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

To the Secretary

I am writing on behalf of the Women's Reconciliation Network NSW in reference to the proposed changes to the funding for Indigenous run education providers.

As a key organisation for reconciliation in NSW, we have had a long association with both Tranby Aboriginal College, the national dance school, NAISDA and the Aboriginal Dance Theatre, Redfern. It is our view that the service provided by these organisations is second-to-none.

Tranby has not only provided a leadership role in training, but is a valuable mentor for Aboriginal people across NSW. NAISDA and the Aboriginal Dance Theatre Redfern, which enjoy a close relationship, have produced many of the most talented Indigenous cultural performers this country has seen. The opening ceremony of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games would not have been the success it was without the Indigenous contribution made by many NAISDA and ADT Redfern graduates.

We are also well aware of the enormous contribution of the Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD). IAD is the recorder and repository for a great wealth of cultural information, which sustains the renaissance of Aboriginal culture in the Northern Territory and will continue to do so given the right and necessary support.

The Women's Reconciliation Network believes that support for these and other Indigenous controlled institutions is a core responsibility for the Australian Government. These organisations have struggled for many years to achieve stability and success. In many cases, they rely on the good will and contributions of Friends groups and the support of community volunteers. They have many, many non-Indigenous supporters who are well aware of the priceless nature of their cultural value. It is our view that any changes to funding protocols, which could undermine the stability of these organisations, should not be tolerated.

We look forward to your response and careful consideration of this matter.

Yours faithfully

Sally Fitzpatrick
Chairperson

Open our hearts to the experiences of others, accept our traditional wisdoms,
acknowledge the past, heal ourselves and teach others.