Annual Report 2021

Matraville Education Partnership

Report prepared by Katherine Thompson, Program Manager, UNSW Matraville Education Partnership April 2022

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 six 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 is also well placed to **contribute 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 will be an essential foundation for the 2051 strategy to begin its work.

Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic continued throughout 2021 meaning that many of the usual activities of the MEP were not able to be undertaken. However, **our community showed its resilience and ingenuity** in inspiring ways, taking on learnings from the previous year to improve practices under the circumstances, including educational delivery. Some planned excursions became virtual incursions; meetings went virtual and made connecting with people in other states and countries much easier and more commonplace. The school community hosted many UNSW students on virtual and hybrid placements, devising ways they could help with online learning and welcoming them back into class when that was once again possible. Despite the flagship Master of Teaching Aboriginal Education Immersion Program needing to move online at the very last minute, it managed to go ahead and received a **UNSW Vice-Chancellor's Teaching Award for Programs that Enhance Learning (p. 23).**

Other 2021 highlights include:

- Increased value-add in academic results for Years 7-9 and 9-12 (pp. 11, 17)
- Marked increases in MSHS Aboriginal students reporting that they feel good about their culture at school and their teachers have a good understanding of their culture, perhaps attributable to the school's participation in the Culturally Nourishing Schools Project (p. 18)
- The Cultural Residents Project highlighted as a proof-of-concept for the nationwide Know Your Country Campaign (p. 20)
- Marked increases in staff morale and sense of the school as a site for innovative practice (p. 29)
- Marked increases in staff reporting that working with UNSW students has helped them feel more energised/engaged with the teaching profession (p. 30)

In 2020, the partnership's strategic priorities were revised and distilled into three goals: **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 2021 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 2021, one Advisory Committee meeting was held on 27 April.

Full committee membership is listed below:

List of Members

Professor Claire Annesley *(Chair)*	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 Ian Jacobs	President and Vice-Chancellor	UNSW Sydney
Dr Kevin Lowe	Scientia Indigenous Fellow	UNSW Sydney
Dr Karen Maras	Director	UNSW Matraville Education Partnership
Calita Murray	Regional Representative	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		
Melinda Harvey (Secretariat)	Executive Officer, Arts and Social Sciences	UNSW Sydney
Shahina Mohamed	Operations Director, Vice-Chancellor Office	UNSW Sydney
Marie Caccamo	External Relations Business Partner, Arts, Design & Architecture	UNSW Sydney
Phebe Chan	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 2021 the partnership was only able to have limited engagement with MSHS students due to ongoing Covid-19 risks, but mitigation strategies for this are in place for 2022.

Key Components

After School Programs

Homework Centre & Music Ensemble

MSHS teachers and UNSW students usually staff the afterschool Homework Centre, held in the MSHS School Library three afternoons per week. MSHS and LBCOS 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. In normal years, the Homework Centre welcomes students in Year 3 and above from the LBCOS to encourage primary students to begin to familiar with MSHS.

A snapshot

The Homework Centre had about 10-15 students attend each day in March-June 2021, until Covid disrupted the rest of the year.

The Homework Centre was attended by a diverse range of MSHS students in 2021, including students in the Inclusive Learning Centre, reflecting the school community.

In 2021, restrictions on student placements and visitors or volunteers in the school meant that these programs were only intermittently available, and did not always have UNSW students available as tutors. However, during the Term 1-2 period when Covid cases were low and student placements were not scheduled, UNSW School of Education staff signed up for a roster of "hot-desking" from Matraville and volunteering in the Homework Centre afterschool.

UNSW student comments:

It allowed me to talk to students individually outside of the classroom and out of their friendship groups. It was helpful as I could have conversations with them about the classwork and the classroom.

I found that homework centre was very valuable in utilising what I have learnt as an observer during my placement for you are now their teacher and that through observing the way that the teacher taught them during the day you can utilise the same techniques that the teacher used to start building a rapport with them.

Holiday Programs

The Covid-19 situation made it impossible to run any holiday programs, and even the GERRIC Student Programs, which are available to Matraville students at a reduced rate, were not able to go ahead.

However, several online holiday offerings did occur 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. Three MSHS students completed the program, though none of those ultimately enrolled at UNSW.

Nura Gili Pre-Programs were offered again in an online mode in December 2021. No MSHS students attended, although several other local students connected with the La Perouse community did attend, and the student who enrolled in the Social Work degree in the previous year has remained enrolled and is having great success at UNSW.

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 2021 this initiative was again offered virtually, and Year 10 Matraville students met online with KWM and UNSW Legal Office volunteers. They missed attending the offices in the city for the mock trial component but we hope that this will be an option in 2022.

UNSW Gateway's in-person assistance with UAC applications, Sydney Story Factory incursions, Work Experience placements, and UNSW campus visits were not able to take place in 2021 due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Special Events and Material Resources

Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, most special events were not able to take place in 2021 – even Graduation and Presentation Day were not open to the public and took place in limited fashion on Zoom. The Program Manager attended the Zoom Open Night for prospective parents in March 2021.

The School of Education Annual Awards night, always a highlight of the year featuring Matraville performers and presenters, did not take place.

In March 2021, the School of Mathematics and Statistics **donated 10 calculators** to the MSHS maths department.

Toward the end of the year, **a donation of 20 computers** was facilitated by the ADA Technical Resource Centre. These computers have provided a full technology upgrade for the MSHS Library

The School of Education sponsored the Principal's Awards at the MSHS Presentation Day – a $250 award for each recipient in years 7-12.

We hope that more special events and material support will be able to resume in 2022.

Scholarships

One bright spot among the many offerings that had to be placed on hold were the ongoing scholarship opportunities that the MEP has helped bring to MSHS.

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.

Two scholarships for study at UNSW have been established and are currently awarded to MSHS alumni studying at UNSW.

In-School Academic Support and Mentoring

Formal programs in literacy and maths mentoring were not undertaken in 2020 due to restrictions. Placements that began in June were disrupted by the Covid lockdown and resumed later in the year, and other students' placements went ahead as online or hybrid experiences in the latter half of the year.

MSHS students were not surveyed in 2021 due to the extreme impact of virtual schooling. UNSW students' feedback about these placements is discussed on pages 26-27.

Student Post-School Decisions

A small number of Year 12 students in 2021 went on to enrol at university or TAFE. Unfortunately, no students enrolled at UNSW. Year 12 students from the 2021 cohort accepted offers at other universities – particularly the University of Sydney, where former MSHS Deputy Principal Jane Stanley is now the Director of Indigenous Student Programs. This speaks to the primacy of building relationships in students' decision-making process around choosing a university. Anecdotally, some students whose secondary schooling has been disrupted by Covid-19 are less inclined to consider further education than they might have been previously – they are turned off by the prospect of indefinite online learning, and the loss of the social component so integral to the university experience in a pre-pandemic world. The uncertainty of the economy, and economic impacts felt by their families, drives some students to want to enter the workforce as soon as possible rather than delay this through further study. These trends are borne out by research across the sector.[1]

Reflections and recommendations:

Ideally, in future, some sort of holiday offering during every school holiday period would be welcomed. It could look something like this:

Summer: Nura Gili Pre-Programs; GERRIC Student Programs; Year 10 Summer Gateway

Autumn: MSHS-based Creative Arts, NAPLAN or uni readiness program

Winter: Nura Gili Winter School, GERRIC Student Programs, Year 12 Winter Gateway

Spring: MSHS SPIN program; Year 11 Spring Gateway

Regarding university attendance, better resourcing the MEP Manager role, allowing deeper and more prolonged contact with MSHS students, could improve students' impressions of UNSW's safety and accessibility.

[1] https://www.insidehighered.com/admissions/article/2020/12/07/more-third-prospective-college-students-are-reconsidering-higher

