

21 June 2001

Dr Brendon Nelson
Chair
House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Employment, Education and Workplace Relations
R1 Suite 116
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Nelson

Thank you for the opportunity to put forward this submission on dealing with "at risk" students in our society. While I prefer to use the term "at risk" I acknowledge that in the majority of cases we are talking about boys.

This submission looks at the theory that deals with alternative education programs and why they are successful. However, the main thrust of this submission is to promote a cumulative model of education that focuses on teaching "at risk" students how to gain full time employment.

Without wishing to be simplistic, as a nation we have a major problem with young people who are failing the education system especially in traditional high schools.

In my presentation to the committee I will explain in more detail the Cumulative Model and its capacity to help "at risk" students. I look forward to our meeting and sharing with you my enthusiasm for a practical approach to major social problems especially when it offers hope and adopts a proactive approach.

Yours faithfully

John Graham
Coordinator – 3R Program

Co-operation ♦ Courtesy ♦ Consideration ♦ Common Sense





3R PLUS

A CUMULATIVE

MODEL

FOR

“AT RISK”

STUDENTS

SUBMISSION TO: STANDING COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT,
EDUCATION AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

RE: (A) INQUIRY INTO THE EDUCATION OF BOYS

(B) PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH AN ALTERNATIVE
EDUCATION PROGRAM THAT WILL ADDRESS SOME
OF THE MAJOR EDUCATIONAL ISSUES THAT ARE
PREVENTING A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF BOYS,
AND IN SOME CASES GIRLS, FROM REACHING THEIR
POTENTIAL OR IN MANY CASES FAILING TO
COMPLETE YEAR 10, LET ALONE YEAR 12.

The consequences of early leaving, dropping out, underachieving, etc. will no doubt be canvassed at length by other submissions. While it is obvious that no simple solution exists it is clear from the research both here and overseas that if certain fundamental principles are integrated into a systemic approach more achievable outcomes are likely.

Our contention is that we must put "Employment" and "At Risk" students in the debate. If we are talking about educational outcomes that matter in our society today, then it is fundamental to this inquiry that answers to the question of the relationship between education and employment must be considered.

This proposal will put forward a cumulative model that will:

- succeed for “at risk” students on the Gold Coast;
- serve as a guide for other districts to model and meet their clients needs of “at risk” students both in Queensland and other States;
- develop best practice pedagogy for addressing the needs of several target groups who will cost the community a great deal in welfare funding or incarceration costs if they are not retrieved;
- provide main stream education with strategies to support “at risk” students;
- lower the unemployment rate;
- provide a safety net for “at risk” students.
- promote the development of Social Capital and provide a strategy for young people to gain employment.
- be evaluated by an external agency (**University of London**)

Why is it so important to link employment with “at risk” students? The answer is both practical and esoteric. From a practical perspective the costs to the welfare system, are substantial – if a student fails to complete Year 12 that person will cost the system \$72,000 extra during their life as opposed to someone who has completed Year 12.

In Queensland at present we have a retention rate of around 64% or 38,000 students complete Senior/Year 12 a year. That means somewhere in the region of 20,000 young people do not complete Year 12. Over their lifetime it will cost the community an extra \$1,440,000,000. When our education system fails a client it costs the community. Can we afford to pay and for how long?

As to the esoteric component, it is important that schools create the desire for students to engage in life long learning. The further a person progresses in education, the more flexible they become in terms of retraining, accommodating change, and the quality of life they can access.

INTRODUCTION

As a nation we have been encouraged to become “clever”. Yet everywhere we look we are confronted with undeniable evidence that for many our schooling systems are failing a large section of our youth, especially boys.

One gender gap closes and another one opens. The evidence is there:

- in literacy and numeracy which determines their chances of success after primary school, fewer boys achieve the benchmarks;
- in secondary school, boys leave earlier;
- boys study a narrower range of subjects;
- boys average Year 12 scores are lower than girls;
- fewer boys go onto higher education except in the area of VET.

If there is any comfort in this present situation it is because most countries with the exception of Japan are also trying to come to grips with the problem of “boys” in education.

