



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

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THE ABORIGINAL POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION PROJECT (1984-1985)

A series of documents has been published by the Aboriginal Post Primary Education Project - a combined undertaking by the Education Department of South Australia and the Flinders University, working in close co-operation with the South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee. The series has two strands. The first consists of "introductions" to schools on situations around Australia which have made notable contributions to the educational opportunities for Aboriginal secondary students. The second strand contains a variety of resource materials and information, including statistics, annotated bibliographies and discussions with leading Aboriginal educationists. Project staff have been provided by the Education Department of South Australia, and the costs of research, publication and the development program have been met by grants from the Participation and Equity Program.

The first strand includes the following:

An Introduction to Warriappendi School, by Ted Lovegrove and Gloria Sparrow. This booklet describes the Warriappendi Alternative School, a small co-educational secondary school in Adelaide, serving the needs of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children who would be at risk in the mainstream secondary system. The origin and development of Warriappendi; the people involved; the activities undertaken at the school; participants' perceptions and aspirations are described effectively and with much understanding. The final part, titled *Achievements and Dilemmas*, provides an insightful analysis of the achievements attained to date, and the problems yet to be faced.

An introduction to Kewdale High Development Centre, by Ted Lovegrove and Gloria Sparrow, starts with the delightful *The Group Ghost* - an essay in creative writing from the Centre's magazine *Woolah*. The Centre is designed "to build bridges across cultures and to break down social prejudice." (p.3). The difficulties in establishing and developing the Centre as a functioning unit within the wider school context are described, as is the philosophy underpinning such development, in Part 1. Part 2 describes the students and staff of the Centre, the Kewdale Senior High School, and *The House* itself. Part 3 looks at the Centre in action, its lessons, its activities as a drop-in centre, the tutorial work it undertakes under the Commonwealth Aboriginal Secondary Grants Scheme, and the camps, excursions and visits conducted. The Centre's relationships

with the High School, with the nearby hostel for Aboriginal children, with parents and with Aboriginal education in general are discussed in Part 4. The final part considers progress, problems and perceptions and future viability of the Centre.

An Introduction to Yirara College, by Ted Lovegrove. Yirara College is the residential school for Aboriginal children and an Aboriginal campsite outside Alice Springs. The Yirara "introduction" takes the form of a case study, and consideration as to the limitations of the case study method is made in the introductory section, as well as description of the special background of the Yirara students. Part 2 outlines the entry conditions and procedures, which are necessarily complex; describes the student groupings, staffing and personnel and curriculum. Part 3 presents a case study of Yirara itself and describes visits to Areyonga and Hermannsburg, and staff visits to the communities from which the students come. The final part undertakes a comprehensive review of the achievements of Yirara, its aims, the factors contributing to student retention rates, and to the maintenance of Aboriginal culture, and discusses the destination of Yirara graduates.

An Introduction to Northern New South Wales, by Paul Edwards. This report summarizes the findings of a two-week visit to the north coast region of New South Wales. The document provides a detailed overview of the educational bodies and the key people involved in Aboriginal education in northern New South Wales and of the roles they play in fostering Aboriginal education. The planning, funding, implementation and operation of in-school and across-school initiatives are described. During his visit to New South Wales, Paul Edwards interviewed a number of people involved in Aboriginal education and his paper presents a summary of discussion points raised by each. The final section of his report lists all the documents and resource papers collected during the visit.

The following titles have been published in the second strand:

C.A.P.S., Computers and The Duke, by Ted Lovegrove. This document reports on three initiatives in Aboriginal education. The first outlines the establishment of the Christian Aboriginal Parent-directed School at Coolgardie, Western Australia, following Aboriginal initiatives in 1981. This is an independent Aboriginal school and attracts students from as far afield as Fitzroy Crossing.

The second section describes two initiatives using computers in Aboriginal education. One is at Alicurung in the Northern Territory and the other the Balga Aboriginal S.P.I.C.E. program for talented Aboriginal students.

The third section describes a full-time program loosely structured around the Duke of Edinburgh's Award for male school leavers at Barunga (formerly Bamyili) in the Beswick Aboriginal Reserve in the Northern Territory. The success of the Barunga experiment has led to the 'Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme in Isolation' with six funded organization and co-ordinating positions, and young women being now involved in the scheme.

Irregular Attendance: Reduction and Treatment, by Ian Westley. This document followed from the author's investigation of current procedures being used by schools in the cases of unlawful absence of Aboriginal students, and makes recommendations for a new and more effective set of procedures.

The problems in dealing with illegal absence are considered in Part 2, culminating in two tables, the first setting out current problems with administrative procedures and possible solutions, and the second effectively summarizing the general problems faced by schools dealing with truanting students and possible solutions. Part 3 discusses ways in which school absence might be reduced by improving the school climate, fostering closer family-school ties, and making changes to curriculum offerings and curriculum content. The Aboriginal education worker plays a crucial role in most of these strategies.

Part 4 presents a check list of procedures for dealing with school absenteeism and outlines Model A and associated flow chart of strategies and options that schools might use to develop or modify their own procedures for coping with irregular attendance of Aboriginal students.

When these booklets were forwarded to us in July for review, we were advised that limited copies were still available at \$4.00 per copy.- Hon. Ed.

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