



strongersmarter

Stronger Smarter

Jarjums



Stronger Smarter Leadership for high-expectations partnerships and relationships in early childhood

Share Our Vision

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

Understand Our Approach

Be the change you want to see in the world (Ghandi).

We believe a positive sense of cultural identity is essential for educational success. The Stronger Smarter Approach builds this strong positive identity for children and their families through collaborative communication processes which we describe as 'High-Expectations Relationships'. Our approach asks everyone to take responsibility for change. We ask everyone to join us in raising our expectations – not only for Indigenous children, parents and communities – but of ourselves.



Stronger Smarter Jarjums

Our highly regarded Stronger Smarter Leadership Program is now available to early childhood educators to ignite conversations, build relationships and embed a Stronger Smarter Approach to create a better future for our Jarjums.

Why?

Learning starts the day we are born. A high quality education early in life will give our Jarjums the best start. Early childhood educators are in a powerful position to provide our Jarjums with the foundation for the rest of their lives.

High Expectations Relationships

In early childhood, relationships are at the heart of everything¹. The best outcomes occur when educators and family members work together². Nurturing relationships, positive interactions, and a strong sense of identity are all vital to the self-esteem and emotional wellbeing of our Jarjums. Stronger Smarter Jarjums introduces the concept of High-Expectations Relationships to build stronger relationships with Jarjums and their families and ensure greater collaboration in decision-making.

Partnerships

Transitions between the early childhood sectors can be challenging and stressful for Jarjums and their families. Partnerships between schools and early childhood services play an important role³.

Stronger Smarter Jarjums brings both educators and community members together, and introduces the language and concepts of Stronger Smarter that can be used across all early childhood settings.

Stronger Smarter Jarjums supports the collaboration needed to create innovative transitions for local contexts.

¹ Early Years Learning Framework Practice Based Resources - Connecting with families: Bringing the Early Years Learning Framework to life in your community.

² As above.

³ Hirst, M., Jervis, N., Visagie, K., Sojo, V. & Cavanagh, S. (2011). Transition to primary school: a review of the literature. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

Jarjums

Jarjums is an Aboriginal word for children used in a number of languages on Australia's eastern coast.

Jarjums throughout this brochure refers to all Australian children.

The Stronger Smarter Institute

Is an independent and Indigenous-led non-profit organisation

The Stronger Smarter Approach is grounded in the work of Indigenous Australian educationalist Dr Chris Sarra who is the founder and Chair of the Stronger Smarter Institute. We have spent the past 10 years working to transform Australian schools through our Stronger Smarter Leadership Program (SSLP) by partnering with dedicated schools and communities to create a peer-to-peer network of practitioners who can deliver the Stronger Smarter Approach to their students.

“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

Who should attend Stronger Smarter Jarjums?

We invite all early childhood professionals, educators and community members who have an impact on Jarjums up to 8 years old to invest in *Stronger Smarter Jarjums*.

Stronger Smarter Jarjums supports the Early Years Learning approach by:

- building a sense of **Belonging** using the language and approach of Stronger Smarter to promote a positive sense of identity for our Jarjums
- building a sense of **Being** by providing tools and strategies to use with Jarjums to build their resilience and develop their relationships with others, and
- supporting **Becoming** by igniting conversations and building partnerships across sectors and across communities that will ensure strong support for Jarjums during the rapid and significant change of the early years.

Stronger Smarter Jarjums will assist you to:

- build High-Expectations Relationships which are nurturing and supportive, built on respect, and work with each Jarjum's unique qualities and abilities
- build High-Expectations Relationships with all families, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, which value the knowledge and build on the strengths that all groups bring to the relationship
- challenge your own beliefs and assumptions and understand how these might impact on our Jarjums' learning
- enhance your leadership capacity and your culture of professional inquiry for the pursuit of educational excellence for all Jarjums, and
- build strong partnerships with other early childhood educators within your area.

What can I expect?

Intense, stimulating, challenging & engaging - our face to face programs provide a highly experiential learning experience with a multi-modal delivery that you can see, hear and feel. Be prepared to be an active participant and draw on your own knowledge and experiences.

You will be challenged to explore your beliefs, behaviours and assumptions in a safe and supportive environment. We offer new learning frameworks, tools, and processes to enhance your leadership capacity, with examples, activities and conversations specifically directed to the early childhood setting.

