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AEWs: Skilled uncles and aunties smoothing out the bumps on the road to learning

Frank Pearce

University of Wollongong

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Wollongong University

Masters of Educational
Research

AEWs: Skilled Uncles and Aunties
Smoothing Out the Bumps
on the Way
to Learning

Frank Pearce
Subject: EDGZ924 Student No: 3026280

AEWs: Skilled Uncles And Aunties Smoothing Out The Bumps On The Road To Learning

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree

Master of Education (Research)

From

University of Wollongong

By

Frank Pearce

Faculty of Education

2011

CERTIFICATION

I, Frank L Pearce, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Education (Research), in the Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at this or any other academic institution.

Frank L Pearce

Preface

Over recent times there has been much concern and debate about why only a very small percentage of Aboriginal people are going on to university (Kim Council, 2010 Hill).

After the tough, long four years it has taken to complete this thesis I believe I could supply most of the answers, but that is a story for another time, or possibly a doctorate?

I have been advised by many people over the long period it has taken to write this thesis not to say too much about what I personally think about Aboriginal issues. But I am afraid that is not me. One of the main reasons Aboriginal people are still the most disadvantaged group in Australia in most areas of disadvantage, is that for historical and cultural reasons they do not wish to cause offence, so do not speak up. They do not speak up because even after all these years they still fear the impacts of speaking up on them, their families and their communities. The problem is if we keep doing the same things in addressing Aboriginal socio-economic and educational disadvantage we will keep getting the same poor results.

“Though no-one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new end” (Anon).

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following individuals and groups for all their assistance, understanding, support and much patience in helping me to write this thesis.

Denise Kelly, a very dear friend, for her original artwork that depicts so well all the willing hands needed to get the best possible educational and social outcomes for Aboriginal children.

All the original custodians of Australia's many Aboriginal lands and in particular the NSW custodians. I would also like to pay my respects to all Elders past, present and future, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of all Aboriginal Australia.

My wife, Fay for her love, patience and understanding over the very long period it took to write this thesis. My brothers and sisters of the NSW CEC Aboriginal Advisory Committee. Their kindness and love have sustained Fay and me through some very difficult times, including this thesis. All the students, parents, teachers and principals of NSW Catholic schools for participating in my AEW survey.

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Bruce Roper, WA Department of Education, a close friend and brother, for all his assistance both academically and emotionally. Ross Tarlinton, Principal, St Joseph's College Hunters Hill, for his friendship and guidance in the writing of this thesis and in particular in the developing of the survey questions. All the *Dare to Lead* principals across Australia who participated in an earlier survey as a precursor to this thesis.

Children have dreams, adults have memories. It is my intention for the rest of my life to do whatever it takes to make sure Aboriginal children achieve their dreams.

ABSTRACT

Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) were first introduced to Australian schools in 1974 basically as a feel-good Social Justice response to the 1967 Referendum.

What AEWs do is largely a mystery to all but those who are closely involved with them. Whether or how much they contribute to improving Aboriginal educational outcomes, until the writing of this thesis, was also a mystery. What is most puzzling is the fact that their effectiveness has never been tested. There is no other job I am aware of that would not have had the effectiveness of its workers tested in some way over a period of thirty-seven years.

The aim of this research project was to gather perceptions and insights into the effectiveness of AEWs from those involved most closely with them: students, parents, principals, teachers and educationalists. To achieve this aim, the study used a mixed-method research design utilising a survey instrument with ten quantitative Likert-scale questions and five qualitative questions. Survey feedback from all survey respondents indicated strongly from their viewpoint and involvement with AEWs, that they make a significant contribution to improving Aboriginal educational outcomes, particularly in the areas of student wellbeing and community engagement. Amongst the respondents, fifteen to twenty-five per cent were undecided on how, or whether AEWs contribute to the attendance, retention and completion of Aboriginal students, or whether their removal would affect the outcomes. This reinforces the theory of the mystery, to a significant number of people, of what AEWs do.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Why is this research project so important? In the words of Yvonne Butler, an Aboriginal woman who grew up under the Protection Act (NSW Government, 1909)

Education is the greatest single weapon to overcome disadvantage and the impact of this denial of education affects me and other Indigenous people to this day. Education is the base upon which society relies, passing on our knowledge and teachings from one generation to the next (McCormack, 2011).

Much Aboriginal research has been done by many researchers over many years on many topics. However I believe that the topic of this research project “Do Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) contribute to improving Aboriginal educational outcomes?” is a first (Millgate, 2009; Partington, 2010). Based on many hours of research over four years I have developed a firm conviction that both the research topic of this thesis and the roles of its subjects, Australian AEWs, are unique. This became very clear when I struggled to find a comparison.

It was the original intention of this thesis to do a comparison of Australian AEWs and a Canadian equivalent, but it proved a fruitless exercise for a number of reasons.

Firstly, the literature would tend to indicate that Aboriginal Canadian School assistants work mainly if not completely in majority Aboriginal schools. Australian AEWs work in schools where Aboriginal students are virtually always in the minority as are they themselves amongst the staff.

Secondly, as it appears that Aboriginal Canadian School assistants work in schools where both they and their Aboriginal students are in the majority it is logical they would not suffer the same stresses and racism within the school environment. Also because it is an Aboriginal school they wouldn't have to deal on a daily basis with a child's identity crises and cultural wellbeing issues because they are working virtually in an all-Aboriginal environment. Australian AEWs on the other hand deal with these issues on a daily basis especially in large semi-metropolitan and metropolitan schools

After an extensive literature search I was unable to find a comparable instance of an Aboriginal teacher's assistant working in a mainstream school environment solely with their own small cohort of Aboriginal students. There may be Aboriginal teachers working in mainstream schools across the world, but it is my belief that would be just as a teacher, not an Aboriginal teacher whose sole duty is to a small cohort of Aboriginal students. All of the aforesaid leads me to believe the official and unofficial roles and circumstance of Australian AEWs working as a small minority with a small minority of students from the same culture in large mainstream schools is unique.

Taking into account all the aforesaid, developing both a methodology and survey instruments to investigate the research question, "Do Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) contribute to improving Aboriginal educational outcomes?" was a huge challenge.

Basing an AEW's performance solely on students test results, such as National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), is as flawed a concept as basing teacher performance on the same criteria (Leigh, 2010; "Teacher quality makes little difference, study shows ", 2009). There are many aspects of all students' lives, including Aboriginal students, that contribute to their having good educational outcomes (Lewis, 2011). In the case of Aboriginal students, these areas are mainly to do with student

wellbeing, and their pastoral and cultural care. That is why it was so important to include these elements in both the quantitative and qualitative research survey instrument.

Note on terminology

Culturally, I have issues with the word Indigenous, as do many other Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people so, unless in its context it is unavoidable throughout this thesis, the word Aboriginal is used. In the context of this thesis the word Aboriginal is also inclusive of Torres Strait Islander people.

Before reading the main body of this thesis it is important firstly to understand its rationale, aims, background, significance, limitations and my research position on this project.

Rationale for the research

I chose the focus of this thesis “Do Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) contribute to improving Aboriginal educational outcomes?” for four reasons.

Firstly, I wanted to demonstrate, in the bigger picture of a whole school with a number of Aboriginal students, that having a skilled AEW in a school is as valuable and as important as having an Aboriginal teacher in a school. An Aboriginal teacher can set an example to all students of motivation, aspiration and dedication (Mandela, n.d.). Their presence also greatly impacts in a positive way on all school staff and students (Behrendt, 2009). However, because of their teaching workload they are unable to take on the wellbeing and pastoral care needs of all Aboriginal students in that school. They also do not have time to make all the essential connections with all the Aboriginal parents and community of that

school, or in some way assist in all the classes that may have Aboriginal students who need assistance (Reid, 2006-2008).

I wanted to explore the possibility that an AEW on the other hand does not have a teaching load so can timetable the wellbeing and pastoral care needs of all the Aboriginal students as well as building relationships and partnerships with parents and community (M Winkler, 2006). They can also timetable classroom assistance for those students in most need as well as provide assistance to various teachers needing assistance with Aboriginal perspectives (Mandela, n.d.).

Secondly, although AEWs have been in classrooms since 1974 there has been no research to find out if they have had any impact on improving Aboriginal educational outcomes. Why this had not occurred puzzled a number of researchers as well as me greatly (MacGill, 2008; Millgate, 2009; Partington, 2010)

Thirdly, AEWs' positions are very insecure because in the main they have always been dependent on annual targeted Aboriginal funding and the ever-changing flavour of the month government policies (see appendix 12A) (Parker, 2009, p. 1). It is hoped that this research will convince sceptical governments, researchers and academics, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, that AEWs are one silver bullet who actually contribute to achieving and maintaining good Aboriginal educational outcomes.

Fourthly, all the positives I have witnessed in schools with AEWs, and what I have heard from students, parents, school staff and in many forums both state and national, has given

me a great passion to see that my grandchildren and great-grandchildren will have an AEW in their school. I believe strongly that the genuine desire to make a difference is the difference.

The next section explains the background to this research project.

Background

The focus of the research for this thesis is in the main on the Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) who are employed in NSW Systemic Catholic schools. These are the schools that are under the authority and administration of the eleven NSW Catholic Dioceses. For very important reasons that will become obvious in Chapter 2 I also discuss Catholic Congregational boarding schools. These schools are outside the Catholic Diocesan Systems and in general are under the control and authority of particular religious congregations or orders.

In 2010 there were 140 AEWs working across 575 NSW Catholic Systemic schools. The majority of these AEWs are employed in rural and remote areas with some servicing more than one school, depending on need and student numbers. Only three of the seven NSW Congregational boarding schools employ AEWs. This is surprising, as the ones that do not employ AEWs have large Aboriginal cohorts.

Also in this thesis I discuss the history of the AEW role in public schools where AEWs were first employed as well as in NSW Systemic Catholic schools and NSW Congregational boarding schools.

The official roles of AEWs and their equivalents are as many and varied as are their unofficial roles. As with all things Aboriginal since the first European settlers set foot on this continent in 1788, there is a great deal of political pressure surrounding the role. In addition to the pressures exerted by governmental politics there are further pressures exerted by Aboriginal and religious politics.

The aspirational aims of this research project are explained in the next section.

Aims

The aim of this thesis is to address the specific research question “Do Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) contribute to improving Aboriginal educational outcomes?”

In seeking to demonstrate that Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) are a vital part of improving Aboriginal educational outcomes, I will be drawing not just on statistics but on the words and perceptions of those who know best, because they live the work every day. This includes students, parents, teachers, principals and those whose voices are softest and seldom heard, the AEWs themselves.

Perceptions play a huge role in our lives as they are how we view the world and other people. More importantly they determine how we interact with others and decisions we make (Cherry, 2011; Sherman, 2001). In the case of AEWs the perceptions of students, parents, principals, teachers, educationalists and even how AEWs perceive themselves can effect educational outcomes (Godfrey, Partington, Harslett, Richer, &

Harrison, 1998; Gower et al., 2011; MacGill, 2008) If these groups have positive perceptions of the AEW it will in the vast majority of cases lead to positive relationships, which will in turn lead to positive educational outcomes. Conversely, negative perceptions will in general lead to negative relationships and in some cases negative educational outcomes. Relationships are at the centre of Aboriginal life so it is vital in relation to education, that they be positive ones (M. Matters, 2011; New South Wales Teachers Federation, 2005; Partington, 2006). That is why the perceptions and words of all stakeholders who interact with AEWs are at the heart of this thesis, rather than it showing a total reliance on statistics. I support the view of Mundine (2005) that any type of research that relates to people cannot be judged solely on numbers because there are many variables in the human condition (Mundine, 2005b).

But it is vital to remember that behind the statistics of low income, unemployment, lack of education and family violence, there are stories of dispossession, cultural annihilation, and loss of languages, stolen generations and lack of recognition of our ownership of this country. We must remember that for every statistic there is a real person, a family and a community (Mundine, 2005b, p. 2).

Never have truer words been spoken. I know, because I was and am one of those statistics, as may be those young Aboriginal people whose futures I seek to secure and improve by writing this thesis. I will expand on this statement in chapter 2 under the heading, "A walk in the shoes of socio-economic disadvantage and cultural capital".

Success in life cannot be solely judged on the statistics from exam results (Donaldson, 2010). It also greatly depends on who is making that judgement and their particular version of success (Lowndes, 2005; Stallings, 2011). My eldest son barely struggled through his NSW School Certificate (Year10) but now owns and runs his own multi-million dollar company. The question cannot be simply answered by analysing student National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results (Donnelly, 2010). One student achieves a ten per cent increase in the NAPLAN results; another student from a less supportive environment is still below the benchmark but is starting to attend more regularly and is becoming engaged in class. Teachers and parents would see both of these as great achievements (Doecke, 2008). However, the student who gets the ten per cent increase gets recognition from governments and quantitative researchers, but the student who is still below the benchmark but who is now attending regularly and participating in class, seldom if ever gets any type of official recognition or affirmation (Kagan, 2011). The Armidale Diocese *Wii Gaay* program is giving recognition to a large group of students who previously receive little recognition at all.

The *Wii Gaay* (Clever Child) Program for Aboriginal students of the Armidale Catholic Diocese is an exemplar case of the failure of a simple reliance on current educational testing regimes. Using a more culturally appropriate assessment tool, large groups of Aboriginal students, previously considered under-achievers, are being identified as gifted and talented students (Dare to Lead, 2011). It's a sad state of affairs if governments are only interested in Aboriginal education statistics to make them look good, particularly in election years (New South Wales Teachers Federation, 2005).

Significance of this research project

This project is significant because after two hundred and twenty-three years, since 1788, of countless governments and Aboriginal education policies, Aboriginal people by any measure are still the most educationally disadvantaged group in Australia (Australian Government, 2009b). The only way that Aboriginal people can reach a state of educational equity with all other Australians is for governments, education systems and school staff to stop trying to make Aboriginal people change and adapt to suit the system, as with the old Assimilation and Integration policies (Gibson, 2009; Skwirk Interactive Schooling, 2011). European society and education systems from kindergarten to university levels have always assumed putting square pegs in square holes, but Aboriginal people are unique round pegs that do not even fit into European square holes (Gibson, 2009; Truskewycz, 2009). The Western Australia Minister for Education acknowledged this recently in the State Aboriginal Education Plan and asked schools to think outside the square and make Western Australia's schools inclusive rather than exclusive (Dare to Lead, 2011).

Positioning the researcher

Many academics and researchers working in the area of quantitative research firmly believe there is only one objective truth in a research study; I beg to differ, supported by the writings of Mundine (2005). Two different groups or individuals may truly believe different truths about the one phenomenon because they are looking at it through different lenses. A group's view of what they are seeing or experiencing is filtered through their personal beliefs, culture, religion, values and life experiences (Zion & Kozleski, 2005). Where you sit on the socio-economic and power scales can have a big effect on what "objective" truth will prevail (Department of Education Employment and Work Relations, 2011a; Smithers, 2003).

In Australia, most “objective truths” in any area of Aboriginal research are viewed through non-Aboriginal eyes. Bindi MacGill, a non-Aboriginal researcher, in her thesis on AEW wellbeing refers to this as the “whiteness theory” (MacGill, 2008). The truth is subjective to the eyes through which it is being viewed (Maser, 2006).

What is your perception of truth? One of the interesting things about truth when you really examine it is that it’s all a matter of perspective. The concept of truth is especially interesting in light of the fact that most people tend to take their perception of truth to be absolute (Wojnowski, 2011).

The vast majority of research in relation to Australia’s Aboriginal people is conducted by non-Aboriginal people about Aboriginal people, not necessarily with them (Burchill, 2004; Eiserer, 1954). That is one of the major reasons I have taken the position in this research project, that the truth is subjective to the eyes through which it is being viewed, and have explicitly interwoven my experience into this thesis. As with each and every person, I am a product of the influences of my life experiences, family, extended family and peer group, as demonstrated in my own personal story in chapter 2. Throughout this thesis I speak in various places from my hard-earned life experience as a sixty-four year-old Aboriginal man. I also speak from my personal hands-on experience as an Aboriginal employment officer, an Aboriginal youth access officer, an Aboriginal vocational training manager, a public schools Aboriginal education field officer and a struggling Aboriginal university student.

I have worked in my current role as the State Coordinator of Aboriginal Education, NSW Catholic Education Commission for twelve years. In this role I am either responsible for, or assist with, all aspects of Aboriginal Education across NSW Catholic schools in all their endeavours to improve Aboriginal outcomes for our 5,000 Aboriginal students.

I am a member of various committees in relation to Aboriginal education and employment, such as: NSW Board of Studies; National Catholic Education Commission; Council of Catholic School Parents; Expert Panel of Australian Independent Schools; Dare to Lead; Books in Homes; Dusseldorp Foundation; and various committees on Aboriginal languages. In 2007 I received a National Award from the Dare to Lead Organisation for my services to Aboriginal Education, and in 2008 was honoured to be a member of the Aboriginal Guard of Honour for the Pope's visit (see appendices 13A and 23D).

In 2010 I lectured in the mandatory Aboriginal component for trainee teachers in their final year at Notre Dame University (see appendix 23E).

As an Aboriginal person with vast experience relevant to the topic of this research, I have chosen to explicitly incorporate my experience and voice throughout this thesis, as I believe it adds to the validity of the research (see appendices 23A, 23B, 23C, 23F, 23G, and 23H).

Limitations of this research

The research conducted for this thesis was limited to NSW Catholic Systemic schools and NSW Catholic Congregational Boarding schools. Another limitation was that, when

seeking information from most educational systems across Australia not one, for political reasons, wanted to discuss AEWs. The WA Department of Education has, however, conducted a major review, the findings of which will be released in 2011.

Data used for this study, discussion generated by the data and the recommendations flowing from it were based solely on the Systemic Catholic schools and Congregational Boarding schools of NSW.

One of the original intentions of this thesis was to investigate whether AEWs contributed to the retention of Aboriginal students. This was attempted using quantitative and qualitative methods in line with the use of a mixed-method methodology.

Firstly, a question in the qualitative section of the Likert-scale survey instrument asked respondents whether they believed that Aboriginal Education Workers played a role in Aboriginal students completing school.

Secondly, in a quantitative way, a comparison was made between the retention rates of Aboriginal students in schools with AEWs (117 shaded blue), as identified by the eleven NSW Catholic Dioceses, and those without AEWs (513 shaded white). Data were presented from as far back as 1999, when CEC NSW recording of grade-specific indigenous enrolments began. It is a mixed result (see appendices 21A to 21G).

Examining initially the overall primary rates for all schools, it appeared that schools with AEWs actually did better up until 2007, but in the last three years the situation has

reversed. In this regard, the AEW effect may be confounded with remoteness, as more remote schools are more likely to have AEWs but also tend to have smaller retention rates (see appendices 21A to 21G).

The schools were separated into the categories of Metropolitan, Regional (Inner and Outer) and Remote (incl. Very Remote), and the retention data examined separately for each group. These results were inconclusive, as the Metropolitan rates showed similar patterns to the overall data, the Regional rates were erratic, and the numbers for Remote schools were too small to show any patterns (again, see appendices 21A to 21G).

There was a similar pattern for secondary data. While it is true that Years 7 to 10 retention rates in Regional schools were greater in AEW schools than in non-AEW schools in every year except for 2003, the rates themselves are too erratic to be reliable. Note that there are no secondary students in Remote schools (again, see appendices 21A to 21G).

Because the data was inconclusive it was omitted from the overall results and discussion.

Outline of the chapters

This chapter has introduced the thesis, given a background to the AEWs in NSW Catholic schools and outlined my aims in writing this thesis. It has also explained the rationale, background, limitations and significance of this project. Finally it has explained my research position in relation to this research project. The catalyst of the study is based on feedback from various informed sources regarding AEW job security and my own experiences of working with AEWs in both the public and Catholic sectors. It also draws on the many discussions I have had with people, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, across the whole Aboriginal education spectrum over many years, from ministerial level to those at the coal face in schools and Aboriginal communities.

Chapter 2 discusses the socio-economic and educational disadvantage of Aboriginal Australians, of which my own Aboriginal life story is part. It also discusses some of the individual and societal effects of this socio-economic disadvantage on Aboriginal people and some elements that needed to be taken into account when addressing these issues. There is discussion around some misconceptions in relation to Aboriginal culture and some suggestions as to new ways to help address Aboriginal educational disadvantage. Finally, there is discussion on Aboriginal student wellbeing, attendance, retention, engagement, identity, parental involvement, supportive school environment, supportive home environment, relevant curriculum and motivation, as well as ten outcomes vital to the educational success of Aboriginal students.

Chapter 3 explains the methodology used in relation to this research project, looking at the challenges faced, and the ethical considerations. It discusses the research design, the trialling of the instrument and the considerations taken into account in administering the main research instrument. It also discusses the three themes selected to group the ten quantitative Likert questions for analysis. Finally how the five qualitative Likert questions were analysed is discussed.

Chapter 4 discusses the history of AEWs pre- and post-1967, and the catalysts, philosophy and rationale for their introduction to schools. It discusses the various titles and roles of AEWs, and the issues they face in both public and Catholic Systemic and Boarding schools. There is also discussion on the context and governance of NSW Catholic Systemic and Boarding schools. Finally, this chapter discusses some of the ambiguities around the AEW role in the eyes of school staff and parents.

Chapter 5 discusses and interprets the results of this study. It also presents, interprets and discusses additional data that arose during the course of the study. What is presented in this chapter is the collective results of the rationale and aims as described in chapter 1, the literature reviewed in chapters 2 and 4, the data collection and analysis as described in chapter 3 and additional data that became evident during the course of the project.

Summary

This chapter has discussed the rationale, background, aims, and limitations of this research project. It has also briefly outlined chapters 2 to 6.

The next chapter discusses the socio-economic and educational disadvantage of Aboriginal Australians, of which my own Aboriginal life story is part. Also discussed are some of the individual and societal effects of this socio-economic and educational disadvantage on Aboriginal people. Finally, this chapter discusses ten outcomes that contribute greatly to the educational success of Aboriginal students.

Chapter 2: Aboriginal Socio-economic and Educational Disadvantage in Australia

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the rationale, background and aims of this research project. It also discussed its significance, the position the researcher has taken, the limitations of the research, and gave an outline of the chapters.

In this chapter the socio-economic and educational disadvantage of Aboriginal Australians, of which my own Aboriginal life story is part, is discussed. Also discussed are some of the individual and societal effects of this socio-economic and educational disadvantage on Aboriginal people. Finally, this chapter discusses ten outcomes that contribute greatly to the educational success of Aboriginal students: Aboriginal student wellbeing, attendance, retention, engagement, identity, parental involvement, supportive school environment, supportive home environment, relevant curriculum and motivation.

A Walk in the shoes of socio-economic disadvantage and cultural capital

To really understand where I am coming from it is important that the story of where I have been is told in this thesis. The following section invites the reader to walk in my shoes.

I was born an Aboriginal child in 1947, twenty years before I became a citizen in my own country. Most Aboriginal people of my era and before have spent a lot of their lives suffering from socio-economic, and in particular, educational, disadvantage. For me, the remnants of this socio-economic and educational disadvantage still exist, which is one of the reasons, at sixty-four years of age, I am attempting a Master's thesis. I am doing this

because I will be the first one in my family to do so and to set an example of the value of education to my children and grandchildren. It is also to set an example for today's Aboriginal students across all educational systems that if a fellow as old as me, from a background as challenged as mine can do it, so can they. My Mum and Nan taught me to always lead by example and in my own small way that is what I have always striven to do.

Universities in a lot of ways are still alien institutions to most Aboriginal people, which is why so few enrol. I believe this Master's in Research qualification, especially in a field with so few Aboriginal researchers, will enable me to bring about long-overdue changes to our tertiary institutions. It will in the eyes of researchers, academics and governments give me some credibility; which in turn will help me to bring about long-overdue socio-economic changes for Aboriginal people. I will now share a little of my story.

I came into the world in Crown Street Women's Hospital. My family was living in Woolloomooloo and I went to Plunkett Street School, then to St Mary's Cathedral School. I was at St Mary's for only a short period; I think it might have had something to do with the fact that we couldn't pay the fees, back in those days. That was, to be quite truthful, probably the most wonderful portion of my life. I thought it was great because everyone who lived in Woolloomooloo in the 50s was black of one shade or another, so there was no discrimination.

I was first introduced to racism in third class at Sutherland North Primary School. In the middle of the year the school conducted an Australian national dress competition. All the mums spent hours turning their children into drovers, farmers, miners and even wharf labourers. Well guess what? My Nan had a better idea; she would dress me in Australia's oldest and only true national dress. She dressed me as a traditional Aboriginal Warrior.

She used soot from the old wood stove to make me even darker than I was. I wore tiny little black swimmers and she used kalsomine to put traditional markings on my face. My Pop gave me one of those old curtain rods with a spear on the end of it.

Two judges from a local newspaper awarded me first prize and Nan, Pop and I were ecstatic. Over the next week my ecstasy turned to agony. I lost all my friends; no-one would play with me and students spent most of their time calling me a little “Abo” and many names I would not use in print. Most teachers were well aware of all this but took no action at all. In the whole school there was not one other Aboriginal student or staff member to provide comfort to me. After that I became very much a loner, spending a lot of my out-of-school time wandering alone in some very thick, and what I know now was very dangerous, bushland.

My Mum decided I should join her in Newcastle for my sixth and last Primary year. She sent me to Cooks Hill Primary and High Schools and it turned out to be the redneck capital of Australia. Sixth class wasn't too bad but high school was a nightmare. If there had been a racist slur that had been missed at my previous school, here they had even invented new ones. The racism also became very physical.

In high school I suffered through First Year and Second Year. Then about halfway through Second Year I left without an Intermediate Certificate. In those days there were no Aboriginal people in any capacity working in schools to turn to for assistance or comfort. I couldn't cope with it any more. Every day was a fight for survival, so I left.

All of my school life had a huge impact on my life. In my early years my development went backwards due to a negative environment. This was due to my role models and to discrimination and racism in the education system. Every day I was told in one way or

another by an assembly line of teachers and "fellow" students I was dumb and stupid like all other Aboriginals and I would never succeed at anything. If you hear something often enough you end up believing it.

At fifteen I went back to live with my Nan in Woolloomooloo and this is where my real life education began. For me, watching the Sydney version of the TV series "Underbelly" was a bit like "This is Your Life". I knew a lot of the real people portrayed in this show as well as many who were less obvious.

I have held many jobs including cleaning toilets, washing and driving taxis, newspaper deliveries, ticket seller at Harold Park and Wentworth Park, delivering pamphlets, furniture delivery and basically any menial task you can imagine. Probably the most interesting job I had in this period was driving an old red double-decker bus around the various legal and illegal gambling clubs. The passengers were mainly American soldiers on R&R from Vietnam.

In 1966 I married, and fathered my first child at eighteen. I now have three sons and nine grandchildren, and am still married to the same wonderful woman.

When I got married we didn't have a great deal of money and my brother-in-law convinced me to go and work as a bus conductor with Sydney Buses, where I graduated to driver. That was probably the first time I'd had money in my pocket, because you used to work virtually around the clock, including holidays and Christmas Days and whatever other days.

Sometime in early 1976 for some reason or other I thought, "I can't keep doing this." So I decided to go back to night school and study for the School Certificate I never had. I went

to Arthur Phillip High School, next to Parramatta station. I was actually delivering papers in the mornings, driving a bus all day, and then going to school five nights a week. This was on top of looking after two children because my wife worked at Parramatta Leagues Club every night.

After I gained my School Certificate I obtained a position as a junior revenue clerk, also with Sydney Buses. I was subsequently promoted to the position of senior revenue clerk until made redundant in 1991.

Then I found out what it was like to be an older black person trying to get a job. Over the next two years I became very disillusioned, unmotivated and depressed at not being able to get a job. I sent off a hundred resumes and job applications and never even got an interview. Being very proud that I had never been on the dole, this period used up much of my superannuation.

I discussed my situation with a friend who suggested that I leave any reference to being Aboriginal off my resume and job applications. Coincidentally or otherwise, I started to get invited to interviews.

I got lucky when I came across a job where being Aboriginal was a positive rather than a negative. They were advertising for what they call a 'trainee employment officer' with the old Commonwealth Employment Service (CES). They wanted an Aboriginal officer. I won that position. You were trained for about 12 months or so, and you had to become qualified in different things. I worked in Blacktown CES, Mount Druitt CES, Mount Druitt Youth Access Centre and Castle Hill CES.

My next promotion was to Auburn CES where they needed a person who knew something about the transport industry to run vocational courses for long-term unemployed, particularly Aboriginal people. I just happened to have worked for Sydney Buses for 25 years, so I got the job. Cutting a long story short, I achieved a one-hundred per-cent better placement record than the CES itself in getting long-term unemployed into jobs.

On the abolition of the CES I moved to the Department of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA). The Aboriginal version of this acronym at the time was Denying Education Training to Young Aboriginals.

I became an Aboriginal Education Field Officer, which was very rewarding but also very problematic. A major difficulty was that for a lot of the time we were underfunded, which meant we were understaffed, so instead of having one field officer area I had two or three.

To this point I have left a large part of my educational journey out. When I was with the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) at Blacktown, I had a mate who wanted to do a diploma in adult education, but he was a very shy fellow and he wouldn't go by himself. So he talked me into it, and I signed up for this course for two years. It was the Diploma of Education in Adult Education and Community Education or something similar, and was very interesting.

The first day was very interesting because we had 35 people, and we were in the smallest room you could imagine. The first thing the Aboriginal coordinator said was, "don't worry about it being crowded; half of you will be gone by the end of the first term". Three years later, all bar two, my mate and a lady who left to have a baby, had graduated. To this day I am not sure if my mate had been using reverse psychology.

About halfway through the Diploma of Education they decided they'd turn it into a Degree. They had no plan; they had nothing. We wrote it for them as we went, which was very interesting. My mate left before the course became a Degree. I however stayed and finished it; because I'm one of those people, I start something and I will finish it no matter what. Very much like my long-term battle to complete this thesis.

Over the first five weeks of the course three of us gradually grew into leaders. We were doing "dial a friend" from all around New South Wales at all hours when somebody was having difficulties educationally or emotionally with the course. Aboriginal students doing block release courses, especially those from rural and remote areas, I believe do it tougher than full-time students. It's all self-directed learning without the comfort of a lecturer, counsellor or even other students to turn to when you are struggling educationally and emotionally. Also the majority of students in my course had family, community and work commitments to deal with as well as their university work. However we all managed to push each other towards obtaining our degrees. Without this degree I would never have been able to obtain my current position as the State Coordinator of Aboriginal Education for the NSW Catholic Education Commission.

This position is the most rewarding I've ever had in my life. I am working with the best group of people in my entire life. I have bosses who have a high degree of confidence in me. If it's Aboriginal Education, I do it and they support me. There's nothing I'll do without passing it by them first, but I don't think I've ever had a knockback in nine years.

I must be doing something right because in 2007 I received a national award from the *Dare to Lead* program for my personal contributions to Aboriginal Education (see appendix 13A). I was also in 2009 honoured to be part of the Indigenous Guard of Honour for the Pope during World Youth Day (see appendix 23D). I have also recently had two articles

accepted from a very competitive field by the Principal Matters Journal and the Australian Council for Educational Research (Frank Pearce, 2011a, 2011b)

Although I have not written peer-reviewed articles about Aboriginal socio-economic disadvantage, I believe I know a lot more about it than many who write about and report on it, because I have lived it. My, at times, painful life journey has been an emotional one and I have tried to convey this emotion in writing my story (Gill, 2007).

The idea is to write it so that people hear it and it slides through the brain and goes straight to the heart (Angelou, 2011, p. 1).

In telling my story I am not seeking anyone's sympathy, just telling the truth about Aboriginal society, which Australian historians until very recently have failed to do. I believe that my story may give an insight into what it is like not to feel like a citizen in your own country until you are twenty years old. I also hope it will give glimpses of the reality of living a large part of your life with racism, poverty and an education system that even today is mainly structured for the success of middle- to upper-class Europeans. During my whole school career up until I couldn't take it any longer at fourteen and left, I never once had the cultural support of an Aboriginal teacher or AEW. If I had, I know now from my experiences working in schools with them over the last twenty years, that I wouldn't have had to wait till I was fifty to enjoy a degree of success (see appendices 16A and 17A).

My story is, sadly, not unique; even today many Aboriginal people experience racism, poverty and exclusion from the education system. This next section of this chapter explores in greater detail some aspects of socio-economic and educational disadvantage that Aboriginal people can experience.

What is the definition of disadvantage?

1

loss or damage especially to reputation, credit, or finances: DETRIMENT <the deal worked to their *disadvantage*>

2

a: an unfavourable, inferior, or prejudicial condition <we were at a *disadvantage*>

b: a quality or circumstance that makes achievement unusually difficult : HANDICAP <his lack of formal schooling (Merriam Webster, 2010)

As an older Aboriginal person I have a continuous battle with the English language. Just defining the word disadvantage was a major project, so I can only imagine the difficulties children have in classrooms. Words can have many meanings, so which meaning do you choose? I consider my Aboriginality and advantage rather than a disadvantage, so for the remainder of this thesis I refer to the particular disadvantage rather than use the generic terms of disadvantage or disadvantaged.

Aboriginal socio-economic and educational disadvantage

The broad definition of socio-economic disadvantage is basically an individual or group's access to materials and resources and their ability to participate equally in society. It is developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics from four indexes: the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage; the Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage; the Index of Economic Resources and the Index of Education and Occupation (Statistics, 2006). Educational disadvantage is part of how socio-economic disadvantage is calculated; however, as the main topic of this thesis relates to educational disadvantage, it has been separated and examined more closely.

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FAHCSIA) in its recent report has stated that in the more than four decades since the

1967 Referendum (90.77% of Australians voted to change the constitution for the benefit of Aboriginal people in two important areas) Australian governments have developed and funded policies and programs to improve the socio-economic status of Indigenous people, and overcome a long history of poverty and marginalisation. Progress has been made. Yet in 2009, Aboriginal people remain among the most socio-economically disadvantaged Australians (Australian Government, 2009b). FAHCSIA also stated in this report that Indigenous people simply do not have the opportunities afforded their fellow Australians, and many are not able to participate fully in our national life (Australian Government, 2009b).

This disadvantage continues, particularly in the three main areas of life expectancy, education and employment.

In 2006 there was a gap in life expectancy, between Aboriginal people and other Australians, of seventeen years (The Department of Families, 2008a).

In the area of education, in 2008 the gaps between Aboriginal students and other Australians were in Year 3 Reading 25.2%, Year 3 Writing 17.6% and Year 3 Numeracy 17.4%. In Year 5 the gaps were Reading 29.2%, Writing 24.2% and Numeracy 24.8%. In Year 7 the gaps were Reading 23.5%, Writing 25.3% and Numeracy 17.8% (The Department of Families, 2008a).

In 2007 only 42.9% of Aboriginal 17-year-olds were attending a secondary school in comparison to 65% of all other students, a gap of 21.9% (The Department of Families, 2008a).

In the other major area of Aboriginal disadvantage, employment, in 2006 only 48% of Aboriginal people compared to 72% of non-Aboriginal people were employed, a gap of 24% (The Department of Families, 2008a).

Reflecting on the findings of FAHCSIA's 2009 Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage report, we must ask why, after two hundred and twenty-three years, are Aboriginal Australians still at the top of the most important measures of socio-economic disadvantage including, health, housing, education, unemployment and incarceration rates? (Australian Government, 2009b). The answers are obvious, but only if seen through the eyes of those on the receiving end of continual and continuing failed government policies, Aboriginal peoples themselves.

The following section highlights, from my life experience as an Aboriginal person and my professional experience as outlined in chapter 1, some areas that need to be considered when addressing Aboriginal socio-economic and educational disadvantage.

When addressing Aboriginal socio-economic and educational disadvantage, Aboriginal value systems, languages, identities, spiritualities, protocols, lore/laws need to inform the solutions

The major reason the majority of all Indigenous policies relating to Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage are faulty and continue to fail, is they do not incorporate Indigenous culture and its components in a meaningful way when framing these policies. These policies need to incorporate into their frameworks and solutions Aboriginal culture and its components, value systems, languages, Identities, spiritualities, protocols, lore/laws (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004).

If policy makers fail to recognise the existence of all these aspects of Aboriginal culture they are doomed to fail before they begin. This view is reinforced by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), Martin, Truscott and Abrey (Hanlen, 2005; Resnik, 2010; The Department of Families, 2008b). Aboriginal cultures are complex, diverse and have important aspects, each of which needs to be understood better and incorporated into policies and programs to address their socio-economic disadvantage.

Value systems

Value systems, beliefs and the way people live, make up their culture. Various definitions of culture are available. The Webster's New World Dictionary defines culture as the ideas, skills, arts, tools and the way of life of a certain people in a certain time of civilization (Guralnik, 1966). The Concise Macquarie Dictionary defines culture as the sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings which is transmitted from one generation to another (Delbridge, 1982).

Languages

Dr Diana Eades, an expert in linguistics, in her paper on Aboriginal English states that originally there were about 250 Aboriginal languages and 600 distinct dialects spoken in Australia. However today there are about only 20 of these languages spoken on a regular basis (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2011). She also states that the languages of Aboriginal English and Creole are now the most spoken Aboriginal languages (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2011). Dr Eades also suggests that even today these two languages are extremely important to Aboriginal people as an assertion of their identity (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2011).

Identity

Identity is the sum total of all the parts that make us what and who we are. Two definitions are:

Who or what a person or thing is; the fact of being oneself or itself and none other" (Guralnik, 1966, p. 175). The individual characteristics by which a person or thing is recognized (Department of Families Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 2009)

It can be said invaders have long recognized the importance of identity. This is evidenced by the fact that in all the nations that have been invaded, the invaders have tried to destroy the individual parts that make up the identity of the people and they have imposed their own culture upon the vanquished (Hunter, 1993). Germany attempted to do this by destroying the Jewish identity and Europeans have done the same to the Aboriginal people in Australia (David Horton, 1994; Hunter, 1993)

Spiritualties

An Aboriginal person's spirituality is the core of their lives. As Bob Randall (2005) a much respected Aboriginal elder from the Northern Territory says our spirituality is our personal connection to the land, its trees, plants, the rivers that run across it, the seas that surround it and every living creature. Even more important are the spirits of the ancestors that still live in these things. Aboriginal people do not view all these separately but as all of them being connected. In our language it is "Kanyini" (Randall, 2005).

Aboriginal lore/laws

Aboriginal lore/law is a group's and individual's responsibilities, relationships and obligations as handed down for many thousands of years by the ancestors (Heritage,

2011). They are handed down in oral stories, dance and ceremony (Crystallinks, 2010). They are aimed at the survival of the group and individual, and in general carry a moral, and the consequences for disobeying a lore/ law (Gower et al., 2011). They are also in most cases not as punitive as Australian law, or English Common Law. Australian law on the other hand changes consistently to meet the demands of our multicultural society. It is also very capitalistic in nature and a large proportion of it relates to financial misappropriation, contested ownership, contesting of wills and so on (Martin, 2009).

Protocols

Due to the dispossession of Aboriginal people and the fact that they do not have a treaty, there is little official recognition of Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of Australia (Freedman, 2010). The current Welcome to Country protocols and Acknowledgement of Country protocols practiced by many government departments and other organisations give Aboriginal people the long overdue respect and recognition they so richly deserve (Zion & Kozleski, 2005). Sadly, this small sign of respect, along with Prime Minister Rudd's apology to the Stolen Generations, is the constant subject of attack by those with their own political agendas (Eiserer, 1954; Lewis, 2011).

Culture

Based on the previously-mentioned definitions, culture is all the little pieces of our lives that make us who and what we are, ourselves. Everybody has a culture that is a value system, a belief or beliefs in certain things and a particular way of living (Kapuri, 2009).

A parliamentary committee report confirms the critical link that language plays in transmitting and reinforcing the ties between kinship, country and family for Australia's Indigenous Peoples (Amnesty International, 2012).

Individual and group societal effects of Aboriginal socio-economic and educational disadvantage

The 2009 the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs *Closing the Gap on Indigenous Disadvantage* report points out that education is the major key in addressing this disadvantage. Successful education can mean better career choices, which in turn can lead to better remuneration, which leads to a far better all-round quality of life. This in turn allows Aboriginal people to put in place better building blocks to enable their children to be successful in education, employment and society, and to determine their own futures (Frank Pearce, 2009). Figures from the Ministerial Council for Education highlight the discrepancies between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students achieving their Year 12 Higher School Certificate, which has implications for future prospects.

In 2008, only 47 per-cent of Indigenous students continued their schooling from Years 7/8 through to Year 12, compared to 76 per-cent of non-Indigenous students. In 2006, approximately 46 per-cent of the Indigenous 19-year-old population had obtained a Year 12 or equivalent Certificate II qualification, compared to approximately 80 per-cent of the non-Indigenous 19-year-old population” (Ministerial Council for Education Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, 2010, p. 18).

Completion of Year 12 is vital if young Australians wish to give themselves the widest possible range of career opportunities and a good quality of life for themselves and their future families. Evidence indicates that young Australians who do not complete Year 12 are less likely to have the same opportunities as those who do (Statistics, 2011a). In 2006, Year 12 completions for Indigenous Australians were 45.3 per-cent, compared to 86.3 per-

cent for non-Indigenous. Based on current trends, the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous is widening, which the Bureau of Statistics states will have implications for young people throughout their lives (Australian Government, 2009a; Statistics, 2011a).

Low education levels are linked to unemployment and, subsequently, the risk of living in poverty. Families with low levels of education often cannot afford to better educate their children and so give them increased chances of employment.

- ABS figures show that , in 2009 people who had not completed high school had a workforce participation rate of 65.9%, compared with the rate of 83.9% for those who had completed year 12, and 87.5% of people with a bachelor degree; and
- In 2009, people with a year 10 qualification received a median weekly wage of \$907, compared with over \$1350 for those with a bachelor degree (Australian Council of Social Services, 2010).

There are large economic benefits for governments to be gained by improving the quality of life of Aboriginal people. These can only be achieved, however, by improving the health and educational attainments of Aboriginal Australians. According to Access Economics if great gains were made in these areas government revenue in 2029 could be up to \$4.6 Billion higher, and expenditure in key Aboriginal portfolios \$3.7 billion lower (Access Economics Pty Ltd, 2008).

Ten areas that are problematic but essential to overcoming Aboriginal educational disadvantage

In the interests of social justice, human rights and what we older Australians used to call a “fair go” there is a pressing need to improve attendance, retention rates, and School Certificate and Higher School Certificate attainment rates of Aboriginal students.

How to address these issues was reflected upon by the twelve NSW Catholic Education Advisors at the NSW Catholic Education Advisory meeting on 18th March 2011. In sharing the roles, both official and unofficial, that their AEWs carried out, they identified ten areas critical to improving the attendance, retention rates and School Certificate and Higher School Certificate attainment rates of their Aboriginal students (see appendix 18A). The following section highlights these ten critical areas. Chapters 5 and 6 highlight what AEWs are doing to address these ten areas.

1) Wellbeing

Wellbeing is listed first for a reason. Student wellbeing needs to be addressed before quality education can occur. Educational outcomes and student wellbeing cannot be addressed separately. It is like trying to drive a car without a motor. Wellbeing is the motor that needs to be well tuned in order to get to the destination of good educational outcomes. Teachers, as well as having great educational knowledge, need to become first-class student wellbeing mechanics. True education is about the whole child. Particularly with Aboriginal students it is about good relationships (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004; Partington, 2006).

The importance of student wellbeing is in general vastly understated (Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, 2010; Jones & Harris-Roxas, 2009). Governments in relation to education and particularly Aboriginal education, focus only on things that can be measured like literacy and numeracy results. They need to be able to demonstrate to the general public with statistics that they are addressing the Aboriginal “problem” (Behrendt, 2011). If this approach were successful, Aboriginal students would not after so many years of this approach be still at the bottom of most educational outcome indicators such as NAPLAN, attendance, retention and School Certificate and Higher School Certificate results (H. Hughes, 2010).

In the Minister’s announcement, he recognised that, despite the numerous education initiatives implemented by the various governments over the past 20 years, Aboriginal students continue to be the most disadvantaged student group in Australia (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004).

If this is ever to change, all schools and all education systems need to put the child first and the educational outcome second. If children feel good about and within themselves, better educational achievement will follow (M. Matters, 2011). A student’s poor wellbeing can often manifest itself in poor school attendance.

2) Attendance

Attendance is vital to achieving good educational outcomes because missing an average of 5 days a term from Year 1 to Year 10 is the equivalent of missing a year of school (Constable, 2011). Basically, if you are not there you cannot learn anything.

Regular attendance and participation in schooling is very important to the educational success of all students. Students who do not attend regularly have many gaps in their learning which impact heavily on their educational success. It can also have far more wide-ranging effects as to their future employment, career and further education opportunities (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004; Services, 2011).

Aboriginal attendance has been and continues to be a major barrier to improving Aboriginal educational outcomes (Ministerial Council on Education, 2000). There is no one size fits all solution or it would have been implemented (Department of Education Training Employment, 2010).

In 2007, Indigenous attendance rates in government primary schools were around 87 per-cent, compared to 93 per-cent for non-Indigenous students. In secondary school, attendance rates were around 78 per-cent for Indigenous students and 89 per-cent for non-Indigenous students (Ministerial Council for Education Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, 2010). Some Aboriginal students, particularly those in metropolitan schools, may experience identity issues which can be a cause of irregular attendance.

3) Identity

Identity is what makes people what and who they are. For Aboriginal people it is not a separate part of you, it is all of you. Unlike the religious belief that the one thing you can never lose is your soul, little bits of your identity can be taken from you piece by piece, such as your language, beliefs, customs and spirituality (Bourke, 1993). Sometimes you don't even realise it has happened because that part of it was experienced by your ancestors. You do however, always have those feelings that something is missing that you

can't put your finger on (Television, 2011). The Aboriginal people of NSW have felt this loss of identity most because they were the first point of contact for Captain James Cook and the colonisers that followed (NSW, 2009).

Filling in the gaps in a student's identity is a crucial role which at times can be very challenging for students, educational staff and in some case parents (MacGill, 2008). It is however essential, as a strong identity greatly helps with student motivation to learn (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004).

For many Aboriginal young people, the school becomes the critical factor in their search for identity (Training, 2010). If they feel accepted and affirmed in their schools, they will have a much stronger chance of developing a strong cultural identity. If the school is just another area of pressure and stress, it is often dismissed as irrelevant and not worth continuing with (New South Wales Department of Education and Training, 2005, p. 9).

Poor wellbeing, poor attendance, identity difficulties or any mixture of these will certainly affect a student's classroom engagement.

4) Engagement

If Aboriginal students are to be engaged in classrooms in a meaningful and lasting way it revolves around another three "R's": relationships, respect, and relevance (New South Wales Teachers Federation, 2005). Classroom teachers need to have a clear understanding of how to do this in a positive way. They not only have to know how to do it

they have to really want to do it. Aboriginal people have long experience with governments and schools who promise much but deliver little (Herbert, 2010). Their antennae are well tuned to whether teachers are genuine in wanting to go beyond normal requirements for Aboriginal students or they are doing it because they feel they have to (Harslett, Harrison, Godfrey, Partington, & Richer, 1998).

Teacher enthusiasm and positive attitudes to students are identified as important when working with Aboriginal students. The author suggests that teachers be positive and give kids a chance, show enthusiasm, give encouragement, find out what motivates them, and have them experience success. These are competencies teachers see in themselves and colleagues who are successful with Aboriginal students (Harslett et al., 1998).

When students are engaged they are more likely to learn and retain that learning. They are also far more likely to become life-long learners. For all students the learning itself should not be a grind but an enjoyable experience. Disengaged learners are far less likely to have good educational outcomes than engaged ones (Group, 2011; NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004; Team, 2011). The more disengaged students become, the greater the likelihood they will not be retained.

5) Retention

Aboriginal students are continuing to drop out at or before Year 10 with a still small cohort continuing on to Years 11 and 12 (Ministerial Council on Education Employment, 2005).

Nationally in 2006, the apparent retention rate from the beginning of secondary school (Year 7/8) to Year 10 was 91%. That is, 91% of the cohort of Indigenous students that started Year 7/8 continued through to Year 10 (suggesting that about 9% of Indigenous students in Australia drop out of secondary school before Year 10; this is close to 20% in South Australia and New South Wales)(Youth, 2007).

An even smaller number are staying on to complete Year 12.

This rate decreases significantly at traditional post-compulsory schooling years – 68% to Year 11 and 40% to Year 12. The rates to Years 11 and 12 are where the largest discrepancies between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students exist – these discrepancies are of the magnitude of 30–40 percentage points (and larger in some jurisdictions). Overall, this means that Indigenous students are half as likely as non-Indigenous students to continue to Year 12 (Youth, 2007).

The National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training, 2006, the latest available, states that nationally Indigenous HSC completions had decreased from 51% in 2001 to 46% in 2006. By comparison, the proportion of non-Indigenous students has increased from 80% in 2001 to 86% in 2006 (Employment and Workplace Relations Department of Education, 2006). However, if the 2006 Year 12 completion numbers for Aboriginal students are taken from the number who were in Year 9 four years before, those figures Government gives in the National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training 2006 tell a far more negative story (AESOC Senior Officials Working Party on Indigenous Education, 2006). Retention of Aboriginal students is a huge issue because if they are not retained they are not

there to learn anything, and parents play a vital role in Aboriginal student retention (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004).

6) Parental involvement

There is no magic formula to gain Aboriginal parental involvement. This has been and continues to be a hugely problematic area. The Government had a really successful program called the Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness Program (ASSPA) (Australian Education Union, 2007; Commonwealth of Australia, 2006). Then, in a decision which I believe from long experience working both for and with the Government was more about money than results, they abolished it (Australian Education Union, 2007). When this occurred, NSW Catholic schools lost eighty per-cent of their parental involvement (see appendix 11A). Its two successors, Parent School Partnership Initiative (PSPI) and Parent and Community Engagement Program (PACE), have done absolutely nothing to get parents back into NSW Catholic schools (see appendix 11A) (S. a. T. Department of Education, 2005; Department of Education Science and Training, 2005; A. Government, 2011b).

Schools and school staff can gain more parental involvement by building partnerships with them. However:

You can't have a partnership without a relationship, and you can't have a relationship without a conversation. You've got to have the conversation. Everything starts here (What Works the Work Program, 2012b)

Having the conversation and building these positive relationships can have a flow-on effect in both creating more supportive home and school environments for a student's learning (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004).

