

## The Power of Two: Sharing Leadership for School Improvement in Indigenous Education

Louise Wilkinson Sue McGinty and Brian Lewthwaite  
*James Cook University, Townsville*

### Abstract

Australian schools are now under constant pressure to improve student results, particularly those of Indigenous students. To this end, successful school-community interrelationships are considered especially significant. This paper reports on a microcosm of one such relationship, that between Indigenous Education Workers (IEWs)/Community Education Counselors (CECs) and principals in the North Queensland educational region. A preliminary understanding is provided from data collected through a questionnaire survey regarding the nature of the IEW/CEC and principal relationship, perceptions of what duties IEWs/CECs undertake and how IEWs/CECs work with their school principal. Initial findings indicate that while the IEWs/CECs worked in a wide range of duties with significant depth and breadth across a school overall, their work *with* their principals was under estimated at best, or non-existent at worst. The paper concludes by suggesting that this working relationship needs to move beyond the procedural or routine to a much greater collaboration for shared educational leadership. It briefly explains the next steps of an ongoing larger research project that will be used to highlight best practice.

### Introduction

‘Improving schools to reduce disadvantage and raise achievement’ or ‘closing the gap’ are the much used current phrases within the field of school education in countries with diverse student populations. There is a shift from ‘fixing the student’ to improving the school. Achieving equity *and* excellence for disadvantaged students and making schools better equipped to do this have impacted on school operations both nationally and internationally (Council of Australian Governments Reform Council, 2012, p. 667; Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, 2012a, 2012b).

Within Australia, it has been long argued that improving engagement, connections and partnerships between schools and their Indigenous community is a necessary component for Indigenous student success. Employing Indigenous people within schools is a key strategy to do this (Ministerial Council for Education Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs and Education Services Affairs, 2010; Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, 1991; Watts, 1981). Yet the number of teachers in Australian schools who are of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait cultural background is still very low and those who are principals are even more scarce (Santoro & Reid, 2006). Where schools do employ numbers of Indigenous people, it is usually within the role called an Indigenous Education Worker (IEW) or Teacher Aide who is Indigenous and in the state of Queensland, where the study is situated, an additional role called a Community Education Counsellor (CEC). Just over 4,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are registered across Australia as working in the former roles, representing nearly 6% of the teacher-aide workforce (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

These indigenous workers usually come directly from the local community or are accepted by and identify with the local community (Northern Territory Department of Education (NTDE), 1999). An

emerging body of research regarding Indigenous and non-Indigenous educational leadership practices in Indigenous communities, shows that where effective partnerships exist between parents, teachers and the community, the quality of schooling for all students improves, students enjoy more satisfying educational experiences, and communities are strengthened (Flückiger, Diamond, & Jones, 2012; Frawley & Fasoli, 2012; Kamara, 2009). As such, it could be argued that if IEW/CECs form the bridge between their school and community, the working relationship between the IEW/CEC and their school's principal could be representative of the first condition needed for strong school-community links. Currently, however, there is little documented research that focuses specifically on the Australian IEW/CEC and principal relationship and what occurs *between* them. This is an overlooked situation as both are key leader members of a school and both have a unique role to play in the improvement of Indigenous student learning outcomes and parent-school-community engagement.

One of the few known studies within Australia that has involved principals *and* Indigenous workers working directly together as partners on a school improvement project is a descriptive study known as Principals as Literacy Leaders with Indigenous Communities (PALLIC) (Johnson, Dempster, & McKenzie, 2013). PALLIC was a 'Closing the Gap' project funded by the Australian Commonwealth Government's, Department of Education, Employment and Workforce Relations (DEEWR) initiated and managed by a peak professional body, the Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA). PALLIC ran for 18 months, finishing December 2012 with 46 pilot schools across Australia (those identified as 'focus schools' due to their high numbers of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander students). The focus schools were supported by six leader mentors, who were seconded principals. This paper's first author was one of the leader mentors and worked with nine state schools across the Department of Education, Training and Employment's (DETE's) North Queensland Region.

At the outset of PALLIC, principals were asked to nominate an Indigenous person (staff or parent) from their school that they would be willing to partner with on this project, to be known as an Indigenous Leadership Partner (ILP). Together they attended three, two-day input sessions held over 12 months that presented five modules about school improvement, leadership, the teaching of reading and subsequent expected activities to be implemented over the life of the project within their school sites. The first author noticed that the project assumed the ILP (who was almost always a staff member, usually a teacher aide) and their principal would be able to work together to complete the tasks of the project. It became very apparent through observation and participant feedback that the ILP had not previously experienced what it was like to work in an equal leadership/partnership relationship with their non-Indigenous principals and vice versa. Because of this, quickly adjusting to a new power relationship, moving comfortably into this space and contributing as equal collaborators was new ground for them both.

Co-incidentally to the implementation of PALLIC and also having impact on state schools, was the introduction in the region of two major educational policy initiatives, namely the state driven, 'Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools' (EATSIPS) and the nationally developed new Australian Curriculum. Both explicitly called for inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and perspectives and accordingly, placed further demands on the leadership roles and expectations of IEWs/CECs and principals alike.

## Research Questions and Theoretical Framework

Such complex contextual issues, systemic requirements and increasing pressure for school improvement provide good reason for examining the relationship between the IEW/CEC and principal. Until now this relationship has not been well understood. The preliminary research described in this paper investigates the current situation to establish the context for the subsequent larger research project where there will be further investigation into the current IEW/CEC – principal relationship, how it might be strengthened and transformed to improve learning outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and connectedness with their families to school. The research question that guides this phase of the research is: *What is the current IEW/CEC- principal relationship?* The successive questions are: *How can this relationship be strengthened and what are the contextual features that influence this? What are the outcomes of this strengthened relationship? What are the implications for practice and policy in schools?*

All are represented diagrammatically in Figure 1 below, with this paper's research question highlighted in red:

