

Teaching and pedagogies

- 5.1 High quality teaching is fundamental to both a positive school experience and good education outcomes. Even experienced teachers can struggle with the demands of teaching in remote schools.
- 5.2 Mr Noel Pearson encouraged upholding high standards and expectations, both of teachers and students:

Culture is often invoked as a justification for this lowering of expectations and standards. It will be invoked by indigenous community members as well as those developing policies and delivering programs, as a justification for not upholding rigorous standards that apply in the mainstream. We must be careful to ensure that we are not unconsciously using culture as an excuse for failure, poor performance and under-achievement.¹

- 5.3 The Stronger Smarter Institute agreed, noting that 'Australian society has conditioned us to have low expectations of Indigenous students' and that 'public discourse around educational underachievement and failure frequently relies on deficit accounts that attribute blame to disadvantaged groups'.² It explains:

A teacher who believes children's achievement is limited by their social group reduces their belief in their own capacity as a teacher to teach these children. This can impact on teacher-student relationships...or cause teachers to adopt 'defensive' teaching strategies where they simplify content and reduce demands on

¹ Noel Pearson, 'Bending to Dysfunction, Bending to the Problems', *Cape York Partnership Position Paper*, 11 February 2004, pp. 1-2.

² Stronger Smarter Institute, *High Expectations Relationships: A Foundation for Quality Learning Environments in all Australian Schools*, Stronger Smarter Institute Limited Position Paper, 2014, pp. 2-8.

students... This can all potentially contribute to poor student achievement and disengagement.³

- 5.4 This chapter discusses the importance of quality teaching, teacher training, and ongoing support and professional development for teachers. The chapter considers some of the pedagogies and programs utilised by schools to close the gap in education outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, particularly relating to literacy, illustrated by case studies.

Teacher training

- 5.5 A number of submissions emphasised the importance of training teachers – even highly experienced teachers – to meet the needs of Indigenous students.⁴ Professor Bob Morgan, International Engagement Officer, University of Newcastle, told the committee that many teachers are trying hard to meet the needs of Indigenous students but ‘flounder because of very poor preparation.’⁵
- 5.6 Ms Philomena Downey, Principal, The Murri School, told the committee that teachers, especially newly graduated teachers, are:
- ...not equipped to deal with the broad range that needs to happen in our classrooms, because one size does not fit all... we have a team of mentor teachers who work with every teacher in the school to ensure that their planning is up to standard and up to scratch. If a teacher is struggling, their learning will also be scaffolded – like we scaffold the children's learning, we scaffold the teachers' learning.⁶

³ Stronger Smarter Institute, *Submission 33*, 44th Parliament, pp. 6–7.

⁴ For example: The Wollotuka Institute, *Submission 15*, 44th Parliament; Independent Schools Council of Australia, *Submission 16*, 44th Parliament; Australian Education Union, *Submission 45*, 44th Parliament; Dr Nicholas Biddle and Assistant Professor Dr Jessa Rogers, *Submission 14*, 44th Parliament; Reconciliation Victoria, *Submission 48*, 44th Parliament; Independent Schools Queensland, *Submission 19*, 44th Parliament; Stronger Smarter Institute, *Submission 33*, 44th Parliament; Reconciliation Australia, *Submission 36*, 44th Parliament; Queensland Catholic Education Commission, *Submission 20*, 44th Parliament; and Worawa Aboriginal College, *Submission 32*, 45th Parliament.

⁵ Professor Bob Morgan, International Engagement Officer, The Wollotuka Institute, University of Newcastle, *Committee Hansard*, Newcastle, 21 March 2016, p. 9.

⁶ Ms Philomena Downey, Principal, The Murri School, *Proof Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 29 August 2017, p. 28.

