



Annual Report 2023

# Matraville Education Partnership

Image: Matraville Sports High School Students, Jacquie Manning, 2022

Report prepared by Katherine Thompson, Program Manager, UNSW Matraville Education Partnership  
February 2024

We acknowledge that the work of the UNSW Matraville Education Partnership takes place on the unceded lands of the Bidjigal people and honour the traditional owners who have cared for this Country forever.

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## Executive Summary

For the last eight years, the UNSW Matraville Education Partnership (MEP) has been a significant contributor towards all goals of the UNSW 2025 Strategy. The partnership encourages academic excellence, has a positive social impact and supports our society through engagement with local schools and the community. Its purpose is to enhance learning and teaching, enrich UNSW's diversity and enable collaboration between UNSW and the local community.

The MEP also **contributes to newer UNSW strategies** including the uni-wide Indigenous Strategy, the Arts, Design and Architecture (ADA) faculty-level Indigenous strategy, and the ADA Foundational Strategy 2051, launched in 2021. This strategy emphasises the urgency of change via “creativity, collaboration and inclusion” and its first goal is to “listen to, learn from and elevate Indigenous knowledges”. The MEP's long-standing relationships with local Aboriginal community members and track record of successes achieved in partnership with the Aboriginal community are an essential foundation for the 2051 strategy to achieve its goals.

2023 saw a blossoming of many face-to-face activities and events following the two years of pandemic restrictions and cautious return to some normalcy in 2022. Flagship programs like the Master of Teaching Aboriginal Education Immersion and Professional Engagement placement program occurred face-to-face. Many Matraville students had many engagement points across the year to visit UNSW's campuses or experience incursions with UNSW staff members.

Other 2023 highlights include:

- 20 Matraville Year 10 students undertaking Work Experience with UNSW or its industry partners
- Bespoke antiracism program “My Voice Matters” developed with EDI grant funds and delivered to Matraville students
- Publication of the Cultural Residents Project Toolkit
- Ongoing work with the Culturally Nourishing Schooling Project

The Partnership's Strategic Goals are:

- **to raise the educational motivations, aspirations and achievement of low-SES and Indigenous students in the Matraville area;**
- **to engage UNSW with the Matraville community and build capacity to raise low-SES and Indigenous student outcomes; and**
- **to engage UNSW with the Matraville teaching community and build capacity to raise low-SES and Indigenous student outcomes.**

This report details the 2023 MEP activities and achievements around those goals.

Each section ends with a “Reflections and Recommendations” block, offering an evaluation of achievements and ideas for moving forward.

## Advisory Committee Membership

In 2023, one Advisory Committee meeting was held on 5 April.

Full committee membership (in April 2023) is listed below:

### List of Members

Professor Claire Annesley ( <i>Chair</i> )	Dean, Arts and Social Sciences	UNSW Sydney
Nic Accaria	Director, Education Leadership	Public Schools NSW, Botany Bay Network
Professor Kim Beswick	Head, School of Education	UNSW Sydney
John Bush	General Manager, Education	Paul Ramsay Foundation
The Hon. Dr Bob Carr	Director	Australia-China Relations Institute
Dr Avinesh Chelliah	Surgical Resident and Conjoint Associate Lecturer	Prince of Wales Hospital/ UNSW Sydney
Stanley Cowper	Alumnus	UNSW Sydney
The Hon. Michael Daley MP	Member for Maroubra NSW Shadow Treasurer	Australian Labor Party, Member of the Legislative Assembly
Noni Hoskins	Principal and Representative	Matraville Public School/Little Bay Community of Schools
Professor Attila Brungs	President and Vice-Chancellor	UNSW Sydney
Associate Professor Kevin Lowe	Scientia Indigenous Fellow	UNSW Sydney
Associate Professor Karen Maras	Director	UNSW Matraville Education Partnership
Hayley-Marie Brown-McNeill	President	Eastern Suburbs Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
The Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite MP	Federal Member for Kingsford Smith	Australian Labor Party, House of Representatives
Nerida Walker	Principal	Matraville Sports High School
Invited to Attend		
Nicolle Fierro (Secretariat)	Executive Officer, Arts and Social Sciences	UNSW Sydney
Marie Caccamo	External Relations Business Partner, Arts, Design & Architecture	UNSW Sydney
Louise Gilligan	Development Manager, Arts, Design & Architecture	UNSW Sydney
Josephine Holecek	School Manager, School of Education	UNSW Sydney
Katherine Thompson	Program Manager, UNSW Matraville Education Partnership	UNSW Sydney

## Strategic Priority 1: Raise the educational motivations, aspirations and achievement of low-SES and Indigenous students in the Matraville area

A major aim of the MEP since 2015 has been to share the range of resources that UNSW has to offer with school students experiencing social and/or educational disadvantage. UNSW provides technology, special programs, incursions, excursions, and afterschool activities that would otherwise be unavailable at MSHS due to its school profile, student numbers and SES status. UNSW is now prioritising low-SES and Indigenous student recruitment, retention and support (see the [UNSW Gateway program](#) and the “Grow Our Own” pillar of the [UNSW Indigenous Strategy](#)) and the MEP has committed to focus on and improve those activities within our portfolio that explicitly support improving students’ capability to access UNSW or other tertiary education, should that be their aspiration. In 2023 the partnership was finally able to reinstate many of the face-to-face activities that the pandemic had interrupted for the previous two years, enabling more MSHS students to access opportunities for educational growth and enrichment.

### Key Components

#### *After School Programs*

#### **Homework Centre & Music Program**

MSHS teachers and UNSW students usually staff the afterschool Homework Centre, held in the MSHS School Library two afternoons per week. MSHS students can undertake tutoring and receive assistance with their homework from UNSW students and volunteers. They can access the library’s computer and internet resources, read, play board games, and enjoy healthy refreshments in a calm environment. The Homework Centre welcomes students in Years 3-6 from the LBCOS to encourage primary students to become familiar with MSHS.

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#### ***A snapshot***

*The Homework Centre was attended by a diverse range of MSHS students in 2023, including students in the Inclusive Learning Centre, reflecting the school community. Approximately 10-15 students per day attended.*

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Music ran on Tuesday afternoons for primary and high school students..

#### *Holiday Programs*

In the September holidays, Year 12 students were invited to four “Hello HSC” sessions, involving MSHS staff and UNSW student tutors across a variety of HSC subjects. The sessions were attended by 12 Year 12 students (approx. 38% of the cohort – but nearly all the students who were pursuing an ATAR track of study).

Additionally, several online holiday offerings occurred across the year:

**UNSW Gateway offered their [online Year 12 Winter Gateway program](#)**, to assist students in the uni application process and HSC success leading to a Gateway Early Conditional Offer. Several MSHS students completed the program, and two of those ultimately enrolled at UNSW.

**Nura Gili Pre-Programs were offered face-to-face.** No MSHS students attended, as most First Nations students with university aspirations chose to pursue other disciplines/universities.

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### **Reflections and recommendations:**

*At the start of the MEP, a major goal was to grow the school population by appealing to local students, and partnership with the feeder primary schools was a big part of this. The MSHS population is now growing healthily with a mix of local and out-of-area students accessing the Talented Sports Program.*

*The teachers who spearhead the afterschool programs have noted that younger primary students may not be suited to the environment they hope to create for MSHS students, so a request was made for 2024 to limit primary attendance to Years 5-6 for Homework Centre on only one day per week, and to reserve Music for high school students only.*

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### *Excursions and Incursions*

**The TalkLaw program** is an Australian community legal initiative run by King & Wood Mallesons (KWM) Pro Bono Legal Services, targeting year 10 students in schools with significant cohorts of low-SES students and providing practical workshops on legal issues relevant to young people. In 2023, Year 10 Matraville students met for three sessions with KWM and UNSW Legal Office volunteers. The excursion to KWM was not able to take place due to an overcrowded schedule, staffing, and excursion resource shortages at the end of the year, but the school-based sessions were considered worthwhile by participants.

