

Chapter 8

Homeland Centres Education

INTRODUCTION

8.1 An important way in which Aboriginal people living a more traditionally-oriented lifestyle have sought to gain greater control over their lives and also over the provision of education for their children is through moving from towns, settlements and missions to 'outstations' or 'homeland centres'. This movement has had a significant impact in northern Australia in the last decade. It reflects the desire of Aboriginal groups to return to a more traditional way of life, often on traditional land. The desire to escape the tensions of life on the larger settlements where different tribal and language groups live in close proximity to each other and where the consumption of alcohol can be a problem, is an important motivation for the move. The smaller, more homogeneous, groups have been able to re-establish communities along more traditional social lines and under traditional leadership.

8.2 Homeland communities, having established themselves on their own terms, make different requests of government for the provision of services, including educational services. Some communities believe that the provision of basic services, bringing with them non-Aboriginal people and technology, will undermine the autonomy they have sought to establish. Other homeland centres desire a full range of services, although they want them to be provided in a way that does not erode the independence of the community. These differing requirements are reflected in requests for educational services made by the communities. Some prefer to have no formal schooling system and choose to educate their children in Aboriginal ways, while other communities want their children to receive schooling in English literacy and numeracy. In all homeland centres the community decides what aspects of Aboriginal culture will be taught and by whom.

8.3 The Commonwealth Government provides financial assistance for communities which choose to move to homeland areas to allow them to establish basic facilities. The responsibility for providing educational services to homeland centre communities lies with the State and Northern Territory Governments. Commonwealth funds are used to assist State and Territory Governments to provide educational services to homeland centres, for example, by funding additional Aboriginal teaching assistant positions and more recently by funding the provision of school facilities in homeland centres.

CURRENT PROVISION OF EDUCATION TO HOMELAND CENTRES

8.4 Homeland centres have been established throughout northern Australia, although the movement has tended to concentrate in the Northern Territory where successful land rights claims have given Aboriginal people the opportunity to move back to their traditional country. The Northern Territory has developed specific educational policies and provisions to cater for homeland centres. This is shown by the fact that, at the end of 1983, there were 63 homeland centres in the Northern Territory being provided with an education service. This represents only a small proportion of the estimated 400 homeland centres which exist in the Northern Territory.

8.5 The initiative to develop or request an education service for homeland centres in the Northern Territory rests, appropriately, with the homeland centre community. Where requests are made by homeland centres for the provision of an education service the

school is visited by the regional superintendent and the principal from the nearest settlement (or resource) school to evaluate whether the school meets the criteria for provision of educational support. These criteria are:

- a degree of stability;
- a bone fide interest in developing a school; and
- that a local Aboriginal assistant teacher (approved as suitable) is available.¹

8.6 If the homeland centre satisfies the three criteria then an education service will be provided, as far as possible, according to the assessed community needs. A suitable Aboriginal assistant teacher chosen by the community is employed and a visiting teacher from the resource school is appointed. The Aboriginal assistant teacher is expected to make a commitment to undertake teacher training to improve his or her qualifications, although the Northern Territory Government claimed that it is not possible to provide adequate on-site training for the Aboriginal assistant teachers because of the extreme isolation of homeland centres. Appropriate training can only be provided through Batchelor College (including the Remote Area Teacher Education programs) and Darwin Community College. Before commencing duties, the visiting teachers normally undertake a comprehensive induction course which provides information about the general Aboriginal community and specific information about the homeland centre to which the teacher will go.

8.7 The homeland centre school is considered to be an extended class of the central resource school. A class is provided in the resource school for children temporarily resident in the central settlement. This is particularly important in northern areas of Australia where homeland centres can be abandoned during the wet in favour of the settlements.

8.8 The curriculum materials being used in the Northern Territory homeland schools are the 'School of the Bush' materials. These materials consist of correspondence-type pupil workbooks which incorporate 'distance teaching' techniques. The 'School of the Bush' series provide a full set of materials up to middle primary level and are capable of being used by the Aboriginal assistant teachers.² They are used in conjunction with the Northern Territory 'Tracks' reading scheme and provide basic skills in English, numeracy and handwriting.³

BENEFITS OF HOMELAND CENTRE EDUCATION

8.9 The autonomous nature of homeland centres has created encouraging aspects in the education of their children. Of greatest importance is that Aboriginal people have much greater control over the education of their children. They make the decision initially to establish a school in the community and then have an important say in the actual setting up of the school and its program. In the Northern Territory, homeland community leaders are 'directly involved in the decision appointing both visiting teachers for Outstations and the selection of Outstation teachers themselves'.⁴ Aboriginal people feel that the school is part of the community rather than a separate non-Aboriginal institution. The teachers at Papunya homeland centres commented on homeland centre schools that they enjoy a more intimate relationship with the community because they become more a part of community life.⁵

8.10 A result of the greater parental involvement in, and approval of, the school is that parents ensure that their children attend. The Northern Territory Government claimed that:

The interest of parents, teachers and children in their outstation classes and the improvement in attendance rates justifies the support given to this alternative form of schooling for Northern Territory Aboriginals.⁶

This claim was supported by the Papunya homeland centres teachers who noted that in Papunya homeland schools: 'Attendance is numerically higher and consistent when compared with the central school'.⁷ The teachers also commented that the children at homeland centres were learning.

DIFFICULTIES IN PROVIDING EDUCATION SERVICES TO HOMELAND CENTRES

8.11 The difficulties in providing an educational service to homeland centres have created problems for educational authorities and resulted in disadvantages for the communities concerned. Most of the problems stem from the isolation and poor physical conditions of many homeland centres. The visiting teacher can have problems getting to and from the community. It can be difficult to safely store materials and equipment. The lack of suitable curriculum materials, the infrequency of the visiting teachers visits and the often limited training of the Aboriginal assistant teachers make it difficult to establish a continuing education program. This difficulty is exacerbated by the often small class sizes with a wide range of age groups (including post-primary age children) and the often rapid fluctuations of enrolments.

8.12 As a result of these difficulties, the South Australian Government asserted that:

It is pure fantasy to expect that schooling, in English, as requested by the Aboriginals themselves, can occur in the Pitjantjatjara Homelands Communities.⁸

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs, in its first submission to the inquiry, claimed that while schooling could be provided to homeland centres, it believed that children in homeland areas would be disadvantaged in the education they received. According to the Department, there is no practical possibility of the children in homeland centres receiving a complete school program at a level comparable to that in central schools.⁹

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.13 The provision of education to homeland centres raises poignantly the tension referred to in Chapter 2 which exists in Aboriginal education between recognition of the right of Aboriginal people to retain their racial identity and associated lifestyle and the obligation of governments to provide Aboriginals with the same access to the education which is available to other Australians. The Committee believes that much can be done to achieve these twin objectives. The Northern Territory Department of Education noted that it was possible for homeland centre schools to make the transition to a formal school as had happened at Peppimenarti.¹⁰ With Aboriginal people in the homelands able to make their own decisions and with a demonstration by governments of a determination to provide adequate education services to the homeland communities in new and flexible ways, it should be possible for Aboriginals both to retain their desired lifestyle and receive an adequate education without greatly compromising either objective. It would be a sad reflection on our society and its educational system if there was a failure to respond in a positive way.

8.14 Given the positive aspects of the education of Aboriginal children in homeland centres, the Committee believes that the level of support by government of homeland centre education should more positively reflect these benefits.

8.15 The Committee is concerned to see that broad policies for the provision of education services to homeland centres be developed. At this stage only the Northern Territory has developed policies and procedures. However, it is likely that the homeland movement will develop more significantly in other States in future. The Committee believes that a national consistency in policy in this area would be valuable. The Committee notes the documentation on homeland centres' education produced by the Schools Commission in consultation with the National Aboriginal Education Committee for the Australian Education Council and considers this a useful base from which to work in terms of broad policies.

8.16 The Committee recommends that:

- *The Commonwealth Schools Commission develop broad policies and procedures for the provision of education services to homelands centres, in consultation with the National Aboriginal Education Committee and State and Territory governments and Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups.*

8.17 With regard to the education programs to be provided for homeland centres the Committee considers that, given the difficulties which exist in providing services, the use of visiting teachers and local Aboriginal teaching assistants is probably the most appropriate service that can be provided to homeland schools just establishing themselves and with only a small number of students (less than 20). However, the Committee believes that improvements can be made. The role of the visiting teacher to homeland centre schools is a specialised one, and these teachers should receive appropriate in-service training to equip them to teach in isolated, traditionally-oriented Aboriginal communities.

8.18 The assistant teachers themselves should be provided with opportunities to improve their qualifications and teaching skills and so enhance the level of education provided. As they often have to work without a trained teacher, the teaching assistants in homeland schools need special training to improve their teaching ability and their personal level of skills. Training for these teaching assistants at the moment is grossly inadequate. The Northern Territory Department of Education claimed that, in homeland centre schools, 'it is the level of training of the assistant teachers that is the key thing that is holding us back in this area'.¹¹ The training needs to be provided closer to the communities in which the assistants live. The quality and quantity of relevant curriculum materials for use in homeland centres also needs to be improved if the developed skills of the teaching assistants are to have an impact. The Committee notes that the Northern Territory Department of Education is revising and expanding its 'School of the Bush' materials used in homeland centres.

8.19 As homeland centre schools develop there may be a desire by the community to upgrade the educational service provided by having one or two fully qualified teachers located in the community, supported by local Aboriginal assistant teachers. In the future, as more Aboriginal teachers are trained, it may be possible for the teachers in the homeland schools to be local Aboriginal people. This would greatly enhance the educational program offered by the school.

8.20 Attention should be given to providing education services to homeland centres in new and flexible ways. The use of new technology could present exciting possibilities in the provision of education to remote communities. It is possible that satellite technology and emerging radio technology could be used beneficially by educators for homeland centre education.

8.21 The Northern Territory Department of Education is considering installing a number of local 'school of the air' type networks from the central schools to service the homeland centres' classes. The 'school of the air' technique would be used largely as a teacher-

training device and also for broadcasting some material for students to increase the contact time between trained teachers, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, and the students. The new satellite will not be of assistance in this area because of the different languages involved in teaching. However, the Northern Territory Department of Education is looking at the use of the satellite for TAFE and teacher education in homeland centres.¹²

8.22 The value of using this technology is that it may enable adequate schooling to be provided to remote communities at a lower cost. Regard in the provision of such technology would have to be taken to the extent to which it intruded into, or disrupted, the lifestyle of the community. Homeland communities would have to be closely consulted about the introduction of such technology.

8.23 These are initiatives that could be taken with the application of greater resources and a more positive attitude. Special Commonwealth funding to homeland centre schools will be needed and this is recognised in the report on homeland centres education prepared by the Schools Commission for the Australian Education Council. The report recommends that both the Commonwealth and State/Territory governments accept responsibility for funding homeland centre schools. According to the report, the State and Territory governments should fund those schools within their responsibility to provide education for all children in areas under their jurisdiction, while the Commonwealth's responsibility is seen as being:

- a) per student allocations under the Schools Commission's General Recurrent Grants Program;
- b) supplementary funding through the Schools Commission toward the extra costs of curriculum associated resources at the school level; and
- c) capital support, in the form of assistance with establishment costs in respect to school facilities in homeland areas through the Capital Grants Program of the Schools Commission, and especially through the Aboriginal Schools element of that program.¹³

8.24 The Committee supports these suggested arrangements. The Commonwealth's response in this area should be administered by the Commonwealth Schools Commission acting in consultation with the National Aboriginal Education Committee. The State and Territory Consultative Groups should be consulted by their Governments about the policies and programs to be implemented in the States and Northern Territory for homeland centre education.

8.25 The Committee recommends that:

- *the Commonwealth Schools Commission in consultation with the National Aboriginal Education Committee make homeland centre education an important area of focus for Aboriginal education funding.*

8.26 The following areas should receive attention in the programs developed by the Schools Commission and State and Territory Governments:

1. the production of more high quality curriculum materials relevant to homeland communities;
2. in-service training programs for visiting teachers;
3. the employment of trained Aboriginal teachers in homeland centres where possible;
4. provision of greater training opportunities for Aboriginal assistant teachers in homeland centres and that these training opportunities be provided close to the communities; and
5. investigation of the potential uses of new technology, particularly satellite technology, in providing educational services to homeland centres.

8.27 The Committee acknowledges that the difficulties of providing education services to homeland centres means that, for the foreseeable future, these communities cannot expect to receive a school program at a level comparable to that provided in central

community schools. While the measures that have been recommended earlier will ensure that homeland centre education services are developed and provide an adequate grounding in basic education, it will probably be many years before full education services are available to all homeland centres which require them.

8.28 The implications of this conclusion should be explained to Aboriginal people so that they can make an informed choice about their children's education. Current procedures for starting a homeland centre school in the Northern Territory include making the community aware of the limitation of homeland schooling together with the responsibilities the community must accept if a school is to operate.

8.29 The mechanisms that have developed for homeland centres to control the sort of education their children receive must be protected. Educational services should not be provided to homeland centres which do not make requests for them. These communities will provide for the education of their children in their own way. Communities which do make requests for services should make all the important decisions in relation to the setting up of the service including selection of teachers, determination of what will be taught and how it will be taught, and continuing involvement in the school's activities. It is critically important that the communities have this sort of control so that their independence is not threatened and so that the school becomes an integral part of the community.

8.30 The Committee recommends that:

- *educational services should not be provided to homeland centres which do not make requests for them; and*
- *where homeland centres make requests for educational services, the community should make all the important decisions in relation to the establishment of the service.*

Endnotes

- 1 Transcript of Evidence, p. 2041.
- 2 Transcript of Evidence, p. 3584.
- 3 Transcript of Evidence, p. 3597.
- 4 Transcript of Evidence, p. 2058.
- 5 Transcript of Evidence, p. 2374.
- 6 Transcript of Evidence, p. 3598.
- 7 Transcript of Evidence, p. 2374.
- 8 Transcript of Evidence, p. 3618.
- 9 Transcript of Evidence, p. 372.
- 10 Transcript of Evidence, p. 3585.
- 11 Transcript of Evidence, p. 3572.
- 12 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5254.
- 13 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5363.

Chapter 9

Secondary Schooling

INTRODUCTION

9.1 Secondary education is often neither a satisfying nor beneficial experience for those Aboriginals who are able to participate in it. Many students make the transition from *primary to secondary school without even the basic skills required to handle the more advanced curriculum*. The prospect of unemployment and the perceived irrelevance of schooling have a negative effect on the student's attitude towards school attendance and application to his/her work. Achievement levels amongst Aboriginal secondary students are generally low and the school dropout rate is high. A number of initiatives, government and school based, have been implemented to seek to overcome this gloomy picture. This chapter discusses some of the problems of Aboriginal secondary education, seeks to evaluate some of the initiatives which have been undertaken to overcome the problems and considers other measures which can be taken to improve secondary schooling for Aboriginal students.

RETENTION RATES AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS

9.2 The retention rate of Aboriginal secondary students is significantly lower than for the rest of the community. The Commonwealth Department of Education noted that in 1984 the retention rate to Year 12 of Aboriginal students receiving Aboriginal Secondary Grants was 13.1 per cent. This compared with a retention rate of 45 per cent for the whole student population in 1984.¹ In its evidence to the inquiry the Aboriginal Education Council (N.S.W.) noted that in New South Wales, up to 50 per cent of students withdrew before completing Year 10.²

9.3 Two positive observations, however, ought to be made about retention rates: some schools have higher than average rates of retention and the overall rate has increased in recent years. Both the National Aboriginal Education Committee and the Commonwealth Department of Education stated that more students were entering Year 12 than was the case a few years ago.³ The retention rate increased from 7.5 per cent in 1979 to 9.9 per cent in 1982 and 13.1 per cent in 1984.⁴ This trend was confirmed in a number of high schools throughout Australia. The National Aboriginal Education Committee accounted for this in the following terms:

... we would suggest that perhaps the growth of involvement of Aboriginal people in schools, the growth of the State consultative groups particularly and the involvement of Aboriginal people with the people involved in developing educational programs has led to a greater awareness inside school systems and schools, and we would expect this to have had an effect on children staying on at schools.⁵

According to the National Aboriginal Education Committee, those individual high schools which had achieved higher retention rates had done so as a result of their recognition of Aboriginality in their school programs.⁶

9.4 There exists a consistent pattern of low achievement by many Aboriginal students from the time they enter secondary school until the time they leave. This was evident to the Committee in its visits to the many high schools in all States and the Northern Territory. In New South Wales, the Committee was told, up to half of the Aboriginal students who commence secondary school are placed in a slow learner class in their first

year.⁷ A similar situation exists in some schools in Queensland where, for example, at Cunnamulla it was estimated that about 50 per cent of Aboriginal students in Year 8 require remedial work. As a consequence, there is a strong demand for remedial classes for many Aboriginal children in secondary schools.⁸

9.5 The Committee was informed that in some urban areas, Aboriginal children are not placed in lower classes because of their academic ability. A school in the western suburbs of Sydney informed the Committee that the peer pressure (referred to in Chapter 2) which affects Aboriginal students means that some Aboriginal students want to be placed in lower classes because that is where their friends are.⁹

9.6 The transition from primary school to secondary school, which creates difficulties for all students, is particularly difficult for Aboriginal students. Many Aboriginal students enter secondary school without having acquired a basic primary school education and they have great difficulty coping with the academic requirements of secondary school. The change from an association with just one teacher in primary school for all subjects to a number of different teachers in secondary school for the different subject areas causes difficulties for Aboriginal students. The Committee was told that Aboriginal children attach great importance to personal relationships and that the one to one relationship which exists between teacher and student in primary school is one with which Aboriginal children are comfortable. However, they find the array of teachers with which they have to deal at secondary school difficult to cope.

9.7 It is also important to note that Aboriginal students in secondary schools usually constitute only a small minority of the school population. This fact helps explain the tendency of Aboriginal students to want to group themselves in the lower classes for mutual support. Secondary school for Aboriginal children then is much more threatening and competitive than primary school, and many Aboriginals find it difficult to adjust to this. Programs to assist Aboriginal students to remain, and succeed, in secondary school must be aimed at making the school a more comfortable and satisfying environment for Aboriginal students.

9.8 The disproportionate number of low achievers amongst Aboriginals tends to act against the aim of producing more successful outcomes for these students. It means that they attend school in a climate of reduced expectations from teachers and other students that they will succeed in their studies. Moreover their own aspirations are limited and their expectation of failure is high. The relative absence of a body of Aboriginal senior students means that no role model exists for the younger students of an academically achieving Aboriginal senior student, thus suppressing educational expectations.¹⁰ This cycle of low expectations leading to low achievement is certainly not assisted by the many other factors which pose special difficulties for the Aboriginal secondary school student.

9.9 A wide range of other factors contributes to lower rates of retention and high rates of failure amongst Aboriginals at secondary school. The poor housing and health standards coupled with the difficult economic circumstances many Aboriginal families find themselves in, places definite strains on the student's ability or wish to pursue secondary studies. The relative levels of student allowances and unemployment benefits can encourage some students to leave school.

9.10 It is also clear from the Committee's discussions with communities that the high level of unemployment among Aboriginal people and the lack of employment opportunities for Aboriginals provides no incentive to do well at school. The awareness of the lack of employment opportunities comes during secondary education as the student looks to his or her future. This has a real impact on secondary schooling. While this is a general factor which affects all students in secondary school, its impact is more significant

on Aboriginal people because of the substantially higher levels of Aboriginal unemployment.

9.11 As in other areas of education, there has tended to be a lack of recognition of Aboriginality in secondary school. This has contributed to the perception of Aboriginal students that secondary school is irrelevant to them. The perception of irrelevance of secondary school to Aboriginal students is also related to the nature of secondary programs, which tend to be strongly academic. While some Aboriginals want an academic secondary education to allow them to proceed to further study, many others want to acquire practical skills which will be useful to them on return to their communities or which will provide them with a suitable background to enter a trade.

9.12 In remote communities a lack of secondary school facilities means that many are unable to even attend, let alone complete, secondary school. If students from the communities wish to obtain a secondary education they must leave their community to do so. The students who leave their communities to attend school face the problem of finding accommodation in towns and cities. Away from their communities there is no support from their families. Many become homesick in an unfamiliar environment and quickly drop out of school. A number of residential colleges have been established for Aboriginal students in larger towns and cities to which they can go to obtain at least some form of secondary schooling. These colleges raise many difficulties and dilemmas for Aboriginal parents who wish their children to obtain secondary schooling. The Committee addresses the problems of providing secondary schooling for the remote communities later in the chapter.

THE PARTICIPATION AND EQUITY PROGRAM

9.13 The Commonwealth Government released its Participation and Equity Program (PEP) Guidelines in July 1983. The program aims at achieving 'more equal outcomes of schooling' through an increase in participation in education and through the introduction of 'greater equity' in the overall provision for young people.¹¹ In particular, the program will be directed towards giving:

. . . all students, and especially those from a disadvantaged background, a rewarding, useful education through to the end of secondary schooling. The program will be directed particularly to secondary schools with low retention rates and will seek to foster more equal outcomes of schooling.¹²

9.14 Whilst PEP is not exclusively directed at Aboriginals, special attention is being given to the problem of low retention rates of Aboriginal children in the later secondary years. The Committee strongly supports the program and believes it should continue, certainly in relation to Aboriginal students, until a significant impact is made on the retention rates of Aboriginals in secondary schools. The Government's recent decision to halve the funding to PEP for next financial year is a matter of some concern as it relates to *funding of programs in Aboriginal secondary education. Retention rates of Aboriginal students in secondary schools, particularly in the last years of secondary school is a matter of great concern, as the figures noted above indicate. This is an area that should be receiving particular attention from all governments. This includes the Commonwealth Government's Participation and Equity Program and State and Territory governments in their programs for secondary schools.*

9.15 The Committee recommends that:

- *the Participation and Equity Program, in relation to Aboriginal students in secondary schools, be strongly supported by the Commonwealth Government until*

a significant impact is made on the retention rate of Aboriginal students in secondary schools.

9.16 In supporting the Participation and Equity Program, which is aimed mainly at secondary schools and technical and further education, the Committee emphasises the need to assess the relative priority of funding in relation to primary schooling and secondary schooling. The National Aboriginal Education Committee recognises that a balance must be struck between the Commonwealth Government's stated objective to increase participation and equity in secondary education and the pressing needs in Aboriginal education at the primary level.¹³ It must be recognised that unless an adequate education is provided to Aboriginal children at primary school then their prospects for success at secondary school are limited.

9.17 The Committee considers below the sorts of programs which will address the causes of the low retention rates of Aboriginal students in secondary schools: the employment of Aboriginal people in the schools as teachers, teaching assistants and liaison officers/counsellors; the greater involvement of the Aboriginal community in the school; school-based initiatives to make secondary school more satisfying for Aboriginal students; the development of appropriate curricula and the employment of non-Aboriginal teachers who have the training and empathy to work with Aboriginal students. Such programs should be closely considered for support by Participation and Equity funding and for development by State and Territory departments of education.

INVOLVEMENT OF ABORIGINALS IN THE SCHOOLS

9.18 The employment of Aboriginal people in the school is the most important way to provide Aboriginal students with the support they need in secondary school. A small number of Aboriginal teaching assistants are employed in secondary schools and they have proved very effective in giving Aboriginal students the support they need. Because the numbers of Aboriginal students in particular secondary schools is often very low, appointment of teaching assistants often cannot be justified.

9.19 The employment of more Aboriginal teachers in secondary schools would be immensely beneficial. At present most of the small number of qualified Aboriginal teachers are employed in primary schools. The training of Aboriginal secondary teachers is an urgent need as these teachers would assist significantly in overcoming the difficulties faced by many Aboriginal students as a small minority in secondary schools. The Committee discusses the training of Aboriginal teachers in Chapter 14.

9.20 Aboriginal liaison officers and student counsellors, often servicing a number of schools, have been appointed in some areas. These people again perform the vital role for secondary students (and to a lesser extent, primary students, who often have the support of a teaching assistant) of providing a bridge between home and school and supporting the students in the school. There is an urgent need for more Aboriginal liaison officers and counsellors within secondary schools both to take some of the tremendous pressure off the small number of liaison officers and counsellors who are currently operating in schools, and to service those schools with Aboriginal students which do not currently have access to a liaison officer. The Committee supports the recommendation of the Joint Schools Commission's Working Party on Aboriginal Education, that funding be provided for additional Aboriginal support staff in schools including liaison officers and counsellors.

9.21 Many of the liaison officers and counsellors often find themselves performing social welfare support functions because Aboriginal people's educational disadvantage is so closely related to their often poor socio-economic situation. As this is the case, a wider view of the role of liaison officers is necessary. The performance of social welfare support

functions by the liaison officers will assist in improving the educational outcomes for Aboriginal children and should be seen as part of their educational role. However, to enable them to perform this wider role satisfactorily, more liaison officers will have to be appointed and special in-service training courses provided to develop their skills in performing this social welfare support role.

9.22 The Committee recommends that:

- *Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments urgently give consideration to increasing the numbers of Aboriginal Home/School Liaison Officers and Counsellors.*

9.23 The greater involvement of Aboriginal parents and communities in their schools is an area of as urgent need in secondary schools as in primary schools. A greater understanding of, and involvement in, the education of their children by Aboriginal parents and communities would be a significant step to improve the educational outcomes of Aboriginal secondary students. The Committee has discussed ways of involving Aboriginal parents and communities in schools in some detail in Chapter 4.

CURRICULUM

9.24 As with primary schooling, there is a need to develop appropriate curricula and teaching strategies for Aboriginal students that will assist in making school more relevant to their needs. In many secondary schools in urban areas and large rural towns Aboriginal studies materials designed for all students would be the most appropriate curricula. Aboriginal students in these schools would see Aboriginal society and history being presented in a positive way and would feel more confident and secure about their place within the school. The Committee discusses Aboriginal studies in Chapter 13.

9.25 The establishment of secondary programs in the more traditional communities will require substantial thought to be given to curriculum materials for these schools. Consideration will need to be given to the existence of Aboriginal languages in the communities and the part they should play in school, and to the role that traditional Aboriginal learning styles and strategies can play in the school curriculum program.

9.26 The Committee also considers that the educational programs for Aboriginal students in secondary schools need to give consideration to the balance between an academic education and the practical skills which Aboriginal people need to run their communities. Many Aboriginal parents feel that their children go to secondary school but are neither provided with academic skills to enable them to go on to further education or obtain employment, nor are they equipped with practical skills that will allow them to take up positions within the community to assist the community to be self-managing. The educational programs provided in secondary schools must address themselves to the need for skills in particular areas as defined by the communities. This issue is considered in greater detail in Chapter 12 on Technical and Further Education.

SCHOOL-BASED INITIATIVES

BRIDGING AND TRANSITION CLASSES

9.27 The transition from primary school to secondary school is particularly difficult for Aboriginal students. This chapter has already noted that many Aboriginals enter their first year of high school ill-equipped to cope with their studies. The Committee sees merit in individual schools offering a transition program or bridging class, wherever possible, to

help overcome some of these difficulties. These classes are a valuable means of assisting students to upgrade their basic skills before commencing secondary school studies. Some of these classes are already operating. For example, Yarrabah State School in Queensland offers a bridging class in Year 8 and a basic literacy course has been established at Cherbourg, Queensland.

9.28 The Committee believes that the provision of bridging or transition classes should not be seen as an alternative to providing Aboriginal children with an adequate educational grounding before they enter secondary school. However, until the measures which the Committee has recommended in its chapter on primary schooling significantly improve the educational outcomes of students at primary school, there will be a need for transition or bridging classes in some areas.

9.29 The Committee recommends that:

- *where appropriate, schools consider providing a transition or bridging program between primary and secondary school.*

ENCLAVES

9.30 The Committee was impressed by an innovative program the Wollah Centre, operating at Kewdale High School in Western Australia. The Centre caters mainly, although not exclusively, for Aboriginal students and offers an approved Alternative Achievement Certificate in English and Social Studies. The program places an emphasis on Aboriginal culture. Students spend approximately two periods per day in the Centre and are integrated into the normal classes for other subjects. About half of the students participating in the program are from remote communities while the others are from the Perth metropolitan area.

9.31 For all the students participating in the program the Centre acts as a supportive enclave within the secondary school and attempts to assist them to overcome the difficulties confronting Aboriginals in secondary schools. It is important to note that the students are not entirely separated from the rest of the school as they attend integrated classes with other students for the most part. An appropriate balance is thereby achieved between the need for support as a minority group within the school, and the importance of the students both learning and competing in the wider community.

9.32 The Chairman of the National Aboriginal Education Committee, Mr Paul Hughes, considered the establishment of enclaves for Aboriginal students within secondary schools to be a major initiative which could lead to an improvement in the educational outcomes of Aboriginal secondary students where they form a small minority of their school populations.¹⁴ The Committee supports this view. The Committee also believes that it is important for the students in such enclave programs not to remain segregated from the rest of the school. While the support provided by the enclave will enable the students to feel comfortable and confident at school, encouraging them to remain beyond compulsory leaving age, it is also essential that the students be able to compete in the wider society.

9.33 Enclave programs should be established in a small number of schools on a trial basis, funded by the Commonwealth Schools Commission under its Participation and Equity Programs, or its other programs for Aboriginal students, and be closely evaluated by the National Aboriginal Education Committee. If successful, enclaves could be established in a wider number of schools.

9.34 The Committee therefore recommends that:

- *the National Aboriginal Education Committee develop proposals for the establishment of enclave programs for Aboriginal students in secondary schools,*

identify a small number of schools in which the programs may have the most impact, and submit these programs for funding to the Commonwealth Schools Commission.

OTHER INITIATIVES

9.35 Some schools are attempting to address themselves to the causes of the high drop out rate of Aboriginal students from secondary school by developing more appropriate programs and strategies for the students.

9.36 The Alice Springs High School, for example, has taken a close look at its courses to see how it can make them more relevant to its Aboriginal students and so overcome the problem of the high drop out rate of Aboriginals from the later secondary years. There was a recognition by the school that matriculation was not the answer for all Aboriginal students and that a more practical education needed to be provided. The program designed by the school had a number of different aspects. In recognition of the difficulty of the transition from primary school to secondary school for Aboriginal students, and particularly those students the school receives from Yirara College, the school will provide an integrated teaching program for these children in mathematics, science and English. In this way the gap between the one-teacher orientation of primary school and the multi-teacher approach of secondary school is bridged.

9.37 In the second and third years of secondary school, Alice Springs High will provide a specialised enrichment program for small select groups of Aboriginal children who are obviously capable students but who are under-performing. The enrichment program will be provided on one day per week and will give emphasis to improving skills in English. One of the possibilities being considered for the enrichment program is to take students out of school and place them in the community for that one day a week, looking at jobs and the sort of work available in the public service and in private enterprise. It is hoped that seeing these jobs at close quarters will build up the children's aspirations and stimulate their interest in school.

9.38 The program is also to include the integration into all aspects of the school program, where it is considered pertinent, of elements of Aboriginal culture, history and society. To undertake the whole program, it is recognised by the Principal that teachers at the school will need to be trained to be more in tune with the students they are teaching. Because of this the program will inevitably take some time to show benefits. The program is to be sufficiently flexible to change from year to year according to evaluations undertaken at the conclusion of each year.¹⁵

9.39 The Committee considers that such initiatives developed at a school level have enormous potential because they can be tailored to the particular needs of local students. They require a great deal of effort and dedication on the part of principals and teachers. The efforts of principals and teachers to develop such school-based programs should be strongly supported by Commonwealth, State and Territory educational authorities.

NON-ABORIGINAL PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

9.40 In its chapter on primary schooling, the Committee emphasised the critical role that non-Aboriginal principals and teachers play in the education of Aboriginal children. This applies equally to secondary schooling as should be clear from the Committee's discussion of the problems in secondary education for Aboriginal students and the sorts of programs that have been developed to address these problems. Programs in schools are

only going to succeed with strong support and commitment from non-Aboriginal principals and teachers. The school-based initiatives outlined above by the Committee have only been developed through such commitment and support. The Committee considers the training and recruitment of non-Aboriginal teachers in Chapter 15.

SECONDARY SCHOOLING FOR REMOTE COMMUNITIES

9.41 In northern Australia there is a lack of secondary education facilities in Aboriginal communities. For Aboriginal students in these communities to obtain a secondary education it is necessary for them to leave home and go to a small number of residential colleges which provide post-primary and secondary education, or go to ordinary secondary schools in the cities. This situation exists for Aboriginal people in communities in the Pilbara and Kimberley in Western Australia, in the Northern Territory, in northern South Australia and in the area north of the Tropic of Capricorn in Queensland.

9.42 As a result of this situation many young Aboriginal people have severely restricted access to secondary schooling and many, as a result, do not receive secondary schooling. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs claimed that of the 3,692 Aboriginals of secondary school age in the Pilbara and Kimberley, only 1,011 were enrolled in secondary courses at 1 March 1984.¹⁶ Available data for 1983 on the Northern Territory indicated 1,839 Aboriginal secondary enrolments out of a potential 7,012 students.¹⁷ These figures are a matter of great concern as they indicate that Aboriginal disadvantage in education in the remote northern communities is to be perpetuated for at least another generation because of the failure of governments to respond to the educational needs of Aboriginals. While a demand is made of communities to become self-managing, they are not provided with the potential human resources in the form of well-educated young people to enable them to achieve this demand.

