



Ministerial Advisory Committee For Educational Renewal

## Report on **Indigenous Education**

Recommendations to the Minister for Education and  
the Minister for the Arts

March 2004



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**Queensland** Government  
Department of **Education and the Arts**

Queensland the **Smart State**

**Ministerial Advisory Committee for Educational Renewal  
Membership of the Indigenous Education Sub-Committee**

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## Preamble

This sub-committee report is a response to a request in March 2003 from the Minister for Education, Anna Bligh, to members of her Advisory Committee for Educational Renewal (MACER) for specific advice around Indigenous education reforms in this State.

At the time, the Minister asked MACER to suggest key priority areas that could be the focus for action and resources in the coming years and where she could expect to see significant improvements in outcomes for Indigenous students.

The Minister expressed her concern that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students as a group are still achieving persistently lower academic results and have lower participation, retention and school completion rates than those of other students. Consequently, their future life and employment chances are being jeopardised. Schools with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are seemingly well resourced with additional funding from both State and Commonwealth<sup>1</sup>, however, the Minister indicated she wanted to see a clearer link between education expenditure and improved outcomes.

In response, MACER formed a sub-committee to prepare recommendations for the Minister. They met face to face during 2003 on three occasions and conducted subsequent discussions via email.

In Attachment 1 are listed a sample of the review reports, policies and strategies on Indigenous education over the last two decades to show that there has been no shortage of advice to government about how to address the imbalance in outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Near the top of that list is the Commonwealth Report of the Aboriginal Education Policy Taskforce, presented by respected Indigenous academic Paul Hughes, which resulted in the Aboriginal Education Policy (AEP), endorsed by all Australian governments in 1989. The policy set out 21 long-term goals with the objective of achieving educational equity for Indigenous Australians by the year 2000!

Other major reports and strategies on Indigenous education have reached similar conclusions about the systemic failure of education systems and the need to take urgent action to improve outcomes for Indigenous students in the interests of communities and the State. For whatever reasons, the exhortations to act and the numerous strategies and government supported programs have failed to convert the rhetoric into a reality that Indigenous communities can value.

The sub-committee members recognise that, if there is to be demonstrable progress in Indigenous education, the Queensland education system – State, Catholic and Independent – needs ways of implementing what is known about Indigenous education rather than ‘identifying and mapping the problem’ yet again.

## Scope of this report

As such, this report draws on the findings and proposals of previous reports, and the experience and advice of sub-committee members, to identify key issues and recommend a new approach to tackling these based on personal and professional accountability.

Consistent with the distribution of Indigenous students throughout Queensland schools as shown in Attachment 2, examples used are from the government school sector. Nevertheless, the sub-committee notes that the advice is worthy of consideration by non-government schools facing similar challenges in attending adequately to the needs of Indigenous students.

<sup>1</sup> Combined State and Commonwealth funding (State and non-State schools) for Indigenous education programs in 2002–03 in Queensland was \$15.15 million spent mainly in grants to schools.

## Some recent data to reinforce the need for priority action

The second National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training 2002 was released this year and is a comprehensive account of outcomes for Indigenous students across Australia. It shows mixed results. On the positive side, the 2001 results for Indigenous students on five out of six national benchmarks for reading, writing and numeracy for Years 3 and 5, are at the highest ever levels and the Year 12 school retention rate is at a record 38 per cent. The number of students enrolled in vocational education and training and in higher education institutions are also at their highest ever levels. However, the report summarises that 'whilst these improvements offer hope to those who work towards educational equality for Indigenous people across Australia, the report shows that there remains unacceptable disadvantage across key indicators. Year 12 retention rates may have risen to record levels but they are still only half that of non-Indigenous Australians. Numeracy and literacy results show improvement yet one in four Indigenous Year 3 children still cannot pass a basic reading test.'<sup>2</sup> A snapshot of some recent data from Queensland in standard Year 3, 5 and 7 tests and apparent retention rates are provided in Attachment 2. A key premise of this report is that transforming the performance of schools to improve Indigenous students' levels of participation and achievement is everyone's responsibility.

## The coincidence of circumstances – the time for making significant changes has never been better

The Minister's desire to improve the educational outcomes of Indigenous students is also what Indigenous communities want and rightfully demand from schools. Recent education policy initiatives such as the Education and Training Reforms for the Future (ETRF) are specifically aimed at all Queensland schoolchildren. A core commitment of government in the ETRF White Paper is that it 'will work with communities to develop localised services and better access to education and training for young people in rural, remote and Indigenous communities.' This policy focus provides an opportunity and incentive to make it possible for Indigenous communities to participate in and benefit from this agenda in the same way as other Queenslanders. Importantly, it also generates a real sense of incumbency upon education service providers to engage meaningfully with Indigenous communities in the interests of pursuing real student performance outcomes that are valued by communities.

## An Accountabilities Matrix

This report suggests that significant Indigenous student learning gains can and will be achieved by capitalising on existing political will and insisting that the accountabilities for improved Indigenous student outcomes are attended to by all who work in schools, as well as other relevant officers within the structure of the education system. These responsibilities are especially poignant in Indigenous education because of the history of unfulfilled aspirations and the performance of education systems subsequent to previous reports.