The **In the Making program** ran for the second year in a row with Year 9 students attending a series of workshops at UNSW Art & Design, culminating in an art exhibition at the Paddington Campus.

**Three UNSW ADA Student Ambassadors** visited in September to assist Year 12 students with UAC applications.

The **HSC All My Own Work program** was delivered by UNSW teacher education students during their Term 3 placement at MSHS. Carolyn Davey assisted these students in creating a series of engaging lessons about academic honesty and plagiarism, to prepare them for successfully taking the All My Own Work module required by NESA at the end of the year. This was an opportunity for education students to practice creating engaging lessons from material that students might not automatically find interesting and practice micro-teaching in a small and supported environment.

When Year 11 transitioned to Year 12 in Term 4, their Year Advisor organised an **excursion to UNSW** where they attended classes and had a campus tour led by a Student Ambassador.

Wei Wang, a UNSW PhD student in the school of Art and Design, contributed to the annual MSHS **Chinese Calligraphy Competition** as a community judge and donated calligraphy supplies to MSHS. Wei will complete a component of his PhD research at MSHS, working to develop fonts that make reading easier for people with dyslexia.



## Spotlight: MY VOICE Matters Program

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A special program was developed and run in 2023 using a small Faculty Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) grant. Based on 'Tell Them From Me' survey data from the previous year that reported students' experiences of racism at school, UNSW staff developed a program called "Matrville Youth Voicing Our Identities, Cultures and Experiences", or MY VOICE Matters, to work with a selected cohort of MSHS students from across all year groups (n=40) to better understand their experiences of racism and to deepen their understanding of racism and antiracism. Multiple UNSW academic and professional staff members gave their time to running workshops for this program, and funding was put toward catering and an excursion for the students involved to see a performance of [Reckōning](#) at the Riverside Theatre Parramatta, a show which dealt directly with the themes studied in the program.

The program culminated with a professional learning session for MSHS staff sharing with them what was learned from listening to student voice as part of the program and through a school-wide survey, and offering suggestions based on student input of what they would like their teachers to do when they witness racism occur at school.

- UNSW staff involved:

Katherine Thompson, Rose Amazan, Keiko Bostwick – School of Education

James Perez – ADA Student Experience

Roanna Gonsalves – School of Arts & Media

Andrew Brooks, Astrid Lorange – School of Art & Design

- Following the staff session, **87%** of staff reported they now have a better understanding of their students' experiences, **89%** said they learned something valuable from the PL, and **93%** reported feeling more confident to speak up if they witness incidents of racism in the future.

- Key MSHS staff involved (Relieving Principal, Head Teacher Wellbeing) said they hoped the program could run again in the future, either involving more students in the workshops or examining student voice related to other issues, such as gender and sexuality.



## Spotlight: AVID Careers and Aspirations Program

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At the request of the Head Teacher – Teaching & Learning, a sequence of UNSW guest speakers representing a range of disciplines and career paths were scheduled to run interactive workshops with Year 10 AVID students (*AVID* stands for 'Advancement Via Individual Determination', and aims to prepare low-SES students for university through targeted teaching and organisation strategies).

As part of a unit on 'Careers and Aspirations', students reflected on their own strengths, abilities and goals, and expanded their horizons based on hearing the stories of UNSW staff and HDR students. The speaker series is laid out below.

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Faculty	Presenter Title/Role	Presenter Name	Title of Presentation
Science	Visiting Fellow/UNSW Women in Maths and Science Champion	Kofoworola Oluwabunmi Gbayo	Career Planning
Science – Chemistry	PhD Candidates	Olivia Rusli and Abigail Marcus	Research life, My Love-Hate Relationship with Science and the Lessons You Could Learn from It All
ADA	Project Officer, Student Experience	James Perez	Tautua - Pathway to leadership is through service
UNSW Business School	Program Manager Indigenous Business Education	Bec Harcourt & UNSW First Nations Business Student Society Team	Navigating our world with purpose community building negotiation and entrepreneurship
UNSW Fitness and Aquatic Centre	Health and Lifestyle Manager	Paul Hamad	<b>Obsession to Profession:</b> Exploring Careers in Fitness
Medicine	Research Manager, Baum Lab  School of Biomedical Sciences	Mike Johnson	Laboratory Research and Solving Medical Problems
ADA	Senior Lecturer, School of Education	Rose Amazan	The Power of Education

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Speakers reported feeling fulfilled by the experience and wanting to engage in further outreach opportunities in the future. The teacher reported good behaviour and insightful questions from students during sessions.

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Image: UNSW staff Yazmine Jamshab and Samantha Chao with Matraville work experience students

Following the success of the 2022 Work Experience fortnight for Year 10 students, the Program Manager solicited UNSW contacts for placement offers and connected these work units with the Careers Advisor for the matching of students to the available opportunities. In 2023, about 20 students attended placements at UNSW or its industry partners, with all parties involved reflecting on the positive nature of the experience.

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### **Reflections and recommendations:**

*Incursions have presented some of the most engaging opportunities across 2023, offering intellectual stimulation and exposure to UNSW without the school facing the expense of hiring buses or relieving staff to organise an excursion.*

*The MY VOICE Matters program and AVID Careers and Aspirations Speaker Series show the positive impact of students being exposed to current issues, critical thinking, and the range of possibilities for their future lives. Expanding on these initiatives in the future holds a lot of potential.*

*Feedback about the Work Experience program indicated that this would be better suited to running earlier in the year when there is more activity at UNSW, and in some cases more attention needs to go to matching students to placements that suit their interests and preparing them for the behaviours expected in the workplace.*

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## Special Events and Material Resources

**MSHS Open Day** again featured the School of Education sponsoring a Gelato Cart for more than 50 prospective families. At the end of the year, Gelato was also sponsored for another morale-boosting event to reward students for their hard work across the year.

**The School of Education Annual Awards night**, was reinstated following several years' hiatus during Covid-19. Matrville was awarded a Partner School Award for Research Excellence. The citation written about the school read:

*Matrville Sports High School has played a major role in supporting SED research initiatives focussed on Indigenous Education. In partnership with the Eastern Suburbs Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, the Cultural Residents Project lead by Dr Rose Amazan and supported by Katherine Thompson has explored the impact of the appointment of First Nations Cultural Residents, the basis of which as informed proposals for a model of First Nations Cultural Residents in all Australian primary schools, to strengthen the teaching of First Nations perspectives for all students.*

*The school has also supported the Culturally Nourishing Schools Project, funded by the Paul Ramsay Foundation and lead by Associate Professor Kevin Lowe, a UNSW Scientia Indigenous Fellow. This project explores improving outcomes for First Nations students and communities based on whole-of-school reform. Schools engage in critical professional learning, work with local Aboriginal cultural mentors, and develop micro-treaties with their local communities to forge an education system that better meets the needs of Aboriginal children.*

*MSHS has also engaged Dr Karen Maras, Professor Terry Cumming, and Dr Ellen Lee from the School of Education to research, develop and implement, and evaluate a model for Mentoring Early Career Teachers, many of whom are recent UNSW graduates teaching across a range of KLAs. Currently the school is also supporting the research of two PhD candidates from UNSW Art & Design, in developing creative approaches to teaching students with dyslexia and autism, and in the past seven years the school has opened its doors to research projects led by UNSW academics Professor Andrew Martin, Professor Iva Strnadova, and others.*



Image: Deputy Head of School Tony Loughland with Relieving Principal Billy Lundon accepting the MSHS Research Excellence Award.

