

**Final Report to the Warlpiri Education and
Training Trust Advisory Committee: Options for
Education and Training**

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Note: This edited version of the original 2006 report, commissioned by the Central Land Council (CLC) as the agency administering the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT), is being made available for publication on the CAEPR website with permission from the CLC. The CLC requested the following statement be included in the report: 'While the Central Land Council, the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust Advisory Committee and the Warlpiri-patu-kurlangu Jaru Association value this report, the views expressed in it are the author's and not necessarily the views of these bodies. Further, these bodies do not vouch for the accuracy of this report.'

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Executive Summary

Background

Central Land Council as the agency administering the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT) commissioned this report into Aboriginal education and training focusing on remote Australia. The report is intended to provide clear models of Aboriginal education and training approaches and structures and identify some broad options for support under WETT, which receives royalties from mining activity in the Tanami region. These options are then to be the subject of thorough consultations by CLC staff with Warlpiri people in the 4 Warlpiri communities (Yuendumu, Lajamanu, Willowra and Nyirripi) and relevant others. That consultation is intended to culminate in the development of several regional education and training programs (to be funded and supported by WETT) that will make a significant difference to education and training outcomes amongst Warlpiri people.

Methodology and structure of project

The author participated in initial discussions in late March 2006 with Dr Danielle Campbell from the Central Land Council. The specific project brief was developed in April and more detailed discussions were conducted over the telephone and via email in May and early June. Dr Campbell carried out community consultations on the ground and over the telephone with educators and selected other residents in Warlpiri communities; notes summarising those consultations were provided to the author as background material. The 2005 report prepared for the CLC 'Warlpiri Education and Training Trust—Options for Use of Funds' was also provided to the author. A meeting between the author and the office bearing members of Warlpiri patu kurlangu Jaru (WpkJ) was held in Alice Springs on 27 and 28 June 2006. The WPKJ office bearers provided advice and instruction to the author. Dr Campbell and Dr David Jagger (also of the CLC) provided additional background information at that time as well. The research was entirely 'desk based' and focused, as directed by the project brief, on exploring and documenting education and training options in the context of relevant government policy, without being dictated by that policy.

WETT and the local context - perceptions of needs, challenges and opportunities

CLC consultation notes

Dr Danielle Campbell of the CLC conducted community consultations for this project. A total of 18 individuals gave their views; the majority (12) were involved with the four Warlpiri schools as teachers or principals. Of the total, three are identified in the notes as Indigenous. Among the various themes that emerged in the consultation notes, several have particular relevance to WETT:

- **Childcare centres:** there is a need for formal childcare in the communities (Yuendumu has a new facility but at the time of the consultations it had not yet opened).
- **Trained childcare workers:** there was broad recognition of the need for trained childcare workers. Comments suggested both a need for individuals with skills and knowledge and opportunities for employment.
- **Life skills and family education:** there is a general view that young people are most likely to engage with and benefit from education and training if the focus is on life skills and the method of teaching applies to 'real life'.
- **Businesses and enterprises:** there were suggestions that business and enterprise opportunities had been or could be in future a useful way to engage young people. Setting up and operating these would provide opportunities for training as well as real jobs in the community. For example, there was more than one reference to food preparation and service that might suggest an opportunity for a local catering or restaurant/take-away in Willowra.
- **Art centres:** a need for functioning art centres was mentioned by people from both Nyirripi and Lajamanu.
- **Multifunctional community centre:** a desire for a multifunctional community centre was mentioned in the notes for each community. The vision varied only slightly and involved a place, possibly but not necessarily separate from the school, where people could access technology (computers and the internet) and engage with learning.
- **Community development and/or youth and recreation workers:** there were suggestions that a paid community development and/or a youth and recreation worker would be valuable in communities; the consultation notes suggest that only Willowra currently has a youth worker.

2005 report ‘Warlpiri Education and Training Trust – Options for the Use of Funds’

The 2005 report was provided to the consultant at the beginning of this project and served as an important document portraying both perceived needs and recent thinking about the best ways to meet those needs. That report was considered carefully and provides important background information for this report. Some of the recommendations in this report align with advice from the 2005 document.

Meeting with the Warlpiri patu kurlangu Jaru office bearers

The consultant met with the Warlpiri patu kurlangu Jaru (WpkJ) office bearers in Alice Springs on 27-28 June 2006. That meeting was intended to provide an opportunity for information exchange and relationship building. There was discussion about social challenges for the Warlpiri communities and what was and what was not working in education and training. Some of the discussion involved an identification of education and training needs perceived by the WpkJ office bearers who were in attendance. Those needs focused on particular segments of the community such as Youth (including young mothers and young men), boarding school students and adults (who, it was said, need practical skills for jobs but also life skills like leadership). While those identified needs did not determine the direction of the research, they certainly provided important advice and insight that has been taken into consideration.

Remote Indigenous education and training - the governmental policy context

Following the project terms of reference, the research included consideration of thirteen of the most significant government policies, strategies and reports to allow the CLC to consider and, if necessary, progress education and training programs strategically, consistent with current government policies where appropriate, at variance to it where not. The report’s discussion is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather it highlights thirteen of the most important national, bilateral and state/territory strategies, reviews and policy frameworks. Prominent among these thirteen are the

- The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) report, Australian Directions in Indigenous Education, 2005-2008
- The Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) strategy Partners in a Learning Culture: Australia’s National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy for vocational education & training , 2000-2005
- The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) report Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators
- Learning Lessons – an Independent review of Aboriginal Education in the Northern Territory in 1999.
- Agenda for Action: Whole of Government Approach to Indigenous Affairs in the Northern Territory 2005-2009
- The Northern Territory’s Indigenous Economic Development Strategy, 2005
- The Northern Territory’s Indigenous Education Strategic Plan 2006-2009
- The Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey

Key themes from contemporary policies and programs

There are a number of clear and prominent themes that emerge in the various government policy and strategy documents that are important for deliberations and decisions related to the investment of WETT funds. The policy themes are diverse yet there is consistency. Early childhood is obviously a key focus both in terms of childhood health and readiness and engagement with school. There is an emphasis on strengthening of families and communities. Transition to adulthood appears in some form in most of the policies and strategies as does investment in business. Partnerships are often mentioned, both in terms of government and business. Throughout there is an assumption that communities will share responsibility for finding and implementing solutions to their needs.

The research literature and options for WETT investments in education and training

The brief for this project instructed the author to look

‘broadly at what is working in Aboriginal education and training and to identify some options that CLC staff can consult Warlpiri educators, community members and other stakeholders about in order to develop one or two education and training programs to be funded by WETT’

Out of the review of research and program literature emerged four thematic areas. Those areas are shaped by the project brief in the first instance, published research on education and training programs that appear to ‘work’ in remote Aboriginal communities or appear to have potential to work, insights and advice from CLC staff, the 2005 Harrison and Price report, the community consultation notes, the advice

and concerns of the WpkJ office bearers and the numerous government education and other policy documents, strategies and reports.

The themes identified are:

- Child development, school readiness and parenting skills
- Youth and media
- Enterprise development and training
- A Warlpiri learning community

Theme 1. Child development, school readiness and parenting skills

What does the research show?

It is widely accepted that the health of a child affects that child's ability to learn and there is increasing research to suggest that ability to learn is also affected by biological processes occurring before birth. Programs that assist young or potential parents to understand how their behaviours can influence the health and learning abilities of their children can have positive effects in both child health and school readiness. Research has shown that brain development, both before and after birth, influences health, learning and behaviour throughout the individual's life. There is evidence to show that if foetal brain development is disrupted or damaged by maternal infection or toxic substances such as alcohol during crucial developmental periods of antenatal growth parts of the brain associated with literacy and numeracy can be affected. It is also well established by research that maternal malnutrition can have damaging affects on the foetus. External environmental factors such as stress that affect the mother have been shown affect foetal brain development which then affects behavioural development of the child.

There is a wealth of research to show how cognitive development and educational attainment (including literacy) can be diminished by a range of factors that affect the health of infants. Brain development in the first three years of life is rapid (growing to 90 percent of its adult weight), and much of a child's capacity for learning is established during this time. Breast feeding appears to be associated with later improved cognitive performance while infant malnutrition can have a dramatic negative impact on learning and educational attainment.

As during the antenatal period, stress early in life has been shown to have a negative affect on neural systems necessary for learning and may modify an individual's ability to moderate or control responses to stress in later life. Perhaps there is a link between this finding and research in the United Kingdom that shows that family conflict and breakdown is associated with reduced educational attainment. Similarly, and in the context of Australian Indigenous communities, neglect and child abuse have a dramatic negative affect on children's health and their ability to learn. In addition, chronic ear infection (e.g., associated with otitis media) and subsequent hearing loss is generally agreed to impair language development and education. Similar research shows the impact of vision problems on ability to learn.

There is an enormous literature to show the positive effects of early childhood and family programs like Project Head Start. Project Head Start began in the United States in the mid-1960s and was designed to assist disadvantaged preschool children in making them 'school ready' to learn. Evaluations were extensive and showed participating children had better health, nutrition fewer absences and improved academic performance. In addition, long term studies show children who participated had reduced need for assisted education programs, were less likely to repeat grades, and were less likely to engage with the welfare and criminal justice systems.

Research also indicates there is value in programs that assist parents with the development of parenting skills. An analysis of 23 parent training studies showed that immediately following training, parents showed moderate decreases in unhealthy childrearing attitudes, increases in emotional adjustment and improvements in childrearing skills. Importantly, data from studies that conducted follow-up assessments suggest positive changes in childrearing attitudes were durable, but that emotional adjustment and childrearing skills were not.

Specific programs with potential for adaptation in the Warlpiri context include:

The Even Start Family Literacy Program—This program addresses the basic educational needs of parents and children. Even Start provides an integrated program that includes three key service components: adult basic or secondary education, assistance for parents to promote the educational development of their children, and early childhood education.

Similar programs are under way in Australia. There are two major programs called Best Start, one in Victoria and another in Western Australia. The Victorian version is aimed at improving the wellbeing of young children through improving access to child and family support, health services and early education, assisting parents and carers to increase their skills and understanding and working with communities to better support families and children and it includes Indigenous community sites. The Western Australia is focused exclusively on Aboriginal children (birth to 5 years) and their families. The overarching aim of the program is improvement in life opportunities for Aboriginal children through focusing on improving health, education, social and cultural development.

Mable Park High Parents Overcoming Work and Education Restrictions (POWER)—The Parents Overcoming Work and Education Restrictions (POWER) program was established at Mabel Park State High School south of Brisbane at the beginning of the 2001. It is funded under the Australian Government's *Stronger Families and Communities* strategy. Over 130 young parents who have accessed the program since it began. Currently 10% of the program participants are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

The program encourages young parents to become involved in their communities, supports their transition into employment or higher education, assists them to realise their potential, enhances their parenting and relationship skills, and helps them build stronger relationships with their children. Under the POWER program, the young parents participate in normal school classes while an on-site crèche cares for their children. The parents spend spare periods and lunch breaks with their children. They also attend weekly parenting skills courses as well as classes in effective family management, household budgeting, and relationship and social education. The program also provides playgroups, delivers intervention and prevention strategies and establishes support links within the community for the student parents. The program addresses itself to prospective fathers as well as mothers/mothers-to-be.

Triple P – Positive Parenting Program—This is a multilevel family intervention program for the prevention and treatment of behavioural and emotional problems in preadolescent children. Developed in Australia over 25 years ago, the program is used in many countries around the world. Recently, a Indigenous specific program has been developed though the evaluation of that program is not yet available.

The stated aims of Triple P are to:

- promote the independence and health of families by enhancing parents' knowledge, skills and confidence;
- promote the development of non-violent, protective and nurturing environments for children;
- promote the development, growth, health and social competencies of young children;
- reduce the incidence of child abuse, mental illness, behavioural problems, delinquency and homelessness; and
- enhance the competence, resourcefulness and self-sufficiency of parents in raising their preadolescent children.

The program involves range of interventions from the provision of media messages on positive parenting, through to information resources such as tip sheets and videos, and brief targeted interventions (for specific behaviour problems) offered by primary care practitioners and more intensive parent training programs at Level 4 and Level 5 programs targeting broader family issues such as relationship conflict and parental depression, anger and stress. Evaluations of the program show positive results—declines in behavioural problems, significant improvements in parental skills, sense of competence, and decreases in depression, anxiety, stress, and conflict between couples.

Child development, school readiness and parenting skills: issues in the Warlpiri context

There is growing interest in parenting capacity building in Indigenous communities. A recent major study among Indigenous Australians revealed that there is a strong desire for more information and effective strategies to assist individuals and communities with parenting. For example, people wanted to know more about: babies and children's care, health and nutrition; communication, interactions and relationships with infants and children; child development; building children's self esteem; support for teenage parents, new parents, fathers, grandparents; positive parenting; and a range of other topics. In some colonised countries like Canada and Australia, Indigenous people suffered separation from their families and were taken into institutional care where they no longer observed and participated in normal parenting. As a result, some Indigenous people have little confidence with parenting. There programs

identified above serve a range of different purposes but all have value in developing practical knowledge and skills in parenting that enhance both the confidence of parents and the health of children.

Theme 2: Youth and media

What does the research show?

Early school leavers comprise the majority of young people in remote Indigenous communities. Typically, they have low levels of literacy and numeracy and either avoid or struggle with conventional adult education and training opportunities. The social cost to Indigenous communities of the decision by young people to leave school is high, with mental health, criminal activity, drug abuse and other social problems increasing among this group in the Northern Territory and the rest of the nation.

International research has shown that arts-based projects provide a context for situated learning with the capacity and potential to stimulate non-formal learning. Youth Multi-media programs allow young people to explore and define who they are while gaining a broad range of technical competencies in the context of meaningful literacy use and collaborative 'situated learning' or 'intent participation'. An extended study in the US between 1987 and 1998 showed how non-school based arts programs in disadvantaged communities were effective in re-engaging young people with learning and with their communities.

A collection of case studies of youth media programs around the world pointed out that the most significant challenge for such programs is financial sustainability. Programs operate with funding from various sources. Some were established with grants from foundations, businesses or the public sector while others generate revenue from subscriptions, advertising, and the sale of material to mainstream news outlets. The precarious nature of funding means that unless it was a condition of the grant, few of the programs can afford to invest in an objective evaluation. Yet, recent research has shown how powerfully socially integrative radio is as a media for youth in Yuendumu and how young people in Warburton have seized on new media as a way to express themselves and reconnect with learning and the wider community. There is little research to show the long term social impact of new media among minority or Indigenous youth but anecdotal evidence from Australia indicates it could hold enormous promise for Warlpiri youth.

Specific programs with potential for adaptation in the Warlpiri context include:

Goolarri Media Enterprise Training Section—Goolarri Media Enterprises in Broome WA is successful both for its media enterprises (radio, television and music production) and its training program. Goolarri became a Registered Training Organisation in 2003 with four training pathways: film and television, radio broadcasting, music and multi-media. It has developed on-site reality based training using a multi-media package developed by Perth Central TAFE and adapted to suit Goolarri operational and cultural needs. Goolarri media training won the business category of the 2003 WA Training Excellence Award and was one of only three organizations short listed for the Australian Training Awards. In the same year it won WA Department of Education and Training funding to run a secondary school based traineeship for Indigenous students interested in studying broadcasting and screen as part of their secondary education.

Bi-lingual media: Print Media i) Warlpiri Youth Newspaper and ii) Book Production—The Harrington and Price report suggests that the Mt Theo Program (Jaru Pirrjirdi) and the Bilingual Resource Development Unit are interested in supporting the production of a regular Warlpiri bilingual newspaper to tell stories, report on local events and print photos. Mt Theo program staff have expressed an interest in assuming the role of base organization to support the project as it fits well with their Youth Challenge Program aims. This would mean they would administer the funds/make payments to reporters and writers. The paper could, for example, include one page of news for each community. Part of the proposal is that people who write stories and illustrate them will be paid a fee for their efforts and supported to produce them into books for use as community literacy materials. Ultimately the aim is to publish more books and newspapers in Warlpiri and English, employing people as reporters and writers, and involving more people in editing and producing in Warlpiri.

The project has merit in addressing an important facet of the literacy problem—a lack of reading material in remote areas. Typically, the only place that any reading material is available is at school and this proposal could assist with getting meaningful, community-based reading materials into local homes.

The Gap Youth Centre Alice Springs—The Gap Youth Centre in Alice Springs offers youth support, mentoring, an internet café and training and support in the practice of web creation and other digital media production in an informal process-focused (rather than outcome-focused) manner. While based in Alice Springs, the Youth Centre does tour communities in the region to impart skills in media and offer support to youth. Currently its major focus is on the deadly mob web site and the site's ongoing utilization as both a communication media and focus/display of creative youth activities. The web site is a mine of creativity and represents a project that is boosting the self esteem, self identity and expression of youth.

Road Open Kimberly DVD Production—The Road Open Kimberly DVD was co-produced by Catholic Education and a Broome musician, Alan Pigram. The Road Open project collected stories, songs and footage from a wide range of Kimberly communities. For each place, an Elder tells a story, linking everything back to the dreaming. The DVD includes images of animals, dances and songs for kids to sing along with. This project offers a model of both an early learning tool that may be utilized in preschool and early primary learning contexts and a production concept that could enlist and engage Warlpiri youth.

Touch Screens to Display Simple Talking Books—Ndjebbana Talking Books were created by Kunibidji people in the Maningrida region who speak Ndjebbana as their first language. The talking books are displayed on touch screen computers that were placed in children's homes to promote interaction in an informal setting and to promote Indigenous Australian language. There are 96 talking books that depict and reflect Kunibidji life-and social practices. Some describe trips to Kunibidji country where links with land and sea are reinforced while others show aspects of daily life in Maningrida.

Youth and media: issues in the Warlpiri Context

The Goolarri Media Enterprises Training section director stated that Goolarri has already begun a process of consultation with the Warlpiri Media Association to assist them in developing a training program. Due to the centrality and cultural significance of the Warlpiri Media Association this is obviously an important focus area for industry related Vocational training in the region. It is also an area that has great appeal for youth and young adults. Price and Harrison included such training as part of their recommendations and suggested that programs be linked to Mt Theo initiatives that seek appealing community activities to direct their 'at risk' young people into when they are ready to leave the Mt Theo community.

There are other very good examples of media programs for Indigenous youth around Australia and they appear to be powerful ways to reconnect young people with learning and to develop skills and confidence in a way that is meaningful to them. A strong program is underway in Warburton and a youth media project, 'Wugularr Film Crew', has just been completed in the community of Wugularr.

DVD production along the lines of 'Road Open' has the potential to link with youth media activities and could fulfil the desire expressed in the Harrison and Price report for projects that support the maintenance of traditions and language. It represents a way of utilizing multi media to preserve and foster language and traditional knowledge.

Similarly, the Maningrida touch screen talking books project represents an option that could be explored by youth and young adults in a multi media training context. Obviously, and again like the Road Open project, this would be a community level project involving youth and Warlpiri elders. In this way local youth could be engaged in education and training that results in a 'product' that is valued by the whole community.

Theme 3: Enterprise development and training

What does the research show?

Sustainable enterprise development can provide multiple benefits in remote areas. It can provide services which might not otherwise exist, it can provide employment and it can drive, through the need for employees, education and training. Solid research on the success rate of new business and enterprises in remote areas is difficult to obtain but they can be successful. The Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation, with an annual income of over \$26 million last year, has several enterprises underway including a recent initiative in which BAC purchased a commercial crab licence. Another enterprise that was new for 2005 was the Good Food Kitchen, a project that has some potential for Warlpiri communities (see below).

In a recent discussion of Indigenous business failures, one researcher highlights ‘the lack of financial literacy, business management expertise and basic office administration skills within some Indigenous communities. Without the provision of business infrastructure (he writes) and the necessary financial and management skills, community-based businesses are being set up for failure. A focused training program, with real service and profit goals, might overcome the problems many Indigenous businesses face. What follows are some examples of enterprise opportunities that could propel and be propelled by targeted training.

Specific programs with potential for adaptation in the Warlpiri context include:

The Good Food Kitchen—Located in Maningrida, a large township in North Central Arnhem Land on the Liverpool River, the Good Food Kitchen is a recent enterprise of the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation (BAC). Already operating a retail food store and mobile service to outstation residents, BAC opened a healthy food take away in 2004. The new business grew out of increasing awareness of the links between diet and health and recognition of the need (and opportunity) to provide something different for Aboriginal people in the township. The Good Food Kitchen serves only healthy hot and cold meals, snacks and drinks and operates as a take-away venue. In addition, it prepares all the meals for the community’s ‘meals on wheels’ program and offers catering services.

The building was constructed by BAC building crews and includes a fully stocked industrial kitchen, stock storage space, shop area and manager’s flat. In the near future the Good Food Kitchen will offer a sheltered outdoor eating area. All staff have completed training in Safe Food Handling and other hospitality and food service skills. Future training is planned.

