

Hey, my name is Scott Gorringe. The country I belong to is Mithaka country, far South West Queensland in between the Diamantina River and Cooper Creek. I am this country and the people who walk with me both now and past. I currently live in Lockrose, a small rural hamlet 15 minutes east of Gatton in the Lockyer Valley, Queensland. I enjoy going back home camping on the river banks and caring for our sites. I also love to play golf and live to watch my two children grow and enjoy life.



I came to the Institute about 2 years ago after a conversation with our Director, Chris Sarra and Leadership Programs Manager, Sharon Grose, and I am pretty happy I did. My best mate, David Spillman and I were consulting at the time - the Stronger Smarter philosophy and this conversation had a huge impact on me. The most humbling thing about this job is the relationships that evolve from spending time with quality people. It seems like I am supposed to be here at this time.

Pre-Institute I did many jobs, including meatworker, Education Officer, Research Officer, and Native Title Consultant, which all contributed to my growth personally and professionally. I am privileged to have recently been selected onto the Australian Rural Leadership Program, which is aimed at growing the capacity of rural leaders to undertake the challenges of an ever-changing world.

This enabled me to travel recently to India for 2 weeks, as part of participants being exposed to the challenges and opportunities surrounding security and trade within a fast developing economy. This experience will again challenge my thinking, which in turn will benefit my Stronger Smarter family.

My position at the Institute is Coordinator, Teaching and Community Leadership, which enables me to work closely with Principals and other school leaders to create a high expectations culture within their school communities. It is a role I am honoured to be doing.

I hope you enjoy catching up with everything that is going on with the Institute, and that you all have a safe and relaxing Easter break.

Scott Gorringe
Coordinator, Teaching and Community Leadership

Reflections from Chris Sarra's blog site:

Collusion with a Stronger Smarter Indigenous Student Identity

"Put simply, the actions of one in schools will clearly indicate if they are an educator that is colluding with a Stronger Smarter Indigenous student identity, or something watered down. It is worth noting that sometimes we think we are being 'culturally sensitive' when we go easy on Indigenous students, or we somehow lower the bar for them. The truth here is that often this is not being 'culturally sensitive', this is simply colluding with low expectations or a belief that they cannot rise to the challenge".



“It is pretty straightforward in many ways; yet complex in other ways. What never changes though, is that making a difference in Indigenous education means we must be prepared for very hard work, as well as building a positive and productive relationship with individual students and their families. This is a recipe for success with any student, not just Indigenous students.”

In this post, Chris urges our readers to “get some useful discussion going”. Raise questions or add to his list of actions, behaviours and beliefs that signal collusion - any examples that you might practice, or might have observed. To read the blog in full, post a response, or subscribe to Dr Sarra’s blog, visit <http://chrissarra.wordpress.com/>.

Stronger Smarter Learning Communities (SSLC) – What’s Happening...

Just like schools we have had a frenzied month of activity. We thank all those from the areas we visited for their hospitality during our travels. The involvement of some SSLP staff in the forums and the presence of SSLC staff in the follow-up program has greatly enhanced our internal communications and will provide greater linkages for schools involved across the teams.



Ray Land of SSI at the Brisbane forum

Regional Research Forums

One-day Forums were designed to bring together researchers, system people, school leaders and community representatives. The forums were conducted in Newcastle, Darwin, Perth and Brisbane over February/March. Further forums are also being planned for Melbourne and Adelaide.

A proposal for a tender process is to be conducted over coming months to select and appoint Regional Research Partner Teams to compile case studies for each SSLC hub and their affiliates as well as providing designated research support services.

Forums involved a total of 81 participants and allowed us to use feedback to inform planning at the jurisdictional and institute level. The breakdown of participants was:

- School staff & Indigenous community members: 37
- System representatives (eg State/regional education departments, principal associations etc): 18
- Universities and other potential research: 18
- Stronger Smarter Institute staff: 8

Each Forum was very different and hopefully better met the context of the audience at the different locations. The involvement and feedback from a range of people has really enabled us to critically reflect on our project design and consultation processes. Having the different lenses placed over the Forums has been very beneficial and enabled us to learn a lot from them.

March SSLC Network Teleconference

The teleconference on 18 March went very well, with 25 participants involved. Some highlights of key issues related to SSLC hub and affiliate links

arising in the Teleconference are outlined below.

Paul Tracey, Principal Callaghan College, Wallsend Campus in NSW reported on his visit to Western Cape College (WCC) late last year and on the importance of cross-jurisdictional connections for re-affirming practices of improvement and in asking tough questions and doing what needs to be done.



University, school & community representatives at the Hunter

Paul Bridge, Principal of Derby District High School in WA spoke about how the local cluster of schools is working with Stronger Smarter to explore key focus areas for Kimberley schools – attendance (seasonal and year-level variations), induction program for staff (high turnover), literacy and numeracy (NAPLAN results), school community partnerships (context specific).

Lisa O'Malley, Head of Department for Year 4 – 7, Western Cape College in Queensland, spoke about how WCC now has an SSLC strategic plan and calendar.

Dyonne Anderson, Principal of Cabbage Tree Island Public School in NSW spoke about her school and its local affiliates from the Southern Cross Community of Public Schools.



Group discussions at the Darwin forum

Thanks to everyone for your continued passion, support and commitment. For more insight into these events, you'll find the unabridged article on our website under [Newsroom](#). For more information about the national landmark Stronger Smarter Learning Communities project itself, click [here](#).

Holly Johnson, SSLC Administrative Assistant
Ray Land, SSLC Senior Research Manager
Iqbal Singh, SSLC Principal Network Coordinator

Partnerships in Action: Stronger Smarter Keynote at

the TriState Conference

Light misty rain over Uluru was a perfect start to the fifth *Dare to Lead TriState Remote Schools Conference* for participants from the Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia.