In Australia, there is no doubt that in the attempt to narrow the gender bias boys have suffered. However, it is too simplistic to think that in an attempt to make educational outcomes more equitable for girls, boys have become the victims. We need to start talking about students “at risk”. This is not a gender issue. Our focus must be on “at riskness” in our education system.

It would appear that there are many factors that have contributed to this situation that is impacting on boys. This submission is not going to present new reasons for boys declining participation in the education system. It is clear from the submissions presented that there is a core of research both here and overseas that has identified what is wrong and why it went wrong.

The purpose of this submission is to seek funding to establish an Alternative Education Program on the Gold Coast in Queensland. To this end the submission will:

- analyse the situation that exists for all boys and girls in this area
- show how the social, cultural and educational factors are impacting on young people especially boys but not excluding girls, in negative ways
- present a strategy that would allow those students who are “at risk” to stay within the education system.

WHAT THE LITERATURE IS SAYING

The starting point for this discussion is that boys are underachieving. On this point there is total agreement. As to the reasons, they are many and varied. On one hand we have those who argue it is a masculinity problem and in his article Peter West from the University of Western Sydney (*Issues on Educational Research*, 9 (1). 1999 P33-57, explores the topic of masculinity.

Just what it means to be male and more importantly what does it mean to be a male in our schooling system. The notion of proving oneself almost as if man lives in a state of uncertainty continually having to prove himself.

In terms of how adolescents see men, who are their role models? How has the role of the father as the provider changed? Are fathers still authority figures? What happens in the 600,000 plus single parent families where the father is not involved?

This debate is not restricted to Australia, there are many who argue that boys are confused about how they should act. Many feel that society is critical of men and schools have been strongly feminised.

In Australia today the media is all pervasive in its capacity to influence young people. We have sporting heroes, some with feet of clay, who model violence and aggression as being the norm. Many television programs depict parents in a negative way. From this perspective authority figures are no longer admired and children gain double standards in respect of behaviour by adults.

As a society we pontificate about the dangers of drugs, yet the way the adult world handles legal drugs sends mixed messages to young people.

On a daily basis we see evidence of corporate immorality. Thousands of people are losing their jobs in the name of rationalisation while companies make obscene profits. We are engaged in a headlong rush into technology and the need to be competitive. Are there safety nets in place for those who are unable to make the transition from manual based employment to the areas of technology.

While it is acknowledged that change is inevitable, *our education system seems to have been truanting when managing change was discussed.* There is a crisis in

education but there will always be a crisis, because as a nation we will always want to blame someone else for what is going wrong in society. *The crisis in education is not about a gender bias, it is about that proportion of the community that is “at risk” because they have no Social Capital.*

This paper is looking at the problem boys face in education, but not excluding girls.

Looking at the submissions, who and what do they blame? The list is fairly long:

- society has changed;
- schools have become too feminised;
- curriculums lack relevance;
- boys are confused in society as to what it means to be a male;
- adults do not really listen;
- those who try to buck the system fail;
- schools expect adult behaviour and espouse fairness, respect for difference and deliver the opposite;
- it's the teachers' fault;
- it's the government's fault because not enough money is being spent on education;
- it's the parents' fault
- our system does not identify students with learning difficulties early enough;
- not all boys are having problems, it depends on some economic issues and family backgrounds;
- there is a crisis mentality, money is directed at problems and not proactively to prevent problems arising;

- not enough male teachers;
- the implications of gender, race and ethnicity, rural isolation and socio-economic factors.

This list is not exhaustive but it illustrates the professional opinion of educationalists and those who have an interest in the education of young Australians, especially boys. *We believe it would be counter productive to be talking about a separate boys education policy because we should be talking about meeting the needs of all students.* In an attempt to compensate for the bias against girls we are now confronted with another disadvantaged group.

It also needs to be pointed out that boys more so than girls have been disadvantaged by the advances in technology and the changing face of the workforce. As the world of boys has changed, so has the world of men.

Work is increasingly based on skill rather than muscle. Women now tend to dominate the jobs in growing industries eg. computer data processing, health services and business services. On the other hand *men make up the largest group in the declining industries.*

Men are now more likely to be affected by the cyclical nature of our economy in the building and car industries. Globalisation has impacted heavily in the rural sector. In all industries, technological advances have reduced the number of jobs open to men. There needs to be a major shift in our educational focus to address this situation.