The Dreamtime Cultural Centre VET Program—the Dreamtime Cultural Centre in Rockhampton promotes Aboriginal culture and displays exhibitions. Its meeting centre had been a marquis which was not well suited to its functions. The Central Queensland Institute of TAFE was looking for projects to embed its training in real-life practice for Aboriginal students. In this context, it partnered with the Dreamtime Cultural Centre and Capricornia Training Company to provide accredited training for 14 Indigenous students (aged between 22 and 34) in Construction, Fit-out and Finishing. Most had completed only Year 9. The workers put their training to practice in replacing the Dreamtime Cultural Centre marquis with a permanent facility.

The project was successful for several reasons:

- Student response was greater when learning was linked to practical outcomes.
- Students had in the past felt demoralized when they constructed buildings and then had to demolish them on completion.
- The project had the support of elders and the Aboriginal community.
- The project was real and had a tangible and useful result.

Youth Build USA—Youth Build is a program from the USA that engages with young unemployed men and women, most of whom have not completed secondary studies. In the program, youth are involved in the construction of affordable housing for low-income individuals/families, simultaneously transforming their own lives by being supported to further their education and to acquire skills that allow them to find employment.

Youth Build participants come from low income backgrounds and many have had experience with foster care, the juvenile justice system, welfare and homelessness. Participants spend between 6-24 months with the program and their time is divided between the Construction site and the Youth Build alternative school. Each Youth Build program raises public and private funds to support itself. Since 1994, YouthBuild has expanded to more than 225 local programs, and 60,000 youth have produced 15,000 units of affordable housing.

Youth Enterprise Training and Implementation through YAA (Young Achievements Australia)—YAA is a not-for-profit non-government business education provider that enables young secondary and tertiary students to experience the real world of business by creating and operating their own business. During the training, participants start a real company, raise capital by selling shares, produce and distribute a product or service. Participants take on a range of management and operational roles. At the end of the program, the company is dissolved and shareholders are paid out. YAA offers a Business Certificate II and links to mentors in the community. Although YAA is not Indigenous specific, in 2006 it secured funding to support 20 special Indigenous Youth projects across Australia.

A school based version of this approach exists at St Mary's College in Broome. In that school secondary students have been involved in developing, stocking and operating a Youth Art Gallery that generates a profit. Students produce the art, operate a gallery, keep the books and pack and ship stock to customers. Similarly, the College offers a tourism and hospitality program that involves secondary students in on-the-job training in restaurants and tourism ventures throughout the Broome region.

Boys from the Bush Program –Cape York—The Boys from the Bush Program is a behaviour modification program for 14-20 year old Indigenous youth in Far North Queensland. It has many similarities to the Mt Theo program but it differs in using business enterprises as the means of reconnecting young men to their community. The program operates in partnership with the Community Justice Groups under the auspices of the Cape York Land Council and Cape York Partnerships. Juvenile offenders are frequently ordered to work with Boys from the Bush as a way of serving their sentence. The program also assists young participants with the transition from boyhood to manhood and from play to work.

The boys produce native species oils and market their products locally, nationally and internationally. After deducting production costs, profits from the sales are shared by the participants. The oils are distilled on location during bush camp excursions which are a process of training in positive behaviour. They are later transformed into a range of cosmetic and medicinal products and marketed. The program builds a wide range of important skills from personal development and management (e.g., confidence, goal setting, follow through), bush and camping skills, organizational and social skills and marketing skills.

Enterprise development and training: issues in the Warlpiri Context

Meaningful, 'real' work provides a strong incentive for training. The Good Food Kitchen enterprise could work in each of the four Warlpiri communities and would have direct impacts not just on local skill levels, but on health and employment as well. Similarly, some version of targeted construction training (housing or something more substantial like a motel built, staffed and operated by Warlpiri people who have completed the training and acquired the various certificates that would both real skills, jobs and tangible community assets.

Another enterprise that would require training might be some version of the newspaper or book publishing proposal contained in the Price and Harrison report (Proposal 5a). Initial funding might be obtained from YAA, and WETT funds used to facilitate the mentorship/training of youth participants. WETT funds might also be used to leverage additional resources to establish a Warlpiri Youth enterprise of some sort. While there is enormous interest in 'Desert Art', there may be interest as well in the art produced by young people and the establishment of a gallery to exhibit to visitors in Yuendumu might be possible. This could be extended to web-based sales to enlarge the potential market. Obviously this would require a careful consideration of the cultural rules around art production.

The Commonwealth government has for a very long time argued that Indigenous communities can overcome disadvantage through business development and a recent review of Indigenous business. Acknowledging that normal business development models may not apply in remote areas, programs can 'assist in developing an enterprise culture by adopting community development models and discrete economies focused on the provision of community projects funded out of the welfare receipt'. While a reasonable argument can be mounted that this suggestion is discriminatory since no other Australian community is asked to finance enterprises through rightful welfare funds, it does represent the reality of government policy. It may also represent an opportunity to secure funding for an enterprise where no other option exists.

Obviously there should be opportunities to link with local training providers such as the Indigenous Centre for Appropriate Technology (ICAT), Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, Charles Darwin University and the Centre for Desert Knowledge. Alternatively, it might be possible to draw on a private training organisation.

Theme 4: A Warlpiri learning community

What does the research show?

The phrase 'learning community' has been related to the notion of learning as a life-long process, linking families, schools and communities (including business and government) to work together to identify and

deploy resources to address community needs. An Indigenous (in this case Warlpiri) learning community would be a collection of ideas and strategies to promote life-long learning, build partnerships between families, schools, business and government and provide a means whereby communities can identify their most pressing needs and develop the skills and knowledge they need to enact solutions. In this sense, a Warlpiri learning community would be a tool for individual and community empowerment and capacity development. It might involve the local school and would be recognisable in the ways walls and fences, metaphorical and real, are dismantled between the school and community and replaced by a bridge. It might, for example, involve the delivery of well-baby health services in a vacant classroom, the provision of adult literacy or parenting classes, internet access after hours, opening the school library to the community on weekends, the use of the staff room for community meetings or virtually any other service or activity the community needs or desires. A Warlpiri learning community would be something transformative, involving the sharing of knowledge, the design of solutions and creation of the future.

Specific programs with potential for adaptation in the Warlpiri context include:

New York City Beacons Initiative—The Beacons program was established in 1991 in New York City. Beacons are school-based community centres offering after-school programs, as well as extended programming for children, youth, and families in the evenings, on weekends and during the summer. Although the program is geared toward school-age children, it also serves as a community resource, providing support and services to parents, senior citizens, and other community members. Each program is open year-round and operates a minimum of 42 hours six days a week. Most programs operate between 3 p.m. and 10 p.m. daily. The Beacons program varies from site to site, but the essential program areas remain the same: academic enrichment; recreational; school-to-work transition; counselling and supportive services; leadership and community service; and parental and intergenerational involvement.

An external evaluation of the Beacons program showed it had a powerful positive effect on young people and their communities. The evaluation showed consistent high results in assisting youth by creating high expectations, teaching leadership skills, participation in community services and avoiding negative behaviours (e.g., fighting and drug use). The evaluation also showed a highly positive impact through educational enrichment, homework help, and engagement with teachers. Parents too reported the program provided opportunities for adult education, support for parental employment, intergenerational activities and support for parents.

Library and Knowledge Centres (Northern Territory Library)—The Northern Territory Government is currently in the process of establishing Libraries and Knowledge Centres (LKC) in a range of remote Indigenous communities. These represent a new model of library with an emphasis on meeting the interests and needs of communities. An important part of the LKC model is the incorporation of the Our Story database, a computer system that enables Indigenous community members to organise, store and access digitised material related to local culture and history. To date, one has not yet been announced for the Warlpiri region. A LKC in the Warlpiri region could contribute to the Warlpiri people in a number of ways:

- Provide access to knowledge and information through core library services, including English literacy and information literacy programs;
- Enable the acquisition and preservation of local knowledge;
- Provide training and support to community members engaged in acquiring and preserving knowledge; and
- Provide access to recreational activities for all groups within the community.

In this way the LKC is a way to build community capacity and provide part-time or full time jobs. A similar program, Ara Irititja, involves historical materials about Anangu (Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people). Ara Irititja, a project of the Pitjantjatjara Council, began in 1994. To date, a major focus of Ara Irititja's work has been retrieving and securing such records for the benefit of Anangu and the broader Australian community.

Adult Skills and Learning –A Queensland Government Initiative— the Queensland Government recognises that learning does not start and end with school and has initiated the program *Adult Skills and Knowledge for the Smart State*. Amidst a range of initiatives within this program, two have particular relevance in the Warlpiri context: Indigenous Knowledge Centres and Community Learning Hubs.

In remote Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands, the Queensland Government has established Indigenous Knowledge Centres to foster learning and leadership in Indigenous communities and to celebrate Indigenous knowledge. Such knowledge centres have been established at New Mapoon, Wujal Wujal, Lockhardt River, Mabuig and Erub. The centres are physical and virtual communication hubs, and provide community-wide access to computers and internet and traditional library resources, supplemented with resources to support the oral and visual traditions of local Indigenous people. They are created in conjunction with community councils.

Community Learning Hubs are a related initiative and involve the utilization of primary/secondary schools as hubs for adult learning after-hours. This means that facilities including vocational skill building equipment (e.g., woodwork and sewing) and computers are accessible for adult learning classes and courses. The project thus maximally utilizes existing local resources for the benefit of adult learning.

A Warlpiri Learning Community: issues in the Warlpiri context

The idea of a community education centre has a long history in the Northern Territory, but most observers and members of communities in which they were established argue that they were never fully realized. Academics have written about the idea and the notion of Aboriginal education precincts have recommended in the Northern Territory Review of Secondary Education. The idea has also been well developed put forward in Geraldton and is under review by the Western Australian government. A Warlpiri Learning Community, incorporating elements of the Beacon program could be a powerful vehicle for promoting learning.

There is certainly evidence to suggest that libraries can be an important resource for all members of a community from small children, to young people to elders. Whether or not WETT funds could or should be used to support the development of a community library is a difficult question. Perhaps there is a way to work in partnership with the Northern Territory Library to ensure a library is established in the region in the near future. For example, perhaps the Northern Territory government would be willing to fast track a LKC for Yuendumu if WETT funds were used to buy and operate a mobile library to visit outlying communities.

Recommendations for WETT investments in education and training

This report recommends a range of investments in each of the four themes identified. Some recommendations could be taken up immediately; others would require a longer period of time to develop. The recommendations are not prioritised because that requires input from the Warlpiri communities—but each recommendation addresses what has emerged as a pressing need.

There were a number of important challenges that formed a backdrop in the research carried out to identify options for investing funds from the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust. First, there are many very positive programs and activities related to education and training in the region and it is important to look for options that do not duplicate current or future efforts. The Price and Harrison report suggested the WETT funds should be used to compensate for the lack of government willingness to fund certain types of programs (particularly ones related to culture and language) and several of the projects funded out of that report did just that. However, it can also be argued that government should not be encouraged to ‘cost shift’ programs that it should provide. Second, there are clearly many different education and training needs and desires among Warlpiri people; consequently, the best options may be those that will have the maximum long term impact for the most people. Third, it may be prudent to consider the use of the WETT money as an investment, not a ‘one-off’ fix for a problem. A mix of investments in education and training, some visionary and others more immediately practical could be the best strategy. In that sense the challenge was to look for education and training options that have not only a long term but also a sustainable impact. Fourth, and in some ways the most difficult, is the fact that the communities that comprise the Warlpiri Triangle cover an extremely large area. Identifying education and training options that are not tied to a single location is difficult and in some cases unavoidable.

Recommendation 1:

The Warlpiri Early Childhood Institute. This recommendation is somewhat open ended but starts with an ambitious vision of a place where early childhood courses are taught and child health and other services are provided. It would also be a preschool facility and day care centre operated by Warlpiri staff. It would be affiliated with a University with Warlpiri people directing a program of teaching and research focused on culturally appropriate early childhood development, school readiness and parent support. It would build expertise in the region and would be a model for research, development and best practice.

Whether or not that vision is achievable would need to be debated and discussed but the foundation for such an Institute could be established today. Where some of the building blocks already exist, ways can

be found to strengthen and extend them. One option could be a central facility, probably in Yuendumu, with satellite facilities in Lajamanu, Willowra and Nyirripi. It would provide community controlled preschool and day care services and would serve as the site for training in early childhood. It would be a facility for Warlpiri people to access information and quality early childhood services but also a career path for many in the communities.

The first stage might involve investing in a series of targeted scholarships and study grants for students who are at the secondary level and want to develop a career in this field. Those scholarships and study grants could fund field trips to relevant institutions and locations outside the region. The logic in this would be to develop interest early on and set students on a career path.

Next funds could be used to develop, train and support a cohort of early education workers. CDU, BIITE, IAD and other bodies could be approached to provide training though there might be an opportunity for links to interstate organisations (e.g., The Telethon institute) as well. Funds could also be used (matched by government, industry or philanthropic foundations) to establish appropriate facilities in each community. There is obviously enormous support at many levels of government for a community-initiated program like this focused on the long term care and enrichment of Warlpiri children and communities.

Recommendation 2:

Warlpiri Parent Education and Parent Support Program. Research clearly shows that one of the ways to ensure children have the best start in life is for parents to have knowledge about antenatal health, nutrition and child development. In addition, parents benefit from knowledge of child rearing strategies, early literacy and discipline. There are different approaches to parent education and support, but a place to start is with community courses and individual support.

The Northern Territory government has indicated through its Building Healthier Communities agenda a commitment to strengthening families and communities so there should be opportunities for synergies between WETT investments and government support. For example, if WETT paid to develop a culturally appropriate curriculum for parent education, perhaps government monies could be used to pay for a parent and community development officer who could serve all four Warlpiri communities. Obviously, there could be links too with a potential Warlpiri Early Childhood Institute.

In addition, many programs available interstate and overseas (versions of Project Head Start as in the Western Australian Best Start program) have been shown to make a difference in building strong families through parent education and links could be made with those programs. The Northern Territory government has indicated it will be exploring a Head Start type program for Territorians; Warlpiri people could develop a proposal where WETT funds are invested on the condition that the new program is rolled out first in Warlpiri communities.

Recommendation 3:

Warlpiri Youth New Media Project. The disaffection and disengagement of Indigenous young people pervades communities across the country, but it is particularly difficult in smaller communities in remote areas where opportunities for study and employment are limited. In such places, offering more training seldom seems to work. There are, however, hopeful signs of social and educational reengagement in Indigenous youth arts and media programs. There are good examples of programs overseas as well that show positive results.

Young people in many Indigenous communities are uninterested in school and yet they are fascinated by and competent with many of the new media technologies. Many young people, who have left school because they see no relevance or find it boring, will seek out access to the internet, and to technologies that allow them to work with photographs, video and sound. The engagement of Indigenous youth in local media projects is often inspiring and there is research evidence to show that the informal learning that propels individual involvement often generates confidence, self-discipline and skills that are transferable to other areas of life and work.

There could be a valuable long-term benefit in investing WETT funds to outfit and operate a Warlpiri Youth New Media project with computers, printers, sound and video recording devices, internet access and production spaces in each of the Warlpiri communities. The technology is increasingly affordable and qualified community development staff area are not as difficult to locate as in some other fields (often young people who work in media in capital cities are keen to live and work with Indigenous people in remote communities). There is probably no other remote community with the history of positive incorporation of media that Warlpiri people have experienced. Partnerships could be built with

Warlpiri Media, CAAMA and Goolarri Media. In addition, the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre has prominent research streams in telecommunications.

A Warlpiri Youth New Media project could link to other WETT initiatives as well. Culturally and locally appropriate print, sound and video training materials are necessary for Warlpiri early childhood and parent education programs. Talking books are needed in schools and community newsletters can be produced by young people at marginal cost.

There may be government support for a project like this if framed as an Indigenous art sector initiative, a youth development scheme, a community capacity building program or even as a vocational training initiative. Business partnerships would be possible as would links to Philanthropic foundations (the Fred Hollows Foundation secured funding to sponsor a highly successful youth media project in Wugularr). Like the other initiatives, this one would involve WETT funds that should in principle be easily leveraged to acquire matching funds.

Recommendation 4:

Warlpiri Training through Enterprise Program. It is often said that training is most effective and learning is most easily facilitated when it results in practical 'real-life' skills. The research literature is filled with examples of 'hands on' and 'on the job' training programs that work because people gain real skills and they see the fruits of their labours in concrete outcomes. Remote communities have limited options for business development, so it would be wise to link opportunities that do arise with opportunities for people to gain real skills and experience that prepares them for and makes them valuable contributors to the workforce and to the community.

What is being proposed here is to invest WETT funds in building a set of community assets based on the Good Food Kitchen (take-away and catering facility) in Maningrida. The idea would be to establish one in each of the four Warlpiri communities. To build and operate Good Food Kitchens requires workers trained in construction, food preparation and service, office management (ordering, storing and stocking products and ingredients) and small business operation. A program like this couples a business opportunity with training so that training is based on demand not supply.

There could well be strong opportunities for leveraging a project like this with an Australian business, perhaps one that supports healthy foods. In addition, government policy related to building stronger, healthier communities could be cited in working with government to provide support and training. A similar training through enterprise opportunity might be a motel in Yuendumu. Again, a community owned business like this is very successful in Maningrida which, like Yuendumu, is a busy community with a never ending stream of government and other visitors who require accommodation.

Recommendation 5:

A Warlpiri Learning Community. A Warlpiri Learning Community is in many ways a 'virtual' community, linking people with services, information and resources and taking shape according to whatever the community needs and through whatever physical resources are available. A hub for the learning community might be the local school, or a library, or existing community centre. All of these options should be explored, but it may be that WETT funds would best be used (and matched by government or other business) to construct a purpose-built facility. Again, this is an ambitious vision, but one few other Aboriginal communities have ever had.

The hub would be a place where community and adult education courses and activities could be offered, a place where information (print and electronic) can be collected, digitised, stored. It would be a place that was open 'people hours' not business hours so that individuals and groups could access the facility in the evenings and on the weekends. It would probably be most reasonable to establish the hub in Yuendumu because of the size of the population and proximity of other services, but satellite centres could be established in Lajamanu, Willowra and Nyirripi.

Because information is such an important component of a learning community, there might be immediate and valuable opportunities to develop a Warlpiri Learning Community affiliated with a Northern Territory Library facility. The time is right and there is certainly movement in this area as the Northern Territory Library proceeds with plans to build Library and Knowledge Centres in some remote Aboriginal communities.

This program could link with others put forward earlier. Early childhood and parent training could be offered if classroom space was built into the facility; a childcare facility could be attached or located next door; a youth new media project could be housed in the same building or precinct.

This is an idea that has been developed though not yet implemented in Western Australia. One of the reasons for that is that government is cautious about investing heavily when there is no financial commitment from the community. Normally, remote Indigenous communities have few resources and so there is no way for them to show their commitment to a project. Warlpiri people have wisely set aside funds in WETT that could be used to leverage major initiatives with government, business or philanthropic foundations.

Section 1: Introduction

Background

Central Land Council as the agency administering the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT) commissioned this report into Aboriginal education and training focusing on remote Australia. The report is intended to provide clear models of Aboriginal education and training approaches and structures and identify some broad options for support under WETT, which receives royalties from mining activity in the Tanami region. These options are then to be the subject of thorough consultations by CLC staff with Warlpiri people, the 4 Warlpiri communities where mostly Warlpiri live (Yuendumu, Lajamanu, Willowra and Nyirrpri) and relevant others. That consultation is intended to culminate in the development of several regional education and training programs (to be funded and supported by WETT) that will make a significant difference to education and training outcomes amongst Warlpiri people.

Terms of reference

1. Review relevant literature, highlighting literature that provides most persuasive support for the options in 6 below, but also noting credible literature that suggests views at odds with these options. Pay specific, but not inordinate, attention to the 2005 report to CLC 'Warlpiri Education and Training Trust – Options for Use of Funds' by Angela Harrison and Dave Price as indicative of the area's education environment and some contemporary thinking on it.
2. Review CLC notes on consultations in 'Warlpiri communities' in 2006 about education.
3. Consider relevant government education policy and/or reports that will likely influence, or have influenced, this policy to allow CLC to in turn consider and, if necessary, progress education and training programs strategically, consistent with current government policy where appropriate, at variance to it where not.
4. Analyse the literature, notes and reports in 1, 2 and 3 above to distil relevant lessons, models, best practice, prior research findings and conformity with current government policy.
5. Arrange and discuss the literature, notes and reports in 1, 2 and 3 above according to education and training themes informed by the analysis in 4 above.
6. Develop options for education and training support consistent with the themes in 5 above, options that will each advance a broad and sustainable program or approach likely to significantly improve educational outcomes in the long term.
7. Prepare a comprehensive draft report to CLC:
 - i. documenting the literature and note review, analysis, thematic arrangement and discussion and policy consideration above, paying attention to the Harrison and Price report in 1 above.
 - ii. outlining and justifying the options in 6 above, including the Consultant's recommended option(s),
 - iii. including an introduction, executive summary, any recommendations for further research, and mention of other matters the Consultant considers relevant,
 - iv. listing all references in a comprehensive bibliography.
8. Complete a final report to CLC, covering all the elements a) to d) in 7 above, following review of the draft report by the WETT Advisory Committee (see The Brief 1(b) attached), incorporating relevant coordinated comments from the Advisory Committee.
9. Complete a plain English summary of the final report for dissemination and/or discussion in 'Warlpiri communities'.