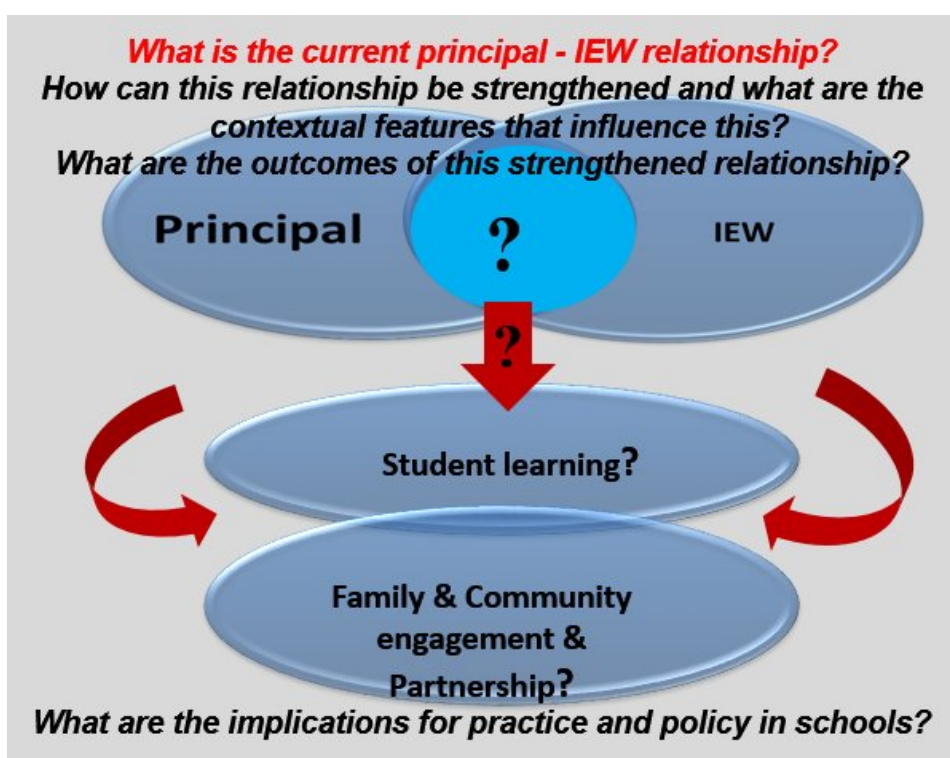


Figure 1: Diagrammatic view of research focus and questions

The nature of this whole inquiry draws its intent from the social justice principles of ‘parity of participation’ (Fraser, 2007, p. 27), that of seeking elimination of inequalities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in schooling. As such, it is based within the transformative research paradigm of Critical and Indigenous Theories, acknowledging the emancipatory work of Friere (1973) and explorations of ‘the cultural interface’ Nakata (2002). Interwoven with this to assist with the

examination of the IEW/CEC – principal relationship is an interpretation of Relational Leadership (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000; Uhl-Bien, 2006).

Critical Theory seeks to critique and change the status quo and is about resistance, struggle and emancipation at the local level which Paulo Friere made famous. Cultural Interface Theory challenges us to move from the binary, the ‘decoloniality’ and closed-minded thinking about relationships between Indigenous and other Australians. This idea provides an “...appreciation of just how intricate and open to interpretation the dance around world view, knowledge and practice is as a result” (Nakata, Nakata, Keech, & Bolt, 2012, p. 133). Yunkaporta describes this trend in thinking as a ‘guiding principle’ by arguing, “...The deeper the knowledge, the more common ground is found across cultures, or conversely, the shallower the knowledge, the more difference is found between cultures” (2009, p. 60). Finally, Relational Leadership is defined as

“...an overarching framework for the study of the relational dynamics that are involved in the generation and functioning of leadership...Relational Leadership Theory focuses on the relational processes by which leadership is produced and enabled. It does not define leadership as holding a managerial position, nor does it use the terms manager and leader interchangeably...It sees leadership as able to occur in any direction;... in some variations, it may result in the breakdown of the distinction between who is leading and who is following... instead reflecting a mutual influence process” (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 667).

These theories can be linked together by the idea of transformation and when combined to examine the IEW/CEC and principal relationship they foreshadow a shift toward hybridity, where there is overlap, and a ‘space in between’ is emphasised, what some call the ‘border lands’ or ‘powerful places of liminality’ (Küpers, 2011; Rutherford, 2011; Tempest & Starkey, 2004). A critical realist ontology (way of being) and transactional and subjective epistemology (way of knowing) affect the methodology (way of doing) of this research. The methodological procedures for the larger research project are participatory, dialogic and transformative (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Grogan & Cleaver Simmons, 2012; Guba & Lincoln, 1994) and accordingly, the study context has then influenced the methods used. These ideas are diagrammatically represented in Figure 2 below with the research methodology and method of the first phase of this study detailed in the next section:

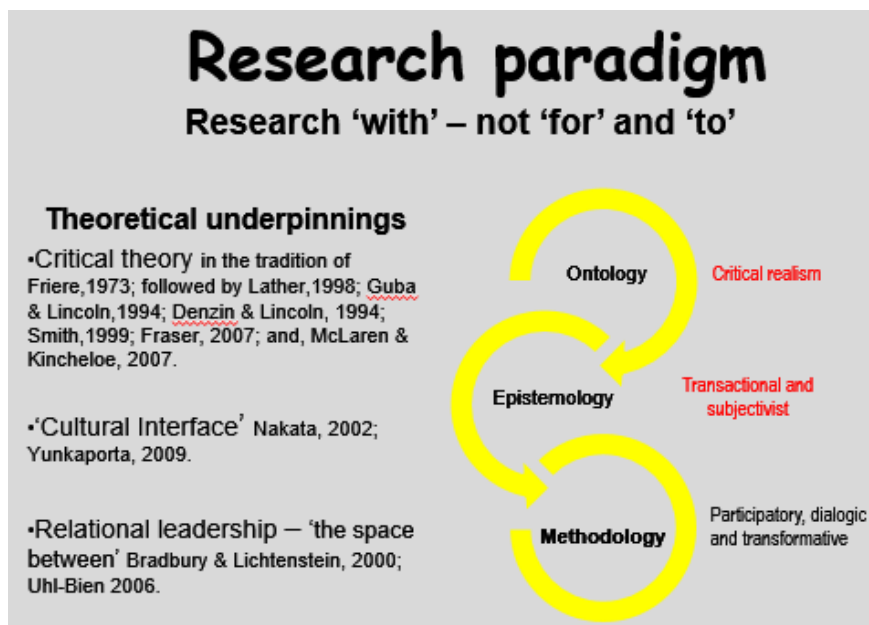


Figure 2: Diagram of Research Paradigm

## Methodology

With the larger research project being a practitioner-based, multiple case study using Participatory Action Research (PAR) (Brydon-Miller & Maguire, 2009; Chevalier & Buckles, 2013; McTaggart, 1991), an initial reconnaissance method was called for. This paper focuses on the results of the very first data set collected which was a self-administered questionnaire distributed to North Queensland state school IEW/CEC and principals in 2013. Due to the large number of participants involved, the questionnaire was seen to be an efficient and non-obtrusive data gathering tool. Such a method of data collection ensured, "...a high response rate, accurate sampling and a minimum of interviewer bias, while permitting interviewer assessments, providing necessary explanations (but *not* the interpretation of questions) and giving the benefit of a degree of personal contact" (Oppenheim, 1992, p. 103).

The questionnaire existed in two forms; one for the IEWs/CECs and one for the principals (see Appendix A & B). In four sections, the questionnaires were designed to gather a snapshot of information about IEWs/CECs and principals in the North Queensland region: their school context, their perceptions on the nature of the work undertaken by IEWs/CECs, what they do together and willingness to participate in case study work with the first author. Both questionnaires had a similar format. The first section focussed on demographic information. The second section asked questions pertaining to management and operational procedures and duties of the IEW/CEC. The third section gathered information about what school activities the IEW/CEC and principal perceived they worked on together. The final section sought recruitment of IEW/CEC and principal respondents in the next stage of the main body of research as case study schools in participatory action research.

The content and structure of the questionnaire were informed by several sources: the first author's professional experience of working in the field as a principal for 9 years, the PALLIC project experience mentioned above and DETE's position descriptions for IEWs/CECs (Queensland

Government. Department of Education Training and Employment, 2013). Most of the questions devised were closed questions providing the option to select only one or sometimes multiple responses to pre-coded answer categories. Two questions specifically required multiple responses and two were open ended questions that allowed opportunity for respondents to provide their perceptions about their work and what work IEWs/CECs and principals did together. A pilot of the questionnaires was undertaken with copies sent to several principal colleagues who came from outside the North Queensland Region and to the Regional CEC, a long serving employee of DETE, who is acting as a cultural mentor to the first author and who works closely with the region's IEWs/CECs. All provided feedback about time taken to complete and effectiveness of the questions for this stage of the study.

A total of 112 questionnaires were personally distributed to principals during a 2013 regional principals' forum and 43 were returned with 41 consenting to and completing the questionnaire. 45 questionnaires were distributed to IEWs/CECs at a 2013 regional Indigenous workers' meeting and 38 were returned with 35 'yes' consents. This represents a return of approximately 70% of all state school IEWs/CECs in the North Queensland region. It should be noted that out of all returned questionnaires, eight schools were represented by both groups, that is, IEWs and/or CECs and the principal from the same school completed the questionnaire. The results, analysis and discussion emanating from all questionnaires are reported below.

## Results

The results of both questionnaires are organised according to three sections: Demographic and Work Contexts; Working Together; and, Recruitment.

### Section 1: Demographic and work contexts

Seventeen out of the 35 IEW/CEC respondents were in the CEC role and all except four were female. There are currently 28 CECs in the North Queensland Region (Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Council, 2014). 21 identified as Aboriginal; five identified as Torres Strait Islander; one person identified as Aboriginal *and* Torres Strait Islander; and eight indicated they were neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander. 23 out of 41 respondent principals were female. No principal respondents were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and five principals indicated they did not have any Indigenous students enrolled in their school. The majority of IEW/CEC respondents (20) indicated they lived in a regional city as did sixteen principals. Eight IEWs/CECs and fourteen principals were from rural towns. All remaining respondents were from remote areas. Of the time spent in their current school, IEWs/CECs served for longer in the one school than did the principals. Of the time spent in their current roles, more principals were new to the role. The three findings of time in role, time in current school and residence discussed above are represented for each group in Figures 3 and 4 below:

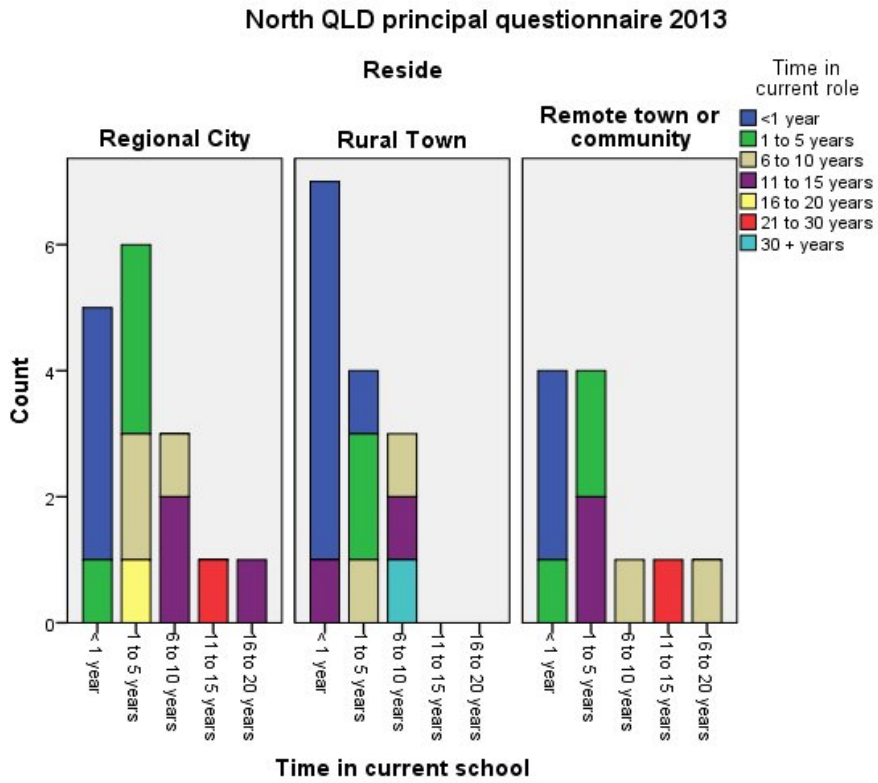


Figure 3: North QLD state school sample principals demographic

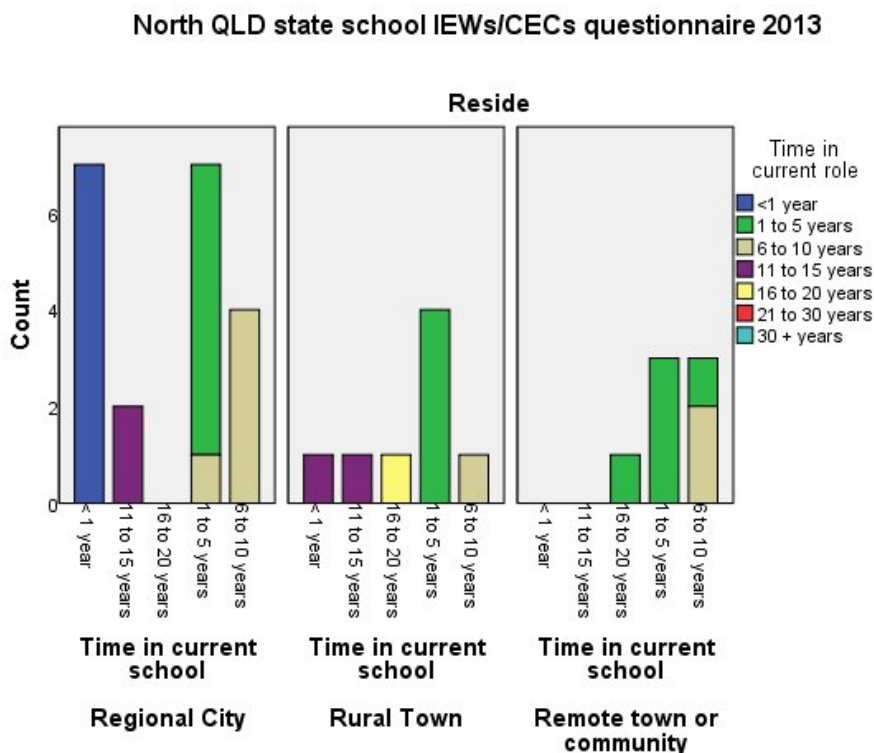


Figure 4: North QLD state school sample IEWs/CECs demographic

One question asked both groups of respondents about what types of duties IEWs/CECs performed using ten descriptors created from combining the first author’s professional field observations with themes from various role description statements of Teacher Aides, Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) and CECs (Department of Education Training and Employment, 2014; Queensland Government. Education Queensland, 2014). 35 IEWs/CECs and 29 principals responded accordingly. The gap between the percentage frequencies of responses of both groups was used to determine where there were similar or different perceptions of duties performed in the IEW/CEC role. i.e., a low percentage gap = a high agreement; or high percentage gap = low agreement.

There was high congruence of agreement by IEWs/CECs and principals on three duties where a similar percentage of CECs/IEWs and principals agreed that:

1. IEWs/CECs provide information to school staff
2. IEWs/CECs provide advice to school leadership
3. IEWs/CECs provide assistance to teachers.

This same question also revealed a paradox - for instance, one duty showed a low congruence of shared perception between both groups yet, at the same time, it attracted the highest percentage of responses from both groups. The duty was ‘Provides educational support for students’ (Highlighted in Table 1). In other areas, there was a widening of difference in perception, with the two greatest percentage gaps being ‘liaises with families’ (25% gap) and ‘provides welfare support for students’ (27% gap) respectively.



Table 1: Comparisons of perceptions of duties performed by IEWs/CECs

Duty	% gap in difference of responses	IEW/CEC responses	Principal responses
Provides information to school staff	1%	68%	69%
Provides advice to school leadership	4%	65%	69%
Provides assistance for teachers	5%	77%	72%
Provides information to teachers	10%	68%	58%
Other	11%	11%	22%
Organises various activities	12%	74%	62%
Provides educational support for students	15%	91%	76%
Monitors attendance	19%	74%	55%
Liaises with families	25%	80%	65%
Provides welfare support for students	27%	74%	47%

Whichever way the responses are viewed, they show more differences than similarities: what IEWs/CECs think they do is generally different to what principals think IEWs/CECs do. For example, more IEWs/CECs indicated their duties were associated with students and families than did principals. More principals indicated they thought IEWs/CECs performed duties that were associated with staff, teachers or leadership than did IEWs/CECs.

This difference is also reflected in the answers to 'Other' duties completed by both respondents. See verbatim answers in Table 2 below. IEWs/CECs indicated they are involved in more duties than principals realise while at the same time, principals have identified duties that were not recognised by IEWs/CECs.

Table 2: 'Other' duties said to be performed as perceived by IEWs/CECs and principals

'Other' written responses by IEWs/CECs	'Other' written responses by principals
Assist in Homework program	Co-ordinates community centre
Assisting CEC	General T/A duties only 4 students
Co-ordinate mentoring program	Indigenous Kindy
Community development for networking and learn parenting skills	Leadership activities for students
Health & well-being committee	Member of EATSIPS committee
Liaise with external agencies for student & parent wellbeing	Monitors achievement
Run leadership camps, reward days	Provides feedback of emergent community issues
SETP plans for students	Work placement
VET Career Pathways Program	A voice and advocate for the people
Whole school student orientation	Runs Indigenous advisory group
Indigenous Community engagement	SAT
Member school well-being case management team	
Refer parents to appropriate organisations	
School uniforms	

A further question asked Principal respondents to identify what duties they would like their IEW/CEC to do that they were not doing and why they were not seeing these duties being performed. Verbatim answers are presented in Table 3 below. This table shows principals do have a desire for IEWs/CECs

to better support students and engage community while at the same time, have some understanding of the barriers to achieving this:

**Table 3: Desired Non-teaching staff duties and why not currently performed**

<b>Duties would like this person to do</b>	<b>Reason/s why they are currently not doing them</b>
More counselling	Lack of time
Home visits; Aboriginal and Torres strait Islander protocols; Curriculum perspectives; Attendance	Unknown. Previous principal placed T'Aides in set roles
Developing activities to get parents into the school; Homework Club	Only been in current school 6 weeks
Increased capacity to work in classrooms	Time
Attendance follow-ups	They don't like getting involved in other family issues
Newly formed role in the school <sup>1</sup>	Only been 2 weeks
Assist with monitoring attendance, liaises with families	Tensions between families

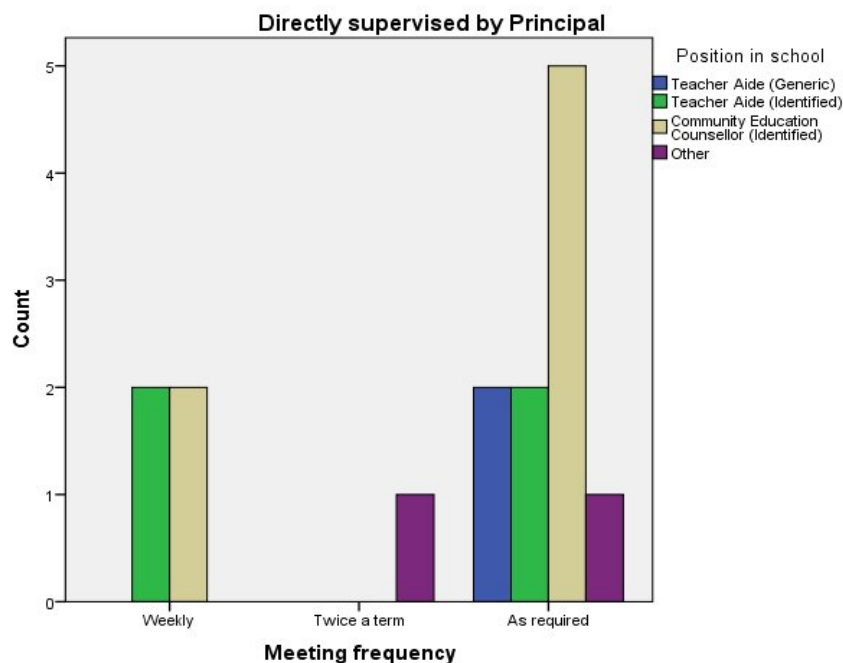
Therefore, there is not a clear pattern of congruence of shared perception of role and duties of IEWs/CECs between the two questionnaire groups. What is evident is an underestimation of the role and duties of the IEW/CEC by both groups.

## Section 2: Working Together

When asked who was their direct supervisor, only fifteen out of the 35 IEW/CEC respondents indicated their principal, with most meeting 'as required', although two IEWs/CECs said they met weekly. The remainder were supervised by other classified officers in the school: Deputy Principal (twelve), Business Services Manager (three) or 'Other' which was usually a Head of Department (five). This likely explains why there are so many mismatches in perceptions over IEW/CEC duties by principals as discussed above in Section 1. Details of types of Indigenous staff supervised by principals and their meeting frequency are provided in Figure 5 below:

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<sup>1</sup> respondent had indicated their non-teaching staff worked as a Teacher Aide (Identified)



*Figure 5: Supervisor of IEWs/CECs and meeting frequency*

One of the questions asked both sets of respondents to indicate what school events/activities they worked on together and how often they did this. 30 IEWs/CECs and 24 principals completed this question. There were some common themes to emerge from both groups' responses as to what they both perceived they worked on together. These included: school celebrations of key Indigenous dates; contact with parents for attendance or student disciplinary reasons; and, implementing educational policy. Using percentage frequencies of responses, however, the only common theme that showed the greatest congruence of perception was implementation of EATSIPS (IEWs/CECs 43% and principals 37%), mentioned earlier in this paper as a new state policy demand on schools.

There were also 24, one-off responses from both groups about what they worked on together, with the principals listing the majority (17) of them. IEW/CEC responses to joint work seemed grouped around students and policy implementation, while the majority of principal responses featured cultural or community engagement activities as the main co-work. These results again showed differences of perception on what IEWs/CECs think and what principals think they work on together.

### Section 3: Recruitment

The final questions in both questionnaires asked would respondents, "...be willing to participate further in this research project?" The majority of all respondents indicated they were willing to participate further, either after more information or if the IEW/CEC or principal also agreed. Of the IEWs/CECs and principals from the same eight schools who completed the questionnaire, three pairs agreed to further participation. This information will be used in conjunction with an Indigenous mentor's advice to assist the first author approach the IEW/CEC and principal pairs to volunteer for the next stage of the research.

## Discussion

An analysis of the questionnaires' findings provide some initial indications of the nature of the current IEW/CEC and principal relationship and is presented in three parts: their general work and social contexts, initial relational co-work perceptions and further participation willingness for the larger study.

### General work and social contexts

The principal respondents' demographic profile mirrored the current principal demographic of the North Queensland Region for state schools; that is, there were many more relatively inexperienced than experienced principals (English, 2013). The IEW/CEC results confirm past research findings that IEWs/CECs tend to have a greater stability of role and continuity at the same school than principals and are predominantly female (Buckskin & Hignett, 1994; Northern Territory Department of Education, 1999). The 100% principal non-Indigenous cultural background profile also reflects current Australian principal Indigenaenity trends - in 2012, there were only 78 principals who were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander across the whole of Australia in any jurisdiction (More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative [MATSITI], 2014). It would seem that in the North Queensland Region, not many IEWs/CECs and principals worked directly together, with supervision responsibility given to other classified school personnel. If and when they did meet, it was mostly 'as required'. Reasons could be attributed to school size, however, some of those who did work directly together were from large schools where the principal had not delegated this working relationship and they did meet frequently.