It is a well worn cliché that schools are a reflection of society, however, it is so true in Australia today. If you are a boy and come from a disadvantaged family background

(socio-economic), rural/isolated community, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background than you can expect:

- to have lower levels of literacy and numeracy skills throughout primary and lower secondary years of school;
- leave school earlier
- find it harder to gain permanent employment;
- make up a significant proportion of the population in juvenile detention centres.

Australian figures are not available, however, a British study has shown that 85% of all inmates in detention centres had specific learning difficulties.

The problems of boys underachieving have been well documented. All schools have put in place strategies that enable boys to achieve better educational outcomes. We believe that the 3R program has the potential to extend its philosophy and pedagogy further and help students who are “at risk”, especially in the area of developing strategies to help young people make the transition from school to work.

The research has clearly shown that low literacy skills lead to early departure from school. Statistics also show that without completing at least the compulsory years of schooling that these people will be disadvantaged for many years to come.

It is these students who are being marginalised and who make up a significant proportion of the students who don't reach Year 12. To understand the problem of why students who are “at risk” leave school early is a complex one and there is a substantial amount of empirical research that tries to explain this situation. While it is

obvious that on the face of it there are many logical explanations for this practice including academic ability, socio-economic status and ethnic background and economic factors influence young people to drop out of education.

Worldwide trends indicate an upward movement in retention rates within traditional schools however, there is increasing evidence of students moving up the education ladder by alternative means. In Queensland, in the early 90's the completion rate for Senior reached 75%. It has now fallen back to 68%. This drift defies explanation in terms of other countries and their experiences. Reducing the number of early school leavers has become a national concern. In Queensland the Government is committed to increasing the completion rate of Year 12 students to 88% by 2010.

The concern for early school leavers is well founded and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. As already stated early school leavers cost the country money because:

- they are less likely to find permanent work that will keep them off the welfare system;
- even if they find work they will earn substantially less than a high school graduate;
- those that are employed full time do not make up a significant proportion of the group when compared to graduates who have completed Year 12;
- research indicates that high school drop outs are more likely to have health problems;
- engage in criminal activity;

- become dependent upon welfare and other government programs when compared with high school graduates.

Research by the Dusseldorf Foundation already mentioned indicates that a failure to complete Year 12 will incur a cost to the community of \$72,000 per student. That means that in one year alone, we are projecting a \$1.5 billion loss to the community in Queensland alone.

Other concerns for early school leavers are fuelled by a number of economic demographic and educational trends that could exacerbate the problem in the future. As we become a more technology-based country a higher skilled labour force will be required and high school dropouts will find it even harder to survive without the capacity to acquire technological skills. Just as worrying is demographic, that is the number of students who are genuinely “at risk” of school failure because they are from poor or low socio-economic households, ethnic and linguistic minorities, and as the research shows a great majority of these are boys.

Understanding why students “at risk” leave school early is extremely difficult because like other forms of educational achievement many factors impact upon the outcome. These include where the student lives, ethnic background, socio-economic background, community settings and the lack of Social Capital.

If we ask the students who have dropped out of the system why they left there is a multiplicity of responses including:

- school related reasons;
- family related reasons;
- work related;

The most specific reasons that are normally given were “I did not like school”, “I was failing school” or “I could not get along with the teachers”. They should have included reasons such as “I was encouraged to leave early because I was not comfortable in a traditional setting and would be better suited in the workforce” or “the curriculum has no relevance in respect of me obtaining employment”. These reasons never reveal the underlying causes of why students leave school early. What needs to be considered is what student’s attitudes, behaviours and school success existed at the time when the decision was made to leave school.

Our present education system for young people is failing a significant number who are not succeeding in a traditional school setting. For these young people the education system has become a time when failure is reinforced on a daily basis, where the incentive to leave is far greater than the desire to stay and study and for many the solution is to “drop out”.

For more than a decade it has become fashionable to speak about children and families “at risk”. Research in this area has often identified poverty as a source problem and the factor most likely to put a person “at risk”. In this context “at risk” specifically refers to the young person not being able to complete compulsory schooling.

Of course the term “at risk” has far greater implications for young people.

