Introduction

Background

The NSW Department of Education and Training’s Review of Aboriginal Education commenced in 2003 and as part of its advisory structure established, under the leadership of Professor John Lester, an Academic Advisory Group (Group) to provide informed input and monitoring of the Review process. As part of this advice the Group thought it appropriate to prepare six Stimulus Discussion Papers to assist the overall macro conceptual framework for significant shift in outcomes for Indigenous students in NSW. The motivation for such Papers stemmed from the apparent focus on micro reform and discussion emanating from the overall Review process in the early stages. Put simply, there was a need to provide considerable stimulus for the urgent resolution and critical analysis of significant shift in thinking, on what fundamental changes needed to be explored, if outcomes for Indigenous students in this state were to be significantly improved over the next decade.

Noted educationalists, with years of productive work, policy development and research in Indigenous education, were invited to attend a workshop to prepare Stimulus Discussion Papers to act as a catalyst to simultaneously deepen, extend and challenge the analysis and level of discussion on viable innovative outcomes for positive change for Indigenous students. The Papers produced as a collaborative exercise by those available educationalists, stand in their own rights and are woven in a loose thread to provide a comprehensive but by no means exhaustive attempt, to raise the bar of Indigenous outcomes for all Indigenous students in NSWDET. If the Group efforts have provided the reader with the passion to challenge, define, refine and develop or evolve higher order workable and productive outcomes for Indigenous students, then the primary task of the Group has been fulfilled. We invite you to take up the challenge.

The following six papers attempt to provide such stimulus:

- **The NSW Indigenous Schooling Proposal** - Scribe Dr Eric Willmot
- **Indigenous Quality Education Improvement Program (IQEIP)** - Prof. John Lester
- **Aboriginal Leadership Colleges** - Scribe: Dr Robert Morgan and Dr Peter Howard
- **Indigenous Studies Senior College** - Scribe: Prof. John Lester
- **Re-Visioning Schooling** - Scribes: Deirdre Heltmeyer and Dr Rhonda Craven
- **NSW Indigenous Quality Teaching Program (IQTP)** - Scribe: Prof. John Lester

The Task

The Academic Advisory Group workshop was designed to provide some form of stimulation to the discussion, analysis and development of improved outcomes for Indigenous students in NSW Department of Education and Training. Invited noted
educationalists from within Australia met over an evening and day to critically evaluate and discuss the nature and possible innovative interventions required to significantly raise outcomes for Indigenous students in this state. From some very informed discussion a consensus evolved in the approach and nature of the papers to be developed. Various members of the Group accepted responsibility to put together the Group’s thoughts into a collection of stimulus papers. While each paper stands independently there exists a binding thread which provides an opportunity to engage each paper into a comprehensive whole, which covers potentially all Indigenous students in schools in the NSWDET.

The primary thrust of all papers is a focus on changes at a classroom and school level in how Indigenous students are taught (pedagogy) and how schools are managed and staffed by specially trained and selected staff, to maximise Indigenous outcomes. Clearly the purpose and effect of change for Indigenous students must emanate from the most fundamental happenings and programs in the four walls of a classroom and the overall environment of the place of learning (schools/colleges). Fundamental change must take place here and is given prominence in the collective approaches of each of the individual and the overall theme of the Papers.

All papers build on important productive developments over the life of the original (1982) and revised NSW Aboriginal Education Policy (1996) in the areas of community empowerment/self-determination, syllabus direction from the NSW Board of Studies and the more current positive developments in teaching practice (pedagogy) through the NSW Quality Teaching Program.

The diagram below (Diagram 1) indicates how all Indigenous students are encapsulated through the wholeness of the individual papers.

**Diagram 1**

Discussion/Stimulus Papers

Key: * = Primary/High/Ab. 2001 Enrolment
As noted in Diagram 1, the Papers particularly maximised effort at the highest points of Indigenous student school populations. Change at the centre of the diagram has to involve whole school staffing changes and approaches to the productive education of Indigenous students. Moving from the centre the emphasis moves through various stages into improved and appropriate school management, and specialist schools; to an overall emphasis on quality classroom practice, which is inclusive and engaging of Indigenous students who find themselves as isolated individuals or small cohorts in schools across NSW.

The Academic Advisory Group

The task of bringing together high quality educationists with proven track records was in fact not a difficult one. Within Australia we are fortunate to have nearly all of the key players in the field still alive and kicking. Invitations were extended to around a dozen educators who were felt could provide a valuable, constructive and innovative input into the Review process. All invitations were warmly, enthusiastically and positively received but due to prior commitments, not all could attend the workshop. The following list of contributors to the Workshop held in Sydney in February provided the foundation discussion and collaborative content for the six Discussion Stimulus Papers.

- Dr Rhonda Craven - University of Western Sydney
- Charles Davison - President NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
- Denis Fitzgerald - NSWDET
- Deirdre Heitmeyer - University of Newcastle
- Dr Peter Howard - Catholic University
- Prof. John Lester - University of Newcastle - Life Member NSWAECG
- Dr Bob Morgan - Life Member NSWAECG
- Dr Eric Willmot -
Paper Summaries

**Paper 1: The NSW Indigenous Schooling Proposal**

**Summary**

The proposed Indigenous schooling strategy is both broad based and tightly focused. It is broadly based in that it includes a range of new and different provisions. It is highly focused in that initially it is designed to serve a relatively small part of the Indigenous school population.

This new proposal draws from much that has been learned about Indigenous education and schooling in general. However, the fundamental base of the whole strategy is that the best outcomes for Indigenous children can always be traced to exceptional teachers of whatever race, and particularly if they have been specifically trained for the task.

There is nothing new about the above conclusion, nor is the strategy proposed to provide such a group of teachers new, at least in Australia.

The Commonwealth Teaching Service (CTS) was such a body. It was set up in the 1950s and eventually closed down in the 1980s. During that period it had provided the teaching service for Christmas Island, Norfolk Island, the Northern Territory, Papua New Guinea and eventually the initial teaching service for the Australian Capital Territory.

