



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

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PUTTING EDUCATION INTO THE HANDS OF THE COMMUNITY

This article, reproduced from Bernard Van Leer Foundation NEWSLETTER Number 56, October 1989, is based on an interview with James Irving who has been Project Coordinator for Anau Ako Pasifika, a program of non-formal early childhood care and education for Pacific Island communities in New Zealand.

The administration of education in New Zealand has undergone a total reorganisation. On 1 October the Department which ran all the schools and technical institutes in the country became a much smaller Ministry concerned only with the development of policy, the giving of advice, and the disbursement of government funds.

Part of the rationale behind the change was the belief that educational institutions were too divorced from the communities they served and that there should be more local control and parental involvement. Every school now has its own Board of Trustees, elected by parents and other guardians, with representatives of teachers and, in the case of secondary schools, students. The Boards are responsible for administering a government grant to run the schools, most of which is taken up by fixed costs on staff and buildings, but with some flexibility in how the remaining money is used.

The intention is to put education into the hands of the community. Training courses have been held and will continue to be run for members of the governing boards to help them fulfil their functions and to provide opportunities to build up experience and confidence.

The effects on the early childhood area should generally be beneficial and it could almost be said that the model for the reforms is what has already been happening in early childhood facilities where parental involvement has long been the case. The *Anau Ako Pasifika* project, which works with communities from the Pacific Islands, runs a home based program for families with young children. Many of the children move on from the project to attend 'language nests' run by their own communities, based on their own culture and using their own language. The tremendous success of the Maori language nest program, *Te Kohanga Reo*, has provided an important model for the Pacific Island Communities which have taken up the same idea. As a prelude to the reforms, it was seen by Government that funding for all types of early

childhood facilities should be more equitable and a fund was set up last year to provide 'seed money' for starting new Pacific Island language nests.

From 1 October any group or community wishing to set up a formal pre-school facility, for example a kindergarten, has access to government grants on an equal basis and advice from the newly set up Early Childhood Development Unit. As with schools, new formal facilities must have a Board of Trustees and agree a formal Charter setting out their objectives as well as abide by standard physical and health requirements.

The potential for early childhood is very bright in New Zealand, but there is still a long way to go in encouraging and enabling minority groups to express their needs and arrange the kind of pre-school care that they want for their children.

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ABORIGINAL STUDIES COURSES (Cont. from p.50)

ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER NURSE EDUCATION PROGRAM

A support program for Aboriginal and Islander students doing the Diploma of Nursing at the Underdale Campus of the South Australian College of Advanced Education (SACAE).

Aboriginal and Islander nursing students receive continuing academic and personal support throughout their course of study.

Aboriginal and Islander persons who meet the entry requirements for the Diploma of Nursing Course can apply to the South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre (SATAC) for standard entrance into the nursing course, but please also contact the Co-ordinator, Aboriginal and Islander Nurse Education Program, SATAC.

For full information on all courses -

South Australian College of Advanced Education
Aboriginal Studies and Teacher Education Centre
Holbrooks Road, UNDERDALE SA 5032
Phone (08) 354 6303

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"SUCCEEDING AGAINST THE ODDS"
The Townsville Aboriginal & Islander
Teacher Education Program

Edited by Noel Loos and Greg Miller (1989). Allen & Unwin

This is the story of a pioneering venture - a successful search for new ways to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers. It is told by the teachers themselves, graduates of the Aboriginal and Islander Teacher Education Program at James Cook University.

It is the story of an experiment - in affirmative action, in needs-based curriculum, in innovation within a university.

It is a story which must be heard - by teacher educators, by Aboriginal and Islander people and by policymakers in Aboriginal affairs and education - if the crisis in Aboriginal education is to be honestly tackled.

Noel Loos was a pioneer in Aboriginal and Islander education, first at Townsville CAE and now at James Cook University where, with Greg Miller, he has helped develop the Early Childhood Education Program. Greg Miller is chairperson of the Division of Aboriginal and Islander Education at James Cook University, Townsville.

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Applications from Aboriginal and Islander people interested in tertiary level programs in Teaching or Community Welfare should address enquires to:

The Registrar
James Cook University
Townsville Qld 4811

or phone (077) 814359 (AITEP Early Childhood Education)
(077) 814641 (AITEP Primary/Secondary)
(077) 814898 (AICWEP Community Welfare)