

# Promoting Intercultural Understanding Through Student Exchange: A City-Country Multi-School Program

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Preliminary Report

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## Introduction

Cultural diversity and intercultural understanding are an essential part of living in a diverse multicultural society such as Australia. This report, commissioned by the City Country Alliance (CCA), provides the initial baseline data on students' views and experiences in relation to cultural diversity and intercultural understanding. This will act as a benchmark for further studies that measure the changes in schools' student attitudes as they participate in a student exchange program aimed at enhancing intercultural understanding.

This research will generate empirical knowledge of improved intercultural understanding for school students' learning outcomes. Intercultural understanding is a recent addition to the Australian curriculum core capabilities; as such this knowledge has the potential to inform the direction of future education policy.

## Key findings

- Research has shown that cross-cultural contact is most effective at improving attitudes and community relations when it occurs between ethnic groups in a non-competitive setting, in the absence of a cultural hierarchy, where leadership have endorsed the initiative and where there is clear intention. There should also be opportunities for in-depth and ongoing interactions.
- The data show that CCA school students have high levels of cultural awareness.
- The strongest influences on students' cultural empathy, awareness and understanding were parents and self-realisation.
- Students show a strong appreciation and acceptance of cultural diversity; however there is a strong thread of assimilationist attitudes towards migrants (1/3 of students agreed with the statement that "migrants should behave like Australians").
- Students showed a high level of pro-social dispositions. 90% of students wanted to see their peers show empathy towards people from a different culture, 73% stated they would help if they saw someone being treated badly because of their culture. However knowledge of ways to help was lower (62%).
- Students born overseas were significantly less likely to 'feel Australian' (51% compared to 80% of the Australian-born population).
- Country students expressed a stronger sense of place and community. However both country and city students could benefit from a greater understanding of rural/urban life.
- The vast majority of students (8 out of 10) have not experienced racism directed towards them. However, the number of those who have experienced racism in a school setting is significant. This is particularly relevant in country schools where respondents were twice as likely to experience racism as their counterparts in city schools.

## Literature

There is strong support for cultural diversity in Australia (Dunn et al. 2004; Blair et al. 2017). Schools are important institutions where values and understandings of cultural diversity are formed (Watkins, Lean & Noble 2016). Australian schools have also been found to be the most common setting in which children experience racism (Forrest, Lean & Dunn 2015; Mansouri & Jenkins 2010;

Priest et al. 2014). With experiences of racism considered to have significant morbidity outcomes (Priest et al. 2013), it is important to create safe school environments free of racism and bullying, and where cultural diversity is valued and practiced. Research has found that cultural diversity, when framed by anti-racism, has strong positive benefits for student's wellbeing, safety and satisfaction (Juvonen, Nishina & Graham 2006) and has a significant effect on developing strong community relations into the future (Aboud et al. 2012). Equally, there is strong support from teachers and schools for multicultural education. Research has shown that NSW teachers are pro-diversity, pro-multicultural education, and strongly support anti-racism in schools (Watkins, Noble & Lean 2015; Forrest, Lean & Dunn 2015; 2017).

One means of creating schools as safe environments is to develop interventions based on contact theory. There is considerable literature that shows the positive social benefits of cross cultural contact. Given the right conditions, research has shown that cultural contact increases intercultural knowledge and acceptance, and reduces racist attitudes and prejudice (Nesdale and Todd 1998; Pedersen et al. 2005) – though it is important to note that contact alone is not sufficient to change attitudes and behaviours. The contact theory or hypothesis positions that contact between two groups can promote tolerance and acceptance, but only under certain conditions (see Table 1) such as where there is equal status among the groups and a set of common goals (Allport 1954; Pettigrew 1998). The conditions for positive cross cultural contact are outlined in Table 1. Where these conditions are not met, contact can lead to increased prejudice, thus the conditions under which cross cultural contact occurs are of significant importance. Indeed, it is also worth noting that repeated cross cultural encounters that are negative in nature will have a retrograde impact.

