

# Accelerated Education

Addressing education gaps and the ‘whole of life’ crisis facing Australian Indigenous youth

Marcia Langton



## **I. The Indigenous Youth crisis, education gaps and the ghetto**

EDUCATION HAS A MAJOR ROLE TO PLAY in building social capital and diverting Indigenous youth from a lifetime of underemployment, unemployment, social alienation and socially destructive behaviours. Despite a few positive developments, the education status of the Australian Indigenous population is catastrophic. Closing the education gap is essential to capacity building in the hundreds of dysfunctional Aboriginal communities whose plight is manifestly unnecessary in a wealthy developed nation. Education is the key to creating the Aboriginal leaders, teachers, professionals and self-sufficient individuals of the future. It is capable of expanding opportunities for full social, political and economic participation.

*Illustration: Kerry Leishman*

Education for Indigenous Australians can be, and has been, a two-edged sword eroding cultural integrity. The pedagogical and practical complexities are considerable and need to be carefully considered and implemented. The accelerated education and work-readiness project which, with my colleagues Dr Zane Ma Rhea of the Faculty of Education at Monash University and Ms Helen Teichman of HTT Associates, I initiated and designed as an intervention is aimed at fast-tracking students from underperformance in school and early exclusion from educational opportunity to successful performance levels in the standard curriculum<sup>1</sup>.

The project design is being undertaken collaboratively with a group of expert Israeli educators and Australian partners, and we intend to involve several other international experts in design and evaluation

1. The Israeli East Kimberley Accelerated School project, in its planning phase, has already attracted financial commitment from government, industry and philanthropic partners. A range of potential partners from the government, non-government and corporate sector have been approached with formal requests for their involvement in specific aspects of the Project. The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations has provided support for the project to date, while philanthropic support for the initial phase of the project has come from the Pratt Foundation. Corporate partners which have provided support for the initial phase of the project are the Argyle Diamond Mine (located in the East Kimberley) and Rio Tinto Ltd based in Melbourne.

components. Several industry partners already involved in employment and training programs among their local Aboriginal populations are keen to assist in developing the work-readiness components of the project. Our partnership approach, involving school communities, families, teachers, government, industry and philanthropic partners has shown considerable initial success. This increasing desire on the part of philanthropic and

non-government donors for assurance of change achieved by modern project planning techniques has also involved interesting forms of partnership.

During the initial phase of the project in January and February, a delegation of Israeli educational experts was brought to Australia, visiting Cairns, towns and other locations in the East Kimberley region, and Shepparton and Melbourne in Victoria, to explain to community representatives the principles, methods and track record accelerated education programs. The delegation met with teachers, researchers, parents and community and industry stakeholders attended seminars and meetings at schools and educational centres, presenting their accelerated education methods and evidence of their success in delivering programs to a range of populations, including 'at risk' groups<sup>2</sup>.

The historical factors that contribute to Indigenous disadvantage and put the population at risk are widely reported: (see for instance, Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation 1998) intergenerational poverty and marginalization, geographical remoteness, a range of degrees of cultural difference

(including language difference) and educational disadvantage. Education has a central role to play in building social capital and a sense of belonging. In addition to the transmission of intellectual traditions and skills, the socialization of children into a community and its norms and expectations beyond the narrow dimensions of the family, education, especially vocational and higher education, enables citizens to undertake employment and careers by providing skills, including highly specialized skills and training. Basic work readiness is most often inculcated at the secondary school level. High quality education for children and lifelong education for adults are core components of the idea of 'social capital.' The idea of 'social capital' is being embraced by many communities of diverse interests, globally, to assist in these communities achieving economic benefit for themselves and their children (Falk and Harrison 1998).

Glaeser (2001) observes that education has been consistently identified as the most robust correlate with social capital. He defines social capital using an economic

lens as "the set of social resources of a community that increases the welfare of that community". He also contends that, when measured at the individual level, social capital is very closely related to human capital. He proposes an economic model of 'social capital', but he also discusses education and ethnic heterogeneity as variables that are closely related to social capital formation where higher education is correlated with higher social capital and more ethnic heterogeneity seems to depress social capital. Although the idea of 'social capital' is highly contentious, and the use of the concept by neoconservative governments to privatize the welfare functions of government criticized in the growing literature on this concept, it is nevertheless one that captures the idea of the participation of individuals in civil society contributing in complex ways to their social and economic well-being.

The role of community and voluntary organizations in contradistinction to government institutions in the development of social capital is emphasized in the literature. In his review of definitions of human and social capital, Cote (2001) differentiates between, human capital, which "has come to refer to the knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes embodied in individuals," and social capital, which "has been defined in terms of networks, norms and values, and the way these allow agents and institutions to be more effective in achieving common objectives". The author notes that more attention has been given to the role of voluntary associations while the roles of families, schools and firms have been less researched. His argument is that human and social capital are embedded in political, institutional and legal conditions which allow for economic development. Education is high on his list of government actions that support human and social capital along with inclusion of diverse groups, health care delivery, flexible work sched-

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2. In Cairns, two seminars were hosted by the Cape York Institute of Policy and Leadership, the Director of which, Noel Pearson, expressed strong support for the project and enthusiasm for introducing it to at least one Cape York community initially. The tour of the East Kimberley region included visits to several schools: the Halls Creek District School, the Doon Doon School, the Ngalangangpum School at Warmun and the Kununurra District School. The visit to northern Victoria entailed a seminar hosted by the Academy of Sports, Health and Education, a new initiative of the University of Melbourne and the Victorian State Government, founded by Mr Paul Briggs, a Yorta Yorta leader, in collaboration with educationalists and the local Indigenous community of the area.

ules, use of public space and better urban infrastructure to avoid sprawl and excessive commuting.

The links between education and employment, between education levels and economic well-being, and between education and health are widely reported; that being the case, it is unlikely that the low levels of education among the Australian Indigenous population are not causally linked to the disadvantages experienced by the Indigenous population across all socio-economic indicators. The continuing educational gaps between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population are evident in the failure of one in four Indigenous children assessed at Year 3 and Year 5 to achieve levels of literacy and numeracy at the national standard.

The immediate contributing factor to this lack of most essential and basic skills is non-attendance at school, whether frequently or infrequently. It is also clear that inappropriate educational environments and inadequate and inappropriate teacher training also contribute to this problem. What is undeniable is that failure to achieve at primary and secondary school results in a lack of pathways for Indigenous youth to employment opportunities and further education.