7). Supportive school environment

A supportive school environment is crucial to the learning of all students and especially Aboriginal students (Mandela, n.d.; Melbourne, 2009). It is especially crucial to Aboriginal students because Aboriginal people only became a “real” part of schools between 1950 and 1970 and at different times in each state (Board of Studies NSW, n.d.). The 1967 Referendum shifted the responsibility for making Aboriginal policy, including education policies, from individual states to the Federal Government (Attwood & Marcus, 2007). It took a while for States to relinquish their power over all areas of Aboriginal life, and it wasn't until 1972 that the authority to exclude an Aboriginal child from school, based solely on their Aboriginality, was removed from the NSW Teacher's Handbook (Katon, 2002). The students, even today, through the knowledge passed down to them by, their parents, grandparents, uncles and aunties bring with them unhappy memories of what schools used to be like. It is up to schools to provide a much more supportive and happy environment in which to learn than those before them enjoyed (Creative Spirits, 2012; What Works the Work Program, 2010). I am a product of that unhappy environment and time, and strive every day to make sure today's schools have a much more supportive environment for Aboriginal children, including my nine grandchildren. As stated previously, supportive home and school environments are both vital building blocks for a student's learning (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004).

8) Supportive home environment

A supportive home environment is also crucial to the educational success of Aboriginal students (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004). However to do this

successfully, a number of misconceptions, barriers, stereotypes and misunderstandings need to be overcome by both school staff and Aboriginal parents and communities.

There are several popular myths, stereotypes and misconceptions about Aboriginal people that are bandied around by non-Aboriginal people (Reconciliation Australia, 2010). One of these is the myth that Aboriginal people do not value education; nothing could be further from the truth. They value education highly but it must be on their terms and without loss or diminishment of their culture and heritage (Ferrari, 2008). Another myth is the misconception that all Aboriginal families are dysfunctional (What Works The Work Program, 2012a). This view is the continuing Western mainstream misconception about Aboriginal culture, family structures and child rearing practices that were the catalyst for the stolen generation (Personally selected art, n.d.). As with all Australians, some people from various races, groups, and religions will be dysfunctional but there doesn't seem to be the same "they are all dysfunctional" attitude to these people.

We need to consider seriously recent discussions about removing children from dysfunctional families, initiated by the Minister for Community Services. We might be presenting an opportunity for the same sorts of events to occur. I acknowledge that the policy itself is not discriminatory—it does not refer to Aborigines or non-Aborigines in particular—but sometimes the way policies are carried out can have a discriminatory impact (Ryan, 2000).

On the other hand some Aboriginal people still harbour misconceptions about today's schools and today's school staff, such as: school staff are racist; school staff have low expectations of Aboriginal students; school staff have no respect for Aboriginal culture; school curriculums don't tell the "real" history of Australia. In my long experience working in both public and independent schools, this does still occur, but only in a minority of cases.

9) Relevant curriculum

Given that Aboriginal people were denied real education until the late 60s it is essential that they now feel they have some ownership of what is being taught to their children. That is why it is essential they have some input into the curricula of today's schools. Currently that is being done, by including an Aboriginal perspective across the Key Learning Areas (KLAs). However it is my experience that this is not done well. Often the Aboriginal perspective is diluted to the point of invisibility. The current debate surrounding the National Curriculum makes this issue very important. Many Aboriginal education leaders are unimpressed with the quality and even absence of Aboriginal content in the national curriculum (Ferrari, 2009).

All of the previously-mentioned nine areas essential to improving Aboriginal educational outcomes can have a big impact on student motivation.

10). Motivation

When students are unmotivated their learning will be impaired. During the four years of writing this thesis there have been many periods due to personal circumstances when I have been completely unmotivated. During these periods I have struggled to write two sentences. Academic motivation plays a vital role in the levels of student achievement. When we are low on self-esteem and self-concept it is a huge struggle to motivate ourselves to do much at all (Jasmine Green, 2006). All, or at least some, of the previously-mentioned nine areas need to be functioning at some level if we are to be motivated to achieve anything. In the case of more mature students parental involvement is not as important as for younger people. However even older people benefit from their parents/ family involvement and interest in what they do.

Aboriginal parents/caregivers and other family members have a role to play in all of the previously-mentioned areas essential to improving Aboriginal educational outcomes (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004). To this stage, the programs developed to get them more involved have shown little understanding of the root cause of the continuing reluctance of Aboriginal parents/caregivers to be more involved with schools, namely Australia's Aboriginal history. Schools were one of the major instruments of racist policies such as segregation, assimilation, exclusion and the latest, integration. The memories and effects of these policies still linger in the minds of Aboriginal people today. Some are recent memories such as the exclusion policy that was removed from the NSW Teacher's Handbook only in 1972 (NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs, n.d.).

As outlined in the literature review in this chapter, there have been more failures in Aboriginal education policy and programs than there have been successes. It is clear a one size fits all solution has not been successful and some broader thinking outside the square is needed. The following section does just that.

"Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results" (Einstein, 2009, p. 1).

Two untried new initiatives

Successful education for all students, including Aboriginal students is about good relationships among students, teachers, parents, and in the case of Aboriginal students, AEWs (Partington, 2006). All students need a safe and happy environment in which to grow, not only in an educational sense, but also to meet the needs of the whole person (Khavarpour, 2006-2008). The following suggestions based on my professional

experience, and my Aboriginal life experience, may help to build more effective relationships, which may lead to better Aboriginal educational outcomes.

Firstly, as an Aboriginal man my greatest sadness is the non-involvement of a significant percentage of Aboriginal men in the educational side of their children's lives. They are quite often involved in the school sporting sides of their children's lives but not the educational side. I have worked for many years in both the public and private education systems, and most school parent meetings are attended predominantly by females. Further exacerbating this lack of Aboriginal male involvement in schools is that across Australia, in all schooling systems, the vast majority of teachers are female (Blanchard, 2009; Magazine, 2006).

Even within the NSW Catholic school system, eleven of our twelve Aboriginal Education Advisors are female as are a large percentage of our one-hundred-and-forty AEWs. It is not uncommon for me to be mentoring up to five Aboriginal male students who lack an Aboriginal male educational role model.

In order to address this issue and provide more male education role models for boys, I am exploring, developing and implementing a motivational program to get Aboriginal men actively involved.

Secondly, I am exploring the idea of setting-up Aboriginal grandparent school committees. Grandparents are one of the few groups who can influence parents. They brought them up so they are well aware of which buttons to push. The same applies to the children.

Grandparents are the ones who give children the lollies and the cuddles, and are not viewed by children in the same way as parents. They can influence and motivate children more positively because they are not as involved in the discipline side of things.

Aboriginal students in boarding schools would also benefit greatly from these initiatives, but as in a lot of cases, they are a long way from their home communities, a different approach would need to be taken. The distance factor as well as the cost factor means that some of the previously-mentioned ten areas vital to improving Aboriginal outcomes may also need to be addressed differently.

AEWs would be a major key to the success of these initiatives. Firstly, they could assist to break down the barriers between teachers and Aboriginal students as well as assisting to build relationships between them. Secondly, they could act as role models, mentors and motivators to get more fathers involved in the educational side of their child's education. Thirdly, they could get across to grandparents the value of the contribution they can make to their grandchild's education

There is further discussion in chapter 4 on the unique context and issues that face both students enrolled and AEWs working in boarding schools.

Summary

This chapter has discussed the socio-economic and educational disadvantage of Aboriginal Australians, of which the researcher's personal Aboriginal life story is a part. This discussion has clearly shown that socio-economic and educational

disadvantage are very complex things, as are the ways to overcome it; when it involves cultural aspects it becomes even more complex to overcome.

There was also discussion around the failure to date of governments and government policies to address the socio-economic and educational disadvantage of Aboriginal Australians. Governments continually look for the one size fits all solution to the Aboriginal “problem”. They completely ignore the diversity of Aboriginal cultures. Western society has always liked to put square pegs in square holes, but Aboriginal people are unique round pegs that won’t fit into square holes.

The literature review in this chapter clearly shows there are many individual and societal impacts of socio-economic, and in particular educational, disadvantage on Aboriginal people. These impacts vary, although in the main they generally lead to unemployment, low-paid jobs, poor health, poor housing, low self-esteem and loss of motivation. Their effects on society manifest themselves in higher welfare payments, higher public health costs, more demand for public housing and in some cases drug and alcohol abuse, often followed by higher incarceration rates.

There is discussion on ten vital areas that are still problematic to overcoming Aboriginal educational disadvantage: student wellbeing, attendance, identity, student engagement, retention, parental involvement, supportive school environment, supportive home environment, relevant curriculum and motivation.

Also highlighted in that chapter were two new initiatives Grandparent Committees and a motivational program for Aboriginal men that I believe would have positive impacts on the educational and social outcomes of Aboriginal students. The suggestion I have made regarding teacher practice in the first week of each school year may also assist in improving Aboriginal educational and social outcomes. AEWs would be an integral part of developing and implementing these initiatives.

The next chapter discusses the challenges in developing an effective methodology to address the research question “Do Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) contribute to improving Aboriginal educational outcomes?” There is also discussion about the ethics and protocols respected and adhered to in both developing a methodology to answer the research question and in implementing the survey instrument. Also discussed are various research designs, the development of the survey instrument, the trial of this instrument and how the data were analysed.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The previous chapter gave an overview of Aboriginal socio-economic disadvantage and in particular Aboriginal educational disadvantage. Also highlighted in this chapter were the ten main areas essential to good outcomes for Aboriginal students: Aboriginal student wellbeing, attendance, retention, engagement, identity, parental involvement, supportive school environment, supportive home environment, relevant curriculum and motivation.

In this chapter the challenges in developing an effective methodology to address the research question “Do Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) contribute to improving Aboriginal educational outcomes?” are discussed. There is also discussion about how the ethics and protocols of conducting research in Aboriginal communities were respected and adhered to in both developing a methodology to answer the research question and in implementing the survey instrument. Also discussed are various research designs and why a multi-method research design was chosen. Finally, there is discussion on the development of the survey instrument, the trial of this instrument, how the data were analysed and the ethical procedures followed.

Challenges

Developing a methodology and research instrument to test the research question “Do Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) contribute to improving Aboriginal educational outcomes?” posed two significant challenges.

Firstly, prior to 1967 there is very little literature available on any aspect of AEWs, and only a handful of Aboriginal people were employees of schools. Post 1967, even though AEWs have been employed in schools in both the public and private sectors since 1974, there would also appear to be no research carried out on their effectiveness. This posed a significant problem as there was no prior literature on this subject nor a tried method or instrument for measuring the effectiveness of AEWs. Coincidentally, since I first posed this question in 2009, the Western Australia Education system developed an instrument and conducted research into the effectiveness of AEWs. G.Partington a researcher for this project informed me that, “there is nothing to my knowledge on the effectiveness of A.E.W's in improving the educational outcomes of Indigenous students , at least in terms of improved performance in tests. However qualitative studies may suggest otherwise”(Partington, 2010) . Unfortunately in writing this thesis, this information was unavailable as the findings have not yet been released.

Secondly, as with Aboriginal people themselves, AEWs across Australia have a huge diversity of titles and roles (see appendices 1A to 1G and 2A to 2I). There is also a lot of ambiguity and confusion amongst students, principals, teachers, parents and sometimes AEWs themselves as to their roles (Miller, n.d.). Much of the work AEWs do is ad hoc and not in their role descriptions (see appendix 18). Because of these issues it was very difficult to isolate the priority of various elements as held by Aboriginal parents, students and AEWs, as compared with the priorities held by principals and teachers, and those held by other stakeholders in improving Aboriginal educational outcomes. These groups do not always have the same priorities and aspirations for Aboriginal students, in either an educational or a societal sense. The problem to date has been the disparity in the decision-making power structure between Aboriginal people and schools. Due to the blighted history of Aboriginal people and the education system, getting them to come to a normal school event is a major task. Getting them to be on a school committee or school

parent committee as the only Aboriginal person is almost an impossibility. Even if by some miracle they agreed to do this there are very few who would speak up on contentious issues. The next section looks briefly at some positive initiatives that may make inroads into this issue.

Since 1999, there have been Aboriginal funding agreements made between the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and education providers. A stipulation is that Aboriginal people must be involved in all education decision-making involving their children. There have also been targets as to how many Aboriginal people were members of various school committees (Department of Education Science and Training & Department of Education Employment and Work Relations, 1999-2008). This has been a wonderful vision but in reality has been more tokenistic than mandatory. However this clause from the new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014 gives some hope.

The involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at all levels of educational decision-making and the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, teachers, education workers or community members in schools and classrooms provides strong role models and builds connections, contributing to a positive impact on educational outcomes (Ministerial Council for Education, 2011, p. 12).

Also in this plan is a new concept called focus schools. These schools are supposed to use intensive initiatives to help close the Aboriginal education gaps. If a school signs up as a focus school they are also required to form an official partnership with

the local Aboriginal community relating to these initiatives (Ministerial Council for Education, 2011).

Since 2000, all Aboriginal funding agreements made between DEEWR and all education providers have contained a clause that Aboriginal people must be involved in all educational decision-making in relation to their children. While this has been a fine vision, it has seldom occurred (Department of Education Employment and Work Relations, 2009; Union, 2007).

The next section outlines the ethical considerations undertaken in relation to this research project. The majority of these ethical considerations relate to the rules and guidelines for ethical research of Wollongong University. The two exceptions being those relating specifically to the Catholic Education System and most importantly to me as an Aboriginal person those relating to Aboriginal protocols (Board of Studies NSW, 2008).

Ethical considerations that were adhered-to in relation to this research

- The Commission for Children and Young People ACT 1998 (People, 1998).
- Commission for Children and Young People Amendment Act 2005 No 108 (N. Government, 2005).
- Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies (Studies, 2000).
- Wollongong University Code of Practice-Research (Wollongong, 2011).
- Wollongong University Privacy Policy (University, 2011).

- All conditions imposed by the eleven NSW Catholic Dioceses in their permission to conduct research guidelines were adhered-to.
- All local Aboriginal ethical considerations were discussed with the twelve diocesan Aboriginal Education Advisors and adhered-to (Board of Studies NSW, 2008).
- All participants were given a clear statement in plain English of the intent of all aspects of this research, along with the right of withdrawal of either party, and data related to them, at any time (see appendix K).

After researching and reflecting on all the ethical considerations related to this project, the next step was to select the most appropriate and most effective research design.

Research design

There are two main research paradigms, quantitative and qualitative (Clarke, 2005; Corbin, 1998).

Quantitative research

Quantitative research is based on statistics. Its strength is that it can indicate something is occurring or how many times it has occurred. Its weakness is it can't indicate definitively why, in relation to the thoughts, actions and perceptions of mankind (Sawford, 2001). Using it alone to make an informed decision in relation to the perceptions or behaviours of any creature that has free will, including man, would not be logical because no two people or creatures perceive things in exactly the

same way (National Science and Technology Centre, 2011) What one sees and what one thinks are filtered through that person's life experiences (Parrott, 2010). There are no absolutes when it comes to living creatures (Net, 2011). The following is evidence of these propositions.

Judging an AEW's effectiveness, using quantitative measures of student educational outcomes as determined by the Federal Government, is a severely flawed concept, for a number of reasons (Mellor & Corrigan, 2004). My credibility in making this statement is based on ten years of judging quantitative reports for the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), and twelve years of compiling them for the NSW Catholic Education Commission for submission to DEEWR. The latter required me annually to compile, analyse and deliver on time a hugely complex and detailed report on all areas of Aboriginal educational outcomes.

There are several flaws in using this type of quantitative data to make informed decisions on the effectiveness of AEWs.

Firstly, tests such as the National Assessment Plan in Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and its predecessor the Basic Skills Test (BST) are a snapshot of one day in a school student's year. The results are further skewed by those students absent or withdrawn on the day of the exam; taking the Northern Territory as an example, the latter can be a significant number of students (Kieran Finnane, 2012)

While previously arguing in favour of tests like NAPLAN, I have changed my mind about the validity and value of standardised testing (Donnelly, 2010, p. 1).

US and Australian test experts agree that standardised tests like NAPLAN are unreliable, invalid and cannot be trusted (it's Lies, damned lies and statistics) (Donnelly, 2010, p. 1).

What follows is further evidence that the current long-term Government accountability-reporting framework is a long way from accurate.

In the NSW Catholic system, because of the complexity of collecting, collating and averaging the attendance data from eleven different diocesan databases, attendance data has been based on a sample. This sample was across four dioceses but had to include metropolitan, rural and remote schools. Until 2009 this was even more complex because forty-six Independent Catholic Congregational schools also had to be included. Congregational schools belong to particular religious congregations or orders, such as the Christian Brothers and the Marist Brothers Burden (2000, p. 1). There is no complete data record of all Aboriginal attendance.

Retention figures in relation to Government accountability reports are based on apparent retention, which really means, in a lot of cases the students being measured might not be consistently the same students. This became very clear to me when doing the retention figures for the NSW Catholic Education Commission. In some age groups, mainly in secondary, there were retention figures of up to 150%. This is due to the numbers of Aboriginal students enrolling in Catholic schools just for senior secondary. The very small numbers of Aboriginal students overall can also

skew the figures. Sometimes the movement of a few Aboriginal students either way can mean a gain or loss of between one and ten per-cent in any educational outcome.

Retention rates are *apparent* as they do not track individual students through schooling. What they measure is the ratio of the total number of full-time school students in a designated year to the total number of students in an earlier designated year, that is, Year 12, 2003 compared to Year 10, 2001 (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004, p. 28).

The Indigenous identifier for both the SC and HSC plays havoc with the results. Students self-identify on these exams and NSW Catholic schools often have anything up to 150% more results than they have Aboriginal enrolments for these two exams. For example, NSW Catholic schools would have 100 students officially enrolled in Year 12 but when the HSC results were sourced from the NSW Board of Studies it would show 150 completions. This was because an additional 50 students had identified as Aboriginal on the test forms. As part of the research on this anomaly I tracked most of the differences back to two of our Catholic Dioceses, Sydney and Parramatta. It is my well-founded belief that a lot of Islander students are self-identifying as Aboriginal for the exams. The reason I believe this is occurring is that the question asks whether you are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. I believe a lot of the students just see the Islander part. Both of these Dioceses have significant Islander populations, which strengthen my belief this is occurring.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research has a similar weakness to quantitative research in making informed judgements on human perceptions and behaviours. Ten people watching the same event will give ten different versions of what occurred. The same ten people will give you ten different reasons explaining why it occurred (Cantril, 1954, pp. 1-3; Interior, p. 2). However, its strengths are that the information is coming from those directly involved. It is the way the information is interpreted that is the critical part.

Both Qualitative and quantitative research have their strengths and weaknesses. For that reason a mixed-method methodology was chosen.

I chose to use part quantitative research because in my own small way I wish to use this thesis to influence and change the many things within the arena of education that are still causing disadvantage for Aboriginal people. This can only be done by influencing those with their hands on the wheel of Aboriginal education, namely politicians, bureaucrats and researchers, who rely mainly on statistics because of their own agendas (Butten, 2008). The problem is these are the people who control the money, and whether we like it or not, it is money that makes the education wheel go round (Green, 2011).

I chose to use part qualitative research for two reasons. Firstly, qualitative research is about telling a story, and as an Aboriginal person I am very comfortable with that (Zion & Kozleski, 2005). Secondly, and most importantly, I am gathering the real story, from real people who are involved at the coalface in schools and the

communities of those schools every day. Researchers often forget that behind every statistic there is a real person (Mundine, 2005b).

Taking into account the strengths and weaknesses of the research design I chose, I networked with Aboriginal educational stakeholders in developing the survey research instrument .

Development of the survey research instrument

All questions in this survey are the result of consultation and agreement between Ross Tarlinton, Principal of St Joseph's Hunters Hill, Brian Giles-Brown National Schools Coordinator of Dare to Lead and the twelve Aboriginal NSW Catholic diocesan advisors of whom ten are parents. The Likert scale used was in consultation with the same group. It was numbered to be able to better analyse the data. Additional consultation was held with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff of the NSW Catholic Education Commission, the NSW Department of Education and Communities, the Western Australia Department of Education, Jeff McMullen Journalist and Aboriginal advocate, and my interstate counterparts. All those named in this research document have given written permission and are also included in the acknowledgements.

The questions were selected based on what this group perceived to be the major roles AEWs needed to play in schools to achieve the best possible outcomes for Aboriginal students. Both the ten Likert and five qualitative questions for the target groups are the same, but each group has been given a variation of the questions depending on their personal interactions with and perceptions of the AEW in relation to the particular question (see appendices 14A-F).

The views of parents of Aboriginal students were given priority, as parents are the first educators of their children. They live the whole educational experience with their children as well as live with the impacts of their child's education for the rest of their lives. Other stakeholders such as school staff and the governments, who fund schools, were given a lesser priority as their roles in the child's life and impacts on the child's education finish when they leave school.

Taking this into account the questions were broken into three themes, in order of importance according to the consultation group: culture and identity, learning, and educational outcomes. Question seven appears under both the headings of learning and educational outcomes for two reasons. Firstly, it appears under the heading learning, because it relates to attendance; regular attendance would tend to indicate the child is enjoying coming to school and learning. Secondly, it appears under the heading educational outcomes because it is a measurable educational outcome. The ten Likert questions grouped under the three themes follow.

Ten Likert questions under their three selected themes

This next section contains the ten quantitative Likert survey questions under their themes of supporting culture and identity, learning and educational outcomes.

Supporting culture and identity

Motivation, self-esteem and aspirations were grouped together because they are interconnected (Amanda Hughes, 2011)

4. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff helps in developing the motivation, self-esteem and aspirations of Aboriginal students.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

5. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff helps to demonstrate a school respects and values Aboriginal culture.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

6. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff helps reinforce Aboriginal students' identities.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Learning

2. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff helps Aboriginal students to enjoy learning.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

7. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff helps with the attendance of Aboriginal students.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

8. I believe Aboriginal students work better in the classroom when an Aboriginal Education Worker is assisting them.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Educational outcomes

1. In a school with Aboriginal students I would prefer to have an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

3. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff helps Aboriginal students to achieve the school's expected outcomes.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

7. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff helps with the attendance of Aboriginal students.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

9. I believe Aboriginal students are more likely to complete school because the school has an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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5

4

3

2

1

10. I believe if Aboriginal Education Workers were removed from schools Aboriginal students would not do as well.

Strongly Agree**Agree****Undecided****Disagree****Strongly Disagree**

5

4

3

2

1

The next section looks at the trialling of the survey instrument.

Trialling the survey instrument

Once the survey instrument was developed it was trialled. This trial was conducted through the Dare to Lead organisation. Dare to Lead run an innovative program designed to get principals to take ownership of Aboriginal education in their schools (Lead, 2008).

A selection of one hundred and seven principals nationally completed the survey. They were from most states, education systems and geo-locations i.e., metropolitan, rural and remote. They were also from different age groups and genders, and included principals of both primary and secondary schools.

I consider this trial was a great success for a number of reasons:

Firstly, and most importantly, the principals from the public education sector were more than prepared to share their insights with someone from the private sector, for the greater good. A significant number also offered to have further conversations with me.

Secondly, this survey drew responses from most states and gave me insights into how things operate educationally in several states.

Thirdly, the majority of feedback was very positive (see appendices 27A and 27B).

The trial survey instrument related to only one of the target groups of the main survey, so further considerations needed to be taken into account, in relation to its administration to all the target groups.

Considerations in administering the main survey instrument

The survey instrument was administered by the twelve diocesan Aboriginal education advisors for the following reasons:

- Time-wise and cost-wise it would be impossible for me to administer the survey instrument.
- The Aboriginal advisors know their communities and the protocols that must be observed.
- The Aboriginal advisors have the trust and the respect of the staff of their schools.
- The twelve advisors would know most of the Aboriginal students in their schools.

The next section discusses the analysis of the ten Likert questions.

How the ten quantitative Likert survey questions were analysed

The Likert questions were analysed in three ways:

Firstly, the total responses to each of the ten Likert questions were analysed.

Secondly, the questions were sorted into the categories of supporting culture and identity, learning and educational outcomes, and analysed as a category.

Thirdly, under the same three themes, they were broken down into the groupings of Aboriginal adults, school staff/others and students.

Parents of Aboriginal students, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, as well as AEWs, were grouped together, as in the majority of cases, for them the wellbeing of the child holds precedence over the educational outcome. As demonstrated earlier in the literature review for this thesis, Aboriginal people in the main have a different world-view, and this particularly applies to the education of their children. Even if one parent is non-Aboriginal, certain traits and beliefs will still form part of the family group's culture and way of life (Department of Education Employment and Work Relations, 2011b; Groome, 1995; What Works the Work Program, 2011). For that reason and as parents are the first educators of their children, their views needed to be heard separately. The issue of whether Aboriginal people have a different world-view is contentious with a lot of western academics and researchers. As an Aboriginal educationalist I have many heated debates on this issue.

Some of the educators who have had a very strong influence on Indigenous education improvement, such as Dr Ernie Grant, the Jirribal elder who wrote the Holistic Framework (My Land, My Tracks) used in many Queensland government schools, argues strongly that Indigenous people as animists see land, culture, time and community in a markedly different way to the European gaze. He argues that this influences the way Aboriginal parents and students see the world (Grant, 1999).

Principals, teachers and others are grouped together because they, as the providers and administrators of education, may have different priorities, which are not always strictly educational ones. Their priorities in some cases are dictated by government, which provides the funds to run the school. I say this because I believe the best principals and teachers in fact defy government fashions and follow proven educational theories and methods rather than policies that are changed all too frequently. An example of this is the role of Aboriginal languages in teaching young Aboriginal children. The Government pushes against this despite the fact the evidence supports the principals and teachers who utilise a child's knowledge of a first language and scaffold them through the stages of learning English as well(Patty & Harrison, 2010).

Students are grouped separately for two reasons. Firstly, as this thesis looks at whether AEWs contribute to improving their educational outcomes, it is vital their voice is heard(Godfrey et al., 1998). They may also have completely different perceptions of the quality of what is being delivered, because children think differently (Craven et al., 2003; Eiserer, 1954; Lewis, 2011). Secondly, parents, AEWs, principals and teachers are in different ways providers of education or educational support to students. The students themselves are the ones best placed to comment on the quality of the education and educational support AEWs provide, as they are the recipients...

The data have been analysed in this way to take into account each particular group's interactions with, or perceptions of, AEWs. Perceptions are essential. They may produce different results for each group, or the same results.

This section explains the purpose of each of the five qualitative Likert survey questions.

Qualitative questions

The five qualitative questions were designed for three important purposes.

Firstly, all five qualitative questions were designed to give respondents the opportunity to provide some uninhibited comment, rather than the comment likely to be elicited by closed statistical questions.

Secondly, questions 1 and 3 were designed to clarify some of the mystery and ambiguities of the AEW role. This particularly relates to what an AEW does in the classroom and what they do to involve the Aboriginal community in a school.

Thirdly, and most importantly, questions 2, 4 and 5 seek from all stakeholders some suggestions as to how the AEW could better assist the Aboriginal students in their school.

These are the five qualitative questions:

1. What role do Aboriginal Education Workers play in assisting Aboriginal students with their learning?
2. What could Aboriginal Education Workers do better to assist individual Aboriginal students with their learning?
3. How do Aboriginal Education Workers involve the Aboriginal community in the schools where they assist students?

4. How can Aboriginal Education Workers best assist you with the learning of Aboriginal students?

5. Are there any suggestions you would make that may assist all Aboriginal Education Workers to better support Aboriginal students in completing school?

How the five qualitative Likert survey questions were analysed

The qualitative data were analysed on the basis of whether three or more respondents gave similar answers to the same question or used key words relating to improving Aboriginal educational outcomes. This was to ensure that the particular comment did not just relate to one AEW and one issue in one school. The selected responses were analysed in two groupings. The first was to clarify some duties that AEWs perform that people are unclear of. The second sought positive suggestions for improvements to the AEW role that would benefit students.

Summary

This chapter has demonstrated the challenges involved in finding a methodology that satisfied the proponents of both quantitative and qualitative research as to the question “Do Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) contribute to improving Aboriginal educational outcomes?” Firstly, there is a dearth of literature on AEWs prior to 1967. Secondly, AEWs across Australia have many titles, role descriptions, and unofficial duties. Thirdly, no-one appears to have conducted research on this topic, making this research not only important in itself but the basis for future more-focused research on this topic.

Also discussed was the contentious issue of Aboriginal people having a different world-view particularly in relation to the education of their children? That they do is confirmed by the views of widely-respected Aboriginal educationalists.

This chapter has shown that using statistical quantitative data such as NAPLAN, test scores, attendance, retention and external examination results to be the sole judge of the effectiveness of AEWs is a flawed concept.

The choice of a mixed-method quantitative and qualitative research for this project satisfies the proponents of both quantitative and qualitative research, especially those who control the funding.

In putting together this research project, all ethical considerations, including Aboriginal protocols, were taken into account. There has also been appropriate consultation with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

A successful trial of the survey instrument was carried out through the *Dare to Lead* program. It involved principals across Australia in both the public and independent education sectors. One hundred and seven surveys were returned, with very positive response rates on all questions.

The survey instrument was developed in consultation with experienced Aboriginal Advisors of whom ten were parents, and in consultation with many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educationalists across Australia. The survey instrument was implemented in an ethical and

appropriate manner, by Aboriginal people who have the respect of both their local Aboriginal community and the schools of their Catholic Diocese.

There was discussion around how the ten quantitative Likert survey questions would be analysed, first under three themes: culture and identity; learning; and educational outcomes; then further analysed in three stakeholder groups: students, parents and AEWs; principals and teachers; and other stakeholders. This was to see if their particular group's interactions with, or perceptions of, AEWs might produce different results, or in fact similar results.

Finally, there was discussion of the process of how the five qualitative Likert questions were to be analysed. To do this they were put into two groupings. Questions 1 and 3 were designed to clear up some of the mystery and ambiguities of the AEW role. Questions 2, 4 and 5 sought from all stakeholders some suggestions as to how the AEWs could better assist the Aboriginal students of their schools.

The next chapter discusses the history of Aboriginal education and AEWs nationally, and specifically in the case of NSW Catholic schools. Also discussed are the various issues facing AEWs in today's schools. Finally, there is discussion of the additional issues faced by AEWs working in Boarding schools.

Chapter 4: Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs)

Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the challenges in developing the methodology that has produced the results for this chapter. It explained why a mixed-method research design was preferred and also demonstrated the ethical procedures followed in developing the methodology. There was also discussion about the development of the survey instrument, its implementation and how the data would be analysed.

This chapter discusses the history of Aboriginal education in general and the history and catalysts for the introduction of AEWs to both public and Catholic schools specifically. It also discusses the philosophies and rationales for their introduction to both public and Catholic schools. There is discussion on the various titles and roles of Aboriginal Education Workers nationally. Also discussed are the various issues facing AEWs in today's schools. Finally there is discussion of the additional issues faced by AEWs working in Boarding schools.

In order to understand the true value of Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) it is important to know: the history of AEWs; the philosophy and rationale behind their introduction; the issues they face; and the political pressures around the role and how the role has developed, and continues to do so. There are two sides to every story, so in order to achieve a balanced view it is important to look at these things from both an Aboriginal and a non-Aboriginal perspective.

History of AEWs in Australian schools pre-1967

It was in NSW public schools where the idea of AEWs was born and first implemented, hence their inclusion here (Fletcher, 1989). It will become clear that prior to 1967 there is a lack of information about AEWs at both state and national levels.

Aboriginal people, as students in western education in Australia, date back to Bennelong in 1789 (Fletcher, 1989). However, the history of Aboriginal people as staff in schools is far harder to document as are their roles up until 1967. Until that time, there are only a few references to Aboriginal teachers and Aboriginal people who assisted teachers (no official titles at that time) (Fletcher, 1989).

In 1867 Bessy Smith, an Aboriginal teacher, accepted an offer to teach at Ramahyuck mission station in Victoria. Sadly her tenure was short-lived as the superintendent, Rev. F. A Hagenauer, was intent on securing her and four other young women as wives for his Aboriginal converts to Christianity (Attwood, 2005).

Bindi MacGill refers to Anangu teaching assistants working at Ernabella Mission School in South Australia in the 1940s, although no names are mentioned (MacGill, 2008).

Clean, Clad & Courteous (Fletcher, 1989) is the most authoritative work on Aboriginal education in NSW, and even it provides limited information. Its only references to Aboriginal school staff are John Lewis, a teacher at Moonahcullah Aboriginal School, an

Aboriginal, two-year teacher-trained male Education Officer who took up a position in 1951 at Burnt Ridge Aboriginal school near Kempsey, and another Aboriginal male who in 1953 took up a similar position at Cabbage Tree Island Aboriginal School (Fletcher, 1989).

Survival, another highly regarded book on the history of NSW Aboriginal people, in both its 1986 and updated 2005 editions does not mention Aboriginal school staff prior to 1967 (Parbury, 1986, 2005). They are not mentioned in the Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia (David Horton, 1994).

A 2010 publication by the NSW Board of Studies stated that in 1940, on the abolition of the Aboriginal Protection Board (APB), the NSW Department of Education started to employ Aboriginal teachers (Cadzow, 2010). However, the real situation is confused because the Board of Studies publication says that Evelyn Robinson became the first Aboriginal teaching graduate in 1956 and began her teaching career at Burnt Bridge Aboriginal School on the North Coast (Cadzow, 2010). The ambiguity around who was the first NSW Aboriginal teacher may have to do with the standards required for a teacher. Prior to Evelyn Robinson's appointment, a university teaching degree was not required to teach in an Aboriginal school. The only requirement was to observe a practising teacher for a week or two (Fletcher, 1989).

There are no officially available public school role statements for AEWs pre-1967. However, as mission schools and Aboriginal reserves played a very big role in Aboriginal education prior to 1967 it is essential that they are included in any further research on this topic.

Catalysts for Introduction of AEWs to NSW schools post-1967

There were several catalysts that brought about the introduction of AEWs to NSW Schools.

The first occurred in 1963 when Alan Duncan, a teacher with the Department of Education (DE) was appointed a lecturer in Aboriginal Adult Education at the University of Sydney. Coincidentally, he was the Chairman of the NSW Teachers Federation Aboriginal Schools Committee. Wearing both of these hats, in September 1963 he asked the Department of Education if it would carry out a survey of Aboriginal children in government schools. He wanted to do this to better plan his own work around Aboriginal Adult Education. As a carrot to get the Department of Education to conduct this survey he said it may help them to gauge the progress of Aboriginal students to detect any noticeable “retardation” (Fletcher, 1989).

The request was denied on the grounds there should be no differentiation among students. So going through the back door he convinced the NSW Teachers Federation to conduct the survey. The findings of this survey rang alarm bells for teachers on how badly Aboriginal students were faring (Fletcher, 1989). Not being impressed by what they believed to be interference by the Teachers Federation, it would appear the Department of Education went into damage control. For the next five years, the only publicly available figures on Aboriginal schooling, were those of the Teachers Federation survey (Fletcher, 1989). This survey, however, with its accompanying media coverage putting pressure on governments, convinced the NSW Department of Education that

they needed to respond (Fletcher, 1989). One step it took was the employment of AEWs (Fletcher, 1989).

The second catalyst was the 1966 strike by the Gurindji people at Wave Hill Station, led by Vincent Lingiari, over their pitiful wages and conditions (Parbury, 2005). The subsequent media coverage awakened the consciousness of Australia to the plight of Aboriginal Australians. Australia had finally come of age on human rights for the first Australians. Ordinary Australians in increasing numbers put pressure on governments to change the policies that had so unfairly affected Aboriginal people, including in the vital area of education. Improvements in education eventually led to the introduction of AEWs to schools in 1974 (Fletcher, 1989).

The third was Charles Perkins' "Freedom Ride" in 1967, an event that further awakened Australia to all the things Australians didn't know about the horrific treatment of Aboriginal people and perpetrated or condoned by all levels of government since settlement (Parbury, 2005; Rudd, 2008). Charles was accompanied by the Reverend Ted Noffs of the Wayside Chapel at Kings Cross and thirty "white" University of Sydney students, from a group called Student Action for Aborigines (SAFA) (Foley, 2005a; Parbury, 2005). Apart from the time Aboriginal workers conducted a strike in Darwin in 1950 and were supported by the North Australian Workers Union (NAWU), this was the only time that Aboriginal people had been politically supported by non-Aboriginal people in this way (Foley, 2005b).

Charles Perkins and his “freedom riders” confronted severe racism in many towns (Parbury, 2005). The resulting media coverage contributed to the record 90.77% ‘yes’ vote in the 1967 referendum (Dawkins, 2004; Fletcher, 1989; Korff). Charles Perkins placed great value on education and was one of the first Aboriginal people to attend university. It was while at university that he developed the idea of the Freedom Ride. It was the influence and charisma of Aboriginal people like Charles that opened the doors of schools to both students and Aboriginal staff such as AEWs (Janet Mooney, 2000).

Fourth was the 1967 referendum itself (Australia). It was a watershed in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations and signalled to the world that Australia had accepted its human rights obligations to its Aboriginal peoples. This event triggered the constitutional requirement for all States to hand over the responsibility for Aboriginal Affairs to the Commonwealth Government (Attwood & Marcus, 2007). It finally gave all Australians a chance to see the big picture on the treatment of Aboriginal people rather than the rosy ones often painted by State governments and their media allies (Miley, 2006; Mills, 2010; Plater, 1985).

History, philosophy and rationale of the introduction of AEWs to NSW public schools post-1967

The first two AEWs were employed in 1974 under a pilot scheme at Walhallow School and at Weilmoringle School. It was hoped that the project and its training course would increase teachers’ understanding of Aboriginal children’s kinship ties and value systems. It was also hoped that it would increase student motivation and create additional vocational opportunities for “responsible” Aborigines (Fletcher, 1989) .

The pilot scheme was funded by the Commonwealth and was so successful that in 1975 over twenty AEWs were appointed to NSW public schools. This was followed in 1976 by sixty-seven AEWs being appointed; sixty were appointed to public schools and seven to non-Government schools. A condition of employment was completion of a twelve-month AEW training course run by the University of Sydney, with three months having to be on campus (Fletcher, 1989).

Subsequently, the NSW Teachers Federation requested the number be raised to one hundred so that any school with more than twenty Aboriginal enrolments could employ an AEW. The NSW Government and the Commonwealth Government disagreed over who should fund the employment of AEWs (Fletcher, 1989). The Commonwealth's view was that they were a short-term funder and if an initiative proved successful state and territory governments should then take funding responsibility (Fletcher, 1989). This view is still held by the Commonwealth regarding the funding of some Aboriginal programs (Watson, 2003).

The next recommendation to employ AEWs in more schools' came from the 1980 Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly upon Aborigines. The Committee recommended that the number of AEWs be increased and for them to be used more constructively in schools (Fletcher, 1989).

From that point the greatest growth of AEWs came about with the advent of targeted Aboriginal education funding being provided to education systems and providers to improve Aboriginal education outcomes. Targeted Aboriginal funding plays a huge role in the employment of AEWs; the reality is that from the inception of AEWs in 1974 to the

present day it is unlikely that AEWs would exist without it (Education Queensland, 2002; Strevens, 2010). In NSW Catholic schools, 70% to 80% of targeted Aboriginal funding is used for the salaries and on-costs of AEWs (Department of Education Science and Training & Department of Education Employment and Work Relations, 2004; Frank Pearce, 1999-2008). The NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) have a much larger AEW staff as well as nine times more Aboriginal students. This would lead logically to the conclusion that the salaries and on-costs of its AEWs would at least proportionally match NSW Catholic schools. “The bulk of IESIP funds are spent on wages and salaries” (Education Queensland, 2002).

Prior to 1990 there were at least eight funding programs that supported Aboriginal education (Department of Education Science and Training, 2003). The weakness of these programs was that they were submission-based; it became quickly obvious that the best-written submission not necessarily the best program was usually successful. In 1990 the Commonwealth passed the Indigenous Education (Supplementary Assistance) Act 1989 (Australian Government, 2009c) which supported the Aboriginal Education Policy (AEP) (Cadzow, 2010) through an Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program (AESIP) (Department of Education Science and Training, 2001).

The Act determined and defined four objectives:

- Increasing Aboriginal involvement in educational decisions
- Equal access to education by Aboriginals
- Equity of participation by Aboriginals in education
- Equitable and appropriate education outcomes for Aboriginals.

The Act's major weakness was that it did not support Aboriginal employment in any form in schools (Australian Government, 2009c). Aboriginal employment as a target wasn't included in financial agreements with all education systems until the advent of the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program (IESIP) in 2001 (Department of Education Science and Training, 2001).

The Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program (AESIP) and the Aboriginal Education Direct Assistance Program (AEDAP) were launched in 1990 (Department of Education Science and Training, 2001). These two programs did not have as a funding requirement that Aboriginal people be employed as AEWs or in any other school position. Education systems and schools were not challenged to focus on giving Aboriginal people employment opportunities. In 1997 these two initial programs were replaced by the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program (IESIP) and the Indigenous Education Direct Assistance Program (IEDA) (Employment and Work Relations Department of Education, 2001). As part of the new triennial funding agreements the following clause was inserted and targets required on the employment of Aboriginal people. "Increase Indigenous employment in education and training" (Department of Education Science and Training, 2003, p. 5).

In NSW public schools, AEW employment peaked in about 2005 and the number employed has been "unofficially" frozen, and continues to be frozen since that time (ABC South East, 2010; Strevens, 2010).

The next section clarifies some of the confusion and ambiguities around the roles of AEWs.

Why the role of AEWs is still a mystery to some school staff and sometimes themselves

Since 1967 Aboriginal people working in Australian schools in roles similar to classroom assistants and teacher assistants have had different titles in different states. These titles may also vary across the different education systems in the same state. There is little consistency in either their official role descriptions and even less consistency in the many unofficial tasks they carry out in the course of their work (see appendices 1A-1G and 2A-2I).

Various titles of AEWs across Australian schools post-1967 (appendices A and B).

Table 1

State or Territory	System	Job Title
ACT	Public Schools	Aboriginal Home Liaison Officer (AHLO)
ACT	Catholic Schools	Indigenous Assistant (IA)
Northern Territory	Public Schools	Aboriginal and Islander Education Worker (AIEO)
Northern Territory	Catholic Schools	Urban Schools Indigenous Education Workers (IEW) Remote Schools Teacher Assistant (TA)
NSW	Public Schools	Aboriginal Education Officer (AEO)
NSW	Catholic Schools	Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW)
Queensland	Public Schools	Community Education Counsellor (CEC)
Queensland	Catholic Schools	Indigenous Teacher Assistant (ITA)
South Australia	Public Schools	Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW)

South Australia	Catholic Schools	Indigenous Education Officer (IEO)
Tasmania	Public Schools	Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW)
Tasmania	Catholic Schools	Teacher Assistant (ATA)
Victoria	Public Schools	Koori Educator (KE)
Victoria	Catholic Schools	Koori Education Worker (KEW)
Western Australia	Public Schools	Aboriginal & Islander Education Officer (AIEO)
Western Australia	Catholic Schools	Aboriginal Teaching Assistant (ATA)

Roles of AEWs in NSW public schools post-1967

In 1972 the first NSW university-trained teachers' aides assisted students with language and teaching approaches in the classroom and were educational role models (Janet Mooney, 2008). Aside from this ground-breaking course, the only NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) AEW equivalent role descriptions currently available are for 1996, 2009 and 2010 (see appendices 1A to 1D). The Tasmania Department of Education, Northern Territory Department of Education and Training and Western Australia Department of Education also have similar AEW role descriptions (see appendices 1E, 1F and 1G).

The 2009 NSW DET AEW role description falls under four main categories: student support; community support; teacher support; and, other duties (see appendix 1B). The revised 2010 DET AEW role description has four broad categories: working with teachers; working as part of a school team to support students; liaising with the principal and staff; and, other duties (see appendix 1C). The glaring difference between the two is the omission of community support. Given the current Federal Government's focus on programs to promote Aboriginal community engagement, leaving out the community

support part of the AEW role would appear to be counterproductive (Department of Education Employment and Work Relations, 2010).

Interestingly, the 1996 NSW DET AEW role descriptions bear some similarities to the old “clean, clad and courteous” policies of earlier governments (see appendix 1A) (Fletcher, 1989). Under its pastoral care section in 1996, the AEW was responsible for the behaviour and hygiene of Aboriginal students (see Appendix 1A). Subsequently, in the NSW Department of Education and Training 2009 and 2010 AEW role descriptions, AEWs no longer have pastoral care responsibilities for Aboriginal students (see appendices 1B and 1C). This is also an interesting approach as, since AEWs were first employed in schools their main roles have been about Aboriginal student wellbeing and creating an environment for Aboriginal students conducive to learning.

Some issues facing AEWs in today’s public schools

The issues facing AEWs in today’s public schools can be classified into three basic areas:

(1) Government and bureaucracies; (2) school-level issues (3) their community.

Government and bureaucracies

The levels of funding, both state and federal, that are allocated to schools determine their staffing levels and the quality of programs they are able to maintain. The growing pressures on schools to be community hubs and provide more and more services severely stretch them. They are then forced to prioritise and sadly, even though Aboriginal education is supposed to be a top priority, it often ends up well down the list (Frank Pearce, 2010).

The new Federal Labor Government in 2008 eliminated the targeted status of the Aboriginal funding that was used to employ most AEWs in all systems (see appendix 26). Previously, under the IESIP program it was a requirement to spend a minimum of twenty-five per-cent of the funding on Aboriginal employment and training (Queensland Government, 2002). In reality the funding expended across most education systems on Aboriginal employment and training was between sixty-five and seventy-five per-cent (Frank Pearce, 2010).

Aboriginal funding now comes under the Schools Assistance Act 2008 (Australian Government, 2008). Under the policies of the current Federal Government it is now added to the overall recurrent funding that schools receive for all programs. The Aboriginal component of overall federal school funding is calculated using an Aboriginal student per-capita rate (O'Connor, 2010). The 2009 rates were:

Primary non-remote	\$1,600 per student
Primary remote	\$3,850 per student
Secondary non-remote	\$2,250 per student
Secondary remote	\$4,400 per student

This funding is then mainstreamed into the system's overall General Recurrent Grants funding with the understanding that it will be used in good faith for the benefit of Aboriginal students in closing the gap in educational outcomes and Year 12 attainments (Australian Education Union, 2002).

Another issue in the area of Aboriginal education funding is the NSW Government experiencing financial difficulties as is well-publicised; this may explain the lack of security

of AEW and teacher's aide positions. The following illustrates why AEWs feel insecure in their jobs:

Some teacher's aides in NSW schools have been working in the job for up to 15-20 years but are still employed as temporary workers. The NSW DET has told teacher's aides-learning support officers (LSOs) it cannot make their position permanent because the funding for their position comes from the Commonwealth. However the Public Service Association claims some LSO positions have been running for up to 20 years, with no question the funding will continue, so there is no reason to keep most positions as temporary positions. Of course the NSW DET has been taking advantage of the goodwill of teacher's aides for decades. Many are mothers who want part-time work while their children are at school, so they are soft targets. At the end of each year they have no guarantee their job will continue, but they are asked back, year after year. It is demoralising to have such experience and connection with a school so easily dismissed and so terribly undervalued (Parker, 2009, p. 1).

Funding for AEWs comes from the same source, so it is only logical that their positions would be just as uncertain (Frank Pearce, 2010).

School-level racism

Just some of the issues facing AEWs in schools today are racism, cultural isolation, lack of staff cultural awareness, role confusion, low expectations, and repercussions of Aboriginal funding.

Firebrace maintains that racism is still a big issue for Aboriginal people. In 2007, she suffered 44 counts of racial violence while teaching at a private secondary school in eastern Victoria. Some senior teachers encouraged racial hatred among students to pressure Firebrace out of her job. She was nicknamed the “Black Gorilla” and had her car spattered with blood. Firebrace finally quit after a student tried to stab her with a pair of scissors (Said, 2010, p. 1).

Racism is still alive and well in many schools and is a big issue for AEWs, both in a personal sense and on behalf of the Aboriginal students in their care (see appendix 5A). This can be confirmed by sitting in any school staff room listening to casual conversations when staff are relaxed and with their guards down. While in this modern era we are all inundated with racism policies, particularly in schools; policy however in a lot of cases does not translate to attitudinal and behavioural change. Schools are a reflection of society, and any form of media on any given day will confirm racism is alive and well in both. Racist school staff are of particular concern as they are the ones educating and influencing the citizens of tomorrow (see appendix 5A).

Cultural isolation

Cultural isolation is an issue for AEWs because in the main they are cultural islands within their schools. Except in a small number of cases, they are the only Aboriginal adult in their school, which can make it a very lonely place (MacGill, 2008). Those AEWs working in rural and remote areas suffer this cultural isolation to a greater extent because they are often many miles from a school with another AEW or Aboriginal staff member. This cultural isolation can have a big impact on AEW wellbeing, which in turn can impact on their Aboriginal students. Aboriginal life revolves around family, extended family and

relationships in a very personal physical and spiritual sense. They have telephones and email, but Aboriginal people on the whole need the physical and spiritual presence of another Aboriginal person to achieve a degree of cultural comfort.

Lack of staff cultural awareness in relation to AEWs' cultural obligations, particularly in relation to Sorry Business (funerals), is a big issue (Australian Academy of Medicine and Surgery, 2010; Australian National University, 2010). Unlike non-Aboriginal Australians, leaving aside a few Islander and other ethnic groups, Aboriginal people are close in a very personal way to the members of their extended family. When one of their extended family passes away, in most cases they "need" to attend the funeral. As a lot of AEWs, in particular those in metropolitan schools have their home communities in rural and remote areas, they will need to travel home, and that takes time. Sometimes this can take a week, as there is also the mourning process to take into account. Travel costs also play a big factor in how long a cultural obligation may take, as often Aboriginal people have to drive or go by bus because they can't afford an airfare. School staff very seldom understand any of this; I personally have had the comment made to me on a number of occasions "if one of my distant family dies I only take the day of the funeral off; how come Aboriginal people are often off work for so long?"

School staff, in particular teachers, for whatever reason often have low expectations of AEWs and Aboriginal staff in general (MacGill, 2008).

Evelyn Crawford had worked for two years as an unpaid "reading mum" at the local school at Brewarrina, before taking an aide's position in 1977. She tells how "... white teachers had assumed that the teacher's aides were there to

wash the cups and tea-towels, and if the teacher or kids made a mess it was the Aboriginal person's job to clean it up" (Evelyn Crawford, 1993, P. 278).

This sort of thing is still happening in schools today, for example setting-up classrooms, photo copying, bus driving, and using private vehicle to transport students. The low expectations of other school staff and confusion over their role description versus what they are required to do is a concern for a lot of AEWs (Flanders, 2004).

Aboriginal funding in any form is subject to more accountability than any other government program at both state and federal levels; this can have a negative impact at school level. As schools get caught up in more and more paperwork in relation to Aboriginal funding and programs it doesn't make Aboriginal workers the most popular people in the school and certainly doesn't help in maintaining good relationships.

Application processes for accessing Parent School Partnership Initiative (PSPI) funding are difficult and onerous; it has made the funding inaccessible for many schools and has further contributed to the deterioration of positive relationships between Indigenous parents and schools (Moyle, 2005, p. 4).

