

Submission to Senate Committee on Indigenous Education Funding 2/3/05

Issues and Effects of Changes from ATAS, VEGAS and ASSPA to Parent School Partnership Initiatives

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Positives

- Should provide more stability in funding if projects can be approved for funding for up to 4 years.
- Should establish more communication between government funding bodies leading to less confusion or cross purposes in projects.

Negatives

- Call for concept plans and then invitations for applications for funding requires a doubling up of time needed for consultation and gathering all the information needed for writing submissions.
- Time frames are not 'Yolngu friendly' in that there is little time for consultation and discussion in a time frame that makes no allowance for cultural decision making processes.
- Forms are not 'Yolngu friendly' in that the instructions, format and information required is very difficult for people for whom English is very much a second or foreign language.
- Help promised from DEST Field officers in completing forms has not eventuated, in fact just the opposite. Messages have been sent that application forms should have been lodged last Friday (Concept Plans) or due a week ago (Application for Funding). Telephone communication with Field Officers to clarify submission requirements on forms have left us with more confusion.
- There are no travel funds available (we were able to use VEGAS previously) to get representatives from Homeland Learning Centres together for consultation, and no time to arrange this even if funds had been available.
- Delays involved in finding out if funds will be available for projects or not has put many things on hold, planning can't take place. ASSPA gave certainty of amounts and also areas of funding. This allowed some degree of certainty to enable planning and programs to commence at the start of the school year.
- The constant demand on measuring of outcomes is becoming a time consuming distraction from teaching time. Often we are being asked for slightly different data about the same students for anything up to ten different projects and submissions (eg. Tutoring, Retention project, Secondary Project, Literacy and Numeracy Plan, Parent School Partnership, Community and School Partnership Initiative, Annual School Report, Two Ways Learning Review). Added to this we may have several projects funded which are all supposed to be leading to improved attendance – it is becoming a question 'of which tooth of the circular saw actually cut the tree down'.