UNSW was again able to **sponsor the Principal's Awards for all year groups at MSHS Presentation Day**. The UNSW Faculty of Science also awarded a **cash prize to the top Year 12 achiever, Nate Lawson**.

A **donation of 30 computers** was facilitated by the ADA IT Business Partner and Technical Resource Centre. These computers, including 20 iMacs, have provided an upgrade to the computers across the school and particularly in the digital music recording lab.

Relieving Principal Billy Lundon nominated Program Manager Katherine Thompson for a **Principals Network Award**, for "Excellence in the role of Parent or Community Member" in recognition of the dedication she shows to the MEP and MSHS. The citation written about Katherine read:

*Katherine Thompson is the Program Manager for the Matraville Education Partnership with the University of New South Wales. She plays a pivotal role in establishing and nurturing valuable connections with UNSW. With a strategic vision and strong networking skills, she develops meaningful partnerships that benefit students, parents and staff at Matraville Sports High School.*

*Katherine actively collaborates with university representatives, organising campus visits, guest lectures, and workshops that expose students to higher education opportunities.*

*Katherine opens doors for students, paving the way for their successful transition to higher education and career paths.*

*Scholarships*

The GO Foundation offers scholarships to Indigenous students in years 8-12, and the Harding Miller Foundation to girls from Year 8 onwards, with special consideration for Matraville students.

Sachiko Jamyang, who was awarded **the E & FJ Cowper Scholarship** in 2022, enrolled in a Bachelor of Science at UNSW for 2023. Sachiko achieved a Distinction-level WAM across her first year and was happy at UNSW.

*In-School Academic Support and Mentoring*

UNSW students on placement provided a great deal of support to students both in class and afterschool throughout the year.

*Student Post-School Decisions*

Out of 32 Year 12 students in 2023, 6 went on to enrol at university or TAFE. Two of those students enrolled at UNSW.

*Student Feedback*

A feedback survey was created for distribution to students; however, a technical glitch with the MSHS school calendar meant that it was distributed only to graduating Year 12 students. Student and staff anecdotal feedback was positive on all initiatives.

16 Year 12 students completed the feedback survey, constituting about half of the total cohort. This was an interesting dataset to receive, because previously, annual surveys administered at the end of the year have missed the graduating Year 12 students who officially leave school in September.

Students were asked about which UNSW activities had been most important to their school experience. They mentioned excursions/incursions (25%), help applying to uni (25%) and help from UNSW student tutors (19%) most frequently.

A clear majority of Year 12 students found the UNSW Partnership beneficial to them. The numbers reporting they want to go to university as a result of working with UNSW students and staff are encouraging, as other students may have responded “neutral” or “disagree” because they already aspired to university – indicating that the numbers at the school with an aspiration toward further education is growing.

	<b>% Agree or Strongly Agree</b>
<b>I like having UNSW students and staff at my school.</b>	<b>69%</b>
<b>The programs offered by UNSW are an important part of my school experience.</b>	<b>69%</b>
<b>I feel more confident that I can succeed because of working with UNSW students or staff.</b>	<b>63%</b>
<b>Having UNSW students assisting in my classes helps me learn.</b>	<b>56%</b>
<b>Working with UNSW students/staff has made me want to go to university.</b>	<b>56%</b>

The MEP provided several examples to the ADA submission on their reporting against the Sustainable Development Goals, including in the areas of providing free access to educational resources for those not studying at university, undertaking educational outreach activities, and providing public access to natural heritage landscapes of cultural significance (via our Walks on Country programs).

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**Reflections and recommendations:**

*It is encouraging how many UNSW staff and work units have been excited to contribute to the Partnership this year, and many MSHS students were able to reap the benefits of this.*

*It is clear that for Year 12 students, a personal connection with UNSW staff and students, and targeted support with the uni application process, is hugely beneficial to their pursuit of further education.*

*Students respond very well to working with UNSW Student Ambassadors and members of the ADA Student Experience team, as well as other academics. More opportunities for these groups to interact with Matraville students, and especially to help with the uni application and enrolment process, could help attract more students to enrol at UNSW.*

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Image: Matraville Sports High School Students, Jacque Manning, 2022













## Student Academic Outcomes

### NAPLAN and HSC Results

NAPLAN was not held in 2020, and 2023 results reflect students who had two years of their schooling being disrupted by the pandemic. In addition, ACARA’s MySchool website offers the following caution: “Please note in 2023 NAPLAN testing moved from May to March and the NAPLAN scale was reset. This means you can’t compare NAPLAN achievement prior to 2023 to that from 2023 onwards.”

This means that 2023 data is of limited use in comparing to prior years, and specific growth or “value-add” data is unavailable.

However, broad trends are reported on by the Department of Education and show encouraging results: 100% of Aboriginal students achieved in the top three bands of NAPLAN for both literacy and numeracy, and there is a 15% increase in HSC achievement in the top three bands. Nearly all measures are trending upward over time, despite some single-year drops in individual areas. The below table is excerpted from the MSHS School Dashboard.

Student Performance	Current Value	Prior Period Comparison	Trend	Period	Last Update	Report
 Value Added (7-9)	Delivering				31 Dec 2023	<a href="#">Report</a>
 Aboriginal Students NAPLAN Top 3 Bands - Reading	100.00%	81.25%		Last 12 Year(s)	31 Dec 2023	<a href="#">Report</a>
 Aboriginal Students NAPLAN Top 3 Bands - Numeracy	100.00%	88.89%		Last 12 Year(s)	31 Dec 2023	<a href="#">Report</a>
 HSC Top 2 Bands	9.20%	-4.13%		Last 12 Year(s)	31 Dec 2023	<a href="#">Report</a>
 HSC Top 3 Bands	36.78%	15.67%		Last 12 Year(s)	31 Dec 2023	<a href="#">Report</a>
 HSC - No. and % of Y12 Students Yet to Meet HSC Min Std.	40 (76.9%)				3 Feb 2024	<a href="#">Report</a>
 Average VALID Score	82.92	3.21		Last 8 Year(s)	31 Dec 2023	<a href="#">Report</a>

### Tell Them From Me Survey

Each year since 2014, MSHS has conducted the Department of Education’s “Tell Them From Me” survey, which collects students’ impressions of how their school addresses both academic and wellbeing issues. Below is a chart showing Tell Them From Me data since 2014 – the year before our partnership began. Areas in which the school improved in 2023 are highlighted in green, whereas areas where the school declined are highlighted in pink. (Note that different students and different sample sizes complete the survey each year, so many factors could contribute to perceived improvement or decline). Items marked with an asterisk exceed NSW state norms.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Students with a positive sense of belonging	69%	70%	68%	60%	58%	54%	57%	58%	62%	61%
Students with positive intellectual engagement	52%	46%	46%	45%	44%	43%	46%	37%	39%	32%
Teachers use class time effectively (score out of 10)	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.4	6.6	6.4	6.3	6.4	6.4	5.9
Teachers have high expectations for student success	6.7	7.1	6.5	6.8	7.3	6.7	7.0	6.7	6.8	6.6
Students who plan to finish Year 12	80%	79%	76%	66%	71%	64%	75%	71%	71%	69%
Students who plan to pursue an apprenticeship or TAFE	56%	33%	48%	33%	48%	40%	41%	44%*	38%*	38%
Students who hope to attend university	52%	49%	51%	42%	45%	40%	51%	46%	39%	43%
Aboriginal students who "feel good about their culture at school"	n/a	91%	83%	75%	82%	67%	69%	75%	64%	78%
Aboriginal students who feel their teachers have a good understanding of their culture	n/a	82%	74%	69%	65%	53%	48%	52%	52%	62%
Students feel teachers are responsive to their needs								6.2	6.3*	5.9*

