

# Annual Report

2024

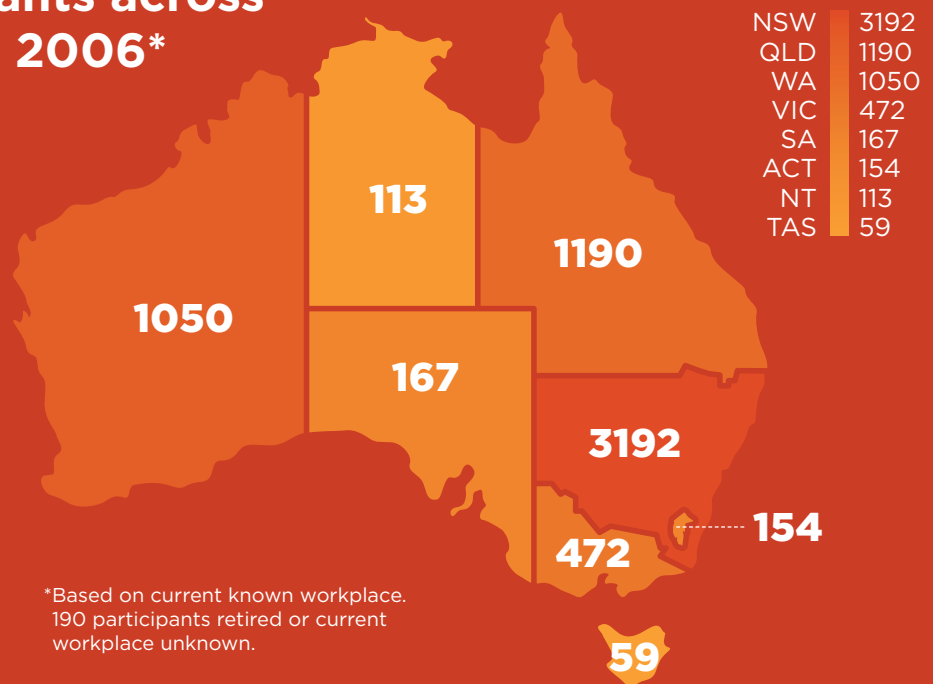


## Program participants across the country since 2006\*

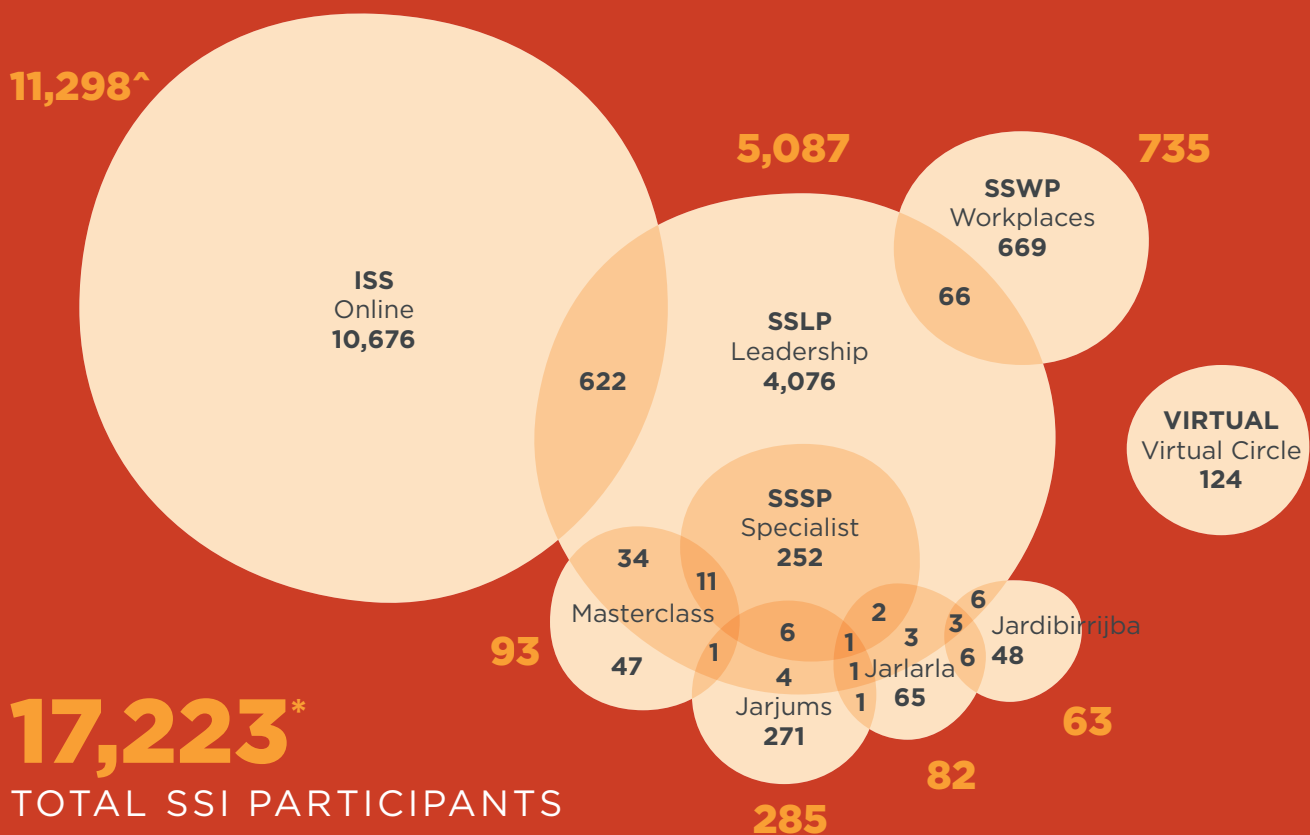
**6,587**  
PARTICIPANTS

**368**  
PROGRAMS

**1,771**  
SCHOOLS



## Cross-over of programs participants



\*48 participants have done 2 SSLP programs  
21 participants have done more than 1 Workplace program  
4 participants have done more than 1 Masterclass  
<sup>^</sup>Online module includes enrolled and incomplete

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## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live, and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community. We also pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.



