



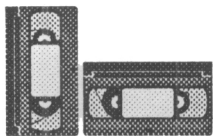
# The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

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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Visually, the book is a delight: the maps, line drawings and historical and contemporary photographs are aptly chosen; it is well designed and printed in large type on good paper. I would recommend it as an excellent introduction for young people to an

exceedingly complex and dynamic culture and a fine addition to any secondary or introductory tertiary course on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

### ***Education: Your Choice. Secondary Schooling Choices***

Commonwealth Department of Employment Education and Training  
Central Office, GPO Box 9880, Canberra City, ACT 2601.

***Reviewed by Peter Renshaw***

*Graduate School of Education  
The University of Queensland*

The information package, *Education: Your Choice. Secondary Schooling Choices* was funded by DEET through the Projects of National Significance Program. The package contains two videotapes, a booklet, pamphlets and posters that describe diverse options for the secondary education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. There is an optimistic tone throughout the videotapes, and a multitude of images showing young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students participating in various secondary education options.

The first videotape focuses on the options that are available to students who have chosen to study in their local community. Students have the option of studying through a Distance Education Program either at home under the guidance of a parent, or at a local primary school where the resident teacher and Distance Education teacher cooperate to provide the lessons for secondary students, or at a Community Education Centre where high school students and young adults can be taught in small groups. Further options include travelling to nearby secondary schools which offer mainstream curriculum to Year 10. Where the local community has taken the initiative to organise a community school, students have the option of studying a curriculum adapted to their needs, and can be taught traditional cultures and languages by local community members.

The second video focuses on the options that are available to students who move away from the local community for their secondary education. Students

from the bush can attend boarding schools often run by the churches or organised by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In addition, students have the option of boarding in hostels. The videos are designed to allay the fears of parents about the safety, supervision, health and welfare of their children. Throughout the video, students are shown realistically — engaging in study, playing sport, socialising with their peers, calling home and actually going back to their home communities.

This package was produced as an information resource for remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It could be used productively in community meetings where parents and students come together to consider options for secondary education. It would be a valuable resource for Guidance and Career Counsellors in remote regions of Australia. In addition, it provides a positive and realistic image of young Indigenous Australians making plans for their future. Too often, they are depicted in the media in negative stereotypes, and too often the mainstream white community are fed a television and radio diet of negative comment and biased opinions.

This package refuses to even acknowledge that destructive discourse. Rather, it concentrates on the real lives, real options and realistic possibilities that are available, and identifies pathways to success in secondary education for the diversity of needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

## Reviews

**Editor's Note:** The package was available from the Commonwealth Department of Employment Education and Training, Central Office, GPO Box 9880, Canberra City ACT 2601. We have been

informed however, that the video package is presently unavailable. DEET may be able to obtain funds to produce further copies if there was adequate demand.

### ***The Darug and Their Neighbours: The Traditional Aboriginal Owners of the Sydney Region***

J. Kohen

Darug Link in association with the Blacktown and District Historical Society, Blacktown, 1993, 300 pp.

*Reviewed by Ian D. Clark*

*The Darug and Their Neighbours* presents a general history of the Darug people and their immediate neighbours—the Dharawal and Gundungurra peoples of the greater Sydney region. Four families from this region are the focus of the book, in an effort to demonstrate that there are many Darug descendants still living in the Sydney area. The book has three clear parts: a general historical introduction (comprising 144 pages); descendant charts of four families (62 pages); and dictionaries of the Darug, Kuringgai and Gundungurra languages (54 pages).

The general historical introduction is arranged into eleven chapters, of which the first four are concerned with the pre-European era, covering prehistory, spatial organisation, hunting and gathering, and social organisation. Maps showing the locations of clans (listed on pp. 20-21) would have been useful, as would a general locality map showing the major places mentioned in the text. The seven chapters that are concerned with the period since the arrival of a permanent European presence in 1788 focus on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and predominantly with the latter. A detailed reconstruction of the history of the Darug people in the twentieth century will need to be the focus of a further publication, for this period is only superficially mentioned in this work.

The descendant charts present the state of genealogical knowledge for four Darug families at the time of publication. This provides a useful foundation, for there are many gaps and considerable work yet to be

done; we can only hope that this will be the focus of a future publication, that also presents biographies and photographs of key family members. In relation to the appendices on vocabulary, I note that there is no reference to Jakelin Troy's doctoral thesis on the Sydney languages, which will soon be published as part of the AIATSIS Dictionary Project. Troy has a chapter on the Sydney language in the recently published *Macquarie Aboriginal Words*.

Kohen recounts (p. 142) the commonly held view that Aboriginal peoples of the Sydney region are defunct. By confirming the existence of many families of Darug descent currently living in the Sydney area, Kohen has discredited this view, and this is his book's greatest strength.

#### Reference

Troy, J. (1994) 'The Sydney language', in N. Thieberger and W. McGregor (Eds), *Macquarie Aboriginal Words: A Dictionary of Words from Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages*. Sydney: The Macquarie Library, pp. 61-78.

**Editor's Note:** This review originally appeared in *Australian Aboriginal Studies* (1994) Number 2: 100-101. We thank *Australian Aboriginal Studies* and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies for allowing us to reprint it here. □