Methodology and structure of project

The author participated in initial discussions in late March 2006 with Dr Danielle Campbell from the Central Land Council. The specific project brief was developed in April and more detailed discussions were conducted over the telephone and via email in May and early June. Dr Campbell carried out community consultations on the ground and over the telephone with educators and selected others resident in Warlpiri

communities; notes summarising those consultations were provided to the author as background material. The 2005 report prepared for the CLC, *Warlpiri Education and Training Trust—Options for Use of Funds*, was also provided to the author. A meeting between the author and the office bearing members of Warlpiri patu kurlangu Jaru (WpkJ) was held in Alice Springs on 27 and 28 June 2006. The WPKJ office bearers provided advice and instruction to the author. Dr Campbell and Dr David Jagger (also of the CLC) provided additional background information at that time as well.

The research itself was entirely ‘desk based’ and focused, as directed by the project brief, on exploring and documenting education and training options in the context of relevant government policy, without being dictated by that policy. The author was directed to ‘pay specific but not inordinate attention’ to the 2005 report *Warlpiri Education and Training Trust – Options for Use of Funds* ‘as indicative of the area’s education environment and some contemporary thinking on it.’ Though several recommendations in that report have been funded, this report draws on some of the key findings from the earlier research to guide an analysis of education and training options from across the country and overseas.

Section 2: WETT and the local context - perceptions of needs, challenges and opportunities

This section aims to summarise key points from the CLC briefings, CLC notes on consultations in 'Warlpiri communities' in 2006 about education, the 2005 report *Warlpiri Education and Training Trust – Options for the Use of Funds* and the meeting with Warlpiri patu kurlangu Jaru office bearers in Alice Springs on 27 and 28 June 2006

CLC briefings

The briefings from the CLC took the form of telephone conversations, email correspondence and face-to-face meetings in which the aims and methodology of the project were discussed. A written background brief detailing the history and aims of the project was included with the project contract; a copy of that brief appears in Appendix A.

CLC community consultation notes

Dr Danielle Campbell of the CLC conducted community consultations for this project and the notes from those consultations were sent to the consultant; those notes are attached in Appendix B. A total of 18 individuals gave their views, the majority of whom (12) were involved with the four Warlpiri schools as teachers or principals. Of the total, three are identified in the notes as Indigenous. Not surprisingly, given the number of education department staff consulted, there was a great deal of discussion about the lack of adequate infrastructure (with the exception of Willowra where the Principal said the school was 'pretty well resourced and supported'). There was a common view that too few young people are attending secondary studies, even when some form of opportunity is available. Among the themes that emerged in the consultation notes, several have particular relevance to WETT:

- **Childcare centres:** there is a need for formal childcare in the communities (Yuendumu has a new facility but at the time of the consultations it had not yet opened).
- **Trained childcare workers:** there was broad recognition of the need for trained childcare workers. Comments suggested both a need for individuals with skills and knowledge and opportunities for employment.
- **Life skills and family education:** there is a general view that young people are most likely to engage with and benefit from education and training if the focus is on life skills and the method of teaching applies to 'real life'.
- **Businesses and enterprises:** there were suggestions that business and enterprise opportunities had been or could be in future a useful way to engage young people. Setting up and operating these would provide opportunities for training as well as real jobs in the community. For example, there was more than one reference to food preparation and service that might suggest an opportunity for a local catering or restaurant/take-away service in Willowra.
- **Art centres:** a need for functioning art centres was mentioned by people from both Nyirrpi and Lajamanu.
- **Multifunctional community centre:** a desire for a multifunctional community centre was mentioned in the notes for each community. The vision varied only slightly and involved a place, possibly but not necessarily separate from the school, where people could access technology (computers and the internet) and engage with learning.

- **Community development and/or youth and recreation workers:** there were suggestions that a paid community development and/or a youth and recreation worker would be valuable in communities; the consultation notes suggest that only Willowra currently has a youth worker.

Warlpiri Education and Training Trust – Options for the Use of Funds

The 2005 report, *Warlpiri Education and Training Trust – Options for the Use of Funds* (Harrison and Price 2005), was provided to the consultant at the beginning of this project and served as an important document portraying both perceived needs and recent thinking about the best ways to meet those needs. That report was considered carefully and provides important background information for this report.

Note: though a summary of detailed proposals from that report appeared in the original 2006 version of this report, that summary was removed from this version at the request of the CLC.

Meeting with the Warlpiri patu kurlangu Jaru office bearers

The consultant met with the Warlpiri patu kurlangu Jaru (WpkJ) office bearers in Alice Springs on 27-28 June 2006. That meeting was intended to provide an opportunity for information exchange and relationship building. There was discussion about social challenges for the Warlpiri communities and what was and what was not working in education and training. Some of the discussion involved an identification of education and training needs perceived by the WpkJ office bearers in attendance. Those needs focused on particular segments of the community such as Youth (including young mothers and young men), boarding school students and adults (who, it was said, need practical skills for jobs but also life skills like leadership). While those identified needs did not determine the direction of the research, they certainly provided important advice and insight that has been taken into consideration.

Section 3: Remote Indigenous education and training - the governmental policy context

This section of the report details recent key government strategies, reviews and policy frameworks of significance to WETT. Following the project terms of reference, the aim of this section is

to consider relevant government policy (and where applicable reports that will likely influence, or have influenced, these policies) to allow the CLC to in turn consider and, if necessary, progress education and training programs strategically, consistent with current government policies where appropriate, at variance to it where not.

What follows is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather it highlights important national, bilateral and state/territory strategies, reviews and policy frameworks. While the emphasis is on education and training policy, other key policies are considered where they are significant for understanding education and training opportunities. The section includes brief descriptions of each of the key reports, programs or policies and discussion of the potential importance of each for WETT. An overview of key Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training education and training-related support programs, many of which will be relevant to whatever particular education and training options are chosen for investment of WETT funds, is contained in Appendix D.

National or bilateral strategies, reviews or policy frameworks

Australian Directions in Indigenous Education, 2005-2008

What is it about?

The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) comprises State, Territory, Australian Government and New Zealand Ministers with responsibility for the portfolios of education, employment, training and youth affairs, with Papua New Guinea and Norfolk Island having observer status.

The Council is responsible for pre-primary education, primary and secondary education, vocational education and training, higher education, employment and linkages between employment/labour market programs and education and training, adult and community education, youth policy programs and cross-sectoral matters. MCEETYA is particularly important as the body that coordinates strategic policy at the national level and is responsible for the negotiation and development of national agreements on shared objectives and interests.

The Council's recent report, *Australian Directions in Indigenous Education, 2005-2008*, will have significant impact on the future directions of Indigenous education policies and programs across the country. Its recommendations, intended to focus national effort over the next few years, cluster in five areas:

- early childhood education;
- school and community educational partnerships;
- school leadership;
- quality teaching; and
- pathways to training, employment and higher education.

The MCEETYA report aims to provide state/territory systems and individual schools with greater capacity to engage Indigenous children and young people in learning. It also is intended to assist jurisdictions to meet proposed education and training outcomes of the national reform agenda (human capital stream) agreed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in February 2006 and to address key indicators of Indigenous disadvantage endorsed by COAG in 2003.

How might it be important to WETT?

Though the detail is not provided above, there are many very specific recommendations that could have significance for WETT. For example, the report commits all of the ministers to providing Indigenous children in each of their states or territories with access to two years of high quality early childhood education prior to their first year of formal schooling. How that will be achieved is not specified but there may be opportunities for WETT funds to be invested in early childhood education materials, early childhood worker training or facilities in ways that complement or increase the impact of this government commitment. Another agreement among the Ministers that could have bearing on WETT investment is the commitment to formalise partnerships between schools and communities. The consultations and earlier research suggested a stronger relationship between the schools and the wider Warlpiri communities is one important avenue for enhancing education outcomes. Awareness of these and other such policy commitments could have some strategic value for determining how best to invest the WETT resources.

Source: Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), 2005. *Australian Directions in Indigenous Education, 2005–2008*, report prepared by the Australian Education Systems Officials Committee Senior Officials Working Party on Indigenous Education, MCEETYA, Adelaide.

http://www.mceetya.edu.au/verve/resources/Australian_Directions_in_Indigenous_Education_2005-2008.pdf

Improving Indigenous Outcomes and Enhancing Indigenous Culture and Knowledge in Australian Higher Education (2006)

What is it about?

The Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC) was appointed by the former Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson, MP, to provide policy advice on the issues concerning Indigenous Australians in higher education. In their recent report to DEST, *Improving Indigenous Outcomes and Enhancing Indigenous Culture and Knowledge in Australian Higher Education* (March 2006), IHEAC identified seven key areas on which to focus in the next three years:

1. encourage universities to work with schools, TAFE colleges and other registered training organisations to build pathways and raise levels of aspiration and confidence of Indigenous students;
2. develop a concerted strategy to improve the level of Indigenous undergraduate enrolments;
3. improve the level of Indigenous postgraduate enrolment, enhance Indigenous research and increase the number of Indigenous researchers;
4. improve the rates of success, retention and completion for Indigenous students;

5. enhance the status on campus of Indigenous culture, knowledge and studies;
6. increase the number of Indigenous people working in Australian universities; and
7. improve the participation of Indigenous people in university governance and management.

How might it be important to WETT?

This report is of strategic relevance to the WETT Advisory Committee and may present an opportunity to seek support for WETT activities and initiatives. In the report the committee refers to the growing interest overseas of universities working directly with disadvantaged school communities but points out that there are presently no policy mechanisms or incentives for driving relationships of this kind in Australia. The IHEAC urges government to develop policies that will ‘create cross-sectoral collaborations and partnerships, encouraging universities to undertake greater responsibility for ‘reaching back’ into schools and communities to widen Indigenous people’s horizons and boost their perceptions of attainability and relevance of higher education’ (IHEAC 2006: 15). Obviously the report is of longer term interest given that so few Warlpiri young people are attending university, but linkages with universities might be one way to encourage the perception that university study is a viable and worthy investment for Warlpiri youth while also facilitating access to other sorts of resources and expertise universities might bring to the communities in the region.

Sources: Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council, 2006. *Improving Indigenous Outcomes and Enhancing Indigenous Culture and Knowledge in Australian Higher Education*, Report to the Minister for Education, Science and Training, Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training, Canberra.

http://www.dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/10D89BBD-5DB7-4E1D-B634-0F3F2C57DB47/12984/IHEAC_Report_003_WEB_wCover_pf_FINAL.pdf

National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (1995)

What is it about?

Indigenous education policy in Australia has long been underpinned by an assumption that improvement of Indigenous educational attainment is an important way to enhance future prospects of Australia’s most disadvantaged people. Over the course of more than 30 years there have been many policy and program reviews and many reports dealing directly (or indirectly) with Indigenous education and training; all of these have recognised the special challenges for Indigenous people who reside in remote regions. Among the most prominent of the reviews are:

Education for Aborigines: Report to the Schools Commission (Aboriginal Consultative Group 1975)

Report of the Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Programs (Miller M. [Chairman] 1985)

Report of the Aboriginal Education Policy Task Force (Hughes 1988)

Review of the Training for Aboriginals Program (Johnston 1991)

Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, Vol. 2, (Commonwealth of Australia 1991)

Review of the Aboriginal Employment Development Policy (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission 1994)

Katu Kalpa: Report on the Inquiry into the Effectiveness of Education and Training Programs for Indigenous Australian (Commonwealth of Australia 2000a)

The current national education policy for Indigenous Australians is the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy* (commonly referred to as the AEP). It took its current form following a major review in 1995. Chaired by Mandawuy Yunupingu, that review resulted in 44 recommendations clustered around five themes: involvement and self-determination; equitable access; raising participation; equitable and appropriate outcomes; and ensuring appropriate reporting, monitoring and evaluation (Commonwealth of Australia 1995). It continues to this day to be the primary education policy foundation document for the Commonwealth, States and Territories.

How might it be important to WETT?

The AEP is an important document because it portrays the thinking, at a national level, around the challenges and best strategies to address Indigenous educational disadvantage. Though the review is over ten years old, the key issues remain salient today and many of the education and training strategies in place across the country are anchored in the recommendations and goals of the Commonwealth policy. Consequently, it is a useful document for identifying opportunities that have national recognition and potentially national and territory support. For example, the policy includes 21 long-term goals under four themes: involvement, access, participation and outcomes. Warlpiri people, through the Warlpiri patu kurlangu Jaru and the WETT Advisory Committee, have achieved a level of involvement with educational decision-making the policy aims for and therefore their visions for the future development of education and training should be supported by all levels of government. Similarly, the options identified in this report address other key goals of the AEP (e.g., some of the options discussed relate to AEP goals of enhanced access to pre-primary and other early childhood education services, increased school readiness, community education services, education and training for adults). Consequently, Warlpiri people might rightfully expect support and collaboration from education departments in the investments of their valuable resources. Yet that may not be the case. The political terrain has shifted dramatically since the mid 1990s, and while the AEP remains the core policy document, Warlpiri people need to look very carefully at other policies and other bodies inside and out side of government. For example, as will be discussed below, there is value in looking to policies and programs outside education departments that relate, for example, to economic development, regional infrastructure enhancement and or health and communities in order to find the best strategic and logistical support to achieve their aims.

Source: Commonwealth of Australia (M. Yunupingu Chair) 1995, *National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples: Final Report*, AGPS, Canberra.

Partners in a Learning Culture

What is it about?

Partners in a Learning Culture: Australia's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy for vocational education & training, 2000-2005, published in 2000, was the first national strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in vocational education and training. It was developed by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Training Advisory Council and identified a series of four primary objectives. A complementary document, *Partners in a Learning Culture: A blueprint for implementing the National Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People*, sets out a range of strategies for each objective, all aimed at the provision of culturally appropriate vocational education and training for Indigenous Australians:

1. Increasing the involvement of Indigenous people in decision making about policy, planning, resources and delivery
 - Secure Indigenous membership of key relevant decision-making bodies.
 - Develop mechanisms for inclusion of Indigenous advice in all VET projects, programs and products
 - Secure Indigenous employment in key areas of the VET Sector

2. Achieving participation in VET for Indigenous people equal to those of the rest of the Australian community
 - Focus on participation and outcomes for Indigenous students in VET in Schools programs
 - Provide professional development for staff delivering VET
 - Create partnerships between schools, postsecondary institutions, industry and communities
 - Increase access to and attainment in, higher level VET and more industry relevant courses for Indigenous students

3. Achieving increased flexible delivery, including use of information technology, for Indigenous people
 - Establish training centres
 - Training in IT skills and use

4. Developing closer links between VET outcomes for Indigenous people and industry and employment
 - Establish and expand partnerships between Indigenous peoples, communities, training providers and industry
 - Expand opportunities for Indigenous people participating in CDEP
 - Promote Indigenous training and employment through ITABs (Indigenous Training Advisory Bodies)
 - Promote Indigenous training and employment through Group Training Companies

A midterm review of the Blueprint resulted in six new priorities that were affirmed in mid-2005 when ANTA was dissolved and its functions transferred to the Department of Education, Science and Technology. Those priorities are:

- Building the capacity of the VET sector
- Creating more pathways
- Improving funding frameworks
- Culturally appropriate product development, design and delivery;
- Links to employment
- Growing VET sector partnerships

How might it be important to WETT?

Though ANTA has been disbanded and its responsibilities shifted to DEST, *Partners in a Learning Culture* remains the primary policy vision for enhanced participation and outcomes in the Vocational education sector. The principles of flexible delivery and culturally appropriate training product development, design and delivery still underpin

VET programs in the Northern Territory and align closely with the options for WETT investment outlined later in this report. The emphasis on partnerships is also significant and represents the foundation of policy and programs at both the national and territory levels. Again, WETT makes possible a very real partnership in which both partners have resources to invest in realising a vision for enhanced education and training. Like other national policy frameworks, this one is strategically significant for WETT and may be used to leverage particular programs or approaches.

Sources: Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) 2000a, *Partners in a Learning Culture: Australia's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy for vocational education & training, 2000-2005*, Australian National Training Authority, Brisbane.

Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) 2000b, *Partners in a Learning Culture: A blueprint for implementing the National Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People*, Australian National Training Authority, Brisbane.

Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) 2005, *Partners in a Learning Culture: the Way Forward*, Australian National Training Authority, Brisbane

Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage, 2005

What is it about?

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) is the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia. It comprises the Prime Minister, State Premiers, Territory Chief Ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA). The role of COAG is to initiate, develop and monitor the implementation of policy reforms that are of national significance and which require cooperative action by Australian governments. The Ministerial Taskforce on Indigenous Affairs is responsible for strategic direction and high level coordination of policy development and government investment.

In April 2002, COAG asked the Australian Government Productivity Commission to produce a regular report against key indicators of Indigenous disadvantage. That report, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage*—and the subsequent 2005 report—was intended to inform Australian governments about whether policy programs and interventions are achieving positive outcomes for Indigenous people. Out of the report came seven strategic areas for action:

- Early child development and growth (prenatal to age 3)
- Early school engagement and performance (preschool to year 3)
- Positive childhood and transition to adulthood
- Substance use and misuse
- Functional and resilient families and communities
- Effective environmental health systems
- Economic participation and development

The Taskforce has identified three key priorities that encapsulate the seven strategic areas for action under the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage framework:

- Early childhood intervention, a key focus of which will be improved mental and physical health, and in particular primary health, and early educational outcomes
- Safer communities (which includes issues of authority, law and order, but necessarily also focuses on dealing with issues of governance to ensure that communities are functional and effective)
- Building Indigenous wealth, employment and entrepreneurial culture, as these are integral to boosting economic development and reducing poverty and dependence on passive welfare (Australian Government Productivity Commission 2005: A2.2)

How might it be important to WETT?

This report could well be the most significant document—in terms of future relations with Australian governments—Warlpiri people interact with. It has become the dominant framework for Indigenous policy both nationally and in the Northern Territory. The policies and programs that are already beginning to flow from this report will influence and shape life in remote communities for decades to come. Of particular importance to WETT are the clear signals related to particular types of investments government is willing to make in education and training. Government is signalling a philosophical shift toward broad social change, not as in the past simply targeted programs. For example, a community project related to preschools could well find support (and funding) outside traditional territory ‘school’ programs because early childhood engagement, as a social change objective, may involve direct ties to health, criminology, welfare and social services, employment, arts and a range of other policy and program areas.

Source: Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), 2003, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators*, Australian Government Productivity Commission, Canberra.

Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), 2005, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2005*, Australian Government Productivity Commission, Canberra.

COAG National Framework of Principles for Delivering Services to Indigenous Australians

What is it about?

In April 2002, COAG agreed to trial a new approach to working with Indigenous communities: the *COAG Whole-of-Government Indigenous Initiative*. The aim is to better coordinate the delivery of services and to provide a more effective government response to community needs. Under this approach, governments and communities are intended to work together to address key issues and share responsibility for getting better outcomes.

In June 2004, COAG agreed to a *National Framework of Principles for Delivering Services to Indigenous Australians*. The Framework is based around the following 6 principles:

- Sharing responsibility
- Harnessing the mainstream
- Streamlining service delivery

- Establishing transparency and accountability
- Developing a learning framework
- Focusing on priority areas

Source: Council of Australian Governments, 2004. *National Framework of Principles for Delivering Services to Indigenous Australians*, COAG, Barton.

http://www.coag.gov.au/meetings/250604/attachments_b.pdf

In addition to its focus on delivery of government services to Indigenous communities, COAG has committed to two additional areas of effort: 1) family violence and child abuse and 2) reconciliation. In these areas COAG is working across jurisdictions on approaches to the prevention of family violence and child abuse in Indigenous families. Part of this effort involves a *National Framework on Indigenous Family Violence and Child Protection*. Bi-lateral arrangements will be negotiated and the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments have already agreed to implement two new measures—community patrols and anti-violence education for indigenous young people—as part of their bi-lateral partnership commitment.

Source: Council of Australian Governments, 2004. *National Framework on Indigenous Family Violence and Child Protection*, COAG, Barton.

http://www.coag.gov.au/meetings/250604/attachments_c.pdf

COAG also agreed that Senior Officials would report to it annually on progress in promoting reconciliation against the *Framework for Reconciliation* that it adopted at its November 2000 meeting. The framework identifies three priorities for governments' action: investment in community leadership initiatives; reviewing and re-engineering government programmes and services to ensure they deliver practical support to indigenous Australians; and the forging of closer links between the business sector and indigenous communities to help promote economic independence.