- 5.7 The Australian Education Union told the committee that:
- ...it is very important that we have programs at university that look at working with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and address the cultural obligations of working with local communities but also that we can go a step further and put in mentoring programs for our new educators when they go out into these schools, because quite often you will find very experienced people that have been working in these schools that can assist in terms of that teacher's professional development as they begin their career.⁷
- 5.8 Dr Margaret (Marnie) O'Bryan told the committee that many teachers and staff receive no cultural awareness training, and that 'even people coming out of teachers college now are saying that there is no compulsory teacher training around cultural awareness'.⁸

Cultural awareness and teacher attitudes

- 5.9 Some submissions noted the importance of teacher training in cultural awareness, especially when preparing to work with Indigenous students, and the impact it can have on teacher attitudes towards students.⁹
- 5.10 Mr Warren Mundine AO told the committee that research showed that 40% of early learning teachers working with Indigenous children 'did not have a good view...of where these kids were going to end up'. He explained that these attitudes can have a profound impact on students:
- ...kids pick up that body language and pick up the way you act. We then see the later results of those kids, when they are going from infants into the primary and the high school area, you can see that that has had a major effect on them. So it is very important to work on those areas we are talking about – the cultural training

⁷ Ms Correna Haythorpe, Federal President, Australian Education Union, *Committee Hansard*, Campbelltown, 22 March 2016, p. 21.

⁸ Dr Margaret (Marnie) O'Bryan, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 1 June 2017, p. 6.

⁹ For example: The Wollotuka Institute, *Submission 15*, 44th Parliament; Independent Schools Council of Australia, *Submission 16*, 44th Parliament; Australian Education Union, *Submission 45*, 44th Parliament; Dr Nicholas Biddle and Assistant Professor Dr Jessa Rogers, *Submission 14*, 44th Parliament; Reconciliation Victoria, *Submission 48*, 44th Parliament; Independent Schools Queensland, *Submission 19*, 44th Parliament; Stronger Smarter Institute, *Submission 33*, 44th Parliament; Reconciliation Australia, *Submission 36*, 44th Parliament; Queensland Catholic Education Commission, *Submission 20*, 44th Parliament; and Worawa Aboriginal College, *Submission 32*, 45th Parliament.

and the awareness – but also going there with energy to show these kids that the world is their oyster, in a sense.¹⁰

- 5.11 Reconciliation Victoria noted that ‘longer term achievements will always rely on the attitudes embedded in principals, teachers, and other workers’.¹¹
- 5.12 Ms Rebekah Shurley, a former Indigenous Youth Parliamentarian, told the committee that:
- I am often greatly concerned by some of the remarks I hear from my teaching peers. When I was doing my bachelor's degree, there were some interesting conversations. I will never forget one incident. We had to do a one-semester course on Indigenous cultural awareness and the topic of the Stolen Generation came up – I should tell you at this point that my mum was part of the Stolen Generation. I was one of only a few Indigenous students in the class. But some of the non-Indigenous students were really quite vocal – asking why we even needed to do this course and what the point of it was. They said: 'Why are we learning about the Stolen Generation? That was ages ago. It is not even relevant anymore.' I was sitting there knowing that my mother had been taken, and I was listening to these people saying, 'It was not us; why do we have to learn about it?' I found that really heartbreaking. I was thinking: 'These are the people who are going to be my teaching peers when I graduate. These are the people who are educating future generations. If that is the attitude they are taking into their classrooms, what are they going to then pass on?'¹²
- 5.13 Mr Michael Donovan, University of Newcastle, emphasised the importance of training teachers to build strong relationships with students, families and the community. He explained that teachers must be able engage with student perspectives and viewpoints.¹³
- 5.14 The Stronger Smarter Institute explained that its program:
- ...supports educators to enhance their personal leadership skills to fully understand how their beliefs might impact their teaching.

¹⁰ Mr Nyunggai Warren Mundine AO, Chairman, Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 11 February 2016, p. 13.

¹¹ Reconciliation Victoria, *Submission 48*, 44th Parliament, p. 6.

¹² Ms Rebekah Shurley, Former National Indigenous Youth Parliamentarian, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 26 May 2017, pp. 17–18.

¹³ Mr Michael Donovan, Lecturer, The Wollotuka Institute, University of Newcastle, *Committee Hansard*, Newcastle, 21 March 2016, p. 14.