RESIDENTIAL COLLEGES

The Northern Territory

9.43 In the Northern Territory, as secondary schooling is unavailable in all but two communities, and as post-primary schooling is only available in about 30 communities, two residential colleges provide post-primary and secondary education to Aboriginals from the remote communities. The two residential colleges are Yirara College in Alice Springs and Kormilda College in Darwin. Another residential college, Dhupuma College, operated in Arnhem Land until it was closed in 1980.

9.44 The Colleges were established in response to the recommendations of the 1964 Watts-Gallacher report on Aboriginal education in the Northern Territory. Their original stated purpose was the provision of a bridge between schools in the remote communities and urban high schools. There have been difficulties in achieving this aim and many students have not made a successful transition. This has been particularly true at Yirara College where the Committee was told that many Aboriginal children who were academically bright could not cope with the social problems of an urban high school. Out of necessity the College had introduced a secondary education program and had tended to become an educational institution in its own right, although it did not provide a full secondary education to matriculation standard. Kormilda has been more successful in seeing its students make the transition to Darwin high schools.¹⁸

9.45 The Department of Aboriginal Affairs expressed to the Committee concern about the educational outcomes and social impact of the colleges. In relation to educational

outcomes, the Department pointed out that neither college has produced a matriculant. The Department claimed that the colleges had ignored Aboriginal needs and seemed to be based on 'the typical white boarding school model'.¹⁹ Aboriginals from a large number of language groups are mixed in the colleges and there is insufficient parental involvement, according to the Department.

9.46 In relation to the social impact of the colleges, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs claimed that Aboriginals believe the colleges 'are breaking down Aboriginal culture and encouraging anti-social behaviour'.²⁰ According to the Department, over 90 per cent of students at the two colleges who return to their respective communities are unemployed. They can then become restless and petty offences can occur and they can have problems such as petrol-sniffing and anti-community feelings. According to the Department, many of the former students 'appear to be in a situation where they are caught between two worlds and belong to neither'.²¹

9.47 The Department believed that the colleges would have to change their direction in curriculum, policy and administration. It claimed that Aboriginal participation at all levels should be introduced including the Aboriginalisation of teaching and ancillary staff and parental participation through a properly constituted Aboriginal College Council with members from tribal and urban communities. The primary aim of the colleges should be to guarantee literacy and numeracy to the students who complete their courses. According to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the alternative is to transform the colleges or parts of them into regional TAFE institutions specialising in accelerated trade courses.²²

9.48 The observations of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs of Aboriginal community concerns about the educational outcomes and social impacts of the colleges corresponds with the Committee's impressions following its visits to Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.

9.49 The Northern Territory Department of Education claimed that it is looking to achieve a new dynamic in relation to the residential colleges. Firstly, students attending the colleges will be required to demonstrate that they are capable of handling secondary programs, and secondly, attendance at the colleges will be restricted as far as post-primary students are concerned to those communities with no, or inadequate, post-primary facilities.²³ The new dynamic for the colleges will be facilitated by the fact that secondary schooling streams and post-primary facilities will be increasingly provided in the communities.²⁴

9.50 The Northern Territory Department of Education is also looking closely at the cost effectiveness of the colleges. For the cost of two students educated in the colleges, 16 to 20 students could be provided with post-primary schooling in a community.²⁵ The Northern Territory Department of Education hopes that in future the colleges will more effectively achieve their original purpose by having genuine secondary students whose parents support their children experiencing a normal high school to 'learn to cope both ways'.²⁶ It is also anticipated that the colleges will fit in with the policy of providing secondary and post-primary facilities in the communities by catering to secondary students who have completed a number of years of secondary schooling in the communities and who wish to enter the colleges for their later years of secondary schooling.²⁷

9.51 The Committee considers that the educational and other issues raised by the educational programs conducted by Yirara and Kormilda Colleges are complex and require resolution. The Committee believes that a major review should be undertaken of the Colleges. The review should look at the level of educational attainments and the current employment of students who have attended the colleges. It should look at the social and cultural effects of the schooling provided in the colleges on students and on the

communities to which they return. It should look at the overall effectiveness of the colleges and how the colleges can better address themselves to the needs of the communities they are serving. The review should be undertaken in close consultation with the Northern Territory Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, and the communities which the colleges serve.

9.52 The Committee recommends that:

- *a comprehensive review be undertaken of Yirara and Kormilda Colleges in the Northern Territory to investigate the overall effectiveness and the future role of the colleges.*

Western Australia

9.53 In Western Australia, Nulungu College at Broome operates as a co-educational boarding institution providing secondary education primarily, though not exclusively, for Aboriginal students from Aboriginal communities in the Kimberley area. The College is conducted by the Christian Brothers and by nuns from the Orders of Our Lady of the Mission and St John of God.

9.54 The College's objective is to provide students with schooling that is oriented towards the acquisition of vocational skills which will enable them to obtain employment or proceed to further education. The Committee was impressed with the way in which the programs at Nulungu enabled students to retain their traditional culture and language skills. A bilingual education program is being developed and students are encouraged to participate in their own traditional cultural activities.

9.55 It is clear that the approach of the College towards Aboriginal education is succeeding in assisting Aboriginal teenagers to proceed through secondary school and obtain employment. A survey of former Nulungu pupils, conducted by Brother Howard of the College, in 1982 showed that 67.8 per cent of the group were in full-time employment, 5.9 per cent in full-time studies, with 26.2 per cent unemployed.²⁸ These figures are significantly better than the general levels of unemployment and participation in further studies and employment for the rest of the Aboriginal community. Whilst there is a lack of such detailed data for Kormilda and Yirara Colleges, it appears that these two institutions have not achieved comparable results.

9.56 The Committee believes that the vocational orientation of Nulungu College and its emphasis on the importance of Aboriginal students retaining their cultural and social links with their traditional lifestyle are particular features which should be emulated by the residential colleges in the Northern Territory. However, the difficulties caused by Aboriginal students having to leave their communities for their secondary education remain. The Committee considers the emphasis in secondary schooling for the remote areas should be on providing the education in the communities. It is to this that the Committee now turns.

SECONDARY SCHOOL FACILITIES IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES

9.57 The Committee is concerned that the lack of facilities in many remote areas means that Aboriginals have a severely restricted access to secondary education. The Committee has already referred to figures which give some indication of just how restricted this access to secondary schooling is. The Commonwealth Department of Education noted that:

At present, many Aboriginal children must travel long distances to get secondary schooling and their absence from the communities creates serious problems for their parents and to the children themselves. Most children return to their communities without adequate education.

In addition, some Aboriginal children do not have access to secondary education in any form.²⁹

9.58 Yet, the demand for secondary schooling in communities is very clear. Parents told the Committee that they were often reluctant to send their children away to towns and cities to receive a secondary education but would prefer them to remain in their community to pursue their schooling. For example, at Yuendumu and Lajamanu in the Northern Territory, the Committee met parents and teachers who were united in their demand for a secondary stream to be provided in the community. Given the size of their populations there would appear to be sufficient numbers for a secondary stream to be provided.

9.59 The Northern Territory Department of Education informed the Committee that it was aware of the genuine demand of many community councils and leaders for secondary and post-primary facilities to be provided in the communities rather than having to send children away to Yirara and Kormilda Colleges. It claimed that there were many reasons for this demand including the problems of having different tribal groups at the colleges and the promised marriage system.³⁰ The response by the Northern Territory Department of Education to this demand from the communities was to develop a policy to work as quickly as possible to install secondary and post-primary programs in the communities.

9.60 The Northern Territory Department of Education has given priority to post-primary projects in its capital works program. The capital works program is a joint program with the Commonwealth Schools Commission for the provision of capital facilities in Aboriginal communities. In relation to secondary school programs, the Northern Territory Department of Education claimed it was limited simply by having a sufficient number of students in a community who are genuinely secondary students in terms of their achievement levels. According to the Department:

There is no point in running a secondary program if the students have not mastered basic primary school work. As soon as any community is able to achieve significant numbers of secondary students, we will instal a secondary program for that community. That is the threshold factor.³¹

There are currently two trial secondary programs under way in the Northern Territory, at Milingimbi and Yirrkala. They have been in operation for two years.

9.61 The Committee appreciates the need for Aboriginal students to obtain a certain threshold of achievement of basic primary schooling skills before a secondary stream is provided to the communities. However, the failure of students in the communities to achieve a basic primary education may be the result of a lack of incentive to do well because there is no post-primary or secondary stream in the community for which to aim. Given the crying demand of the communities for post-primary and secondary schooling to be provided in the communities, the Committee believes that there should be a strong, positive response from governments.

9.62 The provision of post-primary and secondary school facilities and services to remote communities will be a very expensive proposition. However, the Committee believes that governments have an obligation to provide Aboriginal people with equality of access to education. The establishment of post-primary and secondary school facilities in the remote communities will be a major step towards ensuring equality of access to education for Aboriginals.

9.63 In 1984 the Commonwealth, through the Schools Commission, allocated \$7m for capital funding for facilities in schools serving predominantly Aboriginal communities. The amount allocated in 1985 is \$8.66m. A major priority in this area is the provision of permanent or transportable buildings to communities whose present primary level facilities are inadequate.³²

9.64 While the Committee agrees that a major priority of this funding should be for primary school facilities so that a basic education can be made available to communities, there is a great demand also, as the Committee has made clear, for post-primary and secondary facilities. The Committee believes that the allocation of funding to the program should be increased to allow post-primary and secondary school facilities to be provided or upgraded more rapidly, but not at the expense of the provision of primary school facilities for those communities currently without such facilities.

9.65 The Committee recommends that:

- *the capital funding program for education facilities in predominantly Aboriginal communities continue with increased funding so that greater priority can be given to providing secondary school facilities.*

9.66 The establishment of the physical facilities raises a number of questions about the provision of post-primary and secondary education to the more remote, often traditionally-oriented, communities. As the Department of Aboriginal Affairs claimed, there are three aspects of the provision of facilities which need to be considered:

- the curriculum provided;
- the teaching methods used; and
- the nature of the physical facility to be constructed.³³

The Department stated that it would be anomalous to provide funds for facilities if 'the education provided remains inappropriate to the needs of Aboriginals in those areas'.³⁴ The development of suitable educational facilities and programs for the communities raises profound questions about the purpose of secondary education for, and the effect of secondary education on, the traditionally-oriented communities. A dilemma arises between the stated aim of ensuring equality of access for Aboriginals to education while at the same time retaining Aboriginal identity.

9.67 Clearly, secondary education should provide Aboriginals in remote communities with the skills required to run their own communities and thus make a substantial contribution to Aboriginal self-management. In this sense the education provided would need to be practically oriented. As some Aboriginals view their secondary education as a basis for pursuing further education, such as teacher and other professional training, the education provided should also be of an appropriate academic level. As the Department of Aboriginal Affairs noted, flexibility will be an important element of the successful operation of secondary facilities in the remote communities to enable students to transfer to a range of further educational options or to obtain employment. The Department stated that in some cases a TAFE facility may be more appropriate than a secondary facility.³⁵ These are clearly matters which should be decided by particular communities based on their own perceived needs. Secondary schooling in the communities will need to be tailored closely to the desires and needs of each community.

9.68 The ability to accommodate secondary schooling for Years 11 and 12 in the communities will obviously create problems because of the very small numbers involved. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs suggested two ways of overcoming the difficulties. Firstly, regional secondary facilities could be established for the later years. The Department acknowledged that while this approach may re-create some of the problems of sending students away from home, it would be on a lesser scale as students would be older and more mature than those who leave home presently and the distance from home would be less. Another option, suggested by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, is the development of a mobile senior teaching service which would visit the communities and give personal or small group tuition.³⁶ As indicated earlier, the Northern Territory Department of Education envisages the later years of secondary schooling being catered for at Yirara and Kormilda Colleges.

9.69 Secondary schooling in the communities also will need to be particularly sensitive to the desire of the communities to retain their culture and social values. The introduction of secondary schooling in the communities should not become a mechanism for the destruction of Aboriginal cultural and social values. In those communities with bilingual programs at primary school, there would be enormous value in extending the bilingual program into the secondary stream. Attention will also need to be paid to Aboriginal learning styles and how these can be introduced into the educational program. The communities should be closely consulted about the aims and content of the secondary education program.

9.70 There will be a particular need in the secondary school programs introduced into the communities for high quality Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal teachers and Aboriginal teaching assistants. There will also be a need for the development of appropriate curriculum materials which cater to the educational needs of students in these schools.

ABORIGINAL SECONDARY GRANTS SCHEME (ABSEG)

OUTLINE OF SCHEME

9.71 The major program operating at secondary level, in monetary terms, is the Aboriginal Secondary Grants Scheme. The scheme was introduced in 1970 by the Commonwealth Department of Education 'to assist students of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent likely to benefit from further secondary studies to remain at school beyond the statutory school leaving age as a measure of discrimination in their favour'.³⁷ In 1973 it was decided to extend the Scheme to include all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who were attending secondary schools. The Scheme provides for a living allowance payable to parents, a personal allowance for students, a book and clothing allowance and payment of school fees, excursion costs, and for individual tutoring if required. Government expenditure on the scheme has grown from \$521,887 since its inception to roughly \$25.21m in 1984.³⁸

ELIGIBILITY

9.72 ABSEG grants are non-competitive and are open to full-time students under the age of 21 years on 1 January in the year of the grant who satisfy the Commonwealth definition of Aboriginality and who are attending an approved secondary school or class in a State or internal territory. To retain a grant, a student must attend school regularly. Irregular attendance may lead to a reduction of living and personal allowance benefits. The scheme also provides additional educational support to students in the form of tutorial assistance and counselling from Education Officers. Supplementary tuition may be provided where a student is experiencing particular difficulty in a particular subject or where a student has a specific interest or talent in a certain subject.

9.73 Education Officers are employed by the Commonwealth Department of Education to administer the Scheme and support students. They act as a contact point between students, parents and the school. Through their counselling and educational advice they are able to provide the support needed by Aboriginal secondary students. Unfortunately, these Education Officers are spread thinly throughout Australia, particularly in more remote areas. They also have other responsibilities which preclude them from giving full-time support to Aboriginal students in the difficult secondary school environment. The Committee is also concerned that only a small number of Education Officers are Aboriginal, although the Commonwealth Department of Education has established a goal

of having at least 50 per cent of the Education Officer positions filled by Aboriginals by 1990.³⁹ The Committee strongly supports this goal.

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHEME

9.74 In 1976 Professor B.H. Watts, Professor of Special Education, University of Queensland published her report *Access to Education, An Evaluation of the Aboriginal Secondary Grants Scheme*. Her conclusions on the success of the scheme were as follows:

- (1) that the Grants Scheme has achieved some success in encouraging students to stay on longer at secondary school, but also,
- (2) that the proportion of students beyond age 15 who remain in school is markedly lower for Aboriginal and Islander than for other Australian adolescents, and that
- (3) a small but increasing number of students are reaching the senior secondary grades. That is, early school leaving is still strongly characteristic of Aboriginal/Islander secondary school students.⁴⁰

9.75 As discussed earlier in this chapter, there are many factors which influence a student's decision to stay on at secondary school of which the existence of ABSEG is only one. Nevertheless, on the basis of information given to the inquiry by teachers in secondary schools, the Committee shares the view of Professor Watts that ABSEG has achieved success in encouraging students to stay longer in secondary school.

9.76 The increased participation is reflected in the table below, supplied by the Department of Education, which details the numbers of students assisted each year since the inception of the scheme. The sudden increase in 1973 reflects the extension of the Scheme in that year. The Department of Education, in its submission, stated that the ratio of male/female recipients is roughly even except in the senior years where more females tend to receive the grant than males.⁴¹

<i>Year</i>	<i>No. of students assisted</i>
1970	2 379
1971	4 025
1972	4 779
1973	10 621
1974	11 882
1975	12 800 (approx)
1976	13 834
1977	14 848
1978	15 052
1979	16 187
1980	17 994
1981	18 718
1982	19 964
1983	21 900 (est)

9.77 ABSEG has been widely accepted and approved of by the Aboriginal community. The success of the scheme has only been established in evaluation in terms of the increased retention rates of Aboriginals in secondary schools, particularly in the later years of secondary school. Unfortunately, there is little evidence of whether or not the students who are assisted by the scheme are, in fact, achieving well in their secondary studies. The Committee is concerned that in spite of ABSEG, few Aboriginals are matriculating, many Aboriginal students in secondary schools have low levels of academic achievement and are emerging from the secondary school system without the

qualifications to pursue further studies, to enter other forms of vocational training or to obtain jobs in the community.

9.78 It is clear that success for Aboriginal students in secondary school is dependent on more than just keeping them at school. There is little point in seeing Aboriginal children progress through secondary school if they are unable to cope with their courses and if they are not achieving in their studies. It is also self-defeating if Aboriginal students are being retained in secondary schools because of ABSEG, while the educational programs offered in the school remain irrelevant to Aboriginal needs.

9.79 The Committee notes that a limited review of ABSEG is to be undertaken by the Commonwealth Department of Education. An Aboriginal researcher and assistant will carry out the study and they will be advised by an advisory committee comprised of representatives of the Department of Education and the National Aboriginal Education Committee. The study will look at the following aspects of ABSEG:

- tutorial assistance;
- boarding provisions;
- educational and vocational guidance programs; and
- excursion provisions, particularly for students in very remote areas.⁴²

9.80 The Committee considers that a more comprehensive review of ABSEG is required so that the educational success of the program can be evaluated. It is now nearly ten years since Professor Watts' report on ABSEG was published and a further comprehensive review is warranted, particularly in view of the extent of the expenditure on ABSEG.

MEANS TESTING OF ABSEG

9.81 The issue of using a means test to determine appropriate levels of assistance for ABSEG recipients was raised frequently with the Committee. Examples were cited, throughout Australia, of Aboriginal families allegedly better off financially than others in a particular community, receiving the non-means tested ABSEG grant. The Western Australian Government stated:

The availability of A.B.S.E. Grants to all Aboriginal students irrespective of their parents' economic standing, or their academic or social status, has caused an adverse reaction from non-Aboriginal disadvantaged groups.⁴³

In her review of the Scheme in 1976, Professor Watts stated that:

Most people would agree, on the grounds of equity, that a means test must be applied to the Aboriginal Secondary Grants Scheme; the issue in dispute is the timing of the implementation. Many feel that policy makers must be very sure that positive outcomes are not counterbalanced by negative effects, and, furthermore, that implementation of the principle of equity is not achieved at too great a cost to too many.⁴⁴

Professor Watts did not believe that it was the appropriate time to introduce a means test but she recommended that the Departments of Education and Aboriginal Affairs should keep the issue under constant review.

9.82 The imposition of a means test on ABSEG recipients might be a good public relations exercise for the funding of Aboriginal education and could minimise the backlash from genuinely disadvantaged non-Aboriginals in the community. However, the Committee firmly believes that an overriding case still exists for not imposing such a test on this particular scheme at this time.

9.83 The means testing proposal was examined in 1976 on the basis of data from the recent census on Aboriginal incomes. At that time, only 2-3 per cent of Aboriginals earned in excess of average weekly earnings. These figures suggest that very few

Aboriginals have incomes high enough to justify a realistic means test. In addition, Aboriginal employment was estimated at being between 25–30 per cent. To date this gloomy economic picture has not changed substantially and Aboriginals, indisputably, are the most underprivileged group in Australian society.

9.84 The cost of administering a means test and the net savings to the ABSEG scheme are difficult to quantify. It is fairly clear, however, that a test would prove to be uneconomic because cost of administering it may be greater than the savings effected. Given their low earning levels, too few Aboriginals would be affected by even a stringent income test. The Department of Education also pointed to the problem of low levels of literacy generally amongst Aboriginals which would make answering even the simplest questions relating to income extremely difficult. Additional staff would undoubtedly be required to administer the test, to gather and check information. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs also noted that a means test could discourage Aboriginals from using the scheme because experience has shown that Aboriginal people tend to resent and avoid form-filling and official scrutiny.⁴⁵

9.85 The ABSEG scheme is not entirely a financial assistance scheme. It is a scheme which, through its provisions for tutorial assistance and its Education Officers, offers educational support and advice to Aboriginal students. The Committee does not wish to see the situation arise where Aboriginal students, who were deserving on educational grounds, be deprived of support because they were excluded from the benefits of ABSEG because of family income levels.

9.86 Finally, the Committee notes that ABSEG is not the only Commonwealth assistance scheme to be exempt of a means test. The Isolated Children's Assistance Scheme, for example, which applies to the community as a whole, includes a non-means tested component of \$927 a year (on a means tested basis a family can obtain up to \$2,572 a year per child).

9.87 The Committee recommends that:

- *a comprehensive review, initiated by the Minister for Education in consultation with the National Aboriginal Education Committee, be undertaken of the Aboriginal Secondary Grants Scheme to determine whether the scheme is the most effective program for enabling Aboriginal students to achieve well at secondary school and whether the grant should be subject to a means test.*

CONCLUSION

9.88 The low rate of participation and of success of Aboriginal students at secondary school was a matter of great concern to Aboriginal communities and to the Committee. In urban and rural areas, where Aboriginal students form a small minority of the school population, secondary schooling is often a difficult and depressing experience for Aboriginals. The development of enclaves and other school-based initiatives in secondary schools would contribute significantly to overcoming the isolation of many Aboriginal secondary students. The greater involvement of Aboriginal people in the schools through employment as teachers, home/school liaison officers and counsellors will also assist in making secondary schools a more comfortable place for Aboriginal students.

9.89 In relation to the remote communities, priority should be given, over the longer term, to providing secondary education facilities in Aboriginal communities. This will be an expensive but effective way of ensuring that Aboriginals have equal access to secondary education. All secondary education programs in Aboriginal communities ought to provide Aboriginals with the sort of skills and knowledge required which will enable

them to pursue further studies should they so desire. At the same time, Aboriginal secondary education should also cater for those students who wish to achieve the grounding in skills which will enable them to manage their own communities.

Endnotes

- 1 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5287.
- 2 Transcript of Evidence, p. 1561.
- 3 Transcript of Evidence, pp. 4793, 5143.
- 4 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5287.
- 5 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5143.
- 6 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5146.
- 7 Transcript of Evidence, p. 1561.
- 8 Hansard Precis, Visit to Cunnamulla, 20 March 1984, p. 11.
- 9 Hansard Precis, Visit to western suburbs of Sydney, 25 June 1985, p. 17.
- 10 B.H. Watts, *Aboriginal Futures, op.cit.*, p. 916.
- 11 Department of Education and Youth Affairs, *Participation and Equity, Funding Guidelines to the Commonwealth Education Commission for 1984*, AGPS, 1983, p. 3.
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4919.
- 14 *Ibid.*
- 15 Hansard Precis, Visit to Alice Springs, 12 June 1985, pp. 20-32.
- 16 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5504.
- 17 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5505.
- 18 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4823.
- 19 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5514.
- 20 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5515.
- 21 *Ibid.*
- 22 Transcript of Evidence, pp. 4515-16.
- 23 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5239.
- 24 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5237.
- 25 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5240.
- 26 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5242.
- 27 *Ibid.*
- 28 Br. D. Howard, *Nulungu Employment Survey*, June 1982, p. 36.
- 29 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4710.
- 30 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5237.
- 31 *Ibid.*
- 32 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5332.
- 33 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5506.
- 34 *Ibid.*
- 35 *Ibid.*
- 36 Transcript of Evidence, pp. 5507-08.
- 37 Transcript of Evidence, p. 245.
- 38 Transcript of Evidence, pp. 245 and 5289.
- 39 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5292.
- 40 B.H. Watts, *Access to Education, op.cit.*, pp. 278-79.
- 41 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4677.
- 42 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5289.
- 43 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4041.
- 44 B.H. Watts, *Access to Education, op.cit.*, p. 261.
- 45 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4837.

Chapter 10

Aboriginal Independent Schools

INTRODUCTION

10.1 A small number of Aboriginal communities and groups have established their own schools as independent alternatives to the existing schooling system because they perceived the general schooling system as being irrelevant to their children's educational needs and as not enabling them to have sufficient say in the running of the school. These schools generally have established educational programs which emphasise teaching in accord with Aboriginal social and cultural values. Aboriginal parents have a significant involvement in the running of these schools.

10.2 Aboriginal independent schools which have been established at the initiative of Aboriginal communities and parent groups, and which are the subject of this chapter, have been seen as distinct from other non-Government schools with majority Aboriginal student population which are operated by various religious denominations such as the Catholic Education Commission schools which serve Aboriginal communities in Western Australia and Queensland.

THE SCHOOLS

10.3 It was noted in the introduction that only a small number of Aboriginal independent schools have been established. They cater for only a small portion of the total Aboriginal school population. The schools are:

STRELLEY AND KULKARRIYA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

10.4 Strelley, which has a number of campuses in adjacent communities and at Kulkarriya (Noonkanbah Station), is operated under the auspices of the Nomads Charitable and Educational Foundation. Strelley was established in 1976 and Kulkarriya was established in 1978. The schools' guidelines are controlled by the communities and emphasise the need for education to serve the communities' needs as pastoral properties and desert camps.¹

10.5 The various Strelley campuses cater for approximately 150 students and there are approximately 50 students at Kulkarriya. The Nomads' schools have been registered as independent schools and so receive Commonwealth Schools Commission and State Education Department funding. Additional funding is provided by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

NYOONGAH ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY SCHOOL, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

10.6 Nyongah provides primary and secondary schooling for approximately 60 Aboriginal children. A secondary school program has commenced while primary schooling has been provided for a number of years. The school program has been adapted from the curriculum offered in the general schooling system with additional Aboriginal culturally related components. The school is registered and receives funding from the

Schools Commission, State Department of Education and Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

CHRISTIAN ABORIGINAL PARENT-DIRECTED SCHOOL, COOLGARDIE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

10.7 The school was established in 1980 by a committee of Aboriginals from the Eastern Goldfields area to provide a Christian-oriented parent-controlled school. The teaching of English and maths is emphasised in the school to achieve good academic results. It is a boarding and day school with approximately 30 primary and 45 secondary students. Funding is provided by the Schools Commission, the Commonwealth Department of Education, the State Education Department and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

YIYILI COMMUNITY SCHOOL, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

10.8 Yiyili Community School was established at Louisa Downs Station in 1982 and caters for approximately 17 primary and seven pre-school children. The school is supported by all community members and is seen as central to the community achieving its major objective of 'economic stability and social independence'.² The school is registered and funding is provided by the Schools Commission, the State Department of Education and Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

YIPIRINYA COMMUNITY SCHOOL, ALICE SPRINGS, NORTHERN TERRITORY

10.9 Yipirinya Community School was established in 1978 to cater for approximately 60 students from the town camp areas of Alice Springs. The school, set up by the Yipirinya School Council, is characterised by:

- Aboriginal control of staff, curriculum, and organisation through a Committee of the Council elected annually;
- a decentralised, 'out-station' structure in which formal teaching takes place in each community, and informal teaching is structured to meet educational objectives;
- delivery of educational service by Aboriginal teachers themselves, living in and nominated by their own particular community;
- a curriculum emphasising the need to reinforce the primary Aboriginal identity of the children as a prerequisite for acquiring the 'three R's'.³

10.10 Funding was a major issue for Yipirinya. The school was not registered until 23 September 1983. Schools Commission and Northern Territory Department of Education funding did not commence until then. The Northern Territory Government had refused to register Yipirinya as an independent school for a number of educational reasons particularly the content of the curriculum, the amount of time the children were to spend in school and that unqualified Aboriginal people would be doing most of the teaching. Registration was finally negotiated with the National Aboriginal Education Committee acting as an intermediary. Since registration the school has been funded by the Schools Commission, the Northern Territory Department of Education and Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

WORAWA COLLEGE, MELBOURNE, VICTORIA

10.11 This private boarding school for about 20 Aboriginal children was registered as an independent school in June 1983 and is funded by the Schools Commission.

MIRRAWINI GARDENS, NEW SOUTH WALES

10.12 Mirrawini Gardens, near Bellbrook, has a primary school which has provisional certification from the N.S.W. Department of Education. Upon construction of a new primary school building with funds from the Schools Commission, full certification is expected. Several secondary students attend the school where their correspondence studies are supervised.

BLACK COMMUNITY SCHOOL, TOWNSVILLE, QUEENSLAND

10.13 The school was established in 1973 to serve a small group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children in Townsville. Its enrolment fluctuated between 20 and 60 pupils. The school was begun because of parents' concern over the anti-Aboriginal atmosphere in the local schools and their wish to have their children taught aspects of their own culture as well as the more academic subjects.

10.14 Other Aboriginals and Islanders living in Townsville appeared to prefer to send their children to the local schools, possibly feeling it was better for children who must live in an integrated society to attend an integrated school.⁴

10.15 The school was registered and received funding from the Schools Commission, Queensland Education Department and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. The National Aboriginal Education Committee conducted an evaluation of the school in 1977, supporting the school's concept but noting that there were serious deficiencies in its administration, questions concerning its academic quality and a tenuous relationship between the school and the Townsville community.⁵

10.16 The school was closed in 1982 when it lost its premises and was deregistered by the State.

REASONS FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOLS

10.17 As we have seen from this brief survey of the Aboriginal independent schools, a number of themes emerge as reasons for their being established by Aboriginal communities.

THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE

10.18 Parents with religious convictions historically have had the right to set up their own schools. Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and other groups 'have already established the precedent of maintaining sub-cultural norms through control of their own schools, with varying but increasing "state aid" and with a minimum of formalised accountability to Government'.⁶ The Department of Aboriginal Affairs claimed that Aboriginals have the same right as other citizens to establish their own independent schools and to create and adopt educational programs so that they accord with their cultural values and chosen lifestyles.⁷

10.19 The Commonwealth Schools Commission noted that the present funding arrangements for non-government schools reflected policies 'supporting freedom of choice and providing differential grants to schools based on relative resource use'.⁸ Professor Watts pointed to the value of the existence of diversity in the education system, particularly in the education of minority groups:

The existence of a diversity of offerings in education must constitute a strength in any community; when the community concerned is a minority group and when alternatives are developed which recognise and affirm their cultural membership, such diversity has even greater potential value.⁹

AN EXPRESSION OF ABORIGINALITY

10.20 The National Aboriginal Education Committee claimed that Aboriginals could ensure the perpetuation of Aboriginal culture, norms and values through an independent school system.¹⁰ The New South Wales Aboriginal Education Consultative Group stated 'that any initiative that promotes and reinforces Aboriginality is a positive step in perpetuating the desire of Aborigines to retain their racial identity and traditional lifestyles'.¹¹ The establishment of Aboriginal independent schools, with aims expressing the importance of reinforcing Aboriginality, was seen as such an initiative.

THE MOST APPROPRIATE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

10.21 The survey of Aboriginal independent schools indicated that an important motivation for establishing the schools was the parents' dissatisfaction with the general schooling system and a belief that Aboriginal children would only be educated well in a more sympathetic social environment. Yipirinya School Council claimed that almost all children who attended Yipirinya had found other Alice Springs' schools:

... a hostile, threatening environment, inimical to learning. Some children dropped out of conventional school; others never attended ... The parents perceived both government and non-government schools in Alice Springs as alien institutions; monolingual and monocultural, in which foreign teachers offered their children foreign content in a foreign manner.¹²

For Yipirinya School Council the most effective way of providing appropriate education for Aboriginal children is in the familiar environment of the Alice Springs town camps, with the children being taught by untrained Aboriginal teachers appointed by the community.

MODE OF OPERATION

10.22 Given the reasons for their establishment, it is understandable that the operation of Aboriginal independent schools emphasises the notion of community control of the school. School councils or boards, comprising representatives of parents and the community, generally have broad powers within the schools. They decide on the employment of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal teachers, the curriculum content and teaching methods, the language of instruction, the suitability of resource materials and structural arrangements which may reflect Aboriginal kin relationships and social values.

10.23 The Strelley Community School has 'vigorously and effectively pursued a policy of maximum community involvement and participation in all aspects of the educative process'.¹³ Control over school matters is exercised by a full community meeting and the school committee, and includes staff hiring and appointment conditions, the division of

adults and children into different school classes, the selection of adults to work as teachers with the non-Aboriginal personnel and the approval or rejection of proposed curriculum and materials.

10.24 Community involvement and control also is exhibited at Yipirinya, with regular community meetings providing an opportunity to discuss educational matters. School committee members are elected by the Yipirinya communities to have executive control over the school. Other members of the community are involved in the production of teaching materials and assist with the cultural and educational programs. In its submission for registration the Yipirinya School Council envisaged teachers visiting individual camps and working with teaching assistants and students from the camp. Older people would be able to take the children into the bush for Aboriginal learning, and both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children from the town area would be able to visit the camps.¹⁴ The Yipirinya Council believed that this decentralised structure was more in harmony with Aboriginal social structures:

. . . the children's education takes place in their own particular camp. As each fringe camp has been set up to conform to traditional Aboriginal social structures based on the clan group, so each camp's multigrade class conforms to the traditional social structure.¹⁵

10.25 Similar arrangements for parental and community control of the school exist in other Aboriginal independent schools.

