

# Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education  
Legislation Committee

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

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**Submission no:** 5

**Received:** 22/07/2005

**Submitter:** Dr Helen Edwards

**Organisation:** School of Professional Development and Leadership

**Address:** University of New England  
ARMIDALE NSW 2351

**Phone:** 02 6773 2078

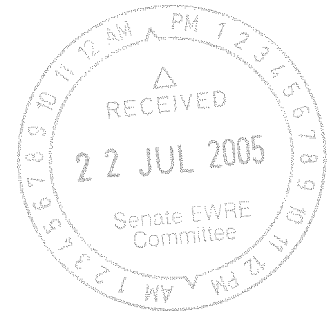
**Fax:**

**Email:** [Helen.edwards@une.edu.au](mailto:Helen.edwards@une.edu.au)

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**From:** Farnhill, Brian (SEN) on behalf of Web, Administrator (SEN)  
**Sent:** Friday, 22 July 2005 11:30 AM  
**To:** EET, Committee (SEN)  
**Subject:** FW: Indigenous Education



-----Original Message-----

**From:** Helen Edwards [mailto:hedward2@pobox.une.edu.au]  
**Sent:** Friday, 22 July 2005 10:57 AM  
**To:** Web, Administrator (SEN)  
**Subject:** Indigenous Education

Secretary  
Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and  
Education Committee  
Department of the Senate  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Australia

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my concern regarding the proposal to transfer \$3.7 million dollars in funding away from the four independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander training institutions: the Institute for Aboriginal Development, Tranby Aboriginal Cooperative College, Aboriginal Dance Theatre and Tauondi Incorporated. It is my understanding that these funds are currently used to support a significant number of students from rural and remote areas of Australia to participate in the programs offered at these colleges.

I grew up in an isolated rural community and had to live away from home for my secondary and tertiary

education. This made me conscious of the trauma involved in such a shift and the importance of relocating into an environment where your needs as a whole person are understood. Reports of the care and support available in these Independent Colleges illustrates their ability to recognize and meet the unique needs of rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

For the last 15 years I have worked in NSW TAFE and at the University of New England in mainstream education programs. I am conscious that the retention and completion rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in these programs is nowhere near the level achieved by the Independent Colleges (Durnan & Boughton 1999). It would seem more expedient to build on and expand the frameworks already laid down to embrace even more young Indigenous Australians in this positive network of learning, rather than to cut the funds.

The graduates of these Independent Colleges provide positive role models for youth, most particularly those living in rural and remote communities. They demonstrate the potential for achievement of economic and social independence that many people in these communities have not experienced. For all of the above reason I ask that you examine what these Independent Colleges are contributing to Australian society and developing ways of extending their services to a greater proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Dr Helen Edwards  
School of Professional Development & Leadership  
University of New England  
Armidale 2351  
email: [helen.edwards@une.edu.au](mailto:helen.edwards@une.edu.au)  
Ph: 02 6773 2078