The CTS was a Commonwealth statutory authority set up under a Commissioner, Jack Lenahan who was responsible for recruitment, training and posting. Each region of operation had a chief executive until just before it was closed down. The last Commissioner and Chief Executive was Eric Willmot who closed the provision down and was responsible for ensuring the remaining CTS personnel received the rights due to them under their contract.

In terms of recruitment the CTS was like a kind of teaching Foreign Legion with teachers coming from all Australian States, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and even from places like Hong Kong and Malaysia.

The CTS was far from perfect but for its time it was a very effective provision and provides at least one model for a special teaching service.

**The NSW Indigenous Schooling Proposal**

- Based on old Commonwealth Teaching Service
- Creation of specially trained teaching and executive teaching staff
- Properly prepared professional teachers
- Specially trained for the task
- Have an aptitude for the task
- Want to be part of such a group
- Are compensated for the conditions under which they may have to work.
Paper 2: Indigenous Quality Education Improvement Program (IQEIP)

Summary

The Indigenous Quality Education Improvement Program (IQEIP) is designed to increase educational outcomes of Indigenous students through the active genuine partnership with the Indigenous school community and the recruitment and professional support of quality Indigenous teaching and leadership in schools with high Indigenous proportional and raw enrolments.

To drastically reverse the outcomes for Indigenous students in schools over the next ten years specific high quality intervention will be required. Positive outcomes for Indigenous students are possible and are being achieved amongst small numbers, but generally this involves primarily students from black middle class or the ‘lucky’ students who manage by chance, to come in contact with the too few culturally conducive and productive teachers or educational leaders in our schools. By targeting this program at schools with high proportions of Indigenous enrolments (i.e. schools with 50% plus Indigenous enrolment and schools with 100 plus students enrolled) over 5000 Indigenous students or nearly 17% of the total Indigenous school population can be reached. This would involve around 42 primary and 16 secondary schools.  

It is vital that quality specifically trained, culturally conducive and motivated teaching and leadership staff be appointed to these high Aboriginal populated schools. This will involve the implementation of case managed staffing of the whole school and specific ongoing training and support (one option being ‘The NSW Indigenous School Staffing Proposal’ another paper by the Academic Reference Group to the Aboriginal Education Review).

The Indigenous Quality Education Improvement Program (IQEIP) will be governed by a school board, which has a majority of Indigenous community membership and the principal. Such boards will have access to specialised accredited training. They will have the specific brief of significantly improving student outcomes through implementation of quality Indigenous teaching in:

- Cultural affirmation;
- Community leadership skills;
- Attendance;
- Retention;
- Academic attainment; and
- Career/enterprise engagement.

These Indigenous community schools will be mentored by leading Indigenous education centres in NSW universities as part of an ongoing cutting edge innovative partnership approach to Indigenous education. Schools on the program will also form an interactive network for professional development and mutual support.

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1 Based on 2001 DET Enrolment Figures.
Specialist staff recruited under this program will be acknowledged for their expertise in salary packaging and career enhancements.

**Indigenous Quality Education Improvement Program (IQEIP)**

- Targeted at high Indigenous populated schools
- Quick turn around in current school results - outcome driven
- Culturally dominated pedagogy
- Genuine Partnership with Indigenous Community - School Board
- Hand picked and specially trained teaching and executive staff

**Paper 3: Aboriginal Leadership Colleges**

Centres of Aboriginal Education, Excellence for Enhancing Student Learning and Building Community Capacity.

**Summary**

Irrefutable evidence exists that clearly demonstrates that education generally and schooling in particular continues to result in failure for the overwhelming majority of Aboriginal students in NSW. The direct influence that poor learning experiences and even worse learning outcomes have on Aboriginal lifestyles and aspiration is a contested area of debate. However, whatever the merits or otherwise of the debate, it can be demonstrated\(^2\) that poor schooling experiences and educational outcomes often position Aboriginal students in such a manner that ill health, poverty, early and ongoing encounters with the juvenile justice system, life long unemployment, systemic and institutional racism are all tragic features of the marginalized life for far too many Aboriginal students who experience failure at school.

Pivotal to the identification and implementation of strategies to transform Aboriginal lifestyles and experiences is the need for strong, visionary and sustainable cultural, political and community leadership. It is argued that the absence of appropriately school trained and educated Aboriginal leaders is one of the fundamentals that is required if positive and meaningful change and development is to occur to enable Aboriginal peoples to enjoy the same level of freedoms and opportunities as other Australians. The underlying theme of this paper is that “getting it right for Aboriginal students in education” maximizes their prospects of “getting it right in life.”

This discussion paper argues the need for fundamental and radical change to the way in which Aboriginal education services and programs are conceptualized and implemented and the following proposal is couched in these terms.

\(^2\) (See various reports of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody)
Aboriginal Leadership Colleges

- Centres of Aboriginal Education, Excellence for Enhancing Student Learning and Building Community Capacity.
- “getting it right for Aboriginal students in education” maximizes their prospects of “getting it right in life.”
- Aboriginal Excellence – Not ‘Guest Paradigm”
- Specialising in development of Indigenous leadership
- Culturally appropriate pedagogy
- Selected and specially trained teachers and executive staff
- Mentored by university for research and development

Paper 4: Indigenous Studies Senior College

Alternative Names:
- Indigenous Studies Senior College (Sciences/IT Specialisation)
- (Leadership) (Languages)
- (Local Indigenous Name) Senior College

Summary

To improve retention rates to the School Certificate and the HSC and to provide a specialised Aboriginal Studies program in a culturally promoting environment amongst a productive cohort of Indigenous peers, the establishment of Indigenous Studies Senior Colleges in joint partners with the tertiary sector is required. Such Colleges will provide isolated Indigenous students and students studying Aboriginal Studies encouragement and access to the Colleges specialised support and teaching programs. Initially up to 3 of the proposed total 5 Colleges will be established as leading pilot programs. It is anticipated that such pilots could accommodate up to 500 Indigenous students across the state and potentially doubling current HSC Indigenous participation rates when fully operational.