The theme for the conference was *Leading at the Local Level* and a number of speakers and presentations explored what this means and what was working for remote Australian schools.

I had the pleasure of co-presenting the keynote address with Nicky Prosser, Principal, Marree Aboriginal School in South Australia. We discussed the need for school cultures that promote high expectations for staff, students and school community, and shared the *Engoori* framework for cultural planning that originated from the Mithaka people in South West Queensland.

Nicky talked about how the framework has been used at Marree School and the positive impact it has had on the school culture. Through discussion of the Stronger Smarter five meta strategies; in particular acknowledging Indigenous student identity, Indigenous leadership and high expectations leadership, participants were challenged to have an honest look at their school culture, policies, and practices and identify the times when they collude with a low expectations culture.

The challenge was put to participants that it is up to each and every one of us to make the difference, lead at the local level and to 'be the change you want to see in the world' (Ghandi).

Jacky Costanzo

Coordinator, Teaching and Community Leadership



Jeff McMullen presenting

Returning to the Heartland – Back to Cherbourg

Twenty-two deadly educators came together from across (and beyond) the country, for the third SSLP program of 2010 held at Ironbark Ridge, Murgon (7-12 March). Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland education systems were strongly represented.

The Leadership Program's international

participation came in the form of the gracious and generous Tony Sparvier, a Cree elder, and Director of Education from the Cowessess First Nations Community, Saskatchewan, Canada. Tony had read about Chris Sarra and the Cherbourg school success and decided he must experience the program for himself.

The visit to Cherbourg community was again a powerful and emotional experience. A tour of the newly opened Ration Shed Museum in the Cherbourg Historical Precinct and a presentation by community elders and workers was a program highlight.



Community elders, Pop John & Sandra Morgan sharing the Ration Shed story



Sharon Grose of SSI & program participants

During their time together, participants explored their cultural and collaborative competence and engaged in challenging learning activities, including role play requiring them to take the position of the 'other' when reflecting on dominant perceptions of Indigenous leadership in schools. A powerful conversation and learning was initiated with one participant's reflection that their expectations and assumptions about what Cherbourg would be like had been shattered by the actual experience.

The final focus was on the 'rhetoric to reality' journey – making sense of all that the participants had experienced, remembered and talked about, and harnessing their passion and commitment to champion high-expectations cultures for Indigenous students in Australian (and Canadian) schools. Activities focused on sharing personal and workplace leadership challenges. Tony Sparvier honoured the group with a ceremonial song and offering of gifts.



Participants sharing their personal 'footprints'

The constant but refreshing drizzle and the lush greenness of the magnificent landscape offered a metaphor (and perhaps a catalyst) for the regeneration and renewal of passion and commitment to Indigenous education occurring in the circle as this group began their Stronger Smarter Leadership

journey.

For more information on the Stronger Smarter Leadership Program or the schedule of programs for the remainder of 2010, visit our [website](#). To find out more about the Ration Shed Museum, email rationshed@bigpond.com.

David Spillman
Coordinator, Teaching and Community Leadership

Get Ready to Take AIME

There's a revolution heading to Queensland and it comes dressed in black 'hoodies', with a mission to stamp out inequalities in Indigenous education. It's called **AIME – Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience**.

Under the direction of CEO & founder Jack Manning-Bancroft, AIME first started in Redfern, Sydney in 2005 working with 25 school students and 25 university students. Today AIME is working across NSW, Victoria and Qld working with over 1000 school students and over 1000 university students.



*Belinda Huntriss, Program
 Manager Brisbane*

Through a partnership with the Stronger Smarter Institute and the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), AIME has arrived in Brisbane to offer a significant opportunity for QUT's university students to gain invaluable experience working with and learning from young Indigenous students from local high schools in a safe, innovative and fun educational environment unlike anything they've ever experienced.

Heading up the AIME Program in Brisbane is Belinda Huntriss. Belinda is a descendant of the Worimi people from the mid north coast of NSW. Having recently completed a teaching degree at the University of Newcastle in NSW she soon realised that teaching wasn't the only way to make a difference.

"I am excited to be working with AIME, it's an idea that is so simple, yet so effective and that is in the business of changing lives, making an impact and changing the social landscape of Australia. I am extremely passionate about Indigenous education. As a young Aboriginal person I know and can remember what it is like to be a student and face the sort of problems that came along with that. My aim is for Indigenous students to realise, as I did, the opportunities they have in life as successful young Indigenous Australians."

Belinda is based in the Stronger Smarter Institute's office at QUT's Kelvin Grove campus and can be contacted on bh@aimementoring.com or 0404-873-114 during work hours.

For more information on Aime's programs and how to get involved, or to see AIME in action on Youtube simply visit www.aimementoring.com.



Farewell to Amanda Watt, Jobs Australia Foundation



Amanda & Petah Hegarty, Community Ed Counsellor, Loganlea SHS

We wish to express our sincere thanks and warmest wishes to Amanda for the wonderful support she has provided the Institute, in her role as JAF Project Manager.

The Jobs Australia Foundation fosters innovation and best practice to build effective collaborations and inclusive communities by providing scholarships for Indigenous community leaders to attend the Stronger Smarter Leadership Program alongside their school leaders.

We wish Amanda well in her new marketing role with Community Sector Banking, as we welcome Jodie Belyea to the role of Project Manager and look forward to continuing the Institute's partnership with the Jobs Australia Foundation.

Charly Keith
Business Liaison Officer



Erratum

The dillybag illustration accompanying the February edition article, *A New Chapter in the Stronger Smarter story – The SSLP Facilitator Learning Program*, was reproduced with kind permission of RAtARtAt Public Art. We apologise for this omission.



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