).

IEW/CEC B later expanded on how she thought different past principals had negatively impacted on her role capacity:

And [pauses] that’s the thing, the previous two, like did not, and I did not feel comfortable to come and do that... I just did not have it. I did not have the positives. I know I wouldn’t be listened to, I was not valued, I just felt, what am I doing here? (Pair B, Interview 3, p. 21).

Principal B mentioned she coached IEW/CEC B to lead professional development of teachers in EATSIPS, “to bring that to the school and make it context specific and site specific. Well you know, I’ve, I’ve walked with [IEW/CEC B] side by side, step to make sure that she’s comfortable in being able to do that” (Pair B, Interview 3, p. 14). Principal B also attested how adaptable IEW/CEC B had become when working with a variety of staff in the school:

[First name of IEW/CEC B] does respond to every other staff member on staff in the same level, um, you know, working closely as in relationships in the school. But then she works with people on a different level to me ...so with the Deputy for instance, they work very closely on attendance ...as we do now with the new success coach, so you know they work very closely on that agenda ...you know where as I work with [first name of IEW/CEC B] in a different strategic levels and strategic agendas, so we, we're working under our individual portfolios or whatever you want to call them, [first name of IEW/CEC B] does code switch and code switches very well with whatever working party she's working with at the time (Pair B, Interview 3, pp. 29-30).

Later in the same interview, Principal B thought of a metaphor to describe what she had seen in IEW/CEC B's transformation, "I reckon [first name of IEW/CEC B]'s been like a flower, it's opened up, you know?" (Pair B, Interview 3, p. 33). She then recalled what she found when she first came to the school:

Principal B: Because when I first walked in this door in, in [name of school]'s door there was a lot of different perceptions to [first name of IEW/CEC B] and what she does and the role and there was a lot of closing of opportunity. You know, at that point in time when I walked in this door, [first name of IEW/CEC B] was the sandwich maker and I can honestly say, with no disrespect to the predecessors at all, I'm not about that, but she was in herself, quite closed. And she was quite closed because that was how she was, the role was around, it, it wasn't, she wasn't um, allowed to, you know, well that's probably not the right word, um...she, she, she wasn't empowered and she wasn't able to, um, I guess be as, um,

IEW/CEC B: [Finishes the sentence] take a leadership role

Principal B: And be a leader in the school ...where as, I took an entirely different approach (Pair B, Interview 3, pp. 33-34).

In the closing stages of their final interview, when asked what changes to policy or practices would they like to see that would improve what they were doing, IEW/CEC B made an insightful suggestion for future improvements in the role of CEC. She said, "and that's where we need a CEC school, so [laughs] ...so, when, and then also the CECs are being shown or coached, coached in what they are required to do" (Pair B, Interview 3, p. 71).

In School C, IEW/CEC C performed duties of a CEC and worked alongside the school's Vocational Education and Training Co-ordinator, Tertiary Co-ordinator, Year Level Co-ordinators and Literacy Coaches [with the latter role referred to as 'STLaNs'] to provide advice so together they could best support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In particular IEW/CEC C noted, "working with the, our two stlans has been incredible" (Pair C, Interview 2, p. 4). In 2014-2015 IEW/CEC C was elected onto the executive of the school's

Parents and Citizen's Committee. Additionally IEW/CEC C actively ensured Indigenous students at her school accessed every opportunity to participate in co-curricular activities, "today I waved off ten Indigenous students attending a school, a senior leadership camp" (IEW/CEC C, Pair C, Interview 1, p. 5). IEW/CEC C said she had also set up a shared reading program with a nearby feeder state primary school "with the Preppies because we've got our Year 8 literacy group and they go and read" (Pair C, Interview 3. p. 38).

In the final interview with Pair C, IEW/CEC C showed confidence when she spoke about how she supported teachers with embedding Indigenous perspectives in their curriculum,

and I'm thinking, you know, with having more input now teachers are coming to see me and looking at um, you know, where they are sitting in alignment with um, their Indigenous programs, or, you know, unit planning and what they haven't done in these twelve months (Pair C, Interview 3, p. 6).

IEW/CEC C also talked about the same level of self-assurance she had in the course of her outreach work with her students:

Sometimes these things just happen, just like that because I'm there in the moment, I took our Indigenous students for work experience over to [name of a local workplace] and we had some big wig come over and said to me how about, of course I said yes to it, sometimes things happen, it's an opportunity, yes it's an opportunity, they had their Indigenous rugby team wanting to be in our school! (Pair C, Interview 3, p. 8).

Such was the strength of their professional relationship, that in their final interview IEW/CEC C could respectfully ask Principal C a challenging question:

I'll be honest, I am saying, why aren't I part of your leadership team? Because if you're discussing Indigenous input, you go off data [pauses] everyone can go off data [pauses] you know ... it's all part of the, you know, regional sort of focus, but our input is still down there [gesticulates with her hand in a low down motion] (Pair C, Interview 3, pp. 4-5).

It has already been noted in the above section this matter of opportunity to participate in leadership at a middle management level was not resolved between the pair, however of importance here is that IEW/CEC C had the confidence to ask the question and demonstrates the level of exchange possible when there is high trust in a professional relationship.

Later in the same interview, Principal C spoke deferentially about IEW/CEC C. He talked about how the school needed this position, how he valued what IEW/CEC C did for student well-being and what he believed the work of the IEW/CEC showed students, something

she did that showed students, “I’m caring for you” (Principal C, Pair C, Interview 3, pp. 18-19). When IEW/CEC C responded, it was evident she confidently saw herself as part of the whole school. IEW/CEC C said this was more than what she thought happened for other IEW/CECs in The Region:

I think that’s where I feel, I, a lot more valued than the other CECs, because that’s not just exclusive to Indigenous students, I feel that non-Indigenous students ...a lot are respectful of my position and myself as a person, um and as a staff member then what I hear other CECs talk about. Because sadly some of the other CEC’s they’ve just got a tunnel vision and I think you cannot build a complete whole relationship with a whole school or school body that’s inclusive with staff as well if you’re not part of that whole staff and whole school body. So you, that’s probably one thing I do pride ourselves in having is the, I do feel amongst the non-Indigenous students that there is that high level ‘Oh, its Miss [surname of IEW/CEC C]’. Yep ...and they see me, you know, I’m visible, you can’t miss me! [Laughs] (Pair C, Interview 3, pp. 18-19).

In School D, IEW/CEC D1 undertook the usual duties of a CEC and IEW/CEC D2 worked primarily as a teacher aide for students with a disability. As well, IEW/CEC D2 voluntarily worked in an after hour’s homework session “I do hub” (IEW/CEC D2, Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 4) in the library for Indigenous students, something that had been running in the school for many years, “we’ve been doing homework classes for a long time” (IEW/CEC D2, Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 7). Both workers also supported the school’s Indigenous students to participate in The Region’s annually run targeted programs for Indigenous students such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aspirations Program (ATSIAP), “yeah, we’ve got to put out, um, notices out for the students next week ...and they can start setting their teams up” (IEW/CEC D1, Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 24). Additionally IEW/CEC D1 was assisted by IEW/CEC D2, to organise and facilitate an annual school ‘culture camp’ where Indigenous students from Year 8 to Year 12 invited a non-Indigenous student and were accompanied by IEW/CEC D1 and D2 and several teachers. Endorsed by Principal D1 and then Principal D2, the camp aimed to offer students personal development and improve relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and staff in the spirit of reconciliation. IEW/CEC D2 explained how it worked:

Yeah, we open it, yeah, for them and then they’ve got to bring a non-Indigenous student with them ...so that’s, we’ve always had it like that ...coz we thought it was, they want to learn something about us. Well, it’s good to involve them into what we do and so that’s where we get it from (Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 15).

Towards the end of this interview, IEW/CEC D1 also mentioned that Principal D2 had supported her to design and lead the professional development about the histories and cultures of the local area's peoples with the school staff in the beginning of the next year's student free days. "Coz, um, coz [name of Principal D2]'s agreed to um, for us to do our Phase Two in our cultural awareness training for our pupil free day ...it's our, our localised ...and it's, um, we're just working on the feedback, we asked, we did feedback forms so and what they've written on the feedback forms, that's, that's what we'll be addressing" (IEW/CEC D1, Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 41).

In their final interview, there appeared to be an increased level of self-efficacy for IEW/CEC D1 and expectation of leadership influence IEW/CEC D1 could have with the principal and the school. Principal D2 spoke about the benefits of supporting IEW/CEC D1 to ask provocative questions,

Principal D2: [first name of IEW/CEC D1] knows that she can come and she knows that I absolutely want the same things as her. Um, sometimes [first name of IEW/CEC D1] will pull me up and go, "ah, have you thought about that? Have you done that?" I go, um, you know I've, I've just, "it's been an oversight", um

Researcher: Yep

IEW/CEC D1: I s'pose

Principal D2: Keeping the transparency

IEW/CEC D1: Transparency and the honesty, yeah, and that between us (Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 27).

IEW/CEC D1 recounted how Principal D2 had asked her speak up about an issue in the school where students and some staff were not behaving respectfully during school assemblies and were talking when the acknowledgement of country was being given. IEW/CEC D1 described her leadership in this as being "stern",

IEW/CEC D1: [First name of Principal D2] wasn't here when I addressed it and I addressed it on thing and I, I spoke stern, stern, but in a good way ... yeah and a staff member came up to me and said, "Are you alright [first name of IEW/CEC D1]?" You know..., "Are you alright?" You know, "I'm just a bit worried about you, how you spoke" and I thought, I'm OK [laughs] ...but you know, no point being nice and fluffy all the time [laughs]. I had to be stern [laughs] to get across to them (Pair D2, Interview 3, pp. 37-38).

### 5.3.2 For the principal: increased cultural understanding, leadership capacity and appreciation of the IEW/CEC role

Already noted earlier in this chapter, is that the case study principals brought with them personal and professional life experiences that likely provided a subsequent respect for the IEW/CEC role and undoubtedly positioned them to work closely with the IEW/CEC in their school. An outcome of this strong professional relationship for the principal was that their ongoing and regular interactions with the IEW/CEC further built their own cultural understanding and ability to lead for school improvement in Indigenous education. The principal also seemed to develop an even greater appreciation of the IEW/CEC role.

The findings in Chapter 4 proved the existence of the former outcome in the early stages of the research where there was unanimous response by all principals for the relational dynamic of Capability Development in the SKSG questionnaire statement, ‘The Principal uses his/her interactions with the CEC/IEW to build his/her own cultural understandings’. They strongly agreed with this statement, as did all IEWs/CECs with the exception of IEW/CEC D1, who at the first time she completed the questionnaire with Principal D1, indicated ‘Mostly Agree’. However, when she filled it out again with her new principal, Principal D2, she indicated ‘Strongly Agree’. In their second interview it was demonstrated how working alongside the IEW/CEC gave Principal B greater access to getting to know the community, “But even like doin’ home visits, I mean, I’ll go with [first name if IEW/CEC] ...coz I need to know these parents in the community, as well” (Principal B, Interview 2, p. 21). Another example of the important influence an IEW/CEC can have on developing a principal’s own cultural knowledge was observed during this exchange between Principal D2 and IEW/CEC D1 when they were discussing their intentions to introduce the study of a local language into the school. IEW/CEC D1 gently corrected Principal D2’s use of a term to describe Aboriginal people in Queensland:

Principal D2: About our LOTE? Yes and that’s very different to what we are doing and that has just, that’s brand new and that’s great, it’s our LOTE will be Koori, isn’t it? Yeah so one lesson we’ll be studying the language and the other lesson

IEW/CEC D1; Murri, not Koorie.

Principal D2: Yeah Murri. Murri is it?

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah

Principal D2: The local language from here?

IEW/CEC D1: Yeah

Principal D2: Yeah ...the other lesson's studying the culture (Pair D2, interview 2, p.53).

The latter outcome of developing a greater appreciation of the IEW/CEC role was most evident during the final interviews in 2016 when all principals showed this by their interactions with and comments about the IEW/CEC. Following is what was noted with every case study principal.

Principal A reflected on what enabled them to work together, "I think, I think the relationship's critical" (Principal A, Interview 3, p. 30) and comments by IEW/CEC A showed they shared a mutuality of desire for every student succeeding, "our interest is that child, let's see what we can do best for that child" (IEW/CECA, Interview 3, p. 30).

When Principal B responded to a question about what did she think would happen when she moved on from the school, her answer included what she expected from IEW/CEC B:

like if I wasn't here and I was [indecipherable word] or where ever, um, you know I would hope that [first name of IEW/CEC A] would feel comfortable to be able to ring, cross check anything with me that she might not be clear around...you know if there were things around processes, policies, possibilities even... even just to nut things out and say, hey, you've been at [name of school] for a while, I'm thinking about doing this and, you know, what do you think? Or just to have that point of call, a point of reference (Pair B, Interview 3, pp.14-15).

Principal B added that she believed she had actually formed a strong friendship with IEW/CEC B:

I hope what we have now is a lifelong friendship ...I, I don't envisage when I walk out the gate, that's it, that's it, done and dusted ...no because I will still be in touch with her, anyway, just checkin' up, coz I'll want to know how her family is ...and she'll want to know how mine are (Pair B, Interview 3, p.15).

Principal C showed he had a deep respect for the work of IEW/CEC C and that over time, he had appreciatively got to know firsthand how she interacted with students in the school:

I can walk there now and you can observe her [looking at and referring to IEW/CEC C] from a hundred metres away, walking around and the kids will, you know, [chuckles], the walking past and it's the eye contact, it's the flick of the finger, it's something or it's the five, you know the five words

that are used, well turns around and “what are you doing there?” sort of thing, [pauses] they take on board the value of the person who is looking after them (Pair C, Interview 4, p. 18).

Principal D1 and Principal D2 each made comments at their respective interviews about how they had gained a deeper appreciation of the role of the IEW/CEC. Principal D1 explained she relied on IEW/CEC D1 to give her advice, and as presented in Chapter 4, when responding to one of her answers on the questionnaire she said, “I wrote down, “sometimes in the busy-ness of work I’ll make an ill-considered decision, [laughs] ...but we can always talk about it and reflect about it” (Principal D1, Interview 1, p. 33). Principal D2 saw the usefulness of working closely with the IEWs/CECs whose direct advocacy for Indigenous education helped her to do a better job as a principal:

Principal D2: ...look, honestly I don’t mind, ...[first name of IEW/CEC D1] ...like challenging me because it does keep me honest and it does keep me thinking, you know just keep my finger on the pulse and what I have missed and I’m not going to do everything right that’s for sure.

IEW/CEC D2: And see [first name of Principal D2] asked. Oh we understand that too, but we’re just bringing it up, you know

Principal D2: Yeah (Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 37).

### **5.3.3 Racism can be better addressed**

Earlier in this chapter, racism was noted as a detrimental influencing contextual feature to the work of the case study IEWs/CECs and principals and was an issue that particularly affected the IEWs/CECs personally. On the other hand, the various responses of the pairs to racism, also mentioned above, showed they were galvanised to support each other to bring about better interactions and understandings between all members of their school community. This could therefore be seen as another outcome of their strengthened working relationship. In addition to the responses to racism presented above, the following comments by the IEWs/CECs and Principal D2 reflected their determination to improve their school to redress discrimination, “We do, we do our best” (IEW/CEC D1, Interview 3, p. 47), “We do our best for the kids, for the, yeah, but that’s just it” (IEW/CEC D2, Interview 3, p. 47) and they made it clear they would work with their principal, “And we want to support her in every way that we can, too, to make things right” (IEW/CEC D1, Interview 3, p. 47). Principal D2 then added, “And I don’t think you should ever ignore it. It should always be addressed and never accepted” (Principal D2, Interview 3, p. 47).

### 5.3.4 The school is a welcoming place for Indigenous students and their families

All case study pairs wanted their schools to be safe and welcoming environments for their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families. The strong relationship between each pair better enabled them to undertake actions to this end. There was evidence each school displayed artefacts and were implementing practices that deliberately recognised and genuinely respected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories. This included murals featuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander imagery and traditional stories painted by Indigenous artists, acknowledgement of country on weekly assembly, the flying of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and many staff in each school wearing staff shirts that included Indigenous motifs. All schools ensured that staff induction included explanations of the roles and responsibilities of the IEW/CEC. Two of the case study schools, School B and School D, had established local Indigenous community consultation groups that they used to advise and support them on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

As noted in Chapter 4, each case study school also had other intended strategies in their Action Plans to improve their school for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student success. During the period of the case study, School C and School D provided crossing-cultures training to their staff. In 2015, School C achieved one of the goals in their Action Plan to become a new site for unique and significant vocational training program where senior Indigenous students and adults could obtain vocational certification training that served a pathway for them to transition into university. During 2015, School D also began the groundwork to offer a new languages subject in the following year that would feature the local Indigenous language, “ I can’t see why we can’t offer a second language, um, but a local language ...and a local language and that’s what we want to do” (Principal D2, interview 3, p. 8). School A and School B had as part of their Action Plans for the duration of the research, to build better community engagement. This was manifested through inviting students, parents and community members to help them create a physical space in their schools, gardens that contained ‘yarning’ circles. For instance, IEW/CEC A acknowledged what the project would give students a sense of pride:

And I’ve, you know, I’ll say to kids, you know when you come back, when you’re a Grade 9 or Grade 10 or you go past, you know and look at that, that was what you helped to build...and that’s part of your legacy back in the school (Pair A, Interview 2, p. 22).

IEW/CEC A then described another intention of their new garden, to be ‘a sacred area’:

We’re putting the bigger trees in, in um, trees now to um, so that when it gets older, when they get bigger you gotta bit of shade and once you’re

inside there, once you step into the circle, even though it's not completely a circle closed, once you step into the circle, whatever's in here stays so this your, um sacred area if you like...or your, you know, your place where you can find peace and things like that (Pair A, Interview 2, p. 23).

IEW/CEC B mentioned how the refurbishment and opening up of a large kitchen area had allowed greater parent access and 'ownership':

Another part that the parents have really taken ownership of is our big kitchen...they just know that, that is just the drop in, yep, they just know if I am not there they just go in and help 'em selves (Pair B, Interview 2, p. 10).

School B's garden project had involved the school's Indigenous students and their families, "It's been a big team effort" (IEW/CEC B, Pair B, Interview 2, p. 13) and:

So we've got pavers acknowledging every group that's involved in our school so whether they come from the Tablelands or the coast or the desert, we are still acknowledging, I've got parents, who's keeping a list. Miss [name of another CEC] gave me another thing for my project, my little project [smiling], I'm writing down who they are associated with, what groups (IEW/CEC B, Pair B, Interview 2, p. 15).

Also contributing to this outcome of wanting to create a sense of place for Indigenous students was the way each case study school IEW/CEC conducted transition programs. The two case study state primary schools, School A and School B, had transition programs for students going into state secondary school and utilised their IEWs/CECs to especially work with supporting their Indigenous students to transition to secondary school. For instance, IEW/CEC A used past students from her school, "Indigenous kids from [name of School A] or a good model kids to come over and talk about what's it going to be like in high school for them and everything else" (IEW/CEC A, Pair A, Interview 2, p. 18). IEW/CEC A said she spoke with these former students to make sure they were utilising the support of the secondary IEWs/CECs:

You know, have you used Miss [name of CEC from a local high school]? Have you used Miss [name of CEC from another high school]? You know even if you're needing a sounding board or you need this or you need that, have you used them? Because, they, they're there for you (Pair A, Interview 2, p. 20).

The two case study secondary schools, School C and School D, had similar transition programs with their feeder schools. For instance, as described in the above section, IEW/CEC C spoke about how she conducted home visits with one of the primary school IEWs/CECs. She

also reported that she attended this particular state primary school regularly to meet and get to know the parents of students at the family playgroup run on site. IEW/CEC C said:

I've been working with [name of feeder primary school] and going over there every week, um, I went down to their little playgroup...but it's also giving them the reassurance, oh, you know, this is going to benefit you and your family and your child, that transition into high school (Pair C, Interview 3, pp. 12-13).

### **5.3.5 Indigenous students are more supported to succeed**

As the permissions of this research did not allow gathering of evidence directly from students, there were limitations to what data might provide findings about student success that was connected to a strong IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship. However, it is reasonable to conclude that if the IEW/CEC and principal are functioning well in their roles and together, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are likely to be better supported to achieve improved learning outcomes. Student data that was allowed and accessed for this research came from each school's Annual Report available on their school website and that which is available from the My School website<sup>4</sup>.

A summary of the student attendance data for each case study school taken from both sources of data and is presented in Table 20 below. Noteworthy is the difference in reporting between the two data sources: the School Annual Report provides attendance data in the categories of 'All students' and 'Indigenous students' only; whereas the My School website has three categories, 'All' 'Non-Indigenous' and 'Indigenous'. There are also slight discrepancies in percentages between the sources. Reasons for this are unknown.

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<sup>4</sup> The My School website is a website administered by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority and is set up as, "a resource for parents, educators and the community to find information about each of Australia's schools" (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2018).

Table 20 Case study schools' annual attendance 2014-2016

School	Group	My School	School Annual Report	My School	School Annual Report	My School	School Annual Report
		2014	2014	2015	2015	2016	2016
A (primary)	All	93%	93%	94%	94%	94%	94%
	Indigenous	84%	84%	88%	88%	88%	87%
	Non-Indigenous	93%	NP	94%	NP	94%	NP
B (primary)	All	86%	86%	85%	85%	84%	84%
	Indigenous	84%	84%	82%	82%	79%	79%
	Non-Indigenous	89%	NP	90%	NP	91%	NP
C (secondary)	All	90%	91%	89%	89%	86%	87%
	Indigenous	85%	85%	80%	83%	80%	80%
	Non-Indigenous	91%	NP	90%	NP	87%	NP
D (secondary)	All	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
	Indigenous	88%	88%	86%	86%	86%	85%
	Non-Indigenous	90%	NP	91%	NP	91%	NP

NP = Not provided

Tables 21 and 22 data are sourced from the Department of Education’s public website (Queensland Government, 2018b) and gives a view of attendance rates of all state schools throughout the state of Queensland.

Table 21 Student attendance rates in state primary schools by Indigenous status

Year	All QLD primary state schools Indigenous attendance rates			All QLD primary state schools non-indigenous attendance rates		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
Prep	85.5%	86.2%	86.4%	92.9%	93.1%	93.3%
1	85.6%	86.0%	86.1%	92.8%	92.9%	93.2%
2	86.3%	86.5%	86.5%	93.1%	93.2%	93.4%
3	86.8%	87.1%	87.0%	93.3%	93.3%	93.6%
4	86.5%	87.2%	87.2%	93.3%	93.3%	93.4%
5	86.4%	86.8%	87.4%	93.1%	93.2%	93.3%
6	86.1%	86.7%	86.7%	92.9%	93.1%	93.2%
Average attendance rate Prep – Yr. 6	86.1%	86.6%	86.8%	93%	93.2%	93.3%

Table 22 Student attendance rates in state secondary schools by Indigenous status

Year	All QLD secondary state schools Indigenous attendance rates			All QLD secondary state schools non-indigenous attendance rates		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
7	85.3%	84.9%	84.8%	92.4%	92.4%	92.6%
8	83.8%	82.9%	81.7%	91.7%	91.7%	90.6%
9	80.1%	80.6%	79.1%	89.4%	89.8%	89.7%
10	76.4%	78.4%	79.1%	88.1%	88.7%	89.1%
11	80.1%	80.9%	81.1%	89.0%	89.5%	89.9%
12	83.8%	83.8%	85.3%	89.7%	90.1%	90.5%
Average attendance rate Yr. 7 – Yr. 12	81.6%	81.9%	81.9%	90.1%	90.4%	90.4%

Table 20 shows no case study school has equal attendance rates between its Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, however, some rates for Indigenous students are close to that of their non-Indigenous peers. They have, in the main, *less than* a 10% difference in rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, except School C, which had a 10% difference in

attendance rates in 2015 and School B, which had a 12% difference in 2016. Overall, the case study school rates are comparable if not better to those of the whole state, as seen in Tables 21 and 22 where the gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students are larger. The two secondary case study schools enjoyed 5% better attendance rates for their Indigenous students than those of the state.

The two secondary case study schools also enjoyed some higher percentages of Year 12 student academic achievement. Two academic performance measures in the School Annual Report explicitly report on Indigenous achievement. Table 23 shows Year 12 student results over the case study research period for the two secondary schools.

Table 23 Academic achievement of Indigenous students in the case study secondary schools

Performance measure	SCHOOL	2014		2015		2016	
			QLD*		QLD*		QLD*
Percentage of Indigenous students awarded a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) at the end of Year 12	C	100%	86.5%	93%	95%	100%	97.1%
	D	100%		100%		82%	
Percentage of Indigenous students receiving an Overall Position (OP)	C	0%	NP	33%	NP	30%	NP
	D	0%		38%		9%	

\* = Data provided by Department of Education (Queensland Government, 2018a)  
NP = Not provided

To know whether these rates are better than other schools who have/or do not have an IEW/CEC role is outside the scope of this research, as is concluding they are a direct outcome of a strong IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship. That said, interestingly Principal C was convinced improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in his school were facilitated through the full time employment of an IEW/CEC. In the final interview with School C, one of the concluding remarks made by Principal C was that, while the results in his school were not as good as he would like, he suggested there could be a correlation between other schools that had no or less employment of CECs with their student results:

We have, um, a growing element of dysfunctionality in adolescents, we have that for a fact. We've got to start increasing the levels of support in our schools. Closing the gap, classic example. Well don't look at [name of School C] and say well you know, you're gaps only this big [gesticulating a small gap between his thumb and forefinger]. It's this big because we've got someone full time, buddy and it's not good. It's still not the best, it's still not that way [gesticulating with both hands to show an up/down gap], it's still that way [gesticulating with both hands to show a horizontal gap]. It's still a gap [sighs] so that's with one person five days a week [sighs]. ...all the other schools, individually, put the number of days that they have, find what the gaps are and you'll start to see, oh my goodness..." (Principal C, Pair C, Interview 4, pp. 44-45).

### **5.3.6 Indigenous parent engagement can increase**

As stated earlier in this chapter, two of the case study schools had Indigenous parent groups that they consulted with on school matters. Out of all case study schools, two made comments at interview about how their work together affected parent engagement. The Action Plan of School B to increase parent engagement was achieved through their garden project. Principal B recounted how "community interest just sparked" (Pair B, Interview 2, p. 3) when she took the garden project to a group of parents who had gathered in their school kitchen. She saw how this authentic project had been able to involve many parents and as a result the yarning circle was built as was another mural painted on the front entrance by another group of parents. Principal B said:

It's been about ownership for EATSIPS in the school and having them focus on the front gate and have that um art work take place on the front gate, um it's been really good for both projects to have taken off (Pair B, Interview 2, p. 14).

Pair A were less optimistic about how their joint efforts had attracted more parents, "Yeah ...and that's still a struggle" (IEW/CEC A, Pair A, Interview 3, p. 13). Principal A expressed her disappointment that despite their best efforts they just weren't able to attract as many parents as they would like to come into the school, "They've not, they've not come. So whether it's they don't feel comfortable?" (Pair A, Interview 3, p. 16). IEW/CEC A responded, "I don't know" (Pair A, Interview 3, p. 16) and conjectured it was that parents were satisfied with "what you're doing with our kids" (Pair A, Interview 2, p. 16) and so did not see the need to have to always be involved in the school.

### 5.3.7 For staff: cultural competence and responsibility increases

Mentioned in earlier chapters, by 2014 all schools in The Region had undertaken EATSIPS training. It has also already been noted above that two of the four case schools had conducted further professional development known as ‘Crossing Cultures’ with their staff over the period of this study and the other two schools had either undertaken this prior to or were revisiting it after the study period. Additionally mentioned was that the Crossing Cultures professional development usually required the school’s IEW/CEC to assist in its design and delivery. Available data showed a positive increase in staff confidence use this information in their work (see Table 24). It comes from the case study schools’ School Annual Reports published on their websites and shows the percentage of staff responses to a statement about Indigenous education in their annual School Opinion Survey. Also of note, this is the only one out of 44 opinion statements that relates to what staff think about Indigenous education. The statement is, “I feel confident embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across the learning areas”. In viewing these results, useful is a consideration of each school’s annual staff turnover rate. While staff retention percentages were not available for every year in the three-year period for each school, the staff turnover for 2016 was found to be: School A = 93%; School B = 90%; School C = 93%; and, School D = 89%. These results show the likely positive impact of staff receiving EATSIPS and Crossing Cultures training.

Table 24 Percentage rates of case study schools' staff to an annual School Opinion Survey statement

<b>Percentage of school staff who agree* that they feel confident embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across the learning areas</b>			
<b>School</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
A	93%	95%	94%
B	93%	56%	79%
C	78%	66%	85%
D	87%	84%	93%

\* ‘Agree’ represents the percentage of respondents who Somewhat Agree, Agree or Strongly Agree with the statement.

The majority of staff in all case study schools had agreement that they had confidence to undertake EATSIPS. School C and School D showed the greatest growth of staff confidence over the period of the study.

The increase of staff confidence in School D is a very positive outcome given what had been noted earlier as a significant finding in Chapter 4, where Principal D1 had realised that they needed to expand the work of school improvement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Education beyond themselves. For instance, “Everybody hasn’t taken on the business, you know ...so it’s not just you and I. ...but other people, who are you know, like you said more of the leadership team, take on more responsibility” (Principal D1, Pair D1, Interview 1, pp. 48-49). In 2015, interestingly Principal D2 had also arrived at the same realisation in School D to extend the work she was doing with her two key Indigenous workers to other staff, “It’s just not us three here you know, like yeah, we’re good and we have a lot of banter and stuff, but you know its serious stuff. It’s high stakes and, yeah, it’s getting more staff on board” (Principal D2, Pair D2, Interview 2, p. 12). By 2016, all staff in School D had undergone further training, led by IEW/CEC D1 with The Region’s senior Indigenous officer.

Not only did school staff confidence increase, all case study pairs reported that they had experienced success in being able to extend the responsibility of work in Indigenous education. They had got more staff ‘on board’ and moved their work beyond just that of the pair. In the final stages of the research, all pairs made comments that other staff in their school were showing a genuine interest and willingness to work with them in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Principal A acknowledged that they had a small but committed group of staff who were now supporting their work,

you know, we are getting there, now [first name of another teacher]’s come on board and she wants to do some NAIDOC stuff... got a new staff member... so she’s got an Indigenous background and organised stuff in her school, so I thought now we’ve got a little team, rather than just you and I sort of doing the talking” (Pair A, Interview 3, p. 1).