Indigenous Studies Senior College

- Specialised Indigenous Studies
- Service isolated senior students
- Improve retention rates
- Targeted teaching and executive staff
- Indigenous Partnership - School Boards
- Partnered and located at Tertiary institution
- Development and research into Indigenous quality pedagogy
- Up to 5 Colleges envisaged – 2-3 Pilot program
Paper 5: Re-Visioning Schooling

Summary

We need to re-vision our schools so that they are transformed into places that are characterised by mutual respect and understanding of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and as such serve as a conducive learning environment for all Australian students. No Indigenous child should be left behind in such a process and there is a dire need to provide Indigenous students with accelerated learning programs to address the educational disadvantage Indigenous students have experienced. Re-visioning schooling takes more than a series of strategies to be achievable; it takes a commitment to accelerating Indigenous students’ learning, comprehending the significance of enhancing Indigenous students’ identity and academic self-concepts, and enhancing Indigenous students’ knowledge and skills. Hallmarks of a truly re-visioned system are resulting tangible educational, employment and economic outcomes that make a real difference. In particular, schools with significant Indigenous enrolments will include special fitness appointment of all Executive Staff.

Re-vision Schools

- Based on Mutual Respect and Understanding
- No Indigenous student left behind
- Accelerated Learning
- Enhanced Indigenous student identity, academic self-concept, knowledges and skills
- Educational, employment and economic outcomes
- Special fitness appointment of Executive Staff to high Indigenous enrolment schools.

Paper 6: NSW Indigenous Quality Teaching Program (IQTP)

Summary

Over one third of all Indigenous students enrolled in DET are in schools with less than 30 enrolments. While discussion/stimulus papers in this series have primarily targeted the two thirds of Indigenous students with specific strategies to address poor outcomes for these students, the system must simultaneously address the needs of Indigenous school students who are isolated in schools and classes in NSW. This one third of Indigenous student on the whole, have often limited cultural support in schools and generally are not engaged in the education process. They often move through school regularly attending, with limited educational outcomes, until they reach minimum leaving ages and then just disappear in a manner described as not dissimilar to the ‘silence of drowning’.

The most practical and potentially effective means of supporting this isolated critical student mass is through building on the potentially extremely positive research and strategies of the NSW Quality Teaching Program (QTP) as it specifically relates to Indigenous student educational engagement.
Ensuring all teachers are trained effectively to ensure Indigenous students feel welcomed, engaged in classroom practices and pedagogy, which are inclusive of their personal cultural and community background.

Creating a team of Indigenous Quality Teaching Program experts to assist schools in the development of teaching programs and processes which would actively support and include Indigenous students in everyday classroom practice.

Providing leading educational research and development in the Indigenous Quality Teaching Program to inform, guide and measure the initiatives’ outcomes for Indigenous students in a timely productive manner.

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**NSW Indigenous Quality Teaching Program (IQTP)**

- 1/3 of Indigenous kids are in schools of less than 30 students
- Highlights and develops Indigenous integration into NSW Quality Teaching Program
- All teachers are trained in IQTP
- IQTP development and implementation support team/s in place
- IQTP backed up by quality research, development and evaluation teams
- Cuts across all Indigenous Stimulus Discussion Papers Series
Paper 1: The NSW Indigenous Schooling Proposal

Preamble

The proposed Indigenous schooling strategy is both broad based and tightly focused. It is broadly based in that it includes a range of new and different provisions. It is highly focused in that initially it is designed to serve a relatively small part of the Indigenous school population.

This new proposal draws from much that has been learned about Indigenous education and schooling in general. However, the fundamental base of the whole strategy is that the best outcomes for Indigenous children can always be traced to exceptional teachers of whatever race, and particularly if they have been specifically trained for the task.

There is nothing new about the above conclusion, nor is the strategy proposed to provide such a group of teachers new, at least in Australia.

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The CTS was a Commonwealth statutory authority set up under a Commissioner, Jack Lenahan who was responsible for recruitment, training and posting. Each region of operation had a chief executive until just before it was closed down. The last Commissioner and Chief Executive was Eric Willmot who closed the provision down and was responsible for ensuring the remaining CTS personnel received the rights due to them under their contract.

In terms of recruitment the CTS was like a kind of teaching Foreign Legion with teachers coming from all Australian States, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and even from places like Hong Kong and Malaysia.

The CTS was far from perfect but for its time it was a very effective provision and provides at least one model for a special teaching service.

The NSW Indigenous Schooling Proposal

- Based on old Commonwealth Teaching Service
- Creation of specially trained teaching and executive teaching staff
- Properly prepared professional teachers
- Specially trained for the task
- Have an aptitude for the task
- Want to be part of such a group
- Are compensated for the conditions under which they may have to work.
A NSW Special Teaching Service (Indigenous Schooling) (STS)

This provision is based primarily on

- The generally accepted principle that the best schooling outcomes for any group and especially Indigenous children are achieved by teachers who:
  
  a) are properly prepared professional teachers,
  
  b) are specially trained for the task;
  
  c) have an aptitude for the task,
  
  d) want to be part of such a group, and
  
  e) are compensated for the conditions under which they may have to work.

The Australian experience of operating the CTS.

Such a teaching service would be established under the auspices of the NSW Department of Education and Training as either a division of the Department or as a NSW Government Statutory Authority with a Chief Executive Officer responsible to the Director General of Education and Training, and reporting through him/her to the Minister of Education and thence to the Parliament.

The CTS was a statutory authority, but at the time this was because there was no appropriate Government Department in the Commonwealth for it to be located by other means.

The authors of this document believe that this special teaching service should also be a statutory for political reasons associated with employment conditions.