<b>Table 1: Conditions for positive cross cultural contact</b>		
<b>Conditions</b>	<b>Descriptions</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Equality	Different groups must arrive equally at the relation	The setting and format of the contact should not empower one group to the disadvantage of another
Non-competitive	There should be minimal competition along group lines	The contact should not occur in a setting or period of group competition for scarce resources
Super-ordinate goals	Subordinate goals should be in place, such as a policy or law	The engagement should be seen as an initiative of the Local Government Area, suburb or school
Institutional sanction	Relevant institutional authorities must sanction the intergroup contact	The Mayor, Leader of Government, Department Minister or CEO, or school principal must endorse the aim of reducing intergroup tensions
Meaningfulness	Duration, frequency and closeness of contacts	Are the interactions superficial (public transport, contractual, canteen line or hallway) or of depth (social settings, teamwork, a class room)
Sources: Pedersen et al. 2005; van Dick et al. 2005; Vrij & Smith 1999		

A key tenet of contact theory is achieving intergroup cooperation which can be a catalyst for to a reconceptualization of self and one's group membership (Pedersen et al. 2005). The basis of this formulation is that the most effective interventions are those that help change the view of the ingroup, rather than those of a particular outgroup. Research suggests that successfully changing the views of the ingroup relies on interventions that simultaneously recognise people are the same and different (Pedersen et al. 2005, p24), rather than focusing on one or the other. Pettigrew frames this

as establishing a longitudinal study that focuses on sameness, and then from a position of commonality, allow that diversity can also exist (1998). Positive intergroup relations must realise the essentiality of these two positions.

The final row of Table 1 is an extension of Allport's original four conditions. Meaningfulness refers to both depth of the relation involved in the contact, as well as frequency and repetition. Particular spaces and events are associated with cross cultural contact that is more or less meaningful. Public spaces like the street, a sports crowd or public transport afford relative anonymity and can be associated with fleeting and non-repeated meetings. In these settings, an investment in cross cultural learning may seem a less worthy investment, and incivility may be less inhibited. However, some public spaces have a greater level of controlled interaction, whether that be organisational authority or oversight, or peer monitoring. These publics include schools, places of worship, sporting clubs and community events (Amin 2002; Ho 2011). In these places cross cultural interactions may be often repeated with the same people, generating familiarity. These public spaces have been defined as micro-publics, and they are thought to hold out the possibility of more meaningful cross cultural contact. The cross cultural contact in these spaces can have a stronger impact on attitudes about diversity and on people's perceptions of other cultural groups. Again, this relies on the cross cultural contact being sustained, repeated, generating familiarity, growing reciprocity and mutuality, and the bases for co-operation, negotiation and the eventual destabilisation of hierarchies and stereotypes (Hurst 2017).

## Sample

1666 students from 26 CCA schools across NSW completed the survey between June 2016 and April 2017. 64.7% of the respondents were female, 35.3% were male. 82.4% of respondents were born in Australia, 17.6% were born overseas<sup>1</sup>. Of those born overseas, the breakdown of country of birth can be found in Table 2, the most common countries of birth being China (2.5%), England (1.9%), South Korea (1.6%), New Zealand (1.3%) and Lebanon (1.1%). 80% (n:1333) of respondents came from city schools, 20% (n:333) were from country schools. 70.1% of respondents were primary school children, 29.9% were secondary students. 43.2% of respondents speak a Language Other Than English (LOTE) at home. Over 65 languages were spoken, the most common being Arabic (12.5%), Cantonese (3.4%), Mandarin (2.5%), Korean (2.5%), Hindi (1.2%), Vietnamese (1.2%) and Japanese (1.0%).

Country of birth	Number	(%)
Algeria	1	0.1
Bangladesh	5	0.3
Brazil	3	0.2
Cambodia	1	0.1
Canada	1	0.1
China	41	2.5
Dubai	1	0.1
England	32	1.9
Ethiopia	1	0.1
Fiji	1	0.1

<sup>1</sup> Research has shown that Australian primary and secondary schools are culturally/racially diverse. One third of students are either immigrants themselves or are born in Australia to at least one immigrant parent (Priest et al. 2014).

Hong Kong	11	0.7
India	17	1.0
Indonesia	4	0.2
Iran	2	0.1
Iraq	4	0.2
Ireland	1	0.1
Israel	2	0.1
Italy	1	0.1
Japan	9	0.5
Jordan	3	0.2
Lebanon	18	1.1
Malaysia	6	0.4
Mauritius	1	0.1
New Zealand	21	1.3
Pakistan	9	0.5
Palestine	2	0.1
Philippines	11	0.7
Poland	1	0.1
Portugal	1	0.1
Russia	1	0.1
Samoa	1	0.1
Saudi Arabia	2	0.1
Singapore	8	0.5
South Africa	3	0.2
South Korea	26	1.6
Sri Lanka	1	0.1
Sweden	1	0.1
Taiwan	5	0.3
Thailand	7	0.4
Tonga	1	0.1
Ukraine	1	0.1
United Arab Emirates	1	0.1
United States of America	9	0.5
Vietnam	9	0.5
West Africa	1	0.1