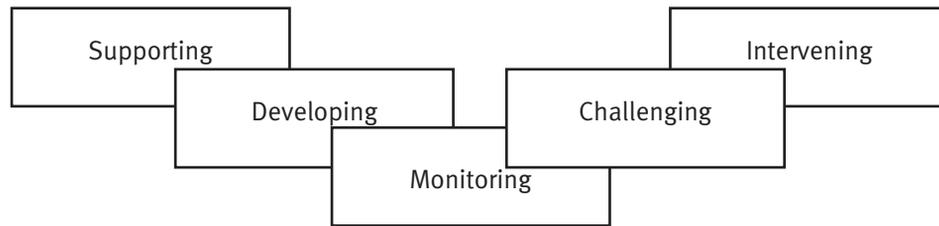
The sub-committee developed an Accountabilities Matrix<sup>3</sup> (Attachment 3), which outlines what can reasonably be expected at various relationship levels within an education system. It is worth emphasising that the matrix is not about enforcement and compliance per se. It is about developing relationships. The matrix attempts to provide some direction in shaping these relationships in the interests of achieving education policy outcomes.

<sup>2</sup> *Second National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training 2002*, Department of Education, Science and Training, 2003, p. iii.  
<http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/Publications/2003/nrpiet/2002split.htm>

<sup>3</sup> The Accountabilities Matrix is based on the work of Chris Sarra in his PhD thesis to be presented in 2004 entitled 'The role of schools in reinforcing Aboriginal perceptions of being Aboriginal'.



The Accountabilities Matrix identifies and locates important performance responsibilities and accountabilities that lie in an education system. It identifies responsibilities and accountabilities for officers according to five categories of action to improve student outcomes, namely:



It is argued that the matrix responsibilities and accountabilities, anchored by real and credible authority, should underpin the pursuit of constructive change in Indigenous education and dramatically improve Indigenous student performance outcomes.

The sub-committee has not set out to ‘point the finger’ or assign blame for underachievement in Indigenous education. We all share collective responsibility and must move forward. All officers within an education authority have a distinct role in generating better learning outcomes in Indigenous education. For example, within Education Queensland, position descriptions for officers other than classroom teacher state that:

‘Education Queensland is committed to providing quality education to ALL state school students in Queensland.’

There is no sub-clause or brackets after this statement that suggests ‘unless those state school students are Indigenous’.

The latest Indigenous education policies outlined in Education Queensland’s Partners for Success<sup>4</sup> strategy have the potential to achieve the outcomes desired.

Notwithstanding this, on the basis of historical precedent for policies in Indigenous education, the sub-committee notes that Partners for Success is at risk of becoming another sound strategy that achieves few worthwhile outcomes, unless the notion of individual and system accountability is addressed.

### Key issues for the improvement of Indigenous educational outcomes

The key issues identified by the sub-committee that should underpin the notion of individual and system accountability for improvements are:

- Challenging mindsets
- Quality teacher practice
- Need for Professional Learning and Development Aimed at Renewal and Transformation Rather than Maintenance
- Leading the reform agenda
- Improving authority and accountability to adequately improve Indigenous outcomes
- Strengthening school leadership
- Developing partnerships and cross-agency linkages

<sup>4</sup>The Partners for Success Strategy was published in 2000 to establish a framework for improving the education and employment outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Education Queensland. It comprises six policy elements covering standards of education, literacy, a Charter between Education Queensland and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, school–Community compacts (partnerships), whole-of-government service delivery and employment and career development. Elements of the strategy were trialled for three years in 38 schools with high proportions of Indigenous students.

### **Challenging mindsets**

The sub-committee identified that, as a system, Education Queensland has demonstrated a tendency to readily accept Indigenous underachievement in schools. Accordingly, it seems there is an underlying assumption that Indigenous underachievement is somehow 'normal' or 'given'. Disturbingly, there has been little outrage from within the system about dramatic and continuing levels of underachievement.

This phenomenon is underpinned at best by ignorance about what Indigenous children in schools can achieve, and at worst by racist beliefs that the learning capacity of Indigenous children is somehow inferior to that of other categories of students and therefore not worth the effort needed to improve performance.

Institutional racism is realised in a failure to be committed to system priorities such as the human resource targets for the extension and development of Indigenous leadership in schools, or in the less than rigorous interrogation of Indigenous student performance data for continuous improvement. At a district and school level, ignorance or racism or both are manifest in the system failure to challenge principals in schools and teachers in classrooms about continuing Indigenous underachievement.

It has seemingly been easier for education authorities to hold Indigenous communities culpable for failing to engage with schools for the purposes of education. If this culpability carries weight, it is also the case that the Queensland education system has failed to engage with Indigenous communities in a meaningful way that encourages, fosters and maintains appropriate levels of Indigenous education outcomes.

It is easy to describe Indigenous communities as a complex social and cultural context and to attribute student failure as a direct consequence of the context. However, the professional challenge for classroom teachers and their support infrastructure is to reflect inwards and evaluate the effectiveness of their own teaching practice and ask what it is that they are doing or not doing as a teacher that contributes to Indigenous student failure.

