

**Evaluative Research Into the Office of the Board
of Studies', Aboriginal Careers Aspiration
Program for Aboriginal Students in
NSW High Schools**

October 2000

**Professor John Lester
Director
Umuliko Indigenous Higher Education Research
Centre
University of Newcastle**

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

This report was commissioned by the Office of the Board of Studies. The views Expressed by the authors do not necessarily reflect the views of the Office of the Board of Studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	7
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	8
RESEARCH TASK.....	9
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	10
Method	10
Ethical Considerations	10
Research instruments.....	10
Literature Review	10
Questionnaire.....	11
Focus Groups	12
Data Collection and Analysis.....	13
OUTCOMES OF THE RESEARCH.....	14
Identification and critical analysis of existing research, reports and projects.....	14
Significant Literature Reviews Exist	14
What the literature is saying on Indigenous education and employment	15
Education and Employment Statistics Point to an Uphill Battle.....	15
Multiple Disadvantage.....	15
Education.....	15
Transition from school to work.....	16
Key Considerations in Confronting the Delivery of Positive Vocational Education Programs to Indigenous Students.....	17
Racism	17
Different Career Agendas?.....	18
Arrest - Employment - Education, Vicious Circle.....	19
Employment Opportunity and the Community's Initiative - Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP).....	20
On Cultural Considerations in Vocational Education.....	21
Language and literacy	22
Community ownership	22
A Mandate for Action on Careers Aspiration for Indigenous Australians - Policy and Practice	23
Policy.....	23
Practice.....	24
The New South Wales Direction.....	25
Base line data on community and students' career aspirations and expectations.....	27
Overview	27
Community Career Aspirations and Expectations.....	27
Expectations.....	27
Aboriginal Community role.....	28
Obstacles.....	29
Career opportunity.....	30
Role of education.....	31
Aspirations.....	32
Student Career Aspirations and Expectations.....	33

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

Aspirations and Expectations.....	33
Obstacles.....	33
Community role.....	34
Role of education.....	34
Curriculum relevance.....	35
Student Pre-Questionnaire Results.....	35
Who do students look to for advice on career information?.....	35
Level of Knowledge about Careers and Related Issues.....	35
Student Confidence.....	36
Significant Findings in Section 1 of Pre-Program Questionnaire.....	36
Students' sense of their career options and aspirations as a result of participating in the program.....	36
Career options.....	36
Career aspirations.....	38
Post Program Questionnaire Outcomes.....	38
Overview.....	38
Advice to students.....	39
Knowledge about Careers and Related Issues.....	39
Student Confidence.....	40
KEY FINDINGS.....	41
What are the critical issues which impact on Aboriginal students' career aspirations?.....	41
What are the critical interactions between Aboriginal communities and the career aspirations of students? Do community expectations impact on those of their students.....	42
Does the Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program have an effect on the career aspirations of students?.....	43
CONCLUSION - WHAT CONCLUSIONS CAN BE DRAWN FROM THIS RESEARCH?.....	44
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	47
ATTACHMENTS.....	53

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Completion of this project was only possible through the assistance and help of all involved.

I am indebted to the schools, executive teaching staff, teachers, Aboriginal Education Assistants, other Aboriginal school staff and project co-ordinators for their generous support and time given to the project. Without this school based support the data could not have been gathered and I thank all involved.

To the community people who continually give freely of their time to ensure a better education system exists, I thank for taking the time to speak with me. I am very appreciative of the effort made and the enormous difficulties and obstacles, which sometimes make these invaluable contributions at times, near impossible. I would also like to apologise to the community for not having sufficient time nor resources within the project to extend the level of consultation undertaken. This is always a dilemma confronting the researcher and one, which needs more careful consideration on such short-term project time frames undertaken in the future.

I thank the Office of the Board of Studies for providing me with an opportunity to conduct the research and their understanding of the complexities and cultural considerations surrounding the timeframes and gathering of data.

I would like to formally acknowledge the excellent support, assistance and mentoring which was given to me from Professor Sid Bourke from the University of Newcastle especially with regard to the collection and analysis of the quantitative data gathering. This support and assistance was extremely appreciated given the pressure experienced with some late data returns and their inclusion into analysis.

One does not work alone on projects of this nature and I would like to acknowledge the advice and assistance of Mr. Paul Davies and Mr. Robert Salt in the collation and analysis of the quantitative data emanating from the questionnaire.

Executive Summary

The *Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program* was established by the NSW Office of the Board of Studies with a funding grant provided by the national Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program (IESIP) and the Strategic Results Program, to achieve two primary outcomes. Firstly, to provide curriculum and resources that could be used to enhance Indigenous knowledge, skills and access to career pathways information. Secondly, the Program had the bold endeavour of producing these same materials to stimulate across key learning areas, perspectives which would serve the dual purpose of raising the self-esteem and importance of the curriculum to Indigenous students and the larger task of raising the Indigenous profile of all students across as many subject areas as possible. The achievement of the first of these endeavours in focus group interviews was achieved to a degree and well received by Indigenous students. With the latter objective, it was much harder to discern the outcomes and the research was inconclusive with regard to a definitive outcome. However, evidence gained from focus groups did indicate a positive potential for the perspectives approach but this outcome appeared to be very reliant on the direct motivation, enthusiasm and commitment of the teachers involved.

The research gathered quantitative data through a pre and post program questionnaire of some 388 Indigenous and Non-Indigenous students across nine schools and qualitative data through focus group input of 173 Indigenous and Non-Indigenous students and community informants across four school case studies.

Unfortunately the research highlighted the enormity of the task ahead in careers education for Indigenous students. The principal obstacle for significant improvement rested with the fundamental issues of social justice. Any career education program has to contend with frightening inequities and racial intolerance before significant redress can be achieved. However, the research while inconclusive in the analysis of quantitative data gathered in the area of perspectives attempted in the program, did indicate in the qualitative analysis of focus groups good support from both Indigenous students and community members.

The findings of the research indicate that overall the program achieved a worthwhile outcome for, in particular, Indigenous students involved in the special curriculum units and moderate achievements in the area of broader curriculum initiatives across the subject perspectives. It is very evident that improved results could be further achieved if closer partnerships could be facilitated for the program objectives with the Indigenous community at a local school level.

RESEARCH TASK

The Office of the Board of Studies (OBOS) tendered for *Research into Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program* with the following express purpose:

To identify and synthesize existing research into the career aspirations of Aboriginal students in NSW Schools. The research into the career aspirations of Years 7-10 Aboriginal students in 10 suburban and rural schools will measure, both pre and post, the piloting of an educational program into the aspirations of these students. The research taking into account both the diversity and location of participating schools and their community environments.

The research was in response to a pilot commenced in Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program by the BOS. *The program had been predicated in the premise that Aboriginal students who have access to Key Learning Areas based teaching programs, which include a defined vocationally orientated experience, will be better placed to address issues around their educational and employment future.*

The three key questions, which the research was required to address were:

1. What are the critical issues which impact on Aboriginal student career aspirations?
2. What are the critical interactions between Aboriginal communities, and the career aspirations of students? Do community expectations impact on those of their students? What conclusions can be drawn from this research?
3. Does the Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program have an effect on the career aspirations of students?

The 10 schools chosen were nominated by the BOS and reflected locations with Aboriginal students across both suburban and rural schools (including both rural and remote examples). Of these 10 schools four were targeted again by the BOS, for specific qualitative data collection activities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Method

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods have been adopted to conduct this research. The methodological approach for each of the key components of the review as highlighted in the Tender for the research, is as follows:

Identification and analysis of existing research, reports and programs:- This has been achieved through a literature search and review of the past 10 years in the area of career aspiration and supplemented with communications with the Steering Committee members and interstate education providers.

Development of base line data for both the communities and students in the area of student career aspirations and expectations:- Data has been gathered using a student questionnaire both prior to or as close as possible to the implementation of the *Aboriginal Career Aspirations Program* in the 10 schools chosen by the Steering Committee for the trial. In addition qualitative measures of focus group techniques have been utilised to ascertain student and Indigenous community responses in four nominated school locations as identified by the Steering Committee.

