

Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education
Legislation Committee

Inquiry into the Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Amendment Bill 2005

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conduit to future employment, when it would overwhelmingly appear that for many and, perhaps, the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples there is no future outside of the welfare/poverty cycle.

This Bill directly attacks activities which provide a direct solution to many of these issues. The institutions that are being targeted, and we speak with direct knowledge of Tranby Aboriginal College, run vocational courses focused on providing skills which are relevant, have meaning, are delivered in a culturally appropriate context and will empower individuals and communities to take control and address the issues they are facing.

This Bill shows a Government blaming education for failing Indigenous people when it is the Government which has failed Indigenous people. How can this Government remove funding from Indigenous community controlled training organisations and TAFE, as it would appear to be, under the Skilling Australia's Workforce Bill, the two major providers of education to Indigenous people to place it into programmes which encourage an open tender arrangement?

This arrangement will mean organisations which are under-resourced, under-skilled and have a lack of understanding of the needs of Indigenous people will more than likely secure the funding because they are cheaper. The Indigenous Education Bill transfers \$10.9 million from Indigenous training providers to the Skilling Australia's Workforce programme, through which specialised Indigenous training providers will be required to compete for funding in a joint funding pool under a proposed new Commonwealth State Funding agreement, which in no way indicates that funding will be quarantined for Indigenous providers. It is obvious, as always, that this is about reducing cost with the ever hopeful view that it will also improve delivery and outcomes.

We call on Committee members to make a visit to the four targetted colleges, and we urge you in the strongest terms to reject the transfer of funds from them to the pool where they will have to bid for what was their own funding.

Yours sincerely,

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