It wasn’t always like this and IEW/CEC A made mention that the first teacher who had just ‘come on board’ had been at the school for some time but had not known about the work IEW/CEC A was doing. “See [first name of teacher] came and spoke to me but didn’t know that there was something happening in the school” (IEW/CEC A, Pair A, Interview 3, p. 24). It was not until after the teacher had attended a professional development day offered at a nearby school about leadership in Indigenous Education that she wanted to know more about what was happening in her own school. IEW/CEC A recounted this new awareness and that the teacher now wanted to participate in the school’s Culture Club, “And when she came back, she goes “Oh, I didn’t know this” ...So she’s come up and she wants to come along every time that she

can come when she's available like, you know, if we've got a guest" (IEW/CEC A, Pair A, Interview 3, p. 25). Principal A later commented that she saw higher support of teachers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in the school:

It's about the teachers who, you know, get involved, are interested and even though we mightn't have big committees, you know, or committees as such ...we still operate as if someone does something, then everyone supports it...so you know I think you need that sort of support (Pair A, Interview 3, p. 29).

Principal B reported a growing number of staff were showing wiliness to participate in the EATSIPS work she and IEW/CEC B had been doing. IEW/CEC B also recognised the importance of always including these staff in their plans:

Principal B: ...but we do have probably three teachers that have expressed an interest to be part of that process which I am really happy with um so far for me, that'd be probably one of the main things that we have to sort of tidy up and look up and because

IEW/CEC B: And be consistent with that, eh?

Principal B: Yeah

IEW/CEC B: If we are going to be like, they've expressed an interest, so we have to keep gettin' 'em involved with it too and goin' along with it (Pair B, Interview 2, pp. 18-19).

In their final interview, IEW/CEC C noticed that at another school their IEW/CEC was not included in curriculum design like she was. At her school this was different and there was an increase of teachers wanting to ensure they were incorporating EATSIPS into their lesson. IEW/CEC C said:

She [the other school's IEW/CEC] wasn't sadly, I know a lot more, that she's not valued as having any part of curriculum based with students. And I sort of looked at my position here where the teachers are knocking at my door just about every day, "[first name of IEW/CEC C] how can we make this more authentic, this unit?" They bring the unit to me and we go through it and it's like OK how can I can find a person here? Find a person there? And that's how we ended up, you know, with our bush unit, that's how we ended up, you know, our English unit, this, is you know coz in English the Year 7 curriculum unit it was myths and legends (Pair C, Interview 4, pp. 34-35).

Principal D2 and IEW/CEC D1 also stated there were more staff wanting to get involved into the work of supporting their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. They

spoke about how one of their teachers had self-initiated an art program where she arranged for local community Indigenous artists to come into the school to work with interested Indigenous students. IEW/CEC D1 commented that this action took the pressure from her to always have to lead activities for Indigenous students:

Principal D2: ...for our Indigenous students as well. That's specifically for them and she, she invites, um, Indigenous artists in to work with them, so that's been good with community in there

IEW/CEC D1: It's been good to see that the teachers are taking an initiative themselves

Principal D2: She did it herself

IEW/CEC D1: Set up a program, program and [first name of teacher] did that herself

Principal D2: She brought it to us

IEW/CEC D2: I didn't have to do anything for that...you know, she did it, herself, I am so grateful for that ...because it's taken a lot pressure off, off (Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 7).

Later in the same interview, IEW/CEC D1 further commented on the work of this teacher with the school's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. She acknowledged the teacher had sought an activity that really engaged the students and appreciated the teacher's initiative:

Coz she's engaging students into something that they really like and that's hard. You know and for her to even, you know, have that conversation with the art, the artist that's coming in I think that's really, really good....So you know, I respect her as a teacher for that (Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 29).

As the interview progressed, Principal D2, IEW/CEC D1 and D2 reflected over their work in the past two years. Principal D2 suddenly realised she had not before noticed just how important it was that this teacher had picked up on the work of the IEW/CEC and principal, "We didn't even try, we didn't know we were actually doing that, yeah, there you go!" (Principal D2, Pair D2, Interview 3, p. 50). IEW/CEC D2 then added a comment about her insight as to why the teacher may have set up the art class, "Yeah, well she listened to what, looked at the kids' needs, OK that's what they're good at that's, and that's beautiful" (Pair D2, Interview 3, pp. 50-51).

This expansion of responsibility within all case study schools is a very positive outcome from the work of the IEW/CEC and principal. What they did together appears to have influenced other staff to take on the responsibility for the support and education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The argument that a strong relationship for the IEW/CEC and principal can be expressed by the term, ‘power of two’ can now be reconsidered. Their strong relationship is influential, their work has extended beyond what they do together and can involve other staff. I suggest it may instead be thought of as, ‘*more* than the power of two’.

### **5.3.8 Section summary**

In the case study schools it was found there were multiple outcomes resulting from a strong professional relationship between the IEW/CEC and principal. For the case study IEWs/CECs they appeared to develop greater self-confidence and increase their capacity to do their job and this led to more opportunities to grow their educational leadership potential. All IEWs/CECs in the case study schools understood their role in assisting Indigenous students to improve their attendance, literacy and numeracy skills and emotional and social well-being. In the secondary case study schools IEWs/CECs additionally facilitated students’ vocational and tertiary education aspirations. This clarity of role, recognition and support from the principal, enabled IEWs/CECs to confidently advise teachers and be a member of or consulted by student support teams, leadership teams and the principal. The case study principals all saw the centrality of the IEW/CEC to help them forge stronger links between the school and the community and to develop their own understandings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing and being. In working together, the pairs were better equipped to confront racism and take action to make their schools a welcoming and positive place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families. In some instances, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parent engagement increased especially when parents were consulted and then had to opportunity to play an active part in an activity that they could see directly benefited their students in the school. Importantly, the case study pairs also realised that their work together should and could extend out beyond them. Over time, as they undertook their work together, more staff were beginning to want to become involved in the work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in their schools. This was significant and expanded the IEW/CEC and principal relationship to something as *more* than the power of the two. Figure 5.5 below captures the summary of findings of outcomes of a strengthened IEW/CEC and principal relationship observed in the case study schools.

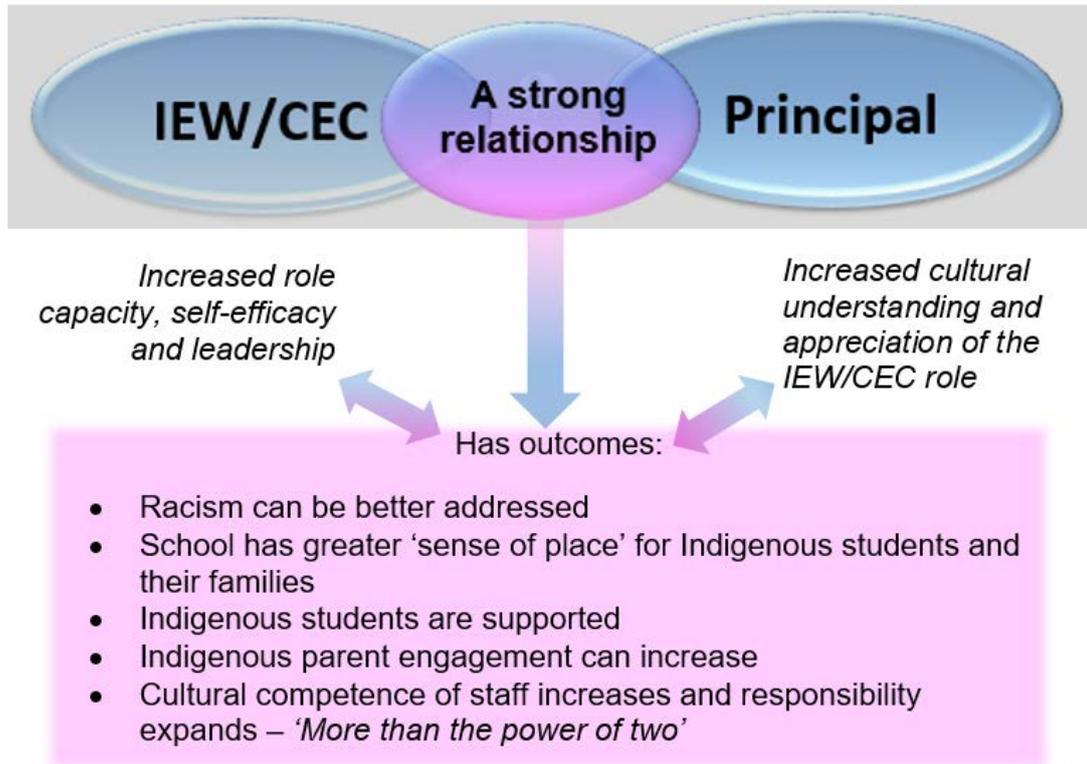


Figure 5.5 Outcomes of a strong professional relationship between case study IEWs/CECs and principals

#### 5.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the second set of findings from the case study of four schools in a large educational region that contributed answers towards the two core research questions: *How can this relationship be strengthened and what are the contextual features that influence this? What are the outcomes of this strengthened relationship?* Presented first were findings pertaining to the first part of the second core question. They showed the significance of the existing professional working relationship of IEWs/CECs and principals in these schools. This represented a shift in the investigative process, from *why* rather than *how* the relationship was already strong for the case study pairs. Findings showed their relationship was congruent because each IEW/CEC and principal had predispositions that enabled them to be willing to enact strong working ties no matter the length of time they worked together. Their working relationships did broaden and deepen over time. At this point in the chapter, the level of collaboration between these key roles in a school was coined as, the ‘power of two’.

Presented next were findings relating to the last part of the second core research question. Contextual features influencing this strong relationship, those as beneficial and then as

detrimental were offered. The positive influencing contextual features of the strong relationship between the IEW/CEC and principal countered some of the detrimental influencing contextual features around their work together and as individuals and gave them store to improve their schools.

Finally, findings for the third the core research question were shown. When IEWs/CECs and principals enjoyed a strong professional relationship and worked alongside each other, a number of outcomes resulted. There were positive outcomes for the IEW/CEC and principal, for the operations of the school and for better relations with Indigenous students and their families. Significantly, the outcomes of increased cultural competence and responsibility of staff were clearly the result of what began with the IEW/CEC and principal pair. This major finding transformed the original phrase describing the strong IEW/CEC and principal relationship from the 'power of two' to 'more than the power of two'.

The expanded view of the conceptual framework of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship, presented at the end of Chapter 4, is now fully extended to capture a summary of all case study findings (see Figure 5.6). These are interpreted, summarised and synthesised with understandings from the literature and underpinning theory in the following discussion chapter, Chapter 6. Additionally their generalisations will contribute to answering, in the final chapter, Chapter 7, the final core research question: *What are the implications for practice and policy in schools?*

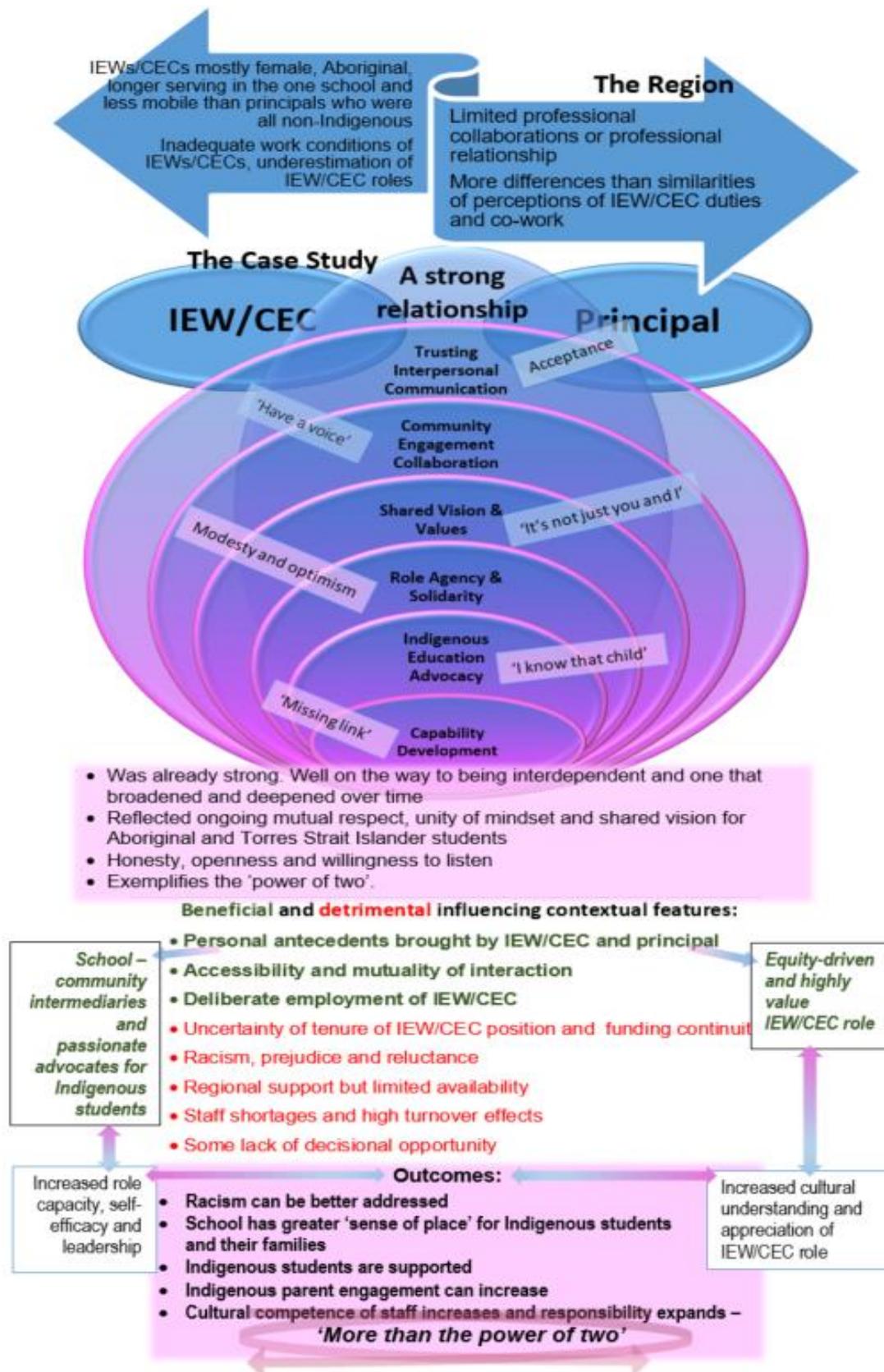


Figure 5.6 Summary of all case study findings responding to the first three core research questions

## 6 Discussion

### 6.0 Introduction

The previous two chapters presented two sets of findings, firstly from schools across a large educational region in the state of Queensland and then a case study of a smaller group of schools in more urbanised contexts within the same region. These findings contributed to answering the first three core research questions:

1. What is the current IEW/CEC and principal relationship? (Chapter 4);
2. How can this relationship be strengthened and what are the contextual features that influence this? (Chapter 5); and,
3. What are the outcomes of this strengthened relationship? (Chapter 5).

In pursuing this study's purposes, Chapter 6 interprets and synthesises the findings in light of the study's theoretical foundations and literature review using this study's conceptual framework. The final chapter of this thesis, Chapter 7 will re-examine the key findings to address core research question four: *What are the implications for practice and policy in schools?* Throughout both chapters, the lenses of criticality, relationality and an interpretation of Indigenous perspectives combine with considerations of socio-political, educational contexts and other relevant research literature to offer deeper explanations and understandings about the IEW/CEC and principal relationship.

Using the first three core research questions as the basis for the structure of this chapter, Section 6.1 provides a consideration of the holistic picture - the 'space between' (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000), namely, the current professional relationship across schools from The Region and within those of the case study. Next, Section 6.2, discusses the main beneficial contextual features that were found to create the already strong relationship of the case study pairs. Section 6.3 explains the outcomes of a strong professional relationship that exist as mitigations and ameliorations. These are explained through the outcomes framework of Reconciliation Australia (Reconciliation Australia, 2018) to highlight transformations found possible in schools where strong IEW/CEC and principal relationships do exist. Featured is a final particular key finding about an important outcome of this strong relationship that represents a shift in understanding of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship. This is represented diagrammatically at the end of the section. Section 6.4 concludes the chapter with an overarching summary. Figure 6.1 provides a revised diagrammatical representation of the

conceptual model of the thesis set against the responses to the first three core research questions that structure this chapter.

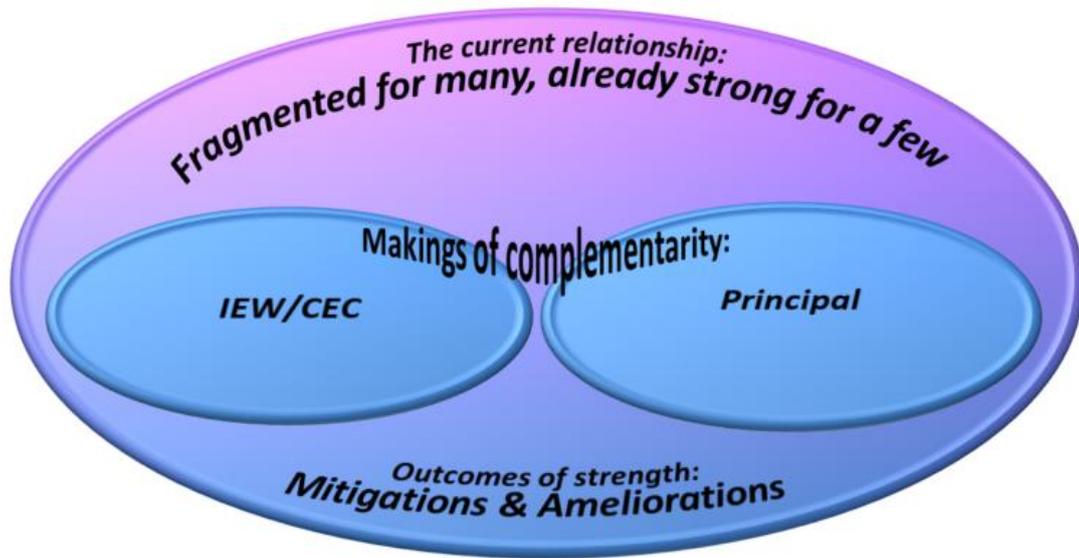


Figure 6.1 Structure of Chapter 6

### 6.1 The current relationship: Fragmented for many and already strong for a few

The discussion in this section focuses on answering the first core research question: *What is the current IEW/CEC relationship?* to understand the nature of the current professional relationship between IEWs/CECs and principals and the joint leadership work that occurs between them. Viewed first are current relationships of IEWs/CECs and principals in The Region followed by those of the case study pairs within the same region.

Established early in the research was that professional relationships between The Region's non-Indigenous principals and their school's IEWs/CECs did not appear well developed. What was experienced across the Region between IEWs/CECs and principals, has parallels to those found by Ma Rhea in her study of the relationship of education service providers and local communities in remote and very remote communities that is, IEWs/CECs and principals in schools across The Region most likely had 'predominantly transactive' exchanges (2012, p. 58). They undoubtedly had limited professional collaborations. Their co-work seemed mainly associated with reactionary operational activities (i.e. following up attendance, student discipline, etc.). Further, if there was proactive co-work, it seemed limited to annual school events or the delivery of some professional development for a short-lived policy implementation at the time of the study known as Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools (EATSIPS). Overall, there were more mismatches than

similarities in perceptions about the reach and influence of the role of IEWs/CECs by both IEWs/CECs and principals. Such a situation aligns to that of the few early and recent Australian studies within different states and jurisdictions that specifically focus on Indigenous Education Workers in schools. For instance, in the only known national study of Indigenous education workers, Pat Buckskin et al. (1994) noted a similar mismatch of perspectives in their discussion about the “unclear lines of accountability” (p. 76) for Aboriginal and Islander Education Workers (AIEWs) across Australia. They suggested, “The demands of the principal and teachers can also be a source of frustration. There is enormous variation in the relationship of AIEWs and these colleagues and in the expectations each holds of the others” (p.76). Lack of understanding was also evident in a statewide review into the effectiveness of the Indigenous worker program in Western Australia (known there as AIEOs) (Gower et al., 2011). Differences in perception are demonstrated in their findings. Such as:

AIEOs report good relationships with school staff and community members, but are concerned that many teachers are unaware of their skills and do not make effective use of them. Induction processes for teachers (either pre-service or early in their careers) to assist them to understand the roles of AIEOs are identified as a need (Gower et al., 2011, p. iii).

Yet other findings from Gower et al.’s review showed teachers and principals thought issues laid elsewhere: principals reported “more effective processes for the recruitment and retention of AIEOs” (2011, p. ii); teachers claimed “time constraints” (2011, p. ii); and, “cultural issues, a lack of skills and formal education among AIEOs and some AIEOs’ poor attendance records, unreliability and low confidence levels are seen as hindering the development of effective working relationships” (2011, p. ii).

Within my study, a likely cause for the underestimation of the IEW/CEC role was linked in the first instance to professional mobility of teachers and principals, newness to the principal role and supervisory variations. Few principals in The Region supervised IEWs/CECs, many delegated it to other staff in their schools possibly reflecting a low priority to have them in the first place. Interestingly, Gower et al. did find that “that a successful [AIEO] program required principals to interact well with AIEOs” (2011, p. 173). Additionally, it was found some IEWs/CECs from The Region, including some of the case study IEW/CECs under recognised their own work. Further interrogation of this was not possible in the wider study of The Region, however, insights from the case study principals and IEWs/CECs suggest likely attributions to the humility of IEWs/CECs. With their attention squarely on advocating for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, IEWs/CECs may not have appreciated just how much they themselves brought the “invisible culture of the community” (Cazden and Leggett cited in Khalifa et al., 2016, p. 1277) into the school. Their actions to help their principal and

staff understand “the entirety of the children they serve” (Khalifa et al., 2016, pp. 1277-1278) may have been more than IEWs/CECs themselves realised. A further consideration of this particular finding is noted later in this section within the discussion that views the role of the IEW/CEC from another perspective, that of Indigenous standpoint theory at the Cultural Interface (Nakata, 2007c).

Misunderstandings and gaps in professional relationships between IEWs/CECs and non-Indigenous staff also run parallel to the research of MacGill (2003, 2009, 2013, 2017) who has long been investigating the Indigenous worker role (referred to as Aboriginal Community Education Officers – ACEOs), especially those in South Australian schools. When arguing for agency and equality for ACEOs in schools, MacGill recently suggested marginalisation is an effect of limited understandings on the role of the ACEO, “The status of ACEOs continues to be marginalised in the workplace as a result of misconceptions and a general lack of awareness regarding the complexity of their role by their colleagues in schools” (2017, p. 64). A similar situation holds true with findings from IEWs/CECs across The Region in my study. While most IEWs/CECs indicated they were satisfied with the nature of their work for Indigenous students in schools, several did not feel valued and expressed a sense of isolation, disempowerment and inability to contribute to school decisions.

Findings of relationship gaps are again reflected in a large study about the Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW) role by Pearce (2011), across eleven Catholic dioceses in the state of New South Wales. While not solely focused on staff relationships, it was noted by those outside the AEW and principal role that “the principal should make it a priority to develop a working relationship with AEWs” (2011, p. 178). Similarly, in a study of twenty government schools in New South Wales participating in professional learning through The Quality Teaching Indigenous Project (QTIP) (Burridge, Whalan, & Valadian, 2012), it was only after the schools had participated in action learning projects that involved all staff working together, that they found improved understandings between non-Indigenous and Indigenous staff:

A number of teachers said they had developed a newfound respect for the Aboriginal staff (including support staff and teachers) at their school. In some cases this involved teachers realising for the first time the positive contributions these staff members could make to learning at the school, especially through the cultural knowledge that they could bring to teachers’ relationships with students, parents and carers, and the ability of Aboriginal staff to engage with their local Aboriginal community (Burridge & Chodkiewicz, 2012, pp. 147-148).

Fragmented relationships are also reflected in a smaller study, about Indigenous Education Workers (IEWs) in three different schools in South East Queensland by Funnell

(2012) who found that IEWs experienced “various types of concern and frustration about not being able to share their knowledge about Indigenous children with the teachers” (2012, p. 58). Funnel suggested “a better conception of the roles of IEWs can be broadened through increased dialogue and understanding of their views about good practice”(2012, p. 58). Interestingly within the same geographic location, one of the findings of a larger scale project undertaken on behalf of the Queensland Indigenous Consultative Committee (QIECC) on Indigenous education by White and Robb (2014) was that the role of IEW/CEC was under recognised or misunderstood by non-Indigenous staff. Consulting with a wide range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school staff and community members across different sectors and jurisdictions in South East Queensland, they found that participants believed Indigenous staff were not supported as well as they could be. For instance one participant said, “It depends on the principal, some schools give good support, others do not” (White & Robb, 2014, p. 54). Within the report’s focus area of *Leadership and Quality Teaching* and the consultation theme of *Barriers created by employment conditions*, White and Robb noted, “It was generally agreed that Indigenous workers need to be supported to take on leadership roles through: stability of employment, in-house support, induction and training, cultural awareness training for co-workers, and, Indigenous workers must be valued” (2014, p. 52).

It would seem therefore, what was found about the IEW/CEC professional relationship in The Region in my study mirrors those in other empirical studies in numerous schools across Australia from decades past to recent times. This also affirms my anecdotal knowledge formed by professional field experience and the consequent original motivation for my study to assist IEWs/CECs and principals strengthen their professional interrelationship to aid their work for Indigenous student success in their schools. Mentioned earlier in this thesis, I had in 2009, participated in the Building Leaders Building Communities Project (Dare to Lead and the Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 2007b), and this contributed to inspiring me to coin an oft used expression to describe ideal collaborations and powerful combinations as *the power of two*, emphasising what could be possible for the IEW/CEC and principal relationship. The idea conveyed was accordingly reflected initial propositions at my confirmation seminar, first phase of research and early conference presentations.

Shown in Chapter 5, (see section 5.2.1) it was during the second phase of data gathering, that unanticipated findings about the current IEW/CEC and principal relationship provided another view. Unexpected was that the case study pairs in my study had an already established, flourishing and productive interpersonal connection, one that was “built on trust and respect, and ...free of racism” (Reconciliation Australia, 2018, p. 5). Theirs was a very different relationship compared to those in the larger study. Even though the particular case

study IEW/CEC and principal pairs were recruited because they were known to have an already efficacious relationship, they had a much stronger than expected, more rapidly developed professional interconnection, regardless the length of time worked together. The pairs shared very similar demographics to their counter parts in the Region and the case study IEWs/CECs experienced the same lack of tenure in work conditions, yet they were still able to establish strong professional relationships—these relationships started quickly, continued and grew broader and deeper over time. In fact, they were *already* enacting the ‘power of two’.

Each pair, whether formed recently or for longer, were found to have high levels of agreement about demonstrations of shared knowledge and practices considered important to leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in schools (Dare to Lead and the Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 2007c). Referred to as ‘relational dynamics’ (Uhl-Bien, 2006) – these were the leadership knowledge and practices found to be demonstrated when IEWs/CECs and principals worked together. Enacted from the most (97.8%) to the least (75%), these were: Trusting Interpersonal Communication; Community Engagement Collaboration; Shared Vision and Values; Role Agency and Solidarity; Indigenous Education Advocacy and Knowledge Sharing; and, Capability Development. Significantly, Trusting Interpersonal Communication and Role Agency and Solidarity, received the identical highest level of agreement for two statements of enacted relational dynamics between all case study pairs. These were, for Trusting Interpersonal Communication - an acceptance of each other’s limitations; and, for Role Agency and Solidarity – a strong recognition by the principal of the lived experience skills and knowledge brought by the IEW/CEC role.

Such findings can be linked to findings from the broader range of studies about effective school leadership (see Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Coleman, 2011; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2013; Seashore-Louis, 2007). These studies all highlight the need for collaboration and the importance of nurturing trusting interrelationships with key members of school communities. Further, the case study findings are substantiated by contemporary research about the more specific context of improving schools for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to flourish (e.g. J. Davis, 2018; Kearney et al., 2014; Munns, O'Rourke, & Bodkin-Andrews, 2013; Sarra, 2005; Sarra et al., 2018). These Australian studies acknowledge relationships built on acceptance and trust are shown to be core to enabling school communities to work more effectively together for the purposes of improving Indigenous student learning and wellbeing outcomes.

Additionally, possible explanations to better understand the shared and strong professional inter-relations existing between the case study IEWs/CECs and principals are made

clearer when applying the specific lens of relational leadership theory (Uhl-Bien, 2006). That the case study pairs maintained their dyadic ties in collective action (Ospina & Foldy, 2012), is likely attributed to the value they each placed on their relationship. Notably, throughout the course of the case study, IEW/CEC and principal leadership collaborations were shown to be two-directional, not top-down, mostly egalitarian and collaborative (Fletcher, 2012). Case study pairs acted as participants together, as human beings standing in mutuality alongside each other and not necessarily as manager – subordinate, are similar to those leadership practices suggested by international scholars in relational leadership theory (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011; Fletcher, 2012; Offerman, 2012; Uhl-Bien, 2006). Specifically, parallels can also be drawn between the case study findings and those from a much larger seven year study that looked at social change organisations within the United States (Ospina et al., 2012). While schools per se did not feature within the types of social change organisations studied, what these organisations set out to achieve resonate closely to the contexts of the case study schools within my study. That is, Ospina et al. (2012) consider social change organisations as those that “go beyond simply serving the disadvantaged to the harnessing of their power so they can participate in actions that alter their constituent’s material circumstances” (p. 6023). They suggest social change organisations are “exemplars of how to strive for ambitious goals within turbulent environments with few material resources” (p. 6049). The particular organisations they studied had multi-cultural employees working successfully together, engaged in leadership processes and Ospina et al. (2012) found there were “three bundles of relational practices that represent leadership work constructed collectively”(p. 6503). These were: Reframing Discourse; Bridging Difference; and, Unleashing Human Energies (Ospina et al., 2012).