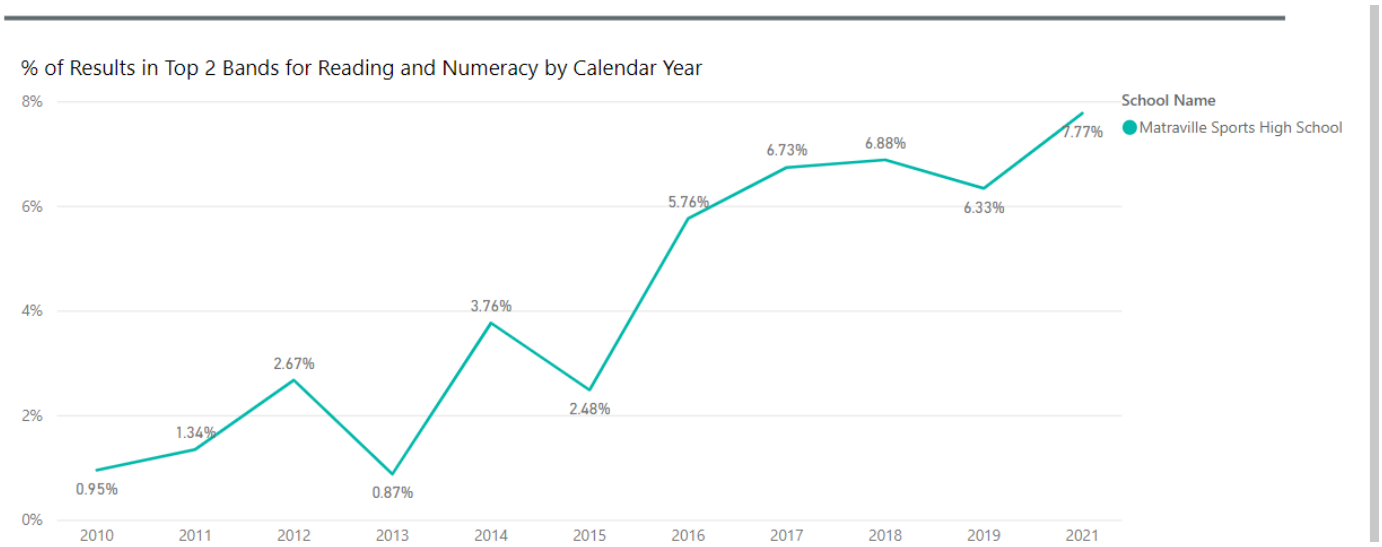
Student Academic Outcomes

NAPLAN Results

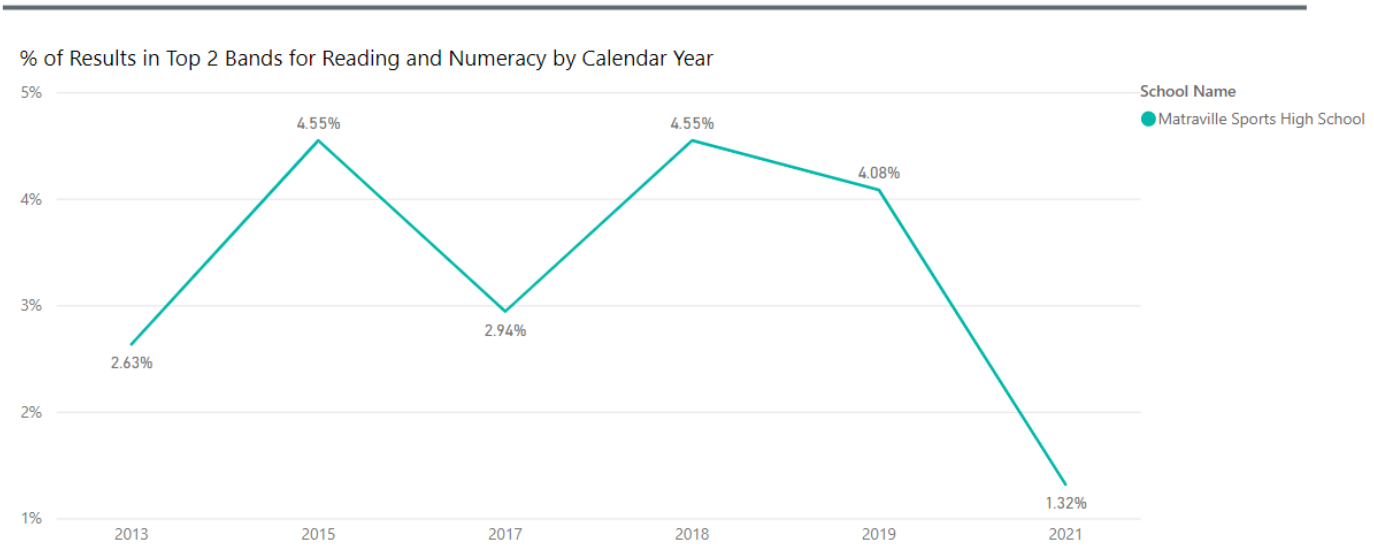
NAPLAN was not held in 2020, and 2021 results reflect students who are over a year into their schooling being disrupted by the pandemic, so these results should be read in that context, recognising there is great variation from one cohort to the next, and they may be of limited use for generalising about the school's progress.

Premier's Priority – Reading and Numeracy Results in Top 2 Bands

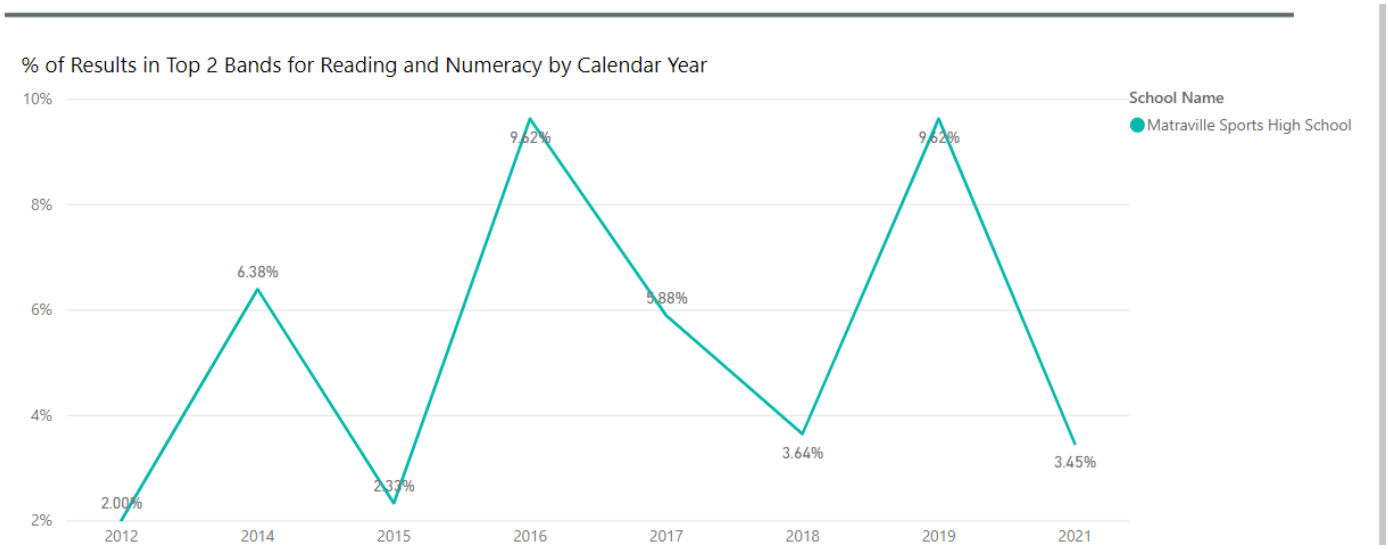
All Students:



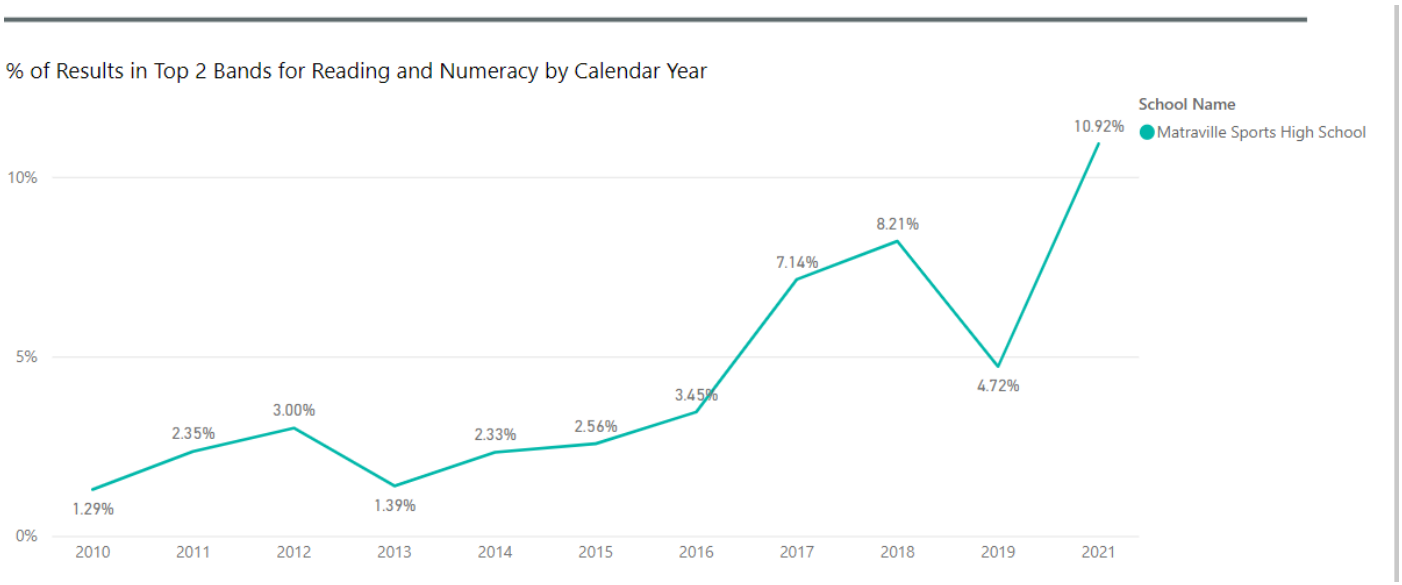
Aboriginal Students:



Female students:



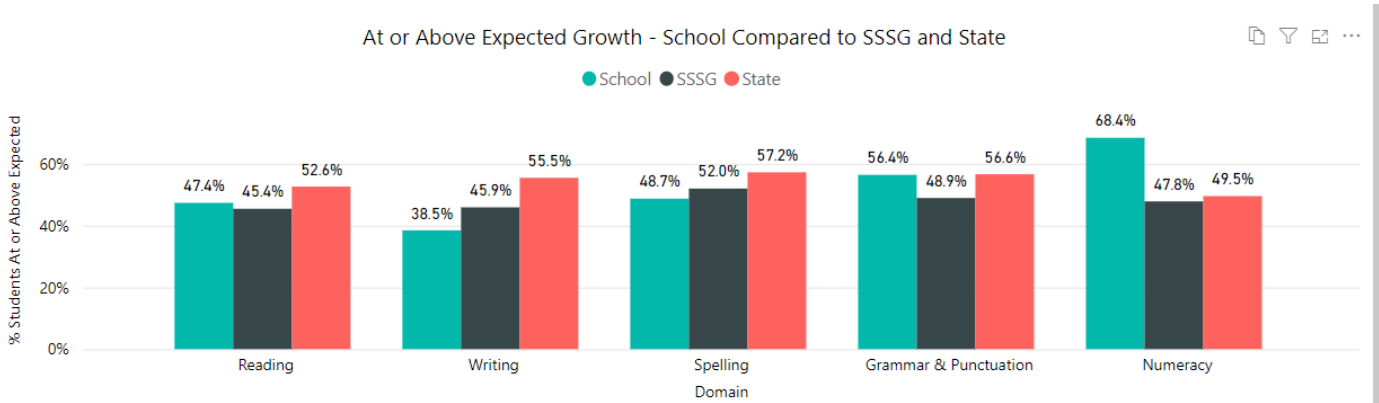
Male students:



The disparity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, and male and female students, could be a variation within the particular cohort, but may also speak to the disproportionate impact of education disruption due to the pandemic on students who were already vulnerable within the education system.

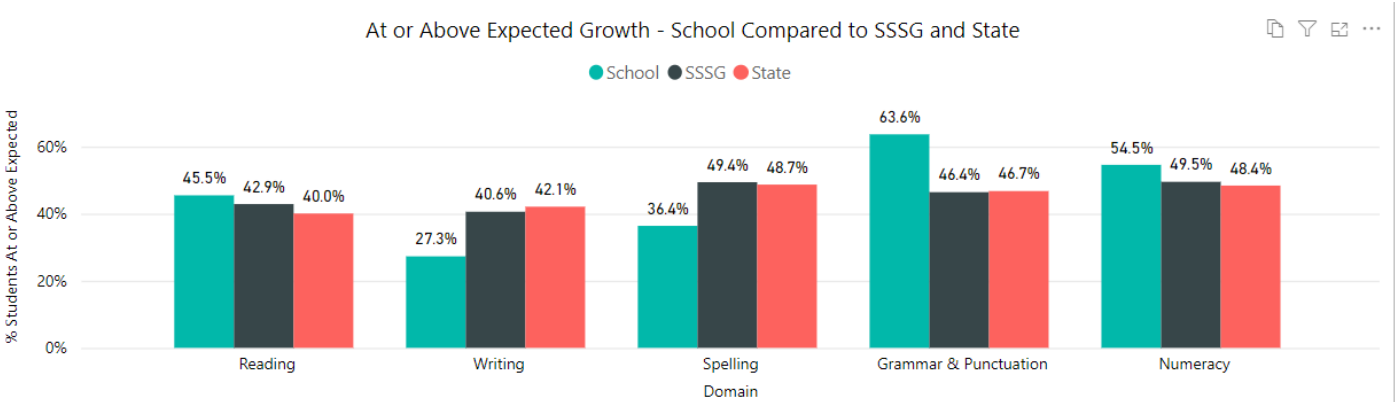
Growth and Value-Add

All students:



There is large uncertainty around the ability estimates for **extremely high performing students**. Students with **extremely** high results in the base year may be reported as having negative growth. Growth scores for these students are less meaningful and should be interpreted with extreme caution. A key benefit of transitioning to NAPLAN Online is that the growth scores for these students will be much more precise and accurate than

Aboriginal students:



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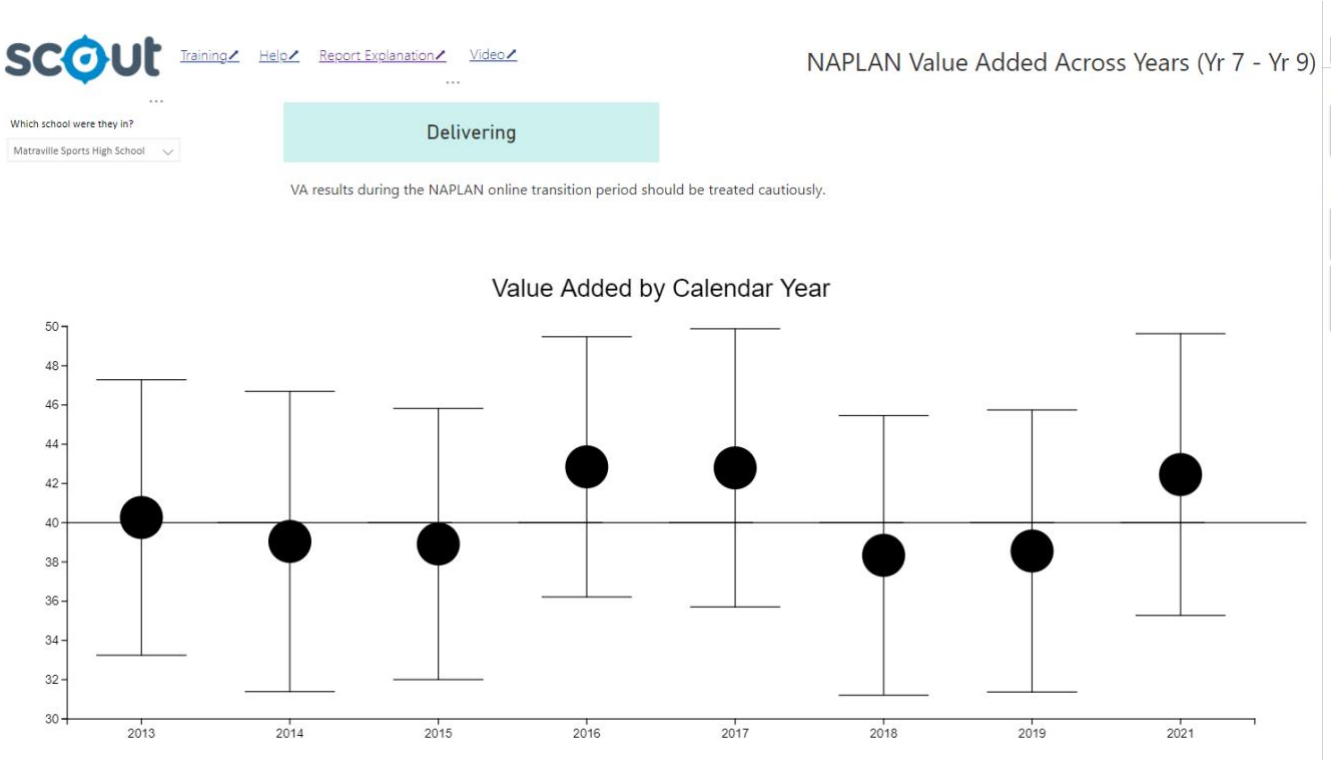
This measure is promising, showing that Year 9 students are achieving growth levels that exceed state averages (both for similar and all schools) in three out of five domains: reading, grammar & punctuation, and numeracy. This is true both for Aboriginal students and for the entire cohort.

The school also shows a value-add at above state averages for student results between Years 7-9:

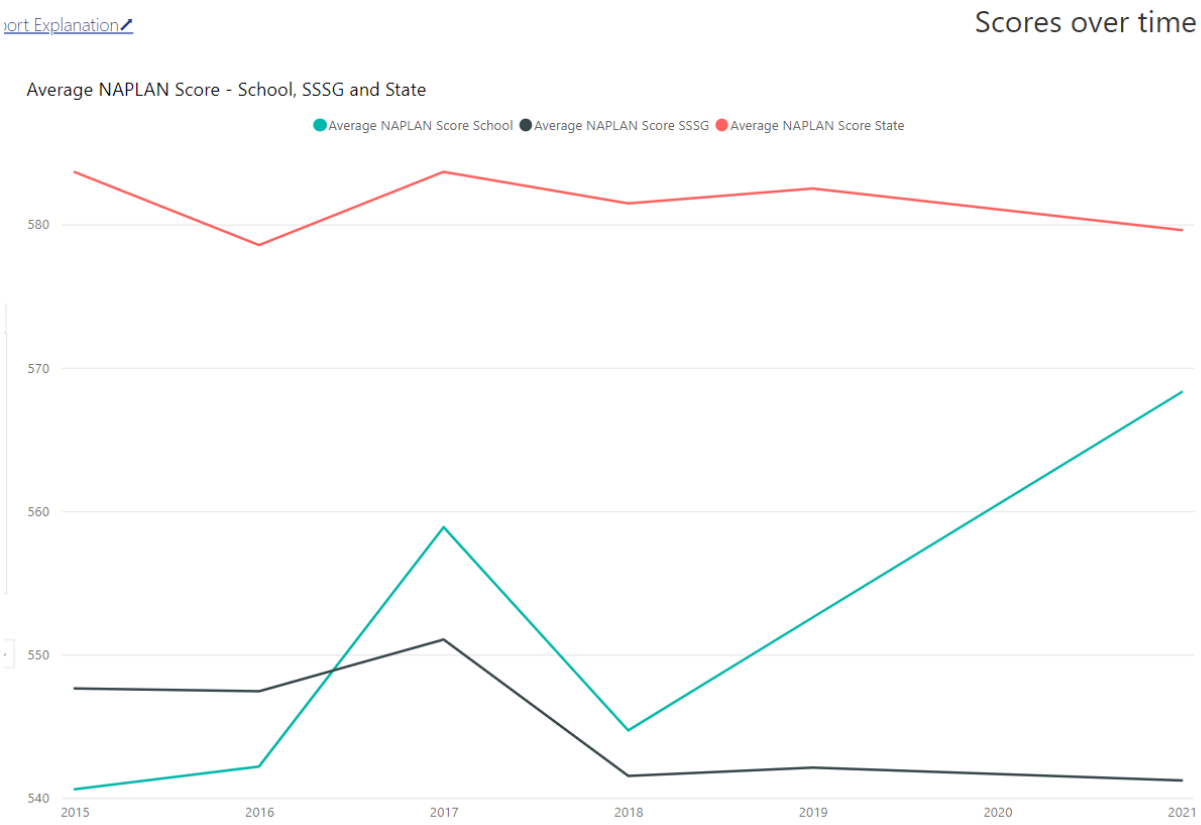


Scores over time

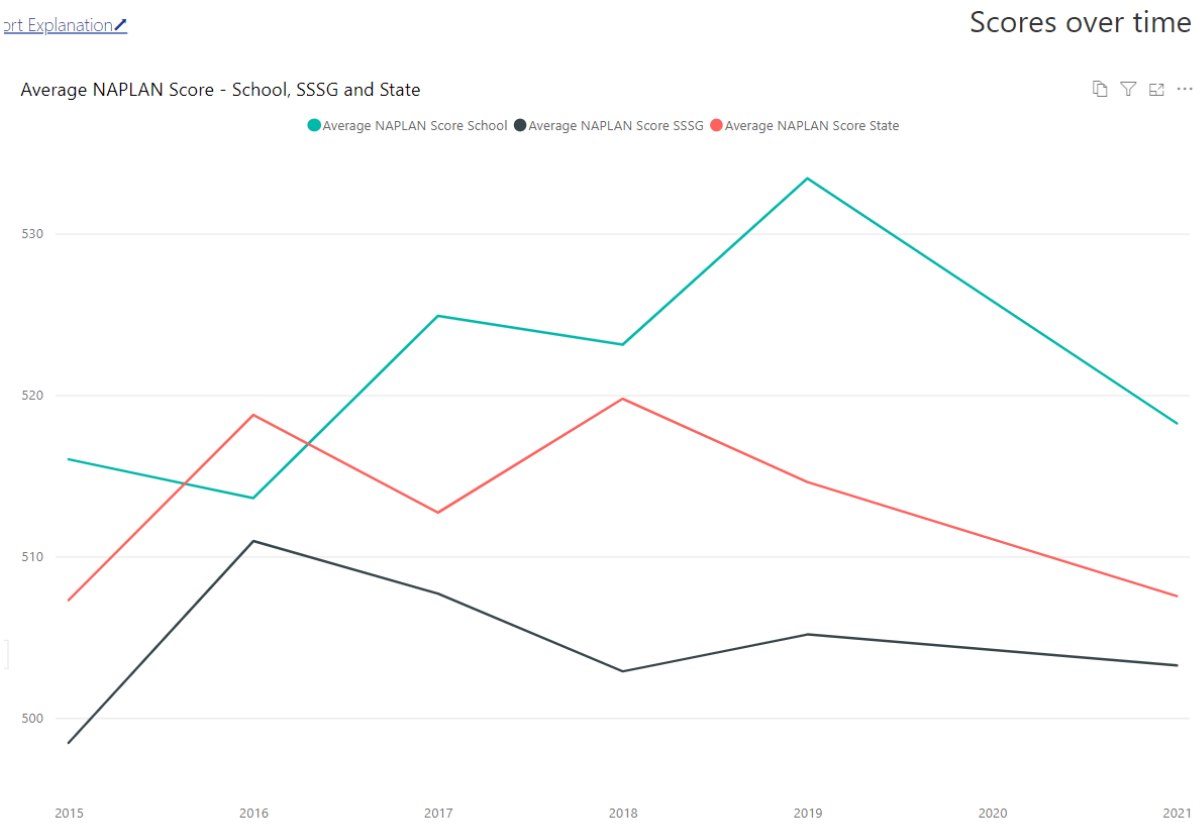
Across different domains, MSHS patterns over time usually mimic trends at state level for similar schools, sometimes with starker troughs and apexes that reflect smaller cohorts and thus greater variation between them.

The best results were seen in Spelling and Grammar, with trends for all students improving, and Aboriginal students exceeding both state and similar school averages.