This position does not deny the commitment and hard work of many teachers and principals in Indigenous education settings. At the same time, in the case of Education Queensland, employees are part of a system-wide commitment to provide quality education for all state school students in Queensland. Education Unions (QTU and QEIU) therefore have a role in actively encouraging their members to have high learning expectations of Indigenous students in schools. Both the Minister and the Director-General have openly asserted their commitment to improved outcomes in Indigenous education, and this must resonate with all educators of Indigenous people.

Deep ethical questions are raised when teachers and other officers within our system somehow accept that such a large proportion of Indigenous students do not have what could be considered as a 'quality education'. Contemporary research about the role of teachers in children's educational progress in contrast to background factors reinforces the fundamental challenge that professional teaching ethics and practices face in the Indigenous education field.

### **Quality teacher practice**

The Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study Final Report (2001) verifies what has long been known: 'that some schools and principals, some teachers and approaches to teaching can make a significant difference in the quality of student learning outcomes.' Put simply, quality teachers create quality outcomes. More generally:

'... teacher and classroom variables account for more of the variance in pupil achievement than school variables. Also, in general, more powerful classroom



level variables are found that account for between-class variance than school-level variables in accounting for between-school variance.<sup>5</sup>

‘Carrots’ as well as ‘sticks’ are needed to ensure that the focus of classrooms is on producing the best quality educational experiences for Indigenous children. At the core of ‘quality education’ is the achievement of learning gains. Central to the provision of quality education for Indigenous children is the provision of quality learning and development opportunities for teachers. Such quality learning and development should promote teaching as about meaningful engagement with the learner’s context, regardless of where they come from. Teachers must be encouraged and supported to go beyond their classroom to develop more contextual knowledge in the interest of facilitating better Indigenous student outcomes.

There are many worthy initiatives in the area of Indigenous education and health, some of which are publicly recognised and rewarded through such schemes as the Showcase, Literacy or Excellence in Teaching awards. These incentives should continue and be expanded to reward strong performers who achieve set outcomes. They should also be used to attract quality teachers to schools with Indigenous children.

### **Need for Professional Learning and Development Aimed at Renewal and Transformation Rather than Maintenance**

There are two elements here that are likely to improve Indigenous education outcomes. The first is to include programs aimed at improving pedagogical capacity in Indigenous schools and specific teacher-centred techniques that provide the procedures for implementing the rhetoric. Being more precise about the pedagogical framework and the pedagogies in it will help to counter well-meaning pedagogy that has few worthwhile educational outcomes. The research tells us that much student ‘activity’, regardless of movement, intensity as children do tasks, and colourful classrooms results in little serious, systematic and sustained learning of knowledge and complex reasoning processes of the kinds required in today’s world.

The second issue is that Indigenous school leaders need systematic preparation in particular kinds of knowledge, skills, strategies, and tools that provide them with expert capabilities they need to have a positive impact on student achievement<sup>6</sup>. If effective leadership is primarily about knowing when, how, and why to do something rather than simply knowing what to do, principals in Indigenous schools especially need this capability while at the same time protecting aspects of culture, values, and norms worth preserving. In short, we strongly advocate a systematic, Indigenous school and student-wide strategic professional learning and development program aimed at the improvement of instructional capacity and its leadership in order to provide some guarantees that Indigenous schooling adds value to students. This is a matter of priority in Indigenous education and, indeed, more generally.

### **Leading the reform agenda**

The sub-committee agreed that an important point of leverage had to be identified if changes to the present circumstances in Indigenous education were to be advanced beyond the rhetoric of this paper. The sub-committee determined that a process driven by the Executive Directors (Schools) (or equivalent positions in the non-State sector) and school principals was needed for the best chance for success in making significant educational gains for Indigenous students. Executive Director (Schools) and/or school principals must be acknowledged as the major change agent position

<sup>5</sup>Scheerens, J. (1993) Basic school effectiveness research: items for a research agenda. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 4: 1, p. 20.

<sup>6</sup>Waters, T., Marzano, R. J., McNulty, B. (2003) *Balanced Leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement: A Working Paper*. McREL. [www.mcrel.org/PDF/LeadershipOrganizationDevelopment/5031RR\\_BalancedLeadership.pdf](http://www.mcrel.org/PDF/LeadershipOrganizationDevelopment/5031RR_BalancedLeadership.pdf)



to produce awareness and promotion of the responsibilities and accountabilities matrix.

Persons in these positions are required to demonstrate a proven ability to provide leadership and strategic direction that enables principals and schools to deliver the performance targets of their system, including targets for Indigenous students. It is worth reiterating that, the accountabilities nominated by the matrix do not represent additional duties, but simply articulate the duties of their position description and the attainment of objectives identified already outlined in the 10-year education outlook in the Queensland State Education — 2010 document.

All officers within the Queensland education system need to be ‘committed to providing quality education to all ... students in ... Queensland’ and all should be concerned about producing improved educational outcomes for Indigenous students in schools. This means teacher aides, teachers, school administrators and district and Central Office personnel will all play respective roles leading the reform agenda of Indigenous education.

### **Improving authority and accountability to adequately improve Indigenous outcomes**

The rhetoric on Indigenous education to date adequately identifies policies and strategies that could, if properly applied, result in improved outcomes for Indigenous education. Such policies however rarely articulate or affirm the responsibilities and accountabilities of officers at various levels of the system ranging from Central Office personnel to principals and teachers in classrooms.