Determine whether students have a clearer sense of their career options and aspirations as a result of participating in the program:- A follow up questionnaire was provided to assess this outcome again in the 10 high schools involved in the program trial. An additional follow up focus group was held with both students and community who participated in the preliminary workshops to ascertain the effects and outcomes of the program.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearances were gained from within the University and through the Strategic Research Directorate of the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) to conduct the research. Included within the DET approval was the researchers formal signed written agreement to abide by Child Protection Undertaking stipulated as a condition of approval to conduct the research. All participants in the research were given an Information sheet on the research and an Informed Consent Form to sign, prior to participation in the research.

Research instruments

Literature Review

A literature review was undertaken as a major component of the research. This process was extensively contributed to by the recent 198 page extensive work carried out by Mike Long et al (1999), *The School to Work Transition of Indigenous Australians - A Review of the Literature and Statistical Analysis*. The focus of the review would concentrate on providing a more general and tailored view of Aboriginal careers aspirations and in particular to pick up on very recent policy direction in the area.

A data search was carried out and supplemented with formal contact with each of the Indigenous education units within each state to seek latest trends, publications and programs.

Literature was critically reviewed and gathered in a thematic approach specifically related to the issues confronting and mandating action for a careers aspirations

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

program to be implemented for Indigenous students and focusing on the aims established in the original *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program's* brief.

Questionnaire

A pre and post program questionnaire was designed based on a model established by Associate Professor Ken Rigby (Bourke, 1999:Appendix 5) and utilising a Likert (1932) Scale for t-test comparison across both pre and post questionnaires.

A total of 388 respondents answered the questionnaires and this included 100 Indigenous student responses. Unfortunately the return rate on the post-questionnaire only included a match with pre-questionnaires of 155 respondents (including 35 Indigenous students). Given this low correlation between pre and post questionnaire returns comparative conclusions need to be treated with care and should not be used to generalise beyond the area of study.

Questionnaires were analysed utilising the SPSS program.

The following table provides a breakdown of sexes; race and school return rates for the questionnaire.

Table 1 Male/Female Student Participants Completed Questionnaires

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Total
Valid Boy	188	48.2	50.8	50.8
Girl	182	46.7	49.2	100.0
Total	370	94.9	100.0	
Missing/system	20	5.1		
Total	390	100.0		

The above table indicates that there was relatively even spread of male and female participants who completed the questionnaires.

Table 2 Indigenous/Non-Indigenous Student Participants Completed Questionnaires

Race	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Total
Valid Aboriginal	92	23.6	23.7	23.7
TSI	8	2.1	2.1	25.8
Other	288	73.8	74.2	100.0
Total	388	99.5	100.0	
Missing/System	2	.5		
Total	390	100.0		

Table 2 above indicates that a total of 100 Indigenous or 25.8% of all students completed questionnaires. This is well above the proportional representation in the general population of approximately 2%.

Table 3. Returns from Schools

Schools	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Total
Valid	1	8	2.1	2.1
	2	14	3.6	5.8
	3	82	21.0	26.9
	4	30	7.7	34.6
	5	11	2.8	37.4
	6	99	25.4	62.9
	7	46	11.8	74.8
	8	89	1.0	97.7
	9	9	2.3	100.0
Total	388	99.5	100.0	
Missing/System	2	.5		
Total	390	100.0		

Table 3 indicates the spread of contributions of questionnaires between schools.

Focus Groups

Focus groups were held with Indigenous students doing the specialised *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program*, with students doing the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program*' perspectives to curricula and community members. Focus groups were held with each of these groups in the four case study schools nominated by the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program*' Steering Committee pre and post implementation of the program. The four case studies included two rural with one of these deemed isolated and two from large urban environments. Unfortunately two of the post focus group meetings for community members did not proceed due to lack of participants and this problem persisted in a further location where a single community participant was interviewed. The following table points out the numbers informants attending these focus groups.

Table 4 Focus Group Participation

	Urban City			Rural Isolated			Urban Regional			Rural		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Community Pre	5	6	11*	6	2	8*	4	2	6	5	2	7
Community Post	0	0	0	4	4	6*	0	1	1	0	0	0
Indigenous ACAP Pre	–	–	–	3	3	6	6	6	12	8	5	13
Indigenous ACAP Post	–	–	–	4	5	9	8	10	18	3	4	7
Students ACAP Perspectives Pre	3	7	10	3	3	6	6	7	13	5	4	9
Students ACAP Perspectives Post	1	5	6	4	3	7	5	3	8	6	4	10
Total Male/Female	9	18	27	24	20	42	29	29	58	27	19	46

Note:

* Donates that some Non-Indigenous community members contributed to focus groups on wishes of schools.

- Donates that this case study did not have a specific Indigenous ACAP program.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data has been analysed between the pre and post implementation of the program and statistical analysis using SPSS program of questionnaires undertaken. Focus group discussions were tape-recorded and the records of the sessions transcribed and analysed using a thematic analysis approach. In this method, all transcriptions were coded to identify key themes and all records, which could identify informants; individuals or schools have been erased.

In keeping with Indigenous research protocol, Indigenous involvement at all stages of the research process has been maintained through the involvement of the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc (AECG) which is a key stakeholder and partner to this project. Regional AECGs were to be contacted about the research but due to time constraints this process was not possible. Schools were however, encouraged to inform their local AECGs, and seek their support on the project. In many schools the Aboriginal Education Assistant provided excellent and timely assistance to the project.

Outcomes of the Research

Identification and critical analysis of existing research, reports and projects.

Significant Literature Reviews Exist

A review of literature for this project has been dwarfed by the publication of Mike Long et al (1999), *The School to Work Transition of Indigenous Australians - A Review of the Literature and Statistical Analysis*. This publication commissioned by the Task Force on School to Work Transition for Indigenous Australians in the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs is a comprehensive base of the literature with annotated bibliography. It draws on the Australian Educational Index and three web-based searches covering publications over a ten-year period from 1988. In addition, the volume draws on the literature on major statistical analysis to assess key issues of Indigenous participation in education and employment using census data of 1991 and 1996, specialised school, vocational education and higher education data, and the invaluable 1994 *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey (NATSIS)*. The data extends across four primary areas:

- School retention
- Educational participation
- Educational attainments; and
- Labour market participation.

Long et al (1999:xiii) established six key findings from the review:

- Indigenous youth experience disadvantage at each of the identified transition points
- Retention at secondary school is lower for Indigenous youth than non-Indigenous youth *at* (sic) every age level
- Many Indigenous youth are participating in vocational education courses requiring low skill levels
- There is evidence in the literature regarding the high participation of youth in part-time, low-paid, insecure employment
- Rurality contributes to the disadvantage experienced by Indigenous youth in terms of poorer educational outcomes, although employment outcomes are supported by Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) in places where there would otherwise be a lack of employment opportunities
- CDEP offers a valuable source of employment for Indigenous people and contributes significantly to employment outcomes documented in statistical reports.

The authors went a step further and reported that in the same geographical location, the data indicated a disturbing disparity between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous youth employment rates when issues of educational attainment were equal. The data pointed to employment opportunities for Indigenous youth to be poorer.

A further publication in the field of vocational education literature which is worth noting is the Golding et al (1997) publication, *Stocktake of Equity Reports and Literature in Vocational Education and Training*, produced by the Australian National Training Authority. This review looks at literature available in the broad area of equity and has two sections covering specifically Indigenous Vocational Education and Training (VET) issues. This document attempts to address issues of barriers to Indigenous participation and outcomes in vocational education and provides advice

with regard to strategies to overcome these barriers. A key issue raised in this review is the need to address cultural difference associated with effective Indigenous participation in the sector.

What the literature is saying on Indigenous education and employment

Education and Employment Statistics Point to an Uphill Battle

A plethora of publications on Indigenous education and employment (Bourke et al, 1999, Long et al 1999; Katu Kalpa, 2000.) point to the enormous disparity between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians on almost every indicator in these fields, as Long et al (1999:xiii) indicates:

At nearly every stage, indigenous (sic) youth experience substantial disadvantage in terms of their participation in education, their attainment of educational qualifications, and their participation in the labour market. In most instances, this disadvantage is substantial.