Source: Council of Australian Governments, 2000. *Framework for Reconciliation*, COAG, Barton.

<http://www.coag.gov.au/meetings/031100/index.htm#reconciliation>

How might it be important to WETT?

The *National Framework of Principles for Delivering Services to Indigenous Australians* is the practical and philosophical vehicle for addressing the key priorities identified in the *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage* reports. The principles it refers to are real and being enacted by every government and government department with a relationship to Indigenous Australians. The now infamous principle of 'shared responsibility' is the spine of this framework and it is strategically important for monies from WETT to be used in full understanding of that principle. While many have seen the principles within the framework as a stick rather than carrot, they represent the reality of Indigenous policy today. The challenge is to use those principles to best advantage in working with government.

Additional important opportunities for WETT may emerge from the COAG *National Framework on Indigenous Family Violence and Child Protection* and the *Framework for Reconciliation*. The first emphasises again the importance of family and children

while the second contains some important signals on government interest in community leadership, practical support by government and entrepreneurial initiatives. Again, there is always strategic value in investing in areas where resources can be complemented or extended by government policy or program initiatives or support.

Overarching Agreement on Indigenous Affairs between the Northern Territory and Australian Governments, 2005

What is it about?

The *Overarching Agreement on Indigenous Affairs between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Northern Territory of Australia* was signed in April 2005. It is the first bilateral agreement to result from the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) 'National Framework of Principles for Delivering Services to Indigenous Australians' endorsed in June 2004. The Agreement sets out areas of priority and is intended to strengthen government efforts in the area of Indigenous affairs.

The Agreement identifies five priority action areas, derived from the Productivity Commission's *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Report*:

1. improving outcomes for young Indigenous Territorians, including through early childhood intervention - a key focus of which will be improved mental and physical health, and in particular primary health, and early educational outcomes:
 - Working together to improve early childhood outcomes
 - Improving access and outcomes in education
 - Supporting the development of emerging Indigenous leaders
 - Streamlining the delivery of welfare services
2. safer communities which includes issues of authority, law and order:
 - Preventing family violence
 - Tackling substance abuse (volatile substances, alcohol, kava and gunga)
 - Providing meaningful activities (sport and recreation)
3. strengthening governance and developing community capacity to ensure that communities are functional and effective:
 - Ensuring effective and legitimate representation
 - Building the capacity of community members
4. building Indigenous wealth, employment and entrepreneurial culture, as these are integral to boosting economic development and reducing poverty and dependence on passive welfare:
 - Ensuring effective training, skills development and job creation
 - Supporting existing and new Indigenous businesses
 - Creating new jobs (including arts and culture)
5. improving service delivery and infrastructure that recognises demographic change and the need to lift the performance of the Governments:
 - Demographic changes - from communities to towns - infrastructure, housing and essential services
 - Expand housing effort
 - Seek strategic solutions to land issues
 - Rationalise essential services delivery in towns and outstations
 - Upgrade and expand communications infrastructure
 - Lifting the performance of the Governments

- Address jurisdictional overlap through finalising bilateral agreements with Australian Government on service delivery
- Build skills and awareness within the Northern Territory Public Sector and the Australian Public Service
- Monitoring and accountability

From these priority areas, the Northern Territory government has entered into four bilateral agreements with the Commonwealth to invest in four priority areas:

- Sustainable Indigenous Housing
- Strengthening and Sustaining the Indigenous Arts Sector
- Developing Regional Authorities
- Boosting Indigenous Employment and Economic Development

A fifth bilateral agreement, focusing on enhancing Indigenous land and sea management, is currently being developed.

How might it be important to WETT?

The bilateral agreements are signposts for WETT, indicating government (both Commonwealth and Northern Territory) philosophy and commitments for Indigenous social and economic development in the near future. While the *National Framework of Principles for Delivering Services to Indigenous Australians* indicates the national agenda, the bilateral shows how that agenda will be manifest on the ground in the Northern Territory. For example, the second agreement relates to the Indigenous art industry and commits government to strengthening the economic opportunities it can provide, particularly for Indigenous people in regional and remote areas. There should be synergies possible in the investment of WETT funds related to this priority area.

Sources: Commonwealth of Australia and the Northern Territory Government 2005. *Overarching Agreement on Indigenous Affairs between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Northern Territory of Australia*, Commonwealth of Australia and the Northern Territory Government, Canberra and Darwin.

<http://www.nt.gov.au/dcm/people/pdf/20050406/OverarchingAgreement.pdf>

<http://www.nt.gov.au/dcm/people/pdf/20050406/Housing.pdf>

<http://www.nt.gov.au/dcm/people/pdf/20050406/arts.pdf>

<http://www.nt.gov.au/dcm/people/pdf/20050406/regional.pdf>

<http://www.nt.gov.au/dcm/people/pdf/BoostIndigEmployEconDevelopNT.pdf>

Northern Territory Government

Agenda for Action, Whole of Government Approach to Indigenous Affairs in the Northern Territory 2005-2009

What is it about?

This document provides an overview of the Northern Territory's Indigenous affairs priorities for the period 2005-2009. It is essentially a map for coordination of policy

and services for the Northern Territory's various agencies and departments. It is built upon the *Overarching Agreement on Indigenous Affairs between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Northern Territory of Australia* (see above) and reflects the 'whole of government' approach which threads through virtually all Indigenous-related programs and initiatives. It also traces out the logic and links between existing policies and the Overarching Agreement. The document identifies six government priorities in Indigenous affairs:

- Establish and maintain a 'whole-of-government' approach — all Government agencies need to talk with each other and work together to achieve good results for Indigenous Territorians
- Invest in the Territory's future by assisting young Indigenous Territorians to get a good start in life, a strong education, and the skills necessary to reach their full potential
- Foster further Indigenous economic development, by creating more local jobs for local people and using land rights to boost community economies
- Develop Indigenous peoples' ability to govern their own communities, and encourage other community-building activities
- Build on the strong progress made over the past four years to improve housing, roads, communications infrastructure (including access to telephones and the internet), and other essential services in Indigenous communities
- Ensure all Indigenous Territorians feel safe living and working in their communities

How might it be important to WETT?

The document provides a clear statement of the Territory's policy priorities, including education and training, a listing of some of what has been accomplished and efforts currently underway. It has clear links to the Overarching Agreement and the priorities that emerge from the COAG and Productivity Commission reports. Its value to WETT is primarily as a statement of where the government intends to go in education and training, investment in children and youth and regional development in infrastructure; this has strategic value that will be important in assessing options for the investment of WETT funds.

Source: Northern Territory Government, 2006 'Agenda for action: a whole of government approach to Indigenous affairs in the Northern Territory, 2005-2009', Northern Territory Government, Darwin.

<http://www.nt.gov.au/dcm/people/pdf/200603AgendaForAction.pdf>

Indigenous Economic Development Strategy, 2005

What is it about?

The Northern Territory's *Indigenous Economic Development Strategy, 2005* is intended to assist in increasing levels of Indigenous employment and enterprise development over the next 20 years. It provides a first pass at an economic sector analysis and highlights some of the opportunities available for Indigenous people living in remote areas. The strategy also suggests a framework for government and the private sector to work together to create jobs and businesses in the bush.

How might it be important to WETT?

The strategy is particularly useful for WETT in providing an analysis of industry sector opportunities and some examples of how Indigenous people in the Territory have

developed businesses and enterprises that exploit some of those opportunities. The sector analysis includes overviews of the following:

- Aquaculture and Fisheries
- Arts
- Community Services
- Construction
- Forestry and Agri-business
- Government
- Horticulture
- Knowledge and Culture
- Mining and Production
- Natural Resource Management
- Pastoral
- Retail and Services
- Tourism

Among the overviews presented in the strategy document, only Aquaculture and Fisheries has no obvious opportunities for employment (and education and training) in the Warlpiri region. In assessing the best options for investment of WETT funds, the Warlpiri communities may want to consider strategic links to industry sectors that could be supported through this government strategy. Obviously, there are existing with mining and the arts that should be developed further, but there may also be opportunities to explore in the other industry sectors. For example, there may be important future opportunities around knowledge and culture and new retail and service sector development that can link with investments of WETT funds (some of these align with options identified later in this report). In terms of education and training opportunities, there is clearly no business or enterprise that does not require educated or trained workers and so any industry development brings with it the potential for education, training and employment..

Source: Northern Territory Government 2005. 'Northern Territory Indigenous Economic Development Strategy', Northern Territory Government, Darwin.

http://www.nt.gov.au/business/documents/general/IED_Strategy.pdf

Building Healthier Communities 2004-2009

What is it about?

The *Building Healthier Communities 2004-2009* strategy provides a framework for Health and Community Services in the Northern Territory. It identifies six core strategic areas of focus:

- Giving kids a good start in life
- Strengthening families and communities
- Getting serious about Aboriginal health
- Creating better pathways to health services
- Filling service gaps
- Tackling substance abuse

It also identifies four key areas for strengthening and reforming the health and community services system:

- Building quality health and community services
- Creating better ways of working together
- Valuing and supporting our workforce
- Creating a health information network

For each of these strategic areas, the document provides priority areas of action and specific examples of programs or programs the government has or will put into place.

How might it be important to WETT?

The strategy contains concrete actions to address the identified areas of focus. For example, there is an identified focus on child health with specific discussion of the need to assist pregnant women (and by association their children in their first years of life) to improve nutrition, promote child growth, reduce smoking and drinking in pregnancy and provide effective antenatal care. Certainly it might be sensible to wait for the government to act in addressing these needs, but there may also be opportunities for the investment of WETT funds to complement or extend government efforts in this area. Another example is the call for practical assistance for aged community members in the form of meals, transport and help at home. Such programs are clearly useful but effective programs require individuals who are educated and trained to undertake some of these tasks. Again, WETT funds might be strategically used to establish a training program in this area, perhaps in collaboration with a training provider. Addressing the priority areas identified in the strategy document will require workers in new jobs; education and training will be required if people are to take up these jobs in their home communities.

Sources: Northern Territory Government 2004. 'Building healthier communities 2004-2009: a framework for health and community services', Department of Health and Community Services, Northern Territory Government, Darwin.

http://www.nt.gov.au/health/building_healthier_communities.pdf

Building Better Schools

What is it about?

A review of secondary education in the Northern Territory, *Future Directions for Secondary Education in the Northern Territory, 2003*, found that overall the education system was not meeting the needs of Indigenous young people or preparing them for 'a variety of career or livelihood pathways and for lifelong learning' (Charles Darwin University and the Northern Territory Government 2003: x). Following the release of the review, and after extensive public consultation throughout 2004, the Territory Government announced it will invest an extra \$42 million during the next four years to improve secondary education. The Building Better Schools initiative aims to:

- Provide greater access to secondary education for all young Territorians
- Better engage young people and their families in secondary schooling
- Improve student performance in secondary education across the Northern Territory

The five key action areas of Building Better Schools are”

- Students and Learning
- Supporting the Territory's Teachers
- Indigenous Education
- Distance Education
- Building Stronger School Communities

Each of these action areas has a series of specific programs and initiatives. While there is one action area focused on Indigenous education, each of the other four has relevance for Indigenous people in the Territory. Out of the \$42 million the government plans to invest, \$15.84 million in Indigenous education initiatives in the bush to ensure Indigenous people are better able to access a quality secondary education. Key initiatives include:

- Providing a pool of specialist teachers to support face-to-face teaching in remote schools
- Developing models of collaboration between Indigenous schools and communities
- Developing mentorship programs for Indigenous students
- Ensuring equity in the staffing formula between bush and urban schools
- Ensuring there is sufficient support within the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) so that remote schools can more readily access support
- working with remote schools to develop a strategic infrastructure plan, including the roll out of secondary education
- working to improve housing and transport for teachers in remote communities
- assisting schools to develop programs for teachers and parents to work together

How might it be important to WETT?

There may be several important opportunities in initiatives that comprise the Building Better Schools initiative. For example, there is a strong focus on building links between communities and schools and it might be worth investing WETT funds in developing a model of what sorts of links best suit the highly dispersed Warlpiri communities.

Similarly, the initiative is supposed to enhance the ability of young people and parents to take a more active role in educational decision making. There may be an opportunity there to invest resources to maximise the effectiveness of individuals in such roles.

Source: <http://www.betterschools.nt.gov.au/>

‘Learning Lessons’ and the Northern Territory Indigenous Education Strategic Plan 2006-2009

What is it about?

The *Northern Territory Indigenous Education Strategic Plan 2006-2009* is the most recent statement on the Territory’s priorities and program focus for Indigenous education. The plan emerged after several years of introspection and analysis by the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) following the release of the ground shaking review of Indigenous education, *Learning Lessons – an Independent review of Aboriginal Education in the Northern Territory* in 1999. In the

years that followed, additional reports were written and extensive consultations carried out with Indigenous people, teachers, principals and other stakeholders. The strategic plan that resulted identifies a set of particular priorities:

1. **Literacy and Numeracy Programs**
Increase the focus on the development and methods for delivery of sustainable high quality school literacy and numeracy programs.
2. **High Quality Teaching Programs**
Provide leadership and support to teachers to advance the delivery of high quality teaching programs that are rigorous and relevant to student needs.
3. **Indigenous Languages and Culture Programs**
Incorporate Indigenous perspectives into teaching programs and deliver high quality Indigenous languages and culture programs.
4. **Local School and Community Partnership Contracts**
Negotiate local school and community partnership contracts in the larger remote centres to support a closer working relationship between the school, Indigenous families and students, and community stakeholders.
5. **Early Years Programs**
Expand the delivery of high quality early years programs to give Indigenous children the best possible start to schooling.
6. **Secondary Education**
Expand the delivery of relevant and accessible secondary education.
7. **Innovative Policy Development**
Develop innovative policy that supports quantum improvements in access to education for Indigenous students.
8. **Health Stakeholder Agreements**
Develop and implement agreements with stakeholders to establish and maintain working relationships between schools and health providers.
9. **Training, Employment and Career Pathways**
Work with stakeholders to identify and introduce training, higher education, employment and career pathways and options for Indigenous students.
10. **Recruitment and Retention of High Quality Teachers and Principals**
Develop and implement policy and procedures that strengthen the recruitment and retention of high quality teachers and principals.
11. **Indigenous Leadership**
Develop new models for Indigenous leadership and governance in DEET.
12. **Indigenous Employment in DEET**
Develop and introduce protocols to increase the rate of Indigenous employment in DEET.

How might it be important to WETT?

At the local level, the Indigenous Education Strategic Plan is probably the key document for WETT considerations of education and training directions in the Northern Territory. It is ambitious, comprehensive and specific and provides concrete descriptions of priorities, action areas (and specific actions), desired outcomes and the means by which DEET will evaluate and assess the impact of various actions. Virtually any education and training option WETT resources are used to support can be linked constructively and strategically to the Territory's Indigenous Education Strategic Plan. Each of the recommended WETT investment that conclude this report have direct links to priorities set out in the Territory's new Indigenous Education Strategic plan.

Sources:

http://www.deet.nt.gov.au/education/indigenous_education/strategic_plan/docs/strat_plan_2006-09_full.pdf

Collins, B. 1999. *Learning Lessons--An Independent Review of Indigenous Education in the Northern Territory*, Northern Territory Department of Education, Darwin.

http://www.deet.nt.gov.au/education/indigenous_education/previous_publications/docs/learning_lessons_review.pdf

A keystone non-government report

West Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey

What is it about?

The Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey is the most extensive survey of Aboriginal families ever undertaken and it is emerging as one of the most important and potentially far reaching pieces of research in recent years. The findings are being progressively released and ultimately there will be five volumes covering health, social and emotional wellbeing, education, family and community and Justice.

The survey was designed to build the knowledge to develop preventative strategies that promote the healthy development and the social, emotional, academic and vocational wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. It involved a random sample of more than 5200 Aboriginal children and included interviews with 11,300 family members, 2000 families, and more than 3000 teachers.

One of the most important findings of the survey is that levels of disadvantage limit the change that can be expected from interventions seeking individual behaviour change; broader cultural, socio-political and other changes are also required.

Specific health goals emerging from the research relate to achieving better Aboriginal child health and include:

- Lowering the rate of early teenage pregnancy
- Improving maternal health and well being
- Lowering the rate of preterm and low birth weight infants
- Lowering rates of alcohol and tobacco use – particularly in pregnant women;
- Reducing infection rates
- Improving nutritional knowledge and access to nutritious food – particularly fresh vegetables
- Improving rates of contact of Aboriginal families and children with health services – particularly comprehensive primary health care services

(Zubrick et al 2004: 298).

The set of recommendations for improving educational outcomes that emerge from the analysis of the survey data includes 15 specific actions under the following seven themes:

- Early childhood and early school leaving

- Engaging carers and communities
- Improving educational outcomes
- Improving culturally inclusive schooling
- Changes to programmes and funding arrangements
- Accountability of the education system
- Establishing an Aboriginal educational research agenda

(Zubrick et al 2006: 497-500).

How might it be important to WETT?

The Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey has already emerged as one of the most influential evidence-based tools for steering Indigenous health and to a lesser degree education policy. The most effective policies are bolstered by evidence and this survey is considered one of the best sources of evidence for creating policy related to Indigenous children and families. The recommendations for supporting Aboriginal children in the early primary years, and for the provision of educational day care and child development experiences, are already shaping policy in Western Australia and other states and territories. Similarly, the recommendations for the development of strategies to re-engage communities with schools are not just a romantic ideal but are shown by the results of the survey to have an evidential base. The high proportion of Indigenous children in Western Australia who live in remote communities increases the relevance of the findings of this comprehensive study for the Warlpiri people living on their home lands.

Source: Zubrick SR, Lawrence DM, Silburn SR, Blair E, Milroy H, Wilkes T, Eades S, D'Antoine H, Read A, Ishiguchi P, Doyle S. 2004. *The Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey: The Health of Aboriginal Children and Young People, Volume One*. Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, Perth.

Zubrick SR, Silburn SR, De Maio JA, Shepherd C, Griffin JA, Dalby RB, Mitrou FG, Lawrence DM, Hayward C, Pearson G, Milroy H, Milroy J, Cox A. 2006. *The Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey: Improving the Educational Experiences of Aboriginal Children and Young People*. Curtin University of Technology and Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, Perth.

Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA), 2005, '*Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage in Western Australia Report 2005*', Department of Indigenous Affairs, Perth.

Key themes from contemporary policies and programs

There are a number of clear and prominent themes that emerge in the various government policy and strategy documents that are important for deliberations and decisions related to the investment of WETT funds. Awareness of the directions governments and their constituent departments intend to move is strategically important when determining how to most effectively invest in education and training. One point of view is that it is important to ensure WETT funds are not used to cover costs for a program or initiative the government should or is planning to deliver. An alternative view is that by investing funds in an area government intends to support, the resources might be leveraged to achieve a more substantial effort or one that proceeds sooner rather than later.

The policy themes are diverse yet there is consistency. Early childhood is obviously a key focus both in terms of childhood health and readiness and engagement with school. There is an emphasis on strengthening families and communities. Transition to adulthood appears in some form in most of the policy strategies as does investment in business. Partnerships are often mentioned, both in terms of government and business. Throughout there is an assumption that communities will share responsibility for finding and implementing solutions to their needs. Taken together these are clear signals of where policy and programs are headed at both the national and territory levels.

Section 4: The research literature and options for WETT investments in education and training

The brief for this project instructed the author to look

broadly at what is working in Aboriginal education and training and to identify some options that CLC staff can consult Warlpiri educators, community members and other stakeholders about in order to develop one or two education and training programs to be funded by WETT

What follows in this section is framed by those instructions. I have surveyed research and program literature and I have identified four thematic areas. Those areas are shaped by the project brief in the first instance, published research on education and training programs that appear to ‘work’ in remote Aboriginal communities or appear to have potential to work, insights and advice from CLC staff, the 2005 Harrison and Price report, the community consultation notes, the advice and concerns of the WpkJ office bearers and the numerous government education and other policy documents, strategies and reports.

The themes I have identified are:

- Child development, school readiness and parenting skills
- Youth and media
- Enterprise development and training
- A Warlpiri learning community

As the previous section of this report has shown, there has been in recent years an enormous investment in research and program development related to a range of ‘action areas’ identified and accepted by both Commonwealth and state/territory governments as the primary focus for policy and programs. The seven ‘strategic areas for action’, derived from the Productivity Commission’s ‘Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage’ report is emerging as a widely accepted template for policy and programs. The action areas that address Indigenous education and training link well with the themes identified in this report.