Each year over my ten years with CEC, NSW I have had to request more and more detailed and complex data from schools. This on occasions has led to heated discussions with school staff when requesting even more data (Frank Pearce, 1999-2008) .

Community level

In most cases AEWs work in the communities in which they reside; this can have both positive and negative impacts. On the positive side they generally know most of the local

community and have established relationships. In some cases their extended family are also part of the community. This can assist the school greatly in the early identification of issues that may arise for Aboriginal students. This gives the school a chance to address these issues at an early stage before they become major issues. A good relationship between the AEW and the local community also helps the school to engage in a positive way with their Aboriginal community for the benefit of all stakeholders (Board of Studies NSW, 2001, 2008).

On the negative side if the relationship between the AEW and the community sours it can be extremely traumatic for the AEW as well as school staff who may receive a backlash from the community. It can also have a very negative impact on the students especially if they are related to the AEW. When this occurs I am often enlisted to resolve the issues because in my position I have always been, and been seen as neutral. In the majority of cases I have been successful, but some issues particularly if they are very long term issues may never be resolved.

Background to the context and governance of NSW Catholic schools

When discussing anything within the arena of Catholic education, including AEWs, the religious context must always be taken into account as it has a great bearing on everything that happens at every level in Catholic schools; it is what the ethos of Catholic education is about. It also plays a huge role in the day-to-day operation of Catholic schools and the employment of AEWs. When discussing Catholic education and in particular, NSW Catholic education, as well as the religious aspects the other factor that needs to be understood is the complex management structures that dictate the day-to-day operation of NSW Catholic schools (Brown, 2011).

Firstly, at the State level there is the NSW Council of Bishops, which is responsible for all things Catholic in NSW including Catholic schools. Secondly, there is the NSW Catholic Education Commission (NSW CEC) established by the NSW Bishops in 1974 and responsible to them for all educational issues. It should be noted that the commission has no role or authority in the day-to-day operation of NSW Catholic schools; that role is decentralised to diocesan education offices or individual schools (Catholic Education Commission NSW, 2008).

Those two bodies have overall control of the big picture in relation to all things related to education in NSW Catholic schools. However, the authority and responsibility for the day-to-day running of Catholic systemic schools lies with the Bishops of the eleven Catholic Dioceses and the eleven Diocesan Education Directors. At a local level the parish priest may also choose to be involved (Gilchrist, 2000).

Each Bishop has overall responsibility for all things Catholic within his Archdiocese or Diocese and the Director of Education's sole responsibility is for the schools within the Archdiocese or Diocese (Catholic Education Commission of NSW, 2010).

As if all the complexities of the governance of Catholic schools already stated is not enough, the NSW Catholic System has forty-six Congregational schools belonging to various religious congregations or orders (e.g. Marist Brothers, Sisters of the Good Samaritan, Christian Brothers) which, although falling under the umbrella of NSW Catholic schools are independent in their governance and operation (B. Kerr, 2009).

As stated previously, the single greatest influence on NSW Catholic schools (and I would say nationally) is the Catholic religious context, and this is where the history of AEWs in NSW Catholic schools began. The catalyst was the 1986 visit of Pope John Paul II to Australia and his speech in Alice Springs to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia.

History, philosophy and rationale of AEWs in the NSW Catholic education system

There were two main factors that led to the introduction of AEWs to NSW Catholic schools, and I believe to Catholic schools nationally. Firstly and most importantly, was the influence of Pope John Paul II. The Address of John Paul II to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at Blatherskite Park in 1986 had a profound effect on all Australians, and in particular those of the Catholic faith. His message of the vital need for reconciliation became a major political theme of the 1990's (O'Sullivan, 2006).

Excerpts from the address of John Paul II to the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in "Blatherskite Park"

Alice Springs (Australia), 29th November 1986

Dear Brothers and Sisters, it is a great joy for me to be here today in Alice Springs and to meet so many of you, the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders of Australia. I want to tell you right away how much the Church esteems and loves you, and how much she wishes to assist you in your spiritual and material needs.

As you listen to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, seek out the best things of your traditional ways. If you do, you will come to realize more and more your great human and Christian dignity. Let your minds and hearts be strengthened to begin a new life now. Past hurts cannot be healed by violence, nor are present injustices removed by resentment. Your Christian faith calls you to become the best kind of Aboriginal people you can be. This is possible only if reconciliation and forgiveness are part of your lives. Only then will you find happiness. Only then will you make your best contribution to all your brothers and sisters in this great nation. You are part of Australia and Australia is part of you. And the Church herself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others (Australian Catholic Bishops, 2006, pp. 1,4).

This was the call to “real “ action on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that the Catholic Church so badly needed after so many years of looking the other way at their ill-treatment and being inadvertent contributors to it through supporting many racist government policies. Pope John Paul II, as the head of the Roman Catholic Church, told all Catholics, regardless of rank or position in life to “walk the talk “of reconciliation rather than continuing to pay it lip service (Mundine, 2005a, p. 1).

Prior to the visit of Pope John Paul II to Australia in 1986, NSW Catholic schools gave little if any focus to the particular needs of Aboriginal students, so it is obvious there was little need for Aboriginal staff to address those needs in a culturally appropriate way. From the earliest records available, the only mention of Aboriginal enrolments in NSW Catholic

schools, from 1973 to 1988, is a sole NSW CEC handwritten record stating that in 1973 there were 143 Aborigines and 68,808 others enrolled in NSW Catholic Schools (Andrew Forbes, 2010).

The second greatest influence on the introduction of AEWs to NSW Catholic schools was the advent of AESIP funding specifically targeted at improving the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students (Department of Education Science and Training, 2003; Smith, 2005; Vander Heide, 2010). In schools today, lack of funding is an ongoing concern, particularly in relation to staffing, which takes up in most cases between 70% and 80% of a school's budget. Contrary to the picture painted ever more frequently by all sections of the media, all Catholic schools are not awash with money. In fact Catholic systemic schools, when taking into account both State and Federal funding to schools, get less per student than public schools (Canavan, 2008; Council of Catholic School Parents, 2009; White, 2009). On a personal note, when working in the public sector before taking up my current tenure with Catholic schools in 1999, I also believed that all Catholic schools had loads of money. After ten years of watching and participating in the struggle of Catholic Systemic schools, which are the vast majority, to even maintain their current educational services to their students and communities I can truthfully state this is definitely not the case.

Roles of AEWs in NSW Catholic schools post-1967

All eleven NSW Catholic Dioceses are autonomous employers and have differing AEW role descriptions (see appendices 2A to 2I). This is good in some ways and problematic in others.

On the positive side it allows them to better adapt AEW roles to more localised conditions. This is unlike NSW public schools that have standardised AEW roles across all of NSW regardless of local needs. Catholic principals also have more authority in developing the role of the AEW at the school level.

On the negative side, because there are so many job descriptions, it is very hard to mount an industrial case for better working conditions and remuneration (see appendices 1A to 1G and 2A to 2I). It can also lead to a lot of role confusion for AEWs who move to another diocese or school.

Across the eleven dioceses there are also forty-six non-systemic Catholic schools, known as Congregational schools, who are also individual employers in their own right (B. Kerr, 2009). Those that employ AEWs also have their own AEW role descriptions. In the main it is the Congregational Boarding schools that employ AEWs. The roles of AEWs in these schools is extremely complex and demanding as they are usually responsible for the usual day-to-day needs of Aboriginal students, as well as most of the needs of Aboriginal students in the boarding area. In a lot of cases they are also responsible for engaging with Aboriginal parents in often distant communities (see appendices 2E, 2G and 2I).

The roles of AEWs across the eleven dioceses and forty-six congregational Catholic schools are many and varied, but in general involve things like student support, teacher support and community support. In these roles they are required to do things such as:

- Liaise with Aboriginal parents and the local Aboriginal community.
- Assist parents with enrolment enquiries, school fees.

- Assist teachers with Aboriginal students in class, either individually or in small groups.
- In some cases monitor Aboriginal student attendance and behaviour.
- Assist teachers with matters in the development of programs for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students with particular emphasis on Aboriginal education.
- Be a key figure in the pastoral care of students, particularly Aboriginal students.
- Assist teaching staff in developing and implementing a curriculum that is appropriate for the Aboriginal students of the school.
- Assisting Aboriginal students and parents in the transition from primary to high school.

(see appendices 2A-2I).

In the essential areas of literacy and numeracy they may be required to:

- Assist students by doing group work in maths and English.
- Assist students individually who need to develop maths and reading skills
- Work in classrooms and assist students by modifying reading/writing tasks.
- Encourage students to gain self-confidence to attempt tasks.
- Ensure students know that AEWs are there to support them.
- Answer student questions, queries or uncertainties in a sensitive and calm manner.
- Gain the trust of students in order to assist them with spelling/punctuation, essay writing/maths/identification of formulas, etc.

- Encourage students to read books that are of interest to them, which will encourage students to read independently with more confidence and read a wider variety of books.

(see appendix 18A).

Issues facing AEWs in NSW Catholic schools today

AEWs in Catholic schools have all the same issues that come under the same broad headings of: (1) Government and bureaucracies; (2) school-related issues (3) their community, as those highlighted earlier under the heading “Issues facing AEWs in today’s public schools”. But as if that is not enough, there are some issues around the religious context of their roles.

Government and bureaucracies

As mentioned previously under the same heading for public schools, the abolition of targeted funding by the Department of Education, Employment and Work Relations had a big impact. The Catholic Education Commission NSW Aboriginal Advisory Committee has managed to avoid this impact at least until 2012. The committee put together a paper outlining the significant improvement in Aboriginal outcomes since the inception of targeted funding. This recommendation was approved by the Catholic Education Commission NSW at its June 2009 meeting (S. B. Kerr, 2009). NSW Catholic schools are the only education system in NSW and possibly nationally to keep by choice their Federal Aboriginal Education funding targeted.

Constantly changing government directions, priorities and guidelines can also cause AEWs a lot of stress as they struggle to adapt to the frequent changes that often add to an already onerous workload. Some examples are:

Abolition of Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA) (Commonwealth of Australia, 2006).

“A survey of government schools conducted by the Australian Education Union (AEU) has shown that the Federal Government's changes to indigenous education funding have had a severe impact on the participation of indigenous parents in school activities and has led to a reduction in both programs and support offered to indigenous students in schools across Australia (Doyle, 2005).

School level

At school level, AEWs in Catholic schools face exactly the same issues as their public school counterparts: racism; cultural isolation; lack of staff cultural awareness; role confusion; low expectations; and repercussions of Aboriginal funding.

Racism is also alive and well in some Catholic schools, as evidenced by the following statements from a diocesan Aboriginal Education Advisor.

The one that sticks in my mind is: "Why do we have to keep doing this Aborigines stuff? You lost the war. Why can't you just get over it? (NSW Catholic Diocesan Aboriginal Education Advisor, 2010)"

There is always the one about kids. "We have 8 Aborigine students but with 3 you don't really know. One even has red hair and freckles" (NSW Catholic Diocesan Aboriginal Education Advisor, 2010).

AEWs in NSW Catholic schools suffer a great deal more from cultural isolation than their public school counterparts. There are three main reasons for this:

First, there are the complexities of the governance and management system of NSW Catholic schools, as explained previously. Whereas NSW public schools have one governance and management system, NSW Catholic schools have 11 dioceses and 46 Congregational schools, all that are completely autonomous (Brown, 2011).

Second, the public system has more schools and more AEWs and other Aboriginal staff in more places to allow for networking. In 2009, NSW DET had 2,200 schools compared to 580 Catholic schools. In fact in its largest Catholic Diocese, Wilcannia-Forbes, it does not have a high school. There is a public school in virtually every town, whereas with the Catholic system, because of the way they are funded, schools are able to operate only in areas where they are financially viable (Canavan, 2008; Council of Catholic School Parents, 2009; White, 2009).

Third, the distance between Catholic schools, especially in rural and remote areas, does not allow for regular networking with their peers.

In order to help address the issue of isolation since 2004 the NSW CEC has run four highly-successful biannual AEW conferences (O'Keefe, 2008).

All AEWs, as well as coping on a daily basis with their own cultural isolation, are also on a daily basis assisting their Aboriginal students with the same issue. The sheer size of the Aboriginal student's cultural isolation in large school populations is clearly evident from the following table:

NSW Catholic schools (Andrew Forbes, 2011)

Table 3

Year	All Student Enrolments	Aboriginal Student Enrolments	Aboriginal Student % of School Population
1991	216,617	1,078	0.49%
1992	217,058	1,152	0.53%
1993	216,779	1,285	0.59%
1994	216,149	1,355	0.62%
1995	217,629	1,508	0.69%

1996	218,663	1,684	0.77%
1997	220,607	1,860	0.84%
1998	223,310	2012	0.90%
1999	226,352	2143	0.94%
2000	229,502	2391	1.04%
2001	233,284	2549	1.09%
2002	235,538	2718	1.15%
2003	236,577	2851	1.20%
2004	238,135	3041	1.27%
2005	239,222	3328	1.39%
2006	239,364	3577	1.49%
2007	239,274	3893	1.62%
2008	238,680	4,180	1.75%

As mentioned at the beginning of this section on issues for AEWs in Catholic schools there are also some issues around the religious context.

Firstly, there is the employment interview for their position, which can contain questions of a religious nature. The classic question is “tell me what you know about the Catholic ethos”? This is when a lot of applicants for the job coming from outside of Catholic education really struggle to put their version into words.

Secondly, even in this day and age having children with a partner rather than a husband is not well accepted in some schools. This can in some cases “unofficially” influence whether they are considered “suitable” for employment.

Thirdly, in the religious context of some Catholic schools there is still not a complete understanding and acceptance of Aboriginal spirituality in its own right.

Community level

At a community level AEWs working in Catholic schools suffer from exactly the same issues as their public school counterparts. They also have two additional community issues to contend with.

Firstly, as with the wider community, in Aboriginal communities there is the public schools versus Catholic schools debate which can be read or seen regularly in the media. For example, which system are the best educators or get the most government funding (Farrelly, 2001; McMullen, 2007).

Secondly, in some Aboriginal communities, particularly those that were formerly missions, there is still some ill feeling towards schools that belong to religious orders. In my role as a State Aboriginal Education Coordinator for Catholic schools, I have had said to me on a many occasions that Catholic schools shouldn't charge Aboriginal students fees, as recompense for past wrongs. Due to the ethos of Catholic schools that one should not

seek recognition for one's good deeds, it is not widely known that Catholic schools provide a large amount of no-fee or fee arrangements for disadvantaged students.

Both of these issues can cause angst for AEWs working in Catholic schools and living in that community, as they are seen as employees of the Catholic school.

Another very important community issue impacting on an AEW's ability to get the best outcomes both educationally and socially for their students became apparent during the course of this research.

For AEWs who are "not locals" there can be a whole set of problems (see appendix 3A). If a local applied for the AEW position and was beaten for the position by a non-local, there can be a lot of local hostility. It doesn't matter whether the non-local is better qualified. This can be especially so in communities with few employment opportunities for Aboriginal people. I have experienced this on many occasions when I have been a member of the interview panel for the job. In my position as State Coordinator of Aboriginal Education for NSW CEC I often have non-local AEWs from all systems ringing for advice on this issue. (see appendix 3A). When trying to find referencing material on this particular issue as an Aboriginal person I was not surprised when I was unable to find any. It is a very sensitive cultural issue, so not spoken about openly, that I am aware of. A lot of it is based on interpersonal relationships and kinship lines.

At times there are some negative aspects for AEWs working in the community in which they live. The AEW's family and another family may have long-standing issues with each

other (Price, 1999). This can have a negative impact on student relationships, with both the AEW and the children of the family with whom they have community issues (Price, 1999). Colin Baker, a long-time educationalist was asked to run one of the new boarding schools in the Northern Territory and had many problems over this issue. Two different tribal groups were put together in this boarding school and this caused mayhem. It even got to the stage of physical violence between the two opposing groups (Baker, 2009). Colin in the end had to only have one group at a time in the school, which greatly impacted on educational outcomes. In the interests of research on this issue in August I am spending a few days in a remote school where Colin is now the principal, and the problems are even more complex.

In some communities the AEW also has to contend with the tall poppy syndrome (now called lateral violence)(Kim Hill, 2008) Sometimes because of the position they hold where they have to please two masters, the school and the community, they are in an unwinnable position. If they side with the school, especially on a discipline issue, the community will view them as just another school authority figure and give them a hard time. If they side with the community the school will also give them a hard time because they are school staff, and as such are supposed to act like “everybody else” (MacGill, 2008).

Because the issues for local and non-Local AEWs can impact heavily on an AEW’s ability to get the best outcome for Aboriginal students, it is essential they be discussed. If that conversation does not begin, this issue will remain unresolved for many more years. To begin this conversation I sent out a wide-ranging email seeking input on these issues from many Aboriginal education stakeholders. There is some discussion on this issue in the results chapter of this thesis (see appendix 3A).

AEWs working in NSW Catholic Boarding schools in general have the same issues to contend with as AEWs working in Catholic Systemic schools. However as highlighted in chapter 2, they also have some that are unique to the boarding situation.

Aboriginal students in boarding schools

This section looks at the wellbeing of Aboriginal students enrolled in Catholic boarding schools. There are two major reasons that this section is being looked at separately to Aboriginal students in Catholic systemic schools.

Firstly, the boarding school option would appear to be the government's latest flagship to hang its hat on in improving Aboriginal education outcomes. The government is spending a large amount of funding in chasing some badly-needed success, particularly in the area of Year 12 completion (A. Government, 2011a). This is the option that is being championed by people like Noel Pearson (Hagan, 2004).

With the support of governments and a number of scholarship funds, Aboriginal enrolments in boarding schools are rapidly growing (Penfold, 2011; W Stanley, 2011). They are currently the flavour of the month of both government and educationalists, including Aboriginal educationalists, so it is extremely important that they are included in this thesis (Rintoul 2008; Waverley Stanley, 2011b).

There are a lot of incentives being offered to these schools to encourage them to enrol more Aboriginal students, such as:

- Up to \$19,290 in special allowances plus scholarship funding makes these enrolments, in a lot of cases, cost-neutral (Centre, 2010a).

- The scholarship funds also contribute to uniforms, text books, etc. (Penfold, 2011; W Stanley, 2011).
- The Federal Government, under its Building the Education Revolution (BER) program has supplied a lot of funding to these schools for improvements to, or building of, new infrastructure (Centre, 2010b).

The following is an excerpt from a personal email from the Ex Principal of a large boarding school, who is considered an expert in this area (Name withheld for privacy reasons, 2007).

Most boarding students will qualify for necessitous circumstances,. Because home circumstances are not conducive to study for the whole year. The minimum and maximum levels are determined by parental incomes:.

<u>Tuition:</u>	
Minimum	\$6396
Maximum	\$7536
<u>Boarding:</u>	
(under 16 years old)	\$7657
(over 16 years old)	\$11,754.60
<u>TOTALS</u>	
(under 16) min.	\$14,053
(under 16) max	\$15,193
(over 16) min	\$18,150.60
(over 16) max	\$19,290.60

While these are commendable initiatives, an outlay of this size for a very small number of students begs the question of what additional funding is being outlaid to improve the outcomes of the vast majority of Aboriginal students in secondary mainstream schools (Rigney, 2011).

Secondly, this section looks at the unique issues and barriers faced by both students and AEWs who work in NSW Catholic boarding schools (K Hill, 2008; McCoy, 2011).

For ten years as a State Coordinator of Aboriginal Education I have worked on a regular basis with most NSW Catholic boarding schools. I support the student, the AEW and the school. When requested I also sit on interview panels for their AEWs and speak with Aboriginal students and staff when requested on various issues. I do this, although it is not part of my role, for the benefit of both students and AEWs.

In working closely with all the stakeholders of boarding school Aboriginal education, I have come to the firm conclusion that the boarding area itself is the area of greatest concern.

Boarding school AEWs and their Aboriginal students

The wellbeing of Aboriginal students and AEWs in general was discussed previously, along with the barriers they face. However, for a number of reasons it is important to have a separate discussion about the wellbeing of Aboriginal students, AEWs and parent caregivers of Aboriginal students attending boarding schools. Research indicates that there are specific issues for these three groups (K Hill, 2008; Mcree, 2000).

The reasons are:

- The numbers of Aboriginal students enrolled in boarding schools is gradually increasing.
- The parent/caregivers of Aboriginal students attending boarding schools are in general a long distance from their children

The issues are:

- As well as having to overcome the barriers previously mentioned there are additional wellbeing barriers to be overcome by students and AEWS in boarding schools.
- Students in boarding schools in the main are from rural and remote areas so they suffer a lot of cultural isolation as well as kinship isolation.
- AEWs in these schools suffer a great deal more cultural isolation than those working in systemic day schools, as they are generally the only Aboriginal person on a large staff.
- These schools, because of their autonomy, are very insular.
- Because a great deal of government focus and funding is being put into boarding schools, the political pressures are even higher (Penfold, 2011; W Stanley, 2011).

They suffer from homesickness, missing the strong social connections they enjoy within their communities. As well, they find linguistic and cultural differences difficult to manage. Apart from homesickness and loneliness, some Aboriginal students have significant learning gaps requiring specific intervention strategies. Many have difficulties with English stemming from their first language being an Aboriginal dialect or a lack of familiarity with Standard Australian English” (Kim Hill, 2008).

Issues in the boarding area

Aboriginal students, and I imagine all boarding-school students, are in general more emotionally vulnerable after class hours in their boarding area. This is particularly so for Aboriginal students, coming as they do from very close-knit extended families. In most Catholic boarding schools Aboriginal students are a very small minority (Kim Hill, 2008).

All students, including Aboriginal ones are under the control of a boarding master/mistress and staff. To my knowledge there is no official training for boarding staff, and they also do not network with each other. This means these roles are very ad hoc, so not necessarily highly effective. The majority of boarding masters I have dealt with are outstanding people. However, there is a small minority who would appear to be culturally unaware and enjoy their position of authority a little more than necessary (Hiat, 2011). I felt so strongly on this issue I made a submission to DEEWR to run a Boarding School Workshop (see appendices 8A and 8B). I was greatly disappointed that DEEWR, which is funding Aboriginal Boarding Scholarships to the tune of millions of dollars, could not see value in my proposal (Penfold, 2011; Waverley Stanley, 2011b).

A familiar issue

The following is a recent example of the lack of cultural understanding, as well as lack of duty of care, of a particular boarding school and scholarship fund. This issue impacted greatly on both student and parent.

A single Aboriginal parent (female) from a rural area had a city boarding school ring her to say her newly-enrolled daughter had a problem. They also told her she must come down that day to resolve the problem. This mother is a single parent on a low income with two smaller children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). There was no-one to mind these children and the mother did not have the money for travel and accommodation. The school said they couldn't cover the costs as did one of the large scholarship funds, as it was not in their guidelines. The mother was very worried and distraught. Alternative arrangements were made by me and members of the Aboriginal Advisory Committee. Subsequently even though it is not their responsibility, the CEC Aboriginal Advisory Committee has set aside \$5,000 annually to cover eventualities like this.

Boarding schools in general receive up to \$18,000 in Abstudy living-away-from-home allowance as an incentive to enrol Aboriginal boarding students. It is means-tested. The single mother mentioned in the previous paragraph, for reasons no-one is sure of, had had this Abstudy reassessed so there was a short-fall of a few thousand dollars. She was told she would have to come up with the difference or her child would have to go home. Subsequently she was given a Centrelink deduction form for a fifty-dollar per-fortnight deduction. This would come out of her very small welfare cheque that supports her and her other two small children who have ADHD.

Boarding school issues for AEWs

The following is based on my intimate knowledge of boarding schools and personal conversations I have had over the last twelve years with boarding school AEWs. When AEWs working in boarding schools are experiencing difficulties they often call me, as the only culturally appropriate support they have. In the same vein this also happens with Aboriginal parents/caregivers who often do not feel comfortable talking about certain issues with boarding school staff. Although this is not my role, as boarding schools are autonomous, as an Aboriginal person I have a responsibility and obligation to assist them in any way I can. Boarding schools often consult with me regarding both Aboriginal students and employees, as I have always acted with integrity and honesty in all my dealings with them.

Of the seven NSW Catholic boarding schools, only two have AEWs. Some of these have had AEWs, but their tenure has been short, usually for the following reasons:

- They have little if any input into any decision-making, especially in relation to finance.
- Staff have low expectations of them.
- The racism, both overt and covert, of staff.

- They are not respected or valued.
- They are hired for their Aboriginal expertise then not allowed to use it, and what they think is usually over-ruled.

To gather data for this section on boarding schools, I posed the following question to the fifteen NSW Catholic Aboriginal education advisors. “I would like you to put on your thinking hats and tell me every issue you have had in the time in your position with a boarding school, including issues for students’ families and AEWs? I don’t want to know what school or what student, just the particular issue”. Responses were categorised as, student support and wellbeing, parent support and wellbeing, AEW support and wellbeing, financial support and staff cultural awareness. The following is the collated feedback from these advisors. The feedback has been put into the following five categories:

1. Student Support and Wellbeing
2. Parental support and wellbeing
3. AEW support and wellbeing
4. Financial support
5. Staff cultural awareness

Student support and wellbeing

Often boarding students are a long way from home and in some places there is little local cultural support for them (Mcree, 2000). There are not enough (official or unofficial) local uncles and aunties or families to visit students or take them out for a day. There is also little in place to allow Aboriginal students from different schools to get together, especially those who have siblings in other nearby boarding schools (see appendix 9A). Students, especially in schools that do not have an AEW are not brave enough to speak up about

these issues. Homesickness is a big issue especially for students from more traditional communities being educated in the city (Kim Hill, 2008; Mcree, 2000). These students can suffer badly in silence from cultural trauma, isolation and feeling lost (C. Matters, 2010). This can exhibit itself by their spending many days in the infirmary upon arrival back at school each term (see appendix 9A). There is little culturally appropriate counselling support available to the students to address these issues (Kim Hill, 2008; Mcree, 2000) (see appendix 9A). Parents' wellbeing is greatly affected by the wellbeing of their children so it is very important they receive support to enable them to better support their children.

Parental support and wellbeing

Without a doubt one of the greatest issues facing all schools is the lack of parental involvement. This issue is much greater for boarding schools than day schools, where parents are close by. Research shows that when parents are involved, all areas of academic achievement are improved, including higher academic scores, better attendance and retention, better motivation and lower suspension rates (McGinty, 2002).

Family participation in education was twice as predictive of students' academic success as family socioeconomic status (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2011).

For Aboriginal boarding students the first three to six months are critical. For the majority, especially from rural and remote areas, it is their first life experience outside of their close-knit families and communities.

I have been involved with a number of Aboriginal boarding students from remote areas and it is a challenging experience for both them and school staff (Russell, 2011). I have also interacted with their parents, long distance over the phone, about the various issues that have arisen. As an Aboriginal person I know Aboriginal people in general feel far more comfortable dealing with issues face to face in relation to their children. Listening on the phone to a disembodied voice of someone they do not have a relationship with, or reading words on a computer screen, do little to allay their concerns for their child. About five years ago I proposed the idea to a boarding school of regularly linking Aboriginal students via webcam to their families to help overcome this issue. While they thought it was a good idea at the time, it is yet to be implemented.

AEW support and wellbeing

In boarding schools AEW role descriptions and expectations vary greatly and most school staff, including teachers, do not understand the role (see appendices 2E, 2G and 2I). AEWs in these schools work in cultural isolation with little academic or cultural support. There is also little appropriate professional development for AEWs in things like child protection training, public speaking and further academic courses. There are also issues of ambiguity of the correct and appropriate communication channels for AEWs to use. AEWs often find that they are called in only when negative situations occur. AEWs are also sometimes asked to drive students home to rural areas when a situation arises, without concern for duty of care and child protection policies (Advisor, 2011) (see Appendix 9A).

Financial support

Scholarships, schools fees, uniform costs and application fees vary greatly and there have been many issues over the years. The demands of culturally-unaware finance staff have also caused much angst and shame for Aboriginal parents at various times. These families are already financially challenged and even pocket money can be an issue, both for students and families. It can cause shame (much more than embarrassment) for both parent and student (Waverley Stanley, 2011a) (see appendix 9A).

Often because they come from low socio-economic circumstances, parents have great financial difficulty in paying the transport and accommodation costs of visiting their children. On a number of occasions in my role as State Coordinator Aboriginal Education CEC NSW, parents approached me for assistance when schools and scholarship funds were unable to assist them (Penfold, 2011). Luckily at the time I had enough in my budget to assist them and NSW CEC was happy to support me in doing so. I have also done this on a number of occasions to enable parents to visit a sick or a very homesick child to either reassure them or take them home for a short period. Subsequently the CEC Aboriginal Advisory Committee has set up a small fund to cover for emergencies like this even though it is not their direct responsibility to do so. The question that puzzles me is that if the criteria for financial support to enrol an Aboriginal child in a boarding school is need, why, when the needs I have just stated arise, do the schools and scholarship funds not cover the costs? Another issue for the parents is the building-up and maintaining community contacts, as parents do not always know who to contact in the school (see appendix 9A). AEWs play a vital role in supporting and tending to the wellbeing needs of both students and parents, so it is vital that schools in turn support them and tend to their wellbeing needs.

Staff cultural awareness

There is little whole-school staff cross-cultural awareness training. Teachers are not visiting Aboriginal communities to gain a far better insight into the background, circumstances and culture of the Aboriginal students and their families and extended families. Schools tend to celebrate Aboriginal culture only on days of significance rather than on a regular basis. Walking a mile in the shoes of these students and families would be a good place to start (see appendix 9A).

Decisions are often made by non-Indigenous staff members who believe they know more than AEWs or Aboriginal advisors about cultural matters. It is always advisable in the best interests of all parties that AEWs and/or Aboriginal advisors should always be consulted in matters such as detentions, suspensions, or in the worst case scenario, when a school is considering sending a student home. It is also advisable that these consultations occur when a problem becomes apparent. That way, in consultation with the student, parents and school staff, the issue may be more readily resolved and the student enabled to remain at school, or a consensus on an alternative solution may be reached. (see Appendix 9A).

The majority of NSW boarding schools at this juncture do not employ AEWs, which I believe from my experience is detrimental to improving Aboriginal outcomes. AEWs become like family to these students. Even though a school may have thirty Aboriginal students they are but a dot on the landscape of a school with a thousand students. AEWs can provide a safe haven when a student is homesick or experiencing difficulties. They are also a positive link to parents and communities,

advocating to them the value of education as well as giving a positive view of the school and its staff.

But?

As with all staff, some AEWs are effective, some are ordinary and some are not suited to the role, so the selection process must be rigorous and it must be fair. This is particularly so for AEWs working in boarding schools, because like their Aboriginal students, their day-to-day existence is in cultural isolation.

From my experience on interview panels for Boarding School AEWs, the best-practice three-step approach I would recommend for a boarding school wishing to employ an AEW is:

First, gather a group of the relevant school staff and at least two appropriate Aboriginal people with some experience of boarding schools.

Second, come to the meeting without any prepared criteria or preconceived ideas. Work out exactly what is your combined vision for the school's Aboriginal students. Then between you come to a consensus on the skill set, experience, and personal qualities your AEW needs to possess.

Third, ensure your AEW is involved in a meaningful way in all decision-making in relation to the Aboriginal students. Even the Federal Government recognises this necessity in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014 (Russell, 2011). Non-involvement in relevant decision-making is one of the reasons boarding school AEWs have had short tenures.

The key to good outcomes in both an educational and social sense for Aboriginal students, and I would say all students, is wellbeing. You can have the best teachers and resources in the world but unless a student has good wellbeing the educational outcomes will be poor (Fred Hollows Foundation, 2010; Ganesharajah, 2009).

Aboriginal enrolment in boarding schools since the inception of financial incentives such as Abstudy living away from home allowance, funding for infrastructure and scholarships has grown immensely. However, the staff of these schools, and in particular the boarding staff, need a large dose of cultural awareness training. This is evidenced by the examples outlined in this chapter. It is also evidenced by the fact that AEWs brave enough to take on this challenge may have a short tenure.

Whilst all these schools have great pastoral care programs they sadly lack in cultural care. The absence of AEWs in some of these schools means there is no Aboriginal advocate in schools to which students can turn. There is also no link to their culture for the students. Some of these schools do not have an AEW but the Aboriginal students appear to be doing quite well, so I will reserve my judgement on those. However whether schools realise it or not, Aboriginal students will not talk to non-

Aboriginal staff about a lot of issues, particularly if they are of a cultural nature. This applies especially to homesickness, which is the number one issue for most Aboriginal boarding students and the staff of these schools.

A culturally-appropriate mandatory training course needs to be developed to train boarding school staff. There also needs to be a lot of sharing of best-practice between all boarding schools and they need to meet regularly as a group with Aboriginal involvement in the decision-making.

One of the main criteria for receiving a boarding school scholarship is that the family be needy. Why is it then that if they have a need, as mentioned in an early scenario of the single mother, this need often is not met by the school or scholarship fund?

Summary

There is very little literature available on any aspect of AEWs. There would also appear to be no research on their effectiveness. Prior to 1967 only a handful of Aboriginal people were employees of schools, so AEWs are a modern phenomenon. This may be one of the reasons that the role is still to reach its full potential.

It would appear AEWs were first introduced to public schools as a response to the political activism of Aboriginal people and their supporters. In the case of their introduction to Catholic schools it would appear their introduction was in response to the appeal of Pope John Paul II, during his 1986 Australian visit, that they were made a very valued part of the Catholic Church.

The current AEWs role descriptions across all systems and all states are many and varied, as are the unofficial duties they perform on a daily basis. Most are ad hoc and would appear to be based on reaction to whatever Aboriginal education priorities both State and Federal governments have at any stage. There are many disparities between their role descriptions and what they actually do. There are also very few staff in any school that could actually tell you what their role is, and in a lot of cases that includes senior staff.

AEWs even today have very little job security as the funding for their positions could disappear at the whim of a State or Federal government.

AEWs in some schools suffer different forms of racism on a daily basis, which in a time where a person can be sued for this is more covert than overt.

On a daily basis they have to deal with school expectations, student expectations, parent expectations and community expectations that may all be different. In their own community they may suffer from the tall poppy syndrome if they side with the school on an issue. If they are not from that community they may suffer another form of racism.

AEWs working in boarding schools have the same issues to deal with on a daily basis as their counterparts in Catholic Systemic schools. On top of these issues they have issues unique to boarding schools. Firstly, as well as taking care of an Aboriginal student's educational needs they have to take care of their wellbeing needs in relation to the boarding area. Aboriginal students quite often get homesick, have cultural issues they will only divulge to another Aboriginal person, and often suffer racism at the hands of their

peers. AEWs working in boarding schools seldom have any decision-making responsibilities, especially in relation to funding. As was said to me by a boarding school AEW “the only time they show any interest in me is when they need a “black” face for a media photo. Dealing with parents, long distance is also a very hard part of their role.

All of the aforesaid begs the question “why” do they stay as an AEW, and in a large number of cases, why do they do it long-term, facing these barriers everyday along with poor remuneration and conditions, in a lot of cases. My experience working with AEWs across the public and independent sector is that it is for those with whose care we are all entrusted, the children. “Wanting to make a difference is the difference”(Frank Pearce, 2009).

The next chapter analyses and discusses the results of data collected for this research project. The results of this data, the literature review of this thesis, and my own vast experience as outlined in chapter 1, have led me to make some informed conclusions. From these conclusions I have formulated a list of recommendations for areas for future research.

Chapters 5: Results and Discussion

Introduction

While the overall goal of this research project is to prove that AEWs contribute to improving Aboriginal education outcomes, the specific purpose of this chapter is to present, interpret and discuss the results of this study. It is also to present, interpret and discuss additional data that arose during the course of this study. What is presented in this chapter is the collective result of the rationale and aims as described in chapter 1, the literature reviewed in chapters 2 and 3, the data collection and analysis as described in chapter 4 and additional data that became evident during the course of this project.

The survey data were collected across the eleven NSW Catholic dioceses over a three-month period. Survey data were provided by 344 respondents. Of these there were 79 students, 22 parents, 38 AEWs, 42 principals, 114 teachers, 44 other stakeholders and 5 who were unknown. The other stakeholders were people working in the Aboriginal education sector in various roles, aside from teachers and principals. People in these categories were invited to respond to the survey in two sections: firstly, to the ten quantitative Likert questions; and secondly to the five qualitative questions. Table 4 shows the respondents by classification and number of surveys returned. There were 5 surveys included that did not have a classification.

Survey returns

Table 4

Students	79
Parents	22
AEWs	38
Principals	42
Teachers	114
Other Stakeholders	44
Unknown	5
Total	344

The following section describes how and by whom the ten quantitative Likert survey questions and five qualitative survey questions were developed. It also presents all fifteen questions as they appeared in the survey form and explains their selection.

Note on AEW respondents

Talking yourself up is not an Aboriginal cultural norm, aside from a notable few. Over the last twelve years my job appraisals have contained a section on self-appraisal and it is something I really struggle with, as this excerpt from one of my job appraisals demonstrates.

The Self-Appraisal Statement conveys a sense of confidence in achievements over an extended period, although the esteem in which Mr Pearce is held is clearly not captured in his self-assessment. Mr Pearce is thought to avoid being

the focus of praise and attribution and consequently his contribution is yet to be celebrated (K. Hughes, 2008).

In the introduction to this thesis I made the statement “this includes students, parents, teachers, principals and those whose voices are softest and seldom heard, the AEWs themselves”.

After analysing the AEW responses to all questions I believe this statement has been proven. Over the last twelve years I have been involved, in one way or another, with the vast majority of AEWs working in NSW Catholic schools. The AEW respondents to this survey have presented a very conservative view of what and how much they do. This trait is one of the main reasons that AEWs struggle in schools where staff steeped in Western traditions tend to be very assertive and outgoing. A lot of AEWs will agree with you, even if they don't, to avoid confrontation.

Quantitative Likert survey questions

With the advice of the thesis advisory committee, ten Likert questions were formulated inviting the responses of strongly agree, agree undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. The ten Likert questions were in relation to the areas that the advisory committee for this thesis thought were most important in relation to improving Aboriginal educational outcomes. These were:

1. The AEWs presence helps to create a supportive environment for Aboriginal students.
2. Student enjoyment of learning.

3. Schools expected outcomes.
4. Student motivation, self-esteem and aspirations.
5. The employment of an Aboriginal Education Worker is a practical demonstration to the Aboriginal community that the school respects and values Aboriginal culture.
6. Reinforcing Aboriginal students' identities.
7. Attendance.
8. In-class assistance.
9. Completions.
10. Do all stakeholders believe that Aboriginal Education Workers make a difference both educationally and socially for Aboriginal students?

The thesis advisory committee was comprised of Ross Tarlinton, Principal of St Joseph's College Hunters Hill, Brian Giles-Brown, the National Schools Coordinator of the *Dare to Lead* program, Jeff McMullen, journalist, and the twelve Aboriginal NSW Catholic diocesan advisors of whom ten were parents; The ten questions were:

1. In a school with Aboriginal students I would prefer to have an Aboriginal Education Worker.
2. I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in Aboriginal students' enjoyment of learning.
3. I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in helping Aboriginal students achieve the school's expected outcomes.
4. I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in helping to develop the motivation, self-esteem and aspirations of Aboriginal students.
5. I believe that having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff demonstrates that my school respects and values Aboriginal culture.

6. I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in helping to reinforce the identity of Aboriginal students.
7. I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in helping to get Aboriginal students to attend school.
8. I believe Aboriginal students work better in the classroom when an Aboriginal Education Worker is assisting them.
9. I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in Aboriginal students completing school.
10. I believe that if Aboriginal Education Workers were removed from schools the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students would decline.

This next section explains how and why the five qualitative questions were developed.

Qualitative survey questions

Five qualitative questions were also formulated by the thesis Aboriginal Education Advisory committee. Questions 1 and 3 were designed to clarify a lot of ambiguity and misconceptions of all stakeholders regarding AEWs' roles in the classroom and in the Aboriginal community. Questions 2, 4 and 5 sought to seek ideas from all stakeholders as to areas for positive improvement AEWs could undertake in order for them to better assist Aboriginal students to get better outcomes both educationally and socially. These five questions were:

1. What role do Aboriginal Education Workers play in assisting Aboriginal students with their learning?

2. What could Aboriginal Education Workers do better to assist individual Aboriginal students with their learning?
3. How do Aboriginal Education Workers involve the Aboriginal community in the schools where they assist students?
4. How can Aboriginal Education Workers best assist you with the learning of Aboriginal students?
5. Are there any suggestions you would like to make that may assist all Aboriginal Education Workers to better support Aboriginal students in completing school?

The next section looks at the first analysis of the ten Likert questions as a whole.

First cut. Results of all respondents to the ten Likert questions

Because of the very small percentage of respondents in the strongly-agree category, they have been combined with the agree category. For the same reasons the strongly-disagree, disagree and undecided categories have been combined. However at the end of each table after the total, the undecided are shown separately as are the combined, disagree and strongly-disagree.

Table 5 demonstrates that 97% of all survey respondents would prefer to have an AEW on staff if they had Aboriginal students in their school. There were none that disagreed and

only 3% were undecided that in a school with Aboriginal students they would prefer to have an Aboriginal Education Worker.

Table 5

Q1: In a school with Aboriginal students I would prefer to have an Aboriginal Education Worker.	
Agree and Strongly Agree Combined	97%
Disagree and Undecided Combined	3%
Total	100%
Undecided only	3%
Disagree and Strongly Disagree Combined	0%

Table 6 demonstrates that 93% of all survey respondents believed that AEWs play a role in Aboriginal students' enjoyment of learning. There were 6% undecided and 1% who thought AEWs did not play a role in an Aboriginal student's enjoyment of learning.

Table 6

Q2: I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in Aboriginal students' enjoyment of learning	
Agree and Strongly Agree Combined	93%
Disagree and Undecided Combined	7%
Total	100%
Undecided only	6%
Disagree and Strongly Disagree Combined	1%

Table 7 demonstrates that 92% of all survey respondents believed that AEWs played a role in helping Aboriginal students achieve the school's expected outcomes. There were 6% undecided and 2% who thought AEWs did not play a role in helping Aboriginal students achieve the school's expected outcomes.

Table 7

Q3: I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in helping Aboriginal students achieve the school's expected outcomes.	
Agree and Strongly Agree Combined	92%
Disagree and Undecided Combined	8%
Total	100%
Undecided only	6%
Disagree and Strongly Disagree Combined	2%

Table 8 demonstrates that 94% of all survey respondents believed that AEWs played a role in helping to develop the motivation, self-esteem and aspirations of Aboriginal students. There were 5% undecided and 1% who thought AEWs did not play a role in helping to develop the motivation, self-esteem and aspirations of Aboriginal students.

Table 8

Q4: I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in helping to develop the motivation, self-esteem and aspirations of Aboriginal students	
Agree and Strongly Agree Combined	94%
Disagree and Undecided Combined	6%
Total	100%
Undecided only	5%
Disagree and Strongly Disagree Combined	1%

Table 9 demonstrates that 91% of all survey respondents believed that having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff demonstrated their school respected and valued Aboriginal culture. There were 6% undecided and 3% who did not believe that having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff demonstrated their school respected and valued Aboriginal culture.

Table 9

Q5: I believe that having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff demonstrates my school respects and values Aboriginal culture.	
Agree and Strongly Agree Combined	91%
Disagree and Undecided Combined	9%
Total	100%
Undecided only	6%
Disagree and Strongly Disagree Combined	3%

Table 10 demonstrates that 94% of all survey respondents believed that Aboriginal Education Workers played a role in helping to reinforce the identity of Aboriginal students. There were 5% undecided and 1% who did not believe that Aboriginal Education Workers played a role in helping to reinforce the identity of Aboriginal students.

Table 10

Q6: I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in helping to reinforce the identity of Aboriginal students.	
Agree and Strongly Agree Combined	94%
Disagree and Undecided Combined	6%
Total	100%
Undecided only	5%
Disagree and Strongly Disagree Combined	1%

Table 11 demonstrates that 78% of all survey respondents believed that Aboriginal Education Workers played a role in helping to get Aboriginal students to attend school. There were 15% undecided and 7% who did not believe that Aboriginal Education Workers played a role in helping to get Aboriginal students to attend school.

Table 11

Q7: I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in helping to get Aboriginal students to attend school.	
Agree and Strongly Agree Combined	78%
Disagree and Undecided Combined	22%
Total	100%
Undecided only	15%
Disagree and Strongly Disagree Combined	7%

Table 12 demonstrates that 80% of all survey respondents believed Aboriginal students work better in the classroom when an Aboriginal Education Worker is assisting them. There were 17% undecided and 3% who did not believe that Aboriginal students work better in the classroom when an Aboriginal Education Worker is assisting them.

Table 12

8. I believe Aboriginal students work better in the classroom when an Aboriginal Education Worker is assisting them.	
Agree and Strongly Agree Combined	80%
Disagree and Undecided Combined	20%
Total	100%
Undecided only	17%
Disagree and Strongly Disagree Combined	3%

Table 13 demonstrates that 75% of all survey respondents believed Aboriginal Education Workers played a role in Aboriginal students completing school. There were 20% undecided and 5% who did not believe that Aboriginal Education Workers played a role in Aboriginal students completing school.

Table 13

Q9: I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in Aboriginal students completing school.	
Agree and Strongly Agree Combined	75%
Disagree and Undecided Combined	25%
Total	100%
Undecided only	20%
Disagree and Strongly Disagree Combined	5%

Table 14 demonstrates that 77% of all survey respondents believed that if Aboriginal Education Workers were removed from schools the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students would decline. There were 17% undecided and 6% who did not believe that if Aboriginal Education Workers were removed from schools the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students would decline.

Table 14

Q10: I believe that if Aboriginal Education Workers were removed from schools the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students would decline.	
Agree and Strongly Agree Combined	77%
Disagree and Undecided Combined	23%
Total	100%
Undecided only	17%
Disagree and Strongly Disagree Combined	6%

The preceding tables 5 to 14 demonstrate an overwhelmingly positive response of between 91% and 97% to questions 1 to 6. There are several possible reasons for this. Firstly, the surveys were voluntary and in a lot of cases would be filled out by those who are already positive about Aboriginal education and Aboriginal people. One of the reasons I say this is that in my role as a State coordinator of Aboriginal education I attend many Aboriginal education conferences, forums and workshops, and see the same faces all the time. These are people already positive about Aboriginal education and not some of the

more culturally unaware. Secondly, five of the first six questions are linked to emotional responses, and in the main people are reluctant to criticise others. As the old adage says “if you can’t say something good about somebody don’t say anything at all”. This theory is borne out by the fact that many survey respondents who made positive comments invited me to have a conversation with them, while not a single respondent who made negative comments offered the same opportunity.

Question 3 in the first group of six questions, “do Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in helping Aboriginal students achieve the school’s expected outcomes”, is an anomaly. It is the only question among the ten Likert questions posed that relates directly to an outcome and has a highly positive 92% agreement rate and 6% undecided. The only explanation that I could give is that it was surrounded by a group of questions that were emotional in nature, so may have confused some of the respondents.

Table 15 on pages 149 and 150 demonstrates that, the strongly agree and agree responses drop off to between 75% and 80% for questions 7 to 10. These are the questions asking directly about outcomes, and respondents are a lot more discerning in their judgements. This is backed up by the fact that for these four questions there is an undecided response of:

22% for question 7

20% for question 8

25% for question 9

23% for question 10

Table 15 also demonstrates that for questions 1 to 6 there is a small, undecided response of between 3% and 6%. Also for questions 1 to 6 there is an insignificant disagree response rate of between 1% and 3%. Conversely, for questions 7 to 10 there is a significant undecided rate of between 15% and 20% and a disagreement rate of between 3% and 7%.

Taking into consideration all ten questions there is a very high 87% agreement rate. There is also a very low 3% disagreement rate with an also-low 10% of respondents undecided. The largest proportion of undecided and disagree responses relate to questions 7, 8, 9 and 10, which are questions directly related to educational outcomes. The only anomaly is question 3 asking whether AEWs contributed to the school's expected outcomes.

Originally I had thought that older teachers and principals, especially those who came to schools when they were not really accepting of Aboriginal people, may have given more negative responses. However preliminary research indicated no patterns across stakeholder groupings, age groups, gender, and geo-location or school type. This theory is further tested in the next section where the questions are grouped into the themes of supporting culture and identity, learning and educational outcomes. Whether the groupings of: students; parents and AEWs; principals and teachers; and others are more likely to be undecided or disagree is also tested.

It would appear that some respondents sought more solid proof before making an informed judgement.

Table 15

	Agree/ Strongly Agree	Disagree/ Undecided Combined	Undecided only	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
Q1: In a school with Aboriginal students I would prefer to have an Aboriginal Education Worker.	97%	3%	3%	0%
Q2: I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in Aboriginal students' enjoyment of learning.	93%	7%	6%	1%
Q3: I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in helping Aboriginal students achieve the school's expected outcomes.	92%	8%	6%	2%
Q4: I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in helping to develop the motivation, self-esteem and aspirations of Aboriginal students.	94%	6%	4%	1%
Q5: I believe that having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff demonstrates my school respects and values Aboriginal culture.	91%	9%	6%	3%
Q6: I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in helping to reinforce the identity of Aboriginal students.	94%	6%	5%	1%
Q7: I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in helping to get Aboriginal students to attend school.	78%	22%	15%	7%
Q8: I believe that having an Aboriginal Education Worker assist me in class plays a role in Aboriginal students performing better in class.	80%	20%	17%	3%

Q9: I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in Aboriginal students completing school.	75%	25%	20%	5%
Q10: I believe that if Aboriginal Education Workers were removed from schools the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students would decline.	77%	23%	17%	6%

To further analyse the data and to look for any patterns that may emerge, the ten Likert questions were broken up into three themes important to improving Aboriginal education outcomes. These are, supporting culture and identity, learning, and educational outcomes. Under these three themes the data were further disaggregated into three groupings of: students; parents and AEWs; and principals, teachers and others. Others were those involved in Aboriginal education that were not part of the first three groupings.

Theme 1: Supporting culture and identity

Q4: I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in helping to develop the motivation, self-esteem and aspirations of Aboriginal students.

Table 16 demonstrates that:

- 94% of students believed that AEWs helped them with motivation, self-esteem and their aspirations, 3% were undecided and 4% disagreed.
- 95% of AEWs and parents believed that AEWs helped students with motivation, self-esteem and their aspirations, 3% were undecided and 4% disagreed.
- 93% of principals and teachers believed that AEWs helped students with motivation, self-esteem and their aspirations, 6% were undecided and 1% disagreed.
- 100% of the others grouping believed that AEWs helped students with motivation, self-esteem and their aspirations.