In order for substantive improvements to be realised for Indigenous students, the sub-committee determined that responsibilities and accountabilities need to extend to senior officers in the management structure of Education Queensland and other education providers where there are Indigenous students in the schools. The sub-committee gathered anecdotal evidence that failure of previous Indigenous education policies to lead to sustained improvements in Indigenous outcomes could be attributed, in part, to the lack of accountability at the highest levels as well as the departure of senior officers who had been pivotal in the implementation of such policies.

Members of the sub-committee articulated a frustration with a system that communicates a sense of ‘no consequence’ for poor outcomes in Indigenous education. Put simply, if a teacher resides over a classroom with continuing Indigenous underachievement, there is often no consequence. If a principal resides over a school with continuous Indigenous underachievement, there is often no consequence. In Education Queensland, if an Executive Director (Schools) resides over a district with continuing Indigenous underachievement, there is seemingly no consequence. If senior officers reside over policy and program areas with continuous Indigenous underachievement, again there is seemingly little or no consequence.

### **Strengthening school leadership**

Attachment 2 graphically shows that Indigenous students are in the greatest need of quality teachers and quality leadership. The reality, however, is paradoxical to what is considered necessary, that is, schools whose data clearly demonstrate a need for exceptional teachers and school leaders are seemingly staffed with inexperienced teachers and principals.

The sub-committee is pleased to note however that the strategy in Education Queensland of targeting and screening teachers for entry into a pool of quality applicants for Indigenous schools is showing early signs of positive progress. A similar strategy must be implemented as soon as possible to attract exceptional school administrators to such schools.

Exceptional school administrators could be identified and targeted for negotiation of a professional package designed to attract them to Indigenous schools requiring



strong leadership. Negotiations could involve discussions around salaries, sabbaticals, study sponsorship and/or guaranteed return transfers. Those administrators in question would certainly not be expected to make changes overnight, but rather to progress a school further down the track to a place where another exceptional administrator could be contracted to take over and progress the school even further. It is worth noting that such a strategy, while it may sound resource intensive, may actually cut costs by reducing the degree of teacher and principal turnover in communities, and the exorbitant costs associated with transferring people in and out frequently.

A strategy to foster Indigenous leadership in schools throughout Education Queensland must also be developed and implemented as a matter of urgency, and the sub-committee questions why this has not emerged earlier as a priority. The lack of Indigenous leadership was highlighted recently with a limited pool of Indigenous educators available with substantial leadership capacity to progress the Partners for Success agenda.

The sub-committee recognises RATEP – a community-based (previously confined to remote areas) Teacher Education Program delivered in association with James Cook University – as an effective means of installing qualified Indigenous teachers and leaders in schools however the program delivery needs to be reviewed and updated.

RATEP was conceived and implemented in the late 1980s and early 1990s respectively. It has undergone many transformations as its funding and other resource bases have shifted over more than a decade. Its fundamental principles, which sharply defined the time of implementation, require restating and possibly retuning to meet the requirements of (i) continuing low performances in Indigenous schooling (ii) the demands of QSE—2010 and ETRF as well as the ethos of other provider imperatives such as The Queensland Bishops Project—Catholic Schools For the 21st Century and (iii) the irrefutable evidence that Indigenous education is in urgent need of a fresh approach and a revamp that will enable a close focus on the achievement of worthwhile and meaningful educational outcomes. The Minister needs to be certain that RATEP, an icon of a successful initiative in Indigenous education, continues to deliver educational outcomes appropriate to the 2000s. For these reasons, a review of its fundamental purposes, means and outcomes is appropriate.

### **Developing partnerships and cross-agency linkages**

Education Queensland's Review of education and employment program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Education Queensland in February 2000 concluded that local level innovation and a solutions-oriented mindset are the important drivers if curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting and employment policies and programs are to be effective in meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples:

‘The future success of local innovation is founded on the building of effective partnerships, underpinned by agreed targets and mutual obligations, between government and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.’

Apart from the still tentative outcomes from the negotiation tables of the Cape York Partnerships at the community level, there are limited outcomes with the establishment of cross-government operations aimed at Indigenous education issues. In addition, there has been limited provision of more integrated whole-of-government services. Issues of truancy, concerns of health and wellbeing and juvenile justice are all matters that would be more efficiently resolved through cross-agency teams working in close collaboration (eg Education, Police, Justice, Families, Health).

It is well worth considering the pursuit of solutions to improving Indigenous education outcomes beyond traditional boundaries. For instance, the Department of Innovation and Information Economy, which provides funding in certain circumstances for the

development of innovative ICT programs, could be approached to be a partner in developing initiatives that are responsive to local circumstances. Other faculties within universities such as Creative Industries must also be considered, as well as the notion of corporate partnerships with large agencies.

