



Improving Learning



LEADERSHIP IN INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

Scoping Paper Prepared for
the ACER Standing Committee on Indigenous Education

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LEADERSHIP IN INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

1 Background

In June 2006, ACER sought advice from its Standing Committee on Indigenous Education (SCIE) on how ACER might better use the (then) Australian Principal's Centre (APC) to support the work of the SCIE and Indigenous education in general. It was noted that the APC had, up to then, had a Victorian focus. The APC did not have a brief to work nationally but ACER was at that stage taking a staged approach. The APC's core strengths at the time were in coaching and mentoring programs and in some performance development support, through, for example, 360 degree instruments.

The (then) chair of the SCIE, Professor Paul Hughes, suggested that ACER set up an arrangement with the Indigenous Education Leadership Institute (under the directorship of Dr Chris Sarra, a (then) member of the SCIE) to identify what could be done in terms of leadership development in Indigenous education. A second approach suggested was through the Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council (APAPDC). It was suggested that Professor Hughes could follow up with APAPDC on how they might make some connections with the ACER's APC, and then next year the Committee might be in a position to look at how to knit those things together.

In July, 2006 the APC co-hosted a seminar at ACER with Dr Chris Sarra. The session, mainly attended by Victorian teachers and principals, used the Cherbourg State School success story to stimulate discussion about how the *Stronger and Smarter* elements of education for Indigenous children might apply in Victorian schools.

Following this, several unsuccessful attempts were made to organize a meeting between Pam Macklin (ACER, Deputy CEO Professional Resources), Paul Hughes (Chair SCIE), Nola Purdie (ACER, Coordinator Indigenous Education Research) and Susan Boucher (CEO of APAPDC) to pursue opportunities for partnerships that would promote leadership in Indigenous education

In August 2007, a meeting between representatives from ACER, the SCIE, and APAPDC was organised to coincide with the ACER Research Conference in Melbourne. At this point, it was noted that the APC had become the ACER Leadership Centre in July 2007.

At this meeting it was decided that a first step would be to garner as much information as possible about current activity in leadership in Indigenous education in Australia. It was decided that ACER would write a brief scoping paper around the theme of "What's happening in Indigenous leadership in education in Australian schools?" A dual focus for this theme was noted:

- leadership *for* Indigenous education; and
- leadership *by* Indigenous principals and teachers.

The next section of this paper provides an overview of current issues in educational leadership that were derived, in the main, from papers presented at the 2007 ACER

conference on educational leadership. Section 3 presents a summary of current activity in Australia that focusses on leadership in Indigenous education. The appendices contain the APAPDC's five propositions of educational leadership (the L5 Frame; the Indigenous L5 Frame; *Dare to Lead* workshop discussion starters; and general questions and suggestions for consideration by ACER

2 Key Issues in Educational Leadership

2.1 Issues Identified in the Literature

The theme for the ACER 2007 Research Conference was *The Leadership Challenge: Improving Learning in Schools*.¹ This conference addressed key issues related to building leadership in schools that makes a difference to student learning outcomes. It provided news about the latest research on leadership practices that enable conditions for quality teaching and student learning. It also stimulated discussion about the resources and conditions that need to be in place if effective forms of leadership are to flower and be sustained in our schools.

In his opening address to the conference, Masters (2007)² outlined five challenges we confront as educational leaders:

- i. achieving an organisation-wide focus on improving outcomes for students;
- ii. promoting a deep belief that every student is capable of successful learning;
- iii. supporting teachers in their creation of effective learning environments;
- iv. promoting a professional learning culture in schools; and
- v. building our own expertise as educational leaders.

Subsequent conference presentations highlighted a number of key issues about educational leadership in general, and about the education of Indigenous students in particular. The following dot points summarise some of these issues, as well as some of the key findings emanating from recent research on educational leadership.

- As educators who are Indigenous people we are particularly concerned about the limited outcomes being achieved by the majority of our Indigenous school students. For our community and the future of our nation as a whole, this has to change. School leaders, in particular school principals, must play a major role in addressing this situation (Hughes, 2007).
- If I was going to succeed as an educational leader, then it was up to me to ensure that what I was changing within my school had cultural integrity (Khan, 2007).
- Building a team of educators (primarily non-Aboriginal) that had high expectations around student success, who could work and function together under the leadership of an Aboriginal principal was the order of the day (Matthews, 2007)
- Two leadership models have dominated the literature in educational administration over the past 25 years: instructional leadership and transformational leadership (Halinger, 2007).