The Stronger Smarter approach asks teachers to take responsibility and 'put a mirror on ourselves as educators.' Within a High-Expectations Relationship, the teacher has to contemplate and understand not only the 'baggage' of the child, but also the baggage they carry themselves. It can be too easy to blame the community and the social issues of the children. The Stronger Smarter approach challenges teachers to ask themselves the confronting questions: What is happening in my classroom that is valuable to Indigenous students? What am I doing that contributes to failure, absenteeism or disengagement?¹⁴

Teacher retention

- 5.15 Mr Andrew Penfold AM told the committee that 'there is a very high churn of teachers in remote schools [and that] the churn is extremely high so you are never getting sustainable quality teaching'.¹⁵
- 5.16 Mr Penfold noted that states and territories have schemes, programs and incentives in place to encourage teacher retention. However, he told the committee that the programs focus on tenure rather than performance and, as such, have not led to any improvement in teaching quality. Mr Penfold called for teacher incentive programs to focus on and reward performance and educational outcomes rather than tenure alone.¹⁶
- 5.17 Mr Peter Johnson, Chair, More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (MATSI), explained that retention challenges inescapably stem from the fact that teachers moving to a remote community are dislocating from friends, family and their community:

The whole issue of who goes out to these schools is problematic in the first place, regardless of what program they go through. For someone to go out to a remote community or even to an isolated town in New South Wales and to teach in that area they are dislocating from their friends, their family and their community. How you incentivise them to get out there is an issue. Many

¹⁴ Stronger Smarter Institute, *High Expectations Relationships: A Foundation for Quality Learning Environments in all Australian Schools*, Stronger Smarter Institute Limited Position Paper, 2014, p. 8.

¹⁵ Mr Andrew Penfold AM, Member, Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 11 February 2016, p. 14.

¹⁶ Mr Andrew Penfold AM, Member, Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 11 February 2016, p. 14.

governments have tried many different things to compensate people for that dislocation.¹⁷

- 5.18 However, the 2015 review into Indigenous education in the Northern Territory (Wilson Review) stated that the average length of service for teachers in the Northern Territory was 6.9 years and 5.7 years for assistant teachers. The review asserted that ‘despite urban legends about the exceptionally short tenure of teachers in remote and very remote schools, the data shows that median tenure is between two and three years’.¹⁸
- 5.19 Nonetheless, almost 30% of teachers in remote and very remote government schools are in their first year of teaching, as illustrated in Table 5.1 below, after which retention rates drop markedly.

Table 5.1 Northern Territory Government remote and very remote schools teacher tenure

Service in current school	Number of teaching staff	Percentage
1st year	362	27.9
1 to 2 years	247	19.1
2 to 3 years	173	13.3
3 to 4 years	112	8.6
4 to 5 years	77	5.9
5 to 6 years	53	4.1
6 to 7 years	52	4.0
7 to 8 years	28	2.2
8 or more years	192	14.8

Source Bruce Wilson, *A Share in the future: Review of Indigenous Education in the Northern Territory*, Northern Territory Department of Education, 2015, p. 191.

Committee comment

- 5.20 It is clear that cultural safety, fostered by strong connection and engagement with community, is the essential foundation upon which all education and support programs must be built. Teachers, their attitudes, pedagogies, and the ways in which they teach are integral to creating the environment necessary for students to achieve their education goals.
- 5.21 High quality teaching is a critical factor in improving education outcomes for Indigenous students. However, the committee acknowledges that the task set before teachers is an incredibly challenging one. Teachers and staff must be able to skilfully deliver the Australian curriculum to students with a broad range of abilities. They are required to provide and tailor

¹⁷ Mr Peter Johnson, Chair, MATSITI Evaluation Panel, *Committee Hansard*, Newcastle, 21 March 2016, p. 19.

¹⁸ Bruce Wilson, *A Share in the future: Review of Indigenous Education in the Northern Territory*, Northern Territory Department of Education, 2015, p. 191.

education and practical support to students with a wide range of health and wellbeing issues. Teachers must also be culturally responsive; they must reach out, establish and build strong relationships with students, their families, and the wider community.