Firstly, let me congratulate our CEO Dyonne Anderson and all of her Stronger Smarter team on another dynamic year of service. Dyonne brings stable leadership to the Institute as well as reinforcing its reputation with her own well credentialed career as an Australian education leader. I am exceptionally pleased that she has been able to lead the institute and retain her Trans-Tasman leadership connection with our Māori brothers and sisters.

For all of us at the Stronger Smarter Institute, 2025 will be a significant milestone year. It marks 20 years of providing educational leadership for Australia's education community and for Australia's First Nations communities. Indeed, as I have often said, the Stronger Smarter Institute has played a significant role in serving all communities where low expectations can manifest.

It is incredible to reflect upon 20 years of service to Australia and our First Nations communities. There have been many great people who have supported us along the way. During 2025 we hope to honour these great people as part of our celebrations. We also are intent on celebrating all of those education and community leaders who have become a part of our Stronger Smarter Leadership Program alumni, which now goes well beyond 6000 educators from across Australia. Each of them will have many great stories to tell as a result of their involvement with Stronger Smarter and we hope to feature some of these great stories at our third Stronger Smarter Summit.

## DR CHRIS SARRA

Chair of the Board



As the Stronger Smarter Institute reflects on another successful year, I am proud of the incredible journey we have embarked on together in delivering leadership programs and transforming outcomes for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Through the dedication and commitment of our team of professional and capable staff, we have challenged the status quo, embraced innovation and made a lasting impact on the lives of our students.

In 2024, we have seen remarkable progress and positive changes in the academic achievements, well-being and sense of belonging of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Our alumni have told us this through our census data. Through our culturally responsive leadership programs and tailored support and opportunities for personal and academic growth for educators, we have empowered our students to reach their full potential and thrive in a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

As we look ahead to 2025, let us continue to build on our successes, learn from our challenges, and strive for excellence in everything that we do. By working together, supporting each other, and embracing diversity and inclusion, we can create a more equitable, empowering, and inspiring educational experience for all students. In 2025 we will be celebrating 20 years of facilitating transformational change for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across Australia. It is a year to acknowledge the great vision that our Founder Dr Chris Sarra had for the institute. I look forward to bringing that vision to life in so many schools and communities when our alumni share their achievements and successes at The Summit in 2025.

## DYONNE ANDERSON

Chief Executive Officer

# Our Vision

**“ We didn’t go to Cherbourg and give the children a sense of being ‘Strong and Smart’... That was inside them already... That sense of being strong and smart resides in every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child.**

DR CHRIS SARRA

The Stronger Smarter Institute (SSI) was established in 2005 by Dr Chris Sarra and incorporated as a not-for-profit organisation in January 2013. In January 2016, the Institute was recognised as a public benevolent institute and Deductible Gift Recipient by both the Australian Taxation Office and the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission.

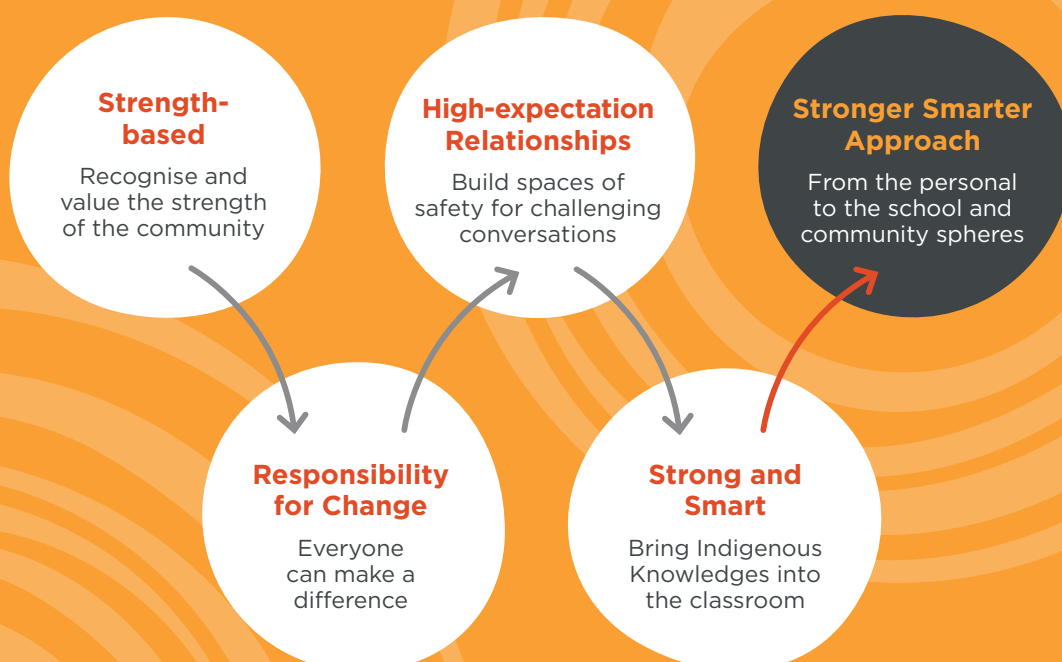
Our vision is for Stronger Smarter communities across Australia, where all people are strong in culture, strong in identity and enjoy prosperous, safe and healthy lives. In these Stronger Smarter communities, success for First Nations Australian children means the transformation of education to support children to walk in two worlds.