It is worth noting there is overlap in some of the themes (for example, some of the program options related to media skills for youth would be related to some of the programs and facilities that might support the building of a Warlpiri learning community). In what follows I will present each theme, summarise what the research literature shows about ‘what works’, provide some examples of program options to address the theme and discuss the implications for WETT.¹

A note on the reliability of ‘best practice’ assessments

The development of a set of education and training themes, and viable education and training options consistent with them, is a challenging task, not least because there is so little solid research that objectively evaluates and reliably assesses the success or failure of Indigenous education programs in remote Australia or elsewhere. There are certainly long lists of projects underway, government websites that attest to activities that are

¹ During my meeting with the WpkJ office bearers, I was specifically asked about the potential for an independent Warlpiri college similar to institutions that exist for Indigenous people in Canada and the United States. I agreed to explore the idea and provide some examples of Indigenous Colleges overseas. My assessment is that an independent Warlpiri college is probably not a viable option at this time. Discussion of that assessment and examples from overseas are presented in Appendix C.

intended to boost education and training outcomes and reports that document a range of activities and programs that ‘work’. Similarly there are myriad problem-commissioned research reports that describe a ‘problem’ and suggest ‘the solution’ (some of which actually influence policy). Yet, the failure (rarely admitted) or success of programs is often assessed by the group that initiated the ‘solution’ in the first place. Typically those evaluation reports of programs are qualitative and descriptive; rarely do these program solutions undergo quantitative evaluation. Some evaluations (even some commissioned by public agencies and government departments) are ‘in-house’ and never—or at best are selectively—released to the public. Indeed, there is often in Indigenous Australian education policy and program circles a vacuum of objective, third party evaluations of ‘what works’. As Mellor and Corrigan point out in their 2004 review of research on Indigenous education outcomes there are a number of reasons most research is highly problematic:

- 1 Research has generally been either testing without context or small case studies.
- 2 Research has generally focused on a specific set of the population.
- 3 Research findings have been equivocal, incomplete or unclear.
- 4 There has been a focus on the uniqueness of the Indigenous experience of education.
- 5 Indigenous education research has been to an extent isolated from the broader research discourses over teacher quality, ongoing professional development, class sizes, and social and emotional readiness for formal education.
- 6 Indigenous education has not been integrated with discourses in other disciplines such as developmental, cognitive and social psychology; paediatrics; sociology and public and community health.
- 7 Research has focused predominantly on ‘problems’.
- 8 The relationship between cause and effect has been asserted rather than the inferences tested through research.
- 9 There is a tendency to adopt and promote the significance of single solutions.

(Mellor and Corrigan 2004:46)

The consequence of this is a need to consider ‘the research literature’ critically and sometimes with a grain of salt. A few important cautions may be worth keeping in mind: there are few programs or interventions that are ‘fail safe’ (even a proven good idea can go wrong); no social program operates in a vacuum and surrounding conditions and events can significantly change the outcomes at any point in time (for example a new policy is implemented or an existing one withdrawn); people make programs or interventions work but people are ‘only human’ and a very good idea can go off the rails simply because a person leaves, gets sick or changes his or her mind (this can apply to both the people participating and the people implementing a program); unfortunately, evaluations are sometimes self-interested, emphasising ‘positive outcomes’ and overlooking negative ones in order to ensure continued funding and to please politicians or departmental officials; rigorous, objective evaluations are expensive and time consuming and as a result they are rare (though the lack of rigorous evaluation does not necessarily mean the program does not work or is not effective); finally, because a program works in one place doesn’t mean it will always work in another (it is very important to assess as carefully as possible if the program ‘fits’—that it is transferable).

Theme 1. Child development, school readiness and parenting skills

What does the research show?

It is widely accepted that the health of a child affects that child's ability to learn and there is increasing research to suggest that ability to learn is also affected by biological processes occurring before birth (Wadsworth 1999). Programs that assist young or potential parents to understand how their behaviours can influence the health and learning abilities of their children can have positive effects in both child health and school readiness. Research has shown that brain development, both before and after birth, influences health, learning and behaviour throughout the individual's life (Mustard 2002). There is evidence to show that if foetal brain development is disrupted or damaged by maternal infection (Hall and Peckham 1997) or toxic substances such as alcohol (Spohr, Willms and Steinhausen 1993) during crucial developmental periods of antenatal growth, neural pathways associated with literacy and maths can in turn be negatively affected (Mustard 2002: 31). It is also well established by research that maternal malnutrition can have damaging effects on the foetus (Perry 1997). For example, research shows that 15% of very low birth weight children and nearly 5% of low birth weight children require special education, compared to about 4% of children born at normal birth weight (Newman 1991). External environmental factors such as stress that affect the mother have been shown to affect foetal brain development which then affects behavioural development of the child (O'Connor et al. 2002).

There is a wealth of research to show how cognitive development and educational attainment (including literacy) can be diminished by a range of factors that affect the health of infants. Brain development in the first three years of life is rapid (growing to 90 percent of its adult weight), and much of a child's capacity for learning is established during this time (Karloly et al. 1998). Breast feeding appears to be associated with later improved cognitive performance while infant malnutrition can have a dramatic negative impact on learning and educational attainment (Wadsworth 1999).

As during the antenatal period, stress early in life has been shown to have a negative affect on neural systems necessary for learning and may modify an individual's ability to moderate or control responses to stress in later life (Cynader and Frost 1999). Perhaps there is a link between this finding and research in the United Kingdom that shows that family conflict and breakdown is associated with reduced educational attainment (Ely et al. 1999). Similarly, and in the context of Australian Indigenous communities, neglect and child abuse have a dramatic negative affect on children's health and their ability to learn (Memmott et al. 2001; Queensland Government 2002). In addition, chronic ear infection (e.g., associated with otitis media) and subsequent hearing loss is generally agreed to impair language development and education (Couzos and Murray 1999; Bowd 2002). Similar research shows the impact of vision problems on ability to learn.

There is an enormous literature to show the positive effects of early childhood and family programs like Project Head Start. Project Head Start began in the United States in the mid-1960s and was designed to assist disadvantaged preschool children in bolstering their health and making them 'school ready' to learn. Evaluations were extensive and showed participating children had better health, nutrition fewer absences and improved academic performance. In addition, long term studies show children who participated had reduced need for assisted education programs, were less likely to

repeat grades, and were less likely to engage with the welfare and criminal justice systems (Zigler & Styfco 1993).

Research also indicates there is value in programs that assist parents with the development of parenting skills. An analysis of 23 parent training studies showed that immediately following training, parents showed moderate decreases in unhealthy childrearing attitudes, increases in emotional adjustment and improvements in childrearing skills. Importantly, data from studies that conducted follow-up assessments suggest positive changes in childrearing attitudes were durable, but that emotional adjustment and childrearing skills were not (MacLeod and Nelson 2000).

Even Start Family Literacy Program

In the mid-1980s a variant of Project Head Start emerged, the Even Start Family Literacy Program. The aim of Even Start is to address the basic educational needs of parents and children. It is intended to help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy and targets low-income families with children up to the age of 8 years. Even Start provides an integrated program that includes three key service components: adult basic or secondary education, assistance for parents to promote the educational development of their children, and early childhood education.

Families enrolled in the Even Start program participate in each of the three core service components with the support of other community service providers. The focus of adult education may be on completing a high school diploma (or General Educational Development Certificate), on acquiring more general skills in basic reading and mathematics, or on learning English as a second language. Adult learners with a very low level of literacy may be offered one-on-one instruction. An Even Start project's staff generally consists of project coordinators, adult education teachers, early childhood education teachers and secretaries. Those people who provide adult education services may be certified adult education teachers or may be volunteers with no official qualifications.

Within the Even Start model there are other, more targeted projects aimed at specific groups such as migrants and Native Americans. Further, under the umbrella of the basic program model, individual projects are given a certain amount of freedom in designing their service delivery. For example, individual projects control the frequency and duration of program activities, whether the activities are primarily centre-based or home-based, and whether or not they develop curricula from scratch or build on existing material. More home visits are conducted in the Tribal (Native American) Even Start projects than other projects due to factors of geography and transportation. The majority of projects provide a centre-based early childhood program, and school age children generally receive Even Start services (for example, after-school homework assistance and summer activities) in conjunction with their regular schooling.

Evaluations of the Even Start Family Literacy Program have shown numerous benefits (and long-term outcomes) for participating families. For adults, participation in a quality family literacy program enhances their academic skills, their personal growth, and their social development. Gains in literacy also seem to improve the quality of learning and other interactions with their children. Job skills, and subsequently employment prospects, increase. Children participating in family literacy programs appear to be more school-ready than children who do not. These children also appear more engaged with learning, show greater literacy achievement, are more interested in

literacy activities, and upon entering school they perform better than those who have participated only in school-based programs (Padak, Sapin & Baycich 2002).

Project Head Start and Even Start Family Literacy Program spawned similar programs around the world, and several in Australia. There are two major programs in Australia called Best Start, one in Victoria and another in Western Australia. The Victorian version is aimed at improving the wellbeing of young children through improving access to child and family support, health services and early education, assisting parents and carers to increase their skills and understanding and working with communities to better support families and children. It includes Indigenous community sites (State of Victoria, Department of Human Services 2001). The Western Australia is focused exclusively on Aboriginal children (birth to 5 years) and their families. The overarching aim of the program is improvement in life opportunities for Aboriginal children through focusing on improving health, education, social and cultural development.

Sources: <http://www.abtassoc.com/reports/3rd-EvenStartEvaluation.pdf>

<http://www.beststart.vic.gov.au/>

<http://www.community.wa.gov.au/Resources/Parenting/Best+Start+for+Aboriginal+Families.htm>

Mable Park High Parents Overcoming Work and Education Restrictions (POWER)

The Parents Overcoming Work and Education Restrictions (POWER) program was established at Mabel Park State High School south of Brisbane at the beginning of the 2001. It is funded under the Australian Government's *Stronger Families and Communities* strategy. Over 130 young parents who have accessed the program since it began.

The Program seeks to re-engage and extend the education, socialization and maturity processes of young people, particularly those who are pregnant and/or parenting so as to establish and achieve solid foundations in parenting and family skills, personal development and positive educational outcomes. POWER supports students who are—or who will become—parents to develop self-help strategies and have their ideas and aspirations addressed, validated and built upon in order to translate into positive action. The POWER Program views academic and life skills education as an integral part of life long learning, and therefore is accessible, linked and client focused learning services and resources. Currently 10 per cent of the program participants are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and 20 per cent are Samoan.

Many of the participants suffer from low self esteem, limited work readiness skills or the ability to set and achieve goals. The conditions and outlooks of the clientele are almost always further exacerbated with the addition of an unexpected or unwanted pregnancy or child/children.

The program encourages young parents to become involved in their communities, support their transition into employment or higher education, assists them to realise their potential, enhances their parenting and relationship skills, and helps them build stronger relationships with their children. Under the POWER program, young parents participate in normal school classes while an on-site crèche cares for their children. The parents spend spare periods and lunch breaks with their children. They also attend

weekly parenting skills courses as well as classes in effective family management, household budgeting, and relationship and social education. The program also provides playgroups, delivers intervention and prevention strategies and establishes support links within the community for the student parents. The program addresses itself to prospective fathers as well as mothers and mothers-to-be.

Though the program appears promising and highly regarded, there is no program evaluation yet available.

Source: <http://education.qld.gov.au/community/events/showcase/docs/mabsub.doc>

Triple P – Positive Parenting Program

Triple P – Positive Parenting Program is a multilevel family intervention program for the prevention and treatment of behavioural and emotional problems in preadolescent children. Developed in Australia over 25 years ago, the program is used in many countries around the world. Recently, an Indigenous specific program has been developed though the evaluation of that program is not yet available.

The stated aims of Triple P are to:

- promote the independence and health of families by enhancing parents' knowledge, skills and confidence
- promote the development of non-violent, protective and nurturing environments for children
- promote the development, growth, health and social competencies of young children
- reduce the incidence of child abuse, mental illness, behavioural problems, delinquency and homelessness
- enhance the competence, resourcefulness and self-sufficiency of parents in raising their preadolescent children

The program involves a population (rather than individual) strategy that incorporates the media and professionals in primary care services (i.e., general practitioners, child health nurses, teachers, childcare workers, and allied health professionals) as part of a comprehensive parenting and family support system to improve the health status and wellbeing of children. When fully implemented, the system is a coordinated set of multilevel strategies to provide parents with easy access to information and support about effective parenting. It offers a tiered continuum of interventions of increasing intensity, and a specialised intervention for families at highest risk for continued or future child maltreatment. The interventions range from the provision of media messages on positive parenting, through to information resources such as tip sheets and videos, and brief targeted interventions (for specific behaviour problems) offered by primary care practitioners and more intensive parent training programs at Level 4 and Level 5 programs targeting broader family issues such as relationship conflict and parental depression, anger and stress. By matching the level of intensity to family need, making parenting information and support broadly accessible to all parents, and promoting the same overarching principles and strategies of positive parenting across all levels of intervention, the system aims to reduce stigma, normalise participation, build continuity across levels of intervention, and optimise population exposure (Sanders 2002).

Evaluations of the program show positive results. An analysis of pre-post data collected from nearly 600 mothers who commenced and completed Triple P programs between 1999 and early 2003 showed that forty five percent of children were found to be in the clinical range for child behaviour problems before intervention. Following the parenting program only twelve percent of children were reported by their parents to be in the clinical range. Significant improvements were also noted in measures of parental style, sense of competence, depression, anxiety, stress, and couple conflict (Cann, Rogers and Matthew 2003).

Child development, school readiness and parenting skills: issues in the Warlpiri context

Research shows unequivocally that early childhood growth and development are critical for health and learning pathways of older children, youth and adults. In communities that have suffered disadvantage, who experience poverty and high levels of social stress, the pathways of growth and development are particularly fragile. Sound programs to ensure and support the health of young children is vital for the Warlpiri communities. Ensuring young Warlpiri women understand the ways in which their children (current and future) may be affected by their actions is vitally important for the future generations. Similarly, research confirms the importance of the early (pre-preschool and preschool) years for learning and later engagement with education. To ensure the best opportunities for healthy, engaged school children, Warlpiri people are seeking ways to ensure their young children have access to early learning experiences. On a practical level, many Indigenous people have for a long period of time expressed interest and have sought employment in teaching and early child care, yet government has not until recently committed to the development of more preschools and child care facilities in remote communities. Given the relatively young population, there will be a need for trained and qualified preschool and primary teachers and child care workers. Among the recommendations that appear later in this report are options to meet those needs by cultivating interest and providing contexts and opportunities for training.

There is growing interest in the need to develop parenting capacity building in Indigenous communities. A valuable overview of Indigenous parenting programs was published in 2004 by the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care, Inc.(SNAICC). That document contains a literature review, an audit of existing programs, summary findings of focus groups, and valuable a overview of some of the key needs and issues related to Indigenous parenting. (SNAICC 2004). SNAICC's Indigenous Parenting Project revealed that there is a strong desire for more information and effective strategies to assist individuals and communities with parenting. For example, people wanted to know more about: babies and children's care, health and nutrition; communication, interactions and relationships with infants and children; child development; building children's self esteem; support for teenage parents, new parents, fathers, grandparents; positive parenting; and a range of other topics. In some colonised countries like Canada and Australia, Indigenous people suffered separation from their families and were taken into institutional care where they no longer observed and participated in normal parenting. As a result, some Indigenous people have little confidence with parenting. The programs identified above serve a range of different purposes but all have value in developing practical knowledge and skills in parenting that enhance both the confidence of parents and the health of children.

Source: Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Inc. 2004
Indigenous Parenting Project, report prepared by Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne.

Theme 2: Youth and media

What does the research show?

Early school leavers comprise the majority of young people in remote Indigenous communities. Typically, they have low levels of literacy and numeracy and either avoid or struggle with conventional adult education and training opportunities. The social cost to Indigenous communities of the decision by young people to leave school is high, with mental health, criminal activity, drug abuse and other social problems increasing among this group in the Northern Territory and the rest of the nation (Ogilvie and Van Zyl 2001; Walker and McDonald 1995).

Recent conservative commentators have pointed to a lack of school attendance and disengaged youth in remote communities as contributing evidence that Indigenous culture is fracturing and communities are falling apart (Hughes and Warin 2005; Beadman 2004; Johns 2006). And while many view those comments as inflammatory oversimplifications, they do draw attention to the same problem of disengaged youth Warlpiri people are aware of and working to address.

International research has shown that arts-based projects provide a context for situated learning with the capacity and potential to stimulate non-formal learning (Eidman-Aadahl 2002). Youth Multi-media programs allow young people to explore and define who they are while gaining a broad range of technical competencies in the context of meaningful literacy use and collaborative 'situated learning' (Lave and Wenger 1991) or 'intent participation' (Rogoff et al. 2003). An extended study in the US between 1987 and 1998 showed how non-school based arts programs in disadvantaged communities were effective in re-engaging young people with learning and with their communities (Heath, Soep and Roach 1998).

A collection of case studies of youth media programs around the world pointed out that the most significant challenge for such programs is financial sustainability (Kinkade and Macy 2003). Programs operate with funding from various sources. Some were established with grants from foundations, businesses or the public sector while others generate revenue from subscriptions, advertising, and the sale of material to mainstream news outlets. The precarious nature of funding means that unless it was a condition of the grant, few of the programs can afford to invest in an objective evaluation.

Hinkson (2004) describes how powerfully socially integrative radio is as a media for youth in Yuendumu while Kral (forthcoming) describes how young people in Warburton have seized on new media as a way to express themselves and reconnect with learning and the wider community. There is little research to show the long term social impact of new media among minority or Indigenous youth but anecdotal evidence from Australia indicates it could hold enormous promise for Warlpiri youth.

Goolarri Media Enterprise Training Section

Goolarri Media Enterprises in Broome WA is successful both for its media enterprises and its training component. Over the past five years the enterprise has established Goolarri Radio 99.7FM (the most popular radio station in Broome), Goolarri Television

GTV (famous for producing the Mary G Show for SBS) and the Goolarri Music Studio. It also sponsors major events.

Goolarri has attributed its success to the enthusiasm and verve of its staff and to its strong commitment to training. Goolarri became a Registered Training Organisation in 2003 with four training pathways: film and television, radio broadcasting, music and multi-media. It has developed on-site reality based training using a multi-media package developed by Perth Central TAFE and adapted to suit Goolarri operational and cultural needs. One of its 2003 Multi-media training graduates is now the Manager of Goolarri Radio 99.7FM

Goolarri media training won the business category of the 2003 WA Training Excellence Award and was one of only three organizations short listed for the Australian Training Awards. In the same year it won Western Australia Department of Education and Training funding to run a secondary school-based traineeship for Indigenous students interested in studying media as part of their secondary education.

Source: <http://www.dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/E879AF00-53E7-4087-812A-5064A50E0BFB/6398/THEWAYFORWARDfinalJune05.pdf>

Bi-lingual media: Print Media i) Warlpiri Youth Newspaper and ii) Book Production

The Harrison and Price report, proposal 5a reported that the Mt Theo Program (Jarj Pirjirdi) and the Bilingual Resource Development Unit are interested in supporting the production of a regular Warlpiri bilingual newspaper to tell stories, report on local events and print photos. Staff of the Mt Theo Program have expressed an interest in the program assuming the role of base organization to support the project as it fits well with their Youth Challenge Program aims. This would mean they would manage and administer the funds and make payments to reporters and writers. The paper could, for example, include one page of news for each community.

Part of the proposal is that people who write stories and illustrate them will be paid a fee for their efforts and supported to produce them into books for use as community literacy materials. Ultimately the aim is to publish more books and newspapers in Warlpiri and English, employing people as reporters and writers, and involving more people in editing and producing in Warlpiri.

The project has merit in addressing one facet of the literacy problem—a lack of reading material in remote areas. Typically, the only place that any reading material is available is at school and this proposal could assist with getting meaningful, community-based reading materials into local homes.

The Gap Youth Centre Alice Springs

The Gap Youth Centre in Alice Springs offers youth support, mentoring, an internet café and training and support in the practice of web creation and other digital media production in an informal process-focused (rather than outcome-focused) manner. While based in Alice Springs, the Youth Centre does tour communities in the region to impart skills in media and offer support to youth on communities. Currently its major focus is on the *Deadly Mob* web site and the site's ongoing utilization as both a communication media and focus and display of creative youth activities. The web site

is a mine of creativity and represents a project that is boosting the self esteem, self identity and expression of youth.

In the past the Gap Youth Centre has visited the Warlpiri area however, as its current focus is media and as the Warlpiri Media Association is taking up media training programmes in the area, the Gap Youth Centre has not included Warlpiri communities in its itinerary, so as not to duplicate programs. The *Deadly Mob* web site and the Gap activities however are a successful youth programme that is worth noting for its role in youth engagement and support.

Source: www.deadlymob.org

Road Open Kimberly DVD Production

The *Road Open Kimberly* DVD was co-produced by Catholic Education and a Broome musician, Alan Pigram. Originally Alan was approached to produce a culturally relevant music video for children along the lines of 'The Wiggles', including songs and dances that children could participate in. It was intended as a way of teaching numeracy and literacy through music. Alan, however, had recently been exploring DVD technology and realized that the media utilizes the same raw data that would have to be collected for a video yet a DVD has far more depth and interactive power as a learning tool.

