Crisis in Teaching
- NT government schools experienced a 13.3% reduction in teaching staff and a 10% reduction in non-teaching staff, enrolments fell by only 2% (Shepherd, 2016).
- Rise in teacher workloads, with 42% of teachers saying they worked more than 50 hours per week, & 23% working > 55 hours per week (AEU, 2015).
- 50% of teachers resigning from teaching within the first five years (Arnup & Bowles, 2016).
- Negative impact on student achievement and the school.
- Teacher quality & performance under scrutiny, but “A lot of people are crying” “No one’s opinions are taken on board – leaves you hating your job – feels like not coping”

Findings
- Remote locality impacts on wellbeing: reasons for teachers in remote localities leaving the profession were isolation and lack of support (Buchan, 2012); interstate migration more common in NT (Carson, 2008).
- Indigenous concepts of wellbeing need inclusion (Purdie et al., 2010; Poroch et al., 2009).
- Mindfulness in Education: Our data supports studies that mindfulness-based training can improve teachers’ sense of well-being, teaching self-efficacy, classroom management, and interactions with their students (Singh et al., 2013, p. 226) is embodied activity
- Wellbeing in focus for students (social & emotional learning) but not yet for teachers
- Intrapersonal development and spiritual domains currently overlooked in PD offerings
- Wellbeing in job descriptions: #15143ClassroomTeacher; #38517 Senior Teacher
- Professional Development offerings website 2015-16: 744 PDs with 10 addressed wellbeing
- Kids Matter (X8), Early Career Teacher Network (X1) and Personal Pilates (X1)

Aim
Provide holistic seminars and workshops to support teacher wellbeing as professional development aligned to:

Australian Curriculum
- General Capabilities: Personal and Social Capabilities and Ethical Behaviour (ACARA, 2015)

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
- Engage in professional learning to improve practice (Standard 6.2)
- Engage with colleagues to improve practice (Standard 6.3) (AITSL, 2012)
- Combine interpersonal and intrapersonal wellbeing strategies that included mindfulness exercises

An early career teacher speaks
I found myself within a week connecting in a different way to place through Feldenkrais training. It became a serendipitous re-positioning, offering embodied mindfulness practice that not only connected me with place but became a crucial resource to draw on during the classroom territory I was to step into. Taking part in a one-day workshop on short mindfulness meditations and gentle movement, I found myself lying prone, feeling the ground beneath me, asking: how was my body connecting to this place? What was my mind/body aware of? My lungs filling up like billows, the ribcage expands to embrace the breath and expel tension. Attention to the breath, attention to posture and position and presence, these were the things that echoed back to me often while anticipating the classroom. Then Term Four arrived – I did not anticipate that the classroom would evoke the Contact Zone I experienced as a junior army cadet; I did not anticipate the similarities between the classroom and my cadet experience.

Methods
- 120 NT teacher participants
- Qualitative study: action research; interviews, (creative) reflections

Symposia:
- Making Positive Connections
- Awareness through Mindful Movement
- 10 week Mind/ Body courses delivered at a Darwin Middle School and a Regional Primary School

Impact

Conclusion
Teacher wellbeing must be included in Professional Development offerings and supported at systemic levels as ongoing (as opposed to ad hoc) and responsive to school localities and cultures. In 2017 we are offering fee-for-service Teacher Wellbeing Professional Development.

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