NATIONAL REVIEW OF EDUCATION FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

summary and recommendations
The painting on the front cover is by Sarah Napangati Bruno, Paul Tjamptjimpa Bruno, Monica Nangala Robinson and Victor Tjungurrayi Robinson from Walungurru (Kintore), Northern Territory. It tells the story of the Pintupi peoples’ experience of education and their hopes for the future in education. In many ways it is the story of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ experience of education and their hope for the future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ngurrara walytjangka</td>
<td>Tjirritjingka yanggu tjinta nyinanyi ngurrangka, walyrupa wiyangka. Pipirri wiima tjinta nitirringanyi tjukurra, wanka, tjukku, ngurraku, kapalikunu kamu tjirnukunu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yalanjarra wilparralku</td>
<td>Ratjintayimi yanggu tjinta ngurrpa nyinanyi. Walyrupa tjungkka nintja pipirri wiima tjinta tjirnangka wungkaku kalijaku. Yanggu ngurru tjinta ngondu nyinanyi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yalanjarra kajarri</td>
<td>Yanggu mungkurrpalpi nintirringanyi walyrupakunu wungkaku kalijaku, kuwalaku, konya yanggu kutjupa tjungaya ngurrpa nyinanyi. Pipirri kamu yanggu tjinta kutjupa tjinta nintirringanyi tjirnangkaku putulaku.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yulparrira kajarri</td>
<td>Kwarri, yanggu kamu walyrupa tjungulpiba nyinarrar warakarrinyi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wajarriyaljatja</td>
<td>Wajangurrakanku yanggu tjinta kuwilaku nintirringkula mayuji nyinaka. Paluyarriyangka pipirri tjinta kuwilanka tjarrparra nintirringkuri walyrupalakun wungkaku kalijaku, yangangukunu ngurraku, walyrupa, tjukku, tjukurralajjarra. Walyrupa kululuji mayuji kuwilanka nyinanyingka, pipirri tjinta tjana ngurrpa kutu nyinaku.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The centre of the picture</td>
<td>In our original country: The yangu of long ago, before the walyrupa came, are living in their land. The children learn about their dreamings, their language, their ceremonies, their country - all this is passed on to them from their grandmothers and grandfathers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the north-west</td>
<td>In the ‘ration times’ [up to and including the 1960s], the yangu are sitting, not knowing. The walyrupa are teaching the [yanggu] children about their [non-indigenous] language and [non-indigenous] culture. The other yanggu people are sitting ‘behind’, at the back [and not involved].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the north-east</td>
<td>In the 1970s, although the others continue in ignorance of walyrupa ways, a few yanggu eventually learn about walyrupa language and culture and [start to work in] schools. At the same time some of the children and the adults together learn about grog and petrol sniffing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the south-east</td>
<td>Today, yanggunu and walyrupa have joined, living and working together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the south-west</td>
<td>[In the future] our grandmothers and grandfathers are holding on to [and not forgetting] the land. They are telling us how to teach in school. They are saying that yangugu schoolteachers should instruct the children. The yanggunu and walyrupa teachers are together working out [how to operate the school]. The boss [for the government] is sending other walyrupa teachers to work in the school with yanggunu people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>At Walungurru the yanggu people now know about schools - they are going to control their own school. With yanggu people in charge the children will be able to come to school and learn properly, learn both walyrupa language and culture, and yanggu culture and tradition. If the walyrupa remain solely in charge, our children will not learn properly at all.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NATIONAL

REVIEW OF

EDUCATION FOR

ABORIGINAL

AND

TORRES STRAIT

ISLANDER PEOPLES

summary and recommendations
REFERENCE GROUP OVERSEEING THE NATIONAL REVIEW OF EDUCATION
FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

The Hon Simon Crean, MP
Minister for Employment, Education
and Training
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

The Hon Ross Free, MP
Minister for Schools, Vocational
Education and Training
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ministers

In October 1993 your predecessor, Mr Beazley appointed a Reference Group to oversee a National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

In February 1994 I forwarded to you, on behalf of the Reference Group, the Discussion Paper that marked the end of the first stage of the Review. The Discussion Paper set out the statistical and other evidence on the current state of education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and made some suggestions to encourage debate in this area.

The Review has now received over 170 written submissions and has met with hundreds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia. This evidence has been a rich source of ideas and has much assisted our own deliberations.

It gives me great pleasure to transmit to you the final Report of the National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The Reference Group believes the Summary and Recommendations of the Report should be distributed widely to Indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

The Reference Group looks forward to an early response to the Report from the Commonwealth, States and Territories and others, and to the achievement of equity and reconciliation in and through education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Mandawuy Yunupingu
Chair

on behalf of

Romina Fujii
Frank Coolahan
Colleen Hayward
Gerry Moore
Roger Scott

Lionel Bamblett
Stephen Harris
Hilda Kickett
Henry Reynolds
Des Williams

30 September 1994
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- Persons
- Males
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- Persons
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New South Wales
Victoria
Queensland
South Australia
Western Australia
Tasmania
Northern Territory
Australian Capital Territory
Australia
6 State Australia

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Persons
Males
Females

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New South Wales
Victoria
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6 State Australia

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Reference Group overseeing the National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples thanks the many people who have been generous with their time and their expertise over the course of the Review.

In particular we would like to thank the officers of the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training who have worked directly with us over this last year:

Aurora Andruska (April - June 1994)
Kevin Clarke (to September 1993)
Julia Forrest (from June 1994)
Jenny Harrison (from April 1994)
Irene Kaspar (to August 1993)
Hilda Lamech (to July 1994)
Greg Milton
Greg Miller (to June 1994)
Nada Pavlak (to March 1994)
Adrian Smith
Dennis Strand
Catherine Wildermuth (from October 1993)
Veronica Wilkinson (from December 1993)

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John Ainley
Mary Anne Bin-Sallick
Noel Blomeley
Rick Flowers
Paul Hughes
Stephen Kemmis

for their assistance.

Our thanks too to Sean Burt, Sandra, Lyn Cochrane, Crinkles, Kelvina, Joy Kinslow, Col Nayler, Tony Rufo, Sandra and Zamil.

Our work would not have been possible without the contributions of the many Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders who wrote to us or met with us over the last two years. Their contributions have been a continuing source of inspiration to us.
Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders are the First Nations of this continent and have inalienable rights as the Indigenous peoples of Australia. Education is one of these rights.
The Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, established with the agreement of the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments in early 1993, has done two things. Looking back, it has examined what has happened up to the present and has assessed what has and has not worked in education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. Looking forward, it suggests ways to improve the way things are done, and new action to further improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' experience of education\(^1\).

The Review has collected the available statistics across all sectors on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' involvement in, access to, participation in, and outcomes from, education. It has also collected qualitative information on these matters through written submissions from individuals and organisations\(^2\) and by talking with people around Australia who provide educational services to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders and to the people who receive these educational services\(^3\).

Most of these people have been Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We, the Reference Group overseeing the Review, have been profoundly impressed by the vigour and creativity of Indigenous Australians in their endeavours to improve education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders and in their pursuit of ways to educate non-indigenous Australians about the Indigenous peoples, their knowledge, cultures and communities. We hope that, in this Report, we have faithfully represented what people have said or written to us.

\(^1\)The full Terms of Reference for the National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are set out in Appendix 2 of the Final Report.

\(^2\)The people and organisations that made formal submissions to the National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are listed in Appendix 3 of the Final Report.

\(^3\)The places where consultations were held by the National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are listed in Appendix 4 of the Final Report.
EDUCATION, EQUITY AND RECONCILIATION

Two principal themes emerge from the evidence presented to the Review - equity and reconciliation.

On the basis of the evidence presented to us we have no doubt that the educational experiences of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders have improved over the last five years. More Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders than before are involved in educational decision-making and in the delivery of educational services. More have access to education facilities. More participate in education, particularly in the technical and further education and higher education sectors. More people use their knowledge and experiences of education to contribute both to their communities and to the wider Australian community.

But equity is not just a matter of numbers. In 1994 Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders continue to be the most educationally disadvantaged groups in Australia. While more opportunities to express their views about the policy, programs and practices of education have been created, Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders remain concerned that their views are not heard. Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders continue to have the most limited, and in some cases no, access to education beyond primary school. They do not participate in education to the extent that other Australians participate, particularly in secondary education; in technical and further education and in higher education they participate only in particular and narrow fields of study. Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders still do not enjoy equitable and appropriate outcomes from education.

Equity is the yet-to-be-finished business of the twentieth century. Much still needs to be done. And there is a sense of urgency - both to fulfil Australia's promise of providing a fair go for all and to complete the work of this century before the end of the decade. Time is critical.

We are keenly aware that in Australia, as elsewhere, globalised political, economic, cultural and intellectual power threatens to overwhelm indigenous and local cultures.

Counterbalancing this global trend, the relationship between Australia's Indigenous peoples, governments and the wider society is changing rapidly. The process of reconciliation between Australia's Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, governments' and others' responses to the High Court's decision on Mabo and others vs the State of Queensland, the implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and the widely held commitment to social justice all point to change. The movement for indigenous self-determination gathers pace both in Australia and overseas.

We have done our work in the watershed between the twentieth and the twenty first centuries. We are aware that we are working in a time of rapid change - in the short turbulent period between the end of the Cold War and the end of the twentieth century.
It is a time when Australia is reconsidering its past and its future - its place in the world, its constitutional arrangements, its own identity.

_The great task ahead is the business of the future - the achievement of reconciliation through education and the fulfilment of the strongly felt, and frequently expressed, desire of Indigenous Australians to achieve self-determination._

Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders occupy a unique position in Australia - they are its first inhabitants and not just one of many ethnic minorities. We believe that Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders are the First Nations of this continent and have inalienable rights as the Indigenous peoples of Australia. The right to education is one of these rights.

The concrete expression of this view of education is that Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders must have equal opportunities to access and participate in any form of educational provision available to all Australians and that the education provided for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders must be culturally appropriate. This is the basis of reconciliation.

Education contributes directly to all people's quality of cultural, economic and political life. For Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders, self-determination in education is essential; it creates the framework which allows Indigenous Australians to be themselves and puts them on an equal footing with other national and international communities.

Education is only one area where Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders and other Australians want equity and reconciliation. Our recommendations are only part of the way to achieving these goals. Much needs to be done in other areas, such as health, housing, infrastructure and economic development, to achieve equity and reconciliation for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. Education is essential to progress developments in these areas.