Young people at significant risk of harm have complex needs in respect of their safety and wellbeing. They come to the attention of the community, agencies and authorities as a result of abuse or neglect, family conflict and breakdown, criminal behaviour, self harming behaviour, substance abuse, emotional and psychological disturbance,

school refusal and exclusion, homelessness, unemployment and lack of income support. Typically, these young people are likely to come under scrutiny as a result of a number of these issues.

The index of relative socio-economic disadvantage indicates that the Gold Coast is more disadvantaged than most local government area's in the state. Bilinga, Coolangatta and Labrador experience the highest levels of disadvantage.

The youth population of the Gold Coast is characterised by:

- the second highest youth population, aged 12-25 in Queensland;
- the highest population growth in the state;
- the second highest level of young people on Youth Homeless Allowance in Queensland;
- a high number of births in young females, aged 12-24, with the areas of Beenleigh and Eagleby having the highest rate of births per 100 females aged 12-24, compared to elsewhere in the state;
- high levels of transience, with a high proportion of young people changing address more frequently than young people in other areas;
- the highest suicide rate of all metropolitan areas in Queensland (this related to South Region including Beaudesert and Logan LGA);
- high rates of offending behaviour, with the Gold Coast Area Office carrying the highest number of young people on supervised Juvenile Justice Orders;
- highest number of young people seeking advice and support from Kids Helpline (KHL) compared to other areas in the state;

- higher than average rate of unemployment, opportunistic prostitution and drug and alcohol abuse.

Initially the “3R” program was designed to intervene positively with “at risk” students who currently are not succeeding in a traditional school environment. In essence the concept was to identify “at risk” students and place them in an alternative education setting and address specific educational needs especially numeracy and literacy.

While our results indicate that this is happening what has been discovered is that many students will never return to mainstream schooling and they need to be catered for in an alternative education program. These people are defeated and discouraged learners. The following characteristics best describe the student population to be served in an Alternative School Program:

1. *They are low in self-confidence*, have a deeply held sense of personal impotency, helplessness, and lack of self-worth.
2. *They are “avoiders”*. They avoid school because it is demanding and/or threatening, or because it is confusing and unresponsive to their needs. They avoid contact and confrontation with other students and adults, for they are not confident of themselves. They avoid classes because they are behind and because there is often a more satisfying short-run payoff to skipping school than going to class and trying to figure out what is going on. Avoidance of adults and school begins in very early grades.
3. *They are distrustful of adults and adult situations*. Adults in their life have been unfair, unresponsive, or even mentally, intellectually and physically abusive.

4. ***They have a limited notion of the future.*** They are very responsive to short term, measurable goals with demonstrations of success and competence. However, they do not see the future as either bright or positive. Their life is usually grim and they have no cause to see the future any other way. Therefore, long-range class projects are deadening as are complicated career planning systems. Teachers and other involved adults must be willing to compete for their attention or lose them.
5. ***They usually lack adequate*** reading, writing and math skills and have come to see themselves often as “dumb” rather than unskilled. Dumbness, as they reason, cannot be cured so adults give up on them and the kids give up on themselves. Schools stop taking them seriously as learners and only put simple worksheets in front of them that make no intellectual demands and offer no challenge. The students are not convinced that skills not yet learned can be learned. They are poisoned by a sense of intellectual incompetence.
6. ***Most of these students come from fragile or dysfunctional homes.*** Their parents often suffer similar characteristics: low skilled, low self-confidence, distrustful of institutions, avoidance, suspicious of the future. Some of these fragile parents don't care, treat sons and daughters with hostility, and even engage in serious physical and sexual abuse. Some of these students come from homes with parent's eager to help, but more often, parent response is to be grateful that an adult finally is helping their child.
7. ***They are impatient with routine,*** long-time sitting and listening, and classrooms with little variety; more so than students who feel good about

themselves as learners and have a better developed sense of how to get along in adult institutions. Because of their low skills, discouraged learners are often seen as disruptive when they demonstrate their impatience. Once the disruptive label is attached, there is a predictable chain to difficult....dumb.....delinquent.....dropout.