In my study, as the case study IEW/CEC and principal worked together to redress the situation faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in education, it is suggested their ‘relational dynamics’ could reasonably correlate to the social change leadership practices established by Ospina et al. (2012). The shared vision and values espoused by the case study pairs and their trusting interpersonal communications can align with the practices of collaborators who reframed their way of working by, “enacting the egalitarian frame they wish to invoke” (Ospina et al., 2012, p. 6373). The role agency, solidarity and Indigenous education advocacy and knowledge sharing of case study pairs may well be analogous to the bridging difference leadership work of those studied by Ospina et al. (2012). The collaboration for community engagement and capability building that happened between the case study pairs, likely links to the unleashing human energies practices of the many social change organisations suggested by Ospina et al.’s research. By way of further explanation, Table 25 features these

sets of relational dynamics and leadership practices summarised alongside each other to show alignment and compatibility.

An equally important theoretical consideration that offers explanation of the current IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship is through viewing each case study pair's interactions as examples of navigations of the complexities of the Cultural Interface and Indigenous standpoint theory (Nakata, 2007d). Nakata's advocates that "Indigenous people are entangled in a very contested knowledge space at the Cultural Interface" (2007d, p. 215) and describes this as, "the familiar confusion with constantly being asked at any one moment to both agree and disagree with any proposition on the basis of a constrained choice between a whitefella or blackfella perspective" (Nakata, 2007d, p. 216). Found was that case study IEWs/CECs expressed to their principal, the tensions they felt as an Indigenous person working in a predominantly non-Indigenous organisation. This links to a finding mentioned earlier, where some IEWs/CECs in my study also underestimated their own reach and influence in the school with this being attributed to their humility. When considered in the light of the Cultural Interface, another explanation may be that the 'push-pull' situation (Nakata, 2007a), IEWs/CECs constantly found themselves in when working in schools could have prevented them from positively considering their school role effectiveness. Both explanations shed light into the complexities of the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship in schools.

Table 25 Alignment of findings between my case study and Ospina et al.'s major study

<b>Relational Dynamics in strong IEW/CEC and principal relationships (Chapter 4, Section 4.3.4).</b>	<b>Leadership practices in effective social change organisations (Ospina et al., 2012).</b>
<p><i>Shared Vision and Values:</i> pairs sought to increase responsibility for a whole school approach to Indigenous education.</p>	<p><i>Reframing Discourse</i> “Work to disrupt established frames, while forming new ones congruent with their vision for the future” (Ospina et al., 2012, p. 6356).</p>
<p><i>Trusting Interpersonal Communication:</i> there was a universal high acceptance of each other and regular interactions.</p>	<p>“Many have explicit procedures for meetings and decision making to ensure equitable relations and voice” (Ospina et al., 2012, p. 6366) and “others imbue their work with cultural or identity-based rituals that assert their ways of being” (Ospina et al., 2012, pp. 6376-6377).</p>
<p><i>Role Agency &amp; Solidarity:</i> there was optimism to do the work, deep appreciation and support for the IEW/CEC role. Both acted as champions for Indigenous education.</p>	<p><i>Bridging Difference</i> “Practices that create the conditions to bring diverse actors together and facilitate their joint work while maintaining and appreciating their differences ...weaving relationships among different people from different worldviews builds community” (Ospina et al., 2012, pp. 6377-6378).</p>
<p><i>Indigenous Education Advocacy and Knowledge Sharing:</i> both strongly promoted Indigenous perspectives and better knowing of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student</p>	<p>“Bridging work entails building connections without suppressing differences or ignoring its value, as well as cultivating difference that does not turn into disunity” (Ospina et al., 2012, p. 6388).</p>
<p><i>Community Engagement Collaboration:</i> listening together for community views. <i>Capability Development:</i> developing performance considered important.</p>	<p><i>Unleashing Human Energies</i> People come with a certain mastery over the problem, which is derived from their own lives. Lived experience is considered a legitimate source of expertise ...Unleashing human energies can be facilitated through formal educational mechanisms... trainings and leadership development. (Ospina et al., 2012, p. 6409) “it also happens through dialogic interaction” (Ospina et al., 2012, p. 6419).</p>

Case study findings also showed interactions with the IEW/CEC clearly assisted the principals' increased understandings of Indigenous perspectives. Case study IEWs/CECs could likewise confidently and safely express any school matter with their principals, whether it be their own concerns and expectations or those from the community. In most scenarios evolving during the course of the case study, IEWs/CECs and principals showed they were able to work together to negotiate the best way forward to address problems and matters that arose within the school.

Such negotiations were through explicit conversations between the IEW/CEC and principal, sometimes quite robust ones, where each other's worldviews and perspectives were recognised, differences acknowledged and some common ground sought. Each case study IEW/CEC and principal seemed to have the predispositional and relational maturity "to work two knowledge systems together in the interest of better practice" (Nakata, 2007a, p. 11).

Likewise, Lowe's (2017) study into the nature and dynamics of school and Aboriginal community engagement and its impacts on teacher professional knowledge draws specific attention to a 'standpoint position'. He suggests "when authentic engagement between Aboriginal people and schools occurred, it appeared to positively impact the teachers' professional knowledge and created a consequent interest within these communities to engage with their schools" (Lowe, 2017, p. 36) and observed in each of the research sites the achievement of "educative and relational potential" (p. 49), happened because of authentic engagement. Lowe concluded, "authentic engagement is built on appreciating the standpoint positions of Aboriginal communities, and in understanding that these positions are uniquely developed out of their experiences and their acts of agency and resistance to their oppression" (2017, p. 50). Parallel findings occurred in my study. There was 'authentic engagement' with each case study pair as they gained a deeper understanding of each other's beliefs, self-agency and differing perspectives. Notably, the case study principals recognised the positionality of IEWs/CECs between their community and the school. One case study principal was particularly mindful that school decisions might put the IEW/CEC in a compromising position with their own community or negatively affect community engagement or do both. IEWs/CECs had to walk a fine line. This was similarly noted in the research of Pearce (2011) that asked what role do AEWs play in assisting Aboriginal students in their learning. One principal's response was, "They must also be prepared to wear two hats and juggle the responsibility of being a school employee and a community member and that is not always easy" (p. 170). It seemed in the case study instead of the Indigenous worker ultimately always bending to the demands of their (non-Indigenous) employer the pairs actively sought ways to bend the school to the demands of Indigenous perspectives. Through trial and error, the pairs found ways of preserving the

IEW's/CEC's ongoing connection to the community, maintaining their shared professional relationship and at the same time, following school policy.

A similar situation is found in an action research English literacy project in Western Australia (Cahill & Collard, 2003), where the non-Indigenous teacher and Indigenous Education Officer reflected on their working together. Cahill and Collard made the point this was always not easy. They attributed their capacity to work through difficulties together was “because we really respect each other and the expertise and the perspectives that each brings” (2003, p. 218) and called what they did as “meeting in the middle” (2003, p. 219).

## **6.2 Contextual features: Makings of complementarity**

The above discussion responded to the first research question about the nature of the current IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship. It explained that, unlike their peers in the greater study of The Region, the case study pairs could already effectively work with an interrelational reciprocity that allowed them to accept and utilise their differences in authentic ways. The situation that their relationship was already strong was unexpected.

Discussed in this section is an analysis of the next findings resulting after the intended participatory action research strategy to strengthen their relationship consequently took another turn. Instead, of responding to the first part of the second research question: *How can the relationship be strengthened and what are the contextual features that influence this?* Knowing *why* a strong relationship was possible between an IEW/CEC and principal became the focus to understand how strengthening happened. Lowe's research findings on school and Aboriginal community engagement suggests, “the greater the propensity for engagement, the greater the opportunity for individuals and groups to interact, and the deeper the level of engagement that took place between them” (2017, p. 49), but needing explanation is *why* was there greater propensity for engagement? *Why* did the IEW/CEC pairs want to work together in the first place? Importantly *why* was this relationship already strong for the case study pairs? This section presents that there were a particular set of personal predispositions and deliberate actions by individuals that are beneficial contextual features influencing a strong relationship. They were found as the makings of complementarity between the case study pairs. The following sub-section begins with a focus on the unique personal characteristics of IEWs/CECs.

### **6.2.1 Reticulists by necessity who ‘do it for the children’**

My study found that many IEWs/CECs in The Region displayed positive common predispositions that made their role pivotal in schools and in the situation of all of the case

IEWs/CECs, most certainly very compatible with their particular principals. They showed they could bring together their lived experience of the Indigenous worldview with an understanding of the school system and combine these with their belief in the benefits of a good education. The case study IEWs/CECs were consequently inclined to be natural intermediaries and passionate advocates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island student success at school. Similar predispositions from this research remarkably echo in the words of Indigenous practitioners from forty years ago who they were being employed in greater numbers as support staff in school jurisdictions across Australia. For instance, in an article published in *The Aboriginal Child at School* in 1978, Yvonne Bolton, a trailblazing teacher appointed as Aboriginal liaison teacher to the State Department of Education, New South Wales, emphasised the linking capacity of Aboriginal teacher aides in schools in her speech to graduates of a unique teacher aide course. Bolton wrote the following in her article:

I see all Aboriginal teacher aides, as solid [original emphasis] and I stress the word solid, (I quote again) ‘solid links in the chain of our people getting to know your people’ . . . The Aboriginal teacher aides are very special persons, for they have learned to cope with life in both the Aboriginal world and the European world. (pp. 3-4)

Similarly, a few years later also published in *The Aboriginal Child at School*, is an article by two Aboriginal teacher aides, who saw themselves as links and advocates for Aboriginal students,

We act as a link between parents and teachers, hoping to establish an understanding on both sides. . . We feel very strongly that it is important that there should be Aboriginal aides in all the primary schools in Mt Isa, so that when children transfer from our school to another in Mt Isa, support is continuing. (Turner & Munns, 1981, pp. 25-27)

The limited empirical research discussed in the literature review that specifically centres on IEWs/CECs similarly confirms existence of the suggested predispositions of IEWs/CECs found in my study. For instance, Pearce’s thesis includes the importance of the linking work of IEWs/CECs in their “communication and advocacy between school and home” (2011, p. 175). Likewise, MacGill called it a ‘border crossing’ skill of Aboriginal workers when they assist remote Aboriginal students transition into new schools utilising “Indigenous ethics of care practices” (2013, p. 182). She acknowledged these workers “are the conduit for students and family engagement and provide the site of intersection with the school . . . unquestionably a most critical role” (2017, p. 59).

Further, a recent survey of research literature and various role statements on the Indigenous worker role in schools, notes something similar about the manner in which

IEWs/CECs interacted between families and their school. Utilising Nakata's theoretical framework of Cultural Interface, A. Price et al. (2017) suggest, "One of the key roles of AEWs... has been to provide a link between the school and the community - often referred to as cultural bridges" (2017, p. 6). A. Price et al. also acknowledge "AEWs are well versed in both the community and schools' contexts to assist all parties especially teachers in building collaborative relationships with Aboriginal students, parents, families and communities" (2017, p. 9). The IEWs/CECs in my case study appeared very successful in facilitating these collaborations. A. Price et al. (2017) also emphasise the skills of IEWs/CECs being "linguistic knowledge workers" (p. 8). In one of the case study schools, this capacity served as an impetus for the principal to work through the IEW/CEC with the local Indigenous community to introduce the teaching of the local home language as a subject for students. In the other case study schools, teachers who recognised many of their students were English as a Second Language or Dialect (EAL/D) learners, sought the guidance and advice of their IEW/CECs to engage with their Indigenous students and families and bring Indigenous knowledges into their classrooms.

Research shows, however, there are also negative sides to the intermediary work of IEWs/CECs. Pearce (2011) and MacGill (2017) present adverse issues relating to the role of IEW/CEC. They both argue Indigenous workers are put in "the position where they have to please two masters, the school and the community" (Pearce, 2011, p. 118), "in two routinely conflicting sites of loyalty" (MacGill, 2017, p. 59) and this "requires disproportionate emotional labour for their job description" (MacGill, 2017, p. 60). Equally A. Price et al. (2017) suggest the notion of 'bridge' can imply a separatism that can only be crisscrossed by the IEW/CEC, allowing non-Indigenous principals and teachers to slacken off or not even take up their own responsibility to engage with community themselves. On the other hand, my study in the main differs from the former issue of duality of obligation and provides a different outcome to the latter issue of abrogation of responsibility.

Already confirmed was that case study IEWs/CECs experienced the daily tensions of a constant "push-pull between Indigenous and not Indigenous positions" (Nakata, 2008, p. 351). However, unlike a number of their colleagues in The Region, case study IEWs/CECs did not experience marginalisation because of their work (A. Price et al., 2017). Instead, case study IEWs/CECs had a different and positive positionality at their school and reported they felt supported and valued by their principal to do their job. Equally different about negative outcomes of the intermediary nature of the IEW/CEC as noted by A. Price et al. (2017), was that in the case study schools, there was an opposite effect - an increase of responsibility of the principal and a number of teachers seeking engagement with families and other members of the

community. IEWs/CECs knew who to approach in the first instance and how to make steps towards speaking with local Indigenous people (Baxter & Meyers, 2016). In the case study, IEWs/CECs changed up the way their schools could and did engage with families. As has been suggested by other research, it was found the case study IEWs/CECs could “bring an Indigenous way of being to the school environment that has a subtle yet pervasive effect on the school milieu” (Whiteford et al., 2017, p. 1496). Case study IEWs/CECs served as expert advisors in the use of culturally safe and respectful behaviours, an attribute termed as “cultural knowledge workers” (A. Price et al., 2017, p. 7). They introduced non-Indigenous school staff to key members of the community and showed them how to engage respectfully with Indigenous families. In her research, Karen Martin describes the deep respect necessary for relatedness and an observance of protocols, “as processes of ‘coming amongst’ and ‘coming alongside’” (2008, p. 9). Consequently, case study IEW’s/CEC’s boundary spanning skills were highly respected, valued and supported by their principals and many staff in their schools. That the case study IEW/CEC could see their principal valued their work and was willing to work alongside them for the benefit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is likely to have contributed to their ‘greater propensity’ to collaboratively engage with their principal in school improvement.

To emphasise these valuable predispositions, ‘reticulist’ may be a useful consideration to use when considering the significance of the IEWs/CECs role. Granted, Reticulism is a 20th century western construct that has previously sat outside research relating to Indigenous education in Australia. It is used mainly in public sector management to describe the professional facilitation skill and capacity to assume multiple viewpoints that enables (usually non-Indigenous) agents to ‘boundary-cross’ or what has been termed as ‘boundary-spanning’ (Brown, 2017; Williams, 2013). It would seem many Indigenous non-teaching staff, who are after all, are themselves public servants, already possess the very skill asked for and have had to adopt this high-level of capacity to collaborate out of necessity and usually without training when employed in schools. The case study IEWs/CECs appeared to have honed this capacity to operate in and across the mainly non-Indigenous dominated schools and Indigenous communities they served. They could be considered as persons of influence (Burrige, Whalan, & Valadian, 2012; Gervasoni, Hart, Croswell, Hodges, & Parish, 2011) because of “how their roles play out at the ‘interface’ of the school” (A. Price et al., 2017, p. 2). Case study IEWs/CECs helped make their schools not only more Indigenous-friendly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families but equally as places conducive for willing engagement of non-Indigenous staff with Indigenous local knowledges, histories and experiences.

Furthermore, the case study findings suggested IEWs/CECs were reticulists by necessity mixed with a passionate advocacy – they did not just boundary cross, they also broke down barriers for their students. This form of rights-based advocacy by Indigenous workers in Australian schools is something highlighted in educational research by J. Davis (2018) and Gervasoni et al. (2011). MacGill (2017) also claims advocacy is integral to the IEW/CEC role with students, “They are the critical stakeholder representing Indigenous students’ position in the school...ACEOs are committed to education for Indigenous students” (p. 67). This is an attribute recognised in the early development of the CEC role in Queensland state schools, “I know what it is like to be black” (Schloss, cited in Clarke, 1981, p. 38).

All case study IEWs/CECs spoke about how they supported students to interact confidently with teachers and peers. Seeing students accomplish this gave case study IEWs/CECs as much satisfaction as did progress and success with academic learning. Chris Sarra correspondingly noticed similar characteristics about an experienced Indigenous worker, ‘Mrs Long’, in the school he worked as principal for a number of years, “like many people in Indigenous communities, she harbours an intense desire to see children gain power through education” (2005, pp. 180-181). This it seems, is not a new motivation – over two decades ago in the only national research ever conducted into the position of Indigenous workers from all school jurisdictions across Australia, the Ara Kuwaritjakutu project, researchers reported that Indigenous workers made it clear why they did their job, “I do it for the children” (Pat Buckskin et al., 1994, p. 83). These were almost the identical words of current IEWs/CECs in the case study schools.

### **6.2.2 An Indigenist perspective**

The second main actor in this study of professional relationships was the principal. They are the one to “get all the fame (and the blame)” (B. Lewthwaite, personal communication, December 23, 2018). The 100% principal non-Indigenous cultural background profile found in this study reflects current Australian principal Indigeneity trends - in 2012, there were only 78 Principals who were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander across the whole of Australia in any jurisdiction (More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative [MATSI], 2014). More recently, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principals Association (NATSIPA) notes there are 100 Indigenous principals across Australia (NATSIPA Inc., 2018). Additionally this study showed while the principals in The Region had more experience working within the Department of Education; they were more mobile than IEWs/CECs and served for less time in the one school. While the non-Indigenous principals in the case study reflected these same demographics, something made them different to their

peers. They each displayed a combination of other predispositions and practices that enabled them to have a ‘greater propensity’ to do the leadership work they did with their school’s IEW/CEC.

The finding that all case study principals had a vision of making their schools a place of learning and wellbeing for all students and particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, did not appear overtly aligned to the ‘excellence through equity’ agenda pervading educational jurisdictions in recent times. (e.g. Department of Education Training and Employment, 2011b; Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, 2012; United States Department of Education, 2013). They did not subscribe to what is argued by some as the narrow view that sees ‘excellence’ as academic performance and ‘equity’ as a concept where “it’s usage etymology in business and economic discourses, has replaced concepts of ‘social justice’ and the earlier ‘equality of educational opportunity’ in education policy discourses” (Sellar & Lingard, 2014, p. 1). Rather, each case study principal in my study seemed more driven by a school improvement belief that gave focus on equity as equality of opportunity for every student and not just performativity (Ball, 2003, 2016; Gannon, 2014; Maguire, Perryman, Ball, & Braun, 2011; Turnipseed & Darling-Hammond, 2015). The findings show case study principals understood and promoted expectations of working with individual students differently, equitably, responsively – according to their needs, something consistent to that suggested by Blankstein, Noguera, and Kelly (2015). Further, as was found to be an effective strategy in the New Zealand study by Robinson, Hohepa, and Lloyd (2009), case study principals were endeavoring to promulgate a collective sense of responsibility and accountability for every student’s achievement with all staff in their schools.

Case study principals’ did not deny that academic results were important, but they also placed equal value on recognition of the ‘whole child’ and paid just as much attention to supporting the provision of programs in their schools that addressed students’ social-emotional needs. They saw the employment of IEWs/CECs as integral to their work. This idea of a focus on equity is supported by Berryman (2018) who suggests that relying on a “narrow band of excellence measures without simultaneously investing in our students’ sense of belonging and wellbeing” (p. 16), has deleterious effects on students, particularly already marginalized students. High expectations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Sarra et al., 2018) were also recognised by the case study principals. They knew their desire to achieve excellence *through* equity for every student was hard to achieve (Blankstein et al., 2015), but remained committed to this ideal with the counsel and support of their IEW/CEC. A recent Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report, *Promising Practices in Supporting Success for Indigenous Students* (2017) succinctly provides a description that

reflects the determined outlook of the case study principals. It refers to principals in schools where Indigenous students can succeed have “a clear will and strong commitment ...to improve education outcomes for Indigenous students” (p. 11).

The case study principals’ equity-driven stance was likewise underpinned by a second predisposition – that they brought with them to their school, a growing understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contemporary issues (Douglas, 2009; T. Riley & Webster, 2016). While they themselves were non-Indigenous, case study principals generally recognised the complexities of the issues involved with Indigenous peoples, including understanding that many Indigenous peoples’ lack trust with education systems (Ma Rhea, 2015a). As emphasised with the discussion about the IEW/CEC role, the predispositions of principals were created by personal or professional life experiences shaping their outlook for Indigenous education, which likely influenced their own capacity to work with an IEW/CEC. Case study principals were able to self-evaluate enough to recognise their inadequacies, or what has been referred to as “cultural discomfort” (Yunkaporta & McGinty, 2009, pp. 63-64). However, unlike the teachers reported by Yunkaporta and McGinty (2009), the case study principals were very willing to learn. Rather, they preferred to dialogue with their school’s IEW/CEC if they did not always get things right or confirm first with their IEW/CEC if they were on the right track when making decisions about the school that would have effects for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. One case study principal acknowledged with sincerity the ‘forgiveness’ and patience the school’s IEW/CEC showed her in these situations.

Case study principals were also aware that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families had aspirations and expectations for their student’s success (Kearney et al., 2014; K. Martin, 2017), akin to what Nichol (2011) acknowledges, “that Indigenous Australians want to be fully-fledged citizens leading dignified and satisfying lives within Australian society”(p. 99). The principals aspired for a whole school positive relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families (Berryman & Woller, 2013; K. Martin, 2017; Sarra et al., 2018). For two of the case study schools, increased school-community engagement was a key feature of the action plans they focused on during the period of the research. It is reasonable therefore to suggest the case study school principals were developing their cultural responsiveness, which Pursoe explains happens when there is an “enacted cultural competence” (2012, p. 22). Case study principals showed they were seeking to apply their knowledge and understandings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories in practices on a daily basis. The results of the larger study from The Region on the other hand, showed such understandings and responsiveness was not the norm. All of this gives rise to arguments already offered in many studies in Australia and abroad. That is, practicing ‘cultural

responsiveness’, culturally responsive leadership, is a way to improve schools for Indigenous students (Bishop et al., 2014; Peter Buckskin, 2001, 2012; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Dugan, Ylimaki, & Bennett, 2012; Kugler & West-Burns, 2010; Lewthwaite et al., 2014; Pursoe, 2012; Sarra, 2011).

Thirdly and connected to their developing cultural responsiveness, was that all case study principals had pre-existing beliefs in the high value of the IEW/CEC role. Significantly, one of relationship dynamic’s action statements gained an identical ‘Strongly Agree’ response between all five pairs: II: In this school, the Principal recognises the skills and capabilities of the CEC/IEW that are formed through their experience (of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture) (see Chapter 5, p.148). Case study principals came to their schools already knowing the centrality of IEWs/CECs to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, provide advice to staff and forge stronger links with the community. Accordingly, every case study school had deliberate organisational arrangements to employ an IEW/CEC. They all had at least one identified Indigenous position because the case study principals knew through experience what research increasingly demonstrates. For instance, the previously mentioned recent OECD study displays a diagram of “school-level priorities to boost education outcomes for Indigenous students, likely impact and cost” and shows besides “teaching effectiveness”, one of the other most “highest impact” (and “highest cost”), was “Indigenous support workers” (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2017, p. 22).

Additionally, the other key finding related to a shared practice that enhanced the complementarity of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship was the accessibility of the principal to the IEW/CEC. The IEW/CEC usually met with the principal in an open access situation via frequent informal exchanges, something recognised by both as not always as ideal as they would like. However, some pairs were able to hold weekly scheduled meetings where the principal deliberately met with the IEW/CEC to plan and review their ongoing projects or give advice to each other. Whatever their way of working together, the finding that the principal highly valued the IEW/CEC role is likely what allowed their on-going accessible interaction – the principal’s ‘greater propensity for engagement’ and this in turn contributed to their strong professional relationship to flourish.

When viewing these common predispositions and practices demonstrated by all case study principals as becoming a culturally responsive leader, more specific to the context of the case study schools, was that they were likely developing an ‘Indigenist perspective’ (Ma Rhea, 2015a, 2015b). Ma Rhea offers the “potentiality of the term, Indigenist” (2015a, p. 154) which she defines as “the support for Indigenous rights and perspectives without implying that the

supporter is Indigenous” (2015a, p. 153) and argues it implies “a commitment to a pro-Indigenous world view” (2015a, p. 154). The case study principals did not call themselves ‘Indigenist’ nor did they discuss the “colonial mindset” (2015a, p. 156) or that they could see their schools as promulgating a hegemonic curriculum or ‘silent apartheid’ of education (Rose, 2012). However, through their own personal and professional learning experiences what they did appear to have was a heightened self-awareness of the unequal situation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and a desire to operate in a rights-based way, “to develop their professional practice in a culturally-appropriate manner” (P. J. Anderson & Ma Rhea, 2018, p. 212). With guidance from their IEW/CEC, they could more clearly see how school practices did or did not benefit Indigenous students. Case study principals genuinely wanted change for the better in their schools, to make them a great place of learning for all students, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and importantly, they shared this aspiration with the school’s IEW/CEC.

### **6.3 Outcomes: Mitigations and ameliorations on the road to reconciliation**

The previous sections of this chapter provided explanations about the fragmentations for many and strength for some in the current IEW/CEC and principal relationship and that it was certain individual personal dispositions and practices of IEWs/CECs and principals that made a strong professional relationship happen. This next section looks at the findings about outcomes of a strengthened IEW/CEC and principal relationship.

As shown in Chapter 5 during the final stages of my research, the particular set of personal predispositions and deliberate choices by the IEW/CEC and principal not only helped them form their strong relationship, when combined, they acted as a force against the detrimental influences faced in the case study schools and led to positive outcomes. Significantly, one of the findings about the outcomes, which is this strong relationship can move beyond itself to other staff working in schools, is highlighted at the end of this section.

To gain a deeper appreciation of this situation, it is firstly important to be reminded about the national project of reconciliation in Australia that was featured as part of my literature review in Chapter 2. While not as prevalent for the early stages of my research, more recently, the incidence of public discourse and literature featuring discussion of the need to improve the relationships between First Nations and other Australian peoples has grown (Elder, 2017; McMillan & Rigney, 2018). Subsequently it is argued that the findings about the outcomes of a strengthened professional relationship between IEWs/CECs and principals can be seen as extrapolations of reconciliation and the ‘unfinished business’ of redressing long standing

inequalities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, (M. Davis, 2007; Middleton, 2017; Oscar, 2017; Yu, 2018). What was found to exist between IEW/CEC and principal pairs in many ways, exemplifies the journey of reconciliation in Australia (Reconciliation Australia, 2018). National reconciliation in Australia is about bringing resolution to significant issues emanating from the past and significantly, establishing “a fair and truthful relationship” (National Constitutional Convention, 2017, May 26, p. 1) between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. As explained in the literature review, the current prevailing dialogue associated with reconciliation in Australia for the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and many other Australians is from the Uluru Statement from The Heart, a historical statement written in 2017 by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to convey ‘Makarrata’ a Yolngu language term inferring, “two parties coming together after a struggle” (M. Davis, 2018, p. 43). Patrick Dodson provides insight into the national project of reconciliation for Australia, he was the inaugural chair of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, co-chair of the Expert panel for Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous Australians and is now a senator in the Federal Parliament of Australia. He recently explained:

I have often compared Australia’s journey to reconciliation to driving on unsealed roads between remote towns. The journey is long, slow and progress is incremental. It is often bumpy and difficult to navigate. Sometimes we lose our way and get off track and encounter obstacles that challenge our commitment. Over the past six months it has felt as if we are bogged in a sandy quagmire on the road to constitutional recognition. Now, we have a new opportunity. We must make it happen. It’s time to engage the four wheel drive. (2018, pp. 64-65)

Relationships in schools with Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff, students and families are microcosmic to driving on the road to reconciliation. For instance, the expansive view of my research into The Region where many IEWs/CECs experienced fragmented interpersonal interactions with their principals, is a likely representation of the current state of national affairs, where reconciliation at a national level has not finished and remains stalled (Reconciliation Australia, 2019, 4 April). Yet, the other more focused view brought by the case study, showed IEWs/CECs and principals could form a strong professional relationship and is a different depiction. That is, the case study pairs had ‘engage[d] the four-wheel drive’ ride on the road to reconciliation. They enjoyed “strong relationships based on trust and respect, and that are free of racism” (Reconciliation Australia, 2018, p. 5) and make for a likely manifestation of the desired progress for the greater reconciliation project in Australia.

Supporting my interpretation of reconciliation being alive in schools, is an Australian study, acknowledged in a discursive paper by A. Price et al. (2017). The study analysed insights

from Aboriginal education workers in a Western Australian school participating in a numeracy development project. Gervasoni et al. (2011) define reconciliation citing an explanation from Matthews, Howard, and Perry (2003):

Reconciliation is about walking in someone else's shoes. It is about taking the time to listen and to care. It is about working together. It is about sharing and understanding the diversity of culture. It is about appreciating people and their values, language and learning styles. It is about recognising and appreciating difference. (p. 307)

Gervasoni et al. (2011) found that reconciliation was one of the most commonly associated constructs in their analysis of transcripts from the Indigenous workers, who saw "how important it is for education that connections are made between students and teachers" (p. 310). Their findings echo with those of my study, especially these comments by the workers who also mentioned how appreciated they felt by their principal,

We all feel valued and we know that we're valued and even ... Mike [principal] will come to us and ask us questions. We've never had that sort of a principal before. And it's that feeling valued and knowing that your opinion counts. (Gervasoni et al., 2011, p. 310)

Then it is Atkinson, cited in Ma Rhea and Atkinson (2013) who succinctly sums up how reconciliation work can be done in schools, "For me, that's what reconciliation is about in the end ... both sides coming together and doing it differently together" (p. 169).

To reinforce the positive nature of the outcomes of a strong professional relationship as a consideration of reconciliation is Reconciliation Australia's "Reconciliation Outcomes Framework", (Reconciliation Australia, 2019b, p. 4). There is a conceptual framework "designed to assist Reconciliation Australia in building a more comprehensive narrative on Australia's progress towards reconciliation" (Reconciliation Australia, 2018, p. 83). It includes five dimensions which Reconciliation Australia uses to collect and review data about reconciliation across multiple levels of implementation: individual, organisational and societal (Reconciliation Australia, 2018) (see Figure 6.2).