**THE NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EDUCATION POLICY**

In 1988 an Aboriginal Education Policy Task Force chaired by Paul Hughes examined a wide range of evidence on education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. The Task Force concluded that 'in 1988 Aborigines remain the most severely educationally disadvantaged people in Australia'. Its recommendations included setting targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's participation in all sectors of education. It advocated the continuation and expansion of programs which had been found to be effective, and the introduction of additional innovative programs and support services, new curriculum and teaching practices to support these targets.
The Task Force also recommended adopting a national policy for the education of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, recognising that the key to improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's education lay in concerted, cooperative, long-term strategies which involved all governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people themselves.

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (the Joint Policy) was endorsed by all governments in 1989 and came into effect from 1 January 1990. The Joint Policy sets out 21 long-term goals for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, under four important themes: involvement, access, participation and outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involvement of Aboriginal people in educational decision-making</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 1</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Goal 2</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Goal 3</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Goal 5</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Goal 6</strong></td>
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4The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy uses the term 'Aboriginal' throughout to indicate both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
**Equality of access to educational services**

**Goal 7** To ensure that Aboriginal children of pre-primary school age have access to pre-school services on a basis comparable to that available to other Australian children of the same age.

**Goal 8** To ensure that all Aboriginal children have local access to primary and secondary schooling.

**Goal 9** To ensure equitable access for Aboriginal people to post-compulsory secondary schooling, to technical and further education, and higher education.

**Equity of educational participation**

**Goal 10** To achieve the participation of Aboriginal children in pre-school education for a period similar to that for all Australian children.

**Goal 11** To achieve the participation of all Aboriginal children in compulsory schooling.

**Goal 12** To achieve the participation of Aboriginal people in post-compulsory secondary education, in technical and further education, and in higher education, at rates commensurate with those of all Australians in those sectors.

**Equitable and appropriate educational outcomes**

**Goal 13** To provide adequate preparation of Aboriginal children through pre-school education for the schooling years ahead.

**Goal 14** To enable Aboriginal attainment of skills to the same standard as other Australian students throughout the compulsory schooling years.

**Goal 15** To enable Aboriginal students to attain the successful completion of Year 12 or equivalent at the same rates as for other Australian students.

**Goal 16** To enable Aboriginal students to attain the same graduation rates from award courses in technical and further education, and in higher education, as for other Australians.

**Goal 17** To develop programs to support the maintenance and continued use of Aboriginal languages.

**Goal 18** To provide community education services which enable Aboriginal people to develop the skills to manage the development of their communities.
Goal 19  To enable the attainment of proficiency in English language and numeracy
cOMPETENCIES BY ABORIGINAL ADULTS WITH LIMITED OR NO EDUCATIONAL 
EXPERIENCE.

Goal 20  To enable Aboriginal students at all levels of education to have an 
appreciation of their history, cultures and identity.

Goal 21  To provide all Australian students with an understanding of and respect for 
Aboriginal traditional and contemporary cultures.

It is nearly five years since the Joint Policy came into effect - a suitable time to reflect 
on whether or not it has been successful in improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait 
Islander peoples' involvement in, access to, participation in, and outcomes from, 
education.

We took the Joint Policy as our starting point. Those making submissions and 
participating in consultations clearly believe that the Joint Policy is having a 
significant and positive effect. Along with the efforts of many individuals, 
organisations and education systems, the Joint Policy is helping to build an Australian 
culture in which there is greater recognition of, and respect for, Aboriginality, and a 
greater awareness of, and sensitivity to, the aspirations and concerns of Aboriginal 
peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.

There is a growing body of academic writing on the Joint Policy. The Joint Policy is 
commended for its commitment to increased funding for Indigenous education (and for 
triennial, rather than annual, funding); for the State, Territory and Commonwealth 
government cooperation it seeks to foster; for its interest in bringing about more 
coordination between education sectors; and for its support for the development and 
implementation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curricula.

The Joint Policy is criticised for its perceived concern about Aboriginal and Torres 
Strait Islander peoples' access to, and participation in, 'mainstream' education and its 
silence about supporting alternative and community controlled education initiatives 
(this leads some authors to brand the Joint Policy as assimilationist); for its language, 
which some authors perceive as depicting Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait 
Islanders as victims of racist oppression and cultural alienation who need protection 
rather than as peoples who actively resist oppression and create changing cultures; for 
its adoption of the concept of 'involvement' rather than the commitment to 
self-determination of the 1988 Aboriginal Education Policy Task Force Report; and 
for being vague about implementation and evaluation detail.

Evidence presented to us indicates that the Joint Policy might be a better document if it 
took these concerns into account. On a related matter, many people expressed concern 
that the Joint Policy does not reflect an equal partnership between governments and 
Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders - Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait 
Islanders are not signatories to the document.
On balance we consider that the Joint Policy, whilst not without fault, serves a vital purpose and we recommend:

Recommendation 1

*That all Australian governments reaffirm their commitment to the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy.*

**PRINCIPLES**

We consider that the work all Australians need to do to achieve equity and reconciliation in and through education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders must be based on two fundamentals:

- embracing the First Nations' heritage as part of Australia's national heritage; and
- respecting equally the culture and values of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders and the cultures and values of non-indigenous Australians.

These attitudes are intangibles which cannot be prescribed by governments. However, there is much that can be done to encourage and support the changes in community attitudes necessary to achieve equity and reconciliation. To achieve these ends we believe that the Joint Policy would be enhanced by governments' and others' formal adoption of the set of principles which underpin the recommendations of this Report and we recommend:

Recommendation 2

*That the work of all bodies developing policy and/or providing educational programs or services which impact on Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders be based on the following principles:*

- self-determination in education - putting the authority to make decisions in the hands of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders;

- diversity - empowering Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders to exercise the maximum degree of choice in education;

- subsidiarity - shifting responsibility for and about education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders as far 'down' administrative systems as possible, given the demands of accountability and the efficient delivery of services;

- affiliation - ensuring coordination between groups as far 'up' the administrative system as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations wish, to pursue shared aims and to achieve economies of scale; and
efficiency of the available resources, minimising the amount of money spent on administration and maximising the amount of money spent on actually providing educational services for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.

Explicit action which supports the principle of educational self-determination for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders would include the development of arrangements for the allocation, distribution and management of resources which permit the direct funding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander incorporated bodies so these bodies may, as they deem appropriate:

- independently provide education and training services for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders;
- contract with other bodies for the provision of education services; and/or
- otherwise assist in empowering access and participation in education.

Explicit action which supports the principle of affiliation could include the development of joint agreements with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander incorporated bodies providing contact for and assisting with the implementation of education services, to enable them to achieve common goals and objectives which could achieve economies of scale through the joint operation of agreed work programs.

**INvolvement AND SELF-DEtermination**

Our first term of reference has been to review Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ involvement in educational decision-making and in the delivery of education services. Goals 1, 3 and 6 of the Joint Policy and goals 2, 4 and 5 of the Joint Policy are dealt with separately in this section.

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<tr>
<th>National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy Goals</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 1</strong> To establish effective arrangements for the participation of Aboriginal parents and community members in decisions regarding the planning, delivery and evaluation of pre-school, primary and secondary education services for their children.</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 3</strong> To establish effective arrangements for the participation of Aboriginal students and community members in decisions regarding the planning, delivery and evaluation of post-school education services, including technical and further education colleges and higher education institutions.</td>
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Many vehicles exist to involve Indigenous peoples in educational decision-making and in the delivery of educational services, including vehicles such as independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educational institutions, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Groups and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA) committees. These arrangements provide opportunities for the many and varied expressions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' aspirations in education.

It is also clear from the evidence presented to us that Indigenous peoples, the people who live with the consequences, are still not sufficiently listened to, and heard, in the establishment or modification of policies, programs and practices that impact on their educational experiences. The consistency and insistence of calls for greater involvement suggest to us that governments and other educational service providers have not reached, or demonstrated, sufficient recognition and regard for the views of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.

Two perspectives appear in the evidence presented to us:

- a view that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people need to be in positions where they can exercise a strong influence on, and determine, the structures and processes by which education is conventionally governed and administered in Australia; and

- a view that alternative structures and processes must be established through which Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders can exercise self-determination in education.

We commend those educational bodies which, over the last five years, have taken steps to include Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders in their decision-making processes. We note, however, that some relevant bodies still have not taken appropriate action in relation to these goals of the Joint Policy, or have done so inadequately. We recommend:

**Recommendation 3**

*That all bodies developing educational policy and/or providing educational programs or services which impact on Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders:*

- establish a formal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory structure to that body; and/or

- appoint an Aboriginal person and/or a Torres Strait Islander to that body
to ensure that the decisions of these bodies properly reflect the views of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.

Our Discussion Paper, issued in February 1994, canvassed the need to alter existing arrangements for overseeing educational policy, providing educational services and monitoring the outcomes of these services for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. In evidence presented to us people consistently drew attention to the need to move beyond the concept of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 'involvement' articulated in the Joint Policy to one of self-determination in education.

The idea of setting up a new national and independent body to oversee education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders has drawn consistent support. This is seen as a sensible response to the widely-held view that there is not, at present, one body with the necessary breadth or expertise to carry out this function. It was also seen as being one means by which the principle of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' self-determination in education might be realised. To bring these two ideas together we recommend:

**Recommendation 4**

That the Commonwealth, through its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Coordinating Committee, convene a national conference to determine the terms of reference, membership, roles and responsibilities of a new national and independent body to oversee education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.

The conference should also address the nature of the relationship between this new body and other existing relevant bodies, including the Commonwealth's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Coordination Committee and the Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Groups.

Such a body should be a signatory to the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy.

Such a body should be, at the minimum, responsible for:

- determining national policy in relation to education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders;
- overseeing the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy and any other associated documents and continuing to monitor its implementation and recommend improvements;
- examining the mix of guaranteed and discretionary funding and determining the principles for allocating available Commonwealth
discretionary resources for education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders;  

- determining the timetable for moving to outcomes reporting on education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders; and  

- promoting the coordination of educational services with other services which impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' access to, participation in, and outcomes from, education.

Such a body should be made up exclusively of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.

Such a body should have rights to receive reports from educational service providers and to report annually to the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth should establish a permanent secretariat to support this new body and should provide such other resources as the body needs to conduct its business properly.

Developments in education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders over the last five years have been hampered by a lack of coordination in educational service delivery and a lack of information about the range of educational programs and services available to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. Specific problems were most often referred to in the evidence presented to us.