## Recommendations

Based upon the above discussion, the sub-committee recommends that the Minister:

1. challenges the systemic mindset that tolerates or accepts the continuation of underperformance in Indigenous education by asserting the rights of Indigenous people to a quality education;
2. instigates the application of the accountabilities matrix throughout the Education Queensland structure to ensure that all officers of the Queensland education system are meeting their professional responsibilities by challenging, supporting, developing, monitoring and intervening in the interests of improved Indigenous education outcomes;
3. directs within Education Queensland mechanisms to ensure that Executive Directors (Schools) apply the Accountabilities Matrix to lead reform that ensures the rigorous pursuit of improved Indigenous student outcomes that are aligned with Destination 2010 and 'Smart State' targets, and valued by respective Indigenous communities;
4. directs all schools to strengthen learning and management structures to ensure accountability for a greater degree of alignment between the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment practices in Indigenous education;
5. establishes a process to identify exceptional administrators and other quality leaders in schools, and urges employers to negotiate packages to attract them to Indigenous schools;
6. establishes a review of RATEP (Remote Area Teacher Education Program) for the purposes of significantly enhancing its capacity to produce greater numbers of quality Indigenous teachers;
7. utilises Negotiation Tables and other existing mechanisms to ensure that other Queensland Government departments and Indigenous communities take joint responsibility for developing local strategies to reduce absenteeism, improve student health and have a positive impact on improved learning outcomes;
8. convenes a meeting of CEOs of Education Queensland, Catholic Education, leading representatives of AISQ, and Department of Education, Science and Training (Cwlth) to consider and affirm individual and collective responses arising from this report; and
9. strengthens Education Queensland's strategy for targeting and screening quality teachers for schools in Indigenous communities.

## Conclusion

The sub-committee concludes that a failure to clearly articulate the accountabilities of education officers and teachers for improved Indigenous student outcomes is the major silence in previous Indigenous policies. Accordingly, the sub-committee advocates mechanisms for ensuring that current Indigenous education policy is worth retaining. It is crucial, however, that this policy moves beyond rhetoric and creates positive realities for Queensland's Indigenous children. In 15 years from now, great leaps forward should be able to be demonstrated, not more rhetoric of urgency against a background of continued endemic failure.

To ensure the integrity of the education system, all officers should know what is expected and attend to their roles in ensuring that ALL Queenslanders, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, are provided with a quality education.



## List of key reports, policies and strategies related to Indigenous education in the last two decades

- 1985 Report of the Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Programs**
- The Mick Miller report documented the low level of Indigenous disadvantage and made recommendations for changes to Aboriginal education and training. The report made the connection between education and employment. It provided evidence that improvement in education and training levels could overcome racism, geographic isolation and cultural difference and produce equal employment outcomes.
- 1988 Report of the Aboriginal Education Policy Task Force, Department of Employment, Education and Training**
- The Commonwealth established an AEP Task Force (chaired by Paul Hughes) to advise on all aspects of Aboriginal education in Australia, to assess the findings of recent research and policy reports, and to prepare priorities for the funding of existing programs and new initiatives. The Report of the Task Force made a series of recommendations and called for a new national policy to address concerns with Indigenous education.
- 1989 The Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Programs report (Mick Miller 1985) and the Aboriginal Education Policy Taskforce (Hughes 1988) led to the establishment of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy.**
- 1990 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (NATSIEP)**
- From its launch in January 1990, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education policy has committed all Australian governments to work towards educational equity for Indigenous Australians.
- The AEP sets out 21 long-term goals under the following aims:
- Involvement of Aboriginal people in educational decision making.
  - Equality of access to educational services.
  - Equality of educational participation.
  - Equitable and appropriate education outcomes.
- 1990 The introduction of the Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program (AESIP)**
- The Commonwealth Government passed the *Indigenous Education (Supplementary Assistance) Act 1989* which supported the AEP through the Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program (AESIP), as well as through several direct assistance programs.
- 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC)**
- In April, the final report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) was released. It noted that the lack of success of the formal education system to deliver equitable outcomes for Indigenous people was inextricably linked to the disproportionate representation of Indigenous Australians in custody. The Royal Commission endorsed the AEP goals and emphasised the importance of the policy as a way of ensuring that Indigenous Australians achieve a greater degree of control over education services.
- 1993 The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) was established by the Council of Australia Governments (COAG) in 1993.**
- MCEETYA agreed to undertake a national review of the effectiveness of the AEP in its first triennium in improving access to, participation in, and outcomes

from education for Indigenous people. The National Review (chaired by Mandawuy Yunupingu) was undertaken during 1993 and 1994 and its results published in 1995. The MCEETYA then established an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Task Force, which developed a National Strategy for the Education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 1996–2002.

**1995 National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples released.**

**1996 A National Strategy for the Education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, 1996–2002, MCEETYA and Commonwealth**  
<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/mceetya/public/pub3312.htm>

The National Strategy for the Education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (1996–2002) built on the recommendations of the 1995 National AEP Review and recommended reforms in the implementation, evaluation and arrangements relating to the 21 national goals of the AEP. The evaluation of initiatives undertaken in all sectors was given high priority, a six-year period of emphasis on financial inputs into Indigenous education came under scrutiny, and MCEETYA joined the Commonwealth in a national effort to focus on educational outcomes instead of inputs.

MCEETYA reaffirmed its commitment to the AEP and governments pledged to endeavour to increase their financial efforts to improve Indigenous education.

