



## Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Amendment (2007 Budget Measures) Bill 2007

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### Contents

Purpose. . . . .	2
Background. . . . .	2
Financial implications . . . . .	3
Main provisions. . . . .	4
Concluding comments . . . . .	4
Endnotes. . . . .	4

## Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Amendment (2007 Budget Measures) Bill 2007

**Date introduced:** 23 May 2007

**House:** House of Representatives

**Portfolio:** Education, Science and Training

**Commencement:** Royal Assent

### Purpose

The purpose of this Bill is to amend the *Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Act 2000* ('the Act') to implement 2007-2008 Budget measures by appropriating additional funding to:

- expand the Indigenous Youth Mobility Programme
- expand the Indigenous Youth Leadership Programme
- provide boarding school facilities in regional towns, and
- convert Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) places into ongoing jobs in the education sector.

### Background

Commonwealth assistance to Indigenous education is provided through the *Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Act 2000*. The current Act provides quadrennium funding for the years 2005–2008, primarily for the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (IESIP).

The Indigenous Youth Mobility Programme (IYMP) and the Indigenous Youth Leadership Programme (IYLP) were announced as 2004 election commitments.<sup>1</sup> Funding was appropriated by the *Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Amendment Act 2004* to provide 600 places in the IYMP for young people from remote Australia to undertake training and employment opportunities in major centres and provide 200 places in the IYLP for Indigenous youth to access 'education opportunities at high performing Government and non-Government Schools and up to 50 University places'.<sup>2</sup>

The guidelines and administrative arrangements for both programmes were not in place until 2005 and the first scholarships and places were offered in 2006.<sup>3</sup> DEST has not published any evaluation of the programmes. However in the 2007-2008 Budget measure

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‘A Better Future for Indigenous Australians – opportunities for education’, funding of \$69.1 million over five years to 2010-11 will be provided to expand the IYMP by an extra 860 places and the IYLP by an extra 750 places.<sup>4</sup> \$6.6 million will fund the additional places in both programmes in the calendar years 2007 and 2008.

Also under the 2007-2008 Budget measure ‘A Better Future for Indigenous Australians – opportunities for education’ an additional \$65.3 million will be provided over the three years 2006-2007 to 2008-2009 to repair and replace existing non-government boarding schools in remote and regional areas.<sup>5</sup> \$14.1 million will be provided in the calendar years 2007 and 2008. The funding will go to ‘boarding schools with strong track records of providing secondary schooling for Indigenous young people ... many of which are recording growing waiting lists for access to places for Indigenous people’.<sup>6</sup>

The IYMP and IYLP measures aim to improve the Year 12 retention rate which in 2006 was 40.1% for Indigenous students and 75.9% for non-Indigenous students.<sup>7</sup> Rather than provide further assistance for the provision of schools and programmes in remote areas, (which is largely seen to be a state and territory responsibility), the Government is responding to advice from the National Indigenous Council and calls from Noel Pearson and the Cape York Institute that advocate scholarships for bright Indigenous students to complete their schooling at elite boarding schools.<sup>8</sup>

The Budget measure ‘A Better Future for Indigenous Australians – building an Indigenous workforce in government service delivery’ provides \$97.2 million over four years to various portfolios to convert CDEP places into ongoing positions. These costs will be offset by \$35.9 million in reduced CDEP programme funding.<sup>9</sup> DEST will be provided \$15.0 million over the four years,<sup>10</sup> of which the Bill appropriates \$5.3 million for 2007 and 2008 to provide 200 ongoing positions to Indigenous people in the education sector, including positions in both government and non-government schools and systems.<sup>11</sup> The measure to transfer CDEP places to ongoing positions in the education sector further implements the move to mainstream the CDEP. One of the ongoing criticisms of the scheme has been that CDEP projects substitute for the provision of services which are rightly the responsibility of government agencies.

## Financial implications

The Bill will increase the appropriation under section 14A of the Act by \$26.1 million over the 2007 to 2008 calendar years. The increases will provide:

- \$2.6 million for extra places in the Indigenous Youth Mobility Programme
- \$4.0 million for extra places in the Indigenous Youth Leadership Programme
- \$14.1 million for boarding schools catering for Indigenous students, and
- \$5.3 million to convert CDEP places to ongoing education jobs.

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## Main provisions

**Schedule 1** amends the table in subsection 14A (1) to provide increased funding for the 2007-2008 Budget measures.

## Concluding comments

The Bill further implements the Government's stated approach to Indigenous education which is to 'redirect resources to programmes that have demonstrably improved outcomes, to provide greater weighting of resources towards Indigenous students of greatest disadvantage – those in remote areas, and to improve mainstream service provision for Indigenous students'.<sup>12</sup>

## Endnotes

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1. *Howard Government Election 2004 Policy: Indigenous Australians: Opportunity and Responsibility*, 17 September 2004.
  2. See: DEST website Indigenous Youth Leadership Programme [http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous\\_education/programmes\\_funding/programme\\_categories/iylp/default.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/programmes_funding/programme_categories/iylp/default.htm) and Indigenous Youth Mobility Programme [http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous\\_education/programmes\\_funding/programme\\_categories/iymp/default.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/programmes_funding/programme_categories/iymp/default.htm), accessed 25 May 2007.
  3. The IYMP is administered by the Foundation for Young Australians, see: [http://www.youngaustralians.org/fund/ya\\_fund\\_IYLP\\_ALL.asp](http://www.youngaustralians.org/fund/ya_fund_IYLP_ALL.asp)
  4. Budget Measures 2007-08, Budget Paper no. 2, p.164.
  5. Budget Measures 2007-08, Budget Paper no. 2, p.164.
  6. Budget 2007-08 Indigenous Affairs, 'The promise of education' [http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/VIA/budget2007-08/\\$File/07\\_indigenous\\_03.pdf](http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/VIA/budget2007-08/$File/07_indigenous_03.pdf), accessed 25 May 2007
  7. *Schools, Australia, 2006* ABS 2007, Table 23.
  8. The Minister for Family, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Hon. Mal Brough, states in the Budget media release that 'the National indigenous Council has highlighted the importance of boarding schools and mobility measures'. M. Brough, '\$218 million education funding boost for Indigenous youth', media release, 8 May 2007. For Noel Pearson's views see: 'Board our children' *Australian* 30 October 2004; 'Speaking of boarders', *Australian* 1 November 2004, Noel Pearson, 'Opinion: No danger of another stolen generation' *Australian* 5 November 2004.

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9. Budget Measures 2007-08, Budget Paper no. 2, p.165. CDEP programme is funded under the Employment and Workforce Relations portfolio.
10. Budget 2007-08 Indigenous Affairs, 'Building an Indigenous workforce in government service delivery' [http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/VIA/budget2007-08/\\$File/07\\_indigenous\\_05.pdf](http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/VIA/budget2007-08/$File/07_indigenous_05.pdf), accessed 25 May 2007.
11. The Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) programme commenced in 1977. Under the scheme, members of participating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities or organisations can forgo any Centrelink Income Support benefit (except Abstudy or full time student Youth Allowance) for a wages grant paid to the community. Since the abolition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission in 2005 the programme has been funded and administered by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR).
12. [Indigenous Education: Achievement through Choice and Opportunity: Australian Government Indigenous-specific funding for the 2005-2008 Quadrennium, Discussion Paper](#), Canberra, DEST, 2004, p. 2; and Dr. B. Nelson, 'Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme', media release, 5 April 2004.

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