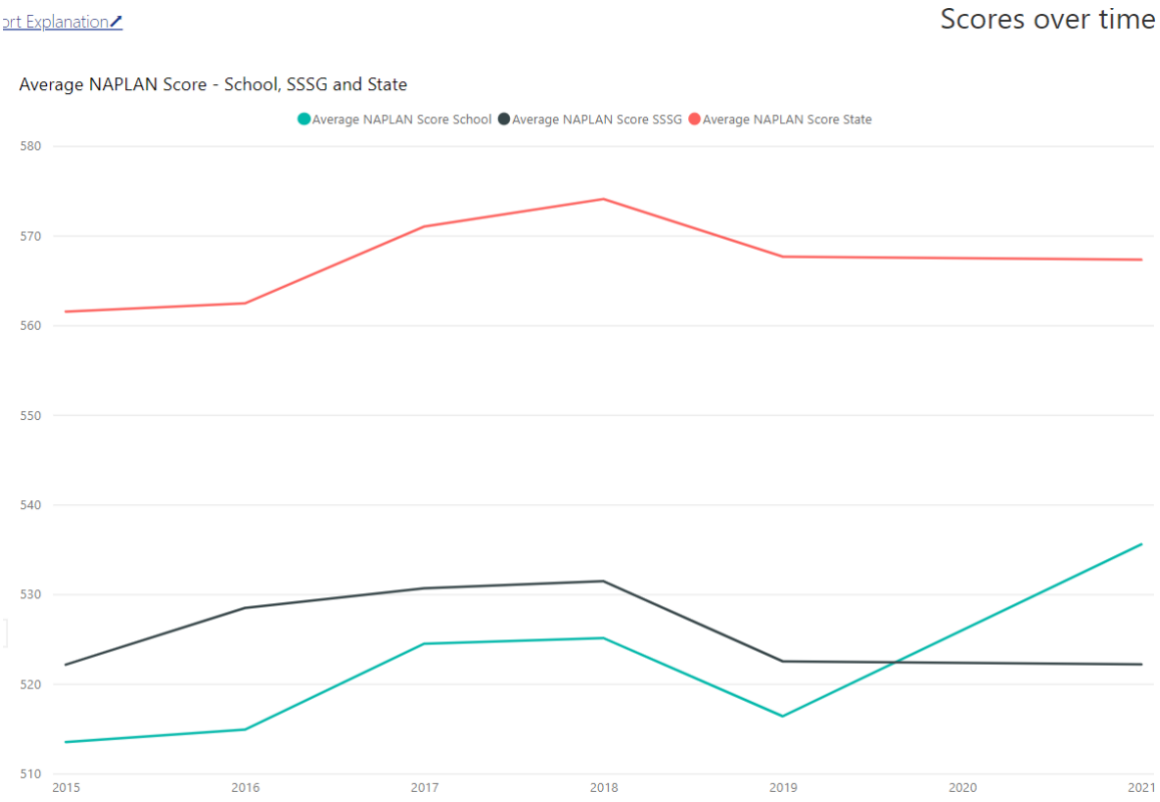
Grammar – All students



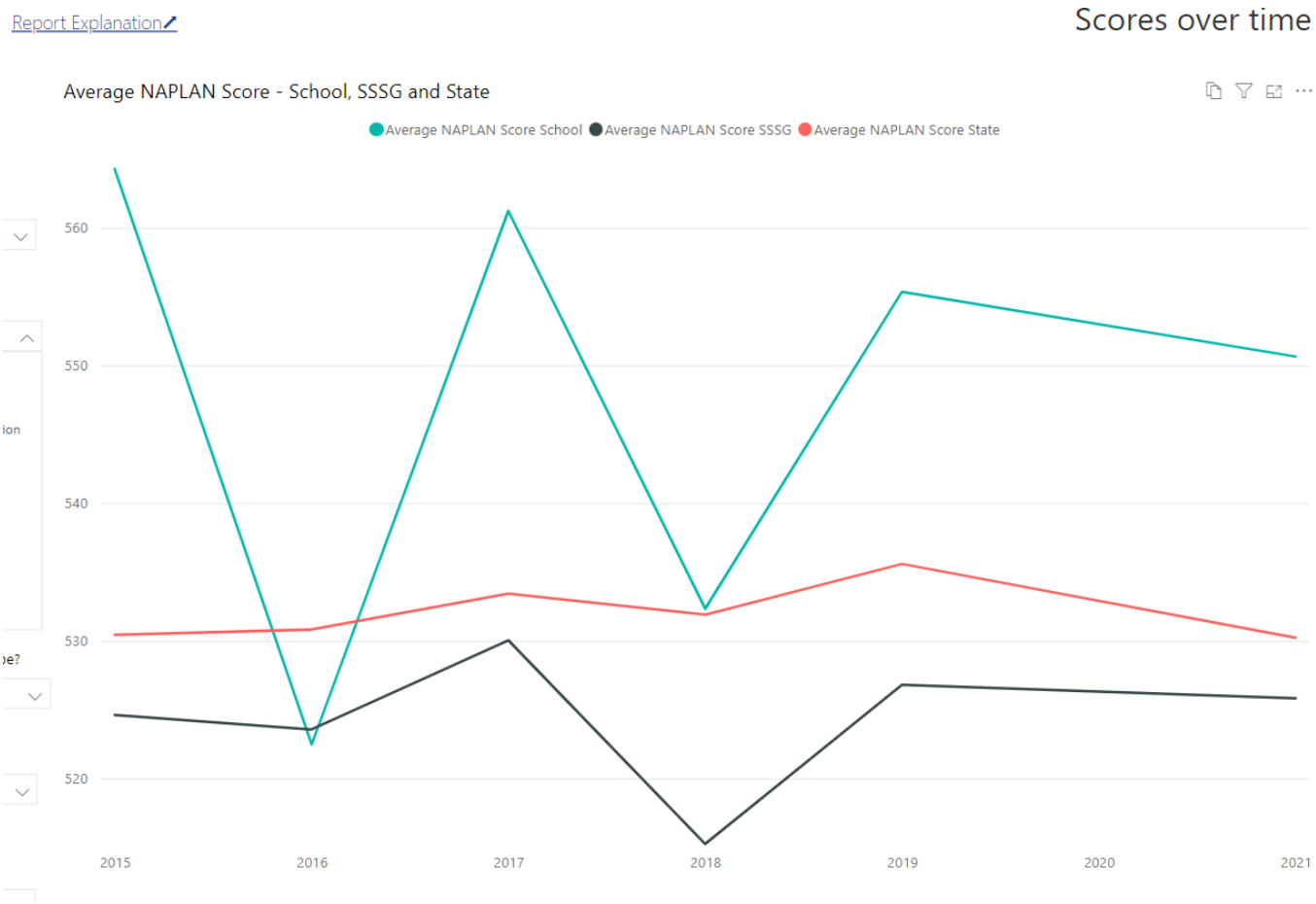
Grammar – Aboriginal students



Spelling – All students

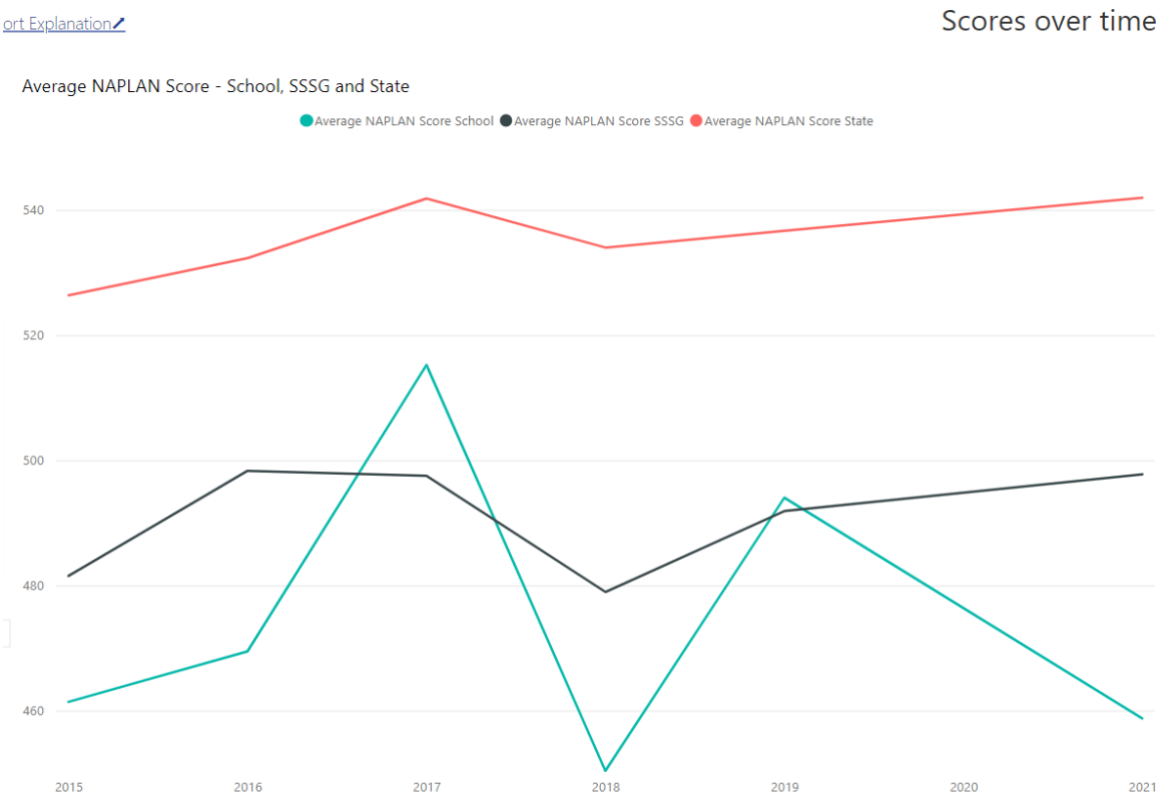


Spelling – Aboriginal students



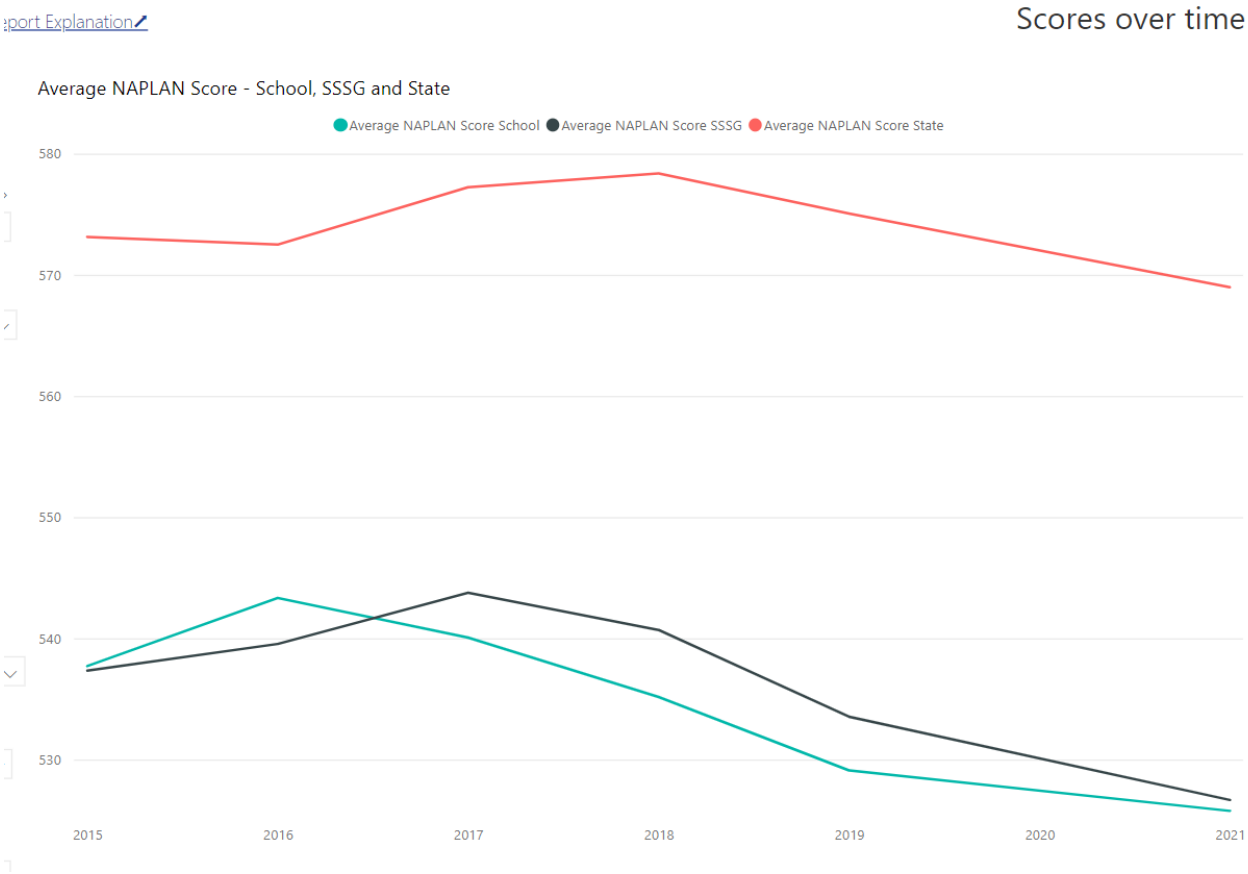
The most concerning results were seen in Writing and Numeracy, with a plunge seen over the years of the pandemic, after previously positive growth trends. This was more stark for Aboriginal students than for the wider cohort.

Writing – All students



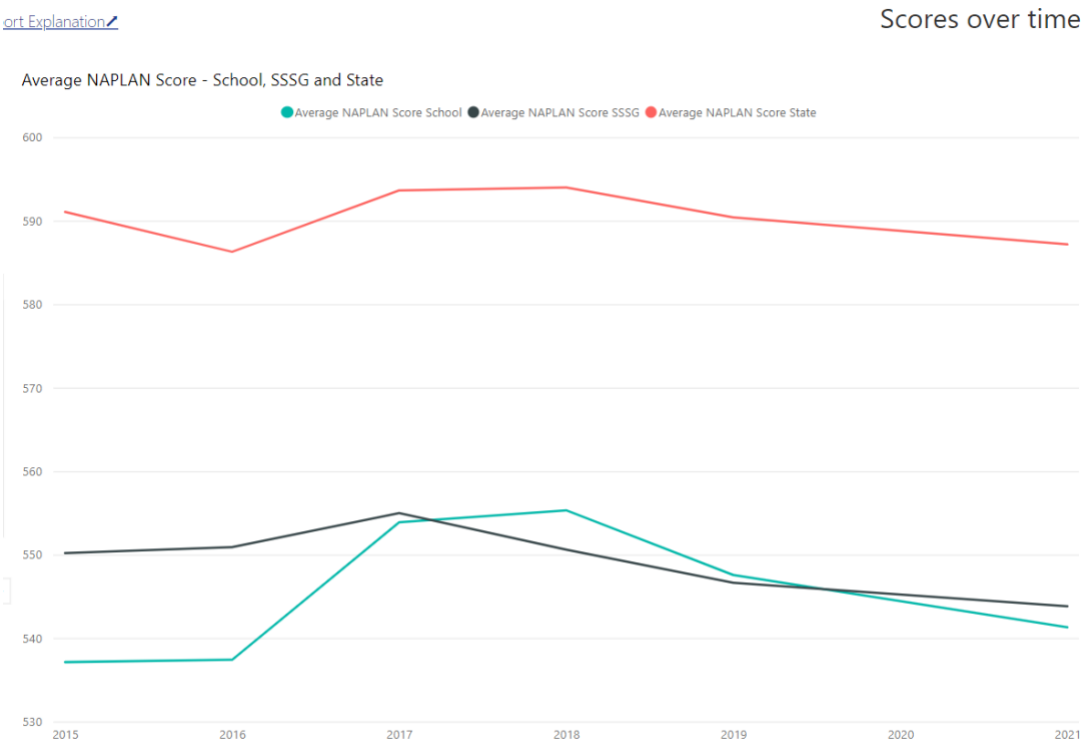
Writing – Aboriginal students

Reading – All students

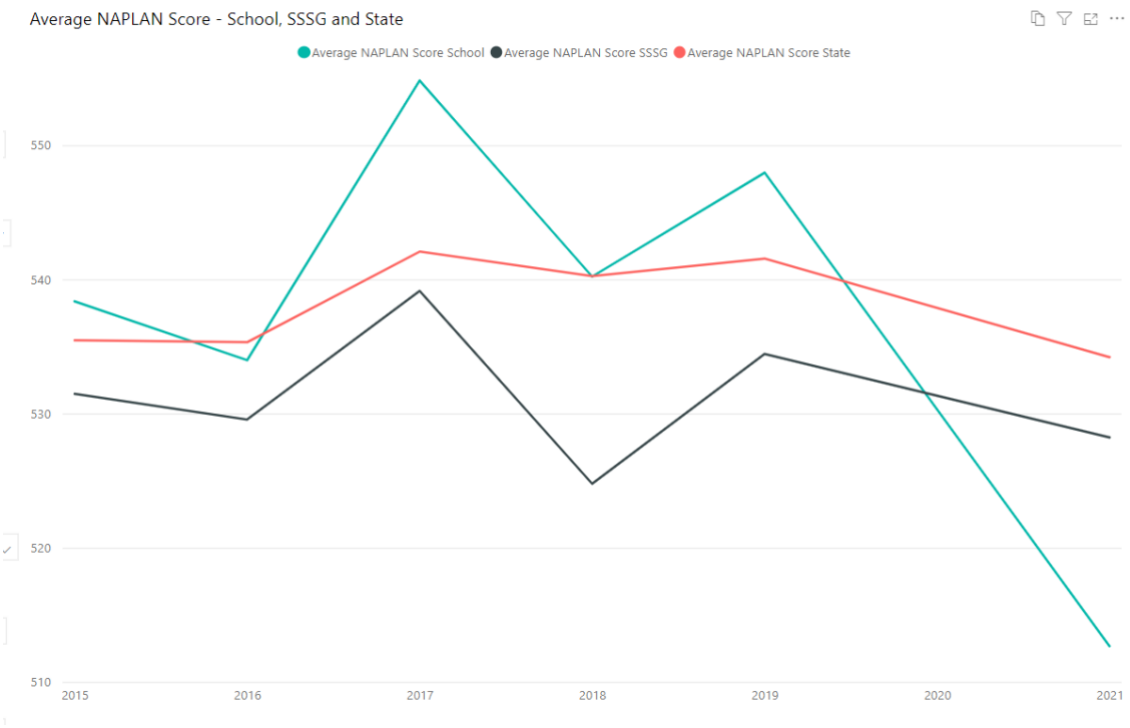


Reading – Aboriginal students

Numeracy – All students



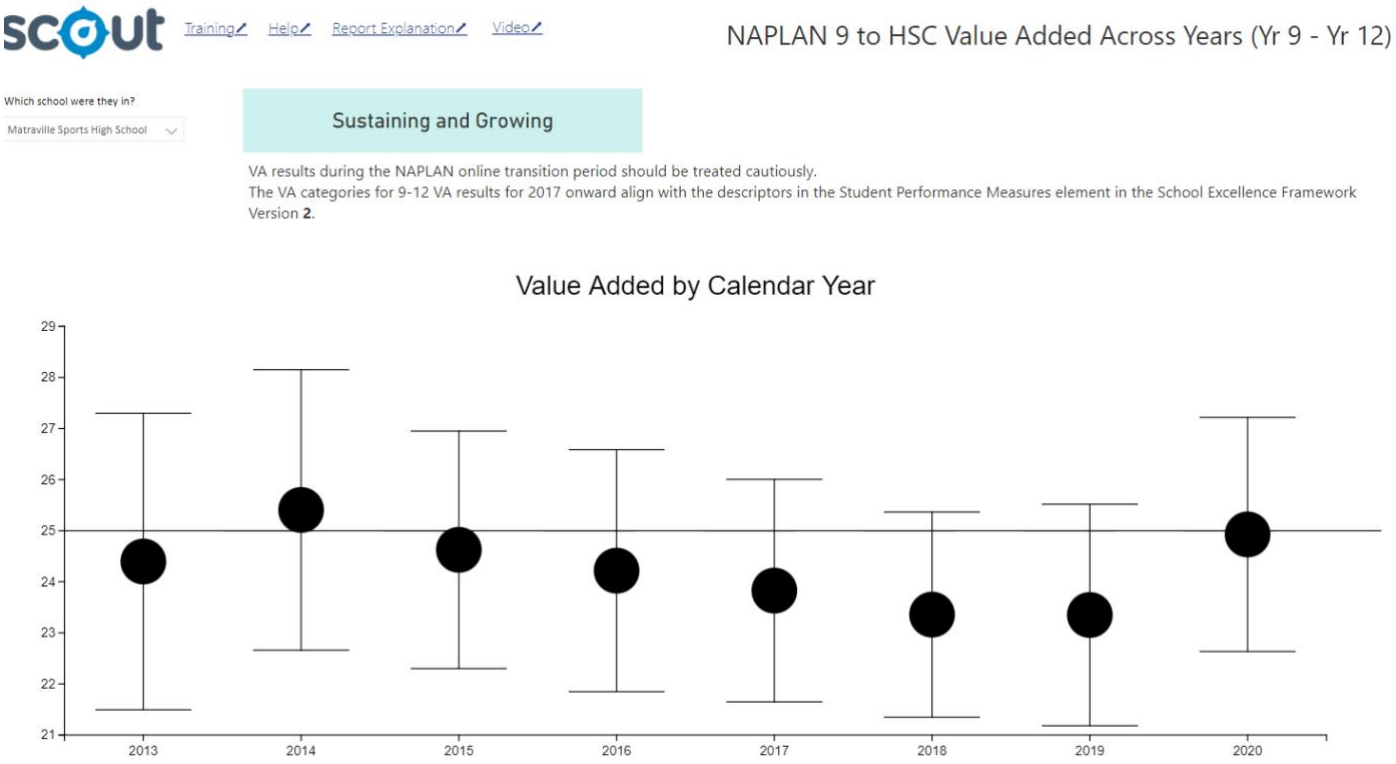
Numeracy – Aboriginal students



HSC Results

At the time of writing, a full interpretation of HSC data was not available through Department of Education tools. HSC data for small cohorts such as MSHS is extremely variable and not easy to extrapolate trends. However, in both 2020 and 2021 **MSHS results in HSC exams matched or exceeded State averages in Chemistry, Hospitality, and Visual Arts**. Subjects in which MSHS students achieved the lowest results compared with State averages in 2020 and 2021 were Biology, Business Studies, Geography, and Mathematics Standard 2. It is interesting that these result trends were consistent across both years. It is also noteworthy that a UNSW education student (studying to be a Chemistry teacher) was matched with the only student completing the Chemistry HSC course for one-on-one supervised tuition sessions via Zoom throughout Terms 3-4. This student's high achievement in the exam reflects this support.