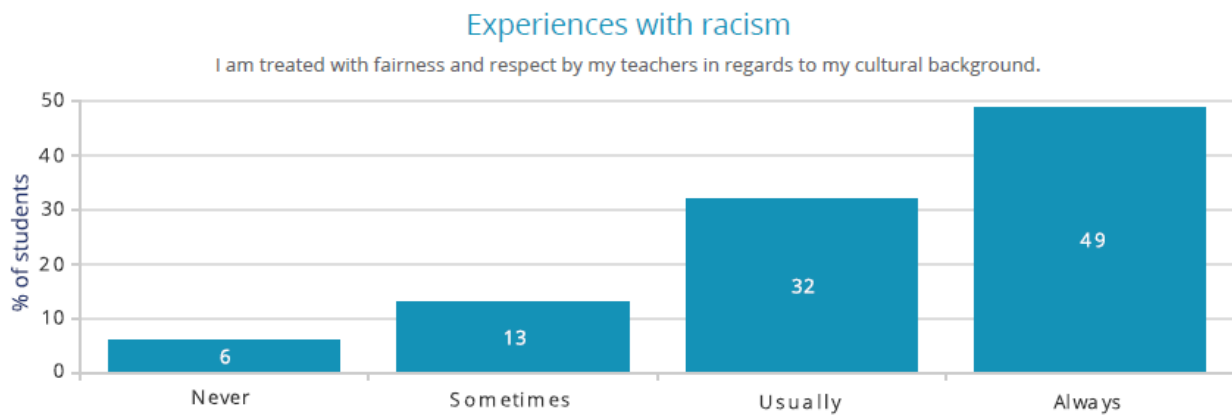
A few important metrics have improved since the previous year. Notably, the percentage of students who hope to attend university, and Aboriginal students who feel good about their culture at school, which were previously flagged as areas of concern, have risen substantially. This could be attributed to the Culturally Nourishing Schooling program implementation reaching a greater number of staff, and perhaps to some of the anti-racism efforts as part of the My Voice Matters program, although it is likely that it will take more than one year of activity, and with more students, to see demonstrable results from this.

Some of the questions about intellectual engagement and teacher practices have fallen since previous years. This may be attributable to staff and school leadership turnover at the school in 2023, alongside growing numbers of students with experiences at other schools to compare to. **These items give us an indication that working further on high expectations, teacher professional learning, early career teacher mentoring, and targeted work with high-potential/gifted students should be areas of future priority.**

Students' experiences with racism were also examined, in light of the work of the My Voice Matters program in 2023. This program worked intensively with about 35 student leaders, and included a professional learning session for all staff in October 2023. Given the timing and scope of the initiative, it is unrealistic to think it would show demonstrable results this year. However, the similarity of responses to questions about racism in 2022 and 2023 show a rationale with continuing anti-racism work with students and staff.

Experiences with racism from teachers remained fairly consistent over the past two years:

2022:

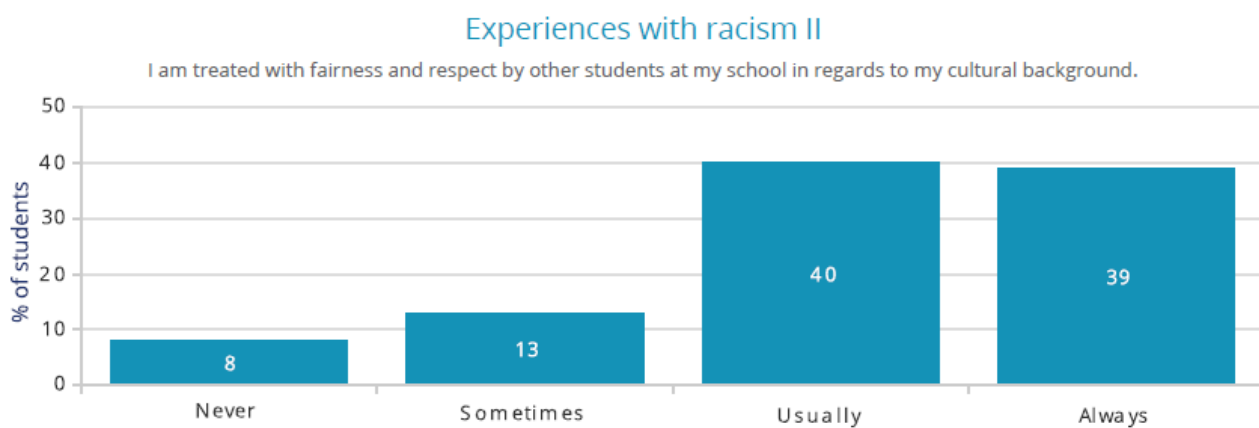


2023:

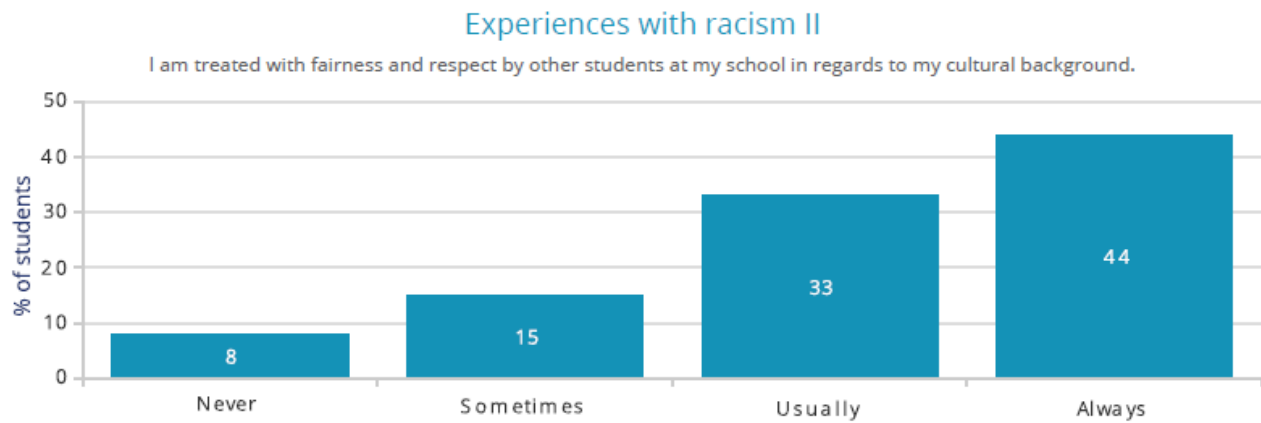


Experiences of racism from other students shifted slightly toward the negative across the two years.

