

## Changing the Tide - June issue

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### Changing the Tide - June issue

Kimberley Stronger Smarter Journey, Welcome to new staff, Chris Sarra's book, NAIDOC Celebrations

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## Welcome from Josh Kitchens

Hi everyone and welcome to the June edition of *Changing the Tide*.

June will be marked as a month of great change for me.

Just a few weeks ago I was living in Darwin where I worked for the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA) in the role of Communication and Network Support Officer.

I was privileged to work with Indigenous land and sea managers across north Australia. One aspect of my work focused on providing tools and opportunities for Indigenous land and sea managers to network with one another.

I loved my job at NAILSMA, but after living in the Top End for four years (I'm originally from Perth) I felt like it was time for a change?and what better catalyst for change than the Stronger Smarter Institute.

My new role as Communication Officer for the Stronger Smarter Institute includes supporting internal and external communications that build awareness of the Institute and its programs; and supporting program participants through engaging communication products. The role is one part of a communication program at the Institute and I'm really looking forward to the collaboration and shared learning that comes from working with a dedicated team.



*Joshua Kitchens,  
Communication Officer*

There are many reasons why I am excited to join the Institute; but two stand out:

- the commitment for innovative and quality communication?evident through the past and present work of Toby, Gailene, Gabe and Mark; and
- the philosophy that empowers, builds esteem and honours a positive sense of cultural identity.

I feel very fortunate and privileged to be invited into the Stronger Smarter family at such an exciting time for the Institute. I acknowledge that after two short weeks on the job I still have a lot to learn about the Institute, its programs and the education sector generally ? but I?m surrounded by Stronger Smarter teachers and supporters so I know I am in good hands.

**Joshua Kitchens**

Communication Officer

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## Stronger Smarter Learning Communities

The Learning Communities project is now half-way through its implementation phase and is preparing to be fully operational in 2012. In 2012 the challenge will be how we prepare the network to transition and be more embedded in the jurisdictions, but with a national collegial framework that enables schools to support, develop and challenge each other while changing the tide of low expectations to deliver improved outcomes for Indigenous students.

An important part of the preparation for 2012 is the SSLC National Forum in August this year where network principals will get together to plan for the operational phase of the project. This year the National Forum is being held in Brisbane at the Park Regis Hotel on the 22nd and 23rd of August. We are looking forward with enthusiasm to reconnect with our colleagues from across the country to share our stories and generate ideas to address the challenges in our schools and communities.

While we have been busy planning for the National Forum, we have still had some very valuable and exciting activities in the last month. Our June teleconference on Professional Learning has received excellent feedback from participants. Teleconference speakers included Professor Allan Luke (QUT), Doug Booth (Manager ? Western Australia Institute of Public School Leadership and Professional Learning) and Paul Bridge (Principal, Derby District SHS in WA).

Professor Allan Luke offered a perspective from his experience in system reforms and international research into professional learning. His insight has proved very valuable for us in designing professional development policies and building workforce capacity. Doug Booth was able to give us an overview of how a system tries to address the issue of performance development of staff, which enable principals to identify the issues confronting large education systems. Finally, Paul Bridge, explained how schools can work together to build local expertise that enables learning communities to address challenges in a sustainable way. It has been great to receive such positive feedback and rewarding to have principals and schools call us to talk about how the teleconference stimulated ideas that haveresulted in changes to practice.

In June, Iqbal also visited Bairnsdale Secondary College in Victoria and Ngunnawal Primary School in the Australian Capital Territory. At Bairnsdale he got to meet with some of the Koorie Workers and the administration to discuss the excellent progress being made in their community. It was great to see the passion and confidence with which they spoke. The most exciting part of the visit was that the changes

that are delivering improved outcomes are building school and community capacity which will be sustainable in the future.

At Ngunnawal, the school has engaged positively with the local Indigenous community and worked with its Indigenous students to produce a publication of their very own special collection of creative artworks. The project known as 'Sharing Our Culture' gave Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at Ngunnawal the opportunity to not only spend time building a sense of belonging but also bring about personal reflection and celebration of their identity and culture. Anyone visiting the school will be impressed with how much the staff knew about the local Indigenous peoples and cultural heritage. It is something extremely valued within the school and highlights how important it is to know and value one's heritage.

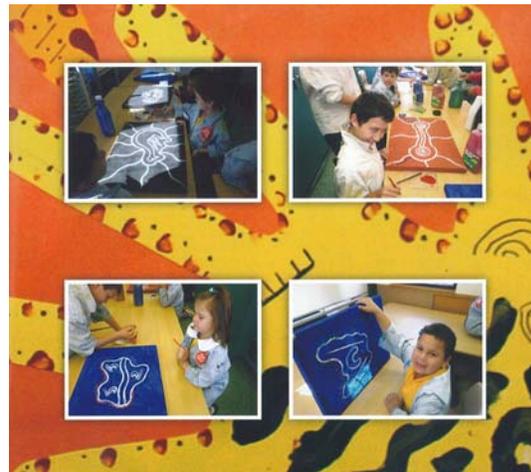
The schools in the Stronger Smarter Learning Communities network are flush with similar stories of success and in the next few months we will see further documented evidence of how schools of all types, from the full spectrum of contexts, can help close the gap for Indigenous Australians and build a better, fairer nation.