Many Aboriginal communities are classical racial ghettos, where social and economic exclusion, separatism and isolation are simultaneously cause and outcome in a worsening spiral of intergenerational and life-long disadvantage. In hundreds of small Aboriginal communities around Australia the usual toxic social and economic cocktail

is evident in the endemic alcohol use, petrol sniffing and other drug use (see Milton James in this issue), crime, violence, and lives cut short by ill health, suicide, vehicle accidents and homicide. Aboriginal youth in these circumstances experience a 'whole of life' crisis.

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The poverty trap is a universal experience throughout the world, both in rural communities and in those that became urbanized in the last half century. It is therefore unlikely that any one strategy alone could alter the circumstances of communities living in historical poverty. Rather, a combination of interventions, based in

sound research and designed and implemented in collaboration with the people intended to benefit, are required. The accelerated education project discussed here is a successful intervention that has achieved outstanding results in Israel, the United States of America, Italy and Hong Kong.

## II. The underperformance of present interventions

### A. Education gaps

AS A GROUP, INDIGENOUS STUDENTS continue to experience much poorer outcomes than their non-Indigenous counterparts; the magnitude of this education gap is described in several recent reports.<sup>1</sup> Dr Brendan Nelson, Minister for Education, Science and Training has remarked in the *National Report to Parliament. Indigenous Education and Training, 2002*:

*“Numeracy and literacy results show improvement yet one in four Indigenous Year 3 children still cannot pass a basic reading test... A continuing concern remains the low achievement levels in literacy and numeracy in the early years and the prospect that these students may experience serious levels of disadvantage throughout the rest of their schooling and education. If students’ literacy and numeracy skills are insufficient to cope with more complex and abstract content of secondary education, many study and career options may be closed off to them.”*<sup>2</sup>

The level of attendance is lower for Indigenous students at each stage of schooling. The most recent Report to Parliament drew attention to this critical factor: “Absence from preschool can be due to

many reasons, but if attendance is erratic, the gaps in knowledge and experience are exacerbated with each absence. When attendance is regular, children are able to continually reinforce and build on their prior learning.”<sup>3</sup>

The Indigenous population is younger than other Australians, with 12.9% children aged 0–4 years, double the non-Indigenous rate of 6.4% (2001 Census of Population and Housing). Consequently, the profile of Indigenous students enrolled at different levels of schooling differs from that of non-Indigenous students. For example, 44% of Indigenous students are in Years 1–4, compared with 38% of the non-Indigenous students. In Years 5–10, the proportions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students are almost equal at 46% and 48% respectively. In Years 11–12, the proportion of Indigenous students falls to half that of non-Indigenous students, with 6% Indigenous students and 13% non-Indigenous students. In addition, almost 4% of primary and secondary Indigenous students are in ungraded classrooms and cannot be allocated into one of these levels.

The impact of absenteeism on student achievement has been recognized as a significant problem requiring concerted policy and program attention. A range of factors can be involved in absenteeism including: disrupted family circumstances, high levels of transience, the nature of the school environment, and community attitudes towards education. Work has been undertaken in the development of a national Indigenous school attendance strategy. Some Indigenous community members themselves recognized that the remedy for absenteeism lies at least partly with Indigenous communities.

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1. Sources: ABS Census and population data 1986, 1991, 1996, 1998 Schools Australia ABS 4221 1991, 1998 Unpublished DEST Report: "Better Practice in School Attendance – Improving the School Attendance of Indigenous Students", 2000 Australian National Training Authority, Annual National Report 1998 Higher Education Report for the 2000–2002 triennium
  2. The *National Report to Parliament. Indigenous Education and Training, 2002*, pp.iii- Xvii

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3. *National Report to Parliament. Indigenous Education and Training, 2002*, p.14.

This issue is a critical one, and one that has been addressed in our project design. Geographical isolation also poses a major obstacle for increased educational participation, as does the absence of secondary schools serving remote area Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations.

In 2003, the Aboriginal leaders of the Coen Aboriginal Community of Cape York Peninsula, and Noel Pearson's Cape York Partnerships, established the Coen Education Strategy, based on the philosophy 'Every child is special.' The strategy has nine components including promulgating a strong commitment to school readiness as a community value. The Coen model addresses one of the major contributing factors to absenteeism, cultural alienation. It is moving indeed to attend classes where, for the first time, language, culture, artefacts, environmental awareness are celebrated and elders within the community are not only welcomed into the classroom but are core parts of the school curricula.

Recent data for some States show that Indigenous school students attend for about 84 per cent of the time, but non-Indigenous students attend for about 93 per cent. This gap widens in secondary school when Year 10 Indigenous students attend school up to three times more than non-Indigenous students. Of particular concern is the lower level of literacy achievement by Indigenous students, which was highlighted by the findings of the 1999 Year 3 Reading National Benchmarks results. Although there is an improvement since the 1996 National School English Literacy Survey, a third of the Indigenous Year 3 students did not meet the national standard in reading. While the

proportion of Indigenous people with qualifications has increased from 10 per cent in 1991 to 14 per cent in 1996, it is still well below the proportion of the total population

possessing post-school qualifications which is approximately 35 per cent.

Indigenous students are also much less likely to continue their education beyond the compulsory years. In 1998, 83 per cent of Indigenous students remained in schooling to Year 10, but only 32 per cent continued to Year 12 compared to 73 per cent for non-Indigenous students.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics<sup>1</sup> reports that while apparent retention rates for Indigenous full-time students have improved since the 1980s, Indigenous students were still less likely than all students in 2001 to stay at school beyond the compulsory years. In 2001, the proportion of Indigenous students continuing to Year 10 was 86%, compared with 94% of all students. For Indigenous students continuing their studies to Year 12, the apparent reten-

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1. See The Australian Bureau of Statistics, *4221.0 Schools, Australia, 2003; Australian Social Trends 2002 Education - Participation in Education: Education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples*. Apparent retention rates are important measures of the performance of education systems and related government policies. The apparent retention rate is an estimate of the percentage of students of a given cohort who continued to a particular level or year of education. For instance, in 2001 the apparent retention rate of full-time secondary school students from Year 7/8 to Year 12 was 73%.

tion rate was half that of all students (36% compared with 73%).