**1996 AESIP funding arrangements: a more equitable and needs based system**

In response to the recommendations of the National Review, the *Indigenous Education (Supplementary Assistance) Amendment Act 1996* was passed in May. The amendments to the Act restructured AESIP and resulted in an acceptance of the significantly increased level of funding proposed by the previous government and a greater commitment by the Commonwealth Government. Differential funding rates for preschool, school and VET were paid with higher rates paid to the non-government sector. This resulted in a fairer and more manageable system. It signified that both sides of federal politics recognised that there was an urgent need to address the deficiencies in Indigenous education and to make it a high priority issue. A suite of indicators for the measurement of progress in each of the MCEETYA priority areas for the 1997–1999 triennium was established.

**1997 Introduction of the new IESIP and the first funding quadrennium (1997– 2000)**

In December 1997, the Commonwealth Government launched a series of Strategic Results Projects (SRPs). They were short, sharply focused initiatives aimed at improving access to schooling, at improving attendance rates, and at promoting academic achievement in literacy, numeracy and vocational education and training to the non-Indigenous educational standard. They were also a major contribution to the capital upgrading of the educational infrastructure of non-government providers. The DEST publication, *What Works*, details the success of many of the projects.

**1998 Indigenous school-to-work transition**

<http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/indigenous/publications/schooltowork.htm>

In 1998, the then Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs established a Task Force on School to Work Transitions for Indigenous Australians. As part of this process, the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) was commissioned to produce a Report to inform departmental policy development as well as assist in the review of its education, employment and training-related programs. It also provides data which can be used to adjust program delivery aimed at increasing the level of access to services by Indigenous young people.



- 2000 National Indigenous Education Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, MCEETYA**  
<http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/Indigenous/nielns.htm>  
 During 2000, the National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (NIELNS) was launched. The strategy's objective is to ensure that Indigenous students reach levels of literacy and numeracy comparable with other Australians through methods such as raising school attendance rates, addressing health problems that undermine learning, attracting and retaining good teachers and using the most effective teaching methods. The strategy requires all States and Territories to develop an implementation plan that sets out how they will use their own resources, as well as the Commonwealth's mainstream recurrent grants and Indigenous-specific supplementary funding to achieve the goals of the plan.
- 2000 Achieving educational equality for Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (revised April 2000) MCEETYA Taskforce on Indigenous Education**  
<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/mctyapdf/reporta.pdf>  
 The Taskforce provided advice to Ministers on making the achievement of educational equality for Australia's Indigenous peoples an urgent national priority.
- 2002 What works: explorations in improving outcomes for Indigenous students**  
[http://www.acsa.edu.au/publications/whatworks\\_sections.htm](http://www.acsa.edu.au/publications/whatworks_sections.htm)  
 A set of professional development materials were developed for use by schools drawing on the lessons which had been learnt from the IESIP Strategic Results Projects (SRPs) and from other schools which have been helping their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve excellent results. This initiative funded 83 projects involving 3800 students across a broad range of topics, locations and contexts, all designed to explore how improvements in achievement might be made relatively quickly through dedicated resources and effort.
- 2003 Second National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training 2002**  
<http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/Publications/2003/nrpiet/2002split.htm>  
 The first National Report to Parliament was in 2001. The Commonwealth Government provides around \$468 million each year for Indigenous education. They have agreements in place with education providers around Australia from State and Territory government systems, schools and vocational education providers for the 2001–2004 period. These agreements incorporate expectations of educational achievement across a number of measures. This report will help shape priorities for the Government's funding and administrative arrangements for the next quadrennium (2005–2008).
- 2003 Dare to Lead Coalition**  
<http://cust49.metawerx.com.au/servlet/Web?cid=14&cde=21471869&action=start>  
 With its genesis in a forum of State and non-State school principals in 2000, an ongoing coalition of schools, their principals, and education institutions is forming during 2003. Coalition members are publicly committing to improvements in Indigenous education. The most important purpose of the Coalition's work will be to:
- support improved mainstream educational outcomes for Indigenous students, and
  - to increase the pace at which the goal of producing equivalence between outcomes for Indigenous students with those of the rest of the Australian student population is reached.

Over 1300 schools nationwide have joined the coalition as at November 2003. The focus is on a new paradigm of professional learning by strengthening and supporting pre-existing networks to work actively on strategies in local areas to meet a few, strategic but realistic targets.

## Queensland

- 2000 **Review of Education and Employment Programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Education Queensland**, Department of Education, Brisbane.  
<http://education.qld.gov.au/publication/production/reports/pdfs/2000/2000-03-revedempltprogs.pdf>
- 2000 **Strategy for the Continuous Improvement of Education and Employment Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Education Queensland ('Partners for Success')**, Department of Education, Brisbane.  
<http://education.qld.gov.au/publication/production/reports/pdfs/2000/2000-03-partsuccess.pdf>
- 2003 **Partners for Success School Information Kit 2003 – 2005 (553k)**  
**Partners for Success Action Plan Executive Summary 2003 – 2005 (365k)**



## Statistics on numbers of Indigenous students in state and non-state schools

### No. of full-time Indigenous and all students in Queensland State and Non-state schools – 2003

State schools			Non-state schools			Qld. schools		
Indigenous	All students	% Indig.	Indigenous	All students	% Indig.	Indigenous	All students	% Indig.
30 629	445 025	6.9	4608	184 746	2.5	35 237	629 771	5.6