2022:

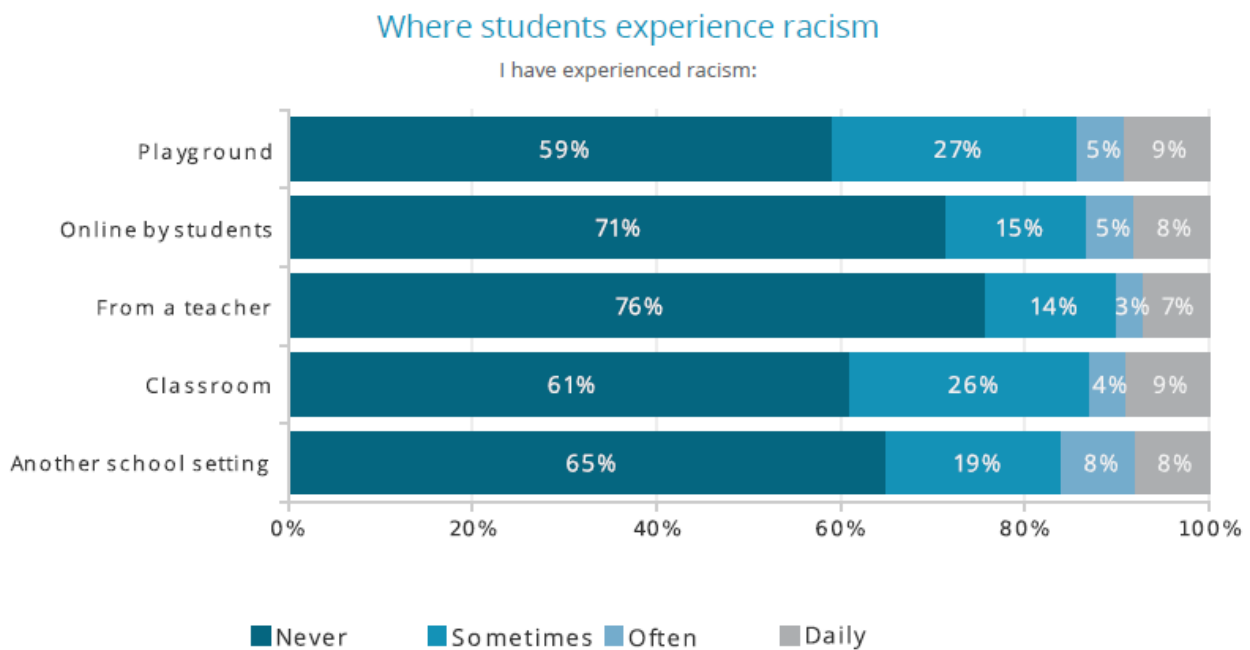


2023:



It is encouraging that fewer students reported experiencing daily racism in 2023:

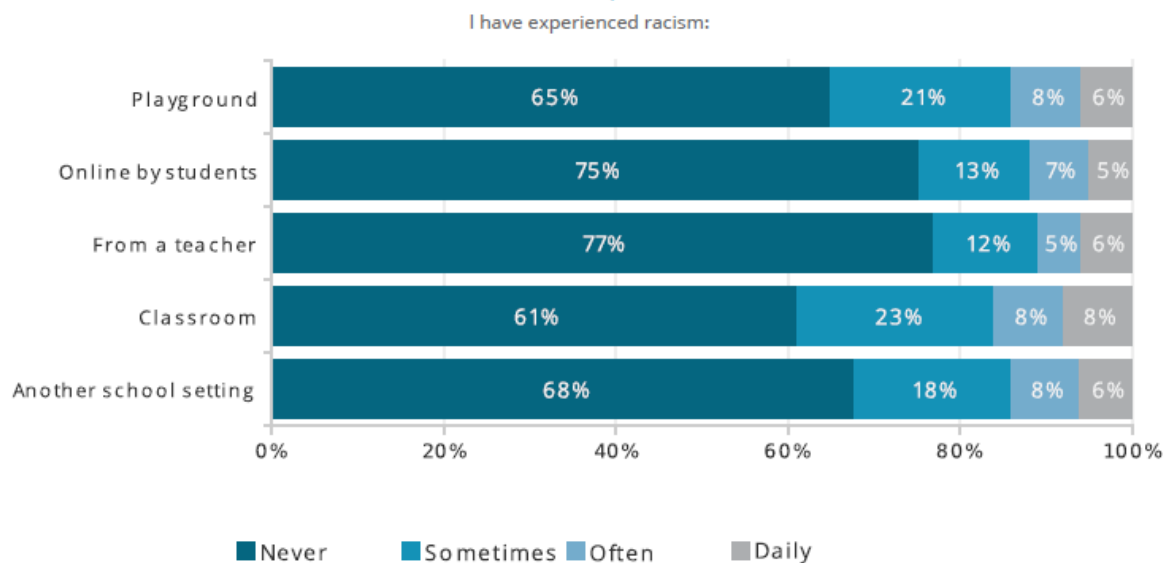
2022:





2023:

### Where students experience racism



Student feedback as part of the My Voice Matters program indicated that students felt that interpersonal racism between students was an issue the school needs to address more effectively. Students voiced that experiencing racism from teachers was rare. They did, however, wish that staff would intervene more often when witnessing incidences of racism between students.

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#### **Reflections and recommendations:**

*Further work on teacher professional learning in various domains, and student-facing anti-racism programming, is warranted.*

*We have further to go in inculcating in students a desire to attend university. Further outreach with both junior and senior years is key to affecting this, as well as working closely with Gateway and Nura Gili.*

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Image: Matraville Sports High School Students, Jacquie Manning, 2022

## Strategic Priority 2: Engage UNSW with the Matraville community and build capacity to raise low-SES and Indigenous student outcomes

### Key Partnerships

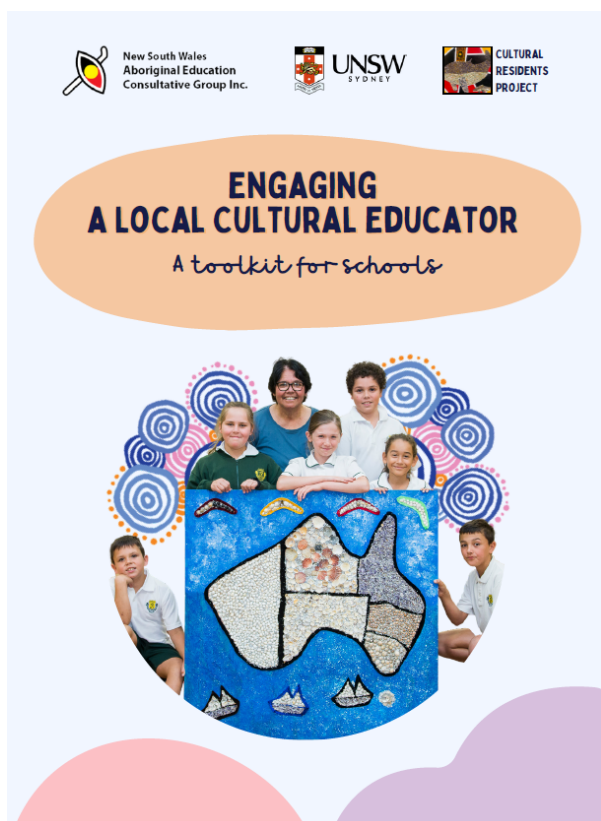
The MEP's most **significant partnership continues to be with the Eastern Suburbs Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG)**. Through enduring collaboration with the community we continue to identify and work together towards shared goals and initiate targeted teaching and research activities.

