

COMMONWEALTH GRANTS COMMISSION

INDIGENOUS FUNDING INQUIRY

SUBMISSION

From: Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance Submission

Submission No.: IFI/SUB/0029

Date Received: 26/04/2000

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Department of Treasury and Finance

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Mr. R J Searle
Secretary
Commonwealth Grants Commission
Cypress Court
5 Torrens Street
Canberra ACT 2612

20/04/00

Dear Mr. Searle

RE: SUBMISSION ON INDIGENOUS FUNDING INQUIRY

I refer to the letter from Mr Morris to Mr Little of 7 February 2000, calling for submissions addressing major issues in regards to the Indigenous Funding Inquiry.

As indicated in my letter of April 11, attached is an additional Victorian Submission, prepared by the Department of Education, Employment & Training.

You sincerely

Stein Helgeby
Director
Revenue Policy

THE NEEDS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE FOR HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING, HEALTH AND EDUCATION

The needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in relation to education and training are documented through a number of policy documents. These include:

- *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy*
- *Review of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy*
- *National Strategy for the Education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples 1996-2002;*
- *The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty- First Century. Goal 3 states Schooling should be socially just so that:.....*
 - *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have equitable access to, and opportunities in, schooling so that their learning outcomes improve, and over time, match those of other students*
 - *All students understand and acknowledge the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to Australian society and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to and benefit from reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians*

When reviewing the education and training needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it is noted that there must be a focus on equitable access, participation and outcomes. Specific areas of focus for educational outcomes include:

- Literacy and numeracy outcomes
- Retention, attendance, completion rates, increased enrolments
- Involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in the delivery of services (ie employment in education and training as well as access to professional development)
- Involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in decision making
- Delivery of culturally inclusive curriculum

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS ESTABLISHED TO MEET THOSE NEEDS, INCLUDING HOW NEEDS ARE MEASURED AND HOW FUNDS ARE ALLOCATED

In developing/establishing programs that meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, the following factors must be taken into account:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples active involvement in decision making processes, particularly in developing, delivering and evaluating programs. The Department has a partnership arrangement with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEA1), a Statewide Community organisation that provide advice regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and training matters: and
- Flexibility of programs so that the specific needs of local and regional areas can be met. There is a diversity that exists amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and as such needs are varied. It is important that programs both recognise this diversity of need and are flexible enough to respond.

Koorie 2000 provides the framework for initiatives that operate in the schooling sector to improve educational outcomes for Koorie students. Koorie 2000 strengthens and formalises the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait people in educational decision making and builds further on the partnership between the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEA1) and the Department of Education, Employment and Training (DEET).

The following programs/initiatives operate as part of Koorie 2000:

Regional Koorie Education Committees (RKEQ)

Eight RKECs are located across Victoria and comprise representation from Local. Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups and the Department of Education, Employment and Training. The committees are allocated funds to resource regional Koorie education programs. The Department has continued its commitment to the Reconciliation process by allocating RKECs specific funds to implement local and regional initiatives that promote a further understanding of reconciliation.

Koorie Open Door Education (KODE) campuses

Three campuses have been established in Glenroy, Morwell and Mildura. The campuses provide Koorie inclusive curriculum and programs for students.

Koorie-Education Development Unit (KEDU)

The KEDU, that comprises of central unit officers and outposted Koorie Education Development Officers, provide policy, curriculum, and program advice relating to Koorie education. The KEDU has developed units of course advice, which contain an indigenous perspective, relating to the Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) Key Learning Area.

Koorie Educator Program

Fifty six (EFT) Koorie Educators are located in schools with a significant Koorie student population. The Koorie Educators provide support to Koorie students at the school and act as a liaison between the school and Koorie community. An annual Statewide Koorie Educator Conference is held to bring together Koorie Educators from across the state to discuss priorities and workshop effective practice in Koorie education.

Koorie Intern Teacher Program.

The final intake of 32 Koorie participants are being supported to complete their training as teachers at Deakin University.

Koorie Literacy Link Project and Koorie Middle Years Link Project

Both projects seek to improve literacy outcomes for Koorie students in years Prep to 3 and years 7 to 9 through the use of video conferencing. Identification and implementation of effective literacy strategies, programs and practices are a priority of both projects.

Koorie 2000 Statewide Newsletter and Website

The Koorie 2000 Statewide Newsletter is produced and disseminated to all government schools twice a year to provide information on Koorie 2000 initiatives. The Koorie 2000 web site supports the implementation of Koorie 2000 through the promotion of specific initiatives.

Koorie Students in the Early Years materials

In partnership with the Early and Middle Years of Schooling Branch, the KEDU has assisted in the development of a video and accompanying notes that promotes how the *Early Years of Schooling Program* can support Koorie students. The materials will be distributed to schools during 2000.