*Source: 2016 Intercultural Understanding Survey, CRP*

<b>Table 3: Participation by school</b>	
<b>School</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Alma Public School	3 (.2%)
Beaumont Road Public School	20 (1.2%)
Bourke Public School	45 (2.7%)
Broken Hill High School	22 (1.3%)
Broken Hill Public School	82 (4.9%)
Burke Ward Public School	56 (3.4%)
Buronga Public School	19 (1.1%)
Chatswood Public School	131 (7.9%)
Gol Gol Public School	39 (2.3%)
Gordon East Public School	37 (2.2%)
Greenacre Public School	215 (12.9%)
Hunters Hill Public School	15 (.9%)
Killara Public School	11 (.7%)
Lindfield East Public School	127 (7.6%)
Lindfield Public School	85 (5.1%)
Menindee Central	20 (1.2%)
Moree Public School	26 (1.6%)
Mungindi Central School	15 (.9%)
Narraweena Public School	9 (.5%)
Parramatta East Public School	68 (4.1%)

Pymble Public School	49 (2.9%)
Railway Town Public School	1 (.1%)
Riverside Girls High School	333 (20%)
Roseville Public School	85 (5.1%)
Wentworth Public School	7 (.4%)
Wiley Park Girls High School	146 (8.8%)

Source: 2016 Intercultural Understanding Survey, CRP

## Data

Students' were surveyed about their awareness, understanding and appreciation of diversity (socio-economic and cultural); understanding of urban and rural life; awareness of stereotypes and representations of other cultures; sense of place and community and sense of self within a diverse Australia; cultural confidence; empathy towards different cultures and pro-social dispositions. In addition, the survey also included items assessing direct experiences of racism. In this paper some of the key points of analysis from their responses are outlined.

### Awareness, understanding and empathy towards other cultural groups

The following group of questions aimed to gauge student's awareness, understanding and empathy towards other cultural groups, as well as influences on these perceptions. The evidence shows high levels of cultural awareness, particularly in terms of self-realisation (90.1%) and the influence of parents (85.5%). We tested for differences in zones of influence across primary and secondary school students but found no variation between the two. This is not unusual as research shows that the biggest influence on this age group is familial (Castelli, Zogmaister & Tomelleri 2009; Hughes et al. 2006). The data in Table 4 do suggest that teacher influence on student attitudes is substantial (79.2%), while not as strong as family influences (85.5%). This in part satisfies one of the conditions for positive cross cultural contact in this micro-public, insofar as there is a clear superordinate goal that has been relayed to students from teachers. However, 20% of students were not able to say that teachers want them to be friends with students from other cultures.

	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Total
<b>It is important to me that I'm nice to people from different cultures</b>	23 (1.4%)	139 (8.5%)	1475 (90.1%)	1637 (100%)
<b>Other students expect me to be nice to people from different cultures</b>	72 (4.4%)	460 (28.0%)	1109 (67.6%)	1641 (100%)
<b>My parents expect me to be nice to people from different cultures</b>	34 (2.1%)	204 (12.4%)	1401 (85.5%)	1639 (100%)
<b>Teachers want us to be friends with students from other cultures</b>	39 (2.4%)	301 (18.4%)	1298 (79.2%)	1638 (100%)

Source: 2016 Intercultural Understanding Survey, CRP

Students were also asked about the role of teachers and their school in fostering cross-cultural understandings in the classroom. 66.3% stated they learn about different cultures in their class, and

61.1% stated their teacher talks to them about different cultures. This is an indication that a super-ordinate approach to cross cultural education is apparent, to most of the students.

<b>Table 5: Role of school in fostering cross-cultural understandings</b>				
	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>I learn about different cultures in my class</b>	156 (9.5%)	397 (24.2%)	1087 (66.3%)	1640 (100%)
<b>My teacher talks to us about different cultures</b>	168 (10.3%)	470 (28.7%)	1000 (61.1%)	1638 (100%)
<i>Source: 2016 Intercultural Understanding Survey, CRP</i>				

### **Appreciation of diversity**

Almost 90% of students noted it was good for their schools to have people from other cultures, and almost 70% of students stated they liked being around people from other cultures. These statistics are encouraging in terms of students' acceptance of cultural diversity. This high appreciation of diversity matches and exceeds population level support for cultural diversity (Dunn et al. 2004:416-417; Blair et al. 2017:6) but not teacher support which is slightly higher again (Dunn et al. 2013:20).