School retention rates of Indigenous students are low, particularly at upper primary and secondary school levels. The need to address this issue has been identified for at least a decade in a number of federal and state government reports on the status of Aboriginal education. The ABS data is summarised in The National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training 2001, as follows:

*The data on Indigenous participation in education show few improvements...*

*\* 13% of Indigenous 5–14 year olds are not attending an educational institution compared with 5% of their non-Indigenous peers.*

*\* The gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous participation ranged between 2 and 19 percentage points.*

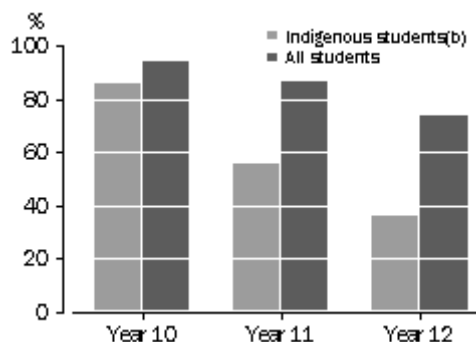
*\* The 115,465 Indigenous students made up 3.5% of total school enrolments in Australia.*

*\* The 68.4% (78,943) of Indigenous students enrolled in primary school were double the 31.6% (36,522) enrolled in secondary schools<sup>1</sup>.*

The data on Indigenous participation in education show few improvements.<sup>2</sup> Between 1992 and 1999, Indigenous student numbers in higher degree and other

postgraduate degrees increased by 156 per cent. At bachelor degree level during the same period, numbers of Indigenous students increased by 61 per cent. Reflecting the rapid increase in their participation in higher education, the percentage of commencing students who are Indigenous has risen from about 1 per cent in 1989 to 1.8 per cent in 1999. While these improvements are welcome, they are far less than the levels of improvement that should be expected.

**Graph 1**  
**Apparent Retention Rates(a) Years 10, 11 & 12 - 2001**



(a) From Year 7/8 for full-time students only.

(b) Indigenous apparent retention rates are influenced by the degree to which students identify as Indigenous, which may have increased between 1998 and 2000.

**Source:** Australian Social Trends, 2002, ABS 2001 National Schools Statistics Collection

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1. Sources: ABS Census and population data 1986, 1991, 1996, 1998 Schools Australia ABS 4221 1991, 1998 Unpublished DEST Report: Better Practice in School Attendance – Improving the School Attendance of Indigenous Students, 2000 Australian National Training Authority Annual National Report 1998 Higher Education Report for the 2000–2002 triennium. (See endnote on census data)

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2. Sources: ABS Census and population data 1986, 1991, 1996, 1998 Schools Australia ABS 4221 1991, 1998 Unpublished DEST Report: Better Practice in School Attendance – Improving the School Attendance of Indigenous Students, 2000 Australian National Training Authority Annual National Report 1998 Higher Education Report for the 2000–2002 triennium. (See endnote on census data).

The National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training 2001, concluded in summary:

*Key improvements included the increase in Indigenous secondary school enrolments, higher apparent retention rates and grade progression ratios for Years 10, 11 and 12, and a decrease in the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Year 10–12 apparent retention rates. ... Of major concern is the proportion of Indigenous students falling at key educational transition points, from primary into junior secondary school, and a sharp drop from compulsory to post-compulsory schooling*

Indigenous completion rates against non-Indigenous completion rates of Year 10, 11 and 12 are shown in Graph 1 above. A critical component of the accelerated education and work-readiness project is to combine the successful strategies presently being implemented in the pilot locations which aim to overcome the problem of the failure of students to attend school.

One important strategy, which has proved successful within one year of operation, is the Coen Education Strategy mentioned above. It consists of a 5 step plan, including a 'School Ready' and Attendance Action Plan. Another project which addresses the school retention rate problem is the Barramundi School of the Kununurra District High School in the East Kimberley of Western Australia. This school provides a special classroom environment for the 'school refusers' of Kununurra.

### **B. Underemployment and unemployment**

For three decades, from the early 1950s to the late 1970s, Australia had very low levels of unemployment. During the 1980s, the concept of 'structural unemployment' became part of public discourse. It is com-

monly accepted that unemployment is, and will remain, an inevitable feature of Australian economic life, and that it is the lot of the uneducated or undereducated who do not have the skills required for the job market. If they can find employment, it will be part time or underpaid (and possibly in breach of industrial standards). This is especially the case for women. If they are young or indigenous, they could be required to attend a 'work-for-the-dole' scheme.

Rapid technological change and the integration of the national economy into the global economy have reduced the jobs available to the unskilled; they will become poorer as social security entitlements fall further behind the income levels of the employed. Technological change may outpace their capacity to become trained, and if this proves to be the case, the unskilled and their children may become permanently excluded from the labour force. The euphemism, 'the long term unemployed', refers to people who have been excluded from the labour market; for most, permanent unemployment will be the reality.

In 1998, in a policy paper entitled *The Job Ahead*, ANU researchers Dr John Taylor and Dr Boyd Hunter alerted policy makers in Indigenous affairs to the impact of ever worsening Aboriginal unemployment on future generations:

*... the magnitude of employment deficits, both present and projected, and the need for sustained improvement in employment outcomes simply to prevent an already poor situation becoming worse, are all essentially unchanged. ... the time available for decisive action is decreasing rapidly. (Commonwealth of Australia 1998a: 2-5).*

Taylor and Hunter argued persuasively for investing in equitable employment outcomes to avert the social crisis, which they predicted on the basis of census data would exponentially worsen. Above all, they

warned of the failure of job growth to keep up with growth in the Indigenous population of working age (1998: 2). They identified the factors that contribute to Aboriginal unemployment and low economic status:

“locational disadvantage, poor human capital endowments and the historical legacy of exclusion from the mainstream provisions of the Australian state.”<sup>1</sup>

They also drew attention to the constraints on opportunities for economic development, (Taylor and Hunter 1998: p.2). They estimated that

the Indigenous population was likely to increase from an estimated 386,000 in 1996 to 469,100 by 2006 at an annual rate of growth of 2 per cent, or twice the rate of growth projected for the rest of the population. The population bubble in the working age group would grow as Indigenous youth, the largest proportion in the population, matured to adulthood, with the result that: ‘The consequences for Indigenous social policy ... would derive more from needs in the school-to-work transition years and in the prime working age group.’<sup>2</sup>

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of working age, unemployment, underemployment, and exploitation in a special Aboriginal ‘work-for-the-dole’

scheme, the Community Development Employment Project, is commonplace. The rate of unemployment is excessively high even though disguised by CDEP (Community Development Employment Project) participation. The 2001

Census indicated that full time employment for non-indigenous people is higher than that for Indigenous people in all age groups and in all geographic regions of Australia. Forty per cent of the full time indigenous working population was in work compared to 60 per cent of the non-indig-

enous working population. Positive indigenous job growth in the private sector is the good news over the past six years, probably as a result of the initiatives taken during the 1990s under Labor governments with the result that the indigenous employment ratio has improved markedly.