### Iqbal Singh

Principal Network Coordinator



*Students performing to the 'Hands Across Australia' song*



*Students from Ngunnawal Primary working on their Indigenous artworks*

## Kimberley Stronger Smarter Journey

Between 19 June to 1 July, the Kimberley Education Regional Office hosted two Stronger Smarter Leadership Programs in Broome, bringing 54 school staff and community members from 14 Kimberley schools, East Kalgoorlie Primary and the Kimberley Success Zones Coordinator into the Stronger Smarter family. Participants came from as far south as Kalgoorlie to Kalumburu Remote Community School in the north of Western Australia.

The stunning beach front location at the Kimberley Camp School provided a therapeutic touch to the challenging professional learning. A team of Stronger Smarter Facilitators from the Kimberley district and the Institute worked the groups from morning into the evenings.

At the beginning of the week some participants reported feeling challenged and somewhat unsure or

confused, however throughout the program their understanding of Stronger Smarter grew.

The Stronger Smarter philosophy of embracing high expectations of Aboriginal students around strong cultural identity is having a huge impact in Kimberley schools. The Kimberley Education Regional Office has a strong and exciting partnership with the Stronger Smarter Institute around strengthening the leadership capacity of all stakeholders including Aboriginal community to look within for solutions to complex challenges in schools. Both weeks were very successful as evident in the comments below:

*Thank you for organising this wonderful week; it has been an inspirational and though provoking. I look forward to getting back to school and developing a Strong and Smart Culture?*

*This week has had a deep impact on me. Affirmed, challenged and inspired, oh and equipped! Thanks for the Dillybag of tools ?*

*?Need to have a whole school do this?*

**Edie Wright**, Manager Aboriginal Education and **Carol Bennell**, Coordinator Aboriginal Education, Kimberley District Education Office

**Sharon Grose**  
Programs Manager



*Group 1 - Week 1*



*Participants planning their group Culture Action Plan*

## Welcome to Jon

Howdy all. I am Jon Bullen and I'm happy to be commencing the role of Administrative & Community Relations Officer.

My mother is of Bibbulman/Wadarni heritage on my grandfather's side and Yamatji from my Nan. My father is an English man born in Bristol. Born and raised in Western Australia, I have also spent a great deal of time with the Murri community, having moved to Brisbane in 1988.

My wife is a Murri woman whom I chased back to Brisbane in 2009; we have two children together. They are a large part of the



*Jon Bullen, Administrative and Community Relations Officer*

motivation behind coming to work at the Stronger Smarter Institute.

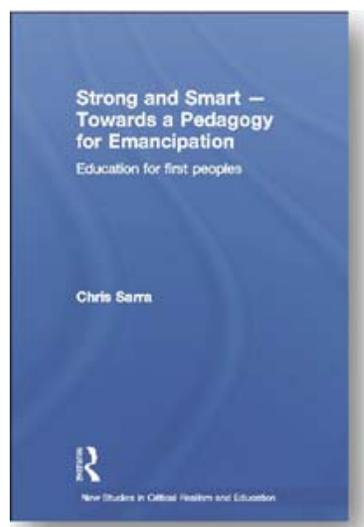
My professional background has been mixed ? however, from working within Indigenous mental health organisations through to supporting Indigenous youth in incarceration, the focus has always been the Indigenous community.

Having not completed high school, I now find myself completing a second degree with the goal of attaining a PhD. From this perspective, I would like to be a role model for those in the community and, in particular, my children. Being of the first generation of children in my family to be raised by their biological parents, I would like to pass on a legacy of high expectations, coupled with the motivation and determination to exceed them.

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## New Book:

### Strong and smart - towards a pedagogy for emancipation: education for first peoples by Chris Sarra



Strong and Smart ? Towards a Pedagogy for Emancipation tells the story of how Dr Chris Sarra overcame low expectations for his future to become an educator who has sought to change the tide of low expectations for other Indigenous students. The book draws upon Roy Bhaskar?s theory of Critical Realism to demonstrate how Indigenous people have agency and can take control of their own emancipation. Sarra shows that it is important for Indigenous students to have confidence in their own strength and ability to be as "able" as any other group within society.