Any single program like the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program* cannot expect to address the enormity of the problems facing Indigenous youth in education and employment. It can only be seen as a small but significant attack on the overall program to redress these imbalances. There will also need to be significant efforts made by industry, outside of government efforts, to show leadership on issues like discrimination. Chris Puplick (1997:42) has clear demands on our industry leaders to demonstrate a commitment to this cause:

The origins of discrimination are many and varied. The persistence of discrimination, however, has one fundamental root in any large organisation, be it corporate, educational or any other: a lack of leadership at the very top dedicated to eliminating discrimination. The attack on discrimination must start in the boardroom rather than on the shop floor, and wherever there are persistent and continuing problems in any organisation, institute or workplace. There is still considerable truth to the maxim that a fish rots from the head first.

Multiple Disadvantage

On almost all factors in employment opportunity Indigenous Australians face a disadvantage (Hunter and Schwab, 1998:1). Compounding this is the fact that it is highly likely that Indigenous peoples find themselves at a multiple disadvantage when in addition to race, disability, gender, location and economic circumstances are included. (Golding, 1996; Long; 1996; Golding and Volkoff, 1998)

Education

Hunter (1996:12) maintains that "education is the largest single factor associated with the current poor outcomes for Indigenous employment." When making comment on the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey* (1994), Long et al (1999:5) support this conclusion:

"The survey looked at predictors of Indigenous employment (such as age, family size, education, location, English proficiency and social factors). For young people, as well as for other age groups, level of education was the biggest predictor of having a job."

Principle findings of *Meeting the Educational Needs of Aboriginal Adolescents - Commissioned Report No. 35* by Groome and Hamilton (1995:ix) indicate four important parameters surrounding adolescents and their education which are very pertinent to the findings of the *Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program* research:

- The developmental tasks of contemporary Aboriginal young peoples are identical to those of their non-Aboriginal peers. However, Aboriginal young

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

peoples have a strong and growing sense of identity which, if recognised and supported by the school, can support high academic achievement.

- Schools in general are not successful in recognising and meeting the needs of their Aboriginal students.
- Schools, which are successful, respect and value all of their students as individuals. They communicate with Aboriginal families and create an environment, which welcomes and fosters the identity of the young people. They have a curriculum, which meets students' needs while making academic demands. The best outcomes can be seen in school communities, which have high levels of tolerance and strongly motivated Aboriginal students who frequently persevere to Years 11 and 12.
- Aboriginal students attributed their own success to the strength of the support they received during their schooling from their own families, their mates at school and supportive but demanding teachers.

In the domain of vocational education provision in relation to TAFE, Teasdale and Teasdale (1996:v-vii) point out that there is increasing support for Indigenous ownership of training in general. The authors also pointed out that while TAFE in particular was very successful at attracting Indigenous student enrolments, the students unfortunately were significantly found in preparatory courses which did not lead to training qualifications required by the employment market. The same report recommended increased appointment of Indigenous staff in TAFE; recognition of prior learning processes; and importantly the call for "A collaborative approach based on shared facilities and integrated programs should ensure a seamless transition for young people from school to vocational education to work."

Transition from school to work

Ainley et al (1997) provides an excellent commentary into the dynamics and motivation behind movements towards transition programs from school to work. Ainley et al's work highlights that due to increasing retention rates in school the system over immediate past years has primarily delivered students to further education and training rather than work and of this destination university preparation has dominated at the expense of vocational preparation. The immediate employment past, especially for youth, has seen an increasing part-time or marginal employment which is argued provides challenges for transition policies of the future. Ainley et al (1999:36) suggest that not only considerable change is required in school transition programs but in the authors' words:

Many aspects of the institutional provisions in Australia that impact on the transition from initial education to working life are changing as better arrangements for education and training are sought. In some ways it is the system itself that is in transition.

It is clear that schools need to develop stronger links with labour markets to ensure future employees i.e. school students, are market ready and provide comprehensive preparation for not only continuing and lifelong education but for a life of work. For Indigenous Australians, this transition is not only into work but at all stages of the education system. As the school system struggles to cope with retention and positive outcomes to develop equity in the most fundamental of lifelong skills, literacy, numeracy and retention to base qualification like the School and Higher School Certificates, simultaneously, the importance of creating opportunities for transition to work in an attempt to reduce future disadvantage, becomes a major imperative.

Key Considerations in Confronting the Delivery of Positive Vocational Education Programs to Indigenous Students

Racism

Racism is pervasive across all areas of community activity and the education domain is not exempt from its destructive forces. Reports of the effect of racism on Indigenous school attendance have been highlighted by Herbert et al (1998) who cite several publications (Groome and Hamilton, 1995; Groome, 1995; Anderson et al, 1995; and Herbert, 1995) in support of this claim. More recent publications including *What Works? Explorations in improving outcomes for Indigenous students*. (McRae et al, 2000:145-147) and *Katu Kalpa - Report on the inquiry into the effectiveness of education and training programs for Indigenous Australians* (Collins, 2000:50-51) continue to support the fact that racism is still a major stumbling block to any program development in Indigenous education and training. A summary of racism from a *Report on Aboriginal Students and the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE)* (Rigney et al, 1998:11) clearly indicates the difficulties experienced by Indigenous students with racism and the inherent difficulties facing program implementation of the nature of the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program*.

Racism as an inhibiting factor to successful educational outcomes was a consistent theme throughout all focus groups. Students particularly commented on racial harassment from peers and teachers. Some students stated that their SACE subject selection was based on non-racist teachers. In addition, students' perceptions of teachers as racist were compounded by a perceived lack of support from the school in addressing racism. This caused considerable additional stress to students undertaking the SACE.

Structural racism exists in some schools in the form of institutional and racialised practices and is exemplified in teachers' low expectations of students of Aboriginal descent. It is also reflected in schools' distribution of human resources, as well as ideologically at the pedagogical level in the construction of knowledge which informs curriculum content....Although racial harassment policies, grievance procedures, and inclusive practices are in place in schools, students believe them to be largely ineffective.

As schools take on increasing responsibility to prepare students for employment in programs like, school-to-work, work education and VET in schools, especially if it involves work placement/experience as a significant component, students will have double exposure to racism from not only within school systems but outside in the workforce. Chris Puplick (1997:41) points to the fact that even recent trends in anti-discrimination laws have had little effect on Indigenous employment outcomes, and employment options for Indigenous peoples still dominantly resting within Indigenous employment areas and in particular with the Community Employment Development Program. While on the one hand the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program* has the stated outcomes related to increased self-esteem and confidence, poorly managed and unthoughtful work placements may in fact have the opposite effect, if students are placed in a racist environment. This delicate balance in self-esteem is well evidenced in the following quote from Gool and Patton (1999:29) in their work on the *Career aspirations of young Aboriginal women*, when they state:

The participants' identity was also affected by racism. They knew that society in general had negative images about them. They announce this before they even mentioned any of the attributes of their culture. Through an awareness of racism most participants anticipated that contact with employers and access to the market could be a problem for some of them, particularly those who have a darker complexion. They also envisaged that a black employer would give them a better deal. Those who had direct experience of racism had

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

also experienced a crisis of confidence, although many expressed a defiance and determination to continue with their ambitions anyway. A combination of group solidarity and identity would suggest that work satisfaction would most likely occur if they were able to work with other Aborigines as well as other members of society.

Different Career Agendas?

There is emerging discussion now centering around the differences associated with expectations from education and also a level of scepticism which surrounds the social moulding of Indigenous people. These issues need to be at least noted and considered in regard to the basic premises upon which programs like *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program* are founded.

One of the primary objectives of the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program* centres on the issue of increased participation and retention rates of Indigenous students. Partington (1998) has argued that schools have perpetuated the assimilation of Indigenous students and alienated them from their own cultures. He and other authors (Carrington, 1990; McInerney, 1991; Munns and McFadden, 1997) have argued that the current high levels of absenteeism by Indigenous students is not just a level of disenchantment of school but in reality a revolt against the assimilationist processes of institutionalised schooling. These concerns and potential hidden or not so hidden agenda of the push for economic rationalism to drive the educational agenda might also be at odds with Indigenous motivation for appropriate education.