Special Learning Needs component of the School Global Budget.

The Department of Education, Employment and Training has addressed the issue of students with special learning needs and has developed an index of resourcing for schools based on identification of factors that best predict students at educational risk. This index is based on actual student characteristics as opposed to previous indices based on characteristics of the surrounding population as identified in the national census. These factors can be broadly classified as those related to family and other personal circumstances.

An SLN Index is calculated for each school based on the weighted proportions of students in the categories above. Funds are allocated on a sliding scale to those schools whose index is above a nominated threshold.

Funds are allocated to schools through an SLN index which incorporates the proportions of students in individual schools that have characteristics that predict student learning difficulties. The SLN index incorporates measures of.

- poverty
- family status
- occupation
- Koorie (Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)
- transience
- language background other than English

Review of Indigenous Training and Further Education.

The involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in decision making processes is highlighted by the Review of Indigenous Training and Further Education, where the VAEA1, in partnership with the Office of Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment , has undertaken a review of training and further education matters that impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The draft recommendations address the requirements of the Koorie community for training to support self determination and to meet the aspirations of individual Koories through:

- recognition of the significance of Koorie identity and the need to support this
- better defining and extending the roles of Koorie advisory structures;
- strengthening the influence of the Koorie community at State, Regional and local levels in the State Training System with respect to planning and policy advice
- developing culturally appropriate training delivery and service standards for Koorie students
- meeting the diverse aspirations of individual Koorie students of all ages.

The Review identifies a range of outcomes that are required from the State Training System to support economic independence, including employment.

The draft recommendations pertain to a range of policy, planning and advisory initiatives that, when implemented, will ensure that training providers better understand the needs of the Koorie community, become more responsive to these needs and become more accountable to the Koorie community in meeting these needs.

To obtain better outcomes from training, including employment outcomes, the Review recommends initiatives that will improve the connectivity of the Koorie community with Government, Registered Training Organisations providing training to the Koorie community and employers.

When measuring need, the following is taken into account:

- Input from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Location and size of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population
- Outcomes experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (including students) in areas of education, training and employment Outcomes may include retention, attendance, completion and participation rates as well as literacy and numeracy achievement levels
- Extent to which existing programs/services appropriately meet the specific and diverse needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Funds may be allocated based on a combination of factors including enrolment (population) data, student outcomes data, socio-economic status of the student and the extent to which existing programs/services appropriately meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

WHERE THERE ARE FEATURES OF SOME REGIONS, SUCH AS LANGUAGE, POPULATION, GEOGRAPHY OR CLIMATE OR SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE ECONOMY THAT CHANGE THE LEVEL OF NEEDS OR MAKE IT MORE EXPENSIVE TO MEET THOSE NEEDS

Location and size of population needs to be taken into account when meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. For example, while it is necessary to meet the needs of significant numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in specific locations, it is also necessary to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may not be significant in number. Victoria's government school student profile can be used as an example to highlight this point.

According to 1999 School Census data, there were 5112.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments (eft) across 908 schools. The table below highlights the distribution of the students across the 908 schools.

Schools with between 1-5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	669
Schools with between 6 - 19 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	201
Schools with 20 or more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	38
Total number of schools with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	908

While it is important to meet the needs of large populations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in particular localities, it is also important to meet the needs of the large number of students that are dispersed across a variety of schools and locations. The issue of meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students dispersed across a large number of schools is a particular challenge in Victoria. It can sometimes be more costly to meet the needs of such students as it is difficult to achieve economies of scales when delivering a service across a variety of locations.

It is also acknowledged that the following factors can cause difficulties when meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:

- Lack of access to appropriate services that take into account the specific and diverse needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is particularly important to note that lack of access to appropriate services can occur in urban as well as rural and remote areas
- Distance, in particular where distance causes difficulties in accessing services
- Language, in particular where English is the second, third or fourth language spoken.

How the Commission might measure the needs for each function and what data are available to measure needs.

Data available to measure needs include:

- Quantitative data - retention rates, attendance rates, enrolments, student completion data, literacy and numeracy achievement levels, socio-economic data, employment and training data relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Qualitative data - gained from consulting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations, including the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated.

The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty- First Century indicates that improvements should be made in a range of curriculum areas including literacy, numeracy, science, information technology and vocational outcomes. It particularly refers to the need to ensure that outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students more closely "match" those of other students. The National Education Performance Monitoring Taskforce (NEPMT) has the responsibility to advise the Ministers for Education, through the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) on ways in which the achievements of cohorts of students including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students should be measured. It would be useful for the Commonwealth Grants Commission to liaise with the Taskforce through the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.