Less than half of students stated most of their friends came from the same culture as them, this indicates students have fairly culturally diverse friendship groups. However, one-quarter disagreed, inferring that their friendship networks are culturally diverse. There are other telling statistics. One-fifth of the students believe migrants should behave like Australians, suggesting assimilationist perspectives on migrant settlement and integration is held by only a minority of students. Other research done by CRP shows that such beliefs are much higher in the general population (above 40%). That research shows that as many as one-third of Australians are both pro-multicultural as well as pro-assimilationist (Dunn et al. 2004:416-417; Blair et al. 2017:6). These data on students align with those findings, although 41% of students could neither agree or disagree. Assimilationist thinking is not straightforward, and requires the thinking through of contradictions and the acceptance of assumptions, such as the narrow definition of what "Australian" means and so this needs to be learned. The large proportion of people with assimilationist views points to the unfinished and incomplete nature of the multicultural project.

<b>Table 6: Appreciation of diversity</b>				
	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Most of my friends are from the same culture as me</b>	440 (26.9%)	439 (26.8%)	759 (46.3%)	1638 (100%)
<b>I like being around people from other cultures</b>	53 (3.2%)	462 (28.8%)	1116 (68.0%)	1642 (100%)
<b>It is a good thing for my school to have people from other cultures</b>	24 (1.5%)	164 (10.0%)	1452 (88.5%)	1640 (100%)
<b>People who move to Australia should behave like Australians</b>	619 (37.7%)	683 (41.6%)	341 (20.8%)	1643 (100%)
<b>I know that Aboriginal stories should be important for all Australians</b>	72 (4.4%)	323 (19.7%)	1245 (75.9%)	1640 (100%)

<b>I know that land is important to Aboriginal Australians</b>	25 (1.5%)	116 (7.1%)	1502 (91.5%)	1642 (100%)
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Source: 2016 Intercultural Understanding Survey, CRP

We also looked at appreciation of diversity based on whether a student went to a city or country school (see Table 7), and whether they were a primary or secondary student (see Table 8). We found that students from country schools were more than twice as likely to believe that migrants should behave like Australians. This question tested support for assimilationist thinking around migrant settlement. The belief that it is a good thing for schools to have people from other cultures is expressed strongly across both city (90%) and country (83%) schools as well as primary (90%) and secondary students (86%). This suggests strong support and appreciation for cultural diversity. But the extent of the pro-diversity stance is stronger in students' from city schools and among primary students. We found that primary students were more likely to agree that anyone can be Australian, while both primary and secondary students showed strong disagreement that people who move to Australia should behave like Australians.

		School type	
		City	Country
<b>People who move to Australia should behave like Australians</b> p<.000	Disagree	554 (42.1%)	65 (19.9%)
	Neither agree or disagree	543 (41.3%)	140 (42.8%)
	Agree	219 (16.6%)	122 (37.3%)
	<i>Total</i>	<i>1316 (100%)</i>	<i>327 (100%)</i>
<b>It is a good thing for my school to have people from other cultures</b> p<.001	Disagree	17 (1.3%)	7 (2.1%)
	Neither agree or disagree	114 (8.7%)	50 (15.2%)
	Agree	1181 (90.0%)	271 (82.6%)
	<i>Total</i>	<i>1312 (100%)</i>	<i>328 (100%)</i>
<b>Anyone can be Australian</b> p<.000	Disagree	93 (7.1%)	33 (10.1%)
	Neither agree or disagree	317 (24.2%)	110 (33.5%)
	Agree	902 (68.8%)	185 (56.4%)
	<i>Total</i>	<i>1312 (100%)</i>	<i>328 (100%)</i>

Source: 2016 Intercultural Understanding Survey, CRP

		School type	
		Primary	Secondary
<b>Anyone can be Australian</b> p<.010	Disagree	78 (6.8%)	47 (9.7%)
	Neither agree or disagree	284 (24.7%)	142 (29.2%)
	Agree	789 (68.5%)	297 (61.1%)
	<i>Total</i>	<i>1151 (100%)</i>	<i>486 (100%)</i>
<b>People who move to Australian should behave like Australians</b> p<.825	Disagree	430 (37.4%)	189 (38.6%)
	Neither agree or disagree	478 (41.6%)	204 (41.6%)
	Agree	242 (21.0%)	97 (19.8%)
	<i>Total</i>	<i>1150 (100%)</i>	<i>490 (100%)</i>
<b>It is a good thing for my school to have people from other cultures</b> p<.053	Disagree	17 (1.5%)	7 (1.4%)
	Neither agree or disagree	102 (8.8%)	62 (12.8%)
	Agree	1034 (89.7%)	417 (85.8%)
	<i>Total</i>	<i>1153 (100%)</i>	<i>485 (100%)</i>

Source: 2016 Intercultural Understanding Survey, CRP



Awareness of Aboriginal culture is high among students, with 75% of students stating Aboriginal stories should be important to all Australians, and 90% of students stating they know land is important to Aboriginal Australians. Nonetheless this does mean that 1 in 10 students do not appreciate the important link between Aboriginal culture and land, and 1 in 5 are not of the view that Aboriginal stories should be important for all Australians. When we looked at this question based on responses from city and country schools we found that students from city schools had a slightly higher appreciation of Aboriginal culture than those from country schools (see Table 9).