The *Road Open Kimberly* project collected stories, songs and footage from a wide range of Kimberly communities from desert to sea. Initially Alan was thinking of a cartoon character, who would depict stories told by the Elders of each place. There would be a character involved, a story, animals and a linking of everything back to the Dreaming. However, he later felt it would be better to depict real people and to have an Elder as an icon introducing each place.

When the DVD is played the viewer first sees a map of the Kimberly with the location of different schools and communities. When the viewer selects a community, he or she is welcomed by an Elder. Next appear options for songs and dances, songs without a vocal track (Karaoke style, so that kids can sing along) and film clips of local community stories that give the songs and dances their relevance.

The production of the DVD involved collaborative with each community and the DVD fulfils its aim as a form of 'cultural sharing'. In each place both elders and children contributed, responding to the question, 'What is special about your place that you would like to share with the world'?

This project offers a model of both an early learning tool for preschool and early primary contexts and a production concept that could enlist and engage Warlpiri youth.

Source: http://www.whatworks.edu.au/3_2_4_9.htm

Touch Screens to Display Simple Talking Books

Ndjebbana Talking Books were created by Kunibidji people in the Maningrida region who speak Ndjebbana as their first language. The talking books are displayed on touch screen computers that were placed in children's homes to promote interaction in an informal setting. While electronic literacy through computers has been used to promote

the teaching and learning of English with Indigenous students, this project used the technology to promote Indigenous Australian languages.

A large button displaying the picture and title represents each talking book. The screen holds six buttons. There are 16 pages, each with six buttons for six different books which are presented in a cyclical fashion so there is no first or last page. When the children quit a specific book they are sent randomly to one of the sixteen pages of six book title buttons. A total of 96 talking books are available on the touch screen computers. When a page is opened the sound plays and each word of the text is highlighted as it is read.

The books reflect Kunibidji life-and social practices. Some report the many trips to Kunibidji country where links with land and sea re reinforced while others depict daily life in Maningrida. The stories were captured on digital camera. Other books were made by colouring in the black and white pages of Ndjebanna printed books made over 20 years ago. Younger children spoke in some books and adults spoke in others. Digital photographs and hand-drawings were used as pictures in different books.

The results of a study highlighted the popularity of each book and the strong relationship that the Kunibidji formed with the computer. The results reveal transformations (work in new contexts) of computer use and of Kunibidji social practice.

Source: Auld, G. 2002. "What Can We Say About 112 000 Taps on a Ndjebanna Touch Screen"?, *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* 30(1) 1-7.

Youth and media: issues in the Warlpiri Context

The Goolarri Media Enterprises Training section director stated that Goolarri has already begun a process of consultation with the Warlpiri Media Association to assist them in developing a training program. Due to the centrality and cultural significance of the Warlpiri Media Association this is obviously an important focus area for industry related Vocational training in the region. It is also an area that has great appeal for youth and young adults.

Price and Harrison included such training among their recommendations and suggested that programs be linked to Mt Theo initiatives that seek appealing community activities to direct their 'at risk' young people into when they are ready to leave the Mt Theo community.

Linda Chellew, the coordinator of The Gap Youth Centre in Alice Springs, which runs the *Deadly Mob* youth program, stated that The Gap's initial work involved mentoring youth, however it has evolved into its current form which is informal (practice rather than outcome based) multi media training. This youth program, based in Alice Springs, is taken out to communities as well. Linda Chellew mentioned that she has in the past taken the program into the Warlpiri region, however they don't do so anymore because Warlpiri Media has already received significant funding to establish a multi media training section. If this is the case, there would need to be a closer look at the use of the WETT fund in this area to avoid duplication of program funding.

Multimedia training and youth support and engagement are the key projects of the Gap Youth Centre. If the Warlpiri Media Association takes up multi media training, this is a different project to a youth centre and does not fulfil the same youth support and

mentorship and engagement role. On the other hand, Linda Chellew, coordinator of the Gap suggests that it could be problematic to undertake informal youth multi media activities if they conflict with the Warlpiri Media Association training plans. Obviously, there is a need to clarify to what extent Warlpiri Media can, could or do provide training that could link into any WETT initiatives.

There are other very good examples of media programs for Indigenous youth around Australia and they appear to be powerful ways to reconnect young people with learning and to develop skills and confidence in a way that is meaningful to them. A strong program is underway in Warburton and a youth media project, 'Wugularr Film Crew', supported by the Fred Hollows Foundation has just been completed in the community of Wugularr.

DVD production along the lines of 'Road Open' has the potential to link with youth media activities and could fulfil the desire expressed in the Harrison and Price report for projects that support the maintenance of traditions and language. Similarly, the Maningrida touch screen talking books project represents an option that could be explored by youth and young adults in a multi media training context. Obviously, and again like the Road Open project, this would be a community level project involving youth and Warlpiri elders. In this way local youth could be engaged in education and training that results in a 'product' that is valued by the whole community.

Source: <http://www.warburtonarts.com/site/youtharts.php>

www.hollows.org

Theme 3: Enterprise development and training

What does the research show?

Sustainable enterprise development can provide multiple benefits in remote areas. It can provide services that might not otherwise exist, it can provide employment and it can drive, through the need for employees, education and training. Solid research on the success rate of new business and enterprises in remote areas is difficult to obtain but there is evidence to show that they can be successful. The Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation, with an annual income of over \$26 million last year, has several enterprises underway including a recent initiative in which BAC purchased a commercial crab fishing licence. Another enterprise that was new for 2005 was the Good Food Kitchen, a project that has some potential for Warlpiri communities (see below).

Yet there are certainly examples of enterprises that have not been so successful. In his recent discussion of Indigenous business failures, Foley highlights

the lack of financial literacy, business management expertise and basic office administration skills within some Indigenous communities. Without the provision of business infrastructure (he writes) and the necessary financial and management skills, community-based businesses are being set up for failure (Foley 2006: 5).

A focused training program, with real service and profit goals, might overcome the problems many Indigenous businesses face. What follows are some examples of enterprise opportunities that could propel and be propelled by targeted training.

Good Food Kitchen

Located in Maningrida, a large township in North Central Arnhem Land on the Liverpool river, the Good Food Kitchen is a recent enterprise of the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation (BAC). Already operating a retail food store and mobile service to outstation residents, BAC opened a healthy food take away in 2004. The new business grew out of increasing awareness of the links between diet and health and recognition of the need (and opportunity) to provide something different for Aboriginal people in the township. The Good Food Kitchen serves only healthy hot and cold meals, snacks and drinks and operates as a take-away venue. In addition, it prepares all the meals for the community's 'meals on wheels' program and offers catering services.

The building was originally constructed by BAC building crews for the local Meals on Wheels program and includes a fully equipped industrial kitchen, refrigerated and dry good stock storage space, shop area and manager's flat. In the near future the Good Food Kitchen will offer a sheltered outdoor eating area.

All staff have completed training in Safe Food Handling and other hospitality and food service skills. Future training is planned.

The Dreamtime Cultural Centre VET Program

The Dreamtime Cultural Centre in Rockhampton promotes Aboriginal culture and through displays and exhibitions. Its meeting centre had been a marquis which was not well suited to its functions. The Central Queensland Institute of TAFE was looking for projects for Aboriginal students that embedded its training in real-life practice. It partnered with the Dreamtime Cultural Centre and Capricornia Training Company to provide accredited training for 14 Indigenous students (aged between 22 and 34) in Construction, Fit-out and Finishing. Most had completed only Year 9. The workers put their training to practice in replacing the Dreamtime Cultural Centre marquis with a permanent facility.

The project was successful for several reasons:

- Student response was greater when learning was linked to practical outcomes
- Students had in the past felt demoralized when they constructed buildings and then had to demolish them on completion
- The project had the support of elders and the Aboriginal community
- The project was real and had a tangible and useful result

Source: http://www.whatworks.edu.au/4_7_2.htm

Youth Build USA

Youth Build is a program from the United States that engages with young unemployed men and women, most of whom have not completed secondary studies. In the program, youth are involved in the construction of affordable housing for low-income individuals and families, simultaneously transforming their own lives by being supported to further their education and to acquire skills that allow them to find employment.

Youth Build participants come from low income backgrounds and many have had experience with foster care, the juvenile justice system, welfare and homelessness.

Participants spend between 6-24 months with the program and their time is divided between the Construction site and the Youth Build alternative school. Each Youth Build program raises public and private funds to support itself. Since 1994, YouthBuild has expanded to more than 225 local programs, and 60,000 youth have produced 15,000 units of affordable housing.

The primary program elements are:

- **Construction experience:** Projects range from restoring multi unit buildings to constructing new homes for homeless and low-income people.
- **Education:** Students study to complete a secondary, vocational or tertiary qualification.
- **Job Training:** Students learn from qualified construction instructors, build work habits and decision making and time management skills, develop career plans and prepare for job interviews.
- **Leadership Development:** Participants learn to advocate for issues that concern them and their communities and to take responsibility for themselves and their families. Students share in the governance of their own program through an elected policy committee.
- **Counselling:** Students are assigned a counsellor with whom they meet regularly to address issues such as child care, transportation or substance abuse.
- **Graduate support:** Graduates from the program have access to resources and support to assist them as they advance their careers, continue with study, build assets, and become role models.

Source: <http://www.youthbuild.org/site/c.htIRI3PIKoG/b.1223925/k.DF42/Programs.htm>

Youth Enterprise Training and Implementation through YAA (Young Achievements Australia).

YAA is a not-for-profit non-government business education provider that enables young secondary and tertiary students to experience the real world of business by creating and operating their own business. During the training, participants start a real company, raise capital by selling shares, produce and distribute a product or service. Participants take on a range of management and operational roles. At the end of the program, the company is dissolved and shareholders are paid out. YAA offers a Business Certificate II and links to mentors in the community. Although YAA is not Indigenous specific, in 2006 it secured funding to support 20 special Indigenous Youth projects across Australia.

A school based version of this approach exists at St Mary's College in Broome. In that school secondary students have been involved in developing, stocking and operating a Youth Art Gallery that operates at a profit (Schwab 2001). Students produce the art, operate a gallery, keep the books and pack and ship stock to customers. Similarly, the College offers a tourism and hospitality program that involves secondary students in on-the-job training in restaurants and tourism ventures throughout the Broome region.

Sources: <http://www.workplace.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/D5B1A285-D6F1-4218-9509-B9C721E45CCA/0/ResourcesGuideApril2006.pdf>

<http://www.stmarysbroome.wa.edu.au/>

Schwab, R.G. 2001. 'If You Have a Dream, You Make It Happen': Approaches to Maximising Educational Engagement among Young Indigenous Students, Department of Education, Science and Training, Canberra.

http://www.dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/4661B298-FA3A-453B-8D4E-8AC3193C36E2/317/JerrySchwab_Report.pdf

Boys from the Bush Program –Cape York

The Boys from the Bush Program is a behaviour modification program for 14-20 year old Indigenous youth in Far North Queensland. It has many similarities to the Mt Theo program but it differs in using business enterprises as the means of reconnecting young men to their community. The program operates in partnership with the Community Justice Groups under the auspices of the Cape York Land Council and Cape York Partnerships. Juvenile offenders are frequently ordered to work with Boys from the Bush as a way of serving their sentence. The program also assists young participants with the transition from boyhood to manhood and from school to work.

The boys produce native species oils and market their products locally, nationally and internationally. After deducting production costs, profits from the sales are shared by the participants. The oils are distilled on location during bush camp excursions which are a process of training in positive behaviour. They are later transformed into a range of cosmetic and medicinal products and marketed.

The program builds a wide range of important skills from personal development and management (e.g., confidence, goal setting, follow through), bush and camping skills, organizational and social skills and marketing skills. The Mossman Police have reported that none of its participants have re-offended since its introduction into the community in 1998.

Source: <http://www.boysfromthebush.org.au/aboutprogram.htm>

<http://www.boysfromthebush.org.au/BoysBookletMar02.pdf>

Enterprise development and training: issues in the Warlpiri Context

Meaningful, 'real' work provides a strong incentive for training. The Good Food Kitchen enterprise could work in each of the four Warlpiri communities and would have direct impacts not just on local skill levels, but on health and employment as well. Similarly, some version of targeted construction training (housing or something more substantial like a motel built, staffed and operated by Warlpiri people who have completed the training and acquired the various certificates) could provide real skills, jobs and tangible community assets.

Another enterprise that would require training might be some version of the newspaper or book publishing proposal contained in the Harrison and Price report (Proposal 5a). Initial funding might be obtained from YAA, and WETT funds used to facilitate the mentorship/training of youth participants. WETT funds might also be used to leverage additional resources to establish a Warlpiri Youth enterprise of some sort. While there is enormous interest in 'Desert Art', there may be interest as well in the art produced by young people and the establishment of a gallery to exhibit to visitors in Yuendumu

might be possible. This could be extended to web-based sales to enlarge the potential market. Obviously this would require a careful consideration of the cultural rules around art production.

There are of course, important decisions that would need to be made related to the economic viability of enterprises such as these. While some of the enterprise options may entail a low risk, others might appear less viable. Obviously, it would be prudent to attempt to assess and evaluate the risks in light of the desired outcomes. In some cases, the aim may not be profit; or profitable ventures (perhaps a healthy food takeaway shop) might be used to sustain others that have positive social consequences yet run at a loss (e.g., a youth art gallery). A market analysis and business planning exercise could be carried out for some of the enterprise options that in itself could provide valuable teaching and learning opportunities.

The Commonwealth government has for a very long time argued that Indigenous communities can overcome disadvantage through business development. Acknowledging that normal business development models may not apply in remote areas, a recent review of Indigenous business suggests that programs can

assist in developing an enterprise culture by adopting community development models and discrete economies focused on the provision of community projects funded out of the welfare receipt' (Indigenous Business Review 2003: 14).

While a reasonable argument can be mounted that this suggestion is discriminatory since no other Australian community is asked to finance enterprises through rightful welfare funds, it does represent the reality of government policy. It may also represent an opportunity to secure funding for an enterprise where no other option exists.

Obviously there should be opportunities to link with local training providers such as the Indigenous Centre for Appropriate Technology (ICAT), Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, Charles Darwin University and the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre. Alternatively, it might be possible to draw on a private training organisation.

Theme 4: A Warlpiri learning community

What does the research show?

Internationally, the phrase 'learning community' has been related to the notion of learning as a life-long process linking families, schools and communities (including business and government) working together to identify and deploy resources to address community needs (Johns et al. 2000; Moore & Brooks 2000). An Indigenous (in this case Warlpiri) learning community would be a collection of ideas and strategies to promote life-long learning, build partnerships between families, schools, business and government and provide a means whereby communities can identify their most pressing needs and develop the skills and knowledge they need to enact solutions (Schwab and Sutherland 2003). In this sense, a Warlpiri learning community would be a tool for individual and community empowerment and capacity development. It might involve the local school and would be recognisable in the ways walls and fences, metaphorical and real, are dismantled between the school and community and replaced by a bridge. It might, for example, involve the delivery of well-baby health services in a vacant classroom, the provision of adult literacy or parenting classes, internet access after hours, opening the school library to the community on weekends, the use of the staff

room for community meetings or virtually any other service or activity the community needs or desires. A Warlpiri learning community would be transformative, involving the sharing of knowledge, the design of solutions and creation of the future.

Source: Schwab, R.G. and Sutherland, D. 2003 'Indigenous learning communities: a vehicle for community empowerment and capacity development', *Learning Communities: International Journal of Learning in Social Contexts*, 1:53-70.

New York City Beacons Initiative

The Beacons program was established in New York City in 1991 as a series of school-based community centres offering after-school programs, as well as extended programming for children, youth, and families in the evenings, on weekends and during the summer. Although the program is geared toward school-age children, it also serves as a community resource, providing support and services to parents, senior citizens, and other community members.

The Beacons program arose when a New York City Mayoral Commission recommended creation of the Beacons to address the lack of constructive activities available to youth after school. The New York City Department of Youth and Community Development believed that involving children and teens in positive youth development programs in safe havens in their neighbourhoods would help reduce drug use and solve other problems in disadvantaged communities.

Currently, there are 41 Beacons operating in 32 school districts throughout the city. The program is so successful that the cities of Oakland, Savannah, Denver, Minneapolis, and San Francisco are replicating it. Each program is managed by a community-based organization such as the YMCA or the Police Athletic League manages each Beacon under contract with the City Department of Youth and Community Development. The community group holding the contract also must develop a partnership with other community groups such as:

- Representatives of the school districts
- Police departments
- Parents
- Local merchants
- Youth involved in the program
- Health and social service providers
- Employment and adult education providers

The Beacons strive to create an environment within each school that promotes youth development and resiliency. This is accomplished by creating opportunities for caring relationships to form between young people and adults and providing adult support and supervision throughout the day. The programs offer activities that are intended to stimulate curiosity and creativity and engage students in cultural arts, recreation, career education, and community service. While there is variation in focus and content, each of the Beacons programs set high behavioural expectations and standards for youth and strive to create opportunities for young people to demonstrate leadership within their schools and in the community.

Each program is open year-round and operates a minimum of 42 hours six days a week, between 3 p.m. and 10 p.m. The Beacons program varies from site to site, but the essential program areas remain the same:

- academic enrichment;
- recreational opportunities;
- school-to-work transition;
- counselling and supportive services;
- leadership and community service; and
- parental and intergenerational involvement.

The Fund for the City of New York also devotes resources to the project and collaborates with other private foundations to increase support to Beacons. Foundations providing support to ten or more Beacons include the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Charles Hayden Foundation, the Open Society Institute, and J. P. Morgan. The most successful Beacons also find money and support through members of their advisory board and other champions in the community. Strategies include establishing fundraising committees made up of local merchants, and applying for foundation grants.

An external evaluation of the Beacons program showed it had a powerful positive effect on young people and their communities. The evaluation showed consistent high results in assisting youth by creating high expectations, teaching leadership skills, supporting participation in community services, and providing strategies for avoiding negative behaviours (e.g., fighting and drug use). The evaluation also showed a highly positive impact through educational enrichment, homework help, and engagement with teachers. Parents too reported the program provided opportunities for adult education, support for parental employment, intergenerational activities and support for parents (Warren, Brown and Freudenberg 1999).

Source: <http://nccic.org/ccpartnerships/profiles/beacons.htm>

Library and Knowledge Centre (Northern Territory Library)

The Northern Territory Government is currently in the process of establishing Libraries and Knowledge Centres (LKC) in a range of remote Indigenous communities. These represent a new model of library with an emphasis on meeting the interests and needs of communities. An important part of the LKC model is the incorporation of the Our Story database, a computer system that enables Indigenous community members to organise, store and access digitised material related to local culture and history. To date, one has not yet been announced for the Warlpiri region. A LKC in the Warlpiri region could contribute to the Warlpiri people in a number of ways:

- Provide access to knowledge and information through core library services, including English literacy and information literacy programs
- Enable the acquisition and preservation of local knowledge
- Provide training and support to community members engaged in acquiring and preserving knowledge
- Provide access to recreational activities for all groups within the community

In this way the LKC would support the development of community capacity and provide part-time or full time jobs. A similar program, *Ara Irititja*, involves historical

materials about Anangu (Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people). *Ara Irititja*, a project of the Pitjantjatjara Council, began in 1994. To date, a major focus of *Ara Irititja's* work has been retrieving and securing such records for the benefit of Anangu and the broader Australian community.

Sources: http://www.dcdsca.nt.gov.au/dcdsca/intranet.nsf/pages/ntl_ikc

[http://www.dcdsca.nt.gov.au/dcdsca/intranet.nsf/Files/ntlis_ikcdocs/\\$file/nakata_finalreport.pdf](http://www.dcdsca.nt.gov.au/dcdsca/intranet.nsf/Files/ntlis_ikcdocs/$file/nakata_finalreport.pdf)

<http://www.irititja.com/>

Adult Skills and Learning –A Queensland Government Initiative

Recognising that learning does not start and end with school, the Queensland Government initiated the program *Adult Skills and Knowledge for the Smart State*. Among a range of initiatives within this program, two have particular relevance in the Warlpiri context: Indigenous Knowledge Centres and Community Learning Hubs.

In remote Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands, the Queensland Government has established Indigenous Knowledge Centres to foster learning and leadership in Indigenous communities and to celebrate Indigenous knowledge. Such knowledge centres have been established at New Mapoon, Wujal Wujal, Lockhardt River, Mabuig and Erub. The centres are physical and virtual communication hubs, and provide community wide access to computers and internet and traditional library resources, supplemented with resources to support the oral and visual traditions of local Indigenous people. They have been created in conjunction with community councils.

Community Learning Hubs are a related initiative and involve the utilization of primary and secondary schools as hubs for adult learning after-hours. This means that facilities including vocational skill building equipment (e.g., woodwork and sewing) and computers are accessible for adult learning classes and courses. The project thus maximally utilizes existing local resources for the benefit of adult learning.