Overall the IEWs'/CECs' perception of their duties tended to a focus on student engagement, attendance and achievement. While the greatest single number of principal responses acknowledged the IEW/CEC role in working with students, generally principals saw the IEW/CEC role as most commonly one that provided advice, assistance and information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of staff/teachers/school leadership in a school. As such, the above findings do resonate with those found in a survey of the handful of known empirical studies pertaining to the work of IEWs/CECs in Australia (Buckskin & Hignett, 1994; Cahill & Collard, 2003; Funnell, 2012; Gower et al., 2011; Grace & Trudgett, 2012; MacGill, 2009; Pearce, 2011; Warren, Cooper, & Baturo, 2004). Themes that emerged from these works included: (i) visibility and representation of IEWs/CECs within schools; (ii) amorphous roles performed by many IEWs/CECs; (iii) centrality to bridging the home-school divide; (iv) influence on building cultural responsiveness in other school staff; and, (v) influence on participation and achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The latter three are especially evident in the current questionnaires' findings.

The mismatch of perception by both groups around the role of the IEW/CEC likely reflects an under appreciation of the reach and influence of the IEW/CEC role not only by principals, but also by the very people who perform the duties – the IEWs/CECs themselves. Could this be an example of what happens when the social justice principle, 'participatory parity' (Fraser, 2007), is impeded? That is, this mismatch of perception and low social esteem is a result of the historical non-achievement of equal opportunity dogging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples over the past 200 years? This will be explored further in the larger study.

## Initial Relational Co-Work Perceptions

Themes that emerged from responses by both groups on co-work activities of IEWs/CECs and principals related to: students, enacting school and system policies and school-home/community connections. These included school celebrations of the ‘one-off’ Indigenous calendar events like National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Commemoration (NAIDOC) or activities for students requiring parent involvement (i.e. disciplinary matters or attendance). Implementation of DETE policy like EATSIPS, however, was the only one perceived as a joint activity by the greatest number of respondents from both groups. It is known to the paper’s first author that this co-work participation exposed IEWs/CECs and principals to the EATSIPS policy documents and regional training where they were introduced to the notion of a ‘third cultural space’ which directly connects to Nakata’s Cultural Interface Theory:

“The third cultural space recognises that Indigenous communities have distinct and deep cultural and world views — views that differ from those found in most Western education systems. When Western and Indigenous systems are acknowledged and valued equally, the overlapping or merging of views represents a new way of educating” (Department of Education and Training, 2011, p. 9)

This reinforces aspects of the paper’s first author theoretical paradigm and will assist with participant development in the larger project.

## Further participation willingness

Apart from written information, the first author also provided a short oral presentation at the distribution of all questionnaires, citing the focus of the research was to examine the IEW/CEC relationship. The high number of positive responses to participate further bodes well for the first author whose next steps are engaging identified pairs of IEWs/CECs and principals in case study schools. This work will form the bulk of the larger study.

## Conclusion

This report captures a snapshot of the current IEW/CEC and principal relationship in state schools in the North Queensland region. It reveals there is a significant reach of the IEW/CEC role across the school, yet at the same time, their role seems to be under estimated and underappreciated, not just by many principals but by IEWs/CECs themselves. There is a perceived mismatch of agreement on co-work actions and where there is agreement, this tends to be in the area of the operation of policy and school routine.

The next step of the major study seeks to further examine and strengthen the current IEW/CEC and principal relationship through a multiple case study approach. Four pairs of volunteer IEWs/CECs and principals will work with the first author using Participatory Action Research processes in actions deemed important to improve Indigenous student achievement. The first author will examine ways the IEW/CEC and principal relationship can be strengthened and the contextual factors that influence this. Any outcomes of the strengthened relationship and implications for practice and policy will then be identified. The research questions will be answered through use of mixed methods and a variety of data sources such as: questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, critical incidents, focus groups, school/DETE documents, icons, artefacts, diary, field notes and enumeration data. The case studies will run for at least two cycles of observing, reflecting, planning and acting occurring over an 18

month period, commencing in August 2014. Both quantitative and qualitative data results from of each cycle of action, will be analysed in three steps using an interactive model of data analysis (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008) to provide evidence and answers to the main and emerging micro research questions.

By examining the IEW/CEC and principal relationship, this work will make known, the 'space in between' the two roles, a place for overlap of leadership actions and '...where a mutual influence process' (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 667), may occur to maximise the power of two. This shift towards hybridity could give leverage to strengthen and transform the why, what and how of IEWs'/CECs' and principals' work together. It can offer practical implications to enhance their leadership impact on the learning outcomes of all students, especially those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their school-community interrelationships.

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## APPENDIX A

**IEW/CEC QUESTIONNAIRE****RESEARCH PROJECT WORKING TITLE:**

*The power of two: Collaboration for urban Indigenous educational leadership.*

This questionnaire is part of a research project for a PhD study undertaken by [REDACTED], principal [REDACTED] State School. The study will look at the Indigenous Education Worker (IEW)/Community Education Counsellor (CEC) and principal relationship to inform and strengthen school improvement for equity and excellence with Indigenous students and their families. It will look at how the CEC/IEW and principal work together to assist students do well at school and their families feel more connected in a culturally friendly place. The study results will be useful to help make positive changes to school policy and practice.

**WHAT YOU ARE INVITED TO DO:**

As part of the initial stage of this study, you are asked to complete a short questionnaire.

You are also invited at the end of the questionnaire to nominate to be involved further as a case study school.

See also the attached copy of the information sheet and consent form.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

The questionnaire is confidential. Your individual responses will not be shown to anybody else. Your name and the name of your school will not be used in any reports, presentations or publications, however, because you may be working with others in groups, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed outside the group. If you choose to withdraw from the research, any information that you have given will not be used in the research.

All data collected during this study will be kept securely in a locked filing cabinet at the university, accessible only by the lead researcher and destroyed after five years.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS?**

The analysed results of the questionnaire will form a report which will be available to the participants upon request. The analysed results will also be used to write some academic articles, presentations and contribute to the overall findings of the PhD. Copies of the questionnaire report may also be provided to Northern Region's Regional Director, Assistant Regional Directors and other senior officers within DETE upon request.

**THIS STUDY HAS BEEN APPROVED** by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) (Approval number: H4703) of James Cook University and Research Services of the Department of Education, Training and Employment.

**QUESTIONNAIRE PURPOSE:**

To collect information about the context of working relationships between principals and their Indigenous Education Worker/Community Education Counsellor.