<b>Table 9: Appreciation of Aboriginal culture</b>			
		<b>School type</b>	
		City	Country
<b>I know that land is important to Aboriginal Australians</b> p<.001	Disagree	16 (1.2%)	8 (2.4%)
	Neither agree or disagree	79 (6.0%)	37 (11.3%)
	Agree	1219 (92.8%)	283 (86.3%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1314 (100%)</b>	<b>328 (100%)</b>
<b>I know that Aboriginal stories should be important for all Australians</b> p<.214	Disagree	52 (4%)	20 (6.2%)
	Neither agree or disagree	262 (19.9%)	61 (18.8%)
	Agree	1001 (76.1%)	244 (75.1%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1315 (100%)</b>	<b>325 (100%)</b>

Source: 2016 Intercultural Understanding Survey, CRP

### Cultural confidence/sense of self

Over 7 out of 10 students stated they felt Australian. This is a relatively strong level of felt belonging. Only 6% of students disagreed that they felt Australian, although 18% were unable to agree or disagree. As part of this analysis we ran some cross-tabulations on whether students' responses or experiences were impacted by being a member of an ethnic minority group or not (as indicated by their country of birth). Students born overseas were significantly less likely to 'feel Australian' (51% as opposed to 80% of those who were born in Australia). This variation is troubling. It shows that a sense of self, when cached in terms of an Australian identity, is a problematic concept for many. 65% of students stated they thought anyone could be Australian. One-third of students were not able to agree that anyone can be Australian, which suggested a narrow notion of who is considered Australian.

<b>Table 10: Cultural confidence/sense of self</b>				
	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Total
<b>I feel I am Australian</b>	107 (6.5%)	303 (18.5%)	1230 (75.0%)	1640 (100%)
<b>Anyone can be Australian</b>	126 (7.7%)	427 (26.0%)	1087 (66.3%)	1640 (100%)

Source: 2016 Intercultural Understanding Survey, CRP

For both Australian-born and non-Australian born the data show a reasonably high level of cultural diversity in students' friendship groups, with 1 in 4 Australian-born and 1 in 3 non-Australian born expressing they had friends outside their cultural group. One of the additions to the contact theory conditions was the meaningfulness of the cross-cultural contact. Depth and repetition of encounter was seen as more facilitative of positive attitudes on diversity. Friendship groups are therefore a critical form of that, and the micro-publics of schools hold strong potential. However, only 27% of students were able to say that their friends were from different cultural groups to their own. Non-Australian born students were more likely to have a diverse friendship group than the Australian-

born students. It highlights that students from ethnic minority groups show little indication of forming ethnic enclaves, or excluding themselves from engagement with people outside their cultural group.

<b>Table 11: Belonging and cultural diversity based on being a member of an ethnic minority group</b>			
		<b>Were you born in Australia?</b>	
		Yes	No
<b>I feel I am Australian</b> p=<.000	Disagree	69 (5.1%)	38 (13.1%)
	Neither agree or disagree	198 (14.7%)	105 (36.3%)
	Agree	1084 (80.2%)	146 (50.5%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1351 (100%)</b>	<b>289 (100%)</b>
<b>Most of my friends are from the same culture as me</b> p=<.000	Disagree	329(24.4%)	111 (38.3%)
	Neither agree or disagree	345 (25.6%)	94 (32.4%)
	Agree	674 (50.0%)	85 (29.3%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1348 (100%)</b>	<b>290 (100%)</b>
<i>Source: 2016 Intercultural Understanding Survey, CRP</i>			

### Stereotypes of target groups

Only 23% of students agreed that they believe what they see on TV about people from other cultures. Over half of students expressed a neutral position on whether they believed what they see about other cultures on TV, and 21% disagreed. This indicates a very strong level of distrust of media, and suggests an impressive reach of 'critical perspective' among students, perhaps reflecting curriculum.

The high percentage of students that stated they neither agreed or disagreed that people from other cultures are good or smart has a number of possible points of analysis. It may suggest that students were uncertain of what the question was asking; it may also indicate that students have a strong sense of these questions as stereotyping people from different cultures.

