



## Indigenous Studies in Teacher Education

# MAPPING OF STATE AND TERRITORY ACTIVITIES

### Background

The AEU is committed to ensuring that all teachers employed in the Public Education system in Australia are adequately prepared to work effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

To this end, the AEU believes that all State and Territory Governments have a responsibility to ensure that all teachers employed in their systems have completed Indigenous studies as a component of their pre-service training.

We believe that State and Territory Governments have a responsibility to ensure that this is a minimum requirement for the employment and registration of teachers.

The AEU has written to all State and Territory Ministers for Education to asking them to outline their Government's position on Indigenous studies.

Below is a summary of the replies we have received.

### State/Territory Responses

**NSW (former Minister John Watkins –  
New Minister – Andrew Rafshauge)**

#### *Policy:*

- Government committed to achievement of high educational standards and the development of strategies to improve Aboriginal student learning outcomes.

#### *Activity:*

- NSW Government has committed to mandating compulsory Indigenous studies as a part of its last election campaign.

- Page 7 of the “Quality Teaching” election campaign platform states –
  - Improved pre-service teacher training will be mandated. This will include compulsory university education in the areas of – behaviour management; Aboriginal education; literacy education; and teaching students from non-English speaking backgrounds.

#### **Northern Territory (Minister Sid Sterling)**

#### *Policy:*

- The Territory Government has an in principle support for Indigenous studies including English as a Second Language.

#### *Activity:*

- Department of Employment, Education and Training is represented on Northern Territory University and Bachelor Institute of Tertiary Education Teacher Education course development committees.
- Northern Territory University includes compulsory Indigenous studies and has done for 10 years.
- Monitoring of relevant course content will be undertaken by Teacher Registration Board, to be established in 2003.
- Board will develop and accredit standards for initial and continuing teacher education.

#### **ACT (former Minister – Simon Corbell)**

#### *Policy:*

- ACT Government supports the AEU's position on “recognising the needs of Indigenous students and their communities in schools”.

**Activity:**

- Department has formed strategic relationships with a number of Universities in the local area to ensure the “highest quality teacher graduates”.
- University of Canberra has core unit “Diversity in Education” which focuses on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, as well as other ‘educationally disadvantaged students’.
- Department’s Selection Criteria for teachers refers to “Integrating Indigenous issues in to the curriculum”.

**Tasmania (Minister Paula Wriedt)**

**Policy:**

- Not compulsory.
- Hopeful of further improvements based on ‘excellent relationship between Department and University of Tasmania’.
- Developing a policy approach.

**Activity:**

- Considerable interaction between Department and University partially designed to address the issue of Indigenous education.
- Peak Educational Action Committee established, and will address pre-service teacher education.
- Minister has spoken to Department, and a formal approach will be made to University to see how programs can be strengthened.

**Western Australia  
(Minister Alan Carpenter)**

**Policy:**

- Dept shares our views on the subject and has worked with Tertiary Institutions to ensure that there is a compulsory Indigenous studies unit in the Bachelor of Education and Diploma of Teaching courses.
- The module provides content in Language acquisition, language patterns and the pedagogy of Aboriginal education,

including cross-cultural understanding and cultural awareness.

**Activity:**

- Government has prioritised Aboriginal Education.
- Addressing problem of low retention rates.
- Encouraged and promoted Indigenous involvement in decision-making.
- Developing traineeship and cadetship options to encourage more Indigenous teachers.
- On-line professional learning program to enable people to access teacher education.
- Internship program.

**Queensland (Minister Anna Bligh)**

**Policy:**

- Government is strongly committed to pursuing the mandatory inclusion of Indigenous studies in pre-service teacher training.

**Activity:**

- Dept has commenced negotiations with tertiary providers, through the Queensland Deans of Education.
- Working with the Board of Teacher Registration to modify registration requirements to include Indigenous studies as a condition of employment with the Department of Education.
- Whilst negotiations are ongoing the Department is offering incentives to student-teachers who are doing Indigenous studies as an elective to teach in community schools.

**South Australia (No reply received)**

**Victoria (No reply received)**

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