However, the official recorded level of Indigenous employment has been increasingly augmented over the past 20 years by individuals participating in the CDEP scheme. In 1996, one-fifth of all Indigenous workers were engaged in such schemes and it is expected that this proportion will increase further (Taylor and Hunter 1998: 3). In 2001, 22 per cent of the Indigenous working age population were unemployed, representing nearly four times the rate of mainstream unemployment. If we add those working on CDEP projects, that is largely working two days a week on community projects, the rate of unemployment doubles.

Taylor and Hunter (1998: 2) also found that labour market trends for Indigenous people ran counter, at times, to the economic cycle, and were attributable to the emergence and substantial growth of the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) scheme which operates

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1. Taylor refers to a number of sources: Altman and Nieuwenhuysen 1979; Fisk 1985; Miller 1985; Altman 1991; Taylor 1993; Daly 1995; Taylor and Altman 1997.
  2. Taylor and Hunter predicted that the number of Indigenous adults in 2006 would be greater by 28 percent (or 64,800 individuals), The projected increase in the rest of the adult population was only 12 per cent.

increasingly as an employment program. He observed also that it reflected the consolidation of a distinct Indigenous segment in the labour market which has emerged with the growth of activities aimed at servicing the Indigenous population.

Taylor and Hunter made a number of conservative predictions based on his analysis of the population and labour market data:

- \* barely one quarter of Indigenous adults will be in mainstream employment. By comparison, the proportion of non-Indigenous adults in mainstream employment is assumed to remain static at around 55 per cent, and

- \* in the absence of CDEP scheme work, the unemployment rate for Indigenous people would rise from 41 per cent of the labour force to 48 per cent by 2006. For non-Indigenous Australians, the unemployment rate is assumed to remain around the 1996 level of 8.5 per cent.

They concluded that to prevent the Indigenous labour force status from slipping further behind, and to attempt to close the gap between Indigenous and other Australians, would require an unprecedented expansion in Indigenous employment. He estimated that an extra 25,000 extra jobs by the year 2006 were required, whereas only 21,000 were expected to be created. He also found:

*To achieve employment equality with the rest of the Australian population, an additional 77,000 Indigenous people would have to be employed resulting in an overall deficit of some 55,000 jobs. If the focus is on mainstream job requirements, excluding opportunities provided by the CDEP scheme, then the backlog in the number of jobs needed is projected to be much larger; indeed greater than the number presently employed.*

It is not simply the high levels of unemployment that contribute to Indigenous poverty: the low occupational status and consequent low incomes also cause disadvantage. In 1996, the overall average income for Indigenous people was \$14,200 which was 30 per cent less than the average of \$21,100 for the total population. In 2001, the mean (average) equivalised gross household income for Indigenous persons was \$364 per week, or 62% of the corresponding income for non-Indigenous persons (\$585 per week)<sup>1</sup>. In some states the income level of indigenous people actually fell and in the Northern Territory improved only marginally.

The income gap for Indigenous people results from several contributing factors: the relatively low Indigenous employment/population ratio; the greater dependence of Indigenous people on government spending, and their overall lower occupational status. High levels of welfare dependence, the dependence on the CDEP scheme for employment generation, low occupational status and high levels of part-time employment exacerbate the income gap severely (Taylor and Hunter 1998).

Because more than half of Indigenous adults are not in employment and one quarter of those in the labour force are unemployed, there are two major costs to government: the direct cost of meeting the basic income support of those who want to work but cannot acquire jobs in mainstream employment, and the cost of tax revenue foregone. In this issue of **Australian Prospect**, Peter Botsman, following Hunter argues the cost of Indigenous unemployment is between \$1 billion and \$7 billion

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1. Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australia Now*, Australian Social Trends: Work - Underutilised labour: Geographic distribution of unemployment, Labour Force Characteristics, at URL: <http://www.abs.gov.au>

per annum and by 2011 could be as high as 11 billion. (Hunter, 2003)

Taylor and Hunter argue that "The low expected employment income of many Indigenous people is itself an impediment to improving labour market outcomes.... Clearly there is little incentive to seek work when the alternative income from welfare is higher than one's expected wage." This is a real problem where "about 20 per cent of single men and women could expect a higher income from welfare than from employment in non-CDEP work" and "those in a partnered relationship, the share was higher, 30 per cent for males looking for work with a dependent partner and almost 80 per cent for females looking for work with a dependent partner".

The bane of the Aboriginal NGO sector is the relentless change in government policies and programs. The myopia associated with three and four year electoral cycles is inexorably accompanied by equally short-sighted policy swerves in Indigenous matters aimed at pleasing the fickle—and profoundly uninformed—electorate, especially the swinging voter.

Few of the successful programs survive long enough to show outcomes; it is best, then to be extremely cautious in recommending any change at all in government responses to the Indigenous situation. Present federal Government interventions to improve the situation for the Indigenous population of working age include: wage assistance, Centrelink's Remote Area Service Centres (RASCs), structured training and employment projects (see Sanders 2003), the National Indigenous Cadetship Project, career development and recruitment strategies in several departments, employment and training projects established under partnership arrangements, such as in Cape York, and the Corporate Leaders for Indigenous Employment project.

Since April 2002, in areas where there are jobs available, Indigenous Employment

Centres (IECs) are now helping (CDEP) participants into lasting jobs. IECs are run by the CDEP and help Indigenous people develop the skills, knowledge and experience to move into a non-CDEP job and keep it. They also help them deal with Centrelink and Job Network. IECs complement Job Network services. There are a small number of IECs to start off, with more commencing over the next couple of years<sup>1</sup>.

Clearly, these policies are applied on a large scale in a centrist mode, whereas, as the riots in Redfern show, small, sometimes tiny, populations are in such distress that specially tailored and delivered programs are required to break the cycle of poverty, under-education, unemployment and dysfunction, leading to crime and civil unrest.

Low employment income can be raised by improving the productivity of Indigenous workers through education and training. Improving Indigenous education outcomes relative to the rest of the population is the best way to increase Indigenous income expectations, and, as Taylor and Hunter (1008 further point out, "The advantage of this strategy is that education has a substantial direct impact on the employability of Indigenous Australians."

