

Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education
Legislation Committee

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

Submission no: 12

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Submitter: Mr Bob Makinson
Secretary

Organisation: Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation NSW
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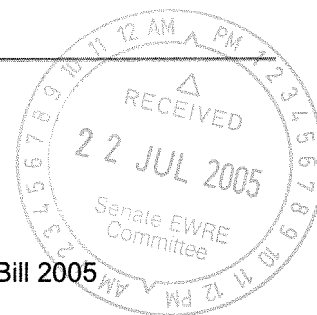
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Subject: Submission re Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Amendment Bill 2005



Submission to: Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee
 Inquiry into provisions of the Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Amendment Bill
 2005

For attention of: Mr John Carter, Committee Secretary

Having only come across information on this inquiry on the last working day before close of submissions, my comments on the proposed funding arrangements are necessarily brief.

The Government's proposal to provide tutorial support to indigenous students who need to move away from remote communities to study is welcome.

The Government's proposal to fund this by transfer of existing funding away from the 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) is unacceptable, counter-productive, and inequitable.

These colleges are already providing critical support to indigenous students, some of whom originated from remote communities and many of whom have not. Regardless of point of origin, these students are benefiting from the specialized and community-oriented education and training provided by these institutions. Also benefiting are their own families and local communities, and the wider Australian community as Indigenous disadvantage in education is addressed and our cultural life is enriched.

In addition to their direct educational function, these institutions also provide a major point of contact between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, not only for people and organizations within the education sector but across the whole community. They have been important centres of contact, ideas and resources for the Reconciliation process over the last decade and a half, a process to which the Australian Government and Parliament remain at least nominally committed.

Would the Government propose to fund any other remote-area education support program – for the non-Indigenous community – by direct penalization of students in crucial existing programs? Is school education to be funded only at the direct expense of adult education? Would the Government seek to fund drought relief for wheat farmers at the direct expense of sheep graziers? Would it make any sense to do so?

Has the Government conducted any assessment of the effects of de-funding these four institutions, in terms of their current contribution to retention of indigenous youth in education programs, the re-integration into adult education of older people, and to overcoming Indigenous disadvantage in education and training? Where has the Government published its research to show that the proposed de-funding of these institutions will not be detrimental to the above processes?

The Government, if it persists with the proposal to fund one needed area at the expense of these others, will find that there are a surprising number of citizens in the cities concerned who know of and value the contribution that these institutions make, and are not prepared to see their decades of good work undone by cost-shifting in the funding of essential programs.

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