



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

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EDITORIAL

This volume of *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* touches upon many of the educational issues and concerns which occupy our hearts and minds as teachers and learners in the broad field of Indigenous education. Nationally in Australia, we are experiencing an increase in the neo-liberal insistence that numbers mean everything, regardless of whether those numbers are collected, calculated or calibrated in ways that deny or make space equitable, fair or socially just enactment of educational policy and practice. We are becoming increasingly aware and wary of the kinds of “watchwords” used by politicians and policy makers which signal a certain kind of surveillance, regulation and assessment of the ways in which teachers at all levels of education go about their daily business. These issues are of great and pressing concern to us as educators in Australia, and increasingly abroad.

Many of the papers in this volume enter into debate and dialogue about quality control and what this means for Indigenous children in classrooms and the kinds of education that happens. Exley’s paper critiques the implementation of Queensland’s Comparable Assessment Tasks, or QCATs in the Torres Strait Islands and investigates its claim to “authentic” and “meaningful” assessment. The collaborative work by Bodkin-Andrews, Dillon and Craven examines what might be considered a “flow on” effect of testing and assessment measures and compares patterns of academic disengagement from school and the correlation this has with academic self-concept amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian students.

Bond’s paper addresses the ways in which the Mornington Island community is facilitating relationships between Aboriginal elders and students to increase participation and engagement in education amongst young people, and the research presented by Rahman in secondary contexts, and Taylor and Dunn with reference to the Northern Territory, explores factors which facilitate Aboriginal student’s engagement and educational outcomes. DRUMBEAT is explored by Faulkner, Ivory, Wood and Donovan as a successful music intervention program which improves educational outcomes for Indigenous students. Nelson and Hay’s discussion takes us on a different yet not unrelated path when they discuss the incongruence between educational policies and young Indigenous people’s life experiences in Australia. Bullying is a frightening real aspect of school experience and Coffin, Larson and Cross contextualise the participation of Aboriginal children in bullying

through discussion of the “Solid Kids Solid Schools” program in Western Australia. The volume then takes us away from Australian contexts, to New Zealand and Papua New Guinea (PNG) with discussions about Māori and Indigenous PNG engagement in research, methodology, pedagogy and knowledge systems. The final paper in this volume presents a provocative discussion from Foley about whether or not higher education has the capacity to train Aboriginal leaders.

We hope you enjoy this volume of *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* and that the papers presented here provide a measure of hope in what Hannah Arendt might call “these dark times”.

Elizabeth Mackinlay & Michael Williams
Editors