

Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education
References Committee

Inquiry into indigenous training and employment outcomes

Submission no: 8

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Senate Employment, Workplace Relations & Education References Committee

Dear Senators

Re: Funding for the Education of Indigenous Students

It has been brought to my attention that submissions can be submitted to the "Inquiry into Commonwealth funding for schools" with the deadline being Friday, 25th June, 2004.

I write as Deputy Principal and Special Education Coordinator of Condell Park Christian School. The single issue that I bring to your attention is that funds provided by government to educate indigenous students should be available to all students across all sectors. My current experience is that this funding is not available to all students.

Over recent months I have contacted Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Education Access, Department of Education, Science and Training, Association of Independent Schools and IESIP. This was in an endeavour to represent the parents, with the wife herself being the indigenous Australian, to confirm the availability of funding for educational programs for indigenous students. Unfortunately, no funding is available to fund educational programs for our single indigenous student because we do not have a total of twenty indigenous students enrolled at this school.

A young lady from IESIP has been extremely helpful and has endeavoured to provide as much counsel and recommendations as possible. One suggestion was that we form a TOPS cluster with other schools. I made contact with two large schools with large numbers of indigenous students and made application; however, these endeavours were unsuccessful.

Our single indigenous student has special needs evident within the classroom and school surroundings. Programs are being implemented to address these needs in collaboration with the parents. This will proceed whether funding is available or not!

My issue is that a specific number of students required within a school before any external support can be provided appears inconsistent with the total objectives of this whole funding proposal. My request is that you please give consideration to how support services may be provided for a few indigenous students located in smaller schools. The outcomes toward literacy and numeracy achievement, along with attendance are being realised within the structure of the school as it currently exists, but if a level of support were available to assist the achievement of those outcomes, results may be more effective.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Yours faithfully,

Ronald John Christie
Deputy Principal