Our mission is to support communities, schools, organisations, and policy makers to create Stronger Smarter schools and classrooms where First Nations children can thrive. This is a learning environment where all children can be proud of their culture, there is high intellectual challenge, and the curriculum is relevant to their lives.

Collaboration, partnerships, community-led approaches and co-design of local strategies are at the centre of our work. The Institute works with educators, community groups and organisations as ‘partners in change’ to ensure the sustainability of the Stronger Smarter Approach in schools.

The Institute has partnerships with the Commonwealth Government, the Catholic and Independent education sectors, corporate and philanthropic supporters.

There were no significant changes in the nature of the activities of the Institute during the year. We continue to strive for our shared vision of improving outcomes for our children and creating engaging, productive, and respectful learning environments that nourish belonging and high achievement.



# Our Values

**At the Stronger Smarter Institute, we live, breath and honour the Stronger Smarter Approach every day and in all that we do.**



## RESPECT

We acknowledge and honour existing positive strengths and processes.

We work collaboratively with colleagues in relationships underpinned by loyalty professionalism and collegiality.

We do things 'with' people, not 'to' them.



## INTEGRITY

We display professionalism in all aspects of our work and seek to deliver beyond expectations as often as we can.

We honour and enable processes of transparency and accountability in all Stronger Smarter Institute activity.

We 'walk our talk'.



## HONESTY

We respectfully challenge others who demonstrate toxic behaviours that are contrary to the Stronger Smarter values.

We respectfully challenge those who collude with low expectations.

We continually reflect on our own practice to contemplate how we can learn and do better.



## COURAGE

We accept positive feedback with humility and constructive feedback as an opportunity to reflect, learn and develop.

We provide robust and constructive feedback in the interests of a high expectations agenda.

We enable and embrace innovative and creative ways of thinking and doing.

# Our Ways of Working



## High-expectations relationships

Building respectful, supportive and challenging relationships weaves through everything we do. We believe this is the key to transformative change.



## High expectations

Our view of high expectations ensures a balance of challenge and support for all students. It moves from high expectations of students to high expectations of self and for students.



## Equal power relating

We work in circles where everyone can sit together in a space of equal power-relating.



## Multiple perspectives

Solving complex challenges requires spaces of 'not knowing' where all voices come together to share knowledge and experiences.



## Local contexts

Any group of people usually already holds the collective knowledge and wisdom to successfully meet the complex challenges they face. There is no 'one size fits all' approach, and local solutions are always needed.



## Responsibility for change

Everyone can be a leader. When we reflect and unpack 'out-of-awareness' assumptions we unlock the belief and confidence to be an agent of positive change.



## Co-design

Co-design of local strategies privileges diverse voices and perspectives, ensures deep respectful listening and honours the knowledge and expertise the community brings.



## Respond with possibility

Privileging community voices means letting go of being the knowledge holder and responding with possibility and action.



## Community empowerment

Sustainability is obtained through shifting the locus of control towards community leadership.

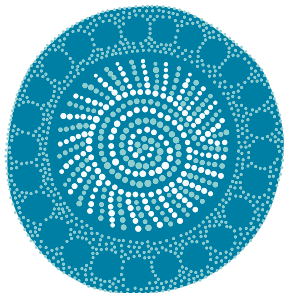
# Our Programs

January - December 2024



## 26 STRONGER SMARTER LEADERSHIP AND JARJUMS PROGRAMS

Leadership, the little black fella he grew, and he grew and he learned all types of trades... in every field that he possibly can ... and the same for the little black girl she grew and she grew and she learned... to become a better person, to become a leader in whatever field they pursued.



## 2 STRONGER SMARTER WORKPLACES PROGRAMS

Workshop... workshop as spirals to the centre... is the centre of the workplace... which branch out.. to other work... workshopping areas.

### This year

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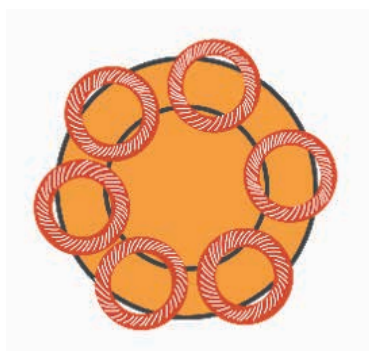
**511**  
PARTICIPANTS

**28**  
PROGRAMS

**154**  
SCHOOLS

**20**  
ORGANISATIONS

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## ONLINE MODULE

Online... the circle and rings represent our tribes that were sent here... from all over the state. From north - far north Queensland... all the Guugu-Yimidhirr, all the Bwgcolman. From out west the Gunggari and the Kulali. From our coast area, all the Butchulla mob. And down south all the Ipswich mob.

