

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AFFAIRS
(HORSCATSIA)**

**Questions on Notice
Wednesday 18th of June 2003**

Attendees: Mr Willaims, Mr Hoffman and Ms Brodie

**Members in attendance: Mr Haase, Ms Hoare, Mr Snowdon, Mr Tollner
and Mr Wakelin**

1. Questions on notice in reference to the Indigenous Youth Partnership Initiative (YPI), Western Australia school based traineeship program.
 - How many students have gone through the program?
 - When they are pulled into that particular program are literacy and numeracy issues addressed as well?
 - What is the age group?

Answers:

The commencement figures are as follows:

- 2001 65
- 2002 120
- 2003 150 -200 (as advice of commencements continues to come in from the regions).

The Western Australian DEST office advises that literacy and numeracy needs are met by the combination of Registered Training Organisations (RTO), Group Training Organisations GTO) and schools, but the degree of the response varies between locations.

The project assists students in Yr 11 and 12, so the age group is 16-17 yrs.

Attendance

The following extract from the Western Australia National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (NIELNS), outlines two quite significant cross sectoral initiatives in responding to comments on attendance.

Key Element One ACHIEVING ATTENDANCE

The objective of this element is to increase the attendance rate of Indigenous students through the active support of a greater number of parents of Indigenous students and community members in their children's education. In doing so, the aim is to ensure that students are learning in an environment of positive expectation. Two initiatives have been put in place to achieve this objective:

Initiative 1 will focus on supporting the building of more effective partnerships between schools, families and parents to develop and implement School Attendance Action Plans. These will ensure students attend regularly and experience a positive, supportive learning environment while at school. The Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia will co-ordinate the initiative on behalf of the three major education sectors in Western Australia. Focus areas include the Kimberley region, Kalgoorlie / Coolgardie and Port Hedland townships and in the Perth metropolitan area.

Initiative 1.1 Parent Attendance Trusts (PAT) – Getting Attendance off PAT

The PAT initiative will focus on supporting the building of more effective partnerships between parents and schools to ensure a supportive family environment enabling students to attend school regularly and experience a positive learning environment while both at school and at home. It will include an emphasis on families and students valuing education and raising the expectations of parents and teachers alike so that parents and their children work cooperatively with teachers to achieve the best they can.

The Catholic Education Commission of WA will co-ordinate this initiative on behalf of all the education providers in WA. Implementation sites will be selected from the Kimberley Region, Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie town sites (including CAPS Coolgardie and CAPS Kurrawang), Port Hedland town site (including Strelley Community School) and the Swan Education District.

This initiative will also have a positive impact on all other elements of the Literacy, Numeracy and Attendance Strategy (LNAS).

1.1.1 Engaging Families and Communities in Developing the PAT Initiative

The PAT initiative will support parents, students and teachers to work out what they will do at their local levels to support parents and students to improve attendance and student achievement.

The first stage of the initiative will be to appoint a Project Leader to establish a Management Team with representatives from the Indigenous community and each education sector. The Project Leader will be an Indigenous person with significant influence with the Indigenous community across Western Australia. The Project Leader will implement a school and community consultation programme to identify and confirm participating schools.

The Project Leader with advice from the Management Team will develop in collaboration with the Commercial Television Stations in WA a rolling set of TV

advertisements over the 3 years of the initiative. The Commercial Stations will be approached on the basis that the advertisement programme will be part of their contribution to Reconciliation. The programme will focus on the responsibilities of parents in their children's education and the importance of regular attendance at school through to the final years of schooling.

The Project Leader will work with the Management Team to develop the operational guidelines and a framework for School Attendance Action Plans. The School Attendance Action Plans will support parents and teachers to work through a collaborative approach to identify the issues impacting on attendance levels. The Plans will support parental expectations of their children's attendance and ensure schools' responses include behaviour management and discipline strategies, counter racism practices, culturally appropriate curriculum and decision making structures.