The book also compares and contrasts White perceptions of what it is to be Indigenous and Indigenous views of what it is to be an Aboriginal Australian. The book calls for Indigenous Australians to radically transform and not simply reproduce the identity that Mainstream White Australia has sought to foster for them. Here the book explores in what ways Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are "othered" by White Australians. Sarra seeks to advance the novel position that it is OK to be other to White Australia. The question becomes, "which other?" The Indigenous Student should not be treated as the Feared and/or Despised Other, nor should they be coerced into wholly assimilating into White culture.

**Special Offer for Changing the Tide readers:** receive a 20% discount off the purchase price when you place your order online. Visit <http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415615600/> and enter the discount code ?SAS11? when prompted.

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## Stronger Smarter in the News

- [Dawul Remote Community School broadens horizons and boosts attendance rates - ABC Online, July 7 2011](#)  
[Audio Interview] An Indigenous school called Dawul Remote Community School is chalking up an

attendance rate of over ninety per cent and has established high levels of both student and community engagement... [\[read more\]](#)

- [Committing to the toughest teaching gig in the country ? The Australian, June 18 2011](#)  
Leading indigenous educator Chris Sarra , of the Stronger Smarter Institute, says the potential has always been there in indigenous communities, and that what has been lacking is the thinking to change. "Schools should be a beacon in the community, ... [read more](#)
- [Service industries the way of the future, forum told ? The Australian, June 17 2011](#)  
Speakers at the panel included NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell, KPMG partner Bernard Salt and Stronger Smarter Institute executive director Chris Sarra. Mr Ruthven said the industries with the best chances for growth over the next few decades in Australia ... [read more](#)
- [Australia 'falling behind' on Indigenous literacy ? ABC Online, 8 June 2011](#)  
Dr Chris Sarra , an expert in Indigenous literacy, says it is difficult to pinpoint where things are going wrong. "We've got a long way to go and we've all got to keep working pretty hard at this," he said. "I think it's very significant that we know ... [read more](#)
- [Indigenous literacy figures fall short ? ABC Online, 8 June 2011](#)  
[Audio Interview] Dr Chris Sarra is an expert in Indigenous literacy and the executive director of the Stronger Smarter Institute at the Queensland University of Technology. CHRIS SARRA : It just signals that we've got a long way to go and we've all got to keep working ...[read more](#)

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## Chris Sarra's Video Blog



[COAG report on Indigenous education ? June 14 2011](#)

[Video Blog] Today I wanted to comment on the COAG report that has recently come out which signals some concerns around year 9 data?but before I go to the year 9 data I just wanted to signal that in an overall sense, it's been very positive ... [view video](#)

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## NAIDOC Celebrations

### The Memory Project



*Ration Shed Management Committee: Bevan Costello, Sandra Morgan, Ada Simpson, Grace Stanley, Robert Langton and Jeanette Brown*

To start off the NAIDOC celebrations for 2011 the Ration Shed Museum in Cherbourg Queensland launched an exhibition of the lost works from the 1930s of anthropologist Carolyn Tennant-Kelly.

In 1989 near Kyogle in Northern NSW, a friend of Caroline Tennant Kelly's a local cattleman Grahame Gooding was clearing out her house after her death when discovered a jumble of letters, papers, photographs and personal effects. Something made him resist the advice of neighbours to throw everything out. He kept the collection. More than 20 years later 2 doctoral students searching for the works of noted anthropologist Carolyn Tennant-Kelly

advertised in Northern Rivers media for information about her. Grahame Gooding contacted them to say he had a steel trunk in his possession that might interest them. In it the students discovered a treasure of writings, documents and photographs - the life's work of one of Australia's most important academics.

Among her areas of work and research, Tennant-Kelly spent many months in Cherbourg in 1934 interviewing and recording the stories of the residents who had been brought there from far and wide in the preceding decades. She also took photos of people and events. This work has now been brought back to Cherbourg by Grahame and Stephanie Gooding who travelled to Cherbourg with Anthropologists Kim de Rijke and Tony Jefferies.

The event opening on the 4th July was by invitation only and an audience of Cherbourg Elders, residents, Indigenous visitors, academics were presented with this work. The Stronger Smarter Institute received a special invitation where Michal Purcell, Senior Community Relations Officer represented the Institute to attend this important celebration. An official certificate of appreciation from the Museum was accepted by Michal on behalf of the Institute recognising the support and close relationship the Stronger Smarter Institute has with the Ration Shed Museum and Cherbourg Community.

#### **Michal Purcell**

Senior Community Relations Officer

### **NAIDOC Family Fun Day**

The Stronger Smarter team attended the NAIDOC Family Day held at Brisbane's Musgrave Park on Friday 8 July. Staff were treated to live performances, arts and crafts and the huge variety of food on offer. Chicken Vermicelli was in demand and no one came home empty-handed with giveaways offered at every corner. It was a fun day and a great way to end NAIDOC week celebrations.



*Stronger Smarter staff at NAIDOC Family Fun Day*

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## **New on the website**



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