A similar questionnaire to this one is also being issued to the region's principals.  
**A PILOT STUDY HAS SHOWN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE SHOULD TAKE NO MORE THAN 10 MINUTES TO COMPLETE**

**IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE** the term 'Indigenous' WILL refer to BOTH AUSTRALIAN aboriginal people and Torres Strait islanders, Alternatively, 'OTHER AUSTRALIANS' will refer to non-indigenous Australians.

**Qu 1: Are you....?**

	Select One
Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 2: Are you of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent?**

	Select One
Australian Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	<input type="checkbox"/>
Torres Strait Islander	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 3: Where do you live?**

	Select One
Regional city	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural town	<input type="checkbox"/>
Remote town or community	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 4: What is your position in your school?**

	Select One
1 Teacher Aide (Generic)	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Teacher Aide (Identified)	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Community Liaison Officer (AO3)	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Community Education Counsellor (Identified)	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 5: How long have you worked for Education Qld?**

	Select One
Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 to 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 to 15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 to 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 to 30 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
30 + years	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 6: How long have you worked in your current role?**

	Select One
Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 to 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 to 15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 to 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 to 30 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
30 + years	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 7: How long have you worked at your current school?**

	Select One
Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 to 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 to 15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 to 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 8: Who is your direct supervisor?**

Role	Please select one
1 Principal	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2 Deputy Principal	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3 BSM	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
4 Other. Please state whom:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

**Qu 9: How often do you meet?**

Please select one

Weekly  Fortnightly  Twice a term  Once a term  As required

**Qu 10: How long has your direct supervisor worked in their current role?**

	Select One
Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 to 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 to 15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 to 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 to 30 years	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 11: What are some of the duties you currently perform?**

Please select as applicable

- Provide educational support for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students ( i.e. in-class and/or individual/small group withdrawal)
- Provide assistance to teachers on welfare matters relating to their Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students
- Provide information and assistance to teachers about Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum
- Provide information to the school staff about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander social and cultural protocols and issues
- Provide advice to the school leadership team (i.e. principal & DP, etc.) about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community matters relevant to the school students
- Monitor Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander student attendance including doing home visits
- Liaise with the school's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families on student and school matters
- Organise various activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (i.e. homework classes, breakfast club, Junior or Senior ATSIAP, etc.)
- Provide appropriate welfare support and/or counselling for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students
- Other. Please specify:

**Qu 12: What is a task/are tasks you would like to do but currently don't? Why?**

Please write the task and the reason below

**Qu 13: What school events/activities do you work on together with your principal?**  
 Please list these events/activities and a description of the frequency of occurrence of them. Tick the examples below if they apply to you or please add in others

Name of School events/activities	Frequency of occurrence
<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Parent Group meetings	
<input type="checkbox"/> Interviewing Indigenous students for their personalised learning plans	
<input type="checkbox"/> Discussing your Developing Performance Plan	
<input type="checkbox"/> Developing and implementing the school EATSIPS plan	
<input type="checkbox"/> School NAIDOC or other Indigenous celebrations	
<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous student attendance – some home visits/parent interviews	
<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous student discipline: interviewing students, contacting parents, suspension re-entry interviews, etc.	

**Qu 14: All principals are asked this same question:**

Would you be willing to participate further in this research project? If you both agree, you will be contacted to work as a pair in a case study school. The following questions are guiding the research project:

- What is the current principal – IEW/CEC relationship?*
- How can this relationship be strengthened and what are the contextual features that influence this?*
- What are the outcomes of this strengthened relationship?*
- What are the implications for practice and policy in schools?*

	Select One
Yes, but I would like further information before I commit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes, I am willing - If the school principal also agrees	<input type="checkbox"/>
No thanks	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you ticked a 'yes', please write your name and email below and Louise Wilkinson will contact you:

Name: ..... email: .....@eq.edu.au

**Qu 15: Would you like to receive a report on the findings of this survey? If yes, please email me: [ewilk25@eq.edu.au](mailto:ewilk25@eq.edu.au)**

	Select One
Yes, I will	<input type="checkbox"/>
No thanks	<input type="checkbox"/>

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. YOUR INPUT IS APPRECIATED.**

APPENDIX B

## PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE

### RESEARCH PROJECT WORKING TITLE:

*The power of two: Collaboration for urban Indigenous educational leadership.*

This questionnaire is part of a research project for a PhD study undertaken by [REDACTED], principal [REDACTED] State School. The study will look at the Indigenous Education Worker (IEW)/Community Education Counsellor (CEC) and principal relationship to inform and strengthen school improvement for equity and excellence with Indigenous students and their families. It will look at how the CEC/IEW and principal work together to assist students do well at school and their families feel more connected in a culturally friendly place. The study results will be useful to help make positive changes to school policy and practice.

### WHAT YOU ARE INVITED TO DO:

As part of the initial stage of this study, you are asked to complete a short questionnaire.

You are also invited at the end of the questionnaire to nominate to be involved further as a case study school.

See also the attached copy of the information sheet and consent form.

### CONFIDENTIALITY:

The questionnaire is confidential. Your individual responses will not be shown to anybody else. Your name and the name of your school will not be used in any reports, presentations or publications, however, because you may be working with others in groups, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed outside the group. If you choose to withdraw from the research, any information that you have given will not be used in the research.

All data collected during this study will be kept securely in a locked filing cabinet at the university, accessible only by the lead researcher and destroyed after five years.

### WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS?

The analysed results of the questionnaire will form a report which will be available to the participants upon request. The analysed results will also be used to write some academic articles, presentations and contribute to the overall findings of the PhD. Copies of the questionnaire report may also be provided to Northern Region's Regional Director, Assistant Regional Directors and other senior officers within DETE upon request.

**THIS STUDY HAS BEEN APPROVED** by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) (Approval number: H4703) of James Cook University and Research Services of the Department of Education, Training and Employment.

### QUESTIONNAIRE PURPOSE:

To collect information about the context of working relationships between principals and their Indigenous Education Worker/Community Education Counsellor.

A similar questionnaire to this one is also being issued to the Northern Region's IEW's and CEC's.

