



The IEUA speaks on...

Authorised by Lynne Rolley, Federal Secretary Independent Education Union of Australia

## INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

The Independent Education Union of Australia believes that critical attention is required in relation to a wide range of Indigenous Education issues. The fact that Australia's Aboriginal peoples remain at the bottom level of every economic, health and social indicator is unacceptable and should be a source of national shame.

In particular the IEUA seeks development of policy and mechanisms to support:

### **Early intervention and literacy/numeracy support**

The IEUA believes that withholding tutorial assistance until the student has failed to meet the year 3 benchmark test is neglecting the considerable educational research that has shown that the vital time for students acquiring literacy and numeracy skills in the early years of education.

It does not make sense that the Government is willing to expend very substantial resources to improve outcomes in years 4 and 5, when targeted assistance given in the early years could also improve those outcomes in a more cost effective manner.

During-school-hours tutorial assistance has demonstrably improved literacy and numeracy syllabus outcomes and has also improved attendance rates and social integration, particularly at the early stages of primary education.

The IEUA also believes that one of the strengths of the during-school-hours tutorial assistance program is the fact that the student is not withdrawn from their immediate peer group and the program is clearly supplemental to mainstream teaching and learning in the student's classroom.

### **Teacher Education**

All teacher education courses should provide an opportunity to learn about Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander people,

their history, culture and contemporary issues confronting them.

Teacher education courses should provide an opportunity for pre-service teachers to develop successful teaching and learning strategies that have been developed in an Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander context

Teachers and support staff in schools with indigenous enrolments need specific skills and knowledge development and these must be provided through fully funded inservicing.

### **Accountability**

The IEUA knows that staffing rural and remote schools and sustaining those staff over a period of time to allow them to establish sustained teaching and learning relationships with their students – particularly Aboriginal students – is very important and also very difficult. Accountability measures should be in place which require reporting on

- teacher and support staff retention;
- the specific support mechanisms provided in remote indigenous communities intended to achieve such retention
- the nature of employment contracts in particular nature and length of tenure.

### **Funding Entitlement**

The IEUA recommends that consideration be given to broadening the scope of the per capita funding entitlement for indigenous students to overcome difficulties arising from current arrangements based on an application process for targeted funds. Such funds should be made available to the school.

### **Vocational Education**

The IEUA calls for a commitment to supporting vocational education especially in rural and remote areas. This requires the provision and support of the necessary infrastructure and also of the

local economy to ensure that genuine training opportunities and subsequent employment opportunities are realised.