<b>Table 12: Stereotypes of target groups</b>				
	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>People from other cultures are good</b>	24 (1.5%)	617 (37.6%)	999 (60.9%)	1640 (100%)
<b>People from other cultures are smart</b>	90 (5.5%)	911 (55.5%)	641 (39.0%)	1642 (100%)
<b>I believe what I see on TV about people from other cultures</b>	344 (21.0%)	922 (56.3%)	373 (22.8%)	1639 (100%)
<i>Source: 2016 Intercultural Understanding Survey, CRP</i>				

### Sense of place, community, and understanding of rural/urban life

A little over half (54%) of those who live in the city stated they liked living in the city. 80% of those who live in the country stated they liked living in the country. This suggests a greater sense of place, comfort and community is felt by those living in the country. 44% of those living in the city stated they would like to live in the country, whereas only 32% of those living in the country stated they would like to live in the city. Again, this suggests a higher level of contentment is felt by those living in the country. However, both statistics show a reasonable level of interest in experiencing something different. Statistics showing students' understanding of urban/rural life suggest there is

room to develop this further through means of exposure, such as the City and Country Alliance exchange program.

<b>Table 13: Sense of place, community, and understanding of rural/urban life</b>				
	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>I know what it is like to live in the country</b>	328 (20%)	321 (19.6%)	988 (60.4%)	1637 (100%)
<b>I know what it is like to live in the city</b>	246 (15.0%)	289 (17.6%)	1106 (67.4%)	1641 (100%)
<b>I like living in the city</b>	1616 (12.3%)	422 (32.3%)	724 (55.4%)	1307 (100%)
<b>I would like to live in the city</b>	118 (36.1%)	104 (31.8%)	105 (32.1%)	327 (100%)
<b>I like living in the country</b>	11 (3.4%)	50 (15.3%)	266 (81.3%)	327 (100%)
<b>I would like to live in the country</b>	217 (16.6%)	512 (39.1%)	581 (44.4%)	1310 (100%)

Source: 2016 Intercultural Understanding Survey, CRP

### Pro-social dispositions

Students' show a high level of what we would call pro-social dispositions; behaviours that intend to help others or show empathy towards others (Nelson et al. 2011). 90% of students wanted to see their peers show empathy towards people from a different culture, 74% stated they would help if they saw someone being treated badly because of their culture. However, only 63% of respondents stated they knew about ways to help if someone is treated badly because of their culture. This suggests that one-fifth of students are pro-social but need guidance on how to take pro-social action.

<b>Table 14: Pro-social dispositions</b>				
	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>I have seen students treated badly because of their culture</b>	498 (30.4%)	426 (26.0%)	716 (43.7%)	1640 (100%)
<b>I want other students to be nice to people from different cultures</b>	17 (1.0%)	148 (9.0%)	1478 (90.0%)	1643 (100%)
<b>I know about ways to help if someone is treated badly because of their culture</b>	98 (6.0%)	504 (30.8%)	1037 (63.3%)	1639 (100%)
<b>I try to help when I see someone being treated badly because of their culture</b>	45 (2.7%)	381 (23.2%)	1217 (74.0%)	1643 (100%)

Source: 2016 Intercultural Understanding Survey, CRP

We ran cross tabulations to see if students' pro-social disposition differed according to whether they went to a city or country school. We found that students from both country and city schools expressed strong pro-social dispositions, though students from city schools expressed higher degrees of pro-social attitudes and behaviours than their country school counterparts.

<b>Table 15: Pro-social disposition based on school type</b>			
		<b>School type</b>	
		<b>City</b>	<b>Country</b>
	<b>Disagree</b>	409 (31.1%)	89 (27.4%)

<b>I have seen students treated badly because of their culture</b> p=<.421	Neither agree or disagree	339 (25.8%)	87 (26.8%)
	Agree	567 (43.1%)	149 (45.8%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1315 (100%)</b>	<b>325 (100%)</b>
<b>It is a good thing for my school to have people from other cultures</b> p=<.010	Disagree	10 (0.8%)	7 (2.1%)
	Neither agree or disagree	109 (8.3%)	39 (11.9%)
	Agree	1195 (90.9%)	283 (86.0%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1314 (100%)</b>	<b>329 (100%)</b>
<b>I know about ways to help if someone is treated badly because of their culture</b> p=<.005	Disagree	66 (5.0%)	32 (9.8%)
	Neither agree or disagree	405 (30.8%)	99 (30.4%)
	Agree	842 (64.1%)	195 (59.8%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1313 (100%)</b>	<b>326 (100%)</b>
<b>I try to help when I see someone being treated badly because of their culture</b> p=<.007	Disagree	29 (2.2%)	16 (4.9%)
	Neither agree or disagree	295 (22.4%)	86 (26.2%)
	Agree	991 (75.4%)	226 (68.9%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1315 (100%)</b>	<b>328 (100%)</b>
<i>Source: 2016 Intercultural Understanding Survey, CRP</i>			