**145**  
PARTICIPANTS

**28**  
SCHOOLS

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# Where We've Been

## 2024 Program Facilitators

### Our SSI Facilitators were:

Cassie Ryan  
Ken Weatherall  
Michal Purcell  
Rebecca Giles  
Kylie Greatbatch  
Dyonne Anderson  
Ingrid Lancaster  
Sarah McDonald

### Joined by our Specialist Trained Alumni:

Mirryndah Nixon – Teacher, Aurukun State School  
Trina Horder – Cluster Director, Penrith City Council Children's Services  
Karen Rubie – Teacher, Callaghan College Wallsend Campus  
Cath Gillespie – Education Leader, Evans Head-Woodburn Preschool  
Mark Manchur – Deputy Principal, Temora High School  
Aaron McDonald – Deputy Principal, Ballina Coast High School  
Tammi Webber – Indigenous Education Advisor, Catholic Education Townsville

## January

We started the year when Cassie, Ken and Aaron headed to Toowoomba for a one-day Introduction to Stronger Smarter at Highfields State School. This was the beginning of a partnership and was followed by the full SSLP in May 2024.

At the end of January, Cassie, Michal and Ingrid travelled to WA to run a 2-day Workplaces Program for Halls Creek District High School.



## February

In February, Ken and Dyonne were in Barkindji country at Menindee. We were delighted to be working with SSLP alumni Fiona Kelly and the staff of the Menindee Central School.

On Wiradjuri land, we were proud to continue our long partnership with Glenroi Heights Public School as they once again hosted a program with participants from across the region. It was a fantastic week facilitated by Ken and Kylie.

On Turrbal country, in Meanjin (Brisbane), our Teachers of STEM Initiative participants came together for the Jardibirrijba and Jardi Dadarrinyi programs facilitated by Cassie, Rebecca and Sarah.



## March

In March, our facilitators travelled across New South Wales, from Bundjalung country to deliver another Ballina SSLP to Wilyakali country at Broken Hill, where Rebecca and Ken delivered a program to educators from schools in and around Broken Hill.

On Gadigal land in Sydney, Michal and Rebecca worked with educators from the Association of Independent Schools of NSW.

Cassie and Trina visited the Darug Nation at Chipping Norton in Western Sydney to deliver a program to principals from the local network of schools.

Ken teamed up with Karen in the Hunter where local schools continued to deepen their ongoing involvement with Stronger Smarter.



## April

In April, Cassie, Ken and Mich headed to Kamilaroi country to facilitate a Stronger Smarter Workplaces program for over 60 staff at Gunnedah High school.

We were delighted to continue our ongoing association with Penrith City Council Children's Services, where Cassie and Rebecca ran another Jarjums program.



## May

In May, our facilitators found themselves travelling the country again. Rebecca and Cassie were in Toowoomba where staff from Highfields State School and Edmund Rice Flexible Schools came together for a program.

Michal and Ingrid were on beautiful Yawuru country in Broome, where educators from various Kimberley schools and Edmund Rice Flexible Schools sat in circle together.

Ken and Rebecca travelled to Monaro in NSW where Monaro High School hosted a program for schools from the surrounding area.

They also travelled to Darug country in Penrith in Sydney to deliver a program as part of our Maximising the Middle partnership



with ARACY and Uniting. School educators, Youth Engagement Officers from the NSW Police force and staff from the NSW Department of Communities and Justice and other community organisations came together for

a program to support students in the middle years.

Our facilitators also completed follow up programs in Sydney, Chipping Norton, Ballina and Orange.

## June

In June, the Paamp Board at Aurukun invited the Institute to work with them and Koolkan Aurukun State School staff. Dyonne facilitated a program together with SSLP alumni and ToSI participant, Mirryndah, who is employed as a teacher at Koolkan Aurukun State school. We were able to work with an amazing group of educators including youth workers, board members and classroom teachers.

Cassie and Kylie were on Yuin country for a program for the Eden Marine network where school leadership, teachers and student support officers from schools in the Eden Marine area all came together.

Rebecca and Cassie were on Dharawal country for a second Maximising the Middle program in Campbelltown, and facilitators completed follow up programs in Monaro, Broken Hill, Penrith and the Hunter.



## July

In July, Michal and Ken were delighted to be able to work with another wonderful group of SSLP alumni for our Stronger Smarter Specialists Program on Gubbi Gubbi country in Redcliffe, north of Brisbane. The program included staff from Townsville Catholic Education, and Edmund Rice Flexible Schools.

Michal and Rebecca travelled to Warrgamay Country at Abergowrie to facilitate a program for educators from various Townsville Catholic Education schools. They also ran a follow up for the 2023 Workplaces Program for St Teresa's College in Abergowrie where staff shared some powerful journeys in working towards their workplace challenges.

Facilitators also travelled to Broome, Toowoomba, and Menindee for follow up programs.



## August

In August, Ken and Cassie were on Kaurna country in Adelaide where staff from Wirreanda Secondary College, Playford International College and Edmund Rice Flexible Schools attended a Leadership Program.

Cassie was joined by Cath on Bundjalung country for the Ballina Jarjums program with pre-schools from the Northern Rivers Preschool Alliance.

Cassie and Rebecca headed to Gunnedah for the first follow up session for the Gunnedah High School Workplaces Program.



## September

In September, Dyonne and Mirryndah were back in Aurukun, and Cassie and Kylie were in Eden Marine, both running Phase 1B of the Leadership Program.

Cassie was joined by Mirryndah on Bundjalung country for our second Ballina program of the year. Facilitators completed follow up programs for Maximising the Middle, and the South Australia program in Adelaide.