Source: ABS Schools, Australia – 2003 (Catalogue no. 4221.0)

### Queensland state school apparent retention rates (ARR) year 8 to year 12

Year	ARR (%)
2001	73.6
2002	76.5
2003	76.1

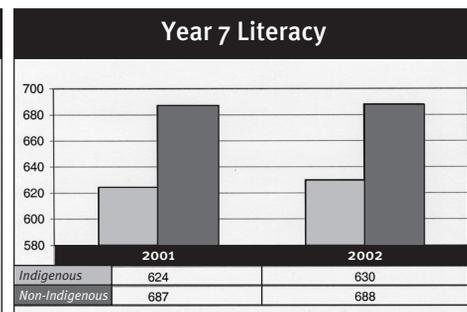
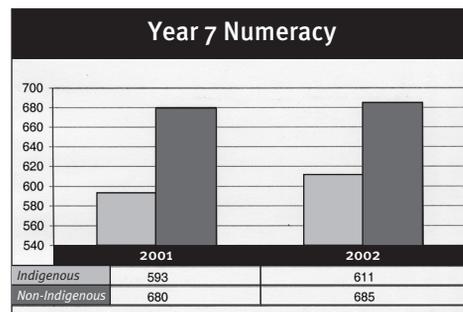
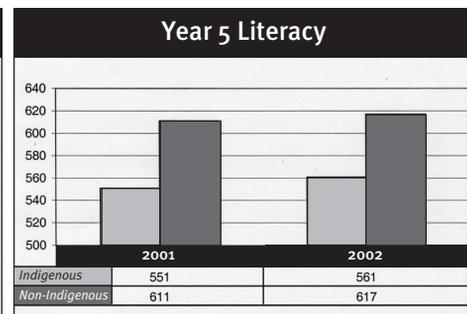
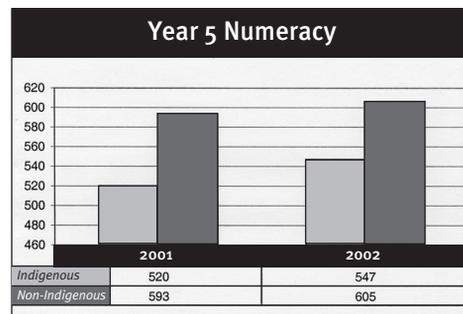
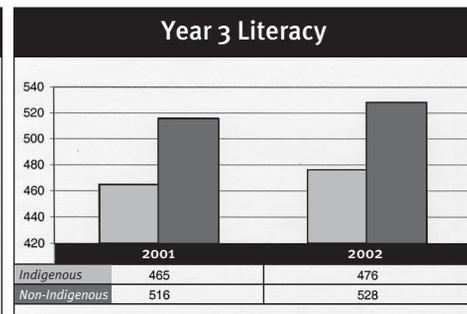
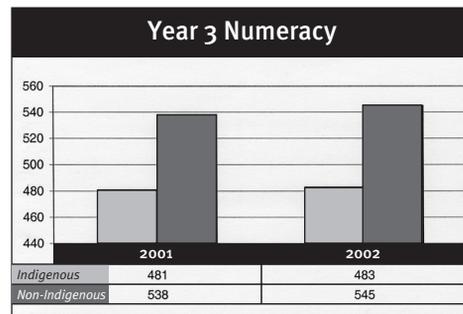
### Queensland state school Indigenous apparent retention rates (ARR) year 8 to year 12

Year	ARR (%)
2001	48.3
2002	51.7
2003	50.6

Note: Rates based on full-time enrolments

Source: Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW)

## Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Performance in the Years 3, 5 and 7 Literacy and Numeracy Tests



Note: The source of these measures is the Queensland Studies Authority testing of Years 3, 5 and 7 students in August each year. The Years 3, 5 and 7 test result scale scores (on the left hand side of the graphs) are indicators of achievement in literacy and numeracy. The literacy scale score is a composite measure based on results in reading and viewing and writing. The numeracy scale score is a composite measure based on results in number, data (including measurement) and space. The higher the score the stronger the performance.

## Accountabilities Matrix

Key:

P4S – Partners for Success action plan;

IESIP – Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program (Commonwealth funds);

CO – Central Office

EDS – Executive Director (Schools)