Two publications from the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research by Arthur (1999) and Schwab (1997), identify perhaps some conflicting desires on education by Indigenous Australians which need to be encapsulated in the discussion of any career aspiration program.

Schwab (1997:7-8) argues that the education agenda has taken on the concept of human capital theory, which maintains that investment in education should result in quite definable positive outcomes for either the individual, government or organisation making such an investment. Schwab (1997) argues further that there is a mismatch between many Indigenous Australians and that of most other Australians with regard to such human capital theory. This is exemplified by Schwab's (1997:11) quotes from the statistics available from the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey* (NATSIS) conducted in 1994 on post-compulsory training:

The NATSIS findings show that only 24.6 per cent of Indigenous people who attended a training course did so to get a job. In contrast, more (30.7 per cent) attended such courses for personal development; another 7.5 per cent attended as a hobby.

Arthur (1999) in his work on *Careers, aspirations and the meaning of work in remote Australia: Torres Strait* also points out a potential significant difference in career orientation. While many individuals gain significant satisfaction, identity, life structure and social interaction from work (Watson, 1995:118,144), this may not be the case for all Indigenous Australians who may demonstrate characteristics which Watson (1995:145) describes as getting their social interaction and purpose in life from activities outside of work. The role of work in individual's lives can be heavily reliant on the social norms of the community and Arthur (1999:2) articulates this difference in the following:

...Indigenous people often prefer to socialise with one another, and many actually experience a form of isolation if they are the only indigenous (sic) workers amongst a number of non-indigenous (sic) people. Similarly, if many of their peers are unemployed, they need not necessarily feel socially isolated when they are unemployed and at home. Therefore it cannot be assumed that

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

employment represents a social attraction, and that unemployment represents a social cost for indigenous (sic) people.

In confronting the delivery of career aspiration programs for Indigenous students, care must be taken and consideration given, to the perception of the relevance of work for to this group. The relevance of work may be quite different for a significant number of the Indigenous community who seek cultural social interaction primarily outside of work. The "Protestant work ethic" or the dominant culture's perceptions of the role of work, should not form the only option for Indigenous students in career education.

Arrest - Employment - Education, Vicious Circle

The Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research has produced at least three important discussion papers which Dr. Boyd Hunter has been primary contributor and which highlight arrest rates as a major factor in low employment and education prospects for Indigenous Australians and for Indigenous youth more specifically.

The causality is highlighted by Hunter (1996) as a process of a vicious circle where any one determinant i.e. employment, education or arrest impacts on the other and causes a negative spiralling effect. Hunter (1996:7) states this issue clearly in the following:

"To the extent that the above results indicate that employment affects Indigenous arrest rates there are large potential improvements that may be made by improving Indigenous employment outcomes. Indeed, if the direction of causality is reversed so that employment drives arrest, then this further heightens the importance of addressing Indigenous education in order to improve employment and therefore arrest rates."

As cited in Hunter and Schwab (1998:13), the research findings of Chapman (1991:138) and Daly and Liu (1995), indicate in the first instance by Chapman, that individual income levels did not change significantly as a result of secondary education. However, Daly and Liu's (1995) work did show that higher education increased Indigenous income capacity. These findings highlight the importance of education to employment and in particular the potential income, which can be derived. The cost to the individual and the Indigenous community more broadly of incarceration has a potential domino effect on capacity to get an education and therefore ultimate capacity to compete in the labour market. This effect is interestingly termed in Hunter and Schwab (1998:13) as human capital:

"The main effect of arrest on education is through its effect on indigenous (sic) attendance at secondary school. That is, arrest and subsequent detention have most of its impact on human capital formation for the school-aged population. Being detained in either youth detention centres or jails (sic) may directly interfere with the process of human capital formations by removing individuals from familiar surroundings."

Hunter and Borland (1997:v) in their publication looking at the effects of arrest on employment of Indigenous peoples indicate that alarmingly arrests amongst Indigenous Australians could reduce the probability of being employed by up to 20% for males and up to 13% for females.

Incarceration of Indigenous juveniles has a costly effect not only on the individuals but also on the long-term economic and social base of the Indigenous community. It represents a vicious circle of cause and effect which has a devastating consequence on education and employment. This is a reality which is well known to the Indigenous youth targeted in this research and exemplified by a single but powerful comment by on young Indigenous female. In answer to a question about the

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

most important things required about getting a job, said in a soft cowering voice, speaking through a friend because of embarrassment:

“Girl: She wants me to tell it for her.
Researcher: Yes, well you tell it for her, what did she say?
Girl: Not having a criminal record.”

A valuable reference with regard to the issues surrounding education and training in correctional facilities including a list of 32 corresponding recommendations is the *Senate Employment and Training References Committee - Report of the Inquiry into Education and Training in Correctional Facilities* (1996). A scan of these recommendations reveals a major thrust is required in education and training in these facilities. The Report also clearly highlights the staggering over representation of both Indigenous adults and juveniles within correctional facilities.

Employment Opportunity and the Community's Initiative - Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP)

The CDEP is a widely accepted employment program initiated by and for Indigenous people in areas of low employment prospect, principally in rural and remote locations. The scheme started in 1977 in Bamyili in the Northern Territory and now caters for in excess of 30,000 Indigenous people throughout the nation. Indigenous people entering the scheme forgo personal entitlement to several Federally funded unemployment and training allowances to work on the Indigenous community run scheme. Spicer (1997) provides a good insight into the program and the details outlined above in his *Independent Review of the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) Scheme*. Spicer (1997:23) further defines the objectives of the original scheme as; "to provide (a) work to those wishing to work; (b) an alternative to 'sit down'¹ money, and (c) power for communities to make their own decisions about work activities."

The role of the CDEP particularly in rural locations in New South Wales cannot be underestimated in any discussion on career aspirations. In many instances the Indigenous communities are almost entirely reliant on the scheme for employment and in the case of secondary students for work experience. The research into the *Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program* provided substantive evidence that CDEP was seen as a primary employment aspiration of Indigenous students and particularly in rural locations forming part of the research case studies.

While Spicer (1997) clearly identifies the positive benefits of the CDEP in communities especially those with little or no employment opportunity. Spicer (1997:5) also highlights that on 1994 figures unemployment statistics for Indigenous Australians would have risen from figures of around 38% to 54% if not for the scheme.

Altman (1997:13) in his concluding remarks is a little more critical and points to the pros and cons of the scheme and in particular to the limitations therein:

“To summarise, looking back over the past 20 years, the major achievements of the CDEP scheme would have to include, in no order of priority: its undiminished popularity; its sheer survival; its ability to create mechanisms to facilitate productive activities in many contexts; and its ability (and potential) to supplement low cash incomes that would otherwise hit a very low welfare ceiling, especially in remote, relatively underdeveloped, regions. Its limitations include the lack of tangible and convincing evidence of success, be it in income supplementation, employment creation, community development or enterprise creation; the absence of well-defined exit options; and ongoing

¹ This term refers to those Indigenous people who while on the CDEP program do not actually do work. They instead enrol on the program and receive lesser amounts for not working. This as Spicer puts it the communities see as no-work-no-pay scenario.

administrative problems, especially in maintaining accurate participant schedules.”

One of the conclusions of Altman (1997) with regard to limited evidence of employment creation can perhaps be countered by Spicer's (1997:5) evidence that there was a substantive correlation between transfer of CDEP scheme employees into other employment:

“This Review found considerable evidence that the scheme is effective in facilitating the transfer of participants to other employment. The Office of Evaluation and Audit found that ex-CDEP participants were five percentage points more likely to be in a job than a comparison group of mainly non-Indigenous job seekers on the CES (*Commonwealth Employment Service*) register.”

Long et al (1999:10) cite Daly's (1993: 36) findings with regard to potential conflict between CDEP and the 1989 *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy* (commonly referred to as the AEP) incentives in particular for school aged youth:

“There is some danger of conflict between the incentives offered under the AEDP employment programs (e.g. the CDEP scheme) and the AEP programs to promote school retention. The offer of part-time employment within the community under the CDEP scheme may discourage individuals from leaving home in pursuit of further education. While not wishing to underestimate the wider social benefits, which may arise from this choice, it may have important implications for an individual's future income potential.”