## October

In October, Ken was joined by Ingrid on Yawuru Country for our second Broome program for the year where we continued to deepen our work with various Kimberley schools.

Ken and Kylie were on Gadigal land for our second Sydney program where staff from Reconciliation Australia and Edmund Rice Flexible Schools joined with other educators.

Cassie was joined by Mark on Wiradjuri Country when Temora High School hosted a program for the Temora network of schools.

We completed follow up programs in Townsville, where we were joined by Tammi, and in Penrith for the Maximising the Middle Program, and Eden Marine.



“ Amazing week of PD on Gadigal Country with the Stronger Smarter Institute working through Phase 1 of the Leadership Program focusing on High Expectations Relationships. Informative, inspiring and so valuable - not only in the education space but across all areas where engagement with First Nations communities must be authentic, reciprocal and equitable. So excited to put new learning into action and make stronger connections in and outside of work context.

~ PARTICIPANT IN SYDNEY PROGRAM

## November

In November we completed follow up programs in Aurukun, South Australia, Ballina and Penrith. All solid days of re-connecting and sharing journeys from Workplace challenges, showcasing priorities and putting learnings into action. Participants walked away with their next most powerful steps to continue their Stronger Smarter Journey for better learning outcomes for our Jarjums to thrive.



## December

In December, we finished the year at Temora High School, with Michal and Mark completing the follow up. We finished the year when Michal headed back to Abergowrie to support a staff PD day.

“ A huge thank you to The Stronger Smarter Institute and Many Tracks for guiding us through such valuable learning. We're grateful for the opportunity to build on our foundations and enhance our skills. Our fantastic staff continues to grow stronger, and we're more empowered than ever to make a positive impact!

~ ST TERESA'S COLLEGE, FACEBOOK, DEC '24



# Extending Our Influence

## SSA in Communities

Our SSA in Communities Project, supported by the National Indigenous Australians Agency, finished at the end of 2024. This is a pilot project with four regional and remote communities to empower community voices. It has been an honour to work across these four communities to facilitate workshops and processes to build stronger relationships and partnerships between the school and the community.

An important element of this work has been to develop resources for schools seeking to improve community engagement. We look forward to sharing these resources in 2025.

## Round tables

In March, we were able to bring First Nations teachers and principals together to meet with Federal Education Minister, Jason Clare. There were many valuable diverse and collective views shared about how to improve the educational experience for First Nations students and staff, and we look forward to keeping these conversations going.

Dyonne has also been part of the National Principal Reference Group that has held two round tables with the Federal Education Minister.

## ARC grants

The Institute is a participating organisation in two ARC projects.

We are involved in a three year project led by the University of Tasmania to investigate why children in Out of Home Care (OOHC) are absent from school more than their peers.

We are also a participating organisation in the new ARC Centre of Excellence for Indigenous Futures. The Centre is led by a team from The University of Queensland and aims to transform the life chances of Indigenous Australians by using Indigenous Knowledges to enhance our understanding about the complex nature of Indigenous intergenerational inequity.

## Te Akatea Māori Principals Conference HUI TAUMATA 2024

In July, the Institute sent a team to attend the Te Akatea Conference in Tauranga, New Zealand.

Cassie Ryan and Ken Weatherall presented individual workshops. Cassie focused on the Teachers of STEM Initiative, while Ken provided an overview of our nineteen years of delivering our Leadership Program to more than 6,000 graduates.

Dyonne gave a keynote address that focused on the importance of the National School Reform Agreement review to provide a better and fairer education system aligned to Closing the Gap initiatives. Key messages were the urgency to build culturally safe schools, and fair and transparent reporting with true accountability for our First Nations students and staff and other vulnerable student cohorts.



# Teachers of STEM Initiative

The Teachers of STEM Initiative (ToSI) supports First Nations women to complete a STEM teaching qualification through a scholarship to help with study costs, mentoring, and connection to peers.

Our participants come from a wide range of locations which include metropolitan, regional and remote communities. They also come from different walks of life with some already experienced educators and others just beginning their higher education journey.

## In 2024

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**9** PARTICIPANTS  
completed their university course

**8** PARTICIPANTS  
completed their university course in previous years

**66** FIRST NATIONS WOMEN  
were supported with scholarships and mentoring

**9** FIRST NATIONS WOMEN  
commenced with the ToSI program

**10** ATTENDED  
the Jardí Dadarrinyi program

**8** ATTENDED  
the Jardibirrijba program + 5 attending a virtual day session

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*Artist Djeripy Mulcahy, a Gamilaroi and Jarriwa man completed this artwork in consultation with Liz Kupsch, a Waanyi and Kalkadoon woman and designer of the Teachers of STEM Initiative. See our [website](#) for the full artwork story.*

## Our ToSI Graduates



### CELESTE HAJI-ALI

Celeste Haji-Ali is a proud First Nations Woman from the Kimberley. Celeste completed her Bachelor of Education (Primary) at the University of Notre Dame Australia and secured a teaching position in Broome for 2025.

“The PDs were effective in supporting me, they expanded my knowledge, they linked IK with STEM really well. I found the financial support and networking (in person/face to face events) were excellent. I could discuss stuff, share ideas, worries, concerns with others doing what I was doing. Networking was empowering for my journey.



### TOLITA DOLZAN

Tolita completed her degree at The University of Southern Queensland, graduating with a Bachelor of Education with a STEM focus with a distinction.

“I can honestly say if I was not a part of this network, I would have quit. I will be forever thankful for the support, encouragement and empowerment this program has offered.