Indigenous enrolments in Vocational Education and Training (VET) have almost doubled from 1994 to 1998 and Indigenous people are well represented in VET relative to the Indigenous share of the total Australian population. While Indigenous people comprise approximately 2 per cent of Australia's total population, around 4 per cent of all clients aged 15–64 undertaking publicly-funded vocational programmes in 1998 were Indigenous.

However, the weaknesses in the simple 'education equals employment' argument are several. One is the failure of the general

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1. See website at URL: <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/humanservices-news/aug03/shep.htm>

provision of education aimed at work readiness and employment to target strategically and purposefully the relevant locales, age and gender cohorts, their social and health characteristics, and actual employment opportunities.

The most serious flaw in some centrist programs is that they substitute substandard ‘training’ for proper education. The successful participants in such programs achieve one or more non-transportable and non-articulated certificates that do not provide them with stated industry requirements. If

such certificates are non-transportable, the ‘qualification’ will not be recognized in another state or territory jurisdiction or across industries. If the certificates are non-articulated, they do not permit the holder to enroll in a more advanced course in a similar field without further study. Moreover, often these ‘training’ programs are based on the assumption that training leads automatically to employment. In the 1990s, Geoff Clark said, “We’ve had more training than the clowns in the Moscow circus. We want jobs,” and this sentiment can be heard throughout the Aboriginal world. The revolving door of substandard training, underemployment, unemployment, welfare dependency, leads to a deep demoralization which is expressed—too often—in crime and drug and alcohol use. The high suicide rates, risk-taking behaviours and mortality rates among Aboriginal youth can be explained, at least in part, by these economic factors.

### **III. Accelerated education as a strategy of intervention**

THE YACHAD Accelerated Education and Work Readiness Project (YAEWR Project) directly addresses the lack of education

achievement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and their teachers in rural and remote areas of Australia. In a collaboration between Australian and Israeli educationalists, industry and philanthropic partners, and government, this project will focus the debate on the use of the principles of accel-

erated learning for education and work readiness to ensure that disadvantaged people are able to achieve, at a minimum, the national standards of literacy and numeracy within the curriculum standards framework. This

project was inspired by my visit to Israel last year where I investigated accelerated education programs pioneered through partnerships between philanthropic bodies and government. These programs address the educational challenges of Israel’s Bedouin community and the absorption of Ethiopian Jews who immigrated to Israel in the 1980s and 1990s. Developed originally at the Hebrew University, these programs have shown they can “fast-track” students from educationally and culturally disadvantaged backgrounds. Having been tested for more than a decade in Israel, they have since been adopted in locations as disparate as China and Italy.

The Project aims to introduce accelerated education methods, in particular those developed in Israel at the Hebrew University Centre for Innovation in Education and the Sachta Rashi Foundation to three rural and remote pilot locations in Australia where non-Indigenous and Indigenous students suffer a range of educational disadvantages.

Further, the goals of the Project are to develop school retention and transition projects in a number of pilot schools and other educational institutions in all States of

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Australia to the level where non-Indigenous and Indigenous students alike have access to the same quality of educational experience as would be available to them in normal Australian schools, commencing with three pilot locations in the Cape York area of north Queensland, the East Kimberley area of Western Australia, and Shepparton in northern Victoria.

The very different lifestyles of students, teachers and their families in these communities were considered in the design of the project. Whereas in

Shepparton, regular schooling became available to Aboriginal pupils incrementally over the last century, in communities such as Halls Creek and Coen, the great grandparents and grandparents of the Aboriginal children in the classrooms grew up in the bush, many of them in the last fully hunting and gathering societies. Their own parents and grandparents may not have attended school as children, and in some cases, walked into these remote area towns from their bush camps only thirty years ago.

The Aboriginal pupils of schools in the East Kimberley live in multilingual families and communities, and for many the principal language spoken at home will be a combination of one or more Aboriginal languages and Kriol. Many children are not fluent in Standard English. The Aboriginal students live in markedly different cultures from the normative culture of the classroom, so different that teachers resort to sitting children on the floor, using Aboriginal cultural and linguistic curriculum aids, Aboriginal teacher aides, and many other techniques to engage them in class room activities. The expectations of Aboriginal

students are extremely low. There are few industries in these remote areas where they can be employed and until recently little expectation that they would work in the existing industries, such as mining, pastoralism, agriculture and tourism.

In such towns as Halls Creek and Kununurra, many of the predominantly English speaking settler families are highly itinerant, some staying for only two years in such towns, while a core will be the old families of perhaps three generations residency in the area, well-established

in the pastoral industry and related service industry. Families in the higher socio-economic categories may be able to send their children to private schools in Perth, while families from lower socio-economic categories send their children to the local schools. Few of these students have the certainty and range of opportunities for career and further education pathways. Such demographic and sociological considerations have informed our project design.

The project's success is heavily dependent on the involvement of families and communities, for instance in improving commitments to school attendance (such as the Coen Education Strategy which has a School Readiness and Attendance Action Plan), and additional curriculum development such as local Aboriginal language material. The role of industry partners, such as the Argyle Diamond Mine, will be important in the work-readiness components of the project which aim to create local opportunities for successful students in achieving training and employment opportunities. I have observed in the remote area industrial locations, where Aboriginal

**The project's success is heavily dependent on the involvement of families and communities, for instance in improving commitments to school attendance ...and additional curriculum development such as local Aboriginal language material.**

employment is a core business target, a positive impact on the employment expectations in the Aboriginal population, both of working age and in the secondary school population.

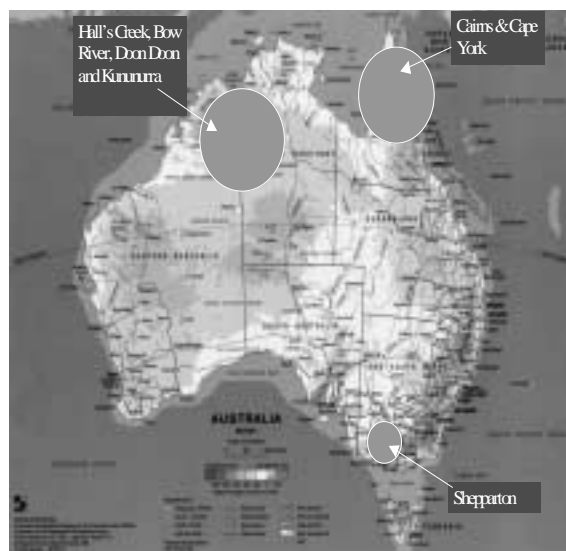
During a review conducted in 2003 of the Comalco commitment to the Western Cape York Communities Co-existence Agreement, signed in 2001 by Comalco, the Queensland State Government and western Cape York communities and traditional owner groups, a consistent demand from Aboriginal people was increased levels of local Aboriginal employment and training and an expectation that the success of the programs implemented to comply with the employment provisions of the Agreement would be substantially extended. This demand by Aboriginal employment for increased employment opportunities coincides with the business strategy of companies such as Comalco and the Argyle Diamond Mine whose production costs could, in the long term, be reduced by increased local employment.