We believe that sharing information and materials would do much to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the activities conducted under the auspices of the Joint Policy and we recommend:

Recommendation 5

That the Commonwealth, States and Territories establish and fund a clearinghouse for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education to:

- collect, evaluate and disseminate best practice materials and resources for:

  - teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students;  
  - the teaching and learning of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies;  
  - incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in existing curricula;  
  - incorporating, in education programs, appropriate health, nutrition and student welfare information and assistance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students;  
  - the teaching and learning of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness courses for non-indigenous students,
cross-cultural awareness courses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and counter-racism courses; and
- the teaching and learning of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages;

- identify examples of best practice in:
  - innovative methods of educational service delivery;
  - innovative methods of institutional organisation; and
  - innovative administrative arrangements which allow for self-determination in education

for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders across all sectors of education;

- collect and promulgate information on relevant policies and programs, research and evaluations, including publishing a regular national ASSPA newsletter to inform ASSPA committees about the program and to share information about the kinds of activities ASSPA committees are funding;

- act as an agent to assist with the provision of educational services to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders living in remote areas;

- maintain a voluntary register of those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators and educators with formal qualifications in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and/or with other extensive experience of teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, who wish to have their names on the register so that information on prospective employment can be supplied to potential employees by the clearinghouse.

This clearinghouse should be an independent body funded jointly by the Commonwealth, States and Territories. Its governing board should be made up of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.

The evidence presented to us supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Groups but recognises problems with the way some of them are currently constituted. In particular there was a concern that the capacity of State and Territory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Groups to provide independent advice might be compromised where members are appointed rather than elected, or where funding for these organisations was not made directly to them. The view that these organisations might take a more active role in informing Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders about developments in education, especially at the regional and local level, was also widely put. We agree with these arguments and we recommend:
Recommendation 6

That, in consultation with existing State and Territory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultative Groups and State and Territory governments, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Groups be reconstituted to ensure that:

. office holders are elected by Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders;

. the roles and responsibilities of such reconstituted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultative Groups are specified and agreed and include, as a minimum, responsibility to:

- participate in the formulation of and endorse strategies drawn up under the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy across all education sectors;
- monitor the implementation of these strategies; and
- provide independent advice to governments on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education issues as appropriate;

. such Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Groups are established as incorporated bodies;

. regional and local structures exist to ensure that local constituencies can provide input to and receive feedback from their representatives; and

. structures exist to coordinate the activity of these bodies with other relevant bodies, including other relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander bodies.

Recommendation 7

That Commonwealth support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Groups be paid as a grant-in-aid, in line with arrangements for other like organisations.

Recommendation 8

That State and Territory support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Groups be paid directly to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Groups where they are incorporated bodies.
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy Goals

Goal 2  To increase the number of Aboriginal people employed as educational administrators, teachers, curriculum advisers, teachers assistants, home-school liaison officers and other education workers, including community people engaged in teaching of Aboriginal culture, history and contemporary society, and Aboriginal languages.

Goal 4  To increase the number of Aboriginal people employed as administrators, teachers; researchers and student services officers in technical and further education colleges and higher education institutions.

Goal 5  To provide education and training services to develop the skills of Aboriginal people to participate in educational decision-making.

The evidence presented to us indicates patchy progress towards achieving the Joint Policy goals related to increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' employment in the education industry.

While the total number of people employed in the education industry has increased, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people predominantly occupy short-term (rather than permanent) and junior positions. In the postschool education industry Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders make up less than 0.01 per cent of all staff, working mostly in non-teaching positions. Only 20 per cent of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed in the higher education sector are permanent employees; over half of those who do not hold permanent positions are employed under contracts of less than one year.

Almost 40 per cent of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers\(^5\) employed in the school sector work in schools in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, however, are enrolled in other schools and have insufficient access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers.

There was almost universal praise for the important and positive benefits the employment of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders in the education industry brings to the educational experiences of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders employed in the education industry provide positive role models for all students. Their employment 'inside' the system serves as a constant reminder that education needs to accommodate the cultures and values of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and that employers need to accommodate the cultures and values of their employees.

\(^5\)In this Report the term 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education worker' is used to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed in a paraprofessional capacity to support education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Terminology differs between States and Territories and between sectors of education.
The evidence strongly supports the work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers, and indicates a concern that, despite their crucial role in encouraging and facilitating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' access to, participation in, and outcomes from education, their pay and conditions of service do not reflect this. To address these issues we recommend:

**Recommendation 9**

*That higher education institutions providing teacher education courses and employers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators implement the recommendations of the Aboriginal Research Institute of the University of South Australia's publication 'Teacher Education Pre-service: Preparing Teachers to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students'.*

**Recommendation 10**

*That, by the year 2001, employers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching staff, in consultation with unions and representatives of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders, will have reviewed their existing employment practices in preschools, schools, technical and further education, adult and community education and higher education institutions and have taken adequate steps to:*

- ensure that pay and conditions of service do not discriminate between Indigenous and non-indigenous professional educators;

- give priority to the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators, for the benefit of both Indigenous and non-indigenous students;

- accommodate local and specific cultural affiliations in determining the placement or posting of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees or prospective employees;

- adopt a mentoring system which promotes the advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators to senior positions;

- give priority to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators to attend inservice professional development courses;

- establish staffing and staff development practices which encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators to upgrade their qualifications when they wish to do so, including giving priority to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders in scholarships and awards where such schemes exist;

- allow secondment of experienced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled community*
schools under contract without penalty to their entitlements and conditions of service;

. make provision for a special allowance, similar to the Australian Public Service linguistic performance allowance, which recognises the additional and specialist skills of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people where those skills are required and used in the workplace; and

. allow leave for cultural obligations.

Employers, in consultation with unions, should formalise such conditions as may be appropriate in awards.

Employers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators who receive Commonwealth funding for the education of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders should report annually to the Commonwealth on progress made towards achieving these goals.

Recommendation 11
That, by the year 2001, employers of teaching staff, in consultation with unions and representatives of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders, will have reviewed their existing employment practices in preschools, schools, technical and further education, adult and community education and higher education institutions and have taken adequate steps to:

. provide inservice courses in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness, counter-racism and teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for all staff, especially those posted to institutions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students;

. give priority to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness and counter-racism courses in inservice professional development plans of all educators;

. give priority to the employment of teacher graduates who have completed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies courses as part of their teacher education course;

. make completion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training mandatory for career advancement and/or renewal of performance contracts; and

. allow secondment of experienced non-indigenous teachers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled community schools under contract without penalty to their entitlements and conditions of service;
Employers, in consultation with unions, should formalise such conditions as may be appropriate in awards.

Employers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators who receive Commonwealth funding for the education of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders should report annually to the Commonwealth on progress made towards achieving these goals.

Recommendation 12
That, noting the recommendations of the Australian Education Union's publication 'Ara Kuwaritjaku: Towards a New Way', by the year 2001, employers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers, in consultation with unions and representatives of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders, will have reviewed their existing employment practices in preschools, schools, technical and further education, adult and community education and higher education institutions and have taken adequate steps to:

. ensure that pay and conditions of service (including security of tenure) do not discriminate between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers and their non-indigenous paraprofessional equivalents;

. set out clearly the roles and responsibilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers;

. guarantee improved provision of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers by, for example, introducing staffing formulae which provide for at least one part-time (0.5) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education worker in all preschools and schools with more than 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and which provide for one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education worker for each 30 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in schools where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are enrolled; and

. provide appropriate inservice courses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers' peers and supervisors to ensure they are aware of the roles and responsibilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education worker staff;

. give priority to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers to attend inservice professional development courses;

. establish staffing and staff development practices which encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers to upgrade their qualifications when they wish to do so;

. introduce means by which experts in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional and contemporary cultures can be recompensed for
their contributions to the teaching and learning of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies.

Employers, in consultation with relevant unions, should formalise such conditions as may be appropriate in awards.

Employers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers who receive Commonwealth funding for the education of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders should report annually to the Commonwealth on progress towards achieving these goals.

These ten recommendations (recommendations 3 to 12) extend the notion of 'involvement in educational decision-making' to encompass educational self-determination. While this move is a powerful symbol in its own right, we believe it should be embedded in the governing and advisory structures of all education and training providers.

**EQUITABLE ACCESS**

Our second term of reference has been to review Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' equality of access to education services.

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<th>National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy Goals</th>
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<td><strong>Goal 7</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Goal 8</strong></td>
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Many people have brought to our attention specific instances where Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders do not have access to the kinds of educational services they wish. For some people, particularly those living in remote communities, this means not having access to any kind of education, either through local institutions or through some other, distance education based means. Submissions and consultations also draw attention to the unmet need for adult education in remote areas - for many Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders primary school is their last experience of formal schooling.
These gaps in educational provision are inexcusable. Australia has international obligations to make primary education free and compulsory; to make secondary education in its different forms generally available and accessible to all; to make higher education equally accessible to all on the basis of individual capacity; and to ensure compliance by all with the obligation to attend school prescribed by law. States and Territories have enacted laws making schooling compulsory up to the age of 15 or 16 years.

Access to these educational services is not yet universally provided across Australia. There are communities that do not have access to even basic education services. Even where provision is reasonably accessible the journeys to and from school are long and enervating. Further, there are often limits on the range and quality of what is provided. It is our judgement that the standard and quality of all education provided to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders, especially postprimary schooling in some remote areas, is not equal to the standard and quality of services provided for other Australians. We have received evidence that Australia may be in breach of its international and legislative obligations in respect of education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.

We are concerned that the fundamental goal of local access to educational services is still unfulfilled for many Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. Our concern covers all sectors and all aspects of provision. We recommend:

Recommendation 13

That the Commonwealth and States and Territories jointly provide additional capital funds for:

. the refurbishment of existing buildings to provide appropriate facilities to deliver preschool education services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children living in rural and remote areas;

. local school educational services for the compulsory years of schooling where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children do not have access to local schools or to other means of school education;

. residential facilities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary students from rural or remote areas where their access to secondary education is currently limited, and where demand for such facilities can be demonstrated;

. preschool and school transport where no effective or economic means of transport is otherwise available; and

. school teacher accommodation where no other rental accommodation is available within a reasonable commuting distance from their place of employment.
Provision of these additional funds should be contingent on applicants for funding demonstrating that they can make adequate provision for the maintenance and repair of capital items and that they can meet any associated operational costs.