### ALEX HONEYSETT

Alex is a Wiradjuri woman currently living on Yorta Yorta and Bangarang Country. She completed her Bachelor of Education (Secondary) at La Trobe University Bundoora. She now has a teaching position at a local high school where she is teaching Physics and Mathematics.

“The best part of the ToSI experience has been meeting strong women who can relate to the same experiences that I have had.

ToSI is funded by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA).



Australian Government  
National Indigenous  
Australians Agency



**NIAA**



stronger smarter  
institute

# Our Reach

## 2024 Schools and Organisations

**154** SCHOOLS

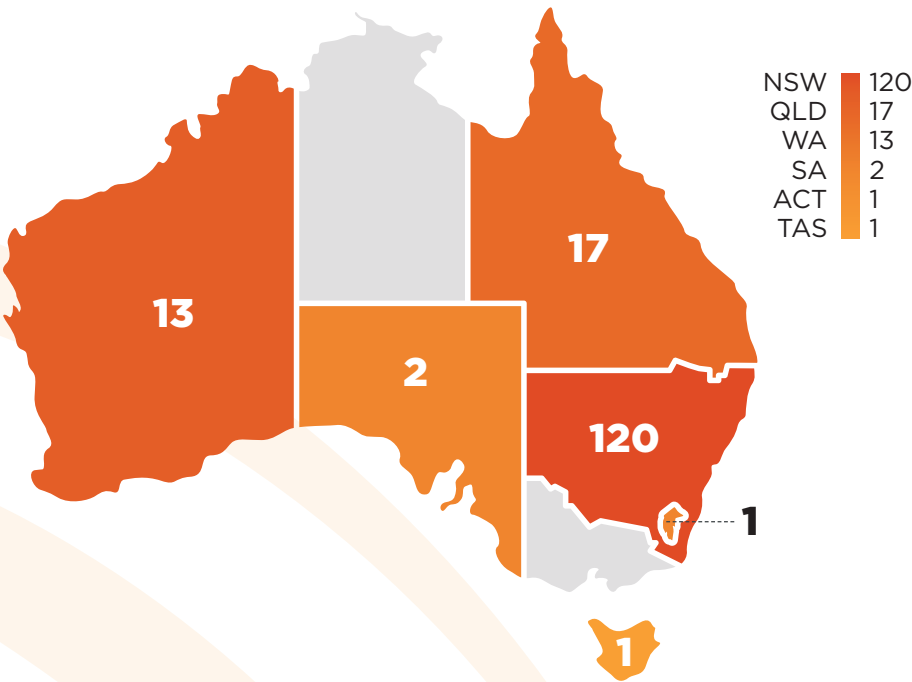
**48** OF THESE SCHOOLS  
had not worked with the Institute previously

**20** BUSINESS  
ORGANISATIONS

**8** OF THESE ORGANISATIONS  
had not worked with the Institute previously

**174**  
SCHOOLS AND  
ORGANISATIONS

In 2024, a total of 174 schools and organisations sent staff to one of our face-to-face programs (Leadership Program, Jarjums Program, Workplaces Program, Specialists Program). The majority of these schools were in New South Wales.



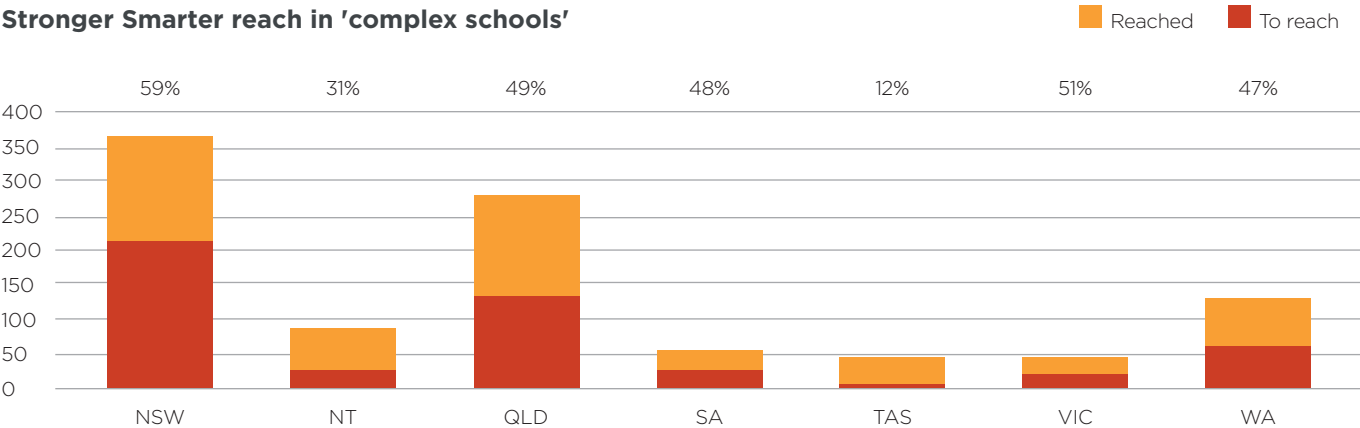
# Impact across Australia

The Institute has defined 'complex schools' as a way to ensure we can have the most impact across Australia. We have defined 'complex' schools as those with an ICSEA value of less than 950 (ICSEA is the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage applied to schools). We narrowed this down further to schools with 50 or more First Nations students.