8. *They often come from the category of learning preference identified as "practical".* They are good at working out applications of what is being taught if that is allowed and encouraged. They learn well through their own private experience and can talk about the experience better than write about it. They remember very little of what is delivered in linguistic style to a physically passive, note-taking audience.
9. *They do not see a relationship between effort and achievement.* They see success as a matter of luck or ease of the task. They are "externalizers", who see the world as happening to them and one over which they have little control of events, especially failures and successes. When they do poorly, it is the result of an impossible task, bad luck, a bad day, or an adult who refuses to help them. And, of course, to the "fact" that they are dumb, a situation of which they have no control and, therefore, can take no responsibility. It is the same when they do well: good luck, easy assignment, wonderful teacher. **They will not take personal responsibility because they do not see the relationship; not, as adults often accuse because they stubbornly refuse to.** Because of this phenomenon, these students do not learn from their mistakes, and they do not learn from their successes. They think mistakes and success just happen and then cannot explain why or how. To ask them "why" they did

something prompts an impotent response, “I don’t know. It just happened.” They are a challenge for an “internalizer” adult who understands internal responsibility but does not understand the impotent world of the “externalizer” student.

10. *They have insufficient “social capital”* to enable them to make the transition from school to work.

The principles of an alternative school program have been identified and are premised on the following:

1. All students have value and potential;
2. Prevention to address needs is cost effective in that it forestalls greater expenditure in the future by way of retrieval programs;
3. Alternative education must be one component of a comprehensive discipline policy and procedures action plan, which includes classroom management training, graduated disciplinary alternatives and other strategies. Alternative education must be integrated with community resources, including federal, state and/or local service delivery agencies;
4. Alternative programs address the basic psychological needs of “at risk” youth.

Five central dimensions are crucial to an individual’s well-being and ability to be resilient under stress:

- **Competence:** the student has evidence of abilities, skills and strengths
- **Belonging:** people accept the student in some important group
- **Usefulness:** the student’s work is needed by others and it has meaning
- **Potency:** the student has power to make changes

- **Optimism:** the student receives positive feedback from others and is confident about solving problems in the future and understands that the future holds promise

[Abraham Maslow, William Glasser and Richard Sagor, *At-Risk Students: Reaching and Teaching Them (1993)*]

5. Alternative programs must offer an alternative learning environment in which students can learn: possible at different rates of time, with different but successful strategies and tools, and with caring and dedicated staff of visionary teachers and leaders;
6. Professional development enables staff to approach behaviour problems in a way that builds character and offers opportunities for restitution, use active listening skills and problem solving strategies, and use social skills that demonstrate positive character traits

The danger in many Alternative School Programs is that they are developed especially for students whose behaviour disrupts the learning of others. These settings are often seen as punitive or last chance options.

This program is a proactive choice for students and parents before serious problems arise and students “drop out” of the system.

The principles of an Alternative School Program have been discussed earlier and the elements of effective programs can be summarised as follows:

1. Clear focus on academic learning. A concentration on academic learning that combines high academic standards with active teaching and relevance to the real world.
2. Ambitious professional development

3. Strong level of autonomy and professional decision making
4. Sense of Community
5. Development of Social Capital
6. A flexible relevant curriculum that keeps career pathways open.

Rethinking Assumptions

The elements identified above provide the foundation for a successful alternative education program. In addition to a progressive education orientation that has problem solving as an organising framework, alternative education programs need to identify essential elements of the curriculum and how the program links with other agencies and services for youth. For example, some youths and families who may choose alternative education will have social service or mental health needs. Finding ways to give students and parents access to these services and avoid duplication of efforts is important.

Additionally, alternative education programs need to find ways of linking their classrooms and instructional experiences to the community. Within local and regional communities are people, businesses, museums, libraries and agencies that can provide information and learning experiences for youth. These same resources can also serve as a bridge to post secondary education or training and employment for students in the alternative school setting in the critical Social Capital factor.

Alternative education should have a well-defined place with state schools and within communities. Enrolment in alternative education programs should be an option for students who, for whatever reason, experience difficulty with large, and sometimes impersonal traditional high schools. Educators, program developers, teacher trainers,

and researchers need to rethink the assumptions we make about alternative education. For too long, professionals have adopted a “deficit” model in examining the needs of children and adolescents who fail in and disrupt traditional school settings. It is time to develop an academically rigorous and engaging alternative school.