A significant measure is that of the value added by the school between Years 9-12. MSHS has achieved parity with state averages for the first time since 2014.



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 2021 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
Students with a positive sense of belonging	69%	70%	68%	60%	58%	54%	57%	**58%**
Students with positive intellectual engagement	52%	46%	46%	45%	44%	43%	46%	**37%**
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***
Teachers have high expectations for student success	6.7	7.1	6.5	6.8	7.3	6.7	7.0	**6.7**
Students who plan to finish Year 12	80%	79%	76%	66%	71%	64%	75%	**71%**
Students who plan to pursue an apprenticeship or TAFE	56%	33%	48%	33%	48%	40%	41%*	**44%***
Students who hope to attend university	52%	49%	51%	42%	45%	40%	51%	**46%**
Aboriginal students who "feel good about their culture at school"	n/a	91%	83%	75%	82%	67%	69%	**75%**
Aboriginal students who feel their teachers have a good understanding of their culture	n/a	82%	74%	69%	65%	53%	48%	**52%**

One item that we had not previously tracked in this table, but which had a very positive result for MSHS compared to state norms, was "Positive teacher-student relations: Students feel their teachers are responsive to their needs and encourage independence with a democratic approach". MSHS achieved a 6.2 vs the state norm of 5.7.

The high levels in the "belonging" measure may speak to the level of outreach and wellbeing support that teachers engaged in during online learning periods. The increases in Aboriginal student cultural support may be related to MSHS' participation in the Culturally Nourishing Schooling project as part of the UNSW Partnership.

Reflections and recommendations:

The intellectual engagement composite dip make sense given the pandemic conditions of the past two years.

The positive trends in Aboriginal student belonging are encouraging, and may be part of a whole-school shift related to the Culturally Nourishing Schools project.

We have further to go in inculcating in students a desire to attend university. Hopefully, a return to face-to-face activities, excursions, and in-person engagement with UNSW staff will help with this.

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 partnerships continue to be with the Eastern Suburbs Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) and the Little Bay Community of Schools (LBCOS)**. Through enduring collaboration with the community and local schools we continue to identify and work together towards shared goals and initiate targeted teaching and research activities. One unfortunate effect of Covid-19 was that the quarterly meetings of these groups ceased to take place and were not replaced by virtual meetings. Thankfully, the AECG Working Group providing oversight and consultative support for the Cultural Residents project was able to meet again, and these monthly meetings provided a touchpoint for raising important issues for discussion with Aboriginal community representatives.

Most collaborations with external groups and organisations did not progress in 2021, but we hope to revisit many of the previous partnerships and opportunities in the future.

Aboriginal Community Engagement

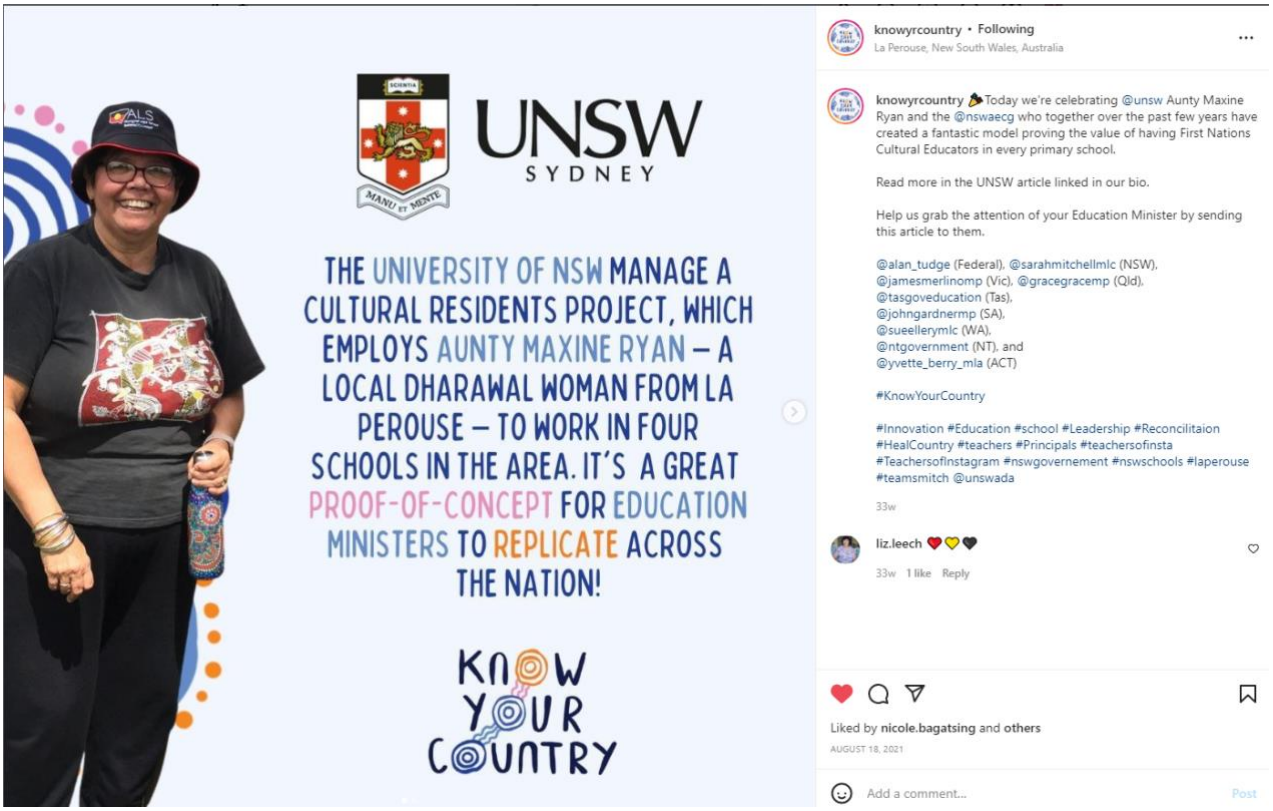
Through the MEP, UNSW School of Education has built a strong relationship with the Eastern Suburbs Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, which has enabled mutually beneficial research and education activities to grow and be sustained. In 2021, these included the Cultural Residents Project, Culturally Nourishing Schools project, and the Master of Teaching Indigenous Education Immersion program. Working with Nura Gili, the School of Education also offers Indigenous Winter School and Pre-Programs for prospective students, and promotes these programs to the local community.

Cultural Residents Project

Funding from the Crown Resorts Foundation has enabled UNSW to hire Aunty Maxine Ryan at 0.8FTE, to serve as a "Cultural Resident" in two local primary schools each term, helping strengthen the teaching of Aboriginal perspectives and the connections between schools and their local community.

The project was able to run as intended for the first half of the year in two primary schools: Clovelly Public School and Mascot Public School, but the reinstated lockdown from July through October meant that activities in schools for Term 3 were largely virtual, and only gradually resumed across Term 4. Aunty Maxine was active in Kensington Public School, Clovelly and Mascot during this time, attending Zoom classes and assemblies, recording videos of storytelling and damper-making, and making up for lost time once school returned to face-to-face learning.

We continued **to partner with World Vision, whose "Know Your Country" campaign** is undertaking consultation, lobbying, advocacy and public awareness to call for an Aboriginal Cultural Educator in every primary school. Their campaign, launched in 2021, is making concrete inroads into public and political support for this initiative. This relationship has resulted in increased awareness of this work Australia-wide and the formation of valuable connections with other organisations involved in Aboriginal education. Aunty Maxine featured in two World Vision videos and blog/social media posts, and Kim Beswick stepped forward as an Ambassador for the campaign.



Further viewing:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39-VsbMUXdE

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WIdqHLiGgTw

Culturally Nourishing Schools Project

In 2020, **MSHS signed on to be one of six high schools across NSW to participate in the Aboriginal Voices – Culturally Nourishing Schools (CNS) Project led by Dr Kevin Lowe**. This project follows six 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 2021, the CNS involved a small group of teachers experiencing the first cycles of 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. Delays due to Covid-19 meant that "teaching bursts", observed by project leads and Aboriginal cultural mentors, were delayed to 2022, but the project is well underway at the school and is taken seriously by all involved.

Master of Teaching Indigenous Immersion

Another casualty of Covid-19 was the in-person Master of Teaching Immersion component of EDST5115: Indigenous and Sociocultural Contexts of Education. This had, from 2015-2019, been a 3-day intensive program held at MSHS, with a variety of speakers and activities led by the local Aboriginal community. Unfortunately in 2020, a virtual program had to be substituted. In 2021, the face-to-face program had been fully planned and scheduled when a Covid lockdown was reinstated in the week prior.

This meant a quick about-face and restructure to a virtual environment. The previous year, students had undertaken a series of self-paced activities online, but this year we did not want to lose the opportunity of real-time engagement with the Aboriginal community – plus, many community members had accepted paid work with us, and turned down other work during the busy NAIDOC week period.

The result was a three-day Zoom extravaganza, involving 10 local Aboriginal community members as tutors and many more as guest speakers. More than 300 Master of Teaching students were in attendance. UNSW arranged for technology, including internet dongles and tech support, to be available to those community members who did not have this at home. Aunties in their 70s and 80s who do not even have mobile phones or internet were still able to participate.

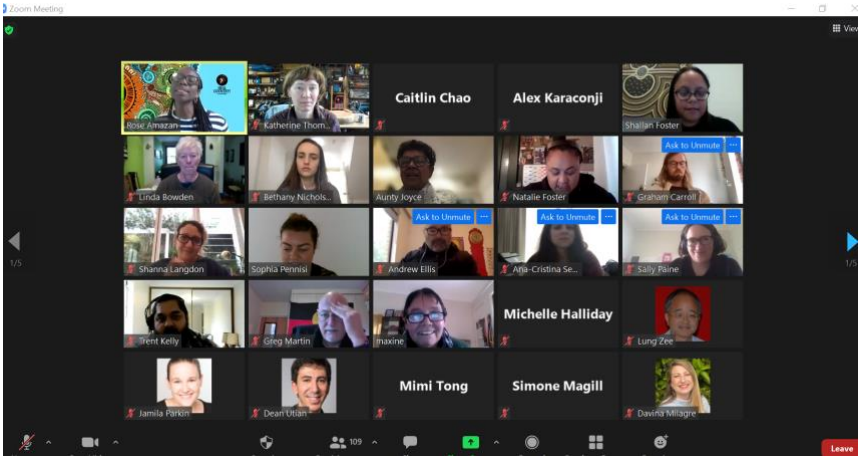
Student and community member feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and **the program was ultimately successful in receiving a Vice-Chancellor's Award for Programs that Enhance Learning. The $2000 prize associated with this was donated to the AECG.**

Prof Merlin Crossley with Dr Rose Amazan, Katherine Thompson, and Josephine Holecek accepting the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Programs that Enhance Learning, 27 November 2021.