- 5.22 The committee commends the work of the Stronger Smarter Institute in training and empowering teachers to establish and maintain high-expectations relationships in the classroom. Nonetheless, the committee is concerned to hear that many teachers feel underprepared and ill-equipped and that many schools report that teachers, particularly new teachers, are struggling. The committee is of the view that more must be done to train, equip and support teachers, both new and experienced, to meet the challenges of providing high quality teaching and support for Indigenous students.

Recommendation 11 (Priority)

- 5.23 **The committee recommends that the Minister for Education take a proposal to the Council of Australian Governments to:**
- **make Indigenous history and culture a compulsory component for all teaching degrees; and**
 - **require all teachers already working in schools with a significant number of Indigenous students to complete in-service local Indigenous language, history and culture training as a part of mandatory professional development.**

Pedagogies

- 5.24 Literacy is an essential foundation upon which education and employment is based. Throughout the inquiry, the committee saw a wide range of pedagogies used in different schools. However, the two pedagogies that were most discussed in the evidence provided to the committee were Scaffolding Literacy and Direct Instruction.

Scaffolding Literacy/Accelerated Literacy

5.25 Scaffolding Literacy, also known as Accelerated Literacy, is the result of a number of years of research, trials, and projects throughout Australia.¹⁹ The program aims to not only teach spelling, grammar, and vocabulary but to also teach ‘the ways of thinking – the discourses, or cultural knowledge – that underpin what these mean’, explaining that ‘this knowledge is an essential part of being able to decode text and therefore succeed educationally’.²⁰

5.26 Dr David Rose, Reading to Learn, explained that:

The term ‘scaffolding’ means you are supporting a student to do something that is well beyond what they can do independently, and repeated practice at that enables them then to function independently over time. Then you withdraw the scaffolding.²¹

5.27 Dr Rose further explained that the pedagogy is particularly effective for students from oral cultural backgrounds. He stressed the importance of ensuring that students with weaker literacy skills do not miss out on the mainstream curriculum and fall further behind their peers:

That is absolutely critical. If you are going to close the gap in the classroom, the weakest children have to be involved in what the top kids are doing. It all has to happen at the same time, which means that the teacher needs highly designed strategies for interacting with their whole class so they are supporting the weakest student to be able to do what the top kids are doing. That does not mean it does not break down into group and individual work, but it always starts off with highly designed teacher guidance so that all students can do the tasks.²²

¹⁹ National Accelerated Literacy Program, ‘Overview’, <http://www.nalp.edu.au/about-nalp/about-overview.html>, accessed 24 September 2017.

²⁰ National Accelerated Literacy Program, ‘What is AL?’, <http://www.nalp.edu.au/what-is-accelerated-literacy/overview-final.html>, accessed 24 September 2017.

²¹ Dr David Rose, Director, Reading to Learn, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 30 March 2017, p. 1.

²² Dr David Rose, Director, Reading to Learn, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 30 March 2017, p. 2.

Case study – Wongutha CAPS

5.28 Wongutha Christian Aboriginal Parent-directed School (Wongutha CAPS) is a strong proponent of scaffolding literacy. It explained that, prior to implementing this pedagogy, the texts that were being used in its classrooms were low level readers, which did little to build the self-esteem or maintain the interest of its students, who are between 15 and 19 years of age. However:

Today Wongutha students are engaging in age appropriate texts that give them different world perspectives...[students can] access texts and authors appreciated by all young people in Australia...such as John Marsden, Tim Winton and James Moloney, as well as texts that relate directly to Aboriginal people.²³

5.29 Wongutha CAPS told the committee that, under the pedagogy, students are 'expected to improve at least two year levels in one year in their reading levels'. The school reported that, in 2014, there was an average improvement of 2.4 year levels across the school, 'two and a half times greater than what teachers were achieving before Scaffolding Literacy'.²⁴

Direct Instruction

5.30 Direct Instruction and Explicit Direct Instruction, 'combines explicit instruction pedagogy with a comprehensive curriculum, student assessment and scripted lessons...[to ensure] that advanced students can be accelerated and that no child is left behind'.²⁵ The program covers literacy and numeracy from kindergarten to Year 5.²⁶

5.31 Good to Great Schools Australia and the Cape York Partnership, quoting Professor Bill Loudon, explained that:

...Direct Instruction breaks each learning task down into its smallest component and requires mastery of simpler skills before proceeding to more difficult skills. Students are grouped according to their achievement, teachers are provided with closely scripted lesson plans, students respond to the teacher orally and as a

²³ Wongutha CAPS, *Submission 37*, 44th Parliament, p. 12.

