



2005/2006 Federal Budget Analysis

Indigenous Education

**Darcel Moyle,
Federal Aboriginal Education Officer,
Australian Education Union
120 Clarendon Street
Southbank VIC 3006**

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No New Money

It seems a familiar catch cry in the day after the Federal Budget is released, a 'groundhog day' type of feeling for people like me who analyse the budget year after year – the 2005/06 Federal budget offers no new money for Indigenous Education.

All elements of the budget were announced in the changes to the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program (IESIP) and Indigenous Education Direct Assistance (IEDA) funding last year, except for the 'Tutorial Support for Remote Indigenous Students' worth \$8.7m over four years. There is no indication of where this money is being appropriated from, but it seems as though it will come through the IEDA program which houses the new Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS). If this is the case, then it is likely that the funding has been appropriated from the \$4m per annum that was saved through the abolition of ASSPA committees.

Where is the Indigenous Voice in VET?

Given the focus on Vocational Education and Training in this budget, the Government's focus on VET participation for Indigenous 16 and 17 year olds who are on CDEP, the budget allocation for the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC), and the commitment in this budget to 'continue to progress recommendations from Partners in a Learning Culture, Australia's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy for Vocational Education and Training, it is anomalous that the Australian Government did not incorporate an Indigenous VET advisory mechanism in to the Federal Budget.

The current advisory body, the Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council (AITAC) to the ANTA board will wind up with ANTA at the end of June 2005. The AITAC has provided advice to DEST about an appropriate replacement mechanism, but it is clear that this advice has not been picked up in the 2005/06 budget. Given that Indigenous students access VET at a greater rate per capita than non-Indigenous students, and this Government's commitment to receiving advice from Indigenous peoples in Higher Education is built in to the budget, one would expect an announcement from the Minister later in the year, re-affirming his commitment to establishing a national Indigenous voice in VET through the appropriately suggested mechanisms.

Largesse to Private Schools

The private schooling sector is clearly the winner out of this year's Indigenous education budget, closely following trends in Commonwealth Government funding to private schools in mainstream areas.

The guidelines for the Indigenous Youth Leadership Program (IYLP) are not yet available on the DEST web-site, but according to the Queensland Government's submission to the recent *Senate Inquiry in to Indigenous Education Funding* (May 2005), money for this program is available only to students attending private schools, or so called 'high performing schools' and tertiary institutions (as put in the Minister's budget statement). However, the problem with the so-called 'high-performing schools' is that, in Queensland, at least, these 'high performing schools' have an attrition rate of 97% of students attending from Cape York. That

is a retention rate of 3%. Students who attend Government owned residential colleges will not be eligible for the subsidy.

There are two funding categories outlined by DEST in the *Indigenous Education – Achievement through Choice and Opportunity Discussion Paper* (April 2004) – the Metropolitan Rate and the Funding Guaranteed Provider Rate. In both, the non-Government schooling sector is clearly the winner, receiving approximately three times the amount of funding than the Government schooling sector, in spite of the Government schooling sector enrolling 87.5% of all Indigenous primary and secondary students, according to the 2003 *National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training*.

IESIP Funding – Metropolitan Rate

EDUCATION SECTOR	GOVERNMENT RATE	NON-GOVERNMENT RATE
Primary School	\$335.85	\$1,119.51
Junior Secondary School	\$447.80	\$1,679.27
Senior Secondary School	\$559.76	\$1,847.20
VET Institution	\$559.76	\$1,847.20

IESIP Funding - Funding Guaranteed Provider Rate

EDUCATION SECTOR	GOVERNMENT RATE	NON-GOVERNMENT RATE
Preschool	\$671.71	\$2,239.02
Primary School	\$671.71	\$2,239.02
Junior Secondary School	\$895.61	\$3,358.54
Senior Secondary School	\$1,119.51	\$3,694.39
VET Institution	\$1,119.51	\$3,694.39

Source: DEST 2004 *Indigenous Education – Achievement through Choice and Opportunity - Discussion Paper* pp 11 & 12.

Q. When does a funding increase not equal growth? A. When growth in enrolments outstrip growth in funding.

Between 2001 and 2003, Indigenous enrolments in primary school have increased by 6.5% (average 3.25% per annum) and by 14.5% (average 7.25% per annum) in secondary school. The 2005/06 Federal Budget has not kept pace with this rate, instead growing at a paltry 2.4%. This level of growth does nothing to counter the level of educational disadvantage faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Instead, it makes a mockery of this Governments' commitment to addressing Indigenous disadvantage.

Budget Elements

Element	Amount \$m	New Money
Indigenous Youth Mobility Program	23.1 (5 years)	No – announced last year
Indigenous Youth Leadership Program	12.9 (5 years)	No – announced last year
Tutorial Support for Remote Indigenous Students	8.7 (4 years)	New announcement – it is likely that the money has come from funds redirected from ASSPA committee abolition
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Study Assistance Scheme (Abstudy)	205.4 (1 year)	No – ongoing funding
Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program	195.7 (1 year)	No – ongoing funding
Indigenous Education Direct Assistance Program	70.4 (1 year)	No – ongoing funding
Indigenous Support Program	29.4 (1 year)	No – ongoing funding
Indigenous VET Infrastructure Program	4 (1 year)	No – ongoing funding
Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council	0.3 (1 year)	No – ongoing funding
Indigenous Staff Scholarships	0.2 (1 year)	No – ongoing funding

References

DEST (April 2004) *Indigenous Education – Achievement through Choice and Opportunity Discussion Paper* from <http://www.dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/52073C84-CA1F-4A4A-BC3E-9D37B8813F62/2496/IndigenousEducationDiscussionPaper20052008.pdf> (accessed 11.05.05)

DEST (2004) *National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training 2003* Australian Government, Canberra from http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/publications_resources/ (accessed 11.05.05)

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