This activity has become a key pillar of UNSW School of Education's commitment to Indigenous education and to preparing future teachers to work effectively with Indigenous students and communities, as well as to include Indigenous perspectives and knowledges in their teaching for the benefit of all students.

One student wrote in their feedback survey:

"This immersion program has informed me of practises and strategies to be aware of in the classroom. I will not judge, I will not make assumptions, I will take the time to listen to all students and learn from them. I will take the time to reflect on each teaching day and build relationships with my students and the community. No matter how hard, I promise to continue challenging the constraints of the curriculum to meet Indigenous student educational needs. I will continuously take the initiative to research and learn about Indigenous cultures and histories and I will use my position of power and privilege to support, uplift and empower Indigenous students and their communities."



Nura Gili Programs

For many years, the School of Education has offered both a Winter School (for students in grades 10-12) and Pre-Education Program (for recent high school graduates) as part of Nura Gili's suite of recruitment and alternative entry pathways. Unfortunately, for the past several years, we had not received applicants into these programs and they have not been able to run. However, after Nura Gili's restructure, relationship-building recommenced between MEP and Nura Gili staff, and the MEP Program Manager participated in a cross-faculty working group to evaluate and strengthen these programs, and to improve recruitment strategies. The Pre-Education ran for two students in 2021 (from high schools other than MSHS, but still part of the local community), via Zoom.

Using lessons learned from virtual community engagement during the M Teach Immersion program described above, many local community members were engaged as speakers and mentors, including several MSHS Aboriginal staff members. A highlight was a virtual damper-making session with Aunty Maxine Ryan, during which the students were guided through making damper in their own kitchens via Zoom, and afternoon teas for participants to meet current First Nations staff and students at UNSW, "catered" via UberEats vouchers emailed to each person. One advantage of the Zoom program was that some speakers from outside of Sydney were also able to be engaged. **The program resulted in both students receiving offers to study at UNSW, both of which were accepted.**

Faculty Indigenous Strategy

As part of a commitment to improve UNSW's structures and processes, the MEP Program Manager sits on the ADA Indigenous Strategy Community Engagement Working Group, which is made up of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff working to support the Associate Dean Indigenous, Dr BJ Newton, and the Faculty Indigenous strategy. This role particularly centres on local community engagement via the relationships built through existing MEP activities, and improving education delivery across the Faculty in terms of cultural reflexivity and inclusion of Indigenous knowledges and perspectives.

In 2021, the Program Manager helped facilitate sponsorship of the Department of Education Nanga Mai Awards for high achievement in Aboriginal Education ($8000 per year for five years) via working with the Associate Dean Indigenous on a business case for this. Actions like this help strengthen UNSW's commitment to "giving back", a pillar of its Indigenous Strategy.

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. In 2022 this is promising with a pilot "uni taster program" in place run by Rebekah Torrens, ADA Indigenous Student Engagement and Support Specialist.

Recommendations include:

1. Continue to prioritise future funding for the Cultural Residents project.

2. Return the M Teach Immersion to face-to-face delivery.

3. 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).

4. 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.

Many of these ideas will be difficult to implement without further resourcing.

MSHS Parent Community

For the third year in a row, MSHS conducted a Tell Them From Me Parent Survey. Results in most areas improved from the previous year, when a dip had occurred presumably to do with Covid-19, the difficulty of remote schooling and reduced extracurricular activities which drew many families to the school.

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 keeping parents informed**:

	2019		**2020**		**2021**	
	MSHS	State	MSHS	State	MSHS	State
Parents feel welcome	8.3	7.4	7.1	7.4	7.4	7.4
Inclusive school	7.4	6.7	6.7	6.7	7.1	6.7
Safety at school	7.9	7.4	6.6	7.4	7.6	7.4
School supports positive behaviour	8.1	7.7	6.7	7.7	7.4	7.7
School supports learning	8.0	7.3	6.5	7.3	7.2	7.3
Parents support learning at home	6.7	6.3	6.0	6.3	6.6	6.3
Parents are informed	8.3	6.6	7.2	6.6	7.1	6.6

While most areas improved, the weakest area remained in parent support for learning at home, with fewer parents than average saying they “discuss how well your child is doing in his or her classes”, “talk about how important schoolwork is”, “ask about any challenges your child might have at school”, or “take an interest in your child’s school assignments”. This is interesting as these are results from parent self-reporting, not teacher perception.

Other items of interest from this survey are that

- 75% of parents report that their child is at their first choice of public school, up from 64% in the previous year
- 69% of parents would recommend the school to others, up from 61% in the previous year
- 57% of parents expect their child to go to university, up from 29% the previous year
- 90% of parents expect their child to finish Year 12, up from 71% the previous year

No MEP events were held for parents due to Covid-19 measures, though the Program Manager attended a Zoom Year 7 Orientation.

Reflections and recommendations:

It is encouraging to see parental impressions of MSHS, and expectations for their children’s school attainment to be rising significantly.

Better communication with parents about MEP events and offerings, and opportunities for their children through UNSW would be appreciated by parents. In 2022, a focus on reengaging parents through face-to-face events would be advisable if resourcing allows.

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. **One student** completed her Professional Experience 2 placement during a Covid lockdown period with a mix of online and face-to-face teaching. She was subsequently employed at MSHS to cover her supervising teacher's maternity leave.

Oversight of these cohorts of UNSW students was largely conducted by Howard Cheng and Carolyn Davey, the MEP School-based Coordinators. Some students had to finish their placements in 2022 due to Covid disruptions. Rates of return for feedback surveys were very low, perhaps due to ongoing fatigue with online engagement measures during the lockdown.

Professional Engagement Student Feedback

Of the 48 Professional Engagement students placed at MSHS across the year, only 7 completed a post-placement evaluation (14% response rate). Due to this low response rate, results may not be as reliable as in previous years.

In addition to an array of short-answer questions, students were asked to rate 11 statements on a Likert scale of 1-10 (1 = Strongly Disagree; 10 = Strongly Agree):

Student responses about their in-school experience varies from year to year as expectations can vary. In 2021, **feedback across a few areas improved, with 100% reporting they are now better prepared to teach students with a range of ability levels.** Other areas that declined had had extremely high ratings in the past, so even with a dip in results the experience is extremely positive for most students.

Survey item	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Gain or loss
I had a positive experience overall in my Matraville placement.	75%	87%	100%	73%	86%	86%	0%
The teaching staff at the school were helpful and made me feel welcome.	80%	88%	100%	80%	96%	86%	-10%
This placement helped me confirm whether teaching is the right career choice for me.	80%	79%	100%	73%	92%	86%	-6%
This placement helped prepare me to teach students from diverse backgrounds.	75%	79%	100%	87%	88%	71%	-17%
This placement taught me a lot about behaviour management in the classroom.	70%	71%	100%	100%	81%	86%	+5%
This placement taught me about the role of student relationships and wellbeing in schooling.	80%	79%	95%	73%	96%	86%	-10%
I learned a lot about teaching from this placement.	65%	79%	95%	73%	96%	86%	-10%
This placement helped prepare me to teach students with a range of abilities.	75%	79%	90%	60%	88%	100%	+12%
The afterschool programs were a valuable part of my experience.	65%	58%	75%	47%	48%	71%	+23%

Comments on findings:

Student responses indicate that their time at Matraville was a valuable learning experience and that they were made to feel welcome at the school. The placement prepared them with practical experience to address the great variety of student backgrounds they will encounter in their careers.

More neutral or negative comments related to some unpredictability and disorganisation, though students understood that much of this was due to Covid. A few comments addressed the large numbers of students placed at the school all at once, with some students feeling that staff were overwhelmed, that there were more UNSW students than were needed for certain activities, or that their experience was not as personal as it might otherwise have been. Surprisingly, **the majority of comments about the numbers of fellow UNSW students were positive**, with many students finding value in the sense of community built among their peers. Many of them said they finally have made friends within their degree program and built relationships that they had not been able to forge in classes prior to this placement. Students expressed gratitude for having the opportunity to complete a placement when Covid restrictions meant they might not have been able to.

The MSHS staff are to be commended for their willingness to welcome and mentor pre-service teachers even during the stressful and uncharted conditions presented by the pandemic.

Qualitative student comments:

On what they have learned:

- I had the greatest experience at Matraville during my placement. It has changed the way I looked at the subject I am majoring and also my perspective on how students behave.
- Being at Matraville Sports High was a truly explorative experience; an absolute 180. Cultural landscapes such as these are so transformative and has brought so many new worlds and new identities into my field of view as an upcoming teacher.

On organisation of the placement:

- I worked with two teachers and it was very helpful to be able to explore the differing approaches of teachers and the differing set up/ layout of lessons and classrooms.
- I got put on a year 7 class. It was awesome to see the different range of teachers and how they all taught. Most importantly, the best part was being able to witness how the same class reacted to different teachers - really helped me discover what is and isn't effective. I worked outside my method which I really enjoyed as now I'm potentially thinking of teaching another method.

On teachers and staff:

- I want to go back to Matraville so much because of their warm welcoming attitude on the first day. Plus they were very welcoming in letting me adapt to the school environment.
- Really great and passionate staff.
- For me there are too many good standout things about the school. I enjoyed being Tanya Cerin's class as she helped me understand students and taught me an interesting method of giving feedback which is congratulating the student for what they have done and encouraging them to show the same achievement again. Also, I like how she compliments students even on the most basic of things that most teachers take for granted such as "Thank you for wearing your black leather shoes to school," even though other parts of the student's uniform is incorrect sometimes or "Thank you for listening,". In that sense I enjoyed working with her as she also shows great optimism and positive energy during the school day which I heavily appreciated.
- The music teacher Jonathan - he is awesome and super passionate about what he does, I would recommend all students check out his class. Isobel Bruce probably has the best relational based teaching style I've ever seen.

Reflections and recommendations:

The results seen from pre-service teachers' experience at Matraville are among the strongest outcomes of the MEP. The aim of improving UNSW teacher education and the teaching community at large is being achieved through equipping these students with diverse practical experiences and through teachers having positive experiences of mentoring incoming members of the profession.

It is encouraging that even with small numbers of respondents and in a very challenging year, students still learned a great deal and found the MSHS staff friendly and welcoming.

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. For example, compared with the previous year, questions around staff morale and perceptions of leadership are markedly improved:

Survey item	2020 % agreement	2021 % agreement
Morale amongst staff at my school is good.	20%	63%
School leaders in my school are leading improvement and change	56%	71%
School leaders clearly communicate their strategic vision and values for our school.	48%	77%

MEP Survey

In late 2021 Matraville staff members were emailed a survey seeking feedback on the UNSW Matraville Education Partnership undertakings that occurred that year. They were asked to reflect on their experience of having pre-service teachers (PSTs) in their classroom, professional learning opportunities and their attitudes toward the school. 17 staff members completed this survey.