1.1.2 Implementing School Attendance Action Plans

School Attendance Action Plans will detail the initiatives/strategies to be undertaken by the school together with performance measures and targets. Funds will be made available under the LNAS to fund those initiatives. The funds may be used to promote effective liaison between the teachers and parents/families, facilitate greater parent involvement in school decision making through school boards or ASSPA committees and improve communication between parents and teachers. The funds could also support community organisations to take more pro-active roles in ensuring students get to school, and in assisting schools to meet parent and community needs for culturally appropriate, effective education delivery.

The School Attendance Action Plans will compliment other school development planning processes, including links with School Strategic Plans.

Initiative 2 will extend a student tracking system into the Kimberley region to locate students across all sectors who are missing from enrolment lists. This is a joint venture between all three major providers and will be co-ordinated by the Education Department of Western Australia.

Initiative 1.2 Establishing a Student Mobility Tracking System

Educational statistics concerning Indigenous children in education may be sufficient to provide a comparison between the attendance and achievement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous children in schools; however, the data does not provide reasons for the differences.

The system will provide a managed environment for recording and analysing information concerning the attendance patterns of students of compulsory-school age.

The proposed system replaces, and extends beyond, the existing "transfer note" procedure used by schools as a notification of student movements.

The system brings together sufficient information about students and their attendance at any Western Australian school, and will include the following information:

- The patterns of poor attendance of Indigenous children, together with reasons for the non-attendance, are available both to those who are responsible for

developing and implementing programmes to correct or ameliorate the problem, and to those who seek to support the individual children.

- Individual children who are “missing” from the enrolment lists will be more effectively and efficiently located, so that appropriate action can be taken.
- Analysis and reporting will enable the government, state agencies, education authorities and providers, and schools themselves, to better carry out their obligations, particularly their duty of care and equity of service delivery.

A trial of the system was conducted in the Kalgoorlie and Geraldton regions. The education providers are currently reviewing the trial to determine the extent to which the system has delivered the necessary information/data requirements. Additional support is provided under the Implementation Plan to enhance and extend the system into the Kimberley region of WA where there are a significant number of mobile students moving between all three education sectors. A review of the Kimberley trial will be undertaken with a view to extending the system throughout the whole state within existing provider resources if the trial proves successful.

2. Questions on notice in reference to the Indigenous Youth Partnership Initiative (IYPI), Toowoomba Queensland project, running under the Enterprise and Career Education Foundation (ECEP).

- What is the sustainability level of this project?

Answer:

The project referred to is the Youth & Community Learning Centre (YCLC). This Centre was established in 2000 as an initiative of the Catholic Education Office of Toowoomba in response to commissioned research indicating significant numbers of Indigenous compulsory school aged young people were disconnected from all educational provisions in the Toowoomba area.

YCLC was initially funded through the provision of a grant from the Enterprise Career Education Foundation as an Indigenous Youth Partnership project. Funding was for a three year period and extended to December 2002. The YCLC is now a registered school and is therefore eligible for normal recurrent, non recurrent and Special Purpose school funding. It is currently still operating.

During its operations YCLC has catered for the educational and vocational education training needs of over seventy (to April 2003) Indigenous young people aged 13–17 who had disconnected from all mainstream education and vocational training programmes.

A summary of client statistics 2000-2002 indicates the intensive support needs of the young people who are utilising the YCLC service:

- 74% disconnected from other education and VET options for greater than 6 months.
- 33% disconnected from other education and VET options for greater than 12 months.
- 57% have a Youth Justice History.
- 82% identified as experiencing significant learning delays compared to age peers.
- Vocational awareness and experience extremely low.
- 74% Indigenous males.

YCLC has developed a unique response to the education and VET needs of the client group it serves. Young people who are disconnected from all mainstream educational options are catered for at YCLC. The service is primarily directed at young people of compulsory and post compulsory school age who are looking to reconnect with education or VET, but who are not suited to mainstream provisions in the short term. Many of the young people who present at YCLC are seriously disadvantaged and in need of multi-disciplinary support for significant periods of time (1-2 years).

3. Question on notice in reference to a prescriptive list of where we identify best practice.

- I accept that it is early days, I accept that the first national report has just come out and I accept measurement is probably just starting to happen more appropriately, but can we talk about those best models and best practice.

