



Ms Melissa Price MP  
Chair  
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

8 November 2016

Dear Ms Price,

**Inquiry into Educational Opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students**

Deakin University provided extensive comment for this Inquiry via our original submission in February 2016.

On behalf of the leadership and colleagues in the Institute of Koorie Education and across Deakin, I write to offer the following additional comments to contribute to this important Inquiry:

*1. Contexts for Educational Success*

The contexts that support and enable success in Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is essentially framed by careful planning, sustained commitment and structured evaluation of actions and outcomes for improvement. In our initial submission Deakin University noted the improvements and success of the MATSITI project. The University is now a strong partner in the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience Program. It is programs such as these that bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, educators and communities, and university practices together to make a difference. At Deakin, we urge the Australian government to commit long term support to initiatives such as these for a sustained period of time so that real change in educational systems, including the university sector, can be realised. Sustained change takes longer than the normal three-year funding cycle.

*2. Barriers to Success*

The greatest barrier to success is clearly the capacity of the education sector Australia wide to create and sustain effective programs which grow through a long term strategy which leads a whole of system approach.

*3. Systematic Improvement of Educational Outcomes*

We re-iterate the critical need for a research framework which can systematically review and evaluate the short and long term effect of structural changes so that government investment can be tied to sustainable and effective practices that deliver clear and successful outcomes.

*4. Good practice, better practice and Initial teacher education*

The work of MATSITI has resulted in strengthened resolve from AITSL national standards for initial teacher education. This resolve and explicit recognition of the standards is leading to stronger initial teacher education curriculum for all students, but notably provides stronger recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in all Australian classrooms.

*5. Engagement and models for successful participations*

Deakin confirms the need for constructive community engagement to achieve improved educational outcomes.

*6. Building cultural competence and capacity in educational settings*

Australia will never succeed in appropriately recognising and enabling First Peoples to achieve their full potential unless we are all culturally aware, respectful and engaged. We commend the Universities Australia leadership across the higher education sector in the development of the Indigenous Cultural Competence Goals and Action and the aspiration to have all universities sign on to this commitment and deliver strong educational outcomes.

My colleagues and I are pleased to continue to provide advice and will work with the Australian Government in the development of policy and practices that are designed to achieve improved educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across Australia.

Best wishes

Professor Jane den Hollander  
**Vice-Chancellor**