¹ http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/RC2007_ConfProceedings.pdf

² http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/RC2007_GeoffMastersOpening.pdf

- The impact of instructional leadership on student outcomes is considerably greater than that of transformational leadership (Robinson, 2007).
- Transformational leadership theory predicts teacher attitudes and satisfaction, but, on the whole, its positive impacts on staff do not flow through to students (Robinson, 2007).
- Leadership theory, research and practice needs to be more closely linked to research on effective teaching, so that there is a greater focus on what leaders need to know and do to support teachers in using the teaching approaches that raise achievement and reduce disparity (Robinson, 2007).
- Successful school principalship is underpinned by the core values and beliefs of the principal. These values and beliefs inform the principal's decisions and actions. . . (and) together with the values and beliefs of other members of the school community, feed directly into the development of a shared school vision, which shapes the teaching and learning, student and social capital outcomes of schooling (Mulford, 2007).
- There is an impending crisis in school leadership due to a decline in the numbers of interested and suitable applicants for principals' positions (Watson, 2007).
- Financial resources alone have not yielded any systematic returns in terms of students achievement . . . Transformation (is) achieved by building capacity of staff . . . (and by building) social capital in the community by working closely with parents and care-givers to ensure they understand and support what the school is endeavouring to accomplish, even at the most basic level to ensure that they send their children to schools (Caldwell, 2007).
- The indicators for each form of capital (intellectual, social, spiritual, financial) illustrate the complexity of leadership and governance if transformation is to be achieved (Caldwell, 2007).
- Whether labelled 'shared whole school visions and goals' or 'community values' or simply 'moral purpose', a shared moral purpose has been consistently identified in the literature as one of the fundamental necessities for bringing about the kind of change and improvement that will deliver desirable student learning in schools (Bezzina, 2007).

In addition to this summary of issues raised at the ACER 2007 conference on educational leadership, it is also worth noting here points raised in several papers that have emanated from the *Linking Worlds: Strengthening the Leadership Capacity of Indigenous Educational leaders in Remote Education Settings* project. This project investigates the work of Indigenous educational leaders in remote community schools with the aim of "redefining educational leadership as applied to remote Indigenous communities through the process of identifying and analysing the various dimensions that relate to it" (d'Arbon, Frawley, & Richardson, 2004³, p. 7).

Linking Worlds researchers have explored a number of leadership theories and examined their applicability to the *Linking Worlds* project. The researchers note that very often theories of leadership are categorised as either trait theories (people are born with inherited leadership capabilities), behavioural theories (people can learn to be leaders), situational theories (leaders emerge as a result of time, place, and

³ d'Arbon, T., Frawley, J., & Richardson, N. (2004). *Linking Worlds: A project to research Indigenous educators as leaders in remote community school settings*. <http://www.aare.edu.au/04pap/dar04636.pdf>

circumstance), process theories (leadership is a function of the relationships amongst people, and is dissipative), and values theories (there is a commitment to ethics, purpose, values and beliefs) (d'Arbon, Fasoli, & Frawley, 2006)⁴.

The researchers describe the theoretical perspective most applicable to their project as one that draws on process and values theories – with an emphasis on transformational leadership, morals, leadership, and ethical leadership. It is further noted that although there appears to be no unitary concept of transformational leadership, the role of leadership in fostering capacity development and higher levels of commitment to a project's goals is a key concept.

2.2 *Standards for School Leadership*

An extensive exploration of the issues related to educational leadership in schools is contained in the review of the literature commissioned by Teaching Australia and conducted by ACER (Ingvarson, Anderson, Gronn, & Jackson, 2007)⁵. In particular, this review examines national and international developments in school leadership standards and assessment for prospective and established school leaders.

Writers of the review note several challenges for those who would develop standards for school leadership. First, standards writers need a guiding conception of leadership to frame their deliberations – that is, they must be able to describe what good leadership practice is. Second, standards writers must be able to identify how evidence about leadership practice can be gathered. The third challenge is to be able to describe what counts as meeting the standard. Ingvarson et al., (2007) note that it is common to find sets of standards that do not go beyond the first step. Consequently, the standards can mean what anyone chooses them to mean, limiting their usefulness in providing a common language to talk about practice and professional development. (p.107)

In considering standards for leadership in Indigenous education it is vitally important that similar challenges are addressed head on. Because of the diversity of issues facing educators of Indigenous young people (such as the different contexts in which their education occurs; and the social, economic, health, and housing disadvantages that impact on Indigenous education), it may be an even greater challenge to reach consensus on standards for leadership in Indigenous education. However, Ingvarson et al. (2007) note that standards should be context free in that they describe leadership practices for all principals, everywhere. Ingvarson and his colleagues summarise the essential features of good standards as:

- pointing to a large, meaningful and significant 'chunk' of school leaders' work;
- being context-free, in the sense that they describes a practice that most agree accomplished principals should follow no matter where the school is (which is not to say that context does not affect practice);

⁴ D'Arbon, T.Fasoli, L., & Frawley, J. (2006). Journeys through a research landscape: Lessons in multi-partner research. <http://www.aare.edu.au/06pap/dar06284.pdf>

⁵ Ingvarson, L. C., Anderson, M., Gronn, P., & Jackson, A. (2006). Standards for School Leadership: A critical review of the literature. Canberra: Teaching Australia. www.teachingaustralia.edu.au/ta/go/home/publications/pid/301

- being non-prescriptive about how to build professional culture; they do not standardise practice or force school leaders into some kind of straightjacket; and
- pointing to something that is measurable, or observable.