49%

OF ALL 'COMPLEX SCHOOLS' across Australia have sent at least one staff member to a Stronger Smarter program since 2006

## Stronger Smarter reach in 'complex schools'



Data based on schools with ICSEA less than 950 and 50 or more First Nations students. Schools 'reached' are those schools who have sent at least 1 staff member to a Stronger Smarter program.

# Embedding the Stronger Smarter Approach

All participants in our face to face programs take on a 'workplace challenge' of their choice to embed the Stronger Smarter Approach into their workplace practice. For many participants this involves working with others to embed the Stronger Smarter Approach in schools.

13%

OF SCHOOLS across Australia are embedding the Stronger Smarter Approach at least to a minor extent

## The Stronger Smarter Approach in schools



Graph groupings based on estimates from survey data and number of staff who have attended a program.

# Our Impact

# Biennial alumni survey

Since 2016, the Institute has run a biennial alumni survey, the Stronger Smarter Census. In 2024, we sent out our fifth survey to alumni from the Stronger Smarter Leadership Program and Stronger Smarter Jarjums Program.

Our surveys have respondents across all programs from all years from 2006.

# 45%

OF ALL ALUMNI  
have now responded to at least one survey

## Responses

In our surveys, we expect that the responses to questions about outcomes will vary depending on the choice of Workplace Challenge. The Word Cloud gives an idea of some of the important ideas such as relationships, collaboration and engagement.



## Workplace challenges

These surveys, together with alumni reports at our follow up sessions, show that almost everyone takes something away from the program as a Workplace Challenge to implement in their workplace. Many participants go beyond their original workplace challenge.

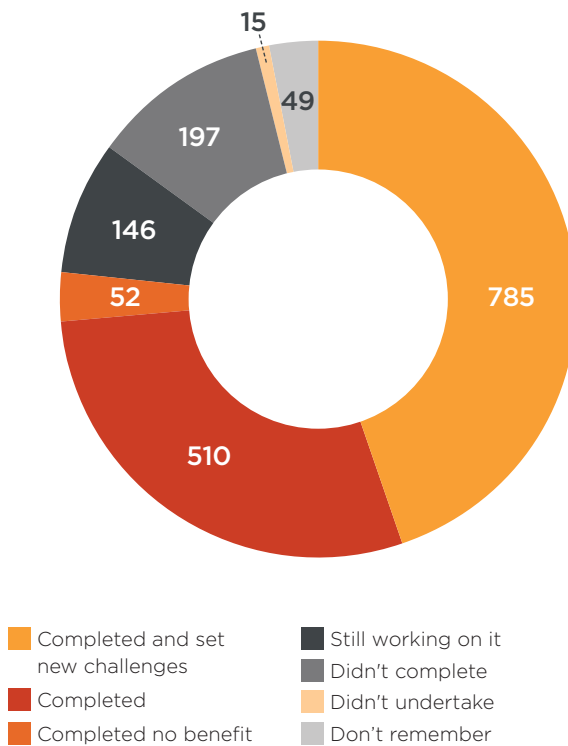
85%

OF ALL RESPONDENTS  
had either completed or were still working on  
their challenge

# 45%

OF ALL RESPONDENTS  
report that after completing their original challenge  
they went on to set themselves new challenges

## Workplace Challenges 2006-2022



*Data from combined alumni census surveys from program alumni from 2006 - 2022.*

## Teaching practice

In our 2024 Census survey, respondents told us that after attending the Stronger Smarter program:

# 96%

OF ALL RESPONDENTS  
made some level of change to their teaching practice

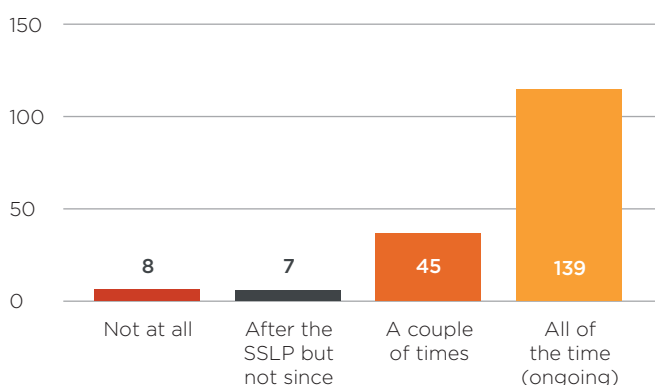
# 70%

OF ALL RESPONDENTS  
changed their teaching practice 'all the time'

# 84%

OF ALL RESPONDENTS  
who have been teaching for 5 years or less  
changed their teaching practice 'all the time'

### Changes to teaching practice



Data from 2024 survey, question given only to participants who had not answered a previous survey.

## 2024 survey outcomes

Summary of the outcomes reported in the 2024 Census survey as a result of implementing the Stronger Smarter Approach in schools and classrooms.

### Student outcomes

- Improved behaviour, attendance, engagement and performance.
- Students more ready to learn and passionate about their work.
- Happier students, sense of trust, respectful relationships.
- Students proud of who they are, with greater connection to culture.

### Learning environment

- High-Expectations Relationships bringing greater cohesion and inclusion.
- Culturally safe classrooms.
- Increased embedding of Indigenous Knowledges in curriculum.

### Community involvement

- Community more comfortable with the school, feeling that their voice is heard.
- Greater involvement in events such as NAIDOC week.
- Deepened participation in decision making.

