



From: Paula Young [paula_young@optusnet.com.au]
Sent: Monday, 15 August 2005 2:29 PM
To: EET, Committee (SEN); Campbell, George (Senator); Coonan, Helen (Senator); Faulkner, John (Senator); Fierravanti-Wells, Concetta (Senator); Forshaw, Michael (Senator); Heffernan, Bill (Senator); Hutchins, Steve (Senator); Macdonald, Sandy (Senator); Nash, Fiona (Senator); Nettle, Kerry (Senator); Payne, Marise (Senator); Stephens, Ursula (Senator)
Subject: Indigenous Education [Targeted Assistance] Amendment Bill 2005 & Skilling Australia's Workforce [Repeal and Transitional Provisions] 2005

I write to you concerning the above bills. I ask that you vote against them on my behalf due to the following (not exhaustive) reasons;

Institutions who will suffer under the bills provide critical support to Indigenous students, many of whom have to move away from their communities for this specialised, community oriented education.

These institutions provide a solution to educational disadvantage suffered by many Indigenous people. In particular, they cater to students who have not been able to enter the education process earlier in their lives.

As well as providing education, they build links between Australia's Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations within the Education sector and the wider community.

They provide ideas and impetus for the Reconciliation efforts of many people.

Often, what appears as a cost-cutting exercise in the short term results in much higher expenses later - often in the form of crime, mental health issues and an increase in welfare payments, not to mention the regression in the practical reconciliation process - completely at odds with Government policy.

What is the point in increasing a budget surplus when the cost is so high and the saving so paltry? It will do nothing to reduce the gap being experienced by Indigenous people in the delivery of employment and educational outcomes. It will further disadvantage Indigenous people seeking a way to re-engage with education, after what has been a lifetime of apprehension and doubt in their abilities to participate in main stream environments.

Indigenous people, should this Bill be passed, will be further isolated and marginalised in society with very little to encourage them into active participation within communities, both black and white.

Is this Bill a direct attack on Indigenous culture and values? The Government must take care that they are not seen to be saying that they do not believe that Indigenous people and community controlled organisations can deliver educational outcomes of any value for Indigenous people, or that Indigenous culture, values and methods of teaching have no relevance and place in today's society and cannot deliver appropriate outcomes which help to reduce the disadvantage faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This Bill attacks activities which provide a direct solution to many Indigenous issues. The institutions that are being targeted deliver services in a culturally appropriate context and empower individuals and communities to take control and address the issues they are facing. There is a depth and wealth being steadily added to our culture as a result of these institutions and the people that work in them and are educated by them.

Those who are the most affected by these bills are amongst the most disadvantaged and marginalised. We need a humanistic and culturally appropriate approach to this, not an economic one. Let them continue to develop within the existing framework and let's add resources to the mix, not take it away.

I thank you for your time and consideration, and look forward to hearing the result of the vote.

Yours faithfully,

Paula Young