MFP – Management for Performance

Accountability	Challenging	Supporting	Developing	Monitoring	Intervening
CENTRAL OFFICE	<p>Asking the hard questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent do we commit to/ believe in/support P4S?</li> </ul>	Facilitate delivery of Commonwealth agenda	<p>Foster Indigenous Leadership</p> <p>Ensuring understanding within CO of Indigenous Education agenda</p>	<p>Ensuring strategic expenditure of IESIP funds</p> <p>Scrutinising Indigenous employee statistics</p>	<p>Negotiating a process to ensure renewed and positive pursuit of P4S agenda</p> <p>Applying MFP processes in areas where P4S policy and targets are not attended to adequately</p> <p>Reward and celebrate success</p>
CENTRAL OFFICE – EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS (SCHOOLS)	<p>Asking the hard questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent are you committed to/ believe in/ support P4S?</li> <li>To what extent do you believe Indigenous student performance can be improved?</li> <li>How will you respond to these beliefs?</li> </ul>	<p>Ensuring delivery of clear policy directions</p> <p>Facilitate delivery of Commonwealth agenda</p> <p>Providing resources and/or key personnel to assist with delivery of P4S as required</p>	<p>Ensuring EDSs have skills and capacity to engage with Indigenous communities</p> <p>Promoting P4S strategy</p> <p>Generating understanding and enthusiasm for P4S strategy</p>	<p>Ensuring strategic expenditure of IESIP funds</p> <p>Scrutinising correlation between IESIP expenditure and student outcomes in Districts</p> <p>Scrutinising Indigenous student performance in respective Districts</p>	<p>Negotiating a process to ensure renewed and positive pursuit of P4S agenda</p> <p>Applying MFP processes in areas where P4S policy and targets are not attended to adequately</p> <p>Reward and celebrate success</p>
EDSs – PRINCIPALS	<p>Asking the hard questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent are you committed to/ believe in/ support P4S?</li> <li>To what extent are you meaningfully engaged with the Indigenous community?</li> <li>To what extent is your performance as a Principal contributing to Indigenous underachievement/ absenteeism/ lack of engagement in the school?</li> <li>To what extent do you believe Indigenous student performance can be improved in your school?</li> <li>How will you respond to these beliefs?</li> </ul>	<p>Providing resources and/or key personnel to assist with delivery of P4S as required</p> <p>Providing strategic Leadership on P4S agenda within their District and in respective communities</p>	<p>Ensuring Principals have skills and capacity to engage with Indigenous communities</p> <p>Modelling engagement with Indigenous communities</p> <p>Promoting P4S strategy</p>	<p>Generating understanding and enthusiasm for P4S strategy</p> <p>Ensuring strategic expenditure of IESIP funds in the District</p> <p>Scrutinising correlation between IESIP expenditure and student outcomes in Schools</p> <p>Scrutinising Indigenous student performance in respective schools</p> <p>Examining the extent to which P4S is pursued by all Principals</p>	<p>Negotiating a process to ensure renewed and positive pursuit of the P4S agenda, as well as improved Indigenous student outcomes in the school</p> <p>Applying MFP processes in areas where P4S policy and targets are not attended to adequately</p> <p>Applying MFP processes in areas where Indigenous student performance is not attended to adequately within the school</p> <p>Reward and celebrate success</p>



Accountability	Challenging	Supporting	Developing	Monitoring	Intervening
PRINCIPALS – TEACHERS	<p>Asking the hard questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent are you committed to/ believe in/ support P4S?</li> <li>• To what extent are you meaningfully engaged with the parents of the Indigenous children in your classroom?</li> <li>• To what extent is your performance as a teacher contributing to Indigenous underachievement/ absenteeism/ lack of engagement in the classroom?</li> <li>• To what extent do you believe Indigenous student performance can be improved in your classroom?</li> <li>• How will you respond to these beliefs?</li> </ul>	<p>Providing resources and/or key personnel to assist with Indigenous student/community engagement as required (eg family support worker)</p> <p>Facilitating productive links between teachers and Indigenous community</p> <p>Providing strategic Leadership on P4S agenda within their school and community</p> <p>Ensuring some degree of Indigenous leadership in the school</p> <p>Assisting teachers to challenge/ understand Indigenous students</p>	<p>Ensuring Teachers have skills and capacity to meaningfully engage Indigenous students in respective classrooms</p> <p>Ensuring teachers are able to deliver productive pedagogies to Indigenous children</p> <p>Ensuring teachers develop a meaningful understanding of the context of Indigenous learners</p>	<p>Ensuring strategic expenditure of IESIP funds in the school</p> <p>Scrutinising correlation between IESIP expenditure and student outcomes in the school</p> <p>Closely scrutinising Indigenous student performance data in respective classrooms</p> <p>Examining the extent to which P4S (including reconciliation) is embraced by teachers and pursued in their classrooms</p>	<p>Negotiate a process to ensure renewed and positive pursuit of P4S agenda</p> <p>Applying MFP processes in areas where P4S policy and targets are not attended to adequately</p> <p>Reward and celebrate success</p>
TEACHERS – CHILDREN	<p>Helping Indigenous children to contemplate some hard questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent do you truly believe you can be as good as anyone else in this classroom?</li> <li>• To what extent do you believe being Indigenous is something to be proud of?</li> </ul>	<p>Establishing a classroom environment in which Indigenous children are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supported</li> <li>• encouraged</li> <li>• challenged</li> <li>• understood</li> <li>• respected</li> </ul>	<p>Attending to individual needs</p> <p>Ensuring high expectations of Indigenous children</p> <p>Ensuring Indigenous children have access to curriculum programs that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meaningful</li> <li>• responsive</li> <li>• challenging</li> <li>• NOT ‘watered down’</li> </ul>	<p>Maintaining meaningful and reputable Indigenous student data</p> <p>Informal connections with Indigenous students maintain positive relationships</p>	<p>Administering firm consequences for inappropriate behaviour</p> <p>Developing alternative approaches to learning if required</p> <p>Following up on absenteeism</p> <p>Getting parents and grandparents involved in classroom concerns</p> <p>Reward and celebrate success</p>