This special teaching service should be managed and operated separately from other areas of the Department, but have access to specialist provisions of the Department such as Special Education.

The STS should have an identified budget, which it is responsible for managing through the financial management section of the Department.

Teaching and administrative staff for the STS should be specially selected and recruited mainly from the NSW teaching force and students in NSW universities. Under some conditions teaching staff could be recruited from other states or overseas.

One or at most two NSW universities with recognized outstanding performance in Indigenous education should be selected to provide both in-service and pre-service training.
Employment conditions for STS teachers should be as follows:

- Teachers are employed under contract to the STS statutory Authority;
- Basic salary and superannuation conditions should be the same rate as other NSW teachers;
- A separate and attractive allowance system and remote housing allowance should be established;
- At the end of their contract period and after satisfactory service, teachers may apply for a further contract, but in any case they will be accepted into the NSW system at an agreed level;
- Teachers leaving the STS before the contract period except for health reasons will be subject to an application to the NSW Dept of Education and Training; and
- STS Teachers and other staff can be assigned to any of the components in the new system without appeal.

Some elements of the new Indigenous schooling system may be set up by the NSW Department but all would be staffed and managed by the STS.

**Team Scribe: Dr Eric Willmot**
Paper 2: Indigenous Quality Education Improvement Program (IQEIP)

Synopsis

The Indigenous Quality Education Improvement Program (IQEIP) is designed to increase educational outcomes of Indigenous students through the active genuine partnership with the Indigenous school community and the recruitment and professional support of quality Indigenous teaching and leadership in schools with high Indigenous proportional and raw enrolments.

To drastically reverse the outcomes for Indigenous students in schools over the next ten years specific high quality intervention will be required. Positive outcomes for Indigenous students are possible and are being achieved amongst small numbers, but generally this involves primarily students from black middle class or the ‘lucky’ students who manage by chance, to come in contact with the too few culturally conducive and productive teachers or educational leaders in our schools. By targeting this program at schools with high proportions of Indigenous enrolments (i.e. schools with 50% plus Indigenous enrolment and schools with 100 plus students enrolled) over 5000 Indigenous students or nearly 17% of the total Indigenous school population can be reached. This would involve around 42 primary and 16 secondary schools.

It is vital that quality specifically trained, culturally conducive and motivated teaching and leadership staff be appointed to these high Aboriginal populated schools. This will involve the implementation of case managed staffing of the whole school and specific ongoing training and support (one option being ‘The NSW Indigenous School Staffing Proposal’ another paper by the Academic Reference Group to the Aboriginal Education Review).

The Indigenous Quality Education Improvement Program (IQEIP) will be governed by a school board, which has a majority of Indigenous community membership and the principal. Such boards will have access to specialised accredited training. They will have the specific brief of significantly improving student outcomes through implementation of quality Indigenous teaching in:

- Cultural affirmation;
- Community leadership skills;
- Attendance;
- Retention;
- Academic attainment; and
- Career/enterprise engagement.

These Indigenous community schools will be mentored by leading Indigenous education centres in NSW universities as part of an ongoing cutting edge innovative partnership approach to Indigenous education. Schools on the program will also form an interactive network for professional development and mutual support.

3 Based on 2001 DET Enrolment Figures.
ABORIGINAL EDUCATION REVIEW STIMULUS DISCUSSION PAPERS

Specialist staff recruited under this program will be acknowledged for their expertise in salary packaging and career enhancements.

### Indigenous Quality Education Improvement Program (IQEIP)
- Targeted at high Indigenous populated schools
- Quick turn around in current school results - outcome driven
- Culturally dominated pedagogy
- Genuine Partnership with Indigenous Community - School Board
- Hand picked and specially trained teaching and executive staff

### Rationale

Outcomes for Indigenous students in schools with high proportions of Indigenous students are well below the norm for all students across the state. Major intervention is required if this trend is to be turned around within the next 10 years and the primary focus needs to be on quality teaching and educational leadership in schools. To achieve improved outcomes in these high Indigenous populated schools a case managed specially selected school staffing policy needs to be introduced. Executive and teaching staff need to be selected with appropriate specialised qualifications and experiences in Indigenous education under a special fitness category for each school with 50% or more Aboriginal enrolments. There are approximately 26 primary and 8 secondary schools, which represents approximately 7% of all Indigenous enrolments.

The Indigenous population base is growing at a staggering 16% and concentrated on school or near school aged children.

The primary emphasis of such schools in the program would be a concentration on cultural inclusiveness and quality Indigenous education. The local Indigenous community needs to be in active and equitable partnership with the school to ensure relevance and improved outcomes for students.

### Aims

1. The Indigenous Quality Education Improvement Program Schools will have the specific brief of drastically improving student outcomes over the next ten years through implementation of an emphasis on quality Indigenous teaching, targeting:
   - Cultural affirmation and respect;
   - Educational engagement;
   - Academic attainment;
   - Career/enterprise engagement; and
   - Community leadership skills.

2. The Indigenous community will have maximum input into these schools through the establishment of community boards with proportional (to
Indigenous school enrolment base) representation of the broader Indigenous community peoples. Boards will:

- Provide direction on school policy and practice to the school principal;
- Be in partnership with the school in working towards achieving agreed quality outcomes for students; and
- Play the leading role in the selection and support of school staff.

3. Community boards and schools will keep current with latest Indigenous education research, management and teaching practice through a mentoring partnership with leading Indigenous educationalists in NSW universities.

4. Schools identified for the program will form a network with other schools on the program to provide professional development and encouraging productive interchange and focus on community agreed outcomes.

The Program

The program is designed to increase outcomes of Indigenous students through the active genuine partnership with the Indigenous school community and the recruitment and professional support of quality Indigenous teaching and leadership in schools with high Indigenous proportional enrolments.