The appendix to Ingvarson et al. (2007) presents Australian examples of Standards and Guiding Conceptual Frameworks for Educational Leadership. The first example is that of the APAPDC five leadership propositions (the L5 Frame), which is described as a good example. The L5 Frame is presented in Appendix A of this scoping paper. The reworking of the L5 Frame into the APAPDC's Indigenous Frame is presented in Appendix B.

3 Indigenous Education and Educational Leadership

Current offerings and opportunities in the area of Indigenous leadership and leadership for Indigenous education include those operating through the Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council (APAPDC), principally through the *Dare to Lead* project, and a number of independent/autonomous programs and projects. Some programs are for Indigenous principals/school leaders and some are for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous principals/school leaders.

In the remainder of this section we provide brief details of current activity that focuses on leadership in Indigenous education. Most of this information has been obtained from the websites of the organisations or groups that are responsible for the leadership programs or activity that we report on. First, activity that is associated with the work of the Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council is presented. This is followed by information about other activity that has leadership in Indigenous education either as a focus or as an off-shoot of an organisation's core business.

3.1 The Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council

<http://www.apapdc.edu.au/>

The Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council (APAPDC) is a key player in the promotion of quality in educational leadership in Australian schools. In this section, we present information about several key APAPDC initiatives that relate to leadership in Indigenous education.

The APAPDC was established in 1993 by the Australian Principals Association to provide support for principals' professional development. It is owned by the peak Australian principals' associations - Government, Catholic and Independent, Primary and Secondary.

The Association works to support principals, their associations and their schools, to build effective, inspirational and sustainable leadership in Australia. It has a number of current projects relating to leadership in general and to Indigenous leadership in particular.

The APAPDC has developed five major propositions for school leadership. These are espoused in the APAPDC L5 Frame. The five propositions are expanded on in Appendix A, but in brief form are:

- leadership starts from within;
- leadership is about influencing others;
- leadership develops a rich learning environment;
- leadership builds professionalism and management capability; and
- leadership inspires leadership actions and aspirations in others.

The APAPDC Strategic Plan 2006-2008 contains specific reference to its work in leadership in Indigenous education. One of its specific aims (under ‘Leadership is about influencing others’) is to “expand its leadership in the promotion of health and wellbeing and Indigenous education.”

3.2 *Dare to Lead*

www.daretolead.edu.au

The primary APAPDC program concerning Indigenous leadership is *Dare to Lead*, a project funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). It is the umbrella project for a number of initiatives in Indigenous leadership. This national program works with school leaders to improve the educational outcomes of Indigenous students.

The *Dare to Lead* coalition is devoted to Indigenous leadership and leadership for Indigenous education. Its primary goal is
the improvement of educational outcomes for Indigenous students through increasing and supporting effective school leadership. An underpinning belief of the *Dare to Lead* project is that principals are the people who can make most difference to the schooling outcomes of Indigenous students.

Through the *Dare to Lead* project, the APAPDC has developed an Indigenous focus for the five propositions of the L5 school leadership frame. Each proposition is supported by a number of action areas to guide the work of school leaders who are committed to promoting reconciliation and Indigenous perspectives within their school. These action areas are contained in Appendix B. Also included (Appendix B) is a series of *Dare to Lead* workshop discussion starters related to the five propositions.

The project’s comprehensive website provides information about *Dare to Lead* events and seminars nationally and in each of the states and territories. It also provides information about other, non *Dare to Lead* activities related to the promotion of leadership in Indigenous education (e.g., the Indigenous Youth Leadership Forum, and the Stronger, Smarter Principals Leadership Program). The site also has links to important research and reports related to leadership and the education of Indigenous students.

The *Dare to Lead School Review Checklist* provides a range of examples to assist educational leaders to review what is happening in their schools for Indigenous students, and to develop a strategic approach to overcoming Indigenous educational

disadvantage. The strategies are grouped around themes to that schools may choose as appropriate to their specific context or need. The themed areas are:

- engaging with Indigenous students, families and communities;
- focus on attendance;
- focus on literacy;
- focus on completion;
- focus on curriculum;
- focus on transitions; and
- focus on school structure and practice.

The *Dare to Lead* website also includes a comprehensive rationale for schools that do not have any enrolled Indigenous students to join the *Dare to Lead* coalition. It notes, for instance, that

in many ways, Australia's educators are leading the country in the areas of Reconciliation and Indigenous social justice through practical strategies which are facilitating change. It is brave and demanding work, and while the Dare to Lead project and the [Dare to Lead] Coalition's school leaders are fully supported by their peak professional bodies, the additional collegial support of peers is a critical factor in success.

Any school may join the *Dare to Lead* coalition and to date nearly 5000 schools and 170 educational organisations across Australia are members of the coalition. Coalition members commit to:

- improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students;
- promoting cultural understanding; and
- supporting the goals of reconciliation.

The *Dare to Lead* project's targets over the last three years include a 10% or greater improvement in primary school literacy at Grade 5 (as defined in the jurisdiction); a 10% or greater improvement in retention in secondary schools; and an auditing of curricula in schools without Indigenous students with a view to ensuring development of student understanding of Indigenous people and their cultures and the importance of the reconciliation process.