### Experiences of racism

The vast majority of students (approximately 80%) stated they had not experienced racism directed towards them. Nonetheless, 94 students did state that other students did not play with them because of their culture, and 108 stated they had been spat on, or pushed, or hit by other students because of their culture (see Table 16). These constitute a significant number of students who still experience racism in their educational setting. The form of racism tested (non-play, spat on, pushed or hit) would likely be experienced outside of the more formalised settings of classrooms, and these may be the micro-publics within schools where it harder to create the conditions for productive cross cultural contact. Imposing super-ordinate goals, institutional sanction for cross cultural contact, and avoiding competition and inequality (racial bullying) would be more difficult in playgrounds and thoroughfares. Schools have been found to be the most common setting in which children and adolescents experience racism and racial discrimination (Mansouri and Jenkins 2010). While beyond the scope of this analysis, it is worth noting that these figures are typically seen as an under-representation. For a range of reasons including fear, stigma, distrust of the systems/processes, people do not feel comfortable reporting experiences of racism directed at them.

<b>Table 16: Racist experiences</b>				
	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Other students didn't want to play with me because of my culture</b>	1298 (79.1%)	249 (15.2%)	94 (5.7%)	1641 (100%)
<b>I was spat on, or pushed or hit by other students because of my culture</b>	1370 (83.4%)	164 (10.0%)	108 (6.6%)	1642 (100%)
<i>Source: 2016 Intercultural Understanding Survey, CRP</i>				

We also ran cross-tabs on whether students from country or city schools had different responses in terms of experiences of racism (see Table 17). When we looked at whether a student from a city or country school had a different experience of racism the result was significant. The data show that students from country schools were more than twice as likely to be spat on, or pushed, or hit by

other students because of their culture, than those from city schools. While one-in-twenty city students reported experiencing this form of racism, the prevalence among country students was one-in-ten. However, there was little difference between country and city schools in response to the question of whether other students did not play with you because of your culture.

<b>Table 17: Experiences of racism based on type of school</b>			
		<b>School type</b>	
		City	Country
<b>I was spat on, or pushed, or hit by other students because of my culture</b> p<.000	Disagree	1126 (85.6%)	244 (74.6%)
	Neither agree or disagree	119 (9.0%)	45 (13.8%)
	Agree	70 (5.3%)	38 (11.6%)
	<i>Total</i>	<i>1315 (100%)</i>	<i>327 (100%)</i>
<b>Other students didn't want to play with me because of my culture</b> p<.150	Disagree	1050 (80%)	248 (75.6%)
	Neither agree or disagree	188 (14.3%)	61 (18.6%)
	Agree	75 (5.7%)	19 (5.8%)
	<i>Total</i>	<i>1313 (100%)</i>	<i>328 (100%)</i>

*Source: 2016 Intercultural Understanding Survey, CRP*

## Conclusions

This report shows that students participating in the Country City Alliance have a strong positive disposition towards cultural diversity and high levels of cultural awareness. In addition, more than 90% of students expressed strong pro-social dispositions, meaning they have a strong desire to help, and have empathy towards others. This is a strong outcome, though students also expressed a lack of knowledge of how to direct this pro-social disposition into action. This suggests that schools could take a more active role in guiding students on how they can respond when they witness or experience acts of racism and bullying.

However, there are areas that clearly show where points of intervention are needed. Students born overseas were significantly less likely to feel Australian, suggesting more work needs to be done to ensure students feel they belong, including a critical perspective on the current notion of what it means to be Australian. Students from country schools were more than twice as likely to experience racism and bullying than those from city schools. With Australians schools being the most common setting for children to experience racism and bullying (Mansouri & Jenkins 2010), reducing these rates and creating safe environments for children is an imperative.

From a positive viewpoint, research posits that schools can be micro-publics, and can be significant sites for meaningful cross cultural contact (Amin 2002; Ho 2011). Schools are sites where not only can cross-cultural contact occur, but this contact can be of greater depth and meaning. In schools, cross cultural contact can bear significant impact on attitudes towards cultural diversity and other cultural groups. This would suggest that the student exchange program, utilising Allport's conditions already mentioned in this report, serves as an important tool to develop students' resilience against the various factors that lead to racism and bullying.