The CDEP is a very important factor in Indigenous employment and needs to be a major consideration in any program endeavouring to address Indigenous careers aspirations. Further, program development at all levels needs to contemplate the potential conflicting objectives, which may unintentionally place programs in undesirable competition.

On Cultural Considerations in Vocational Education

McIntyre et al (1996) have produced a major contribution to the discussion of the importance of cultural consideration in delivery and outcome of vocational education for Indigenous peoples and includes seven key recommendations. These research findings highlight the integral and uncompromising need for providers of vocational education programs to ensure that Indigenous diversity and cultural issues are paramount in the development, design, delivery and evaluation of any program. The main finding of the McIntyre et al (1996:8) report is that:

“indigenous (sic) Australian's participation in education and training has to be approached as a cultural and cross-cultural activity.”

Golding et al (1997:25-32) in a review of the literature advocate the need to recognise and design programs which incorporate Indigenous cultural diversity. Institutions must adapt their pedagogy to meet these cultural considerations and not expect Indigenous students to merely assimilate into Non-Indigenous provision.

As cited in McIntyre et al (1996:18), Cope et al (1995) convincingly make the following statement not only about the importance of cultural considerations in education but also about the inherent institutionalised outcomes from ignoring the cultural dimension in provision:

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

“From the evidence supplied by the informants who participated in this project, it is evident that 'culture' is used in these senses in order to shift responsibility for failure from institutional and systems' practices onto people whose needs are demonstrably not being met. 'Culture' becomes a concept by means of which the 'victim' is blamed for inadequate service provision.

Many of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander informants spoke of negative experiences of education, including the tests that they had perennially failed at school. This is not a problem of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 'culture' but a disjunction of lifeworlds in which no serious possibility of negotiated relationship with the culture of the 'mainstream' has been possible. Tests are imposed. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people failed. When this has occurred, this is structural racism.”

Language and literacy

Language and literacy is a fundamental underpinning skill of effective participation in contemporary Australia and a clear foundation for lifelong education, training and subsequent employment. While Indigenous literacy has neither been a focus, nor key direction of this research, it would be remiss not to mention that consistently through the vocational education literature (as exemplified in McIntyre et al, 1996; Golding et al, 1997; and Hunter and Schwab, 1998.), is constant reference to addressing the most fundamental of the skills required for participation in work and life, language and literacy.

Community ownership

The cultural dimension referred to previously can only be achieved through Indigenous peoples. The literature has consistently supported the concept of Indigenous self-determination and management as the essential component for success in education in general and the associated area of vocational education. Teasdale and Teasdale (1996:v) clearly captured the changing environment and movement to Indigenous autonomy:

“The documentary analysis revealed that a far-reaching policy shift is taking place - a shift from equity to Indigenous rights. This is likely to lead to an increasing emphasis on Indigenous autonomy and self-determination in the management of VET programs. No longer will it be acceptable for non-Indigenous policy makers, administrators and educators to provide VET programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Instead, the control of VET for Indigenous Australians increasingly will be in their own hands. This could impact strongly on VET programs, resulting in a significant restructuring of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pathways through VET.”

Indigenous self-determination and management is the underlying principle of all development for Indigenous peoples and clearly the mandate of education provision as set out in the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy* (1989). This policy has been the foundation for all subsequent national Indigenous education and training direction and its objectives in this regard are well established in section 3.3.6 covering the guiding educational principles:

3.1.6 For Aboriginal education purposes the effectiveness of schools, colleges and other educational institutions depends in large part on the degree to which Aboriginal people are involved in the processes of educational decision-making. Without parental and community involvement there can be no guarantee that students will attend, that the curriculum will be relevant and that learning outcomes will be achieved. Aboriginal youth are also more likely to stay on and succeed at school when they see and have contact with

Aboriginal people in professional roles in the school, and are exposed to Aboriginal role models. (P.13)

The critical literature surrounding vocational education provision to Indigenous Australians is dominated by several key policy and strategic papers which support the initial foundations established in the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy* (1989) and consistently promulgate self-determination as the essential guiding principle.

A Mandate for Action on Careers Aspiration for Indigenous Australians - Policy and Practice

Policy

Over the past two years considerable policy literature has emerged from key national educational bodies like the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) and its own Indigenous advisory body, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Training Advisory Council (ATSIPTAC). On a state level, each education and training department of government is providing similar policy responses to heightened enthusiasm and a sense of urgency for development in Indigenous vocational education.

MCEETYA in April 1999 established the Taskforce on Indigenous Education to provide advice generally; improve performance and monitoring; and provide more specific advice on literacy/numeracy and attendance within its national strategic directions. The Taskforce has recently published two works, *Report of the MCEETYA Taskforce on Indigenous Education* (March 2000) and a *Discussion Paper - Achieving Educational Equality for Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples* (April 2000). Each of these publications has good references with regard to key policy decisions and directions at attachment which are very worthy of note and include the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy* (1989) and the *Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the 21st Century* (1999).

ANTA has produced two important publications in Indigenous vocational education and training under the banner of *Partners in a Learning Culture*. One, covering a National Strategy, and the other a Blueprint for Implementation for the period 2000 until 2005, which will drive the vocational education and training agenda. ANTA has established the following four objectives which it will pursue during this period:

Objective 1: Increase involvement of Indigenous people in decision making about policy, planning, resources and delivery.

Objective 2: Achieving participation in VET for Indigenous peoples equal to those of the rest of the Australian community.

Objective 3: Achieving increased culturally appropriate and flexible delivery training, including use of information technology, for Indigenous people.

Objective 4: Developing closer links between VET outcomes for Indigenous people and industry and employment.

Of particular note for the *Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program* addressed in this research is through directions to achieve Objective 2, which include,

Increasing school retention rates through VET in schools programs, and

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

Forging partnerships between schools and the post secondary sector (including VET and universities).

Supplementing these major national policy thrusts in vocational education and training are emerging support programs and initiatives. These include *Building Pathways - School-Industry Work Placements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Secondary Students* (1998) by ATSIPTAC and *WADU - National Vocational Learning Strategy for Young Indigenous Australians*, which is a joint consultation paper from ATSIPTAC and the Australian Student Traineeship Foundation (1999). A further emerging initiative in draft form from the Conference of Education Systems Chief Executive Officers' National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy Indigenous Working Group titled, *learning for vocational success - Strategic Directions in Vocational education for Indigenous Australian Secondary School Students* (Draft, August 2000). This document being developed by the Aboriginal Programs Unit, NSW Department of Education and Training, highlights the important role that vocational education in schools can fill and encourages young Indigenous school aged students to:

- Engage in education and training programs
- Learn through the experience of employment
- Become active participants in their communities and their cultures and
- Become lifelong learners beyond school. (P.7)

Practice

Over recent years there has been a heightened activity with regard to programs involving vocational education in schools, which has been sparked by the development of policy targeted funding.

The Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (IESIP) Strategic Results Projects (SRP) National Coordination and Evaluation Team Report, *What works? Explorations in improving outcomes for Indigenous students* (March 2000), endeavours to highlight outcomes from a range of programs stimulated by special funding grants from the Commonwealth Government. The publication covers projects drawn from pre-school through compulsory schooling and onto vocational education and training pathways. The conclusions drawn from the programs encompassed in the SRP lead simplistically to the following four essential ingredients for improvement in Indigenous students:

- They must be given respect
- Their culture and its relevant implications must be respected
- They must be taught well
- And they must attend regularly (P.180).

All states are actively in pursuit of programs, which will enhance the general and specific vocational education outcomes in school. While it is not possible to list all in this report, included are some examples of approaches adopted which fall into the basic research dimensions of this report. Specifically, most states have developed some type of careers aspiration program for Indigenous students to raise their perceptions of the diversity of career options and pathways available.

Queensland State Department of Education has pioneered the work in Indigenous career education and *Enhancing Career Opportunities - 1999 Performance Report on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Career Aspirations Pathways Program (AICAPP)* highlights this history, with substantive program development and achievements. Significantly the Queensland program highlights two important factors which are paramount in national policy directions, ownership of the program by school communities and maximising community participation. Two essential ingredients in any successful Indigenous initiative.