OPPOSITION TO ABORIGINAL INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

10.26 Many Aboriginal parents do not favour the establishment of independent schools. Mr J. Fleming claimed that:

There is no indication that the majority of Aboriginal people would wish to see the creation of any number of separate educational institutions to cater for their special needs. These can be met through effective consultation and change within existing administrative structures, given adequate government funding support and with enlarged Aboriginal participation in the implementation of education programs at all levels.¹⁶

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre acknowledged that those Aboriginal parents in favour of independent schools constitute a minority, although support for the idea seemed to be growing.¹⁷

10.27 A number of teacher organisations expressed concern about the establishment of Aboriginal independent schools. The Northern Territory Teachers Federation, while agreeing that Aboriginal communities should have more input in designing local curricula, could not support the establishment of independent Aboriginal schools as they would compete with public education for funding. However, the Federation did not see any reason why Aboriginal schools would have to move outside the public system provided 'the Government shows support for Aboriginalisation of Education, and the Education Department shows a willingness to provide education suitable for Aboriginal communities'.¹⁸

10.28 Another concern raised by the establishment of Aboriginal independent schools is the question of educational standards. The National Aboriginal Education Committee's evaluation of the Black Community School referred to questions being raised concerning 'its academic quality'.¹⁹ However, the Committee claimed that ensuring a basic quality of education in Aboriginal independent schools was 'a given' in its criteria for supporting the schools.²⁰ Inadequate funding of Aboriginal independent schools could also, as the School Commission noted, be a factor preventing these schools from providing educational services comparable to that available to students in most schools.²¹

FUNDING OF ABORIGINAL INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

10.29 The most pressing problem facing existing Aboriginal independent schools, and those Aboriginals seeking to establish independent schools is lack of finance. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs pointed out that many Aboriginal communities do not have the capacity to contribute, by way of fees, to their own schools, to the same extent as generally happens in non-Aboriginal independent schools. This leads to a greater reliance on government to meet the costs of standard educational services and almost complete reliance on government to provide the special needs of such schools.²² The Commonwealth Schools Commission also has recognised that Aboriginal community schools are an obvious example 'of very low resource non-government schools where communities are able to make little or no contribution towards the attainment of acceptable standards'.²³

10.30 The methods of funding which exist for Aboriginal independent schools are generally the same as those for other non-government schools. Prior to registration as an independent school, the schools can apply for assistance under the Schools Commission's Capital Grants program for non-government schools. Following registration, recurrent finance is available through the Commonwealth Schools Commission and State Departments of Education. The Schools Commission provides benefits through the General Recurrent Grants Program and specific purpose funding is also provided through the Disadvantaged Schools Program, the Services and Development Program, the Special Education Program, and the Special Projects Program. To cover the shortfall in funding as a result of the inability of Aboriginal people to pay substantial fees for the schooling of their children the Department of Aboriginal Affairs provides additional funding to cover recurrent costs.

10.31 The Department of Aboriginal Affairs claimed that these funding arrangements left a more significant shortfall in the total cost of running the schools than might have been expected from the fact that the Commonwealth Schools Commission and the State Departments of Education generally funded approximately 60 per cent of the 'standard costs' of running the schools. The setting of 'standard costs' was based on the costs for a 'basket of services'. The 'basket of services' on which the percentage was calculated appeared, according to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, inadequate for Aboriginal schools. As a result the additional funding for the schools which was normally met by the Department could be as much as 65 per cent of overall funding.²⁴

10.32 The Schools Commission also believed the existing funding arrangements for Aboriginal independent schools were inadequate. In its recent report on funding policies for Australian Schools, the Commission expressed its concern that the present funding scheme and the Assisted Schools Scheme do not allow Aboriginal independent schools to reach acceptable resource standards, and provide students with services comparable to those available to students in most other schools.²⁵ The Commission recommended that:

... schools operated by Aboriginal communities should receive support through the Commonwealth general recurrent program to enable them to operate at acceptable resource standards.²⁶

10.33 As this funding is to be provided very much on the basis of needs it will ensure greater funding for these generally impoverished schools than is provided for all but the poorest non-Aboriginal independent schools. It is noted that the Schools Commission also recommended an amount of approximately \$2m in 1984 for funding of capital projects in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander non-government schools, which include the Aboriginal independent schools.

10.34 Another difficulty with the funding arrangements for Aboriginal independent schools is that Commonwealth and State or Territory funding is dependent on registration

as an independent school. As the setting of educational standards is a State and Territory Government responsibility, they must recommend the registration of all non-Government schools before Commonwealth Schools Commission funding can commence. The experience of Yipirinya School demonstrates that the process of obtaining registration can be a difficult one for Aboriginal independent schools.

10.35 The Department of Aboriginal Affairs considered that State and Territory education authorities would need to be flexible in their interpretation of the registration requirements so that the difficulties facing Aboriginal independent schools, in becoming registered, can be overcome.²⁷ According to the Department, flexibility is needed particularly in assessing the curricula of the schools, as these curricula often differ substantially from those of other schools because Aboriginal language and culture form major components of them. The Department concluded that Aboriginal independent schools should be given both financial and professional support to establish and ready themselves for inspection for registration and the Department's decision in 1983 to fund Yipirinya School before registration was obtained was an application of this principle.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.36 The Committee believes that Aboriginal people have the same right as other Australians to establish their own independent schools and receive support from Government. The existence of alternatives in Aboriginal education, as in education generally, constitutes a strength in the community. Also, as expressions of Aboriginal self-determination and Aboriginal community control, Aboriginal independent schools should be encouraged.

10.37 To enable the aims of these schools to be fully achieved, and some of the existing deficiencies in relation to educational standards to be overcome, the critical concern will be that of assured funding. The Committee supports the Commonwealth Schools Commission's recommendation that recurrent funding to Aboriginal independent schools should be made through its General Recurrent Grants Program to non-government schools to enable the schools to operate at acceptable resource standards. Particular regard should be given in funding these schools to the generally low socio-economic standing of many Aboriginal communities and consequently their inability to fund their own schools. Funding should be sufficient to ensure that there is no longer any need for the recurrent funding currently provided by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. This recommendation is in line with the Committee's earlier recommendation that continuing funding in Aboriginal education be transferred from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to the Education portfolio. The particular arrangements will be the subject of negotiation with the States and the communities involved.

10.38 The Schools Commission's capital grants program for non-Government schools with majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments should continue and should give attention to the needs of the Aboriginal community-controlled schools. Their needs for appropriate capital facilities are immense. Much assistance under this program has already been given to these schools. The Committee believes that it is essential that these funding programs should be developed in close consultation with the National Aboriginal Education Committee and the Aboriginal communities involved.

10.39 The Committee recommends that:

- *Aboriginal independent schools should be funded through the Commonwealth Schools Commission general recurrent program for non-government schools to enable them to operate at acceptable resource standards;*

- *the Commonwealth Schools Commission's capital grants program for non-government schools with majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments give attention to the needs of Aboriginal independent schools; and*
- *these programs be developed in close consultation with the National Aboriginal Education Committee and the Aboriginal communities concerned.*

10.40 Measures should be taken to ensure that the difficult experience of Yipirinya School in obtaining registration and hence recurrent Commonwealth and State or Territory funding is not repeated. Where genuine steps are taken by Aboriginal parents and communities to establish Aboriginal independent schools then support in terms of curriculum advice and funding should be provided to the school to assist it to gain registration. Curriculum advice could be provided by State or Territory Departments of Education, the Commonwealth Curriculum Development Centre, the National Aboriginal Education Committee or tertiary institutions. Funding should come in the form of an establishment grant. It is essential that the National Aboriginal Education Committee or the State or Territory Consultative Groups be involved with new Aboriginal independent schools at an earlier stage to act as co-ordinator for advice provided to the school and as a mediator with State and Territory Governments. The implementation of these measures would greatly reduce the possibility of conflict arising between the new school and the authorities responsible for registration.

10.41 The Committee recommends that, where genuine steps are taken by Aboriginal parents or communities to establish Aboriginal independent schools:

- *the schools be provided with curriculum advice and funding to assist them to obtain registration as independent schools; and*
- *the National Aboriginal Education Committee or the relevant State or Territory Aboriginal Education Consultative Group be involved with the schools at an early stage to act as co-ordinator for advice provided to the school and as mediator with the authorities responsible for registration.*

10.42 While the Committee has recommended these measures to assist new Aboriginal independent schools to establish themselves, the Committee believes that, for a variety of reasons, there will not be an overwhelming demand from Aboriginal people for the establishment of independent schools. The greatest demand for community schools will probably come from the more traditionally-oriented communities which wish to assert community control over the education of their children and introduce a strong Aboriginal element into the school. However, some urban communities may also wish to establish independent schools. Where there is a strong demand from the Aboriginal community for the establishment of an independent school, assistance should be provided.

10.43 The demand for Aboriginal independent schools will also be affected by the extent to which the general schooling system is able to cater for the needs of Aboriginal children. In making general schooling for Aboriginals more relevant, there would be benefit in incorporating some of the central features of Aboriginal independent schools — Aboriginal community involvement in school activities and decision-making and a school program sensitive to Aboriginal needs — into the general schooling system. These features of Aboriginal independent schools point the direction in which the Committee believes that schools need to move to see education catering better to Aboriginal needs.

Endnotes

- 1 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4227.
- 2 Transcript of Evidence, p. 2928.
- 3 Transcript of Evidence, p. 2808.
- 4 B.H. Watts, *Aboriginal Futures Summary Report. op.cit.*, p. 92.

- 5 National Aboriginal Education Committee Report on the Black Community School, Canberra, 1978.
- 6 Transcript of Evidence, p. 556.
- 7 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4818.
- 8 Commonwealth Schools Commission, *Funding Policies for Australian Schools*, AGPS, Canberra, 1984, p. 32.
- 9 B.H. Watts, *Aboriginal Futures, op.cit.*, p. 1073.
- 10 Transcript of Evidence, p. 160.
- 11 Transcript of Evidence, p. 1390.
- 12 Transcript of Evidence, p. 592.
- 13 Transcript of Evidence, p. 1782.
- 14 Transcript of Evidence, p. 2814.
- 15 Transcript of Evidence, p. 593.
- 16 Transcript of Evidence, p. 1618.
- 17 Transcript of Evidence, p. 1831.
- 18 Transcript of Evidence, p. 1996.
- 19 National Aboriginal Education Committee, Black Community School, *op.cit.*, p. 21.
- 20 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5161.
- 21 Schools Commission, *Funding Policies, op.cit.*, p. 63.
- 22 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4818.
- 23 Schools Commission, *Funding Policies, op.cit.*, p. 63.
- 24 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4818.
- 25 Schools Commission, *Funding Policies, op.cit.*, p. 63.
- 26 *Ibid.*
- 27 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4819.

Chapter 11

Post-schooling

INTRODUCTION

11.1 Post-schooling has received significant emphasis in special programs in Aboriginal education because of the desire of Aboriginal people to gain formal secondary and tertiary qualifications which will enable them to obtain employment and allow them to be self-managing in their own communities. The failure of the general schooling system to provide Aboriginal people with an adequate schooling, and the difficulties many Aboriginals have had in schools, has meant that post-schooling programs have been especially important in achieving these aims. The Institute for Aboriginal Development observed that the period of adolescence, traumatic for all young people, was particularly so for young Aboriginal people, making it difficult for them to engage in education successfully during these years. In later years though:

... many Aboriginal people who become socially located and have relatively permanent giving and receiving relationships with children, parents and relatives become aware of their need to gain further knowledge and skills.¹

11.2 An indication of the tremendous increase in numbers of Aboriginals taking advantage of the various post-schooling programs available can be gained from the figures for the number of Aboriginal Study Grants awarded. In 1976 there were 2,253 Aboriginals receiving Study Grants. This figure rose to 7,202 awards in 1979 and 12,800 in 1984.²

11.3 However, there are also significant shortcomings in this area. The Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, in its 1985–87 Triennium Report, noted the significant increase that there had been in Aboriginal participation in all forms of post-compulsory education. However, it also noted that much of this participation was concentrated in TAFE and non-award courses and that the present level of Aboriginal participation would need to more than double before it would approach the participation levels of the general population. The Commission also claimed that when entry was achieved, Aboriginal retention rates were significantly lower than for the general population.³ The Tertiary Education Authority of South Australia claimed that there was an absence of overall planning and co-ordination and satisfactory funding arrangements in the post-schooling area, and that existing provisions have achieved only limited success in increasing access to post-secondary institutions for Aboriginal people.⁴

11.4 Post-schooling programs fall into four categories. Firstly, bridging educational programs have been designed to provide Aboriginal people, who have failed in the normal schooling system, with the opportunity to obtain the necessary secondary and other educational qualifications to enable them to move into tertiary education, obtain employment or effectively manage their communities. These programs can also cater for other areas in which older Aboriginal people wish to obtain training. Secondly, special programs have developed in tertiary education in an effort to greatly increase the number of Aboriginal people obtaining tertiary qualifications. Thirdly, Technical and Further Education (TAFE) programs have catered to some extent for Aboriginal education needs in this area. Fourthly, various programs have operated in the more remote Aboriginal communities to provide Aboriginals with the necessary basic skills to run their own communities. The Committee considers the first two areas in this chapter together with the funding of post-schooling programs and the student assistance program in the post-

schooling area, the Aboriginal Studies Grant Scheme. The important areas of TAFE and adult education in remote communities are considered in the next chapter.

BRIDGING PROGRAMS

11.5 Programs aimed at bridging the gap between the current qualifications of Aboriginals and qualifications that will enable them to go on to further education or gain vocational skills are an important feature of post-schooling. These bridging programs have often been designed to overcome the perceived shortcomings of the normal schooling system which have led to Aboriginal failure. Many of the programs have operated as enclaves within educational institutions such as the Aboriginal studies unit in the Western Australian Institute of Technology, the Aboriginal Task Force in the South Australian Institute of Technology and the Aboriginal Task Force in the Darwin Institute of Technology. Within these enclaves there is support to students that was often unavailable in secondary school. Other programs are offered in autonomous Aboriginal colleges such as the Aboriginal Community College in Adelaide, Koorie College in Melbourne and Tranby College in Sydney.

11.6 The bridging programs offered by these institutions are varied. Some are specifically designed as bridging courses to higher education and so enable students to obtain matriculation qualifications. Others are designed to provide adult Aboriginals with study courses which develop their personal and social skills to enable them to compete for apprenticeships and jobs on equal terms with their peers and to help their communities become more self-sufficient. Other programs are more specifically oriented as pre-employment and pre-vocational programs.

11.7 The value of these programs is in their emphasis on the attainment of self-confidence and an awareness of Aboriginal identity. For many Aboriginal people participating in the programs, they are a marked contrast to the normal schooling system.

ENCLAVES

11.8 As stated earlier, special bridging courses to higher education are provided in the enclaves of the Aboriginal Studies Unit in the Western Australian Institute of Technology and the Aboriginal Task Forces in the South Australian Institute of Technology and the Darwin Institute of Technology. These programs have been successful in providing Aboriginal students with the qualifications required for tertiary study and employment, and while the normal schooling system continues to fail Aboriginals, they will be essential if more Aboriginals are to enter tertiary institutions and gain adequate employment. The enclaves also provide general studies courses for those not wishing to obtain matriculation qualifications. Other enclave programs operating in universities and colleges of advanced education are described later in this chapter.

11.9 The Aboriginal Task Force in the South Australian Institute of Technology was the first established Aboriginal enclave within a tertiary institution and it has provided the model for many of the enclaves established later. The Senior Lecturer-in-Charge of the Task Force stated that the rationale for the enclave was based on the need to provide educational, social and administrative support for all Aboriginal students in the Institute. The main features of the enclave were: the availability of counselling to overcome the social and cultural problems Aboriginals could have in attending a tertiary institution; educational support in the form of a Resource Centre for the exclusive benefit and use of Aboriginal students and additional tutorial and remedial assistance; negotiating special

entry provisions for Aboriginal students; and Aboriginalisation by giving preference to Aboriginal employers to service Aboriginal needs.⁵

11.10 The Task Force Academic Unit is responsible for the Bachelor of Arts in Aboriginal Affairs Administration, the Associate Diploma in Community Development and the Community Development Certificate. Whilst these courses are open access courses, they are subject to quota provisions which enable at least 75 per cent of places to be filled by Aboriginals.⁶

11.11 The Bachelor of Arts in Aboriginal Affairs Administration was offered for the first time in 1983, and the Task Force claimed it is widely regarded as a significant development in Aboriginal affairs education. The course is designed to provide professional training for middle management and executive positions in Aboriginal affairs administration. The Associate Diploma in Community Development was offered for the first time in 1982 and provides a qualification tailored to the vocational needs of Aboriginals for work at Field Officer and middle-manager level in community organisations. The Community Development Certificate is a qualification requiring one year's academic work which closely follows the first year in the Associate Diploma in Community Development. Certificate holders are eligible for entry into the third division of the Public Service.

11.12 The Committee was informed, when it visited the Task Force in 1983, that in the 10 years the enclave had been operating nearly 400 people had enrolled in the various courses and up to 1982, 191 awards had been made. Of the 70 students enrolled in courses in 1983, only 10 had dropped out and this was mainly due to family pressures and inadequate allowances rather than an inability to handle the courses academically.⁷

11.13 Within the Aboriginal Studies Unit at the Western Australian Institute of Technology (WAIT) an Aboriginal Bridging Course is offered. Successful completion of the course enables entry into specified areas of study at WAIT and other tertiary institutions, eligibility for application to the Third Division of the Commonwealth Public Service and an educational base for enhancing employment prospects. Of the 237 students commencing the course in the years 1976–1983, 126 have completed it. The Institute also offers a Liaison Officers Course. Students in the Institute are supported by an enclave run on similar lines to the one in the South Australian Institute of Technology.⁸

11.14 The Western Australian Institute of Technology has established a Centre for Aboriginal Studies to assist Aboriginal students in all tertiary courses within the Institute including engineering, business studies, nursing, social work and agricultural management. It provides a resource centre for community programs, applied resources, visiting Aboriginal artists, speakers and scholars in Aboriginal education.⁹

11.15 The Darwin Institute of Technology, through its Aboriginal Task Force program offers a Certificate in General Studies which enables students who complete it successfully to gain entry to the Third Division of the Public Service, enter tertiary courses at the Darwin Institute of Technology, or gain employment elsewhere. The Committee was informed that most students who drop out of the course do so for financial and personal reasons, rather than because of an inability to cope academically.¹⁰

11.16 These enclave programs have proved successful for Aboriginal people who have not been able to obtain the formal qualifications they require from the normal schooling system. While Aboriginal people continue to fail in the normal schooling system these programs will be required. The Committee strongly supports the need for the programs. Their particular problems relate to funding and the Committee considers the funding of tertiary education later in this chapter.

ABORIGINAL COLLEGES

11.17 Institutions oriented largely to offering more general studies courses include the Aboriginal Community College, Adelaide, Koorie College, Melbourne, and Tranby Aboriginal College, Sydney. Tranby College also offers a matriculation course for students. The emphasis of the courses provided in these institutions is on developing the academic and vocational skills of their students in an atmosphere that is also supportive of the students' Aboriginality. Apart from developing particular skills which will prove valuable in obtaining employment for the students, these colleges emphasise the achievement of self-confidence and an awareness of Aboriginal identity. For many Aboriginal people participating in the programs, they are a marked contrast to the normal schooling system. The support of other Aboriginal people is available, the programs are relevant to Aboriginal educational needs and they are taught in a manner which does not threaten Aboriginal values.

11.18 The rationale for the education provided in these institutions was explained by the Principal of the Aboriginal Community College:

There are a lot of people whose schooling has been very short, who have had a short section of primary schooling or who if they have had a longer stay in school have had an ineffective one. I think a very important point . . . is that, with a community like that, of Aboriginal people, which has been entirely neglected or ineffectively treated through the education system, it is not enough to say we are going to patch this up by dealing with the adults of the future, because we have already the adults of the present whose lives are as important surely as those of the future adults.¹¹

Apart from their lack of formal schooling, most students at the College have had a long history of unemployment or unsatisfying employment. Many have suffered from major health disability, were institutionalised at some time in their life or felt feelings of alienation from the non-Aboriginal community.¹² The College caters almost entirely for urban Aboriginals and its educational programs are designed to develop skills useful in obtaining employment or moving into other studies, and to build the self-confidence and self-image of the people involved in the programs. According to the College:

The atmosphere and environment is identifiably Aboriginal, and the College is accepted as an Aboriginal centre. It is therefore non-threatening and is not associated with the non-Aboriginal community for which predominantly negative feelings exist.¹³

11.19 The rationale of the other Aboriginal colleges is similar. Mr Morieson, a teacher at Koorie College, in Melbourne, claimed that Aboriginal groups have been forced to provide their own programs because TAFE is not meeting Aboriginal needs in the area of adult education. The College would have an important role to play in second chance education providing the opportunities for adults to rectify the deficiencies in their primary and secondary schooling. According to Mr Morieson, the College's educational credo is based on Aboriginal values and its prime service is to assist the training and educational needs of the Aboriginal community.¹⁴

11.20 As these institutions often do not provide Aboriginal people with formal qualifications which will enable them to enter university or obtain employment requiring matriculation standard, it could be claimed that many of them are not serving Aboriginal educational needs. However, these programs are meeting a genuine need among Aboriginal people in the urban areas and should continue. They provide for the development of academic and vocational skills, which many Aboriginals desire without necessarily wanting to reach a matriculation standard or undertake university studies. In some cases they do provide matriculation qualifications or at least provide a bridge to those with little formal schooling to enter formal courses in other institutions. They also provide Aboriginal people who have failed in the normal schooling system, and whose

employment prospects and self-confidence and self-esteem are poor, with the opportunity to upgrade their educational standing and build their personal confidence and esteem. It is the Aboriginal atmosphere of these colleges which enables these people to succeed where previously they had failed.

11.21 The Aboriginal Community College in Adelaide receives significant funding from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the Commonwealth Department of Education and the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations. But the College referred to difficulties in funding, particularly from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, because of the practice of annual funding, the delays in establishing the size of grants, the failure to provide sufficient funding to support pre-existing levels of operation and the lack of explanation of decisions reached.¹⁵ The Koorie College also has had funding difficulties in its early years of operation. The College has received funding from the Victorian Technical and Further Education Board and from private sources. It claimed that educational authorities should recognise the Aboriginal self-management principles of the College and respond with both moral and financial support.¹⁶ Tranby College also claimed that autonomous Aboriginal educational institutions such as itself should be supported by governments 'both morally and financially'.¹⁷ The Committee considers these Colleges should receive sufficient funding support from governments to enable them to provide programs to give Aboriginals the opportunity to upgrade their educational qualifications in an environment they find comfortable.

11.22 The Committee recommends that:

- *Commonwealth, State and Territory governments provide funding support to Aboriginal educational colleges which enable adult Aboriginal people to upgrade their educational qualifications.*

TERTIARY EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

11.23 Aboriginal people are significantly underrepresented in tertiary educational institutions. The 1981 Census indicated that 0.6 per cent of Aboriginals had a diploma or higher qualification in comparison with 8 per cent of the general population.¹⁸ A Commonwealth Department of Education survey of Aboriginal access to tertiary education showed that, in 1980, 0.5 per cent of the Aboriginal population was undertaking courses located in universities and colleges of advanced education compared with 2.2 per cent of the overall Australian population.¹⁹ However, that report also noted the positive trend of a steadily increasing rate of Aboriginal participation in courses in tertiary institutions in the past decade or so.²⁰ In 1983, there were 799 Aboriginals enrolled in higher education courses (54 per cent in teacher education) of whom 617 remained until the end of the year. This represents a participation rate of 0.50 per cent (0.39 per cent by the end of 1983). If the Aboriginal participation rate had been the same as the general population there would have been 3,630 Aboriginal students in higher education courses.²¹

11.24 To the extent to which there have been positive developments in tertiary education for Aboriginals it reflects the desire of Aboriginal people to obtain tertiary qualifications and the success of special programs which have been provided within tertiary institutions to assist Aboriginals to gain these qualifications. The major initiative in tertiary education has been the establishment of enclave support programs which provide special staff and counselling services as well as study facilities and additional tutorial assistance. Enclave programs operate in 13 tertiary institutions, mainly in the area

of teacher education. The success of these programs lies in the fact that they provide a supportive atmosphere for Aboriginal students in what is a very competitive environment. Other provisions made for Aboriginal students in tertiary institutions include special entry provisions, bridging courses which overcome the educational shortcomings of Aboriginals that prevent them from participating in tertiary programs (these are often associated with enclave programs), extensions to the length of conventional courses and off-campus academic programs.

11.25 The areas identified by the National Aboriginal Education Committee as being ones in which there is a particular need for professionally qualified Aboriginals are teacher education, law, medicine, nursing, management and administration, linguistics, anthropology, communications, social work, economics, politics and environmental science.²² In the 1985–87 Triennium, teacher training was seen by the National Aboriginal Education Committee as the major priority.²³ This Committee strongly supports this priority because of the importance of employing more Aboriginal teachers in schools. The National Aboriginal Education Committee considered that if its target of 1,000 Aboriginal teachers employed in schools by 1990 was to be achieved a number of initiatives would need to be taken including:

- increasing student capacity of enclaves;
- developing external or off-campus programs;
- training of traditional people as teachers; and
- training of secondary teachers.²⁴

The Committee considers ways of training more Aboriginal teachers in Chapter 14.

11.26 However, for the Aboriginal community to be effectively self-managing there is clearly a need to see Aboriginal graduates emerging from the other disciplines identified by the National Aboriginal Education Committee. There will need to be an extension of the special measures which have already achieved success in Aboriginal tertiary education. Many of the special measures should, as they do in some cases now, operate in tandem in a single institution. So there may be special entry requirements to an institution with a bridging course to enable skills to be upgraded before commencing a full tertiary course. All these programs could be provided in an enclave which provides academic and social support.

SPECIAL ENTRY PROVISIONS

11.27 Many tertiary institutions have been prepared to modify their entry requirements for Aboriginal students as they have for other disadvantaged students. However, the Federation of University Staff Associations noted that 'many universities appear to have no provisions of this kind'.²⁵ The Federation adopted a policy that all university administrations 'implement positive discrimination standards for Aboriginal student entry, where these do not already exist'.²⁶ The Committee strongly supports this policy. Entry into some areas of university study, such as medicine and law, in which quotas are very tight may need special consideration in terms of obtaining special entry of Aboriginals. Effort should be made to enable Aboriginal people to obtain entry in these areas.

11.28 The Committee recommends that:

- *all tertiary education institutions implement a policy of positive discrimination in terms of standards for Aboriginal student entry, where these do not already exist.*

BRIDGING COURSES IN UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

11.29 The bridging courses operating in the Western Australian Institute of Technology, the South Australian Institute of Technology and the Darwin Institute of Technology have been described above. Bridging and orientation courses also operate in a number of colleges of advanced education, such as the South Australian College of Advanced Education, the Western Australian College of Advanced Education and the Northern Rivers College of Advanced Education. In these institutions the bridging courses are designed to upgrade study skills for students to then proceed to the normal courses offered in these institutions. They also usually operate with the support of an enclave.

11.30 A bridging course operating in a university which is worthy of note is the Monash Orientation Scheme for Aborigines which commenced in 1984. The Scheme offers Aborigines a full academic year of preparation for university study, so bridging the educational and cultural gap which exists between Aboriginal people and what is expected of first-year university students. Students are assisted to acquire the study and communication skills essential for university training during this year. Successful completion of the orientation year guarantees first-year places for the students in Monash University Faculties of Arts and/or Law. The program is also an enclave providing specific staff, rooms and support mechanisms for students during the orientation year and in subsequent years of their undergraduate course.²⁷

11.31 While substantial advances have been made in providing bridging courses in colleges of advanced education, particularly for teacher trainees, there has been much less development of bridging courses in universities and in a wide range of other disciplines which Aboriginal people may wish to pursue. Monash University stands alone in providing such a bridging year. The Committee considers that more orientation years similar to the one offered in Monash should be available in other universities and that they should enable Aborigines then to gain entry to a wide range of university courses.

11.32 The Committee recommends that:

- *other universities develop bridging courses and enclaves for Aboriginal students to enable them to gain entry to a wide range of university courses.*

ENCLAVES

11.33 The Committee has already made substantial reference to enclaves throughout this chapter. Enclaves are support programs which provide Aboriginal people enrolled in standard courses in tertiary institutions with additional support to enable them to cope with the often alien atmosphere of a tertiary institution. The essential elements of an enclave program are:

- a) provision of staff whose role is to assist students in dealing with their course work and developing the necessary skills to proceed through the course to graduation. This involves both counselling support and providing/arranging for special tutorials i.e. personal and academic support.
- b) provision of a separate area for students use.²⁸

11.34 As has already been stated, enclaves operate in a number of colleges of advanced education, particularly in teacher education, and in Monash University. Most have associated special entry arrangements and bridging courses. Figures compiled by the National Aboriginal Education Committee in 1983 indicated the importance of enclaves for Aboriginal people undertaking tertiary courses. In that year 62.2 per cent of Aboriginal students enrolled in higher education award courses were in institutions

which had enclaves. According to the National Aboriginal Education Committee, while a number of these students would have enrolled in these institutions if there weren't enclaves, 'it would appear that many others are only enrolled because of the existence of the enclaves'.²⁹

11.35 The Committee was informed that the enclave programs have been enormously successful for non-traditional people. According to Mr Sherwood, of the Western Australian College of Advanced Education, enclaves have proved to be the 'best model' that is available for non-traditional people. However, he also noted that enclaves were quite inappropriate for traditionally-oriented people and that other programs would be required for them.³⁰ The success of the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program within the South Australian College of Advanced Education was described as an 'outstanding' historical event'.³¹ According to Ms Koolmatrie who is the co-ordinator of the program:

We firmly believe that enclave support programs, such as the Aboriginal teacher education program, are the only way in which Aboriginal people are going to succeed within a tertiary institution, maintain aboriginality and become a powerful force in changing Australian society so that it is complementary to the development of all Australian citizens.³²

11.36 Ms Koolmatrie also claimed that there will be a need for enclave programs until at least the year 2000. In view of this, she stated that it was essential that enclave programs be funded as part of the overall institutional funding so that there is a formal acceptance of enclaves and their staff with some assurance of tenure or continuity.³³ This was supported by the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program in the Western Australian College of Advanced Education which claimed that funding for the enclave support system and pre-tertiary courses:

... should be seen as part of the overall college budget (but of necessity specially identified) so that the whole of ATEP can be fully integrated into the operations of the college. Staff morale, and the work that they do, is affected if they are seen to be some temporary adjunct to the college.³⁴

There are other questions relating to who should fund the programs which the Committee considers later in this chapter in looking at the funding of post-schooling programs.

11.37 The Committee considers that the enclave programs have been tremendously successful in assisting Aboriginal people to obtain tertiary qualifications. They have enabled the many cultural and social difficulties which confront Aboriginal people attending tertiary institutions to be overcome so that they do not provide an impediment to academic success in these institutions. The Committee considers that there will be a continuing need for enclaves and that they will need to be catering for students in a much wider range of courses than to date. In particular, efforts should be made to further develop enclaves for Aboriginal people attempting courses in areas other than teacher education. The Committee considers that the enclaves should be developed in association with bridging courses and special entry requirements. They should also be funded as part of the normal funding of tertiary institutions and so ensure continuity of staffing and a proper integration into the institution.

11.38 The Committee recommends that:

- tertiary institutions develop further enclave programs, or existing enclaves be expanded, with associated special entry provisions and bridging courses for Aboriginal students;
- enclave programs give attention to the needs of Aboriginal students in areas other than teacher education; and

- *enclave programs and associated bridging courses be funded as part of the overall funding provided to the tertiary institution concerned.*

EXTERNAL OR OFF-CAMPUS COURSES

11.39 In recognition of the difficulties that Aboriginal people from remote and traditional communities have in attending tertiary institutions in metropolitan centres, there have been attempts to establish external or off-campus tertiary programs. The necessity of developing off-campus programs for these Aboriginal people was underlined by Ms Koolmatric of the South Australian College of Advanced Education:

... there is a growing recognition that continuing ties with the home community are absolutely vital for most indigenous trainees and that the destructive effects of any prolonged absence from the community are greater than any benefits of on-campus study and experiences in large metropolitan areas.³⁵

11.40 The major development in this area is the off-campus teacher education programs of the Western Australian College of Advanced Education offered in Broome and Derby, and those of Batchelor College in the Northern Territory. These programs are described in Chapter 14 in connection with teacher education.

11.41 The Committee considers that off-campus programs in areas other than teacher education should be available where there are sufficient numbers of Aboriginal people who wish to pursue other courses. Institutions should also attempt to make their existing external courses more accessible to Aboriginal people. It is clear that unless such external programs are provided, Aboriginal people in remote communities will not be able to undertake university studies.