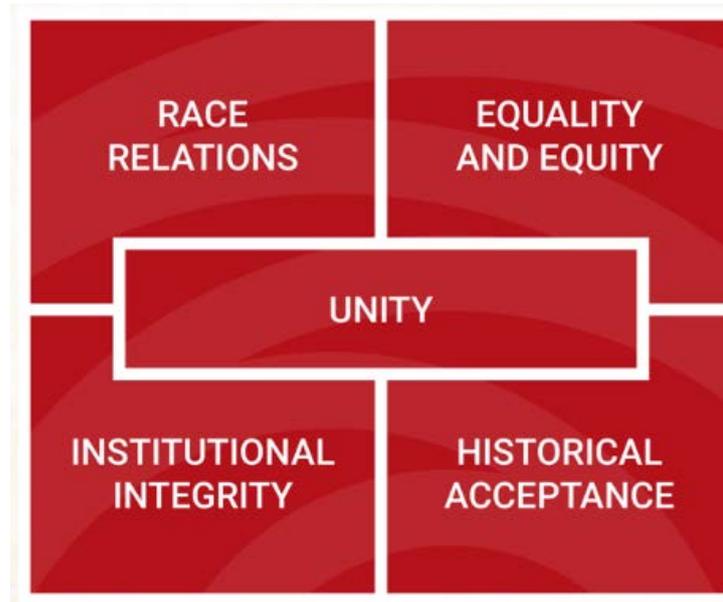


Figure 6.2 From "Five Dimensions" by Reconciliation Australia, 2017 (<https://www.reconciliation.org.au/>). In the public domain.

As explained in Chapter 2, this framework was developed in 2014. Reconciliation Australia acknowledges the five dimensions “do not exist in isolation. They are interrelated and Australia can only achieve full reconciliation if we make progress in all five areas” (Reconciliation Australia, 2019b, p. 4). Synthesised therefore, are this thesis’ literature review including Reconciliation Australia’s major and most recent report, *State of Reconciliation Report* (Reconciliation Australia, 2018) and the latest results from their 2018 Australian Reconciliation Barometer (ARB), with key findings from my study about outcomes of a strong IEW/CEC and principal relationship. Outcomes are presented as mitigations and ameliorations within the case study schools while simultaneously reflecting on the five dimensions of reconciliation at the individual and organisational level. The outcomes are: racism in schools is better addressed; Indigenous students are better supported to succeed; schools are more welcoming and parent engagement can increase; there is agentic growth in both the IEW/CEC and principal; and, staff cultural competence increases and responsibility expands. Because Reconciliation Australia’s five dimensions interrelate, so too do outcomes of a strong IEW/CEC and principal relationship. This connection is presented in Table 6.

Table 26: Connections between my study and the five dimensions of reconciliation

<b>Key findings</b>	<b>The five dimensions of reconciliation</b>
Racism in schools is better addressed	<p><b>Race relations:</b></p> <p>At the heart of reconciliation is the relationship between the broader Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. To achieve reconciliation, we need to develop strong relationships built on trust and respect, and that are free of racism. (Reconciliation Australia, 2018, p. 5)</p>
Indigenous students are better supported to succeed	<p><b>Equality &amp; Equity:</b></p> <p>Reconciliation is more likely to progress when Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians participate equally and equitably in all areas of life. To make this happen, we have to close the gaps in life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and achieve universal recognition and respect for the distinctive collective rights and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. (Reconciliation Australia, 2018, p. 5)</p>
Schools are more welcoming and parent engagement can increase	<p><b>Institutional integrity:</b></p> <p>“Institutional integrity refers to the extent to which our political and business institutions, and community and social sectors actively support reconciliation” (Reconciliation Australia, 2018, p. 6).</p>
There is agentic growth of the IEW/CEC & principal	<p><b>Unity:</b></p> <p>In a reconciled Australia, national unity means Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights, histories and cultures are valued and recognised as part of a shared national identity. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are the oldest living cultures in the world. Reconciliation involves all Australians valuing and recognising the rich and diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures that have existed in our nation since time immemorial and continue to this day. (Reconciliation Australia, 2018, p. 8)</p>
Staff cultural competence increases and responsibility expands	<p><b>Historical acceptance:</b></p> <p>We cannot change the past but we can learn from it. We can make amends and we can ensure mistakes are never repeated. Our nation’s past is reflected in the present and unless we can heal historical wounds, they will continue to play out in our country’s future. Reconciliation can only truly evolve when the Australian community and our major institutions acknowledge and repair the wrongs of the past, understand their effects—and make sure that these wrongs, or similarly damaging actions, are not occurring today and are never repeated in the future. (Reconciliation Australia, 2018, p. 9)</p>

### 6.3.1 Race relations: Racism in schools can be better addressed

The RA dimension of ‘Race Relations’, defined in Table 26, emphasises the importance of strong relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and the elements that make these happen. While it is noted in the 2018 ARB summary report that since the previous ARB in 2016, “racism, both perceived and experienced, has decreased slightly” (2019a, p. 5), the key finding from 2018 was, “Almost all Australians – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and Australians in the general community – believe the relationship between each other is important. Yet too often this goodwill is not reflected in behaviours” (Reconciliation Australia, 2019a, p. 5).

Granted, my study showed that despite the high levels of mutual respect and trust found with the case study IEW/CEC and principal pairs, most IEWs/CECs and some principals reported experiencing or witnessing, differing forms of racism as well as reluctance of some teachers to engage with Indigenous education. Why these detrimental influences remain omnipresent in schools is discussed at length in an extensive review of the literature on ‘Cultural Responsiveness and School Education’, by Thelma Pursoe who offers this explanation:

Many behaviours in schools may be racist even if educators do not deliberately deliver the behaviours using racist attitudes. Some racist behaviours occur through omission or incorrect assumptions. For example...indirect discrimination may occur when teachers ‘treat all their students the same’ in an honest, if misguided attempt to be ‘fair’ or equitable. (2012, p. 9)

Pursoe (2012) also notes, citing the *Racismnoway* website<sup>5</sup>, “those who don’t experience racism themselves frequently don’t recognise it, or even dismiss it as trivial, not seeing its potential or damage” (p. 10). Additionally MacGill (2017) suggests, “buffering racism is routinely a silenced aspect of ACEO’s work within schools” (p. 60).

Importantly, what my study showed was that racism was not silenced nor condoned in the case study schools. Instead, as an outcome of their strong professional relationship, case study IEWs/CECs and principals could work together to mitigate the effects of and work towards the elimination of racism in their schools. For instance, in one of the case study schools, two IEWs/CECs acknowledged, “the racism, both overt and covert, of staff” (Pearce,

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<sup>5</sup> *Racismnoway*, The extent of racism in Australian schools. <http://www.racismnoway.com.au/about-racism/understanding-racism/the-extent-of-racism-in-australian-schools/>

2011, p. 122) and the toll it took on them personally. Their (newly appointed) principal responded with determination to right those wrongs and was adamant to change the culture of their school. She understood how the ‘deficit discourses’ of teachers translated into lower expectations of students (Sarra, 2005; Sarra et al., 2018). While not experiencing it herself from staff in her own school, another case study IEW/CEC talked frankly and emotionally about the “scalding pain” (Pearson, 2009, p. 96) of racism she witnessed with others in the community and in other schools. All case study IEWs/CECs received the support of their principals who were equally resolute to address racism, prejudice and reluctance of staff to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students their schools. Within this environment case study IEWs/CECs remained steadfast to staying ‘true’ to their culture and beliefs. In their role, they were able to influence non-Indigenous staff to be more confident to have positive personal interactions with Indigenous students and their families, a relational factor known to support student achievement and engagement (A. J. Martin & Dowson, 2009; L. Riley, 2015).

Additionally, case study principals did not rely on IEWs/CECs to be the only informants about racist situations, they monitored for it themselves. One case study principal responded to non-Indigenous staff who had questioned why they had to ‘do’ the crossing cultures training by further discussion with the leadership team and teaching staff to make clear her standpoint on redressing equality for Indigenous students. Other case study principals had proactively included the school’s IEW/CEC in their new staff induction and ongoing professional development conversations to build the knowledge and understanding of non-Indigenous staff, especially in those schools where there was a high turnover of staff. The IEW/CEC and principal pairs understood some of the reluctance expressed by teachers was out of genuine concern to not make ‘mistakes’ (K. Price, 2012). This emboldened them to ensure staff were exposed to training and resource materials to address this. One case study IEW/CEC also increased teacher confidence by deliberately using participation of non-Indigenous teachers to gain experiential learning in Indigenous programs at the school to help them change their perceptions so they could better understand the Indigenous students they taught and how they might better go about their work.

### **6.3.2 Equality and equity: When supported, Indigenous students can succeed**

What was found to happen or not happen in the schools within my study can be also extrapolated to the definition of the second dimension from the reconciliation outcomes framework, ‘Equality and Equity’. RA’s key finding for this dimension in their 2018 ARB is:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to feel barriers to accessing cultural and material rights. A majority of Australians in the general community, and a majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, believe governments must do more to address disadvantage. (Reconciliation Australia, 2019a, p. 7)

That Australians should have this opinion is not a new situation. In 1991, as outlined in the literature review, the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, after extensive consultation and review of evidence before them, made distinct recommendations to the government of the day to reduce barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Commission specifically acknowledged that the employment of Indigenous peoples in schools (Aboriginal Education Workers) was a direct response to better support students so they may go on to more equal life opportunities of their peers, but their employment conditions should be improved: Through growing quality of expertise from better professional development; of recognition of the vital role played by Indigenous educational workers, including remuneration; and with accountability by consultation with the local Aboriginal community. Recommendation 297 from Volume 4, Chapter 33, states:

That:

a. The vital role which Aboriginal Education Workers--or persons performing a similar role but with another title--can play in ensuring effective Aboriginal participation in the education system be recognised;

b. Aboriginal Education Workers be given the recognition and remuneration which their role merits and that it be recognised that they suffer from conflicting expectations of community and Department as to their role; and

c. It be understood that there is a need for them to have accountability to the Aboriginal community as well as to their employer. (Johnston, 1991b)

While time has moved on, my study shows and the 2018 ARB finding for ‘Equality and Equity’ reflect more has remained the same than not. Granted, role descriptions and performance development processes for IEWs/CECs do now exist in Queensland state schools, yet the provision of these in The Region did not appear to necessarily improve the working relationship between IEWs/CECs and principals. As already discussed above, results from The Region showed working relationships between these key positions were fragmented. MacGill (2017) notes a similar situation in her research, “the status of ACEO’s continues to be marginalised in the workplace as a result of misconceptions and a general lack of awareness regarding the complexity of their role by their colleagues in schools” (2017, p. 64). Certainly, some of the regional IEWs/CECs expressed a sense of marginalisation.

The case study schools, however, offer an alternative view to this situation when barriers are mitigated and action is taken to redress disadvantage. Firstly and significantly in the case study schools, as noted earlier, all principals made deliberate additional provision for the employment of an Indigenous person dedicated to the role of either IEW or CEC. This however could not be in a full time permanent capacity, as at the time of the study, allocation of full time IEWs/CECs across The Region was only fractional (i.e. 168 permanent hours for Indigenous teacher aides and 8.2 full time funded CEC positions distributed across approximately 85 primary schools and over 20 secondary schools in The Region). Additionally industrial regulations only allowed for the extension of additional hours to be temporary. All case study principals expressed their concerns over the funding allocation to their schools, especially for the IEW/CEC position. Their comments reflected the pressure they felt when juggling their budgets to maintain the levels of support they knew they needed. In the face of this, case study principals maintained a firm commitment to sustain the employment of IEWs/CECs in the best ways they could with the resources they had.

The actions of case study principals could not completely assuage the stressors on IEWs/CECs about their employment. Two case study IEWs/CECs did have an allocation of some permanent hours, but the others did not and all were subject to a year-by-year renewal of their employment, which was very distressing for them. All case study pairs concurred these were unacceptable terms of employment for IEWs/CECs and their sentiments are reflected in current research about the role of IEWs/CECs across Australia (MacGill, 2017; A. Price et al., 2017). It is even more unacceptable that this has remained a major cause for concern for over 25 years since the role was first reviewed nationally. In 1994, Pat Buckskin et al. reported this finding, “even though many AEIWs have had continuing employment for a number of years, they are regarded as temporary employees whose positions only remain while the Commonwealth funding continues” (p. 56). In more recent times and within the same state as my research, a report from a small study on the education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in South East Queensland on behalf of the Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Committee (QEICC) found similar issues. There were a number of recurring themes seen in their report and the one that related to Indigenous staff in schools (schools from all sectors – government, Catholic and Independent) was, “Employment conditions of Indigenous Education Workers and expectations of their role remain unsatisfactory” (White & Robb, 2014, p. 6). One of their recommendations addressing this mentioned. “funding of Indigenous education worker positions in schools be reviewed – with a view to creating more permanency” (White & Robb, 2014, p. 55). The same uncertainty of tenure of IEWs/CECs weighed heavily on the case study pairs, but the strong relationship between the IEW/CEC and

principal was found to at least mitigate some of the employment conditions experienced by their less supported IEW/CEC colleagues across The Region.

Secondly, in the case study schools, unlike their peers in The Region, the IEW/CEC role was not amorphous and instead was clearly defined and embedded in the school. Case study IEWs/CECs had recognition and support—first and foremost from their principal—something Gower et al. (2011) acknowledge as one of the “factors that contribute to success” (p. v) of the IEW/CEC role. As noted earlier in this discussion, case study principals and IEWs/CECs met regularly in varying ways, reported to each other on their work, and, they planned and problem solved together. While not all may have had the principal as their line manager, three case study IEWs/CECs reported they did engage in the systemic annual Developing Performance processes (Department of Education, 2019d) with another senior member of staff. Each IEW/CEC had a designated office or workspace within a larger office. They knew it was their job to assist Indigenous students in various ways to improve their attendance, literacy and numeracy skills and emotional and social well-being. Those case study IEWs/CECs in secondary schools also directly facilitated students’ vocational and tertiary education aspirations. This clarity of role, recognition and support from the principal enabled IEWs/CECs to confidently advise teachers, be a member of or consulted by student support teams, leadership teams and the principal and ultimately, be better positioned to better support students. Such a proposition is elegantly described by the joint project that ran over ten years ago between the Dare to Lead and the Dusseldorf Skill Forum, *Same Kids Same Goals*, to support IEWs/CECs and principals working together in schools,

When Principals and Indigenous Education Workers (IEWs) work well together, the needs of the school’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are better met than when the Principal and IEW work separately. (2007a, para. 1)

The discussion in this section now moves to the third and final outcome of a strong IEW/CEC and principal relationship found to correlate with the reconciliation dimension of Equality and Equity. That is, in all case study schools Indigenous students achieved more successful engagement and achievement than necessarily their peers in other schools. That the strong professional relationship between the IEW/CEC and principal could be categorically proven as one of the main determinants of these ameliorations is not conclusive, however having IEW/CEC and principal pairs working collaboratively together likely played a part. During the period of this study, it was noticed attendance rate differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the case study schools were generally smaller when compared to those in schools across the state. That there are variations between them in the first place

remains unacceptable, but it is noteworthy the findings of the case study schools are better than the state results. Also of note is that both of the secondary case study schools enjoyed very high levels of completion rates of their Year 12 Indigenous students, with two out of the three years of the case study research seeing these students achieving 100% completion, something not seen as readily in other secondary schools in The Region or State.

These successes are important when considered against a recent Australian Productivity Commission research paper about Indigenous primary school achievement. For instance, within their discussion as to what are the “most effective contributors to instructional delivery” (2016, p. 70) and with mention of findings from the 2016 Closing the Gap Report from the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), The Commission considers the contributions of well-being in student success. “Wellbeing has been identified as a key contributor to student engagement, and school attendance rates are relatively low for Indigenous students (DPMC, 2016), suggesting that improvements in wellbeing might contribute to greater school participation and achievement” (2016, p. 79). That the case study schools deliberately employed an IEW/CEC whose role was clear and supported and that they could work productively with their principal, suggests they were enacting improvements in student well-being for learning. It is highly likely this work was contributing to better engagement and achievement for their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

### **6.3.3 Institutional integrity: A greater sense of place**

Within the 2018 ARB, a key finding about this dimension defined in Table 26 was,

Experiences of racial prejudice in workplaces and other settings have remained steady. However, there has been an increase in experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feeling they cannot be true to their cultures or personal beliefs in certain settings. (Reconciliation Australia, 2019a, p. 11)

For the purposes of comparison, a school can be reasonably considered as an institution and most certainly ‘a workplace’ or ‘certain setting’. My study showed outcomes as ameliorations in this dimension were most certainly recorded in all case study schools. The IEW/CEC and principal worked together to recognise and increase inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives as part of their whole school ethos. Each case study school outwardly displayed Indigenous artefacts (i.e. staff shirts with Indigenous motifs, regularly flying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and highly visible, well-maintained Indigenous murals). They used organisational practices that recognised Indigenous peoples (i.e. welcome to and acknowledgement of country on assemblies and school functions). The case

study schools had established or were refining how to incorporate curriculum and learning experiences targeted to improve Indigenous student engagement. All undertook different Indigenous focussed projects specific to their location and local needs. Three out of the four case study schools had designated rooms or spaces for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and parents to gather for different purposes. One case study school looked to establish the teaching of the local Indigenous language for all students and another had commenced a major initiative of providing a tertiary pathway to university study for its Indigenous students.

Two of the case study schools had established Indigenous parent groups that they regularly consulted with for varying purposes to assist the schools embed Indigenous perspectives (i.e. devising a Reconciliation Action Plan, building a landscape project) and introducing programs to enhance Indigenous student learning. As has been shown in a recent study about community partnerships supported by an Indigenous worker and making school Indigenous friendly places (Baxter & Meyers, 2016), these schools consequently experienced success with parent engagement. That said, all case study principals and IEWs/CECs recognised they needed to continue to find ways to further increase their school's authentic partnership and engagement with their local Indigenous community. This is something considered crucial to school improvement for Indigenous students and argued by many in the field of education within and outside of Australia (Deslandes, 2006; Flückiger et al., 2012; Langton & Ma Rhea, 2009; Lowe, 2011; Ma Rhea, 2015a; Mutch, 2015; Tunison, 2013).

#### **6.3.4 Unity: Leads to agentic growth**

At the centre of the diagrammatic representation of the five dimensions model is 'Unity', which is also inferred within the vision of Reconciliation Australia: "a just, equitable and reconciled Australia" (Reconciliation Australia, 2017b). The findings from the 2018 ARB for this dimension are stated as:

There continues to be pride for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in Australia. The belief by Australians in the general community that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are important to Australia's national identity has remained steady. This belief has slightly decreased among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The desire to help Australia become a more reconciled nation has remained steady. (Reconciliation Australia, 2019a, p. 9)

Some of the findings of my study about the outcomes of a strong IEW/CEC and principal relationship can also be correlated to the reconciliation dimension of Unity. That is, despite afore mentioned detriments within the contexts outside and within the case study schools, the strong relationship between the IEW/CEC and principal also reflected a "pride in

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures” (Reconciliation Australia, 2019a, p. 9). It was found each case study pair shared a moral imperative to improve their school for their Indigenous students and were united in their efforts to achieve this. The more case study IEWs/CECs and principals worked together, not only did their school benefit, there were ameliorating outcomes for each of them. Case study IEWs/CECs and principals seemed to experience growth in their respective self-agency. Case study IEWs/CECs were found to experience greater self-efficacy, increased role capacity and upward leadership skills; and their partner principals developed greater cultural competence and leadership capacity for school improvement in Indigenous education.

For case study IEWs/CECs, they were supported to have visibility in their schools and autonomy to do their job and empowered to initiate and take leadership of projects to improve education for their Indigenous students. In many ways they were considered as role models in their jobs. That said, there are varying views from researchers in the field of Indigenous education about IEW/CECs being considered in this way. Price et al. (2017) note that the Institute of Koorie Education in Victoria, Australia cautions to not project this idea onto IEWs/CECs because of their unequal positioning within schools. Partington (2003), who about this same situation over a decade earlier, argues because there are low numbers Indigenous teachers, “schools have to depend on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aides to provide Indigenous input. However, their role is subordinate to the classroom teacher and their presence confirms the status of Indigenous education in Australia” (p. 39). The first part of Partington’s commentary (low numbers of Indigenous teachers), remains the same today in schools across Australia (Australian Government, 2017; Peter Buckskin, 2017). The second part (subordination of IEW/CEC), does resonate with the responses of some of the IEWs/CECs surveyed in the larger study of The Region, however it was different in the case study schools. Instead case school principals and many teachers worked with the IEWs/CECs in an egalitarian way in terms of respectful interactions and acknowledgement on a day to day basis. Case study school IEWs/CECs reported they were held in high regard in their schools by their principal and most staff, something similar to the findings about perceptions of many AIEOs in Gower et al.’s 2011 investigation. Considered positively, the case study IEWs/CECs were able to work in a strengths-based way, one that “concentrate[s] on articulating the world views, knowledges, principles and practices of Indigenous Australian cultures” (J. Davis, 2018, p. 49). They had autonomy to organise and facilitate engagement of their Indigenous students with other local Indigenous role models who came into the school as guest speakers or artisans and through participation in external activities that exposed students to vocations and occupations in a variety of contexts.

Partington (2003) also conjectures that “through their interactions with non-Indigenous classroom teachers, the AIEOs are influenced by prevailing deficit explanations of the failure of Indigenous students at school and come to promote these explanations themselves” (p. 39). This was not evident within the case study schools where the discourse was focussed on improving schools and not blaming students (Faubert, 2012; Seifert et al., 2015). IEWs/CECs in the case study schools and their principal did not promulgate a deficit view. Rather, if anything, the principals modelled a deep and abiding appreciation and respect for their IEWs/CECs (Sarra, 2012a) and together, they worked to make their school a better place for all students, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Interestingly my study also found while IEWs/CECs were listened to and sought after for advice from their principals, this did not always necessarily transfer to an equal voice at a management level in every school. One exception was one of the case study IEWs/CECs, who was a member of the school’s leadership team, providing strategic counsel and giving input into key decisions. This same IEW/CEC acknowledged prior to the current principal, under the frequent turnover of past principals, she had retreated to doing only operational tasks and had not been invited into the leadership team. Such wearing down of resiliency and capacity suggests just how much non-Indigenous leadership mobility when coupled with a ‘colonial mind’ (Ma Rhea, 2015b) can impact on empowerment of Indigenous staff, let alone students in schools.

Principals in the case study came to their schools with a self-developed cultural competence that seemed to enhance their active engagement in a strong professional relationship with the school’s IEW/CEC. Their Indigenist views were cultivated from personal experience and self-directed learning and not from their tertiary training or system provided professional development on induction to the role because those were non-existent. Every case study principal unanimously agreed their interactions with the IEWs/CECs further built their own cultural understandings and cultural competence. IEWs/CECs agreed they also saw this happening and actively sought to support principals to understand and navigate the protocols and particularities of their local Indigenous community. Pursoe (2012) makes clear that “cultural competence is an on-going activity and journey of growth and development, an individual or an organization is continually developing in their cultural competence and responding accordingly” (p. 22). Case study principals did this. They showed they would sincerely act on what their IEWs/CECs advised them. Peter Buckskin (2012) argues that this is something “non-Indigenous politicians and decision-makers” (p. 176) do not do with Indigenous educators. He adds, “How better to keep widening the gap than to take advice on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education from non-Indigenous bureaucrats or from

outspoken Indigenous individuals who are not educators!” (2012, p. 176). Chris Sarra also notes, “Schools can, and some do, have white principals who recognize the immense value of Aboriginal leadership to the extent that they are guided by it” (2005, p. 268). In the situation of the case study schools, the leadership of IEWs/CECs provided good counsel for their principals. Consequently, the more the case study principal worked with their IEW/CEC, the more they understood the complexity of the IEWs/CECs work, their appreciation of the IEW/CEC role grew stronger and they better understood and positively appreciated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and issues.

### **6.3.5 Historical acceptance: Better understanding and expanding responsibility**

The final of the five dimensions of reconciliation, Historical Acceptance, defined in Table 26, has as its key finding in the 2018 ARB, “More Australians accept key facts about Australia’s past prejudices against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Most people think it is important to learn about the past and believe formal truth telling processes should be undertaken in Australia” (Reconciliation Australia, 2019a, p. 13). My study showed the strong relationship between case IEWs/CECs and principals did contribute to ameliorating understandings and knowledge of the histories and cultures of Indigenous Australians with their staff, both directly and indirectly.

Directly it was seen through the intentional provision of professional learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages, such as ‘Crossing-Cultures’ for all staff in each case study school facilitated by the case study pairs and supported by key Indigenous regional officers from The Region. What happened in the case study schools is akin to findings from the study by Burrige et al. (2012), who found when school staff were supported to learn “about Aboriginal histories and cultures that further develop their knowledge of, and contact with, local Aboriginal communities and the cultures they represent” (p. 142), there were gains in staff confidence to embed Indigenous perspectives into teaching practices and increased engagement between them and their local Indigenous community. The majority of staff in all case study schools had very high levels of agreement that they had confidence to undertake EATSIPS. Two schools in particular showed the greatest growth of staff confidence in this aspect over the period of the study.

The focus of the case study pairs to improve their schools for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was also found to indirectly influence other staff to want to participate in or initiate programs with Indigenous students. Early into the case study, one of the pairs recognised their actions had actually inadvertently excluded others and so they made changes in

how they worked to better include staff in their activities to embed Indigenous perspectives in the school. Two years later, the same IEW/CEC from this case study school expressed gratitude and relief that the burden had shifted from her as more teaching staff were taking initiative and showing a genuine intention to take responsibility for operating learning programs and activities to engage their school's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This IEW/CEC had through her own practice, identified what research shows is an important characteristic for teachers to have if school experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are to improve (Harslett, Harrison, Godfrey, Partington, & Richer, 2000; Lewthwaite et al., 2017). Another case study school pair also acknowledged they had been able to attract other key staff members to join in on their leadership work (White et al., 2009). In this same school, the increased appreciation of non-teaching staff of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, for instance, led to them adopting a new staff shirt that featured Indigenous motifs, which many staff, including the front office staff proudly wore.

It is here that another important finding from this study emanated. In many ways, all case study school pairs showed they moved from developing their own and individual staff capacity to understand and appreciate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages to that of collective groups of staff, that is, developing their social capital (Mulford, 2011, 2013; Sharratt & Fullan, 2012). Through the direct and indirect influences of the collaborative IEW/CEC and principal pairs, their schools changed for the better to be more supportive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The IEW/CEC and principal were able to recognise and enact what those in educational leadership research have shown, that "in a given system or organization, social capital is much more than the aggregate of members' human capital" (Spillane, 2016, p. 10). The case study pairs' collaborations intensified and reached out, they acknowledged that the work of embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in a school was not just up to the two of them alone. The strong relationship between the IEW/CEC and principal created a way of working that was built on respect, shared vision, cultural appreciation and responsiveness. When they enveloped more staff into these ways of working, they too, were willing to take on 'the business' of Indigenous education, this could be described as a vorticity of influence. The term 'vorticity', while stemming from the field of science to explain natural and mechanical forces (Vorticity., 2014), is deliberately used here to describe the powerful force of change in social capital growth that was created. In the case study schools, the vorticity of influence created by the IEW/CEC and principal pairs, took time to build, but once it gained momentum there was a greater willingness of more staff to take on the responsibilities of improving their school for Indigenous students to achieve and succeed. Another correlation may be drawn with the particular relational leadership

practice of ‘Unleashing Human Energies’ from the major study of Ospina et al., (2012), mentioned earlier in this chapter when discussing the current IEW/CEC and principal relationship and the links between relational dynamics and leadership practices known to make positive transformational social change (see Table 6.1) (Ospina et al., 2012). Acknowledging Freire, Ospina et al. comment that while unleashing human energies can be done through formal education and development, “it also happens through dialogic interaction that enables people to reflect on the structural causes of their situation, their roles in both the current and envisioned societies, and the solutions that will transform society” (2012, p. 6417). Additionally and importantly, these findings can be considered as practical examples of reconciliation activities and what can happen when non-Indigenous people have deeper understandings of the impacts of the past for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Similarly, the *State of Reconciliation Report*, within the discussion about findings from the dimension of historical acceptance, remarks that “when people participate in reconciliation activities their knowledge improves and their views on the relationship change significantly” (Reconciliation Australia, 2018, p. 9).

The case study IEW/CEC and principal pairs created the conditions for reflection and collective leadership (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012b). As noted in the discussion of outcomes in Chapter 5, the strong relationship between the IEW/CEC and principal was re-examined and this led to a reconsideration of the conceptual framework associated with the study. Realisations of the case study IEW/CEC and principal pairs moved them from operating together as ‘the power of two’, to become ‘more than the power of two’. Figure 6.3 is a visual representation of the expansion of the conceptual framework for the IEW/CEC and principal relationship.