Ownership of capital items purchased with these additional funds should be vested, where possible, in appropriate incorporated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

We also recognise the conflict people face between wanting to stay in their own communities and gaining access to education services of a quality not available locally. Some evidence views educational technologies as one promising way to resolve this conflict. Other evidence identifies potential dangers in these technologies - that they might substitute for, rather than supplement, local provision of educational services; that they might foster a move to centralised curricula; and that they are as yet unproven in crosscultural contexts.

Evidence from Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders living in remote areas stresses the difficulties of studying through distance learning methods without the support of onsite tutors or teachers. We recognise that off-campus, mixed-mode and distance education services are most effective when supplemented by the provision of onsite teaching. We also believe that these developing technologies could serve the educational needs of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders who are physically isolated in prison. On balance, we are persuaded that the use of these technologies merits further development and we recommend:

**Recommendation 14**

The Open Learning Technology Corporation accelerate its development of open learning technologies in the schools and vocational education and training sectors, particularly where these technologies would extend Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' access to education.

**Recommendation 15**

That the Commonwealth, States and Territories continue to develop the use of alternative technologies, including video-conferencing and tele-conferencing technologies and computer-based teaching and learning aids, to deliver off-campus, mixed-mode and distance education services to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders for whom local access to relevant education services is not yet available.

Priority in the development of these technologies should be given to:

- delivering secondary education to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people living in those remote areas where education is not available in the compulsory years; and
giving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in remote areas access to postcompulsory, and particularly teacher education, courses.

Ownership of capital items purchased with funds used for these purposes should be vested, where possible, in appropriate incorporated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

**Recommendation 16**

*That the Commonwealth provide additional funds to support the provision of onsite tutorial support for students in remote areas undertaking postcompulsory education courses by distance education where the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tutorial Assistance Scheme does not meet this need.*

Making education and training accessible is a fundamental responsibility of governments. These four recommendations (recommendations 13 to 16), addressing gaps in provision, the variable quality of educational services and trying to reconcile the demands of community membership with the pursuit of education and training, are modest responses to the embarrassing gaps in service delivery.

**RAISING PARTICIPATION**

Our third term of reference has been to review the means of raising the rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in education to those for all Australians.

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<td><strong>Goal 11</strong></td>
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Between 1986 and 1991 the education participation rates (that is, in preschool and school) fell for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other Australian 3 to 5 year olds. Overall, the gaps in participation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other Australian 3 to 5 year olds have narrowed but:
while the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other Australian 4 year olds preschool participation has almost halved, it remains significant at 9.5 per cent; and

a high proportion (some 13.2 per cent) of 5 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children apparently are not participating in any form of education - mainly children living in remote areas of Australia.

The steady increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary school enrolments in all but two States/Territories suggests increasing levels of participation in primary school. Like other Australians, the vast majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children will begin and complete primary school. However, significant numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary school students do not complete the compulsory Years 8 or 9. An estimated 25 per cent or more of those who start secondary school leave before the end of Year 10.

Between 1986 and 1991 the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other Australian 16 to 24 year olds' overall education participation (that is, in school, technical and further education and university) widened.
There are major differences in participation according to where people live, their gender and the language spoken at home. For example, 16 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young men living in urban areas are more likely to be in education than their rural counterparts (50.1 per cent v 35.7 per cent); 16 year olds who speak an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language at home are much less likely to be in education than those who do not (32.8 per cent v 49.3 per cent).

In our view, the statistic most revealing of the state of education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders is the current apparent Year 12 retention rate. Nationally, just over 25 per cent of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who started Year 7 or 8 five or four years ago (depending on the State or Territory) were enrolled in Year 12 in 1993. The apparent Year 12 retention rate varies between States and Territories - from a low of just over 10 per cent in the Northern Territory to a high of 88 per cent in the Australian Capital Territory.

Despite the concerted efforts of the last decade to raise Year 12 retention rates for all Australian students, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' current Year 12 retention rate is now what it was for all Australian students more than twenty years ago.
Access to education is not just a matter of the availability of educational services, but rather the availability of a form of education which is regarded as appropriate by students, their communities and the organisations that represent them. We believe that the provision of culturally appropriate education services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is the key to raising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in education.

Participation is not just about numbers. The data in the statistical annex to this Report mask the qualitative difficulties faced by educational institutions across all sectors in providing education which will engage, and continue to engage, Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders in education.

The evidence presented to us provides a variety of views about the best ways to increase the rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in education. Some see the problem of relatively low participation as one to be resolved by compensating measures (like out-of-school tutoring), campaigns to strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' motivation and parent and community commitment to keeping students in education, ancillary support (like residential accommodation) or other special programs to redress the so-called 'disadvantage' of Aboriginality in 'mainstream' education.
Others regard improving participation as a matter of making some form of special, culturally sensitive and culturally aware provision for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in curriculum, teaching and learning practices. A special effort must be made to ensure that education includes, rather than excludes the distinctive aspirations, needs, circumstances, knowledge and cultures of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.

Education should be provided in ways that value and respect diversity. It should recognise that different students should have opportunities to access and participate in education in different ways and at different times. Australian education is already diverse. A range of differences can be found in education across classrooms, schools and other educational institutions, and subjects and subject choices. Education providers should make a conscious effort to extend this diversity to meet the aspirations, needs, circumstances and cultures of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.

In evidence presented to us many people argued the critical importance of ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's first experience of institutional education is a positive one.

There was strong support for the continuation of existing policies and practices and strong claims to extend the benefits of the Commonwealth's Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness program - the participation of parents in educational decision-making and the availability of supplementary funds to extend students' educational experiences - to the preschool sector. There is ample evidence to support this claim, both in Australia and overseas, and we recommend:

**Recommendation 17**

*That the Commonwealth, relevant agencies and individual organisations providing preschool education services for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders ensure that preschool education providers:*

1. adopt staffing policies which give priority in employment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are enrolled;

2. adopt measures to include and appropriately remunerate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members delivering cultural programs in preschools;

3. provide professional development activities in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness and counter-racism for all staff;

4. adopt teaching practices which recognise and value the student's first language, be it Standard Australian English, Aboriginal English, a Kriol or an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language;*
provide preschool environments in which Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander parents feel welcome and encouraged to be involved in the preschool educational program; and

adopt practices which maximise the coordination of preschool education programs with health services and nutrition education programs.

Recommendation 18
That the Commonwealth provide additional funds to extend its Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness program to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children attending registered preschools.

The per capita rate paid under this new program for preschool students should be the same as that paid for primary school students under the Aboriginal Student Support and Parental Awareness program, regardless of whether they are attending preschool full- or part-time.

We have collected a great deal of evidence that technical and further education institutions are the increasingly preferred providers of postcompulsory education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in technical and further education is increasing, and for 16 to 24 year olds, their participation rates are higher than those of other Australians. About 40 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander technical and further education students are doing basic education and preparatory courses; other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander technical and further education students are concentrated in two fields of study - Business, Administration and Economics (17 per cent) and the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (10.5 per cent).

On average, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander technical and further education students have higher student contact hours than other technical and further education students and are more likely to be enrolled full time. Only 13 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander technical and further education students were doing trade or higher level courses in 1992.

Many reasons have been proposed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' increasing participation in technical and further education, including:

. the capacity of technical and further education institutions to deliver education in a form which is more appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults;

. the capacity of technical and further education institutions to tailor courses to meet the specific educational needs of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders;

. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' attraction for 'second chance' basic (that is, schooling-equivalent) education provided by technical and further education institutions; and

. the more direct relevance of the courses of study offered by technical and further education institutions to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' employment aspirations.

We have some concern that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander technical and further education students remain concentrated in vocational and preparatory courses but consider that their participation in 'second chance' education, particularly in basic literacy and numeracy courses and in courses leading to the award of a Year 12 qualification or its equivalent, should continue to be actively encouraged. Keeping in mind the need to balance these points of view, we recommend:

**Recommendation 19**

*That technical and further education institutions, adult and community education colleges exempt Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from all fees and charges applying to basic literacy and numeracy courses or courses leading to the award of a Year 12 qualification or its equivalent.*
Recommendation 20

That the Australian National Training Authority review the existing State and Territory training profiles and negotiate any necessary changes to those profiles with States and Territories to ensure that:

- by the year 2001, the type and amount of training available for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders matches the training needs identified as a priority by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders;

- priority is given to the development of curriculum materials for, and the delivery of, courses in those areas identified as priorities in the Australian Committee for Training Curriculum project on national curriculum priorities for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders; and

- preference in the allocation of its growth funds is given to:

  - those training institutions which can demonstrate strong demand for its courses among Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders; and

  - those private training institutions which best provide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' educational self-determination.

We have similar concerns about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in higher education.

Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders have lower university participation rates than other Australians, although the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university
students more than doubled between 1988 and 1993. Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders are much more likely to gain entry to university through special provisions (including mature age entry provisions) and to be older when commencing university. Almost two thirds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students are studying Arts, Humanities or the Social Sciences (34.6 per cent) and Education (30.6 per cent). In recent years the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students enrolled in degree courses has increased while the proportion enrolled in diploma and certificate courses has decreased. The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates is steadily increasing.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in, and completion of, higher education courses has two benefits. Professionally qualified Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders, through the contributions they make to their communities, are important to the process of securing economic independence for all Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. They serve as important role models for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who follow them. We believe that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in two areas of higher education should be more actively encouraged - postgraduate study and the development of political, public policy and leadership expertise. We therefore recommend:

**Recommendation 21**

*That providers of postschool education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders:*

- more vigorously promote their existing schemes aimed at encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in postschool education; and

- expand the number of existing scholarships, cadetships and postgraduate awards available to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.

**Recommendation 22**

*That the Commonwealth provide additional funds for two new schemes to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in postschool education:*

- a scholarship/wage subsidy scheme to support Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders undertaking innovative combinations of work and related postgraduate study; and

- an internship scheme to support the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledge of political science and public policy and to further encourage the development of Indigenous leadership.
We note that the Commonwealth's ABSTUDY program is currently being evaluated and believe that all submissions and notes of public consultations relevant to the program should be made available to that evaluation, provided the respective individuals or organisations giving evidence to the Review agree.

ABSTUDY is widely regarded as an essential and vital means of enhancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in secondary and postsecondary education. Strong views were expressed about ABSTUDY's income testing arrangements - seen as inequitable and degrading - and participants in consultations overwhelmingly believed that the income test on ABSTUDY should be abolished.