THE 3R PLUS PROGRAM

The 3R PLUS program is a logical extension to the 3R program as it provides a viable alternative for students who will not succeed in a traditional high school setting or students who are already out of the system too early and cannot find long term employment. We know that knowledge is at the core of economic development.

Workers will increasingly need the skills to:

- Research, select and efficiently use existing knowledge and discard irrelevant knowledge
- Recognise patterns in information
- Interpret and decode information as well as learn new and forget old skills
- Create new knowledge

The 3R Plus program recognises the need to challenge traditional ways of learning, distributing and using knowledge. In the knowledge based economy, learning by doing is paramount. Learning will take place in a variety of situations including non formal settings.

The need for all organisations to realise that in the future they will have to continuously adapt to changing management structures to accommodate new

knowledge and technologies. **In this context it could be argued that education is the formation of human capital.**

The philosophy of the 3R Plus program is consistent with the ideas put forward in the "The Next Decade" a discussion paper by the Office of Strategic Planning and Portfolio Services, where it explains that the Education systems of industrial economics are being remade to match the economic environment. Education plays a crucial role in maintaining international competitiveness. High levels of education allow workers to move into new industries more easily, helping to address unemployment and encourage the development of new industries. For established firms, a well-qualified workforce is more flexible and innovative, allowing companies to produce high quality goods and services, rapidly adjust work processes and pursue continual product innovation.

The more skilled workers a firm employs, the cheaper will be the process of innovation; the more research and development it undertakes, the more profitable it will be, and the larger will be its market share. At the same time, the workers' return on their skills will be higher.

The alternative is a 'low skill, bad job' trap, with a cycle of low productivity, deficient education and deficient job skills, reducing the capacity to compete effectively for skill-intensive work opportunities. 'Bad jobs' have low wages and little opportunity to accumulate new skills.

Firms will be less likely to expand production capacity and purchase more technologically advanced equipment if there are skills shortages.

A major challenge for the future is to work out the balance between education directed at the formation of human capital and education directed at developing human potential and social outcomes. However, the economic health of the State is, in part, dependent on the qualifications of its people. The higher a State's post-compulsory education profile, the higher the Gross State Product per employed person.

To prosper in the labour market of the future, workers will need new skills that enable them to work across conventional boundaries and see connections between processes, functions and disciplines; and, in particular, to manage the learning that will support their careers

TARGET GROUPS

At Risk students rather than gender should determine the target groups. If as the research clearly shows there is significant value in completing year 12 we need to look at a 100% completion rate.

To this end there must be a safety net. It is the most vulnerable who will benefit from this strategy. Youth unemployment is an issue of great concern and must dominate the thinking of government in relation to developing policy concerned with education, training and employment.

When a young person makes a decision about education, training and employment or options beyond the post compulsory schooling years the consequences can have profound effects for the person and the wider community. While there has been

increases in people completing Year 12 their completion rates do not match the completion rates in other developed countries.

Impacting on this has also been significant structural changes in the labour market. It is also widely acknowledged that over the last fifteen years there has been a substantial decline in the availability of full time employment for school learners.