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

In South Australia the *Aboriginal and Islander Career Aspirations Program (AICAP) Report 1999* (Draft) indicates that work in this field commenced in 1994 with unemployed and youth in detention. The South Australian approach was based on pioneering work of a similar base in Queensland even earlier. Over the period special initiatives were undertaken including in-school vocational programs for years 6-12, workskills/career expos, newsletters and the provision of specific career information to students, teachers and families. Two recent initiatives involved a *Mobile Work/Career Expo* and a project *Aboriginal Role Models*, where successful past students worked directly with students across the state. Penny (1995) supplies in an article the background of these initiatives.

In Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory, the approach was to encourage local school initiatives in vocational education e.g. Erindale College in ACT; and across several clusters of schools in Tasmania under funding supplied by the Commonwealth Government Vocational and Educational Guidance for Aboriginals Scheme (VEGAS).

Long et al (1999:19) report through reference to Nasir (1996), of initiatives in the Northern Territory with regard to the *Aboriginal and Islander Tertiary Aspirations Program* approach adopted to increase retention, academic performance, outcomes and broadening career aspirations.

While in New South Wales, the primary focus of Indigenous career aspirations is the subject of this research, it is worthy to point out two more general publications for background reference from the Curriculum Support Directorate, NSW Department of Education and Training, *Stage 5 Work Education - Curriculum Framework and Course May 1998*; as the forerunner to, *Working Education Curriculum Support Document -Second edition - November 1999*. In addition to these broad systemic responses many individual school responses to career education have taken place utilising the Commonwealth Government resources under programs such as Vocational Education Guidance for Aboriginals Scheme (VEGAS).

The New South Wales Direction

The intervention of the *Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program* is the single most positive step taken systemically within career education for this group. New South Wales' (NSW) development in this domain appears to have been late in coming given the extensive work and history of such initiatives in Queensland and South Australia. The approach adopted by the Office of the Board of Studies (OBOS) is significantly different from those of other states. The emphasis of the program was in the more difficult area of provision of mainstream stimulus and the ambitious attempt at perspectives to the curriculum. This differed to the focus of other states which generally opted for programs built around specific Indigenous career markets and visiting displays and resource people. The NSW OBOS approach was in line with the Aboriginal Education Policy (NSW Department of School Education, 1996), which mandates Aboriginal studies for all students and the implementation of such throughout the curriculum (either perspectives or specific units of work on Aboriginal issues). This directive was an integral component of the BOS own policy in the area (NSW Board of Studies, 1996) and maintains as it four key elements of Career Education as:

- Learning about self in relation to work
- Learning about the world of work
- Learning to make career plans and pathway decisions
- Learning skills required to implement career decisions and manage work/study transitions

The OBOS approach to the development and implementation of the *Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program* was the development and piloting of specifically designed Units of Study which became earlier known as "Cooee Koori" (this title was dropped in later versions of the program). These units of work and supporting student workbook and

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

resource material were designed to be implemented as a stand alone unit of work or as units of work/activities which could be integrated as perspectives throughout the school curriculum. The target, unlike those of other states, was therefore all students and with the capacity of the program to also meet the specific needs of Indigenous career aspiration. The *Work Education Curriculum Support Document - Vocational Learning* through the Curriculum Support Directorate has been developed at the same time as the *Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program* and while both support documents cover similar areas of content, there appears to be little correlation between each document although it is noted that DET have been consulted. It is strongly urged that both documents should be at least designed to complement and recommend each other and ideally in the future, the *Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program* considerably merged with the *Work Education Curriculum Support Document* or at least be seen as a recommended addition to this volume.

The curriculum perspective approach adopted for this Program is one supported in policy of both the Aboriginal Education Policy (1996), and in general principles established on national policy and position papers (ATSIPTAC, 1998: 5) when referencing barriers associated with Indigenous participation in relation to; "relative absence of curriculum related to Indigenous cultures" and significantly the "lack of cross-cultural understanding of Indigenous cultures." This support is further evidenced in the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs *Discussion Paper - Achieving Educational Equity for Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples* (2000:9) which has recommended for implementation "a model for more culturally inclusive and educationally effective schools;". Evidence was also found in the literature which supported across the curriculum implementation of careers education in general (McMahon and Carroll, 1999; Barnett, 1998; and Kenway, 1993).

Base line data on community and students' career aspirations and expectations.

Overview

Focus group work with students and community during the research into the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program*, highlighted that Indigenous community and students wanted the broadest possible positive outcomes for their students from school and work. This research however discovered that there was still an enormous mismatch between these expectations and the outcome. The most alarming concern, with regard to the potential achievement of these desired positive outcomes for Indigenous students, was the fact that, despite both state and national education policy demands for Indigenous self-determination, little, if any significant evidence could be found which identified community input to the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program*, outside of guest speakers and visits to community organisations. The research outstandingly supported the importance of Indigenous community and in particular the family role in provision of advice and assistance for their children. The research evidence clearly established that family must be intimately involved in any school careers program, as they have been specifically identified by students, as the most influential and respected form of advice.

While seeking and aspiring to equitable outcomes in education both the community and the students identified considerable obstacles that needed to be overcome. As the literature and this research supports, issues such as racism, lack of community involvement, rural isolation, low self-concept, lack of real employment opportunity and substandard school outcomes consistently frustrate real progress and improved career reality for Indigenous peoples. Community vision, while demanding equity, was often limited to its own personal restricted experiences of the employment market.

The school, working in genuine partnership with parents and caregivers and the Indigenous extended family and community, has a very important role to play in career education and aspiration of Indigenous students. This role is encouraged by both community and the students who genuinely recommended there be more careers training and that it commence in the earliest years of high school.

Community Career Aspirations and Expectations

Expectations

There is a clear fundamental delineation which focus groups established in regard to Indigenous and Non-Indigenous parental expectations for their children's career choices. Non-Indigenous students reported that their parents' expectation for them was to get a good paying job, which led to economic independence. Indigenous parents consistently wanted their children to have a job, which they liked and felt secure within. This view of security, happiness and safety in a career option often limits career expectations to Indigenous organisations and programs mounted under the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) Scheme. Racism and the potential for rejection plays a key part in Indigenous students limiting their career horizons to Indigenous organisations, as indicated in the following quote from a rural focus group:

"But you see, the kids when you ask them where they want to go for work experience they don't ask for a white organisation they ask to go in the Aboriginal organisations. Always:" (OC-Pre-8)

Data gathered at both community and student interviews indicated that Indigenous students had much more limited expectations of career opportunities than Non-

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

Indigenous students. This was particularly the case in more remote communities. When discussion centred on career options and knowledge about the range of careers, Indigenous students appeared much more restricted and often only envisaged local opportunities. There is considerable scope for improvement in this perspective on which the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program* and other career guidance initiatives should capitalise, as indicated in the community's response to the level of knowledge and information being given to students on career information:

"Male: They would probably just pick up a job guide or trainee guide.

Female: No they are not aware.

Interviewer: They don't know? So they don't know?

Female: But they have got some choices. Hairdressing and pamphlets that goes out that gives them some inspiration I suppose.

Female: Yeh, but most of the time they think jobs in this town are the only jobs that exist, I think. And they don't broaden their minds to think that there are thousand and thousands of jobs out there that they will enjoy, 'cause they don't know.

Interviewer: What do you think is the most limiting factor to them?

Understanding? Why don't they know?

Male: It's not provided to them.

Interviewer: The information is not provided?

Male: Yeh.

Female: It's not provided. It's probably here, we have probably got it but it is not provided. They are not shown." (IC-19-6-9)

The above quote clearly indicates that the community wants additional career resources available to enhance both the school and parents' capacity to provide informed advice. The Indigenous community in focus groups indicated that it was extremely supportive of improving career outcomes for their youth and see education as a critical tool for achieving better employment prospects:

"Male: I would say that everyone and I know I'm not sticking my neck out. Everyone in the community would say, do you think the kids should go to school and get a fairly good education? And most parents want their kids to (do) better than themselves at school.

Female: Yeh, I agree.

Male: And I think all of them would say, "Yes we want our kids to go to a good job."