Interaction with the Little Bay Community of Schools has lessened in recent years, due initially to the pandemic, and subsequently to a shift in MSHS' engagement with the LBCOS. As the Talented Sports Program continues to expand and attract students from across Sydney, the emphasis on recruitment of local enrolments from the LBCOS has diminished. The school no longer relies on local enrolments to fuel its growth. Transition and collaboration programs continue to involve the local schools, but they are not as much of a focus for MEP activities as they once were.

### Aboriginal Community Engagement

Through the MEP, UNSW School of Education has built a strong relationship with the Eastern Suburbs Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, which has enabled mutually beneficial research and education activities to grow and be sustained. In 2023, these included follow-up from the Cultural Residents Project, the Culturally Nourishing Schools project (in its third year), and the Master of Teaching Indigenous Education Immersion program (in its eighth year). Working with Nura Gili, the School of Education also offers winter leadership Pre-Programs for prospective First Nations students, and promotes these programs to the local community.

#### *Cultural Residents Project*



The original funding from the Crown Resorts Foundation finished in 2022, and further philanthropic funding for the project was not secured. However, ten local schools responded to an EOI process initiated by their Director, agreeing to fund 1-2 days per week out of their own budgets to employ a Cultural Resident across multiple schools. Two Cultural Residents were recruited in 2023 who performed work across the last two terms at four different local primary schools. UNSW completed its Toolkit for Schools in November 2023, which is now available for free download to schools across Australia who may wish to engage a local Aboriginal Cultural Educator.



The Toolkit is available for free download at:  
<http://unsw.to/crtoolkit>

## *Culturally Nourishing Schools Project*

In 2020, **MSHS signed on to be one of eight high schools across NSW to participate in the Aboriginal Voices – Culturally Nourishing Schools (CNS) Project led by Dr Kevin Lowe.** This project follows eight case study schools as they attempt to implement whole-school reform that centres Aboriginal voice in the articulation of school policies, structures and strategies, and in teaching and learning.

The recommendations for activities undertaken by the schools are derived from systematic reviews conducted of all relevant studies related to Indigenous education in the last 20 years. The necessary elements of a Culturally Nourishing School are: learning from Country, cultural/language inclusion, epistemic mentoring (of teachers by Aboriginal community members), and teacher professional change (via Aboriginal-led professional learning).

During 2023, the CNS Project worked with its third group of teachers undertaking workshops, mentoring, and professional learning. They participated in two days of Learning from Country led by the local Aboriginal community, a series of eight Professional Conversations based around academic readings related to Aboriginal education, and a two-day curriculum workshop. Teachers also planned and undertook “teaching bursts” during which they could receive feedback from the team and Cultural Mentors. Participating staff also attended a 3-day Symposium held at UNSW involving teams from all the schools involved from across the state and Aboriginal staff members attended a Micro-treaty retreat held on Wiradjuri Country.



*Blak Caucus members, including MSHS staff members, on Wiradjuri Country with Aunty Diane McNaboe.*

## *Master of Teaching Aboriginal Education Immersion Program*

The Master of Teaching Aboriginal Education Immersion Program has become a key pillar of UNSW School of Education's commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and to preparing future teachers to work effectively with First Nations students and communities, as well as to include First Nations perspectives and knowledges in their teaching for the benefit of all students.

Following feedback from the AECG, we were able to incorporate more cultural programming across the three days. All students were able to participate in plenary sessions about Aboriginal histories and cultures, mental health and wellbeing, language and Aboriginal English, and working with Aboriginal communities. In addition they participated in smaller group Community Yarn sessions, Dharawal Language workshops provided by the Gujaga Foundation, Walks on Country in La Perouse, and cultural activities such as damper making, weaving and Indigenous Games.

Feedback from both students and community members involved was very positive.

### **Results at a glance:**

**112** students attended the three-day program

**28** Aboriginal community members were engaged to work on the program – these included lectures, presentations, tutorials, community yarns, cultural activities, and walks on Country

**2** non-Aboriginal community members contributed to joint presentations with Aboriginal colleagues

**6** UNSW staff were involved in the program delivery, with many more supporting behind the scenes with operational components.

**10** local organisations were represented:

*Department of Education Aboriginal Education and Wellbeing Team*

*Eastern Suburbs Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group*

*Giralang Spirit Art*

*Gujaga Foundation*

*IndigiGrow*

*Konanggo Consultancy*

*La Perouse Museum*

*Rolling With the Punches*

*Sydney Children's Hospital*

*UNSW Culturally Nourishing Schools Project*

**99 students** completed a feedback survey about the program.



*Master of Teaching Immersion Program  
damper making with Aunty Maxine Ryan and  
Sharon Simms, 2023*

**94% of students** reported that the Immersion program changed previous perceptions or understandings that they may have had about Aboriginal people and/or Aboriginal culture.

Those who responded “no” elaborated in their comments that they had prior knowledge or experience that meant their previous understandings were not necessarily changed, but that they still found the program very moving and worthwhile.

Students were asked about each session and whether they found it useful to their development as a teacher.

**All sessions had 95% or more answer “Yes”** to this question.

One student’s comment:

*Through this program, I have learned a lot more about historical injustices and ongoing challenges faced by Aboriginal people. Learning about their life experiences and how they were forced to assimilate into schools and societies and got punished for speaking their languages, I felt deeply about their struggles and resilience. I admired them for overcoming adversities in life and wish I can create a more supportive and inclusive learning environment for Aboriginal students.*

Finally, an unusual outcome of this year’s MTeach Immersion was an opportunity for ADA staff to experience Country-based learning with Aboriginal knowledge holders, as additional Walks on Country were scheduled as make-up activities for students and opened to ADA staff to attend. Approximately 10 staff members and their families were able to attend these events.

### *Nura Gili Programs*

In 2023, Nura Gili’s winter Youth Leadership Program were attended by 4 Matraville students. No Matraville students attended the summer Pre-Programs, as most First Nations students from this cohort pursued different post-school options. A Nura Gili representative attended MSHS Open Day to speak to prospective families. The MEP Program Manager continues to sit on the Nura Gili Future Students Outreach committee to contribute to the development of new Nura Gili outreach initiatives that target the local community.

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### **Reflections and recommendations:**

*Because of strong and long-standing relationships with the AECG, the MEP's activities around Aboriginal community engagement are among its most successful initiatives. In particular, the Cultural Residents Project, Culturally Nourishing Schools Project, and MTeach Immersion are flagship examples of success that many groups around Australia could turn to as they seek to improve their practices.*

*We can still improve Indigenous student preparation and aspiration to attend university (whether at UNSW or elsewhere) through better support across their high school years and a closer relationship with Nura Gili and the ADA Student Experience Team.*

*Recommendations include:*

- 1. Continue the M Teach Immersion Program, opening it up to current teachers seeking professional learning.*
  - 2. Work with Nura Gili Future Students team and School of Education advisors on pathways for Aboriginal community members working in local schools to attend UNSW as mature-age students (e.g. for an Aboriginal Education Officer to continue their education to pursue a teaching qualification while continuing to work).*
  - 3. Reinstate ability to purchase gift cards from UNSW funds. These have provided a valuable source of honoraria for Aboriginal Elders and community members who contribute time and expertise to our events and projects but who may not be able to or want to be paid by invoice or casual employment.*
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Image: Matraville Sports High School Students, Jacquie Manning, 2022

## MSHS Parent Community

For the fourth year in a row, MSHS conducted a Tell Them From Me Parent Survey. Results in most areas remain positive. State norms were unavailable for item-by-item comparison in this year's report, but an aggregate data point showed where MSHS fell in relation to other schools.

