



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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EDITORIAL

In May 1971, a National Workshop on Aboriginal Education was held in Brisbane. The task of the Workshop was to determine priorities for action and research. The Workshop made a number of recommendations, one of which was *"that a periodical publication be commenced to provide a medium for the exchange of ideas and developments in the teaching of Aborigines, for the examination of the practical implications of research findings and for the recording of Aboriginal achievements."*

This journal is a response to that recommendation. Funding from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in Canberra has made it possible for the journal to be distributed free of cost to schools. The journal is addressed primarily to teachers who are working with Aboriginal pupils. It is intended that issues will be published at two monthly intervals.

Teachers working in the field of Aboriginal education face perhaps the most challenging and urgent task in Australian education. The task is challenging, because these children come from families whose styles of life and values differ in some respects from those of teachers. They therefore demand of their teachers high levels of professional creativity, of understanding and of concern. If teachers are to create satisfactory learning environments for Aboriginal children they must, courteously and realistically, accept them as they are and their homes and communities as significant to them. They must also understand how these children might learn most effectively and it is their professional responsibility to devise ways of capitalising on the Aboriginal pupils' distinctive learning styles and particular strengths.

Throughout Australia today many exciting developments are taking place in schools with Aboriginal pupils. Usually, however, there is little publicity about these programs and teachers some distance away are often unaware of these developments. Unfortunately, the many creative and successful practices benefit only a small number of pupils. A major aim of this journal is to provide a medium whereby teachers might share with one another their thinking and their successes. Reports from teachers will be included in the section: *"Across Australia From Teacher to Teacher"*. I am sure that teachers will accept the invitation to enter, through the journal, into a meaningful and productive dialogue with their colleagues.

In addition, each issue will contain articles of general interest and research reports on areas relevant to Aboriginal education. There is an increasing body of research which should be of help to teachers as they devise programs which will facilitate the learning and general educational development of their Aboriginal pupils.

Reviews of books, both local and overseas, will be presented by teachers in the final section of the journal.

I do extend to you all a very warm welcome. This is intended to be your journal; my role basically is to facilitate communication among you. I would urge you, then, to share with one another; do let

us hear from you soon, so that Aboriginal pupils in other places may gain from your ideas. We need, too, to know which of you are willing to act as book reviewers.

My very best wishes to you and to your Aboriginal pupils.

Betty H. Watts

This editorial by Betty Watts, the founding editor, appeared in Volume 1 number 1 of The Aboriginal Child at School in 1973. It provides an insight into why the Journal was established.