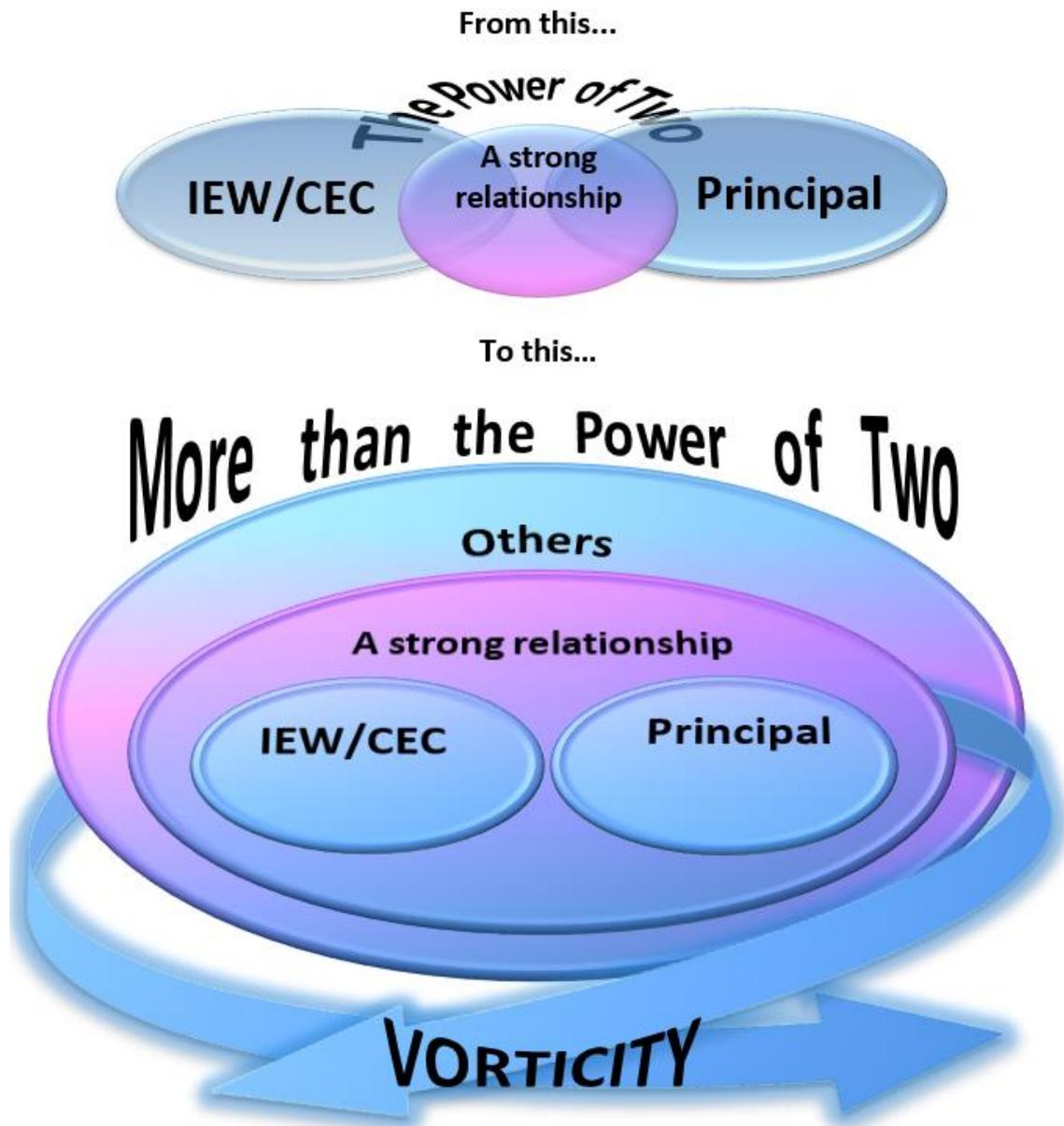


Figure 6.3 Expanded conceptual framework of this research with new title: More than the power of two

#### 6.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has shown within the broader context across a large educational region, strong working relationships between IEWs/CECs and principals are the exception and not the norm. However, despite this current state of affairs, strong professional relationships are not only possible, they already exist in some schools. Discussed were certain individual personal antecedents and actions of IEWs/CECs and principals that give likely explanation as to why strong working relationships between them can come into being in the first place. Also

highlighted were findings about the advantages and impediments IEWs/CECs and principals face in the course of their work independently and together to improve their schools for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student success. A strong professional relationship between the IEW/CEC and principal was found to contribute to mitigating and ameliorating outcomes for whole school improvement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, their families and the staff. The realisations of the IEW/CEC and principal pairs as they worked together led them to understand that they had to open up their leadership practices and invite other staff in to support their work. This opening created a ‘vorticity’, a powerful flow of action that lead to social capital development. Here ‘the power of two’ transformed to ‘more than the power of two’.

Significantly, these outcomes have offered practical examples of the possibilities when Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples do move beyond a “material reconciliation” and move towards a deeper “interpersonal reconciliation” (M. Dodson, 2009, p. 2) at the Cultural Interface of schools (Nakata, 2007a, 2011; A. Price et al., 2017).

## 7 Conclusion - more than the power of two

### 7.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study has been to examine, interpret and transform the ambiguity of the Indigenous Education Worker/Community Education Counsellor (IEW/CEC) and principal professional relationship as they work together to improve their schools. On another level, the study purpose has been to highlight effective practice, inform future improvements for Indigenous education within the schools studied and for those in the greater region, and finally, provide a call for change of policy and practice within the wider school system in the state of Queensland.

This final chapter draws together how the purposes of my research were achieved. It begins with a review of the research as reflected through the chapters. Next, major findings that correlate to answering the first three core research questions are considered after which all are consolidated to respond to the final core research question: *What are the implications for practice and policy in schools?* The responses to this question also serve to provide recommendations from this research. Then a discussion of recent developments provide a cause for hope followed by suggestions for further research. To finish, there is a closing statement.

### 7.1 Review of this research

Several circumstances gave rise to this study (see Chapter 1). My professional field experiences of work as a principal in my own school and in particular, in the time I served as a mentor with IEW/CEC and principal pairs working together on a literacy leadership project, motivated me to wonder what was happening in this professional relationship and how it might be improved. Significantly, up until now, little research has been conducted to understand the nature of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship and its connection to educational leadership and school improvement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, especially in more non-remote schools. The four core research questions framing the inquiry purposes and driving the phases of research were:

- What is the current IEW/CEC and principal relationship?
- How can this relationship be strengthened and what are the contextual features that influence this?

- What are the outcomes of this strengthened relationship?
- What are the implications for practice and policy in schools?

A review of literature offered an explanation as to why the IEW/CEC and principal relationship seemed ambiguous and confirmed the need for my study (see Chapter 2). The review showed at a national level, relationships between Indigenous Australians and non-Indigenous Australians were not strong (Reconciliation Australia, 2018). At an international level, achieving equity and excellence in schools was an ongoing challenge (Blankstein et al., 2015; Rebell, 2007) and improving ‘low performing disadvantaged schools’ and in particular Indigenous education, was a contentious focus of jurisdictions worldwide (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2017; Gray & Beresford, 2008; Langton & Ma Rhea, 2009). Notions of leadership are shifting to being more about processes than the person (Leithwood & Seashore-Louis, 2012; Robinson, McNaughton, & Timperley, 2011) and there is limited empirical research on the Australian IEW/CEC in schools and even less on the interrelationships between them and principals. This situation set the focus for my conceptual framework that was represented throughout this study and thesis.

The methodology for my research (see Chapter 3) was built after consideration of the study purposes and the logistics to achieve them. Field work and the writing of this thesis were consequently informed by a plurality of paradigms, that of the two philosophies of transformation and pragmatism (Greene & Hall, 2010; Mertens, 2007, 2015; Mertens et al., 2010; Patton, 2015). Data collection and analysis methods were supported by a tripartite of theories: contemporary interpretations of critical theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008); Cultural Interface explained through Indigenous standpoint theory (Nakata, 1997, 2007a, 2007d); and, Relationship Leadership Theory (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012b). These considerations fed into my conceptual framework as I sought to respond to the core research questions.

When in the field and evidenced in this thesis, I have endeavoured to ensure *what* was researched, was supported by *how* it was researched. My study design featured integrated mixed methods and an instrumental case study conducted through an adaption of critical participatory action research (CPAR) (Kemmis et al., 2014) (see Chapter 3, Figure 3.4 for a summary of the research assumptions, approach and design). This design served the purpose of an exchange relationship (Patton, 2015), allowing me to undertake my research and at the same time, be least intrusive and most useful to assist the participants achieve their actions for school improvement.

While data was captured from across a large educational region, a case study featuring five IEW/CEC and principal pairs contained the greater share of findings that responded to the

core research questions. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously and consecutively over three phases that provided sequential contributions for analysis (Creswell, 2014). Data included self-administered surveys, a guided questionnaire, almost nine hours of interviews, at least a dozen site visit observations and reflection notes as well as some enumeration and documentary data from the case study schools. Each data collection method within the phases of the research fed into achieving the purposes of the research (Patton, 2015). Like the data, the analytical framework was multifaceted and overall, three rounds of data analysis occurred. Some rounds used convergent analysis (Creswell, 2014) and other stages, parallel mixed data analysis (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) to look at the quantitative and qualitative data. Apart from being informed by methodological experts in the literature and my supervisors, I wanted to ensure my methods were ‘right’ on a different level. I therefore sought frequent counsel from my cultural mentors in terms of how I might best engage with the participants and then directly with the participants themselves during and after site visits to make transparent and verify my representations of findings and analysis of events, behaviours and phenomena associated with them (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

These methods produced a rich collection of findings. Presented over two chapters, (see Chapter 4 and Chapter 5) they aligned to the first three core research questions. Initially presented were the first set of findings elicited from The Region followed by the early stages of the case study after which both sets of findings were compared and contrasted to draw out further analysis (see Chapter 4). All were consolidated to contribute to a response to the first core research question and were included in an expanded version of the conceptual framework of this study (see Chapter 4, Figure 4. 8). Remarkably, in this phase of the research, was a shift in my thinking about the significance of IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship. It happened during the first cycle of the CPAR approach, when one of IEW/CEC and principal pairs verbalised a realisation that their leadership reach had been exclusionary and it needed to expand beyond them to include others in the work of school improvement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This sparked my critical thinking and upon reflection, I continued to ponder their idea further as the case study unfolded, to reconsider the notion of ‘the power of two’, the strong professional relationship between an IEW/CEC and principal, to that of ‘*more than* the power of two’ as one that where the IEW/CEC and principal could enrol others to also ‘take on the business’ of improving schools for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The second set of findings (see Chapter 5) drew from data collected over the latter cycles of the case study and all contributed to answers of the second and third core research questions. Amongst the findings captured was that all case study IEW/CEC and principals pairs

shared even more efficacious relationships than I had predicted. I found the ‘power of two’ was already enacted and their strong relationships appeared to be naturally established and self-sustaining. I then determined that by understanding *why* this relationship was already strong for the case study pairs, the emerging findings would explain *how* a relationship could be strengthened. I changed my participatory focus, and instead of putting energy into assisting the pairs strengthen the way they worked together per se, I focused on assisting them with their school improvement actions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This adjustment of investigative tactic was not only being responsive to the altered conditions of inquiry, I was being respectful and acting on in real terms, the covenantal ethic (Brydon-Miller, 2009) espoused as my axiological position. In the concluding section of the chapter, the study’s conceptual framework was further extended to capture a summary of all findings responding to the first three core research questions (see Chapter 5, Figure 5.6).

All findings were synthesised and interpreted in light of the study’s theoretical foundations, literature review and the first three core research questions (see Chapter 6). The current IEW/CEC and principal relationship, the contextual features and outcomes of a strong relationship were discussed. It was here I came to the realisation that the relationships I studied were, by extension, a likely microcosmic manifestation of the greater project national reconciliation in Australia. The connection of the micro (the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship) to the macro (Australia and its First Peoples’ relationship), became evident and were highlighted by reviewing the findings of mitigating and ameliorating outcomes for a strong IEW/CEC and principal relationship through the “Reconciliation Outcomes Framework”, (Reconciliation Australia, 2019b, p. 4). In particular, one of the ameliorating outcomes of reconciliation, ‘Historical Acceptance’, added to the idea I had been exploring of ‘more than the power of two’. I conceptualised the actions required to achieve this outcome as a vorticity of influence, a powerful force of momentum and used it to describe what was found to happen when the case study pairs continued to work together in expanding ways for social capital growth. Parallels were drawn to the leadership practice of ‘unleashing of human energies’, the facilitation of appropriate training and development and reflective dialogic interaction with people (Ospina et al., 2012), found to be critical for social change and improvements in relationships in organisations. In simple terms, the discussion chapter revealed because the case study pairs’ relationship was able to flourish, their schools were the better for it. The importance of this for the national project for reconciliation cannot be ignored.

## 7.2 Major findings and conclusions

The following discussion of major findings contributes to fulfilling this study's purposes, responds to the core research questions and offers conclusions for this study. Adapted from Figure 6.1 in Chapter 6, Figure 7.1 is a diagrammatic summary of major findings as they sit within the conceptual framework of the study.

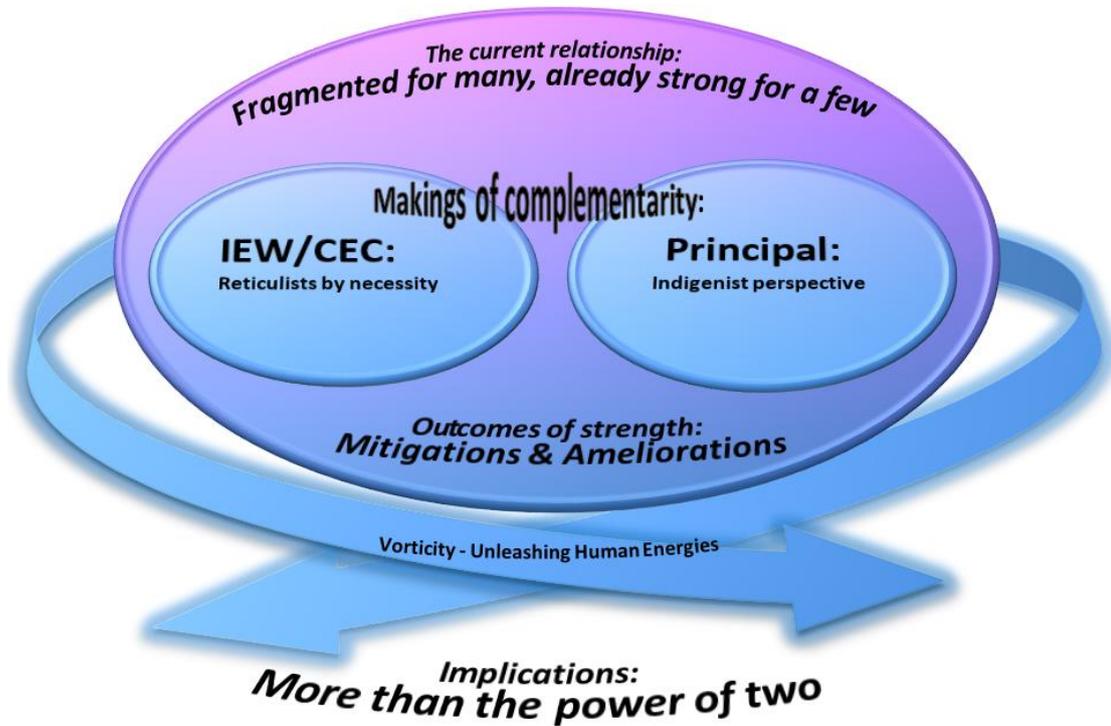


Figure 7.1 Major findings as they sit within the conceptual framework of this study

The first major finding emerged after consideration of the current IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship from across The Region and with that of the case study pairs. This was that strong professional relationships between IEWs/CECs and principals were variable and fragmented in many state schools and only strong for a few. Overall in The Region, many IEWs/CECs and principals appeared to work in limited ways together, unlike their peers in the case study schools who enjoyed already stronger and flourishing relationships. Within The Region, professional relationships between these key school roles resembled more transactional and business-like partnerships found in remote communities (Ma Rhea, 2012) and there were underestimations of the reach and complexity of the IEW/CEC role, a situation confirmed by (Gower et al., 2011). On one hand, regional principals may have used IEWs/CECs short term to support some systemic policy implementation, annual events or operational activities and as key advisors for staff on local community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural matters. On the other hand, a close working relationship with the

IEW/CEC was not seen as a priority practice of many principals surveyed. The role of IEWs/CECs was underestimated. This was also evidenced by many IEWs/CECs themselves, with possible explanations drawn from the case study IEWs/CECs who articulated a self-acknowledged humility and the impacts of their experiences when working in a pre-dominantly non-Indigenous institution. The latter suggested the ‘push-pull’ of the daily tensions at the Cultural Interface (Nakata, 2007b) that is IEW/CEC work in schools.

The case study pairs’ professional relationships, however, were different and found to be already more efficacious than expected. Their strong professional relationships could be explained through a number of relational dynamics by applying relational leadership theory (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012b). In particular, there were parallels drawn between these dynamics and those of social change leadership practices (Ospina et al., 2012). The tensions and resulting negotiations experienced by the case study IEWs/CECs could be also seen as manifestations of Indigenous standpoint theory and for the case study pairs, as working at the Cultural Interface (Nakata, 2007c). Importantly the case study pairs generally navigated their way successfully in this space together because their strong relationships were built on trust, respect, shared vision, cultural responsiveness and they wanted to work together in leading school improvement. The conclusions that can be drawn from this major finding are that IEWs/CECs do have a centrality of role in the implementation of Indigenous education policy and as Indigenous advisors for staff and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families. Most importantly, strong professional relationships between IEWs/CECs and principals only currently exist as the exception in a few schools and not the norm for every school.

In understanding why the case study IEW/CEC and principal relationship was already strong and what were the contextual features found to influence this, led to the second major finding of this study which also adds empirical contributions to the field of Indigenous education. That is, the current strong IEW/CEC and principal relationship was influenced by particular individual personal predispositions of and deliberate practices by each person in their role. Considerations of these offered explanations about how IEWs/CECs and principals had rapidly established and sustained their strong professional relationships. That the case study IEWs/CECs could be considered as reticulists (Brown, 2017) by necessity was important because their lived experiences as Indigenous peoples enabled them to better support and advocate for their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families and, at the same time, be willing to work alongside their principals and other non-Indigenous staff. That case study principals had Indigenist perspectives (Ma Rhea, 2015b) allowed “a greater propensity for engagement” (Lowe, 2017, p. 49) with their Indigenous staff, students and their families. No

case study principal was Indigenous and none had exposure to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies during their own schooling and tertiary learning. They had gained their cultural responsiveness (Pursoe, 2012) by self-chosen training or familial situations. The conclusion to be drawn from this finding is that the strong relationship between IEWs/CECs and principals was created by particular personal predispositions and practices brought together more by chance and less by systemic design.

The final major finding is that a strong IEW/CEC and principal relationship can mitigate and ameliorate outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in state schools. A strong professional relationship mitigates detrimental contextual features like racism, perceived or actual uncertainty of funding and insufficiency of system support, while it ameliorates school members' capacity so leader agency, student success, parent engagement and staff cultural competency growth can occur. When analysed through the outcomes framework of Reconciliation Australia (Reconciliation Australia, 2018), these mitigations and ameliorations were consequently found to be not only microcosmic to the IEW/CEC and principal relationship or even school-community engagement, but also to the greater project of national reconciliation. One of the particular ameliorating outcomes, a vorticity of influence, explained the actions of envelopment by IEWs/CECs and principals with more staff into the work of Indigenous education. That is, when the case study pairs recognised their leadership actions must more effectively include and engage others in authentic ways with their work, they could harness the social capital of staff to move towards a whole school approach to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Mulford, 2013). It can be concluded that a strong IEW/CEC and principal relationship produces a number of positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student engagement and achievement. These were achieved through the agentic growth of the IEW/CEC and principal themselves and importantly, social capital growth (Spillane, 2016). In these case study schools, it was becoming "everyone's business" (Rigney, 2011, p. 14) for school improvement in Indigenous education. It can also be concluded that the progress being made that this local level was contributing to the greater project of national reconciliation in the current Australian context.

### **7.3 Implications for practice and policy**

The final core question of this study was: *What are the implications for policy and practice in schools?* This study found the implications of a strong relationship between an IEW/CEC and principal are many fold for state schools and for the system that supports them. They are discussed as two recommendations: (i) guarantee the reticulist and (ii) demand Indigenist perspectives.

### 7.3.1 Guarantee the reticulist

This study showcased some of the unique skills and practices of the IEW/CEC role in state schools and what can be achieved when they are in a strong professional relationship with their principal. Without IEWs/CECs in schools in the first place, especially those with numbers of Indigenous students, there is little opportunity for the support and influence they can offer and there certainly is no chance of improving their relationship with the principal. The case study within my research clearly showed that having IEWs/CECs and principals working together in schools exemplifies what is possible between them, between the school and the community and by extension, the greater project of reconciliation, between Australia and its First Peoples.

Across Australia and within state jurisdictions, there have been ongoing and multiple calls for systemic recognition of the important roles of IEWs/CECs played in schools over many decades (Commonwealth of Australia. Senate Standing Committee on Employment Workplace Relations Small Business and Education, 2001; C. Davis et al., 1995; Gower et al., 2011; Johnston, 1991b; White & Robb, 2014). It would seem after reviewing the major findings of my research, particularly those relating to the roles of IEW/CEC, that all of these above recommendations and requests for improvement in the tenure and working conditions for IEWs/CECs are most certainly still applicable and desperately needed for Indigenous non-teaching staff in schools in Queensland of the current day. The case study IEWs/CCs showed, with the backing of their principals, they had confidence to undertake their key position within the school. This is congruent with Gower et al. (2011) who acknowledge “the effectiveness of the AIEOs in schools was also connected to the support they received from the central and district offices, and importantly, at the school level from the principal” (p. 173). However, even though the individual principals made adjustments at their school as best as they could to maintain and support the position of IEW/CEC, for this exception to become the norm across The Region or across the state of Queensland, significant change must happen at a systemic level. Even with the evidence provided by numerous studies and now my study, there is yet to be an adequate response in real terms to ensure improved tenure and better work conditions for the roles of IEW or CEC in Queensland state schools. These were recurring issues for all of the case study IEWs/CECs in my research.

For example, at the time of writing this chapter (September 2019), the role description of a Community Education Counsellor in a Queensland government school is offered as two types, one is ‘Generic’ and the other is ‘Identified’ (Queensland Government, 2019a) (see Appendix T for a sample ‘Identified’ role description). A comparison of both would show that

they have identical wording of duties and expectations, with the exception of the words, 'generic' and 'Identified' and in the Identified role description, the person applying must comply with a "mandatory requirement of this role... [and supply] verification of Aboriginality and/or Torres Strait Island heritage" (Queensland Government, 2019a). There are no longer identified roles for Teacher Aides as was previously noted at the commencement of my study. How these role descriptions as they exist now add benefit to the roles of IEWs/CECs is unknown and would seem to be counterproductive to the major findings of my research.

As noted in Chapter 6, because IEWs/CECs "know what it is like to be black" (Schloss, cited in Clarke, 1981, p. 38), this positions them, in the first instance, as valuable to have on staff to support the learning and well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The need for having Indigenous staff in schools has long been recognised and was again recognised in a recent government inquiry into school education for Indigenous students across Australia:

It is clear that an increase in Indigenous teachers, teaching assistants and liaison officers with a connection to the community would not only provide an element of cultural safety in schools, but would also help to provide consistency and stability in terms of staff resources. (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, 2017, p. 54)

That said, this is only part of what is required. Not only must IEWs/CECs be offered permanent positions, they then must be supported by their principals through ongoing training to best position them to use their reticulist skills to greater effect for the learning and well-being of Indigenous students and the development of cultural competence of their principal and non-Indigenous staff. As one of the case study IEWs/CECs commented, "we need a CEC school ...the CEC's are being shown or coached, coached in what they are required to do" (IEW/CEC B, Pair B, Interview 3, p.71). It is from this position of school and systemic-based support that clear trajectories for IEWs/CECs to higher duties and other careers within the department, including teaching must be on offer and actively supported by the system.

That these improvements to the career structure of IEWs/CECs are equal to that recommended by C. Davis et al. (1995) almost 25 years ago, in the only national investigation into the working conditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers, is a disturbing and an unreasonable situation that must be addressed. Chris Sarra makes clear the maxim, "If you always do what you always did, then you will always get what you always got" (2005, p. 258). There is enough research to show the positive contribution made to schools by IEWs/CECs, including my research. Now is the time to for not just policy change, but new requirements in

employment agreements that can guarantee tenure, enhance capacity and provide future pathways of the position of IEWs/CECs.

### **7.3.2 Demand Indigenist perspectives**

My research makes clear the importance of how a principal's predispositions enable their strong relationship with IEWs/CECs. As noted by Gower et al. (2011), in a state-wide investigation into government schools in Western Australia, their findings relating to "Skilling principals of schools with AIEOs" (Gower et al., 2011, p. 151) showed,

an unwillingness to take advice from AIEOs on community matters, prevent them from liaising with communities or ignore their assistance in resolving issues with students can result in poorer-quality schooling for the students. In schools with significant numbers of Aboriginal students, the effectiveness of AIEOs can be increased by ensuring that principals have had sound professional learning on ways to effectively engage them to improve the students' education. (Gower et al., 2011, p. 151)

That all case study principals in my research had self-developed predispositions enabling them to be willing to take advice and assistance of their IEWs/CECs is significant. That this happened by their choice and not by systemic design is also significant. Their predispositions were shaped by similar circumstances described in the recent longitudinal study of Indigenous children, *Footprints in Time* (Department of Social Services, 2015) when looking at how Australian teachers gained cultural competence. Just like the teachers, the case study principals' Indigenist perspectives were obtained through self-elected Indigenous-specific training and/or on the job experience and/or familial Aboriginal connections.

None of the case study principals were Indigenous and the longevity of their career meant that it was highly unlikely they partook in systemically provided Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies during their own school or university years. Only one of the case study principals had, in recent times, undertaken elective training from the Stronger Smarter Institute (Stronger Smarter Institute, 2018b), one of the few professional opportunities still existing in Australia that specifically offers a strong focus on the practical educational leadership necessary to lead effectively for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The Institute was developed by an Indigenous principal for all principals. It is led by Indigenous people and within it, Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff work together. The cost to come out of a school and to attend may be prohibitive to smaller schools and the system needs to look at how to support greater access to this valuable training opportunity provided by Stronger Smarter.

The only recent systemic policy initiative training experienced by the case study principals mentioned throughout this thesis was EATSIPS (Department of Education Training

and Employment, 2011a). As noted in earlier chapters, it was implemented in The Region during 2013-2014 as a one off. Two of the case study schools did make developing staff capacity using EATSIPS as a key feature of their action plans enacted during the period of my research. The case study schools, however, were the exception and not the norm. Buckskin's observation made over eight years ago still holds true today,

there is not yet a national policy about the role and status of cultural competency training for teachers, non-Indigenous teachers who have worked with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and other members of Indigenous communities know that interacting appropriately and effectively with people from different cultural and language backgrounds calls for knowledge, skills and attitudes which most members of the dominant Anglo or western culture group do not possess. (2012, p. 168)

Granted, there are now National Standards for teachers (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2018) and principals (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2019) embedded within the developing performance processes of Australian school jurisdictions, including Queensland state schools, but my research shows these have yet to have wide spread translation into competencies required or a level of accountability to apply them at the school level, certainly in The Region studied. Currently, there is 'mandatory training' that every state school principal must ensure occurs with their staff at the commencement of employment for new employees and then refreshers for staff annually, but these relate to topics such as codes of conduct, workplace health and safety and child protection and are delivered in house by the school, usually the principal (Queensland Government. Department of Education, 2019). It is known to me through my prior professional field experience and what was found throughout the duration of my research that, ongoing professional development to embed Indigenous perspectives, however is optional and is at the discretion of the principal and requires specialist trainers to deliver the content.

The only state in Australia that known to have a state wide policy in place for Cultural Competency of its staff in schools is Western Australia. Their Department of Education released an Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework in 2015:

Following a period of familiarisation with the Framework in 2016, from 2017 schools are expected to use self-assessment against the framework in school improvement planning. This practice should form part of schools' ongoing improvement planning. In 2018, school leaders are expected to implement the framework as a clear statement of expected practice and behaviour in schools and communities to increase Aboriginal student achievement and drive improvement planning. (Department of Education Western Australia, 2015)

Acquiring and expecting an Indigenist perspective for all staff, especially principals, should therefore not be left to chance. For example, it could be at the recruitment stage, that an expectation that principal applicants must have well developed skills and willingness or ability to quickly acquire similar to collaboratively work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, should be specifically included within the selection criteria. Similarly training and expectations to learn about Indigenous histories and cultures, especially those of the local area should be included at their induction and then in ongoing ways through annual developing performance processes for principals. These expectations should not just be for principals of schools in remote areas, but for every principal in every school.

My study also showed that while specialist support was offered at a regional level, the limited availability of key staff to service such a large region was problematic, especially for the case study schools who did want to maintain this work in an ongoing way. At a regional level, there needs to be systemic positions for an appropriate number identified Indigenous support officers proportionate to the complexity of the region to work alongside other non-Indigenous officers to provide timely and targeted assistance across all schools.

The significance of the need for this situation to change is emphasised by other scholars from the field of Indigenous education who, within their research, make reference to principals needing to work more effectively with their Indigenous workers (see Funnell, 2012; MacGill, 2009; Pearce, 2011; Sarra, 2005).

While the Department of Education in Queensland currently has, a state schools directorate for Indigenous education led by an Assistant Director General who is Aboriginal, the work to develop the capacity of schools to grow their Indigenist perspectives should be the expectation of all directorates. The layers of leadership starting with the Director General of Education through to Regional Directors to the Assistant Regional Directors who directly supervise state school principals must equally all be supported to have an Indigenist perspective. Just like the expectations for improvement in schools for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students made clear by my research, this is “everyone’s business” (Rigney, 2011, p. 14).

A summary of the core research questions, major findings and implications is provided in Table 27.

Table 27 Summary of core research questions, major findings and implications

Core research questions	Major Findings	Implications for practice and policy
What is the current IEW/CEC and principal relationship?	<b>Major Finding 1:</b> Overall, across The Region, strong professional relationships between IEWs/CECs and principals were variable and fragmented in many schools and only strong for a few.	<b>Guarantee the reticulist.</b> Recognise the important role of IEWs/CECs to enhance school improvement for Indigenous student success. IEWs/CECS need to be employed in schools in the first place. They require improved tenure and work conditions and be offered ongoing support and training for their capability development. IEWs/CECs must have clear trajectories for higher duties and other careers within the department, including a ‘CEC school’ to learn and be coached about their role.
How can the relationship be strengthened and what are the contextual features that influence this?	<b>Major Finding 2:</b> The current strong IEW/CEC and principal relationship was influenced by particular individual personal predispositions of and deliberate practices by each person in their role.	<b>Demand Indigenist perspectives.</b> Gaining cultural responsiveness should not be left to chance. Implement the raft of past recommendations, refine already implemented successful strategies and make accessible further training for school leaders, i.e. the Partnership Assessment tool; and Stronger Smarter Institute training. Expect Indigenist perspective capacities at selection and recruitment of principals. Introduce cultural competencies as a system wide framework and ‘mandated’ training and ongoing systemic targeted training for all staff. Employ and better deploy more Indigenous regional support staff.
What are the outcomes of this strengthened relationship?	<b>Major finding 3:</b> a strong IEW/CEC and principal relationship can mitigate and ameliorate outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in state schools.	

