



Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Amendment Bill 2010

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Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Amendment Bill 2010

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Commencement: 1 January 2010

Links: The [relevant links](#) to the Bill, Explanatory Memorandum and second reading speech can be accessed via BillsNet, which is at <http://www.aph.gov.au/bills/>. When Bills have been passed they can be found at ComLaw, which is at <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/>.

Purpose

The Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Amendment Bill 2010 (the Bill) amends the *Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Act 2000* (the IETA Act) to increase appropriations for non-ABSTUDY payments by \$10.93 million over three overlapping eighteenth-month periods from 1 January 2010 to 30 June 2013. This additional appropriation is the result of a 2009–10 budget measure which provided additional funding of \$10 million over four years for the Sporting Chance Program.¹

The proposed additional funding is actually a re-appropriation of funds originally appropriated under *Appropriation Act (No. 1) 2009–2010*. Prior to the 2009–10 Budget, all funding for the Sporting Chance Program was appropriated through the IETA Act. In effect, by re-appropriating the additional funding, all funding for the Sporting Chance Program will again be combined under the one Act.

Background

The [Sporting Chance Program](#) is part of a suite of Indigenous school education programs that seek to improve the education, training and employment outcomes of Indigenous school students. The program uses sport and recreation activities as a means to enhance their engagement in schooling. There are two elements to the program: school-based sports academies for secondary students; and education engagement strategies for primary

1. J Gillard (Minister for Education) and J Macklin (Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs), *\$10 million to expand the Sporting Chance Program*, media release, 12 May 2009, viewed 24 February 2010, http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_090512_182832.aspx

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and secondary school students. These projects are implemented through providers working with schools, education authorities, sporting bodies, businesses and community groups.²

Introduced by the previous Government through a 2006–07 Budget measure, which provided \$19.6 million over four years to 30 June 2010 to establish 20 sporting academies, the initiative was inspired by the [Clontarf Foundation](http://www.clontarffoundation.com/) Football Academy (WA) established in January 2000.³ As part of the Closing the Gap strategy to address Indigenous disadvantage, in December 2008 the Government provided a further \$10 million over four years to expand the program.⁴

The 2009–10 Budget committed further funding for the program – \$10 million over four years, \$5 million of which is directed towards establishing 10 new sports-based academies, with a particular focus on improving the participation and engagement of girls; and \$5 million to the Former Origin Greats to establish academies with a focus on rugby league in Queensland and New South Wales.⁵ This budget measure's focus on girls accords with the findings of a recent performance audit of the program which raised concerns about the low level of female participation in the program.⁶

In total, the Government will be providing \$42 million over four years, 2009 to 2012, for the Sporting Chance Program. In 2010, this funding will support 22 organisations delivering 59 projects (54 school-based sports academies for about 5000 students and five education engagement projects for another 5000 students).⁷

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2. For further information, see Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), 'Sporting Chance', DEEWR website, viewed 24 February 2010, <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Indigenous/Schooling/Programs/SportingChance/Pages/default.aspx>
 3. For further information, see the Clontarf Foundation website, viewed 24 February 2010, <http://www.clontarffootball.com/>
 4. K Rudd (Prime Minister), *\$10 million to expand Clontarf Academies* [sic], media release, 9 December 2008, viewed 24 February 2010, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FD5CS6%22>
 5. Gillard and Macklin, op. cit.
 6. Department of Finance and Deregulation (Finance), Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs), *Performance audit of the Sporting Chance Program*, Finance, 2009, p. 5, viewed 24 February 2010, http://www.anao.gov.au/uploads/documents/Performance_Audit_of_The_Sporting_Chance_Program.pdf
 7. DEEWR, op. cit. See also J Macklin (Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs), K Rudd (Prime Minister) and K Ellis (Minister for Sport), *Sporting chance expansion*, media release, 11 February 2010, viewed 24 February 2010,

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This continuing government support can be seen as testament to the success of the program:

The Sporting Chance Program is delivering strong results for Indigenous students, particularly in remote and rural areas. Attendance rates are starting to climb and are, on average, better than attendance rates for Indigenous students not involved in the program.

Data collected from projects in 2009 indicates that the average attendance rate for academy students was 79 per cent. The average rate for all Indigenous students in the schools the projects were in was 73 per cent.