Male: I don't think there would be anyone out there who'd say I don't want my son or daughter to get a job.

Male: No. They wouldn't stop them.

Male: No. They wouldn't stop them." (OC-Pre-10)

Community career expectations for students are based on equitable outcomes and encouragement for the students to achieve their potential in a safe non-threatening and non-discriminatory environment. There was clear evidence that expectations in rural areas were different from those in more populated city and regional centres. Rural Indigenous informants in the research case studies appeared to have had much narrower career goals and knowledge than both their Non-Indigenous counterparts and Indigenous counterparts in the larger populated case study areas. Within the city and regional centre case studies, little difference in community and student expectations could be discerned between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous informants in focus groups.

Aboriginal Community role

The most significant role played by the Indigenous community in the area of career education relates directly to the role and function of community based organisations like, lands councils, CDEP, and community health agencies. These organisations play a significant part in student career aspirations and exposure. CDEP is seen in at least

three of the case study areas as perhaps the most significant player in training and employment. In many instances the Indigenous students saw CDEP as their only employment option and aspired to such employment as their primary choice. Due to the importance placed on these organisations in the eyes of Indigenous youth, as the most viable option to employment, considerable effort needs to be taken to co-ordinate and work co-operatively with these Indigenous organisations.

"Male: With I suppose the CDEP and the Co-Op and the Aboriginal Land Council's role and there's the Medical Service. They are good grounds I suppose for kids (who) want to get out of the system because it is not working for them, maybe to get a traineeship or something like that. Now there is always the CDEP. There is lots of areas where people can be put in as trainees and that sometimes is far more attractive to the kids than staying at school, when in fact probably staying at school would be the best option..." (OC-Pre-5)

The data indicated an enormous role and responsibility is placed on parents and extended community members to provide careers advice. Parents were clearly the most important source of advice in this area for both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous students. The only variation was that Indigenous students were more inclusive of the extended family for such advice. However, parents themselves often quoted peers as the major source of influence on their children (OC-Pre-7). While often parents underplayed their role in providing careers advice, they recognised the importance of additional support and career advice for children, especially from career advisers at school, and the need to work in partnership with them:

"They (students) need more guidance than anything else because, as we've said before, our community members and our parents can advise as much as they want, but sometimes they need the advice from someone else. Because I'm sure you'd know for yourself, kids get to a certain age they know everything and parents know nothing..." (TC-Pre-2)

Obstacles

The biggest single obstacle to career expectations for Indigenous students as far as the Indigenous community reported was racism. Racism impacted on students both within the school and greatly affected their prospects in the employment market. This was the case particularly in the rural case studies where there appeared very few, if any, examples of Indigenous people working in retail employment:

"Female: If the kids were given a chance. If the majority of the kids were given a chance they would go out and get work, like you don't see any Koori kids working in F's and the chemist and the butcher shops and other places." (OC-Pre-8)

Community expressed concerns with regard to racism within the school, which greatly affected the education of students and hence had the flow on effect on career opportunity:

"Male Parent 1: There's a lot of racism in the school, this is what holds the kids back. We have to have an education where the only education, I don't care what you do or where you go, nowadays there's nothing for anyone without an education. And you have to have the right education too. But there is a lot of racism and discrimination in the schools because we work in a lot of schools." (TC-Pre-2)

The importance of education in career attainment was clearly aligned to outcomes from school. The community articulated quite clearly that failure to obtain at least the basic skills would jeopardise employment opportunity:

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

"Female: You got to learn to read. You must learn to read. I think that is a lot of problem with our Kooris, they don't learn to read. I don't know whether that goes wrong in schools because I think that what really happens is the ones that are the best readers or the best learners get more attention and the ones that are slower, they just get neglected and left behind. But this is where the one to one comes in that school." (TC-Pre-2)

Racism and lack of basic education creates a near impenetrable obstacle which erodes the important characteristics required for employment, that of confidence and self-esteem. These two attributes, which even the students indicated in their focus groups, were major concerns confronting them in obtaining employment. Community focus groups supported this claim:

"Female 1: If no-one saw them fail, they can just make their mistakes just quietly and they can learn from their mistakes but not be judged for them then they'd keep climbing the hill. But to be seen and watched closely to (be) waited for you to fail, that hurts too much and makes it hard to get back up again." (OC/P-Pre-1)

And;

"Male: Confidence mate, they lack a lot of confidence and skills and um, in theory wise like I mean Aboriginal people struggle in theory, but actually to do the work here it's all experience. Yeh, they are pretty good at it you know. Yeh, I mean confidence and motivation." (IC-19-6-5)

Confronting the damaging effects of racism both within the school and broader community still remains the most challenging of all tasks associated with improved career outcomes for Indigenous peoples.

Career opportunity

The community focus groups indicated that career education was an extremely important part of schooling, but were concerned that the quality of such advice was poor. This frustration was clearly articulated by one parent in the following comment:

"Community member: I can't say that about here, but I know with G High School, and that's supposed to be the Mickey Mouse School of the area, but I mean, the careers adviser around there I wouldn't piddle on him if he was on fire. That's how good he is as far as his careers advice is concerned." (YC-18-7-8)

This level of frustration was continued when parent informants clearly indicated that they felt that, the school career advisers were not assisting them in providing career advice. Several parents indicated that obviously they had an important role to play in providing such advice and again called for effective support in the process from the school:

"Community member: We can give them directions as parents, and of course, my daughter always wanted to do law, but that is, only because I worked in the coppers. But now she wants to do sports medicine, but that is her own direction. But if she gets guidance from the school, that is someone else giving them guidance to what she could be doing." (YC-18-7-12)

Given that students in this research have identified the most significant people providing advice have been overwhelmingly their parents and the extended family, it would appear essential that any provision of career education in schools should be in close partnership with the student's family.

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

Role of education

"Male 1: Well back in my time education was, well they didn't want you to have an education. When I was a young fellow they couldn't wait to get you out of the school and the first thing they done was put an axe in your hand or a crowbar. We never had a chance. Nowadays these kids have got all the chance in the world and it's up to the parents to make these kids aware of the chances that they have." (TC-Pre-Con't-8)

School and education are strongly seen as important instruments in career development and provision of information by the community. The school's role becomes paramount when considering the staggering unemployment levels highlighted in the literature review of this report. As indicated in the research findings, parents and the extended family play a dominant role in provision of advice to students. Therefore the parents' employment experiences are a vital source of advice in assisting in career choice and outcome. However, the long history of exclusion from the employment market place for disproportionately high numbers of Indigenous peoples, demands that the critical gap in career experience needs filling. Communities, as indicated earlier, are very supportive of the importance of the school's role in supplementing their advice. While clearly, the community has a critical role to play in providing this, career advice programs should in addition be developed not only for the school but also simultaneously developed and delivered for the Indigenous community. Extending the communities' career information base would be simultaneously extending the career options to students.

"AEA: Everybody has their own career path and they have to choose. They've got to learn to choose them wisely. They need more guidance than anything else, because, as we've said before, our community members and our parents can advise as much as they want, but sometimes they need the advice from someone else..." (TC-Pre-2)

Community also identified the importance of role models in any careers program. It was deemed important to use Indigenous role models from a variety of careers as well as high profile public figures and positive role models, to assist in breaking down barriers.

"Community member: Sport, peers, Kathy Freemans and all the top-notch players, AFL, Rugby League, Ernie Dingo on the TV and all that.

Researcher: So those high profile role models are important?

Community member: They look at them and correspond, they go, well if he can do it.

Community member: Especially like Ernie Dingo, he is so down to earth, and straight forward, he doesn't talk down.

Community member: Well not that, how he doesn't talk down to people, he talks on a level, that my young fellow thinks is great. Then being involved with football, he has a lot to do with DM and EM brothers and what ever. There even, because they are so high profile in the rugby union or what ever. That they speak to the kids on a level that the kids understand. Instead of using all the high tech words or explanations or what ever, they just basically sit and tell them, so it does come to having a high profile person and the kids really do respond to it.