In higher education it is argued that the combination of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) and the inadequate income provided under ABSTUDY relative to obligations and costs, especially in remote areas, actively discourages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in tertiary education. Some believe that HECS should be abolished for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; many feel strongly that HECS should be abolished for all students.

Evidence presented to us also indicates a strong concern to ensure that ABSTUDY continues to be administered as a separate program from AUSTUDY. We agree, noting that the original arguments in favour of establishing a separate income support payment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students still hold.

Some evidence argues for universal eligibility for ABSTUDY, abolishing the income test on this payment entirely. In a climate of scarce resources, it is difficult to sustain this argument when need in other areas is much more pressing. In our judgement, the income test on the living away from home component of ABSTUDY for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary students living in rural and remote areas could be abolished to remove what are seen as invasive tests of eligibility. This change would encourage participation among secondary students in the critical later years of schooling, for little additional cost. To give effect to this judgement we recommend:

Recommendaion 23

*That the Commonwealth improve ABSTUDY by abolishing the income test on the living away from home component of ABSTUDY for secondary school students in rural or remote areas.*

While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in education has increased in the last five years, the size of the gaps between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' participation and all other students' participation remains largely unchanged. Selective and highly targeted initiatives are now needed. The seven measures (recommendations 17 to 23) we propose cover the whole spectrum of education and training provision and need to be implemented as a set to avoid discontinuities in students' progression and to maximise the opportunities of those currently involved in education and training.
**EQUITABLE AND APPROPRIATE OUTCOMES**

Our fourth term of reference has been to review the means of achieving equitable and appropriate educational outcomes for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders, while acknowledging traditional and contemporary cultural differences, including gender issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 13</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 14</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Goal 15</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Goal 16</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Goal 17</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Goal 18</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Goal 19</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Goal 20</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Goal 21</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' outcomes from education are most often reported in terms of participation in a subsequent level of study, or in terms of post-education destinations, notably employment.

The evidence presented to us has drawn our attention to possible tensions between what is 'equitable' and what is 'appropriate' in 'equitable and appropriate outcomes' for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. When equity is interpreted quantitatively it tends to be understood as referring to statistics such as the rate at
which Indigenous students achieve the same outcomes from education relative to non-indigenous students. This raises the question of whether or not these same outcomes can be appropriate to both groups, since the backgrounds, needs, circumstances and aspirations of Indigenous peoples may differ from those of other Australians.

There is a good deal of support in the evidence presented to us for the view that different outcomes are appropriate for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. We do not concur with this view. We do agree, however, that different groups may place different emphases on the many and varied outcomes of education or may manifest the same outcomes in different ways under different circumstances.

![Labour Force Status of Young Australians, 1991](chart)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>15-19 Year Olds</th>
<th>20-24 Year Olds</th>
<th>15-19 Year Olds</th>
<th>20-24 Year Olds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not In Labour Force</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The 'Not in the Labour Force' category is made up of the balance of the population who are neither employed nor registered as unemployed. Many in this category are in full-time education.

Source: 1991 ABS Census of Population and Housing

Language is an essential part of a person's identity and is of critical importance in the transmission of cultures. We recognise the critical importance of supporting the study of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages because of the role they play in the maintenance and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures and values. The question of language maintenance and preservation was comprehensively examined in *Language and Culture - A Matter*
of Survival. The report makes a strong and unequivocal case for increased support for language maintenance programs, alerting Australia to the possibility of extinction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

In evidence presented to us we note the emphasis placed on the role of bilingual and 'both ways' schools in maintaining traditional languages. We believe that other schools, and other Australians, also have a role to play in maintaining indigenous languages. We recommend:

**Recommendation 24**

*That State and Territory curriculum, assessment and accreditation authorities develop courses of study which allow students to undertake study in an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language in primary and/or secondary school.*

*In those States and Territories which prescribe courses of study in languages other than English, such courses should be regarded as courses in a language other than English.*

While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people strongly support the teaching and learning of their own cultures and languages in educational institutions, they almost universally also recognise the importance of achieving proficiency in standard English in both its spoken and written forms.

Like the Aboriginal Employment Development Policy Review, we recognise the possible tension between generating courses and curricula specific to the needs of Indigenous peoples and offering them access to the 'mainstream' education and training which may be the gateway to wider employment opportunities. This is reflected in our concern that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' education include literacy education, since 'literacy in the dominant culture is a prerequisite for more equitable education and employment outcomes for disadvantaged young people'. This was a strongly held view, especially among Indigenous peoples in urban settings and younger people more generally.

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children entering primary school have a limited command of standard English and/or speak Aboriginal English, a Kriol or an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language as their first language. Lack of proficiency in Standard English, the dominant language of instruction across all sectors of education, is considered by many to be a fundamental barrier to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in education.

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6 Report of the Inquiry into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Language Maintenance, House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, June 1992.

7 John Freeland made this observation in his issues paper for the Australian Education Council on Postcompulsory Education and Training.
We believe that forms of education which are based on the recognition and acceptance of a child's first language as a legitimate form of communication best serve the educational needs of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Similarly, there is strong evidence for the pressing need to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children whose first language is a Kriol or an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language with the same kind of intensive English language tuition as is currently available to newly arrived immigrant children whose first language is not English. Accordingly, we recommend:

**Recommendation 25**

That education providers identify those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander preschool, primary and secondary school students whose first language is Aboriginal English, a Kriol or an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language and ensure that they are provided with at least the same levels of literacy and English as a second language support and assistance provided to non-indigenous students whose first language is not English.

**Recommendation 26**

That education providers identify those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander preschool, primary and secondary students whose first language is a Kriol or an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language and whose literacy and numeracy achievements are below the average for non-indigenous students of a comparable age and ensure that they are provided with at least the same level of intensive English language support and assistance provided to newly arrived immigrant children whose first language is not English.

The Commonwealth should contribute to the provision of this support and assistance in the same way that it contributes to the costs of providing intensive English tuition services to immigrant children under the New Arrivals Component of its National Equity Program for Schools.

The evidence presented to us indicates an ongoing need for high quality resources which reflect indigenous lifestyles and cultures. While there is a considerable amount of activity in curriculum and resources development, it can be difficult for people to discover existing materials and gain access to them.

There is considerable debate but little consensus about whether or not Indigenous students learn in different ways to non-indigenous students but it is clear that educators need to recognise socio-cultural and linguistic factors when they plan their teaching approaches and assessment procedures.

In evidence presented to us, Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders across Australia have consistently said that they believe education systems are failing to support them in their efforts to preserve their culture and traditions. Their children's participation in school education particularly is characterised by high levels of truancy, low levels of achievement and feelings of alienation and lack of
respect for a system which lacks relevance. At the same time there is a widespread concern that Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander knowledge, cultures and values are not taught and valued by those who control the systems.

Schools and school systems need to be aware that the culture of schools may create an environment in which Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders feel no sense of belonging. For schools and school systems to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, their cultures and their values need to be accommodated. And in accommodating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and values, the diversity of Australia's Indigenous peoples must be recognised.

Most submissions from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and organisations made a sharp distinction between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies. They discuss Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education as the education necessary to maintain and develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity, knowledge, culture and community aspirations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies is the study of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders, their cultures and heritages appropriate, or even necessary, for non-indigenous Australians (though also, perhaps for some Indigenous people) to develop cultural awareness and sensitivity to Indigenous Australians. This knowledge is necessary to develop the kind of recognition and respect for Indigenous Australians which might provide a basis for a lasting reconciliation between Indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

We found that there was widespread support among Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders for the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies in the curriculum for all Australian students. In addition there is general support for the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in key curriculum documents.

Many submissions argue that the content, processes and organisation of the dominant forms of Australian education do not acknowledge their culturally corrosive effects on Indigenous Australians. It is crucial, they argue, that the integrity of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders knowledge, communities, and cultures be actively recognised and supported as the basis for their continuing development.

**Recommendation 27**

*That courses aimed at improving non-indigenous Australians' understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional and contemporary cultures be made a mandatory element of the curricula of courses at all levels of education.*

*Such courses should be developed by Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders, drawing on the curriculum development expertise of others if necessary.*
Such courses should include information about local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures on the advice of local communities.

Such courses should be delivered, where possible, by appropriately qualified and/or experienced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Accreditation and assessment bodies should formally recognise the prior knowledge and understanding that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students hold in relation to these courses.

Recommendation 28

That the Commonwealth, States and Territories jointly develop materials which include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the 'Cultural Understandings' competency.

Vocational education is particularly successful in raising the postschool aspirations of young Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. The Commonwealth's Vocational Education and Guidance for Aboriginals Scheme needs to be improved (see recommendation 40). Funds available for vocational education and guidance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are inadequate, relative to the demand for these services. Accordingly, we recommend:

Recommendation 29

That the Commonwealth provide additional funds under its Vocational Education and Guidance for Aboriginals Scheme.

Despite some improvements in educational attainment, Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders remain the most disadvantaged in the labour market. While Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders make up some 1.6 per cent of the total Australian population, they are over-represented among the unemployed (some 3.8 per cent), the long-term unemployed (some 4.5 per cent) and among those unemployed and receiving benefits for 18 months and longer (nearly 4.8 per cent).

Of even greater concern is the large proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who, leaving education, do not enter the labour market at all. Little is known about Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders who are neither in the labour force nor in education.

We regard the labour market programs offered under Working Nation as means by which unemployed Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders and those participating in Community Development Employment Projects might get education and training which will prepare them specifically for employment. We are concerned that eligible Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders may not yet be participating in mainstream labour market programs and/or in labour market programs designed specifically to meet their needs. Accordingly, we recommend:
Recommendation 30

That agencies responsible for providing specific mainstream labour market programs and labour market programs designed specifically to meet the needs of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders report annually on the participation of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders in those programs, relative to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' share of categories of unemployment.

This term of reference also asks us to give special attention to the gender issues around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in education. The evidence presented to us demonstrates that, starting from the early years of secondary school, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys and men are less likely to participate in education than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls and women. There are marked gender differences in Year 12 retention rates, and in technical and further education and higher education participation rates. Many of our recommendations will improve the educational experiences of both males and females; evidence has also drawn attention to the need to adopt some special measures to improve the educational experiences of boys and men.