It is envisaged that this project will have a wide ranging beneficial impact on the local communities and will improve the matriculation outcomes and work readiness of the participating students for further education and employment opportunities in their local communities.

One of the aims of this project is to investigate international and local best practice examples where the development of an education centre has developed a whole community, ultimately achieving economic benefit that can be enjoyed by all members of that community. Second, it is intended that the project would assist local school staff and other stakeholders to apply the best practice methods identified by this investigation. It is anticipated that the school communities and government departments, both State and Federal, with responsibility for education, will be influenced by the findings of the research, and

the continuing success of accelerated education programs elsewhere in the world, to implement these techniques in schools where the student population has a significant sector that is failing to perform in literacy and numeracy as demonstrated by universal assessments.

Another of the goals of the project is to ensure that weak students are not slip-streamed out of the school, as a result of a



### ***Three Project Sites of the Accelerated Learning Strategy***

failure to identify such weak students at a stage when it is still possible to bring them up to date with the curriculum and support them to achieve at or above the national standard in literacy and numeracy against established benchmarks. This is especially the case with Indigenous students.

#### **A. Principles of Accelerated Learning**

Accelerated learning is a set of principles that guide pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and teacher professional development (Ma Rhea and Langton, unpub. 2004). There are several examples of successful accelerated learning programs: the programs developed by the Centre for Innovation in Education at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the most famous of which is the international HIPPI program (the

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters program), and the literacy and reading programs developed by Olshtain and others (see for instance Fraida Dubin and Elite Olshtain. 1981); Tafnit (an accelerated learning program supported by the Sakta Rashi Foundation in southern Israel)<sup>1</sup>, and the Accelerated Schools Project in an elementary school in Sacramento, California, developed Henry M. Levin (Levin and Chasin 1994), the adoption of this accelerated learning program (ALP) by the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS), North Carolina, in 2000 (Baenen et al 2000), and in 2000 Levin's extension of the reach of the ALP in collaboration with the Hong Kong government (Levin 2001).

In his most recent work (Levin, 2002), he argues that improving schooling efficiency and equity in industrializing countries is a sensible short-run strategy. He has strong evidence for claiming that the Accelerated Schools project, using the methods of gifted education to foster in all children, gives presently disadvantaged communities the problem-solving and decision-making skills that will be critical in the future.

Rather than the traditional approach that relies on remedial solutions to address educational disadvantage, the Accelerated School concept uses the principles of gifted and talented education. International evidence shows that this has been a successful approach.

The successful models of accelerated learning to which I have referred led me to develop with my colleagues a proposal for the adoption of these innovative methods

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1. See URL: <http://www.sactarashi.org.il/>

into communities in remote and rural Australia where educational gaps, both for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students are endemic<sup>2</sup>

Several key lessons can be drawn from the Israeli experience with accelerated learning: that the national school curriculum must be taught to educationally disadvantaged groups both in the classroom and in additional classes provided as accelerated learning programs in pre-school, after school and pre-university training. The teaching of the national school curriculum is achievable in widely divergent cultural groups with some attention to cultural content and pedagogy.

The success of the accelerated learning programs depends on the belief of the program staff that everyone should be taught the standard curriculum, and that every student is inherently capable of achieving the expected educational outcomes, having regard to the impact of linguistic and cultural difference and other impediments to the students' ability to learn the standard curriculum. Elite Olshtain (pers. comm.. 2004), Director of The NCJW Research Institute for Innovation in Education at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem emphasizes the capacity-building approach in the accelerated education projects:

*The first step in the intervention project is to build mutual trust in the*

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2. Generous support for the commencement of the Project, including the visit by Israeli experts to Cairns, the East Kimberley, and northern Victoria has been received from several sources: the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, the Pratt Foundation, the Argyle Diamond Mine, and Rio Tinto.

*community. The process starts with a goal searching stage, which leads to mutual vision building. The educational vision of the leaders of the community is the basis for defining project goals.*

*In order to promote trust and understanding between the major partners in the education process of change, the academic facilitator and the educational community, it is necessary to create a culture of collaboration, sharing and open communication. It is this ongoing dialogue between the partners that ensures success along the road.*

In a survey conducted by Ma Rhea (unpub. 2004) the literature overwhelmingly pointed to the low educational expectations of poor, ethnic minorities in the United States of America and in other countries where accelerated education programs have aimed to address educational gaps. For instance, Bloom, H. S. *et al.* (2001, .13, as cited in Ma Rhea 2004) write in their introduction to their report, *Evaluating the Accelerated Schools Approach*:

*Past research suggests that school strategies that rely on remediation and ability grouping may contribute to low academic growth and achievement in the long term (Dougherty and Barth, 1997; Education Trust, 1996) and to differences in academic achievement along racial and socio-economic lines (Oakes and Lipton, 1990). The main disadvantage of this approach is that children in low-achievement classes or schools are typically offered lower-quality instruction and curricula than other children. The resulting differences in learning opportunities may play an important causal role in the performance gap between low- and high-achieving students (Nettles, 1997; Glover and Marshal, 1992). There is*

*strong evidence in the educational literature that participation in a demanding academic curriculum promotes academic success (Annie E. Casey, 1997; Solorzano and Solorzano, 1995; Natriello, McDill, and Pallas, 1990.). In addition, the literature suggests that the degree of opportunity to learn rigorous academic subjects \_ for instance, in advanced placement courses \_ varies across socioeconomic and racial groups. Poor and minority students' lesser access to beneficial learning opportunities begins early in their education, reducing the likelihood of their being exposed to an academic curriculum in high school that meets the entrance requirements of most four-year colleges (Gamaron, 1987).*

Accelerated learning is a paradigm which may look different in different contexts—in schools, the focus is on the learning environment; in adult learning, scaffolding provides an important framework to this approach. Recently, principles of scaffolding are also being used in schools, a new development that works very well with the principles of accelerated learning.