Source: <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/about/visitors/ikc>

https://www.trainandemploy.qld.gov.au/partners/about_us/research_publications/strategic_policies/adult_skills/action.html#12

http://www.trainandemploy.qld.gov.au/resources/about_us/pdf/det_adult_skills.pdf

A Warlpiri Learning Community: issues in the Warlpiri context

The idea of a community education centre has a long history in the Northern Territory, but most observers and members of communities in which they were established argue that they were never fully realized. Researchers have written about the idea of an Indigenous Learning Community (Schwab and Sutherland 2003) and the notion of Aboriginal education precincts have recommended in the Northern Territory Review of Secondary Education (Charles Darwin University and the Northern Territory Government 2003). A version of the idea has also been put forward in Geraldton and is under review by the Western Australian government (Geraldton Aboriginal Education Precinct Working Group 2005). Some version of a Warlpiri Learning Community,

incorporating elements of the Beacon program could be a powerful vehicle for promoting learning. Similarly, these ideas would articulate well with one of the library options discussed above.

There is certainly evidence to suggest that libraries can be an important resource for all members of a community from small children, to young people to elders. Whether or not WETT funds could or should be used to support the development of a community library is a difficult question. Perhaps there is a way to work in partnership with the Northern Territory Library to ensure a library is established in the region in the near future. For example, perhaps the Northern Territory government would be willing to fast track a LKC for Yuendumu if WETT funds were used to buy and operate a mobile library to visit outlying communities.

Source: Geraldton Aboriginal Education Precinct Working Group 2005. *A Matter of Choice: Geraldton Aboriginal Education Precinct*, unpublished report by the Geraldton Aboriginal Education Precinct Working Group, Geraldton.

Section 5: Recommendations for WETT investments in education and training

This section of the report provides a set of recommendations for the investment of WETT funds framed by the four themes identified above (in Section 4):

- Child development, school readiness and parenting skills
- Youth and media
- Enterprise development and training
- A Warlpiri learning community

Those themes emerged out of a careful research process involving a literature review to: identify relevant lessons, models and prior research findings from Australia and overseas; and to identify how potential investments might be supported (or in some cases obstructed) by current Commonwealth and state/territory policies.

Some recommendations could be taken up immediately; others would require a longer period of time to develop. The recommendations are not prioritised because that requires input from the Warlpiri communities—but each recommendation addresses what has emerged as a pressing need.

There were a number of important challenges that formed a backdrop in the research carried out to identify options for investing funds from the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust. First, there are many very positive programs and activities related to education and training in the region and it is important to look for options that do not duplicate current or future efforts. The Price and Harrison report suggested the WETT funds should be used to compensate for the lack of government willingness to fund certain types of programs (particularly ones related to culture and language) and several of the projects funded out of that report did just that. However, it can also be argued that government should not be encouraged to ‘cost shift’ programs that it should provide. Second, there are clearly many different education and training needs and desires among Warlpiri people; consequently, the best options may be those that will have the maximum long term impact for the most people. Third, it may be prudent to consider the use of the WETT money as an investment, not a ‘one-off’ fix for a problem. A mix of investments in education and training, some visionary and others more immediately practical could be the best strategy. In that sense the challenge was to look for education and training options that have not only a long term but also a sustainable impact. Fourth, and in some ways the most difficult, is the fact that the communities that comprise the Warlpiri Triangle cover an extremely large area. Identifying education and training options that are not tied to a single location is difficult and in some cases unavoidable.

Recommendation 1:

The Warlpiri Early Childhood Institute. This recommendation is somewhat open ended but starts with an ambitious vision of a place where early childhood courses are taught and child health and other services are provided. It would also be a preschool facility and day care centre operated by Warlpiri staff. It would be affiliated with a University with Warlpiri people directing a program of teaching and research focused on culturally appropriate early childhood development, school readiness and parent support. It would build expertise in the region and would be a model for research, development and best practice.

Whether or not that vision is achievable would need to be debated and discussed but the foundation for such an Institute could be established today. Where some of the building blocks already exist, ways can be found to strengthen and extend them. One option is a central facility, probably in Yuendumu, with satellite facilities in Lajamanu, Willowra and Nyirrpri. It would provide community controlled preschool and day care services and would serve as the site for training in early childhood. It would be a facility for Warlpiri people to access information and quality early childhood services but also a career path for many in the communities.

The first stage might involve investing in a series of targeted scholarships and study grants for students who are at the secondary level and want to develop a career in this field. Those scholarships and study grants could fund field trips to relevant institutions and locations outside the region. The logic in this would be to develop interest among young people and set students on a career path.

Next, funds could be used to develop, train and support an adult cohort of early education workers. CDU, BIITE, IAD and other bodies could be approached to provide training though there might be an opportunity for links to interstate organisations (e.g., The Telethon institute) as well.

Funds could also be used (matched by government, industry or philanthropic foundations) to establish appropriate facilities in each community. There is obviously enormous support at many levels of government for a community-initiated program like this focused on the long term care and enrichment of Warlpiri children and communities.

Recommendation 2:

Warlpiri Parent Education and Parent Support Program. Research clearly shows that one of the ways to ensure children have the best start in life is for parents to have knowledge about antenatal health, nutrition and child development. In addition, parents benefit from knowledge of child rearing strategies, early literacy and discipline. There are different approaches to parent education and support, but a place to start is with community courses and individual support.

The Northern Territory government has indicated through its Building Healthier Communities agenda its commitment to strengthening families and communities so there should be opportunities for synergies between WETT investments and government support. For example, if WETT paid to develop a culturally appropriate curriculum for parent education, perhaps government monies could be used to pay for a parent and community development officer who could serve all four Warlpiri communities and assist with parent education. Obviously, there could be links too with a potential Warlpiri Early Childhood Institute.

In addition, many programs available interstate and overseas (versions of Project Head Start as in the Western Australian Best Start program) have been shown to make a difference in building strong families through parent education and links could be made with those programs. An important feature of these programs is their adult education component; many are framed to serve as a mechanism to re-engage adults with study and they have been very effective in that regard. The Northern Territory government has indicated it will be exploring a Head Start type program for Territorians; Warlpiri people could develop a proposal where WETT funds are invested on the condition that the new program is rolled out first in Warlpiri communities.

Recommendation 3:

Warlpiri Youth New Media Project. The disaffection and disengagement of Indigenous young people pervades communities across the country, but it is particularly difficult in smaller communities in remote areas where opportunities for study and employment are limited. In such places, offering more training seldom seems to work. There are, however, hopeful signs of social and educational reengagement in Indigenous youth arts and media programs. There are good examples of programs overseas as well that show positive results.

Young people in many Indigenous communities are uninterested in school and yet they are fascinated by and competent with many of the new media technologies. Many young people, who have left school because they see no relevance or find it boring, will seek out access to the internet, and to technologies that allow them to work with photographs, video and sound. The engagement of Indigenous youth in local media projects is often inspiring and there is research evidence to show that the informal learning that propels individual involvement often generates confidence, self-discipline and skills that are transferable to other areas of life and work.

There could be a valuable long-term benefit in investing WETT funds to outfit and operate a Warlpiri Youth New Media project with computers, printers, sound and video recording devices, internet access and production spaces in each of the Warlpiri communities. The technology is increasingly affordable and qualified community development staff in this area are not as difficult to locate as in some other fields (often young people who work in media in capital cities are keen to live and work with Indigenous people in remote communities). There is probably no other remote community with the history of positive incorporation of media that Warlpiri people have experienced. Partnerships could be built with Warlpiri Media, CAAMA and Goolarri Media. In addition, the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre has prominent research streams in telecommunications.

A Warlpiri Youth New Media project could link to other WETT initiatives as well. Culturally and locally appropriate print, sound and video training materials are necessary for Warlpiri early childhood and parent education programs. Talking books are needed in schools and community newsletters can be produced by young people at marginal cost.

There may be government support for a project like this if framed as an Indigenous art sector initiative, a youth development scheme, a community capacity building program or even as a vocational training initiative. Business partnerships would be possible as would links to Philanthropic foundations (the Fred Hollows Foundation recently secured funds to implement a highly successful youth media project in Wugularr). Like the other initiatives, this one would involve WETT funds that should in principle be easily leveraged to acquire matching funds.

Recommendation 4:

Warlpiri Training-through-Enterprise Program. It is often said that education and training are most effective and learning is most easily facilitated when it results in practical ‘real-life’ skills. The research literature is filled with examples of ‘hands on’ and ‘on the job’ training programs that work because people gain real skills and they see the results of their labours in concrete outcomes. Remote communities have limited options for business development, so it would be wise to link opportunities that do arise

with opportunities for people to gain real skills and experience that prepares them for and makes them valuable contributors to the workforce and to the community.

What is being proposed here is to invest WETT funds in building a set of community assets based on the Good Food Kitchen (take-away and catering facility) in Maningrida. The idea would be to establish one in each of the four Warlpiri communities. To build and operate Good Food Kitchens requires workers trained in construction, food preparation and service, office management (ordering, storing and stocking products and ingredients) and small business operation. A program like this couples a business opportunity with adult (and potentially youth) training so that training is based on demand not supply.

There could well be strong opportunities for leveraging a project like this with an Australian business, perhaps one that supports healthy foods. In addition, government policy related to building stronger, healthier communities should provide opportunities for collaboration with government to provide support and training.

A similar training-through-enterprise opportunity might be a motel in Yuendumu. Again, a community owned business like this is very successful in Maningrida which, like Yuendumu, is a busy community with a never ending stream of government and other visitors who require accommodation.

Recommendation 5:

A Warlpiri Learning Community. A Warlpiri Learning Community is in many ways a ‘virtual’ community, linking people with services, information and resources and taking shape according to whatever the community needs and through whatever physical resources are available. A hub for the learning community might be the local school, or a library, or existing community centre. All of these options should be explored, but it may be that WETT funds would best be used (and matched by government, business or philanthropic foundations) to construct a purpose-built facility. This is an ambitious vision, but few other Aboriginal communities have ever had the foresight and opportunity the Warlpiri people have (through WETT) to invest their own resources to begin building such an important community facility.

The hub would be a place where community and adult education courses and activities could be offered, a place where information (print and electronic) can be collected, digitised, stored. It would be a place that was open ‘people hours’ not business hours so that individuals and groups could access the facility in the evenings and on the weekends. It would probably be most reasonable to establish the hub in Yuendumu because of the size of the population and proximity of other services, but satellite centres could be established in Lajamanu, Willowra and Nyirripi.

Because information is such an important component of a learning community, there might be immediate and valuable opportunities to develop a Warlpiri Learning Community affiliated with a Northern Territory Library facility. The time is right and there is certainly movement in this area as the Northern Territory Library proceeds with plans to build Library and Knowledge Centres in some remote Aboriginal communities.

Again, this program could link with others put forward in the recommendations above. Early childhood and parent training could be offered if classroom space was built into the facility; a childcare facility could be attached or located next door; a youth new media project could be housed in the same building or precinct.

This is an idea that has been considered though not yet implemented in Western Australia. One of the reasons for that is that government is cautious about investing heavily when there is no financial commitment from the community. Normally, remote Indigenous communities have few resources and so there is no way for them to show their commitment to a project. Warlpiri people have wisely set aside funds in WETT that could be used to leverage major initiatives with government, business or philanthropic foundations.

Appendix A: CLC project brief

SCHEDULE 2 THE SERVICES

The services required are: desktop research culminating in a report on educational (including training) lessons, models (including models of governance and delivery), best practice, prior research findings and policy in remote Aboriginal Australia and, where appropriate, overseas, towards options for application in programs in central Australia via WSLA.

The consultant shall:

1. Review relevant literature, highlighting literature that provides most persuasive support for the options in 5 (typo: should read 6) below, but also noting credible literature that suggests views at odds with these options. Pay specific, but not inordinate, attention to the 2005 report to CLC in the NT Education and Training Trust: Options for Use of Funds by Angela Harrison and Dave Price as indicative of the current education environment and some contemporary thinking on it.
2. Review CLC Notes on consultations in the NT in 2006 about education.
3. Consider relevant government education policy and/or reports that will likely influence, or have influenced, this policy to allow CLC to in turn consider and, if necessary, progress education and training programs strategically, consistent with current government policy where appropriate, at variance to it where not.
4. Analyse the literature, notes and reports in 1, 2 and 3 above to distil relevant lessons, models, best practice, prior research findings and conformity with current government policy.
5. Arrange and discuss the literature, notes and reports in 1, 2 and 3 above according to education and training themes informed by the analysis in 4 above.
6. Develop options for education and training support, consistent with the themes in 5 above, options that will reach advance a broad and sustainable program or approach likely to significantly improve educational outcomes in the long term.
7. Prepare a comprehensive draft report to CLC:
 - v. documenting the literature and note review, analysis, thematic arrangement and discussion and policy consideration above, paying attention to the Harrison and Price report in 1 above.
 - vi. outlining and justifying the options in 6 above, including the consultant's recommended option(s).
 - vii. including an introduction, executive summary, any recommendations for further research, and mention of other matters the consultant considers relevant.
 - viii. listing all references in a comprehensive bibliography.
8. Complete a final report to CLC, covering all the elements a) to d) in 7 above, following review of the draft report by the WSLA Advisory Committee (see the brief 1(b) attached), incorporating relevant coordinated comments from the Advisory Committee.
9. Complete a plain English summary of the final report for dissemination and/or discussion in an NT in 2006.

The deadline for the draft report in 6 (typo: should read 7) is 31 July 2006.

The deadline for the final report in 7 (typo: should read 8) is 14 August 2006.

Appendix B: Community Consultation Notes for 2006 WETT Consultancy

Note: this section removed from this version of the report at the request of the CLC.

Appendix C: Secondary Studies and the potential of a Warlpiri College

Indigenous Colleges

In Canada and the USA there are many independent and other colleges operated for and by Indigenous peoples. Many are similar to independent Aboriginal community controlled adult education institutions in Australia like Tranby College in Sydney, Tauondi College in Adelaide and the Institute for Aboriginal Development in Alice Springs. Most have an adult education focus but some include secondary studies as well. Some of these colleges were established because Indigenous Canadian and US students struggled with mainstream education facilities but others were created simply to foster and encourage a culture-based approach to education. Most are funded federally, though the literature continually refers to struggles communities and institutions face in finding adequate funding to operate. Some communities complement their federal funding with money derived from local royalties or earnings from resources such as, forestry, mining or gaming (casinos). The following are two descriptions of North American Indigenous colleges:

Blue Quills First Nations College in Alberta.

Established in 1971, the college provides a large range of courses, some leading to specific skills and others involving study toward degrees. Entry does not require a high school completion certificate and most students are admitted to study without such credentials. The range of courses and training programs is diverse and includes subjects like Aboriginal Social Work, Indigenous Art, Leadership and Management, Teacher's Assistant. Special employment readiness course are also offered to prepare First Nations citizens to work in entry level positions in the local Oil industry. Some of the more advanced programs are linked to mainstream universities so that students can gain credits that will be recognized and counted as fulfilling requirements for mainstream Bachelors and other degrees. The college has federal not-for-profit status.

For more information:

<http://www.bluequills.ca/>

Northwest Indian College

Northwest Indian College is an accredited tribal college in the US State of Washington. Its goal is to provide developmental and continuing education courses, certificate programs, associate and Bachelor degrees to meet the academic, vocational and cultural needs of Native American communities. It has a campus but also an outreach program to provide learning opportunities to Native American people in their home communities. While there are many traditional education programs the college also operates a special 'Center for Service Learning'. That centre focuses on providing education for leadership and works with communities to provide opportunities for students to work out of the classroom and with community members to develop skills and accomplish tasks or build programs that address the specific needs of those communities. Examples of programs include the reintroduction and development of community gardens involving students working closely with community elders; a water quality community awareness program to protect traditional salmon fisheries, and a community art project involving traditional carving and painting projects for placement in the community. The college will take students between the ages of 16 and 18 who undertake secondary studies and development courses; most courses are for individuals over the age of 18. Northwest Indian College also offers professional and vocational

course through its Training Institute. That program provides training for individuals who currently or who plan to work for tribal organizations. Examples include training in security, resource management, workplace safety, small business operations, governance and a range of other programs. For more information see: <http://www.nwic.edu/pages/about.html>

One consortium of colleges in Canada is the First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium (FNAHEC) This group includes ten independent colleges. For more information see: <http://www.fnahec.org/>

A listing (with web links) to all the tribal colleges and universities in the USA is available here: <http://www.ed.gov/about/inits/list/whtc/edlite-tclist.html#sk>

Implications for Warlpiri people.

Most Indigenous colleges struggle to find funding. Establishing and operating a college is very expensive and funding is often a function of a number of factors including the number of students the college can attract. Many Indigenous colleges in Canada and the US have hundreds of students. It appears none of the colleges were established without a significant amount of federal money and all require financial support from government to continue operating.

Many who work in the independent community-controlled adult education sector in Australia believe Australian governments have shown ambivalence at best and hostility at worst toward the small number of Indigenous colleges. Though there have been studies that show positive gains by this sector (Durnan and Boughton 1999) the most recent national review of independent providers reflected Commonwealth ambivalence (Australian Government 2003). That review found there was value in the services independent colleges provide, but it stopped short of recommending any expansion in services. Indeed, the emphasis was on increased accountability, reporting and partnerships (including new funding sources) and employment outcomes. The likely high establishment costs, the relatively low number of likely students, the government lack of enthusiasm for independent colleges, and the recent announcement by the Northern Territory of a regional secondary study facility in Yuendumu indicate a Warlpiri College is probably not a viable option at the present time. It might be possible, however, to develop some version of a Warlpiri College that is linked to an existing education provider such as Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, Charles Darwin University or the Institute for Aboriginal Development. Exploring that option might be worth doing but would require, money and political support.

On the other hand, the recent announcement of full secondary education to four bush communities, including Yuendumu, may represent an opportunity for Warlpiri people to help shape the provision of secondary education to best suit their needs. The government indicated a timeline of two years, which should allow enough time for strong engagement and participation in what the government describes as a new approach.

Source:

http://www.nt.gov.au/ocm/media_releases/2006/06%20June/20060622_SydIndigenousPlan.pdf

Appendix D: Key Commonwealth Government Indigenous Education and Training Support Programs

While certainly it would be possible for WETT monies to be spent on developing unique and useful programs for education and training, there may be important strategic and other advantages to be gained by augmenting investments with existing support program funds. DEST, in particular, offers a wide range of specific programs that Warlpiri schools and communities could access irrespective of WETT but nonetheless they might well be used strategically to complement initiatives pursued by Warlpiri people through WETT. What follows is a set of program summaries, including a description of the program, main objectives, details on eligibility and a reference or web link for further information. I have made no attempt in this appendix to discuss the potential value of these programs. After the Warlpiri people have decided which of the education and training options to pursue, this appendix can be used as a guide to specific programs that might be used to support the investment of WETT funds.

DEST programs and policies

The aim of all the DEST Indigenous education programmes is to accelerate improvements in education outcomes for Indigenous people. The Australian Government's Indigenous education and training programmes are supplementary to mainstream funding, and are intended for strategic interventions that will accelerate improvements in Indigenous student learning outcomes. DEST is directing resources towards those areas that have the greatest need, particularly remote Australia where gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous student outcomes are at their widest.

English as a Second Language – Indigenous Language Speaking Students (ESL-ILSS)

Description

English as a Second Language - Indigenous Language Speaking Students (ESL-ILSS) makes funding available to providers who are educating Indigenous students from a non-English speaking background undertaking their first year of formal instruction in English. Funding is a once only per capita entitlement based on eligible student numbers.

Objectives

ESL-ILSS aims to facilitate the entry of eligible Indigenous students into education by providing intensive English language tuition to each eligible student.

Eligibility

Funding is available to education providers for enrolled Indigenous students who:

- are assessed as having a 'pre-level 1' rating in English which is a barrier to their participation in the classroom; and
- have a home language that is an Indigenous language, Kriol or Torres Strait Creole;
- are commencing formal schooling in English for the first time; and

- have not previously attracted an ESL-ILSS payment

Funding is provided to education systems rather than individual institutions, except for independent institutions.

Source:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/programmes_funding/forms_guidelines/IEP_Provider_Guidelines_2005_2008/9_2_english_as_a_second_language_indigenous_language.htm

Supplementary Recurrent Assistance (SRA)

Description

Supplementary Recurrent Assistance (SRA) provides supplementary per capita funding to education providers across the preschool, school and vocational education and training (VET) sectors.

Objectives

SRA aims to accelerate educational outcomes for Indigenous Australians beyond those which could reasonably be expected from mainstream and own-source funding alone, by focusing provider effort on the 8 MCEETYA priority areas:

- improving Indigenous literacy;
- improving Indigenous numeracy;
- increasing the employment of Indigenous Australians in education and training;
- improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students;
- increasing Indigenous enrolments;
- increasing the involvement of Indigenous parents/community members in educational decision making;
- increasing professional development for staff involved in Indigenous education; and
- expanding culturally inclusive curricula.