²⁴ Wongutha CAPS, *Submission 37*, 44th Parliament, p. 13.

²⁵ Good to Great Schools Australia, 'Effective instruction', <https://goodtogreatschools.org.au/our-products/effective-instruction/>, accessed 20 September 2017.

²⁶ Good to Great Schools Australia, 'Effective instruction', <https://goodtogreatschools.org.au/our-products/effective-instruction/>, accessed 20 September 2017.

group, and the group does not move on until everyone understands the material.²⁷

5.32 Ms Lyn McKenzie, Director, Good to Great Schools Australia, explained that:

...from the instruction point of view we have two different programs: direct instruction and explicit direct instruction. The direct instruction is their literacy and numeracy programs, and their explicit direct instruction is what we use in the teaching of the rest of the Australian curriculum.²⁸

5.33 Good to Great Schools Australia and the Cape York Partnership told the committee that 'there are no other, better, evidence-based approaches deserving greater priority for trial and implementation in Indigenous contexts', asserting that if the pedagogy appears to be failing, it is more likely to be a failure of the implementation of the pedagogy rather than a fault of the pedagogy itself.²⁹

5.34 They told the committee that the implementation of Direct Instruction 'does not necessarily mean there is a narrowing of the curriculum,' explaining that:

The Cape York Academy school has deliberately devoted additional time to literacy and numeracy to address the significant gap these students have, whilst providing an extended school day to fully address other areas of the Australian curriculum.³⁰

5.35 Yipirinya School, an independent Indigenous school, implemented Direct Instruction less than 12 months prior to speaking with the committee. The Principal, Ms Lorraine Sligar, told the committee about the school's experience:

...when I got to the school and did a reading test of the students, the results were absolutely abysmal. Some of the students in year 6 did not know the 26 letter sounds. I guess you could say we had a school where the literacy results were not good and something drastic had to happen, and I think Direct Instruction is a drastic remedy. It is drastic and it would not suit all schools, and it does

²⁷ Good to Great Schools Australia and Cape York Partnership, *Submission 28*, 45th Parliament, p. 9.

²⁸ Ms Lyn McKenzie, Director, Good to Great Schools Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Cairns, 7 March 2016, p. 2.

²⁹ Good to Great Schools Australia and Cape York Partnership, *Submission 28*, 45th Parliament, p. 11.

³⁰ Good to Great Schools Australia and Cape York Partnership, *Submission 28*, 45th Parliament, p. 18.

not suit all schools. But, when you are a situation like the one we were in, it was the only answer that our school could have really looked at.³¹

- 5.36 Ms Sligar advised that Direct Instruction has ‘very much settled the students’ and provided structure and repetition. She told the committee that students are tested and placed in a class where they can succeed. However, she cautioned that the results of the pedagogy will take time to manifest, noting that ‘given the nature of where we were, with most of the year 6s not knowing letter sounds, we are not going to see NAPLAN results for quite a while with this’.³²
- 5.37 Direct Instruction has been the subject of some controversy – while some schools have achieved success, others have been criticised for failing to deliver the Australian curriculum.
- 5.38 In its interim report, the committee expressed its concern regarding the effectiveness of Direct Instruction/Explicit Instruction as a teaching approach for students of all ages, questioning the extent to which it can equip students for future opportunities. The committee acknowledged that the pedagogy may be of value in the earliest years of literacy and numeracy fundamentals, but noted that Direct Instruction appeared limiting for older students studying other subjects.³³
- 5.39 In 2013, the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) Evaluation of the Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy (CYAAA) Initiative was unable to determine ‘whether or not the CYAAA Initiative has had an impact on student learning’ and noted that ‘student attendance has declined in two campuses during the period of the CYAAA Initiative despite the perception by many stakeholders that it has increased’.³⁴
- 5.40 ACER explained that its evaluation was hindered by the large amount of missing data from test results, and ‘further limited in that, ideally, participants in the interviews and discussions would have been chosen