11.42 The Committee recommends that:

- *tertiary institutions provide off-campus programs in courses other than teacher education where there are sufficient numbers of Aboriginal students who wish to undertake tertiary courses. The demand for such courses could be assessed by the State and Territory Aboriginal Educational Consultative Groups; and*
- *tertiary institutions with significant external studies programs adapt these programs in ways which will make them more accessible to Aboriginal students.*

FUNDING OF POST-SCHOOLING PROGRAMS

11.43 Some of the major issues raised in the post-schooling area were those of funding. It was claimed that there was a lack of co-ordination between the multiplicity of funding agencies involved in this area. Another major difficulty in funding referred to in many of the post-schooling institutions the Committee visited was that the predominance of annual grants in Commonwealth funding (provided through the Department of Aboriginal Affairs) created difficulties in planning in the post-schooling area, particularly in tertiary institutions. The Tertiary Education Authority of South Australia summarised the concerns and proposed a solution:

Current financial arrangements which are characterised by multiple sources of funds and a predominance of annual grants are regarded as perhaps the major source of problems facing providers of special tertiary programmes for the Aboriginal people. The Authority in its Submission to the Tertiary Education Commission for the 1982-84 Triennium requested that, as well as increasing funding provisions for special programmes within the tertiary education sector, *funds for the Aboriginal Task Force and the Aboriginal Community College should be provided on a triennial basis through the TEC.*³⁶

11.44 Those involved in enclave and other tertiary education programs have also referred to the difficulties of funding in this area. Staff involved in the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program in the Western Australian College of Advanced Education referred to the range of funding sources for the program and claimed that the involvement of such a large number of agencies, each with its own rules and regulations, made it difficult to co-ordinate funds and seek the extension of funds to enable greater implementation of existing schemes. The staff of the program claimed that it would be more efficient if one agency (perhaps the Commonwealth Department of Education) were to be responsible for the implementation of a national Aboriginal education and teacher education policy under the guidance of the National Aboriginal Education Committee.³⁷

11.45 Mr V. Forrest, of the Western Australian Institute of Technology, referred to the fact that long-term planning could not be undertaken with annual funding from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.³⁸ Mr French-Kennedy, of the South Australian College of Advanced Education, claimed that it was inappropriate for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to be involved in recurrent funding of the Anangu Teacher Education Program being undertaken by the College because of the annual basis of Departmental funding and because, as a tertiary education program, it should be funded and evaluated by agencies involved in tertiary education.³⁹

11.46 The Committee outlined the role the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission has in Aboriginal education in Chapter 3. The Commission's position, as stated in its last Triennium Report, is that any strategy to increase Aboriginal enrolments in regular courses must recognise that the normal costs of those enrolments are to be met from the ongoing sources of funding of the institution concerned. The general recurrent grants of the Commission enable higher education institutions to meet the basic teaching costs associated with Aboriginal enrolments in award courses. To meet the higher costs associated with tertiary education for Aboriginal people, the Commission referred to the Commonwealth agencies involved in providing additional funding. It claimed that this funding should be rationalised by being provided through a single co-ordinated source and suggested the Commonwealth Department of Education as the best source. The Commission thus recommended that:

- Special funding should be provided through a single co-ordinated funding source. To this end the Commission sees merit in the concept of a Tertiary Education Program for Aborigines (TEPA), as proposed by the NAEC, to be administered by the Department of Education and Youth Affairs working in close co-operation with the NAEC and the Commission.
- Special Commonwealth funding should be provided on a contractual basis, for no less than three years (the normal duration of a course) and that annual allocations should be provided on a calendar year rather than financial year basis; such funding would be consistent with the base funding provided on a triennial basis on the advice of the Commission.⁴⁰

11.47 In Chapter 3 of this report the Committee has made recommendations about the transfer of funding for Aboriginal education from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to the Education Portfolio so that a better co-ordination of policy and funding can be achieved. This transfer of funding will include the funding for post-schooling programs currently being made by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. The National Aboriginal Education Committee claimed the funding in the post-schooling area should be transferred to the Education Portfolio under a Tertiary Education Program for Aborigines (TEPA). This Program would be administered by the Commonwealth Department of Education in consultation with the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission on the advice of the National Aboriginal Education Committee.⁴¹

11.48 The Committee supports the proposal for the establishment of TEPA following the transfer of Department of Aboriginal Affairs funding to the Education Portfolio as

recommended in Chapter 3. The establishment of such a program will have a number of advantages. It will concentrate Commonwealth funding for post-schooling programs basically under a single authority. It will mean that the Tertiary Education Commission which has the expertise in tertiary education, becomes involved in Aboriginal tertiary education. It will ensure that the National Aboriginal Education Committee and the Aboriginal education consultative network has a significant input into policy and programs in the post-schooling area. And finally, it will allow longer term funding of programs which is essential for adequate planning of tertiary education programs.

11.49 The Committee also considers that additional resources will have to be made available to TEPA, once it is established, to allow the development of the additional programs recommended in this chapter and those additional teacher training programs recommended in Chapter 14. Post-schooling programs are critical to the achievement of Aboriginal self-management as well-trained Aboriginal people are needed in all forms of employment and to run their own communities. Sufficient funding must be provided for programs to enable this objective to be achieved.

11.50 The Committee recommends that:

- *following the transfer of Aboriginal education funding from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to the Education Portfolio, a Tertiary Education Program for Aboriginals should be established administered by the Commonwealth Department of Education in consultation with the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission and the National Aboriginal Education Committee;*
- *the proposed Tertiary Education Program for Aboriginals fund post-schooling programs for at least a three year period and on a calendar rather than financial year basis so that the funding provided is consistent with the triennial funding of the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission; and*
- *the Commonwealth Government provide significant additional funding to the proposed Tertiary Education Program for Aboriginals to enable the establishment of a number of new initiatives in the post-schooling area as recommended in this report.*

STUDENT ASSISTANCE FOR POST-SCHOOLING PROGRAMS

ABORIGINAL STUDY GRANTS SCHEME

11.51 This scheme (usually referred to as Abstudy) is administered by the Commonwealth Department of Education. It was introduced in 1968 with the objective of raising the educational, economic and social levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders by assisting them to take up opportunities for further study after leaving school. The scheme embodies a recognition that Aboriginal and Islander people require special measures to take advantage of available educational opportunities.

11.52 Initially the scheme was intended to provide assistance to individual students undertaking full-time post-secondary courses at universities and colleges, centres of vocational training and other recognised institutions. Many Aboriginals wishing to undertake such courses lacked the necessary educational pre-requisites. Others were unable to take up opportunities for further studies because of family and other commitments or because their needs could not be met through existing courses.

11.53 To cater for as broad a range of needs as possible, the scheme has departed significantly from its original concept of providing grants and financial support to individual students. It has been extended to cover a wide range of educational opportunities for Aboriginals in a number of geographic areas. The scheme supports

students undertaking pre-apprenticeship and pre-employment courses, secondary studies for adults, part-time study and special courses devised specifically for Aboriginal students. Abstudy funds are also provided to students attending some seminars, workshops and conferences involving structured learning for the participants. The costs of some enclave support programs in tertiary institutions have also been met by Abstudy.

11.54 Since 1984, Abstudy has provided a special allocation of 100 teacher training awards. This initiative is in response to the stated aim of the National Aboriginal Education Committee of achieving a target of 1,000 Aboriginal teachers by 1990. Eligible applicants must be undertaking an approved full-time course in teacher training leading to a formal teaching qualification. The award is designed to assist adult teacher trainees so the applicant must be aged 25 years or over. The Committee discusses these awards in Chapter 14.

11.55 Since its inception Abstudy has assisted increasing numbers of Aboriginals. In 1983 some 12,102 Abstudy payments were made, an increase on the previous year when 9,861 grants were made.⁴² It should be noted that these figures include some people who have received more than one grant in the year as they may have enrolled in more than one short course that year. It is clear from these figures that Abstudy is seen as important amongst Aboriginals and is providing Aboriginal people with the opportunity to promote their own educational and personal development. The Committee considers that it is essential that the Scheme continue.

11.56 Over half of Abstudy grants are for some form of full-time study although only a small percentage of the fields of study lead to professional qualifications.⁴³ Most recipients of the Abstudy grant are concentrated in TAFE or non-award courses.⁴⁴ A significant number of students are involved in literacy courses.⁴⁵

11.57 In monetary terms, Abstudy is the second major item of Commonwealth Government expenditure in the field of Aboriginal education after the Aboriginal Secondary Grants Scheme. In the financial year 1984-85, Commonwealth funding for Abstudy amounted to some \$24.9m representing 29 per cent of Commonwealth expenditure in the field of Aboriginal education.⁴⁶

EVALUATION OF ABSTUDY

11.58 In 1982 the Department of Education commissioned a comprehensive evaluation of Abstudy which was conducted by Dr D. Williams and Ms B. Chambers. That review was completed in 1984 and the Committee had the opportunity to discuss some of its conclusions and proposals with the Department of Education in the course of the Public Hearing in Canberra on 27 June 1985. Whilst the report of this Committee cannot hope to deal with the issues discussed in the *Evaluation of the Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme* in as much detail, some common ground was covered by the Committee in the course of its inquiry.

11.59 As mentioned previously, Abstudy grants have begun to flow increasingly to support students in special course arrangements. In its submission to the Inquiry, the Department of Education reported that in 1982, 5,447 of the total 9,861 study grants, or 55 per cent, were for special courses. These programs tend to fall into three categories: special support for Aboriginal students enrolled in mainstream courses in tertiary institutions (enclaves); special courses designed to meet specific needs of particular groups of Aboriginals; and, the funding of bridging and orientation courses.

11.60 As discussed earlier in this chapter, the provision of enclave programs has been one of the more successful components of Aboriginal tertiary education. In 1984, some 13

enclave programs were operating in colleges of advanced education and universities, funded directly from Abstudy. In addition, a number of 'bridging' or 'access' courses have been mounted to assist Aboriginals make the transition to pursuing further studies. Some examples are the courses funded through Abstudy at the Western Australian Institute of Technology, Monash University, and the access program at the Aboriginal Teacher Education Centre at Batchelor College in the Northern Territory.

11.61 Aboriginal community organisations and institutions are making increasing use of Abstudy to pool grants in order to fund particular courses to meet their needs. In this way Abstudy has been able to respond to the need for instruction in a range of areas such as commercial fishing, motor maintenance, adult literacy, community management and other fields. Special courses have been mounted in some cases to meet immediate needs, e.g. car repair courses.

11.62 The Evaluation of Abstudy recommends that the scheme continue but with a number of administrative and structural changes. The Evaluation supports the Committee's earlier recommendation for the establishment of a Tertiary Education Program for Aboriginals located within the Commonwealth Department of Education of which Abstudy would be one part. With these structural changes in place, the Evaluation recommends that Abstudy revert to its original function of being primarily a source of financial assistance for individual Aboriginals. The Committee supports this view.

11.63 The Committee also agrees with the recommendation that special courses continue to be funded by the proposed Tertiary Education Program for Aboriginals but that they be funded separately from Abstudy grants to individuals. It is clearly the role of TAFE to provide special courses to meet the needs of Aboriginals. This is dealt with in the next chapter.

11.64 A major issue raised with the Committee by Aboriginal students on its visits to post-schooling institutions was the assistance levels of Abstudy awards and, in particular, the anomaly between the level of Abstudy allowances and the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations' training allowances. The Department of Employment and Industrial Relations' training allowances are substantially greater than those provided under Abstudy. In many places the Committee visited students were receiving the different awards, with their different levels of allowance, to undertake the same courses. The level of Abstudy assistance was also addressed by the Evaluation of Abstudy.

11.65 The Evaluation report claimed that approximately a third of all full-time Abstudy students were finding it difficult to survive and that a substantial increase in Abstudy benefits was required.⁴⁷ It pointed to the relativities between the levels of Abstudy grants and unemployment benefits (which are at similar levels) and claimed that there was little financial incentive for Aboriginal people to undertake training.⁴⁸ The Evaluation also referred to the anomaly between the levels of Abstudy allowances and Department of Employment and Industrial Relations' training allowances and recommended that Abstudy allowances for formal courses be increased to approximately the level of the training allowances with certain special considerations because of the differences between the Schemes.⁴⁹ The Committee supports this recommendation.

11.66 The Committee recommends that:

- *the Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme be maintained; and*
- *the Abstudy allowance for students in formal courses of at least a year's duration be increased to approximately the level of the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations' formal training allowances, with the necessary adjustments made for the differences between the administrative operation of the two Schemes.*

11.67 Finally, the Committee refers to the need to greatly increase the number of Aboriginal people holding Education Officer positions to assist students involved in the

Scheme. The Committee referred in Chapter 4 to the importance of ensuring that more Aboriginal people be involved in the delivery of programs in Aboriginal education. The Evaluation of Abstudy shared this view and recommended that more Aboriginal Education Officers be trained and recruited and that a goal be established of having Aboriginals fill at least 50 percent of Education Officer positions by 1990.⁵⁰ The Committee endorses this recommendation.

11.68 The Committee recommends that:

- *more Aboriginal people be trained and recruited to Education Officer positions within the Abstudy Scheme.*

ABORIGINAL OVERSEAS STUDY AWARD SCHEME

11.69 The other major scheme of assistance administered by the Commonwealth Department of Education is the Aboriginal Overseas Study Award Scheme. This is a scheme designed to foster leadership training within the Aboriginal community by facilitating overseas experience for selected achievers. Ten awards per year are created by the scheme. The aim is to develop the existing potential of members of the community whose achievements are already considerable. The scheme has provided for short-term formal courses and overseas attachments of a type not available in Australia. Some examples of these include a six months program studying co-operatives, and a four months T.V. production course with the British Broadcasting Corporation and two months with an archeological survey expedition. The Committee supports the scheme and considers that it should continue.

ACCOMMODATION

11.70 A difficulty facing many Aboriginal students undertaking post-schooling programs away from home is that of finding adequate and inexpensive accommodation in the capital cities and provincial centres in which educational institutions are located. Accommodation difficulties were raised with the Committee by Aboriginal students at every post-schooling institution the Committee visited.

11.71 When the Committee visited the Northern Rivers College of Advanced Education it was informed that accommodation for students in the College's enclave was a major problem because some real estate agents discriminated against Aboriginals. The majority of the enclave students did not come from Lismore and many were mature-age students with families. It was claimed if students did not find suitable accommodation for themselves and their families before the beginning of the college year, their studies suffered. The enclave had made a submission to Aboriginal Hostels Ltd to obtain a house which would provide suitable accommodation.⁵¹ Similar difficulties were raised with the Committee in other institutions it visited.

11.72 Aboriginal Hostels Ltd provides funding for hostels to accommodate Aboriginal students undertaking studies away from home. The type of hostel normally involved in education accommodation is a small home with an Aboriginal manager, house-parents and staff that can accommodate about 12–18 students. In some cases student counsellors are employed in the hostels to work with students, hostel staff, the Education Department and schools and other institutions. Aboriginal Hostels Ltd claimed that it needed adequate forewarning of the establishment of courses for Aboriginal students in educational institutions so that it could plan hostels for students. It also stated that it needs early advice of the cancellation of courses which may affect the planning and operation of hostels for students.⁵²

11.73 The Committee considers that adequate resources should be provided to Aboriginal Hostels Ltd to enable it to provide for the accommodation needs of students participating in educational programs away from home. At the same time there should be liaison between educational authorities responsible for planning new programs and Aboriginal Hostels Ltd to ensure that Aboriginal Hostels are informed of new initiatives to assist it in planning for the accommodation needs of students. The Committee also notes that its recommendation for an increase in the level of Abstudy grants to approximately the level of the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations' training awards should assist students to find more adequate accommodation.

11.74 The Committee recommends that:

- *adequate resources be provided to Aboriginal Hostels Ltd to enable it to meet the accommodation needs of Aboriginal students undertaking educational programs away from home; and*
- *the Commonwealth Education Portfolio liaise with Aboriginal Hostels Ltd about new programs in Aboriginal education which will require the support of a hostel to provide accommodation for students.*

CONCLUSIONS

11.75 The provision of appropriate post-schooling programs for Aboriginal people is vital to the achievement of Aboriginal self-management and self-sufficiency. While post-schooling has been an important area of focus of government, and a number of programs in this area have tended to cater well to Aboriginal needs, more programs must be provided and in some cases will have to be tailored better to meet Aboriginal needs.

11.76 Bridging education programs have filled a particular need among Aboriginal people because of the failure of the normal schooling system to provide Aboriginals with the necessary qualifications to undertake further study or gain anything but unskilled employment. These programs have been developed to overcome the perceived shortcomings of the normal schooling system which led to Aboriginal failure. While the general schooling system continues to fail Aboriginal people, these programs will be required.

11.77 Special tertiary education programs designed for Aboriginal people have been successful in improving the appallingly low level of access of Aboriginals to tertiary education. As the desire of Aboriginal people to gain professional and tertiary qualifications will grow, these special programs will have to be maintained and extended to provide for the demand. In particular, the area of teacher education is one to which Aboriginal people will be demanding satisfactory access and in which there is a tremendous need for trained Aboriginals. The Committee considers Aboriginal teacher training in Chapter 14.

11.78 The Committee sees the need for the continuation of the Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme. The Scheme has enabled the access of Aboriginal people to post-schooling programs to be greatly improved. There are a number of issues raised about the Scheme in the evaluation recently completed. These issues should be resolved so that the Scheme can continue to make an important contribution to the post-schooling needs of Aboriginal people.

Endnotes

- 1 Transcript of Evidence, p. 2243.
- 2 Transcript of Evidence, pp. 4744 and 5289.
- 3 Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, *Report for 1985–87 Triennium*, Vol. 1, Part 1, Recommendations on Guidelines, April 1984, p. 74.
- 4 Transcript of Evidence, p. 2300.
- 5 Transcript of Evidence, pp. S3740–41.
- 6 Transcript of Evidence, p. S3741.
- 7 Hansard Precis, Adelaide, 11 August 1983, p. 10.
- 8 Transcript of Evidence, pp. 4933–4945.
- 9 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4931.
- 10 Hansard Precis, Darwin, 28 October 1983, p. 4.
- 11 Transcript of Evidence, pp. 3773–74.
- 12 Transcript of Evidence, pp. S3658–59.
- 13 Transcript of Evidence, p. S3665.
- 14 Transcript of Evidence, pp. S3566–67.
- 15 Transcript of Evidence, pp. S3673–3683.
- 16 Transcript of Evidence, p. S3567.
- 17 Transcript of Evidence, p. 1466.
- 18 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4827.
- 19 Department of Education, *Survey on Aboriginal Access*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 15.
- 21 National Aboriginal Education Committee, *Aborigines and Tertiary Education*, Report for the Triennium, 1985–87, p. 28.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 49.
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. 45.
- 24 *Ibid.*, pp. 45–46.
- 25 Transcript of Evidence, p. S3355.
- 26 Transcript of Evidence, p. S3344.
- 27 Transcript of Evidence, p. 3344.
- 28 National Aboriginal Education Committee, *Aborigines and Tertiary Education*, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
- 29 *Ibid.*, p. 70.
- 30 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4155.
- 31 Transcript of Evidence, p. 3811.
- 32 Transcript of Evidence, p. 3812.
- 33 Transcript of Evidence, p. 3813.
- 34 Transcript of Evidence, p. 554.
- 35 Transcript of Evidence, p. 3814.
- 36 Transcript of Evidence, p. 2313.
- 37 Transcript of Evidence, p. 554.
- 38 Transcript of Evidence, p. S3376.
- 39 Transcript of Evidence, pp. 3821–22.
- 40 Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, *Report for 1985–87 Triennium*, Vol. 1, Pt. 1, *op. cit.*, pp. 77–78.
- 41 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5392.
- 42 D. Williams and B. Chambers, *An Evaluation of the Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme*, Commonwealth Department of Education, 1984, p. 241.
- 43 *Ibid.*, p. 247.
- 44 Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, *Report for the 1985–87 Triennium*, Vol. 1, Pt. 1, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
- 45 D. Williams and B. Chambers, *Evaluation of Abstudy*, *op. cit.*, p. 247.
- 46 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5394.
- 47 D. Williams and B. Chambers, *Evaluation of Abstudy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 356–57.
- 48 *Ibid.*, p. 357.
- 49 *Ibid.*, pp. 361–62.
- 50 *Ibid.*, p. 389.
- 51 Hansard Precis, Visit to Lismore, 8 February 1984, p. 10.
- 52 Transcript of Evidence, p. 1860.

Chapter 12

Technical and Further Education

INTRODUCTION

12.1 The National Aboriginal Education Committee has noted that Aboriginals participating in Technical and Further Education (TAFE) have tended to concentrate in non-certificate level courses. Only small numbers are in trade certificate courses.¹ This is regarded as a quite inadequate situation by the National Aboriginal Education Committee Working Party on TAFE because it claimed that TAFE programs had the capacity to meet three fundamental needs in Aboriginal society, namely:

- overcoming the inadequacy of the schooling which has been provided to Aboriginals;
- providing an alternative for students who do not wish to continue school beyond the legal leaving age;
- providing the skills necessary for effective self-determination, particularly at community level.²

12.2 The Technical and Further Education Council, in its Report to the Tertiary Education Commission for the 1985–87 Triennium, noted four features of the current TAFE provision for Aboriginals:

1. Most States have developed a range of access courses aimed to provide training and educational opportunities for Aboriginal communities and other small groups who do not easily take part in TAFE courses.
2. A range of special full-time pre-vocational and pre-trade courses are provided, specifically for Aboriginals, and usually in association with the Departments of Aboriginal Affairs and Employment and Industrial Relations.
3. It appears that TAFE systems are still only in the developmental stages of structuring vocational courses to meet the needs of Aboriginals and their communities, although there is a wide range of circumstances to be catered for.
4. Few States have until recently sought the employment of Aboriginals in their systems to interpret Aboriginal needs, develop courses appropriate to those needs and be involved in their delivery.³

12.3 What these features indicate are that, in attempting to cater for Aboriginal needs, the TAFE systems have done so largely through specially designed courses with special funding from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, with insufficient Aboriginal consultation, and have done so in a largely inadequate fashion. TAFE then has tended to be under-utilised by Aboriginal people because its programs have not been addressed to Aboriginal needs and because they have not been provided in ways acceptable to Aboriginals. This general picture is confirmed by the National Aboriginal Education Committee's TAFE Working Party which claimed that, currently, only minimal resources are being provided for TAFE for Aboriginals. According to the Working Party's Report:

Governments are placing demands on Aboriginal people yet seem to expect us to conjure up from nowhere the vast knowledge of complex management, trade and other skills. Unless government and educational agencies are committed to applying resources to the area of Aboriginal TAFE then the policy of self-determination will be meaningless.⁴

12.4 It would be incorrect to say that there are not things happening in the TAFE area for Aboriginal people. The Committee describes briefly the developments in the States and Northern Territory.

THE SITUATION IN THE STATES

NEW SOUTH WALES

12.5 There have been significant developments in New South Wales in TAFE for Aboriginal people. The Department of Technical and Further Education has an Aboriginal Education Unit which is concerned with providing special courses for Aboriginal people. The staff of the Unit is 95 per cent Aboriginal and it reacts to requests initiated by local communities in developing its programs. Aboriginal involvement in TAFE courses has increased significantly in recent years from 1,198 enrolments in 97 courses in 1981, to 1,603 enrolments in 137 courses in 1982, to 1,742 enrolments in 136 courses in 1984. Of more significance than the increase in numbers is the change in the type of courses being undertaken by Aboriginal students. In 1982 over half of the courses provided were access courses (short, part-time courses usually of a craft or hobby nature) whereas in 1984 these had dropped to one-sixth of the total provision. In 1984 more than half of the programs were longer term vocational courses.⁵

12.6 A number of recent major initiatives in TAFE in New South Wales which are worthy of note are:

- A Mobile Unit has commenced operations and two teachers have been appointed. The first courses were 18-weeks courses in Building Skills conducted at Cummeragunja and Brungle in 1984. In 1985 the program moved to Murrin Bridge.
- Special courses at Certificate Entrance and Tertiary preparatory Certificate levels have been developed and were piloted in 1984. These pilots have continued in 1985. These courses have been written to be meaningful and relevant to Aboriginal students.
- An Aboriginal Education Centre in Redfern named the EORA CENTRE was opened in July, 1984. The Centre provides courses for the local Aboriginal community, especially in the Performing and Visual Arts. This is seen as a major initiative for Aboriginal students in the Sydney Metropolitan area.
- In March, 1985 the New South Wales Education Commission brought down a determination which, for the first time in New South Wales and possibly Australia, recognised Aboriginality as a formal qualification in the NSW TAFE teaching service.
- Early in 1984 the Aboriginal Development Commission purchased the Pioneer Cement Factory in Moree and allocated \$85,000 to renovate and equip the building. This work was carried out by apprentices on the TAFE courses at Mehi and Stanley Village. The premises are now being used by TAFE for their Aboriginal Building Courses in the region. Houses are being built in the communities by Aboriginal trainees involved in the training courses.⁶

The Committee visited Moree TAFE College and inspected the training premises and some of the buildings which trainees have assisted in constructing.

12.7 Funding for TAFE programs for Aboriginals in N.S.W. is received from a number of Commonwealth sources, principally the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Department of Education with lesser amounts from the Technical and Further Education Council, Participation and Equity Program funding, and the Aboriginal Development Commission. The State provides substantial funding to cover teaching hours, salaries for administrative staff and materials and travel. Of the 62,424 teaching hours in 1984/85, 33,920 are State funded.

VICTORIA

12.8 In Victoria, TAFE is the responsibility of the Technical and Further Education Board whose approach is to co-ordinate and promote activities in co-operation with local providers. However, it noted that its philosophy of decentralisation has 'inherent difficulties where a small and scattered target group is concerned'.⁷ Such a group is the Aboriginal community in Victoria which has the added factor, according to the Board, of not being 'homogeneous in aspiration and general attitude'.⁸ As a result, the Board *acknowledged that Aboriginals did not exploit TAFE's potential to the full.*⁹ For example, adult literacy classes which might be expected to be frequently used by Aboriginals were generally not used except where special programs had been mounted. The Board also admitted that:

there is little by way of Aboriginal direction of TAFE's Aboriginal education initiatives, or Aboriginal influence in their day-to-day running. There are grounds for believing that an Aboriginal secondary and post-secondary facility would achieve more by way of Aboriginal management and direction than the current diverse approach.¹⁰

However, the Board had developed a policy to devolve greater control over Aboriginal programs to Aboriginal people.

12.9 The Board expressed concern about the multiplicity of funding sources, particularly at the Commonwealth level and the difficulties this gave rise to in achieving co-ordination at the State level. It claimed that there was 'potential waste, duplication and conflicting policy objectives likely to arise' in having such a multiplicity of funding sources.¹¹

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

12.10 The Department of Technical and Further Education in South Australia operates joint training initiatives for Aboriginals with the Aboriginal Employment and Training Section of the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations. The basic philosophy of programs is to enable unemployed Aboriginal people to compete in the employment market. This is done by providing an educational/training program that:

- a) compensates for the gaps in the education of the individual trainees and enables them to compete more equally in the employment market;
- b) is relevant to employer requirements and the general demands of the work place; and
- c) motivates those who are able to undertake further skills training.¹²

Funding is provided by the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs through its State Grants and the Commonwealth Department of Education.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

12.11 The Western Australian Department of Education maintains a TAFE Aboriginal Access section. The section is responsible for supporting and co-ordinating special classes created to fulfil Aboriginal needs and operates within the Technical Education Division. Seven officers are located within the head office of TAFE and two operate out of regional offices. One is located at Broome and one at Kalgoorlie. In addition to making Aboriginal people and community groups more aware of the courses and resources offered by TAFE, the section has a threefold role:

- a) organising and conducting intensive courses for people who wish to develop or refine a specific skill. The courses consist of various technical, commercial, personal development and administrative subjects. The major intention of the programs is to provide people with management and technical skills and by so doing help Aboriginal communities in their bid for self-determination.
- b) conducting part-time leisure and interest classes. In these classes an emphasis is placed on fostering personal interest and self-development leading to a more satisfying use of leisure time.
- c) implementing full-time literacy courses which provide 'bridging' or 'second chance' courses for Aboriginal people who wish to improve themselves socially, educationally and vocationally. These courses (known as TAFE Aboriginal Access Courses) are conducted in Technical Colleges.¹³

TASMANIA

12.12 The comment of the Principal of the Northern Region in Tasmania on adult education was that the involvement in adult Aboriginal education had been consistent, 'but generally in an uneven and small manner'.¹⁴ The most successful programs that had been undertaken according to the Principal, were evening classes on Cape Barren Island and a dressmaking/needlework program in Launceston.

QUEENSLAND

12.13 In Queensland, TAFE for Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders is co-ordinated by an Officer-in-Charge, Aboriginal and Islander TAFE within the Queensland Department of Education's Division of Technical and Further Education. The Queensland Aboriginal and Islander TAFE programs aim:

- to provide education/training for Aboriginal and Islander adults to enable them to be better equipped to enter the work-force, to cope better with life in today's society and to provide 'second chance' education programs for entry to tertiary studies;
- to provide a training program for Aboriginal field officers which could lead to a TAFE Teacher Preparation Program at Mt Gravatt Campus of the Brisbane College of Advanced Education and subsequent appointment as a fully qualified TAFE teacher.¹⁵

12.14 To meet these aims, TAFE provides a training program for Aboriginal/Islander field officers located at various colleges. Through these field officers and college extension programs, staff provide educational and training programs for Aboriginal and Islander communities. The field officer positions are temporary at present and funded by the Commonwealth for two years. Field officers are recruited with or without trade or post-secondary qualifications. Where the appointee lacks qualifications it will be required that he/she complete the certificate course in community development as part of the field officer training program. In 1983 there were 12 such appointees.

12.15 The Curriculum and Evaluation Section of TAFE has specialist officers available for consultation in the development of all programs for Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders and their skills are widely used in the development and evaluation of vocational programs, in particular those which are formally structured. All structured vocationally-oriented programs conducted by Aboriginal and Islander TAFE in Queensland have a 'living skills' component and the students are provided with a student counsellor for the entire time the program operates.

12.16 Local surveys have shown that those courses which teach employment skills are heavily requested and a close liaison is maintained with the Departments of Employment and Industrial Relations and Commonwealth Education to provide courses which assist students to obtain employment. Special courses which reflect employment market requirements, e.g. stockmen, stationhands, short order cooks, hospitality, farm

machinery operations, etc. are conducted as the job market requires. Programs for unemployed youth on traditionally-oriented communities are undertaken.

12.17 In the metropolitan area particularly, literacy and numeracy has been a major thrust by TAFE. Some Aboriginal tutors have been trained and these people go out and tutor their own people. At Cairns, Rockhampton and Townsville, special courses have been conducted for Aboriginal and Islander office workers.

12.18 Many Aboriginal and Islander people attend ordinary courses such as pre-vocational, apprenticeship, office education at colleges of Technical and Further Education. However, separate figures are not available through the TAFE system.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

12.19 Adult education in Northern Territory Aboriginal communities, including the urban communities, is provided by Adult Educators employed by the Northern Territory Department of Education and located in the communities. The Adult Educators are supported by a team of Itinerant Instructors, based in regional offices of the Department of Education, who visit Aboriginal communities to conduct a variety of courses such as commercial studies, including typing, book-keeping and accounting procedures, carpentry and joinery, concrete laying, general mechanics, outboard motor maintenance, home science. Extensive use is also made of part-time teachers who provide instruction within their specific area of expertise. Adult Educators are required to provide a full education service to the adults of the communities they are serving except for those involved in teacher education. The Committee describes the adult education provision for those involved in teacher training in Chapter 14.

