

## **Appendix 4**

### **Response to concept plan submission**

referred to in Chapter 4 at para 4.26





**Australian Government**

**Department of Education, Science and Training**

Thelma Gertz  
Indigenous Education Co-Ordinator  
Townsville Catholic Education Office  
2 Gardenia Avenue  
Kirwan Qld 4817

Dear Thelma,

### **Whole of School Intervention Strategy – Concept Plan**

Thank you for your submission relating to the Whole of School Intervention Strategy's-Parent School Partnership Initiative. The Mt Isa Catholic High School submitted a Concept Plan regarding funding for the following projects:

- ❖ Curriculum & Religious Education and
- ❖ Early Years and
- ❖ Transition of Yr-7-8 and
- ❖ Community Connection.

The Australian Government is committed to accelerating progress in Indigenous education and training outcomes. The Australian Government's restructured Indigenous Education Programmes represent a significant step forward to better focus resources on the programmes that are achieving real results with the objective of closing the educational divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. To achieve this broad objective, the Australian Government has developed a set of priorities to direct its resources to strategic and forward looking interventions that most effectively achieve outcomes, target areas of greatest need and implement holistic and creative approaches to improve education outcomes for our Indigenous students.

**The Australian Government has also established a new approach to the provision of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. "The new approach is based on all of us accepting responsibility. We all need to do better – the Australian, State and Territory Governments and Indigenous people themselves."**

*Senator the Hon Amanda Vanstone  
Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs 15 April 2004*

The Australian Government's Indigenous programs are now administered by mainstream agencies, but under a 'whole-of-government' approach.

A Ministerial Taskforce on Indigenous Affairs is providing leadership and strategic direction at the national level, advised by a Secretaries' Group and a National Indigenous Council.

In the States, Territories and regions, multi-agency Indigenous Coordination Centres (ICCs) have been established, managed by an Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC) within the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.

Through these new arrangements, the Australian Government is committed to ensuring that funding for Indigenous people from all sources is coordinated and effective, and that Indigenous communities at the local and regional level have a say in how it is spent.

Cooperative working with the States and Territories and local government is also critical, given their important role in servicing Indigenous Australians.

The arrangements combine a bottom-up and a top-down approach. Leadership, strategy and accountability will be provided at the top of the structure, but these same qualities will be emphasised at the local and regional level in active partnership with Indigenous people.

Important terms and concepts underlying the new approach include:

- 'shared responsibility'—governments alone cannot fix Indigenous problems. Both governments and Indigenous people have rights and obligations and all must share responsibility;
- 'partnership'—shared responsibility requires real partnerships involving government and communities, as well as non-government organisations (NGOs) and the private sector;
- 'whole-of-government'—all government policies and funds must be coordinated and used efficiently and strategically in cooperation with local communities;
- 'regional focus'—service strategies must be shaped by the needs of particular regions and communities, not dictated nationally;
- 'flexibility'—services and programs must become more flexible, so they can be adapted to local needs; and
- 'outcomes'—the operation of policies, programs and service-delivery organisations will be scrutinised and judged on the results they produce for local Indigenous people.

A Ministerial Taskforce on Indigenous Affairs has been established to provide high-level direction to Australian Government policy development, as well as coordination and flexible resource allocation to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Taskforce identified three areas for priority attention:

- early childhood intervention and improving primary health and early education outcomes, to head off longer term problems;
- safer communities; and
- reducing dependency on passive welfare and boosting employment and economic development in Indigenous communities.

Indigenous Coordination Centres (ICCs) will be the main engine for coordination of Indigenous-specific programs in the regions, where the new arrangements are focused. They will work with local Indigenous communities and negotiate regional and local agreements for effective partnerships and shared responsibilities. ICC Managers are employed by OIPC. Their role is to develop and coordinate innovative responses to local Indigenous needs. The new arrangements call for creativity and accountability, together with sensitivity to the needs of local Indigenous people and the ability to negotiate with them.

The new approach was informed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and its commitment to greater coordination in Indigenous affairs. "We have built our model on the coordinated partnership approach of the Indigenous COAG trial sites where the state and territory governments are there beside us. Government departments will work as one with the communities. The government department's job will be to make it simpler for the community and they will do the shopping around for them." (Senator Amanda Vanstone, Address to Bennelong Society, 4 September 2004)

Lessons emerging from the COAG trials have helped to shape the new arrangements. "To underpin government effort to improve cooperation in addressing this disadvantage, COAG agreed to a National Framework of Principles for Government Service Delivery to Indigenous Australians ... The principles address sharing responsibility, harnessing the mainstream, streamlining service delivery, establishing transparency and accountability, developing a learning framework and focusing on priority areas. They committed to Indigenous participation at all levels and a willingness to engage with representatives, adopting flexible approaches and providing adequate resources to support capacity at the local and regional levels."  
**COAG Communiqué, 26 June 2004**

DEST is required to take into consideration in respect to the investment of public monies in communities ***The New Arrangements in Indigenous Affairs.***

At this point, your Concept Plan does not meet the Department's State and District Priorities in Indigenous Education and as a result can not be funded at this time. The criteria that have been used to assess your Concept Plan are set out in the:

- ❖ Department's *Indigenous Education Provider Guidelines 2005-2008*, these can be obtained either online at: [www.dest.gov.au](http://www.dest.gov.au) or by phoning the Department on **1800 800 821** and
- ❖ *DEST-State Office priorities and*
- ❖ *Within the context of the Ministerial Taskforce on Indigenous Affairs priorities and the COAG principals.*

I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the potential and merit of your submission and encourage you to revise your Concept Plan for the next round (to be determined). If you require support and assistance from this office please contact 07 4747 2200.

I would also like to take this opportunity to show appreciation for your continuing and shared commitment in helping to achieve better outcomes for our young Indigenous students, thank you.

Yours sincerely

Lyle F Johnson  
Education Officer  
Indigenous Education Unit  
DEST-Mount Isa District Office  
3 March 2005