#### 7.4 A cause for hope

Since the period of data collection and its analysis for my research, there have been some positive developments in Queensland Government policy that shows there may be an increased appetite for the very recommendations made by my research. For instance, the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP), who now has had Dr Chris Sarra as its Director General since August 2018 (The Queensland Cabinet and Ministerial Directory, 2018), released a publicly available strategic document, *Statement of Commitment*, “to affirm the joint commitment to a reframed relationship in response to recommendation seven of the Reparations Taskforce Report, Reconciling Past Injustice” (Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, 2019, p. 1). This document has at its conclusion, those who acknowledge the statement as the Premier of Queensland, Annastacia Palaszczuk, the Deputy Premier of Queensland, Jackie Trad and Chair of Reparations Taskforce, Mick Gooda.

A parallel internal document has been created by the Department of Education in Queensland. On 6 June 2019, in recognition of my strong interest in Indigenous education and in my capacity as co-chair of the Queensland Association of Primary Principals sub-committee for Indigenous Education, I was invited to Brisbane to witness the Department of Education launch its own commitment statement, titled, *Our Commitment to Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*. This document was signed by the Director General of Education, Tony Cook and in July, 2019 every state school was sent two posters featuring this document with specific directions to frame them, where and how they must be displayed in a prominent position in every school’s foyer for public viewing. See Figure 7.1 for an image of the Department of Education’s 'Commitment Statement' on public display in my school's front office foyer.

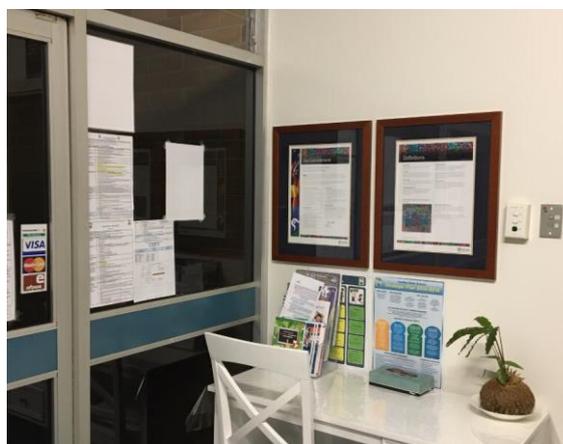


Figure 7.2 Image of the Commitment Statement on display in my school's foyer

This Department of Education document outlines seven actions by which the commitment is to be achieved including, “providing career pathways and professional development within the department” and, “challenging inequities in our policies and practices”. The final statement of the document pledges,

Activities designed to achieve these commitments and aspirations will be embedded throughout the department’s action plans, including the Cultural Capability Action Plan, Reconciliation Action Plan, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy and our Advancing Education Action Plan. We will report on the activities within these action plans and ensure they are captured in role descriptions, performance plans and agreements. (Department of Education, 2019f)

The challenge is to see the activities enacted and achieved in real terms in state schools and sooner rather than later. The words of Noel Pearson come to mind,

One problem with these policy documents is that they never grapple with the challenges of implementation. Even where the policies appear sound, implementation failure reduces them to yet another instalment in the Groundhog Day sequence. If an education ‘strategy’ results in implementation failure, then it could not have been a true strategy. A proper strategy is not just good policy content and intent—it must grapple with what is needed to make it work. (2009, pp. 30-31)

## **7.5 Contributions and suggestions**

This thesis makes a contribution to current knowledge in the fields of Indigenous education and school improvement because as far as I am aware, this is the first time in the context of state schools in Queensland, that such a detailed examination of positive professional relationships between IEWs/CECs and principals has been undertaken and linked to school improvement. It has provided empirical evidence about the phenomenon of the IE/CEC and principal professional relationship and the work they can do together in state schools. It has highlighted that when strong, this relationship does play a part in improving Indigenous student engagement and achievement, embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and developing staff cultural competence. Importantly, a strong IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship leads to better understanding between staff and students, can enhance school-community engagement and makes a contribution to the national project of reconciliation.

As such, this study offers opportunities for further research at scale into the impacts of strong relationships by key leaders on student learning and wellbeing outcomes, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. There is a great need to review the effectiveness of the role of the IEW/CEC within state schools in Queensland. Unlike other states and

territories, research into their roles has not been undertaken in Queensland in recent times or as empirical research. Better still, a national study into the situation of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship would significantly add to research knowledge and have potential to influence national education policy. Similarly pursuing the notion of reconciliation in schools as a focus of study across the country would be timely and also serve as beneficial research for school improvement and to the cause of the national project of reconciliation.

As noted in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3, while the non-remote context of this study might limit generalisability to all state schools in Queensland or Australia, on the other hand, some of the methods used to measure the strength of the professional relationship between IEWs/CECs and principals, particularly the ‘Partnership Assessment’ tool featured in Chapter 4 does have replication usefulness. The *Same Kids Same Goals* project from which it emanated is no longer available, however. IEWs/CECs and principals would stand to benefit if it was revitalised and redeveloped by researchers working in partnership for the Department of Education to create useful diagnostic assessments for next steps in leadership capacity development in schools.

That my research design utilised a CPAR approach, proved to be particularly beneficial for me as a practitioner-researcher and for the participants involved in the research, especially the case study IEW/CEC and principal pairs. It enabled us to authentically work together to engage in spirals of inquiry to find solutions to real life problems in contemporary state schools. I note with interest that the Queensland Education Department has moved in recent years to include an ‘Inquiry Cycle’ into its School Improvement Model for all state schools to have “Every Student Succeeding” (Department of Education, 2019e). A similar research design is recommended for further inquiries about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education by practitioner-researchers and academic researchers in state schools. When I searched the Queensland Education Research Inventory website, as at 7 September, 2019, I noted there was currently only one such application for research about Indigenous education in state schools in train (Queensland Government, 2019c). The need to know more about what success is being experienced in Indigenous Education in contemporary state schools and in particular non-remote state school is greater than it has ever been before.

## **7.6 Closing statement**

Underpinned by a desire for social justice in education, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, this study has focused on examining the IEW/CEC and principal professional relationship to better understand how it forms and might be further strengthened for school improvement in Indigenous education. As a pair of key leaders, IEWs/CECs and

principals should be able to work effectively together to achieve equity and excellence in their schools. By examining and interpreting the IEW/CEC and principal relationship, the context that surrounds it and their leadership actions and resulting outcomes, emancipatory knowledge has informed and transformed practice of participants in this study, including my own.

This thesis provides an evidence informed argument to influence change in policy and practice in Queensland schools for Indigenous students. Importantly this thesis “privileges oral accounts as a means to develop receptivity between historically dissonant partners, such as ACEOs and teachers, policy makers and principals” (MacGill, 2017, p. 57) by featuring as evidence, excerpts of dialogue emanating from the study’s CPAR approach. The voices of IEWs/CECs and those of the principals speak to a deep recognition of the valuable and complex work of IEWs/CECs in schools and showcase the transformative introspection of the pairs when they talk and work together. This thesis also demonstrates that strong IEW/CEC and principal professional relationships in Australian schools are not only possible, they already exist and where they do not, they have the possibility to exist. Such professional relationships should be widespread and not happen by chance and rather, by design.

Contributing to the body of research about Indigenous school education, not only in Australia but also internationally, this thesis also offers pragmatic strategies for school improvement for practitioners and policy makers so every student can succeed, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This thesis also showcases a grassroots illustration of the strong relationship possibilities between Australia and its First Peoples that many of us hope to live long enough to see as enacted across our nation.

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## Appendix A: Uluru Statement from the Heart

### ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart:

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from ‘time immemorial’, and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

This sovereignty is *a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or ‘mother nature’, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty.* It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years?

With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia’s nationhood.

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is *the torment of our powerlessness.*

We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take *a rightful place* in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: *the coming together after a struggle*. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.

In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

(National Constitutional Convention, 2017, May 26)

**Appendix B: Positioning of IEW/CEC role and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in the public domain**

<p><b>State:</b></p> <p><b>Title of Education Department</b></p>	<p><b>Title of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander non-teaching role/s</b></p> <p><b>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education information</b></p>
<p>Australian Capital Territory (ACT):</p> <p>Education Directorate</p>	<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officer (IEO).</p> <p>A search of the home page of their web site showed there was no apparent specifically named Aboriginal branch or division easily sighted. After searching across the various tabs, however, under the ‘Support For Students’ tab, a series of drop down headings was visible with the first being ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education’. Clicking on that, a new page opened with 10 further links to information about Indigenous education in the ACT. The first tab was headed, ‘ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Advisory Group’. Also featured in this page was the ACT’s ‘Cultural Integrity Continuum’. Opening that tab, the following information was provided,</p> <p>From 2018 schools have access to a new suite of resources, framed around a self-assessment continuum. The continuum has drawn on the latest evidence and research, which says that to build their Cultural Integrity schools should focus on four dimensions:</p> <p>Engagement with families and community;</p>

	<p>Teaching with Cultural Integrity;</p> <p>Leadership, celebration and environment; and</p> <p>High expectations and successful transitions (Department of Education. Australian Capital Territory, 2018).</p> <p>The very last tab on the page was ‘Links’ and opening it revealed links to various documents including the Australian Government’s National Strategy. Another link was titled, ‘ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement’. On opening that document it was dated 2015-2018 and had not been updated.</p> <p>Another tab on this page was titled: ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officers (IEOs)’. This was the information presented once the tab was opened:</p> <p>The Education Directorate also employs 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officers (IEOs) who work across 11 ACT public schools. From 2018 IEOs will support schools to build their Cultural Integrity by:</p> <p>Supporting schools to engage with families and community;</p> <p>Supporting teachers to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across the curriculum;</p> <p>Providing advice and leadership to schools on celebrating significant events and milestones for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;</p> <p>Supporting schools to grow a culture of high expectations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; and</p> <p>Facilitating successful student transitions between year levels, between schools and to post school study or work (Department of Education. Australian Capital Territory, 2018)</p>
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<p>New South Wales (NSW) : Department of Education (DoE)</p>	<p>Aboriginal Education Officer (AEO).</p> <p>A search on the home page of their web site showed there was no apparent specifically named Aboriginal branch or division easily sighted. After searching across the various tabs, under the ‘Teaching and learning’ tab, there was a drop down link to ‘Aboriginal education and communities’. Clicking on that link, a new page opened with six sections of information. One of the six sections was titled, ‘About us’ tab with the statement, “About the Aboriginal Education and Communities Directorate” (Department of Education. New South Wales, 2019a). One of the other six sections, included a dynamic link titled, ‘Aboriginal education strategy and policy’. Clicking on that link, another page opened with further information about strategy and policy. The following is stated about the policy,</p> <p>The Aboriginal Education Policy confirms the NSW Department of Education's commitment to improvement in educational outcomes and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. It demonstrates our commitment to the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015 (Department of Education. New South Wales, 2019c).</p> <p>Upon opening the dynamic link on this page, the actual policy content is visible. The document information on the right hand side of the page shows the date of implementation as: 18/11/2008. The date it was last updated was 16 April 2018. When returning to the policy and strategy page, information was also presented about the Partnership Agreement between the NSW Department of Education and the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc. (NSW AECG) under the header, “Together We Are, Together We Can, Together We Will: Maintaining a collaborative partnership into the future - Partnership Agreement“ (Department of Education. New South Wales, 2019c). A link to a pdf document and the NSW AECG website is provided. Also on the ‘Aboriginal education strategy and policy page is information mentioned under the headings of, ‘Connected Communities Strategy’ and ‘OCHRE Plan – Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests’. Finally there was a heading titled ‘Other key department</p>
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policies and strategies'. The update information at the foot of the 'Aboriginal education strategy and policy' page states this page was last updated on 24 April 2018.

Back at the home page, going to the 'About us' tab at the top right hand side, when clicked revealed one major and eight minor dynamic links. Clicking on the 'About us' major link revealed a page about the department. There was a bank of 'Quick links' with six dynamic links. Clicking on 'why choose us?' opened a page with various parts of information. On the right hand side of the page were several tabs including a tab, 'Employing Aboriginal people'. Clicking on that tab provided a page of information about employment with the department including instructions about 'Confirmation of Aboriginality'. Finding the particular roles in schools for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples was only achieved when 'Aboriginal education worker' was typed into the search function on the home page. This yielded 4357 results. The third search result, 'Aboriginal peoples, Careers in Education' proved to be the best link to the information. Scrolling down through the page, the following information was presented under a heading, 'Positions in school leadership and support',

After teaching for some time, you may consider applying for a senior position that gives you the opportunity to apply your leadership and management skills. These positions include head teacher, assistant principal and principal.

Other positions you may consider include:

school education director

Aboriginal community liaison officer

Aboriginal student liaison officer

	<p>consultant Aboriginal education</p> <p>home school liaison officer</p> <p>school development officer</p> <p>Aboriginal education and wellbeing officer</p> <p>These positions give you the opportunity to support Aboriginal students, communities, teachers of Aboriginal descent and teaching communities. The positions are generally located in state and regional offices (Department of Education. New South Wales, 2019d).</p>
<p>Northern Territory (NT):</p> <p>Department of Education (DoE)</p>	<p>Aboriginal and Islander Education Worker (AIEW)</p> <p>There was no apparent specifically named Aboriginal branch or division easily sighted on their home page. Information was found after using the search function and typing the words ‘Aboriginal education’. This bore 200 results. The first result featured a link to information about the ‘Indigenous Education Strategy’. Clicking on this link, a new page opened with information about the strategy, “The Indigenous Education Strategy was developed in response to recommendations from the A Share in the Future Review of Indigenous Education in the Northern Territory (NT)” (Department of Education. Northern Territory, 2015). Immediately under this statement was a link to the strategy, titled: Indigenous Education Strategy 2015-2024.</p> <p>Despite numerous searches using the home page search function, no role or role statement for an Indigenous specific role in schools was found within the Department’s home page. It was only after searching through various documents, that the role known as ‘Aboriginal and Islander Education Worker (AIEW)’ was noted in the document, <i>A Share in the Future Review of Indigenous Education in the Northern Territory (NT)</i> (Department of Education. Northern Territory, 2015).</p>

<p>Queensland (QLD): Department of Education (DoE)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Community Education Counsellor (CEC)</p> <p>In Queensland, there is one Minister responsible for several portfolios, one of Education, including Early Childhood and the other is the Office of Industrial Relations. Depending on what search phrase is used determines which page a person is directed to. There is an ‘Education’ home page, a ‘Department of Education’ home page, an ‘Early Childhood’ home page and an “Office of Industrial Relations’ home page. It is confusing to search for what is ‘the right’ home page. When on the ‘Department of Education’ home page (the Department of Education page features a blue masthead design), no specifically named Aboriginal branch or division was easily sighted. Using the search function and typing the words ‘Aboriginal education’ yielded 215 results but none specific to a home page for Indigenous education. Using the phrase ‘Indigenous education’ to search yielded 362 results but again none led to a home page. After searching across the home page tabs and scrolling down through each one, the tab, ‘Programs and initiatives’ opened a page with a list of programs and initiatives. After scrolling down through the eight headings, the final heading was “Indigenous education and training”. It provided a link to “The Indigenous portal” (Department of Education. Queensland, 2019a). After clicking on to the ‘Indigenous portal’ a review of the home page did not reveal there was any strategic plan or any kind of policy statement for Indigenous education.</p> <p>Searching the DoE public website for Indigenous non-teaching roles appeared only possible if one knows the specific name of the role in question. Because I knew the role, ‘Community Education Counsellor’, I was able to use that term in the search function of the home page. This drew 25 results, with the second item heading ‘Role Descriptions’ being the link I could use to find the role. On reaching that page, I was required to scroll down through 25 headings of different role descriptions with the final one right at the end of the page being, ‘Community Education Counsellor’. The information under that heading was” The community education counsellor (CEC) provides educational counselling and support services to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander</p>
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	<p>secondary students and communities” (Department of Education. Queensland, 2019b). There was no dynamic link or other link to access any further information on that page. It is only my insider knowledge that allowed me to navigate to this site. It is known to me that more information pertaining to the IEW and CEC role is available on the ‘staff only’ side of the DoE website. It took six steps into the website to find the CEC position. It is reasonable to suggest, without prior knowledge, the website is difficult to navigate.</p>
<p>South Australia (SA):  Department for Education (DfE)</p>	<p>Aboriginal Community Education Officer (ACEO)</p> <p>A search of the home page of their web site showed there was no apparent specifically named Aboriginal branch or division easily sighted. After searching across the various tabs, under the ‘Teaching’ tab and within the ‘Projects and programs’ tab, there was a link to the Department’s ‘Aboriginal Education Strategy’. This is a 10 year plan,</p> <p>released in December 2018 to increase outcomes for Aboriginal students... The strategy was designed in partnership with Professor Peter Buckskin, chairperson of the South Australian Aboriginal Education and Training Consultative Council (SAAETCC) and informed by consultation with Aboriginal students, families, communities and our workforce” (Department for Education. South Australia, 2019).</p> <p>To find a non-teaching role in schools for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the ‘Working with us’ tab on the home page linked to eight dynamic links. One of them was ‘Preschool and school support (ancillary)’. Clicking on that link led to seven further dynamic links of which one was ‘Aboriginal community education officers’. Opening this page provided information about ‘Duties’, ‘Appointment details and definitions’ and ‘Contact’ details.</p>
<p>Tasmania (TAS):</p>	<p>Aboriginal Early Years Education Workers (AEYEWs)</p>

<p>Department of Education Tasmania  Aboriginal Education Services</p>	<p>Aboriginal Education Officer (AEO)</p> <p>A search of the home page of their web site showed there was no apparent specifically named Aboriginal branch or division easily sighted. Using the search function and typing the words ‘Aboriginal education’ yielded 264 results but none specific to a home page for Indigenous education. Using the phrase ‘Indigenous education’ to search yielded the identical search results. A third attempt of just typing ‘Aboriginal’ yielded eight results with the second dynamic link being ‘Aboriginal Education Services’. Opening this link provided some information about its position within the department. The information presented under the heading, ‘About’ states,</p> <p>Aboriginal Education Services (AES) supports all child and family centres, schools, colleges and the Department of Education’s service areas to develop practices and environments that improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal students and enable all learners to deepen their knowledge of Aboriginal people in Tasmania. Through engaging with the world’s oldest continuous living culture, learners will understand that contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal people are strong and resilient, with a rich and dynamic culture.</p> <p>Our work focuses on the Australian Curriculum cross-curriculum priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures to understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We base our work with the Child and Family Centres on principles of the Early Years Learning Framework and with schools on the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (1.4 and 2.4).</p> <p>The work of AES is also informed by Tasmania’s Aboriginal Education Framework which in turn supports Tasmania’s Closing the Gap Strategy. This Strategy takes into account Tasmania’s unique socio-cultural context and responds to the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy (Department of Education. Tasmania, 2019).</p> <p>Upon opening the document, <i>Tasmania’s Aboriginal Education Framework</i>, showed it had not been updated for 2019. It was dated 2016-2017. There was a further tab on the ‘Aboriginal Education Services: About’ titled, ‘Read more about Aboriginal</p>
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	<p>Education Services’ (Department of Education. Tasmania, 2019). It was here that some mention of the specific roles in schools for Indigenous workers was stated as,</p> <p>Aboriginal Early Years Education Workers (AEYEWs) are based in Child and Family Centres (CFCs) throughout the state. AEYEWs work closely with families of Aboriginal children from birth to five years of age to engage their children in a wide range of early year’s activities and programs. These programs nurture and stimulate young children’s learning and help children to become ready for school. AEYEWs play a key role in building connections between schools and families with young children.</p> <p>AES employs Aboriginal Education Officers (AEOs) who work across schools across the state. They play an important role in schools for learners, teachers and the Aboriginal community. An understanding of local culture and strong community ties contribute to the improvement of educational outcomes for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners. AEOs support teachers and Aboriginal students in the areas of academic achievement, participation, attendance, retention, pathways and in developing a rich curriculum inclusive of Aboriginal histories and cultures across the curriculum (Department of Education. Tasmania, 2019).</p>
<p>Victoria (VIC):  Department of Education and Training (DET)</p>	<p>Koorie Education Coordinator (KEC) (regional position); Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO) (school based)</p> <p>There was no apparent specifically named Aboriginal branch or division easily sighted on their home page. Information was found after using the search function and typing the words ‘Aboriginal education’ and returned 523 results. Researching using the term, ‘Koorie education’ returned 521 results. The first result featured a link to information about ‘School policy: Koorie Education’. The information stated under the link said, “Policy to support schools to provide quality and meaningful education to Koorie students including using the Wannik, Learning Together – Journey to Our Future education strategy” (Department of Education and Training. Victoria, 2019). Upon clicking on the link, a page of information about the policy is stated. There is no mention of Wannik, but rather ‘Marrung; Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026’. A copy of the plan was available at the end of the</p>

	<p>page under the heading of ‘Department resources’ (Department of Education and Training. Victoria, 2019). To find what roles for Indigenous staff existed in schools besides teachers,</p>
<p>Western Australia (WA):  Department of Education (DoE)</p>	<p>Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer (AIEO)</p> <p>There was no apparent specifically named Aboriginal branch or division easily sighted on their home page. Information was found after using the search function and typing the words ‘Aboriginal education’. This bore 37 results. The second result featured a link to information about an award known as the ‘WA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officer of the Year’.</p> <p>Returning to the home page, and after searching across various tabs, under the ‘Our organisation’ tab and within the ‘Strategic direction’ tab, there were various links to information about strategic plans and other strategies including a link to “Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework’. A link to the document was provided. Upon opening the document, the copyright page showed the framework was devised in 2015. The following information was stated under the ‘Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework’ header,</p> <p>The Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework supports our work to improve outcomes for Aboriginal students.</p> <p>It sets expected standards for all staff when working with Aboriginal students, their parents and families, and communities. The framework supports staff to reflect on their behaviours, attitudes and practices with a view to progressing from cultural awareness to cultural responsiveness so we can maximise learning outcomes for Aboriginal students.</p> <p>Our Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework – the first in Australia – is an exciting development for our system and one that will help us put into action the steps we need to take for our schools to become culturally responsive (Department of Education. Western Australia, 2019).</p>

**Appendix C: Summary of specific empirical studies IEWs/CECs 1994 - 2019**

<b>Author (date) Title Text type</b>	<b>Research purpose Research Method</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Main Findings and recommendations</b>
Buckskin & Hignett (1994)  ARA Kuwaritjakutu Project: Towards a new way: Stages 1 & 2. A research project into the working conditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workers  Paperback book	To investigate the working conditions of AIEWs across Australia.  Mixed methods: quantitative surveys, consultation workshops, structured visits focus groups and interviews	1,115 AIEWs from across Australia  Members of State Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups  Staff in State Aboriginal Education Units	Turnover of AIEWs Role confusion Low Salary levels Lack of opportunity for training & development Institutional racism Exploitation of AIEW roles Sixteen recommendations to address the above
Cahill, & Collard (2003)  "Deadly Ways to Learn. . . a Yarn about Some Learning We Did Together"  Journal Article	To collect, create and critique two-way bi-dialectal classroom practices in fourteen Western Australian schools to promote parity of esteem between the dialects of Standard Australian English (SAE) and Aboriginal English.  Action research: Structured visits focus groups and interviews	14 teachers  14 AIEOs from across state, Catholic and private schools	Teacher practices became more inclusive and self-reflexive Teacher perception of AIEWs significantly changed to be viewed as integral to advice for curriculum planning and delivery
Warren, Cooper & Baturu (2004)  Indigenous students and mathematics: teachers'	To examine teachers' perceptions of the role of teacher aides in mathematics classrooms in rural and remote communities.	12 teachers from three rural and remote Queensland schools	Results indicated: 1. There were differences in how the teachers worked with their teacher aides, particularly the specific roles assigned to them in the mathematics classroom, with non-Indigenous

<p>perceptions of the role of teacher aides</p> <p>Journal Article</p>	<p>Action research: Structured visits focus groups and interviews</p>	<p>12 – 6 AIEWs and six non-Indigenous teacher aides</p>	<p>teacher aides being given greater responsibilities for student learning and Indigenous teacher aides for behavioural management.</p> <p>2. Because of teacher aide in-service on mathematics learning, teachers' perception of the Indigenous teacher aides changed, resulting in each being given greater responsibility for student learning.</p>
<p>MacGill (2009)</p> <p>Aboriginal Education Workers in South Australia: towards equality of recognition of Indigenous ethics of care practices</p> <p>PhD thesis</p>	<p>To reveal how the absence of recognition of AEWs in State schools is a form of institutionalised discrimination that leads to the marginalisation of AEWs by their non-Indigenous colleagues.</p> <p>Qualitative: Semi-structured in-depth interviews</p>	<p>Five AIEWs from remote South Australian schools</p>	<p>This study revealed the inequality of recognition of AEWs at a collegial and institution level. Three recommendations to address this.</p>
<p>Pearce, F. (2011)</p> <p>AEWs: Skilled uncles and aunties smoothing out the bumps on the road to learning</p> <p>Masters thesis</p>	<p>Do Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) contribute to improving Aboriginal educational outcomes?</p> <p>Mixed methods: Likert survey and qualitative survey</p>	<p>79 students 22 parents 38 AEWs 42 Principals 114 teachers 45 others from 11, New South Wales Catholic Dioceses</p>	<p>Agreement rate of 91% from participants that AEWs play an important role in helping improve Aboriginal educational and social outcomes. Six recommendations for further research into AEWs.</p> <p>“AEWs are the unrecognised jewels in the crown of Aboriginal Education” (Pearce, 2011, p. 199)</p>
<p>Gower, Partington, Byrne, Galloway, Weisssofner, Ferguson &amp; Kirov (2011)</p>	<p>To what extent do public schools’ expectations of the AIEOs’ role and the duties they perform match the expectations of the Department, as indicated in the current job description?</p>	<p>Surveys from 183 AIEWs, 220 principals/deputy principals and 278</p>	<p>There were 11 major findings. Most pertained to findings from perceptions of principals, teachers and to a lesser extent, the AIEOs themselves. The majority of principals and teachers (approx. 60%) and an even greater majority of AIEOs</p>

<p>Review Of The Aboriginal And Islander Education Officer Program: A report prepared for the Department of Education Western Australia</p> <p>Report</p>	<p>How and to what extent do AIEOs enhance the capacity of public schools to engage effectively with the Aboriginal members of the school community?</p> <p>What factors enhance or impede the effectiveness of the contribution of AIEOs?</p> <p>To what extent do public schools collect and analyse data/information to determine the effectiveness of the AIEO program in assisting them to improve the participation and engagement of Aboriginal students?</p> <p>How could the AIEO program in public schools be made more effective?</p> <p>Qualitative: (a) an on-line survey, supplemented by hard copies of questionnaires; and (b) school-based interviews</p>	<p>teachers from across the State</p> <p>Interviews with 71 AIEOs, 49 principals/deputy principals and 55 teachers from 34 public schools across the state</p>	<p>(approx. 75%) considered the AIEO program to be effective.</p> <p>Principals thought cultural and community liaison and relationship skills were important and teachers considered education support in the classroom as the important contributions made by AIEOs.</p> <p>Suggestions were made to improve the program by all three groups, including better induction practices not just for AIEOs, but also the staff who utilise AIEOs.</p> <p>A lack of career pathways and a review into the job description of the AIEO role was recommended</p>
<p>Gervasoni, Hodges, Crosswell, &amp; Parish (2011)</p> <p>Insights from Aboriginal Teaching Assistants about the impact of Bridging the Numeracy Gap project in a Kimberley Catholic school</p>	<p>The paper was an analysis of the views of three Aboriginal Teaching Assistants (ATAs) from a participating Catholic School in the Kimberley, Western Australia.</p> <p>Qualitative: Semi-structured interviews</p>	<p>Two members of the research team met with three ATAs at School K to discuss their views about the impact of the project and advise about how to assist students to learn mathematics</p>	<p>It was found that the Aboriginal Teaching Assistants were particularly concerned about: (1) student engagement in mathematics learning; (2), the importance of the school community appreciating people's values and learning styles (reconciliation); and (3) involving Aboriginal people in decision-making about their children's education (self-determination). Connectedness</p>

<p>Conference paper</p>		<p>effectively. The conversation was digitally recorded and transcribed, then analysed in terms of the seven constructs identified by (Matthews et al., 2003): Social Justice; Empowerment; Engagement; Reconciliation; Self-determination; Connectedness; and Relevance.</p>	<p>(belonging) and relevance were also highly represented in their discussion. “Learning from each other and working together to bring about this vision for education is what Reconciliation is all about” (Gervasoni et al., 2011, p. 313)</p>
<p>Grace, R., &amp; Trudgett, M. (2012)</p> <p>It's not rocket science: The perspectives of Indigenous early childhood workers on supporting the engagement of Indigenous families in early childhood settings</p> <p>Journal article</p>	<p>How might Indigenous families be better supported to engage with early childhood education and care services?</p> <p>Qualitative: Semi-structured interviews</p>	<p>6 Indigenous early childhood workers from across disadvantaged communities in New South Wales (Mt Druitt, Wollongong, Nowra, Bathurst, Taree, Broken Hill and Tweed Heads).</p>	<p>Indigenous early childhood workers identified both barriers and facilitators to the engagement of Indigenous families in early childhood settings. Barriers of student success were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transport</li> <li>Embarrassment</li> <li>Community Division</li> </ul> <p>Facilitators were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embracing families</li> <li>Embracing culture and community</li> </ul> <p>Support workers wanted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional development &amp; training</li> <li>Culturally safe work environment</li> </ul>