Driving the agenda of the program will be two fold. Firstly the emphasis on genuine Indigenous community management through a school board, consolidating and promoting the foundation principles of Indigenous self-determination and self-management and secondly, the recruitment of specifically trained and experienced executive and teaching staff to the program schools.

The program will be managed and held accountable for outcomes centrally through the regional director in charge of Indigenous education and at a school level through the principal via performance agreements negotiated directly with local school boards.

Recruitment of quality specially trained and experienced staff in Indigenous education will be integral to the success of the program. Concentration of such staff on a single location will provide the catalyst to the reform required in the next 10 years. Such staff will understand the guiding principles of Indigenous self-determination, cultural understanding, respect and professional training to quickly move the program schools to positive results. The foundation of learning should be soundly based on an emerging quality Indigenous teaching program (a specialised approach to the NSW Quality Teaching Program, which requires specialised adaptation to the Indigenous learning domain).

Staff recruited under this program will need to be duly recognised in salary packages and career enhancement for their specialised skills, qualifications, experience and capacity to deliver outcomes in such circumstances. Consideration of some incentive schemes based on agreed outcomes should also be investigated for all staff involved.
School boards will need to be supported via accredited professional development programs to enhance their roles and contribution to this very important function. Such programs might best be delivered by specifically designed block-release and flexible delivery programs through TAFE.

**Team Scribe: Professor John Lester**
Paper 3: Aboriginal Leadership Colleges

Centres of Aboriginal Education, Excellence for Enhancing Student Learning and Building Community Capacity.

Background

Irrefutable evidence exists that clearly demonstrates that education generally and schooling in particular continues to result in failure for the overwhelming majority of Aboriginal students in NSW. The direct influence that poor learning experiences and even worse learning outcomes have on Aboriginal lifestyles and aspiration is a contested area of debate. However, whatever the merits or otherwise of the debate, it can be demonstrated that poor schooling experiences and educational outcomes often position Aboriginal students in such a manner that ill health, poverty, early and ongoing encounters with the juvenile justice system, lifelong unemployment, systemic and institutional racism are all tragic features of the marginalized life for far too many Aboriginal students who experience failure at school.

Pivotal to the identification and implementation of strategies to transform Aboriginal lifestyles and experiences is the need for strong, visionary and sustainable cultural, political and community leadership. It is argued that the absence of appropriately school trained and educated Aboriginal leaders is one of the fundamentals that is required if positive and meaningful change and development is to occur to enable Aboriginal peoples to enjoy the same level of freedoms and opportunities as other Australians. The underlying theme of this paper is that “getting it right for Aboriginal students in education” maximizes their prospects of “getting it right in life.”

This discussion paper argues the need for fundamental and radical change to the way in which Aboriginal education services and programs are conceptualized and implemented and the following proposal is couched in these terms.

Aboriginal Leadership Colleges

- Centres of Aboriginal Education, Excellence for Enhancing Student Learning and Building Community Capacity.
- “getting it right for Aboriginal students in education” maximizes their prospects of “getting it right in life.”
- Aboriginal Excellence - Not ‘Guest Paradigm”
- Specialising in development of Indigenous leadership
- Culturally appropriate pedagogy
- Selected and specially trained teachers and executive staff
- Mentored by university for research and development

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4 (See various reports of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody)
Proposal

One possible means of achieving the often elusive desire for change and improved learning outcomes for Aboriginal students is the design and development of the concept of Aboriginal Leadership Colleges. Aboriginal Leadership Colleges, 3 or 5 strategically located across NSW, would provide scope and the potential to train and educate a new generation of cultural and political leaders. The values and principles upon which Aboriginal Leadership Colleges (ALCs) would be based would be a process leading to the development of in-depth knowledge, respect for and appreciation of a number of key culturally affirming and academically enriching programs.

Aboriginal Leadership Colleges would be a site of Aboriginal education excellence where Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educators would be working collaboratively with an appropriately constituted College Board that would forge links to and seek to engage in partnerships with the Aboriginal community. This process would also facilitate moving beyond the “Guest Paradigm” (Morgan 1995), within which Aboriginal students and their community are merely “guests” in the non-Aboriginal, Eurocentric education domain.

The challenge is to create a learning space that is fundamentally culturally affirming and sustainable for Aboriginal students. Such a space would value Aboriginal history and philosophy (worldview) and strive to establish a system of knowledge, teaching and learning that utilizes the culture, heritage and identity of its students. This is the foundation upon which an Aboriginal focused and grounded education within the constructs of a learning site of excellence could and indeed should operate. Such an environment positions Aboriginal people and their children beyond the “Guest Paradigm” into that of an appropriate learning paradigm establishing the prospect of genuine partnership and collaboration.

The existing Aboriginal education “Guest Paradigm” does little more than create an illusion of Aboriginal self-determination and meaningful parental and community involvement in the processes and practices of Eurocentric education systems. It is argued that it is this “Guest Paradigm” that has characterized what is mistakenly referred to as “Aboriginal education” during the past 30 or 40 years and is a significant contributing factor in the continuing failure of “Aboriginal education” to address the learning needs and aspirations of Aboriginal students.

Guiding Principles of an Aboriginal Leadership College

For the concept of Aboriginal Leadership Colleges to be successful there would need to be a series of guiding and enabling principles. These guiding and enabling principles (incomplete) would include:

- Aboriginal cultural affirmation; (Self worth, pride and dignity in Aboriginal identity, extended family values and traditions)
- The development of an appropriate learning paradigm; (Respecting identity, relations learning and community members as valued educators);
- Cultural diversity; (Valuing and respecting all cultures)
• Parental and community engagement; (Processes that engage parents and community members as co-learners and educators in the education process)
• Aboriginal Reconciliation; (Dreaming the future)
• Partnership; (Creating the future - together)
• Aboriginal self-determination. (The right and responsibility to determine Aboriginal futures through honouring and celebrating the past)

An Aboriginal Leadership College could also act as a space where the science of education institutions could be established to provide training and research opportunities for both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal researchers, trainee teachers and other Aboriginal education workers including Aboriginal Education Assistants (AEAs) and Aboriginal Home School Liaison Officers. Linkages with established teacher education institutions would enable cross-fertilization of “best practice” methods in Aboriginal education and teaching. The ALCs could also be utilized for training and development of executive and other senior education administrators. The ALC system would also provide the opportunity for staff and administrators to be creative and innovative about how knowledge is generated and imparted including the use of gender based classes, Indigenous focused curriculum development, Aboriginal culturally affirming studies, e-mentoring and teaching and learning linkages with international Indigenous education facilities.