The most famous of the accelerated education programs developed at the Hebrew University is the HIPPY Program, a home-based, family focused program that helps parents provide educational enrichment for their preschool child. It has been taken up in Australia and worldwide. It has been adopted in Aboriginal communities, such as at Napranum in western Cape York, where the Parents and Learning program is showing the success of educational preparation in early childhood. The HIPPY program is designed to ensure that parents play a critical role in their children's education, and builds on the basic bond between parents and children. as explained in the following

*The HIPPY program is about helping parents teach their three-, four- and*

*five-year-olds at home. It's about spending fifteen minutes a day at the kitchen table with a storybook, a puzzle, or a learning game, and it's about children who enter kindergarten ready to succeed with parents ready to support them throughout their educational careers.*

*...Supported by easy-to-use activity packets, home visits, and group meetings, HIPPY parents learn how to prepare their children for success in school and beyond. Throughout their children's fourth and fifth years, parents receive a progressive series of 60 weekly packets of daily activities. Every other week they attend group meetings with other parents and HIPPY staff. Learning and play mingle throughout HIPPY's structured curriculum as parents encourage their children to recognize shapes and colors, tell stories, follow directions, solve logical problems, and acquire other school readiness skills.*

Paraprofessionals train the parents who join in the HIPPY program and support is also provided by other participants and a local program coordinator. Many HIPPY parents become further involved in the program by training as para-professionals.

*These dedicated staff members work part-time visiting homes, role playing lessons, providing encouragement and advice, and receiving training and support through regular meetings with local coordinators. As peers of other HIPPY parents, they have a chance to build trust and communicate with hard-to-reach families; as members of the same local community and parents of small children, they can often empathize with the challenges facing HIPPY families and make the program work within their own communities.*

*Paraprofessionals gain job experience while the program's flexibility allows them to deal with their ongoing concerns as parents. As they work (at what is for many a first job), they develop both a sense of responsibility and crucial skills such as organizing schedules, writing reports, communicating in person, solving problems, and exercising leadership. Along the way, they demonstrate - to themselves and to their communities - their power to change lives for the better.*

In southern Israel, another Israeli program with outstanding results is the Tafnit Program, involving around 12,000 pupils in approximately 140 schools. The guiding principle of Tafnit, (Hebrew for Turn-around) is "the belief that every child can succeed academically, and that pupils often use only a small portion of their cognitive potential."<sup>14</sup> It is successful because it operates by working with school staff, utilising existing resources as much as possible so that the program can easily be incorporated into a school's regular activities, and by giving teaching staff the tools and skills to succeed with low-achieving populations. The website of the Tafnit program explains the three stages of its implementation:

*The program mainly targets elementary school pupils, but is also operating in some junior-high and high schools. Within each grade, the program has three stages. Stage 1 identifies the weakest pupils (about 20 children out of the 60 pupils in the grade), and they participate in an accelerated study program aimed to close the gap between them and the rest of the grade. Stage 2 works with the entire grade, providing additional*

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1. See the description of Tafnit at URL: <http://www.sacta-rashi.org.il/images/document/>

*teaching hours so as to elevate their level to the national average for that grade. Stage 3 restores the class to its regular program of study, while integrating the principles and skills acquired over Stages 1 and 2 by both pupils and teachers. In high schools, emphasis is placed on preparing students for matriculation exams. ... Typically the program is implemented in three grade levels per school, and guides each grade for two years. Each year a new grade level is added, so that the intervention is staggered over a three-year period.<sup>1</sup>*

Our simple hypothesis is that in Australian classrooms with significant numbers of Indigenous students, there are three related factors in the teacher- student classroom interaction that require intervention in the class room through teacher training in accelerated education methods and altering the classroom environment:

*Teachers leave weak students (including Aboriginal students) behind—that*

*is, they are unable to prevent them from underperforming scholastically*

*\* because the students are deaf or partially deaf, or misbehave in class, or are frequently (extremely high failure to attend school rates), because their homes and communities cannot provide them with safe environments because of alcohol, domestic violence, drug abuse and lack of role models and resources, and;*

*\* because, as would be expected in these circumstances, teachers do not believe that these students can perform at the normal level, and;*

*\* because the teachers do not have the range of skills necessary to teach in rural and remote communities with multilingual classrooms, conflicting expectations between community and school, early maturity of children, and endemic illness, disease, and often malnutrition among the student population.*

### **B. Teacher education**

In considering the implications of Australian pedagogical approaches applied to Indigenous students, Ma Rhea (Ma Rhea and Langton unpub. 2004) noted that the emphasis on pedagogy to the exclusion of other factors which affect “the circumstances under which teaching takes place” (UNESCO, 2000):

*Teachers are faced with a constantly changing world and there is significant pressure on them to ensure that their students achieve well in the conventional classroom or in workplace training. There are many examples of good teaching but often these examples rely on the vision or abilities of a good teacher or principal. It has been very difficult for teacher education programs to equip students with the complex skills required of them in most rural and regional settings.*

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1. <http://www.sacta-rashi.org.il> Starting with less than 2,500 pupils at 54 schools in 2000/1, Tafnit has grown quickly to reach some 12,000 pupils at approximately 140 schools in 2003/4. In many locations, the program has been integrated in the Enriched School Day program so as to make use of its extensive organizational infrastructure, and thereby keep down costs. In the south, Tafnit is implemented through the Madarom program – the Foundation’s major project in science and technology education in the southern region. The main partner in the program is the Ministry of Education, with the Foundation covering roughly 26% of the budget. Sacta-Rashi is responsible for managing Tafnit nationwide.

