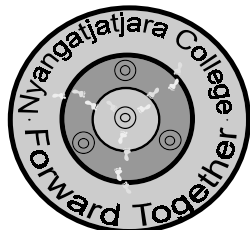


Nyangatjatjara College Yulara Campus



PO Box 171 or
288a Mala Road
Yulara NT 0872

Principal (08) 8956 2555
Administrator (08) 8956 2155
Fax (08) 8956 2466
E-mail ncollege@octa4.net .au

Inquiry into Vocational Educational in Schools

Submission from Nyangatjatjara College.

This College is an independent, secondary, Indigenous College, established by the Nyangatjatjara Aboriginal Corporation. As such, our submission would be in relation to the term of reference:

‘the accessibility and effectiveness of vocational education for indigenous students’

Brief Background

Our students come from remote Aboriginal communities (Imanpa, Docker River and Mutitjulu) that experience the lowest socio-economic situations in Australia. English is not their first language, and contact with ‘mainstream’ Australia is limited. However, there is a strong sense that the College, which their parents/elders have set up, can offer positive outcomes, and the programs presently running at the College are very successful, with the students participating enthusiastically.

For the past two years a work experience program at Ayers Rock Resort has been in place for senior students, and this has been very successful, with students gaining skills and confidence to join in the workplace at the Resort, at the Outback Pioneer Hotel in particular. The Resort has been especially cooperative, training staff, meeting the students at the College and at various activities such as Sports Days and Discos.

We have negotiated a Partnership with the Resort to encourage ‘real’ employment at the resort for senior students. This will take the form of part-time work, with complimentary study at the College. We propose to set up a separate hostel at the College for these students, as a step toward independent living.

A major area of ‘training’ is in social skills, expected behaviour in ‘mainstream’ society, and in improving Literacy and Numeracy skills.

Students are undertaking courses with Centralian College in Tourism, and Construction, funded under the TRY (Training for Remote Youth) program.

Plans for the Future

- As outlined above, we hope students will find employment at the Ayers Rock Resort, with the National Park, or with tour operators around Uluru and Kata Tjuta.
- This employment will progress from part time work, with study and a hostel at the College, to eventual full time work and independent living within housing provided by the Resort.
- With 400,000 tourists passing through the area each year, there is potential for sales of handcrafts and artefacts. We would like to establish a gallery and meeting place, at the College. Students and their families could sell through the gallery, and with controlled visits by tourist groups the students could give some understanding of their culture and stories to the tourists.
- We have plans to establish businesses under the umbrella of the Nyangatjatjara Aboriginal Corporation. These small businesses could be run by students and graduates. One obvious business for our students is to for a Production Studio. We have a strong media program in the school, and already the Resort has commissioned a video from our students.

Difficulties

Our main difficulty is funding.

These plans will never eventuate without funding for a staff member to oversee the program.

Our staff is small and over-committed to teaching and other initiatives at the College, and we are still largely in demountable buildings.

We need funding for

- staff to oversee the program
- a gallery and VET centre on site
- hostel accommodation separate from present student dormitories.
- an Aboriginal houseparent to live with the students.
- vehicle for transport

We have sought funding from many bodies, both government and private, but all have been unsuccessful. A problem is that we do not fit 'guidelines' in most cases. However, the situation in remote areas is different from those experienced elsewhere, but funding bodies do not recognise this.

The College is broadly the main opportunity for young people from the three remote communities to gain skills and employment. Unemployment is high in the Communities, around 90%, and there are few opportunities except through the College..

Conclusion

On September 12th 2002 we gave a presentation to the board of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), chaired by Mr Stuart Hornery. We outlined our achievements, and plans for the future in relation to our Transition to Work program. My impression was that they became enthusiastic about the College, and Ms Evelyn Scott summed it up by saying "You are breaking new ground."

I agree, we are breaking new ground, and achieving positive outcomes. However, we are being limited by inadequate funding.

To fund our program would be far-sighted in that social problems in the communities could be reduced in the future, with financial savings.

If you require more information, please contact me.

Ian White

Principal

13/9/02