Table 16

Group	Agree (4 or 5)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (1 or 2)
Students	74 94%	2 3%	3 4%
Parents & AEWs	62 95%	2 3%	1 2%
Principals & Teachers	152 93%	10 6%	1 1%
Others	35 100%	0 0%	0 0%
Total	323 94%	14 4%	5 1%

Q5: I believe that having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff demonstrates my school respects and values Aboriginal culture.

Table 17 demonstrates that:

- 91% of students believed that having an AEW on staff demonstrated their school respected and valued Aboriginal culture and 9% were undecided.
- 91% of AEWs and parents believed that having an AEW on staff demonstrated their school respected and valued Aboriginal culture, 6% were undecided and 3% disagreed.
- 90% of principals and teachers believed that having an AEW on staff demonstrated their school respected and valued Aboriginal culture, 5% were undecided and 5% disagreed.
- 94% of the others grouping believed that having an AEW on staff demonstrated their school respected and valued Aboriginal culture and 6% were undecided.

Table 17

Group	Agree (4 or 5)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (1 or 2)
Students	72 91%	7 9%	0 0%
Parents & AEWs	59 91%	4 6%	2 3%
Principals & Teachers	147 90%	8 5%	8 5%
Others	33 94%	2 6%	0 0%
Total	311 91%	21 6%	10 3%

Q6: I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in helping to reinforce the identity of Aboriginal students.

Table 18 demonstrates that:

- 91% of students believed that AEWs helped to reinforce their identity, and 9% were undecided.
- 95% of AEWs and parents believed that AEWs helped to reinforce Aboriginal students' identities, 3% were undecided and 2% disagreed.
- 95% of principals and teachers believed that AEWs helped to reinforce Aboriginal students' identities, 4% were undecided and 1% disagreed.
- 100% of the others grouping believed that AEWs helped to reinforce Aboriginal students' identities.

Table 18

Group	Agree (4 or 5)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (1 or 2)
Students	72 91%	7 9%	0 0%
Parents & AEWs	62 95%	2 3%	1 2%
Principals & Teachers	155 95%	7 4%	1 1%
Others	32 100%	0 0%	0 0%
Total	321 95%	16 5%	2 1%

Theme 1: Supporting culture and identity totals

Table 19 demonstrates that under the theme of supporting culture and identity 94% of all respondents were in agreement that AEWs supported culture and identity, 4% were undecided and 2% disagreed.

There was minimal disparity in responses from any of the groups in relation to individual questions or as a theme. This supports my preliminary research, which failed to find any patterns

Table 19

Group	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
Students	92%	6%	2%
Parents & AEWs	93%	4%	3%
Principals & Teachers	93%	5%	2%
Others	98%	2%	0%
Average	94%	4%	2%

Theme 2: Learning

Q2: I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in Aboriginal students' enjoyment of learning.

Table 20 demonstrates that:

- 94% of students believed that AEWs played a role in Aboriginal students' enjoyment of learning, 5% were undecided and 1% disagreed.
- 98% of AEWs and parents believed that AEWs played a role in Aboriginal students' enjoyment of learning, and 2% disagreed
- 92% of teachers and principals believed that AEWs played a role in Aboriginal students' enjoyment of learning, 7% were undecided and 1% disagreed
- 86% of the others grouping believed that AEWs played a role in Aboriginal students' enjoyment of learning, and 14% were undecided.

Table 20

Group	Agree (4 or 5)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (1 or 2)
Students	74 94%	4 5%	1 1%
Parents & AEWs	64 98%	0 0%	1 2%
Principals & Teachers	150 92%	11 7%	2 1%
Others	30 86%	5 14%	0 0%
Total	318 93%	20 6%	4 1%

Q7: I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in helping to get Aboriginal students to attend school.

Table 21 demonstrates that:

- 77% of students believed that AEWs played a role in Aboriginal students' enjoyment of learning, 15% were undecided and 8% disagreed.
- 83% of AEWs and parents believed that AEWs played a role in Aboriginal students' enjoyment of learning, 6% were undecided and 11% disagreed.
- 76% of teachers and principals believed that AEWs played a role in Aboriginal students' enjoyment of learning, 18% were undecided and 6% disagreed.
- 86% of the others grouping believed that AEWs played a role in Aboriginal students' enjoyment of learning, 11% were undecided and 3% disagreed.

Table 21

Group	Agree (4 or 5)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (1 or 2)
Students	61 77%	12 15%	6 8%
Parents & AEWs	53 83%	4 6%	7 11%
Principals & Teachers	122 76%	29 18%	10 6%
Others	30 86%	4 11%	1 3%
Total	266 78%	49 14%	24 7%

Q8: I believe Aboriginal students work better in the classroom when an Aboriginal Education Worker is assisting them.

Table 22 demonstrates that:

- 81% of students believed that AEWs played a role in Aboriginal students' enjoyment of learning, 15% were undecided and 4% disagreed.
- 86% of AEWs and parents believed that AEWs played a role in Aboriginal students' enjoyment of learning, 12% were undecided and 2% disagreed.
- 78% of teachers and principals believed that AEWs played a role in Aboriginal students' enjoyment of learning, 19% were undecided and 3% disagreed.
- 80% of the others grouping believed that AEWs played a role in Aboriginal students' enjoyment of learning, 17% were undecided and 3% disagreed.

Table 22

Group	Agree (4 or 5)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (1 or 2)
Students	64 81%	12 15%	3 4%
Parents & AEWs	56 86%	8 12%	1 2%
Principals & Teachers	126 78%	30 19%	5 3%
Others	26 76%	7 21%	1 3%
Total	272 80%	57 17%	10 3%

Table 23 demonstrates that under the theme of learning, 84% of all respondents were in agreement that AEWs played a role in an Aboriginal student's learning, 12% were undecided and 4% disagreed.

There is minimal disparity in responses from students, teachers and principals, and other stakeholders. The parents however have a higher agreement rate and are the least undecided. There may be a number of reasons for that. Firstly, they are by far the lowest group of respondents, and measurements of a small cohort against a much bigger one can tend to distort the results. This is a common occurrence in government reporting on Aboriginal outcomes. In 2010 in the NSW Catholic system, 4,414 Aboriginal students were measured, for the purposes of equity, against a cohort of 240,155. Secondly, as Aboriginal adults, AEWs and parents may have different views of what constitutes a student's enjoyment of learning to the views held by principals, teachers and other stakeholders. On the other hand, students may be the hardest markers, as they know exactly what they enjoy.

Table 23

Group	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
Students	84%	12%	4%
Parents & AEWs	89%	6%	5%
Principals & Teachers	82%	15%	3%
Others	82%	16%	2%
Average	84%	12%	4%

Theme 3: Educational outcomes

Q1: In a school with Aboriginal students I would prefer to have an Aboriginal Education Worker.

Table 24 demonstrates that:

- 97% of students would prefer to have an AEW in their school, and 3% were undecided.
- 98% of AEWs and parents would prefer to have an AEW in their school, and 2% were undecided.
- 96% of teachers and principals would prefer to have an AEW in their school, and 2% were undecided.
- 100% of the others grouping would prefer to have an AEW in their school.

This is the only question with a nil disagreement rate and only 4% were undecided.

Even those who disagreed on other aspects of an AEW's role still preferred to have one.

Table 24

Group	Agree (4 or 5)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (1 or 2)
Students	77 97%	2 3%	0 0%
Parents & AEWs	64 98%	1 2%	0 0%
Principals & Teachers	157 96%	6 4%	0 0%
Others	35 100%	0 0%	0 0%
Total	333 97%	9 3%	0 0%

Q3: I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in helping Aboriginal students achieve the school's expected outcomes.

Table 25 demonstrates that:

- 91% of students believed that Aboriginal Education Workers played a role in helping them achieve the school's expected outcomes, 8% were undecided and 1% disagreed.
- 98% of AEWs and parents believed that having an Aboriginal Education Worker in a school played a role in helping Aboriginal students achieve the school's expected outcomes, 2% were undecided and 1% disagreed.
- 90% of teachers and principals believed that having an Aboriginal Education Worker in a school played a role in helping Aboriginal students achieve the school's expected outcomes, 7% were undecided and 3% disagreed.
- 91% of the others grouping believed that having an Aboriginal Education Worker in a school played a role in helping Aboriginal students achieve the school's expected outcomes, 6% were undecided and 3% disagreed.

Table 25

Group	Agree (4 or 5)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (1 or 2)
Students	72 91%	6 8%	1 1%
Parents & AEWs	63 97%	1 2%	1 1%
Principals & Teachers	147 90%	12 7%	4 3%
Others	32 91%	2 6%	1 3%
Total	314 92%	21 6%	7 2%

Q7: I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in helping to get Aboriginal students to attend school.

Table 26, on page 164, demonstrates that:

- 77% of students believed that Aboriginal Education Workers played a role in helping them to attend school, 15% were undecided and 8% disagreed.
- 83% of AEWs and parents believed that having Aboriginal Education Workers played a role in helping Aboriginal students attend school, 6% were undecided and 11% disagreed.
- 76% of teachers and principals believed that having Aboriginal Education Workers in schools played a role in helping Aboriginal students attend school, 18% were undecided and 6% disagreed.
- 86% of the others grouping believed that having Aboriginal Education Workers in schools played a role in helping Aboriginal students attend school, 11% were undecided and 3% disagreed.

Teachers and principals, as well as students, have the highest disagreement and undecided responses to this question. This may be for a number of reasons. Firstly, because teachers and principals are at the official end of non-attendance, they may view it as a major issue in their particular school. Secondly, students may be loath to admit non-attendance, or for that matter, think it unimportant.

Table 26

Group	Agree (4 or 5)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (1 or 2)
Students	61 77%	12 15%	6 8%
Parents & AEWs	53 83%	4 6%	7 11%
Principals & Teachers	122 76%	29 18%	10 6%
Others	30 86%	4 11%	1 3%
Total	266 78%	49 14%	24 7%

Q9: I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in Aboriginal students completing school.

Table 27, on page 165, demonstrates that:

- 75% of students believed that Aboriginal Education Workers played a role in their completing school, 22% were undecided and 3% disagreed.
- 86% of AEWs and parents believed that Aboriginal Education Workers played a role in Aboriginal students completing school, 8% were undecided and 6% disagreed.
- 70% of teachers and principals believed that Aboriginal Education Workers played a role in Aboriginal students completing school, 25% were undecided and 5% disagreed.

- 83% of the others grouping believed that Aboriginal Education Workers played a role in Aboriginal students completing school, 14% were undecided and 3% disagreed.

Teachers and principals and student groups have the lowest agree rate and highest undecided rate for this question.

Table 27

Group	Agree (4 or 5)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (1 or 2)
Students	59 75%	17 22%	3 3%
Parents & AEWs	56 86%	5 8%	4 6%
Principals & Teachers	114 70%	41 25%	8 5%
Others	29 83%	5 14%	1 3%
Total	258 75%	68 20%	16 5%

Q10: I believe that if Aboriginal Education Workers were removed from schools the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students would decline.

Table 28 on page 167, demonstrates that:

- 61% of students believed that if Aboriginal Education Workers were removed from schools their educational outcomes would decline, 28% were undecided and 11% disagreed.
- 83% of AEWs and parents believed that if Aboriginal Education Workers were removed from schools the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students would decline, 11% were undecided and 6% disagreed.
- 80% of teachers and principals believed that if Aboriginal Education Workers were removed from schools the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students would decline, 15% were undecided and 5% disagreed.
- 89% of the others grouping believed that if Aboriginal Education Workers were removed from schools the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students would decline, and 11% were undecided.

Students have by far the lowest agreement rate and highest undecided rate for this question. This may be because as school children, they are starting to enjoy increased amounts of independence, and may have the view they can do everything on their own and don't need anyone's help to do it.

Table 28

Group	Agree (4 or 5)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (1 or 2)
Students	48 61%	22 28%	9 11%
Parents & AEWs	54 83%	7 11%	4 6%
Principals & Teachers	128 80%	24 15%	9 5%
Others	31 89%	4 11%	0 0%
Total	261 77%	57 17%	22 6%

Table 29 on page 168 demonstrates that under the theme of educational outcomes, 85% of all respondents on average were in agreement that AEWs contributed to the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students. There was a low 6% disagreement rate to this question, with 10% undecided. The same 85% also believed that if AEWs were removed from schools it would be detrimental to these outcomes.

Table 29

Group	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
Students	80%	14%	6%
Parents & AEWs	89%	5%	6%
Principals & Teachers	82%	13%	5%
Others	90%	8%	2%
Average	85%	10%	5%

The next section looks at the respondents' replies to the five qualitative questions.

Qualitative survey questions

1. What role do Aboriginal Education Workers play in assisting Aboriginal students with their learning?

AEW responses

AEWs saw themselves in the role of supporting, motivating and encouraging students, and helping them to overcome difficulties. They stated that they assist with individual and small group work in the classroom. They believed that their presence in class was of benefit to students and that they were able to make class work more relevant to the students. They also believed that their connections to families and communities was of benefit to students.

“An AEW’s role is to assist the teacher with any Indigenous child who is having difficulty in the classroom”(survey 76, question 1, AEW).

“Having a presence in the class and helping keep students on track”
(survey 343, question 1, AEW).

Other stakeholder responses

Other stakeholders believed that the major roles of an AEW were to support, mentor and encourage students, and to provide in-class support both individual and in groups. Other stakeholders also said that AEWs emphasised the importance of education, advocated for students, and acted as role models and mentors. Most importantly, they helped schools to engage with parents and communities and helped build relationships between all stakeholders.

“The AEW must establish a relationship with the students, staff and community to be effective. They must also be prepared to wear two hats and to juggle the responsibility of being a school employee and a community member - not always easy” (survey 345, question 1, other stakeholder).

In the negative, some other stakeholders thought AEWs carried out their role in an ad hoc fashion.

Parent responses

Parents believed the role of the AEW was to help, assist and provide support with any difficulties. It was also to give individual help in the classroom and bring relevance to the lessons. They also stressed strongly that part of the AEW's role was to assist with the cultural aspects and provide links between schools, families and communities.

“The AEW assists with tasks that are troubling my child in her school work, or helps find a teacher who can” (survey 114, question 1, parent).

Principal’s responses

Principals strongly believed that the major aspects of an AEW’s role were, to give individual help, work with small groups in class, assist teachers, reinforce students’ identities and emphasize the value of education. They were also to motivate and inspire students and act as role model and mentor for them. They also believed strongly that AEWs need to help build home-school relationships, and assist school staff to become more culturally aware.

“They must also be prepared to wear two hats and juggle the responsibility of being a school employee and a community member and that is not always easy”

Student responses

The overwhelming comment from students about what AEWs do were: explains; helps; makes lessons relevant; helps me with literacy; encourages me. Other comments related to breakfast programs and assistance with assignments, assessments and difficulties.

“Giving me and others time and effort to help us out with work and assignments, so we are up to date” (survey 131, question 1, student).

Teacher responses

Teacher responses related to literacy and numeracy, individual help, small groups and in-class help that were by far the largest contributions. Other things mentioned more than three times were the AEWs' efforts to encourage, motivate, keep on track, liaise with teachers, make lessons relevant, foster community-parent engagement, encourage attendance, to act as role models and promote cultural awareness.

On the negative side, comments made more than three times relate to the attendance, punctuality and reluctance of AEWs.

"My AEW is often absent from class due to outside school commitments. When in class she sometimes does the work I set, however she likes to choose what or who she will work with" (survey 254, question 1, teacher).

2. What could Aboriginal Education Workers do better to assist individual Aboriginal students with their learning?

AEW responses

AEWs' major suggestions for self-improvement were to be better at: encouraging; motivating; knowing and involving families; giving cultural awareness training; giving individual help in class; and making lessons relevant. There were also a number of AEWs who expressed the wish to be teacher-trained and achieve other relevant qualifications.

"More PD to keep up to date with teaching methods and curriculum.

Development to assist with cultural knowledge to improve students' understanding of cultural identity" (survey 46, question 2, AEW).

Other stakeholder responses

Other stakeholders suggested that AEWs could be better at: dealing with difficulties; group work; curriculum planning; listening; literacy and numeracy; and encouraging parents.

“AEWs must have skills, particularly in literacy and numeracy, to enable them to assist Aboriginal students. Unfortunately there are some AEWs who don’t have the necessary subject knowledge and cannot assist the Aboriginal students to any great extent” (survey 345, question 2, other stakeholder).

Parent responses

Parents’ major suggestions for AEW improvement were the cultural aspects and being a better uncle or aunty to students.

Principals’ responses

Principals’ major suggestions for areas of improvement for AEWs were, to do more PD, improve their literacy and numeracy skills and be better role models. On the negative side a number of principals suggest AEWs need to improve their work ethic.

“Further develop classroom skills and strategies to assist with reading, writing and numeracy groups” (survey 37, question 2, principal).

Student responses

Students’ overwhelming response was they wanted the AEW to give them more assistance in class with literacy and numeracy. They would also like AEWs to be more challenging, make the lessons more relevant, keep them on track and teach them about their culture.

“Just help me to understand things I don’t. Be there for support when I need it and give me encouragement and motivation” (survey 158, question 2, student).

Teacher responses

Teachers thought AEWs needed to improve in the areas of, teacher knowledge, individual help, literacy and numeracy, engaging parents and Aboriginal perspectives. They also believe they need to have high expectations, be pro-active and be better role models.

“Our AEW has already altered her role to improve basic skills in literacy and numeracy, which I feel is important” (survey 250, question 2, teacher).

3. How do Aboriginal Education Workers involve the Aboriginal community in the schools where they assist students?

AEW responses

AEWs believed they involve the Aboriginal community in the school by encouraging parents and elders to visit, holding meetings, making home visits, helping with newsletters, making schools like family, inviting parents to school to teach, and being part of teacher interviews.

“Create an extension of family at school. Make school a welcoming place” (survey 56, question 3, AEW).

Other stakeholder responses

Other stakeholders believed AEWs involved community by: mentoring parents; involving the whole family; and making the school environment more community friendly. They also assisted in developing positive relationships between all stakeholders.

“The AEWs maintain regular contact with parents, extended families and occasionally make community visits. They also invite Elders, guest speakers and other community members to join in school activities” “(survey 103, question 3, Other stakeholder).

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Parent responses

Parents believed AEWs involved community in NAIDOC celebrations, invited them to school; and involved community in decisions about their children. AEWs also made home visits; were active in the community and were involved in parent meetings with teachers.

“Inviting them into school, involving community in the decisions involving their children” (survey 85, question 3, parent).

Principals’ responses

Principals believed AEWs helped schools to engage community through, NAIDOC celebrations, relationship building, school community events, building community confidence, regularly visiting parents and community, with newsletters and phone calls.

“They provide an essential link with the community. The principal depends upon the AEW for advice and a vital communication with the community” (survey 30, question 3, principal).

Student responses

The overwhelming responses from students were that AEWs ran meetings, contacted parents and ran NAIDOC celebrations. Other comments related to involving the students with community and inviting community to visit their school.

“The AEW runs meetings with our parents, sends notes home and contacts our parents. She helps us take part in the community” (survey 194, question 3, student).

Teacher responses

The major responses from teachers were related to NAIDOC celebrations, liaising with community and keeping staff informed about community events. Other mentions were made of also keeping community informed about school events.

“Our AEW is heavily involved in the Aboriginal parent group and assists coordinating meetings. At Aboriginal conferences our AEW informs the community of events occurring within the school” (survey 282, question 3, teacher).

4. How can Aboriginal Education Workers best assist you with the learning of Aboriginal students?

AEW responses

AEWs believed they could best assist with student learning by communication and advocacy between school and home, supporting students and parents wherever possible, and having high expectations and providing cultural PD for staff.

“AEWs assist in any way possible depending on the individual. Strategies include: developing PLPs with the Year Coordinator; pastoral; and learning support; developing literacy and numeracy programs, including tertiary and job markets” (survey 50, question 4, AEW).

Other stakeholder responses

Other stakeholders believed that AEWs could best assist student learning by assisting with PLPs, literacy and numeracy, and helping to make lessons relevant for students. They also believed AEWs could assist them by supporting engagement in learning, identifying needs and ensuring the school meets those needs. AEWs could also assist by acting as a parent liaison officer and becoming a significant other in the lives of Aboriginal students.

“AEWs can best assist Aboriginal students in classrooms in the areas of literacy and numeracy. This is their pivotal role. AEWs can also assist Aboriginal students by acting as a mentor, being the “significant other adult” in their life within the school” (survey 345, question 4, other stakeholder).

Parent responses

Parents believed that AEWs could best assist the learning of their children by keeping parents informed of the expected outcomes, meeting regularly with them and keeping them involved in the process. They also believed that AEWs needed to work with “all” students in relation to Aboriginal perspectives and culture.

“Keeping parents informed of the expected outcomes and up to date communication” (survey 117, question 4, parent).

Principal's responses

AEWs could best assist principals with the learning of Aboriginal students by behaving in a professional manner, keeping them informed and not undermining a teacher's authority. AEWs could also assist with the cultural awareness of all staff, including community protocols, and by emphasizing the importance of education to both students and parents.

"By supporting teachers in the classroom and encouraging student learning, not overstepping the mark so they don't listen to their actual classroom teacher" (survey 13, question 4, principal).

"Working within classrooms, keeping the teachers and principals informed of issues pertaining to the educational needs of students" (survey 30, question 4, principal).

Student responses

Students believed AEWs could best help them by interpreting what the teacher says into language that is relevant to them. They would like them to inform teachers and parents of how they are going, and to teach them social skills, study skills, and help them get to Year 12 and beyond.

"Get good grade marks to go all the way to Year 12 and do a traineeship" (survey 197, question 4, student).

Teacher responses

Teachers believed AEWs could best assist with the learning of Aboriginal students by: individual help; small group work; engaging with parents and community; role

modelling; and making lessons relevant. They also believed AEWS could assist by motivating, and by building connections and relationships between teachers, students, parents and community.

“Be clear about what each student does well or needs helps with. Seek opportunities for students to shine at things they do” (survey 7301, question 4, teacher).

5. Are there any suggestions you would like to make that may assist all Aboriginal Education Workers to better support Aboriginal students in completing school?

AEW responses

AEWs believed they needed more PD and better qualifications to be able to better assist students. They did not want to be given the sole responsibility for everything Aboriginal in the school. They would also have liked to make more home visits and to build up a better rapport with students.

Other stakeholder responses

Other stakeholders believed that AEWs must be given the opportunity to participate in appropriate personal learning (PL) opportunities to further develop their skills. They also believed that the teaching staff needed to utilise AEWs to assist with programming. Other stakeholders also thought the principal should make it a priority to develop a working relationship with AEWs.

Parent responses

Only four parents responded to this question, which was surprising. Their comments were: be professional, don't segregate the kids; develop a mentor program for those without a family role model, and promote confidence building for separated families.

Principals' responses

Principals' comments related to: being proactive; engaging community; continual PD; training in specific skills; model learning; and being part of the leadership team.

"To encourage, encourage, encourage AEWs to stand up to staff and not be considered as less important. They are priceless members of staff" (survey 40, question 5, principal).

Student responses

The by far the most frequent comment of students is they would like AEWs to spend much more time with them. Students would also like AEWs to help them with literacy and numeracy, assignments, relevance and assessments.

A possible correlation that AEWs contribute to improving Aboriginal educational outcomes?

As the State coordinator of Aboriginal education for NSW CEC since 1999, I have been charged with reporting to DEEWR the educational outcomes of our Aboriginal students. We are required to report on all areas of literacy, numeracy, attendance, retention and SC and HSC completions. For political reasons this data is aggregated with all NSW education systems. Up until 2009 we were required to meet ever-increasing targets in all these areas. From 1999 to 2009 as a system we met the large majority of our targets (Frank Pearce, 1999-2008). In this same period our AEW workforce grew from 50 to 148.

In order to better define what main areas that need to be addressed to improve the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students, the twelve NSW Catholic Aboriginal Education Advisors and a number of non-Aboriginal educationalists were asked to list the ten areas they thought were essential to achieving this aim. Then the twelve Catholic Aboriginal Advisors who are best placed to comment were asked how do your AEWs contribute to these ten essential areas?

The next section looks at how NSW Catholic schools AEWs are addressing ten areas essential to improving Aboriginal educational outcomes that were outlined in chapter 2.

How NSW Catholic-school AEWs are addressing the ten areas essential to improving Aboriginal educational outcomes.

These ten essential areas as outlined in Chapter 4 are:

1. Wellbeing
2. Attendance
3. Identity
4. Engagement
5. Retention
6. Parental involvement
7. Supportive school environment
8. Supportive home environment
9. Relevant curriculum

10. Motivation

The following information relating to AEWs is selected feedback from the twelve NSW Catholic-school Aboriginal education advisors. It is in relation to what their AEWs are doing to address these ten areas essential to improving Aboriginal educational outcomes. This feedback was gathered at the NSW Catholic education Aboriginal advisory meeting on the 18th March 2011 as part of the minutes. Any comments that were duplicated have been removed. Some Aboriginal English and terminology has not been removed as much is lost in the translation.

1) Wellbeing

Assistance provided by Catholic-school AEWs in the area of student wellbeing falls into the three broad areas of pastoral care, school environment, and parental/community involvement in a student's learning.

Firstly, pastoral care for Aboriginal students is provided in consultation with diocesan Aboriginal advisors, AEWs, parents and school staff. In this area, AEWs take a personal individual interest in each student. Because of their own life experiences and community connection they are very attuned to the students, their issues, their educational difficulties and in a lot of cases any emotional difficulties they may be experiencing. Often it is literally just the presence of an Aboriginal face that boosts the wellbeing of an Aboriginal student who may be a little low emotionally. Having an AEW in a school to an Aboriginal student is like having an uncle or aunty in a school that they can turn to in their time of need, either educationally or emotionally.

Secondly, in the area of school environment, AEWs keep teachers informed as to any problems a student or their family may be experiencing. This allows the teacher to be pro-active rather than re-active. This is particularly important in relation to the

student and family experiencing Sorry Business (bereavement), which sadly, in Aboriginal families and communities, is a frequent occurrence. They are also of great assistance in classroom in interpreting the teacher's instructions and often the curriculum into a language more relevant to the Aboriginal students.

Thirdly, and most importantly, Aboriginal parents are the first educators of their children so it is vital they are involved in a meaningful, consultative, consistent way in their child's education. This is one of the most important roles AEWs carry out, not just on a school day basis, but after-hours and on weekends in the Catholic schools' Aboriginal communities across NSW. Their unofficial roles in most cases outweigh heavily those set out in their job descriptions. Often the partnerships between Aboriginal communities and schools are disjointed, and in some cases non-existent. This is evidenced by the need for the Federal Government to insert a mandatory Aboriginal community partnership clause into the provider's contracts for their latest flagship to solve the Aboriginal Education "problem", Focus Schools (Hanlen, 2005). Further evidence is the succession of flawed programs developed by the Federal Government, aimed at getting Aboriginal parents and communities engaged with schools (Australian Education Union, 2007) also (see appendix 11A). Due to the continual failure of these programs, AEWs are not only important; they are vital. AEWs are the link between schools, students, parents and communities. In schools they are the advocates for students, parents, and communities. In the communities they are the advocates for schools and the value of education.

2) Attendance

In general, AEWs visit schools and pre-schools and regularly talk to principals and school staff regarding attendance. They ring parents and follow-up any concerns from classroom teachers/contact teacher. They also monitor students' attendance on

a daily basis in the schools that they work in. Schools that they are not based in are reviewed at the end of each term.

AEWs are aware if there is an issue with attendance, and make it their business to find out what the issues are and then support the student and family to address the issues.

Some students tend to still go to school even when there are issues at home when they know they have an AEW to talk to and know that the AEW will support them as much as possible. This is because of the good relationships they have developed with the Aboriginal students. Sometimes just the presence of an AEW in a school improves the attendance of students as they have a part of their “family” in the school taking part in their learning (Gibson, 2009).

3) Identity

Filling in the gaps in a student’s identity is a crucial role of AEWs which at times can be very challenging for the student, the AEW and in some case the parents (Department of Education Employment and Work Relations, 2011b; MacGill). It is however essential as a strong identity greatly helps with student motivation to learn.

For many Aboriginal young people, the school becomes the critical factor in their search for identity (Training, 2010). If they feel accepted and affirmed in their schools, they will have a much stronger chance of developing a strong cultural identity. If the school is just another area of pressure and stress, it is often dismissed

as irrelevant and not worth continuing with (New South Wales Department of Education and Training, 2005, p. 9).

In general, NSW Catholic-school AEWs assist students to know their mob and work with schools to include an Aboriginal focus throughout the year, not just on special days/dates. Awards evenings are used to showcase the achievements of Aboriginal students. Community involvement in these events raises awareness of being proud to be Aboriginal. The AEWs play a vital role in these awards nights. They are a community presence who promote identity and give students a sense of who they are and that they belong somewhere. They are often the key to a student wanting to find out about whom they are and where they come from.

Sometimes the literal “black face” notion comes into play here, where the students can identify with an AEW in a cultural way but in the school environment.

AEWs are responsible for keeping Aboriginal knowledge and culture on the school’s agenda at all times and through this a strong Aboriginal student identity will follow (Gibson, 2009).

4) Engagement

AEWs assist classroom teachers to include Aboriginal perspectives that make it relevant for students. Aboriginal teachers and AEWs studying to be teachers support Aboriginal students in the classroom with individual learning plans. AEWs often have

a deeper understanding of how Indigenous students learn, and are able to make learning more relevant and encourage students to achieve to the best of their ability.

Some AEWs are used for crowd control, but also they are using a very traditional form of discipline that is culturally respected by the students. AEWs usually know the students' families and have a strong link with the community, and this flows into the classrooms and gives students the capacity to engage in their learning through the support of the AEW, who makes it a less demanding process (Gibson, 2009).

5) Retention

In the area of retention, AEWs in some dioceses work with schools to develop pathways for students to University. They are a vital part of residential leadership workshops that are held for students in Years 6–12 each year. They are also heavily involved in many dioceses in developing and running various retention, career and gifted and talented camps. Tutoring is provided for students at a dedicated Indigenous education unit at no cost to families. They also work in schools to encourage and support students to stay at school through various programs e.g. the lighthouse mentoring program (Parramatta, 2011). AEWs support the students with direction in educational choices and are role models who support and value education and give positive messages to students that education is important. They give relevance to the need for a good education and have direct links to universities, scholarships, TAFE Colleges and various career choices.

Maintenance is more the issue in some schools with high Aboriginal populations, where the AEWs play a pivotal role in sustaining students to finish school. One

diocese has no secondary schools but their primary schools still face retention issues due to poor attendance, therefore AEWs have to work hard to maintain enrolments (Gibson, 2009).

As the State coordinator of Aboriginal education for the NSW Catholic Education Commission I am personally involved with three outstanding retention initiatives. AEWS have and continue to be involved in the development and running of these three initiatives, as well as being facilitators, mentors, role models and unofficial Uncles and Aunties to all the children involved . They are also very involved in engaging the community in relation to these initiatives.

- *Wii Gaay* (Clever Child) in the Armidale Diocese (Dare to Lead, 2008)
- Lismore Diocese Annual Careers Camps
- Parramatta Diocese Awards Nights (Achenbach, 1991).

6) Parental involvement

AEWs in some dioceses implement various literacy programs at home with the parents such as, Pause, Prompt and Praise, and Bridging the Gap early Literacy Program (Freeman, 2009). There are also in some instances community liaison staff that assist families to liaise with the schools and various community organisations.

All Catholic dioceses have Aboriginal Education Advisory committees, of which parents and AEWs are core members.

AEWs make phone calls to parents/carers, write newsletters/flyers for parents/carers, and organise Aboriginal education parent information sessions. In some instances they make home visits to talk with parents/carers. AEWs often organise morning teas with the staff and parents/carers, and meet with parents/classroom teachers to discuss students' learning needs. They also consult Indigenous parents about any new programs that involve their children, and in some instances a DVD is put together and sent home for the parents/carers. AEWs inform parents about what is happening at the school, encourage them to be involved, although not always successfully, and attend meetings with other agencies with parents (Gibson, 2009).

The Parramatta Diocese annual Aboriginal awards night started out eight years ago with the attendance of about 20 parents. This night has got so big that two venues have to be used, with about 100 parents and families attending each

7) Supportive school environment

Within schools, AEWs advocate for Aboriginal students as well as making staff more culturally aware, which helps create a supportive environment for Aboriginal students (Mandela, n.d.). They are the significant other that Aboriginal students can turn to in time of need (Mandela, n.d.). As someone who has long experience in both public and private education sectors, I have often found that in time of need students of all different nationalities and circumstances will often gravitate to AEWs for comfort (Carney, 2011).

8) Supportive home environment

AEWs engage with Aboriginal parents to ensure Aboriginal students are supported in their learning at home (Allard & Sanderson, 2002). As literacy and numeracy can at times also

be an issue for some Aboriginal parents, AEWs also often assist parents to be able to better assist their child with their learning (Freeman, 2009). A number of dioceses run literacy and numeracy programs that involve students taking home literacy and numeracy games that parents play with the children.

9) Relevant curriculum

AEWs in classrooms often act as virtual interpreters, converting what a teacher has said into a more relevant form for Aboriginal students (MacGill). They are also often involved, both in the classroom and the school, in adding an Aboriginal perspective across the curriculum (Ashby, 2011; MacGill).

10) Motivation

AEWs, by supporting the students and their families, bring relevance to the Aboriginal students' learning, providing constant encouragement to them, constantly reinforce student motivation (Michael Winkler, 2006). They are also, in general, great role models. Just their presence in a classroom motivates some Aboriginal students. The AEWs, with their own enthusiasm for education and the positive role modelling they present, are also a great motivation for "all" students (Mandela, n.d.).

While it is hard to prove cause and effect in relation to these educational outcomes, what the NSW Catholic Aboriginal Advisors have outlined as to how their AEWS contribute to the previously outlined ten essential areas, further adds to a very strong circumstantial case, that AEWs do contribute in a significant way to improving Aboriginal educational outcomes.

Conclusion

This research investigated the question, “Do Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) contribute to improving Aboriginal educational outcomes?” It examined the question using a number of research methodologies. These were quantitative in the form of ten Likert questions and five qualitative questions. All fifteen questions were contained in the same survey instrument.

I chose the research question for four reasons. Firstly, I wanted to demonstrate in the bigger picture of a whole school with a number of Aboriginal students, that having a skilled AEW in a school is as valuable and as important as having an Aboriginal teacher in a school. Secondly, although AEWs have been in classrooms since 1974 there has been no research to find out if they have had any impact on improving Aboriginal educational outcomes. Thirdly, AEWs’ positions are very insecure because in the main they have always been dependent on annual targeted Aboriginal funding. Fourthly, all the positives I have witnessed in schools with AEWs, and what I have heard from students, parents, school staff and in many forums both state and national, has given me a firm conviction that AEWs play an important role in improving Aboriginal educational outcomes.

These are the conversations that are at the heart of this thesis. These conversations and supporting correlations clearly demonstrate that AEWs contribute not only to improving Aboriginal educational outcomes but, just as importantly, social outcomes. The very strong message that comes from all respondents is we must never lose sight of the fact that the children must always be at the centre of what AEWs do.

As highlighted in chapter 1, perceptions play a huge role in our lives, as they are how we view the world and other people. More importantly they determine how we interact with others and decisions we make (Cherry, 2011; Sherman, 2001). If these groups have positive perceptions of the AEW, and AEWs have positive perceptions of themselves, it will lead to positive relationships, which will in turn lead to positive educational outcomes.

As the results of this study showed, AEWs, parents, principals, teachers, other stakeholders and most importantly the students have strong perceptions that AEWs play an important role in helping to improve Aboriginal educational and social outcomes.

For questions 1 to 6 there is an aggregated, average 91% agreement rate for all respondents that:

1. They would prefer to have an AEW.
2. AEWs help students enjoy learning.
3. AEWs help Aboriginal student's complete school.
4. AEWs help with the motivation, self-esteem and aspirations of Aboriginal students.
5. 91% of all respondents believe their school values Aboriginal culture.
6. AEWs help reinforce Aboriginal students' identities.

For questions 7 to 10 there is a significant reduction in the agreement rates of between 20% and 25%. However, there are positive signs in that only between 1% and 7% disagree with the rest still to be convinced as to whether:

- An AEW assists with attendance.
- The students work better with an AEW in class.
- An AEW assists Aboriginal students to complete school.
- Removing AEWs from schools would affect outcomes.

The following are the results of the data in relation to the themes of supporting culture and identity, learning and educational outcomes.

Under the theme of supporting culture and identity, on average 94% are in agreement, 4% are undecided and 2% disagree.

Under the theme of learning, on average 84% agree, 12% are undecided and 4% disagree.

Under the theme of educational outcomes, on average 85% agree, 10% are undecided and 5% disagree.

The two most significant points in relation to the data results in relation to these three themes are the high agreement rate and low disagreement rate.

The next section looks at the results of the five qualitative questions.

Questions 1 and 3 which were designed to elicit from respondents their knowledge regarding AEWS.

Q1 What role do Aboriginal Education Workers play in assisting Aboriginal students with their learning?

Q3 How do Aboriginal Education Workers involve the Aboriginal community in the schools where they assist students?

The respondents' replies indicate they all have a good level of knowledge as to what AEWs do both officially and unofficially in their roles, although a small proportion are not sure.

Questions 2, 4 and 5 were designed to see what areas of improvement respondents believed AEWs needed to undertake.

Q2 What could Aboriginal Education Workers do better to assist individual Aboriginal students with their learning?

Q4 How can Aboriginal Education Workers best assist you with the learning of Aboriginal students?

Q5 Are there any suggestions you would like to make that may assist all Aboriginal Education Workers to better support Aboriginal students in completing school?

Responses from all respondents were:

- More individual help and small group work in class.

- Continuous PD.
- Be better skilled in the areas of literacy and numeracy.
- Make sure they attend staff meetings and become part of everything that happens rather than just Aboriginal education.
- Constantly emphasise the importance of education.
- Work to make schools an extension of family.
- Be better skilled at involving parents in all decision-making.
- Make sure they don't just talk about the importance of attendance and punctuality but practise it themselves.
- Be better skilled at bringing Aboriginal culture into schools and helping to make all staff culturally aware.
- Be better skilled at advocating not only for Aboriginal students but also themselves.
- Be better skilled at challenging students.
- Be better skilled at keeping students on track.
- Be better skilled at teaching students more about their culture and identity.
- Be better skilled at adding an Aboriginal perspective to the learning.
- Be better skilled at keeping parents informed on student performance and difficulties.

Recommendations

The following three additional research questions arose during the course of this research project:

1. Does having an AEW on staff influence enrolments?
2. Are more Aboriginal students identifying because of AEWs?

3. Should an AEW be Aboriginal?

These three questions may add further evidence or correlations to the question of whether AEWs contribute to improving Aboriginal education outcomes. Even though the evidence is anecdotal, it comes from those at the coalface who work in or with schools in one form or another on a regular basis.

1. Does having an AEW on staff influence enrolments?

As demonstrated by table 28, since the introduction of AEWs to NSW Catholic schools, both the enrolment rate and their percentage of the school population has grown at faster rate than prior to the introduction of AEWs.

**NSW Catholic Schools Aboriginal Enrolments as a Percentage of All Enrolments
1985-2010 and AEW Employment Numbers 1985-2010 (Andrew Forbes, 2010)**

Table 28

Year	All Students	Aboriginal Students	Aboriginal students as a % of school population	AEW Nos
1985	173,843	921	0.5%	Not known
1986	176,319	876	0.5%	Not known
1987	177,563	830	0.5%	Not known
1988	178,462	818	0.5%	Not known
1989	178,702	745	0.4%	Not known
1990	179,557	748	0.4%	Not known
1991	180,184	956	0.5%	Not known
1992	180,425	1,046	0.6%	Not known
1993	180,167	1,153	0.6%	Not known
1994	179,580	1,248	0.7%	Not known
1995	180,674	1,410	0.8%	10
1996	181,233	1,537	0.8%	12
1997	182,384	1,708	0.9%	28
1998	184,491	1845	1.0%	40
1999	186,781	1956	1.0%	50
2000	191,650	2223	1.2%	64
2001	195,500	2,356	1.2%	96
2002	197,104	2,508	1.3%	96
2003	198,675	2,631	1.3%	123
2004	201,323	2,858	1.4%	134
2005	202,273	3,128	1.5%	130

2006	202,426	3,273	1.6%	141
2007	202,474	3,543	1.7%	147
2008	202,101	3,769	1.9%	148
2009	202,517	4,116	2.0%	148
2010	204,155	4,414	2.2%	148

As demonstrated by table 28, there has been a steady increase of Aboriginal enrolments since AEWs were introduced in 1995. This coincides with the introduction of a significant level of AEWs that continues to grow, along with Aboriginal enrolment numbers. These correlations and qualitative responses bear further investigation (see appendix 19A).

2. Are more Aboriginal students identifying because of AEWs?

As the State Coordinator of Aboriginal Education for NSW over the last ten years I have been charged with completing NSW CEC's Educational accountability report to DEEWR, the funding body. The reason I have raised this question is that quite often our actual Aboriginal enrolments don't match up with the number already enrolled plus new Aboriginal enrolments. For example, 100 enrolled plus 50 new enrolments should equal 150. Sometimes that figure is higher because of students already enrolled choosing to identify.

Anecdotally it would appear to be that a proportion of these enrolments are students who were already enrolled, identifying, because of the more culturally-inclusive environment AEWs help to create. It would also appear that it tends to be more when students are in transition to high school and parents are seeking assistance with the higher costs of secondary schools, and when seeking scholarships (Penfold, 2010). Some Aboriginal

people have concerns about people waiting till the transition to high school to identify. They feel in a lot of cases people are only choosing to identify when it is of benefit to them (see appendix 20A).

The next section looks at an issue that is very important to Aboriginal people for a number of reasons. It is also an issue that can have an impact on a school's Aboriginal enrolments.

3. Should an AEW be Aboriginal?

Over the last twenty years I have spent a lot of time in both Catholic and public schools' Aboriginal communities. I have also spent the same amount of time working with the Aboriginal staff of these school communities. Asking either Aboriginal communities or Aboriginal school staff whether an AEW should be Aboriginal will lead to a heated debate with all of them.

Firstly, it is because Aboriginal people have a very strong view that any employment generated in schools by Aboriginal funding should go to an Aboriginal person. They don't just mean in an employment sense but in the belief that an Aboriginal person brings to the job their Aboriginality and the cultural aspects of that identity (see appendix 22A).

Secondly, it is because in most cases Aboriginal communities by any standard have very low employment levels (Statistics, 2011b).

Some schools however do not agree that an AEW 'must' be Aboriginal. In my twelve years in my position the two questions I am most often asked by school staff are: First, "in the guidelines for Aboriginal funding is it a mandatory requirement to hire an Aboriginal person"? Until the removal of the targeted status of Aboriginal funding in 2009, I could say yes it was mandatory (E. a. W. R. Department of Education, 2005; Robinson, 2010). However after a long negotiation period Federal Aboriginal Education funding was kept as an internal funding allocation method by the NSW CEC. How the funding is utilised is strictly a diocesan decision and Aboriginal employment is not mandatory but based on goodwill (S. B. Kerr, 2009). The second most-asked question by school staff is, "X number of Aboriginal students have enrolled, how much Aboriginal funding are we entitled to"?

Based on the literature review of this thesis, the results of the survey instrument used for this research and the feedback on other issues that arose during the course of this research, I make the following recommendations for further research:

1. Case studies be conducted in both NSW Department of Education and Communities and Catholic-Independent Schools, on the effectiveness of AEWs. This needs to be pre- and post-AEWs in those schools.
2. A national longitudinal study be conducted in all schools that have AEWs. This needs to be pre- and post-AEWs in those schools. AEWs are a modern phenomenon, first appearing in schools in 1974, and in addition are a miniscule employment category, so this study is achievable.
3. A research study be conducted to see how AEWs can add value to readiness for school.
4. A research study be conducted to see how AEWs can add value to the progression of Aboriginal students to university courses and careers.
5. A research study be conducted on the different skill sets required for AEWs

working in primary schools, secondary schools and boarding schools.

6. A research study be conducted to bring under one umbrella the many titles, role descriptions and unofficial community roles of AEWs so they can get the recognition, pay and conditions they so richly deserve.

I strongly believe that all contained in this thesis clearly demonstrates that AEWs are the unrecognised jewels in the crown of Aboriginal education.

Epilogue

A teacher upsets Aboriginal students by saying Aboriginal parents don't insist that their kids go to school.

An Aboriginal student is painfully self-conscious about not knowing her cultural story.

An Aboriginal boy does not want to be the one always asked by a teacher to explain what it means "to be Indigenous" and to give the school's Acknowledgment of Country.

An Aboriginal student is painfully self-conscious about not knowing her cultural story.

The Aboriginal students want to do something special to celebrate their culture and show the school who they are.

The school librarian wants advice on the purchase of Indigenous themed readers.

Sorry Day is approaching and no appropriate school assembly has been arranged. An

Aboriginal child has a sudden drop in school attendance.

The behavioural issues of another Aboriginal child need investigation, with possible links to a negative change in the home environment.

The school has to report on what it is doing to improve Aboriginal outcomes.

An Aboriginal funding submission has to be filled out.

Teachers and parents are interested in learning about the story of the local Aboriginal community.

A teacher wishes to engage with the local Aboriginal community.

What's the difference between a Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country, and who should do which?

A teacher wishes to broaden their knowledge of appropriate and inappropriate language in relation to Aboriginal students and community.

Your school is being asked to explain why the Yr. 5 Aboriginal students NAPLAN results have dropped since they sat the test in Yr. 3.

You have an Aboriginal parent who wishes to enrol their child but is unable to pay the fees.

A young Aboriginal boy has an altercation with another student but refuses to explain why.

Your school's retention of Aboriginal students is low.

Some of your Aboriginal students need some additional classroom assistance.

A teacher needs direction in adding an Aboriginal perspective to their lessons.

An Aboriginal student becomes ill and you can't locate the parents.

An Aboriginal student, because of financial circumstance, has no lunch.

You need someone to negotiate with local Aboriginal organisations.

You need someone to help you advocate to government agencies on Aboriginal issues.

A young Aboriginal boy, who is normally well behaved, is starting to act out and refuses to talk about it.

Taking the words from the 1980's movie

Who you gonna call?

In many schools the answer to each question is the

Aboriginal Education Worker

Their reward for all this?

- **Under paid.**
- **Under appreciated.**
- **Little recognition.**
- **Many additional duties that are not in the role description.**
- **Job insecurity.**
- **Low expectations of school staff.**
- **Racism.**
- **Stereotyped by staff.**
- **In some cases considered a tall poppy by their own community.**

Why do they do it?

For The Kids,

Their families and their Communities

ACRONYMS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AEW	Aboriginal Education Worker
ABSTUDY	Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme
AEDAP	Aboriginal Education Direct Assistance Program
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AEP	Aboriginal Education Policy
AESIP	Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program
AEU	Australian Education Union
APB	Aboriginal Protection Board
ASSPA	Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (Program)
ATAS	Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme
BER	Building the Education Revolution
BST	Basic Skills Test
CEC	Catholic Education Commission
CES	Commonwealth Employment Service
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DE	Department of Education Western Australia
DEC	NSW Department of Education and Communities
DEETYA	Department of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs

DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Work Relations
DET	Department of Education and Training
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
FAHCSIA	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
HSC	Higher School Certificate
IEDA	Indigenous Education Direct Assistance (Program)
IESIP	Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program
KLA	Key Learning Area
LSO	Learning Support Officer
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy
NAWU	National Australian Workers Union
NSW	New South Wales
NSW CEC	NSW Catholic Education Commission
PACE	Parent and Community Engagement (Program)
PD	Personal Development
PLP	Personal Learning Plan
PSPI	Parent School Partnership Initiative
SC	School Certificate
TAFE	Technical and Further Education

UTS	University of Technology Sydney
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WA	Western Australia

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Appendix 1-A

DET NSW 1996 AEA Role

An example of a duties statement for Aboriginal Education Assistants (AEAs)

The Aboriginal Education Assistant is responsible to the Principal in the following areas:

- **Pastoral Care of Students**

Assisting the Principal and teachers in:

1. monitoring the attendance, behaviour and progress of Aboriginal students;
2. interviewing and advising Aboriginal students in relation to pastoral care;
3. attending to personal needs of Aboriginal students in relation to hygiene, health and injury etc, and
4. advising Aboriginal students on matters relating to school, family or personal problems.

- **Community and Parent Liaison**

1. Assisting the Principal to establish and maintain effective relationships with Aboriginal parents and the Aboriginal community.
2. Assisting the Principal and teachers in interviewing parents of Aboriginal students in relation to their school progress.
3. Undertaking approved visits to Aboriginal parents in their homes in relation to their children's school progress or problems.
4. Assisting the Principal and teachers in informing the Aboriginal community of the objectives and organisation of the school.
5. Informing the Principal of activities and attitudes in the Aboriginal community which may affect the Aboriginal students in the school.

- **Teacher Support**

1. Assisting teachers with individual or small groups of Aboriginal students in classrooms Or on excursions.
2. Assisting teachers with matters affecting the behaviour or progress of Aboriginal students.
3. Assisting teachers in the development of programs for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students with particular emphasis on Aboriginal education.
4. Assisting teachers in the production of materials with particular reference to Aboriginal education.
5. Assisting teaching staff in developing and implementing a curriculum which is appropriate for the Aboriginal students in the school.

- **Other Duties I.** Carrying out other related duties as required by the Principal.

Appendix 1-B

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION OFFICERS

STATEMENT OF DUTIES 2009

NSW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Department and the Association agree to review the statement of duties for Aboriginal Education Officers and to Insert any changes to the statement of duties by way of consent variation to this enterprise agreement.

Introduction

The Aboriginal Education Officer (AEO) is responsible to the principal for giving assistance to Aboriginal students and parents and to teachers.

The emphasis given to these three aspects of the role will vary, according to the nature of the school and its community.

The Aboriginal Education Officer is responsible to the principal in the following areas:

1 Student Support

- Advising Aboriginal students in relation to their participation and progress. Support and encouraging student retention.
- Encouraging student participation in school decision making.
- Advising students on matters relating to educational and individual needs.

2 Community Support

- Encouraging the involvement of Aboriginal parents in school programs and their participation in decision making.
- Maintaining effective relationships with Aboriginal parents and the Aboriginal community.
- Interviewing parents of Aboriginal students in relation to their school progress
- Undertaking approved visits to Aboriginal parents in their homes in relation to their children's school progress or needs.
- Informing the Aboriginal community of the objects and organisation of the school.

- Informing the principal of activities and views of the Aboriginal community, including the local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG), which have relevance for the Aboriginal students in the school and the Aboriginal education program.

3 Teacher Support
Assisting teachers:

- To involve parents and the community in school programs.
- With Aboriginal students in all school activities including excursions.
- with the progress of Aboriginal students
- In the development of programs for all students with particular emphasis on Aboriginal education.
- With the identification and development of resources to support programs for all students with particular reference to Aboriginal education.
- In developing and implementing an appropriate curriculum for all students and specifically one which meets the needs of Aboriginal students.