The website defines the project's core issue as "the push for data-evidenced improvement in Indigenous student outcomes." The July 2007 Interim Report cites evidence of improvement in the first two cohorts of students against the indicators of Year 5 literacy and Year 12 completion. However, it is not possible to attribute gains definitively to the effect of the *Dare to Lead* project because the results are based on averages of the aggregated results for 2005 and 2006 of the member schools; there is a lack of information about other changes that may have occurred in the schools during that time (and before) that may have had a causal effect on student gains; and comparison is not made with non *Dare to Lead* schools (in which gains may also have been made).

3.3 *Leading from the Front*

<http://www.daretolead.edu.au/cache14/LeadingFromTheFront.html>

Leading from the Front (LFTF) is a project linked to *Dare to Lead* and the Western Australian Primary Principals Association (WAPPA). It is a professional development program that occurs in a live-in environment over an intensive three days. The program is aimed at secondary principals and deputy principals and addresses three questions:

- What does good leadership look like?
- How do you lead in Indigenous education?
- Where can principals find support in what can often be a lonely job?

LFTF incorporates elements of action research, the reading of current research, a focus on best practice, and an examination of good examples of what is happening in schools. Prior to the current focus on Indigenous education, LFTF conducted symposia with a focus on curriculum, and then on ICT.

3.4 *National Aboriginal Principals Association*

http://www.daretolead.edu.au/cache14/NAPA_Formation.html

The National Aboriginal Principals Association (NAPA) was formed in 2006. It is supported by *Dare to Lead* operationally and strategically, but is functionally and structurally separate. The NAPA is a collegial body that aims to bring Aboriginal principals in all primary and secondary schools together. A NAPA conference was held in Darwin in 2007. The organisers of this group are Principals Susan Matthews and Gavin Khan, who delivered papers at ACER's leadership conference in August 2007.

3.5 *National Indigenous Leadership Programs*

www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/indigenous/programs-leadership_program.htm

http://www.oipc.gov.au/programs/Indigenous_Leadership_Programs/default.asp

The National Indigenous Leadership Programs (Australian Government) offer a range of programs for current and potential Indigenous leaders. These include programs for women, men, and youth (18 – 25). Over 600 people have completed these programs since 2004.

The programs aim to develop skills in the following areas:

- advocacy and representation;
- conflict management;
- negotiation skills;
- financial management;
- community participation, resources, action and leadership;
- meeting information needs of the community, making presentations and communicating with the community;

- conducting community meetings and follow-up;
- understanding self as leader;
- vision and goal setting;
- confidence building; and
- networking.

The programs include an intensive residential training course and require a six to seven month continuing commitment overall.

Although not targeted specifically at leadership in education, some program participants have been employed in various roles in schools.

3.6 *The Indigenous Education Leadership Institute*

www.strongersmarter.eq.edu.au

The *Indigenous Education Leadership Institute* is the result of a partnership between the Department of Education and the Arts Queensland, and the Queensland University of Technology. It has four focus areas, two of which are concerned with leadership - leadership in Indigenous education, and Indigenous leadership.

Leadership in Indigenous education delivers five programmes:

- Stronger Smarter Leadership Program for Principals
- Strong and Smart Replication program
- Stronger Smarter In-service and Induction program
- Quality Leaders in Indigenous Schools program
- High Achieving Principals Network and Schools of Excellence Network

Indigenous leadership delivers 2 programmes:

- Cherbourg State School Indigenous Leadership program
- Stronger Smarter Indigenous Leadership program

The five day residential *Stronger Smarter Principals Leadership Programs* led by the Director, Dr Chris Sarra, are for principals (and aspiring leaders) of schools throughout Australia with high numbers of Indigenous children.

The intended outcome of the courses is that principals work to improve Indigenous student outcomes in urban, regional and remote area schools across Australia through the strategies, systems, and approaches they use to lead people and processes in their school communities.

There is a focus on effective use of evidence, on setting targets for worthwhile objectives, on strategic data gathering, and on reviewing existing resource allocations. Principals are encouraged to mobilise community capital, to become change agents by bringing key people on-side, and to work as a team. They are encouraged to co-operate with others in cross-sectoral efforts, to ensure that overlapping systemic initiatives are linked.

(Dr Chris Sarra delivered a paper at the ACER leadership conference in August.)

3.7 *Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership*

www.cyi.org.au

The *Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership* is directed by Noel Pearson. The Institute offers various leadership programs for current and future leaders and for secondary and tertiary aged Aboriginal youth. In the education area, it has a strong focus on improving literacy. A major discussion paper was published in January 2007: *Improving Literacy in Cape York*. The paper describes literacy as the most significant and urgent of the education problems facing Cape York's Indigenous communities.

The Institute also has a Leadership Academy open to those who have a leadership role in a Cape York Indigenous community or regional organisation. Associate membership is offered to leadership team members of major service providers, including government departments. The Institute describes its major focus as being on individual development of leaders through a personalised program of learning, professional development and support. The pilot program commenced in 2007. The Academy has 33 inaugural members.

3.8 *The Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre (AILC)*

<http://www.indigenousleadership.org.au/?q=>

The Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre (AILC) is a not-for-profit Registered Training Organisation providing nationally accredited Certificate and Diploma level courses for Indigenous leaders. The Centre offers leadership development programs through sponsorship and partnership arrangements.