Interestingly, none of the respondents identified as being on the P&C or having any involvement in school committees or volunteering. Despite a lack of formal involvement, **the school performed well around being inclusive and parents feeling welcome:**

	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		Comparison To State
	MSHS	State	MSHS	State	MSHS	State	MSHS	State	MSHS		
<b>Parents feel welcome</b>	8.3	7.4	7.1	7.4	7.4	7.4	7.7	7.4	7.3	Average	
<b>Inclusive school</b>	7.4	6.7	6.7	6.7	7.1	6.7	7.3	6.7	6.3	Below average	
<b>Safety at school</b>	7.9	7.4	6.6	7.4	7.6	7.4	7.3	7.4	7.1	Average	
<b>School supports positive behaviour</b>	8.1	7.7	6.7	7.7	7.4	7.7	7.6	7.7	7.4	Average	
<b>School supports learning</b>	8.0	7.3	6.5	7.3	7.2	7.3	8.0	7.3	6.8	Average	
<b>Parents support learning at home</b>	6.7	6.3	6.0	6.3	6.6	6.3	7.0	6.3	7.3	Above average	
<b>Parents are informed</b>	8.3	6.6	7.2	6.6	7.1	6.6	7.0	6.6	5.8	Below average	

While most areas declined, which could be due to low response numbers causing year-to-year variability, parent support for learning at home grew substantially from the previous year. This could be due to the changing demographics of the school and more families choosing the school purposefully for the Talented Sports Program, ILC, Aboriginal Centre of Excellence, and other factors. Comparison to state norms was on par in most areas, although the school could work better on communication with parents and fostering an atmosphere of inclusivity.

Other items of interest from this survey are that

- 85% of parents report that their child is at their first choice of public school, up from 83% in the previous year
- 62% of parents would recommend the school to others, down from 93% in the previous year
- 52% of parents expect their child to go to university, down from 86% the previous year
- 81% of parents expect their child to finish Year 12, down from 100% the previous year

These responses seem to indicate a lesser degree of enthusiasm for the school among parents, in comparison to the previous year. Notably, numbers from 2022 were abnormally high in some areas and this year's numbers are not out of character with what has typically been seen in previous years documented. While some of this may just be due to which parents responded to the survey, the school should reflect on their strategies for parent communication and inclusivity. No P&C or similar committee has existed in several years, and re-establishing one could be a way to address some of these issues expressed by parents.

## MEP Parent Engagement

In 2023, MEP staff engaged with parents through MSHS Open Day, Presentation Day and Graduation. One Parent Event was held in Term 2, 2023 – a Parent Seminar from Professor Terry Cumming, entitled “Surviving Your Child’s Adolescence” – this was attended by 12 MSHS parents. ILC parents were surveyed to see if they would want to partake in a similar event aimed at parents of students with special needs, but due to a low response rate, we did not initiate such an event.



1 Professor Terry Cumming presenting to MSHS parents

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### **Reflections and recommendations:**

*Better communication with parents about MEP events and offerings, and opportunities for their children through UNSW would be appreciated by parents. Learning from parents what sort of outreach events they would benefit from should be a priority for 2024.*

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## Strategic Priority 3: Engage UNSW with the Matraville teaching community and build capacity to raise low-SES and Indigenous student outcomes

### Initial Teacher Education

**48 UNSW undergraduate education students** completed a 15-day placement in 2020 for their EDST2002: Professional Engagement (this is the first official placement in a school as part of their Bachelor of Education).

**Seven students** completed longer-term placements for Professional Experience 1 and 2; some of these have ended up receiving offers of employment at Matraville.

Oversight of these cohorts of UNSW students was largely conducted by Howard Cheng and Carolyn Davey, the MEP School-based Coordinators. Students contributed to special programs such as the HSC All My Own Work preparation program (creating engaging sessions for Year 10 students about academic honesty and plagiarism) and the “Hello HSC” holiday program tutoring sessions.

#### *Professional Engagement Student Feedback*

In previous years, we have reported on Professional Engagement student feedback survey outcomes. These have been consistently strong – in the “HD” levels – since 2018. For 2023, a decision was made not to survey these students as outcomes had not significantly shifted for some years.

Survey items from 2016-2022 are retained below for reference.

Survey item	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>I had a positive experience overall in my Matraville placement.</b>	75%	87%	100%	73%	86%	86%	100%
<b>The teaching staff at the school were helpful and made me feel welcome.</b>	80%	88%	100%	80%	96%	86%	92%
<b>This placement helped me confirm whether teaching is the right career choice for me.</b>	80%	79%	100%	73%	92%	86%	100%
<b>This placement helped prepare me to teach students from diverse backgrounds.</b>	75%	79%	100%	87%	88%	71%	83%
<b>This placement taught me a lot about behaviour management in the classroom.</b>	70%	71%	100%	100%	81%	86%	92%
<b>This placement taught me about the role of student relationships and wellbeing in schooling.</b>	80%	79%	95%	73%	96%	86%	100%
<b>I learned a lot about teaching from this placement.</b>	65%	79%	95%	73%	96%	86%	92%
<b>This placement helped prepare me to teach students with a range of abilities.</b>	75%	79%	90%	60%	88%	100%	100%
<b>The afterschool programs were a valuable part of my experience.</b>	65%	58%	75%	47%	48%	71%	50%

## HDR Students

Two HDR students from UNSW Art & Design reached out to the Program Manager in 2023 with inquiries about using MSHS as a site for their PhD research. One of them, Wei Wang, is researching fonts that may reduce cognitive load for students with dyslexia, and another, Michael Blake, is researching creative robotics approaches to preventing emotional escalation in students with autism. The school signed letters of support for both these students to pursue their projects at Matrville and the projects are currently in the phase of applying for Ethics and SERAP clearance before continuing.

## Other UNSW Students

Two cohorts of UNSW [Professional Development Program \(PDP\)](#) students attended MSHS as an internship site in 2023. This program provides international students with skills and experience to enhance their employability. Student groups worked closely with Carolyn Davey, MSHS librarian and site-based coordinator, on improvement projects for the school library, including developing a digitised system for maintaining school archives, and making recommendations for redesign of the physical library space. These students came from many faculties and academic backgrounds and contributed significantly to MSHS.

ADA Gateway Student Ambassadors assisted Year 12 students in applying for UAC, attending for two half-day sessions.

## MSHS Teacher Experience and Capacity Building

### *Tell Them From Me Survey*

MSHS teachers, like parents and students, completed a Department of Education Tell Them From Me survey. While many items measured by this survey do not relate directly to the MEP, some findings are interesting. Staff morale fell significantly in 2023. This may have related to the uncertainty of who would be in leadership positions within the school due to the substantive principal taking leave:

Survey item	2020 % agreement	2021 % agreement	2022 % agreement	2023 % agreement
<b>Morale amongst staff at my school is good.</b>	20%	63%	68%	21%
<b>School leaders in my school are leading improvement and change</b>	56%	71%	72%	52%
<b>School leaders clearly communicate their strategic vision and values for our school.</b>	48%	77%	61%	50%

Of interest due to the school’s participation in initiatives such as the Culturally Nourishing Schooling Project are teachers’ responses about their confidence with Aboriginal education. However, the question is oddly worded, seeming to imply that teachers should report on teachers in their school generally, rather than their personal answer to this question. This data does provide an interesting contrast with the student report mentioned above, in which **only 62% of Aboriginal students surveyed believe their teachers have a good understanding of their culture (still this is a substantial improvement since the previous year).**

Survey item	2020 % agreement	2021 % agreement	2022 % agreement	2023 % agreement
Teachers in my school are confident in their capacity to meet the needs of Aboriginal students	Question not asked	83%	75%	83%
Teachers in my school have the knowledge required to engage with students on Aboriginal cultures and histories.	Question not asked	86%	83%	83%



Image: Matraville Sports High School Teachers, Jacquie Manning, 2022

## Participation in Professional Learning

Professional Learning offerings from UNSW are not at their pre-pandemic levels, and many of the Matraville staff most likely to take up these opportunities have already completed the Mini-COGE, mentoring, and Autism courses frequently offered.