4 Other Duties

Carrying out other duties as required by the principal.

Note: The school must not require an Aboriginal Education Officer to accept responsibility for class management and control, playground supervision or teaching students.

Appendix 1-C

REMUNERATION OF ABORIGINAL EDUCATION OFFICERS AND ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICERS 2010

Dear Aboriginal Education Officer

In consultation with the Public Service Association and the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc., the department has formalised new role statements and remuneration for Aboriginal Education Officers which will take effect from day 1, Term 1, 2010.

A copy of the new role statement is attached.

The new remuneration will be at the equivalent of:

- Ⓒ Clerk Grade 1 minimum for Aboriginal Education Officers currently on steps 1-4 of the current Aboriginal Education Officer scale;
- Ⓓ Clerk Grade 1 maximum for Aboriginal Education Officers currently on step 5 of the current Aboriginal Education Officer scale; and
- TO Clerk Grade 2 minimum for Aboriginal Education Officers currently on step 6 of the current Aboriginal Education Officer scale.

Progression will occur through the remuneration steps for Clerk Grade 1/2.

Revised role statements and remuneration will also be implemented from day 1, Term 1, 2010 for Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers. A copy of the new role statement for this position is also attached.

Diane Wasson
Director, HR Policy and Planning
11 December 2009

**REMUNERATION OF ABORIGINAL EDUCATION OFFICERS AND ABORIGINAL
COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICERS 2010**

Attention: Principals

Following the implementation of Recommendation 25 of the Report of the Review of Aboriginal Education, revised role statements and remuneration for Aboriginal Education Officers will be implemented from day 1, Term 1, 2010.

Revised role statements and remuneration will also be implemented from day 1, Term 1, 2010 for Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers. Advice will be provided to Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers through the regional office.

Where applicable, I would ask principals to provide a copy of the attached advice to the Aboriginal Education Officer (s) in the school.

Diane Wasson
Director, HR Policy and Planning
11 December 2009

Appendix 1-D

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION OFFICERS (AE0s) 2010

Responsible to the Principal or delegate for providing assistance to teachers, Aboriginal students and their families to support improved learning outcomes for Aboriginal students.

Statement of Duties

Working with teachers:

- to assist Aboriginal students in all school activities including excursions
- to discuss with Aboriginal parents the educational progress of their children
- to identify and develop resources to support the learning outcomes of Aboriginal students
- to assist in the development and implementation of personalised learning plans for Aboriginal students
- to support Aboriginal cultural awareness for all students with particular reference to Aboriginal students
- To help maintain effective relationships between Aboriginal parents, the Aboriginal community and school staff.

Working as part of a school team to support students:

- in relation to their school participation and programs
- in relation to their attendance and retention.

Liaising with the Principal and staff:

- On protocols for interacting with the Aboriginal community in relation to staff and Aboriginal students in the school and Aboriginal education activities.

Other Duties

Performing other related duties as required by the Principal.

Note: the school must not require an Aboriginal Education Officer to accept responsibility for class management and control, playground supervision or teaching students.

Appendix 1-E

Department of Education

STATEMENT OF DUTIES January 2008

Tasmania

TITLE Aboriginal Education Officer	NUMBER Generic
AWARD Administrative and Clerical Employees	CLASSIFICATION Level 4
DIVISION Learning Services	BRANCH Learning Services (North)
SECTION Programs - Students	SUB-SECTION Aboriginal Education Unit
TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT Permanent or fixed-term, full or part time, up to 73.5 hours per fortnight, 52 weeks per year including 4 weeks annual leave.	FULL TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE) as specified
CATEGORY/FUNDING/RESTRICTIONS Permanent or fixed term. Cost code: as specified.	SUPERVISOR As specified
LOCATION The current location is specified in the advertisement.	

THE ROLE: Assist school communities to improve the participation rate of aboriginal students from Grade 7 to 10 through the provision of culturally sensitive support to students, families/carers, and the community. Provide program/project support.

DUTIES:

1. Operate as a member of one or more Learning Support Teams to improve the participation of Aboriginal students from Grade 7 to 10.
2. Assist with the transition process of Aboriginal students from Grade 6 to 7 and Grade 10 to 11.
3. Develop and maintain culturally effective communication links between schools and families of all Aboriginal students.
4. Assist the carers/families of Aboriginal students to gain and use information about the public education system.
5. Support schools to understand their local Aboriginal community and issues affecting the education of Aboriginal students.
6. Assist in the development and implementation of culturally appropriate programs to involve carers/families in the education of their children.
7. Provide information as required for departmental monitoring and reporting processes.
8. Liaise with other Aboriginal Education staff to support planning and implementation of programs for Aboriginal students.

LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY: Responsible for the support and implementation of programs that have as their focus the participation of Aboriginal students from Grades 7 to 10.

DIRECTION/SUPERVISION RECEIVED: The officer is expected to work with general direction and guidance from the assigned supervisor with general policy direction from the Manager Aboriginal Education Policy 81 Programs.

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS: Aboriginality. The State Service Commissioner has determined that this is an Aboriginal Identified Position and that it will be filled in accordance with the Guidelines for Aboriginal Employment. The Commissioner has determined that the person nominated for this position is to satisfy a pre-employment check before taking up the appointment, promotion or transfer.

DESIRABLE REQUIREMENTS: Nil

SELECTION CRITERIA: Employment in the State Service is governed by the State Service Act 2000 and employment decisions must be based on merit. A decision relating to appointment or promotion is based on merit if: an assessment is made of the relative suitability of the candidates for the duties; and

The assessment is based on the relationship between the candidates' work-related qualities and the work related qualities genuinely required for the performance of the duties; and

- the assessment focuses on the relative capacity of the candidates to achieve outcomes related to the duties; and
- The assessment is the primary consideration in making the decision.

Work-related qualities might include; skills and abilities; qualifications, training and competencies; standard of work performance; capacity to produce required outcomes; relevant personal qualities; and demonstrated potential for future development.

The following specific selection criteria must be addressed by candidates in this context. The nominated position objective and duties contained in this statement of duties must also be used to assist in the interpretation of these selection criteria.

1. Knowledge of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and Aboriginal culture both traditional and contemporary.
2. Knowledge of the Tasmanian public education system and an understanding of issues relevant to Aboriginal students.
3. Proven communication skills, including the ability to communicate sensitively and effectively with Aboriginal people, including students of secondary school age, and to liaise with individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds.
4. Proven personal and work organisation and problem solving skills.
5. Proven interpersonal skills and the capacity to work effectively as a member of a team.

WORKING IN THE DEPARTMENT: The Department is a large, decentralised employer with staff deployed throughout Tasmania in a variety of locations including schools, colleges, libraries and offices.

The Department is committed to high standards of performance in the application of contemporary management practices and principles. All employees are expected to participate in maintaining safe working conditions and practices and to promote and uphold the principle of fair and equitable access to employment/promotion, personal development and training and the elimination of workplace harassment and discrimination. Smoking is prohibited in State Government workplaces and vehicles.

The Department is committed to the introduction and application of information management systems and solutions to improve its capacity to meet its objectives. Consequently the successful applicant may work extensively with screen-based equipment. All employees are expected to utilise information management systems responsibly and in accordance with privacy principles and the Department's discrimination and harassment policies.

Employment in the Department and the State Service is governed by the State Service Act 2000 which contains a set of State Service Principles that provide an overarching statement as to both the nature and operation of the State Service and expectations of those who work within it. The State Service Act 2000 also contains a Code of Conduct which complements the State Service Principles and requires employees and officers to act appropriately in the course of their duties and to maintain the confidence of the community in the activities of the State Service.

All departmental employees and officers must comply with the Principles, the Code of Conduct and Commissioner's Direction Number 2 which sets out the minimum requirements that must be met in upholding, promoting and ensuring adherence to the Principles.

Appendix 1-F

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Public Sector Management Act	Salaries Agreement/Award: Teachers Aides Award 1979	Effective Date of Document July 2002
Division:	• Permanent item	
Directorate:	• Temporary item	
Branch:		
Section:		

Title:	Education Assistant (Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer)		
Classification:	Level 3		
Position No:	Generic		
Role Statement	<p>The role of the AIEO provides support and assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, their parents/guardians, teachers, the school and the community through their knowledge, understanding and sharing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, language and culture. Aboriginality is considered essential for this position under section 50(d) of the Western Australian Equal Opportunity Act.</p>		
Positions under direct responsibility:	Classification:	Position No:	Number of FTE's Controlled:

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS	
LEVEL POSITION NUMBER	Principal
^	
ID& POSITION NUMBER	
^	
This position and the positions of:	

TITLE	CLASSIFICATION	POSITION NO	EFFECTIVE DATE
Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer	Level 3	Generic	July 2002

CONTEXT AND SCOPE

The aim of the Department of Education is to ensure that all students within its schools develop the understanding, skills and attitudes relevant to individual needs, thereby enabling them to fulfill their potential and contribute to the development of our society. The Department's commitment to provide all WA students with access to a quality education, irrespective of their background or geographical location, has resulted in the provision of primary and secondary schools, specialist schools and centres and facilities located in many diverse locations round the State.

An Education Assistant supports the Department of Education's main objective of teaching and learning of students through assisting the teacher in delivering planned education programs and encouraging a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Through the assistance of the Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer, students are able to better utilise the educational program and have an increased understanding of the multicultural nature of the learning environment. The Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer acts as a liaison between the community and the school in order to develop an education program that is relevant to both educational and cultural needs. Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers assist and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, particularly those at risk, through mentoring and pastoral care to ensure their participation and achievement in the school environment.

ROLE

Employees at this level work under limited supervision and may be expected to participate within a team situation offering advice and expertise relating to their relevant area. Education outcomes are determined by the teacher, or other professional, with the employee performing tasks which require discretion in problem solving, decision making and choosing methods and processes to achieve outcomes. Performance of these tasks may require activities within or outside school that result in supervision of students without the presence of a teacher.

Employees will be able to apply techniques, skills and knowledge of relevant principles and practices acquired through previous experience, on the job learning or relevant qualification,

Under limited guidance, the Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer can be expected to perform tasks within the following range:

- Provides support and advice to schools and teachers on the management program of students at risk, under the supervision of the relevant professional.
- Designs and implements behaviour management plans in consultation with teachers, parents and where appropriate other relevant professional.
- Maintains records regarding implementation of behaviour management plans in order to assess how educational programs fit in with the overall educational outcomes of the student.
- Assists with training students in the acquisition of self management eg life skills.

TITLE	CLASSIFICATION	POSITION NO	EFFECTIVE DATE
Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer	Level 3	Generic	July 2002

- Provides information to parents on the education system and relevant school procedures and school policies.
- Provides appropriate physical restraint and removal of students where appropriate.
- Consults with parents/caregivers independently of teacher, though under supervision of Psychologist in Charge or relevant professional.

Provides information to parents on the education system and relevant school procedures and school policies. In addition, it is expected that the range of duties contained within Schedule A, when required to be performed, will be achieved at a higher competency than that reached by Level 2 and Level I Education Assistants.

TITLE	CLASSIFICATION	POSITION NO	EFFECTIVE DATE
Aboriginal and islander Education Officer	Level 3	Generic	July 2002

OUTCOMES

1. Classroom, school and community focused support is provided to enable the delivery of high quality, student focused learning programs.
2. Classroom, school and community level support is provided to ensure that the learning environment is inclusive and relevant, appropriately resourced and maintained, with the health and safety of students a high priority.
3. Students are aware of cultural diversity and varying customs within the classroom and school environment through the delivery and planning of relevant educational programs, through the AIEO's cultural expertise.
4. Parents and the community are well informed of and take a pro-active role in the educational progress and social development of their students.
5. Students develop intrinsic motivation to participate in educational activities.
6. Community contribution to the formulation of school policies and development of educational programs is facilitated through the use of the Aboriginal and Islander Officer as a point of contact between the school and the community.
7. Students at risk are successfully integrated into the learning environment through assistance in the planning and implementation of relevant educational and behavioural management programs.
8. A high level of mentoring and pastoral care is provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, particularly those students at risk, enabling students to have an increased participation rate, resulting in an ability to better utilise the education program.

TITLE Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer	CLASSIFICATION Level 3	POSITION NO Generic	EFFECTIVE DATE July 2002
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The following selection criteria are to be read in the context of this position.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Essential

Aboriginality is considered essential for this position under section 50(d) of the Western Australian Equal Opportunity Act.

1. Effective written and oral communication skills including the ability to effectively interact with students, teachers, parents, community members and professional staff on the provision and development of educational programs.
2. Effective interpersonal skills, including the ability to interact on a range of levels in a variety of settings and with different audiences, including community members, teaching and other professionals.
3. Ability to contribute to a school level team and to provide multi-cultural direction in the development of the educational program, development of language resources, and evaluation of education and behaviour management programs.
4. Effectively assist teachers in implementing educational and behaviour management programs.
5. Effective organisational skills that will assist in the delivery of effective education programs to students.
6. Ability to assist with the general health and well-being of students.

TITLE	CLASSIFICATION	POSITION NO	EFFECTIVE DATE
Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer	Level 3	Generic	July 2002

SCHEDULE A

In addition to the Level 3 AIEO indicative duties, it is expected that the following range of duties, when required to be performed, will be achieved at a higher competency than that reached by a Level 2 AIEO:

- Assists the teacher to meet the educational and cultural needs of students by identifying opportunities and providing advice on program content relating to Aboriginal culture.
- Facilitates community contribution to the formulation of school policies with regard to Aboriginal culture by providing a point of contact within the school for the local Aboriginal community.
- Liaises with Agencies to further the educational welfare of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Counsels students on matters affecting their education
- Provides knowledge and understanding of the history, language and culture within the classroom, the school and the community that promotes respect, understanding and harmony.
- In consultation with teacher, provides instruction on Aboriginal culture to students.
- Provides orientation to staff in relation to the Aboriginal community.
- Conducts interviews or home liaison visits to discuss the academic progress or social development of students.
- Manages class resources or storeroom by maintaining and updating inventory lists, monitoring stock levels and requirements, and submits requisitions to the teacher for approval.
- Ensures the safe and hygienic storage and handling of foodstuffs and food preparation utensils.
- Assists the teacher in the delivery of planned education programs including the operation of computers and, implements individual student or small group programs or demonstrations.
- Collects resources and administrative documents.

In addition, it is expected that the following range of duties, when required to be performed, will be achieved at a higher competency than that reached by a Level 1 AIEO:

- Assists the teacher in the delivery of planned education programs including the operation of computers, and implements individual student or small group programs or demonstrations.
- Assists with the preparation and maintenance of the learning environment by maintaining equipment, materials and resources for use in classes, displays and demonstrations, and assisting the teacher with clean and safe storage of items after class's and activities.
- Acts as a facilitator for discussions between parents, students and teachers where there are communication difficulties.

TITLE	CLASSIFICATION	POSITION NO	EFFECTIVE DATE
Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer	Level 3	Generic	July 2002

- Assist the teacher with the care and supervision of students in out-of-class activities and on school excursions.
- Assist the teacher with the general care and well being of students, including attending to students with minor illnesses eg colds, or students in need of minor first aid.
- Assists the teacher in the preparation and distribution of food for students' morning tea in the pre-primary and pre-school areas.
- Assists with arrival and departure of students travelling on buses.
- Assists students undressing, bathing, showering, toileting, and dressing and where necessary, cleans soiled clothing and areas.
- Provides administrative support and may in accordance with school policy be required to collect monies from students where appropriate.

Appendix 1-G



Job Title:	Aboriginal and Islander Education Worker (AIEW)	DET Values
Designation:	Administrative Officer 4 - 92%	Professionalism
Work Unit:	Nhulunbuy Primary School	Respect
Position Number:	19523	Innovation
Responsible to:	Principal	Diversity
		Excellence

Primary Objective

To act as a role model and mentor for indigenous students and to work with students, staff, school community members and appropriate agencies to assist indigenous students to achieve educational outcomes

Context Statement

Nhulunbuy Primary School is situated in the mining town of Nhulunbuy on the Gove Peninsula, East Arnhem Land. The school has an enrolment of approximately 570 students of which approximately 65 students are identified on the Special Education Needs (SEN) profile and 27 students receive Inclusion Support Assistant (ISA) support. The school has approximately 15% Indigenous student population.

Key Responsibilities

1. To provide a caring and supportive environment to ensure indigenous students enrolment and attendance.
2. To work in partnership with classroom teachers to provide support for individual and small groups of Indigenous students to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes.
3. To support the school leadership team to access appropriate networks (including government and Indigenous organisations) to develop a harmonious and culturally inclusive environment that works to engage and empower indigenous students and their families.
4. To provide appropriate administrative and professional support in line with the responsibilities of the position.

Selection Criteria

Essential

1. Ability to communicate effectively with Indigenous students and their families, and develop community networks and partnerships with stakeholders to improve student attendance and retention
2. Proven capacity to work effectively in a politically and culturally sensitive environment.
3. Demonstrated ability to work both individually and as part of a team to assist in the planning, coordination and implementation of strategies and programs to positively contribute to Indigenous learning outcomes.
4. Comprehensive understanding of Indigenous issues, knowledge and culture.

Desirable

1. Certificate IV — Indigenous Education Work or similar qualification or progress towards such a qualification.
2. Current NT Drivers Licence or the ability to obtain one.

Further information

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are encouraged to apply. The successful applicant will be required to undergo screening for suitability for employment in schools.

Approved

Principal — Nhulunbuy Primary School

October 2009

www.det.nt.gov.au

APPENDIX 2-A.
WILCANNIA FORBES DIOCESE
PRIMARY REMOTE AND RURAL SCHOOLS
SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF (CATHOLIC SCHOOLS)
(STATE) AWARD

This document should be read in conjunction with the SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF in the Award to better reflect the work of AEWs in Wilcannia-Forbes. (CATHOLIC SCHOOLS) (STATE) AWARD. It redefines the indicative duties listed

SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF - AEWs

LEVEL 2

A Level 2 position is one where the employee may have no relevant training and:

- 1) Exercises a limited range of skills and undertakes basic duties similar to those Indicative duties listed below; and
- 2) Is under the general supervision of a teacher or higher level Aboriginal Education Worker; and
- 3) Initially, receives specific direction, leading to routine direction as knowledge of procedures develops; and
- 4) Will not supervise other Aboriginal Education Workers; and
- 5) Does not supervise students without a higher level Aboriginal Education Worker or teacher present.

INDICATIVE DUTIES

An employee at this level may be required by the employer to undertake the following indicative duties:

- Liaise with Aboriginal parents and the local Aboriginal community
 - Encourage the participation of Aboriginal parents in the life of the school.
 - Assist with classroom duties.
 - Assist teachers with Aboriginal students within the classroom.
 - Attend staff meetings
- Support teachers in their understanding of cultural differences (culture sensitivity, Aboriginal history and children's local needs).
- Raise awareness of local Aboriginal history.
 - Advise teachers in the preparation of Indigenous specific programs such as NAIDOC week.
 - Assist teachers in the area of literacy and numeracy for Indigenous students.
 - Work as part of a team, adhering to school philosophy and vision

LEVEL 3

A Level 3 position is one where the employee:

- 1) Undertakes duties similar to those indicative duties listed below; and
- 2) May be required to exercise independent initiative and judgment; and
- 3) Has the knowledge and experience to perform basic duties without technical Instructions; and
- 4) Receives instructions for complex tasks or tasks requiring specialised Knowledge; and

I Would be expected to have undertaken and completed skill developing Programs relevant to the skills and duties required to be undertaken. This requirement may be satisfied by relevant employer sponsored programs and/or post secondary training which may include TAFE training.

INDICATIVE DUTIES

In addition to those indicative duties listed for a Level 2 employee an employee at this level may be required by the employer to undertake the following indicative duties:

- Prepare displays
- Prepare charts, diagrams and models
 - Research reference material under the direction of a teacher and/or the CEO Indigenous Support Officer.
 - Assist teachers with small groups of students:
 - a) In the classroom.
 - b) In an adjacent area under the direct supervision of a teacher.
 - Under direction, take Aboriginal students for their individualised teaching plans in specific areas.
 - Assist with the cataloguing of Aboriginal Education resources.
 - Encourage student participation.
 - Assist teachers in the planning and preparation of Indigenous specific programs such as NAIDOC week.

LEVEL 4

A Level 4 position is one where the employee:

- 1) Undertake duties similar to those indicative duties listed below; and
- 2) Is regularly required to exercise independent initiative and judgment; and
- 3) Shall have responsibility and accountability for maintaining the quality of their Own work and, if requested by the employer, the work of others; and
- 4) Receives limited instructions which relate specifically to matters of substance In the work assignment; and
- 5) May assist teachers or other qualified members of staff with the conduct of One or more areas, such as laboratories, libraries, audio-visual units, kitchens or workrooms; and
- 6) Is competent in technical areas as required for the position; and

Would be expected to have undertaken and completed skill developing programs relevant to the skills and duties required to be undertaken. This requirement may be satisfied by relevant employer sponsored programs and/or post secondary training which may include TAFE training.

INDICATIVE DUTIES

In addition to those indicative duties previously listed an employee at this level may be required by the employer to undertake the following indicative duties:

- Assist teachers when interviewing parents of Aboriginal students in relation to their children's progress at school
- Represent the school in the local and wider Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community.
- Under direction, take Aboriginal students for their individualised teaching plans in specific areas
- Assist therapists in their work with Aboriginal students
- Carry out individual programs of a self help nature that develop independent living skills in Aboriginal students
- Take part in case management meetings with teachers
- Assist teachers with the identification and development of resources to support programs for all students with particular reference to Aboriginal education
- Provide cultural background information for teachers.

LEVEL 5

A Level 5 position is one where the employee:

- 1) Undertake duties similar to those indicative duties listed below; and
- 2) Possesses a knowledge of workplace procedures and of the practices
Required by the employer including a detailed knowledge of complex procedures relevant to the position; and
- 3) Has responsibility for the quality of their own work and, where appropriate, the Work of those who are supervised; and
- 4) Resolves complex operational problems and coordinates the work within a
Department of the school; and
- 5) Assists in planning future department or school organisational needs;
and
- 6) Is required to have undertaken and completed post secondary training
provided by an accredited training provider relevant to the tasks required by the employer for this Level, or has engaged in extensive equivalent in-service training, or has significant and substantial technical and procedural knowledge which is regarded by the employer to be equivalent to the required post secondary training.

INDICATIVE DUTIES

In addition to those indicative duties previously listed an employee at this level may be required by the employer to undertake the following indicative duties:

- Assist with the planning and conducting programs for parents on Aboriginal education and perspectives.
- Provide cultural background information for teachers.
- Assist teachers in the development of all students with particular emphasis on Aboriginal education
- Assist teachers in programming and implementing Aboriginal language
Assist teachers in the programming and implementation of the Aboriginal Studies

APPENDIX 2-B

τ
.. %) Lake Alive with Dreamtime Knowledge: Waves of Learning: Sailing into the

_____ Future'

Duty Statement

Aboriginal Teacher Assistants

LAKE CARGELL1G0 PRIMARY REMOTE SCHOOL

Rationale

A Catholic School is a **community of faith** based on belief in God and a Christian way of life. The spirit and values of the Gospel determine the atmosphere of the School.

St Francis Xavier's School's religious orientation relies on the presence of a *committed Christian staff*

St Francis Xavier's School is a Catholic K-6 School community, committed to Christian values and excellence in education, which under the patronage and protection of St Francis Xavier, and fosters an environment that allows justice, peace and love to prevail. The teaching practices, liturgies and celebrations enable the students and staff to recognise the relevance of the presence of Jesus in our lives. As a School community we are called to witness to the spirit of the Gospel in our daily lives.

Our purpose is to provide an educational climate which:

- Reflects Gospel values
- Recognises individual needs
- Is relevant, flexible and challenging
- Is strongly oriented towards skills for life at each stage of the individual child's development
- Encourages respectful cooperation leading to the development of self-discipline.

In this way the School helps students grow to achieve their **unique potential**. St Francis Xavier's staff cultivates intellectual development, promotes learning, integrity and respect for truth. Through their participation in worship in the school and their modeling of Christian values, teachers at St Francis Xavier's support students in their personal journey of faith.

The Indigenous Education Assistant is a school-based role. Indigenous Education Assistants develop, promote and maintain communication networks between Indigenous students, their parents or guardians, the community and the school. They play a key role in providing knowledge and understanding of Indigenous history,

Responsibilities:

To Principal:

Meet with the Principal on a regular basis to discuss:

- **Student** progress
- Matters of Indigenous culture
- Indigenous Education Assistants work in the school
- Home-school liaison activities with parents, caregivers and the community
- Actively seek to increase the number of Catholic Indigenous students enrolled in Catholic schools
- Undertake training, study and other forms of professional development
Such as: - CEO offered programs / the annual TEA conference / all pupils
Free days / staff meetings / other activities to enhance professional
Knowledge, skills and understanding.

Communication with parents / guardians:

Assist parents with enrolment enquiries, school fee issues and pastoral support especially during the designated enrolment period.

Conduct home / school contact regarding matters of:

- School attendance
- Explanations of school policies and practices
- Students' academic progress / their social and physical wellbeing
(including health issues)

Supporting Teaching and Learning

Assists the classroom teachers in:-

- The delivery of planned educational programs
- Preparation and maintenance of the learning environment
 - Provision of support to Indigenous students, either in small groups or one to one in the classrooms (especially in Literacy and Numeracy activities)
 - Planning cultural studies opportunities for students, and acting as a role model for all students

Contributing to the Indigenous cultural awareness of staff by:

- Presenting information about Indigenous culture
- Promoting and organising cultural activities throughout the year
- Suggesting culturally appropriate human and material resources for all students and for school programs in the area

Contributing to the Indigenous cultural knowledge of all students and staff by:

- Providing culture support in classroom experiences
- Introducing all students and staff to Indigenous personnel resources and information

Appendix 2-C

**Lumen Christi CATHOLIC COLLEGE
SECONDARY RURAL SCHOOL
ABORIGINAL EDUCATION ASSISTANT ROLE DESCRIPTION**

The Aboriginal Education Assistant is responsible to the Principal in the following areas:

• **Pastoral Care of Students** Assisting the Principal,

Resource Teacher and teachers in:

1. monitoring the attendance, behaviour and progress of Aboriginal students;
2. interviewing and advising Aboriginal students in relation to pastoral care;
3. attending to personal needs of Aboriginal students in relation to hygiene, health and injury etc., and
4. Advising Aboriginal students on matters relating to school, family or personal problems in consultation with the Welfare Coordinators and Pastoral Care Teachers.

• **Community and Parent Liaison**

1. Assisting the Principal and Resource Teacher to establish and maintain effective relationships with Aboriginal parents and the Aboriginal community.
2. Assisting the Principal, Resource Teacher and teachers in interviewing parents of Aboriginal students in relation to their school progress.
3. Undertaking approved visits to Aboriginal parents in their homes in relation to their children's school progress or problems.
4. Assisting the Principal, Resource Teacher and teachers in informing the Aboriginal community of the objectives and organisation of the school.
- 5 Informing the Principal, Resource Teacher of activities and attitudes in the Aboriginal community which may affect the Aboriginal students in the school.

• **Teacher Support**

1. Assisting teachers with individual or small groups of Aboriginal students in classrooms or on excursions.
2. Assisting teachers with matters affecting the behaviour or progress of Aboriginal students.
3. Assisting teachers in the development of programs for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students with particular emphasis on Aboriginal education.

4. Assisting teachers in the production of materials with particular reference to Aboriginal education.
5. Assisting teaching staff in developing and implementing a curriculum which is appropriate for the Aboriginal students in the school.

APPENDIX 2-D

MCCAULEY CATHOLIC COLLEGE

SECONDARY METROPOLITAN SCHOOL



Role Description

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION ASSISTANT

Education Assistants at McCauley Catholic College bear witness to Jesus Christ and the values inherent in His teaching. They are fully informed of and actively support the philosophy of this school and in particular the aims and objectives of this school. They also demonstrate a sincere commitment to the pastoral care and welfare of students.

The Aboriginal Education Assistant has the following specific functions:

- To provide a positive role model for Aboriginal students
- To be key player in the pastoral care of students, particularly Aboriginal students
- To be involved in community and parent liaison initiatives
- To provide support for teachers
- Other duties as determined by the Principal

Key Tasks: Aboriginal Education Assistant

1. To be key player in the pastoral care of students, particularly Aboriginal students

- Monitoring the attendance, behaviour and progress of Aboriginal students.
- Interviewing and advising Aboriginal students in relation to the above.
- Attending to personal needs of Aboriginal students in relation to hygiene, health, injury, etc.
- Advising Aboriginal students on matters relating to school, family or personal problems.

2. To be involved in community and parent liaison initiatives

- Assisting the Principal to establish and maintain effective relationships with Aboriginal parents and the Aboriginal community.
- Assisting the Principal and teachers in interviewing parents of Aboriginal students in relation to their children's progress at school.
- Undertaking approved visits to Aboriginal parents in their homes in relation to their child's school progress or problems.
- Assisting the Principal and teachers in informing the Aboriginal community of the objectives and organisation of the school.

- Informing the Principal of activities and attitudes in the Aboriginal community which may affect the Aboriginal students in the school.

3. To provide support for teachers

- Assisting teachers with individual or small groups of Aboriginal students in the classroom or excursion situation.
- Assisting teachers with matters affecting the behaviour or progress of Aboriginal students.
- Assisting teachers in the development of programs for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students with particular emphasis on Aboriginal education.
- Assisting teaching staff in developing and implementing a curriculum which is appropriate for the Aboriginal students in the school.
- Assisting teachers with Aboriginal resources.

4. Other Duties as determined by the Principal

- Carrying out other related duties as required by the Principal
- In conjunction with teachers, develop programs for all students with particular emphasis on Aboriginal education.

APPENDIX 2-E

ST. GREGORY'S COLLEGE, CAMPBELLTOWN SECONDARY METROPOLITAN SCHOOL

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION ASSISTANT — JOB DESCRIPTION

Literacy Based

Position: Permanent Part-time

Hours 26 Hours p.w, Award: Support Staff Award.

Salary: Starting level and hourly rate is commensurate with experience and expertise.

Salary includes stand down during pupil vacations.

Responsibilities:

- Primarily, the AEA will be responsible for the pastoral care of the Indigenous students in the College. As such this person will have an understanding of the variety of issues affecting Indigenous students. S/he will work closely with the Indigenous Liaison Teacher in this regard.
- The A.E.A. will work closely with the Special Needs Coordinator to improve the educational outcomes of Indigenous students in the College.
- To attend recommended in-service training programs in educational support of Indigenous students.
- H/she will provide a liaison between students, staff and parents in matters relating to Indigenous students.
- Be a visible presence in the school and in the staff room

Duties Include:

- Liaison with Year Coordinators and Boarding Staff in matters relating to the pastoral care of Indigenous students.
- Meet with students individually and as a group to assess needs. Attend to Clerical duties relating to St Gregory's Indigenous Council (SG1C), ATAS with The assistance of the Indigenous Liaison Teacher and to assist parents with Documents such as Abstudy claims etc.
- Provide staff with teaching and learning material or resources where appropriate and possible.
- Meeting with Indigenous support staff once a month to discuss progress of education of students, Individual education plans and educational activities and events, as well as goals for the next year.
 - Meeting with Indigenous students once a month along with other Indigenous support staff.



APPENDIX 2-F

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION ASSISTANT

ARMIDALE DIOCESE REMOTE/ RURAL SCHOOLS

Role Description:

The primary role of the Aboriginal Education Assistant is to support the classroom teacher in achieving the best possible education outcomes for Indigenous students of the Armidale Diocese Catholic Schools.

A secondary role is to assist in other ways not directly in support of those students, but which assist the class teacher in facilitating understanding and knowledge of all students of Indigenous cultures. The Aboriginal Education Assistant is directly responsible to the Principal (or delegate) in the execution of his/her duties.

Note: This generic role statement and list of accountabilities provides guidance to Principals and Aboriginal Education Assistants in negotiating a school-based role description specific to the position and level of responsibility.

Key Accountabilities (in consultation with Aboriginal Education Consultant and School Principal):

- 1) Support Aboriginal and other students in their learning
 - a) Support all Aboriginal children in their learning.
 - b) Observe Aboriginal students progress and behaviour in learning situations/activities.
 - c) Assist individual students with literacy and numeracy under the guidance of the classroom teacher.
 - d) Provide feedback, in conjunction with teachers, to Aboriginal students regarding their academic attainment.
 - e) Assist the teacher in the preparation of teaching aids to support the learning of Aboriginal students.
 - f) provide positive role models to students.
 - g) Encourage Aboriginal students to participate in excursions and other school activities.
- 2) Promote Aboriginal Community Involvement within the school
 - a) Liaise with Aboriginal parents/care-givers, community and staff.
 - b) Be a point of contact within the school for Aboriginal parents/care-givers, in conjunction with the principal.
 - c) Maintain ongoing contact with parents/care-givers, including home visits.
 - d) On invitation from parents and principal, become involved in the local PSPI committee.

- 0 In conjunction with principals and other staff inform parents/care-givers about school policies and practices.
- g) Assist school staff in giving explanations regarding subject/career issues to parents/care-givers and students.
- h) In conjunction with the school community, promote the enrolment of Catholic Aboriginal students.

- 3) Provide Input Regarding Aboriginal Perspective's into all School Life
 - a) In conjunction with Aboriginal and school community, organise cultural activities for the school.
 - b) Assist the school staff and community with the co-ordination of NAISIC (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Celebrations).
 - c) Assist teachers and other staff to respond appropriately to Aboriginal students and Aboriginal parents/care-givers.
- 4) Contribute to the appreciation and understanding of Aboriginal culture within the School Community
 - a) Provide cultural input to units of work being taught in the school,
 - b) Recommend resources which are of an acceptable standard for use in the school.
 - c) Assist teachers to identify opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives in their classroom.
 - d) Direct teachers to advisory services relating to Aboriginal culture (regional and Central).
- 5) Self management with respect to undertaking these duties
 - a) Undertake on-going training/study and other forms of professional development such as Aboriginal Education Workers/Assistants in-services, pupil free days, staff meetings and Armidale Diocesan Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee meetings.
 - b) Meet with principal on a regular basis to discuss community issues and cultural matters.
 - c) Carry out other duties as directed by the principal.

Qualifications

Essential

1. Demonstrated ability to work with children of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander origin and to assist in building their self-esteem

2. Commitment to Catholic Education and the ethos of the school
3. Effective communication and interpersonal skills for building relationships with the Indigenous parent community
4. Demonstrated ability to work unsupervised with a small group
5. Ability to implement a program directed by the Class Teacher and/or the Aboriginal Education Consultant, or other specialist staff as appropriate.
6. Readiness to be involved in Parent School Partnership Initiatives.
7. Respect confidentially in all matters concerning the student and school.
8. A willingness to undergo training as required.

APPENDIX 2-G

RED BEND FORBES

Aboriginal Education Worker Duty Statement (Permanent Position) SECONDARY REMOTE CO/ED BOARDING SCHOOL

1. Act as a liaison person between school and home. Contact with parents to give them confidence in the school and familiarity with the background of students to achieve greater parental support, understanding and involvement in student learning and school aims.
2. Working with all Aboriginal students Day and Boarders. Monitor the academic and social progress of the student and liaise with the various teachers to identify concerns that may arise from both parties.
3. Assist with school support on Thursday Afternoon
4. Work closely in conjunction with the permanent Aboriginal Education Workers at Red Bend Catholic College
5. Network with the local Aboriginal support group to promote a positive profile in the community.
6. Be a mentor for the students, first point of contact if they are having difficulty with integration, academically or their ability to participate in school activities.
7. Be a part of boarders study and/or boarders sport
8. Liaise with the Special Education Teacher, House Coordinators and Class Teachers who have Aboriginal students in classes. Also liaise with the Health Centre Nurse, College Counselor, Careers Advisor, Director of Boarding, Business Manager and report concerns in writing to Deputy Principal
9. Improve culture awareness in the school, with emphasis being placed on organization of NAIDOC Week, School Masses and other School activities.
10. Track academic performance and attendance records for all aboriginal students especially those on an independent scholarship
11. Hours of work are 8:30am — 3:30pm (Monday to Friday) with Y2 hour lunch, during school time although opportunities to other work in other areas of the College during these hours may be required from time to time, which means

Position of Aboriginal Education Worker

This is a permanent position for 2004 and is for 32.5 hours per week. This is a funded position, and is expected to continue into 2005.

Hours of work will be dependent on the needs of the College and the suitability of the applicant, but it is expected that there will be some work both during school times and boarding supervision times.

Essential Criteria

Must be of Aboriginal Descent and Male

Good Computing Skills in the following packages as a minimum — MS Word, Publisher and Email

Ability to prioritise tasks and duties

Ability to communicate with students, parents and school staff members. Uphold the Marist Mercy Ethos of the College
Be able to perform the duties outlined in the duty statement

APPENDIX 2-H

DIOCESE OF BATHURST

RURAL/REMOTE SCHOOLS

CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE

SHERATON RD

PO Box 4208

Ph.: 0268

1. AEW Role Description:

- **Assist with Literacy and Numeracy remediation programs for Aboriginal students (and other students if deemed suitable, e.g. group remediation).**
- **Liaison with Aboriginal families, members of the Aboriginal community and Aboriginal Education and community agencies.**
- **Provide a role model, intermediary, contact person for Aboriginal students (and**

families) within the school and school system.

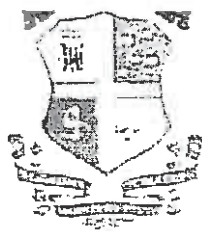
Provide assistance to the teaching staff with unit and lesson preparation to ensure a culturally inclusive curriculum across KLAS.

To highlight Aboriginal education issues within the school's community.

Assist Aboriginal students with attendance, progression and career choices. Other responsibilities may be included at the school level to ensure a full workload —

these may be clerical but may not make up a major part of the AEW role.

- *The relative weightings of each of the above mentioned duties vary from school to school.*



APPENDIX 2-I
POSITION DESCRIPTION
SECONDARY METROPOLITAN BOYS BOARDING SCHOOL
INDIGENOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM
ACADEMIC SUPPORT FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

St Joseph's College has an established indigenous education program that currently supports 44 indigenous students from both rural and urban areas of NSW. The College is seeking to appoint a teacher whose role will be to provide individualised academic support to these students. The teacher would also have some responsibility for the coordination of additional tutoring support programs including those that run during evening study sessions. This will require some flexibility in working hours which will be negotiated within the framework of a full- time teaching load equivalent.

Essential criteria:

- Have an understanding and appreciation of the Catholic and Marist ethos of the College) (
- Proven excellence as an innovative and adaptable classroom teacher
- Demonstrated ability in enhancing the literacy skills of students
- Cultural sensitivity to the circumstances and needs of Aboriginal students and their families
- Ability to work in a collegial manner as a member of the Indigenous Support Team
- Ability to be self-directed and to develop processes for ensuring individualised, proactive support for all students in the Indigenous Education Program.

Previous experience in working with Aboriginal students is desirable.

(I) Purpose

The Academic Adviser to indigenous students provides oversight for the academic progress of the Indigenous students in the College. They support these students and their teachers in achieving the teaching and learning outcomes of their individual programs of study. They also provide oversight of additional tutoring for indigenous students during evening study.

0 Responsibility

The Academic Adviser to indigenous students:

- (i) Is directly responsible to the Director of Mission and ultimately the Headmaster
- (ii) Works in conjunction with the Learning Enrichment Centre
- (iii) Is a member of the Indigenous Support Team

0 Required Skills and Attitudes

The Academic Adviser to indigenous students will:

- (i) Have an understanding and appreciation of the Catholic and Marist Ethos of the College
- (ii) Proven excellence as an innovative and adaptable classroom teacher
- (iii) Have knowledge of Indigenous communities and cultures
- (iv) Have experience in meeting the educational needs of indigenous students
- (v) Be able to work collaboratively as part of the Indigenous Support Team
- (vi) Be creative and proactive in implementing ways to assist Indigenous students to fulfill their academic potential

0 Duties

The Academic Adviser to indigenous students will:

- (i) Work with Subject Coordinators, Academic Coordinators and teachers concerning the academic progress of Indigenous students
- (ii) Share responsibility for the selection and monitoring of those students who may need additional tutoring
- (iii) In collaboration with the Aboriginal Education Assistant and the Learning Enrichment Centre to provide support for Indigenous students in the classroom including:

Assisting teachers with individual or small groups of students in the classroom

Working in the classroom to assist students improve their literacy and numeracy skills within teacher developed lessons and learning programs

- (iv) Organise evening tutors and their timetables
- (v) Be willing to work flexible hours in order to ensure oversight of the evening tutoring program
- (vi) Organise and conduct study skills programs as appropriate for individual students/groups of students
- (vii) Assist Subject Coordinators and Academic Coordinators in a

Appendix 3-A

Local vs. Non Local

Issues for Local AEWs

Aboriginal Responses

Non-Aboriginal responses

- I'm not surprised there is no literature reference to it; only Aboriginal people would be aware of the issue and many would not be prepared to publicly admit that there are rifts and local differences within Aboriginal communities.
- Writer, Richard Frankland has made some rare criticism of this problem he calls "lateral violence" which he uses to cover all kinds of in-fighting, jealousy, rivalries and nepotism. It is understandable that traditional kinship had built in avoidance mechanisms to prevent meddling by non locals, just as it had strong responsibilities for locals.

The Aboriginal sense of community and kinship does favour the local AEW, sensing that this is the best informed, best connected and most likely to succeed person. But some Aboriginal non-locals prove mighty useful, bringing fresh talents, fresh eyes, and sometimes a fresh ability to form new alliances.

Very small communities depend more on locals and are more reluctant to accept non locals. If something goes wrong, the non-local is often first to cop the blame.

- I have seen the opposite occurring as well where depending on who the local is that is also applying there can be opposition to this person from particular local groups - often where there is some dispute between local families (including issues related to original land claim matters).

I guess it is important that interview panels are briefed thoroughly on the need for unbiased assessment of applicants and the role of the panel's

chair in ensuring this during discussions of applicants is crucial in this regard.

Allegiances; no biases; no personal histories to deal with etc.

- This is definitely an issue in a lot of the places we go. I can remember it being particularly relevant in at one rural school where the AEW was from WA and resented by some of the local Aboriginal community because she beat another local for the job. She is very well qualified and was the best person for the job but not local.

I think for too long people, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, have been employed because it was who they knew and nothing really to do with qualifications and/or skills. We need to educate our school communities about the role of AEOs and AEWs, which is to support our kids both socially and academically and that people in these positions must have literacy and numeracy skills so that they can assist students in class.

Issues For Non Local AEWs

Non Aboriginal Responses

The local issue is a killer all across Australia – The AEW needs to demonstrate to the community that kids in the school and families in the community come from a wide variety of nations, they are not all local (from the traditional owners). The role of the AEW is to support all kids in their schooling – the role of the community to support the heritage and cultural growth of kids is not changed because a person from off land is appointed to the school – the Elders and traditional owners will always have the cultural role for local kids (does this mean that only local kids get access to cultural events and learning's?)

Aboriginal Responses

- I would like to know how other AEW's support black kids to be more comfortable in their skin. Especially those who have blood but not heritage. A lot of my kids do not want me in the classroom and as it is

their learning I am quite conscious not to impose but this may be the wrong approach. How do you engage community especially if you are not a local.

- This is an area where people fear to tread although there is some truth to what you are trying to find out. There will be very few who will engage in such discussion...why?
 1. Looks like we discriminate against our own kind
 2. Some people have lots of pull in community and insist on schools employing local people.
 3. Some Aboriginal people think they are more deserving than others...
 4. Some resistance for outsiders due to lack of understanding of community needs and wants as well as desires and expectations from the worker.

Some could verbally attack the worker due to lack of understanding... Things like what do you know you're not from here...

Instead of nurturing the worker they condemn them sometimes we can be very harsh folk you know...the expectations of AEWs are important, community expectations, elders expectations parents desires, concerns, students welfare, cultural and curriculum, and the schools needs and wants in implementation of Aboriginal education. AEWs are the go between and mediator of all and sometimes the demands are overwhelming for the worker...

where we should look beyond common ground and be looking at the quality of the worker are they the sort of person who can,, create partnerships and understanding of the learning styles of Aboriginal children, are they able to solve conflicts of interest, have they proven beyond a reasonable doubt their ability to get results, do they have the personality and the maturity to cope with all these issues that can arise..If this is so and they are an outsider should we not embrace them and support the very qualities they bring with them...

Appendix 5A

Brian Giles-Brown Dare to Lead National Schools Coordinator

Racist Comments Made by School Staff in Feedback Sheets for Various Dare to Lead Workshops and Forums

By teacher when asked how many Aboriginal students in her class (school had a 30% population)

"I don't have any Aboriginal students in my class, those that think they have heritage are at least 4 generations away from any colour so I treat them as white."

By parent when asked about how the community would react to the school flying the Aboriginal flag (school had about a 12% population)

"Most of the white families would withdraw our kids from the school; we are all Australians, even the black kids."

From a Deputy Principal of a big High school

"We want our Aboriginal kids to leave their culture at the front gate and learn like all the rest of the kids"

The most used comment by teachers across the country...."why should we treat Aboriginal kids any differently, they have the same opportunities to learn in my class and it isn't our fault they don't."

Some classics one liners.....

"Everyone knows that an Aboriginal degree only comes from the special privileges and easier courses they have to do"

"Why would we have Gifted classes for Aboriginal kids, they don't exist"

"Research has proven that Aboriginal people don't have the same desire to do well in school or jobs"

"I treat all is the same in my class, but the Aboriginal kids don't attend"

"We have to pay the Elders to do cultural work in the school; no other parent wants money to listen to kids read"

"This is Australia why do we want to learn about Aboriginal culture, we have a European background"

Appendix 6A



The Hon Julie Bishop MP

Minister for Education, Science and Training
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women's Issues

Mr Frank Pearce
State Coordinator of Aboriginal Education
NSW Catholic Education Commission
Email: Frank.Pearce@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au

22 NOV 2006

Dear Mr Pearce

Boarding School Forum

Thank you for your email of 18 September 2006 concerning the roundtable discussion I held in Perth with school principals from around Australia who have Indigenous student boarders. I convened the roundtable in order to gain a better understanding of the issues around education mobility for Indigenous Australians. I was pleased to hear from principals from government, Catholic and Independent boarding schools.

The roundtable confirmed a number of your observations. The health and wellbeing was the strongest overall theme with principals discussing the issue of Indigenous students coming to boarding schools who often presented with a range of physical and mental health needs. The demand for health and wellbeing services continued through a student's stay at boarding schools. A key quote was 'success in the residence before success in the school'. This supports your observation that happy, comfortable students learn more effectively. Other key issues raised by principals at the roundtable are listed in the attachment.

A draft of the roundtable report is currently with participants for comment. Once it has been finalised my Department will send you a copy.

Should you require further assistance with your Parent School Partnership Initiative proposal, please contact Mr Arthur Townsend, the NSW State Manager of my Department, on telephone (02) 9298 7251.

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Yours sincerely

JULIE BISHOP

Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600 • Telephone (02) 6277 7460 Facsimile (02) 6273 4116

Boarding School Forum Themes

Infrastructure issues

Principals noted a strong demand by parents and caregivers of Indigenous students to access boarding schools. Improvements, restoration and new additional infrastructure required to meet the demands was also discussed. It was noted that much of the infrastructure funding for non-government schools focuses on day-school infrastructure rather than residential facilities in boarding schools.

The concept of Learning Hubs

Principals believed that boarding schools could serve as a focal point for learning for Indigenous communities. One model discussed was based on a boarding school providing secondary schooling to a number of Indigenous communities. The learning hub could include access to health and well-being services. Schools would establish relationships with parents/caregivers in communities.

Halfway Houses

While principals wished to investigate another name for this concept, the aim was to create a residence which would assist Indigenous students to make the transition to or from boarding schools. These residences would also serve to provide an alternative to suspensions and to allow behavioural issues to be addressed while remaining engaged with education.

Urban student issues

It was noted that urban based students, particularly homeless children and youth, also faced high levels of disadvantage. These students required opportunities to access quality education as well.

Workforce issues

High turnover of staff and the need for professional, social and emotional support for teachers was discussed as an issue. High turnover impacted on the maintenance of some programmes such as Accelerated Literacy, for example.

Indigenous liaison officers

Indigenous liaison officers (ILO) were recognised as playing a very important role in facilitating the relationship between the school, Indigenous communities and parents/caregivers. Most principals believed that an ILO should be attached to each boarding school with a significant Indigenous student population.

Show casing what works

Principals found the roundtable an excellent opportunity to share good practices between boarding schools. Since the roundtable discussions my Department has sought the assistance of the successful *What Works* programme to develop a paper on 'what works' in boarding schools.

Attendance and retention.

Attendance and retention continues to be a problem faced by all schools. A number of suggestions were made including a focus on direct messages about getting to school. Some principals believed the Government needed to support tougher messages around children attending school (eg. National Truancy Unit and Cape York Welfare Reform Trials). Another suggestion was that boarding schools take responsibility for transporting students to and from community events to ensure they returned to school in a timely manner.

Planning on the number of places required.

It was recognised that better planning and analysis of supply and demand of boarding places could assist, especially with resourcing.

Parental capacity, building and choice.

Principals agreed that there should be parental involvement in school decisions. Most principals also agreed that parents/caregivers have a choice in what school a child attends. A voucher system was considered to support this.

Funding and administrative burdens.

Principals believed funding and administrative arrangements could be made simpler. The main issues centered around administrative burden associated with data collection and reporting, Absstudy and Centrelink, socio-economic status funding, annual census-based funding, Block Grant Authorities and access to capital funding, and funding certainty.