Much of the evidence presented to us suggests that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys' and young men's lower participation in secondary education is attributable, at least in part, to the conflict which arises from being treated as children by the education system but as men by their communities. We believe that further research needs to be done to identify the causes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys' and young men's educational alienation and recommend this as a research priority in recommendation 34. In the interim, we believe that the provision of positive role models for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys in secondary education and the encouragement of school practices which take their changed status into account would be effective means of redressing this problem. Accordingly, we recommend:

Recommendation 31

That agencies and organisations providing secondary education for male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary students:

. give priority to the employment of appropriately qualified and/or experienced male teachers in secondary schools where classes contain young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men;

. promote the employment of both male and female Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers in secondary schools; and

. adopt school organisation practices (such as separating male and female students for particular subjects or at particular times) which give appropriate respect to the status of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men in their communities.
Language, culture and heritage are intricately intertwined with notions of self-determination and reconciliation which are the keys to improving educational and employment outcomes for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. Non-indigenous Australians need to know more about Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders, and Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders need the best possible literacy and language skills to be successful in education and training and in working and community life. These eight recommendations (recommendations 24 to 31) address these ends, have relatively low direct costs and are in the reach and gift of all governments.

**REPORTING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Our fifth term of reference has been to review the means of ensuring appropriate reporting, monitoring and evaluation procedures for the use of funds under the auspices of the Joint Policy.

The funds spent on education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders come from a variety of sources, but ultimately from taxpayers, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander taxpayers. The processes of government which allocate taxation revenue to the Commonwealth’s own programs, and to general revenue and specific purpose assistance to the States and Territories, take a number of factors into account - for example, the composition of the population, rurality and special needs. The effect of the Grants Commission’s fiscal equalisation principle:

that each State or Territory should be given the capacity to provide the same standard of public services as other States and Territories, if it makes the same effort to raise revenue from its own sources and conducts its business with an average level of operational efficiency

is to increase general revenue grants to those States and Territories with high proportions of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders in their populations and especially in those States and Territories where Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders are concentrated in rural and remote areas.

One of the most worrying gaps in information is the absence of reliable expenditure data, as demonstrated on the table on the following page. The total amount of money spent on education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders is still not known.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMONWEALTH</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>VIC</th>
<th>QLD</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>WA</th>
<th>TAS</th>
<th>NT</th>
<th>ACT</th>
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<td>4,271,700</td>
<td>10,079,000</td>
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<td><strong>Total AEDA (93-94)</strong></td>
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<td>2,318,892</td>
<td>154,212</td>
<td>1,766,924</td>
<td>225,824</td>
<td>1,508,722</td>
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<td><strong>Total GRG (1994)</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,574,472</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,517,033</strong></td>
<td><strong>11,267,519</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,015,729</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,134,947</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,398,590</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,665,902</strong></td>
<td>319,555</td>
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<td>Total Equity Program for Schools (1994)</td>
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<td>na</td>
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<td>Higher Education - Support funding</td>
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<td>2,744,422</td>
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<td>4,123,654</td>
<td>9,348,639</td>
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<td><strong>6,270,243</strong></td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL COMMONWEALTH</strong></td>
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<td><strong>54,820,178</strong></td>
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<td>STATE/TERRITORY (4, 5)</td>
<td>27,236,041</td>
<td>3,433,694</td>
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<td>12,737,336</td>
<td>15,798,145</td>
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<td>AEGCs (6)</td>
<td>206,000</td>
<td>109,000</td>
<td>557,958</td>
<td>136,927</td>
<td>133,183</td>
<td>10,080</td>
<td>228,000</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL STATE/TERRITORY (1994)</strong></td>
<td><strong>27,502,041</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,533,694</strong></td>
<td><strong>18,040,718</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,874,273</strong></td>
<td><strong>15,931,328</strong></td>
<td><strong>875,287</strong></td>
<td><strong>39,286,734</strong></td>
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<td>Vocational Education/Training (93-94)</td>
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<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>106,330,215</strong></td>
<td><strong>23,568,613</strong></td>
<td><strong>94,408,249</strong></td>
<td><strong>38,764,228</strong></td>
<td><strong>70,751,506</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,297,924</strong></td>
<td><strong>94,918,194</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,148,926</strong></td>
<td><strong>441,187,855</strong></td>
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</table>

1. Aboriginal education direct assistance funds to the ACT are included in NSW and therefore skew both the NSW and ACT government funding ratios.
2. ORG funding for government schools is based on 1992 enrolments and 1994 initial funding rates. ORG funding for non-government schools is based on 1993 enrolments and 1994 initial funding rates.
3. Teaching costs include funding under the former Aboriginal Participation Initiative and funding provided under higher education general operating grants. Note that operating grant funding is an estimate only and is based on the average funding level per ESFPU for each institution.
4. Information provided by State and Territory government education providers under Schedule C of the Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program agreements.
5. Figures for some States/Territories do not include general expenditure on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attending mainstream schools. Figures for the Northern Territory are not precise due to the integrated nature of education delivery and the high percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
6. No ACT government funding has been provided to the ACT AEGC since October 1992.
We recognise that there are substantial difficulties in gathering this information. It is not always possible to identify the component of funds used for a general purpose, for example, for total curriculum development, which is applied for education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. We also note the claims that supplementary funds allocated specifically for education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders may be diverted to other purposes. In effect, funds are 'swallowed up' in bureaucracies. This claim is particularly strong in evidence presented about the postschool education sector. We consider this financial information to be vital to future assessments of the efficiency and effectiveness of education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. We recommend:

**Recommendation 32**

*That governments identify:*

1. **the component of general revenue assistance to States and Territories which is a loading for those States and Territories with relatively high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations and which is used for the education of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders;**

2. **the component of general revenue assistance spent on education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders attending 'mainstream' education courses; and**

3. **funds spent on specific purpose education programs for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders**

*as baseline funding data on education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.*

*The Commonwealth should compile, update and publish this information annually.*

The data in the statistical annex to this Report reveals the extent of both what is known and what is still *not* known about education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. One common issue in submissions and consultations, and a matter of great concern to us, is the collection and analysis of information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' access to, participation in, and outcomes from, education. Collecting this information is one important way for Australia to keep track of what is being done in education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.

On the basis of the evidence presented to us, we believe that the current reporting and monitoring arrangements for education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders across all sectors of education are inadequate. In some cases the necessary information is not being, or has only recently begun to be, collected. In other cases information is being collected to no purpose and is not publicly available.
The absence of this basic statistical information impedes proper policy formulation. The lack of information about, for example, literacy attainment levels and language spoken at home makes it difficult to assess the extent of unmet need for intensive English language instruction or the potential for bilingual education in English and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander languages to redress literacy problems. Information about socioeconomic status (provided by data on income, parent's income and parent's educational attainment) allows us to assess the compounding effects of the often multiple educational disadvantages experienced by Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. Without this information it is difficult to identify, for example, the component of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student's educational disadvantage attributable to poverty.

Without this information governments, providers and the community cannot be assured of the efficiency of the educational services they provide for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders; nor can they properly account for the use of the funds they spend. This is an area which needs urgent and sustained attention and we recommend:

Recommendation 33

That the Australian Bureau of Statistics and recipients of Commonwealth funding for education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders maintain databases to enable national reports on the state of education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders to be compiled and published annually.

These reports should include, as a minimum:

- the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory structures by sector of education and the proportion of positions held by Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders on these bodies;

- the number of full-time equivalent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed, and the total number of employees, by:
  - age;
  - gender;
  - location;
  - parent's educational attainment;
  - sector of education;
  - part-time or full-time status;
  - casual, contract or permanent employment status;
  - professional or paraprofessional status/academic or non-academic status; and
  - level of appointment within occupational classification;

- the number of additional education places provided to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders by construction or refurbishment of facilities, by sector of education;
the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled at and attending preschool education programs, by age, gender, location, parent's income, parent's educational attainment, language spoken at home and sessional participation;

the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled at and attending primary, compulsory secondary and postcompulsory secondary school programs, by age, gender, location, employment status, parent's income, parent's educational attainment, language spoken at home and year of schooling;

the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander year 12 students eligible for entry to higher education institutions, by age, gender, location, employment status, income or parent's income, parent's educational attainment, language spoken at home and subjects studied in Year 12;

the number of full-time equivalent Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders enrolled at and attending technical and further education institutions, by age, gender, location, employment status, income or parent's income, parent's educational attainment, language spoken at home and field and stream of study;

the number of full-time equivalent Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders enrolled at and attending adult and community education institutions, by age, gender, location, employment status, income or parent's income, parent's educational attainment, language spoken at home and field and stream of study;

the number of full-time equivalent Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders enrolled at and attending higher education institutions, by age, gender, location, employment status, income or parent's income, parent's educational attainment, language spoken at home and field of study;

the number and proportion of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders aged 19 who have completed Year 12 or its equivalent, by gender, location, employment status, income or parent's income, parent's educational attainment, language spoken at home and course or field of study;

the number and proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled at and attending courses not leading to the award of any formal credential, by sector of education, age, gender, location, employment status, income or parent's income, parent's educational attainment, language spoken at home and course or field of study;
the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students completing courses of study, and the proportion of these students receiving a formal credential at the end of that course of study, at the following levels:
- Certificate
- Associate Diploma
- Diploma
- Degree; and
- Postgraduate award;
by type of institution, age, gender, location, employment status, income or parent's income, parent's educational attainment, language spoken at home and field of study;

the number of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders enrolled at and attending intensive English language instruction courses by age, gender, location, employment status, income or parents' income, parent's educational attainment and language spoken at home;

the number of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders enrolled at and attending courses in Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander languages, by age, gender, location, employment status, income or parent's income, parent's educational attainment and language spoken in the home;

the number of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders enrolled at and attending courses aimed at enhancing their capacity to manage and develop their communities, by age, gender, employment status, income or parent's income, parent's educational attainment, location, language spoken at home and field of study; and

the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other Australian students completing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies courses, by age, gender, location, employment status, income or parent's income, parent's educational attainment and language spoken at home.

The standard ways that access to, participation in, and outcomes from, education are measured do not and cannot reveal a great deal about the quality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' educational experiences, or at least do so only in a very indirect way.

Educational outcomes mean different things to different people. The evidence presented to us makes it clear that Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders and other Australians share a broad vision of the outcomes they want from education. At the same time, Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders place great importance on the transmission and continuing development of indigenous cultures and values through education - at the moment the culture and values being reproduced through institutional education are not their own.
We believe that work should be undertaken to develop a complementary set of performance indicators which could provide evidence of the quality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' educational experiences. These performance indicators need to take into account all of the outcomes of education - including the transmission and continuing development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures and values. Essentially this is a shift in emphasis, to place greater weight on the quality of educational outcomes as opposed to input and quantitative outcomes measures.