Ma Rhea has emphasized the caution given in the NLTC review:

*It would be naive to assume that schooling, and more effective classroom approaches and pedagogies in literacy and numeracy, will alone make the difference for students from poor and culturally diverse communities. ... The challenges confronting literacy and numeracy educators in a rapidly changing world are enormous. Tinkering with pedagogy alone is not a solution to changing the outcomes for students who are disadvantaged. Luke urges a 'focus on how schools shape variable repertoires of practices with specific texts and discourses that have salience and potential combinatory power with other kinds of capital available in students' lived communities' (NLTC, 2003, p.62).*

The context of teaching and learning has emerged as a critical issue to consider in delivering the accelerated education program. For instance, Ma Rhea reported the words of a school principal, consulted during the visit by the Israeli educators to Australia:

*.. I'm pretty proud at the beginning of this year to have stood up in front of the whole staff and said that if they're not prepared to embrace the local population and accept a significant Aboriginal enrolment then maybe there's other places they should be working. I copped some smiles and some flack for that but I really strongly believe in that because I think there's some history up here that needs to be changed (Alan McLaren, Principal, Kununurra District High School, Kununurra HREOC Public Hearing - 17 May 1999).*

In their National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training, (DEST, 2002) found that:

*One school system attributed unprecedented improvements in literacy and numeracy to a concerted effort in building teachers' awareness, affirmation and appreciation of Indigenous people's presence in Australia's culture, while also improving their understanding of cross-cultural pedagogy. Several other IESIP funded providers took this same route, reporting improvements in teachers' and Indigenous students' confidence, along with more active participation in school activities by Indigenous students. (DEST, 2002, p.54)*

Ma Rhea (Ma Rhea and Langton, unpub. 2004) wryly observed that "While teachers are facing changing expectations about their capacity to teacher the diversity of students and are being encouraged to undertake professional development, it would seem logical that people who are training to be teachers would benefit in learning this set of skills before they begin their teaching career." She also noted that because the Curriculum Standards Framework, particularly at secondary level, encourages teachers to develop in a learning area of specialisation geared to the needs of metropolitan schools, there are few secondary teachers who can confidently teach across the curriculum to senior examination standard, meaning that in rural and remote schools, teachers rarely even have the content knowledge to teach outside their area of expertise.

*Even without taking into consideration the diversity of needs facing a teacher pedagogically, they are ill-prepared for teaching the curriculum. There are many examples in rural and remote schools where the students cannot take maths and science beyond lower primary. This poses severe limitations on their future success at school and also impacts negatively on their ability to gain employment*

beyond school. While there has been little research done in this area, anecdotally, it has been suggested that teachers who undertake the professional development in accelerated learning gain confidence in both their pedagogy and also in their capacity to deliver a broader curriculum to their students.

The professional development for teachers with the accelerated learning program enables current teachers to develop the skills in their classrooms and training programs. The long term vision must be to bring these principles and methods into university and TAFE teacher education programs.

Ma Rhea draws attention to the MCEETYA taskforce Report which argues:

*\* Educators need to have a better pedagogical understanding of children's diversity of experience and diverse cultural capital to ensure that early childhood services and schooling better reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of Australian society. In addition, they need a better understanding of how to build on and encourage Indigenous children to move fluently amongst and between cultures in a way which allows them to reposition their cultures, languages, histories, beliefs and lifestyles and affirm identity; and*

*\* Educators need to have a better pedagogical understanding of how the literacy and numeracy development of children takes place, especially for Indigenous multi-lingual students and speakers of English as a second or foreign language, that at the same time avoids any consideration of 'Indigenous learning styles'. The national literacy and numeracy benchmarks pose a challenge for some Indigenous children from an*

*ESL/EFL background including some from an oral, rather than a print-tradition. Some educators need further support to ensure that Indigenous children meet the standards. Improvements in educational outcomes for Indigenous students can be accelerated by educators having high expectations of student success and using code-switching strategies; (MCEETYA, 2001, p.4)*

#### **IV. Is a Whole of Government Approach Needed?**

WHATEVER THE OUTCOMES of the Yachad Accelerated Education and Work Readiness Program, it is clearly the case that a whole of government approach is required to more effectively address the education gaps that put Indigenous youth at risk of life-long disadvantage.

It may be necessary to consider a radical strategy such as declaring an emergency and tackling the Indigenous youth crisis as a special case under the COAG scheme which applies a "whole of government" approach to community development, and which allocates specific Federal and State departments to lead agency status for programs in Aboriginal communities in designated parts of Australia.

Such a crisis zone strategy that supplements the COAG regional strategy might involve a national crisis team that focusses on communities where youth are 'at risk' such as in Redfern or Aurukun to establish long term solutions and to take immediate action. In 1998, Taylor and Hunter wrote: "In order to operationalise this strategy it may be necessary to revisit the role of targeted educational assistance. . . Whatever policy is adopted it is clear that attention needs to be focused on specific Indigenous educational needs;" the grounds for their recommendation continue, and indeed, worsen.

Such an emphasis on Indigenous Youth is justified by the magnitude of the problem, and by the consequences for future generations of Australians, both Indigenous and non indigenous, as the situation worsens with the exponential growth of the Indigenous population and the levels of disadvantage across most socio-economic indicators.

How difficult could it be for the relevant government agencies, including schools, the police, and community organizations to provide enriching education, occupations and skill-enhancing activities for these young people? This question is not rhetorical. The obstacles are the intangible but powerful matters of defeatist, negative attitudes, fear and lack of political will. At least part of the problem lies in education delivery and assumptions about the capacity of young Indigenous people to succeed. If the twin problems of under-education and unemployment were tackled resolutely and rationally, with sensible strategic planning, the lives of these young people could be transformed, if not radically, then at least to the extent that they might experience some optimism and a sense of worth in emotionally fulfilling and financially rewarding activities.

In Australia, there is a view that Aboriginal people are not capable of the achievements that are held to be normal for other Australians, and that view is hardening. There is a view in many universities departments, with which I am familiar, that if Aboriginal people are allowed to enroll, the standards of the universities will be reduced. Some universities have found ways to overcome these old prejudices by relaxing the standards of enrolment, but the views of many teaching staff remain intransigent.

This view is also evident in our schools. Aboriginal children are allowed to slip through the net and fail to meet the educational standards that are necessary for full

involvement in Australian social and economic life.

The collaborative work plan which brings together the Israeli educators, the project proponents from Monash University Faculty of Education, and the University of Melbourne, with the teachers and school communities of the pilot areas is designed to ensure that the social capital of the students, families and school communities are harnessed in a focussed, outcome-driven approach. *The key principle of our approach is a belief that every child can do it, and that every child is special. The challenge is to focus on the capacity of each teacher and each child to achieve education targets as if it were their basic right rather than a privilege or goals beyond their means.*

***\* Marcia Langton holds the Chair of Australian Indigenous Studies at The University of Melbourne.***

*\*\* Endnote: It should be noted that there are some generally acknowledged problems for comparing Census data on indigenous issues. Changes in population counts could lead to significant inconsistencies. The key components of change are the relatively high Indigenous birth and death rates, Indigenous migration patterns, transmission rates (mixed couple relationships), undercounts, non-response rates, editing definitions, and most significantly an*

*increased acceptance of Indigenous status. Nevertheless, comparisons across the same year and comparisons of outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous across Census years, are generally consistent when using percentages.*

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