

Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education
References Committee

Inquiry into indigenous education funding arrangements

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Submitter: Hon Stephanie Key MP

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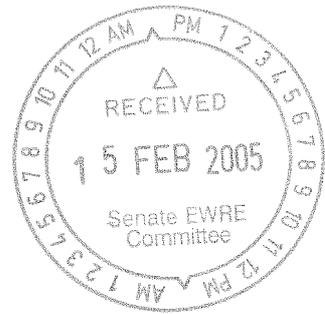
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14 February 2005

Senator Trish Crossin
Chair
Suite SG.52
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Crossin

Thank you for your letter dated 7 December 2004 regarding the Inquiry into new indigenous education funding arrangements.

The new provisions as identified in the *Indigenous Education (Financial Assistance) Bill 2004* will have significant impact on the availability and accessibility of education programs for Aboriginal students in South Australia.

Of particular concern are the changes made to the 'boundaries' of remote and non-remote areas in this State.

I acknowledge that indigenous specific funding provided by the Australian Government is supplementary to other mainstream funds and is intended for strategic interventions to accelerate indigenous student learning outcomes. However, state and territory agencies, schools and school communities will be affected by provisions which specify new accountability arrangements for funding agreements regarding vocational education and training and higher education.

The South Australian Government is committed to improving educational outcomes for indigenous students. Mr David Rathman, Executive Director, Aboriginal Education and Employment Strategies Unit from the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology will be available to meet with the Committee or officials if that will be of assistance.

Please find attached South Australia's submission concerning the impact arising from changes to the Commonwealth targeted assistance programs to indigenous education.

Yours sincerely

(THIS DOCUMENT IS UNSIGNED DUE TO ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION)

HON STEPHANIE KEY MP

Att.

SUBMISSION FROM DEPARTMENT OF FURTHER EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY REGARDING INQUIRY INTO NEW INDIGENOUS EDUCATION FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

The Department provides the following advice concerning implications of the Australian Government's proposed changes to funding arrangements for targeted assistance in indigenous education, as contained in the Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Amendment Bill 2004:

- The South Australian Government has a long history of supporting initiatives to assist the Aboriginal peoples to improve cultural, social and economic growth.
- The demographic picture of South Australia indicated the largest number of indigenous people reside in the capital city. In South Australia there are 11,047 (2001 ABS Census) Aboriginal people who live in Adelaide, 58.3% of those people are under 25 years. Needs based resourcing appears to be replaced by remoteness by location as an indicator of higher levels of disadvantage.
- DFEEST, through TAFE SA, has been at the forefront of providing community and individual with responsive and inclusive education and training.
- Involvement
Indigenous people have a higher per capita representation in TAFE SA institutes than the total population. In 2003, approximately 25,000 Aboriginal people comprise 1.7% of the total SA population. Of these, 14,700 were in the TAFE age cohort of 15 to 64 years, with 19.1% enrolled in TAFE. In general, only 7.7% of the SA TAFE age population is enrolled.

In simple terms, TAFE age indigenous people make up 1% of the total SA population, but comprise 3.8% of the TAFE population.

- Level of Education
Not all TAFE students enrol to gain a formal qualification. The national output measure is the nominal hours for individual modules in which students enrol. In 1996, indigenous students generated 685,561 hours. In 2003, this increased to 765,398 hours, an increase of 11.6%, compared with 9.2% for all of TAFE.

In 1996, 5% of indigenous hours were higher level (Certificate IV and above). In 2003, this increased to 13%. 21% of the higher level involvement is now at diploma level and above.

- Qualifications Awarded
In 1996, only 0.7% of all qualifications awarded were to indigenous students. In 2003 this increased to 2.5%, with an increase in higher level awards from 11% to 24%, including two bachelor degrees.

- Involvement in Wider TAFE
66% of indigenous involvement is in specifically funded Aboriginal Education programs. The balance covers 75 educational activity areas in all programs made up of State recurrent funded (61%), User Choice New Apprenticeships (8%) and fee-for-service (10%).
- Educational Outcomes
TAFE SA has a higher pass rate than the Australian average. Although the pass rate for SA indigenous students is below the general rate, it is well above the national rate for indigenous students, and is very close to the national rate for all students.
- South Australia, whilst welcoming the continued support of the Australian Government, is concerned about the following and is seeking clarification about the interpretation of the policy in the administrative guidelines:
 - in 2001–2004 DEST recognised only hours from nationally accredited courses, based on the Recognition Status Identifier as defined in the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standards (AVETMISS). This results in courses accredited in accordance with South Australia requirements being excluded
 - for students who need to repeat courses recognised prior learning is not considered eligible student contact hours, students are therefore not eligible for Abstudy. This only discourages indigenous students from continuing on with further study
 - in restricting the indigenous hours to accredited modules only, DEST may be seen to be unnecessarily restrictive
 - the need for DEST to calculate the funding entitlements in 2005-2008 for hours from all South Australian courses in VET together with those from nationally accredited courses that are accepted by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) as part of the national data collection
 - Port Augusta will now be classified as non-remote but continues to have a high population of Aboriginal students from rural and remote communities with significant ESL needs. The reclassification of Port Augusta as a non-remote location will represent a funding loss of 2% per annum (with funding remaining at 2004 levels for the quadrennium)
 - the demographic picture of South Australia indicated the largest number of indigenous people reside in the capital city. In South Australia, according to the 2001 ABS Census, there are 11,047 Aboriginal people who live in Adelaide; 58.3% of those people are enrolled in the education system compared to 41.5% in outer regional, remote and isolated communities. The concern is that geographical isolation is not the only factor of isolation. There are communities in metropolitan areas that are more socially isolated and therefore the Aboriginal young people at greater risk of disengaging from education

- rather than increase funding in any substantial way the Commonwealth Government has chosen to redefine indigenous people according to their 'levels of disadvantage' relative to each other, rather than relative to the rest of the community. In the next funding quadrennium funds will be redistributed from the 'least' disadvantaged indigenous peoples (those living in urban/rural areas) to the 'most' disadvantaged Indigenous peoples (those living in remote areas)
- the redistribution of funds will be felt in areas capped at 2004 funding levels for the duration of the quadrennium.