NSW DET All Student Enrolments 1991-2008

Field	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055	2056	2057	2058	2059	2060	2061	2062	2063	2064	2065	2066	2067	2068	2069	2070	2071	2072	2073	2074	2075	2076	2077	2078	2079	2080	2081	2082	2083	2084	2085	2086	2087	2088	2089	2090	2091	2092	2093	2094	2095	2096	2097	2098	2099	2100	2101	2102	2103	2104	2105	2106	2107	2108	2109	2110	2111	2112	2113	2114	2115	2116	2117	2118	2119	2120	2121	2122	2123	2124	2125	2126	2127	2128	2129	2130	2131	2132	2133	2134	2135	2136	2137	2138	2139	2140	2141	2142	2143	2144	2145	2146	2147	2148	2149	2150	2151	2152	2153	2154	2155	2156	2157	2158	2159	2160	2161	2162	2163	2164	2165	2166	2167	2168	2169	2170	2171	2172	2173	2174	2175	2176	2177	2178	2179	2180	2181	2182	2183	2184	2185	2186	2187	2188	2189	2190	2191	2192	2193	2194	2195	2196	2197	2198	2199	2200	2201	2202	2203	2204	2205	2206	2207	2208	2209	2210	2211	2212	2213	2214	2215	2216	2217	2218	2219	2220	2221	2222	2223	2224	2225	2226	2227	2228	2229	2230	2231	2232	2233	2234	2235	2236	2237	2238	2239	2240	2241	2242	2243	2244	2245	2246	2247	2248	2249	2250	2251	2252	2253	2254	2255	2256	2257	2258	2259	2260	2261	2262	2263	2264	2265	2266	2267	2268	2269	2270	2271	2272	2273	2274	2275	2276	2277	2278	2279	2280	2281	2282	2283	2284	2285	2286	2287	2288	2289	2290	2291	2292	2293	2294	2295	2296	2297	2298	2299	2300	2301	2302	2303	2304	2305	2306	2307	2308	2309	2310	2311	2312	2313	2314	2315	2316	2317	2318	2319	2320	2321	2322	2323	2324	2325	2326	2327	2328	2329	2330	2331	2332	2333	2334	2335	2336	2337	2338	2339	2340	2341	2342	2343	2344	2345	2346	2347	2348	2349	2350	2351	2352	2353	2354	2355	2356	2357	2358	2359	2360	2361	2362	2363	2364	2365	2366	2367	2368	2369	2370	2371	2372	2373	2374	2375	2376	2377	2378	2379	2380	2381	2382	2383	2384	2385	2386	2387	2388	2389	2390	2391	2392	2393	2394	2395	2396	2397	2398	2399	2400	2401	2402	2403	2404	2405	2406	2407	2408	2409	2410	2411	2412	2413	2414	2415	2416	2417	2418	2419	2420	2421	2422	2423	2424	2425	2426	2427	2428	2429	2430	2431	2432	2433	2434	2435	2436	2437	2438	2439	2440	2441	2442	2443	2444	2445	2446	2447	2448	2449	2450	2451	2452	2453	2454	2455	2456	2457	2458	2459	2460	2461	2462	2463	2464	2465	2466	2467	2468	2469	2470	2471	2472	2473	2474	2475	2476	2477	2478	2479	2480	2481	2482	2483	2484	2485	2486	2487	2488	2489	2490	2491	2492	2493	2494	2495	2496	2497	2498	2499	2500	2501	2502	2503	2504	2505	2506	2507	2508	2509	2510	2511	2512	2513	2514	2515	2516	2517	2518	2519	2520	2521	2522	2523	2524	2525	2526	2527	2528	2529	2530	2531	2532	2533	2534	2535	2536	2537	2538	2539	2540	2541	2542	2543	2544	2545	2546	2547	2548	2549	2550	2551	2552	2553	2554	2555	2556	2557	2558	2559	2560	2561	2562	2563	2564	2565	2566	2567	2568	2569	2570	2571	2572	2573	2574	2575	2576	2577	2578	2579	2580	2581	2582	2583	2584	2585	2586	2587	2588	2589	2590	2591	2592	2593	2594	2595	2596	2597	2598	2599	2600	2601	2602	2603	2604	2605	2606	2607	2608	2609	2610	2611	2612	2613	2614	2615	2616	2617	2618	2619	2620	2621	2622	2623	2624	2625	2626	2627	2628	2629	2630	2631	2632	2633	2634	2635	2636	2637	2638	2639	2640	2641	2642	2643	2644	2645	2646	2647	2648	2649	2650	2651	2652	2653	2654	2655	2656	2657	2658	2659	2660	2661	2662	2663	2664	2665	2666	2667	2668	2669	2670	2671	2672	2673	2674	2675	2676	2677	2678	2679	2680	2681	2682	2683	2684	2685	2686	2687	2688	2689	2690	2691	2692	2693	2694	2695	2696	2697	2698	2699	2700	2701	2702	2703	2704	2705	2706	2707	2708	2709	2710	2711	2712	2713	2714	2715	2716	2717	2718	2719	2720	2721	2722	2723	2724	2725	2726	2727	2728	2729	2730	2731	2732	2733	2734	2735	2736	2737	2738	2739	2740	2741	2742	2743	2744	2745	2746	2747	2748	2749	2750	2751	2752	2753	2754	2755	2756	2757	2758	2759	2760	2761	2762	2763	2764	2765	2766	2767	2768	2769	2770	2771	2772	2773	2774	2775	2776	2777	2778	2779	2780	2781	2782	2783	2784	2785	2786	2787	2788	2789	2790	2791	2792	2793	2794	2795	2796	2797	2798	2799	2800	2801	2802	2803	2804	2805	2806	2807	2808	2809	2810	2811	2812	2813	2814	2815	2816	2817	2818	2819	2820	2821	2822	2823	2824	2825	2826	2827	2828	2829	2830	2831	2832	2833	2834	2835	2836	2837	2838	2839	2840	2841	2842	2843	2844	2845	2846	2847	2848	2849	2850	2851	2852	2853	2854	2855	2856	2857	2858	2859	2860	2861	2862	2863	2864	2865	2866	2867	2868	2869	2870	2871	2872	2873	2874	2875	2876	2877	2878	2879	2880	2881	2882	2883	2884	2885	2886	2887	2888	2889	2890	2891	2892	2893	2894	2895	2896	2897	2898	2899	2900	2901	2902	2903	2904	2905	2906	2907	2908	2909	2910	2911	2912	2913	2914	2915	2916	2917	2918	2919	2920	2921	2922	2923	2924	2925	2926	2927	2928	2929	2930	2931	2932	2933	2934	2935	2936	2937	2938	2939	2940	2941	2942	2943	2944	2945	2946	2947	2948	2949	2950	2951	2952	2953	2954	2955	2956	2957	2958	2959	2960	2961	2962	2963	2964	2965	2966	2967	2968	2969	2970	2971	2972	2973	2974	2975	2976	2977	2978	2979	2980	2981	2982	2983	2984	2985	2986	2987	2988	2989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NSW DET Fulltime Aboriginal Enrolments 1991-2008

Year	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055	2056	2057	2058	2059	2060	2061	2062	2063	2064	2065	2066	2067	2068	2069	2070	2071	2072	2073	2074	2075	2076	2077	2078	2079	2080	2081	2082	2083	2084	2085	2086	2087	2088	2089	2090	2091	2092	2093	2094	2095	2096	2097	2098	2099	2100
1991	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055	2056	2057	2058	2059	2060	2061	2062	2063	2064	2065	2066	2067	2068	2069	2070	2071	2072	2073	2074	2075	2076	2077	2078	2079	2080	2081	2082	2083	2084	2085	2086	2087	2088	2089	2090	2091	2092	2093	2094	2095	2096	2097	2098	2099	2100

Appendix 8A

For the information of the CEC Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee
for consideration and discussion

(POSSIBLE) - PARENT SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE - WHOLE
OF SCHOOL INTERVENTION - CEC NSW - Aboriginal Education Advisory
Committee

BOARDING SCHOOL FORUM

Rationale for targeting boarding staff:

It would appear that the boarding area is the major area of concern and conflict.

WHO (target audience)	NSW/ACT Boarding School Directors and Co-ordinators Just Catholic or all????????? How many?????? Only Boarding Schools with Aboriginal students or target all as potential???
WHERE	Sydney??? (central) (possibly St. Ignatius Riverview - Large conference centre - lots of parking space - breakout Rooms
WHY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Increasing numbers of Aboriginal parents are choosing Boarding schools for their children- numbers are large and increasing * Boarding schools are offering "Scholarships" - "placements" for our children and actively seeking enrolments * Boarding schools report to Ab. Ed. Consultants unsure of "best practice" to better accommodate our children * Parents and students report to Ab. Ed. Consultants the difficulties they sometimes experience with Boarding schools around the day to day care of their children
HOW	Through our CEC Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee (sub-committee) and our State CCSP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Parent Committee we prepare and put forward a state PSPI
WHEN	2007 - Semester 2 (late)

NEED

Organising Committee

- Parent reps
- Country reps
- City reps
- CEC reps
- Julieanne Manson as current Boarding School liaison person
- Principal of current boarding school – Loretto Richardson St Scholastica's
- Congregational School Religious rep – Sr. Marilyn

Facilitators – Presenters

Parent Participation – CCSP

AECG Participation

CEC Participation – Brian Croke

Diocesan Directors – Lismore (Dianne Marshall)

Armidale (Rick Johnston)

Wilcannia/Forbes (Victor Dunn)

OUTCOMES

- Boarding School Network for Directors and Co-ordinators
- Identify current problems from parents
- Boarding School Issues
- Give parents a "voice"
- Give Boarding Schools a "voice"
- Best Practice for Boarding Schools
- Website
- 2 year cycle for gathering – network

TIMELINE

PSP1 Cutoff for Semester 1 2007 is 31 August 2006

Appendix 9A



CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION NEW SOUTH WALES

ABN 33 266 477 368
PO Box A169, Sydney South NSW 1235
Level 8, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Telephone (02) 9287 1555 Fax: (02) 9264 6308
Email: commission@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au Website: <http://www.cecnsw.catholic.edu.au>

CEC Aboriginal Education Advisory meeting 18TH March 2011

Present

Sharon-Dave-Karen A-Denise-Kerry-Doreen-Louise-Margaret-Jane-Lisa-Mary-Karen
G-Merindah-Karan-Julianne

Question

I would like you to put on your thinking hats and tell me every issue you have had in the time in your position with a boarding school including issues for AEWs ?. I don't want to know what school or what student just the particular issue.

Reponses

- Enrolment packages & associated application fee (parents can hardly afford this initial cost)
- Scholarships, schools fees & uniform costs - vary greatly & there have been many issues over the years
- Transport off/for students
- Transport for parents visiting students
- Accommodation for parents visiting students
- Home sickness & general sickness (parents worry when they are a long distance away & can't get to their child quickly)
- Schools building up & maintaining community contacts (parents do not always know who to contact)
- All school staff cross-cultural awareness training (not happening enough)
- Teacher not visiting communities - they do not necessarily know where students come from
- Academic & cultural support for AEW's - role descriptions & expectations vary greatly & most teachers do not understand the role

- Professional development for AEW's - child protection training, public speaking & further academic courses
- Students spending money (some families can't afford to send much cash to students who then feel shamed & left out)
- Staff support for AEW's - working in isolation can be hard work
- School communication channels for AEW's - (usually it's only when negative situations occur)
- Detentions, suspensions & sending students home - there needs to be clearer explanations of school policies, procedures & processes verses proper cultural ways
- AEW's driving student's home...what about duty of care & child protection policies...???
- Calling on Advisor's for support to put out bushfires that have been raging for weeks or over several issues that have built up
- Communication between school Principals & Advisors - sometimes very limited contact
- Schools demonstrating a real commitment to Indigenous education/issues throughout the year
- Counselling support for students
- Little local support in some places - not enough Uncles & Aunties or families to visit students or take them out for a day
- Students from different schools getting together (in some cases brothers & sisters &/or cousins in other schools close by, but no planning for days out or cultural excursions where they can be together)

Decisions made by non-Indigenous staff members around cultural matters - they think they know better or more than an AEW, who is then told what to

- do in each situation, rather than consult with the AEW & family or community to decide together
- Indigenous students are sometimes not brave enough to speak up!
- Teachers 'hearing' students
- Students from more traditional communities being educated in the city - cultural trauma, isolation & feeling lost (spending many days in the infirmary upon arrival back at school each term (A. E. Advisor, 2011)

Frank Pearce

State Coordinator Aboriginal Education & Executive Office CEC NSW

Aboriginal Advisory Committee

18/3/11

Appendix 10-A

-----Original Message-----

From: Paul Rodney [mailto:Paul.Rodney@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au]

Sent: Friday, 20 May 2011 12:22 PM

To: Frank Pearce

Subject: RE: PLPs

After reading the Guide to Developing PLPs I was concerned that it lacked content and direction in addressing pastoral issues affecting student learning. Issues such as attendance, wellbeing, health, nutrition, relationships etc. As we all know – it is issues such as these that must be addressed for real advancement in education to occur. If PLPs are to tackle such “full-service schools” issues, you can understand the concern of many dioceses that PLPs are not necessary of all Aboriginal students but should be used as necessary.

You might like to consider asking your committee if they feel the same way I did after reading the document and if so, they might like to consider asking DEEWR to fund the development of a support document “Administering PLPs in a Pastoral Context”.

Regards

Paul

Paul Rodney

Assistant Director - Education Programs

Catholic Education Commission, NSW

APPENDIX 11-A

ASSPA V PSPI PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

From:

Sent: Tuesday, 28 June 2005 3:11 PM

To: Frank Pearce

Subject: RE: ASSPA

Frank,

ASSPA v's PSPI the title fight is on. For Wilcannia-Forbes Diocese we have discovered that in 2004 our ASSPA committee numbers were 16 out of 20 schools and this year our PSPI committee numbers, thus far is 9 out of 20 schools. I hope this helps the cause.

Regards,

-----Original Message-----

From:

Sent: Tuesday, 21 March 2006 2:27 PM

To: Frank Pearce

Subject: RE: IEP issues

Hi Frank,

* Our diocese has a real issue with the lack of participation in parent Committees since the restructure of ASSPA. It is quite evident as we Have fallen from having 16/20 ASSPA committee's post 2005 to a possible 5/20 WOSI committees to date. The model does not suit our communities as The planning needs to be done with some degree of an educational Background which most of our remote area parents or carers don't have Thus poses the problem.

3 Approved PSPI Projects

* As for PSPI applications that have been approved we have Cobar and Narromine Catholic schools that have a combined project with their local Dept of Education schools. These two projects were approved in mid 2005 But they have only just been funded this year. Bourke catholic school Has an approved project that was again approved last year but funding Has been allocated this month.

* One or two of our other schools would like to submit a PSPI application but only have 5-10 Indigenous students in their schools, but We are currently in consultation between my DEST area workers and Managers in regards to making these schools into a cluster.

Appendix 12A

Indigenous Employment

<u>Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs)</u>		<u>Aboriginal Teachers</u>
1999	103	NA
2000	100	NA
2001	96	10
2002	112	18
2003	123	26
2004	134	27
2005	139	38
2006	141	39
2007	156	40
2008	140	52

It should be noted that pre-targeted funding that the number of AEWs in NSW Catholic schools was in single figures. It should also be noted that pre-targeted funding there were no diocesan Aboriginal Education Advisors.

From: Frank Pearce

Sent: Thursday, 15 April 2010 7:20 PM

To: 'Diocesan Aboriginal Education Advisors

Way back when I started in 1999 I am sure that AEWs were on year to year contracts • I can remember advisors ringing me very late in the year to see what next years funding would be . I can also remember something sometime about AEWs not getting paid over Xmas . Or did this only occur at the end of each 3 or 4 year funding contract

Can anyone remember this stuff occurring and when

Tha
nk
you
Fra
nk

From: Diocesan

Aboriginal advisor Sent:

Friday, 16 April 2010 9:29

AM To: Frank Pearce

Subject: RE: CAN YOU REMEMBER?

Dear Frank,

You will have to excuse my old memory however I started as an AEW in 1997 and was employed in hours depending on the funding. Each year for approx 7 years I was stood down at the end of each year and employed again at the beginning of the next year again hours depended on funding and Principals discretion. It was made very clear that the hours could change from term to term. I was paid at the lowest level as a School Support Officer and it was not until many years later that I heard that there were levels that school support officers could move up to at the discretion of the Principal. I believe because I was not one of the people who agreed with everything the Principal believed in and that I often challenged and advocated for our kids I was left at the lowest level for 8 years. Then along came the union and things started to change.

First of all you progressed to the next level automatically each full year that you had been employed but only up to a level 4 School Support Officer. After 9 years I moved to level 3 then at 10 years I was a level 4. Our rate of pay was calculated over a full year including school holidays and if you were offered hours at the end of the year for the following year you were also paid a pro rata over the Xmas break also. For me this did not happen until I was there for 8 years. You can not move up to higher levels as each school is allowed only one or two level 6 depending on the size of the school and that was the Head office Secretary. Our AEW's are now paid over the holidays if they are employed with definite hours and move up levels each year until they reach level 4. They are employed at level one until they complete a basic skills test (this is an issue for our mentors and AEW's coming into our system/ most are not able to reach the requirements) and then go automatically to level 2 and so on.

I think that it was probably different in each diocese.

.Appendix 13-A



Appendix 14-A



CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

NEW SOUTH WALES

ABN 33 286 477 368

University of Wollongong



PO Box A189, Sydney South NSW 1235

9th Floor, Polding Centre, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Telephone: (02) 8287 1555 Fax: (02) 8284 6308 Email: commission@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au
Website: <http://www.cecnsw.catholic.edu.au>

To the Parent/Caregiver

If you can give me just a little of your time I think we can help to keep improving educational outcomes for the most disadvantaged students in Australia.

My name is Frank Pearce and I am the State Coordinator of Aboriginal Education for the NSW Catholic Education Commission. I am also an Aboriginal Masters in Research student at Wollongong University.

I would like to ask you to participate in a research project to gather vital evidence on the link between having an Aboriginal Education Worker working in a school and seeing improved educational outcomes for the Indigenous students.

As you probably know, Aboriginal Education Workers are not classroom teachers. They may be known under various titles, e.g. Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW), Aboriginal Education Assistant (AEA), Indigenous Education Worker (IEW) or Koori Education Workers (KEW). They may even be known as a Teachers Assistant (TA) who just happens to be Aboriginal. Within most school systems they are known as "Uncle" or "Auntie", an Aboriginal term of respect often used by the children, rather than "Mr" or "Mrs".

A while back the Dusseldorp Foundation asked me for feedback on their joint project with the Dare to Lead Program called "Same Kids Same Goals". This is centred on a formal partnership between the Principal and the Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW) Aboriginal Education Assistant (AEA), Indigenous Education Worker (IEW) or Koori Education Worker (KEW). The Dusseldorp Foundation make great contributions to the area of Aboriginal Education, because rather than more rhetoric they are actually "walking the talk".

This program and long experience with school staff, Aboriginal students and Aboriginal parents have brought home to me the great contribution Aboriginal education workers make to improving outcomes. This is largely without recognition or commensurate pay and working conditions. There are strong indications that having a well skilled Aboriginal education worker in a school does lead to significant improvements but we need to test this claim.

I seek permission to use your data as part of my Masters in Research thesis.

I enclosed a permission note at end of the survey form. The survey is anonymous. It will be sorted into stakeholder categories, eg Principal, Teacher, AEW-AEA-IEW-KEW, Parent, Student, other stakeholders. During the course of this research I may also interview those who have volunteered via the consent form.

I am interested in all comments, both positive and negative because even the negative ones will help me with formulating solutions and recommendations to any issues or misunderstandings that may exist. Two of the biggest issues being that in most cases the roles of these Indigenous workers in individual schools are extremely diverse and their community involvement role is often misunderstood on both sides.

I am planning to use this information as the topic of my Masters Degree as I believe passionately in the importance of this Indigenous role in improving Indigenous Educational outcomes.

What is the difference between a school with an AEW-AEA-IEW or KEW and one without?

"The same as the difference between schools with electricity and those without – the people in one school can see, the others are left in the dark."

These words from a principal without an Aboriginal Education Worker in his current school reinforce my passion and belief in this research project.

Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Frank Pearce -State Coordinator - Aboriginal Education CEC NSW

Please email responses to frank.pearce@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au
Fax to 02-9264-6308 or post to PO box A169 Sydney South 1235

Aboriginal Education Workers Survey and Questionnaire For Parent/Caregivers

There are many factors that contribute towards Aboriginal students achieving good education outcomes. This research study is looking specifically at the role of Aboriginal Education Workers as one of these factors. The questions below are only meant to reflect your opinions based on your experience and knowledge of Aboriginal Education Workers as one of the possible factors. Please note that the use of the word Aboriginal throughout this document is inclusive of Torres Strait Islander people. The information you provide is confidential. If you have any questions please contact Frank Pearce on 0417433579.

(OPTIONAL) Name:

Please tick the appropriate box:

Are you? Male ☐ Female ☐

How old are you? Under 18 ☐ 19-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐

50-59 ☐ 60-69 ☐ 70-79 ☐ Over 80 ☐

In what capacity are you answering this questionnaire?

Student ☐ Educator ☐ AEW ☐ Teacher ☐

Stakeholder ☐ Parent ☐ Community Member ☐

Other ☐ Please specify _____

School Type: Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Central ☐

Co-ed ☐ Boys ☐ Girls ☐

School Location: Metro ☐ Rural ☐ Remote ☐

There are two sections to the following questionnaire:

Section 1: Survey. You will be asked to respond to a statement along a five point Likkert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Please circle the correct response. For example:

1. I prefer my child attends a school with an Aboriginal Education Worker.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Section 2: Open ended questions. You will be asked to provide you own comments on five open ended questions. You can write as much as you want if you run out of space please write on the back of the page making sure to identify the number of the question you are answering.

Section 1: Survey

1. I prefer my child attends a school with an Aboriginal Education Worker.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

2. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker in our school is helping my child enjoy learning.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

3. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker in our school is helping my child to achieve the schools expected outcomes.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

4. I believe having and Aboriginal Education Worker in our school is helping to develop my child's motivation, self esteem and aspirations.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

5. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff demonstrates my child's school respects and values Aboriginal culture.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

6. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker at my child's school is helping to reinforce my child's Aboriginal identity.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

7. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker at our school is assisting in getting my child to attend school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

8. I believe my child does better in class when the Aboriginal Education Worker is in class helping the teacher.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

9. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker at our school makes it more likely my child will complete school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

10. If the Aboriginal Education Worker was removed from my school my child would not do as well.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Section 2: Open Ended Questionnaire

A. Based on your experience and knowledge what does the Aboriginal Education worker do to assist your child with their school work?

B. What other things could your Aboriginal Education Worker do for your child to assist their learning?

C. Based on your experience and knowledge what does the Aboriginal Education worker do to involve the community in your school?

D. As a parent/caregiver how does your Aboriginal Education worker involve you in your child's learning?

E. Are there any suggestions you would like to make that may assist your Aboriginal Education Worker to better assist your child in completing school?

Any further comments

I left school at 14. Got a SC at 40 and a degree at 50. My main motive in conducting this research is to ensure Aboriginal students unlike me get a chance to live their dreams before they are too old to enjoy them. My other motive is I strongly believe "being Aboriginal is a reason to succeed rather than an excuse not to". Thank you for your time it is greatly appreciated.

Parent/Caregiver Consent Form

Project Title: Skilled Uncles and Aunties Clear the Bumps on the Road to Learning

Project Researcher: Frank Pearce

I _____, have read and understood the information provided to me on the Participant Information Sheet and I agree to participate in the project **Skilled Uncles and Aunties Clear the Bumps on the Road to Learning** conducted by Frank Pearce Research student from the Faculty of Education Wollongong University. I understand that the intention of the project is to study the role and contribution of AEWs, AEAs and IEWs to improving Indigenous students' educational outcomes.

I consent to participate in interviews and/or surveys which will be recorded and transcribed and to have this data analysed by the researchers. I agree to (please tick the boxes):

- ☐ Audio recordings and written notes for transcription and analysis of myself to be reproduced as part of this research project
- ☐ For the information I provide to be reproduced in publications and presentations by the researchers

Please tick the following box if you agree to be contacted for a further interview:

- ☐ I would be interested in being interviewed in the future

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that should I no longer wish to participate in the project there will be no penalty for withdrawing and my relationship with the University of Wollongong will not be affected. I also understand that I will have the opportunity to withdraw any of my responses from the data set at any time. I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for journal articles, research reports, presentations and conferences and project promotional purposes and I consent for the collected data to be used in those manners. I understand that should I have any questions or concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted I can contact;

Eve Steinke, Ethics Officer, Office of Research, UOW; Email eyes@uow.edu.au, Ph: 4221 4457

I understand that should I have any questions or concerns about this research, I can contact:

Frank Pearce

Chief Researcher

State Coordinator of Aboriginal Education

Catholic Education Commission NSW

Ph: 9287 1557 or 0417433579

Email: frank.pearce@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au

Professor Karen Malone

Supervisor, Faculty of Education

University of Wollongong

Phone: 4221 3961

Email: kmalone@uow.edu.au

Name of Research Participant (please print)

Signature

Date

Appendix 14-B



CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

NEW SOUTH WALES

ABN 33 266 477 369

University of Wollongong



PO Box A169, Sydney South NSW 1235
9th Floor, Polding Centre, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Telephone (02) 9287 1555 Fax (02) 9264 6308 Email commission@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au
Website <http://www.cecnsw.catholic.edu.au>

To the AEW

If you can give me just a little of your time I think we can help to keep improving educational outcomes for the most disadvantaged students in Australia.

My name is Frank Pearce and I am the State Coordinator of Aboriginal Education for the NSW Catholic Education Commission. I am also an Aboriginal Masters in Research student at Wollongong University.

I would like to ask you to participate in a research project to gather vital evidence on the link between having an Aboriginal Education Worker working in a school and seeing improved educational outcomes for the Indigenous students.

As you know, Aboriginal Education Workers are not classroom teachers. They may be known under various titles, e.g. Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW), Aboriginal Education Assistant (AEA), Indigenous Education Worker (IEW) or Koori Education Workers (KEW). They may even be known as a Teachers Assistant (TA) who just happens to be Aboriginal. Within most school systems they are known as "Uncle" or "Auntie", an Aboriginal term of respect often used by the children, rather than "Mr" or "Mrs".

Recently the Dusseldorp Foundation asked me for feedback on their joint project with the Dare to Lead Program called "Same Kids Same Goals". This is centred on a formal partnership between the Principal and the Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW), Aboriginal Education Assistant (AEA), Indigenous Education Worker (IEW) or Koori Education Worker (KEW). The Dusseldorp Foundation make great contributions to the area of Aboriginal Education, because rather than more rhetoric they are actually "walking the talk".

This program and long experience with school staff, Aboriginal students and Aboriginal parents have brought home to me the great contribution Aboriginal education workers make to improving outcomes. This is largely without recognition or commensurate pay and working conditions. There are strong indications that having a well skilled Aboriginal education worker in a school does lead to significant improvements but we need to test this claim.

I seek permission to use your data as part of my Masters in Research thesis. I enclosed a permission note at end of the survey form. The survey is anonymous. It will be sorted into stakeholder categories, eg Principal, Teacher, AEW-AEA-IEW-KEW, Parent, Student, Community Member etc. During the course of this research I may also interview those who have volunteered via the consent form.

I am interested in all comments, both positive and negative because even the negative ones will help me with formulating solutions and recommendations to any issues or misunderstandings that may exist. Two of the biggest issues being that in most cases the roles of these Indigenous workers in individual schools are extremely diverse and their community involvement role is often misunderstood on both sides.

I am planning to use this information as the topic of my Masters Degree as I believe passionately in the importance of this Indigenous role in improving Indigenous Educational outcomes.

What is the difference between a school with an AEW-AEA-IEW or KEW and one without?

1

What is the difference between a school with an AEW-AEA-IEW or KEW and one without?

"The same as the difference between schools with electricity and those without – the people in one school can see, the others are left in the dark."

These words from a principal without an Aboriginal Education Worker in his current school reinforce my passion and belief in this research project.

Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Frank Pearce -State Coordinator - Aboriginal Education CEC NSW

Please email responses to frank.pearce@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au
fax to 02-9264-6308 or post to PO box A169 Sydney South 1235

Aboriginal Education Workers Survey and Questionnaire For AEW's

There are many factors that contribute towards Aboriginal students achieving good education outcomes. This research study is looking specifically at the role of Aboriginal Education Workers as one of these factors. The questions below are only meant to reflect your opinions based on your experience and knowledge as an Aboriginal Education Worker as one of the possible factors. Please note that the use of the word Aboriginal throughout this document is inclusive of Torres Strait Islander people. The information you provide is confidential. If you have any questions please contact Frank Pearce on 0417433579.

(OPTIONAL)Name:

Please tick the appropriate box:

Are you? Male ☐ Female ☐

How old are you? Under 18 ☐ 19-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐

50-59 ☐ 60-69 ☐ 70-79 ☐ Over 80 ☐

In what capacity are you answering this questionnaire?

Student ☐ Educator ☐ AEW ☐ Teacher ☐

Stakeholder ☐ Parent ☐ Community Member ☐

Other ☐ Please specify _____

School Type: Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Central ☐

Co-ed ☐ Boys ☐ Girls ☐

School Location: Metro ☐ Rural ☐ Remote ☐

There are two sections to the following questionnaire:

Section 1: Survey. You will be asked to respond to a statement along a five point Likkert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Please circle the correct response. For example:

1. In a school with Aboriginal students it is important to have an Aboriginal Education Worker.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Section 2: Open ended questions. You will be asked to provide you own comments on five open ended questions. You can write as much as you want if you run out of space please write on the back of the page making sure to identify the number of the question you are answering.

Section 1: Survey

1. In a school with Aboriginal students it is important to have an Aboriginal Education Worker.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

2. AEW's play a role in Aboriginal student's enjoyment of learning.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

3. AEW's play a role in helping Aboriginal students achieve the schools expected outcomes.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

4. AEW's play a role in helping to develop the motivation, self esteem and aspirations of Aboriginal students.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

5. Having an AEW on staff demonstrates a school respects and values Aboriginal culture.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

6. AEW's play a role in helping to reinforce the identity of Aboriginal student's.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

7. AEW's play a role in helping to get Aboriginal students to attend school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

8. Having an AEW in the classroom plays a role in Aboriginal students performing better in class.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

9. AEW's play a role in Aboriginal students completing school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

10. I believe that if Aboriginal Education Workers were removed from schools the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students would decline.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Section 2: Open Ended Questionnaire

A. What do AEW's do to help Aboriginal students enjoy learning and achieve the schools expected outcomes ?

B. What do AEW's do to develop the motivation, self esteem and aspirations of Aboriginal students and reinforce their Aboriginal identities?

C. What do AEW's do to make sure Aboriginal students attend school regularly?

D. What do AEW's do to make sure Aboriginal students complete school?

E. What do AEW's do to involve local Aboriginal communities in their schools?

Any further comments

**I left school at 14. Got a SC at 40 and a degree at 50. My main motive in conducting this research is to ensure Aboriginal students unlike me get a chance to live their dreams before they are too old to enjoy them. My other motive is I believe "being Aboriginal is a reason to succeed rather than an excuse to fail".
Thank you for your time it is greatly appreciated.**

AEW Consent Form

Project Title: Skilled Uncles and Aunties Clear the Bumps on the Road to Learning

Project Researcher: Frank Pearce

I _____, have read and understood the information provided to me on the Participant Information Sheet and I agree to participate in the project **Skilled Uncles and Aunties Clear the Bumps on the Road to Learning** conducted by Frank Pearce Research student from the Faculty of Education Wollongong University. I understand that the intention of the project is to study the role and contribution of AEWs, AEAs and IEWs to improving Indigenous students' educational outcomes.

I consent to participate in interviews and/or surveys which will be recorded and transcribed and to have this data analysed by the researchers. I agree to (please tick the boxes):

- ☐ Audio recordings and written notes for transcription and analysis of myself to be reproduced as part of this research project
- ☐ For the information I provide to be reproduced in publications and presentations by the researchers

Please tick the following box if you agree to be contacted for a further interview:

- ☐ I would be interested in being interviewed in the future

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that should I no longer wish to participate in the project there will be no penalty for withdrawing and my relationship with the University of Wollongong will not be affected. I also understand that I will have the opportunity to withdraw any of my responses from the data set at any time. I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for journal articles, research reports, presentations and conferences and project promotional purposes and I consent for the collected data to be used in those manners. I understand that should I have any questions or concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted I can contact;

Eve Steinke, Ethics Officer, Office of Research, UOW; Email eves@uow.edu.au, Ph: 4221 4457

I understand that should I have any questions or concerns about this research, I can contact:

Frank Pearce
Chief Researcher
State Coordinator of Aboriginal Education
Catholic Education Commission NSW
Ph: 9287 1557 or 0417433579
Email: frank.pearce@cecsw.catholic.edu.au

Professor Karen Malone
Supervisor, Faculty of Education
University of Wollongong
Phone: 4221 3961
Email: kmalone@uow.edu.au

Name of Research Participant (please print)

Signature

Date

Appendix 14-C



Appendix 14-C

University of Wollongong



CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

NEW SOUTH WALES

ABN 33 266 477 369

PO Box A169, Sydney South NSW 1235

9th Floor, Polding Centre, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Telephone: (02) 9287 1555 Fax: (02) 9284 8308 Email: commission@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au

Website: <http://www.cecnsw.catholic.edu.au>

To the Principal

My name is Frank Pearce and I am the State Coordinator of Aboriginal Education for the NSW Catholic Education Commission. I am also an Aboriginal Masters in Research student at Wollongong University.

I would like to ask you to participate in a research project to gather vital evidence on the link between having an Aboriginal Education Worker working in a school and seeing improved educational outcomes for the Indigenous students.

In 2007 I sent out a similar survey through Dare to Lead and received a very good response. In order to get a response that is more measurable with the assistance of my University supervisor I have developed a new survey instrument to do just that. Given the Government's new Aboriginal Education funding policies and the fact they have abolished a lot of very successful tuition programs for Aboriginal students a lot of pressure is being placed on all education systems. This pressure in turn is placing a lot of pressure on the job security of Aboriginal Education Workers.

As you probably know, Aboriginal Education Workers are not classroom teachers. They may be known under various titles, e.g. Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW), Aboriginal Education Assistant (AEA), Indigenous Education Worker (IEW) or Koori Education Workers (KEW). They may even be known as a Teachers Assistant (TA) who just happens to be Aboriginal. Within most school systems they are known as "Uncle" or "Auntie", an Aboriginal term of respect often used by the children, rather than "Mr" or "Mrs".

My long experience with school staff in all education systems and discussions with many Aboriginal students and Aboriginal parents have brought home to me the great contribution Aboriginal education workers make to improving outcomes. This is largely without recognition or commensurate pay and working conditions. There are strong indications that having a well skilled Aboriginal education worker in a school does lead to significant improvements but we need to test this claim.

I seek permission to use your data as part of my Masters in Research thesis. I enclosed a permission note at end of the survey form. The survey is anonymous. It will be sorted into stakeholder categories, eg Principal, Teacher, AEW-AEA-IEW-KEW, Parent, Student, Community Member etc. During the course of this research I may also interview those who have volunteered via the consent form.

I am interested in all comments, both positive and negative because even the negative ones will help me with formulating solutions and recommendations to any issues or misunderstandings that may exist. Two of the biggest issues being that in most cases the roles of these Indigenous workers in individual schools are extremely diverse and their community involvement role is often misunderstood on both sides.

I am planning to use this information as the topic of my Masters Degree as I believe passionately in the importance of this Indigenous role in improving Indigenous Educational outcomes.

What is the difference between a school with an AEW-AEA-IEW or KEW and one without?

"The same as the difference between schools with electricity and those without – the people in one school can see, the others are left in the dark."

These words from a principal without an Aboriginal Education Worker in his current school reinforce my passion and belief in this research project.

Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Frank Pearce -State Coordinator - Aboriginal Education CEC NSW

Please email responses to frank.pearce@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au
Fax to 02-9264-6308 or post to PO box A169 Sydney South 1235

For Principals

There are many factors that contribute towards Aboriginal students achieving good education outcomes. This research study is looking specifically at the role of Aboriginal Education Workers as one of these factors. The questions below are only meant to reflect your opinions based on your experience and knowledge of Aboriginal Education Workers as one of the possible factors. Please note that the use of the word Aboriginal throughout this document is inclusive of Torres Strait Islander people. The information you provide is confidential. If you have any questions please contact Frank Pearce on 0417433579.

(OPTIONAL) Name:

Please tick the appropriate box:

Are you? Male ☐ Female ☐

How old are you? Under 18 ☐ 19-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐

50-59 ☐ 60-69 ☐ 70-79 ☐ Over 80 ☐

In what capacity are you answering this questionnaire?

Student ☐ Educator ☐ AEW ☐ Teacher ☐

Stakeholder ☐ Parent ☐ Community Member ☐

Other ☐ Please specify _____

School Type: Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Central ☐

Co-ed ☐ Boys ☐ Girls ☐

School Location: Metro ☐ Rural ☐ Remote ☐

There are two sections to the following questionnaire:

Section 1: Survey. You will be asked to respond to a statement along a five point Likkert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Please circle the correct response. For example:

1. In a school with Aboriginal students I would prefer to have an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Section 2: Open ended questions. You will be asked to provide you own comments on five open ended questions. You can write as much as you want if you run out of space please write on the back of the page making sure to identify the number of the question you are answering.

Section 1: Survey

1. In a school with Aboriginal students I would prefer to have an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

2. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff help's Aboriginal students to enjoy learning

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

3. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff helps Aboriginal students to achieve the schools expected outcomes.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

4. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff help's in developing the motivation, self esteem and aspirations of Aboriginal students.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

5. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff helps to demonstrate a school respects and values Aboriginal culture.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

6. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff helps reinforce Aboriginal student's identities.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

7. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff helps with the attendance of Aboriginal students.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

8. I believe Aboriginal students work better in the classroom when an Aboriginal Education Worker is assisting them.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

9. I believe Aboriginal students are more likely to complete school because the school has an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

10. I believe if Aboriginal Education Workers were removed from schools Aboriginal students would not do as well.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Section 2: Open Ended Questionnaire

1. What role do Aboriginal Education Worker's play in assisting Aboriginal students with their learning?

2. What could Aboriginal Education Worker's do better to assist individual Aboriginal students with their learning?

3. How do Aboriginal Education Worker's involve the Aboriginal community in the schools where they assist students?

4. How can Aboriginal Education Worker's best assist you with the learning of Aboriginal students?

5. Are there any suggestions you would like to make that may assist all Aboriginal Education Workers to better support Aboriginal students in completing school?

Any further comments

I left school at 14. Got a SC at 40 and a degree at 50. My main motive in conducting this research is to ensure Aboriginal students unlike me get a chance to live their

dreams before they are too old to enjoy them. My other motive is I believe "being Aboriginal is a reason to succeed rather than an excuse to fail".
Thank you for your time it is greatly appreciated.

Principals Consent Form

Project Title: Skilled Uncles and Aunties Clear the Bumps on the Road to Learning

Project Researcher: Frank Pearce

I _____, have read and understood the information provided to me on the Participant Information Sheet and I agree to participate in the project **Skilled Uncles and Aunties Clear the Bumps on the Road to Learning** conducted by Frank Pearce Research student from the Faculty of Education Wollongong University. I understand that the intention of the project is to study the role and contribution of AEWs, AEAs and IEWs to improving Indigenous students' educational outcomes.

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Chief Researcher
State Coordinator of Aboriginal Education
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Email: frank.pearce@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au

Professor Karen Malone
Supervisor, Faculty of Education
University of Wollongong
Phone: 4221 3961
Email: kmalone@uow.edu.au

Name of Research Participant (please print)

Signature

Date



Appendix 14-D

University of Wollongong



CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

NEW SOUTH WALES

ABN 33 266 477 369

PO Box A168, Sydney South NSW 1235
8th Floor, Polding Centre, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Telephone: (02) 9287 1555 Fax: (02) 9264 6306 Email: commission@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au
Website: <http://www.cecnsw.catholic.edu.au>

To the Teacher

If you can give me just a little of your time I think we can help to keep improving educational outcomes for the most disadvantaged students in Australia.

My name is Frank Pearce and I am the State Coordinator of Aboriginal Education for the NSW Catholic Education Commission. I am also an Aboriginal Masters in Research student at Wollongong University.

I would like to ask you to participate in a research project to gather vital evidence on the link between having an Aboriginal Education Worker working in a school and seeing improved educational outcomes for the Indigenous students.

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I seek permission to use your data as part of my Masters in Research thesis.

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I am interested in all comments, both positive and negative because even the negative ones will help me with formulating solutions and recommendations to any issues or misunderstandings that may exist. Two of the biggest issues being that in most cases the roles of these Indigenous workers in individual schools are extremely diverse and their community involvement role is often misunderstood on both sides.

I am planning to use this information as the topic of my Masters Degree as I believe passionately in the importance of this Indigenous role in improving Indigenous Educational outcomes.

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These words from a principal without an Aboriginal Education Worker in his current school reinforce my passion and belief in this research project.

Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Frank Pearce -State Coordinator - Aboriginal Education CEC NSW

Please email responses to frank.pearce@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au
fax to 02-9264-6308 or post to PO box 4169 Sydney South 1235

Aboriginal Education Workers Survey and Questionnaire For Teachers

There are many factors that contribute towards Aboriginal students achieving good education outcomes. This research study is looking specifically at the role of Aboriginal Education Workers as one of these factors. The questions below are only meant to reflect your opinions based on your experience and knowledge of Aboriginal Education Workers as one of the possible factors. Please note that the use of the word Aboriginal throughout this document is inclusive of Torres Strait Islander people. The information you provide is confidential. If you have any questions please contact Frank Pearce on 0417433579.

(OPTIONAL) Name:

Please tick the appropriate box:

Are you? Male ☐ Female ☐

How old are you? Under 18 ☐ 19-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐

50-59 ☐ 60-69 ☐ 70-79 ☐ Over 80 ☐

In what capacity are you answering this questionnaire?

Student ☐ Educator ☐ AEW ☐ Teacher ☐

Stakeholder ☐ Parent ☐ Community Member ☐

Other ☐ Please specify _____

School Type: Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Central ☐

Co-ed ☐ Boys ☐ Girls ☐

School Location: Metro ☐ Rural ☐ Remote ☐

There are two sections to the following questionnaire:

Section 1: Survey. You will be asked to respond to a statement along a five point Likkert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Please circle the correct response. For example:

1. In a school with Aboriginal students I would prefer to have an Aboriginal Education Worker.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Section 2: Open ended questions. You will be asked to provide you own comments on five open ended questions. You can write as much as you want if you run out of space please write on the back of the page making sure to identify the number of the question you are answering.

Section 1: Survey

1. In a school with Aboriginal students I would prefer to have an Aboriginal Education Worker.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

2. I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in Aboriginal student's enjoyment of learning.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

3. I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in helping Aboriginal students achieve the schools expected outcomes.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

4. I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in helping to develop the motivation, self esteem and aspirations of Aboriginal students.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

5. I believe that having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff demonstrates my school respects and values Aboriginal culture.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

6. I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in helping to reinforce the identity of Aboriginal student's.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

7. I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in helping to get Aboriginal students to attend school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

8. I believe that having an Aboriginal Education Worker assist me in class plays a role in Aboriginal students performing better in class.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

9. I believe that Aboriginal Education Workers play a role in Aboriginal students completing school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

10. I believe that if Aboriginal Education Workers were removed from schools the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students would decline.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Section 2: Open Ended Questionnaire

A. What does your Aboriginal Education worker do to assist your Aboriginal students with their school work?

B. What other things could your Aboriginal Education Worker do for your Aboriginal students that would assist their learning?

C. What does the Aboriginal Education worker do to involve the community in your school?

D. As a Teacher how can your Aboriginal Education Worker best assist you with the learning of your Aboriginal students?

E. Are there any suggestions you would like to make that may assist your Aboriginal Education Worker to better assist Aboriginal students in completing school?

Any further comments

I left school at 14. Got a SC at 40 and a degree at 50. My main motive in conducting this research is to ensure Aboriginal students unlike me get a chance to live their dreams before they are too old to enjoy them. My other motive is I believe "being Aboriginal is a reason to succeed rather than an excuse to fail".

Thank you for your time it is greatly appreciated.

Teacher Consent Form

Project Title: Skilled Uncles and Aunties Clear the Bumps on the Road to Learning

Project Researcher: Frank Pearce

I _____, have read and understood the information provided to me on the Participant Information Sheet and I agree to participate in the project **Skilled Uncles and Aunties Clear the Bumps on the Road to Learning** conducted by Frank Pearce Research student from the Faculty of Education Wollongong University. I understand that the intention of the project is to study the role and contribution of AEWs, AEAs and IEWs to improving Indigenous students' educational outcomes.

I consent to participate in interviews and/or surveys which will be recorded and transcribed and to have this data analysed by the researchers. I agree to (please tick the boxes):

- ☐ Audio recordings and written notes for transcription and analysis of myself to be reproduced as part of this research project
- ☐ For the information I provide to be reproduced in publications and presentations by the researchers

Please tick the following box if you agree to be contacted for a further interview:

- ☐ I would be interested in being interviewed in the future

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that should I no longer wish to participate in the project there will be no penalty for withdrawing and my relationship with the University of Wollongong will not be affected. I also understand that I will have the opportunity to withdraw any of my responses from the data set at any time. I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for journal articles, research reports, presentations and conferences and project promotional purposes and I consent for the collected data to be used in those manners. I understand that should I have any questions or concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted I can contact;

Eve Steinke, Ethics Officer, Office of Research, UOW; Email eves@uow.edu.au, Ph: 4221 4457

I understand that should I have any questions or concerns about this research, I can contact:

Frank Pearce
Chief Researcher
State Coordinator of Aboriginal Education
Catholic Education Commission NSW
Ph: 9287 1557 or 0417433579
Email: frank.pearce@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au

Professor Karen Malone
Supervisor, Faculty of Education
University of Wollongong
Phone: 4221 3961
Email: kmalone@uow.edu.au

Name of Research Participant (please print)

Signature

Date

Appendix 14-E



Appendix 14-E

University of Wollongong



CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

NEW SOUTH WALES
ABN 33 266 477 389

PO Box A169, Sydney South NSW 1235
9th Floor, Polding Centre, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Telephone: (02) 8287 1555 Fax: (02) 8264 6308 Email: commission@cecnew.catholic.edu.au
Website: <http://www.cecnew.catholic.edu.au>

To Other Stakeholders

If you can give me just a little of your time I think we can help to keep improving educational outcomes for the most disadvantaged students in Australia.

My name is Frank Pearce and I am the State Coordinator of Aboriginal Education for the NSW Catholic Education Commission. I am also an Aboriginal Masters in Research student at Wollongong University.

I would like to ask you to participate in a research project to gather vital evidence on the link between having an Aboriginal Education Worker working in a school and seeing improved educational outcomes for the Indigenous students.

As you probably know, Aboriginal Education Workers are not classroom teachers. They may be known under various titles, e.g. Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW), Aboriginal Education Assistant (AEA), Indigenous Education Worker (IEW) or Koori Education Workers (KEW). They may even be known as a Teachers Assistant (TA) who just happens to be Aboriginal. Within most school systems they are known as "Uncle" or "Aunty", an Aboriginal term of respect often used by the children, rather than "Mr" or "Mrs".

A while back the Dusseldorp Foundation asked me for feedback on their joint project with the Dare to Lead Program called "Same Kids Same Goals". This is centred on a formal partnership between the Principal and the Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW) Aboriginal Education Assistant (AEA), Indigenous Education Worker (IEW) or Koori Education Worker (KEW). The Dusseldorp Foundation make great contributions to the area of Aboriginal Education, because rather than more rhetoric they are actually "walking the talk".

This program and long experience with school staff, Aboriginal students and Aboriginal parents have brought home to me the great contribution Aboriginal education workers make to improving outcomes. This is largely without recognition or commensurate pay and working conditions. There are strong indications that having a well skilled Aboriginal education worker in a school does lead to significant improvements but we need to test this claim.

I seek permission to use your data as part of my Masters in Research thesis.
I enclosed a permission note at end of the survey form. The survey is anonymous. It will be sorted into stakeholder categories, eg Principal, Teacher, AEW-AEA-IEW-KEW, Parent, Student, other stakeholders. During the course of this research I may also interview those who have volunteered via the consent form.

I am interested in all comments, both positive and negative because even the negative ones will help me with formulating solutions and recommendations to any issues or misunderstandings that may exist. Two of the biggest issues being that in most cases the roles of these Indigenous workers in individual schools are extremely diverse and their community involvement role is often misunderstood on both sides.

I am planning to use this information as the topic of my Masters Degree as I believe passionately in the importance of this Indigenous role in improving Indigenous Educational outcomes.

What is the difference between a school with an AEW-AEA-IEW or KEW and one without?

"The same as the difference between schools with electricity and those without – the people in one school can see, the others are left in the dark."

These words from a principal without an Aboriginal Education Worker in his current school reinforce my passion and belief in this research project.

Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Frank Pearce -State Coordinator - Aboriginal Education CEC NSW

Please email reponses to frank.pearce@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au
Fax to 02-9264-6308 or post to PO box A169 Sydney South 1235

Aboriginal Education Workers Survey and Questionnaire FOR OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

There are many factors that contribute towards Aboriginal students achieving good education outcomes. This research study is looking specifically at the role of Aboriginal Education Workers as one of these factors. The questions below are only meant to reflect your opinions based on your experience and knowledge of Aboriginal Education Workers as one of the possible factors. Please note that the use of the word Aboriginal throughout this document is inclusive of Torres Strait Islander people. The information you provide is confidential. If you have any questions please contact Frank Pearce on 0417433579.

(OPTIONAL) Name:

Please tick the appropriate box:

Are you? Male ☐ Female ☐

How old are you? Under 18 ☐ 19-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐

50-59 ☐ 60-69 ☐ 70-79 ☐ Over 80 ☐

In what capacity are you answering this questionnaire?

Student ☐ Educator ☐ AEW ☐ Teacher ☐

Stakeholder ☐ Parent ☐ Community Member ☐

Other ☐ Please specify _____

School Type: Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Central ☐

Co-ed ☐ Boys ☐ Girls ☐

School Location: Metro ☐ Rural ☐ Remote ☐

There are two sections to the following questionnaire:

Section 1: Survey. You will be asked to respond to a statement along a five point Likkert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Please circle the correct response. For example:

1. In a school with Aboriginal students I would prefer to have an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Section 2: Open ended questions. You will be asked to provide you own comments on five open ended questions. You can write as much as you want if you run out of space please write on the back of the page making sure to identify the number of the question you are answering.

Section 1: Survey

1. In a school with Aboriginal students I would prefer to have an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

2. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff help's Aboriginal students to enjoy learning

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

3. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff helps Aboriginal students to achieve the schools expected outcomes.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

4. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff help's in developing the motivation, self esteem and aspirations of Aboriginal students.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

5. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff helps to demonstrate a school respects and values Aboriginal culture.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

6. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff helps reinforce Aboriginal student's identities.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

7. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff helps with the attendance of Aboriginal students.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

8. I believe Aboriginal students work better in the classroom when an Aboriginal Education Worker is assisting them.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

9. I believe Aboriginal students are more likely to complete school because the school has an Aboriginal Education Worker on staff.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

10. I believe if Aboriginal Education Workers were removed from schools Aboriginal students would not do as well.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Section 2: Open Ended Questionnaire

1. What role do Aboriginal Education Worker's play in assisting Aboriginal students with their learning?

2. What could Aboriginal Education Worker's do better to assist individual Aboriginal students with their learning?

3. How do Aboriginal Education Worker's involve the Aboriginal community in the schools where they assist students?

4. How can Aboriginal Education Worker's best assist you with the learning of Aboriginal students?

5. Are there any suggestions you would like to make that may assist Aboriginal Education Workers to better support Aboriginal students in completing school?