12.20 According to the Northern Territory Department of Education, there are a number of problems confronting the Adult Education program:

- the vast distances of the Territory, dispersed population and finite resources mean that some communities are without direct access to Adult Education and Training services;
- a reluctance on the part of many Aboriginal people to travel to larger centres for extended periods of time to receive education and training; and
- many of the curriculum materials and methods which are traditionally used to cater for the needs of the wider Australian population and which are available 'off the shelf' have been found to be unsuitable. The process of development and trial of relevant and appropriate education and training materials and methods is costly and time consuming.¹⁶

12.21 A number of initiatives were being considered by the Northern Territory Department of Education in relation to the program including the provision of access to training to enable Aboriginal people to become qualified Adult Educators, the improvement of access to trade-based training in Aboriginal communities and improvement of access to management training to enable Aboriginal people to take on wider fields of responsibility in areas such as finances and general management of their communities.¹⁷

12.22 Conventional TAFE courses are provided in the Darwin Institute of Technology and the Community College of Central Australia and Aboriginals can take advantage of these courses as can all Northern Territory citizens. However, few Aboriginal students participate in courses in these institutions and even fewer succeed in the courses.¹⁸

IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF TAFE FOR ABORIGINALS

12.23 What this discussion of the TAFE provision for Aboriginal people indicates is that, as the National Aboriginal Education Committee's draft policy document on TAFE claims, there are two virtually distinct systems of TAFE for Aboriginals:

1. A general or mainstream system with courses and services available for the general population (including Aboriginals) which has relatively much greater resources and can provide generally accepted qualifications.
2. A system of Aboriginal programs designed for Aboriginal people which seeks to cater for Aboriginal needs and has greater acceptance by Aboriginal people.¹⁹

12.24 However, as the National Aboriginal Education Committee notes, the general system has done little to cater for Aboriginal needs and has little acceptance by Aboriginal people, while the system of Aboriginal programs is poorly resourced and provides few programs which lead to generally accepted qualifications. This poses a dilemma for Aboriginal people as continued development of the Aboriginal TAFE system will enable Aboriginal needs to be better met in the short term, but it will not provide many of these people with formal qualifications. On the other hand, if Aboriginal people attempt to move into the mainstream system, then many Aboriginal people may not wish to participate in TAFE programs because they are not specifically designed to suit their needs.²⁰

12.25 The Committee considers that this dilemma can be resolved to a significant extent by ensuring that the mainstream TAFE system adapts itself to meet Aboriginal needs. Aboriginal people wish to acquire qualifications that are the equal of those provided to non-Aboriginals and this can most effectively be done within the mainstream system, but with substantial special provisions which ensure that programs cater to the particular needs of Aboriginal people. The general failure of TAFE, except in some areas, to attempt to cater adequately to Aboriginal needs is amply demonstrated by the above description of the activities in the States and the Northern Territory.

12.26 The ways in which TAFE can respond to Aboriginal needs is by introducing new structures and methods into its mainstream programs and by significantly increasing Aboriginal input into its programs. The sorts of structures which should be in place in relation to mainstream programs have been suggested by the National Aboriginal Education Committee:

- developments in programs available to the general population to ensure they meet a much wider range of Aboriginal needs;
- support for Aborigines participating in programs available to the general population;
- structures which facilitate the entry of Aborigines into general courses, and provide for a smooth transition to other courses and to employment;
- programs designed for Aborigines, and provided by the mainstream system where appropriate.²¹

12.27 In relation to Aboriginal involvement in TAFE, the Committee considers that the relevant Commonwealth, State and Territory government departments and organisations should develop policy statements on TAFE for Aboriginals in consultation with the National Aboriginal Education Committee and the State and Territory Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups. Each State and Territory government should establish an Aboriginal Education Unit in TAFE, similar to the Unit established in New South Wales, which will have primary carriage for adapting TAFE programs to meet Aboriginal needs and advising on day-to-day policy. There should also be much greater attempts made by TAFE authorities and institutions to involve Aboriginal people in instructor and field officer roles. To increase Aboriginal access to TAFE, it will be essential that Aboriginal people receive adequate information about TAFE programs which are available to them.

12.28 The National Aboriginal Education Committee has also proposed the establishment of a National Aboriginal Institute of Technical and Further Education to provide a focus and model for appropriate responses to Aboriginal needs in the TAFE area. The Institute would offer distance learning, external studies, and produce publications, curriculum and audio-visual materials. An important aspect of its work would be the incorporation of traditional Aboriginal strategies and modes of learning into the curriculum. According to the National Aboriginal Education Committee, the first step in establishing the Institute is for several positions to be established in a unit attached to an existing TAFE institution supportive of Aboriginal initiatives.²² The Committee considers that the resources proposed for a National Aboriginal Institute of TAFE would be best developed in the State and Territory Aboriginal Units of TAFE. The sharing of developed resources and programs between the States and Territories could be co-ordinated through an Aboriginal advisory unit to the TAFE Council of the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission. This unit, which should develop from the existing National Aboriginal Education Committee Working Party on TAFE, should provide the overall co-ordination and policy framework for TAFE throughout Australia by advising the TAFE Council of the Tertiary Education Commission.

12.29 The Committee considers that such a potentially valuable source of educational programs for Aboriginal people as TAFE must be fully tapped by adapting to become more appropriate for, and accessible to, Aboriginal people. A wide range of courses can be provided through TAFE to Aboriginal people and communities. These courses include vocational and trade courses, matriculation courses, literacy, numeracy and general studies courses, community management and development courses and personal development and leisure courses. Provided in flexible ways that meet Aboriginal needs and are acceptable to Aboriginal people, TAFE programs could cater to the tremendous demand in the adult Aboriginal community for educational programs of wide variety. However, TAFE should avoid duplication of programs and courses currently being provided in Aboriginal colleges such as the Aboriginal Community College in Adelaide and Tranby College in Sydney. As the Committee noted in the previous chapter, these colleges have an important role to play in post-schooling for Aboriginals and TAFE should co-ordinate its programs with those provided in these colleges.

12.30 To enable TAFE to adapt and develop programs to meet Aboriginal needs adequate levels of funding must be provided by Commonwealth, State and Territory governments. The co-ordination of funding and policy, as in other areas of Aboriginal education, should be achieved through the National Aboriginal Education Committee and the State Aboriginal Education Consultative Group network. The Committee considers that Commonwealth funding should be directed through the Tertiary Education Program for Aboriginals, which was recommended in the last chapter under funding in post-schooling. As with Aboriginal education generally, State governments, through their TAFE authorities, should accept funding responsibility for well-established, successful, continuing programs in TAFE.

12.31 The Committee recommends that:

- *the Technical and Further Education system adapt its mainstream programs to cater for differing Aboriginal educational needs in the TAFE area;*
- *Commonwealth, State and Territory governments develop policy statements on TAFE for Aboriginals in consultation with the National Aboriginal Education Committee and State and Territory Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups;*
- *the Technical and Further Education Council of the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission establish an Aboriginal advisory unit on policy in TAFE for Aboriginals at the Commonwealth level;*

- *each State and Territory government, which has not already done so, establish an Aboriginal Education Unit in TAFE to adapt and develop TAFE policies and programs within their respective State or Territory in the TAFE area;*
- *when developing policies and programs for TAFE, Aboriginal communities be consulted closely about their specific needs in the TAFE area;*
- *Commonwealth, State and Territory governments provide adequate resources to TAFE so that programs can be adapted and developed to meet Aboriginal needs; and*
- *Commonwealth funding in TAFE be directed through the Tertiary Education Program for Aboriginals (TEPA) administered by the Commonwealth Department of Education in consultation with the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission and the National Aboriginal Education Committee.*

ADULT EDUCATION IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES

12.32 One of the most urgent priorities in post-schooling and TAFE for Aboriginal people is the provision of appropriate adult educational programs to the more remote Aboriginal communities. If Aboriginals in these communities are to have wider employment opportunities and if they are to be self-managing in their own communities then an adequate level of adult education is essential. Adult educational programs provided to the communities have been haphazard, not allowing the effective achievement of either of these objectives. The programs often have not catered to Aboriginal needs nor have they been provided in ways appropriate to Aboriginal communities. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs emphasised the importance of providing appropriate training to communities:

Many programs in the past have foundered for the lack of technical skills in a community, e.g. paucity of people with adequate literacy and numeracy (thus leading to reliance on non-Aboriginal personnel in key positions). It is therefore essential that a greater effort be made to provide training facilities for such skills in remote communities, so that Aboriginals have a real choice in, and control over, the lifestyles they choose.²³

12.33 Reference has already been made to the increasing role which TAFE should play in providing adult education and training programs to Aboriginal people. This should include an increasing role in providing courses to the more remote Aboriginal communities. However, the mistakes of the past must be overcome if the programs are to be effective. They must be designed to meet the needs of the communities as defined by the communities themselves and be provided in a way that is compatible with the communities' cultural environment.

12.34 The Department of Aboriginal Affairs claimed that, in providing secondary schooling facilities in the remote communities, sufficient flexibility should be allowed so that suitable adult and technical education classes could be provided from the same facility. The Department noted however that centralised facilities would be required for some courses and it pointed to the lack of such a facility in the Kimberley. It was also stated by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs that a future development, following the establishment of TAFE facilities in the communities, should be to provide other TAFE courses externally. These could be provided to the communities by the use of visiting teachers and, eventually, by the establishment of TAFE annexes in the larger communities which would be outposts of a full TAFE College in a more centralised location.²⁴

12.35 The National Aboriginal Education Committee also referred to the need for TAFE to adapt itself to the needs of the remote and traditional communities. It claimed that:

. . . there is no reason why State TAFE Departments could not apply resources to a community-oriented approach, although an important aspect of such an approach is that people being served by the program have control over and responsibility for the evolution of the education program . . . it is essential that community people have control of the resources to enable them to define what education must include, rather than as has been the case, that they are asked to choose from options prepared and defined by people outside the community.²⁵

12.36 The Committee considers that the challenge of providing appropriate technical and further education programs in the remote and traditional communities, programs which address the real needs of these communities if they are to be effectively self-managing, should be one of the major priorities of the Aboriginal Units established in State and Territory TAFE areas. It should also be an area which receives significant additional resources. The challenge in providing programs to these communities will only be met if the communities are closely consulted about the sort of programs they want and if the programs are intertwined with the developmental needs of the communities as defined by the communities themselves.

12.37 The Committee recommends that:

- *a particular area of attention of TAFE for Aboriginals be in the provision of appropriate programs for the remote and traditionally-oriented Aboriginal communities; and*
- *the communities concerned be closely consulted about the sort of technical and further education they wish to receive.*

12.38 TAFE will not be the only source of the provision of adult education programs to the communities. Other organisations such as the Institute for Aboriginal Development in Alice Springs, have developed courses which will assist Aboriginal communities to obtain the necessary management and planning skills to take control of their communities. The Institute for Aboriginal Development has claimed that educational services for Aboriginal people, apart from maintaining and developing Aboriginal identity, should have joint aims of providing skills for living and participating effectively in this society, including participation in employment in this society.²⁶ Organisations such as the Institute for Aboriginal Development which are attempting to meet the educational and training needs of the communities, have an important role to play in providing adult education in the community, and should be supported. The provision of TAFE programs to the communities should be co-ordinated with programs already being provided by organisations like the Institute.

CONCLUSIONS

12.39 There is an urgent need for the TAFE system to provide more, and appropriate, programs for Aboriginals. As yet the resources of TAFE have been inadequately tapped to provide educational programs for Aboriginal people. TAFE has the potential to provide a wide range of programs to Aboriginals in a wide variety of circumstances, from pre-vocational and training programs for Aboriginal people seeking to participate in the wider society, to literacy and self-management skills to Aboriginals in remote communities. To provide such a wide range of programs will require greater flexibility and responsiveness to Aboriginal needs on the part of TAFE, and also the provision of additional funding by government.

12.40 The provision of educational services to adult Aboriginals in the remote communities has received inadequate attention by government despite policies for the self-management and self-sufficiency of the communities. If these policies are to be given

effect to, rather than being espoused as mere rhetoric, then the extension of appropriate adult educational programs to the remote communities to teach skills for community self-management and development will be essential. This must be seen as a major priority in the post-schooling area. While TAFE, provided in flexible ways, will be able to meet this need to some extent, other organisations such as the Institute for Aboriginal Development can make an important contribution.

Endnotes

- 1 National Aboriginal Education Committee, *Aborigines and Tertiary Education*, *op.cit.*, p. 36.
- 2 National Aboriginal Education Committee, Draft of the First Report of the Working Party on TAFE for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, Nov. 1984, p. 9.
- 3 Commonwealth Tertiary Education Committee, *Report for the Triennium 1985-87*, Vol. 1, Pt. 5, *op.cit.*, pp. 114-115.
- 4 National Aboriginal Education Committee, Working Party on TAFE, *op.cit.*, p. 11.
- 5 New South Wales Government, submission, June 1985.
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 Transcript of Evidence, p. S3460.
- 8 Transcript of Evidence, p. S3461.
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 Transcript of Evidence, p. S3464.
- 11 Transcript of Evidence, p. S3462.
- 12 Transcript of Evidence, p. 3630.
- 13 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4037.
- 14 Transcript of Evidence, p. 2296.
- 15 Transcript of Evidence, pp. 4409-15.
- 16 Transcript of Evidence, p. 3607.
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 P. Loveday and E. Young (eds): *Aboriginal Adult Education, TAFE in the Northern Territory*, NARU, Darwin, 1984, p. 123.
- 19 National Aboriginal Education Committee, *TAFE for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders*, June 1985, p. 4.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 7.
- 21 *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.
- 22 Letter from Mr P. Hughes, Chairman, National Aboriginal Education Committee, and Mr Eric Law, Chairman, National Aboriginal Education Committee Working Party on TAFE, to Mr D.M. Morieson, Chairman, TAFE Council, Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, dated 3 June 1985.
- 23 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5508.
- 24 Transcript of Evidence, pp. 5510-12.
- 25 National Aboriginal Education Committee, *Aborigines and Tertiary Education op.cit.*, p. 80.
- 26 Transcript of Evidence, p. S3545.

Chapter 13

Aboriginal Studies

THE NEED FOR ABORIGINAL STUDIES

13.1 An increasing number of Australians, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, is coming to see that the accepted white views of Australian history and the position of Aboriginals within Australian society are often culturally biased and inaccurate. Support for various forms of Aboriginal studies has, consequently, developed in line with the appreciation of the multicultural nature of Australian society and the general awareness of Australia's Aboriginal population. The benefits of Aboriginal studies courses, or of introducing Aboriginal components to particular courses at all levels of education, were raised with the Committee throughout the inquiry.

13.2 It is unfortunate that much of the information which exists about Aboriginals in Australian schools is often stereotyped, inadequate, anachronistic and even racist.¹ The study of Aboriginal culture and society is one means of presenting a more accurate view of contemporary Aboriginal society and its context within the broader Australian community. This may be achieved through the study of the history, culture, languages and lifestyle of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples before and after European settlement.

13.3 Aboriginal studies courses provide an effective means of fostering a greater understanding and tolerance of Aboriginal society and culture and of overcoming the problems of racism and prejudice which were raised with the Committee by teachers in a variety of schools. The Committee believes that by teaching about Aboriginal culture, history and languages, positive racial attitudes towards Aboriginals will be developed in Australian schools. Specific knowledge of Aboriginal culture and history will also promote a broader community awareness of the problems faced by many Aboriginals and an understanding of programs currently being mounted by governments to assist them.

13.4 In addition, the Committee sees Aboriginal studies as an important means of aiding the self-esteem of individual Aboriginal students in schools. The alienation that many Aboriginal students encounter at school has been discussed earlier in this report. For these students, Aboriginal studies can provide positive reinforcement of values learnt in the home and can help to create a more familiar learning environment. Indeed, as the Department of Aboriginal Affairs explained to the Committee:

The lack of Aboriginal studies curricula in schools to date, has helped perpetuate an inferior status for Aboriginal values and lifestyle, increasing the pressure to conform to European values, and contributing to low self-esteem and a lack of self-confidence.²

13.5 The Committee believes that the greatest need for Aboriginal studies (and therefore the greatest potential benefits for these courses) lies primarily in urban schools or those with non-traditional Aboriginals. In schools with a high proportion of traditional Aboriginals the Committee considers that the whole school program should incorporate Aboriginal cultural values and so the question of teaching formal Aboriginal studies courses becomes irrelevant. In traditional communities Aboriginal parents see teaching of the more formal aspects of their culture such as Aboriginal religion, myths and ceremonies as being their responsibility and not a role for the school.

13.6 In July 1980, the Australian Education Council requested that the Commonwealth Minister for Education establish a Commonwealth Aboriginal Studies Working Group with the task of ascertaining the nature of Aboriginal studies programs in Australia and

identifying particular areas of need. In general, the Group found that the provision of Aboriginal studies in Australian schools falls far short of an acceptable situation, as specified by the Australian Education Council.³ The report concluded that Aboriginal studies programs of a high quality are not widely available in Australian schools.⁴

13.7 One of the much debated issues is whether Aboriginal studies should be taught as a discreet entity in the syllabus or whether it should be incorporated into the broader curriculum as far as possible. At the primary level, of course, it is easier to incorporate Aboriginal studies components throughout the curriculum in a range of daily classes, e.g. English, social studies, music. In secondary school it is possible to both offer Aboriginal studies as a separate unit of study or subject, or to integrate elements of Aboriginal studies into other subjects such as history, geography, music, economics, political science, etc. The importance of this approach was expressed to the Committee by Professor Colin Tatz as follows:

My view of Aboriginal Studies is that it is the education of both black and white pupils and as an education it must mean a willingness to enter into a meaningful dialogue through history, literature, politics, sociology, art, theatre, geography, music, anthropology and languages.⁵

The Committee believes that there is merit in both approaches.

THE EXTENT OF ABORIGINAL STUDIES IN SCHOOLS

13.8 The National Aboriginal Education Committee told the Committee that about two-thirds of schools in Australia include a small amount of Aboriginal studies in their programs and about one-quarter of schools include a substantial amount.⁶ More emphasis tends to be given to Aboriginal studies in Years 3 to 6 than at other levels.⁷ It appears that this occurs because of the structure of social studies and history curricula at these levels and the availability of resource materials.

13.9 The Commonwealth Aboriginal Studies Working Group recorded that from Year 7 onwards the proportion of schools offering Aboriginal studies to almost all students declines from 70 per cent to 12 per cent in Year 12.⁸ This pattern is due to the tendency to regard Aboriginal studies as an optional unit or subject in secondary school. Nonetheless, the Committee encountered a significant amount of goodwill in schools towards implementing Aboriginal studies programs.

THE NATURE OF COURSES

13.10 The Commonwealth Aboriginal Studies Working Group also found that Aboriginal studies courses tended to emphasise traditional Aboriginal society and culture.⁹ This needs to be tempered by a more contemporary perspective of Aboriginal society and lifestyle, and should include a focus on the economic and social problems of Aboriginals such as poverty, housing, health, unemployment etc., so as not to present Australian children with a distorted view of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The New South Wales Department of Education 'Guidelines for Teaching Aboriginal Studies' distinguishes between three stages in Aboriginal society: traditional Aboriginal society; transitional society, or the effects of European contact on Aboriginal culture since the 18th century; and contemporary society. A study of contemporary Aboriginal society would include learning about present traditional, semi-tribal, rural and urban communities.¹⁰

13.11 The Committee agrees with the argument of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs when it says that it is important that Aboriginal studies programs include material on non-

traditional groups to avoid re-inforcing the belief that these groups have nothing distinctive or positive to offer. Unless the studies deal with contemporary Aboriginal communities, they are likely to be counter-productive in terms of the objectives of increasing tolerance and cross-cultural appreciation.¹¹

SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT FOR ABORIGINAL STUDIES

13.12 The success of Aboriginal studies depends largely on the attitude of the school principal and the staff. The Committee found that where the school principal was supportive of the idea of increasing the awareness of Aboriginal issues amongst the students, Aboriginal studies tended to be well received by the staff and students.

13.13 The Committee was most impressed with the experience at Plumpton High School in the outer-western suburbs of Sydney. This school has a significant population of Aboriginal children and employs an Aboriginal teacher and an Aboriginal teacher's aide. The Aboriginal staff at the school act as very positive role models for the Aboriginal students in the school. In addition, they have become valuable contacts for the other teachers in the school when dealing with Aboriginal issues. Plumpton High has attempted to incorporate Aboriginal elements across the broader curriculum. The support for Aboriginal studies is evident from the quality material available in the school library and the Aboriginal components of the school museum.

13.14 *The school library has an important part to play in the development of suitable Aboriginal studies programs in a school. As the resource centre for both teachers and students alike, the library ought to contain a selection of quality material on Aboriginal issues. There are numerous texts, videos, records and periodicals available suitable for students and which could assist teachers from many disciplines who wanted to include some study relating to Aboriginals in their courses. For their part, librarians need to familiarise themselves with the range of material that is available.*

13.15 Most teachers are inadequately prepared to deal with Aboriginal students. Few have had any contact with Aboriginal culture and are therefore unfamiliar with how to proceed with Aboriginal studies or where to look for appropriate resource material. A strong case exists for including Aboriginal studies at the tertiary level and, in particular, in teacher-training courses. This matter is discussed in Chapter 15 which also contains some relevant recommendations.

DEVELOPMENT OF CURRICULUM GUIDELINES AND MATERIALS

13.16 The uncertainty of teachers on how to proceed with Aboriginal studies may be overcome with the assistance of the appropriate curriculum development authorities and State departments of education. To assist teachers, State departments of education need to prepare and widely disseminate guidelines for teaching Aboriginal studies. To a certain extent such guidelines already exist. The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultative Committee has issued its own document 'Guidelines for Studies about Aborigines in Queensland Schools'. In 1982 the New South Wales Department of Education, in consultation with the State Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, issued a comprehensive set of guidelines for teaching Aboriginal studies. These were issued with the Department's policy on Aboriginal education, some background to Aboriginal issues and some suggestions of strategies for teaching Aboriginal children. An invaluable booklet, 'Resources in Aboriginal Studies' containing a bibliography of relevant materials, details of resource centres in the State and possible ways of

incorporating Aboriginal studies throughout the curriculum has also been compiled by the Department.

13.17 The Committee recommends that:

- *State and Territory departments of education, in conjunction with their Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups, develop guidelines on the teaching of Aboriginal studies in their schools. These guidelines should include a contemporary perspective of Aboriginal society.*

13.18 The Committee has previously mentioned the work of the Curriculum Development Centre in Chapter 6. Prior to its temporary disbandment, the Centre was engaged in the preparation of Aboriginal studies resources including material to assist teachers. The Committee supports the decision to re-establish the Curriculum Development Centre and believes that it has a valuable role to play in the development of guidelines and further material for Aboriginal studies. The Committee has indicated its support in Chapter 6 for the proposal by the Schools Commission's Working Party on Aboriginal Education to provide funding to support the establishment and maintenance of specific curriculum units within each State and Territory education department.

13.19 One of the focuses of these units ought to be the preparation of resource material on Aboriginal studies to be used in schools. In the preparation of such material the Committee urges curriculum development centres and teachers to look towards two sources of information: the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies and local Aboriginal communities. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies is a statutory body charged with promoting Aboriginal studies through its research. The Institute publishes the results of its research and has embarked on a number of initiatives of direct relevance to schools such as the publication of an *Annotated Bibliography and Teachers' Guide to Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders*. Whilst it is not directly involved in curriculum development, the Institute has provided an advisory service to teachers and schools on curriculum design, course content, teaching strategies, resource materials and the development of curriculum materials.¹²

13.20 At present there is insufficient involvement of Aboriginals at the local level in the development of curriculum material and the teaching of Aboriginal studies. Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups are a useful source of information and guidance when developing suitable materials for use in schools. Members of the Aboriginal community will be able to assist with the preparation of local history studies, oral histories and case studies. Teachers should not overlook the background and first hand knowledge that Aboriginal parents can bring into the classroom. Such personal contact with the students is one means of promoting more positive racial attitudes towards Aboriginals and a greater sensitivity to their problems.

13.21 To date some local groups, government authorities and individual teachers have prepared curriculum materials for Aboriginal studies courses. The kit prepared by the A.C.T. Schools Authority is one example of this. *The Aborigines of the Canberra Region* has been specifically designed to assist teachers presenting courses to upper primary and secondary classes and could be used as a model for the development of similar Aboriginal studies packages in other areas of Australia. The subject matter attempts to give students an appreciation of the traditional Aboriginal culture of the Canberra region and an insight into what happened to that culture through contact with Europeans. The Committee sees great merit in this localised approach to Aboriginal studies.

13.22 The Committee recommends that:

- *State and Territory curriculum development units devise curriculum material for Aboriginal studies programs to be used in schools in conjunction with the local Aboriginal community through the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group;*

- greater use be made of the resources at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies in the preparation of curriculum material for Aboriginal studies programs;
- teachers involve members of the local Aboriginal community, as far as possible, in the development and teaching of Aboriginal studies programs; and
- the Aboriginal Arts Board and other relevant Commonwealth departments and authorities provide support to Aboriginal authors to write and publish children's and other literature suitable for use in Aboriginal studies courses.

Endnotes

- 1 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4357.
- 2 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4814.
- 3 Commonwealth Aboriginal Studies Working Group. Report to the Australian Education Council, *Funding Priorities in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education*, AGPS, Canberra, 1982, p. 6.
- 4 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5440.
- 5 Transcript of Evidence, p. 2528.
- 6 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5440.
- 7 Commonwealth Aboriginal Studies Working Group, *op.cit.*, p. 111.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 109.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 7.
- 10 N.S.W. Department of Education, *Guidelines for Teaching Aboriginal Studies*, 1982, p. 3.
- 11 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4814.
- 12 *Ibid.*, pp. 101–104.

Chapter 14

Aboriginal Teachers and Teaching Assistants

INTRODUCTION

14.1 In the chapters on primary and secondary schooling the Committee has given emphasis to the importance of having Aboriginal teachers and teaching assistants involved in teaching Aboriginal students. They are able to relate better to Aboriginal students because of their understanding of Aboriginal social and cultural values. In traditionally-oriented communities they may be a local person and able to speak the child's Aboriginal language. In all schools with Aboriginal children, they provide a role model for Aboriginal students and a contact point within the school for students with particular problems. In general what Aboriginal teachers and teaching assistants are able to achieve by being employed in schools, is to reduce the discontinuity which exists between the school and Aboriginal community values and lifestyle.

14.2 Most submissions made to the Committee emphasised the need to have more Aboriginal people employed in schools. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs, in pointing to the need for more Aboriginal teachers, claimed that they were most urgently needed in rural and remote communities, as most Aboriginal teacher trainees in the past have come from urban groups, and in secondary schools as there are very few Aboriginal teachers in secondary schools.¹

14.3 The National Aboriginal Education Committee also attaches particular importance to the recruitment and training of Aboriginal teachers. In a major submission to the National Inquiry into Teacher Education, the National Aboriginal Education Committee proposed a target of 1,000 fully trained Aboriginal teachers to be achieved by 1990. That aspiration received endorsement in the Report of the National Inquiry into Teacher Education,² and has subsequently been generally accepted by education authorities. The National Aboriginal Education Committee claims that the measures initiated to train more Aboriginal teachers need to be supported and expanded. It also emphasised the need to train teachers from traditional communities and claimed that:

Imaginative and innovative responses are necessary to improve the training, professional development and support of teachers in traditional areas.³

14.4 The large number of Aboriginal teaching assistants and teacher aides employed in schools throughout Australia forms an enormous potential pool of teacher trainees, particularly of Aboriginal teacher trainees from traditional areas. Many wish to train to become teachers. The Committee believes efforts should be made to tap this pool.

14.5 There are also a number of factors which are limiting the potential effectiveness of Aboriginal teaching assistants and teacher aides in schools. These factors, which are described below, need to be overcome if Aboriginal teaching assistants and teacher aides are to make the contribution to the schools that they should be able to make.

THE TRAINING OF ABORIGINAL TEACHERS

14.6 At the end of 1983 there were 284 trained Aboriginal teachers in Australia. Clearly a major effort is going to have to be made if the National Aboriginal Education Committee's target of 1,000 trained Aboriginal teachers employed in schools by 1990 is to be achieved. While there should not be an obsession with numbers, the objective of creating a strong and visible Aboriginal presence in schools through the employment of

Aboriginal teachers is a vital one. The setting of a target focusses government attention and resources on an objective and greatly increases the chances of it being realised. The Committee strongly supports the target of 1,000 trained Aboriginal teachers by 1990 and considers it should be adopted by Commonwealth, State and Territory governments.

14.7 The Committee recommends that:

- *a target of training 1,000 Aboriginal teachers for employment in schools by 1990 be adopted by Commonwealth, State and Territory governments.*

14.8 Given the urgent need for more Aboriginal teachers, and the fact that potential Aboriginal teacher trainees may not have the necessary educational pre-requisites for training, it is important to take additional steps to increase the number of Aboriginals enrolling for teacher training by:

- further development of Aboriginal enclave teacher education programs;
- ensuring that educational pre-requisites for Aboriginal trainees take account of relevant abilities, cultural associations and appropriate experience (especially mature-age students);
- providing bridging courses for students in preparation for teacher training;
- in-service teacher education programs providing an opportunity for Aboriginal teaching assistants to become fully qualified teachers;
- decentralising training courses to attract Aboriginal applicants from rural and remote areas;
- providing financial assistance to enable Aboriginals to undertake teacher training.

ENCLAVES

14.9 The Committee has already discussed (in Chapter 11) the role of enclave support schemes in tertiary institutions to assist Aboriginal people to meet successfully the demands of tertiary study. Many of these enclaves are supporting Aboriginal people to do teacher training. The National Aboriginal Education Committee, in its submission to the Tertiary Education Commission for the 1985–87 triennium, stated that the major focus of tertiary education for the triennium should be on training more Aboriginal teachers.⁴ Enclave support schemes in tertiary institutions clearly have an important role to play in achieving this objective.

14.10 Evidence available to the Committee and cited in Chapter 11, suggests that the enclave schemes have been successful and will continue to be needed. The enclave schemes meet very well the requirements of training as teachers Aboriginal people who reside in, or close to, capital cities and other major centres.

14.11 Ms Koolmatrie of the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program in the South Australian College of Advanced Education, commented that the enclave program in the College had, by 1983, graduated 10 Aboriginal people as teachers. This doubled the number of trained Aboriginal teachers in South Australia in a period of five years. Ms Koolmatrie described this achievement as an 'outstanding historical event'.⁵ Her remarks on the success of enclave programs for non-traditional Aboriginal people training as teachers were supported by Mr Sherwood of the Mt Lawley campus of the Western Australian College of Advanced Education. He described the enclave model as 'the best model we know for non-traditional people'. At the same time, Mr Sherwood commented that the enclave model was 'absolutely inappropriate — not just partially inappropriate — but totally inappropriate — for traditional people'.⁶ He claimed that unless another model was developed for training traditional people as teachers in Western Australia, that State could go well past the year 2000 without a traditional Aboriginal person being trained as a teacher.⁷

14.12 There is also a need for Aboriginal secondary school teachers to be trained. As secondary school teachers undertake their training in universities the numbers of Aboriginal secondary teachers will only increase as more Aboriginal students undertake university studies. The recommendations that the Committee has made in Chapter 11 for the establishment of more enclave schemes in universities should assist in this process. The Committee also considers that an enclave scheme in a university should extend to include the Diploma of Education year which secondary school teachers are required to undertake.

14.13 There is a great need for trained teachers from the traditional communities and for programs which assist mature-age Aboriginal people currently employed as teaching assistants to upgrade their qualifications. Alternative ways of training these Aboriginal people as teachers need to be found. Some of the programs which are attempting to meet this need are described later in this chapter.

SPECIAL ENTRY PROVISIONS AND BRIDGING COURSES

14.14 There are many Aboriginal people who would be able to undertake teacher training, but whose schooling does not provide them with the entry requirements or the necessary skills to be able to undertake these courses. A number of tertiary institutions have modified their entry requirements for Aboriginal students or introduced bridging courses which can provide the necessary skills to Aboriginal students to undertake the courses.

14.15 In 1976 the Queensland Education Department and the Townsville College of Advanced Education jointly planned an initiative to provide the opportunity for increased numbers of Aboriginals and Islanders to undertake the Diploma of Teaching course. Basically, the plans include selection using other criteria as well as academic achievement, provision of social and academic support, and lengthening of the course by one semester.

14.16 The James Cook University continues to offer, within the Institute of Advanced Education, a three and a half year Diploma of Teaching course for special intakes of Aboriginal and Islander students. On successful completion of the first three semesters, students integrate into the regular three year Diploma of Teaching course for their remaining two years. The Brisbane College of Advanced Education (Mount Gravatt) offers a special entry scheme for Aboriginal people. Places have been provided for 10 students in this program.

14.17 Bridging courses in teacher education for Aboriginal people are operated at the South Australian College of Advanced Education, the Western Australian College of Advanced Education, the Bendigo College of Advanced Education, the Northern Rivers College of Advanced Education, and at other tertiary institutions. They enable Aboriginal students entering these institutions under special entry conditions to achieve formally accepted entry requirements into teacher training courses within the institutions. The Committee supports the establishment of special entry conditions and bridging courses in teacher training institutions to increase the accessibility of these courses to Aboriginal people. The Committee has made recommendations in Chapter 11 about the need to support the bridging courses operating in tertiary institutions.

14.18 As with enclave programs, special entry provisions and bridging courses offered in tertiary institutions in the capital cities and large provincial centres will not have a great attraction for traditionally-oriented Aboriginal people. As the National Aboriginal Education Committee noted, 'alternative models must be designed to meet this specialist need'.⁸

TEACHER TRAINING FOR REMOTE AND TRADITIONAL COMMUNITIES

14.19 The difficulties of leaving home to undertake teacher training in the enclave programs at institutions in the capital cities and larger towns were made clear in a submission from Paddy Patrick Jangala and Christine Nicholls of the Lajamanu School in the Northern Territory:

People feel comfortable and are more self-confident 'at home' as it were, rather than receiving their teacher training, in some cases, thousands of kilometres from their homelands. The kinds of problems which arise at institutions far away from the homelands are unlikely to arise with the sort of training model we are proposing. We are talking about problems such as homesickness, family problems which demand immediate return home, lack of confidence due to the unfamiliarity of the teachers, people being prevented from going because of family commitments, and alcohol. All these problems are overcome if the teacher training/in-service takes place locally.⁹

Given these difficulties it is essential that there be alternative ways for Aboriginal people from traditional and remote communities to be able to train as teachers without suffering the enormous disruption of going far away from their own communities to an alien social environment. Various innovative teacher training programs have been established for Aboriginal people from these communities.