In terms of their experiences with PSTs and involvement in MEP activities, **only one respondent wanted less involvement, and 62% had positive experiences with working with PSTs (the rest called it a "mixed bag" rather than negative).**

Teachers reported the following benefits from working with PSTs:

- Better able to use group work and interactive teaching strategies
- Matraville students receiving more individualised help
- Matraville students broadening/heightening their aspirations
- Opportunities to discuss teaching practice with new members of the profession

Teachers were asked to rate 7 statements on a Likert scale of 1-5 (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree)

Most items showed improvement and showed a positive attitude of the staff toward the Partnership:

Survey item	2015 (% agreement)	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Gain or loss
The UNSW partnership adds value/is beneficial to our school	96%	96%	97%	100%	100%	88%	94%	+12%
I am proud to say I work at Matraville	96%	88%	97%	100%	82%	88%	100%	+12%
Matraville students have benefited from the partnership	87.5%	92%	90%	94%	91%	94%	94%	No change
I felt I was able to share valuable knowledge and experience with the PSTs I worked with	82%	75%	90%	76%	100%	82%	76%	-8%
The UNSW partnership has allowed me to update my skills/pursue professional learning opportunities	45.5%	44%	43%	69%	55%	41%	59%	+18%
I feel my voice is valued by those administrating the partnership	63%	64%	52%	82%	82%	53%	94%	+41%
Working with PSTs has helped me feel more energised/engaged with the teaching profession						53%	76%	+23%

In this year's survey, a few questions were added to gauge staff feelings toward the school continuing to allow UNSW students on site despite the associated Covid-19 related risks. **65% of teachers stated they were happy to have PSTs on site despite these risks and restrictions.** The remainder stated they had mixed feelings

We also asked what involvement teachers had with UNSW during the period of remote learning. 44% reported some involvement, including:

- Speaking or presenting to UNSW classes or groups of students
- Working with PSTs in online classes (e.g. via Zoom)
- Working with PSTs on administrative tasks or resource creation
- Planning for future activities or reflecting on past ones
- Participating in online professional learning
- Participating in online incursions or guest speakers for MSHS students

Qualitative Comments from teachers:

Positive outcomes from the Partnership:

- Allowing students to see our units of work and getting them to create resources helped us as a faculty and I think it helped PSTs to practically apply some of their learning in a safe way.
- the interaction between preservice and current teaching staff is very positive. It enables both "stages" to interact and share ideas, experiences and current methodologies. I would certainly encourage this 'strategy' in the future as it provides a more "legacy" approach in education (it is quite an accomplishment to see many new graduates from UNSW now teaching at MSHS).

- The learning experience in Aboriginal education with high numbers of students, staff and Clontarf program at Matraville hopefully give these teachers a different perspective or build on ideas to what they may already have towards Aboriginal people.
- Sharing knowledge and extra help for the students (x5)
- Access to PL courses (x2)
- It allows collaborative learning between Matraville staff and PST's. Both parties benefit from their shared experiences. (x5)
- Increased student aspiration (x2)

Recommendations for improvement:

- Better induction of students to faculties
- Quality over quantity with PSTs. It is really hard in a small school to cater to the amount of PSTs onsite and needing classroom experience. This is especially true if staff are supposed to mentor these PSTs when they have no allocation to do so. Perhaps, more support on site from UNSW for PSTs would be beneficial. Also having 2-3 2nd year Engagement PSTs in a classroom is off putting for our students, especially those who have additional learning needs and require rapport with staff in order to work well.
- Regular meetings with what is available. Before COVID we would have updates at the staff meeting and interaction at staff meetings
- Try to encourage some of the students to interact a bit more. Sometimes they hardly say a word to you!

Reflections and recommendations:

Teachers accessing professional learning opportunities saw a marked increase, attributable perhaps in part to the Culturally Nourishing Schools project getting underway at MSHS as well as online offerings from UNSW increasing (e.g. Ignite the Spark and online professional learning courses). The dip in feeling able to share skills and knowledge with PSTs makes sense in light of long periods of remote learning. Overall the high levels of agreement with most items show the partnership is still adding value to teachers' experiences despite the challenging conditions of the last two years.

Teachers who have been at the school for many years have noted the difference between the level of on-site support that used to be provided versus the current arrangement (related to the number of days allocated to the Manager's position, along with unavoidable Covid-related issues). Better communication with staff as well as support for them to better support UNSW students could be possible if this role were to be expanded.

Participation in Professional Learning

As mentioned previously, Covid-19 severely impacted on UNSW's ability to offer professional learning courses, but in the second year of the pandemic, more offerings were adapted to be held online or occasionally as small-group events face-to-face.

Two highlights were that Director of the MEP, Dr Karen Maras continued her Mentoring Project, meeting regularly with MSHS Early Career Teachers on areas they identified for further development and support. This involved meetings as a community of practice and structured observations and feedback sessions. Additionally, the Culturally Nourishing Schools project launched its activities in earnest, involving about 10 staff members in ongoing Professional Conversations and two-day workshops on Curriculum and Learning from Country.

Free professional learning through UNSW undertaken by staff in 2021:

Number of Staff	Course	Topic
2	Ignite the Spark conference	Gifted education
1	Supporting Students on the Autism Spectrum	Special needs education
10	Culturally Nourishing Schools conversations and workshops	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education
6	Early Career Teacher Mentoring	various

Publicity

In 2021 the following MEP related activities received positive publicity and the community impact of the partnership was spotlighted.

Links to selected media:

15.6.21	**Know Your Country blog**	**Every School Needs an Aunty Maxine**	**https://www.knowyourcountry.com.au/news/aunty-maxine**
16.7.21	Know Your Country Instagram post	The next generation should learn how rich our culture is...	https://www.instagram.com/p/CRXw4neB8AQ/
18.8.21	UNSW Newsroom	Cultural Residents: improving the teaching of Indigenous perspectives in schools	https://newsroom.unsw.edu.au/news/social-affairs/cultural-residents-improving-teaching-indigenous-perspectives-schools
18.8.21	Know Your Country Instagram post	UNSW Cultural Residents Project	https://www.instagram.com/p/CSsxEIeBPyC/
25.8.21	Know Your Country Instagram post	Kim Beswick - Know Your Country Ambassador	https://www.instagram.com/p/CS-YzcYBrIe/
14.10.21	Teacher Magazine Podcast	The Research Files: Cultural Residents in the classroom	https://www.teachermagazine.com/au_en/articles/the-research-files-episode-70-cultural-residents-in-the-classroom
27.11.21	UNSW Website	UNSW Awards for Teaching Excellence	https://www.education.unsw.edu.au/teaching/award-winning-teachers-unsw/celebrating-recipients-unsw-awards-teaching-excellence
8.12.21	UNSW Newsroom	Celebrating 2021 Awards for Teaching	https://www.education.unsw.edu.au/news-events/news/celebrating-2021-awards-for-teaching-unsw
8.3.22	School of Education eNews	Accolades for Nura Gili Pre-Education Program	

Reflections and recommendations:

These instances of publicity are positive, and celebrate the long-standing relationships built through the Partnership with the local Aboriginal community. But most are related to activities peripheral to the actual operations of Matraville Sports High School or activities of the Partnership there. The school's reputation is slowly improving in the surrounding community and enrolments continue to grow, but more effort must be made to publicise the positive work of the MEP as it directly relates to Matraville Sports High School, in order to continue to improve greater community perception.

Summary of Strengths and Challenges

This report has highlighted many notable strengths of the Partnership across another very challenging year, including:

- Providing meaningful learning experiences for UNSW education students; preparing them to be effective teachers of diverse students
- Building positive perception about MSHS and UNSW among the Matraville community, including teachers and parents
- Collaboration and community engagement which support key research and teaching initiatives, particularly with regard to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education initiatives
- MSHS academic results reflecting an above-average value-add for students in Years 7-9, and being on par with state norms of value-add for Years 9-12.

Resourcing for the MEP is the principal challenge faced, which is reflective of the broader university environment in 2021 as a result of Covid-19, but was an issue even before the financial pressures of the pandemic. The Program Manager's role was renewed for two years in June 2021 at a 0.4FTE entitlement. This has proven to be just enough time to cover the reduced level of business-as-usual activities under Covid restrictions, and with substantial help from the MSHS site-based coordinators. It is not sufficient resourcing to reflect, plan, or implement new initiatives. For example, the development of a suite of activities contributing to Matraville as a "Future Students Hub" for UNSW, envisioned by Principal Nerida Walker and Dr Karen Maras in 2021, was postponed a number of times across 2021 due to Program Manager workload constraints. There are hopes to promote this further in 2022.

In last year's report 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.**

Ideas for future focus

In last year's report, the following ideas were put forward as potential areas of focus if resourcing permitted. The items in **GREEN** are the only ones which were able to be actioned in 2021.

- 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
- Microcredentialing and transfer into M.Ed. degrees – work with MSHS and LBCOS staff on further PL options and support those who may wish to pursue an M.Ed. or research degree to enrol at UNSW
- **UNSW School of Education "hot desk" at Matraville so staff members other than the Program Manager can get to know the programs and community**
- **Informing UNSW committees and processes around low-SES and Indigenous student recruitment and retention based on the experiences of Matraville students and local community engagement via the Partnership**
- In-depth literacy support for MSHS students who arrive from primary school with significant literacy difficulties. Nerida Walker has prospects for a collaboration that would involve academics and students from University of Sydney as well as for the UNSW students undertaking placements at Matraville
- Revive in-person M Teach Indigenous Immersion and Nura Gili Pre-Education Programs supported by on-the-ground collaborations with MSHS staff and students and local AECG.
- Revive pre-Covid initiatives such as in-person excursions to UNSW, Maths Ambassadors volunteer program, Work Experience offerings at UNSW
- Revive quarterly newsletter for parents and wider community subscribers
- Make connections with UNSW teaching staff from a range of departments who are open to have MSHS students visit their lectures or tutorials as a uni "taster", and implement excursion program
- Work with Development Manager and UNSW Sport and Scholarships representatives to offer clear pathways for elite sporting scholarships for MSHS students to attend UNSW.

The initiatives above which were not able to be actioned are still ones we hope to be able to pursue in the future, along with:

- Revive school holiday offerings and expand afterschool offerings
- Involve ADA academics in outreach activities and projects via a “Matraville Future Students Hub”, targeting gifted and talented aspirational students from MSHS
- Add NESA accreditation for UNSW to train Technological and Applied Sciences (TAS) teachers using Matraville as a site for training in various TAS subjects (design and technology, Hospitality, metal/woodworking, agriculture, etc).
- More regular communication with MSHS staff via attendance at staff/faculty meetings, special events, and small group meetings to receive feedback about the Partnership and make them aware of upcoming opportunities and initiatives planned
- 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.

An early news article when the Partnership was first formed hung on the headline “The Sky’s the Limit”. We still believe this is true of the possibilities of the UNSW Matraville Education Partnership. 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, and the university’s resourcing should reflect this.