

Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education
Legislation Committee

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

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**A SUBMISSION BY THE
AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION UNION
TO THE SENATE EMPLOYMENT,
WORKPLACE RELATIONS AND EDUCATION
COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO THE
PROVISIONS OF THE INDIGENOUS
EDUCATION (TARGETED ASSISTANCE)
AMENDMENT BILL 2005**

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1. Background

- 1.1 The Australian Education Union (AEU) appreciates the opportunity to table this submission on the *Inquiry into provisions of the Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Amendment Bill 2005* to the Senate's Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee.
- 1.2 The AEU represents approximately 165,000 members working in Government, early childhood education centres, schools and TAFE institutes across Australia.

2. Proposed Changes to Legislation

- 2.1 As stated in the 'Information about the Inquiry' from http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/eet_ctte/indigenous05/info.htm accessed 19.07.05:

“this bill appropriates additional funding to provide tutorial support to Indigenous students who need to move away from remote communities to study. The bill also provides that \$3.7 million is to be transferred from appropriations under the act to establish a joint funding pool. The transfer will come from funds currently provided to four independent institutions: the Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD) in Alice Springs, Tranby Aboriginal Co-operative College in Glebe, Aboriginal Dance Theatre Redfern and Tauondi Incorporated in Adelaide.”

3. Review of Indigenous Vocational Education and Training Providers

- 3.1 The AEU notes that a review in to the four Indigenous Vocational Education and Training Providers was conducted by DEST in 2003, culminating in a report titled – *Review of Indigenous Vocational Education and Training Providers* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003).

- 3.2 Among other things, the review:

“found evidence that Independent Aboriginal VET providers are making a contribution to Indigenous training in Australia at a time when Indigenous training outcomes still lag behind those of other Australians” (p. 13).

- 3.3 In relation to funding, recommendations one and three state that:

“an agreed model for Independent Indigenous Vocational Education and Training (IIVET) Institutions be acknowledged as part of the education and training system and be funded to achieve targeted vocational education and training outcomes formalised in training agreements and a business plan” (p 26).

and that:

“Australian Government and state funding guidelines and reporting should be coordinated, simplified and jointly managed to assist government funding agencies and IIVET administrators” (p.26).

4. Succeeding Against the Odds

- 4.1 In 1999, the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), through the auspices of the National Centre for Vocational Education and Training Research (NCVER) produced a report titled – *Succeeding Against the Odds - The outcomes attained by Indigenous students in Aboriginal community-controlled adult education colleges* (Durnan and Boughton, 1999).
- 4.2 The report conducted research into the success of three of the four IIVETs (Tauondi College, Tranby College and the Institute for Aboriginal Development) whose funding is proposed to be withdrawn under the Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Amendment Bill 2005.
- 4.3 This research showed that the Community Controlled Education Providers who were subject to this report:
 - catered for some of the most disadvantaged Indigenous students in Australia, including a large number of students from rural and remote areas;
 - produced pass rates for these students (1997 cohort) that exceeded both the pass rates of Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students in the VET sector in general;
 - increased the employment rate of graduates, including in the Aboriginal community controlled sector;
 - contributed to a range of positive social outcomes for students; and
 - showed that the expenditure within the sector was ‘justifiable in relation to the outcomes being achieved’ (pp. x and xi).

5. The AEU Position

- 5.1 AEU policy is committed to the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to self-determination, including in education (AEU 2002).
- 5.2 The AEU opposes the removal and reallocation of this funding on the principle that the Australian Government’s rhetorical commitment to the provision of education and training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be matched by a corresponding funding commitment. Instead of removing funding from one provider group and re-allocating it to another, the Australian Government should allocate additional funding.
- 5.3 The decision to remove this funding is contradictory to the Australian Government’s policy commitment to funding ‘what works’ in Indigenous education, as the above-mentioned research clearly shows.

- 5.4 The decision to remove this funding does not take in to account the recommendations from the Government's review of the IIVETS, which recommended a collaborative approach to the funding of these providers.
- 5.5 Further, the AEU believes that the removal of \$3.7m in funding from the four IIVETs, will have a severe impact on:
- the ability of the four providers in question to cater for their students, many of whom, research shows, are from rural and remote areas and are severely disadvantaged;
 - employment within the sector, including Indigenous employment.

6. References

Australian Education Union (2002) *Policy on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education* from <http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Policy/ATSIEducation2002.pdf> (accessed 19.07.05)

Commonwealth of Australia (2003) *Review of Indigenous Vocational Education and Training Providers*, Department of Education, Science and Training, Canberra from http://www.dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/28190E9B-DD5D-4971-91CD-B6FB67C71A47/2500/IIVETS_summary_report_2003.pdf (accessed 19.07.05)

Durnan and Boughton (1999) *Succeeding Against the Odds - The outcomes attained by Indigenous students in Aboriginal community-controlled adult education colleges* Australian National Training Authority and National Centre for Vocational Education and Training Research from <http://www.ncver.edu.au/research/indig/succOddW.pdf#search='federation%20of%20independent%20aboriginal%20education%20providers'> (accessed 19.07.05)

Senate Workplace Relations, Employment and Education Committee (2005) *Inquiry into provisions of the Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Amendment Bill 2005 – Information about the Inquiry* from http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/eet_ctte/indigenous05/info.htm (accessed 19.07.05)