International Indigenous Context

Culturally focused and grounded education and learning environments have been successfully operating in other Indigenous contexts in other parts of the world for many years. Maori colleges in New Zealand and First Nation (Indian) education facilities such as the Joe Duquette High School in Saskatoon, in the province of Saskatchewan Canada and Ben Calf Robe High School in Edmonton are examples of learning excellence that intellectually engage and educate Indigenous students. Simultaneously these education spaces provide the means to effectively include and value the involvement of community members, the parents and care-givers of the students enrolled at these Indigenous education sites of excellence.

Conclusion

The need for fundamental and radical change must be embraced if the education experiences and outcomes for Aboriginal students are to be dramatically improved. A learning paradigm enabling Aboriginal students and the communities from which they are drawn to move beyond the poverty and social and cultural dysfunction that cripples far too many Aboriginal communities is required.

Appropriately skilled and educated Aboriginal leaders are essential to the repositioning of Aboriginal societies in NSW. A system of education and training such as Aboriginal Leadership Colleges that utilise Aboriginal learning styles and pedagogy can be instrumental in positively changing the learning experiences and outcomes of Aboriginal students enrolled in public education in NSW.
Given the brevity of this discussion paper, it is not possible to define the precise nature and scope of what the administrative and operational dimensions of the proposed Aboriginal Leadership College might look like. However, if the Minister and his Department see the proposal of Aboriginal Leadership Colleges as meritorious, then a more detailed and comprehensive concept paper could be drafted sometime later in the 2004.

Team Scribes: Dr Bob Morgan and Dr Peter Howard
Paper 4: Indigenous Studies Senior College

Alternative Names:
- Indigenous Studies Senior College (Sciences/IT Specialisation)
- (Leadership) (Languages)
- (Local Indigenous Name) Senior College

Option Synopsis

To improve retention rates to the School Certificate and the HSC and to provide a specialised Aboriginal Studies program in a culturally promoting environment amongst a productive cohort of Indigenous peers, the establishment of Indigenous Studies Senior Colleges in joint partners with the tertiary sector is required. Such Colleges will provide isolated Indigenous students and students studying Aboriginal Studies encouragement and access to the Colleges specialised support and teaching programs. Initially up to 3 of the proposed total 5 Colleges will be established as leading pilot programs. It is anticipated that such pilots could accommodate up to 500 Indigenous students across the state and potentially doubling current HSC Indigenous participation rates when fully operational.

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<td>• Up to 5 Colleges envisaged - 2-3 Pilot program</td>
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Rationale

Indigenous retention rates to Yr 12 are way behind that of non-Indigenous students. Significant numbers of Indigenous students exit school at the minimal leaving age (around years 9/10). Aboriginal Studies, the only culturally specific subject for the HSC for Indigenous students has dropping enrolments, is often culled from curriculum because of small student numbers, lack of trained and experienced teaching staff, or unsuccessfully competes with more dominant traditional subjects in crowded school timetables. In most instances Indigenous students completing the HSC do so in isolation or in small Indigenous student groups (less than 5). Indigenous students with exceptional ability at this level basically survive as fully integrated/assimilated students in non-Indigenous mainstream with little, and more often than not, no cultural support. Students wishing to specialise in areas like sciences, drama and languages are even more isolated. Lack of access to a competitive HSC outcome grossly inhibits higher education options and in particular career outcomes. University and TAFE colleges often
have to expend valuable and limited Indigenous resources preparing failed school students and mature adults in programs to build up base level entry skills and qualifications for university and TAFE programs.

To overcome this lack of HSC outcome and to provide high quality culturally appropriate educational outcomes through effective choice and range of subjects that encourage Indigenous students into a broad career options, the system must bring together these isolated students into several highly specialised and staffed senior colleges. To assist in maximising outcomes and preparing students for tertiary experiences these colleges need to be integrated into existing TAFE and university facilities which already have the required experience and expertise in delivery of quality Indigenous education program outcomes. Such locations will also maximise educational support and development of productive Indigenous teaching and learning approaches. These colleges will be seen, promoted and resourced, as ‘innovative leaders’ in the development of Indigenous education.

Due to the attrition rate from Year 9, these colleges would be established to cater for students from Years 10-12, thus providing the required encouragement and opportunity for Indigenous students to pursue studies amongst a larger body of Indigenous students through to the HSC.

These colleges should be based on the primary premise of specialised delivery of Aboriginal Studies (including languages) as a fundamental core of study, as similar schools have been established for the arts, technologies and sports. Such colleges would also be dominated by Indigenous Quality Teaching philosophy, which will maximise Indigenous engagement and ultimately outcomes. Enrolment into these colleges will be encouraged from students who wish to be exposed to Indigenous intensive learning and supportive environments.

To maximise the exposure and opportunity to students wishing to study at these colleges, student accommodation will need to be provided and delivery of courses (especially Aboriginal Studies and languages) will require flexible delivery options to service and support these subjects in NSW mainstream schools.

Colleges will be governed by a 2/3 majority Indigenous community nominated board.