However, much more Professional Learning was offered than in 2022, including the Early Career Teacher Mentoring and the Culturally Nourishing Schooling Project running again with new cohorts of teachers. In addition, UNSW contributed to an Aboriginal Education Symposium on the April Staff Development Day, which was attended by 180 teachers from eight local area schools, and the My Voice Matters Program culminated in a professional learning session for staff about anti-racism education.

This and other events offered a reciprocal learning activity for UNSW staff to benefit from PL run or engaged by MSHS on areas including Aboriginal Education and Trauma-Informed Practice.

Free professional learning through UNSW undertaken by staff in 2023:

Number of Staff	Course	Topic
8	Culturally Nourishing Schools conversations and workshops	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education
6	Early Career Teacher Mentoring	Various
180	Aboriginal Education Symposium	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education
1	UNSW Art & Design Makerspaces and Motion Capture studio tour	Educational technology
1	Ignite the Spark conference	High potential and gifted education
50	Findings from the My Voice Matters Program	Anti-racism and culturally responsive education

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### **Reflections and recommendations:**

*Teachers accessing professional learning opportunities saw a marked increase, attributable to MSHS' growth within the Culturally Nourishing Schools project and special initiatives such as the My Voice Matters Program. The school and MEP would be wise to not let the momentum falter on staff engagement in Aboriginal and anti-racism education, through continuing ongoing and strategic work in these areas.*

*Staff morale and relationship to leadership at the school is an internal issue to be addressed; it is likely 2022 was an aberration in this regard but it is an area worth watching.*

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## Publicity

In mid-2023, the MEP website was updated to include current information. This is more of an achievement than it may sound like, given difficulties with internal processes such as requesting web updates.

<https://www.unsw.edu.au/arts-design-architecture/our-schools/education/engage-with-us/matraville-education-partnership>

In 2023 the following MEP related activities received positive publicity and the community impact of the partnership was spotlighted. *Links to selected media and internal newsletters:*

9.8.23	UNSW Newsroom	Giving Aboriginal students and communities a voice in schools	<a href="https://newsroom.unsw.edu.au/news/social-affairs/giving-aboriginal-students-and-communities-voice-schools">https://newsroom.unsw.edu.au/news/social-affairs/giving-aboriginal-students-and-communities-voice-schools</a>
1.8.23	Faculty of Arts, Design and Architecture website	ADA Creating Impact Stories – Cultural Residents and Culturally Nourishing Schooling Projects	<a href="https://viewer.joomag.com/creating-impact-unsw-arts-design-architecture-102022-918918787-ada-creating-impact-stories-a5-booklet-v12/0954156001686289993?short&amp;mc_cid=5fef0a2ba5&amp;mc_eid=f8744d033c">https://viewer.joomag.com/creating-impact-unsw-arts-design-architecture-102022-918918787-ada-creating-impact-stories-a5-booklet-v12/0954156001686289993?short&amp;mc_cid=5fef0a2ba5&amp;mc_eid=f8744d033c</a>
7.9.23	School of Education eNews	“Matraville Updates”	

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### **Reflections and recommendations:**

*Due to a large amount of effort being put into the actual programs run, less time was available to put into scoping publicity and promotion efforts. More effort must be made to publicise the positive work of the MEP in order to continue to improve greater community perception. Collaborating with school, faculty and divisional staff may help facilitate this as the Program Manager’s time is limited.*

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## Summary of Strengths and Challenges

This report has highlighted many notable strengths of the Partnership across another challenging year, including actions that were flagged for future focus last year:

- Follow-up with recent MSHS Aboriginal graduates about their school experiences – the “Deadly Futures” podcast program
- Revive parent programs and offerings
- Help MSHS teachers become aware of further study options at UNSW
- Providing meaningful learning experiences for UNSW students; preparing them to be effective teachers of diverse students and professional participants in many workplaces
- Collaboration and community engagement which support key research and teaching initiatives, particularly with regard to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education initiatives
- Enrichment opportunities for MSHS students held at UNSW and with industry partners, including Careers and Aspirations speakers, Work Experience, campus tours, and visits to uni lectures and tutorials.

Resourcing for the MEP is the principal challenge faced. The Program Manager’s role was made continuing in early 2022 at a 0.4FTE entitlement, which is a positive step forward. Still, this has proven to be just enough time to cover existing activities, and with substantial help from the MSHS site-based coordinators. The MEP Director’s Role, as of 2023, does not receive a workload allocation, making it difficult for the Director to juggle this role alongside other academic responsibilities.

Some new initiatives were able to be implemented, most notably the My Voice Matters Program. Other initiatives, such as creation of a quarterly newsletter, reinstatement of programming for parents, and outreach from faculties beyond ADA have not been able to be actioned.

In the last three reports we noted that while **many aspects of the MEP are flourishing, particularly in the areas of pre-service teacher experience, research, and community engagement, the actual translation into access to uni for low-SES and Indigenous students is a major area to be strengthened. Further integration with Gateway and Nura Gili could help with this.**

## Ideas for future focus

- Establish procedures for other ADA and Divisional staff (e.g. Nura Gili) to work from the Matraville Annexe to expand and deepen relationships between school and other UNSW staff.
- In-depth follow-up with recent MSHS graduates from the last 4 years – students who experienced MEP activities while at high school – to understand reasons for their post-school decisions – why they did or did not attend uni (and UNSW in particular), what factors enabled or constrained their ability to either attend uni or remain there if admitted.
- Parent workshops/offerings to help support their children’s admission to or success at uni
- Mature-age student clinic/outreach: one-on-one support for local community members – primarily parents and non-teaching staff in local schools such as AEOs – about their options for further study
- In-depth literacy support for MSHS students who arrive from primary school with significant literacy difficulties.
- Revive quarterly newsletter for parents and wider community subscribers.
- Involve ADA academics in outreach activities and projects via a “Matraville Future Students Hub”, targeting gifted and talented aspirational students from MSHS.
- Equity cohort interventions involving UNSW Student Ambassadors, e.g. Pasifika Students mentoring program.

- More regular contact with MSHS students designed to build connection to UNSW – ADA Indigenous uni taster days, “why should I go to uni?” lunches with MEP manager and current students, visits to assemblies and Year Meetings to make students aware of upcoming opportunities and initiatives planned.
- Expansion of the Future Students Hub initiative to include other faculties beyond ADA

With a foundation of genuine relationships, goodwill and community engagement, a great deal is possible. The MEP enables UNSW to achieve its overarching strategy and to act on its values of excellence, respect, building collaboration, embracing diversity, and driving innovation. The more UNSW people and work units who get involved, the stronger the Partnership with our local community becomes.



Image: Matraville Sports High School students and family members, Jacquie Manning, 2022