Eligibility

SRA is available to all pre-school, school and VET providers delivering education and accredited training to Indigenous students which meet specific eligibility conditions. Funding is provided to education systems rather than individual institutions, except for independent providers.

Source

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/programmes_funding/forms_guidelines/IEP_Provider_Guidelines_2005_2008/9_1_supplementary_recurrent_assistance_sra.htm

Indigenous Education Projects - Capital and Non-Capital

Description

Project funding may be approved for capital and non-capital projects which clearly demonstrate that they will advance the objects of the Act and thereby the goals of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (AEP):

- involvement and self-determination;
- equitable access;
- raising participation;
- equitable and appropriate outcomes;
- ensuring appropriate reporting; and
- monitoring and evaluation

Objectives

Indigenous Education Projects aim to improve education and training outcomes for the specific cohort of Indigenous students identified by the project sponsor; the project sponsor must be an education systems rather than individual institutions, except for independent institutions..

Funding Priorities

Strategic priorities for Indigenous Education Projects are:

- the early childhood years;
- improving literacy and numeracy achievements, especially in primary school;
- improving school attendance;
- improving retention of students to Year 12 or its vocational equivalent; and
- improving transitions at critical points in education; with an emphasis on Indigenous students in remote areas.

Ongoing projects

An ongoing project is a project for which funding is to be provided over more than one funding year or even over the whole of the funding quadrennium. Examples of ongoing projects would include:

- Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies (IECB's); and
- National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy.

Non-ongoing projects

A non-ongoing project is a project with a finite funding period which might cross one or more funding years, depending on the nature of the project. Examples of non-ongoing projects would include:

- Major and minor capital projects; and
- Strategic or targeted interventions of limited scope or duration.

Capital Projects

Project funding may be approved for the purchase of capital assets such as land, buildings and transport vehicles.

Non-Capital Projects

Project funding may be approved for non-capital programmes such as targeted education interventions, staff professional development or curriculum development.

Source:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/programmes_funding/programme_categories/support_for_education_providers_staff/Supplementary_Recurrent_Assistance/a3_indigenous_education_projects_capital_and_non_capital.htm

Short Term Special Assistance (STSA)

Description

Short Term Special Assistance (STSA) provides assistance to providers in short-term emergency situations which cause severe temporary financial difficulty.

Objectives

STSA aims to assist providers to overcome short term unforeseeable financial difficulties that threaten their continued viability.

Eligibility

Funding may be available to non-systemic (independent) preschool, school and VET providers who have a current IEA (Indigenous Education Agreements) with the Australian Government.

STSA is not usually available to Government providers or non-Government systemic (non-government but part of an education system e.g., the Catholic Education System) providers. The Australian Government believes that such providers have enough resources of their own to help when one part of their organisation suffers short term financial distress.

Source:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/programmes_funding/forms_guidelines/IEP_Provider_Guidelines_2005_2008/9_4_short_term_special_assistance_stsa.htm

'Mixed-mode' Away-from-Base Assistance (AFB)

Description

Away-from-Base (AFB) assistance provides funding for travel, meals and accommodation while a student (or staff member) is away from their normal place of residence as part of a 'mixed-mode' course of study. A 'mixed-mode' course is a nationally accredited course that is delivered through a combination of distance

education and face-to-face teaching for students who are based in their home communities and undertake occasional intensive study periods on campus.

Objectives

‘Mixed-mode’ AFB aims to facilitate the access and participation of Indigenous students in Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training.

Eligibility

Funding is available to providers which deliver ‘mixed-mode’ courses for enrolled ABSTUDY-approved students, to assist with meeting certain costs in attending residential study periods.

Source:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/programmes_funding/forms_guidelines/IEP_Provider_Guidelines_2005_2008/9_5_mixed_mode_away_from_base_afb.htm

Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS)

The Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) provides targeted tutorial assistance to Indigenous school and tertiary students. The key components are:

- in-class literacy and numeracy assistance targeted to key points in schooling, including to Indigenous students in Years 4, 6 and 8 who did not meet one or more of the literacy and numeracy benchmarks in Years 3, 5 and 7;
- tutorial assistance for Indigenous students in Years 10, 11 and 12 aimed at increasing Year 12 school completion rates;
- tutorial assistance for eligible Indigenous students who leave their remote community to attend school in a non-remote location, or to attend a remote boarding school; and
- continuation of current bulk-funding tuition arrangements for Indigenous tertiary students.

Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) In-Class Tuition

Description

In-Class Tuition is literacy and/or numeracy tuition which is arranged by a funded education provider (a school or school system) targeted to achieving improved literacy and numeracy skills for Indigenous students at key points of schooling.

Tutors normally provide tuition in the students' usual classroom, although students may also receive tutorial support outside their classroom.

Objectives

ICT aims to improve English literacy and numeracy attainment of Indigenous school students.

Eligibility

Education providers are eligible to apply for funding to deliver an ICT programme to Indigenous school students, excluding students in schools in State capital cities and Canberra with a total Indigenous enrolment of less than 20.

Source:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/programmes_funding/forms_guidelines/IEP_Provider_Guidelines_2005_2008/9_6_itas_in_class_tuition.htm

Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) Year 10, 11 and 12 Tuition (DEST Administered)

Description

Year 10, 11 and 12 Tuition provides supplementary tuition for Indigenous students enrolled in Year 10, 11 or 12. Tuition may be provided outside normal hours of schooling or during "study" periods. Year 10, 11 and 12 Tuition is administered by the Department (DEST Administered).

Objectives

Year 10, 11 and 12 Tuition aims to improve learning outcomes of Indigenous students in Years 10, 11 and 12 and to increase retention to and completion of Year 12 by Indigenous school students.

Eligibility

Year 10, 11 and 12 Tuition may be approved for Indigenous students who are studying subjects leading to the completion of Year 10, 11 or 12 of schooling.

Sources:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/programmes_funding/forms_guidelines/IEP_Provider_Guidelines_2005_2008/9_7_and_9_8_itas_year_10_11_and_12_tuition.htm

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/programmes_funding/programme_categories/support_for_education_providers_staff/Supplementary_Recurrent_Assistance/a7_dest_administered_year_10_11_and_12_tuition.htm

Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) Year 10, 11 and 12 Tuition (Provider Administered)

Description

Year 10, 11 and 12 Tuition provides supplementary tuition for Indigenous students enrolled in Year 10, 11 or 12. Tuition may be provided outside normal hours of schooling or during "study" periods. Year 10, 11 and 12 Tuition is administered by funded education providers (Provider Administered).

Objectives

Year 10, 11 and 12 Tuition aims to improve learning outcomes of Indigenous students in Years 10, 11 and 12 and to increase retention to and completion of Year 12 by Indigenous school students.

Eligibility

Year 10, 11 and 12 Tuition may be approved for Indigenous students who are studying subjects leading to the completion of Year 10, 11 or 12 of schooling.

Source:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/programmes_funding/forms_guidelines/IEP_Provider_Guidelines_2005_2008/9_7_and_9_8_itas_year_10_11_and_12_tuition.htm

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/programmes_funding/programme_categories/support_for_education_providers_staff/Supplementary_Recurrent_Assistance/a8_provider_administered_year_10_11_and_12_tuition.htm

Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) Remote Indigenous Students Tuition

Description

Remote Indigenous Students (RIS) Tuition is available from 2006. RIS provides one year's supplementary tuition for Indigenous school students in the first year they are away from their remote community to attend school in a non-remote location or to attend a remote boarding school.

Education providers may receive RIS Tuition funding to provide up to 4 hours tuition per week, for up to 35 weeks, in the first year that eligible students are away from their remote community.

Objective

RIS Tuition aims to improve the learning outcomes of Indigenous students who leave their remote community to attend school. RIS Tuition also aims to maximize the educational opportunities of eligible Indigenous students and to increase the number of Indigenous students completing Year 12.

Eligibility

RIS Tuition may be approved for Indigenous students who leave their remote community to attend school in a non-remote location, or to attend a remote boarding school. Tuition is only available in the first year students are away from their remote community.

Source:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/programmes_funding/forms_guidelines/IEP_Provider_Guidelines_2005_2008/9_12_ias_remote_indigenous_student_tuition.htm

Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) Tertiary Tuition

Description

Tertiary tuition is arranged by funded education providers and provides supplementary tuition to eligible students studying university award level courses and Australian Qualifications Framework accredited vocational education and training courses at ITAS funded institutions. Tuition is available only for subjects in a student's formal education programme and is not usually available for basic literacy, numeracy, enabling and bridging courses.

Objectives

To improve the educational outcomes of Indigenous tertiary students.

Eligibility

Universities and institutions listed in A9.1.7 are eligible for funding under the ITAS Tertiary Tuition programme. Universities, institutions and campuses which received ATAS (now called ITAS) Tertiary funding for VET enrolments in 2004 will continue to be eligible for ITAS Tertiary funding for Indigenous VET enrolments in 2005-2008. Universities, institutions and campuses, which did not receive ATAS Tertiary funding in 2004 are ineligible for funding for their Indigenous VET enrolments in 2005-2008. The provision of ITAS assistance to students is dependent upon the student's eligibility and the availability of funds. ITAS Tertiary tuition may be approved:

for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are enrolled in a formal tertiary education or structured training programme, or accepted for enrolment in a course which commences within one month of the date of application for funding; and

- for an eligible student's formal course of study; and
- for up to 2 hours per week per subject and up to 5 additional hours in total during examination preparation breaks; and
- in accordance with a funding agreement between DEST and an education provider.

In exceptional circumstances only, a funded provider can aggregate the maximum weekly approved assistance over a month to allow flexibility to meet the needs of certain students requiring more than the additional 5 hours flexibility to meet the needs of certain students requiring more than the additional 5 hours to prepare for examinations. Such circumstances must be documented on a student's tuition file.

Source:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/programmes_funding/forms_guidelines/IEP_Provider_Guidelines_2005_2008/9_9_itas_tertiary_tuition.htm

Whole of School Intervention Strategy

The new Whole of School Intervention Strategy aims to improve attendance, literacy and numeracy skills, and increase retention to Year 12 and the level of successful Year

12 completions for Indigenous students. The Whole of School Intervention Strategy will provide \$102 million over 2005-08 to achieve better Indigenous education outcomes through:

- Parent School Partnerships Initiative - submission based projects to improve educational outcomes through parent and school partnerships; and
- the continuation of Homework Centres - with an emphasis on enhancing learning and involvement of local partnerships between schools and Indigenous communities.

The new Whole of School Intervention Strategy will replace the Vocational and Educational Guidance for Aboriginals Scheme (VEGAS) and the Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA) programme with a more coordinated approach to improving Indigenous school students' educational outcomes.

Parent School Partnerships Initiative (PSPI)

Description:

As part of the Whole of School Intervention Strategy, the Parent School Partnerships Initiative (PSPI) focuses on the implementation of creative approaches to improving the educational outcomes of Indigenous school students. It encourages parents of Indigenous students, Indigenous communities and schools to work together in partnership to address local barriers to education.

The PSPI supplements mainstream education services and programmes and may provide a mechanism for capacity building in Indigenous communities to enhance learning outcomes of Indigenous students.

Objectives:

The objectives of the PSPI are to:

- improve attendance;
- improve literacy and numeracy skills;
- increase retention of Indigenous students from Years 10 to 12; and increase the level of successful Year 12 completions for Indigenous students.

Eligibility:

Applications for funding can be made by individual or clustered schools, pre-schools, education systems, legally incorporated organisations and non-government organisations, in partnership with parents of Indigenous students and Indigenous communities.

Source:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/programmes_funding/forms_guidelines/iep_provider_guidelines_2005_2008/9_10_parent_school_partnerships_initiative.htm

Homework Centres (HWCs)

Description:

As part of the Whole of School Intervention Strategy to improve the educational outcomes of Indigenous school students, Homework Centres can provide a supportive environment for Indigenous students to complete their homework and to study. Homework Centres are designed to supplement other school strategies to improve the educational outcomes of Indigenous students. They are usually set up in a school classroom, library or other school building and are supervised by personnel drawn from Indigenous communities and from schools.

Objectives:

Homework Centres (HWCs) are set up to assist Indigenous school students to:

- complete homework and school assignments;
- develop study skills; and
- receive tutorial assistance from a tutor attached to the HWC.

Eligibility:

Applications for funding can be made by individual or clustered schools, education systems, legally incorporated organisations and non-government organisations, in partnership with parents of Indigenous students and Indigenous communities.

Source:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/programmes_funding/forms_guidelines/IEP_Provider_Guidelines_2005_2008/9_11_homework_centres.htm

Indigenous Youth Leadership Programme

Description

The Indigenous Youth Leadership Programme (IYLP) is part of the Australian Government's *Indigenous Australians Opportunity and Responsibility* commitment. It will provide \$12.9 million over 2005-2009 for scholarships for 250 young Indigenous people from remote communities to study at high performing schools and universities. The Programme aims to ensure that Indigenous youth from our remote areas receive the educational opportunities and experiences they deserve to take on future leadership roles in their communities. Students will also receive mentoring, targeted orientation, study tours and practical leadership experiences.

The IYLP has four programme elements. They are:

- Programme Administrator (delivered by The Foundation for Young Australians);
- IYLP Advisory Group;
- Support Strategies; and
- Leadership pathways.

Objectives

The objectives of the IYLP are to:

- assist young Indigenous people generally from remote areas, to develop and fulfil roles as Indigenous leaders in their communities;
- provide young Indigenous people with the opportunity to attend Australian schools and universities, that offer a wide range of educational choices and experiences;
- support young Indigenous people before and during attendance at such schools and universities; and
- provide practical leadership experience.

Eligibility

To receive assistance under this programme, a young Indigenous person must generally be from a remote community. In addition they must be:

- eligible to undertake secondary or university studies at the level for which they apply;
- ABSTUDY eligible or eligibility for Youth Allowance, Allowance for Isolated Children or AUSTUDY.

Source:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/programmes_funding/programme_categories/iylp/default.htm

Indigenous Youth Mobility Programme

Introduction

The Indigenous Youth Mobility Programme (IYMP) is part of the Australian Government's *Indigenous Australians Opportunity and Responsibility* commitment. \$23.1 million over 2004-05 to 2008-09 to assist 600 young Indigenous people, primarily from remote communities, to experience training and employment opportunities in major centres. With the support of their families and communities, these young people elect to relocate for this purpose. In each location a local support team assists IYMP Providers to support the young people. The first participants commenced training during semester 1 of 2006, with subsequent intakes throughout 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009.

Services

The IYMP services are:

- Training and employment services (delivered by IYMP Training and Employment Service Providers in each Host location), and;
- Safe and Supported Accommodation (delivered through Aboriginal Hostels Limited).

Objectives

The objectives of the IYMP are to:

- improve access to training and employment opportunities in major centres for young Indigenous Australians from remote communities;
- increase the number of young Indigenous Australians participating in accredited training;
- increase the number of Indigenous people employed in occupations in particular areas of community need such as trades, nursing, accountancy, business management and teaching, and;
- support the economic development in remote communities by building the capacity of local Indigenous youth to take up skilled jobs in their communities.

Programme Scope

New Apprenticeships and some tertiary pathways including nursing, teaching, accounting and business management are the focus of IYMP in recognition of a demand for these qualifications in remote communities. Participants commence training at the most appropriate level for them, for example, pre vocational training through to Diploma or higher.

Eligibility

To receive assistance under this programme, a young Indigenous person must be from a remote community. In addition they must generally be:

- aged between 16 and 24 years upon commencement of IYMP, and;
- supported by his or her family/community in their decision to relocate to a major centre to undertake a training and employment opportunity.

Source:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/programmes_funding/programme_categories/iymp/default.htm

Partnership Outreach Education Model (POEM)

Description

In 2000, the report to the Australian Government, *Footprints to the Future* developed by the Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce, included recommendations to develop and implement new approaches for engaging in community learning environments for 13 – 19 year olds who are not enrolled in school and not engaged in further education or training and are ‘disconnected’. The young people may also be disconnected from their families and communities. ‘Disconnected’ young people may be in part-time or casual employment.

The Partnership Outreach Education Model (POEM) Pilot initiative closely follows a blueprint set out in the Footprints recommendations and POEM projects were established in 2002 to test responses to the relevant recommendations.

Objectives

The POEM Pilot initiative provides governments, schools, youth related service providers, businesses, communities, young people and their families with the

opportunity to trial new approaches in relation to the delivery of accredited education and support services to disconnected young people in settings that are comfortable for them and conducive to learning. The key objective for each POEM project is to provide education and support to disconnected young people. POEM projects in 2006 will provide young people who have disengaged from learning with an opportunity for re-entry to education that will lead to opportunities to access further education, training or employment.

Eligibility

The primary target for POEM is young people between the ages of 13-19 years who are not enrolled in school and not engaged in education, training or employment. For the purposes of the POEM Pilot these young people are defined as 'disconnected'. Many of these 'disconnected' young people find it difficult to remain engaged in mainstream education or training due to the following risk factors:

- homelessness;
- at risk of homelessness;
- substance abuse or misuse issues;
- physical disability;
- intellectual disability;
- learning disability;
- cultural and linguistic diversity (CALD) (this is a non Indigenous category);
- Indigenous;
- young parent with caring responsibilities;
- young carer;
- in detention;
- under juvenile justice orders (and not in detention);
- victim of physical, sexual or emotional abuse;
- mental health issues.

Young people who are experiencing behavioural problems, who are enrolled in school but have not attended for more than three months in the past school year, are also defined as 'disconnected' and are eligible. Chronic truants and other young people at risk of leaving school early are not the primary target for POEM but may comprise up to 25% of the total number of participants enrolled at each project. However, every effort must be made to keep these young people engaged in mainstream education and referral to a Youth Pathways provider is one preferred option. Young people who have left school early, for example at age 15, but who have worked for a number of years and are in employment, are not classified as 'disconnected' for the purposes of the POEM projects and are not eligible.

POEM projects can accept only disconnected young people who are under the legal school leaving age if this placement has been negotiated or facilitated through the school system and relevant education authorities have given approval to the placement.

Source:

http://www.dest.gov.au/NR/ronlyres/CC3933B2-5FD4-4C88-AF4D-CBA337E58D2A/8947/poem_guidelines_2006.pdf

Skill Centre Programme/ VET Infrastructure for Indigenous People

Background

The Infrastructure Program provides Commonwealth sourced capital funding through DEST (formerly through the Australian National Training Authority) to the States and Territories for the vocational education and training (VET) sector. The major component of the Program provides funding for major buildings and equipment. Most of these funds are allocated by State and Territory Training Authorities to the continued development and refurbishment of TAFE Institutes and other public VET providers, through a Capital Development Planning process. In addition, there are three sub-components to the Program. These provide infrastructure funding assistance:

- for the establishment or expansion of industry based training facilities or “SkillCentres” as part of the continued development of a more diversified training market;
- for Skill Centres for School Students, as part of the expansion of vocational education and training for year 11 and 12 students; and
- to assist in the provision of facilities for the delivery of VET to indigenous people.

Objectives

The objective of the VET Infrastructure for Indigenous People sub-component of the Infrastructure Program is to provide capital funding to assist in the delivery of VET to indigenous people through:

- assisting to meet the need for improved or additional training facilities and infrastructure which is readily accessible by indigenous people;
- increasing direct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and industry involvement in the delivery of VET;
- expanding the number of student places available, thus increasing VET opportunities for indigenous people.

Priorities for assistance

The priority under this sub-component of the Infrastructure Program would be to focus on improving VET outcomes for indigenous peoples. Proposals would need to demonstrate:

- additional training programs and student places generated;
- long term financial viability including sources of recurrent/operational funding.

A priority will be given to proposals from rural and remote regions. In view of the relatively limited level of funds available, it is expected that priority will be given to proposals which will assist the maximum number of indigenous people. This suggests that a number of smaller projects will be supported rather than large amounts to a very small number of projects.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants are expected to be “not-for-profit” industry or community organisations which are legal entities, able to be responsible and accountable for public funds.

Any organisation which is approved for funding will need to agree, as far as is practicable, to transfer any assets acquired through a grant to a similar organisation should they cease to operate as a training provider or to use the assets for training purposes. Types of eligible organisations may include:

- Industry and/or community groups, including those in receipt of CDEP funding;
- Existing industry based Skill Centres;
- Independent Aboriginal Providers of VET.
- Group Training Companies;

Public providers of VET already have access to significant levels of capital funding through the broader Infrastructure Program or other government sources. Thus while TAFE Institutes, Higher Education institutions, other public VET providers and bodies associated with them are not excluded, it would be expected that any such applicant would be able to demonstrate a credible special case as to why they need to access funds through this sub-component, or that the proposal was of such significance that it warranted special consideration.

Source:

http://www.dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/DF52943-ED7E-4321-A8BC-DE1B1CC9E91D/9034/viip_guidelines.pdf

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