The processes involved in education related research are as important as the research itself. Priority in research funding should be directed to projects which engage local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as equal partners in all stages of research - from its design to reporting its results.

Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders argue strongly that their cultures, knowledge and values should be given equal respect and importance to those of non-indigenous Australia in education systems. They recognise the importance of the skills and knowledge that non-indigenous Australia has to offer but without a reciprocal recognition of their skills and knowledge, the education provided for them is incomplete and lacks cultural relevance. Their response has been the development of 'both ways' education systems. 'Both ways' education is an innovative approach that calls for equal respect for both indigenous languages, knowledge and ways of organising learning contexts, and for English language and knowledge-based learning in educational institutions.

'Both ways' education recognises that the maintenance and development of Aboriginality is, and will remain, a permanent issue for education and schooling, and that education for contemporary Aboriginality must take different forms in different circumstances and different forms in different places as the educational processes and outcomes regarded as appropriate vary. This evidence favours processes through which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can develop their own Aboriginality, and do so in ways which maintain shared Aboriginality as a distinctive element in the different and changing circumstances of contemporary Australian social, cultural, economic and political life.

One compelling submission arguing for improved educational provision puts it this way:

A critical factor is to make outcomes appropriate to Aboriginal needs. The education and training system is a white suburban system imported... with special programs added on in an effort to create relevance for Aboriginal students. The education and training system should be redesigned to meet the needs of the Aboriginal majority - with a suitable curriculum, Aboriginal teaching staff, Aboriginal principals and administrators.
We have drawn out a set of priorities for research from the evidence presented to us. We believe these accurately reflect the immediate concerns of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders and we recommend:

**Recommendation 34**

*That the Commonwealth provide additional funds to support ongoing research, evaluation and monitoring of education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.*

*The Commonwealth should allocate funding for this work on the basis of open and competitive tender.*

*Priority for funding should be given to:*

- the development of indicators of the quality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' educational experiences;
- research on the causes of educational alienation, especially educational alienation experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys and young men;
- research on the post education destinations of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders;
- the assessment of language maintenance needs;
- local explorations of two-ways education models;
- the development of best practice primary and secondary education courses in Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander languages;
- community level needs assessment of educational aspirations; and
- the development of counter-racism education.

**Recommendation 35**

*That the Commonwealth provide additional funds for innovative proposals in education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders which:*

- contribute to the achievement of the Commonwealth's national priorities for education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- are time-limited; and
- are able to demonstrate that ongoing funding for the wider application of successful initiatives will be provided by funding bodies other than the Commonwealth.*
The process for selecting innovative proposals for funding should be on a competitive submission basis. Preference should be given to innovative proposals which have been endorsed by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities or organisations. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Groups should not be excluded as potential applicants for up to ten per cent of the available funding.

These funds should support pilot projects in the following areas:

- trialing approaches which enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' self-determination in education within government school systems;

- testing the feasibility of direct funding models, in the first instance by providing Commonwealth funds for:
  - Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders residing in the Torres Strait directly to the Torres Strait Regional Authority, rather than to the Queensland government; and
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students directly to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enclaves in tertiary institutions, rather than to the institutions themselves;

- trialing a nationally available postgraduate course in the language teaching methods and understandings necessary for the delivery of courses under the Australian Indigenous Languages Framework;

- trialing regional high school models which develop alternative school organisation practices to encourage participation in secondary education;

- trialing the local delivery of 'both ways' education models; and

- trialing local area aggregations of school-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Support and Parent Awareness committees as alternative recipients of Commonwealth funding, to test direct funding models and to determine the best means by which their activities might be coordinated with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Groups.

There is already a core of specialists in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies within many universities and a growing informal network of these and other Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders inside and outside these institutions. One extension of this arrangement could be some form of institutional expression, often represented in evidence as the desire for an indigenous university. Such a university would have a special mission to research and promote indigenous approaches to a whole range of studies currently dominated by non-indigenous
perceptions and assumptions. It could also generate teaching materials for use across all sectors of education, raising cultural awareness among both Indigenous and non-indigenous students, and provide a core curriculum for preservice and inservice teacher preparation.

Many of these objectives can be achieved by changing arrangements within and between existing institutions, and by raising the status and profile of the activities of the communities of indigenous scholars and students. The next step proposed by proponents of an indigenous university is to develop a separate network of campuses (perhaps linked together under a common Vice-Chancellor like the Australian Catholic University which grew out of state-based teachers' colleges) from this network in existing universities.

We recognise the strong support for an indigenous university among several influential proponents but consider that many issues still need to be resolved before a firm commitment to establish an indigenous university could reasonably be made - not least what the wider community of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders would regard as the most appropriate form for such a university. To assess these feasibility issues we recommend:

**Recommendation 36**

*That the Commonwealth immediately commission a feasibility study to investigate options for an indigenous university. Such a study should:*

1. canvas the range of Australian and overseas models of tertiary provision for indigenous peoples, including the option of cooperative networks of specialist units in existing universities;

2. quantify the capital and recurrent funding implications of the proposal and assess the capacity for a private sector contribution to these costs; and

3. report by the end of 1996.

The study should be overseen by a committee with a majority of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders and include representatives of the Commonwealth (including the Department of Employment, Education and Training and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission), the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee, the Higher Education Council of the National Board of Education, Employment and Training, representatives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education staff, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students, and relevant union and business interests.

Without realistic and reliable data about how much is spent, and on what, for education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders, governments and the community cannot make informed judgements about how much to spend or how
effective services are. There are no major technical reasons why our two recommendations (recommendations 32 and 33) on monitoring and evaluation cannot be implemented. This data will provide a context for further research into the best ways to provide education and training for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. The three recommendations (recommendation 34, 35 and 36) on priorities for research and related innovative practice are critically important.

RESOURCES AND NEEDS

Our sixth term of reference has been to examine funding allocations, the distribution and management of resources for education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders and the compatibility of these resource allocations with needs.

Many submissions request funding for specific projects, often of critical local relevance. While not necessarily indicating the extent of need, such requests, and especially the number of them, indicate that funding for education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders is either wrongly directed or inadequate.

We cannot assess the merits of these individual requests for funding. Where calls for additional funding for a particular need or place have been consistent we have recommended elsewhere in this Report that additional funding be provided or that new priorities for the use of existing resources be set.

The overwhelming impression from submissions and consultations is that many problems could be resolved not by the provisions of additional funding, but rather by providing existing funds on a secure and stable basis - as a guaranteed entitlement rather than subject to the unknowns of competitive submission-based arrangements.

Much of the evidence complains of complex, and sometimes incomprehensible, funding arrangements. Many specific comments request funding, programs or strategies which are already in place, indicating that many Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders do not yet have adequate information about the array of programs and services which are available to them. This also perhaps reflects the fact that these programs and services have been subject to chronic revision.

We concur with the view that too much of available funding is being wasted on writing submissions and on what are seen as unnecessarily bureaucratic administrative requirements. We are particularly concerned about the level of minor operational detail required by the Commonwealth under current administrative arrangements. Many put the view that the general lack of coordination and information sharing may mean that valuable resources are being wasted on reinventing the wheel.

The set of administrative principles set out in recommendation 2 and the establishment of the clearinghouse for education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders proposed in recommendation 5 address many of these concerns.
New funds are needed to achieve these recommendations. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' control of the expenditure of these funds should be maintained by their continued involvement in endorsing strategic plans. It is clear that particular changes to the administration of existing programs will enhance their efficiency without jeopardising either these programs' objectives or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' aspirations for educational self-determination. We recommend:

**Recommendation 37**

That funds currently provided by the Commonwealth for education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders and which are used for recurrent purposes (for example, for salaries) be paid as a per capita recurrent grant under financial and educational accountability conditions as apply to other per capita recurrent payments.

A provider's entitlement to this supplementary recurrent funding to ensure equitable and appropriate educational outcomes for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders should depend on:

1. the formal recognition of the provider as an accredited provider of an educational service;
2. the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled and actively participating in a course of study with the provider at a certain census date; and
3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Group (or another appropriate representative Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander group) endorsement of the education provider's operational plan.

The per capita amount to be paid for each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student should take into account:

1. the different costs of providing educational services across sectors of education (preschool, school, vocational, technical and adult education, or higher education);
2. the different costs of providing educational services in urban, rural and remote areas;
3. the level of support available from State and Territory governments; and
4. need, recognising that independent Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander controlled providers may lack access to sufficient funds from other sources.

The accountability arrangements for this recurrent funding should:
for financial accountability, be satisfied by a formal statement that funds were used for the purposes for which they were provided; and

for educational accountability, be satisfied by reports on the educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students endorsed by representatives of the relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and/or organisations.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' educational outcomes data to be reported should be agreed between the Commonwealth, education providers and representatives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Any changes to existing Commonwealth funding arrangements should be contingent on recipients' agreement to:

- revised reporting and monitoring arrangements which simplify financial accountability in return for greater educational accountability;

- the continued and permanent employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers; and

- recipients' commitment to implement the recommendations of this Report relating to staffing policies and practices.

These new arrangements should commence at the beginning of the next funding triennium of the Joint Policy. The Commonwealth should make additional funds available to ensure that existing educational providers do not lose under the new arrangements.

Recommendation 38
That the Commonwealth further improve its Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness program by:

- more vigorously promoting the fact that:
  - secondary school students are eligible to be members of their school's ASSPA committee; and
  - funds are currently paid directly to ASSPA committees

- allowing ASSPA funds to meet the institutional fees and charges incurred by committee members undertaking relevant, accredited short courses (for example, bookkeeping) which allow them to both contribute to ASSPA committees and further their own education and training;

- providing complementary program guidelines for school staff setting out the dual purposes of the ASSPA program and promoting the
strengthening of links between schools and ASSPA committees. These guidelines should highlight that:

- ASSPA committees can become an integral part of the partnership between the school, parents and the community
- ASSPA funds are supplementary to and do not replace funds provided to the school for general expenditure for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- providing school budgets to ASSPA committees would assist them to make informed decisions about expenditure based on schools' priorities and planning
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children should not be excluded from school activities on the grounds that their school fees have not been paid;
- the use of ASSPA funding for school activities is legitimate; and
- the autonomy of ASSPA committees; and

encouraging ASSPA committees or groups of ASSPA committees to become incorporated bodies.

