



# The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

This article was originally published in printed form. The journal began in 1973 and was titled *The Aboriginal Child at School*. In 1996 the journal was transformed to an internationally peer-reviewed publication and renamed *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*.

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From THE HON. KIM E. BEAZLEY, M.P.,  
MINISTER FOR EDUCATION.

It is an honour to contribute a few words to the first issue of *The Aboriginal Child at School* and to be invited to do so by Dr. Betty Watts, whose contribution to thought on Aboriginal education is most significant. Notably, Dr. Watts believes that vital facets of Aboriginal education should arise from Aboriginal initiatives and be expressive of Aboriginal culture and in Aboriginal languages.

Bertrand Russell once made this comment:

*"Certain mental habits are commonly instilled by those who are engaged in educating: obedience and discipline, ruthlessness in the struggle for worldly success, contempt towards opposing groups and unquestioning credulity, a passive acceptance of the teachers' wisdom..."*

*"Instead of ruthlessness, education should try to develop justice in thought. Instead of contempt, it ought to instill reverence and an attempt at understanding".*

I do not need to stress that Aboriginal children face distinctive and often serious problems in their schooling. And it falls mainly on the teachers to deal with those problems if equality of opportunity is to be realised. Responsibility does not rest wholly on the teachers, of course, for it is the job of administrators and research people to provide the support that teachers require. There is the obligation for all the Australian community to demonstrate that what counts in Australian society is character, not race.

This journal should express the joy of mental adventure, the essence of education and offer hope, the creative principle in human affairs.

Dr. Watts is to be commended for her initiative in suggesting it, and for her dedication in agreeing to edit and publish it, and I wish to express my personal gratitude to her.

*The Aboriginal Child at School* is designed to be an inspiration to the class teacher, and to that end to be a factor in creating for Aboriginal children a future of dignity and cultural renaissance, unshadowed by a sombre past.

Kim E. Beazley

Minister for Education