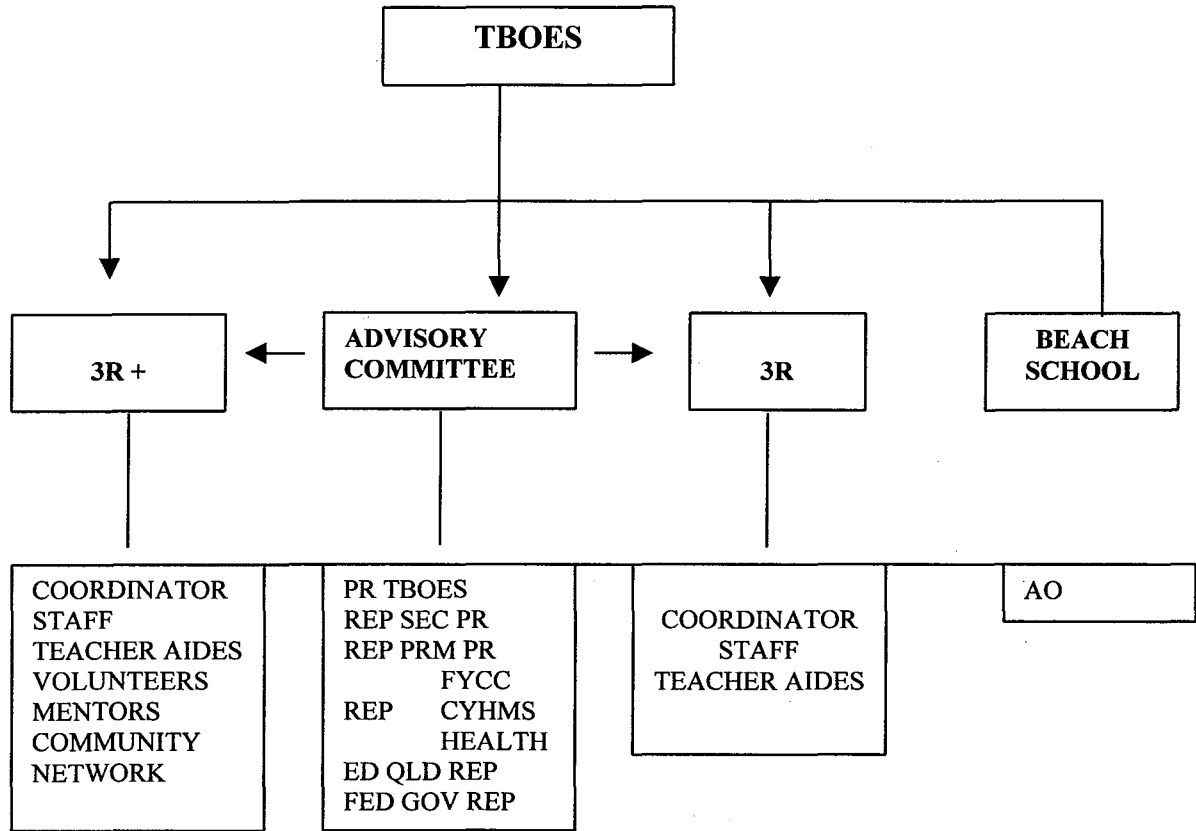
Young Australians face a range of difficulties in securing a place in the labour force and the earlier they leave the education system the poorer their chances will be of obtaining full time employment.

The 3R Plus program would target five (5) groups:

- A Students who are in danger of being excluded or suspended because of behaviour, truanting, lack of success or trauma.
- B Young people under 23 who have left school without Year 12 and are not in full time employment or training.
- C Early school leavers who are in part time employment.
- D Students who leave high school and start TAFE courses but fail to complete certification.
- E Indigenous Australians.

SCHOOL OPERATIONAL PLAN

A ORGANISATIONAL CHART



CURRICULUM

Education is faced with a challenge, that challenge is to ensure that our society becomes a learning society, in which global forces favour the adaptable and the key resources will be *human* and *social capital* rather than just physical and material resources. The 3R Plus recognises the fact that the curriculum must be reconceptualised for “at risk” students. Teaching and learning must occur within community partnerships to allow the development of meaningful networks that consolidate and enhance social capital.

Attaining a Year 12 completion or its equivalent is important. They need a foundation for life after leaving school, one that adequately prepared them for living in a complex, networked, multicultural society.

Education must be based on the principles of equity that ensures all students and especially those “at risk” can access a relevant and appropriate learning environment that will allow the individual to reach his or her potential. If we exclude a proportion of our community because they do not fit the traditional model then we do so at our peril. The disparities already evident in our society will increase and create social divisions that are unacceptable in a democratic society.

The 3R Plus program is designed to allow those students from the target groups to access a curriculum that will create options after compulsory schooling. It is a retrieval program that allows students flexibility in determining career pathways. This program is about a relevant curriculum that focuses on achievement and a successful integration into the work force or a higher educational pathway.

For that reason the curriculum is restricted and employment oriented. The curriculum is a cumulative framework that will provide a safety net for “at risk” students and will ensure that the most vulnerable will get employment.

If as it has already been stated that Year 12 is desirable, then we must admit that it is desirable for everyone, not just those who can succeed in a traditional setting and have the family support to establish the social capital required.

