

# Reconciliation for Western Sydney

Incorporated

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July 29, 2005

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

Dear Sir

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

Our community group, Reconciliation for Western Sydney (R4WS) is dedicated to raising the public's awareness and understanding of past and present issues that impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) peoples and to the rectification of injustices suffered by them. Our members are also vitally concerned with issues of social justice.

We recently became aware that there is a bill before the Senate to appropriate "additional funding to provide tutorial support to indigenous students who need to move away from remote communities to study." This bill will also provide " 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".

The federal government has made many changes to the educational system in recent times, including the encouragement of new private schools that allow parents to choose different ways of educating their sons and daughters.

We ask why is it now choosing to restrict the choices open to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our education system, given that many Indigenous people fail to be nourished in mainstream education and only blossom when they are given an opportunity to develop when provided with a culturally appropriate and nurturing environment?

We believe the transfer of funding away from the abovementioned four organisations will seriously disadvantage the many Indigenous people who chose to return to education in their adult years and seek an environment that includes the comfort of learning from Indigenous teachers and those who understand their culture, their history and the constraints that may have previously prevented their success in mainstream education.

We urge you to reconsider the transfer of funding. We need to retain the services of these organisations at an increased level to ensure appropriate education for our Indigenous population.

Yours sincerely



Lyn Leerson  
Secretary