We structure the program over a period of time to allow you to integrate new learning into your workplace. The initial residency is supplemented by a later follow-up which provides an opportunity for you to share your learning with others.

We expect you to commit to two leadership challenges:

Personal Challenge

Apply Stronger Smarter practices to your individual situation.

Workplace Challenge

Use an action research model to analyse an existing workplace situation and apply strategies to build relationships that will ultimately lead to improved outcomes for our Jarjums.

What will I learn?

Enhance your capacity to identify complex challenges and understand how the shift to a High-Expectations Relationships mindset can help you to actively engage with Jarjums, their families and the local community to co-create the way forward.

High-Expectations Relationships

Strengthen your connections with other educators, and with Jarjums, their families and communities, to support collaborative interactions and challenging conversations.

Reflective Leadership - Responsibility for change

Develop a high level of critical self-knowledge, unlock your beliefs, and uncover habitual patterns that impact on your own ways of thinking, seeing, talking and doing. Draw on your existing strengths and knowledge, stretch and challenge yourself intellectually and emotionally, and build the confidence and courage to activate change.

Facilitative Leadership - a strength-based approach

Enhance your listening skills and increase your understanding of individual and group behaviours. Learn strategies to facilitate group awareness, challenge perceptions, and develop genuine partnerships built on trust, respect, and valuing others.

Learning through *culture*

Learn through culture, not just about culture.

Understand how everyone has a unique cultural identity made up of our experiences and beliefs that are influenced by the communities, traditions or ways of being into which we are born. Use tools for cultural analysis and will understand how cultural patterns and cultural lenses shape the way we see the world.



The Stronger Smarter Metastrategies align closely with the Early Years Learning Framework

- Acknowledging, embracing and developing a positive sense of student identity
- Innovative and dynamic school models in complex social and cultural contexts
- High expectations leadership to ensure high expectation classrooms, with high expectations teacher/ student relationships
- Innovative and dynamic school staffing models in complex social and cultural contexts
- Acknowledging and embracing Indigenous leadership in schools and school communities

Program Outline

Stronger Smarter Jarjums requires a 12 month commitment to incorporate a 'workplace challenge' in addition to attending the face to face components. We ask you to report back to the group on your progress after two months and again after 12 months to share your practice with others, and we will invite you to join the national networks of the Stronger Smarter Institute.

Phase 1 - Stronger Smarter Leadership Development Forum:

The first face to face component is a five day residential program run either as a single session over a week or over two sessions. The program is led by us and incorporates a presentation from school or community leaders working in the early childhood space.

Phase 2 - Taking the message back:

In the periods between the face to face components, we ask participants to 'take the message back' to their workplaces. This requires you to design and commit to a personal and a workplace challenge.

Phase 3 - Leadership for School Transformation forum:

Phase 3 is a two-day follow-up session where you will reconnect with your group and the Stronger Smarter team, and share, review and discuss your workplace challenges.

Phase 4 - Transforming workplaces implementation:

Over the remainder of the year, you will be asked to continue with your leadership challenges, supported by us. At the end of the year we will invite you to share your workplace experience with us to share your practice with others.

High-Expectations Relationships Behavioural Index

The Stronger Smarter Institute has a High-Expectations Relationships Behavioural Index for school and community participants. We will ask you to complete this tool both before and after attending the program.

Program participants have described the program as intense, stimulating, challenging and full of humour and personal involvement

"I do believe we've come together a lot more since we started training at Stronger Smarter, and we get a lot of parents' feedback saying that we are a school that really does understand community, and that they feel comfortable and welcome." Michael Taylor, Principal - Casino West Public School, NSW (2015)

"I came back from the program and felt quite empowered. I could see a real sense of purpose. The first thing I really needed to do was to start building the relationships with my whole school community." Ken Jeanes, Principal - Nowa Nowa Primary School.

"I think the main thing that Stronger Smarter has given our school is the framework to work within and something that everyone can see works and I think that's been really successful. The processes we use now are all strength-based, and that has been introduced to us by Stronger Smarter." Karen Newton, Assistant Principal - Casino West Public School (2014)

"One of the things I've taken away from Stronger Smarter is courage. The courage to have challenging conversations, the courage to go out there and work with the community, the courage to go out there and ask people to help us." Dom Carter, Deputy Principal - Gladstone West State School



"A key indicator for the program's success is principals and other leaders 'taking the message back to schools'; participants demonstrating leadership in a number of areas of school life. Evidence suggests that participants took the message back to schools, and had the hard conversations that led to changes in staff attitudes and beliefs. It was anticipated that changes in conversations, and staff having greater expectations of Indigenous students would in turn lead to students having greater expectations of themselves, and higher levels of self esteem. The majority of respondents indicated that they felt that there had been positive changes to students' self image, and gave moving examples of this. Respondents were also able to demonstrate that there had been significant positive changes to student engagement in all aspects of the school."