			<p>Overall:</p> <p>A strengths-based approach that seeks to understand the challenges facing each family, while also looking to build on their strengths in an attitude of acceptance and non-judgement, is essential. Another layer essential to effective communication is the building of understanding amongst non-Indigenous early childhood workers of the socio-historical and cultural context of Indigenous people. This cultural knowledge will serve them not only in building relationships with families but also in their support of Indigenous early childhood staff (Grace &amp; Trudgett, 2012, p. 17).</p>
<p>Funnell (2012)</p> <p>Indigenous Education Workers: A Special Case of Educational Assistant</p> <p>Book chapter</p>	<p>To what extent should IEW work blend with the duties of a teacher aide?</p> <p>To what extent can the IEW's understanding of Indigenous ways of learning be melded with a teacher's knowledge and understanding of their subject areas? Then reworded in the conclusion as:</p> <p>How might a space be conceptualised in which the teacher and IEW can work together in ways "we" can teach Indigenous students?</p>	<p>Seven Indigenous non-teaching staff from three urban Queensland schools from Catholic, independent and State sectors.</p>	<p>Questions are explored through the chapter using interviews. Some findings from other studies discussed included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roles of teaching assistants are ignored</li> <li>• Blurring of boundaries between assistant and teacher related duties</li> <li>• IEWs want to collaborate with teachers</li> </ul> <p>Conclusion presented arguments that IEWs were a special case of assistant who needed recognition for the work. Non-Indigenous staff needed to better connect with IEWs in 'a space for collaboration'.</p>

	Qualitative: Case studies; Semi-structured interviews		
<p>Armour et al., (2014) Confidence and Professional learning: A Case Study of Indigenous Teaching Assistants attending Professional Learning</p> <p>Conference paper</p>	<p>This paper reported on research about Indigenous Teacher Assistants (ITAs) and their participation as part of a larger RoleM project, a longitudinal study situated in the first four years of schooling in urban, rural and remote contexts in Queensland.</p> <p>The paper examined the personal impact participation in the RoleM project had on ITAs in the mathematics classroom.</p> <p>The paper aimed to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore ITAs confidence in teaching mathematics, and</li> <li>2. Identify factors that support the development of their personal understanding of mathematics and teaching mathematics</li> </ol> <p>Qualitative: Semi-structured interviews with Indigenous teacher assistants who participated in the RoleM professional learning model. These interviews occurred up to three times each year.</p>	<p>Due the remoteness of some of the participating schools not all ITAs were interviewed. One ITA was interviewed four times over a two year period, five ITAs were interviewed twice over one year and 20 ITAs were interviewed once in the year they were involved in the study = 21 T/As</p>	<p>Seven major themes emerged from the data. These were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ITAs own personal knowledge and understanding of mathematics</li> <li>2. The gains that they had made as a result of their engagement in the RoleM professional learning</li> <li>3. The personal confidence they had gained in helping the students in their classroom learn mathematics</li> <li>4. Difficulties they were having in teaching mathematics in their particular contexts</li> <li>5. Their role in the mathematics classroom</li> <li>6. Their perceptions of the students attitudes towards learning mathematics</li> <li>7. Their perceptions of what prevents students effectively participate in mathematics learning.</li> </ol> <p>There were three main conclusions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Professional learning improved ITA self-perceptions of their technical knowledge and personal confidence to teach mathematics</li> <li>2. ITAs ‘felt more valued’</li> <li>3. Including ITAs in professional learning sessions alongside the teachers is an important future strategy.</li> </ol>

<p>Jackson-Barrett, E Gower, G, Price, A &amp; Herrington, J (2019)</p> <p>Skilling Up: Providing Educational Opportunities for Aboriginal Education Workers through Technology- based Pedagogy in Western Australia</p> <p>Journal article</p>	<p>This paper described and reports on a Western Australian project, Skilling Up: Improving educational opportunities for AEWs through technology based pedagogy.</p> <p>Aim of project: how iPad technology could improve the educational opportunities and the roles of Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) across the three educational sectors in Western Australia.</p> <p>Phase 1 research question: <i>What are the potential educational roles for AEWs that are enabled by e-learning and mobile technologies?</i></p> <p>Phase 2 research question: <i>What are appropriate strategies for professional learning for AEWs, pre-service and in-service teachers?</i></p> <p>Phase 3 research question: <i>What pedagogical strategies facilitate the use of e-learning and mobile learning devices in Indigenous primary education settings?</i></p> <p>Phase 4 research question: <i>What pedagogical principles can guide the use of mobile technology to empower AEWs?</i></p> <p>Phase 1: In-depth literature review and online survey and additionally views of Indigenous experts and sector advisors</p>	<p>The project devised a professional development program and workshops for 32 AEW participants in three regional project hubs – Kimberley, Gascoyne and Perth Metropolitan area.</p>	<p>Research findings indicate that the Skilling Up professional development program, implemented in 2015 - 16 within the three hubs was a successful program that resulted in enhanced technological and pedagogical skills for use with Indigenous primary and secondary school students (Jackson-Barrett, Gower, Price, &amp; Herrington, 2019, p. 70).</p> <p>The project challenges and technical difficulties experienced by participants and researchers were overcome through use of the research methodologies.</p> <p>Jackson-Barret et al. made three recommendations pertaining to “improve the educational outcomes and career prospects of AEWs in Australia” (2019, p. 71).</p>
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	<p>were sort through meetings and discussions.</p> <p>Phase 2: Creation of an online course of activities for AEWs</p> <p>Phase 3: Face-to-face workshops and online learning</p> <p>Phase 4: Reflective documentation of all findings from the phases.</p> <p>Mixed method: Design-based research (DBR), incorporating Indigenous research methodologies</p>		
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## IEW/CEC QUESTIONNAIRE

### RESEARCH PROJECT WORKING TITLE:

*The power of two: Collaboration for urban Indigenous educational leadership.*

This questionnaire is part of a research project for a PhD study undertaken by [REDACTED], principal [REDACTED] State School. The study will look at the Indigenous Education Worker (IEW)/Community Education Counsellor (CEC) and principal relationship to inform and strengthen school improvement for equity and excellence with Indigenous students and their families. It will look at how the CEC/IEW and principal work together to assist students do well at school and their families feel more connected in a culturally friendly place. The study results will be useful to help make positive changes to school policy and practice.

### WHAT YOU ARE INVITED TO DO:

As part of the initial stage of this study, you are asked to complete a short questionnaire.

You are also invited at the end of the questionnaire to nominate to be involved further as a case study school.

See also the attached copy of the information sheet and consent form.

### CONFIDENTIALITY:

The questionnaire is confidential. Your individual responses will not be shown to anybody else. Your name and the name of your school will not be used in any reports, presentations or publications, however, because you may be working with others in groups, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed outside the group. If you choose to withdraw from the research, any information that you have given will not be used in the research.

All data collected during this study will be kept securely in a locked filing cabinet at the university, accessible only by the lead researcher and destroyed after five years.

### WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS?

The analysed results of the questionnaire will form a report which will be available to the participants upon request. The analysed results will also be used to write some academic articles, presentations and contribute to the overall findings of the PhD. Copies of the questionnaire report may also be provided to Northern Region's Regional Director, Assistant Regional Directors and other senior officers within DETE upon request.

**THIS STUDY HAS BEEN APPROVED** by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) (Approval number: H4703) of James Cook University and Research Services of the Department of Education, Training and Employment.

### QUESTIONNAIRE PURPOSE:

To collect information about the context of working relationships between principals and their Indigenous Education Worker/Community Education Counsellor.

A similar questionnaire to this one is also being issued to the region's principals.  
*A PILOT STUDY HAS SHOWN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE SHOULD TAKE NO MORE THAN 10 MINUTES TO COMPLETE*

***IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE** the term 'Indigenous' WILL refer to BOTH AUSTRALIAN aboriginal people and Torres Strait islanders. Alternatively, 'OTHER AUSTRALIANS' will refer to non-indigenous Australians.*

**Qu 1: Are you...?**

	Select One
Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 2: Are you of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent?**

	Select One
Australian Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	<input type="checkbox"/>
Torres Strait Islander	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 3: Where do you live?**

	Select One
Regional city	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural town	<input type="checkbox"/>
Remote town or community	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 4: What is your position in your school?**

	Select One
1 Teacher Aide (Generic)	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Teacher Aide (Identified)	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Community Liaison Officer (AO3)	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Community Education Counsellor (Identified)	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 5: How long have you worked for Education Qld?**

	Select One
Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 to 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 to 15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 to 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 to 30 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
30 + years	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 6: How long have you worked in your current role?**

	Select One
Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 to 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 to 15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 to 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 to 30 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
30 + years	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 7: How long have you worked at your current school?**

	Select One
Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 to 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 to 15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 to 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 8: Who is your direct supervisor?**

	Role	Please select one
1	Principal	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2	Deputy Principal	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3	BSM	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5	Other. Please state whom:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

**Qu 9: How often do you meet?**

Please select one

- Weekly  Fortnightly  Twice a term  Once a term  As required

**Qu 10: How long has your direct supervisor worked in their current role?**

	Select One
Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 to 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 to 15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 to 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 to 30 years	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 11: What are some of the duties you currently perform?**

Please select as applicable

- 1  Provide educational support for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students ( i.e. in-class and/or individual/small group withdrawal)
- 2  Provide assistance to teachers on welfare matters relating to their Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students
- 3  Provide information and assistance to teachers about Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum
- 4  Provide information to the school staff about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander social and cultural protocols and issues
- 5  Provide advice to the school leadership team (i.e. principal & DP, etc.) about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community matters relevant to the school students
- 6  Monitor Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander student attendance including doing home visits
- 7  Liaise with the school's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families on student and school matters
- 8  Organise various activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (i.e. homework classes, breakfast club, Junior or Senior ATSIAP, etc.)
- 9  Provide appropriate welfare support and/or counselling for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students
- 10  Other. Please specify:

**Qu 12: What is a task/are tasks you would like to do but currently don't? Why?**

Please write the task and the reason below

**Qu 13: What school events/activities do you work on together with your principal? Please list these events/activities and a description of the frequency of occurrence of them. Tick the examples below if they apply to you or please add in others**

Name of School events/activities	Frequency of occurrence
<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Parent Group meetings	
<input type="checkbox"/> Interviewing Indigenous students for their personalised learning plans	
<input type="checkbox"/> Discussing your Developing Performance Plan	
<input type="checkbox"/> Developing and implementing the school EATSIPS plan	
<input type="checkbox"/> School NAIDOC or other Indigenous celebrations	
<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous student attendance—some home visits/parent interviews	
<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous student discipline: interviewing students, contacting parents, suspension re-entry interviews, etc.	

**Qu 14: All principals are asked this same question:**

**Would you be willing to participate further in this research project? If you both agree, you will be contacted to work as a pair in a case study school. The following questions are guiding the research project:**

*What is the current principal – IEW/CEC relationship?*

*How can this relationship be strengthened and what are the contextual features that influence this?*

*What are the outcomes of this strengthened relationship?*

*What are the implications for practice and policy in schools?*

	Select One
Yes, but I would like further information before I commit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes, I am willing - if the school principal also agrees	<input type="checkbox"/>
No thanks	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If you ticked a 'yes', please write your name and email below and Louise Wilkinson will contact you:**

Name: ..... email: .....@eq.edu.au

**Qu 15: Would you like to receive a report on the findings of this survey? If yes, please email me: [luise22@eq.edu.au](mailto:luise22@eq.edu.au)**

	Select One
Yes, I will	<input type="checkbox"/>
No thanks	<input type="checkbox"/>

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. YOUR INPUT IS APPRECIATED.**

## PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE

### RESEARCH PROJECT WORKING TITLE:

*The power of two: Collaboration for urban Indigenous educational leadership.*

This questionnaire is part of a research project for a PhD study undertaken by [REDACTED], principal [REDACTED] State School. The study will look at the Indigenous Education Worker (IEW)/Community Education Counsellor (CEC) and principal relationship to inform and strengthen school improvement for equity and excellence with Indigenous students and their families. It will look at how the CEC/IEW and principal work together to assist students do well at school and their families feel more connected in a culturally friendly place. The study results will be useful to help make positive changes to school policy and practice.

### WHAT YOU ARE INVITED TO DO:

As part of the initial stage of this study, you are asked to complete a short questionnaire.

You are also invited at the end of the questionnaire to nominate to be involved further as a case study school.

See also the attached copy of the information sheet and consent form.

### CONFIDENTIALITY:

The questionnaire is confidential. Your individual responses will not be shown to anybody else. Your name and the name of your school will not be used in any reports, presentations or publications, however, because you may be working with others in groups, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed outside the group. If you choose to withdraw from the research, any information that you have given will not be used in the research.

All data collected during this study will be kept securely in a locked filing cabinet at the university, accessible only by the lead researcher and destroyed after five years.

### WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS?

The analysed results of the questionnaire will form a report which will be available to the participants upon request. The analysed results will also be used to write some academic articles, presentations and contribute to the overall findings of the PhD. Copies of the questionnaire report may also be provided to Northern Region's Regional Director, Assistant Regional Directors and other senior officers within DETE upon request.

**THIS STUDY HAS BEEN APPROVED** by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) (Approval number: H4703) of James Cook University and Research Services of the Department of Education, Training and Employment.

### QUESTIONNAIRE PURPOSE:

To collect information about the context of working relationships between principals and their Indigenous Education Worker/Community Education Counsellor.

A similar questionnaire to this one is also being issued to the Northern Region's IEW's and CEC's.

*A PILOT STUDY HAS SHOWN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE SHOULD TAKE NO MORE THAN 10 MINUTES TO COMPLETE.*

*IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE the term 'Indigenous' WILL refer to BOTH AUSTRALIAN aboriginal people and Torres Strait islanders. Alternatively, 'OTHER AUSTRALIANS' will refer to non-indigenous Australians.*

**Qu 1: Are you...?**

	Select One
Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 2: Are you of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent?**

	Select One
Australian Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	<input type="checkbox"/>
Torres Strait Islander	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 3: Where do you live?**

	Select One
Regional city	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural town	<input type="checkbox"/>
Remote town or community	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 4: What is your position in your school?**

	Select One
Principal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deputy Principal	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 5: How long have you worked for Education Qld?**

	Select One
Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 to 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 to 15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 to 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 to 30 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
30 + years	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 6: How long have you worked in your current role?**

	Select One
Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 to 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 to 15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 to 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 to 30 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
30 + years	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 7: How long have you worked at your current school?**

	Select One
Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 to 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 to 15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 to 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 to 30 years	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 8: Do you have Indigenous students enrolled in your school this year?**

	Select One
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 9: There are a variety of non-teaching roles that specifically support Indigenous students in schools. Which of the following roles do you have in your school?**

Role	Choose as many as applicable
1 Teacher Aide (Generic)	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Teacher Aide (Identified)	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Community Liaison Officer (AO3)	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Community Education Counsellor (Identified)	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 None of the above	<input type="checkbox"/>

(If you ticked this, go to Qu. 18 on page 5)

**Qu 10: If you ticked any of numbers 1 – 5 in Question 9 above, which of them do you directly supervise? If you ticked 'None of the above', skip this and the next 8 questions and go to Qu. 18 on page 5.**

Role	Please select as applicable
1 Teacher Aide (Generic)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2 Teacher Aide (Identified)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3 Community Liaison Officer (AO3)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
4 Community Education Counsellor (Identified)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5 Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

**Qu 11: Of the above person/s you directly supervise, how often do you meet? Continue answering all following questions.**

Role	Please select as applicable
1 Teacher Aide (Generic)	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly required <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Twice a term <input type="checkbox"/> Once a term <input type="checkbox"/> As required
2 Teacher Aide (Identified)	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly required <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Twice a term <input type="checkbox"/> Once a term <input type="checkbox"/> As required
3 Community Liaison Officer (AO3)	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly required <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Twice a term <input type="checkbox"/> Once a term <input type="checkbox"/> As required
4 Community Education Counsellor (Identified)	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly required <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Twice a term <input type="checkbox"/> Once a term <input type="checkbox"/> As required
5 Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly required <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Twice a term <input type="checkbox"/> Once a term <input type="checkbox"/> As required

**Qu 12: If you supervise more than one of the above persons, select one person.**

Write the role of the person here.....

**Qu 13: Is this person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent?**

	Select One
Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Australian Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	<input type="checkbox"/>
Torres Strait Islander	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 14: How long has this person worked in their current role?**

	Select One
Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 to 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 to 15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 to 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 to 30 years	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 15: What are some of the duties this person currently performs?**

- Please select as applicable
- 1  Provides educational support for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students (i.e. in-class and/or individual/small group withdrawal)
  - 2  Provides assistance to teachers on welfare matters relating to their Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students
  - 3  Provides information and assistance to teachers about Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum
  - 4  Provides information to the school staff about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander social and cultural protocols and issues
  - 5  Provides advice to the school leadership team (i.e. principal & DP, etc.) about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community matters relevant to the school students
  - 6  Monitors Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander student attendance including doing home visits
  - 7  Liaises with the school's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families on student and school matters
  - 8  Organises various activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (i.e. homework classes, breakfast club, Junior or Senior ATSIAP, etc.)
  - 9  Provides appropriate welfare support and/or counselling for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students
  - 10  Other. Please specify:

**Qu 16: Are there duties you would like this person to do that they currently are not doing? If yes, what are they? And why aren't they currently doing them? If no, move on to next question.**

- Please select as applicable
- No
- Yes.
- Duty/Duties:

Reason/s why they are currently not doing them:

**Qu 17: What school events/activities do you work on together with this person? Please list these events/activities and a description of the frequency of occurrence of them. List up to 5. SEE WORKED EXAMPLES BELOW.**

EXAMPLE 1:

<u>Name of school event/activity</u>	<u>Frequency of occurrence</u>
Nil	Nil

OR

EXAMPLE 2:

<u>School events/activities</u>	<u>Frequency of occurrence</u>
Indigenous Parent Reference Group meetings	At least once per term
School NAIDOC or other Indigenous celebrations	Annually
Indigenous student attendance—some home visits/parent interviews	As required
Indigenous student discipline: interviewing students, contacting parents, suspension re-entry interviews, etc.	As they occur
Interviewing Indigenous students for their personalised learning plans	Twice a year
Discussing their Developing Performance Plan	Twice a year
Developing and implementing the school EATSIPS plan	As required

**WRITE YOUR ANSWERS HERE:**

<u>School events/activities</u>	<u>Frequency of occurrence</u>

**Qu 18: All IEWs/CECs are asked this same question: Would you be willing to participate further in this research project? If you both agree, you will be contacted to work as a pair in a case study school. The following questions are guiding the research project:**  
*What is the current principal – IEW/CEC relationship?*  
*How can this relationship be strengthened and what are the contextual features that influence this?*  
*What are the outcomes of this strengthened relationship?*  
*What are the implications for practice and policy in schools?*

	<u>Select One</u>
Yes, but I would like further information from you before I commit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes, I am willing - if the school's IEW/CEC also agrees	<input type="checkbox"/>
No thanks	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If you ticked a 'yes', please write your name and email below and Louise Wilkinson will contact you:**

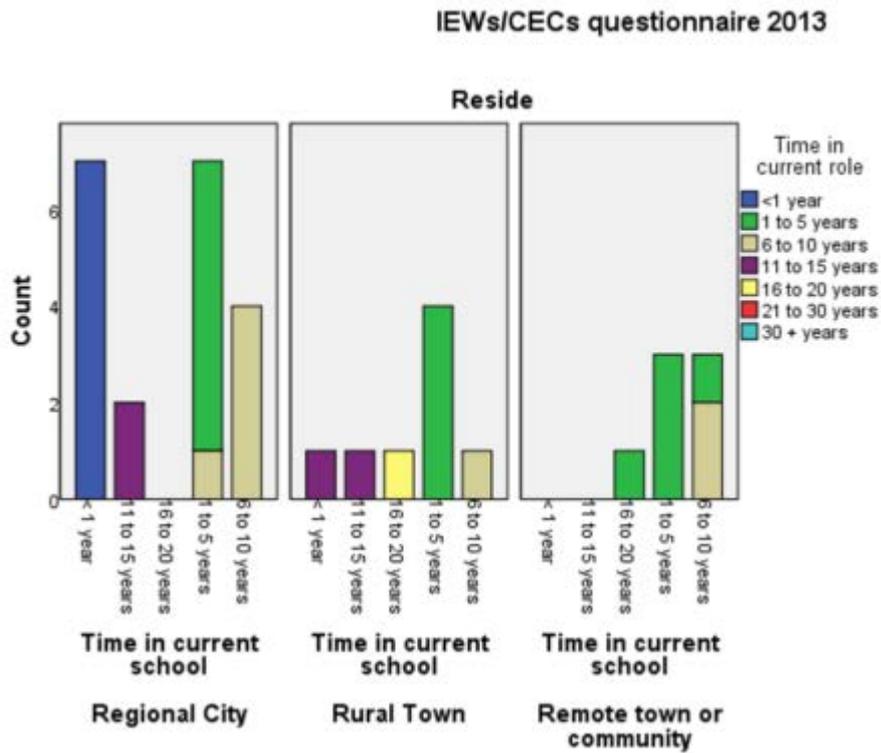
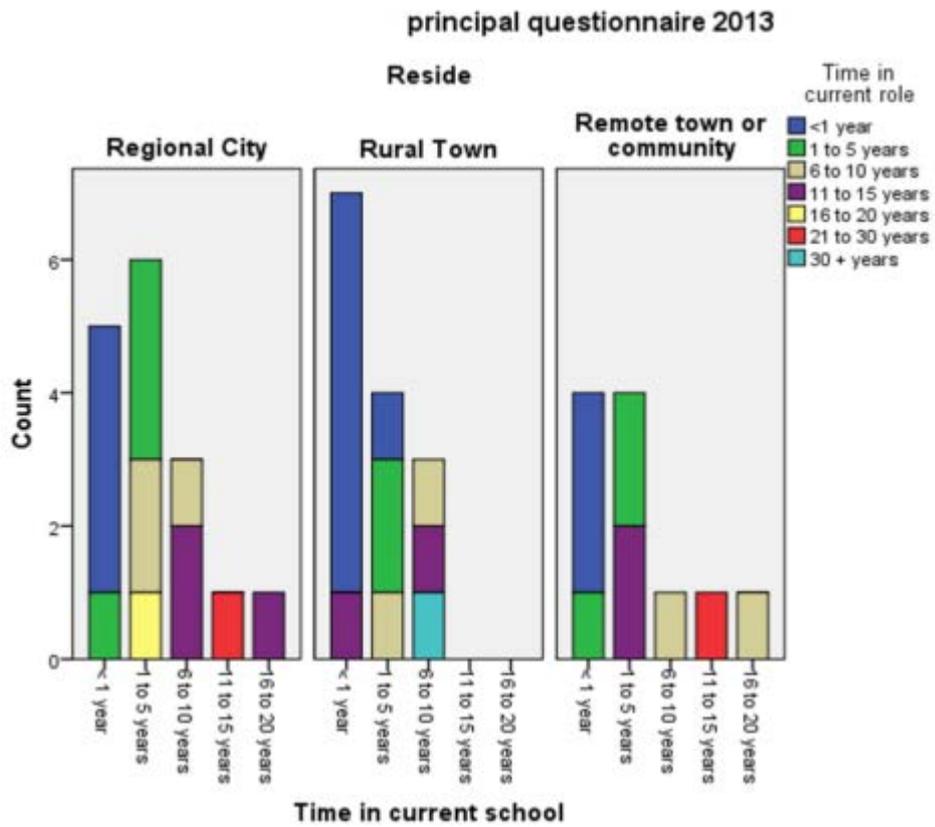
Name: ..... email: .....@eq.edu.au

**Qu 19: Would you like to receive a report on the findings of this survey? If yes, please email me: [REDACTED]**

	<u>Select One</u>
Yes, I will	<input type="checkbox"/>
No thanks	<input type="checkbox"/>

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. YOUR INPUT IS APPRECIATED.**

Appendix F: Demographics of The Region’s principals and IEWs/CECs



**Appendix G: 2015 IEW/CEC regional survey questionnaire**

Louise Wilkinson

**Qu 14: What is a task/are tasks you would like to do but currently don't? Why?**

Please write the task and the reason below

**Qu 15: What school events/activities do you currently work on together with your principal? Please list these events/activities and a description of the frequency of occurrence of them (like daily, weekly, monthly, annually etc.). Tick the examples below if they apply to you or please add in others**

Name of School events/activities	Frequency of occurrence
<input type="checkbox"/> None. I do not work with my principal – mainly with only the line manager or others	
<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Parent Group meetings	
<input type="checkbox"/> Interviewing Indigenous students for their personalised learning plans	
<input type="checkbox"/> Discussing your Developing Performance Plan	
<input type="checkbox"/> Developing and implementing the school EATSIPS plan	
<input type="checkbox"/> School NAIDOC or other Indigenous celebrations	
<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous student attendance– some home visits/parent interviews	
<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous student discipline: interviewing students, contacting parents, suspension re-entry interviews, etc.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other – please explain	

**Qu 16: Do you feel your role is valued in your school? By whom? Why do you feel this way?**

- Yes Who values your role? .....
  - No
- Why do you feel this way?

**Qu 17: In an ideal world what school events/activities would you like to work on together with your principal? Why?**

Name of School events/activities	Frequency of occurrence

Reason/s:

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY. YOUR INPUT IS APPRECIATED.**

**Appendix H: Original partnership assessment questionnaire sample pages**



**Same Kids Same Goals**  
A Toolkit for Principals and IEWS

Report Date:

IEW Name:

Principal Name:

**A. Trust**

Reliance on the integrity, strength, ability, surety, etc., of a person or thing; confidence.

A. 1. We appreciate what each of us can offer to bring a better outcome for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. i.e. The principal provides guidance and expert management and the IEW brings cultural insight and linkages to the community.

Answers		
Always	Sometimes	Seldom

A. 2. Information necessary to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students and the community is shared regularly. For example, both of us know the student attendance rate.

Answers		
Always	Sometimes	Seldom

A. 3. We feel comfortable discussing difficult and challenging issues. For example, we openly discuss things that are not working.

Answers		
Always	Sometimes	Seldom

**B. Respect**

A feeling of admiration for someone because of their qualities or achievements; due regard for the feelings or rights of others

B. 1. The Principal includes the IEWs when conducting induction of new staff, students and parents to schools.

Answers		
Always	Sometimes	Seldom

B. 2. The Principal and the IEW are involved cooperatively in the planning of activities that involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their communities.

Answers		
Always	Sometimes	Seldom

B. 3. Time and independence is given to each other to do their job?.

Answers		
Always	Sometimes	Seldom

- B. 4. We accept that there may be gaps in our capabilities/skills in doing our jobs and it is okay to admit this.
- | Answers |           |        |
|---------|-----------|--------|
| Always  | Sometimes | Seldom |
- B. 5. The Principal uses his/her interactions with the IEW to build his/her own cultural understandings.
- | Answers |           |        |
|---------|-----------|--------|
| Always  | Sometimes | Seldom |
- B. 6. In situations when the views of the school are in contrary to those of the community, any decisions made as a result of such differences are explained to the community jointly by the principal and the IEW.
- | Answers |           |        |
|---------|-----------|--------|
| Always  | Sometimes | Seldom |

### C. Shared Vision

---

Vision: the ability to think about the future with imagination or wisdom, a mental image of what the future will or could be like

- C. 1. We have shared goals for the education of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- | Answers |           |        |
|---------|-----------|--------|
| Always  | Sometimes | Seldom |
- C. 2. The achievement of agreed outcomes is reviewed and celebrated regularly.
- | Answers |           |        |
|---------|-----------|--------|
| Always  | Sometimes | Seldom |
- C. 3. When we are asked separately, similar success stories will be told.
- | Answers |           |        |
|---------|-----------|--------|
| Always  | Sometimes | Seldom |
- C. 4. When we are asked separately, similar challenges in our school will be shared.
- | Answers |           |        |
|---------|-----------|--------|
| Always  | Sometimes | Seldom |
- C. 5. We understand the challenges related to achieving outcomes and share each other's vision on how to overcome these challenges.
- | Answers |           |        |
|---------|-----------|--------|
| Always  | Sometimes | Seldom |
- C. 6. We have a shared vision about how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and perspectives are woven into our school's curriculum and environment.
- | Answers |           |        |
|---------|-----------|--------|
| Always  | Sometimes | Seldom |

### D. Effective Communications

---

Effective: adequate to accomplish a purpose; producing the intended or expected result

Communication: the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs.

- D. 1. We meet regularly in structured and unstructured ways.
- | Answers |           |        |
|---------|-----------|--------|
| Always  | Sometimes | Seldom |

## Appendix I: Adapted partnership assessment questionnaire

Report Date:

CEC/IEW Name:

Principal Name:

**A. Trust: Reliance on the integrity, strength, ability, surety, etc., of a person or thing; confidence.**

A. 1.

We appreciate what each of us can offer to bring a better outcome for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. i.e. The principal provides guidance and educational expertise and the IEW brings cultural insight and linkages to the community.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

A. 2.

Information necessary to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students and the community is shared regularly. For example, both of us know the student attendance rate.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

A. 3.

We feel comfortable discussing difficult and challenging issues. For example, we openly discuss things that are not working.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

**B. Respect: A feeling of admiration for someone because of their qualities or achievements; due regard for the feelings or rights of others**

B. 1.

The Principal includes the CEC/IEW when conducting induction of new staff, students and parents to schools.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

B. 2.

The Principal and the CEC/IEW are involved cooperatively in the planning of activities that involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their communities.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

B. 3.

Time and independence is given to each other to do their job.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

B. 4.

We accept that there may be gaps in our capabilities/skills in doing our jobs and it is okay to admit this.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

B. 5. The Principal uses his/her interactions with the CEC/IEW to build his/her own cultural understandings.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

B. 6.

In situations when the views of the school are in contrary to those of the community, any decisions made as a result of such differences are explained to the community jointly by the principal and the CEC/IEW.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

**C. Shared Vision. Vision: the ability to think about the future with imagination or wisdom, a mental image of what the future will or could be like.**

C. 1.

We have shared goals for the education of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

C. 2.

The achievement of agreed outcomes is reviewed and celebrated regularly.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

C. 3.

When we are asked separately, similar success stories will be told and similar challenges in our school will be shared.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

C. 4.

We understand the challenges related to achieving outcomes and share each other's vision on how to overcome these challenges.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

C. 5.

We have a shared vision about how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and perspectives are woven into our school's curriculum and environment.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

**D. Effective Communications: Effective: adequate to accomplish a purpose; producing the intended or expected result. Communication: the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs.**

D. 1.

We meet regularly in structured and unstructured ways.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

D. 2.

We feel that we are listened to by each other.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

D. 3.

We can predict each other's reactions and responses to some situations and hence prepare for our discussions accordingly.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

D. 4.

We understand the impact our communication has on us doing our jobs effectively.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

D. 5.

We have discussed the importance of including information on the successes and achievements of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and other necessary info in our mainstream and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific school publications.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

D. 6.

We recognise the importance of giving the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school community their own time and space to celebrate achievements and success.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

D. 7.

Others in the school community see us actively communicating and working together.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

**E. Knowledge Sharing**

E. 1.

Statistics and data relevant to understanding and monitoring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student performance are shared regularly.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

E. 2.

Stories, knowledge, and contextual information relevant to understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and community are shared regularly.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

E. 3.

We have discussed the implications of State and Federal funding arrangements for our school.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

### **F. Flexibility/Adaptability**

F. 1.

The Principal reflects on his/her initial response to a situation and is prepared to consider the advice of the CEC/IEW on important decisions regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

F. 2.

We acknowledge that there may be occasions when one of us will need to make decisions independently and the reasons for such decisions are respected and discussed.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

F. 3.

We discuss school policies and procedures and agree which apply to all students and those that can be flexible/adapted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students and make them known amongst school staff.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

### **G. Defined Roles and Responsibilities and Shared Leadership: Working or acting together for a common purpose or benefit; joint action.**

G. 1.

We openly acknowledge each other's contribution to the broader school community.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

G. 2.

We discuss what knowledge, understandings and connections that the IEW uniquely brings into the school community.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

G. 3.

We attend Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Events and interact with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community together.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

G. 4.

The Principal and the CEC/IEW stand together when making significant announcements regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education in school and in staff meetings.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

G. 5.

We have discussed our individual responsibilities regarding the schools Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programmes.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

G. 6.

The CEC's/IEW's role may vary from school to school based on local needs and circumstances. We have discussed how this affects the role of the IEW in our school and developed a job description for the IEW accordingly. This has been communicated to all school staff.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

## H. Mutual Support and Development

H. 1.

We have discussed our Professional Development needs as they relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in our school

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

H. 2.

We have consulted each other and the classroom teachers about the skills CECs/IEWs need frequently in class and have developed formal and informal strategies to develop these skills.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

H. 3.

We actively support each other wherever possible in the development of useful knowledge and skills as they relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

## I. Cultural Appreciation

I. 1.

The Principal looks for, and encourages staff to look for, occasions to openly acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture as an important element in learning and development of all students.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

I. 2.

The Principal recognises the skills and capabilities of the CEC/IEW that are formed through their experience (of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture).