BROOME OFF-CAMPUS TEACHER EDUCATION CENTRE

14.20 Two off-campus teacher education programs have been established, operating from the Mt Lawley Campus of the Western Australian College of Advanced Education. The programs are offered through regional centres in Broome and Derby. Students undertaking the programs will be able to complete a Diploma of Teaching by external studies. The Diploma of Teaching from Mt Lawley will qualify them to teach anywhere in Western Australia. The programs are established as once-only programs in that there is only one intake into the program. Those students spend three years completing their Diploma and then the program is established at another regional centre where there is a demand for a teacher training course.

14.21 The Committee visited the centre in Broome¹⁰ and was very impressed by the program. The students in the program were doing very well and they were achieving a higher standard academically than most students elsewhere in the State. The impressive features of the program were the appointment of a local co-ordinator who related well to the students, the use of itinerant instructors (normally from Mt Lawley) and the existence of a local study centre in which students undertook the course and to which they could go to study and meet each other to discuss problems. The students involved in the program come from communities in and around Broome, and it was their intention to return to their communities to teach after completing the course.

14.22 In a submission to the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, the National Aboriginal Education Committee suggested that there should be at least one institution in every State providing an off-campus teacher education program which incorporates special assistance for Aboriginals. All these courses, the National Aboriginal Education Committee claimed, should provide the opportunity for Aboriginal students to achieve a generally accepted teaching award by doing all their studies off-campus.¹¹ The Committee strongly supports this suggestion. In visiting Aboriginal communities throughout Australia, a strong demand was made for teacher training to be provided entirely on-site. Every effort should be made to meet this demand.

14.23 The Committee recommends that:

- *State and Territory governments consult with relevant teacher training institutions about establishing at least one off-campus teacher education program within their States which incorporates special assistance for Aboriginals.*

14.24 The establishment of these programs would cater for the needs of Aboriginal people from remote communities. However, Dr Metcalfe of the Mt Lawley Campus of the Western Australian College of Advanced Education, acknowledged that off-campus programs such as the Broome centre would not meet the needs of most people in traditional areas.¹² Other approaches have been developed to meet the needs of people from traditional areas.

BACHELOR COLLEGE AND THE REMOTE AREA TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

14.25 Batchelor College in the Northern Territory was the first Aboriginal teacher and assistant teacher training centre in Australia. It was the first institution to develop a program providing for progress to full professional qualifications via various para-professional steps, and for Aboriginal trainee teachers and assistant teachers to undertake part of their training in Aboriginal communities. Accommodation is provided at Batchelor for the families of Aboriginal students while undertaking residential training courses.

14.26 The College offers a three year residential course which leads to the Associate Diploma of Teaching (Aboriginal Schools), which is accepted for entry into the Northern Territory Teaching Service at a Band 1, two year trained, level. The course provides for multiple exits. This allows students to pursue a 'sandwich' type course with teaching years in between study years, or to terminate training at assistant teacher grade 1 or 2. The course is specifically designed for Aboriginal people, particularly those from traditional communities, and is presented using English as a second language. The Associate Diploma offered at Batchelor College can be dovetailed with the Diploma of Teaching (Primary) at the Darwin Institute of Technology so that graduates wishing to upgrade their qualifications to full professional teacher status can do so. The Northern Territory Department of Education has also submitted a proposal to the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission to fund a one year course in Education Administration for Batchelor graduates. This course would enable Batchelor graduates to obtain the necessary skills to apply for eligibility for Band 2 promotional positions in Aboriginal schools.¹³

14.27 Those Aboriginal students who cannot attend Batchelor College during their first year may pursue their studies in their home community through the Remote Area Teacher Education Program (RATE). RATE students cover the full 14 units of the first year of the Batchelor College course but do so on an extended time basis over a two-year period. They attend lectures/tutorials for a minimum of nine hours per week, and the time they spend on directed activities in the classroom counts towards their School Experience. Assessment is continuous, taking into account results of worksheets, quizzes and practical application of methodology. RATE students spend one week annually in residence at Batchelor College.

14.28 In the larger communities, with a minimum of eight students undertaking a RATE program, a full-time lecturer is stationed to run the course. In smaller communities, the course is run by a tutor who acts as a part-time instructor. A RATE lecturer based in Alice Springs has been appointed to assist RATE students in the area and support tutor teachers who are not supported by a full-time lecturer.¹⁴

14.29 The Northern Territory Department of Education claimed that it was going to re-organise the teaching formula in Aboriginal schools to release, in the larger schools and for clusters of smaller schools, a Band 2 position to undertake the task of being co-ordinator of RATE programs. With this re-organisation, the Northern Territory Department of Education anticipated that all Aboriginal teaching assistants would be undertaking a RATE program by the beginning of 1986. The Northern Territory Department of Education is also looking at the possibility of extending RATE to the second year of teacher training.¹⁵

14.30 In order to make Aboriginal teacher training more accessible to Aboriginal people from Central Australia, the Committee considers there is a need to establish an annexe of Batchelor College in the southern region of the Northern Territory. This was a matter frequently raised with the Committee by communities in central Australia. The Northern Territory Department of Education has a task force looking at the question of establishing an annexe of Batchelor College in the southern region, possibly attached to the Community College of Central Australia.¹⁶

14.31 The Committee strongly supports the developments the Northern Territory Department of Education is proposing for the RATE program including releasing a Band 2 teacher in larger schools and clusters of smaller schools to co-ordinate RATE programs, the efforts to have all teaching assistants undertaking teacher training, and the extension of RATE to a second year. There is a strong demand from communities in the Northern Territory for on-site teacher training programs and programs should be provided to meet this demand.

14.32 A submission from Paddy Patrick Jangala and Christine Nicholls of Lajamanu School in the Northern Territory, proposed the establishment of a Warlpiri in-service and teacher training program for the three Warlpiri bilingual schools at Lajamanu, Yuendumu and Willowra.¹⁷ The Northern Territory Department of Education's new proposals for RATE should be able to incorporate the model suggested in the submission by having a single co-ordinator of the program for these three communities and making use of local staff in the three schools with expertise in particular areas of Aboriginal education. The Committee also considers that there would be value in the RATE program extending to the third year of teaching training so that eventually Aboriginal people will be able to train as teachers entirely in their own communities.

14.33 If the Northern Territory Department of Education's 'new dynamic' for Aboriginal teacher training through the developments of the RATE program are to be fully successful, the Committee considers it essential that an annexe of Batchelor College be established in the southern region of the Northern Territory. For teacher trainees to complete their training under present arrangements they are going to need to attend Batchelor for two years, and later perhaps one year. The Committee was told by many people in communities in the south that Batchelor was just too far and too unfamiliar a place to which to go.

14.34 The Committee recommends that:

- *the Northern Territory Government extend the Remote Area Teacher Education Program to the second year of teacher training and consider extending it to the third year as soon as practicable;*
- *the Northern Territory Government provide all the resources necessary to the Remote Area Teacher Education Program to enable it to operate successfully; and*
- *the Northern Territory Government establish an annexe of Batchelor College in the southern region of the Northern Territory.*

OTHER APPROACHES

14.35 The South Australian College of Advanced Education, through its Aboriginal Studies and Teacher Education Centre, has developed a series of courses collectively known as the Anangu Teacher Education Program (ANTEP) to provide teacher training opportunities for traditionally-oriented Pitjantjatjara Aboriginal people who reside in the north-west of South Australia. ANTEP comprises an Associate Diploma in Anangu Education course and a Diploma of Teaching (Anangu) course.

14.36 Extensive discussions by the course co-ordinator, Mr Tony French-Kennedy, with the Pitjantjatjara community about the program established four major areas of need in providing teacher training for Aboriginal people in the area. Firstly, it was established that there was a need for graduates to come out of the program with properly accredited awards. Secondly, it was the desire of the communities that the program be offered on-site in the Anangu lands in either one or more of the Anangu communities. Thirdly, the program needed to be bilingual and bicultural. And finally, the program should provide students with multiple exits so that Aboriginal people can leave the program at various stages with a useful qualification, go back and work in schools for some time and then re-enter the program to upgrade their qualifications should they so desire.¹⁸ The program was approved by the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission and commenced operation in March 1984.

14.37 The National Aboriginal Education Committee has claimed that such courses are necessary if significant numbers of people from traditional communities are to be trained as teachers and that similar sorts of programs are needed 'as a matter of urgency for Western Australia and Queensland, including a program specially designed to train teachers for the Torres Strait Islands'.¹⁹

14.38 A program along the lines of the Anangu Teacher Education Program was proposed in a submission by Dr Metcalfe of the Western Australian College of Advanced Education.²⁰ The program would incorporate the main features of the Anangu Program: namely on-site training, the use of external studies, a flexible and multi-exit training and certification program providing a full career structure and community-specific qualifications.

14.39 The training course currently offered to Islander assistant teachers from the Torres Strait is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Assistant Teacher course offered through the Cairns TAFE.²¹ The aims of the course are:

- to upgrade personal skills in English language (including the ability to teach in English as well as to teach English);
- to promote personal growth and development in general knowledge, with particular emphasis on knowledge and understanding of all primary school subjects;
- to develop teaching skills and competencies, linking these to some understanding of child growth and developments;
- to develop personal confidence and competence in the Assistant Teacher role and in a wider resource role within the community.

14.40 Entry to the course is restricted to Aboriginals or Islanders who live in remote Aboriginal communities or the Torres Strait Islands, and to those who have had at least two years experience in a school as a teacher aide or some similar position. One criterion for selection is a rating of at least two in oral language on the Australian Second Language Proficiency Rating scale. It is anticipated that each intake will be limited to 10 to 12 students. The majority of students in each intake will be Islanders, although the opportunity for selection will also exist for Aboriginal students.

14.41 The course will be of four semesters duration. It is planned that participants will proceed continuously through this four semester cycle, although in special cases some exemption will be considered. The structure of each semester of the course will allow for periods of time in College and 'on site' in the islands or remote communities. A possible model would be seven weeks college, six weeks 'on site', seven weeks college. Such a model would allow for travel time to and from the 'on site' locations and would also place students in or near their home locations for the mid-semester breaks. Some students will exit from this course to the seven semester special entry Diploma of Teaching course at Townsville Institute of Advanced Education. The course itself does not lead to a registration that would be recognised as a qualification for registration as a teacher otherwise than in the Islands.

14.42 The Committee considers that such a course will not meet the long term needs of people from the Torres Strait Islands who will wish to become fully qualified teachers. There is a need for a teacher training program in the Torres Strait along the lines of the Anangu program which provides an integration of career structure with teacher training leading ultimately to fully qualified teacher status.

14.43 The Committee recommends that:

- *on-site teacher training programs which recognise the needs of traditionally-oriented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people be established as a matter of urgency in Queensland and Western Australia. In Queensland priority should be given to the development of a program to serve the Torres Strait Islands.*

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

14.44 Many potential recruits to teacher training from the Aboriginal community are people of mature age with family commitments and employment. For these people to be encouraged to embark on a full-time teacher training course financial assistance beyond the assistance available under the Aboriginal Study Awards Scheme (Abstudy), is required. In recognition of this need the Commonwealth Department of Education in 1984 allocated 100 Special Teacher Training Awards to mature-age applicants intending to undertake an approved full-time course in teacher training at a tertiary institution, leading to a formal teaching qualification. A further 100 awards have been made for 1985. The awards provide a living allowance at approximately twice the level of Abstudy, while other benefits are at the same level as Abstudy.²²

14.45 These awards are obviously of great assistance in overcoming the financial problems of undertaking full-time teacher training which face many mature-aged Aboriginal people. The Committee was informed by the Commonwealth Department of Education that there were almost 200 applications for the 100 awards in 1985.²³ Clearly there is sufficient demand in the Aboriginal community to justify granting additional awards and if the target of 1,000 Aboriginal teachers by 1990 is to be achieved, then greater effort will need to be made to obtain more recruits to teacher training. The Committee considers that the achievement of this target is a major priority and believes that the number of special teacher trainee awards should be increased to 200 to enable the target to be achieved.

14.46 The Committee recommends that:

- *the Commonwealth Government provide 200 special teacher training awards per year to mature-aged Aboriginal people who wish to train as teachers until the demand among Aboriginals to train as teachers declines.*

14.47 The other problem which can face teacher trainees is obtaining suitable and relatively inexpensive accommodation in the cities and large towns to which they often must travel to undertake their training. These problems are similar to those facing other Aboriginal students who must leave home to do further education. The Committee has considered these problems in Chapter 11 on post-schooling, and made recommendations to help overcome the problems. These recommendations apply to teacher trainees with accommodation difficulties.

ABORIGINAL TEACHING ASSISTANTS AND TEACHER AIDES

14.48 The importance of the employment of Aboriginal teaching assistants and teacher aides in schools with Aboriginal students is universally acknowledged. In its submission, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs explained the value of teaching assistants, and some of the problems they face:

One of the most important developments in Aboriginal education has been the employment of Aboriginal teaching assistants. Ideally, these assistants should have a wider role than the general teacher aide. Their duties may vary according to local requirements, but are generally aimed at ensuring that Aboriginal children receive appropriate education and are encouraged to continue with their studies. The assistants work with qualified teachers in the classroom (although the extent and nature of this involvement is still very much dependent on the classroom teacher), providing a point of identification for Aboriginal children and a bridge between the home and school environment.²⁴

14.49 In its submission, the National Aboriginal Education Committee referred to the important place of Aboriginal teaching assistants and aides in schools. The presence of teacher aides provides a means for principals and staff to develop awareness of Aboriginal culture and issues, a liaison between the school and the Aboriginal community it serves, and a point of contact for Aboriginal children within the classroom, and as a success model to which Aboriginal children might relate. It noted the lack of training schemes for teacher aides and recommended that more such schemes be established.²⁵

14.50 There are now some 800 Aboriginal teaching assistants employed throughout Australia at all levels from pre-schools to secondary schools. At this stage the salaries of most of the positions in the States (other than Queensland, which funds a large majority of the positions within its education system) are paid from Department of Aboriginal Affairs' grants. The Department's position and firm attitude in relation to this matter is that other States, following the Queensland example, should assume increasing financial responsibility for the employment of Aboriginal teaching assistants. New South Wales took steps in this direction during 1983. The funding of Aboriginal teaching assistant positions by State Governments will allow the Commonwealth Government to support further positions for assistants, as well as initiatives in other aspects of education.²⁶

14.51 In recognition of the importance of having Aboriginal teaching assistants in schools, the Commonwealth Schools Commission's Working Party on Aboriginal Education has also recommended that funding be provided through the Schools Commission to enable the employment of more Aboriginal teaching assistants and teacher aides.²⁷

14.52 However, there are a number of factors which are limiting the potential effectiveness of Aboriginal teaching assistants and aides. These factors include:

- teaching assistants and teacher aides in some schools are allocated routine and menial tasks;
- conditions are often inadequate, particularly the low salary levels and lack of permanency; and

- lack of adequate provision for formal training and the lack of an appropriate career structure for the teaching assistants and teacher aides.

14.53 A submission from the Aurukun State School claimed that there are teaching assistants in schools who are committed to staying in the communities, and who, by virtue of their upbringing, are in an excellent position to constructively change Aboriginal education. These people lack training and skills that can only be gained from working with experienced and capable non-Aboriginal teachers. Presently, most of these teaching assistants are working at less than peak effectiveness in a role subsidiary to an inexperienced non-Aboriginal teacher. The school claimed that the challenge is to extend the teaching assistant by increasing his or her responsibility while providing support and encouragement in the person of an experienced teacher with the qualities necessary to challenge and inspire the developing Aboriginal teachers. The school went on to recommend that teaching assistants receive better conditions and salaries. Remuneration should recognise the special contribution of teaching assistants in the remote communities — they frequently take an active teaching role in the classrooms in bilingual schools.²⁸

14.54 In relation to the allocation of tasks, the Commonwealth Schools Commission's Working Party on Aboriginal Education pointed to the distinction between Aboriginal teaching assistants and Aboriginal teacher aides. According to the Working Party, the term Aboriginal teaching assistant is currently used in a context which includes bilingual schools, homeland and outstation schools:

In this respect the Aboriginal assistant in the classroom fulfils an active role as a co-teacher. Aboriginal teaching assistants essentially are responsible for the presentation of learning experiences in the local language. In addition, they may assist schools in the establishment of an effective channel of communication with the Aboriginal community, and act as a contact person for Aboriginal students and parents.

In a bilingual school, teaching assistants could more properly be referred to as Assistant Teachers. The success of the bilingual teaching program depends heavily on the involvement of the assistants as persons who, under appropriate supervision, conduct some lessons with all or a group of the students in the class in the community language. To the extent that the teaching assistants are involved they should be responsible, under supervision, for lesson preparation and planning, especially in the areas of vernacular instruction. In this way, the actual development of the teaching assistants' skills will take place, and be reinforced and verified by formal teacher training when this is undertaken.²⁹

On the other hand, Aboriginal teacher aides are, according to the Working Party:

mainly involved in non-interactive roles in schools, mainly administrative duties such as materials preparation, distribution and collection; duplicating and photocopying; displaying student work; keeping records; organising audio-visual equipment for lessons; typing; maintaining classroom equipment; and assisting in the library/learning centre as required, including minor tasks associated with cataloguing, accessioning and stocktaking.³⁰

14.55 The Northern Territory Department of Education is to recognise this distinction in Aboriginal support staff employed in its schools. The Department claimed that, from 1986, if Aboriginal people who are currently classified as teaching assistants are unwilling to undergo either Remote Area Teacher Education training or training at Batchelor College, they will be classified as teacher aides in the same way as the Department has teacher aides in urban schools. Aboriginal teaching assistants then will basically be regarded as 'teachers in training'.³¹

14.56 The Committee believes that there are two major ways of improving the conditions of employment and career structures and opportunities of Aboriginal teaching assistants and aides. Firstly, the positions of Aboriginal teaching assistants and teacher aides should be an integral part of the normal establishment of the schools in which they

work. This can only occur if State and Territory Governments assume the funding responsibility for these positions as part of their responsibility to provide an adequate education to all their children. While the positions continue to be funded by Commonwealth authorities there will be a lack of permanency (because of yearly funding requirements) and a lack of career paths which are dependent on the State and Territory Education authorities.

14.57 Secondly, the Committee believes that the integration of teacher training with a career structure for Aboriginal teaching assistants, as is being provided in the Northern Territory's RATE program and the Anangu Teacher Education Program, is the way to provide Aboriginal teaching assistants and aides with a career path with a valuable long-term objective of being a fully qualified teacher. This sort of long-term incentive is needed to make Aboriginal teaching assistants more effective in the schools and to provide them with the status to feel confident about their role in the school. The Northern Territory Department of Education's notion of Aboriginal teaching assistants being seen as 'teachers in training' is one that could be emulated in the States. The recommendation the Committee has made earlier in this chapter to greatly expand the opportunities for Aboriginal people to train as teachers should be taken up largely by Aboriginal teaching assistants, particularly those teaching assistants from traditional communities. There should be an active encouragement by State and Territory governments of Aboriginal teaching assistants and teacher aides to undertake teacher training courses.

14.58 The Committee recommends that:

- *the relevant Commonwealth departments have discussions with State and Territory governments about effecting a transfer of responsibility for funding Aboriginal teaching assistant and teacher aide positions from the Commonwealth to the States and Territories;*
- *on assuming responsibility for these positions, the State and Territory governments significantly upgrade the conditions of appointment (including permanency of employment and salary levels) of Aboriginal teaching assistants and teacher aides and provide them with an appropriate career structure; and*
- *State and Territory governments provide encouragement to, and suitable programs for, Aboriginal teaching assistants and teacher aides to train as teachers.*

CONCLUSIONS

14.59 Every effort should be made to meet the target identified by the National Aboriginal Education Committee of having 1,000 trained Aboriginal teachers employed in schools by 1990. Expansion of enclave support schemes and bridging courses to facilitate the entry of Aboriginal students to courses, and their successful completion of them should proceed. There should also be an expansion of the off-campus teacher training programs such as the one operating in Broome and described above. Aboriginal adults currently working in schools should be assisted to undertake full-time studies in teacher education. To do this, financial assistance will be needed so that those people with family responsibilities can participate. In this connection the special teacher training awards are an important initiative and should be expanded.

14.60 The Committee considers that the needs of the traditional communities for teacher training calls for a creative and flexible response which recognises the real needs of the communities. The Northern Territory Government is responding to those needs through the expansion of the Remote Area Teacher Education Program and through consideration of the establishment of an annexe of Batchelor College in the southern region. The Committee strongly supports both these responses. The Committee also considers that

programs such as the Anangu Teacher Education Program offer the opportunity to respond to the needs of the traditional communities in an innovative way. There is an urgent need to extend similar programs to Western Australia and Queensland.

14.61 It is important that as many Aboriginal teachers as possible are trained to work in Australian schools. Their presence is essential to raise the confidence of young Aboriginal students and to exemplify the possibility of success in the wider society for Aboriginal students. They can also provide the necessary bridge, which is often lacking, between the school and the Aboriginal community. It is the enormous gulf between the cultural and social values of schooling programs and the cultural and social values of Aboriginal society which has caused great difficulties in effectively educating Aboriginal children.

14.62 The employment of Aboriginal teaching assistants and teacher aides, and other support staff, has been an important initiative in Aboriginal education. Evidence suggests that it is from the ranks of para-professionals that many future teachers will come. Schemes for training teacher assistants and support staff are required. A career structure for teaching assistants, with opportunities provided for them to upgrade their qualifications are also needed.

14.63 The Committee considers these improvements can best be achieved by Aboriginal teaching assistants and teacher aides becoming an integral part of the normal establishment of schools and funded by State and Territory governments in the way other personnel in the school are. It is only by being integrated into the school that conditions of service can be made permanent and that a career structure can be provided.

14.64 Opportunities for Aboriginal teaching assistants to upgrade their qualifications in a manner so that they can improve their career prospects is also an important way of improving the circumstances of teaching assistants. Those teacher training programs which provide an integration of training and a career structure should become the models for ways of providing better opportunities to teaching assistants.

Endnotes

- 1 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4831.
- 2 *Report of the National Inquiry Into Teacher Education*, AGPS, Canberra, 1980, p. 196.
- 3 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5391.
- 4 National Aboriginal Education Committee, *Aborigines and Tertiary Education*, *op.cit.*, p. 45.
- 5 Transcript of Evidence, p. 3811.
- 6 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4155.
- 7 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4156.
- 8 National Aboriginal Education Committee, *Aborigines and Tertiary Education*, *op.cit.*, p. 74.
- 9 Transcript of Evidence, p. S3818.
- 10 Hansard Precis, Visit to Broome, 24 October 1983, pp. 7-9.
- 11 National Aboriginal Education Committee, *Aborigines and Tertiary Education*, *op.cit.*, pp. 76-77.
- 12 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4138.
- 13 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5193.
- 14 *Ibid.*
- 15 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5253.
- 16 *Ibid.*
- 17 Transcript of Evidence, pp. S3814-24.
- 18 Transcript of Evidence, pp. S3817-18.
- 19 National Aboriginal Education Committee, *Aborigines and Tertiary Education*, *op.cit.*, pp. 74-75.
- 20 Transcript of Evidence, pp. 4134-41.
- 21 Transcript of Evidence, pp. 4416-27.
- 22 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5290.
- 23 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5307.
- 24 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4832.
- 25 Transcript of Evidence, p. 155.

- 26 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4831.
- 27 Working Party Report, p. 40.
- 28 Transcript of Evidence, p. 783.
- 29 Working Party Report, p. 24.
- 30 *Ibid.*
- 31 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5252.

Chapter 15

Recruitment and Training of Non-Aboriginal Teachers

INTRODUCTION

15.1 In the previous chapter the Committee stressed the importance of the recruitment and training of Aboriginal teachers, teaching assistants, and other Aboriginal school support staff. It is clear, however, that Aboriginal education will continue for some time to depend very largely on non-Aboriginal educators and school support staff. It is vital, therefore, that teachers and others working in schools should be trained to meet the special needs of Aboriginal students.

15.2 Many submissions to the inquiry were critical of existing arrangements for the recruitment and training of non-Aboriginal teachers. The Committee was told that teachers were not adequately prepared in their pre-service courses to deal with the special needs of Aboriginal students.

15.3 According to the New South Wales Teachers Federation, teacher education should be seen as 'a continuum involving three phases: pre-service, induction and in-service training'.¹ There was thus a need for more and better in-service teacher training programs in the field of Aboriginal education, as well as better pre-service training.

15.4 Teachers selected to serve in schools with significant Aboriginal enrolment are often not adequately prepared for the experience or supported in the school. The school staffing policies in many States means that young and inexperienced teachers are often posted to remote, traditional Aboriginal communities and to rural schools with high Aboriginal enrolments to the detriment of the students of Aboriginal communities and of the teachers themselves.

15.5 Improvement of conditions of service for teachers in remote schools is a way to induce teachers with the right background and qualities to choose to serve in these schools. There was also much support for the idea that teachers in isolated Aboriginal communities should be treated as requiring specialist training. Consequently, special career structures and inducements may need to be provided to compensate for loss of preferment in the general teaching service. These might best be achieved through the establishment of a special Aboriginal teaching service and this is discussed below.

TEACHER TRAINING

15.6 The National Aboriginal Education Committee submitted that pre-service training courses should strive to prepare teachers for work in 'cross cultural situations'. The aim should be to reduce prejudice among teachers and make them sensitive to cultural differences of all kinds, including Aboriginality. Teachers would then teach more sensitively and accurately in the schools about Aboriginals. This would help counter ethno-centrism and prejudice among school children, who would learn to interact with their Aboriginal pupils and their families in a positive and respectful way. This led the National Aboriginal Education Committee to recommend that all new teachers in schools where there are Aboriginal students be provided with an induction program to enable them to adjust and respond positively to the needs of Aboriginal students. The National Aboriginal Education Committee considered it desirable that Aboriginal people be involved in the development of teacher education programs concerning Aboriginals.²

15.7 Frequent reference was made in submissions to the report of the *National Inquiry into Teacher Education* and its recommendations.³ The report recommended that specialist post-experience courses for training selected non-Aboriginal teachers to teach Aboriginal children should be conducted at a number of institutions with appropriate staff expertise. In commenting on this recommendation the National Aboriginal Education Committee recommended that State and Territory Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups should be involved in decisions as to which institutions should have the appropriate facilities and staff. Teacher educators in their turn needed specialist programs to prepare them to work with the teachers being trained.⁴

15.8 A frequent recommendation was for units in Aboriginal education to be made compulsory in pre-service teacher training courses. The Commonwealth Department of Education told the Committee that in 1979 a meeting of the Australian Education Council endorsed the principle that there should be 'promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies as core units of all pre-service and in-service teacher education programs'.⁵ In its report the National Inquiry into Teacher Education recommended that pre-service teacher education courses should be structured and taught so that students develop the appropriate skills and attitudes to be effective teachers in a multi-cultural society.

15.9 In arguing that Aboriginal education should be a compulsory component of teacher training courses a group of educators from the Northern Territory, including Stephen Harris and Graham McGill, said of the training of non-Aboriginal teaching staff that:

Aboriginal education is as much a specialist field as teaching the deaf or the gifted. Substantial specialist training, following some experience in Aboriginal schools, should be introduced as a standard practice: both for the benefit of Aboriginal education and as an incentive for teachers to commit themselves for a certain period of time to Aboriginal education. Such training, in fields such as TESL, socio-linguistics and crosscultural curriculum development, should be in some depth for a recognised post-professional award (eg. one year) and be tied to a bond requiring two or three years subsequent service in some aspect of Aboriginal education.⁶

15.10 The Aboriginal Research Centre at Monash University gives reasons as to why a component of Aboriginal studies should be included in pre-service teacher training courses. The Committee was told of the response of students who had taken an elective course in Aboriginal studies and its effect on them. Their responses consistently incorporated statements about their ignorance of Aboriginal culture and the differences between mainstream Australian culture and Aboriginal culture; the influence and consequences of European contact and the need to understand a wide range of environments throughout Australia and to learn about the needs of Aboriginal people in those environments. On the question of what they hoped to achieve personally from such a course, they stressed the need for better race relations. This could only be achieved through knowledge and awareness of these issues which would assist them in their careers as social workers and teachers and would, personally, enrich and broaden their concept of themselves as Australians by the incorporation of Aboriginal culture and history as part of their own nation's identity.⁷

15.11 The Department of Aboriginal Affairs commented that in-service training in Aboriginal education also needs to be directed at senior staff and principals. The role of these people in Aboriginal education is more crucial than ever before because of the increasing autonomy being given to principals to establish the policy direction of their schools.⁸ The Committee has also noted in earlier chapters that the attitudes of principals and senior staff towards Aboriginal education can pervade the whole school. This means that it is of critical importance that people in these positions have an understanding of Aboriginal education.

15.12 According to the Commonwealth Department of Education, pre-service teacher education courses vary greatly in their content and approach. In some teacher education institutions there are no special studies in Aboriginal education. In others there are elective units in Aboriginal language, culture and learning styles, while some have fully integrated and thorough approaches to the subject. In some institutions a teacher trainee may elect to specialise in training to teach Aboriginal students. Practical teaching in these cases often includes classes with numbers of Aboriginal children.⁹

15.13 Many tertiary institutions now offer special courses on Aboriginal culture and languages which are designed to equip teachers to work in cross-cultural situations. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs finances courses in Aboriginal studies at Monash University, Western Australian CAE, and Northern Rivers CAE. There are also multi-cultural courses, courses in Aboriginal studies, or units of study involving Aboriginals in many other tertiary institutions.

15.14 State and Territory education departments run a series of in-service workshops and seminars for teachers of Aboriginal children each year. These are valuable in facilitating an exchange of ideas and techniques, particularly for teachers working in isolated areas.

15.15 The training of non-Aboriginal teachers to cope adequately in schools where there are a large number of Aboriginal students needs to include more than just a general course on Aboriginal studies. While this sort of course may be sufficient for most non-Aboriginal teachers who may have only limited contact with Aboriginal students, it does not adequately equip a teacher to cope with the demands of teaching large numbers of Aboriginal students in rural and remote communities. This point was made by Mr Stringer, an educator at the Western Australian Institute of Technology:

There has been a recent trend to include some aspect of Aboriginal Studies in teacher pre-service courses. By and large, however, these attempts to sensitise teachers are totally inadequate, doing little more than alert teachers to the nature of problems they will experience with Aboriginal children in schools. Little, if anything, is done to provide students with the means of dealing realistically with multicultural settings.¹⁰

15.16 Dr Maria Brandl, an anthropologist who has conducted research in remote communities in the Northern Territory, made a similar point. She submitted that non-Aboriginal teachers in Aboriginal communities need a wide-ranging specialist training and certain personal characteristics to enable them to be effective teachers. These personal characteristics and areas of specialist training include:

- absence of racial prejudice;
- ability to cope with isolation and stress;
- teaching English as a second language qualification;
- ability and desire to learn languages; and
- an accepted course in Aboriginal studies.¹¹

15.17 Given the wide-ranging specialist knowledge required for non-Aboriginals to make a major contribution to Aboriginal education, the Committee considers that two strategies should be employed in relation to pre-service courses. Firstly, pre-service courses should ensure that all new teachers have general background in Aboriginal culture, the history of Aboriginal people and their place in modern Australian society. The purpose of these courses should be to ensure that all teachers are aware of the special educational needs of Aboriginal students and have adequate understanding of the context in which the needs arise. Such courses should not be regarded as specialist qualifications in Aboriginal education. They also should not be regarded as special elective units on Aboriginal education, but should be seen as an integrated part of the teacher training program for all teachers to prepare them to teach in a multi-cultural Australia.

15.18 Secondly, a number of wide-ranging specialist teacher training programs in Aboriginal education should be developed. The Commonwealth Department of Education recommended that efforts should be made to have available at least four special training programs supported by the Tertiary Education Commission as special courses to be available in Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory to train teachers for employment in remote Aboriginal community schools. The curriculum for these courses would be developed after consultation with the National Aboriginal Education Committee and State and Territory Education Consultative Groups. The Department put this forward as part of the proposal for a National Aboriginal Teaching Service.

15.19 The Committee considers that these courses should be developed and that in addition similar courses should be accredited in Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania. The National Aboriginal Education Committee and the State and Territory Consultative Groups should be involved in this accreditation process. Access to accredited courses in Aboriginal education should be open to teachers already in service, selected as suitable to meet the objectives of these courses, as well as teachers in training. The Committee considers that in developing these courses a detailed study of existing courses should be undertaken. It is desirable that the assessment of existing courses should be done by an advisory committee in each State and Territory. The advisory committee should comprise representatives from the National Aboriginal Education Committee, the State and Territory Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups, teacher unions, State and Territory education departments, other systemic and independent schools which enrol Aboriginal students and teacher training institutions.