**Aims**

The following aims will be achieved by this intervention:

- Provide quality culturally supportive senior college experiences to a significant number of Indigenous students (target doubling existing HSC outcomes in first 5 years);
- Increase significantly SC and HSC outcomes for Indigenous students;
- Specialised development and provision of high quality Aboriginal Studies;
- Create Aboriginal language nests;
- Maximise teaching, professional support and resources to Indigenous students;
ABORIGINAL EDUCATION REVIEW STIMULUS DISCUSSION PAPERS

- Provide outreach professional support, resources and teaching in Aboriginal Studies to isolated and remote students;
- Increase student discipline options, employment and career outcomes;
- Increase Indigenous enrolments in broad based higher level tertiary qualifications; and
- Maximising the use of existing tertiary facilities.

College Selection

It is proposed to select and establish at least 2-3 pilot colleges within rural and urban areas of the state within the first 5 years.

College location selection will be based on a competitive tender from existing tertiary and higher education providers to host such facilities and their capacity to work in genuine partnership with Indigenous communities and the Department of Education and Training in the development of these facilities. The following guidelines for tender selection are recommended:

- Proven ability to work with Indigenous community under the principles of Indigenous self-management and self-determination;
- Capacity of the sector/s to supply significant financial/in kind contributions to the college development;
- Proven capacity and record to provide high quality educational outcomes for Indigenous students;
- Proven capacity, experience and success in delivering Aboriginal Studies;
- Capacity to develop and deliver Aboriginal Languages;
- Ability to develop and deliver programs through innovative flexible delivery;
- Proven capacity to maximise service to a wide geographical enrolment base which would include both day and boarding students; and
- Ability to provide appropriate student accommodation.

Team Scribe: Professor John Lester
Paper 5: Re-Visioning Schooling

Summary

We need to re-vision our schools so that they are transformed into places that are characterised by mutual respect and understanding of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and as such serve as a conducive learning environment for all Australian students. No Indigenous child should be left behind in such a process and there is a dire need to provide Indigenous students with accelerated learning programs to address the educational disadvantage Indigenous students have experienced. Re-visioning schooling takes more than a series of strategies to be achievable; it takes a commitment to accelerating Indigenous students’ learning, comprehending the significance of enhancing Indigenous students’ identity and academic self-concepts, and enhancing Indigenous students’ knowledge and skills. Hallmarks of a truly re-visioned system are resulting tangible educational, employment and economic outcomes that make a real difference. In particular, schools with significant Indigenous enrolments will include special fitness appointment of all executive staff.

Re-vision Schools

- Based on Mutual Respect and Understanding
- No Indigenous student left behind
- Accelerated Learning
- Enhanced Indigenous student identity, academic self-concept, knowledges and skills
- Educational, employment and economic outcomes
- Special fitness appointment of Executive staff to high Indigenous enrolment schools.

Rationale

Given that the current schooling system clearly fails to meet the needs of the vast majority of Indigenous students there is a dire need to re-vision mainstream schooling practices. Waiting for this process to occur continues to impede the education, hopes and dreams of generations of Indigenous Australians.

Re-visioning schooling is required to ensure:

- That at a future date, regular schooling can effectively cater for all Indigenous students whereby it can be demonstrated, that such schooling experiences produce commensurate educational and economic outcomes for Indigenous students, as for their non-Indigenous peers;
- That the needs of Indigenous students that currently comprise small populations in schools are addressed so that no Indigenous child is left behind;
- That reconciliation is achieved; and
- Racism permeating schools and communities is addressed and genuine reconciliation fostered.
In order to achieve these goals the following key areas need to be targeted as outlined below.

**Teach the Teachers**

Effective schooling research has demonstrated that what makes a real difference in educational outcomes is the quality of teachers. Recent DEST commissioned studies (Craven et al., in press-a; Craven et al., in press-b), have also demonstrated that undertaking appropriate mandatory Aboriginal Studies, teacher education subjects impacts significantly on teachers’ abilities to understand and teach both Aboriginal Studies and Aboriginal students effectively. As such, there is nothing more fundamentally important for transforming schooling than stronger teacher education programs. As such, it is suggested that:

- All beginning teachers be required to undertake Aboriginal Studies teacher education subjects as an employment prerequisite;
- All in-service teachers be required to undertake postgraduate Aboriginal Studies teacher education subjects as a prerequisite to promotion and salary increases;
- All senior school staff be required to undertake a leadership training course in Aboriginal Studies and Aboriginal education; and
- Teacher education institutions be encouraged to strengthen their teacher education courses in regard to Aboriginal Studies and Aboriginal education by requiring pre-service teachers to undertake a mandatory Aboriginal Studies course, offering students access to a sequence of electives; ensuring Aboriginal perspectives are a natural core of all areas of the curriculum; and critically evaluating the outcomes of their program and reporting the findings to ensure tangible outcomes result.

It is inadequate to educate teachers without providing appropriate frameworks and support. As such it is suggested that:

- NSW Board of Studies (BOS) incorporate Aboriginal Studies as a Key Learning Area (KLA) and ensure Aboriginal Studies permeates the curriculum as a natural core across all KLAs and all levels of schooling for all Australian students;
- NSW BOS incorporate career education into the curriculum and provide Indigenous students with access to expert advice on schooling, further education, and employment aspirations;
- NSW BOS identify developing positive identity self-concept, academic self-concept, and motivation as critical outcomes of schooling and implement effective teacher education and intervention particularly in relation to Indigenous students;
- Indigenous students’ progress in relation to a wide range of educational outcomes valued by Indigenous communities (e.g. participation in schooling, achievement, positive identity self-concept, academic self-concept, motivation) be monitored independently annually; an analysis of diagnostic results be provided on line for teachers to inform teaching; and made available to researchers;
• Curriculum support resources be readily made available to teachers and teachers be provided with funds to develop locally-derived curriculum support materials;
• A concerted program of Aboriginal education research takes place to identify new solutions to underpin effective intervention and to critically evaluate new teaching strategies, new teaching materials, and new interventions to ensure presumed successful strategies result in tangible outcomes prior to systemic implementation;
• Teachers be provided with ongoing support after pre-service and in-service training through web based information on the latest developments, research findings, and resources available;
• All service deliverers work in conjunction with schools to provide support and funding for programs designed to assist teachers with at risk and talented Indigenous students.