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

I. 3.

The Principal and CEC/IEW recognise the special link that an CEC/IEW can form with the students and community through their shared history and experiences.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

## J. Community Involvement

J. 1.

We have discussed the knowledge and qualities of our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and how they can contribute to our school.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

J. 2.

The Principal is receptive to the views of the community and is seen to listen and take action where possible.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

J. 3.

We make regular arrangements for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to visit the school together.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

J. 4.

The Principal greets visiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and community members alongside the CEC/IEW as frequently as possible.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

J. 5.

We have shared our views on how to make the school a welcoming place for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom

## Appendix J: Final partnership assessment questionnaire

### CEC/IEW & Principal Relationship

Date:

Name:

**A. Trust: Reliance on the integrity, strength, ability, surety, etc., of a person or thing; confidence.**

A. 1.

We appreciate what each of us can offer to bring a better outcome for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. i.e. The principal provides guidance and educational expertise and the CEC/IEW brings cultural insight and linkages to the community.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

A. 2.

Information necessary to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students and the community is shared regularly. For example, both of us know the student attendance rates or student achievement levels, etc.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

A. 3.

We feel comfortable discussing difficult and challenging issues. For example, we openly discuss things that are not working in the school.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

**B. Respect: A feeling of admiration for someone because of their qualities or achievements; due regard for the feelings or rights of others**

B. 1.

At this school, the Principal includes the CEC/IEW when conducting induction of new staff, students and parents to schools.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

B. 2.

At this school, the Principal and the CEC/IEW are involved cooperatively in the planning of activities that involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their communities.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

B. 3.

Time and independence is given to each other to do our respective jobs.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

B. 4.

We accept that there may be gaps in our capabilities/skills in doing our jobs and it is okay to admit this.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

B. 5. At this school the Principal uses his/her interactions with the CEC/IEW to build his/her own cultural understandings.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

B. 6.

In situations when the views of the school are in contrary to those of the community, any decisions made as a result of such differences are explained to the community jointly by us, as principal and CEC/IEW.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

**C. Shared Vision. Vision: the ability to think about the future with imagination or wisdom, a mental image of what the future will or could be like.**

C. 1.

We have shared goals for the education of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

C. 2.

The achievement of agreed outcomes for our students is reviewed and celebrated regularly.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

C. 3.

When we are asked separately, similar success stories will be told and similar challenges in our school will be shared.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

C. 4.

We understand the challenges related to achieving improved outcomes for all of our students and share each other's vision on how to overcome these challenges.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

C. 5.

We have a shared vision about how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and perspectives are woven into our school's curriculum and environment.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

**D. Effective Communications: Effective: adequate to accomplish a purpose; producing the intended or expected result. Communication: the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs.**

D. 1.

We meet regularly in structured and unstructured ways.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

D. 2.

We feel that we are listened to by each other.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

D. 3.

We know each other well enough to be able to predict each other's reactions and responses to some situations and hence prepare for our discussions accordingly.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

D. 4.

We understand the impact our communication has on us doing our jobs effectively.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

D. 5.

We have discussed the importance of including information on the successes and achievements of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and other necessary info in our mainstream and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific school publications.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

D. 6.

We recognise the importance of giving the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school community their own time and space to celebrate achievements and success.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

D. 7.

If asked, others in the school community would say they see us actively communicating and working together.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

### E. Knowledge Sharing

E. 1.

Statistics and data relevant to understanding and monitoring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student performance are shared in conversations between us regularly or as necessary.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

E. 2.

Stories, knowledge, and contextual information relevant to understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and community are shared in conversations between us regularly or as necessary.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

E. 3.

We have discussed between us the implications of State and Federal funding arrangements for our school.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

### F. Flexibility/Adaptability

F. 1.

At this school, the Principal reflects on his/her initial response to a situation and is prepared to consider the advice of the CEC/IEW on important decisions regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

F. 2.

We acknowledge that there may be occasions when one of us will need to make decisions independently and the reasons for such decisions are respected and discussed.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

F. 3.

We discuss school policies and procedures and agree which apply to all students and those that can be flexible/adapted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students and make them known amongst school staff.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

**G. Defined Roles and Responsibilities and Shared Leadership: Working or acting together for a common purpose or benefit; joint action.**

G. 1.

We openly acknowledge each other's contribution to the broader school community.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

G. 2.

We have discussed what knowledge, understandings and connections that the CEC/IEW uniquely brings into the school community.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

G. 3.

Where possible, we attend Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events and interact with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community together.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

G. 4.

At this school, the Principal and the CEC/IEW stand together when making significant announcements regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education in staff meetings, on assembly and/or at parent meetings.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

G. 5.

We have discussed between us, our individual responsibilities regarding the schools Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programmes.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

G. 6.

We know the CEC's/IEW's role may vary from school to school based on local needs and circumstances. We have discussed how this affects the role of the IEW in our school and (i) have developed a site specific job description for the CEC/IEW accordingly. (ii) This has been communicated to all school staff.

	Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(i)				
(ii)				

**H. Mutual Support and Development**

H. 1.

We have discussed our individual Professional Development needs with each other as they relate to improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in our school

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

H. 2.

We have consulted each other and the classroom teachers about the skills CECs/IEWs need frequently in class and have developed formal and informal strategies to develop these skills.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

H. 3.

We actively support each other wherever possible in the development of useful knowledge and skills as they relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education in our school.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

### I. Cultural Appreciation

I. 1.

In this school, the Principal looks for, and encourages staff to look for, occasions to openly acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture as an important element in learning and development of all students.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

I. 2.

In this school, the Principal recognises the skills and capabilities of the CEC/IEW that are formed through their experience (of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture).

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

I. 3.

In this school, the Principal and CEC/IEW both recognise the special link that a CEC/IEW can form with the students and community through their shared history and experiences.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

### J. Community Involvement

J. 1.

We have discussed the knowledge and qualities of our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and how they can contribute to our school.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

J. 2.

In this school, the Principal is receptive to the views of the community and is seen to listen and take action where possible.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

J. 3.

Together, we make regular arrangements for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to visit the school.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

J. 4.

In this school, the Principal greets visiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and community members alongside the CEC/IEW as frequently as possible.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

J. 5.

We have shared our views on how to make the school a welcoming place for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and we work together to make that happen.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

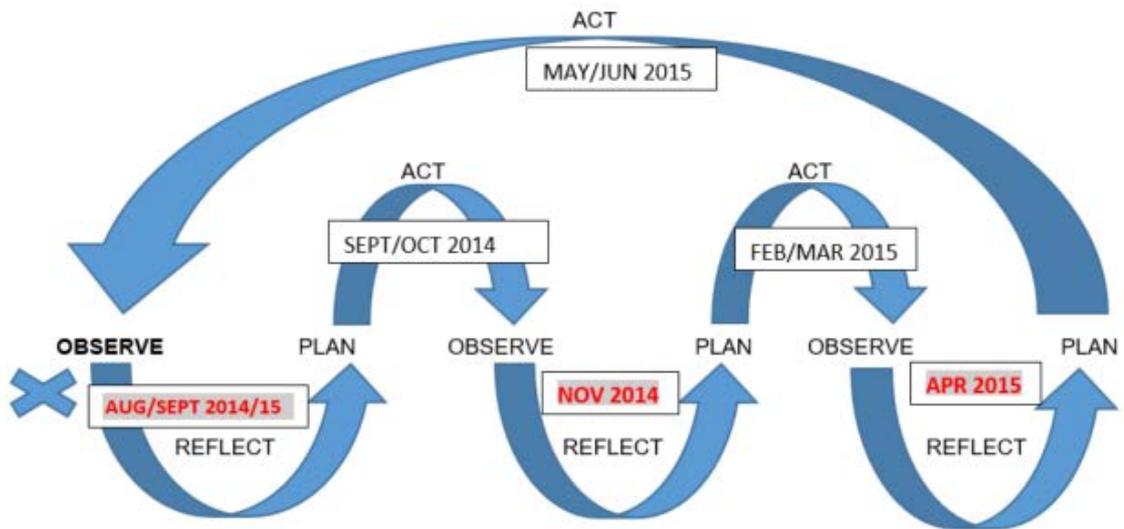
THANK YOU 😊

Used and adapted with permission from [www.SameKidsSameGoals.dsf.org.au](http://www.SameKidsSameGoals.dsf.org.au)

## Appendix K: Proposed PAR plan

### Proposed PAR plan for 'The Power of Two' study

Round 1A – Initial interview  
 Explain purpose of study/ research questions/scope of study, seek participant consent  
 Administer questionnaire  
 Establish a simple 'to- do' plan  
 Set up future communication protocols & Nov discussion date



Data sources at each round
Same Kids-Same Goals questionnaire (Round 1A & 2B only)
Semi-structured Interviews
Critical incidents
Focus Group (Round 2A & 2B only)
School documents, Icons, Artefacts
Diary, Participant Field notes
Enumeration data (Round 1A & 2B only)

- ✗ AUG/SEPT 2014 – Round 1A Face-to-face**  
 OBSERVE: The state of the CEC/Principal relationship as a microcosm to the school/community relationship: What can be seen? What is happening?  
 REFLECT: How do we interpret this?  
 PLAN: How can we improve this? What aspect of our relationship do we want to work on? What is one thing we will try together?  
 SEPT/OCT 2014 TAKE ACTION: Do it!
- NOV 2014 – Round 1B Telephone**  
 OBSERVE: What has happened to date?  
 REFLECT: How do we interpret this?  
 PLAN: How can we improve this? What is one thing we will try together?  
 FEB/MAR 2015 TAKE ACTION: Do it!
- APR 2015 – Round 2A Face-to-face**  
 OBSERVE: What happened to date?  
 REFLECT: How do we interpret this?  
 PLAN: How can we improve this? What is one thing we will try together?  
 MAY/JUN 2015 TAKE ACTION: Do it!
- AUG 2015 – Round 2B Telephone**  
 OBSERVE: What happened do date? What have been the outcomes of our work together?  
 REFLECT: How do we interpret this? What are the implications for practice and policy?  
 CONCLUDE: Share publicly?

**Appendix L: Case study informed consent form**

This administrative form  
has been removed

## Appendix M: Final interview questions

Case Study interviews 2016 FINAL

Case Study School	Identified project/s and actions
1	Increase community engagement - build a Yarning Circle Garden; hold Smoking Ceremony
2	Strengthen role of CEC on staff; scheduled/regular CEC-Principal meetings; increase community engagement and open up school
3	More Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools (EATSIPS) training for staff; more visible signs of recognition – i.e. murals; become a RATEP training school; scheduled/regular CEC-Principal meetings
4	More EATSIPS training for staff, especially middle management; increase school-community organisation links; scheduled/regular CEC-principal meetings

1. Review, reflect past. Where to for you both/your school work in Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander education in the future?

2. What **enables** you to do your work together? At an individual, your school, the system (NQ and/or DET) level?

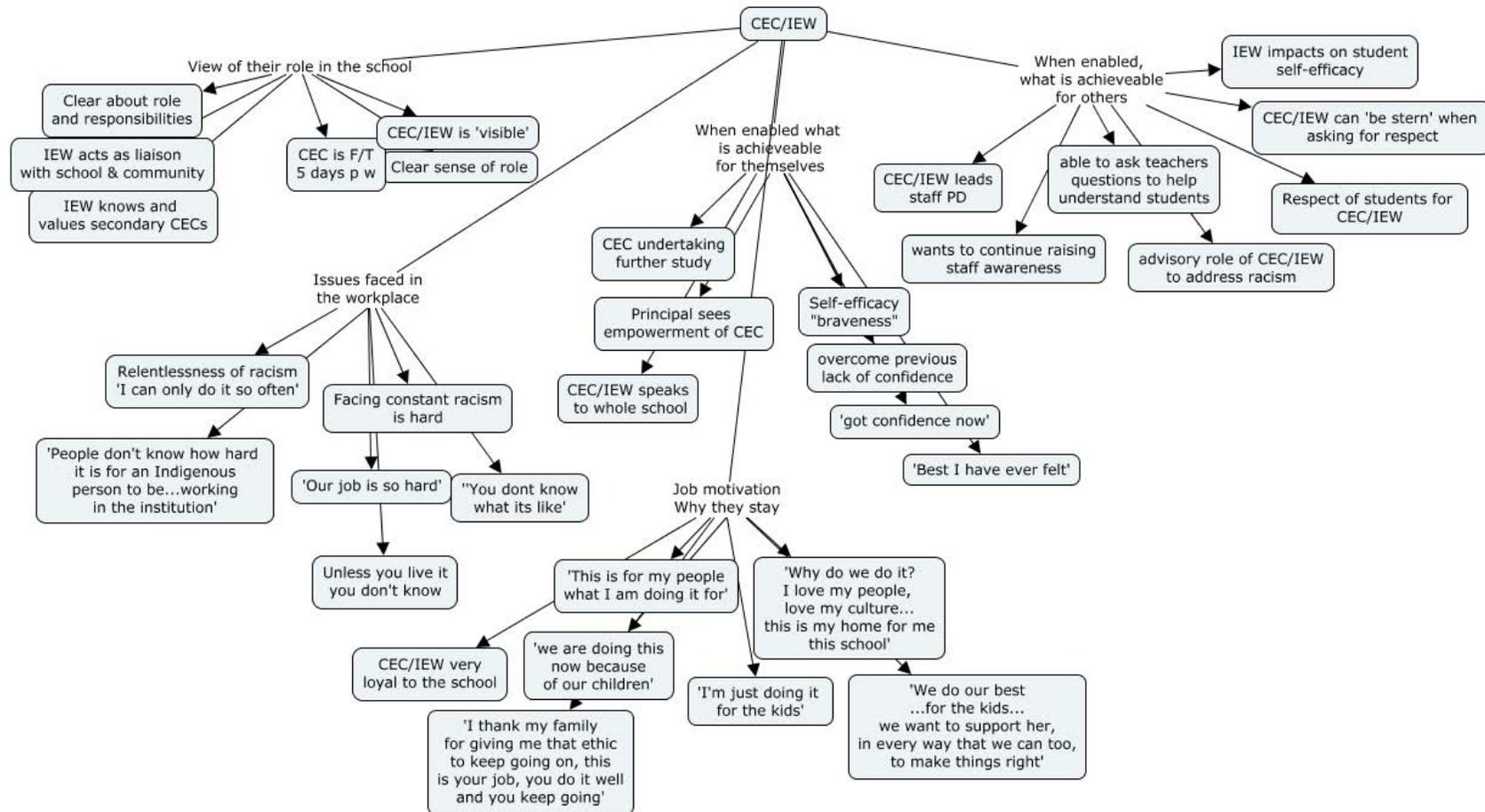
Individual enablers	
School enablers	
System enablers	

3. What **blocks** what you are trying to do? At an individual, your school, the system (NQ and/or DET) level?

Individual blockers	
School blockers	
System blockers	

4. What changes to policy/practices would you like to see that would improve what you are doing? [What key messages can you give to Selwyn Button and Jim Watterston?]

## Appendix N: Mind map example



**Appendix O: Time spent working as at 2013**

Time worked	Role	<1 year	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21-30 years	30 + years	Nil Answer
For The Department	IEW/CEC % of respondents	6 15.8%	8 21.1%	11 28.9%	6 15.8%	3 7.9%	0 0	1 2.6%	3 7.9%
	principal % of respondents	2 4.9%	1 2.4%	6 14.6%	7 17.1%	5 12.2%	13 31.7%	7 17.1%	0 0
In current role	IEW/CEC % of respondents	7 18.4%	15 39.5%	8 21.1%	4 10.5%	1 2.6%	0 0	0 0	3 7.9%
	principal % of respondents	14 34.1%	9 22%	7 17.1%	7 17.1%	1 2.4%	2 4.9%	1 2.4%	0 0
In current school	IEW/CEC % of respondents	8 21.1%	14 36.8%	8 21.1%	3 7.9%	2 5.3%	0 0	0 0	3 7.9%
	principal % of respondents	16 39%	14 34.1%	7 17.1%	2 4.9%	2 4.9%	0 0	0 0	0 0

**Appendix P: 'Other' current duties of IEWs/CECs in 2013**

<b>'Other' written responses by IEWs/CECs in 2013</b>	<b>'Other' written responses by principals in 2013</b>
Assist in Homework program	Co-ordinates community centre
Teachers ask of knowledge how to work with Behaviour and Background of students	General T/A duties - only four students who identify as Indigenous.
Working one on one with students	Nothing specifically supporting Indigenous students
Understanding the language of students	Indigenous Kindy
Assisting CEC	Leadership activities for students
Co-ordinate mentoring program	Member of EATSIPS committee
Community development for networking and learn parenting skills	Monitors achievement
Health & well-being committee	Provides feedback of emergent community issues
Liaise with outside support people...for student & parent welfare and wellbeing	Work placement
Run leadership camps, reward days	A voice and advocate for the people
SETP plans for students	Runs Indigenous advisory group
VET Career Pathways Program	SAT
Community partnerships connection	
Year 12 destinations	
ATSI community engagement	
P Plate	
Traineeships and apprenticeships	
Whole school student orientation on enrolment	

---

Member school well-being case management team

Refer parents to appropriate organisations

Mend uniforms

---

## Appendix Q: 'Other' current duties of IEWs/CECs in 2015

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### 'Other' written responses by IEWs/CECs in 2015

---

VET

Cowboys Learn Earn Legend

Employment Services

Other admin tasks

Year 10 SEPT planning

Year 12 destinations

Career Expos

Yearly NAIDOC celebrations with food and transport

Home visits

Whole school student orientation on enrolment

Bus driver, playgroup co-ordinator

Community co-ordinator – parent involvement

Assisting teacher in class

Assist in NAIDOC & Junior ATSIAP

Work with external agencies

Liaise & organise appropriate agencies to assist students for future studies or workplace

Help co-ordinate ARTIE program

Assist with transporting children to and from school when requested by parents

---

**Appendix R: IEW/CEC perceptions of IEW/CEC desired duties in 2013**

<b>2013 IEW/CEC verbatim responses</b>	
<b>Duties would like to do</b>	<b>Reason/s why currently not doing them</b>
Be more involved in the decision making on a leadership and school level in relation to Curriculum, Policy; Student Support	Nil
In-class assistance and observation of student performance	I don't get enough time
Spend more time on the above tasks...	but we are attached to a timetable which leaves us one afternoon to do our business.
I find the groups/students I work with have few Indigenous kids and more non-Indigenous	Nil
Make sure all teachers know something about the place or community	Nil
Be able to generalise and learn more about local Aboriginal culture i.e. 90% non-Indigenous. Be able to support Ind. students.	Nil
Get Indigenous Community members into the school	Nil
Working more with Indigenous students in the classroom	Nil
Our school is looking at having an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander club/group to teach those kids who have no connection to who they are and how do they find this information. Just fine tuning it with our principal and a classroom teacher.	Initiated by a yr. 5 student

**Appendix S: Principal perceptions of IEW/CEC desired duties in 2013**

<b>2013 Principal verbatim responses</b>	
<b>Duties would like IEW/CEC to do</b>	<b>Reason/s why currently not doing them</b>
More counselling	Lack of time
Home visits; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols; Curriculum perspectives; Attendance	Unknown. Previous principal placed Teacher Aides in set roles
Developing activities to get parents into the school; Homework Club	Only been in current school 6 weeks
Increased capacity to work in classrooms	Because I don't get enough time
Attendance follow-ups	They don't like getting involved in other family issues
Newly formed role in the school	Only been 2 weeks
Assist with monitoring attendance, liaises with families	Tensions between families

## Appendix T: CEC (Identified) sample role description



### Community Education Counsellor (Identified)

Job Ad Reference	██████████
Job Evaluation No.	██████ TRIM No. ██████
Work Unit	██████ State High School State Schools Division
Location	Various locations throughout the State
Classification	CEC 1-3 Teaching in State Education Award – State 2016 - subject to the qualification/s held by the successful applicant. 21.75 hour week
Job Type	Permanent Part-time (0.6 FTE)
Salary Range	\$28,190 to \$44,038 per annum <small>Plus superannuation contributions of up to 12.75% of your annual salary.</small>
Contact Officer	██████████
Contact Telephone	██████████
Closing Date	██████████

### Your employer

The Department of Education and Training (DET) is committed to ensuring Queenslanders have the education and skills they need to contribute to the economic and social development of Queensland. The department delivers world-class education and training services for people at every stage of their personal and professional development. We are also committed to ensuring our education and training systems are aligned to the state's employment, skills and economic priorities. DET is a diverse organisation with the largest workforce in the state. We provide services through the following service delivery areas:

- State Schools Division delivers high quality education to more than 70 percent of all Queensland school students at prep, primary and secondary levels.
- Training and Skills Division works to meet the current and future needs of the economy through building a world class training system to enhance the skills of Queenslanders and optimise employment opportunities. The division achieves this through the regulation of the state's apprenticeship and traineeship system, strategic investment in training and skills, informing consumers, supporting a quality Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector and providing whole of government leadership on training and skills issues.
- Policy, Performance and Planning Division takes a strategic approach to driving the business of the portfolio, across, schooling, training and employment, early childhood, education and care and Indigenous education policy. The division engages in policy development and intergovernmental relations, legislation, governance and planning, and monitors and reviews the department's performance framework.
- The Early Childhood and Community Engagement Division is responsible for the strategic management and implementation of early childhood reforms, coordination of early childhood education and care programs, approval and regulation of services, supporting assessment and ratings and the quality improvement for all early childhood development and education services in Queensland. The Division is also responsible for the department's community engagement and communication priorities with a specific focus on working with stakeholder to meet government goals, commitments and targets.

State Schools Division is responsible for ensuring Queensland state school students are engaged in learning, achieving and successfully transitioning to further education, training and work.

State Schools Division develops the strategic direction for state schools, supported by operational policies and ensuring their implementation in regions and schools.

Schools are the focus of expertise in learning. They perform a vital role in providing opportunities to students to acquire knowledge and understanding, pursue special interests, strive to achieve excellence and develop social and vocational skills. Their core business is providing a learning program for students to achieve system wide and school based learning outcomes. Schools also aim to facilitate and support participation among parents, students, administrators, teachers and others in the school community and between the school and departmental support structures.

For more information about the department, please visit our website at [www.det.qld.gov.au](http://www.det.qld.gov.au)

### **Your opportunity**

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As the Community Education Counsellor (Identified) you will:

- Provide educational counselling and support services within specific secondary school/s to ensure that the best possible assistance services are available to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander secondary students and communities.
- Provide cross cultural awareness training to the broader school community.

The Community Education Counsellor (Identified) reports to the school Principal or delegate.

### **Your role**

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You will have responsibility for leading the following activities and undertaking the following key tasks:

- Provide educational counselling and support services to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander secondary students within a specified school.
- Participate in the development of activities, in and out of school, likely to enhance the involvement in education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families.
- Develop and undertake support service programs designed to meet the needs of the school/s that will encourage the educational participation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander secondary students.
- Establish and maintain links with out of school sources of information and support services to assist in the advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary students.
- Provide information to the school community about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander social and cultural perspectives.
- Utilise, in an accountable manner, state and commonwealth funded school-based programs that focus on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander secondary students and communities.
- Provide advice and information to school administrators regarding Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander social and cultural protocols in order to meet the needs of schools and their communities.
- Ensure that relevant information concerning Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander social and cultural issues is readily available to all members of the school community.
- Participate in activities to develop productive partnerships between members of the school community.

#### **A mandatory requirement of this role is:**

- For this position, it is a genuine occupational requirement that it be filled by an Aboriginal person or a Torres Strait Islander person as set out in Section 7 of the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* for the purposes contained in Section 25 of that Act.

#### **Verification of Aboriginality and/or Torres Strait Island heritage**

- For administrative purposes, in relation to an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander role, an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person is a person who:
  - identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person
  - is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent

- is accepted as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person by the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community in which he or she lives.
- Note, that by definition a person who is not an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cannot be employed (on any basis) to perform the duties of an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identified role.
- Applicants to this position **may have** to provide confirmation of their Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage. Requesting proof of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage from applicants helps to make sure that this intention is honoured.

### **How you will be assessed**

Within the context of the role described above, the ideal applicant will be someone who has the following key capabilities:

#### **1. Supports strategic direction**

Ability to apply Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and cultural protocols in a variety of individual and group settings to young people and adults.

#### **2. Achieve results**

Ability to provide appropriate counselling and other support services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and adults.

#### **3. Supports productive working relationships**

Ability to communicate effectively and sensitively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

#### **4. Displays personal drive and integrity**

Demonstrated ability to develop and present training programs.

#### **5. Communicates with influence**

Possession of appropriate interpersonal skills and an ability to apply interpersonal skills in a cross-cultural context.

### **Additional information**

- Whilst not mandatory, to determine the level to which the applicant is to be appointed to, possession of the below qualifications is highly desirable:
  - Possession of a community/social welfare or similar degree from a recognised tertiary institution or equivalent qualification that, in the opinion of the Director-General of Education and Training or delegate, is acceptable as eligible for appointment at Level 3 Step 1.
  - Possession of a Diploma qualification applicable to the field of community/social welfare from a recognised tertiary institution or equivalent qualification which, in the opinion of the Director-General of Education and Training or delegate, is acceptable as eligible for appointment at Level 2 Step 1.
  - An applicant who does not possess a Diploma or Degree is only eligible for appointment at Level 1 Step 1.
- Travel and overnight absences from base may be required of this position.
- The *Child Protection Reform Amendment Act 2014* requires the preferred applicant to be subject to a working with children check as part of the employment screening process. The department is legally obliged to warn applicants that it is an offence for a disqualified person to sign a blue card application form. Further details regarding the blue card system is available at: [www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/](http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/)
- Confirmation of employment is conditional upon the preferred applicant being issued with a Blue Card from the Public Safety Business Agency (PSBA).
- A criminal history check will be initiated on the successful applicant.
- A serious discipline history check may be initiated on the successful applicant.
- A non-smoking policy applies in Queensland government buildings, offices and motor vehicles.
- If the successful applicant has been engaged as a lobbyist, a statement of their employment is required.

- You may be required to complete a period of probation in accordance with the *Public Service Act 2008*.
- Staff are required to actively participate in consultation and communication with supervisors and management regarding health, safety and wellbeing issues and comply with all provisions of the relevant workplace health and safety legislation and related health, safety and wellbeing responsibilities and procedures developed by the department.
- You will work for an organisation that values its people and promotes leadership and innovation. We respect professionalism, embrace diversity and encourage a balance between work and life commitments.
- Departmental employees are required to acknowledge they understand their obligations under the Queensland Government *Code of Conduct* and the department's *Standard of Practice* and agree to align their professional conduct to these obligations.
- All roles in the department are responsible for creating, collecting, maintaining, using, disclosing, duplicating and disposing of information, as well as managing and using communication devices (for example email, internet and telephone) and public resources (for example computers and network resources). Staff must undertake these tasks in accordance with the department's information management policies and procedures (for example recordkeeping, privacy, security and email usage).
- You will be actively supported as an individual and will have access to a range of flexible work options, an employee assistance program and learning and development opportunities.
- All role descriptions and recruitment and selection processes are required to be aligned with the Queensland Government Capability and Leadership Framework (CLF). For more information about the CLF, visit [www.psc.qld.gov.au](http://www.psc.qld.gov.au)
- Additional information is available online at: [www.smartjobs.qld.gov.au](http://www.smartjobs.qld.gov.au)

### **Your application**

- Applicants are to submit a brief resume; contact details for 2 referees (one of whom should be your current supervisor); and a maximum 2 page written response outlining your suitability for the role referring to the key capabilities under "How you will be assessed".
- Applicants are encouraged to apply using the 'apply online' facility available on the Smart Jobs and Careers website ([www.smartjobs.qld.gov.au](http://www.smartjobs.qld.gov.au)).
- For further information refer to the Department of Education and Training's Applicant Information Package (available via the job advert on [www.smartjobs.qld.gov.au](http://www.smartjobs.qld.gov.au) by searching on a specific Job Ad Reference).