15.20 The Committee does not think it desirable for Aboriginal education to be a compulsory component of pre-service training beyond the point indicated earlier in this chapter. The Committee supports the approach of the National Inquiry Into Teacher Education report which sees a need for all teachers to be trained to function sensitively and knowledgeably in cross-cultural situations. The development of insight into a trainee teacher's own attitude towards people from other cultures, the effects of racism and ethnocentricism etc, should become, if they are not already, a feature of any good pre-service teacher training program.

15.21 In relation to specialist teacher training in Aboriginal education, the Committee would prefer a strategy that concentrates on specifically training motivated people to work intensively in Aboriginal schools and with Aboriginal pupils. Once qualified these teachers could then be effectively deployed for service in schools needing their services. They could be used as resource teachers within schools and assist with in-service training of other teaching staff. The existence of a corps of trained specialists in Aboriginal education would be a way of monitoring the extent to which the education systems were attempting to deal effectively with Aboriginal education by simply checking to see whether resource teachers, who had completed accredited Aboriginal education courses, were attached to schools with significant Aboriginal enrolments.

15.22 These principles also apply to the Committee's thinking on in-service training. Rather than invest resources in global programs for all teachers in a system it would be better for the resources to be committed to the training of a selected elite. They, in their turn, would influence other teachers with whom they worked. This is the basic concept of a resource teacher in a school. However, effective implementation of strategies at the system and school level require the active co-operation of head teachers and senior administrative staff in schools. Once strategies have been devised, in-service programs should be conducted for those in this leadership class to ensure implementation and the proper use of special resources provided for Aboriginal education. Those in charge of the education system should be sensitive to these issues when selecting senior staff for schools

with significant Aboriginal enrolment. In other words they should make sure that head teachers in those schools are sympathetic to the problems of Aboriginal students and are likely to implement chosen strategies. Existing in-service programs would need to be reviewed in accordance with these principles.

15.23 The Committee recommends that:

- *all teachers should be adequately prepared by pre-service training to appreciate the special needs of Aboriginal students. This should include general background in Aboriginal culture, the history of Aboriginal people and their place in modern Australian society. This presentation should aim to ensure that future teachers are trained to function sensitively and knowledgeably in cross-cultural situations;*
- *an advisory committee should be established in each State and Territory chaired by a nominee of the National Aboriginal Education Committee. Its membership should be broadly based to represent the Aboriginal community, teachers' unions, school systems and teacher training institutions. This committee should evaluate existing programs on Aboriginal education in the State and Territory and make recommendations for accreditation of courses. Only such courses as are accredited should be recognised as providing specialist qualifications in Aboriginal education; and*
- *education authorities in each State and Territory should establish a core of Aboriginal education teachers, qualified in the accredited courses in Aboriginal education, for deployment to schools with significant numbers of Aboriginal students.*

PLACEMENT OF TEACHERS

15.24 Many submissions were critical of the policies of the State and Territory education departments in posting teachers. Young and inexperienced teachers, and teachers manifestly ill-equipped to serve in Aboriginal communities were often posted to traditional community schools or rural schools. It was stressed in these submissions that teaching in remote Aboriginal communities required both specific teaching skills and special personal characteristics.

15.25 In a submission made in 1981, the State School Teachers Union of Western Australia reported that it had surveyed a sample of schools in the Kimberley region of Western Australia involving eight schools and 112 teachers. The 1,990 students at these schools included 1,162 Aboriginals. None of the teachers had received any special pre-service training in Aboriginal education. One had undertaken a special practice period in an Aboriginal school during training, two had training in remedial education and two in migrant education. Two teachers had previous experience in teaching Aboriginals. All schools commented on the need for special language programs within their schools, the lack of adequate materials and resources, and the lack of specialist teachers. Many of the teachers commented on the lack of preparation they had received in teacher education programs to cope with the problems faced. They had known very little about Aboriginal cultures, value systems and lifestyles and had experienced various degrees of culture shock. In some cases this had led at first to very negative reactions towards Aboriginals in general. None were familiar with any Aboriginal languages, had training in linguistics, or had much awareness of the differences between standard English and Aboriginal English. All supported the Union's view that compulsory units in Aboriginal education should be included in pre-service training of all teachers.¹²

15.26 The comments of the teachers in this survey are supported by the views expressed by teachers in schools that the Committee has visited. Many teachers felt they were too

inexperienced or inadequately trained to be able to cope effectively in teaching Aboriginal students.

15.27 In selecting teachers for posting in schools with a high Aboriginal enrolment, the W.A. Education Department's policy had once been one of trying to staff them by volunteers. The volunteers were offered the inducement of a more favourable subsequent placement. Teachers who did not feel any empathy with Aboriginals, or who had no interest in Aboriginal education, did not volunteer. The Western Australian Teachers Union reported that this policy no longer applied. Because of the present employment prospects for newly-graduated teachers, it is very difficult for a person offered a position anywhere to refuse to accept it, therefore a large proportion of those now responsible for Aboriginal education are young, inexperienced teachers with no special training, often with no particular interest in Aboriginal education, and under considerable stress because they feel they are not coping adequately. They are reluctant to seek help, because this may be construed as an admission of incompetence; reluctant to complain about working and living conditions because they have been advised to adopt a low profile until granted permanent status; and anxiously awaiting transfer to a less difficult position. The Union has had to intervene on behalf of some because housing and working conditions were substandard. Both teachers and Aboriginal groups feel resentful about the situation and consider they are receiving less consideration than is warranted.¹³

15.28 The Committee received submissions expressing similar views from other industrial organisations representing teachers.¹⁴ Discontent with current departmental practices appears to be widespread.

15.29 The Commonwealth Minister for Education, Senator the Hon. Susan Ryan, perceives a need to develop a core of highly qualified teachers who wish to teach in Aboriginal communities and who are acceptable to those communities. She has proposed the establishment of a National Aboriginal Teaching Service to provide a pool of appropriately trained Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal teachers for teaching in schools with significant numbers of Aboriginal students. According to the proposal the need for the special teaching service exists because of a number of factors:

- not all the teachers currently teaching in schools with Aboriginal students have had appropriate training and experience;
- a number of Aboriginal communities do not wish to accept State Government allocated teachers because they wish to retain the right to choose their own teachers and participate in developing their own curriculums;
- teachers in Aboriginal schools must be able to understand the particular culture of the community they are in, and they must encourage the participation of the community in the school;
- there is a need to provide flexibility in teaching services so that well qualified and experienced teachers of Aboriginal students can transfer from State to State and between systems and community schools without depriving themselves of security of employment and a career structure;
- there will be an increasing number of Aboriginal teachers seeking jobs as a result of Commonwealth initiatives, and those teachers should be given the opportunity to serve their own communities should they so desire;
- Aboriginal education must be supported through staff training and deployment so that a stable and responsive education is provided to Aboriginal children and a start made to redress the imbalance in the provision of educational services to Aboriginal communities.¹⁵

15.30 As a result of these needs the Commonwealth Minister for Education concluded that a National Aboriginal Teaching Service could bring coherence to the provision of teachers to Aboriginal schools by bringing together highly qualified and appropriate

teachers who could be flexibly deployed across States and systems. The scheme would have a number of features including:

- a Register of appropriately qualified teachers of Aboriginal students would be established;
- agreements would be sought with Aboriginal communities, non-government authorities and participating State and Northern Territory governments to allow for ease of teacher transferability between teaching services. Discussions would be held on career opportunities and appropriate salary levels;
- State and Territory governments would meet the costs of teachers' salaries for teachers employed in all Aboriginal schools, including community schools. The Commonwealth would provide substantial capital support for Aboriginal education and it may upgrade its recurrent support for Aboriginal education, possibly through an Aboriginal Schools Recurrent Grants Program.¹⁶

15.31 An example was provided of how the scheme might work. If an Aboriginal community determined that it needed three teachers for the following year it could contact the National Aboriginal Teaching Service giving job descriptions and its requirements for teachers. The community would then be sent a list of appropriately qualified teachers from all States who were available for consideration and interview. The fares of teachers travelling to interviews could be paid, or alternatively, there could be an annual recruiting session where members of Aboriginal communities needing to employ teachers would travel to a central location to interview prospective teachers. The cost of managing the service would be met by the Commonwealth.¹⁷

15.32 According to the Minister for Education's proposal, the financial stability provided by such a scheme would help Aboriginal communities to retain the skills of good teachers and to build up their schools through the employment of appropriately qualified new teachers. Most importantly, it was claimed, the communities would retain control of their schools.¹⁸

15.33 The National Aboriginal Teaching Service proposal was criticised by the Northern Territory Department of Education. It claimed that establishment of the Service would lead once again to a high turn-over rate of teachers in Aboriginal communities, a rate which had been successfully reduced in recent years by the Northern Territory Department of Education.¹⁹ The Department was concerned that the Northern Territory could become the Service's pool to provide teachers to the States.²⁰ It was also concerned that the Service could lead to a segregated school system in which interchange and cross-fertilisation with other sections of the schooling system would be lost.²¹ The Department also pointed out that Aboriginal teachers often had a desire only to teach in their own communities and would gain nothing from being able to easily transfer inter-State. It was reported to the Committee that the Scheme was supported in principle by the Western Australian Minister for Education.²² There were many other expressions of support for the Scheme by people involved in Aboriginal education.

15.34 Despite the criticisms, the Committee supports the concept of a special educational service to provide teachers for schools with significant Aboriginal populations, particularly in the traditionally-oriented communities. The proposal by the Commonwealth Minister for Education provides a useful basis from which to undertake further investigation. It has the potential to establish a pool of well-qualified and experienced teachers for teaching in schools with large numbers of Aboriginal students and for ensuring a greater Aboriginal community control over the selection of teachers.

15.35 The Committee recommends that:

- *the proposal for establishment of a National Aboriginal Teaching Service be further investigated by the Commonwealth Department of Education and the National Aboriginal Education Committee in consultation with State and Territory Governments, Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups and Teacher Unions.*

15.36 While further investigation is undertaken into the establishment of a National Aboriginal Teaching Service, the Committee considers that its earlier recommendation for the establishment within each State and Territory of a core of teachers, who have completed accredited courses in Aboriginal education, will provide a pool of suitable teachers to deploy to schools with significant numbers of Aboriginal students. The advisory committee which the Committee has recommended earlier in this chapter be established to accredit Aboriginal education courses, should also identify schools in their State or Territory requiring special Aboriginal education support so that appropriately trained staff can be deployed to these schools.

15.37 The Committee recommends that:

- *the advisory committees proposed in recommendation No. 100 should identify schools in the States and Territories requiring special Aboriginal education support and report, to their respective governments, their assessment of the schools in the State or Territory; and*
- *State and Territory education authorities deploy appropriately trained teachers to these schools.*

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF TEACHERS FOR WORK IN THE GENERAL SCHOOL SYSTEM

15.38 As has been noted earlier in the report, Aboriginal people live in a variety of social and economic situations and thus Aboriginal education occurs in a range of environments. Each of these environments presents particular challenges to the teacher and the school system. The environments identified are:

- traditionally-oriented communities in isolated regions;
- rural and semi-rural communities;
- provincial urban communities; and
- metropolitan urban communities.

15.39 The particular problems of recruiting teachers for schools in traditionally-oriented and other relatively isolated communities has been dealt with already. Problems of a different order come about in those schools where Aboriginal children are in the minority, albeit at times a coherent and significant minority. The schools attended by these children are subject to community pressures which can often include an intolerant attitude towards Aboriginal people. Apart from their cultural difference, the students have frequently to cope with negative and hostile attitudes to them by other students in the school and some teachers. In its submission the N.S.W. Teachers Federation deplored the racist attitudes of some teachers.²³ The factor of prejudice, as well as the other environmental factors discussed in Chapter 2 of the report, must be acknowledged if educational support for Aboriginal students in schools is to be effective.

15.40 In schools such as these an appropriately trained teacher could be deployed as a resource teacher in Aboriginal education. Such a teacher could provide advice to other teachers about teaching strategies and curriculum materials for Aboriginal students. The resource teacher could also conduct in-service programs for teachers within the school to increase their understanding of the background, needs and cultural considerations associated with the teaching of Aboriginal students. Again, the advisory committees, proposed in earlier recommendations in this chapter, should identify schools which would require the services of a resource teacher in Aboriginal education.

15.41 The Committee recommends that:

- *appropriately trained teachers be deployed as Aboriginal education resource teachers in schools with significant minority Aboriginal student populations identified by the advisory committees proposed in recommendation 100; and*
- *the resource teachers should conduct in-service training courses for other members of the school staff.*

15.42 The Committee's recommendations earlier in this chapter, that all teachers be adequately prepared to appreciate the special needs of Aboriginal students, should assist in making these schools more acceptable to Aboriginal students. The recommendations in earlier chapters on primary and secondary schooling for Aboriginal community involvement in the appointment of principals and other senior staff to schools with significant numbers of Aboriginal students, will also assist in ensuring that the staffing of these schools meets the needs of Aboriginal students.

CONCLUSIONS

15.43 The Committee concludes that the school-based strategies recommended in this report to overcome the disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal children in the education system, will only be effective if appropriately trained and committed teachers are posted to schools with significant Aboriginal enrolment.

15.44 The nature of the training needed will vary depending on the environment of the school. Thus schools in remote and traditional areas have very specific requirements and should be staffed by experienced teachers who have undergone specialist training in linguistics, TESL and Aboriginal studies, and who have, in addition, demonstrated a commitment to Aboriginal education. A specialist Aboriginal teaching service would provide a pool of appropriately trained teachers to make appointments to these schools.

15.45 In rural and urban schools with significant minority Aboriginal populations the Committee has emphasised the need to appoint principals and senior staff with an understanding of Aboriginal educational needs. It has also recommended the appointment of appropriately trained resource teachers in Aboriginal education who would provide curriculum teaching advice and in-service programs to other teachers in the school.

15.46 The Committee considers that all teachers should be adequately prepared as part of their initial training to appreciate the special needs of Aboriginal education. However, those teachers selected to work intensively with Aboriginal children should have specialist qualifications in Aboriginal education undertaken in accredited courses conducted in institutions throughout Australia.

Endnotes

- 1 Transcript of Evidence, p. 112.
- 2 Transcript of Evidence, p. 173.
- 3 *National Inquiry into Teacher Education, op.cit.*
- 4 Transcript of Evidence, p. 193.
- 5 Transcript of Evidence, p. 289.
- 6 Transcript of Evidence, p. 782.
- 7 Transcript of Evidence, p. 631.
- 8 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4834.
- 9 Transcript of Evidence, p. 289.
- 10 Transcript of Evidence, p. 865.
- 11 Transcript of Evidence, p. 566–584.
- 12 Transcript of Evidence, p. 92.
- 13 Transcript of Evidence, p. 96.

- 14 Transcript of Evidence, pp. 112, 779, 838, 3796.
- 15 Transcript of Evidence, pp. 4719-20.
- 16 Transcript of Evidence, pp. 4720-21.
- 17 Transcript of Evidence, pp. 4721-22.
- 18 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4722.
- 19 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5192.
- 20 Transcript of Evidence, p. 5255.
- 21 Transcript of Evidence, pp. 5192-93 and 5256.
- 22 Transcript of Evidence, p. 4062.
- 23 Transcript of Evidence, p. 112.

Chapter 16

Conclusions

16.1 This report has pointed to the way in which Aboriginal educational attainments have improved significantly in the last decade or so following the introduction of a range of special educational programs. However, it has also shown that Aboriginal educational attainments remain significantly below those of the non-Aboriginal community. In view of this, the Committee is convinced of the need to continue special programs for Aboriginal people, and in a number of areas to extend programs so that a greater impact can be made in improving Aboriginal educational outcomes. *Education in Australia* has, as its central tenet, the achievement of greater equality of educational opportunities and outcomes. Such equality has been denied to Aboriginal people and the provision of special assistance is essential if the ideal of greater equality is to be realised.

16.2 While the Committee has emphasised the achievement of equality of educational opportunities and outcomes, it is not convinced that for Aboriginal people this should be achieved by providing the *same* sort of education as for the rest of the community. The Committee has indicated that the Aboriginal community has *different* educational needs which will require *different* educational approaches if significant steps towards the achievement of greater equality of opportunities and outcomes are to be made.

16.3 These emphases are reflected in statements of objectives in Aboriginal education which indicate that Aboriginal people wish to obtain an education to allow them to function without disadvantage in the wider community, while at the same time being able to retain their Aboriginal identity and lifestyle. The Committee endorses these as fundamental aims in Aboriginal education.

16.4 However, the achievement of these objectives is not straightforward. The Committee has indicated the potential for conflict in some situations if both objectives are to be achieved. For example, Aboriginal people who choose to retain their identity and lifestyle by living in homeland centres will find it extremely difficult to achieve equality of educational opportunities and outcomes with other Australians because of the difficulties of providing a full range of educational services to such small, isolated communities. On the other hand, Aboriginal people undertaking university courses in capital cities may find the retention of an Aboriginal identity and lifestyle difficult in such an environment dominated by non-Aboriginal people and values.

16.5 The Committee has indicated that there may have to be a choice made by Aboriginal people about where the balance should lie between the objectives in situations where possible conflict in achieving both objectives arises. However, the Committee also considers that much can be done to reduce the conflict between the objectives allowing Aboriginal people to obtain an adequate education for their needs without destroying their culture and lifestyle.

16.6 There are two major approaches to Aboriginal education which the Committee has supported in its suggestions and recommendations in this report which offer the opportunity to reduce the potential conflict between objectives. Both these approaches are, to varying extents, being pursued by educational authorities and institutions in providing education to Aboriginal people. The Committee would like to see governments and educational authorities make a firm commitment to these approaches as it considers that they offer the best opportunity to significantly improve Aboriginal educational attainments.

16.7 Firstly, the Committee is advocating that Aboriginal culture and values be recognised and used within educational institutions to assist in the education of Aboriginal people, instead of being regarded as obstacles to effective education. Approaches in Aboriginal education must then take account of the cultural differences of Aboriginals and hence of the need for different educational methods in many areas. The Committee sees bilingual/bicultural education, Aboriginal independent schools, the incorporation of Aboriginal knowledge and values into the curriculum, the development of enclaves within educational institutions and the provision of educational services to Aboriginals in their own communities as some of the approaches which take account of Aboriginal cultural differences. These approaches need to be consolidated and extended.

16.8 The other major emphasis of the report has been on the need to achieve greater Aboriginal involvement in all aspects of the education of Aboriginal people. This is the most important way of increasing the mutual understanding between educational institutions and authorities and the Aboriginal community. There is a need for greater Aboriginal involvement in educational decision-making by formalising the existing mechanisms for involvement of the National Aboriginal Education Committee and the State and Territory Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups. To provide advice on educational needs at a local level the Committee has recommended the establishment of local and regional committees which would have a significant say in local educational matters.

16.9 Within schools and other educational institutions the employment of greater numbers of Aboriginal people as teachers, teaching assistants, liaison officers etc. must be achieved. This will require improved opportunities for Aboriginal people to train as teachers and the Committee attaches particular importance to provision of more teacher training programs for Aboriginals, and particularly for people from traditional areas. The Committee has also emphasised the need for Aboriginal parents to be more closely involved in the schooling of their children. The sum of these efforts to bring about greater Aboriginal involvement should amount, in the Committee's view, to an Aboriginalisation of Aboriginal education. It is only through such a process of Aboriginalisation that it will be meaningful to talk of Aboriginal people having genuine self-determination in relation to their own education. The fulfilment of this process is regarded by the Committee as urgent.

16.10 While the Committee supports an Aboriginalisation of Aboriginal education, non-Aboriginal people have an important role to play as educators, administrators and policy makers. Many non-Aboriginals, who are sensitive to Aboriginal educational needs and committed to Aboriginal advancement, are currently involved in Aboriginal education. The Committee emphasises the importance of drawing many more such non-Aboriginal people into Aboriginal education. The appropriate training of non-Aboriginal teachers and the employment within schools with Aboriginal students of principals and teachers with a specialised understanding of Aboriginal culture and society are seen as the most important ways of achieving this objective.

16.11 To enable the effective achievement of the objectives and programs which the Committee has outlined in this report, there is a need to significantly improve the co-ordination and funding arrangements in Aboriginal education. The Committee sees this being achieved by a rationalisation of arrangements at the Commonwealth level prior to the Commonwealth assuming a major role in co-ordinating, setting overall objectives and funding programs in Aboriginal education. The rationalisation involves a transfer of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs Aboriginal education funding to the Education Portfolio to be administered by agencies of the Portfolio on the advice of the National Aboriginal Education Committee. The Committee sees the network of national, State and local Aboriginal education consultative committees and groups as the major means of co-

ordinating Aboriginal education from the national to the local level. The concentration of funding in the Commonwealth Education Portfolio will allow this co-ordination to be achieved through the significantly increased role of the National Aboriginal Education Committee. This concentration of funding within the Education Portfolio will also enable the existing co-ordinating mechanisms between the Commonwealth and States in education generally to be used for the benefit of Aboriginal education. It will also greatly simplify the approach of institutions and organisations seeking educational funding if one agency at the Commonwealth level has primary responsibility.

16.12 If Aboriginal educational outcomes are to be greatly improved the additional programs and initiatives recommended by the Committee in this report will need to be developed. This will require substantial funding support by governments. In keeping with the increased co-ordinating and policy role which the Committee sees the Commonwealth taking in Aboriginal education, the Committee also sees the Commonwealth Government assuming a significant funding responsibility for new and innovative programs. However, State and Territory governments should also be assuming responsibility out of their recurrent educational funding for continuing programs of proven worth. This will free up further Commonwealth funding which can be used to support additional programs.

16.13 Finally, the Committee has been concerned in this report with the question of what the purpose of education for Aboriginal people should be. Education for non-Aboriginal people is concerned with providing skills and knowledge to obtain *employment and live as worthwhile citizens in the wider community*. The extremely high levels of unemployment in the Aboriginal community, particularly in the remote communities, makes the answer to the question of 'education for what?' for Aboriginal people rather more vexed. There is a much more tenuous relationship between education and jobs. While the Committee is not able to make recommendations to increase employment opportunities, it has been able to address itself to what sort of education Aboriginal people need given the employment situation they face.

16.14 The Committee considers that improved educational opportunities and attainments for Aboriginal people will greatly improve their employment prospects. This improvement must commence with significant attention being given to the basic education Aboriginal people receive at pre-school, primary school and secondary school and the Committee has made many recommendations in these areas. It is also of particular importance that programs which are adapted to the different educational needs of Aboriginal people are provided in the post-schooling area. Post-schooling programs give *Aboriginal people the opportunity to obtain the sort of qualifications necessary for them to find adequate employment*. An upgrading of the educational qualifications of Aboriginals will open up the employment market to Aboriginals in a significant way.

16.15 However, the Committee is also aware of the different needs of the more remote, often traditionally-oriented, Aboriginal communities. Most Aboriginal people in the communities do not wish to move elsewhere to improve their employment prospects even though there are likely to be few employment opportunities within their communities. In these circumstances education in these communities needs to be closely integrated with the directions and requirements of the particular communities for trained people who will be able to assist the communities to run their own affairs. Education must be related to community development as perceived by the communities themselves. Given this, it is obvious that the communities must be significantly involved in developing the directions of education in the community and the Committee has made recommendations in the report for the establishment of school advisory committees in the communities with *significant control over the schooling process*. There is a particular need in these communities for the practical skills needed for self-management.

16.16 The answer the Committee is suggesting to the question 'education for what?' is an education sufficient to enable Aboriginal people to live without dependence on others in the circumstances which they choose. Many Aboriginal people in urban and rural areas will seek educational equality of outcomes and opportunities with the rest of the community so that they can compete in the wider society for employment. However, what many Aboriginal people in the remote and traditional communities will seek from education is the practical and other skills which will enable them to run their own communities without the dependence on non-Aboriginals which often exists today. The Committee is asking that educational authorities listen to what Aboriginal people are saying they want from education and respond to the needs expressed.

Allen Blanchard
Chairman

September 1985

Dissent by Mr R.F. Shipton, M.P. and The Hon. P.A.E. Everingham, M.P.

We set out herewith our dissent to parts of the report:

1. *Summary & Recommendation No.27 (paragraph 5.37).*
Pre Schools should be established on the basis of need for all Australians.
2. *Summary & Recommendations. Homeland Centres.*
We believe that the Aboriginal Affairs Committee enquiry into Aboriginal Homeland Centres should further examine the question of Homeland Centres education.
3. *Summary & Recommendations No.60 (paragraph 11.28).*
We do not believe that tertiary institutions should implement a policy of positive discrimination in terms of standards of student entry.
4. *Summary & Recommendation No.93.*
Discussions should be held with the Northern Territory Government concerning the development of resources for the Remote Area Teacher Education Program.
5. *Summary & Recommendation No.95 (paragraph 14.43).*
We believe that the Queensland Government and Department of Education is giving a priority to the Torres Strait Islands, and has and is developing satisfactory programs.

Mr R.F. Shipton, M.P.

Hon. P.A.E. Everingham, M.P.

September 1985

Dissent by Mr I.M.D. Cameron, M.P.

I set out herewith my dissent to parts of the report:

1. *Summary and Recommendation No.21 (Paragraph 4.50).*
School Advisory Committees should not have sufficient powers over staffing, policy, planning and curriculum development as stated in this section, as this is a State responsibility, but should be used in an advisory capacity.
2. *Summary and Recommendation No.27 (Paragraph 5.37).*
Pre Schools should be established on the basis of need for all Australians.
- 3a. *Summary and Recommendation No.45 (Paragraph 8.30).*
Education is compulsory in all States and Aboriginal Homelands for their own long-term benefit, should not have the right to refuse education facilities.
- 3b. *Summary and Recommendation No.46 (Paragraph 8.30).*
Homeland Centres cannot make all the important decisions in establishing their own education, as this is the responsibility of State Education Departments.
4. *Summary and Recommendation No.60 (Paragraph 11.28).*
I do not believe that Tertiary institutions should implement a policy of positive discrimination in terms of standards of student entry.
5. *Summary and Recommendation No.93 (Paragraph 14.34).*
Discussions should be held with the Northern Territory Government concerning the development of resources for the Remote Area Teacher Education Programme.
6. *Summary and Recommendation No.95 (Paragraph 14.43).*
I believe that the Queensland Government and the Department of Education is giving priority to the Torres Strait Islands, and has, and is developing satisfactory programmes.

Mr I.M.D. Cameron, M.P.

September 1985

Appendix I

Witnesses

Aboriginal Arts Board

ATKINSON, Mr J.E. Chairman, Aboriginal Arts Board, North Sydney, N.S.W.
WEST, Mr A.L. Director, Aboriginal Arts Board, North Sydney, N.S.W.

Aboriginal Community College Inc. (S.A.)

HOLT, Ms L. Deputy Principal, Aboriginal Community College Inc. (S.A.)
PETRIE, Mr K.C. Principal, Aboriginal Community College Inc. (S.A.)

Aboriginal Education Foundation of South Australia Inc.

BRYAN, Mr L. Honorary Secretary and Treasurer, Aboriginal Education Foundation of South Australia Inc., Adelaide, S.A.
MILLER, Mrs M. Honorary President, Aboriginal Education Foundation of South Australia Inc., Adelaide, S.A.
MONTEN, Miss H.J. Social Worker, Aboriginal Education Foundation of South Australia Inc., Adelaide, S.A.
VAN DER BYL, Mrs M. Welfare Officer, Aboriginal Education Foundation of South Australia Inc., Adelaide, S.A.

Aboriginal Research Centre

FESL, Ms E. Director, Aboriginal Research Centre, Monash University, Clayton, Vic.

Aboriginal Task Force, Darwin Community College

CALMA, Mr T. Head, Aboriginal Task Force, Darwin Community College, Winnellie, N.T.

Aboriginal Training and Cultural Institute

McNAMARA, Mrs N. Co-Director, Aboriginal Training and Cultural Institute, Balmain, N.S.W.
VALADIAN, Ms M. Co-Director, Aboriginal Training and Cultural Institute, Balmain, N.S.W.

Aborigines Advancement League

DYER, Ms M.G. Secretary, Aborigines Advancement League, Thornbury, Vic.
HOFFMANN, Mrs E. Director, Aborigines Advancement League, Thornbury, Vic.

Australian Capital Territory Aboriginal Education Consultative Group

BOURKE, Mrs E.A. Honorary Secretary, Australian Capital Territory Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Woden, A.C.T.
JOHNSON, Mr N.A. Chairman, Australian Capital Territory Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Woden, A.C.T.

Australian College of Education (Northern Territory Chapter)

LIPSCOMBE, Mrs R.A. Member, Australian College of Education (Northern Territory Chapter), Darwin, N.T.
RICHARDS, Mrs S. Chairman, Australian College of Education (Northern Territory Chapter), Darwin, N.T.
STEWART, Dr A.N. Past Chairman, Australian College of Education (Northern Territory Chapter), Darwin, N.T.

Australian Council for Educational Administration

KENDALL, Dr L.R. Member, Australian Council for Educational Administration, Athelstone, S.A.

Australian Electoral Office

ANDERSON, Mr F.P. Acting Senior Project Officer, Australian Electoral Office, Canberra, A.C.T.

McILRAITH, Ms J.F. Acting Director, Information Section, Australian Electoral Office, Canberra, A.C.T.

Australian Teachers Federation

WEIR, Mrs M.R. Aboriginal Education Co-ordinator, Australian Teachers Federation, Acton, A.C.T.

Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education

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SHELLEY, Mr R.L. Lecturer in Social Science, Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education, Rockhampton, Qld

TATOW, Mrs J. First Year Arts Student, Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education, Rockhampton, Qld

Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia

CURTIS, Mr A.C. Executive Secretary, Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, Wembley, W.A.

McSWEENEY, Dr R.V. Chief Executive Officer, Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, Wembley, W.A.

SORENSEN, Mrs I.M. Aboriginal Education Consultant, Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, Wembley, W.A.

WILLAWAY, Mr H.G. Aboriginal Adviser, Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, Wembley, W.A.

Catholic Education Office, Northern Territory

FYFE, Father M.P. Director, Catholic Education in the Northern Territory, Catholic Education Office, Darwin, N.T.

Commonwealth Schools Commission

ANDREWS, Dr R.J. Commissioner, Commonwealth Schools Commission, Woden, A.C.T.

KENNEDY, Dr K.J. Acting Director, Curriculum Development Centre, Commonwealth Schools Commission, Woden, A.C.T.

McNAMARA, Mr R.P. Acting First Assistant Commissioner, Commonwealth Schools Commission, Woden, A.C.T.

STREAT, Mr W. Acting First Assistant Commissioner, Commonwealth Schools Commission, Woden, A.C.T.

Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission

HENNESSY, Mr L.F. First Assistant Commissioner, Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, Benjamin Way, A.C.T.

TRACEY, Ms H.M. Director, Policy and Co-ordination Section, Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, Benjamin Way, A.C.T.

Creche and Kindergarten Association of Queensland

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BUDBY, Mrs V. Former Aboriginal-Island Liaison Officer, Creche and Kindergarten Association of Queensland, Newmarket, Qld

FAZLDEEN, Mr A.D. Administrator, Creche and Kindergarten Association of Queensland, Newmarket, Qld

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HENRY, Mr K.H. Assistant Director, Employment Section, Development Division, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Woden, A.C.T.

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 O'ROURKE, Mr D.J. First Assistant Secretary, Program Development Division, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Woden, A.C.T.
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 YONG, Mr J. Director, Education, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Woden, A.C.T.

Department of Education

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 CHAMBERS, Ms B.E. Consultant Researcher, Department of Education, Woden, A.C.T.
 DAVIDSON, Mr R.T. Acting Director, Policy Co-ordination and Review, Aboriginal Education Branch, Department of Education, Woden, A.C.T.
 EGERTON, Mr H.R. Director, Policy and Programs, Aboriginal Education Branch, Department of Education, Woden, A.C.T.
 MAYS, Ms A. Principal Aboriginal Education Adviser, Aboriginal Education Branch, Department of Education, Woden, A.C.T.
 MOSS, Mr R.K. Director, Scheme Administration and Development, Aboriginal Education Branch, Department of Education, Woden, A.C.T.
 PARR, Mr J.M. Assistant Secretary, Aboriginal Education Branch, Department of Education, Woden, A.C.T.
 WARD, Mr I.W. Assistant Secretary, School and Aboriginal Student Assistance Branch, Department of Education, Woden, A.C.T.
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DEVITT, Mr J.E. Acting Manager, Aboriginal Employment and Training Branch, CES, Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, Melbourne, Vic.
 FERDINANDS, Miss R.C. Acting Principal Executive Officer, Aboriginal Employment and Training Branch, Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, Melbourne, Vic.
 HOLMES, Mr J.G. General Manager, CES Programmes Division, Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, Melbourne, Vic.
 MUNDINE, Ms K. Executive Officer, Aboriginal Employment and Training Branch, Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, Melbourne, Vic.

Institute for Aboriginal Development

WILLIS, Mr P. Co-ordinator, Community Development Program, Institute for Aboriginal Development, Alice Springs, N.T.