We note that the Commonwealth’s Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme is currently under internal review by the Department of Employment, Education and Training and believe that all submissions and notes of public consultations relevant to this scheme should be made available to that review, provided the respective individuals or organisations giving evidence to the Review agree.

Recommendation 39
That the Commonwealth improve its Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme by:

- setting a minimum tutor hours entitlement, at two hours per week for primary students, three hours per week for secondary students and four hours per week for technical, further and tertiary education students;

- more vigorously promoting the fact that:
  - tutors without formal teaching qualifications can be employed under special circumstances (for example, in remote areas where such qualified tutors are not available); and
  - tutors can be employed during school hours under special circumstances (for example, where students are studying by correspondence);

- allowing for the employment of tutors where students need general assistance (for example, in study methods) rather than assistance in particular subject areas; and
allowing for contracts for tutors to be made for longer than 13 weeks in circumstances where a student's continuing need for tutoring is known to extend beyond 13 weeks (for example, secondary school students, university students doing semester and year long courses).

Recommendation 40

That the Commonwealth improve its Vocational Education and Guidance for Aboriginals Scheme by more vigorously promoting:

. the program to schools early in the school year;

. the use of funds for school based activities raising understanding of the range of postschool options and work awareness; and

. the fact that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education support units in technical and further education institutions, universities and other postschool education institutions are eligible to apply for funding.

The evidence presented to us also highlights the need for a set of principles to underpin the way in which agencies do business with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. We believe that the application of these principles will not only enhance program delivery from the client's perspective but will also increase the efficiency and effectiveness of agencies. We recommend:

 Recommendation 41

That all educational service providers, including the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training, adopt the following principles in relation to the administration of programs supporting education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders:

. the most accessible and widely available information to ensure the community knows of and understands its entitlements;

. the longest possible advance notice of any changes in administrative arrangements;

. the simplest possible application forms, requiring the minimum amount of information to effect efficient program delivery;

. the simplest possible acquittal procedures;

. the least possible delay in answering questions, processing applications or making payments; and

. the earliest possible notification and payment of entitlements.
We strongly believe that any changes to the internal structure of agencies administering educational policies, programs and services for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders should be invisible to the people who receive them. Improvement in the quality of service to clients is what matters; how this is achieved should be of much less concern. In this sense we have been surprised by the many frank comments made in the evidence presented to us about the internal organisational structure of the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training and about other agencies providing education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. We have taken these comments as an indication that the quality of service provided by these agencies is not ideal.

The educational experiences of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders, like all people, are shaped by the interactions they have with individuals as well as with systems or structures. This point is made most clearly in the many calls, not just for more Commonwealth education field officers, but for particular, 'good', field officers to return to particular places.

Frequent references were made in evidence to the inability of these officers to provide adequate client service because of their administrative workloads. Many people thought that greater levels of administrative support in the field were required and that this might permit these officers to work strategically instead of being bogged down with paperwork. Frequent references were also made to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' expectations of the local staff of agencies providing education. These staff are often expected to be all things to all people, and particularly, to be able to deal with issues outside the domain of education - employment issues, housing issues and so on.

We note that the Department of Employment, Education and Training's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Units are currently under internal review and believe that all submissions and notes of public consultations relevant to these Units should be made available to that review, provided the respective individuals or organisations giving evidence to the Review agree.

Recommendation 42

That the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training improve the quality of its service to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders by:

recognising that staff are expected by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities they work in to be familiar with the broad details of programs across the employment, education and training portfolio, and, in some cases, across all Commonwealth portfolios, and providing adequate staff training and development so that they are able to meet these expectations;
maintaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Units as discrete structures responsible, through the Area structure, to one National officer;

recognising the links between education and employment by ensuring that the roles and responsibilities of the Department's Remote Area Field Service and its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Units are coordinated through Aboriginal Strategies Branches in Area Offices;

locating responsibility for policy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education (across all education sectors), direct assistance and income support in one National Office organisational unit; and

basing the administrative and staffing resource allocation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Units on a formula which takes into account both the administrative requirements of the programs they administer and the strong preference expressed by Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders to do business face-to-face and in environments where they are most comfortable.

At least in part, the confusion and uncertainty about education that appears to exist in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities may be attributable to a lack of continuity in staffing in the key agencies providing education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. To meet this concern the Reference Group recommends:

Recommendation 43

That the Commonwealth appoint a senior executive, with appropriate support, to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of this Report, at least until such time as the body proposed in Recommendation 4 is established.

We are also concerned that the process of evaluation continues. A number of the positive developments which have occurred over the last two years may be a consequence of the fact of the Review's existence. We see value in maintaining this watchdog role and we recommend:

Recommendation 44

That education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders be reviewed again from the year 2001.

The Report of that Review should be presented to governments by the end of the year 2002.

In other parts of this Report we have made recommendations for additional funding to meet identified gaps in need for education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. Recommendations 37 to 42 are designed to improve the way existing
resources are managed and to enhance program efficiency and effectiveness. We are concerned too, to ensure that the process we have undertaken in reviewing education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders continues (recommendations 43 and 44).

A SCHEDULE OF NECESSITY

The Joint Policy already embraces a range of strategies to achieve its goals. These different strategies have different specific objectives, involve different groups of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders, respond to different needs, and have different administrative and staffing support arrangements. Evidence presented to us emphasise the uncertainty and confusion which exists around all of these different strategies to improve education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.

There is a clear hope for greater stability and certainty in policy, programs and practices in the future. On the other hand, the evidence heard by the Review also demonstrates that change is warranted. Taken together, these two views suggest that an evolutionary, rather than a revolutionary, approach to change should be adopted.

We have adopted a set of principles which, we believe, should underpin any future work undertaken under the auspices of the Joint Policy. These five principles - educational self-determination, diversity, subsidiarity, affiliation and efficiency - have guided our work and we believe they are manifest in the recommendations of this Report.

We believe that the proposals set out under Involvement and self-determination are the critical next steps in the movement to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' educational self-determination. We have recommended some improvements to existing structures for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' educational self-determination, and the establishment of new bodies to assist this process. We have suggested reforms to the education industry, and in particular to staffing policies and practices. The quality of educational services is critically dependent on the skills, knowledge and attitudes of the people who deliver them.

We are concerned that some Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders still do not have access, particularly local access, to the educational services available to other Australians. Under Equitable access we have recommended new funds, for capital and for the trialing and support of alternative educational technologies, to address this problem.

Under Raising participation we have recommended the continuation of initiatives known to be effective in raising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's participation in preschool education. We have proposed a number of new initiatives to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in technical and further education, adult and community education and higher education.
*Equitable and appropriate outcomes* sets out proposals which, we believe, will lead to better outcomes from education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders - intensive English language tuition and other English as a second language services to improve English literacy attainment levels; further improvements in curricula for both Indigenous and non-indigenous students; special measures to improve the educational experiences of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys and men. We believe that the direction of the assistance given to all Australians under the Commonwealth's Working Nation strategy to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders will be of positive benefit in enhancing the employment outcomes of their education.

We are deeply concerned at the lack of information about what has and has not been achieved in education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. The recommendations made under *Reporting, monitoring and evaluation* set out the data still needed to inform policy decisions and specify the means by which the data might be collected. Other recommendations identify research priorities, and seek new funds to pilot new ideas which we consider will progress the achievement of the goals of the Joint Policy.

*Resources and needs* identifies a number of improvements to existing Commonwealth programs of assistance for education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders, proposes a feasibility study on an indigenous university, and sets out a number of administrative principles and practices which, we believe, will improve the way we do business with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. It also proposes interim arrangements for overseeing the implementation of our recommendations and sets the immediate timetable for the next review of education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.

We are realistic about achieving the goals of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy. We believe that the recommendations made in this Report are readily amenable to action by governments and other educational service providers. Some of the recommendations can be implemented unilaterally by particular agencies; others require cooperation and negotiation between agencies. Some can be implemented immediately and at little cost; others require longer lead times to ensure that Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders understand and endorse the recommended changes and to ensure that adequate funds to implement the recommendation are available.

At its meeting in April 1994 the Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (previously the Australian Education Council) agreed to consider the development of a National Strategy for the Education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to complement the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy. The Ministerial Council set up a Working Group to set out the terms of reference, membership and so on for a Ministerial Council Taskforce to develop this Strategy.

At its next meeting in early November 1994 the Ministerial Council will consider the report of its Working Group. The draft terms of reference for the proposed Taskforce
require it to take the recommendations of this Report into account as it develops the Strategy. We believe that the implementation of those recommendations of this Report which require cooperative effort between Commonwealth, State and Territory agencies is best pursued through the Ministerial Council.

Prime Minister Keating, addressing the New Educational Realities Conference in Melbourne on 15 June 1994, described the Commonwealth's agenda in education as:

less... a vision than a schedule of necessity - the series of things we need to do, must do and can do.

His words are particularly apt for education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders and taken together our recommendations are a schedule of necessity. The conclusion of the story of the painting adorning the cover of this Report is prophetic:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Watjanilatju:</th>
<th>Conclusion:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walungurralakampa yanangu tjuta kaulaku nintirringkula mayutju nyinaku.</td>
<td>At Walungurru the yanangu people now know about schools - they are going to control their own school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palunyatjanu pipirri tjuta kuulangka tjarrparra nintilingkurriku walypalakunu wakgaku kaljaku, yanangukuny ngurraku, walyijaku, tuluku, tjukurrpa. Walypala kuultiti mayutju kuulangka nyinanyingka, pipirri tjuta tjana ngurra kutu nyinaku.</td>
<td>With yanangu people in charge the children will be able to come to school and learn properly, learn both walypala language and culture, and yanangu culture and tradition. If the walypala remain solely in charge, our children will not learn properly at all.</td>
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Australia is at a critical moment of hope and promise in the tasks of achieving educational equity for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders and reconciliation between Australia's Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. It is a moment in which we can all act to make a better future and achieve new partnerships, recognising and respecting the heritage of all Australians.

Individually, each of our proposals offers a small step towards equity and reconciliation in and through education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. Combined, they are a systematic and powerful strategy to provide better educational policies and practices for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. In Yolngu:

| Gurtha nhara methuthu ganumbali djarrjuntjin baykandiari bunuwarra mayku nharana dhiyalkhuyalk yalala buthun dhurrkuma wangangura, gukula waritj munungitj rilmitja | The sacred fire is burning; the tongues of the fire set alight the tree of knowledge. The sparks will fly across the land in this country we call Australia. |