Any further comments

I left school at 14. Got a SC at 40 and a degree at 50. My major motive in conducting this research is to ensure today's Aboriginal students unlike me get the chance to live their dreams before they are too old to enjoy them. My other motive is I believe "being Aboriginal is a reason to succeed rather than an excuse not to". Thank you for your time it is greatly appreciated.

Other Stakeholder Consent Form

Project Title: Skilled Uncles and Aunties Clear the Bumps on the Road to Learning

Project Researcher: Frank Pearce

I _____, have read and understood the information provided to me on the Participant Information Sheet and I agree to participate in the project **Skilled Uncles and Aunties Clear the Bumps on the Road to Learning** conducted by Frank Pearce Research student from the Faculty of Education Wollongong University. I understand that the intention of the project is to study the role and contribution of AEWs, AEAs and IEWs to improving Indigenous students' educational outcomes.

I consent to participate in interviews and/or surveys which will be recorded and transcribed and to have this data analysed by the researchers. I agree to (please tick the boxes):

- ☐ Audio recordings and written notes for transcription and analysis of myself to be reproduced as part of this research project
- ☐ For the information I provide to be reproduced in publications and presentations by the researchers

Please tick the following box if you agree to be contacted for a further interview:

- ☐ I would be interested in being interviewed in the future

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that should I no longer wish to participate in the project there will be no penalty for withdrawing and my relationship with the University of Wollongong will not be affected. I also understand that I will have the opportunity to withdraw any of my responses from the data set at any time. I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for journal articles, research reports, presentations and conferences and project promotional purposes and I consent for the collected data to be used in those manners. I understand that should I have any questions or concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted I can contact;

Eve Steinke, Ethics Officer, Office of Research, UOW; Email eves@uow.edu.au, Ph: 4221 4457

I understand that should I have any questions or concerns about this research, I can contact:

Frank Pearce
Chief Researcher
State Coordinator of Aboriginal Education
Catholic Education Commission NSW
Ph: 9287 1557 or 0417433579
Email: frank.pearce@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au

Professor Karen Malone
Supervisor, Faculty of Education
University of Wollongong
Phone: 4221 3961
Email: kmalone@uow.edu.au

Name of Research Participant (please print)

Signature

Date

Appendix 14-F



CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

NEW SOUTH WALES
ABN 33 266 477 369

University of Wollongong



PO Box A188, Sydney South NSW 1235
9th Floor, Polding Centre, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Telephone: (02) 9267 1555 Fax: (02) 9264 6308 Email: commission@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au
Website: <http://www.cecnsw.catholic.edu.au>

To the Student

I would like to try help you and all the other Aboriginal students do well at school and go on to live your dreams.

My name is Frank Pearce and I am the State Coordinator of Aboriginal Education for the NSW Catholic Education Commission. I am also an Aboriginal Masters in Research student at Wollongong University.

I would like to ask you to help me with a research project to gather evidence that having an Aboriginal Education Worker working in a school helps Aboriginal students to do better.

As you probably know, Aboriginal Education Workers are not classroom teachers. They may be known under various titles, e.g. Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW), Aboriginal Education Assistant (AEA), Indigenous Education Worker (IEW) or Koori Education Workers (KEW). They may even be known as a Teachers Assistant (TA) who just happens to be Aboriginal. Within most school systems they are often known as "Uncle" or "Aunty", an Aboriginal term of respect often used by the children, rather than "Mr" or "Mrs".

Talking and working with Aboriginal students and Aboriginal parents have made me realise the important contributions Aboriginal Education Workers make to the success of Aboriginal students in school's.

I seek permission to use your data as part of my Masters in Research thesis.
I enclosed a permission note at end of the survey form. The survey is anonymous. It will be sorted into stakeholder categories, eg Principal, Teacher, AEW-AEA-IEW-KEW, Parent, Student, Community Member etc. During the course of this research I may also interview some of those who have volunteered via the consent form.

I am interested in all comments, both positive and negative because even the negative ones will help me with formulating solutions and recommendations to any issues or misunderstandings that may exist. Two of the biggest issues being that in most cases the roles of these Indigenous workers in individual schools are extremely diverse and their community involvement role is often misunderstood on both sides.

I am planning to use this information as the topic of my Masters Degree as I believe passionately in the importance of this Indigenous role in improving Indigenous Educational outcomes.

What is the difference between a school with an AEW-AEA-IEW or KEW and one without?

"The same as the difference between schools with electricity and those without – the people in one school can see, the others are left in the dark."

These words from a principal "without" an Aboriginal Education Worker in his current school reinforce my passion and belief in this research project.

Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Frank Pearce -State Coordinator - Aboriginal Education CEC NSW

Please email responses to frank.pearce@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au
Fax to 02-9264-6308 or post to PO box A169 Sydney South 1235

Aboriginal Education Workers Survey and Questionnaire For Students

There are many factors that contribute towards Aboriginal students achieving good education outcomes. This research study is looking specifically at the role of Aboriginal Education Workers as one of these factors. The questions below are only meant to reflect your opinions based on your experience and knowledge of Aboriginal Education Workers as one of the possible factors. Please note that the use of the word Aboriginal throughout this document is inclusive of Torres Strait Islander people. The information you provide is confidential. If you have any questions please contact Frank Pearce on 0417433579.

(OPTIONAL) Name:

Please tick the appropriate box:

Are you? Male ☐ Female ☐

How old are you? Under 18 ☐ 19-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐

50-59 ☐ 60-69 ☐ 70-79 ☐ Over 80 ☐

In what capacity are you answering this questionnaire?

Student ☐ Educator ☐ AEW ☐ Teacher ☐

Stakeholder ☐ Parent ☐ Community Member ☐

Other ☐ Please specify _____

School Type: Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Central ☐

Co-ed ☐ Boys ☐ Girls ☐

School Location: Metro ☐ Rural ☐ Remote ☐

There are two sections to the following questionnaire:

Section 1: Survey. You will be asked to respond to a statement along a five point Likkert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Please circle the correct response. For example:

1. I would prefer to attend a school with an Aboriginal Education Worker.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Section 2: Open ended questions. You will be asked to provide you own comments on five open ended questions. You can write as much as you want if you run out of space please write on the back of the page making sure to identify the number of the question you are answering.

Section 1: Survey

1. I would prefer to attend a school with an Aboriginal Education Worker.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

2. Our Aboriginal Education Worker helps me enjoy learning.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

3. Having an Aboriginal Education Worker in our school helps me to achieve the schools expected outcomes.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

4. Our Aboriginal Education Worker helps me to want to do my school work. They also help make me feel good about being Aboriginal and good about my future.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

5. I believe having an Aboriginal Education Worker shows me my school respects and values Aboriginal culture.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

6. The Aboriginal Education Worker at my school helps to make me proud to be Aboriginal.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

7. Having an Aboriginal Education Worker at my school makes me want to come to school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

8. I do better in class when the Aboriginal Education Worker is in class helping the teacher.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

9. Having an Aboriginal Education Worker at my school will help me to stay at school until I finish.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

10. If the Aboriginal Education Worker at my school was removed I wouldn't do as well.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Section 2: Open Ended Questionnaire

A. What does your Aboriginal Education worker do to help you with your school work?

B. What other things could your Aboriginal Education Worker do to help you with your learning?

C. What does your Aboriginal Education worker do to involve your community in your school?

D. How does your Aboriginal Education worker work with your teacher and parents to help you learn?

E. What are some of the things that you would like your Aboriginal Education Worker to do that would help you do better in school

Any further comments

I left school at 14. Got a SC at 40 and a degree at 50. My main motive in conducting this research is to ensure Aboriginal students unlike me get a chance to live their dreams. My other motive is I believe "being Aboriginal is a reason to succeed rather than an excuse to fail".

Thank you for your time it is greatly appreciated.

Student Consent Form

Project Title: Skilled Uncles and Aunties Clear the Bumps on the Road to Learning

Project Researcher: Frank Pearce

I _____, have read and understood the information provided to me on the Participant Information Sheet and I agree to participate in the project **Skilled Uncles and Aunties Clear the Bumps on the Road to Learning** conducted by Frank Pearce Research student from the Faculty of Education Wollongong University. I understand that the intention of the project is to study the role and contribution of AEWs, AEAs and IEWs to improving Indigenous students' educational outcomes.

I consent to participate in interviews and/or surveys which will be recorded and transcribed and to have this data analysed by the researchers. I agree to (please tick the boxes):

- ☐ Audio recordings and written notes for transcription and analysis of myself to be reproduced as part of this research project
- ☐ For the information I provide to be reproduced in publications and presentations by the researchers

Please tick the following box if you agree to be contacted for a further interview:

- ☐ I would be interested in being interviewed in the future

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that should I no longer wish to participate in the project there will be no penalty for withdrawing and my relationship with the University of Wollongong will not be affected. I also understand that I will have the opportunity to withdraw any of my responses from the data set at any time. I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for journal articles, research reports, presentations and conferences and project promotional purposes and I consent for the collected data to be used in those manners. I understand that should I have any questions or concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted I can contact;

Eve Steinke, Ethics Officer, Office of Research, UOW; Email eves@uow.edu.au, Ph: 4221 4457

I understand that should I have any questions or concerns about this research, I can contact:

Frank Pearce
Chief Researcher
State Coordinator of Aboriginal Education
Catholic Education Commission NSW
Ph: 9287 1557 or 0417433579
Email: frank.pearce@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au

Professor Karen Malone
Supervisor, Faculty of Education
University of Wollongong
Phone: 4221 3961
Email: kmalone@uow.edu.au

Name of Research Participant (please print)

Signature

Date

Appendix 15-A

From:

Sent: Wednesday, 17 February 2010 5:02 PM

To: Frank Pearce

Subject: RE: Your assistance please

Dear Frank,

We will be happy to help. First of all, I have listed a few references at the end of my email that should be useful, particularly Goddard & Anderson. **There is nothing to my knowledge on the effectiveness of AIEOs in improving the educational outcomes of Indigenous students, at least in terms of improved performance in tests, etc. However, qualitative studies may suggest otherwise.**

We used Survey Monkey to carry out a survey of AIEOs, principals and teachers on the efficacy of the program, and will be submitting our report next month. You should be able to get a copy then. We relied fairly heavily on the contract for the research for our guiding questions and on Goddard and Anderson for items in the survey.

Hope this is of help for starters.

Regards,

Professor?

Centre for Indigenous Australian Knowledge's
Edith Cowan University

Buckskin, P. and B. Hignett (1994). ARA Kuwaritjakutu Project: Towards a new way: Stages 1 & 2. A research project into the working conditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workers. south Melbourne, Australian Education Union: 118.

Department of Education and Training (2008). Culture strong, career proud: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategy. D. o. E. a. Training. Perth, Department of Education and Training.

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Goddard, D. and S. Anderson (1998). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers (AIEWs) research. Mt Lawley, Simpson Norris Pty Ltd & Manguri Corporation.

Ministerial Review of Schooling in Rural Western Australia (1994). Schooling in rural Western Australia. Perth, Education Department of Western Australia.

National Inquiry into Rural and Remote Education (2000). Recommendations. Sydney, National Inquiry into Rural and Remote Education.



APPENDIX 16-A

CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION NEW SOUTH WALES

ABN 33 266 477 369

PO Box A169, Sydney South NSW 1235

To the Deputy Prime Minister Hon Julia Gillard

Dear Julia,

I hope you and your family are well.

On a number of previous occasions when I have written to you on issues relating to Aboriginal Education I have highlighted the outstanding contribution Aboriginal Education Workers (AEW'S) make to improving Indigenous outcomes.

Over the last 10 years or so I have come across a number of people including researchers, academics and senior public servants both Aboriginal and non Aboriginal who believe Aboriginal Education Workers do little to improve Indigenous outcomes .

I believe so passionately that they are an essential part of closing the educational gap that I have based my Masters Degree on proving this. This is proving a difficult task as there appears to be little prior research on this subject. The research is not trying to prove they are the sole factor in improving Indigenous outcomes but they play a very important part.

Really I suppose it is not much different to proving that teacher's play a very large role in improving educational outcomes but there are also many other factors that contribute to good outcomes.

In relation to AEWs I also believe that although pedagogy and many other things in education have changed many times over in the last 40 years the role of Aboriginal Education Workers has remained frozen in time for many reasons. I believe that this role now and in the future needs to be a paraprofessional role. It also needs to have commensurate pay and conditions rather than the hotch potch of part time work that seems to be the norm.

Firstly and most importantly I am hoping that my research will prove that Aboriginal Education Workers are an essential part of improving Indigenous outcomes.

Secondly I am hoping to identify the generic skills required for an Aboriginal Education Worker to become a paraprofessional taking into account that each Aboriginal community may require additional skills.

I will also be trying to develop the type of training courses needed for Aboriginal Education Workers to meet the challenges of today's classrooms.

Although due to time constraints the majority of this research will be conducted across NSW Catholic schools I am hoping to include a much wider sample in relation to the Principals survey. Also at a later date I am hoping to expand on this research topic.

This Masters taking into account my ever increasing workload and some very personal issues over the last few years has proved very difficult. However as I firmly believe that "being Aboriginal is a reason to succeed rather than an excuse to fail " it will be completed. ¹⁰⁵

I have enclosed my proposed surveys for Students, Principals, Teachers, Parents and other stakeholders.

Yours sincerely
Frank Pearce

State Coordinator Aboriginal Education
NSW CEC

21/06/2009

Appendix 17-A



CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION NEW SOUTH WALES

ABN 33 266 477 369
PO Box A169, Sydney South NSW 1235
Level 9, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Telephone: (02) 9287 1555 Fax: (02) 9284 6308

To the Prime Minister Hon Kevin Rudd

Dear Kevin ,

I hope you and your family are well.

On a number of previous occasions when I have written to you on issues relating to Aboriginal Education I have highlighted the outstanding contribution Aboriginal Education Workers (AEW'S) make to improving Indigenous outcomes.

Over the last 10 years or so I have come across a number of people including researchers, academics and senior public servants both Aboriginal and non Aboriginal who believe Aboriginal Education Workers do little to improve Indigenous outcomes .

I believe so passionately that they are an essential part of closing the educational gap that I have based my Masters Degree on proving this. This is proving a difficult task as there appears to be little prior research on this subject. The research is not trying to prove they are the sole factor in improving Indigenous outcomes but they play a very important part.

Really I suppose it is not much different to proving that teacher's play a very large role in improving educational outcomes but there are also many other factors that contribute to good outcomes.

In relation to AEWs I also believe that although pedagogy and many other things in education have changed many times over in the last 40 years the role of Aboriginal Education Workers has remained frozen in time for many reasons. I believe that this role now and in the future needs to be a paraprofessional role. It also needs to have commensurate pay and conditions rather than the hotch potch of part time work that seems to be the norm.

Firstly and most importantly I am hoping that my research will prove that Aboriginal Education Workers are an essential part of improving Indigenous outcomes.

Secondly I am hoping to identify the generic skills required for an Aboriginal Education Worker to become a paraprofessional taking into account that each Aboriginal community may require additional skills.

I will also be trying to develop the type of training courses needed for Aboriginal Education Workers to meet the challenges of today's classrooms.

Although due to time constraints the majority of this research will be conducted across NSW Catholic schools I am hoping to include a much wider sample in relation to the Principals survey. Also at a later date I am hoping to expand on this research topic.

This Masters taking into account my ever increasing workload and some very personal issues over the last few years has proved very difficult. However as I firmly believe that " being Aboriginal is a reason to succeed rather than an excuse to fail " it will be completed. 107

I have enclosed my proposed surveys for Students, Principals, Teachers, Parents and other stakeholders.

Yours sincerely
Frank Pearce

State Coordinator Aboriginal Education
NSW CEC
21/6/2011



APPENDIX 18-A

Catholic Education Commission NSW

Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee

Minutes of the 53rd Meeting

Friday 18th March, 2011
9.30 am to 3.30 pm

Present:	Sharon Cooke	<i>Chairperson</i>
	Frank Pearce	<i>CEC NSW Executive Officer</i>
	Karen Andriske	<i>CEC Bathurst</i>
	Denise Kelly	<i>CEC Bathurst</i>
	Dave Ella	<i>CSO Broken Bay</i>
	Kerry O'Callaghan	<i>CEO Canberra/Goulburn</i>
	Doreen Flanders	<i>CEO Lismore</i>
	Louise Campbell	<i>CSO Maitland/Newcastle</i>
	Margaret Harrison	<i>CEO Parramatta</i>
	Jane Bridges	<i>CEO Sydney/Archdiocese</i>
	Lisa Buxton	<i>CEO Sydney/Archdiocese</i>
	Karen Gardiner	<i>CSO Wagga Wagga</i>
	Merindah Wilson	<i>CEO Wilcannia/Forbes</i>
	Karan Taylor	<i>CEO Wollongong</i>
	Julianne Manson	<i>Congregational Schools</i>

Visitors:

Apologies:



53.0 Acknowledgement of Country & Prayer Introduction

53.1 Minutes & Business Arising 46.3 -

53.2 Discussion on how to improve student outcomes in areas of attendance, retention, SC and HSC attainments (For Frank's thesis on AEWs)

10 Areas critical to improving the areas of areas of attendance, retention, SC and HSC attainments were identified. These were:

Aboriginal student wellbeing, attendance, retention, engagement, identity, parental involvement, supportive school environment, supportive home environment, relevant curriculum and motivation.

What AEWs are currently doing to address these 10 areas?

Wellbeing

Assistance provided by Catholic AEWs in the area of student wellbeing falls into the three broad areas of Pastoral care, school environment, and parental/ community involvement in a students learning.

Firstly Pastoral care for Aboriginal students is provided in consultation with Diocesan Aboriginal advisors, AEWs, parents and school staff. In this area AEWs take a personal individual interest in each student. Because of their own life experiences and community connection they are very attuned to the students, their issues, their educational difficulties and in a lot of cases any emotional difficulties they may be experiencing. Often it is literally just the presence of an Aboriginal face that boosts the wellbeing of an Aboriginal student that may be a little low emotionally. Having an AEW in a school to an Aboriginal student is like having an Uncle or Auntie in a school that they can turn to in their time of need either educationally or emotionally.

Secondly in the area of school environment, AEWs keep teachers informed as to any problems a student or their family may be experiencing. This allows the teacher to be proactive rather than reactive. This is particularly so in relation to the student and family experiencing Sorry Business (bereavement) which sadly in Aboriginal families and communities is a frequent occurrence and they are feeling. They are also of great assistance in classroom in interpreting the teacher's instructions and often the curriculum into a language more relevant to the Aboriginal students.

Thirdly and most importantly Aboriginal parents are the first educators of their children so it is vital they are involved in a meaningful, consultative, consistent way in their child's education. This is one of the most important

roles AEWs carry out, not just on a school day basis, but after hours and on weekends in the Catholic schools Aboriginal communities across NSW. Their unofficial roles in most cases outweigh heavily those set out in their job descriptions. Often the partnerships between Aboriginal communities and schools are disjointed and in some cases non-existent. AEWs are the link between schools, students, parents and communities. In schools they are the advocates for students, parents, and communities. In the communities they are the advocate for schools and the value of education.

Attendance

In general AEWs visit schools and pre-schools and regularly to talk to principals and school staff regarding attendance. They ring parents and follow up any concerns from classroom teachers/Contact Teacher. They also monitor student's attendance on a daily basis in the schools that they work in. Schools that they are not based in are reviewed at the end of each Term.

AEWs are aware if there is an issue with attendance and make it their business to find out what the issues are and then support the student and family to address the issues. Sometimes just the presence of an AEW in a school improves the attendance of students as they have a part of their "family" in the school and taking part in their learning.

Identity

Filling in the gaps in a student's identity is a crucial role of AEWs which at times can be very challenging for student, AEW and in some case parents. It is however essential as a strong identity greatly helps with student motivation to learn.

In general NSW Catholic AEWs assist students to know their mob; work with schools to include an Aboriginal focus throughout the year, not just special days/dates. Awards Evenings are used to showcase the achievements of Aboriginal students. Community Involvement in these events raises awareness of being proud to be Aboriginal. The AEWs play a vital role in these Awards nights. They are a community presence who promote identity and give students a sense of who they are and that they belong somewhere. They are often the key to a student wanting to find out about whom they are and where they come from.

Sometimes the literal "black face" notion comes into play here where the students can identify with an AEW in a cultural way but in the school environment.

AEWs are responsible for keeping Aboriginal knowledge and culture on the schools agenda at all times and through this a strong Aboriginal student identity will follow.

Engagement

AEWs assist classroom teachers to include Aboriginal perspectives that make it relevant for students. Aboriginal Teachers and AEWs studying to be teachers support Aboriginal students in the classroom with individual learning plans. AEWs often have a deeper understanding of how Indigenous students learn and are able to make learning more relevant and encourage students to achieve to the best of their ability.

Some AEWs are used for crowd control but also they are using a very traditional form of discipline that is culturally respected by the students. AEWs usually know the students families and have a strong link with the community and this flows into the classrooms and gives students the capacity to engage in their learning through the support of the AEW, who makes it a less demanding process.

Retention

In the area of retention AEWS in some diocese work with schools to develop pathways for students to Uni/CIT". They are a vital part of Residential Leadership Workshops that are held for students Years 6 – 12 each year. AEWs tutor students at a dedicated Indigenous Education Unit at no cost to families. They also work in schools to encourage and support students to stay at school through various programs e.g. Lighthouse mentoring program. AEWs support the students with direction in educational choices and are role models that support and value education and give positive messages to students that education is important. They give relevance to why you need a good education.

Maintenance is more the issue in some highly Aboriginal populated schools where the AEWs play a pivotal role in sustaining students to finish school. One diocese has no secondary schools but their primary schools still face retention issues due to poor attendance, therefore AEWs have to work hard to maintain enrolments.

Parental Involvement

AEWs in some diocese implement various Literacy programs at home with the parents such as, Pause, Prompt and Praise, Bridging the Gap early Literacy Program. There are also in some instances Community Liaison staff that assist families to liaise with the schools and various community organisations.

AEWs make phone calls to parents/carers, write newsletters / flyers for parents/ carers, organise Aboriginal Education parent information sessions. In some instances they make home visits to talk with parents/ carers. AEWs often organise morning teas with the staff and parents/ carers, and meet with parents/ classroom teachers to discuss students learning needs. They also consult Indigenous parents about any new programs that involve their children and in some instances a DVD is put together and sent home for the parents/carers. AEWs inform parents about what is happening at the school, encourage them to be involved, although not always successfully; attend meetings with other agencies with parents.

Supportive School Environment

Within schools AEWs advocate for Aboriginal students as well as making staff more culturally aware which helps create a supportive environment for Aboriginal students. They are the significant other that Aboriginal students can turn to in time of need.

Supportive Home Environment

AEWs engage with Aboriginal parents to ensure Aboriginal students are supported in their learning at home. As literacy and numeracy can at times also be an issue for some Aboriginal parents, AEWs also often assist parents to be able to better assist their child with their learning.

Relevant Curriculum

AEWs in classrooms often act as virtual interpreters converting what a teacher has said into a more relevant form for Aboriginal students. They are also often involved both in the classroom and the school in adding an Aboriginal perspective across the curriculum.

Motivation

AEWs by supporting the students and their families, bringing relevance to the Aboriginal students learning; providing constant encouragement to them, constantly reinforce student motivation. They are also in general great role models. Just their presence in a classroom motivates some Aboriginal students. The AEWs own enthusiasm for education and positive role modelling they present is also a great motivation for "all" students.

All additional feedback to be emailed to Frank by 28th March

Appendix 19-A

Does Having an AEW on Staff Influence Enrolments?

Sydney Aboriginal Advisor

From my experience without a doubt the presence of an AEW at a school is a major factor in Aboriginal parents enrolling their children.

In Sydney I believe the numbers speak for themselves - OLMC Waterloo 90 students at last count, St Andrew's Malabar 30 students, and OLSH Kensington 25, the only schools in the eastern region of Sydney that have full time AEWs.

Tasmanian School Principal

I'm sure that having an AEW's who connects with the community assists in building connections between schools and families and is an important component in building trust. In Tasmania we also have AEYLOs (Aboriginal Early Years Liaison Officers) whose brief is to link families of pre- school age children to school and assist in Birth-4 programs. I suspect having Aboriginal workers at a school may help with enrolments but more importantly assists with relationship building between home, community and school.

School Principal Campbelltown Girls School

Yes I would say yes the presence of an active and engaging AEW does positively influence the interest in Aboriginal enrolments. They must have a profile though and be involved in the school community.

We have had situations where aboriginal families will talk to the AEW first and even make an appointment to meet the AEW unbeknownst to the registrar before they approach the school for an enrolment package.

The AEW therefore needs to know the school and feel they have some impact on the education for the students there.

Ex AEW X Boarding School

Hi Frank, YES. I have had the parents tell me to my face that they only let the boys go to X Boarding School because I was there. It was very up lifting to me as the AEW at the time. It made me think that I was doing something good. Anne was the Grandmother to about 5-6 boys at the time when she and her daughter told me this.

Jeff McMullen

Regarding your question, YES, I STRONGLY BELIEVE that having an AEW can heavily influence parents on where to enrol their child or children.

The visibility of AEWs in a school system reassures the family that the child might not be pressured in any way to pass off identity as someone else, to avoid any perceived or real discomfort in the school.

This same issue surfaces in health and education choice. Parents prefer an institution or service where they know an Aboriginal person is far more likely to understand them and have empathy.

I don't have proof but have had families tell them they prefer to have an AEW to communicate with and explain many things around the school.

Aboriginal Advisor Bathurst

I strongly believe that:

- In most cases Aboriginal parents hear (from local grapevine) about who is at the school and they like what they hear
- Parents hear from other parents about what the school has to offer their child either by the discipline methods (fairness), results of academic performance, the AEW present is really helpful, easier to talk to and supportive and a direct link to parents
- Parents feel comfortable with sensitive and personal issues being treated by another Aboriginal person who has that first on hand understanding
- Parents know that their children won't feel 'shame' on issues or circumstances that warrant a shame feeling
- Parents also know that their children will be cared for in a respectful manner
- They know that their children do not feel threatened while another Aboriginal person is present
- Parents and students appreciate the support that is being offered
- When students feel like 'yukkie' and 'down' they know that the AEW will be there to chat
- Having an AEW at a school assists the improvement of their literacy and numeracy development because the students receives one-to-one assistance as well as group work on a regular basis

Aboriginal Education Advisor

I do believe that an AEW based at our schools can provide the impetus for parents to enrol in our schools and only if that AEW is part of the relationships network. If the AEW isn't then parents become despondent. However I do have those AEWS who are extremely active in what they do at schools. In most of my schools where I have AEWS the enrolments have increased and in particular I have one that has increased twofold. (I can prove using this school that your question can be answered)

I think the reasons are these:

- Passion about what they do.

- They have the children's best interests at heart.
- They offer a 'tough love' stance e.g. trying to stay away from the welfare mentality.
- They inform students about their culture and identity and the good things that come from that.
- They seek the local elders to support them in the school and the AEWs in turn provide the elders and parents support to build their capacity to support what the school is doing for the students. A two way flow of support.
- The AEWs see that their roles are valued by the school staff and especially the leadership team so they support the AEWs by providing PD opportunities, cultural leave times and so on that are not normally part of the leave process.
- Everyone is working towards implementing their Aboriginal education plan by meeting regularly and keeping on the pulse with all the strategies of the plan. When the results are in then parents begin to see that this school would be good for their child and wallah that start to enrol.

I believe it all comes down to the person and what that person can bring to the position. As well I think that the AEW needs to be in the network of relationships and that they are valued and they value others in the network.

These are just some of the reasons why the student numbers have increased at one particular school and I do believe it is because of the AEW. I am just letting you know the characteristics of this particular AEW and what she does in her role at the school. She is dynamite.

National Schools coordinator Dare to Lead

Two answers

Firstly absolutely believe that AEWs do attract enrolments to schools over those that don't - have been told that in snapshots especially in those states, sectors where AEWs are rare e.g. Tasmania, Vic Catholics etc. (don't have written evidence of this just have heard it anecdotally often Secondly I have heard from parents on many occasions they left a particular school because of an AEWs inability to work with community or support their kids, their effectiveness in the role being the main issue - lots of possibilities as to the validity of these claims as I'm sure you are aware. Once again I don't have written evidence as you are always told this outside of the snapshot report

Reckon it brings up two things

Are AEWs trained and prepared for the job Secondly the intense pressure to work in and between two worlds

CEC Aboriginal Commissioner

In my experience I have found families do go where there is an AEW particularly a very active AEW OR where the AEW is a respected elder of the community

Michelle Seinor| Aboriginal Liaison Officer|Teacher

Hi Frank

Here is my take on your question

Do you believe or in fact have proof that having an Aboriginal Education Worker in a school influences Aboriginal parents to enrol their children in that school?

Having an Aboriginal education Officer at the school does influence Aboriginal parents to enrol their children but I have also found that it is important for the school to support the Aboriginal Worker to retain the parents and the students and that the school relies solely on the Aboriginal Worker to look after anything Aboriginal and takes relieving them of any responsibility. I have had many staff direct any problems with Aboriginal students as my problem.

I have also had parents approach me thanking me for being at the school and asking or suggesting ideas regarding: inclusion of cultural events at the school Along with asking questions relating to specific learning needs and cultural needs and why aren't these being addressed in the classroom.

Unfortunately not all staff are willing to take these suggestions on board (as I can only pass the messages on) and hinder both learning outcomes and students needs/relationships. I have found this lack of interaction formulates to the in attendance of Aboriginal students within the school. Allot of the students and parents unhappy not with the Aboriginal Worker but the school's lack of doing anything and many defect to the public school system.

Aboriginal Education Worker within the Catholic system in a necessity but so is support from school and staff.

Hope this helps with your question

Principal Rural High School

Definitely. It doesn't guarantee enrolments in a non-Government school for there are other factors that come into play as well, such as cost, distance, etc, but it certainly helps.

Appendix 20-A

Are More Aboriginal Students Identifying Because of AEWs?

Tasmania Dare to Leader State Rep

Certainly through the snapshot process we have had a number of students and some staff who have identified themselves as Aboriginal during the process. Also anecdotally a number of schools where it feels 'safer' now have seen a small increase in identification- I agree it would be difficult to add into a thesis though!

Not sure if this is helpful at all- but at least confirmation from another jurisdiction! Take care, and happy writing!

Cheers

Jan ☐

Head of DE WA Aboriginal Education

Yes we are seeing it here As well.

Bruce Roper

Manager, Aboriginal Education

Aboriginal Education Directorate

Phone: 08 92645317

Mobile: 0438 960 866

Ex Catholic Aboriginal Education Advisor

The issue is not so much lately identifying but living as an Aboriginal person who is known in the community. I run across many people who suddenly identify because they think identifying will give them an easier ride. **Identifying isn't about grandfather being a black fella etc. but about the self perception of the individual.** I ask the following questions of people suddenly identifying:

- What does identifying mean to them?

- What is their knowledge of their family history? (Knowing a family member is Aboriginal does not automatically give them an Aboriginal identity.)
- How would identifying change their lives?

Call it my suspicious mind but too many people are coming out of the wood work when they think it will benefit them.

Aboriginal Education Advisor Congregational Schools

Yeah, most of mine identify, although some choose not to (or more often it's their parents that choose not to, due to their own past bad treatment within the school system).... but you could say it's happening that more Aboriginal people are identifying due to social changes . Reconciliation, but it's just 'anecdotal evidence' from your Aboriginal advisors & AEW's.

AEW Campbelltown Catholic High School

Since my employment at this school i have had an increase of students identifying as Aboriginal, this was also confirmed by Elders in our community...

They tell me they always wanted to identify but didn't feel comfortable in doing so until their parents and themselves where informed of the Aboriginal officer. Due to my close relationship with community the elders and parents confirmed of such and our Aboriginal students have grown from 2007 = 4 and in 2011 =24 the Aboriginal students are grateful of someone whom they can approach and are excited when we run Aboriginal programs that include culture and curriculum learning in both worlds..

There's some proof for you... not only have our numbers increased but we have more and more inquiries about scholarships and programs that we run for Aboriginal students...

Jeff McMullen

From anecdotal experience, yes this is happening both in schools and workplaces.

Two decades of Reconciliation has contributed but the appearance of more AEWs and other Indigenous success stories in education has made it more secure for young people to ask about their identity. For instance, at recent Indigenous Summer schools I have attended, many of the Year 10, 11 kids told me that they had only recently clearly established their family heritage to the point where they could talk aloud about it. Many of these children were of mixed family lines that had made it difficult for them to know the whole story.

It is also common in the public service and in large firms such as Australian Post where many have never been confident enough to identify openly as Aboriginal.
regards,
Jeff

Manager of Aboriginal Programs Large Rural Boarding School

This would definitely be true in our community both at our school and the local public high school and even in Primary school. There is more acceptance of Aboriginality even to the point where it almost a status issue. As schools we encourage students to self identify and have a very active AECG group (Aboriginal Education Consultative Group) in the Forbes Area that regularly gets 20 people to our meetings. Here we discuss any new opportunities for Aboriginal students, assistance that is required or available or even what we are doing as schools to cater for the students. It has become a bit of healthy competition to think of innovative ideas to support our students which flows onto to other cultures. I feel educationally we are in an exciting period for all students that will benefit in particular Aboriginal students as we are making more of an effort to understand the different learning styles of all cultures which in turn helps how all students learn. Quite often the changes you make for one culture definitely advantage more than just that particular target audience (it works the same for students with disabilities) catering for visual thinkers helps other students whom you have not identified as such but may be.

Food for thought

By the way we have 95 Aboriginal students at our school and a new but very innovative Aboriginal Worker who has a Cert 3 in Aboriginal studies and has taught Wiradjuri at TAFE. Our whole Learning Support focus is dealing on needs of all students with a particular emphasis on Aboriginal education (3 learning support staff also work with Aboriginal students on a day to day basis in addition to Karen) Mavis retired last year but still has input into the school as she is a great community asset.

Diocese Aboriginal Education Advisor

In my experience I think 2 things may be contributing to our increasing enrolments:

- 1) Strong, proactive and valued AEWs who can navigate their way through the politics of the school system as well as their local communities; and
- 2) Making a conscious decision to move Aboriginal Education out of Special Ed and keeping it within our Learning and Curriculum Team

Diocese Aboriginal Education Advisor

This depends on the situation at the time. My people are identifying because Yr. 12 students come forward when they go to apply for university and they want the help and dollars, the students and parents suddenly believe that by coming out there is instant money for them or their child, scholarships to help them if they are Indigenous, they need laptops, tutoring or get out of class to go on cultural

experiences or something that would benefit them, get cost of excursions, uniforms or school fees waived because they are Indigenous, one of the two parents don't want them to identify until it suits them or they are ashamed of their Aboriginality.

I know this sounds negative but it happens all the time to me and the schools that I am involved with.

Appendix 21-A

Year	HasaEW	Indgt107	Indgt108	Indgt109	Indgt110	Indgt111	Indgt112	7 to 12	8 to 12	9 to 12	10 to 12	11 to 12	7 to 10	8 to 10	9 to 10
1999 No		36	37	22	26	15	7								
1999 Yes		41	44	41	29	20	8					120.0%			136.4%
2000 No		41	46	39	30	18	18					110.0%			102.4%
2000 Yes		50	53	47	42	28	22								
2001 No		53	38	44	45	7	14				53.8%	77.8%		121.6%	115.4%
2001 Yes		58	49	49	51	19	20				69.0%	76.9%		115.9%	108.5%
2002 No		66	53	44	34	22	6			27.3%	20.0%	85.7%	94.4%	73.9%	77.3%
2002 Yes		67	54	47	43	27	14			34.1%	33.3%	73.7%	104.9%	81.1%	87.8%
2003 No		63	50	45	34	17	18			48.6%	46.2%	81.8%	82.9%	89.5%	77.3%
2003 Yes		60	68	50	38	28	21			47.7%	44.7%	77.8%	78.0%	79.6%	83.0%
2004 No		103	77	72	42	11	24			33.3%	27.3%	70.6%	79.2%	93.3%	93.3%
2004 Yes		102	71	82	51	17	12			58.5%	26.1%	85.7%	87.9%	94.4%	102.0%
2005 No		90	110	67	61	19	9			49.0%	55.8%	81.8%	92.4%	122.0%	84.7%
2005 Yes		88	107	74	69	38	13			22.0%	23.7%	82.9%	103.0%	100.0%	84.1%
2006 No		96	82	106	69	25	15			26.0%	26.5%	76.5%	103.0%	100.0%	103.0%
2006 Yes		104	88	99	68	41	32			28.3%	33.3%	78.9%	109.5%	89.6%	103.0%
2007 No		86	86	74	88	41	27			55.2%	59.3%	84.2%	113.3%	95.8%	91.9%
2007 Yes		101	105	84	88	43	35			54.0%	37.5%	108.0%	85.4%	80.0%	83.0%
2008 No		73	77	68	59	50	34			52.2%	50.7%	85.4%	86.3%	82.2%	88.9%
2008 Yes		123	107	106	86	54	40			44.2%	44.3%	92.9%	97.7%	64.1%	102.4%
2009 No		89	80	75	62	46	45			54.1%	58.8%	93.0%	97.7%	72.1%	91.2%
2009 Yes		179	124	107	96	59	45			43.7%	40.9%	90.0%	64.6%	91.4%	90.6%
2010 No		84	87	68	71	66	40			44.1%	42.1%	83.3%	92.3%	92.2%	94.7%
2010 Yes		127	165	116	94	76	42			44.4%	43.5%	87.0%	82.6%	92.2%	87.9%

SECONDARY METROPOLITAN

Year	HasAEW	IndigT07	IndigT08	IndigT09	IndigT10	IndigT11	IndigT12	7 to 12	8 to 12	9 to 12	10 to 12	11 to 12	7 to 10	8 to 10	9 to 10
1999 No		89	66	65	54	33	39								
1999 Yes		16	13	11	8	6	1								
2000 No		84	95	65	72	40	34					103.0%			110.8%
2000 Yes		29	20	17	17	4	6					100.0%			154.5%
2001 No		106	86	91	77	46	37					68.5%		116.7%	118.5%
2001 Yes		21	27	17	16	7	4					50.0%		123.1%	94.1%
2002 No		112	93	88	87	43	44					100.0%		123.1%	94.1%
2002 Yes		15	21	24	22	8	5					67.7%		123.1%	94.1%
2003 No		120	101	89	81	63	49					61.1%		123.1%	94.1%
2003 Yes		24	19	21	22	20	9					29.4%		123.1%	94.1%
2004 No		86	118	99	81	59	55					71.4%		123.1%	94.1%
2004 Yes		24	25	18	18	10	9					95.7%		123.1%	94.1%
2005 No		85	80	100	77	69	54					97.8%		123.1%	94.1%
2005 Yes		34	39	32	20	10	10					137.5%		123.1%	94.1%
2006 No		103	95	73	107	60	57					110.0%		123.1%	94.1%
2006 Yes		31	36	31	32	10	8					89.2%		123.1%	94.1%
2007 No		96	110	102	86	89	51					133.3%		123.1%	94.1%
2007 Yes		34	32	35	33	18	10					102.3%		123.1%	94.1%
2008 No		113	96	119	104	69	82					109.5%		123.1%	94.1%
2008 Yes		39	34	30	28	25	17					82.4%		123.1%	94.1%
2009 No		133	119	109	121	80	69					117.5%		123.1%	94.1%
2009 Yes		48	47	29	30	16	19					96.8%		123.1%	94.1%
2010 No		146	141	125	111	89	69					115.6%		123.1%	94.1%
2010 Yes		61	52	46	27	21	15					79.4%		123.1%	94.1%

Appendix 21-B

Appendix 21-C

SECONDARY OVERALL

Year	HasA/EW	IndigT07	IndigT08	IndigT09	IndigT10	IndigT11	IndigT12	7 to 12	8 to 12	9 to 12	10 to 12	11 to 12	7 to 10	8 to 10	9 to 10
1999 No		125	103	87	80	48	46								
1999 Yes		57	57	52	37	26	9								
2000 No		125	141	104	102	68	52					108.3%			117.2%
2000 Yes		79	73	64	59	30	28					107.7%			113.5%
2001 No		159	124	135	122	53	51					63.8%		118.4%	117.3%
2001 Yes		78	76	66	67	26	24					80.0%		117.5%	104.7%
2002 No		178	146	132	121	65	50					94.3%		85.8%	89.6%
2002 Yes		82	75	71	65	35	19					96.8%		85.8%	89.6%
2003 No		183	151	134	115	80	67					73.1%		89.0%	98.5%
2003 Yes		84	88	71	61	48	30					103.1%		92.0%	87.1%
2004 No		189	186	171	123	70	67					85.7%		80.3%	85.9%
2004 Yes		126	96	100	69	27	33					77.2%		84.2%	91.8%
2005 No		185	190	167	138	88	63					68.8%		92.0%	97.2%
2005 Yes		122	146	106	89	48	23					90.0%		91.4%	80.7%
2006 No		198	167	179	176	85	72					85.2%		101.1%	89.0%
2006 Yes		135	124	130	100	51	40					81.8%		89.8%	105.4%
2007 No		182	166	176	176	130	78					83.3%		104.2%	94.3%
2007 Yes		135	137	119	121	62	45					91.8%		92.6%	98.3%
2008 No		186	173	187	163	119	116					88.2%		82.9%	93.1%
2008 Yes		162	141	136	114	79	57					89.2%		87.2%	92.6%
2009 No		222	190	184	183	126	114					91.9%		91.9%	95.8%
2009 Yes		227	171	136	126	75	64					92.0%		93.4%	97.9%
2010 No		230	228	193	182	155	109					81.0%		92.0%	92.6%
2010 Yes		188	217	162	121	97	57					86.5%		105.2%	98.9%
								46.7%	46.0%	47.9%	50.0%	76.0%	89.5%	85.8%	89.0%

Appendix 21-D

PRIMARY REMOTE

Year	HasAEW	IndigT00	IndigT01	IndigT02	IndigT03	IndigT04	IndigT05	IndigT06	K to 6	1 to 6	2 to 6	3 to 6	4 to 6	5 to 6
1999 No		0	2	1	1	0	1	0						
1999 Yes		69	39	43	33	29	15	18						100.0%
2000 No		2	1	2	1	1	1	1						100.0%
2000 Yes		53	50	40	32	34	34	23						153.3%
2001 No		2	2	0	2	1	1	0						0.0%
2001 Yes		52	44	50	30	30	27	32						#DIV/0!
2002 No		3	2	2	1	2	2	1						110.3%
2002 Yes		46	43	52	36	29	31	20						94.1%
2003 No		0	3	1	3	0	2	1						100.0%
2003 Yes		52	46	41	30	33	28	24						60.6%
2004 No		1	0	2	1	0	0	2						58.8%
2004 Yes		38	42	44	22	28	30	28						75.0%
2005 No		2	0	0	1	0	1	0						80.0%
2005 Yes		53	38	45	26	23	26	28						77.4%
2006 No		1	1	1	0	1	1	0						100.0%
2006 Yes		41	44	37	24	22	17	25						100.0%
2007 No		1	2	1	1	0	1	1						96.2%
2007 Yes		37	42	40	24	20	23	22						96.2%
2008 No		0	2	1	2	1	0	1						100.0%
2008 Yes		42	39	36	35	21	17	22						129.4%
2009 No		0	0	3	3	1	1	0						100.0%
2009 Yes		37	45	37	27	33	23	17						95.7%
2010 No		4	0	1	2	3	1	1						100.0%
2010 Yes		42	35	39	31	25	24	25						100.0%
									#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
									32.7%	40.5%	37.8%	70.8%	85.0%	100.0%
									100.0%	#DIV/0!	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
									65.8%	65.8%	67.5%	104.2%	119.0%	108.7%

Appendix 21-E

PRIMARY REGIONAL

Year	HasAEW	IndigT00	IndigT01	IndigT02	IndigT03	IndigT04	IndigT05	IndigT06	K to 6	1 to 6	2 to 6	3 to 6	4 to 6	5 to 6
1999 No		44	60	47	40	40	36	33						
1999 Yes		75	72	73	67	73	60	59						91.7%
2000 No		56	49	57	51	42	51	33						111.7%
2000 Yes		81	75	82	84	76	69	67					130.0%	102.0%
2001 No		58	59	53	53	46	43	52					101.4%	107.2%
2001 Yes		80	93	66	94	85	82	74						
2002 No		83	59	67	84	61	52	45						
2002 Yes		88	75	97	76	98	82	81				112.5%	107.1%	104.7%
2003 No		77	64	58	71	69	62	53			112.8%	120.9%	106.6%	98.8%
2003 Yes		100	97	85	89	71	89	85			116.4%	101.2%	115.2%	101.9%
2004 No		70	70	65	55	67	77	68		113.3%	119.3%	101.2%	100.0%	103.7%
2004 Yes		105	98	108	83	99	72	85		118.1%	103.7%	128.3%	111.5%	109.7%
2005 No		86	72	65	72	69	79	79	179.5%	161.2%	149.1%	123.4%	85.9%	95.5%
2005 Yes		120	109	98	104	89	93	71	94.7%	94.7%	107.6%	93.4%	114.5%	102.6%
2006 No		90	90	78	68	75	72	74	132.1%	125.4%	110.4%	104.2%	100.0%	98.6%
2006 Yes		110	111	117	95	115	95	91	112.3%	97.8%	93.8%	102.2%	110.4%	93.7%
2007 No		90	93	89	88	70	86	72	124.1%	122.0%	124.1%	130.9%	91.9%	97.8%
2007 Yes		126	112	100	119	104	120	103	128.8%	137.3%	121.2%	124.1%	104.3%	100.0%
2008 No		93	83	97	86	94	73	82	128.2%	128.1%	126.2%	124.1%	115.7%	108.4%
2008 Yes		130	126	107	107	121	113	117	130.2%	120.6%	108.3%	113.9%	109.3%	95.3%
2009 No		107	91	98	102	85	95	76	133.0%	108.6%	116.9%	112.5%	101.7%	97.5%
2009 Yes		128	139	133	115	110	121	113	98.7%	114.1%	115.3%	111.8%	108.6%	104.1%
2010 No		96	109	92	104	87	88	101	113.0%	140.3%	129.5%	118.9%	108.7%	100.0%
2010 Yes		134	122	134	129	121	111	126	144.3%	115.6%	107.7%	117.4%	107.4%	106.3%
									120.0%			105.9%	104.1%	104.1%

Appendix 21-F

PRIMARY REGIONAL

Year	HasAEW	IndigT00	IndigT01	IndigT02	IndigT03	IndigT04	IndigT05	IndigT06	K to 6	1 to 8	2 to 6	3 to 6	4 to 6	5 to 6
1999	No	44	60	47	40	40	36	33						
1999	Yes	75	72	73	67	73	60	59						91.7%
2000	No	56	49	57	51	42	51	33						111.7%
2000	Yes	81	75	82	84	76	69	87						102.0%
2001	No	58	59	53	53	46	43	52					130.0%	107.2%
2001	Yes	80	93	66	94	85	82	74				112.5%	107.1%	104.7%
2002	No	63	59	67	64	61	52	45				120.9%	106.6%	98.8%
2002	Yes	88	75	97	76	99	82	81				103.9%	115.2%	101.9%
2003	No	77	64	58	71	69	62	53			112.8%	101.2%	100.0%	103.7%
2003	Yes	100	97	85	89	71	89	85		113.3%	119.3%	128.3%	111.5%	109.7%
2004	No	70	70	65	55	67	77	68				115.4%	100.0%	103.7%
2004	Yes	105	99	108	83	99	72	85		118.1%	103.7%	90.4%	85.9%	95.5%
2005	No	86	72	65	72	69	78	79	179.5%	161.2%	149.1%	123.4%	114.5%	102.6%
2005	Yes	120	109	98	104	89	93	71	94.7%	94.7%	107.6%	93.4%	100.0%	98.6%
2006	No	90	90	78	68	75	72	74	132.1%	125.4%	110.4%	104.2%	110.4%	93.7%
2006	Yes	110	111	117	95	115	95	91	112.3%	97.8%	93.8%	102.2%	91.9%	97.8%
2007	No	90	93	89	86	70	86	72	124.1%	122.0%	124.1%	130.9%	104.3%	100.0%
2007	Yes	126	112	100	119	104	120	103	128.8%	137.3%	121.2%	124.1%	115.7%	108.4%
2008	No	83	83	97	86	94	73	82	130.2%	128.1%	126.2%	113.5%	109.3%	95.3%
2008	Yes	130	126	107	107	121	113	117	133.0%	120.6%	108.3%	112.5%	101.7%	97.5%
2009	No	107	91	98	102	85	95	76	98.7%	108.6%	116.9%	111.8%	108.6%	104.1%
2009	Yes	126	139	133	115	110	121	113	113.0%	114.1%	115.3%	118.9%	108.7%	100.0%
2010	No	96	109	92	104	97	88	101	144.3%	140.3%	129.5%	117.4%	107.4%	106.3%
2010	Yes	134	122	134	129	121	111	126	120.0%	115.6%	107.7%	105.9%	104.1%	104.1%

Appendix 21-G

PRIMARY METROPOLITAN

Year	HasAEW	IndigT00	IndigT01	IndigT02	IndigT03	IndigT04	IndigT05	IndigT06	Kto 6	1 to 6	2 to 6	3 to 6	4 to 6	5 to 6
1999 No		49	55	42	61	49	46	44						
1999 Yes		17	17	20	18	18	14	23						95.7%
2000 No		55	46	56	51	51	53	44						85.7%
2000 Yes		19	18	21	21	16	21	12						
2001 No		58	70	55	61	52	67	62						
2001 Yes		23	22	15	23	23	15	21						126.5%
2002 No		61	61	71	61	68	59	58						117.0%
2002 Yes		24	21	22	16	23	22	16						116.7%
2003 No		63	61	61	70	63	70	60						113.7%
2003 Yes		33	21	21	19	18	22	20						100.0%
2004 No		78	66	65	72	73	63	67						106.7%
2004 Yes		45	35	30	22	21	22	27						101.8%
2005 No		87	81	66	75	79	79	62						100.0%
2005 Yes		33	44	39	26	26	23	27						101.7%
2006 No		95	85	79	72	74	83	79						95.2%
2006 Yes		48	39	44	43	26	32	30						87.0%
2007 No		88	96	98	87	78	87	85						98.4%
2007 Yes		58	54	40	49	44	29	36						100.0%
2008 No		103	88	100	107	94	89	99						102.4%
2008 Yes		47	61	53	40	50	39	29						107.6%
2009 No		107	115	98	116	120	98	101						108.2%
2009 Yes		59	50	63	53	45	48	41						109.8%
2010 No		131	122	133	121	131	129	105						111.5%
2010 Yes		65	58	53	69	52	48	53						129.5%
									117.8%	120.5%	120.5%	108.2%	106.0%	110.4%

Appendix 22-A

Total Non-Aboriginal Comments

Should an AEW be Aboriginal?