More than half of the academy students were reported by the schools to be improving their school performance and many were also reported to have made significant gains in their self-esteem and behaviour.⁸

Addressing Indigenous disadvantage

The underlying rationale for the Sporting Chance Program, and other Indigenous education assistance programs, is to redress the ongoing disparity between the educational outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

In 2007 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to six targets for ‘closing the gap’ between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, including, in relation to educational achievement:

- to halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for Indigenous children within a decade and
- to halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates by 2020.⁹

These targets were formalised in the [*National Indigenous Reform Agreement \(Closing the Gap\)*](#), agreed to by COAG in October 2008.¹⁰

<http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FMPVV6%22>

8. Macklin, Rudd and Ellis, op. cit.
9. Council of Australian Governments (COAG), *Communique*, 24th Meeting, 29 November 2008, p. 7, viewed 25 February 2010, http://www.coag.gov.au/coag_meeting_outcomes/2008-11-29/docs/communique_20081129.pdf
10. Council of Australian Governments (COAG), *National Indigenous Reform Agreement (Closing the Gap)*, COAG, 2008, viewed 25 February 2010, http://www.coag.gov.au/intergov_agreements/federal_financial_relations/docs/IGA_FFR_ScheduleF_National_Indigenous_Reform_Agreement.pdf

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Literacy and numeracy

The COAG target is to halve each of the 2008 gaps in Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 reading, writing and numeracy achievement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students by 2018.

The latest national literacy and numeracy assessment results indicate the significant gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous student achievement. Generally, these gaps widen for older students and, as reported elsewhere in the results, they also widen in provincial and remote areas.

National Assessment Program: literacy and numeracy results, 2009 Indigenous and non-Indigenous students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy (%)						
	Reading		Writing		Numeracy	
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Year 3	75.1	94.8	79.9	96.6	74.0	95.2
Year 5	66.7	93.1	70.1	94.2	74.2	95.3
Year 7	73.2	95.0	69.9	93.7	75.8	95.8
Year 9	67.0	93.5	59.0	89.2	75.0	96.0

Source: [2009 National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy: Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy](#), Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, 2009.

As the Prime Minister's recent *Closing the Gap* report noted, between 2008 and 2009, there was a slight reduction in the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous literacy and numeracy achievement for Years 3, 5 and 7, and a slight increase in the gap for Year 9 reading.¹¹

Student attainment

The COAG target is to halve the 2006 Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous 20–24 year olds by 2020. In 2006, 47.4 per cent of Indigenous 20–24 year olds had completed Year 12 or equivalent qualifications, compared to 83.8 per cent for the corresponding non-Indigenous age group.¹²

Indigenous retention rates are improving. The apparent retention rate from Year 7/8 to Year 12 improved from 40.1 per cent of Indigenous students in 2006 to 46.5 per cent in

11. Australian Government, *Closing the Gap: Prime Minister's Report*, 2010, pp. 21–4, viewed 25 February 2010, <http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/indigenous/pubs/general/Documents/ClosingtheGap2010/closingthegap2010.pdf>

12. Ibid, p. 28.

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2008 – a 6.4 per cent increase. This compares to an apparent retention rate of 75.6 per cent for non-Indigenous students in 2008.¹³

Financial implications

The Bill proposes to increase the appropriation for non-ABSTUDY payments under the IETA Act by \$10.93 million over three overlapping eighteen-month periods (1 January 2010 to 30 June 2013) from \$481,068,000 to \$491,992,000.

This increased appropriation is the result of a 2009–10 Budget measure which provided an additional \$10 million over four years for the Sporting Chance Program. Indexation accounts for the difference between the \$10.93 million and the original \$10 million.

The increased appropriation is actually a re-appropriation of funds from *Appropriation Act (No. 1) 2009–2010*. The re-appropriation of these funds will bring all appropriations for the Sporting Chance Program under the one Act (the IETA Act).

Main provisions

Clause 2 of the Bill proposes a retrospective commencement date of 1 January 2010. The reason for this is that the Bill's proposed additional appropriation is a re-appropriation of funds that were originally appropriated under *Appropriation Act (No. 1) 2009–2010*.

Items 1 to 3 of Schedule 1 to the Bill amend the table in subsection 14B(1) of the IETA Act. That table sets out appropriations for non-ABSTUDY payments for the 2009–2013 quadrennium. The effect of the proposed amendments is to increase the appropriation for non-ABSTUDY payments under the IETA Act by \$10.93 million over three eighteen-month periods (1 January 2010 to 30 June 2013) from \$481,068,000 to \$491,992,000.

13. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Schools Australia 2008*, cat. no. 4221.0, ABS, Canberra, 2009, p. 29, viewed 25 February 2010, [http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/3D1C059F24BE9E80CA2575AE00273795/\\$File/42210_2008.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/3D1C059F24BE9E80CA2575AE00273795/$File/42210_2008.pdf); and *Closing the Gap: Prime Minister's Report*, pp. 25–7, op. cit.

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