

Stronger Smarter Workplaces

To create inclusive, innovative and high performing workplace cultures

"Organisations with strong, collaborative team cultures have greater employee engagement and satisfaction, and greater staff retention. This leads to workplaces that are more inclusive and innovative, and ultimately more productive."

Our Vision

Stronger Smarter communities enabling all people to honour and affirm positive identities and cultures, whilst thriving in contemporary societies

Our Philosophy

The Stronger Smarter philosophy honours a positive sense of cultural identity, and acknowledges and embraces positive community leadership, enabling innovative and dynamic approaches and processes that are anchored by high expectations relationships.

High expectations relationships honour the humanity of others, and in doing so, acknowledge one's strengths, capacity and human right to emancipatory opportunity.



About Us

We are an independent and Indigenous led Not-For-Profit company.

It has taken several decades of passion, belief and commitment to create Stronger Smarter classrooms and communities. Our founder and chair, Professor Chris Sarra developed the Stronger Smarter Philosophy through his studies and work at Cherbourg State School to embrace a strong and positive sense of what it means to be Aboriginal in contemporary Australian society. The success of his work with the students and community of Cherbourg led to the formation of the Stronger Smarter Institute which has spent over 10 years successfully transforming Australian education.

Workplaces Vision

Stronger Smarter communities across Australia, where people are strong in culture, in identity and able to enjoy prosperous, safe and healthy lives.

Within these communities, we want to see Stronger Smarter workplaces that promote excellence, embrace diversity, and honour individual identities and cultures.



Stronger Smarter Approach

The Stronger Smarter approach honours a positive sense of cultural identity for everyone, believing this is essential for educational and workforce success. We raise our expectations, of students, parents and communities, and of ourselves. We anchor this through strength based approaches, and collaborative communication processes which we describe as 'High-Expectations Relationships'.

Stronger Smarter in the Workplace

Stronger Smarter is based on a belief that every Australian should have the opportunity to reach their full potential. This means the same opportunities for everyone in both schooling and employment.

This is not always easy and many workplaces face complex challenges within their staff, stakeholders and local communities. We begin by developing a positive sense of cultural identity and then look deeply at how we communicate and interact with others, using the concept of 'High-Expectations Relationships'.

We need more quality leadership, not more leaders.



Cultural Competency

Our Workplaces Program can mobilise your staff to embrace their diverse strengths and use Stronger Smarter strategies and processes to co-create a way forward.

It complements your local cultural awareness programs and supports your Reconciliation Action Plan by moving your staff towards cultural competency.

This makes it relevant for organisations seeking to build their Indigenous employment strategies or organisations who operate in regional and remote Australia who are seeking to employ local staff and collaborate and connect with the local Indigenous community.

The Program

We will engage your workplace teams in the processes of High-Expectations Relationships and developing high-performance workplace cultures. It is for teams who are seeking to:

- challenge existing thinking and practices and find new approaches to complex challenges
- support a diverse, welcoming and inclusive culture for your workplace
- create spaces where workplace teams can explore the challenges, dynamics and complexity of diverse workplace cultures
- nurture team cultures where everyone works together, and ideas are shared and valued
- develop relationships with local communities and provide positive social impacts for these communities.

For Groups or Teams within an organisation

Two full day modules provide a total of 16 hours face-to-face learning. You can choose one module only, or use both modules to provide your team with a more in-depth learning experience.

The two modules can run together over two days, or can be separated to allow time to implement learning in the workplace and reconnect and review on the second day. We can tailor the content of the modules as required for either workplace teams or management groups.



Module 1 – Building a Stronger Team Culture

Building a Stronger Smarter Team Culture is designed for organisations seeking a positive shift in workplace team culture together with improved communication and collaboration.

- Your team will be able to respond to the questions, ‘what makes me Stronger and Smarter?’ ‘what is our Stronger Smarter workplace?’ and ‘who are we when we are at our best?’
- You will have improved your understanding of yourself as a cultural being, and understand the impact on your workplace of the dynamic between social viewpoints and traditionally marginalised viewpoints.
- You will understand the value of the diversity within your workplace and have enhanced skills for relating and working with others.
- You will have worked with your team to develop a workplace cultural action plan, which will be supported by skills and strategies to enact and sustain a shared culture of trust, care, safety, rigour and honesty within the team.



Module 2 – Understanding & Developing Cultural Competence

Sustainable ways for approaching complex challenges in the workplace.

- You will understand the nature and characteristics of complex challenges.
- You will be able to analyse these complex challenges

to identify the impact that cultural biases, assumptions, and deficit mindsets might have on communication and collaboration in cross-cultural settings.

- You will be competent in approaching inter-cultural communication, and have the ability to offer alternative methods of approaching complex challenges when they arise in the workplace.

What will I learn?

For teams at all levels. We see everyone as capable of leadership, and believe everyone can make a difference.

Workplaces is a highly experiential learning program incorporating a range of activities which will challenge your thinking about how to approach complex challenges.

Learning through culture

We recognise the need to learn through culture, not just about culture. You will understand how everyone has a unique cultural identity made up of our experiences and beliefs and influenced by the communities, traditions or ways of being into which we are born.



A really unique approach to team building! This was a great opportunity for our staff to look within and without to challenge their assumptions, recognise their strengths and commit to collaborative action. Loved it!
Participant Jan 2015

Drawing on existing strengths

You will draw on your existing strengths and knowledge, stretch and challenge yourself intellectually and emotionally, and question your courage to activate change. We offer new frameworks, processes and fresh insights, to inspire you to connect with your full potential.

Celebrating diversity

We recognise that cultural diversity is associated with diverse ways of understanding how people relate to each other and the world. We embed understandings and celebrations of cultural identity into conceptions of how to build an inclusive and productive workplace.

Indigenous ways of knowing

We bring Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing to the learning process. By consolidating the strengths of these ancient cultures that still have an important place in contemporary Australia, we believe we can find that common ground for true reconciliation.

Co-creating a way forward

We recognise that some challenges require changes to the assumptions, beliefs and attitudes of individuals and groups within the workplace. We also understand that many of these challenges may lie beyond the walls of the office and involve local communities. We look at ways to develop High-Expectations Relationships within teams and within communities to co-create a way forward.

Our Team



ABOVE from L to R: Dyonne Anderson - Chief Operations Officer, Cathy Jackson – Head of Research, Jenalee Purcell – Administration Officer, Scott Pardey – Chief Finance Officer, Michal Purcell – Team Leader Programs, Fiona Bobongie – Team Leader Jarjums, Liz Kupsch – Adjunct Research Officer, Darren Godwell – Chief Executive Officer, Cassie Ryan – Facilitator, Dr John Davis – Head of Research, Ken Weatherall – Facilitator/Program Coordinator, Cheryl Jose – Office Manager, Jana Andrade – Research Officer/Analyst, Nancia Guivarra – Chief Marketing Officer.

The Stronger Smarter Workplaces Program honours difference and diversity. This is reflected in the composition of our teams. Our team has both male and female, Indigenous and non-Indigenous members, some with teaching backgrounds and others with other workplace and community experiences. All are experienced in the Stronger Smarter approach to co-facilitation and share a strong commitment to ensure a lifetime of learning outcomes.