**A PILOT STUDY HAS SHOWN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE SHOULD TAKE NO MORE THAN 10 MINUTES TO COMPLETE.**

**IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE** the term 'Indigenous' WILL refer to BOTH AUSTRALIAN aboriginal people and Torres Strait islanders, Alternatively, 'OTHER AUSTRALIANS' will refer to non-indigenous Australians.

**Qu 1: Are you....?**

	Select One
Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 2: Are you of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent?**

	Select One
Australian Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	<input type="checkbox"/>
Torres Strait Islander	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 3: Where do you live?**

	Select One
Regional city	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural town	<input type="checkbox"/>
Remote town or community	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 4: What is your position in your school?**

	Select One
Principal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deputy Principal	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 5: How long have you worked for Education Qld?**

	Select One
Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 to 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 to 15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 to 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 to 30 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
30 + years	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 6: How long have you worked in your current role?**

	Select One
Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 to 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 to 15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 to 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 to 30 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
30 + years	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 7: How long have you worked at your current school?**

	Select One
Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 to 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 to 15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 to 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 to 30 years	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 8: Do you have Indigenous students enrolled in your school this year?**

		Select One
Yes		<input type="checkbox"/>
No		<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 9: There are a variety of non-teaching roles that specifically support Indigenous students in schools. Which of the following roles do you have in your school?**

Role	Choose as many as applicable
1 Teacher Aide (Generic)	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Teacher Aide (Identified)	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Community Liaison Officer (AO3)	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Community Education Counsellor (Identified)	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 None of the above	<input type="checkbox"/>

(If you ticked this, go to Qu. 18 on page 5)

**Qu 10: If you ticked any of numbers 1 – 5 in Question 9 above, which of them do you directly supervise? If you ticked 'None of the above', skip this and the next 8 questions and go to Qu. 18 on page 5.**

Role	Please select as applicable
1 Teacher Aide (Generic)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2 Teacher Aide (Identified)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3 Community Liaison Officer (AO3)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
4 Community Education Counsellor (Identified)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5 Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

**Qu 11: Of the above person/s you directly supervise, how often do you meet? Continue answering all following questions.**

Role	Please select as applicable
1 Teacher Aide (Generic)	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Twice a term <input type="checkbox"/> Once a term <input type="checkbox"/> As required
2 Teacher Aide (Identified)	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Twice a term <input type="checkbox"/> Once a term <input type="checkbox"/> As required
3 Community Liaison Officer (AO3)	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Twice a term <input type="checkbox"/> Once a term <input type="checkbox"/> As required
4 Community Education Counsellor (Identified)	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Twice a term <input type="checkbox"/> Once a term <input type="checkbox"/> As required
5 Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Twice a term <input type="checkbox"/> Once a term <input type="checkbox"/> As required

**Qu 12: If you supervise more than one of the above persons, select one person.**

Write the role of the person here.....

**Qu 13: Is this person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent?**

		Select One
Unsure		<input type="checkbox"/>
Australian Aboriginal		<input type="checkbox"/>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander		<input type="checkbox"/>
Torres Strait Islander		<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither		<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 14: How long has this person worked in their current role?**

	Select One
Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 to 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 to 15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 to 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 to 30 years	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Qu 15: What are some of the duties this person currently performs?**

- Please select as applicable
- 1  Provides educational support for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students (i.e. in-class and/or individual/small group withdrawal)
  - 2  Provides assistance to teachers on welfare matters relating to their Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students
  - 3  Provides information and assistance to teachers about Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum
  - 4  Provides information to the school staff about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander social and cultural protocols and issues
  - 5  Provides advice to the school leadership team (i.e. principal & DP, etc.) about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community matters relevant to the school students
  - 6  Monitors Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander student attendance including doing home visits
  - 7  Liaises with the school's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families on student and school matters
  - 8  Organises various activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (i.e. homework classes, breakfast club, Junior or Senior ATSIAP, etc.)
  - 9  Provides appropriate welfare support and/or counselling for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students
  - 10  Other. Please specify:

**Qu 16: Are there duties you would like this person to do that they currently are not doing? If yes, what are they? And why aren't they currently doing them? If no, move on to next question.**

Please select as applicable

No

Yes.

Duty/Duties:

Reason/s why they are currently not doing them:



**Qu 17: What school events/activities do you work on together with this person? Please list these events/activities and a description of the frequency of occurrence of them. List up to 5. SEE WORKED EXAMPLES BELOW.**

EXAMPLE 1:

<u>Name of school event/activity</u>	<u>Frequency of occurrence</u>
Nil	Nil

OR

EXAMPLE 2:

<u>School events/activities</u>	<u>Frequency of occurrence</u>
Indigenous Parent Reference Group meetings	At least once per term
School NAIDOC or other Indigenous celebrations	Annually
Indigenous student attendance—some home visits/parent interviews	As required
Indigenous student discipline: interviewing students, contacting parents, suspension re-entry interviews, etc.	As they occur
Interviewing Indigenous students for their personalised learning plans	Twice a year
Discussing their Developing Performance Plan	Twice a year
Developing and implementing the school EATSIPS plan	As required

**WRITE YOUR ANSWERS HERE:**

<u>School events/activities</u>	<u>Frequency of occurrence</u>

**Qu 18: All IEWs/CECs are asked this same question: Would you be willing to participate further in this research project? If you both agree, you will be contacted to work as a pair in a case study school. The following questions are guiding the research project:**  
*What is the current principal – IEW/CEC relationship?*  
*How can this relationship be strengthened and what are the contextual features that influence this?*  
*What are the outcomes of this strengthened relationship?*  
*What are the implications for practice and policy in schools?*

	<u>Select One</u>
Yes, but I would like further information from you before I commit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes, I am willing - If the school's IEW/CEC also agrees	<input type="checkbox"/>
No thanks	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If you ticked a 'yes', please write your name and email below and Louise Wilkinson will contact you:**

Name: ..... email: .....@eq.edu.au

**Qu 19: Would you like to receive a report on the findings of this survey? If yes, please email me:** [REDACTED]

	<u>Select One</u>
Yes, I will	<input type="checkbox"/>
No thanks	<input type="checkbox"/>

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. YOUR INPUT IS APPRECIATED.**