Certificate courses offered by the AILC are designed for Indigenous Australians who are active in Indigenous affairs, through employment, or voluntary participation in Indigenous community organisations, government departments or corporations at local and regional levels. Most courses involve residential workshops and some independent study at home. The courses provide exposure to leaders and leadership environments, build awareness, encourage sharing among participants and focus on effectiveness and impact.

The AILC was established in December 1999 under the auspices of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

3.9 *Linking Worlds*

www.acu.edu.au/.../creative_and_authentic_leadership/arc_projects/linking_worlds

Linking Worlds: Strengthening the Leadership Capacity of Indigenous Educational Leaders in Remote Education Settings is funded by the Australian Research Council (2005-2009). This project is described as being the first in-depth investigation of Indigenous educational leadership in remote settings. It aims to “frame the unique ‘worlds’ within which Indigenous educational leaders operate, and to determine the skills, knowledge and attributes required to be an effective leader. . . (It will) produce

a practice based leadership model for the professional development and learning of current and potential Indigenous educational leaders.”

The project partners are the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education; Catholic Education, Northern Territory; Australian Principals Association Professional Development Council; Department of Employment, Education and Training, Northern Territory; and the Flagship for Creative and Authentic Leadership, Australian Catholic University.

Of the initiatives summarised in this scoping paper, *Linking Worlds* is the only one that presents an exploration of models of leadership with a view to addressing the key question of what these models mean in the context of leadership in Indigenous education.

3.10 An Institutional Leadership Paradigm: Transforming practices, structures and conditions in Indigenous Higher Education

http://www.altc.edu.au/carrick/webdav/site/carricksite/users/siteadmin/public/grants_projects_summaries_booklet_2006.pdf

This project is funded by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (previously the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education) under its Leadership for Excellence in Learning and Teaching Programme.

The purpose of this project is to strengthen higher education institutional leadership capacity to develop and deliver culturally appropriate and relevant Indigenous teaching and learning programs within the participant institutes. This strengthened capacity will encourage academics, students and administrators to change and transform institutional leadership practices, structures and conditions so they can more effectively advance excellence in Indigenous teaching and learning, generate new knowledge, and serve the community.

The project aims to:

- strengthen the leadership capacity of participant institutes in the area of Indigenous teaching and learning programs;
- identify common and contested guiding principles, values and philosophies that inform institutional leadership practices, structures and conditions in these programs;
- develop an Institutional Leadership Paradigm (ILP) to strengthen the leadership capacity of institutions to provide culturally appropriate and relevant Indigenous programs;
- compare, contrast and analyse institutional leadership practices, structures and conditions and their outcomes for students within a range of national and international institutes;
- establish how an ILP can be implemented, assessed and evaluated; and
- model and trial a process for strengthening capacity within participant institutes for improving Indigenous teaching and learning.

Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) is the lead institution, which is working in partnership with the Australian Catholic University (ACU National). Project participants include Flinders University, University of South Australia, Griffith University, Sitting Bull University (USA) University of Calgary (Canada), and University of Victoria (Canada).

3.11 Tiddas Showin' Up, Talkin' Up and Puttin' Up: Indigenous Women and Educational Leadership

http://www.altc.edu.au/carrick/webdav/site/carricksite/users/siteadmin/public/grants_projects/summaries_booklet_2006.pdf

This project aims to articulate a common and culturally responsive understanding of leadership for Indigenous women employed in the university sector that also takes account of Indigenous women's capacity for leadership in their own Indigenous communities.

The approach to the project is inclusive of consultation with senior Indigenous women for project affirmation, the establishment of a Steering Committee comprised of Senior executive women of the two partner universities, a series of four workshops conducted over a period of two years that involves Indigenous academic women employed in universities throughout the nation, a project team that is experienced in Indigenous education, and project outcomes that contribute to cutting edge development in the leadership field.

The project is grounded in Indigenous women's epistemological positions to develop further existing leadership capacity. It ensures sustainability by providing mentoring relationships between the Indigenous women (the tiddas) and through the development of curriculum at the postgraduate level in Indigenous women's studies.

The lead institution is Flinders University, which is working in partnership with the Australian Catholic University.

3.12 Good Practice Models of Leadership which focus on professional development of academic and general staff and building and sustaining Indigenous participation, retention and success in higher education

The genesis for this study arose from the report *Improving Indigenous Outcomes and Enhancing Indigenous Culture and Knowledge in Australian Higher Education*, by the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC) which identified the need for an independent study of models of Indigenous leadership in Australian universities with a view to increasing the number of Indigenous people working in Australian universities, and to improving the participation of Indigenous people in university governance and management.

The objective of this DEST sponsored study was to collect information to enable universities to focus on best practice models of leadership and successfully integrate them into organisational strategic directions and planning in the higher education sector, including professional development strategies and sharing best practice in

Indigenous education. It was envisaged that the implementation of best practice models of leadership could benefit Indigenous people:

- with increased numbers in the education sector overall, as well as increased numbers in leadership roles within universities
- from greater commitment from university councils to the issues surrounding Indigenous higher education.