Answer:

The first *National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training, 2001* contains some short case studies illustrating good practice. The report can be found at <http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/Publications/2002/nrpiet/split.htm>

The second National Report to Parliament will also contain similar case studies and will be available by the end of the year.

4. Question on notice in reference to copies/copy of the text *What Works* for the Committee.

Answer:

Copy of *What Works* supplied.

5. Questions on notice in reference to the Strategic Initiatives projects put in place in 1997.

- Who is taking it up and who is not?
- If they are not then aren't they?

Answer:

In his response to the committee, Mr Williams mentioned the *What Works* project which began as a Strategic Results Project (SRP) under the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (IESIP).

The *What Works* project was undertaken during 2000-2001 by a consortium of the Australian Curriculum Studies Association (ACSA) and the National Curriculum Services (NCS). Under the project, two reports were published and distributed: an Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme Strategic Results Project Report for teachers titled *What has worked (and will work again)* and a complete report on *What Works* called *What Works? Explorations in Improving Outcomes for Indigenous Students*. The project also involved the development of a professional development package entitled *What Works – The Work Program* comprising a CD-ROM, guidebook and workbook.

Two further *What Works* projects are now under way:

The first is the *What Works* website project which involves the management of the *What Works – The Work Program* professional development package on the ACSA website under the domain name of www.whatworks.edu.au with a teacher discussion forum attached. This project is funded at \$82,500 over the period 2002-2005. Case studies, which are updated as part of the *What Works* workshop project, are also featured on the website.

The second is the *What Works* workshop project which is to conduct workshops to 'roll-out' the *What Works* professional development package and to update the case studies on the ACSA website. The workshop project was the subject of a public tender process with the successful tenderer being a consortium of ACSA and the NCS. The project is being conducted from 2003-2005 with funding of \$1.5 million.

Under the contract, the consortium is providing professional development support for the *What Works* package through a series of activities and forums. Intensive professional development support is being provided in a number of success zones. The success zones are the two New South Wales Education Districts based on Dubbo and Moree, which are in the Murdi Paaki Council of Australian Governments (COAG) region, and the Logan-Beaudesert area of Southern Queensland.

Mr Williams also mentioned to the committee the involvement of school principals through a \$3.2 million project. This funding has been made available under the Quality Teacher Programme to fund *Taking It On*, the second phase of the *Dare to Lead* project. This follows the *Dare to Lead* project which was also undertaken by the Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council in 2000-2001.

Taking It On, like *Dare to Lead*, is based on the belief that, in order to effect change in schools, principals need to lead the way. The project will engage principals from

around Australia, to form an ongoing Coalition of schools and their principals, who will commit to improving educational outcomes for their Indigenous students. Principals with Indigenous students enrolled in their schools will, as part of joining the Coalition, sign up to achieving educational outcomes for Indigenous students. All principals will sign up to revising their academic curricula and other school programmes with a view to ensuring that students develop an understanding of Indigenous culture.

Coalition membership has continued to grow; 491 schools with Indigenous students, 101 schools without Indigenous students and 70 organisations have now joined. This is a total of 662 out of a target of 1500, with some principals still to attend a forum and some consulting with their school communities before undertaking membership. Since the national Ministerial launch on 9 April 2003, forums have been held in most capital cities and in some regional areas. Further events are scheduled throughout August and September. Information about the forums is available at www.apapdc.edu.au/daretolead

The *What Works* and *Dare to Lead – Taking It On* projects are linked by the professional development package which is demonstrated at Taking It On forums and offered as one of the learning opportunities which is provided to principals to help them achieve their objective. The success of the *What Works - The Work Program* professional development package is evidenced by a request from the consortium for increased copies of the package.

While primary responsibility for education rests with the States and Territories, the Commonwealth provides supplementary assistance to improve the educational outcomes of Indigenous students. In funding national projects such as *What Works*, *Dare to Lead* and *Taking It On*, the Commonwealth is seeking to address the gaps in Indigenous education and training.