As part of developing further steps, we propose research that can test the variation on attitudes and behaviours by school. This is not to identify specific schools or rate them but rather so we can generate findings on whether school matters, particularly when it comes to Allport's third and fourth conditions (1954). We would also suggest an ongoing longitudinal study that can test changes to students' attitudes and behaviours, particularly as they are exposed to a range of cross cultural contact programs. This would involve surveying students on the same sets of questions to gauge change, as well as finessing new sets of questions that are responsive to cross-cultural activities undertaken and the changing socio-political conditions more broadly.

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## Appendices

**Survey Questions****Q52. Are you a primary school student?**

- Yes
- No

**Q53. Consent for participating**

- Yes
- No

**Q1. Are you a:**

- Boy
- Girl

**Q2. Were you born in Australia?**

- Yes
- No

**Q3. Where were you born? \_\_\_\_\_****Q4. Do you speak a language other than English at home?**

- Yes
- No

**Q5. What language do you speak? \_\_\_\_\_****Q6. Was your mother born in Australia?**

- Yes
- No

**Q7. Where was your mother born? \_\_\_\_\_****Q8. Was your father born in Australia?**

- Yes
- No

**Q9. Where was your father born? \_\_\_\_\_****Q10. Which school do you go to?**

- Alma Public School
- Beaumont Road Public School
- Bourke Public School
- Broken Hill Public School
- Broken Hill High School
- Burke Ward Public School
- Buronga Public School
- Chatswood Public School

- Gol Gol Public School
- Gordon East Public School
- Greenacre Public School
- Hunters Hill Public School
- Killara Public School
- Lindfield Public School
- Lindfield East Public School
- Menindee Central
- Moree Public School
- Mungindi Central School
- Narraweena Public School
- Parramatta East Public School
- Pymble Public School
- Railway Town Public School
- Riverside Girls High School
- Roseville Public School
- Wentworth Public School
- Wiley Park Girls High School

**Q11. What year are you in?**

- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9

**Q12. It is important to me that I'm nice to people from different cultures**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q13. Other students expect me to be nice to people from different cultures**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q14. My parents expect me to be nice to people from different cultures**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q15. Teachers want us to be friends with students from other cultures**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q16. People from other cultures are good**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q17. People from other cultures are smart**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q18. Most of my friends are from the same culture as me**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q19. I like being around people from other cultures**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q20. It is a good thing for my school to have people from other cultures**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q21. People who move to Australia should behave like Australians**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q22. I know that Aboriginal stories should be important for all Australians**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q23. I know that land is important to Aboriginal Australians**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q24. Some people are poorer than me**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q25. I know what its like to live in the country**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q26. I know what its like to live in the city**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q27. I like living in the city**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q28. I would like to live in the city**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q29. I like living in the country**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q30. I would like to live in the country**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q31. I feel I am Australian**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q32. Anyone can be Australian**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q33. I believe what I see on TV about people from other cultures**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q34. I have seen students treated badly because of their culture**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q35. I want other students to be nice to people from different cultures**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q36. I know about ways to help if someone is treated badly because of their culture**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q37. I try to help when I see someone being treated badly because of their culture**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q38. Other students didn't want to play with me because of my culture**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q39. I was spat on, or pushed, or hit by other students because of my culture**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q40. I learn about different cultures in my class**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

**Q41. My teacher talks to us about different cultures**

- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree

## Participating schools

School	City/Country	Primary/Secondary
Alma Public School	Country	Primary
Beaumont Road Public School	City	Primary
Bourke Public School	Country	Primary
Broken Hill High School	Country	Secondary
Broken Hill Public School	Country	Primary
Burke Ward Public School	Country	Primary
Buronga Public School	Country	Primary
Chatswood Public School	City	Primary
Gol Gol Public School	Country	Primary
Gordon East Public School	City	Primary
Greenacre Public School	City	Primary
Hunters Hill Public School	City	Primary
Killara Public School	City	Primary
Lindfield East Public School	City	Primary
Lindfield Public School	City	Primary
Menindee Central	Country	K-12
Moree Public School	Country	Primary
Mungindi Central School	Country	K-12
Narraweena Public School	City	Primary
Parramatta East Public School	City	Primary
Pymble Public School	City	Primary
Railway Town Public School	Country	Primary
Riverside Girls High School	City	Secondary
Roseville Public School	City	Primary
Wentworth Public School	Country	Primary
Wiley Park Girls High School	City	Primary