Support Students

Indigenous students are the most disadvantaged Australians on all social indicators. As such they need additional support to realise their full potential. It is suggested that all Aboriginal students:
• Have access to after school academic coaching community centres staffed by fully qualified teachers/tutors with access to web-based learning materials;
• Be provided with access to a computer and individually-paced educational software;
• Have access to professional support (tutoring, counselling, career advice) via a telephone and internet hotline;
• Performing poorly be targeted for early intervention utilising programs that have demonstrable outcomes (e.g. reading recovery);
• Performing well have access to accelerated learning; and
• Have access to a mentoring system.

Community

Indigenous parents and community members want to support their children but are often at a loss as to how to do so. It is suggested that:
• Schools need to work in genuine partnership with Indigenous communities;
• A series of positive parenting programs be developed to empower Indigenous parents and communities with the knowledge and skills to support their children.

Special Fitness Appointment of Executive Staff

Schools with over 30 Indigenous enrolments and not part of high density Aboriginal enrolment schools will be subject to special fitness appointment of all Executive staff.

Team Scribes: Deirdre Heitmeyer and Dr. Rhonda Craven
Paper 6: NSW Indigenous Quality Teaching Program (IQTP)

Summary

Over one third of all Indigenous students enrolled in DET are in schools with less than 30 enrolments. While discussion/stimulus papers in this series have primarily targeted the two thirds of Indigenous students with specific strategies to address poor outcomes for these students, the system must simultaneously address the needs of Indigenous school students who are isolated in schools and classes in NSW. This one third of Indigenous student on the whole, have often limited cultural support in schools and generally are not engaged in the education process. They often move through school regularly attending, with limited educational outcomes, until they reach minimum leaving ages and then just disappear in a manner described as not dissimilar to the ‘silence of drowning’.

The most practical and potentially effective means of supporting this isolated critical student mass is through building on the potentially extremely positive research and strategies of the NSW Quality Teaching Program (QTP) as it specifically relates to Indigenous student educational engagement.

- Ensuring all teachers are trained effectively to ensure Indigenous students feel welcomed, engaged in classroom practices and pedagogy, which are inclusive of their personal cultural and community background.
- Creating a team of Indigenous Quality Teaching Program experts to assist schools in the development of teaching programs and processes which would actively support and include Indigenous students in everyday classroom practice.
- Providing leading educational research and development in the Indigenous Quality Teaching Program to inform, guide and measure the initiatives’ outcomes for Indigenous students in a timely productive manner.

NSW Indigenous Quality Teaching Program (IQTP)
- 1/3 of Indigenous kids are in schools of less than 30 students
- Highlights and develops Indigenous integration into NSW Quality Teaching Program
- All teachers are trained in IQTP
- IQTP development and implementation support team/s in place
- IQTP backed up by quality research, development and evaluation teams
- Cuts across all Indigenous Stimulus Discussion Papers Series
**Rationale**

Over one third of all Indigenous students enrolled in DET are in schools with less than 30 enrolments. While discussion/stimulus papers in this series have primarily targeted the two thirds of Indigenous students with specific strategies to address poor outcomes for these students, the system must simultaneously address the needs of Indigenous school students who are isolated in schools and classes across NSW schools. This one third of Indigenous student on the whole, have often limited cultural support in schools and generally are not engaged in the education process. They often move through school regularly attending, with limited educational outcomes, until they reach minimum leaving ages and then just disappear in a manner described as not dissimilar to the ‘silence of drowning’.

**The Intervention**

Based on the recent and promising leading research and development of the NSW Quality Teaching Program, which has as its foundation inclusive engagement of students through improved classroom teaching practice (pedagogy), there exists the first significant opportunity to affect all students, including Indigenous students, in all classrooms, in all schools, across all subjects in NSW. Given the recent nature of this critical and important development, it will be possible if we engage immediately in its implementation, to get in on ground level and develop appropriate teaching style and subject content to change the foundations of classroom practice to cement the inclusion and engagement of Indigenous students. QTP has the potential to change the fundamental teaching principles which will ensure engagement of Indigenous students through the elements of Significance in the model with particular emphasis on cultural knowledge, inclusivity, connectedness, and narrative; while simultaneously raising Indigenous expectation through the key elements of a Quality Learning Environment. In addition the movement to an inclusion of Indigenous students in higher-order thinking, deep knowledge and understanding and the other key elements of Intellectual Quality in the QTP, will provide the level of engagement to challenge and raise the level Indigenous student's thinking and interaction in the classroom. Indigenous students will arguably be potential active participants on mass, in all classroom activity, for the first time in the history of this State's public schooling. A feat, which perspectives to the curriculum has attempted but fallen well short of realising.

To achieve this significant shift in engagement of Indigenous students, schools need to be supported by specific Indigenous program and teaching development. Such development must be woven into the general thrust of the QTP, and seen by teachers as an important component of this statewide positive and potentially powerful teaching initiative.

Increased positive engagement of Indigenous students will be achieved by three key initiative components. Firstly, ensuring that all teachers receive specialist training in the Indigenous Quality Teaching Program (IQTP) as the means of the fundamental concepts of inclusivity, cultural knowledge, connectedness and narrative are developed in the
Significance dimension along with the mother QTP programs further two dimensions of Intellectual Quality and a Quality Learning Environment. Secondly, the formation of a specialist team or teams, of teaching supports personnel who can actively support the development of the IQTP. Thirdly and finally, provision of a quality research and evaluation partnership/s which will closely develop and monitor the progress of the IQTP initiative and provide clear, timely and informed feedback to the development and implementation of the initiative. All three initiative components can and should be integrated in support of the other four Initiatives/Discussion Papers in this series.

Team Scribe: Professor John Lester