Project Objectives:

- A. building institutional leadership capacity in support of Indigenous education
- B. building a critical mass of leaders in the higher education sector who champion participation and successful educational outcomes for Indigenous people
- C. strategies to achieve successful educational outcomes for Indigenous students and broaden their involvement across more fields of academic endeavour
- D. the extent to which the leadership models, including professional development, raise awareness of Indigenous perspectives in the education sector, and impact positively on student outcomes
- E. the extent to which the leadership models support the recruitment and promotion of academic and general Indigenous staff in higher education
- F. determining the extent to which existing leadership models influence successful educational outcomes, the factors for success, barriers, and
- G. recommending leadership models that can be successfully integrated into the organisational strategic directions and planning in the higher education sector, including professional development strategies and the sharing of best practice in Indigenous education.

The Literature Review of this project examined the historical context of Indigenous leadership, the theoretical basis of leadership in general, how this applies to higher education institutions and specifically how these theories affect and inform Indigenous leadership.

APPENDIX A: APAPDC'S FIVE PROPOSITIONS OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

APAPDC's five propositions of educational leadership (the L5 Frame) are:

- Leadership starts from within.
- Leadership is about influencing others.
- Leadership develops a rich learning environment.
- Leadership builds professionalism and management capability.
- Leadership inspires leadership actions and aspirations in others.

These propositions are presented as describing 'the desirable characteristics and attributes of educational leaders: now and in the future'. They are expanded on as follows:

1. *Leadership starts from within*
Effective educational leaders know themselves, base their actions on a well informed set of values, and have a high degree of self-efficacy and a deep sense of commitment and responsibility. They have a clear personal vision for optimising learning and well-being, and the courage and determination to achieve that vision.
2. *Leadership is about influencing others*
Effective educational leaders understand the nature of power and change and know that the quality of the relationships they have with others is crucial to their ability to influence and achieve desired outcomes.
3. *Leadership develops a rich learning environment*
Effective educational leaders know what supports and enhances learning and teaching, and that collaborative work and professional learning are fundamental to professional and organisational improvement and growth. They understand children and young people and their educational and social needs, and are able to work expertly with others to ensure quality curriculum and support services.
4. *Leadership builds professionalism and management capability*
Effective educational leaders manage the development of the organisation through quality systems and processes, and provide advocacy for professionalism in the community to maximise the value and influence of education and care.
5. *Leadership inspires leadership actions and aspirations in others*
Effective educational leaders know that they have a responsibility to promote and support widespread and sustainable leadership, inspiring others to share in this leadership so that learning and well-being are enhanced.

APAPDC website: <http://www.apapdc.edu.au/>

Propositions: http://www.sacle.edu.au/LF_propositions.html

APPENDIX B: APAPDC'S INDIGENOUS L5 FRAME

1. *Leadership starts from within*

Key themes: Beliefs, Values, Integrity, Vision, Responsibility, Commitment, Courage, Resilience.

Leaders committed to Indigenous perspectives:

- value and acknowledge Indigenous culture;
- have a strong commitment to improving outcomes for Indigenous students;
- continue to explore their own feelings about racism, social justice and equity;
- are honest about their own beliefs and attitudes towards Indigenous Australians; and
- understand that leadership in Indigenous education requires sensitivity, persistence and belief in their ability to make a real difference.

2. *Leadership is about influencing others*

Key themes: Power, Communication, Respect, Expectations, Politics, Trust

Leaders committed to Indigenous perspectives:

- listen to and act on Indigenous community input;
- build quality relationships within the school community;
- work strategically with the knowledge that relationships within and between the school and Indigenous community can be complex;
- promote the importance of protocols such as acknowledgement of country, respect for elders, flying Indigenous flags, and inviting Indigenous representatives into the school; and events such as reconciliation week and NAIDOC week;
- develop communication skills and processes that are respectful, engaging, and inclusive of their local Indigenous community;
- are aware of the perceptions and beliefs held by the Indigenous community about the title and role of the principal;
- model inclusive practices;
- are aware that in addition to inviting Indigenous parents and families into the school, leaders need to go out into the Indigenous community and connect with community members on their terms;
- establish an effective collegial network;
- clearly articulate and document the school's directions and priorities in Indigenous education; and
- ensure that Indigenous education is the responsibility of all school staff — not only Indigenous staff

3. *Leadership develops a rich learning environment*

Key themes: Intellect, Facilitation, Teaching, Openness, Evidence, Collaboration, Rigour

Leaders committed to Indigenous perspectives:

- ensure that all staff and students develop an informed understanding of Australia's Indigenous peoples and cultures, and the importance of the reconciliation process;

- actively promote contact between Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff and students;
- employ Indigenous staff in a range of responsibilities across the school;
- understand Indigenous students will learn better when they experience a holistic ‘whole-student approach’⁶ to health and wellbeing. this is comprised of:
 - respectful and caring relationships
 - high but achievable expectations
 - opportunities for authentic participation and contribution;
- support the role of parents and families as the primary educators of their children and the importance of family/school/community partnerships;
- understand that curriculum activities centred on Indigenous culture need to be handled sensitively and positively;
- encourage the development of a whole school curriculum that includes Indigenous perspectives; and
- value the life experiences that their Indigenous students bring to school.