Clear Horizons Evaluation Report on the Stronger Smarter Leadership Program 2009.

Stronger Smarter Team

The Stronger Smarter Leadership Program is coordinated and facilitated by a team of highly experienced staff.

Our core programs team is supplemented by school and community leaders who bring their own experiences of implementing a Stronger Smarter approach within their school communities.

Dyonne Anderson is a Bundjalung woman from the far North Coast of NSW and is the Director, Service Delivery. With over 26 years' experience with the NSW Department of Education and Training, Dyonne has been the principal at Cabbage Tree Island Public School since 2004 and has also worked in various roles and locations throughout NSW including; classroom teacher, Curriculum Advisor-Aboriginal Studies P-12, Consultant for Human Society and Its Environment and K-6 Science and Technology.

John Bray comes from Redcliffe in Queensland. He began his career as a teacher with the Queensland Department of Education in 1990. Since then he has been a Principal across several Queensland and Northern Territory communities in various positions. In 2010 John was appointed the College Director of West Arnhem College in the Northern Territory where he led the development of the Strong Start Bright Future Framework and together with the communities of Jabiru and Gunbalanya, created a "birth to 100" framework.



Fiona Bobongie is a proud Darumbal and South Sea Islander woman, from the First Nations People of Tanna and Ambrym Island. Prior to joining the Stronger Smarter Institute Fiona had been with Queensland's Department of Education since 1986 in various roles from Teacher Aide, Community Liaison Officer, Teacher, Acting Principal, Principal Project Officer and Senior Project Officer in Community Engagement. Over the past 5 years Fiona has worked as a Principal Project Officer – EATSIPS (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools) in the Central Queensland and North Queensland Region. Her last positions were working simultaneously Principal Project Officer for EATSIPEC (Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Early Childhood) in Townsville and Senior Engagement Officer in Community Engagement in Mackay for EATSIPEC.

Toby Adams is a proud Kullilli man, from Dalby, Queensland. Toby has over a decade of experience facilitating programs throughout Australia, along with many speaking engagements nationally & internationally. In addition to facilitating the Stronger Smarter Leadership Program, his experience includes facilitating the Learn Earn Legend Indigenous Youth Summit, Oxfam Change Course program, Youth 2020 Summit, Australian Youth Forum consultations, the National Youth Roundtable, and presenting at cultural events such as WIPCE, Garma and Dreaming Festival. Toby also has a strong background in Indigenous employment, training and community development.

Michal Purcell has been managing Stronger Smarter programs since the Institute first began in 2005. Descended from the Butchulla people of Fraser Island and the first people of Ambrym Island in Vanuatu, Michal grew up in Childers, Queensland. Before joining the Stronger Smarter Institute, Michal worked at Cherbourg State School with Dr Chris Sarra as Principal. She witnessed the changes in the community when they began to feel strong again in their identity and ability to succeed. Michal is committed to supporting people's learning about themselves and others.

How to enrol?

For more information, please see our website or contact the Institute:

- Email us on enquiries@strongersmarter.com.au or
- Phone us on 07 5499 4135
- Website: www.strongersmarter.com.au

Program accreditation

The Stronger Smarter Leadership Program is recognised in NSW as an Accredited Professional Learning Program. On completion of the Stronger Smarter Leadership Program participants can register with:

BOSTES Quality Teaching Council

Completing the Stronger Smarter Leadership Program will contribute 60 hours of QTC Registered PD addressing 1.3, 1.4, 2.4, 3.7, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 7.3, 7.4 from the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers towards maintaining Lead Teacher Accreditation in NSW.

ACT Teacher Quality Institute

The Stronger Smarter Leadership Program is an accredited Professional Learning Program with the ACT Teacher Quality Institute.

**“...if we believe in young children, we give them
licence to believe in themselves.
And when young children believe they can be
stronger and smarter, that brightens the future in very
honourable ways.”**

**Archbishop Desmond Tutu
Stronger Smarter Institute National Summit (2009)**



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