### Staff

- Increased staff collegiality with shared understandings of high expectations and strength-based approaches.
- More empathy, increased morale, more energy in the workplace.
- Broader understanding of Indigenous perspectives and how to embed them in the curriculum.

# Our Team

The Stronger Smarter Institute honours diversity. This is reflected in the composition of our team and the broad range of experiences and perspectives we bring. We all share a strong commitment to ensuring transformational change for Indigenous Education.

## HQ TEAM



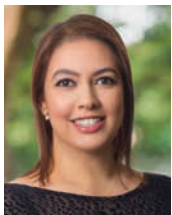
**Dyonne Anderson**  
Chief Executive Officer

Dyonne, a proud Githabal woman from NSW, is an experienced principal and senior leader. She is President of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principals' Association.



**Michal Purcell**  
Chief of Relationships

Michal, a descendant of the Butchulla people from K'gari and Ambrym Island's first people, has 30+ years in Indigenous Education. She's been with the Institute since its inception.



**Paula Jacob**  
Finance Manager

Paula, of Scottish and Portuguese heritage, has over 10 years' experience as an accountant and manager, growing up in Brisbane, Southeast Asia, and Europe.



**Jenalee Purcell**  
Data and Admin Officer

Jenalee is a proud woman with Butchulla, Australian South Sea, Goa, Gunggari, and Wakka Wakka bloodlines, supporting data and administration at the Institute.

## SERVICE DELIVERY



**Cassie Ryan**  
Chief of Delivery

Cassie, a Kamilaroi woman, leads Service Delivery and manages projects. She joined the Institute in 2017 after ten years with NSW Education.



**Ken Weatherall**  
Program Coordinator

Ken, of Muruwari and Kamilaroi heritage, joined the Institute in 2016 after 17 years with the NSW Department of Education.



**Ingrid Lancaster**  
Community Research Officer

Ingrid lives on Yawuru country in WA and has experience working in schools and community development for Indigenous organisations.

## RESEARCH AND IMPACT



**Cathy Jackson**  
Lead Impact Officer

Cathy lives on Jinibara country, Queensland, and has been with the Institute since 2012. She specialises in research, program evaluation, and project management.



**Jana Andrade**  
Research and Database Coordinator

Jana, a Brazilian Statistician, oversees data collection, analysis, and reporting for the Institute, supporting research and impact initiatives.

## TEACHERS OF STEM INITIATIVE

**Liz Sinnott**  
ToSI Mentor

Liz, a Yuin and Wailwan woman with over 30 years' experience in Indigenous education, is a mentor in the ToSI program.



**Shelley Macdonald**  
Program Officer

Shelley, from New Zealand with connections to Ngati Raukawa through family, supports the ToSI team.



**Kylie Greatbatch**  
Community Research Officer

Kylie, a Wiradjuri woman with 14 years in teaching and Cultural Coordinator roles, is our Community Research Officer and ToSI Mentor.

# Our Board

The Stronger Smarter Institute is governed by a board that includes members with broad professional expertise, business experience and educators with much experience in schools. The Institute's Board has maintained a standard of at least 50% Indigenous membership. The officeholders of the Company at any time during the year were as follows:



**Dr Chris Sarra**  
Chair

*MEd, PhD Psychology, ExecMPubEd*

Chris, a Gurang Gurang/Taribelang Bunda man, is the Institute's founder and Chairman. His career spans more than 30 years in positive education reform

for Indigenous students based on the Stronger Smarter philosophy. During 2024 he was the CEO First Nations Engagement and Innovation with the Queensland Government.



**Ms Tammy Anderson**  
Co-Chair

*BTeach*

Tammy, a Biripi woman from the mid-north coast NSW, is the Principal of the Briar Road Public School in New South Wales. She is a Stronger Smarter graduate and ambassador.



**Mr Paul Bridge**  
Non-Executive Director

*BEd, Churchill Fellowship recipient*

Paul is a Kija man from Halls Creek in Western Australia's Kimberley region who has dedicated his career to Indigenous education. He is a former school principal, and

is currently the WA Department of Education Director of Education for the Kimberley region.



**Mr Gary Lennon**  
Non-Executive Director

*BHons (Econ), AssocDip (Financial Services Institute of Australasia), Fellow of the Australian Institute of Chartered Accountants*

Gary served as Group Chief Financial Officer of National Australia Bank from 2016

to 2023. Gary was previously a Non-Executive Director of the Bank Of New Zealand (2019 - 2023) and the Victorian Traditional Owners Fund (2011 - 2017) and is currently a Non-Executive director of the Transurban Group.



**Ms Sharon Davis** (they/them)  
Non-Executive Director

*MSc (Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition), BEd (Specialisation in Aboriginal Studies)*

Sharon is from both Bardi Kija peoples of the Kimberley, with strong beliefs in social justice, educational equity and the

potential power that education has to strengthen the future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Sharon is actively involved in a range of State and National Indigenous education initiatives, from their previous work leading education at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) to their role as the Chief Executive Officer for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation (NATSIEC).



**Mr Peter Leunig**  
Non-Executive Director

*BSc (Pathology), BA (Music)*

Peter has held senior fundraising and development positions in the education and not-for-profit sectors. He is an expert at reviewing the fundraising and development

status of organisations and establishing the necessary infrastructure and visionary strategic direction for fundraising and development operations to succeed.

# Our Partners and Supporters

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our partners and supporters for their support and collaboration, which have been instrumental in helping us achieve our goals and drive meaningful change this year.





# Transformative change since 2005



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