Totally leaving out the issue of race; in relation to getting the best possible outcomes both educationally and in a wellbeing sense for Aboriginal students; aside from our Aboriginality what skills and qualities do we possess that a non-Aboriginal person doesn't The non Aboriginal person may have better qualifications so why then should we get the job aside from being Aboriginal?

Brian

Some thoughts

Knowledge of community-Knowledge of family-Knowledge of connections

Knowledge, albeit innate, of how children work, operate, learn, know and their place in the world.

A level of empathy, care, support, based on spirituality and knowing

I don't think tis is about race, it is about a deeper understanding of place, identity and connection. other Australians just don't have this deep spiritual connection - a different way of knowing.

I can only guess at how strong this connection is but I see it every time I see an effective AEW working with our kids

Malcolm

What an interesting question - and something of a dilemma! Of course if you ask 100 people you'll get a 50/50 response.

Well, my personal view is that the person who can best do the job should do the job, regardless of race. Quite simply, the 'best' person is more likely to achieve the better results and that's what matters most for the child/person at the other end. However, if an Aboriginal person and a non-Aboriginal person have an identical skill set and experiences then I'd be most likely to choose the Aboriginal candidate because they would bring personal experiences, insights and understanding into the role that a non-Aboriginal person can't possibly have, at least not from first-hand experience. And I don't think you can easily quantify the value of having someone with that deeper level of understanding of what it means to be an Aboriginal person, trying to cope with what society throws at them.

TOTAL ABORIGINAL COMMENTS

Should an AEW be Aboriginal?

Totally leaving out the issue of race; in relation to getting the best possible outcomes both educationally and in a wellbeing sense for Aboriginal students; aside from our Aboriginality what skills and qualities do we possess that a non-Aboriginal person doesn't? The non-Aboriginal person may have better qualifications so why then should we get the job aside from being Aboriginal?

Bruce

An AEW needs to have a clear understanding of what Aboriginal culture is and have insight into Aboriginal children that a non-Aboriginal person can never have.

A non-Aboriginal person can be culturally inclusive but cannot be culturally aware.

Dave

The skills and qualities that an Aboriginal person has over the non-Aboriginal person for the role of an AEW. The AEWs are important resource to the school with they own culture knowledge and the knowledge of the local Aboriginal community and the significance of implementing a local Aboriginal perspectives in all programs within the school. Students and staff will develop their understanding of local Aboriginal people rights and celebrate Aboriginal culture with ongoing programs within the school and wider community and have a deep understanding and empathy with Aboriginal people – both in past and contemporary societies. Creating awareness and celebrating the Aboriginal heritage of the area is bridging the gulf between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and the past with the present; this can be done only by an Aboriginal person. AEWs are about building and fostering relationships and working towards improving the outcome of Aboriginal students in a cultural way. The AEWs are a vital ingredient in any healthy and functional relationship when involving the local community and that is the strength of local Aboriginal peoples. Equipping all students with education and knowledge about the local Aboriginal community will nurture empathy and a sense of responsibility; this can only come from an Aboriginal person. Gaining a greater understanding will, over time, create respect for Aboriginal community where society can and will embrace all people from all backgrounds. Respect for all people regardless of ethnic or Indigenous heritage is always of the utmost importance to improve community outcomes; this can only come from an Aboriginal person who has lived the life as an Aboriginal person. A Non-Aboriginal person

Irene

An AEW has the life experiences of the child...caught between two cultures

accepting their identity. Qualifications can be obtained...AEW can be

Skills and qualities beside from being Aboriginal?

Cultural connection that is innate (specific to Aboriginal people that have grown up black) for many communities, students and the AEW will have kinship connection understanding of socio-economic issues that many students have to deal with. Also help students deal with racial issues in the school - non-indig just don't have the same effect. make them feel comfortable in the school environment and ab students do need a place of 'their' own...be that a room, mural, place in the playground etc

Use of English language is different for many black students therefore able to assist students in interpreting classroom information/directions etc call it pigeon English or what you will, but for example ask a white student what 'deadly' means then ask a black student you will get two very different answers.

Our body language is different to non-indig and being able to understand black students without having to say anything is huge. Black students can't put it 'over' Aboriginal adults like they can non-indig. AEWs can help with furthering cultural awareness in the school environment that non-indig cannot do.

And the list can go on and on.....

This is just some reasons why AEWs should be Aboriginal. I do believe however, that there needs to be a move for AEWs to be suitably qualified and that this should become part of the selection criteria - this is my thoughts only

Robyn

In our case an Aboriginal Education Worker in the majority of cases is Aboriginal - usually with the skills necessary to do the components of our work in catholic education. Mainly because of the cultural connections and understandings that it may take someone years to learn! Aboriginal people come with these networks to families, Aboriginal organisations and the order within the Aboriginal community in terms of the protocols for traditional storytelling and welcome and acknowledgement to country. Many of these things are repeated to others and it still doesn't sink in!

In some minor cases we have had to employ non Aboriginal people in the AEW roles as a short term stop gap measure as the students still need support in some areas. This has been successful in some schools whereas it hasn't been in others

Aboriginality is a genuine occupational qualification as authorised by Section 14 of the Anti-discrimination ACT 1977 requirement.

Appendix 23-A

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Ian Thorpe's Fountain for Youth
PO Box 402
Manly NSW 1655

To the Paul Wand Indigenous Student Prize Committee –

Dear Friends,

The Aboriginal world of education has no more determined student than Frank Pearce. His life long effort to learn more, to master all that he can, has always been driven by a selfless interest in improving the lives of others around him.

Frank's gift has been to convert commonsense and extraordinary experience into valuable strategy. His focus on the role of Aboriginal Educators gels with the recommendation of Dr Chris Sarra and other leading Indigenous reformers.

In NSW Frank has had an extraordinary influence on the Catholic Education system's approach to and valuing of Aboriginal students. Frank's support for education workers and programs is relentless and always highly effective.

I have marvelled at how many times I have seen Frank engineer an education opportunity for an Indigenous child in desperate need or with talents that will shine in the right school or college.

His communication skills and networking have encouraged many of his education co-workers.

Frank is a walking, talking example that education is a life long effort and he has used every breath to great effect.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Jeff McMullen AM
CEO (Homorary)
Ian Thorpe's Fountain for Youth
Director – AIME - Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience
Director – Uncle Jimmy's Thumbs Up - Jimmy Little Foundation

Appendix 23B



CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION NEW SOUTH WALES

ABN 33 266 477 369
PO Box A169, Sydney South NSW 1235
Level 9, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Telephone: (02) 9287 1555 Fax: (02) 9264 6308
Email: communications@cec.nsw.edu.au Website: <http://www.cec.nsw.edu.au>

To whom it may concern

Frank Pearce is a hard working man whose heart and soul is in the Aboriginal community of Australia. He does not discriminate between Aboriginal communities because in his heart and mind all communities in Australia where Aboriginal people reside are worthy and valuable communities and he puts his time and effort into whatever their specific needs and request of him may be. Frank has leadership of Aboriginal Catholic education in NSW and supports a group of Aboriginal consultants who operate across NSW.

As Aboriginal Education Co-ordinator for NSW CEC Frank is in a position where he is called upon to assist many schools and their communities for many different and varying reasons and I have not yet found a community that he has not been able to assist in one way or another whether it was:-

- ↓ Warrego in the Northern Territory for jeans for their students so they could be involved in extra curricula activities such as horse riding
- ↓ Manly Ferry and Zoo tickets and a couple of days supervision around Sydney for a group of visiting young Aboriginal students from the Northern Territory
- ↓ Assistance to write and lobby for funding for an Aboriginal owned education room in a school in Gunnedah
- ↓ Supporting families to attend schools in Waterloo/Redfern
- ↓ Working with young boys who need a positive male role model to show them the importance of education in Waterloo/Redfern/Parramatta/Campsie areas
- ↓ A long time friend and supporter of the 'Wij Gaay' Clever Child program being run in the Armidale Diocese and working with communities such as Walgett, Moree, Narrabri, Tamworth, Armidale and Gunnedah
- ↓ Attending student retreats across NSW to support students, parents and staff in many rural and metropolitan settings
- ↓ Being the driving and inspirational force behind the NSW CEC Aboriginal Education Workers Bi-annual Conference which caters for approximately 120 Aboriginal people working in Catholic schools across NSW.
- ↓ Working with the NSW Board of Studies and communities to ensure the effective and purposeful teaching of Aboriginal languages across our NSW schools
- ↓ Liaising with all Government departments both state and federal on behalf of the Catholic Aboriginal school communities he represents in NSW

In his role with the CEC NSW Frank has touched and assisted Aboriginal communities in as many and varying ways as you could imagine. His contact details are as readily available to the Wadeye community in the Northern Territory as they are available to the Waterloo community in inner Sydney. He is a very knowledgeable man who is respectful and mindful of the needs of our Aboriginal brothers and sisters. He has spent much time travelling and meeting with the many communities he has been involved in and is constantly called on to advise them in political lobbying, the writing of applications, to advocate on their behalf to private enterprise, to be an ear when things are not going well but also to be there when it is time to celebrate.

Frank Pearce is a hard working man who's working and social life is steeped in community. Frank's leadership style is to lead by example and he does it well. He is an excellent role model and mentor to the people he works with across the state and nation. His leadership in Aboriginal education in Australia has been well earned through respect by action.

Yours sincerely
Sharon Cooke

Indigenous Commissioner
NSW CEC

17/11/09

Appendix 23-C



Australian Government



Reference - Mr Frank Pearce

To whom it may concern

Mr Frank Pearce is currently completing his Masters Degree at Wollongong University. He is employed by the NSW Catholic Education Commission as the Aboriginal Education Coordinator for all NSW Catholic Schools. Frank leads a strong team of Diocesan advisors from all areas of NSW.

His leadership has been the catalyst that has improved the Catholic School involvement in many facets of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education. This involvement and leadership has seen the Catholic Sector in NSW grow their membership of Dare to Lead to over 250 individual school members.

Frank has continually been the conscience of his educational sector, his enthusiasm and passion to see equitable outcomes for our students has constantly been displayed in his communications with Government, private sector and the church.

Frank is held in high esteem for his actions by many people outside of his educational sector. The Public Education sector meets regularly with Frank to share directions, concerns and ideas. He regularly meets with the executive of the NSW AECG advising them of the impact of decisions on Catholic schools.

Frank is a proud father and grandfather; he is a great friend and diplomat. His interactions with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community across NSW and the wider Australian community is demonstrated in the number of individuals who consider him family.

There is great academic merit in the subject of Frank's thesis Do Aboriginal Education Workers Contribute to Improving Indigenous Education Outcomes. There is little if any research in relation to this topic and also it would appear to be a politically sensitive issue that few wish to discuss. Frank has conducted a successful trial of his research survey with School Principals in all systems across Australia under the auspices of Dare to Lead.

I have no hesitation in supporting Frank's application for this grant; he is a much deserving mature age student who continues to work on making a difference for Indigenous Australians. This grant will assist him greatly in his research and final paper.

Please feel free to contact me for any further clarification on my unqualified support for Frank.

Yours Sincerely

Brian Giles-Browne
National Schools Co-ordinator
Dare To Lead
0423915552

C:\Documents and Settings\frp\Local Settings\Temporary Internet Files\OLK46A\Reference
Frank Pearce.doc

Appendix 23-D



26 September 2008

Frank Pearce
Catholic Education Commission of NSW
PO Box A169
Sydney South NSW 1235

Dear Frank

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;
and you will be my witnesses" Acts 1:8

What a week we had! What an extraordinary outpouring of divine grace upon our Church, our country and the youth of the world! A tsunami of faith and joy. We can be confident that it will bear abundant fruit in the lives of our young people for years to come. And in your role as Indigenous Guard of Honour for the Holy Father you were a crucial part of it!

While we are all still basking in the afterglow of those wonderful days, we wanted to record our heartfelt thanks to you. As we told the Holy Father, you poured out your time, your talents, your energy - your heart and soul - for World Youth Day. The Church is so very proud of you and grateful to you.

We were all blessed not only to take part in what may very well be the greatest project in our individual lives, but also to have done so together, in the company of a great team - a veritable communion of saints.

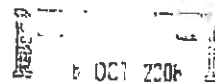
We pray that you will always cherish the time we worked together on this great adventure of faith and that God will continue to bless you during the rest of your pilgrimage to Him.

Yours sincerely in Christ

(Most Rev) Anthony Fisher OP
Bishop Coordinator WYD 2008

(Mr) Danny Casey
Chief Operating Officer WYD 2008

P.S. We enclose a copy of the Holy Father's words of thanks to you and add our own "hear, hear!"



Level 5 Polding Centre, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney NSW 2000 Australia
WYD 2008 ACK 118 060 987

Appendix 23-E



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME
AUSTRALIA

Can Broadway and Abercrombie St (PO Box 944)

Broadway, New South Wales 2007

Telephone: (02) 8204 4400

Facsimile: (02) 8204 4422

Email: sydney@nd.edu.au

Internet: www.sydney.nd.edu.au

ABN 69 330 643 210

16 November 2010

To Whom It May Concern

This is a letter of reference for Frank Pearce who has been employed as the Lecturer and Tutor for ED4132 Working with Indigenous Students at the University of Notre Dame Australia in Semester 2 of 2010.

ED4132 is a mandatory unit for all students in their pre-service teaching degrees in the School of Education. Frank's role included the construction and delivery of the unit and the liaising with me as Dean and with the other sessional academic staff who delivered the unit's tutorials.

Frank proved himself to be a wonderful asset to the University during his period in the role. He was professional in his approach and worked hard to ensure that the unit was delivered in a manner that rigorously prepared Notre Dame graduates for teaching Aboriginal children. Frank is an excellent colleague and was always willing to work with others in the pursuit of a common goal.

His deep understanding of the contemporary and historical challenges of Indigenous education, coupled with his natural teaching ability, made his time with the University a great success.

Please contact me at the University should you require any further elaboration on this letter of reference.

Yours sincerely

Assoc Professor Mark Tannock
Dean of Education

Appendix 23-F



133 Liverpool Street Sydney NSW 2000

(02) 9287 1577

To Whom It May Concern

I would like to introduce to you Frank Pearce. Frank has been a co-worker with me for the last three years in the offices of the Catholic Education Commission (CEC). My position has been that of the Executive Officer of the Association of Catholic Schools Principals of NSW and ACT.

Frank holds the position of State Coordinator-Aboriginal Education for New South Wales Catholic Education Commission. He specialises in Aboriginal Education from Kindergarten to Tertiary levels.

One of Frank's strengths is his ability to get the Aboriginal viewpoint across in matters that come up for discussion. However he does not expect the people he is holding discussions with, would automatically have the same viewpoint as he does. He works cooperatively with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff. Frank has a unique ability to address issues in a down to earth manner rather than a 200 year History lesson.

I have witnessed Frank work with individual students in order to improve the outcomes of a particular cohort. He provides practical advice on getting their local parents and community involved in the school along with some well researched information on who to contact

In my particular field his practical advice on how to make the school a more welcoming and inclusive place for Aboriginal people has assisted many of our Principal members run a more efficient establishment. He works closely with the Principals in facilitating the transition of Aboriginal Students from country schools to city boarding schools.

More recently he has worked with Universities and TAFE assisting them to run successful courses for Aboriginal students, particularly mature students.

There are a myriad of Government Aboriginal Accountabilities that Frank has a grasp upon. Thus he is able to assist people with various projects, particularly with matters referring to Indigenous people. He has demonstrated the ability to seek out research grants useful to our principals.

I wholeheartedly recommend Frank to you if you want someone who has an extensive knowledge of Aboriginal matters and works as easily with Indigenous and non-indigenous alike. His work in Aboriginal education is second to none.

Terry Blanchard
Executive Officer
19/2/07

Appendix 23-G

Our Ref :
Your Ref :



To whom it may concern

I have known Mr Frank Pearce for four or five years since he became the principal Indigenous Officer for the NSW Catholic Education Commission. In this role Frank is responsible for fulfilling the Catholic Commission's accountability requirements to the Commonwealth for the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme. Under this program the Commission is required to report to the Commonwealth against a range of performance indicators and targets. I was the Commonwealth officer to whom, in the first instance, Frank reported the Commission's performance in terms of what was being achieved for Indigenous students.

We met at least twice a year and had numerous out-of-session discussions. Our discussions were wide-ranging as I attempted to gauge what was being achieved and the reasons behind the performance outcomes being presented. An issue could be why there were particularly unexpected educational outcomes for the students - were they data quality issues or related to the actual achievements of the students. Another issue could be related to whether there was parity across the professional development available for different groups of teachers, or about capacity building or succession planning. Inevitably Frank was the officer who had to research and report back on those issues.

As you can see the issues were complex, dealing with not only students, but the education system as a whole and careful research was needed to provide satisfactory explanations. Frank did this well and always presented strong arguments from the Commission's point of view.

If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on (02) 6240 8919.

Yours sincerely

Dr Rosalie Grant
Director, Science and Innovation Mapping Taskforce

(Formerly Director of the Monitoring and Reporting Team
Indigenous Group)
Department of Education, Science and Training

8 March 2003

16-18 Macart Street
Canberra ACT 2601

GPO Box 9880
Canberra ACT 2601

Tel (02) 6240 8111

www.dest.gov.au
ABN 51 452 193 160

Appendix 23-H

Your ref :
Our ref :

To Whom It May Concern,

I have known Frank Pearce for the past 8 years on both a personal and professional level. I have always found Frank to be creative, diligent and honest in all his dealings with the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST).



DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
SCIENCE &
TRAINING

New South Wales
State Office

As Indigenous Education Officer with the NSW Catholic Education Commission (CEC), Frank is responsible for fulfilling the NSW CEC's accountability requirements to the Commonwealth for the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (IESIP). In his role, Frank is required to firstly research outcomes in indigenous education and then compile written reports to the Commonwealth. Specifically, Frank is required to conduct research in relation to IESIP reports; research improvements in indigenous outcomes; research developing trends and monitor the achievement of the Commonwealth's National Indigenous English Literacy & Numeracy Strategy (NIELNS) as it relates to the NSW CEC. Frank is also required to research other issues that arise in relation to the Commonwealth and the CEC.

Frank possesses very good written and oral communication skills and he also has the ability to communicate effectively and efficiently in both formal and in-formal settings. Frank has always presented strong arguments from the Commission's point of view. Frank has maintained a high level of performance despite working in an ever changing environment of competing priorities.

If you have any further questions regarding Frank, please do not hesitate to contact me on (02) 9298 7471.

Jason Lyons
Assistant Director
Indigenous Education Branch
NSW State Office
Department of Education, Science and Training

23 March 2003

Level 20, 477 Pitt St
Sydney NSW 2000

PO Box 1074
Haymarket NSW 1240

Tel: (02) 9296 7200
Fax: (02) 9298 7405

www.dest.nsw.au
ABN 51 462 153 150

Appendix 24A

From: Frank Pearce [mailto:fpearce01@optusnet.com.au]
Sent: Sunday, 25 July 2010 1:59 PM
To: Julian Gillard (Julia.Gillard.MP@aph.gov.au)
Subject: Suggestion for a National PACE initiative

Hi Julia

I hope you are well and work is treating you kindly.

I have just sent the following suggestion to my diocesan Aboriginal advisors for comment.

What about setting up a committee in your diocese or school just for Aboriginal Grandparents?.

I know as a Grandparent myself what an influence Grandparents can have
Not just with Aboriginal students but with their parents.

Kids in a lot of cases also tend to take more notice in a lot of cases
of their Grandparents as kids tend to rebel against what ever their
parents say they should do.

Grandparents also tend to have more time on their hands to get
involved with schools. They also seem in a lot of cases to be more
attuned to what their grandchildren are actually saying .They also in
a lot of cases don't have the pressures of work and putting food on
the table so they have more time to do loving things with kids so
kids seem them in a different light to their parents.

I think this sort of thing would also be great for Grandparents in all
sorts of ways.

I have reflected on the grandparent idea and I think it is a winner. Get them
involved and parents and kids will benefit. They are the only people I know that
can educate parents on becoming involved with schools. I really mean all the
grandparents not just Elders that all the community may not recognise. This is
one way to get to parents on an individual basis and in particular the fellas.
Maybe arrange parent meetings where they are required to bring a grandparent
.Even grandparents that may not have a grandchild at a school. I know from
experience Grandparent advocate daily to their children about their children. We
actually have a very different way of looking at schools and the value of
education than parents. They have a big enough daily battle in catering to the
life needs of their families. They are also usually the poor buggers who have to
discipline their children where grandparents can usually avoid that and just
supply the lollies and love. That is why kids generally view them in a better light
when they are providing advice.

This I think would be a very good National Parental and Community Engagement (PACE) initiative

Thank you for your time and good luck for the election

Frank Pearce
Labour party member

Appendix 25A

Frank Pearce
Labor Party Member No

To the. Prime Minister

Dear Kevin,

I hope your family and you are all well.

As I have mentioned in previous correspondence I was overjoyed and extremely optimistic about the future of Indigenous Australians brought about by your sincere and honest apology to Indigenous Australians. At that time I believed your speech would go down in history as one of the most significant documents Indigenous Australians had ever seen .After too many years under Mission Manager Howard I finally once again had hope. However since taking office your Governments policies and strategies that are gradually becoming apparent in relation to Aboriginal Education are starting to make me think you may go down in history instead as having set back Aboriginal Education 50 years.

Information that is coming to me from around the country concerns me greatly. Especially the National dismantling of dedicated Aboriginal Education Units. Centuries of failed Govt policy that sought to integrate, assimilate and everything else **that** seems to end it ate glaringly demonstrates what happens when Govt tries to mainstream Aboriginal anything.

I have attached some documents that confirm my concerns

On a National level

Attachment 1 is the new DEEWR structure. Aboriginal Education does not appear any where except the one I have circled who is only a business manager.

Attachment 2 and the one marked DEST Indigenous Education Branch show that there "WAS" a dedicated and well staffed Indigenous Education Branch.

On a NSW local level

Attachment 3 in the circled area shows there was? A well staffed dedicated NSW Aboriginal **Education Branch**. Attachment 4 shows that there are now no dedicated Aboriginal Education state offices and I would imagine local offices. Instead we have a small group of staff called Indigenous Social Inclusion Strategies officers. What ever that means?.

All in all DEEWR has become all about employment and is staffed by people

with little if any knowledge of Aboriginal Education.

I would draw your attention to the attachment "Issues Confronting Aboriginal Students" I use this slide to provoke discussion in various workshops and forums I run. I let people look at it for a while then ask them if there is anything strange about the slide. They invariably say if you are all about Aboriginal Education why is education at the bottom. Normally some of the better informed participants will give the correct answer which is. It is at the bottom because it is the solid base from which all else can be achieved.

I am not sure where the Govts idea of mainstreaming Aboriginal Education funding came from and also the idea to do away with dedicated Aboriginal Education Units. My educated guess is it has come from academics, senior bureaucrats and non-aboriginal researchers who have little if any experience of the real world on a day to day basis in schools. They also have zero experience as to what it is like to be an Aboriginal student facing a daily battle with a very non-Aboriginal Education system. I have 55 years of experience as an Aboriginal person dealing with education systems as a student, teacher and administrator. I left school at 14. Got a school certificate at 40 a teaching degree at 50 and at 60 am working on a Masters. To me "being Aboriginal has always been a reason to succeed, rather than an excuse not to". All of this is completely in opposition to Governments own policy i.e.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (AEP)

Major Goal I - Involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Educational Decision-Making

These same people give substance to my greatest fear that because education systems as part of their new educational accountability will not have to hire and retain Aboriginal Education workers they will cease to exist. There is already a strong vibe nationally that Aboriginal Education Workers do little to improve Indigenous Educational outcomes. All of these people forget that in order to achieve improved outcomes Aboriginal students have to attend, be engaged and be retained which Aboriginal Education workers are instrumental in achieving. Surely then these 3 things should be recognised as educational outcomes. If the students don't come, be engaged and stay they can't learn anything. All of this is completely in opposition to Governments own policy i.e.o increase (lie number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed as educational administrators, teachers, curriculum advisers, teachers assistants, home-school liaison officers and other education workers, including community people engaged in teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture., history and contemporary society, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

As I have also outlined in previous correspondence I firmly believe that if the gap in Indigenous Education is to ever be closed Aboriginal education funding needs to remain targeted as it is presently. It also needs to stay under its own. Act of Parliament. Education systems of any kind act on economics not in good faith.

If Aboriginal funding is mixed into mainstream funding with out being targeted it will cease to be Aboriginal funding. I am also led to believe that funding for the ITAS and ICT Aboriginal programs will also go into mainstream funding which is another grave error. So far no one has mentioned the PSPI program but I would really like to know early regarding that one as its paperwork is a killer.

The present way of funding systems to improve Indigenous outcomes is complex and onerous however it is 200% better than putting Aboriginal funding into mainstream funding without it being specifically targeted .

Just as a matter of interest students with disabilities and special educational needs are also receiving the same deal with nothing in any of these Depts that is dedicated and targeted too them either. It would seem that the disadvantaged are being further disadvantaged

I hope you will look favourably on my words. Thank you

for your time it is greatly appreciated Frank Pearce

Appendix 26A

Frank Pearce

To the Prime Minister

Dear Kevin,

I hope your family and you are all well.

If you can give me just a little of your time I think we can help improve education outcomes for the most disadvantaged students in Australia.

In about 2 years I will be retiring but in the words of the Coach of the Century Jack Gibson I never want to leave a place worst off than I found it. Which is why I am writing to you with three urgent issues as a very concerned, Labor Party member, State Aboriginal Education Coordinator and more importantly as an Aboriginal person.

Your historic "Sorry" speech gave me great hope and optimism for a better future for Aboriginal Australians. However after reading the detail in the budget speech I have great cause for concern for the future educational outcomes for those I am charged with caring for, Indigenous students .

Firstly reading through the budget detail or lack of it in relation to Indigenous Education coupled to a lot of insights from people I have a Lot of respect for I believe the Government is about to set back Indigenous Education at least 20 years . If the current funding model (see attachment 1) is changed to adding some kind of top up funding to GRG funding or even the same amount of funding is added to GRG funding it is a recipe for disaster. Funneling Federal Indigenous Education funding through State Treasuries and hoping they will act in good faith is Disneyland stuff.

Also in relation to our current funding formula we have some schools that are funding maintained because they were previously considered remote. This definition also needs to be revisited as most Aboriginal people don't have a car or where withal to travel to a place 300kms away for services. If just this component were removed we would lose about \$400,000 which would mean job losses for Aboriginal staff.

The reason my system has managed to achieve such great results for Indigenous students is that the funding is targeted to Indigenous students. That way systems "have "to use it to try to achieve better outcomes for Indigenous students. It also comes under its own act of Parliament which has helped greatly in getting all Education systems to act in the best interests of their Indigenous students, I know from bitter experience than when Indigenous funding is not targeted it will disappear into other mainstream programs. If you expect to just hand people money, tell them to do the right thing and then expect that is what will happen Government is kidding itself.

Currently my system employs about 140 Aboriginal Education workers who believe me are essential in improving Indigenous Education outcomes. The academics researchers and many Government bureaucrats may say otherwise because they say there is no dead set proof that Aboriginal Education Workers in schools improve academic outcomes. Thing is that probably their greatest contribution is in improving attendance and retention and if kids don't attend or are not retained they can't learn anything to get an improved academic outcome. Surely improved attendance and retention should be an academic outcome in its own right. Currently I am doing a Masters in Research based on just that. Attachment 2 is an outstanding and very knowledgeable survey reply.

All of the above if implemented will mean Aboriginal Education Workers in schools nationally will cease to exist to the great detriment of closing the educational gap. These redundant workers will then become part of the unemployment gap. Education is the key to closing the gap in all areas of disadvantage for Indigenous people. Better education=better job=better-income=better housing, health and overall quality of life

Secondly I have great concerns for the educational futures of the children of the 74.6% of Indigenous Australians who do not live in a remote or very remote area. In fact it reminds me of some words a great educationalist once said to me. We need to stop spending "ail" of our time, energy and resources on the 20% of at risk Indigenous students in the lowest benchmarking category and the top 5% in the Gifted and Talented category because it is to the detriment of the 75% majority which is where we could make a real difference

Now I would not deny that the needs of those in remote communities is not urgent and justified but the needs of those Indigenous students living in non-remote areas although different is equally urgent especially in metro areas. In these areas in a large proportion of schools of all systems because of small numbers Indigenous students suffer profound cultural isolation as do many Indigenous school staff. They are also in many instances also living with drug, alcohol and sexual abuse. This is in the main goes unnoticed in much larger population bases. Also those living in remote areas are not subject to the intense racial tensions in a lot of our schools particularly between Aboriginal people and those of Polynesian descent.

A large proportion of Indigenous people living in non-Remote areas get extremely saddened by the funding and resources constantly being moved and reallocated to where as they also often say to me the perceived "real black" people live. A lot of Aboriginal people believe this is firstly to score political points for all levels of Government and also because all forms of media love an Aboriginal bad news story.

Thirdly once again looking into the budget crystal ball there seems to be a lot of Indigenous eggs being placed in the COAG basket. To be perfectly truthful from a lot I have read (attachments 3 & 4) and personal experience with the Murdi Paaki trial site I have very little faith in this concept. You can't put that many agendas and egos including Indigenous ones together and expect good outcomes.

My Nan always taught me there is absolutely no use complaining about anything unless you can suggest a positive alternative, so I suggest the following.

On the first issue concerning changing the way systems are currently funded and funding formulas for Aboriginal Education my advice is: "If it ain't broke don't fix it" fact I firmly believe that the level of funding should be increased to enable schools that are already battling with ever increasing costs particularly wages to employ more Indigenous staff. My system in fact expends between 70% and 80% of its Aboriginal Education funding on the employment of Indigenous staff and a lot of these are only part time due to lack of sufficient funding.

On the second issue regarding remote v non-remote need my suggestion is that funding for remote area Aboriginal education funding be a completely separate and "additional" bucket of funding. This way every time there is a knee jerk reaction to the poor educational results coming out of there more and more of the current education budget for "all" Aboriginal Education programs including SRA-ITAS-PSP1 and WOSI wont be redirected to remote areas to the detriment of the 75% of us who live in non-remote areas. Those schools that are currently remote funding maintained need to remain that way as no school or Indigenous student should be worse off. CPI rises should also be reinstated for Metro schools. Non remote schools and students should also have access to the full range of DEEWR Aboriginal programs and not be barred because they don't have 20 students. The fact of the matter is nationally those schools with less than 20 students are the great majority.

All of the afore said comes with the most complex and onerous accountability it has ever been my displeasure to deal with. However I and others like me are prepared to continue carrying this load if it means the best academic and social outcomes for those we care for, the kids. Why is it that anything Aboriginal is subject to vastly more accountability than any other program?

I am not sure where the advice for this new way of doing business was sourced. But it is obvious, sadly those providing the advice need advice on how it all works in the real world on the frontline in schools.

If the Government continues down this path in Aboriginal Education we won't be attempting to close the educational gap for Indigenous Australians we will be looking at closing an ever widening chasm.

As an Aboriginal Australian and educator I would greatly appreciate your support with the matters I have outlined.

They say 'Sorry' seems to be the hardest word, but it is just a word. Backing it by walking the talk is what gives it real substance.

Kind regards
Frank Pearce

2010

Footnote

I believe Government has the same plans for special education funding. If that occurs it will have the same result I have forecast for Aboriginal Education.

Appendix 27A

Br Gary Wellsmore Principal St Mary's Bowraville

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION WORKER (AEW) ABORIGINAL EDUCATION ASSISTANT (AEA) INDIGENOUS EDUCATION WORKER (IEW) KOORI EDUCATION WORKER (KEW) SURVEY

Please answer this survey regardless of whether you have an AEW-AEA-IEW-KEW or a Teachers assistant who happens to be Aboriginal your insights and perceptions will be of great value.

Is your school Primary-Secondary and in a Metro-Rural or Remote Area

St Mary's Primary K-6 7-8 Rural but because near Mission classed as Remote for Funding.

What are the duties or roles, formal & informal, both in the school and in the community, carried out by your AEW-AEA -IEW OR KEW?

1. *To be mentors,*
2. *To assist by encouraging Indigenous Children in learning.*
3. *To learn themselves.*
4. *To keep non indigenous teachers honest and open to Indigenous Children physical, educational, spiritual, and cultural needs.*
5. *To create a family mob spirit.*
6. *Help in group learning.*
7. *To encourage community to be involved without shame or blame.*

Why is the function of the AEW-AEA-IEW-KEW necessary?

It creates an Indigenous learning atmosphere where the real needs of the Indigenous Community Children, Parents, Guardians, Aunts, Uncles etc. are cared for. Indigenous Children learn in a community environment not necessarily in a classroom with one teacher. (I would have Indigenous people as Aides in every Primary Class in Australia).

What is it that makes the role work?

They belong in the community where the children are. They understand and live the Indigenous life. They need the support and encouragement of the Teachers as well as the community.

What doesn't work?

1. *When people judge them and expect them to be better than the rest of us.*
2. *When they don't get the support of Principal, Teachers, Staff and Community.*
3. *Non Indigenous people are very judgmental of them and their life style.*
4. *When allowances aren't given for time out for family and community needs.*

5. *When they don't get the opportunity to attend learning support days.*

What do AEWs-AEAs-IEWs-KEW'S contribute to the crucial phases of education i.e. early years and key transitions?

In primary schools they act as role models, community members, and their involvement in the life of the classroom gives everyone the opportunity to learn as a community. It breaks down the barriers of classroom structures that hinder the learning process. It allows for individual learning one to one, frees the teacher to help those who struggle. Literacy and numeracy results were spectacular after this approach in all areas of the school especially in Kindergarten and Years One and Two.

What is the difference between a school with an AEW-AEA-IEW-KEW and one without?

At St Mary's it was chaos as teachers struggled to understand the learning and discipline needs of Indigenous children. Once the school divided into learning groups with Indigenous aides the whole atmosphere changed and the non Indigenous teachers realized that community learning was the way to help the children achieve real learning processes.

Is this an area that should receive additional policy or funding attention?

If Indigenous aides were in every primary classroom in the nation we would change the whole approach to classroom management and learning. Learning would become a real life experience based in the community. Everyone would understand Indigenous People; we would begin to learn an Australian way of learning. The Maoris in New Zealand have done this with their Language Nest Schools. This would be the great step of freeing our Nation of the troubles with reconciliation.

I would begin by funding every school with two or three Indigenous people who would train in the school to become Teacher Aides. I wouldn't allow one Indigenous person on their own as they would be too vulnerable, the more the better. Funding would be needed to pay for them and a teacher part time to support them.

How can the value of AEWs-AEAs-IEWs OR KEW'S be best articulated: What would be useful to you to help "make the case" for AEWs-AEAs-IEWs-KEW'S?

Use the current political climate to get employment to as many Indigenous people in schools as possible. If thousands of Indigenous people were employed in this way it would be a cultural revolution for Australia. It worked at St Mary's.

Does having an Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW-AEA-IEW-KEW) working in a school improve Indigenous Educational Outcomes. If so how?

Yes of course. It creates an Indigenous learning atmosphere where the real needs of the Indigenous Community Children, Parents, guardians, Aunts, Uncles etc. are cared for. Indigenous Children learn in a community environment not necessarily in a classroom with one teacher.

Can you quote an example?

St Mary's

Since your employment of an AEW-AEA-IEW-KEW or a Teachers assistant who happens to be Aboriginal has there been improvement in BST or equivalent, attendance and retention of your Aboriginal students?

Attendance was 40 to 55% it went up to 90%

BST levels improved so much that the Board of Studies sent University people to investigate to see how this had happened. I think they thought we were cheating.

Do AEW's-AEA'S-IEW'S OR KEW'S etc play an important role in the enrolment, attendance and retention of Indigenous students? If so how?

Our roll went up from the 40 to 50. We started a Year 7 and 8 year class because of the Indigenous aide's encouragement of learning. The travelers decreased as children stayed at school.

THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION

If AEW's-AEA'S-IEW'S or KEW's were removed from schools HOW would it impact on Indigenous STUDENT Educational outcomes?

This would be a disaster for every one No one could seriously consider this in this day and age in Australia, not under a Rudd government. It would put the Indigenous Education and all education back to the time of the stolen generations. The current factory model of Anglo Saxon education needs to be freed by introducing Indigenous community cultural approaches to give it new life. It would cost about two billion dollars a year less than the quarter year profit of the Commonwealth Bank.

Thank you for taking the time. Older Aboriginal Australians rarely had the chance to be fully educated. Your interest will help create a better future for the young.

**“Skilled Uncles and Aunties Clear the Bumps on the Road to Learning “
There is a link between having an Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW, AEA, IEW, ATA or KEW) Working in a School and Improved Indigenous Educational Outcomes”**

Appendix 27B

A Selection of Comments From Trial Survey of Dare to Lead Principals

Principal 1

The value of an AEW cannot be underestimated. I have always worked in schools with significant Aboriginal student populations & the differences between their learning outcomes in those schools with an AEW & those without are significant. AEWs provide mentoring, coaching, positive role modelling, contact with family members & assistance to teachers in providing significant resources.

I have 52 Aboriginal students at my school. The education system does not provide the school with an AEW & because I value the contribution such a staff member can make to the learning & well being of these Aboriginal students, that the school employs such a staff member from school funds.

Principal 2

I am luck in my school there is not much difference between the children's backgrounds-but this is certainly not the case everywhere. Given the correct opportunities, Aboriginal children can achieve as any other race, their problem is not and has never been intelligence. If given the opportunities & supported by members of their own group-AEW's- they will perform & succeed. We have evidence of this in every path of life-academic & sport.

Principal 3

Our AEW is a fantastic role model with our students. He has completed training in the Bridges Reading program so works one to one, or in small groups with our children during their literacy time. He teaches them about Koori Culture and has a small Koori dance group going at the school. He also plays sport and generally supports our children in the playground during recess and lunchtimes. Unfortunately, we only have him at our school for 3 days a week, as we share him with another school. We would like more of his time, but we don't have the funding. As 30 of our 120 students are of indigenous backgrounds, I believe we should have a fulltime AEW

Principal 4

The presence of an AEW within the school community adds significant value to the school community, for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students

Principal 5

A most important endeavour. To know and appreciate the gifts that Western civilization has lost and reintroduce again for all Australians . Love of the land, spirituality and true conservation .

Principal 6

If the Federal and State Governments are serious about changing/improving the educational outcomes for aboriginal children they need to provide funding for all schools with Aboriginal students to employ AEWS. I would like at least 2 more fulltime positions

Principal 8

To run a class of Aboriginal students without an AEW, is like running a car with no oil. They are an essential part of the team.

2001 INDIGENOUS EDUCATION STRATEGIC INITIATIVES PROGRAMME (IESIP) PERFORMANCE REPORT

PI	Description	2001 Performance
SLIT7	Percentage (with numbers) of Indigenous and non-Indigenous YEAR 5 students who achieved the Benchmark in the assessed strand of READING	NSW CATHOLIC SYSTEM
a)	Indigenous % meeting benchmark	86.2% \pm 4.9 (238)
b)	Indigenous % exempted	1.4% (4)
c)	Indigenous % absent/withdrawn	3.2% (9)
d)	Non-Indigenous % meeting benchmark	85.6% \pm 0.9 (15766)
e)	Non-Indigenous % exempted	0.3% (58)
f)	Non-Indigenous % absent/withdrawn	1.6% (261)

BST 272
Difference 4 Exemptions

Attachment
(6)

2001 INDIGENOUS EDUCATION STRATEGIC INITIATIVES PROGRAMME (IESIP) PERFORMANCE REPORT

PI	Description	2001 Performance
SNUM5	Percentage (with numbers) of Indigenous and non-Indigenous YEAR 5 students who achieved the Benchmark in the assessed strand of NUMERACY	NSW CATHOLIC SYSTEM
a)	Indigenous % meeting benchmark	84.1% \pm 5.7 (232)
b)	Indigenous % exempted	1.4% (4)
c)	Indigenous % absent/withdrawn	3.2% (8)
d)	Non-Indigenous % meeting benchmark	94.8% \pm 1.1 (15636)
e)	Non-Indigenous % exempted	0.3% (58)
f)	Non-Indigenous % absent/withdrawn	1.5% (257)

BSI 272
Difference 4 Exemptions

Attachment
(8)

Appendix 28B

NSW Catholic Education Commission			
<i>Improve educational outcomes for Indigenous Students</i>			
School	Performance Indicator	Baseline Data	2001 Performance
OUT1: Average attendance rate of Indigenous students compared with non-Indigenous Students:			
a) Indigenous Primary Students	90%	Target Outcome 90.5%	Actual Outcome* 87.3%
b) Indigenous Secondary Students in Year 10 only	90%	90.5%	88.0%
c) Non-Indigenous Primary Students	To be provided when available	Report outcome	98.1%
d) Non-Indigenous Secondary Students in Year 10 only	To be provided when available	Report outcome	98.3%
OUT2: Apparent retention of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in Year 10			
a) Indigenous	107%	Target Outcome 100%	Actual Outcome* 167/147 113.6%
b) Non-Indigenous	98%	Report outcome	18634/191 84%
OUT3(i) Percentage of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students beginning and completing Year 10 in the same year			
a) Indigenous	91%	Target Outcome 92%	Actual Outcome* This indicator only used as a fill in for OUT2
b) Non-Indigenous	98%	Report outcome	

* Please report the actual outcomes your organisation achieved in 2001

Tuesday, 12 March 2002

Appendix 29A

Schedule 10: 18/29 Catholic System NSW - SRA		Report for 2007 - Due 31 May 2008		512		Literacy (School)	
SLIT7MajConIn(*Prelim data)	Percentage of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Year 5 students, in MCEETYA very remote, remote, provincial and metropolitan geographic locations, who achieved the Benchmark in the assessed strand of READING (also reporting percentage (and number) who were exempted from testing and percentage (and numbers) who were absent/withdrawn from testing). *Prelim data						
Measurement Source:	NSW Basic Skills Test - the Statewide Benchmark testing. Target on overall Indigenous students meeting the Benchmark.						
Baseline Data Description:	2002 Data From this indicator will not be published. If a comprehensive national common test is fully introduced by MCEETYA targets will be reviewed. If NSWDET do not supply benchmarking data CEC, NSW may apply for an exception as outlined in DEST's letter of 16 March, 2005 (Appendix A). It is recognised that small changes to Indigenous student outcomes (because of small Indigenous student numbers) may appear to have a large impact on overall Indigenous student outcomes. Combine Very Remote and Remote rates and report as Remote.						
Target Setting Rationale:	Percentage of Indigenous Year 5 students who achieved the benchmark - Reading						
	Geographic Classification	Previous Result	Target	Result			
a	Percentage of Indigenous Year 5 students who achieved the Reading Benchmark (*Current reporting year's prelim data)	Overall	88.55%	89.5%	90.34%		
		Metropolitan	92.20%		93.79%		
		Provincial	87.26%		88.29%		
		Remote	71.42%		84.21%		
		Very Remote	agg up to next level	agg up to next level	agg up to next level		
b	Confidence Interval of Indigenous Year 5 students Reading Benchmark results (*Current reporting year's prelim data)	Overall	0	Report Outcomes	0.00		
		Metropolitan	0		0.00		
		Provincial	0		0.00		
		Remote	0		0.00		
		Very Remote	agg up to next level	agg up to next level	agg up to next level		

Appendix 29B

Schedule ID: 18329 Canoe, System NSW - SRA		Report for 2007 - Due 31 May 2008		Nunery (School)	
SNUM5MajContInt(*Approved data)		Percentage of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Year 5 students, in MCEETYA very remote, remote, provincial and metropolitan geographic locations, who achieved the Numeracy Benchmark (also reporting percentage (and number) who were exempted from testing and percentage (and numbers) who were absent/withdrawn from testing). *Approved data			
Measurement Source:		NSW Basic Skills Test - the Statewide benchmark testing. Target on overall Indigenous students meeting the Benchmark			
Baseline Data Description:		2002 Data from this indicator will not be published. If a comprehensive national common test is fully introduced by MCEETYA, targets will be reviewed. If NSW DET do not supply benchmarking data NSW CEC may apply for an exemption as outlined in DEST's letter of 16th March 2005 (Appendix A). It is recognised that small changes to Indigenous student outcomes (because of small Indigenous student numbers) may appear to have a large impact on overall Indigenous student outcomes. Combine Very Remote and Remote rates and report as Remote.			
Target Setting Rationale:		Percentage of Indigenous Year 5 students who achieved the numeracy benchmark			
		Geographic Classification	Previous Result	Target	Result
a	Percentage of Indigenous Year 5 students who achieved the Numeracy Benchmark (*Previous reporting year's approved data)	Overall	83.48%	87.5%	87.31%
		Metropolitan	87.82%		90.84%
		Provincial	84.50%		86.62%
		Remote	55.17%		66.66%
		Very Remote	agg up to next level	agg up to next level	agg up to next level
b	Confidence Interval of Indigenous Year 5 students Numeracy Benchmark results (*Previous reporting year's approved data)	Overall	5.00	Report Outcomes	4.70
		Metropolitan	6.20		6.10
		Provincial	7.30		6.90
		Remote	20.50		21.40
		Very Remote	agg up to next level	agg up to next level	agg up to next level

Appendix 29C

Schedule ID: 18329 Catholic System NSW - SRA		Report for 2007 - (Due 31 May 2008)		Educational Outcomes (School)	
Educational Outcomes		School			
SOUT1(Major)		Average attendance rate of Indigenous students compared with non-Indigenous students: a) Primary students b) Secondary students to Year 10 only Major providers should also provide the above information by MCEETYA very remote, remote, provincial and metropolitan geographic locations. One page of information is required on the factors that influence the attendance of Indigenous students at a school or school system			
Measurement Source:		School Attendance records in the Dioceses of Wilcannia-Forbes, Armidale, Parramatta and Wagga Wagga Attendance data to be collected in Terms 2 and 3 of each year of the quadrennium.			
Baseline Data Description.		2003 Notes: No targets are required in 2005 and 2006 by geographical location for a) Indigenous primary students and b) Indigenous Secondary students to Year 10 only. Targets are to be set at the 2007 Strategic Directions Meeting for 2007 and 2008 by geographical location for a) Indigenous Primary students and b) Indigenous secondary students to Year 10 only based on the outcome results of 2005 and 2006. If a national attendance measure is comprehensively introduced by MCEETYA, the performance indicator and targets will be reviewed. As there are no Catholic Dioceses with secondary schools Very remote or Remote geolocations CEC NSW is not required to report Very Remote or Remote outcomes for "Secondary students to Year 10 only".			
Target Setting Rationale:		The average attendance rates of Indigenous primary and secondary school students - overall and by geolocation.			
		Geographic Classification	Previous Result	Target	Result
a	The average attendance rate of Indigenous primary school students.	Overall	93.20%	92%	86.16%
		Metropolitan	90.60%	95%	89.60%
		Provincial	90.10%	90%	89.05%
		Remote	94.20%	80.5%	79.85%
		Very Remote	agg up to next level	agg up to next level	agg up to next level

Appendix 29D

Schedule ID 18329 Calliope System NSW - SPA				Report for 2007 - Due 21 May 2008				Educational Outcomes (School)				
SOUT2				Information on Indigenous and non-Indigenous students who apparently stay in school from the commencement of secondary school to Year 10 (For providers in New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory apparent retention of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students is reported from Year 7 to Year 10 and for providers in Queensland, the Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia apparent retention is reported from Year 8 to Year 10.)								
Measurement Source:				National Schools Statistics Collection August Census								
Baseline Data Description:				2003								
Target Setting Rationale:				No Targets								
				Geographic Classification	Previous Result	Target	Result					
a				The apparent retention of Indigenous students from Year 7/8 to Year 10	Overall	112.39%	Report Outcomes	105.95%				
b				The apparent retention of non-Indigenous students from Year 7/8 to Year 10	Overall	95.96%	Report Outcomes	96.52%				
A				How many Indigenous students were enrolled in Year 10 in the reporting year?	Overall	267.00						
B				How many Indigenous students were enrolled in Year 8 (QLD, NT, SA & WA) two years before, or in Year 7 (NSW, VIC, TAS & ACT) three years before, the reporting year?	Overall	252.00						
C				How many non-Indigenous students were enrolled in Year 10 in the reporting year?	Overall	19683.00						
D				How many non-Indigenous students were enrolled in Year 8 (QLD, NT, SA & WA) two years before, or in Year 7 (NSW, VIC, TAS & ACT) three years before, the reporting year?	Overall	20391.00						



ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE HUNTERS HILL

Founded in 1881, St Joseph's is an independent Catholic boarding and day secondary school for boys, under the care of the Marist Brothers. In 2011 enrolment is approximately 980 boys from Years 7 to 12.

Academic Support Teacher for Indigenous Students

Full time contracted position to commence 29 August, 2011 or by mutual agreement

St Joseph's College has an established Indigenous education program that supports students from both rural and urban areas of NSW. The College is seeking to appoint a qualified teacher whose role will be to provide individualised academic support to these Indigenous students. The teacher would also have some shared responsibility for the coordination of additional tutoring support programs. This will require some flexibility in working hours which will be negotiated within the framework of a full time teaching load equivalent.

Essential criteria

The applicant will have:

- an understanding and appreciation of the Catholic and Marist ethos of the College
- proven excellence as an innovative and adaptable classroom teacher
- demonstrated ability in enhancing the literacy and numeracy skills of students
- cultural sensitivity to the circumstances and needs of Indigenous students and their families
- the ability to work in a collegial manner as a member of the Indigenous Support Team
- the ability to be self-directed and to develop processes for ensuring individualised, proactive support for all students in the Indigenous education program

Further information, including a comprehensive Role Description, is available on the College website www.joeys.org

All applicants for the above position must be supportive of the Catholic ethos and tradition of the College and be prepared to participate in the co-curricular area. Applications should contain full curriculum vitae, including university transcripts, a statement of educational philosophy, and the names, addresses and phone numbers of three referees, including current employer. Please address applications to the Headmaster, care of:

Mr Magdy Habib
Director of Personnel Services
St Joseph's College
Locked Bag 5009
Gladesville NSW 1675
Fax: 9879 6804; Email: employment@joeys.org
www.joeys.org

Applications should reach the College by **Wednesday 17 August 2011**

Child Protection screening procedures apply.



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Further information including essential criteria, a comprehensive Role Description, as well as details regarding the application process and contact information, are available on the College website www.joeys.org

Applications should reach the College by **Wednesday 17 August 2011**

Child Protection screening procedures apply.

