



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

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Editorial



Welcome to the last issue of *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* for 1997. The Editorial Committee would like to thank you all for your support this year and we hope that you will continue to subscribe to the Journal in 1998. This has been an important year for Indigenous Australians, with one highlight being the Reconciliation Convention held in Melbourne in late May. We have included some information from the Convention in this issue of the Journal and would welcome your thoughts on, or contributions to, this important process.

We have an interesting collection of contributions for you in this issue. Arthur Smith's paper gives an introductory overview of the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students in Australia and then looks more deeply at factors affecting Indigenous peoples' employment and career opportunities in higher education. He offers some interesting and insightful observations from a non-Indigenous perspective. Johann le Roux and Myra Dunn's article discusses the Oorala Centre at the University of New England, some of the problems experienced by Aboriginal students on entry to tertiary education and looks specifically at students' experiences and perceptions of being disempowered, discriminated against and disadvantaged and the attempts by the University of New England to address the challenges of tertiary education for Indigenous students. Tangi Steen's paper intends to inform readers, and especially educators, of the limited availability of literature in the area of Information Technology and the use of computers to assist Indigenous Australians in literacy programs. She provides a list of annotated articles which refer to the use of computers by Indigenous people in literacy programs and summarises the major issues raised in the literature at the end of the paper.

In section B of the Journal we have for you an article that describes the *Arnernte* Early Childhood Project. The article is based on an interview conducted with four of the central figures in the development and operation of the project, which works with Aboriginal families and is developing culturally appropriate curricula for children aged from three to six years in the *Arnernte* language. The project stresses the need to involve grandparents, aunts, uncles and elders in the development of curricula so that the *Arnernte* culture can stay alive alongside other Australian cultures.

We are fortunate to have for you three papers that were presented at the World Indigenous Peoples' Conference — Education 1996 held in Albuquerque, New Mexico in June 1996 in a session entitled *Aboriginal Education in Western Australia: Studies in Assimilation and Independence*. Richard Routh's paper looks at the strategies developed to enhance the program at Strelley Community School where the role of tribal elders is emphasised. Irene Calgaret provides us with a personal narrative of her childhood spent in a church institution after being taken away from her family. An important contribution in light of the *Bringing Them Home* report and the Reconciliation process. Terry Wooltorton's paper examines and presents a perspective on the extent and effect of assimilation and suggests that the negative outcomes of the education of Nyungars is a result of assimilationist teaching practices and school culture. He recommends that Nyungar education be underpinned by Nyungar control of Nyungar education, which consists of Nyungar decision-makers, teachers and parent involvement in educational implementation and decision-making and culturally appropriate teaching methods and teaching spaces.

We also have some book reviews together with some other news items that we hope you will find both interesting and useful. Finally, we would like to remind you that we welcome all contributions to the journal, although, of course, we cannot publish everything we receive. We encourage responses to articles published and consider such dialogue healthy and important. Please remember, however, that the views expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of the Editorial Committee. Rather, they are the views and ideas of readers of this journal who engage in teaching, running programs and schools, and researching issues of relevance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island education.

The Executive Editors