4. *Leadership builds professionalism and management capability*

Key themes: Systems, Evaluation, Accountability, Consistency, Networks, Trends

Leaders committed to Indigenous perspectives:

- ensure that the management of the school is underpinned by values such as quality of relationships, commitment to equity and social justice and respect for others;
- provide formal feedback to staff and the school board/council about school performance in relation to Indigenous student outcomes in attendance, student retention and academic performance;
- encourage networking opportunities for their staff with staff from other schools with Indigenous students;
- are vigilant in keeping up with current Indigenous education trends, issues and plans;
- encourage all staff to set performance goals and targets for personal growth and professional development related to Indigenous cultural awareness and Indigenous student achievement;
- are active members of the *dare to lead* coalition; and
- ensure that their school’s Indigenous education plan is a part of their school’s strategic plan and promotes improved outcomes for Indigenous students by:
 - Developing clear and realistic but also challenging targets for improvements for their Indigenous students
 - Developing school action plans for Indigenous education that define tasks, assign responsibilities and establish timelines
 - Identifying the resources necessary to support improvement and committing to a budget for this
 - Seeking advice from sources beyond the school if required
 - Collecting data about what is really happening within the school and using this as a basis for monitoring progress
 - Documenting and celebrating successes

⁶ For further information refer to the *Community Matters: Working with diversity for wellbeing* booklet from the MindMatters kit.

- Utilising the *Dare to Lead* project and its partner resources as a guide in detailing the above.

5. *Leadership inspires leadership actions and aspirations in others*

Key themes: Encouragement, Risk, Opportunities, Mentoring, Coaching, Modelling

Leaders committed to Indigenous perspectives:

- invite Indigenous community role models into the school to motivate and challenge all staff, students, parents and families;
- value and celebrate all staff achievements in the area of Indigenous education;
- provide opportunities for all staff to increase their knowledge of Indigenous history and culture by engaging with relevant cultural learnings;
- mentor or provide mentors for all potential leaders; and
- provide a supportive environment where risk-taking is acceptable and ‘mistakes’ are seen as learning opportunities.

APPENDIX C: DARE TO LEAD WORKSHOP DISCUSSION STARTERS

Proposition 1: Acknowledging the traditional owners of your area

It is the first time that you have invited an Indigenous Elder to the school assembly to perform a Welcome to Country. After the assembly you are criticised by a parent for inviting the wrong person.

- How would you respond in the first instance?
- What would you do next and who would you engage in this process?
- Would you do anything differently in the future?

Proposition 2: Engaging parents and connecting with the community

You have just attended a meeting with the outgoing principal of your new school. He/she complains about the unwillingness of Indigenous parents to attend school assemblies, performances, parents' nights or school council meetings. The outgoing principal concluded their 'handover' session with you by advising that all meetings with the local Indigenous community should be held on school grounds.

- What historical/cultural issues might you need to address?
- How would you address this situation as the new principal?

Proposition 2: Resentment of non-Indigenous parents due to perceived favouritism

Your P & C president voices general community concerns about the preferential treatment given to the Indigenous students in your school.

- What is your immediate response?
- How would you address the situation with members of the broader community?
- To what extent do issues of this nature provide you with opportunities to create a more harmonious school community?

Proposition 3: Understanding resilience in Indigenous communities

The MindMatters mental health secondary school initiative used the metaphor of a 'Strength Tree' * as a basis for exploring the things that Indigenous students and school staff believed help Indigenous students to be resilient.

- How does your school contribute to the development of resilience in its Indigenous students?
- What stops young people from being strong or resilient?
- How does a lack of resilience impact on student learning?

* For information about 'The Strong Tree', which was further developed by the Iwantja school and community in South Australia, refer to: <http://cms.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters/atsi/strengthtree.htm>

Proposition 3: Developing a welcoming environment for Indigenous parents and families

Invitations for Indigenous parents and families to attend activities at the school are sent out regularly through the school newsletter but no one comes!

- Why is this so?
- How would you create an environment where Indigenous parents and families feel welcome and are involved on a regular basis?

Proposition 3: Cultural understanding

Mary is appointed as principal to a remote school. She has had no previous experience with Indigenous people or Indigenous culture. In her first week, three Indigenous students from one family display violent behaviour and she suspends them in line with mandatory policy. There is a strong community backlash, which has led to complaints of racism being made to the district office.

- Did Mary do the right thing?
- How can Mary build a relationship with the community?
- What steps could Mary take next time a similar incident occurs?

Proposition 3: Developing a rich learning environment

Your Deputy Principal comes to you after collecting all of the school's teaching programs and comments about the lack of Indigenous perspectives across curriculum areas.

- What processes would you put in place to ensure an Indigenous perspective across key learning areas?
- Who should be involved in this process?

