



# 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

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The theme of participation rates of Indigenous students is a strong component of this volume of *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*. As we know these rates are significantly lower than that of other Australians especially at the postgraduate level. More research and assistance needs to be developed to ensure an adequate representation of Indigenous students in the academy. The successes and challenges of students has been well documented for many years and perhaps it is time to take a stocktake to see what is and what is not working.

Health career courses with culturally relevant approaches are also discussed. Despite all the measures taken in the Government's agenda to "Close the Gap", Aboriginal life expectancy looms still as a tragic statistic in our country. The issue of light skin and urban identity in an interesting paper contributes to the development of critical thinking, and our own critical practice as educators and offers a starting point to address pre-conceived and stereotypical notions about race and colour.

Torres Strait Islander educator Martin Nakata's fine work is explored as it gives non-Indigenous teachers of Indigenous studies a framework for understanding their role, and their potential limitations within the "cultural interface". The career pathways of Indigenous teachers is examined in another paper while the need for a two-way conversation with parents and caregivers of Indigenous students and schools is discussed in the next article.

This is a nice segue to the collection of stories about the aspirations, goals and strategies from a sample of mothers of Indigenous children living in Perth, Western Australia. A major theme was the need for schools to partner with Indigenous parents in the decision-making process to engage the families in a positive education experience.

In testimony to a growing interest in *AJIE* there are also some international contributions from Canada and Taiwan regarding their First Nations peoples' educational experiences. The Cree Nation has instigated a program called COOL (Challenging Our Own Limits) which is homegrown, autonomous and self-determined. In Taiwan attempts to develop an intelligence-fair assessment tool to explore the profiles of Amis pupils is outlined.

Other programs such as *Learnsapes* allows cross-curriculum boundaries to emerge in a rural school in Australia and is discussed in the following article. Adult literacy is a major factor in our society. The

final paper directs attention to those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and adults who have not benefited from the formal school education system. The paper also believes that the massive social and economic inequality at the heart of the social determinants is around the area of Indigenous health. There are also six book reviews included which we are sure everyone will find most interesting.

*Jackie Huggins & Elizabeth Mackinlay*  
Editors