³¹ Ms Lorraine Sligar, Principal, Yipirinya School, *Committee Hansard*, Alice Springs, 4 April 2017, p. 29.

³² Ms Lorraine Sligar, Principal, Yipirinya School, *Committee Hansard*, Alice Springs, 4 April 2017, p. 29.

³³ House Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, *Interim Report: First Steps for improving educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students*, 2016, p. 24.

³⁴ Australian Council for Education Research, *Evaluation for the Cape York Aboriginal Academy Initiative for the Department of Education Training and Employment Queensland*, June 2013, pp. 9–10.

randomly rather than on the advice of CYAAA staff and local community members'.³⁵

Case study – Aurukun School

- 5.41 In March 2016, the committee travelled to the Cape York area and observed lessons being delivered via Direct Instruction/Explicit Instruction in schools in Coen and Aurukun. Good to Great Schools Australia described the Cape York Academy, which operates school campuses in Aurukun, Coen and Hope Vale, as the 'showcase' for its Direct Instruction program.³⁶ Although it did acknowledge that 'Aurukun was [its] biggest challenge'.³⁷
- 5.42 In May 2016, the Aurukun School was closed after a series of violent episodes directed at teaching staff.³⁸ A number of media articles highlighted Direct Instruction as a key element of the unrest. The Guardian reported that Mr John Bray, a former Executive Principal at the school, said that:
- ...the rigidly-scripted curriculum had compounded student disengagement in Aurukun, along with the "complete distrust" of the school by parents amid the punitive approach of welfare reforms. Both were contributing factors to events leading to the town's schooling crisis... "[Direct Instruction] is inappropriate and the evidence is clear".³⁹
- 5.43 However, Mr Kon Kalos and Ms Shoba Kalos, a former Principal and Head of Curriculum respectively, disagreed, asserting that 2015 was 'a period of significant cultural and academic progress at the school' and 'a year marked by strong participation by all who attended the school'.⁴⁰

³⁵ Australian Council for Education Research, *Evaluation for the Cape York Aboriginal Academy Initiative for the Department of Education Training and Employment Queensland*, June 2013, pp. 9-10.

³⁶ Good to Great Schools Australia, *Submission 60*, 44th Parliament, p. 13.

³⁷ Ms Lyn McKenzie, Director, Good to Great Schools Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Cairns, 7 March 2016, p. 4.

³⁸ 'Aurukun teachers evacuated again over safety concerns' *ABC News*, 26 May 2016, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-05-25/aurukun-teachers-evacuated-for-second-time/7444630>, accessed 21 September 2017.

³⁹ Joshua Robertson, 'Aurukun: Noel Pearson's syllabus partly to blame for school crisis, says former principal', *Guardian Australia*, 27 May 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/may/27/aurukun-imported-syllabus-partly-to-blame-for-school-closure-says-former-principal>, accessed 21 September 2017.

⁴⁰ Kon and Shoba Kalos, *Submission 15*, 45th Parliament, p. 1.

- 5.44 The local federal member, the Hon Warren Entsch MP, was reported as saying ‘we need to have a look at the effectiveness of the [education] programs and the impact that those programs have had on the community...for the hundreds of millions that we have spent in there I think we’re getting poor value for money’.⁴¹
- 5.45 In June 2016, the Queensland Department of Education and Training conducted a review of school education in Aurukun which found that ‘the school is not providing the full Australian curriculum to its students through the current approach’. Concluding ‘that the richness of schooling has been compromised by the pressure of delivering literacy and numeracy using only the DI approach’ and recommending that ‘going forward, a more balanced approach, contextualised for the Aurukun community, is required’.⁴²
- 5.46 In November 2016, it was reported that Good to Great Schools would withdraw its support from the school, reportedly stating that they ‘could not accept the unworkable conditions imposed by EQ restricting Direct Instruction teaching methods’.⁴³ The school has reverted back to non-partnership status and is being run by the Queensland Government. Dr James Watterston, Queensland Department of Education and Training, told the committee that:

...we have retained some elements of the curriculum that was in place, but what we have really focussed on is making sure that there is adherence to the Australian curriculum and that there is no difference in terms of the expectations and what students will learn in a remote community compared with a traditional metropolitan community. That is really fundamentally important, because, while you can drill and you can engage young people in learning the foundations of literacy and numeracy, if they are going to transition into the workforce or into another school environment or out of their own remote community they have to be able to apply those skills. We have certainly found in a range of remote communities that we work in that you really do need to

⁴¹ ‘Aurukun a “failed social experiment”, Queensland federal MP Warren Entsch says’, *ABC News*, 27 May 2016, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-05-27/aurukun-failed-social-experiment-qld-fed-mp-warren-entsch-says/7450964>, accessed 21 September 2017.

⁴² Queensland Department of Education and Training, *Review of school education in Aurukun: School Improvement Unit*, June 2016, p. 5.

⁴³ ‘Indigenous leader Noel Pearson withdraws support for troubled Aurukun school’, *ABC News*, 10 November 2016, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-11-10/indigenous-leader-noel-pearson-withdraws-support-arukun-school/8015112>, accessed 21 September 2017.

have a broad curriculum and a range of pedagogies rather than just one singular pedagogy.⁴⁴

Committee comment

- 5.47 Literacy and numeracy is the essential foundation upon which education and further education is based. Throughout the inquiry, the committee saw a wide range of pedagogies used across Australia. The committee is of the view that no single pedagogy will meet the needs of all students. Schools and teachers must be empowered to tailor their teaching to best meet the needs of their students; however, the committee is of the view that all pedagogies utilised by schools must be evidence-based and must adhere to the Australian curriculum.
- 5.48 The committee was impressed by the reported success of Scaffolding Literacy/ Accelerated Literacy. It is essential that pedagogies seeking to address weak literacy skills are able to do so without causing students to miss out on the mainstream curriculum and fall further behind their peers. The committee was pleased to hear that the pedagogy enabled and supported students to engage with age appropriate texts, instead of relying on low level or repetitive readers.
- 5.49 Since the tabling of the interim report, the committee's concerns regarding Direct Instruction have not been assuaged. The committee is particularly troubled by the Queensland Department of Education and Training's finding that, under the Good to Great Schools Direct Instruction program, Aurukun School was not providing the full Australian curriculum to its students.
- 5.50 The committee acknowledges that education is the purview of the states and territories. Nonetheless, the Federal Government is providing funding to deliver Direct Instruction and has a duty to ensure that funds are spent in the most effective and efficient manner. As such, the committee cannot support the continued use of Federal Government funds to deliver Direct Instruction at this time.
- 5.51 The committee also believes that all pedagogies used in schools, particularly those used to address issues with literacy and numeracy, must be assessed and evaluated to ensure they are not only working but are delivering the full Australian curriculum.

⁴⁴ Dr James Watterston, Director-General, Department of Education and Training, Queensland, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 29 August 2017, p. 20.

Recommendation 12 (Priority)

- 5.52 The committee recommends that no funding beyond 30 June 2018 be provided for Direct Instruction until the Federal Government conducts a review of schools utilising the program and finds that the program is providing a proven benefit to the education outcomes of Indigenous students as well as demonstrating that:
- the full Australian curriculum is being provided;
 - the cultural safety and responsiveness of the school is not being adversely impacted; and
 - attendance rates are not declining.

Recommendation 13

- 5.53 The committee recommends that the Federal Government undertake a comprehensive review of all federally-funded pedagogies to ensure the pedagogy is improving literacy and numeracy outcomes, delivering the Australian curriculum, and providing value for money.