Proposition 3: Developing a rich learning environment

A member of the School Executive is concerned at the large number of Indigenous students who fall in the lower band of achievement in numeracy and literacy. She has gathered strong support from her staff and colleagues for the implementation of a remedial 'withdrawal focused' curriculum for these students. Your Indigenous Education Worker has expressed strong reservations about this planned program.

- What are the implications of this planned program?
- What might be the reservations of the Indigenous Education Worker?
- How would you resolve this situation?

Proposition 4: Management of the school

John, a new principal at the school, sees that the previous principal has spent \$10,000 from the main school budget on a literacy program that employs local Elders. John cuts this line of funding without consulting anyone. The local community complain to the District Director who asks John to come for a meeting in his office with the local AECG President.

- What would you do if you were John?
- How would you prepare for the meeting if you were John?

- How can this situation be resolved?
- What are the implications for Indigenous students and the Indigenous community in the removal of this project?

Proposition 4: Professional development of staff

Your school's Indigenous Education Worker has completed his teaching degree and been appointed to your school in a teaching role. The staff who have worked with him in the past do not believe he has the skills necessary to be a good teacher, and bring their concerns to you.

- How would you respond to the concerns of your staff?
- How will you manage the induction of this 'new' teacher?

Proposition 4: Professional development of staff

An Indigenous Teacher is selected as your new Assistant Principal through the normal merit selection processes. Her CV did not indicate her Aboriginality. Upon commencement of her duties as Assistant Principal she takes a strong lead role in Indigenous education. Staff and community members raise several concerns about her ability to do the job.

- What concerns could staff have?
- What concerns could the community have?
- How, as Principal, would you address both staff and community concerns, and support the welfare of the Assistant Principal?

Proposition 5: Inspiring leadership actions in others

The District has implemented a reward ceremony for students and staff who have achieved excellence in Indigenous leadership programs. You have nominated two Indigenous students and one staff member. At a staff meeting, teachers raise their concern that this process is 'reverse racism' and they wish the school to have nothing to do with it.

- What are the significant issues in this scenario?
- What are the benefits and what are the difficulties in recognising Indigenous students for their achievements in this way?
- How can you address staff concerns?

APPENDIX D: GENERAL QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR ACER

What triggers do school principals need to get them to ask what they need to do for Indigenous education? What are some of the issues and how could ACER play a larger role?

Dissemination of information

Principals need to be aware of Indigenous leadership programs on offer and who in their schools would be interested in and benefit from such programs. They need to actively encourage participation. They need to be aware of the full range of programs available – for instance, the National Indigenous Leadership Programs are open to Indigenous Youth (defined as 18 to 25) and would be relevant for senior Indigenous students in schools. This and other programs could also be appropriate for staff.

Principals need to be aware of the leadership programs available for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous principals, and for potential school leaders. They need to participate in such programs themselves.

Note that in many schools, there would be very few Indigenous students, and that these students may only be identified as being Indigenous on enrolment forms. This would be the case, for instance, in many Melbourne metropolitan schools. These students may need appropriate encouragement to participate in Indigenous leadership programs.

Forums and Workshops

A professional learning exercise for principals would be one way of disseminating appropriate information and identifying needs. There will be different levels of awareness and training among principals and this should be taken account of in planning appropriate activities. For instance, a professional learning opportunity offered in a metropolitan context might need to assume a lower level of general awareness of Indigenous education needs.

Suggestions:

- ACER could facilitate workshops around a range of issues.
- A forum conducted by Indigenous principals for non-Indigenous principals. The National Aboriginal Principals Association would be an obvious source of presenters.
- Also appropriate would be a presentation by Indigenous young people, including those who have been educated in areas with a high Indigenous population as well as students who have been in a small minority at their schools. Understanding of Indigenous children would be a major focus for non-Indigenous principals.
- ACER could develop one day workshops for principals that could also be a conduit for other courses (e.g., encourage participation in the Stronger Smarter Schools Programme – initiatives like this need to be accessed by principals across Australia).

Professional learning and preparation of materials

Following through from this, staff training led by principals would be highly desirable. It is important that this professional learning activity be not only participated in but led by school principals, rather than being part of the general professional learning program. Training materials and templates need to be provided. A focus for principal and teacher understanding would be improvements in literacy for Indigenous children.

Data collection and analysis

ACER could assist in further data analysis, and reporting to schools of Indigenous students' state-based assessment data for diagnostic purposes at the school level - particularly in the area of English literacy and numeracy. In general, there has been insufficient use of such data for diagnostic purposes at the school level.

Updating of assessment materials and development of new assessment tools

Assessment materials could be updated and made more relevant where appropriate (e.g., LLANS and DART)

Another way ACER could assist would be in the development of a measurement instrument for schools to assist principals in leadership in the area, along the lines of the procedures developed in the Performance and Development Culture (PDC) project. This project was developed by ACER (Lawrence Ingvarson) in line with the Victorian Department of Education's focus on professional learning. It entailed an online survey for all staff, a school application for recognition as a PDC school and various school visits. ACER prepared the full pilot program for this undertaking. There are various ways a similar project for Indigenous education and leadership for Indigenous education could be tied in to schools. Some sort of school accreditation could be offered, along PDC lines.