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DAVISON, Professor G.J. Chairman of Interim Committee, Monash University Orientation Scheme for Aborigines, Clayton, Vic.

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MORRIS, Mrs L. Student Counsellor, Access Course, College of Technical and Further Education, Rockhampton Aboriginal Communities Representatives, Rockhampton, Qld

School of Australian Linguistics

FORD, Dr K. Head, School of Australian Linguistics, Darwin Community College, Batchelor, N.T.

Schools Commission Advisory Committee for Education

MOSENSON, Dr D. Chairman, Schools Commission Advisory Committee for Education, Canberra, A.C.T.

South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee

LUCAS, Ms J. Executive Officer, South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee, Wattle Park, S.A.
RATHMAN, Mr D.J. Deputy Chairman, South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee, Wattle Park, S.A.

RIGNEY, Mrs A.D. Committee Member, South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee, Wattle Park, S.A.
 ZWECKL, Mr P. Chairman, South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee, Wattle Park, S.A.

South Australian College of Advanced Education

FRENCH-KENNEDY, Mr T. Course Co-ordinator, Anangu Teacher Education Program, South Australian College of Advanced Education, Underdale, S.A.
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 DENTON, Ms S.R. Research Officer, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Adelaide, S.A.
 FRANKLIN, Mr P.A. Executive Secretary, Tertiary Education Authority of South Australia, Kent Town, S.A.
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 SANDOVER, Dr J.A. Secretary, Tertiary Education Authority of South Australia, Kent Town, S.A.

South Australian Institute of Teachers

GREGORY, Mr J.F. Chairman, Aboriginal Education Working Party, South Australian Institute of Teachers, Parkside, S.A.
 HIGNETT, Mr J.W. Field Officer, South Australian Institute of Teachers, Parkside, S.A.
 MAJOR, Mr J.R. Member, South Australian Institute of Teachers, Parkside, S.A.
 NICKS, Ms B.A. Assistant General Secretary, South Australian Institute of Teachers, Parkside, S.A.

State School Teachers Union of Western Australia

CARLSON, Mr D.C. Member, Teachers Union Executive Committee, and Chairperson of the Education Committee, State School Teachers Union of Western Australia, Perth, W.A.
 HAYDOCK, Mr A. Member, Aboriginal Education Sub-committee, and Union Representative on the National Committee on Aboriginal Education of the Australian Teachers Federation, State School Teachers Union of Western Australia, Perth, W.A.
 HAYDOCK, Mrs K.M. Member, Aboriginal Education Sub-committee, State School Teachers Union of Western Australia, Perth, W.A.

Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre

LANGFORD, Mrs R.F. State Secretary and Public Officer, Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, Hobart, Tas.
 RANDRIAMAHEFA, Ms K. Co-ordinator, Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, Hobart, Tas.

Tasmanian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee

EVERETT, Mr K.J. Aboriginal Community Representative, Tasmanian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee, Hobart, Tas.
 FOWELL, Mrs P. Executive Officer, Tasmanian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee, Hobart, Tas.

Tasmanian State Government

HERON, Mrs M. Home-School Liaison Officer for Aboriginal Children, Tasmanian Department of Education, Hobart, Tas.
 RICHARDSON, Miss B. Superintendent of Special Education, Tasmanian Department of Education, Hobart, Tas.

Tranby Aboriginal Co-operative College

- COOK, Mr K. General Secretary, Tranby Aboriginal Co-operative College, Glebe, N.S.W.
DOOLAN, Mr B. Director of Studies, Tranby Aboriginal Co-operative College, Glebe, N.S.W.
WIDDERS, Mr T. Co-ordinator, Tranby Aboriginal Co-operative College, Glebe, N.S.W.

Uniting Church in Australia

- CLARKE, Rev. B.A. Secretary, Aboriginal Affairs, Commission for World Mission, Uniting Church in Australia, Sydney, N.S.W.

Victorian Aboriginal Education Consultative Group

- PINNINGTON, Mr P.W. Deputy Chairman, Victorian Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Carlton, Vic.

Victorian State Government

- ADAMS, Mr I.J.W. Director, Equal Educational Opportunities, Victorian Department of Education, Melbourne, Vic.
BEATON, Mr G. Acting Supervisor of Aboriginal Education, Victorian Department of Education, Melbourne, Vic.
CAMPBELL, Mr R. State-wide Co-ordinator of Equal Opportunity, Technical and Further Education, Hawthorn, Vic.
MOTT, Mr P. Director, Pre-School Child Development Branch, Health Commission of Victoria, Melbourne, Vic.

Victorian Teachers Union

- LO BIANCO, Mr J. Research Officer, Victorian Teachers Union, Camberwell, Vic.
ROBERTS, Mr J. State Councillor, Victorian Teachers Union, Camberwell, Vic.

Western Australian College of Advanced Education

- FORREST, Mr S.N. Lecturer, Department of Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies, Mount Lawley Campus, Western Australian College of Advanced Education, Mount Lawley, W.A.
METCALFE, Dr C.D. Lecturer, Department of Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies, Mount Lawley Campus, Western Australian College of Advanced Education, Mount Lawley, W.A.
SHERWOOD, Mr J.L. Acting Head, Department of Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies, and Acting Executive Officer, Institute of Applied Aboriginal Studies, Mount Lawley Campus, Western Australian College of Advanced Education, Mount Lawley, W.A.

Western Australian Government

- CAIN, Mr R.G. Senior Education Officer, Technical and Further Education College, Aboriginal Access Section, Technical Education Division, Education Department of Western Australia, East Perth, W.A.
LOUDEN, Mr H. Assistant Director-General, Secondary Education, Education Department of Western Australia, East Perth, W.A.
MOUNSEY, Mr C.F. Superintendent of Education, Aboriginal Education, Education Department of Western Australia, East Perth, W.A.

Western Australian Institute of Technology

- FORREST, Mr V. Director, Education Centre, Western Australian Institute of Technology, Bentley, W.A.
RILEY, Mr R. Chairman, Aboriginal Studies Advisory Committee, Western Australian Institute of Technology, Bentley, W.A.
SHARPHAM, Dr J. Associate Director (Academic Affairs), Western Australian Institute of Technology, Bentley, W.A.

WILKES, Mr E.T.	Co-ordinator of Aboriginal Studies, Western Australian Institute of Technology, Bentley, W.A.
WYATT, Mr C.	Area Officer, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Kalgoorlie, W.A.
Yipirinya School Council	
ALLEN, Ms C.	Resource Teacher, Yipirinya School Council, Alice Springs, N.T.
RUBUNTJA, Mr E.	Vice President, Yipirinya School Council, Alice Springs, N.T.
SCOTT, Ms C.	Teacher Trainer, Yipirinya School Council, Alice Springs, N.T.
STEVENS, Mr T.F.	President, Yipirinya School Council, Alice Springs, N.T.
YULE, Mr I.R.	Co-ordinator, Yipirinya School Council, Alice Springs, N.T.
Yirara College	
ODLING-SMEE, Mr D.H.	Principal, Yirara College, Alice Springs, N.T.

Appendix II

Persons and Organisations who Made Submissions to the Inquiry but did not Appear at Public Hearings

Aboriginal Hostels Limited
Aboriginal Task Force, S.A. Institute of Technology
A.C.T. Schools Authority
Mr J.D. Alton
Angurugu Community School Staff
Aurukun State School
Australian Early Childhood Association
Ms W. Baarda
Bamaga State High School
Batchelor College
Batchelor College Students' Representative Council
Mr J.S. Beasley
Mr G. Beaton
Mr P. Brokensha
Bureau of the Northern Land Council
Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education
Mr K. Carpenter
Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Armidale
Mr K. Colbung M.B.E.
Commissioner for Community Relations
Commonwealth Teaching Service
Mr D. Cronin
Mr S. Davey
Ms C. Davies
Ms K. Davies
Djarindjin School Board
Drs Dyer & J. Sunderman
East Arm Progress Association
Ms Nungurrayi Egan
Federation of Australian University Staff Associations
Mr J. Fleming
Flinders Island Community Association
Mr E. Flint
Friends of Bilingual Education
Mr D.I. Glasgow
Gold Coast Support Group of the Aboriginal Treaty Committee
Ms P. Harris
Mr J.A. Heffernan
Ms P. Nangala Herbert
Mr D. Hope
Mr J.R. Huelin
Mr P. Jangala
Jervis Bay Primary School
Ms E. Nangala Johnson
Kalkaringi School
Kamilaroi Aboriginal Corporation
Mr T.M. Kilkenny
Kindergarten Union Training Program (Early Childhood Education)
Reverend and Mrs E.C. Kingston

Ms J.H. Kozisek
 Lajamanu School — Assistant Teachers
 Lajamanu School — Literacy Workers
 Lajamanu School — Staff
 Lake Cargelligo Central School
 Ms L. Lone
 Ludmilla School
 Lyappa Congress
 Mr D.J. McClay
 Mr P. Malone
 Mr J.F. Marsh
 Milingimbi School Staff Members' Group
 Mimili Aboriginal Community
 Mr P.F. Moffitt
 Mount Margaret Mission
 Mrs R. Murphy
 Ms D. Lewis Nakamarra
 Mr D. Nash
 Ms F. Newman
 N.S.W. Federation of School Community Organisations
 Ngoonjuwah Council
 Ms C. Nicholls
 North Coast Institute of Aboriginal Community Education
 Nulungu College (Broome)
 Nungalinga College
 Nungalinga College Students
 Nursery School Teachers College (N.S.W.)
 Nyoongah Community Inc.
 Orana Community College Council
 Papunya Outstation Teachers
 Ms J. Pickett
 Port Augusta Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee
 Quaker Race Relations Committee (N.S.W.)
 Quaker Service Council Australia
 Mr P. Roberts
 Roebourne Primary School
 Ms Napaljarri Ross
 Sacred Heart School, Thursday Island
 Ms C. Napanangka Samson
 Mr J. Sandover
 Save the Children Fund (N.S.W. Division)
 Mr M. Schubert
 Science Research Associates Pty Ltd
 Mr W. Snowdon
 Swan Hill Aboriginal Education Committee
 Mr S. Swartz
 Professor C. Tatz
 Tennant Creek Aboriginals
 Tertiary Education Authority of South Australia
 Mr D. Thompson
 Thursday Island State High School P. & C. Association
 Thursday Island State High School Staff
 Ms T. Toyne and Mr R. Bowler
 Townsville Aboriginal & Islander Education Advisory Committee
 Mr J. Waber
 WAIT Aboriginal Student Association
 Ms G. Waters

Ms E. Watson
Professor B.H. Watts
Mr G. Whan and Mr J. Japananka Williams
Widjeri Co-operative Limited
Yalgoo Primary School
Yarrabah State School
Yelangji Pre-School Association Committee
Yirkala Community School
Yiyili Community
Yuendumu School

Appendix III

List of Exhibits — 32nd Parliament

INDEX

- 1 **National Aboriginal Education Committee**
Rationale Aims and Objectives in Aboriginal Education, February 1980.
- 2 **Northern Territory Government**
Green Paper on Primary and Secondary Education in the Northern Territory Directions for the 80s by The Hon. J.M. Robertson M.L.A., Minister for Education, March 1981.
- 3 **Mr J.D. Gallacher**
Paper by Mr J.D. Gallacher, dated 11 October 1973, addressed to the Secretary, Department of Education.
- 4 **Northern Territory Teachers Federation**
Publication — *The Territory Teacher* — August 1981.
- 5 **Institute for Aboriginal Development**
Annual Report of the Institute for Aboriginal Development for the year ended 30 June 1980.
- 6 **Yipirinya School Council**
Application for registration of a non-government school.
- 7 **Yipirinya School Council**
Correspondence between the Yipirinya School Council and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, March 1981 — 1 July 1981.
- 8 **Yipirinya School Council**
Tape — May Berger talks with people at Iipi Iipi — Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association.
- 9 **Yipirinya School Council**
Document — Yeperenye Yeye, July 1981.
- 10 **Dr M.M. Brandl**
Submission by Dr Brandl to the Committee of Review of Australian Volunteers Abroad Program of 23 March 1981.
- 11 **Dr M.M. Brandl**
Submission by Dr Brandl to the Committee of Review of Australian Volunteers Abroad Program of 28 May 1981.
- 12 **Dr M.M. Brandl**
Document outlining the Review of the Australian Volunteers Abroad Program.
- 13 **Dr M.M. Brandl**
Document 'Speakers of Many Tongues: Towards Understanding Multilingualism among Aboriginal Australians' — 26 August 1981 by Dr Brandl and M. Walsh.
- 14 **Dr M.M. Brandl**
Document 'Aboriginal Family and Children's Heritage Project' of 1 May 1981 by M. Brandl and W. Snowdon.
- 15 **Tasmanian State Government**
Document — Research Study No. 65, Research Branch, Tasmanian Education Department — *Tasmanian Aborigines and Further Education.*
- 16 **Tasmanian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee**
Document — *Statement of Concerns of TAECC.*
- 17 **Mr A.T. Duncan**
Aboriginal Teaching Assistants Training Program — Background Information and Budget Submission, 1982.

- 18 **Mr A.T. Duncan**
Aboriginal Teaching Assistants Training Program — Background Information, 1981, Appendixes.
- 19 **N.S.W. Teachers Federation**
1982 Census of Aboriginal Students in N.S.W. Government Schools in order of Aboriginal Student Population (250–50).
- 20 **N.S.W. Teachers Federation**
Aboriginal Students in Schools of the Western Region, April 1982.
- 21 **N.S.W. Aboriginal Education Consultative Group**
Peakhurst — Lugarnoscope.
- 22 **Aboriginal Arts Board**
Djapu.
- 23 **Aboriginal Arts Board**
Baruwunju Mala Wanju Bunhawuy.
- 24 **Aboriginal Arts Board**
Manayingkarirra Djurrang.
- 25 **Aboriginal Arts Board**
Kanajingirliyanu.
- 26 **Aboriginal Arts Board**
Dubala Beligin.
- 27 **Aboriginal Arts Board**
Warnapari-Kirli.
- 28 **Aboriginal Arts Board**
Murrinh Ku Ngugumingki 2.
- 29 **N.S.W. State Government**
July 1982 Census of Aboriginal Students in N.S.W. Government Schools in order of Aboriginal Student Population (250–50).
- 30 **N.S.W. State Government**
Aboriginal Education Conference, Fairfield, 21/22 April 1982.
- 31 **N.S.W. State Government**
N.S.W. Department of Education — *Aboriginal Australians: A Preliminary Chronology.*
- 32 **N.S.W. State Government**
N.S.W. Department of Education — *Resources in Aboriginal Studies.*
- 33 **N.S.W. State Government**
N.S.W. Department of Education — *Aboriginal Education Policy.*
- 34 **N.S.W. State Government**
N.S.W. Department of Education — *Guidelines for Teaching Aboriginal Studies.*
- 35 **N.S.W. State Government**
N.S.W. Department of Education — *Strategies for Teaching Aboriginal Children.*
- 36 **N.S.W. State Government**
N.S.W. State Government — *The effects of Culture Contact on Aboriginal Australia.*

List of Exhibits — 33rd Parliament

INDEX

- 1 **Aboriginal Research Centre (Monash University)**
Document entitled 'Bala Bala' — Commonwealth Department of Education, Canberra 1982.
- 2 **Mr J. Morieson**
Documents tabled by Mr Morieson — 16.6.1983.
- 3 **Department of Employment and Industrial Relations**
Booklet, *Young Aboriginals at Work* — Commonwealth Employment Service, Canberra 1978.
- 4 **Victorian State Government**
Paper — 'Aboriginal Enrolments: 1983 — Summary Statistics'.
- 5 **South Australian Government**
Document — *Aboriginal Education 1983 Handbook*.
- 6 **South Australian Government**
Document — 'Working Group on Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education — Report to the Tertiary Education Authority of South Australia — September 1982'.
- 7 **South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee**
Document — 'Rationale, Aims and Objectives for Aboriginal Education in South Australia — June 1983'.
- 8 **South Australian Institute of Teachers**
Document — 'Institute's policy statements and curriculum development for Aboriginal schools'.
- 9 **Aboriginal Teacher Education Program, S.A. College of Advanced Education**
Documents — *Annual Report — 1982, Anangu Teacher Education Program (ANTEP) and Anangu Teacher Education — a survey of community needs (April-July 1982)*.
- 10 **Warriappendi Alternative School**
Document — *Warriappendi Alternative School* — August 1983.
- 11 **Pennington Schools**
Booklets — Aboriginal Parents Involvement Programme at the Pennington Schools — 1982.
- 12 **Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission**
Document — *TAFE's courses for Aboriginals*, Tafec News No.38, June 1983.
- 13 **Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission**
Document — 'Courses for Aboriginal Students in Higher Education Institutions 1982-1983 by Years of Course Commencement and Level of Qualifications'.
- 14 **Nulungu College**
Nulungu Employment Survey by Brother Des Howard, June 1982.

List of Exhibits — 34th Parliament

INDEX

- 1 **Department of Aboriginal Affairs**
Directive from the Secretary, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, dated 15 June 1984, to all Regional Directors.

List of Confidential Exhibits — 34th Parliament

INDEX

- 1 Ms Pam Harris
Attachment A to submission.

Appendix IV

Committee Visits — Aboriginal Education Inquiry

(STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS)

AUGUST 1981 — NORTHERN TERRITORY

Darwin

Nungalinya College
Ludmilla Primary School
Darwin Community College (Aboriginal Task Force)

Alice Springs

Traeger Park Primary School
Yipirinya School
Fringe Camps: Inyewente, Inarlenge and Anthepe
Yirara College
Institute for Aboriginal Development

Groote Eylandt

Angurugu Council
Angurugu School

Roper River

Roper River School
Roper River Community Council

Utopia

Utopia community

Batchelor

Batchelor College

Daly River Mission

St Francis Xavier School

Peppimenarti

Peppimenarti Community Council
Peppimenarti School

Papunya

Papunya School
Lyappa Congress
Adult Education facilities

APRIL 1982 — TASMANIA

Flinders Island

Flinders Island Community Association
Flinders Island Community School
Flinders Island Get a Gymnasium Group

Launceston

Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre Inc.

Hobart

Bowen Road Primary School
New Town High School
Tasmanian Aboriginal Pre-school

OCTOBER 1982 — JERVIS BAY (A.C.T.)

Jervis Bay Primary School
Wreck Bay community

NOV./DEC. 1982 — N.S.W.

Lake Cargelligo

Lake Cargelligo Central School
Murrin Bridge

Dubbo

Orana Community College
Regional Aboriginal Education Consultative Group

Bourke

Bourke Public School — Infants
Bourke Public School — Primary
Bourke High School
St Ignatius School
Widjeri Co-operative Ltd

Sydney

Murawina Pre-school (Redfern)
Darlington Public School
University of N.S.W.
Eastlakes Public School
University of Sydney
Tranby Aboriginal Co-operative College
Committee Seminar 2.12.82

JUNE 1983 — VICTORIA

Swan Hill

Swan Hill Technical School
Swan Hill North Primary School
Swan Hill Aboriginal Education Committee
Swan Hill & District Aboriginal Co-operative

Melbourne

Koorie Education Centre
Eric McGuinness Study Centre

AUGUST 1983 — NORTHERN TERRITORY

Yuendumu

Yuendumu Sports Weekend

Mimili

Mimili community

Alice Springs

Yirara College
Traeger Park School
Institute for Aboriginal Development
Yipirinya School

Yuendumu

Yuendumu community
Yuendumu School
Yuendumu School Council

Oenpelli

Gunbalanya Council
Oenpelli School

Milingimbi

Milingimbi School
Milingimbi Community Council
Rapuma, Bodiya and Gumarirbang Outstations

AUGUST 1983 — SOUTH AUSTRALIA**Port Augusta**

Tjiwiltja Pre-school
Port Augusta Primary School
Port Augusta High School
Davenport Reserve
Kindergarten Training Group
Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee

Adelaide

Warriappendi Alternative School
Pennington Primary School
Woodville High School
Aboriginal Task Force
Aboriginal Community College
Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee

OCTOBER 1983 — WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**Broome**

Nulungu College
Holy Child Aboriginal Pre-school
Broome District High School
WACAE Off Campus Teacher Education Centre

Strelley**Roebourne**

Roebourne Primary School

Port Hedland

Hedland College
Pundulmurra Vocational Training Centre

Halls Creek

Community meeting
Halls Creek School

Kununurra

Kununurra High School
St Joseph's School
Community meeting

Lombadina

One Arm Point

Noonkanbah

Lajamanu

Batchelor

School of Australian Linguistics
Batchelor College Student Representative Council
and Teaching Staff

Darwin

Ludmilla Primary School
Casuarina High School
Aboriginal Task Force
Women's Aboriginal Resource Centre

FEBRUARY 1984 — N.S.W.

Lismore

Lismore High School
Albert Park Primary School
Northern Rivers College of Advanced Education

FEBRUARY 1984 — WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Perth

Nyoongah Community Inc.
Woollah Centre
Kewdale Senior High School
W.A. College of Advanced Education
W.A. Institute of Technology

Boulder

Djidiku Pre-school
Boulder Primary School
Boulder Junior Primary School

Kalgoorlie

Ninga Mia Village
Eastern Goldfields Senior High School
Eastern Goldfields Aboriginal Advancement Council
Kalgoorlie College

Coolgardie

Christian Aboriginal Parent-Directed School

MARCH 1984 — CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

Cherbourg

Cherbourg Primary School
Murgon State High School
Cherbourg Community Council

Cunnamulla

Cunnamulla State School
Cunnamulla Aboriginal Community

Charleville

Charleville High School
Charleville Primary School

Rockhampton

Berseker Street Primary School

Glenmore High School

Aboriginal and Islander Catholic Council, Rockhampton Diocese

TAFE College, Rockhampton, (Access Course)

JULY 1984 — NORTH QUEENSLAND**Townsville**

Kindergarten Headstart

Garbutt State School

Townsville State High School

James Cook University of North Queensland

Townsville Aboriginal & Islander Education Advisory Committee

Yarrabah

Yarrabah State School

Yarrabah Aboriginal Council

Cairns High School

Cairns College of Technical & Further Education

Lockhart River

Lockhart River Kindergarten

Lockhart River Primary School

Lockhart River Community Council

Aurukun

Aurukun State School

Doomadgee

Doomadgee State School

Mornington

Mornington Island Council

Mornington Island State School

Thursday Island

Thursday Island State High School

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School

Bamaga

Bamaga Primary School

Bamaga State High School

Bamaga Aboriginal Community Council

Palm Island

Palm Island State School

St Michael's School

(SELECT COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL EDUCATION)

JUNE 1985 — NORTHERN TERRITORY

Yuendumu

Nyirripi Outstation
Yuendumu School

Alice Springs

Ida Standley Pre-School
Traeger Park Primary School
Alice Springs High School
Yirara College
Yipirinya School

Lajamanu

Lajamanu School
Lajamanu Community Council

Kalkaringi

Kalkaringi School

JULY 1985 — NEW SOUTH WALES

Sydney

Murawina Pre-School (Mt Druitt)
Dunheved High School
Plumpton High School
Bidwill Community School
Yawarra Pre-School
Western Districts Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs
Aboriginal Christian Fellowship
St Marys and District Aboriginal Legal Association
Indigenous People's Council

Moree

Moree Primary School
Courallie High School
St Philomena's Convent of Mercy Primary School
Moree TAFE College
Moree Aboriginal Community

Appendix V

National Aboriginal Education Committee Rationale, Aims and Objectives in Aboriginal Education

The National Aboriginal Education Committee is a nineteen member all-Aboriginal¹ Committee. It was established in March 1977 to advise the Commonwealth Minister for Education and his *Department on the educational needs of Aboriginal people and the most appropriate ways of meeting these needs*. The members of the Committee come from all States, including Tasmania and also from the Torres Strait Islands. Members are selected onto the Committee for their experiences in formal education and also for their value as community resource personnel whether residing in a traditional or non-traditional community.

The N.A.E.C. recognises that traditional Aborigines today continue to practice a lifestyle which is almost similar to that of their ancestors. The non-traditional person survives within the wider Australian society, but still maintains his cultural identity. The Committee accepts the definition that an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which he lives.

Since its establishment the N.A.E.C. has been asked to offer advice on the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Department of Education funding for Aboriginal education programs throughout Australia. It also offers advice to other Government agencies. In order to make recommendations about education programs for Aboriginal people, it is necessary to develop a framework of aims and objectives and to consider each project in relation to them.²

During 1978-79 a draft paper on the Committee's Rationale, Aims and Objectives in Aboriginal Education was distributed to Aboriginal community groups and individuals, educational administrators and teachers, government departments and agencies and educational institutions. It was intended as a discussion paper particularly for Aboriginal people so that they could become informed and involved in the N.A.E.C. policies and guidelines and provide their reactions.

As a result of discussions and comments received on the draft paper the Committee has now prepared the following statement 'Rationale, Aims and Objectives' in Aboriginal education. This paper reflects current Aboriginal thoughts regarding the needs and positive education changes required to provide more meaningful and relevant education for Aboriginal people.

RATIONALE

Since 1788 the Aborigines of Australia have been subjected in varying degrees to an authoritarian system which has rationalised their dispossession from the land, and depreciated their culture. This dispossession forced indigenous people from their land and from the source of their rich cultural background and uniqueness.

After more than 180 years of experiencing an inadequate formal education, a position has now been reached whereby non-Aborigines have become a little more aware of some of the problems that have been festering in the Aboriginal community. The National Poverty Inquiry Report of 1975 states that in every conceivable comparison the Aborigines and Islanders —

... stand in stark contrast to the general Australian society, and also to other ethnic groups whether defined on the basis of race, nationality, birthplace, language, or religion. They probably have the highest deathrate, the worst legal status of any identifiable section of the Australian population.

The Australian Schools Commission Report 1975 adds:

They also have the least schooling.

These two quotations illustrate the realization of the majority non-Aboriginal society that its education system still has to develop educational policies and practices which will enable Aborigines the opportunity to participate equally within the Australian society. As a consequence of

this realization the National Aboriginal Education Committee has been formed to offer the Commonwealth Minister for Education informed Aboriginal views on educational matters of Aboriginal interest.

The Aborigine's existence in this country dates back to at least 40,000 years. During this time, unique cultures evolved which enabled Aborigines to achieve complete harmony with the land.

Traditional Aboriginal life was and still is rich, spiritual, complex and meaningful. It was not merely an inheritance of myth and ritual that gave order and value to the Aboriginal existence, but rather an interpretation of the environment and a consciousness of the interdependence, the relatedness of things in the world. The patterns of the relationships are central to Aboriginal spirituality and the study of Aboriginal spiritual life reveals a deep sensitivity and subtlety which is beyond the knowledge of most non-Aborigines.

Both traditional and non-traditional learning processes give Aboriginal people a detailed knowledge of their cultural heritage. Traditional Aboriginal teaching methods develop keen observation and sophisticated listening and retentive skills, for nearly all of the knowledge is committed to memory.

Through extensive knowledge of and spiritual ties with the land, the traditional Aborigine became skillful in the art of survival, approaching the land and its surroundings in a scientific manner. This enabled them to develop an expert knowledge of their land, its seasons, animals and plant life and the rocks and mountains which featured significantly throughout daily life.

Aboriginal education aims at preparing a person to function effectively in a society which does not emphasise material values but those community values of responsibility and obligations which are an important part of an extended family group.

Aboriginal parents have expressed the desire for their children to be able to function successfully in both their own culture and the wider Australian community. Aborigines accept that some parts of their traditional education program should be complemented with those skills which will allow them the opportunity of participating in the general Australian society.

Aboriginal people are equally entitled to the highest quality of education available. All research studies show that Aboriginal pupils are, under the present system of schooling, achieving very low standards in literacy and numeracy skills. One of the most potent factors in the gross educational under-achievement of Aborigines is probably the clash between the schooling system, home and the environment. In this situation, the N.A.E.C. believes that the only realistic solution to such problems regarding education for Aborigines, is that the education systems should change to meet the needs of those they serve.

The N.A.E.C. believes that policies on education for Aborigines should be developed within the guidelines of the following aims:

AIMS

1. To reinforce and recognise that there exists a common feeling of Aboriginality among all the descendants of the indigenous people of Australia which includes the traditional and non-traditional people of the mainland, the Torres Strait Islands and Tasmania.
2. Education for Aboriginal people must be a process which builds on what Aboriginal people are by recognising and developing their natural potential and not by destroying their cultural heritage. The National Committee believes that some changes to the school system would enable a strong Aboriginal identity to be a positive education factor.
3. Aboriginal studies must become an integral part of the education of every Australian. It must be taught with a high degree of respect and understanding to develop an accurate knowledge of Australian history, Aboriginal cultures, and lifestyles.
4. Education for all Australians must be a means of promoting cross-cultural understanding through an intensive community education program. It should aim to develop understanding, tolerance and respect of the differing cultural viewpoints held by the peoples of Australia. In doing so the uniqueness of the indigenous people must not become a lost entity within a multi-cultural Australia.

5. The educational services offered to both traditional and non-traditional people must aim for and be capable of developing and strengthening the Aborigines knowledge of, and pride in their cultural heritage as well as obtaining the academic and technological skills required of Aboriginal Australians today. To ensure effective learning the latter must be acquired in harmony with the Aborigines own cultural values, identity and choice of lifestyle, whether residing in an urban, rural, traditional community or homeland centre.
6. Aboriginal people must be given responsibility for the implementation of policies, funding and the administration of programs in Aboriginal education.
7. In order to ensure the effectiveness of education services for Aboriginal people, Aborigines should play the major part in the delivery of those services. This requires an immediate and substantial change in policy and the implementation of new programs, to train and employ Aborigines in the various fields of education.
8. Aboriginal education research must be of direct benefit to Aborigines.

The means of achieving these aims is through the following objectives:

OBJECTIVES

1. To work in close consultation with the National Aboriginal Conference, State Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups as well as Aboriginal communities and organisations.
2. The urgent setting up of a National Inquiry into all aspects of Aboriginal education under the auspices of the N.A.E.C. in consultation with State Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups.
3. To work towards the establishment of a National Aboriginal Education Commission. The proposed Commission should be a Statutory Body established by an Act of Parliament. This would place the funding, administration and responsibility for Aboriginal education under the direction of Aboriginal people.
4. The establishment of an Aboriginal Education Resource and Curriculum Development Unit which would produce materials for Aborigines and non-Aborigines. The Unit, through the N.A.E.C., would develop links and working relationships with State and regional Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups and the existing Curriculum Development Centre.
5. The immediate implementation of steps to increase, substantially and quickly, Aboriginal involvement, influence and participation in education programs at all levels offered to Aboriginal people throughout Australia. This will require the provision of large scale training programs, manpower planning, understudy and planned academic study. Preparation of Aborigines for participation in these ways should include Aboriginal education philosophy and community-influenced curriculum content.
6. The implementation throughout Australia of community education schemes based on parental involvement and community consultation at the local level. Initially these could be associated with the establishment of community learning centres within Aboriginal community groups.
7. The establishment of a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander College of Advanced Education with campuses located in several different areas of Australia. The NATSICAE could offer a wide variety of courses at all levels.
8. The establishment of appropriate teacher education courses apart from the present schemes so that Aboriginal teachers will receive accredited teaching qualifications and training in Aboriginal philosophy, teaching methods and curriculum development.
9. Any research discussions or activities in the area of Aboriginal education must be conducted in a manner which is consistent with our policy of Aboriginal decision-making in the provision of educational services to Aboriginal people.

Most research fails to produce results of immediate advantage to Aborigines, and in some instances has further disadvantaged Aboriginal people.

The N.A.E.C. believes that research in Aboriginal education is of such importance that any proposal should take cognisance of the following statements:

- (a) All research projects should have the prior and final approval of the local community and/or State or National Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups.
- (b) Emphasis should be placed on action oriented research and on research relevant to the needs of Aboriginal people as defined by Aboriginal people.

- (c) Committees approving research projects should also have majority Aboriginal membership.
 - (d) The committee overseeing research projects should also have majority Aboriginal membership.
 - (e) Research projects should make maximum use of those Aborigines with research skills and where possible the principal researcher should be an Aborigine.
 - (f) A research skills training program should be developed to enable Aboriginal people to obtain these skills so that a pool of qualified Aboriginal researchers will be readily available.
 - (g) Any research project should involve the local Aboriginal people and other Aboriginal resource personnel as much as possible.
 - (h) A research project should provide the involved research team with in-service training on research skills and techniques. This should be an essential part of the project.
 - (i) Result of research undertaken should be made available in a form understandable by those people who were the subjects of that research.
10. The N.A.E.C. considers that evaluation should be an integral part of all Aboriginal education. The evaluation processes should always involve a majority of Aboriginal people so that a reliable expression of Aboriginal viewpoints on such programs is available. Future programs should be planned around the results of these evaluations.

National Aboriginal Education Committee

February 1980

Endnotes

1. Reference to Aborigines in this paper also includes Torres Strait Islanders.
2. The N.A.E.C. recognise that each of the aims and objectives presented in this paper need to be developed in detail and with further consultation with both Aboriginal people and the education system which services them.