The following curriculum is designed to keep all options open to students and prevents students making poor educational choices that will negatively impact on their careers forever.

JUNIOR SCHOOL CURRICULUM

There are no electives

ENGLISH

MATHEMATICS

TECHNOLOGY

SOSE/LIFE SKILLS

HPE

- OUTDOOR EDUCATION
- HEALTHY CHOICES
- SPORT

COMMUNITY NETWORK
DEVELOPMENT

- PART TIME WORK
- COMMUNITY SERVICE
- WORK EXPERIENCE
- PLANNING CAREER PATHWAYS

SENIOR SCHOOL CURRICULUM

ENGLISH

MATHEMATICS

TECHNOLOGY

LEGAL STUDIES

- LIFE SKILLS
- UNDERSTANDING THE SYSTEM

HPE

- OUTDOOR ED
- HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
- SPORT

COMMUNITY
NETWORK
DEVELOPMENT

- VET
- PART TIME WORK
- TRANSITION TO WORK

PREPARATION FOR TERTIARY STUDIES

CLIENT IDENTIFICATION REFERRAL PROCESS

Clients can be referred to the 3R Plus program by:

- Schools who identify “At Risk” students who are in danger of not completing compulsory schooling and then Year 12
- By a Government Agency
 - FYCC
 - CYHMS
 - CENTRELINK
 - JAB
 - HEALTH
- By a Community Group
 - CHURCH
 - SPORTING GROUP
 - WELFARE AGENCY
- By a Parent
- Self Referral

THE CUMULATIVE MODEL

There is a substantial body of research that has identified three factors that are present in the situation where young people gain full time employment. The three critical components are:

- A ⇒ the completion of Year 12
- B ⇒ having had paid part time employment while in Senior School
- C ⇒ social capital

While A and B are self evident it is in C that many “at risk” students are most deficient or more accurately their support network is deficient.

Without contacts in the community young people are disadvantaged. Part of the 3R Plus program, a critical part is to develop those networks so that they can be used to help find employment. Morgan and Banks estimates that 80% of all jobs are never advertised, it is by word of mouth, "who you know". If you are an “at risk” student who comes from a dysfunctional family with limited social contacts, your chances of gaining full time employment are remote.

The development of a supportive network must be a priority and part of the curriculum. This clearly is a matter of appropriate mentors and community partnerships being structured to support “at risk” students.

Our contention is that when a student completes Year 12, has had a paid part time job and appropriate social capital they will gain full time employment. That is surely a safety net worth promoting.

EVALUATION

Given the importance of this project and its significance for “at risk” youth in Australia it is important that an evaluation process is conducted by an external agency.

The 3R Program through the Queensland Education Department has been able to have the University of London agree to evaluate this program. Our Principal Advisor, Performance Measurement and Review Branch, Mr Ian Cosier will facilitate this process and make it available to all educational authorities in Australia.

This authentication process will give this program international recognition and will further enhance the credibility of the program as a model that can be adapted to meet the needs of other communities.

FUNDING

Facilities and resources provided by Education Queensland and Sport and Recreation

Queensland:

- ◆ buildings
- ◆ classrooms
- ◆ library
- ◆ resources
- ◆ sporting equipment

FUNDING REQUIRED FOR 3 YEAR TRIAL PROGRAM

(Commonwealth responsibility ends after 3 years)

Additional classrooms	\$600,000
Research and Development in 2001 Discussion with other States	\$30,000
Establishing Networks of Government Agencies	\$10,000
Technology Centre	\$100,000
Audio Visual and Multi Media Equipment	\$40,000
Communication System	\$20,000
Staffing	\$1,250,000
Bus/Running Costs	\$107,000
Car/Running Costs	\$45,000
4WD/Running Costs	\$68,000
Inservice Activities	\$60,000
Promotion	\$30,000
Professional Development	\$50,000
Evaluation by University of London	\$50,000
	\$2,460,000

CONCLUSION

At the presentation to the committee on the 27 July 2001 we will be happy to answer questions and explain any aspect of the program.

Time lines and implementation procedures will also be explained. On behalf of the Tallebudgera Beach Outdoor Education School and the 3R Program I would once again like to thank the committee for considering this proposal.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Graham', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

John Graham

Coordinator – 3R Program