Community member: That is why I think it is important to have high profile persons like Anthony Mundine and a lot of Aboriginal people, but he is out in the street, giving young Koori kids advice, encouraging them." (YC-18-7-11)

And;

"AEA: It does because the kids have got to get motivated. See, kids follow by example and if there's no example there's nothing." (TC-Pre-Con't-1)

But the reverse also applies and needs to be countered:

"Male 1: Kids have got to have a role model. Look up at Dad, Dad's a Professor, I'm going to follow him.

Male 1 continues: Then they say "look at Dad, he's right, he's happy he's out there he's half shot again he's sitting up there having a few drinks and that, he's having a good time that's what I'm going to do". (TC-Pre-Con't-2)

While the community informants saw school as playing an important and critical role in career development, the community also had some concern with the teaching and curriculum approaches apparent in the schools. Aboriginal Studies was seen as a major direction needing support and some informants raised the need for the development of Indigenous languages programs, to enhance curriculum relevance for Indigenous students. Concern was also expressed about the qualification required to teach Aboriginal Studies and whether or not some teachers had this. Aboriginal Studies is well supported because of its relevance and capacity to maintain cultural heritage, which plays a significant part in the development of self-esteem and confidence, both deemed by community and students as important requirements in the job market:

"Male 1: The trouble is that a lot of the Aboriginal kids don't know a thing about their own culture and this is the sad thing about it. They don't know who they are, where they come from. And this is a sad thing because these kids have already lost the culture.

AEA: It's an identity crisis." (TC-Pre-Con't-15)

Aspirations

The dominant message from the community interviews in terms of career aspirations was to create a level playing field for Aboriginal kids. Removal of racial barriers was seen as the greatest aspiration. This theme was an all-encompassing mist, which stifled any career vision and aspiration. Associated with this inhibitor was the need to build confidence and self-esteem amongst the children to counter the racial vilification, which Indigenous students will have to endure in the broader employment market. The following statements, from a variety of informants within focus groups, set the scene for the aspirations of the community:

"Female: Be able to achieve no matter what it would be, a mechanic or shopkeeper, as long as they are happy in what they are doing. It could be a doctor or anything, for them to achieve their own goals.

Female: Education is the most important thing they need that, so that they can build up their self-esteem and have confidence in themselves to get motivated. They don't feel they have achieved anything. Well they just say that they can't do anything." (IC-19-6-5)

And;

"AEA: One wish, well if I could make one wish come true that there would be no discrimination. We'd all be one, treated the same and regardless of where you lived or what you've done in life or what kind of background you're from. You'd be able to see our kids go for job interviews and be trusted on face value not colour and where you live, just face value on job interviews, nothing else in it. Harmony." (TC-Pre-Con't-12)

And further;

"Male: Give everyone an equal chance, doesn't matter what colour." (IC-19-6-13)

Student Career Aspirations and Expectations

Aspirations and Expectations

"Girl 3: When we were filling out a form for the supermarket a few months ago, these other kids got jobs straight away.

Researcher: Did any Aboriginal kids get jobs?

Girl 3: There was one in Year 12 but she got white skin." (IA-19-6-5)

While the above student indicated in her focus group that she clearly understood the implication of Aboriginality, the majority of Indigenous student informants did not place their Aboriginality as a major stumbling block to securing employment.

Data gathered from focus groups indicated a difference between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous students' job expectations in the two rural case study areas, but not in the larger populated case studies.

Indigenous students in rural locations appeared to have much lower job expectations and knowledge of career opportunities than their Non-Indigenous counterparts. Indigenous students' expectations in the rural case study tended to be very much limited to local career opportunities which were more likely to emanate from employment opportunities in local Aboriginal organisations and in particular in the CDEP or as the students indicated, 'on the dole'. The more isolated rural group had difficulty contemplating what they would be doing in the six months to five years after school. Some common responses included, 'no idea', 'dole bludger' or 'CDEP'. However, the career prospect for those case studies in larger more populated areas, which displayed generally low socio-economic circumstances, indicated very similar trends to the Non-Indigenous informants which included a broader range of occupations and training fields including TAFE and university studies, mechanics, dancing to part-time study and work.

Obstacles

Indigenous students demonstrated more localised perspectives of job opportunities than their Non-Indigenous counterparts in rural locations. Non-Indigenous students often had a greater understanding of the obstacles associated with the job market directly related to issues of employment. While Indigenous students appeared to have very limited views of the employment market, Non-Indigenous students in focus groups, and more pronounced again in the rural environments, often stated much clearer understanding of the employment situation for youth as indicated in the following discourse:

"Girl1: Employment?

Researcher: Actually getting a job, what do you mean?

Girl1: Finding someone who will employ you.

Researcher: Finding someone?

Girl 2: Having qualifications.

Researcher: Having qualifications, what sort of qualifications?

Girl 2: Basic skills and communication.

Researcher: So having basic skills and communication to get a job?

Girl 2: And be literate." (IP-19-6-6)

Non-Indigenous students had a broader sense of the career markets which tended to emanate from their parents' working background and in rural locations directly related to their families' farms or as was referred to as "work on the block" in reference to irrigation plots. Non-Indigenous students were more pronounced in their career options in professional opportunities with greater diversity also than their Indigenous counterparts across the case studies. While Indigenous students were often referring to trade employment like mechanics, truck driver, landscaper, the Non-Indigenous

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

students in the main readily recognised more diverse opportunities in teaching, law, nursing, salesman, reporting, filming, through to being a stuntman.

All students in focus groups raised the issue of completing school and getting an education as a major hurdle to acquiring employment. There was good correlation made by students with regard to completing school and its affect on gaining work.

Perhaps the students' ages being in junior high school played a significant role in them not having a more detailed understanding of the obstacles facing them in securing employment. Their youthful and relative innocent understanding of the broader career market complexities was evident in focus groups of all students. But, again, the Non-Indigenous students, even in this limited understanding of the market, had a greater understanding of the competitive nature of employment and were often reminded of this by their parents through statements like the following:

"Get good marks at school.
I've got to go on to year 12.
Finish school and get a job I like.
Don't be lazy.
Work hard." (IP-19-6-4)

Community role

Students in general did not indicate a clear understanding of the community's perceived role in career training, although all students indicated resoundingly the role of parents in the process of career information and guidance. Indigenous students did demonstrate a clear correlation between work and community organisations such as land councils, government service agencies and Indigenous run co-operatives. The Non-Indigenous students tended to articulate a more sophisticated understanding of the role of family businesses and contacts, networks and friends in securing employment, as evidenced in this student's comment: "My brother's a mechanic and my sister just got married and she sort of works in my uncle's accounting place sometimes." (OP-Pre-4)

Role of education

Both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous students in focus groups indicated an understanding of the importance of education to securing employment. However, Non-Indigenous students had a more pronounced understanding of the competitive nature of the workforce, which required competitive results. Just getting an education and base level skills was the general expectation of Indigenous students, whereas other students could directly relate to the competitive importance of good results from school. Indigenous students tended to have lower and simpler expectations of the education and qualifications required to secure employment:

"Boy 2: Depends on the type of job.
Group Response: If it was a Macca's job.
Girl 2: You would not need an education.
Boy 5: You would need maths.
Girl 2: No the till has a calculator.
Boy 5: You have got to work out if you like your change is a dollar and how many 20 cent pieces to give out." (YA-19-6-7)

The data indicated an increasing number of Indigenous students wanted to or were encouraged to stay on to year 12, the data gathered in focus groups indicated that a higher proportion of Indigenous students would leave prior to completing year 12 than their Non-Indigenous counterparts.

Curriculum relevance

All students were very supportive of the development of career education in school and all enthusiastically wanted the school to do more in this regard. Indigenous students were particularly keen to have more information on careers because they noted that many students leave before year 10 and they need this information prior to leaving:

"Girl1: I think they should start careers earlier, because they start careers in year 9, they should start in year 7 teaching careers.

Boy 5: I reckon because all students have to do Commerce.

Girl 1: Because some young lady over here might not know how to get a job, or where to go for it. This is what I'm presuming, if she comes into high school having no idea where she is going to go or what she is going to do, she has got nowhere to go. If she leaves in year 8 she still has no idea what to do.

Researcher: Would people generally think that getting information about jobs early as early as you can is important?

Boy 3: Yes.

Researcher: Is that something the school should teach?

GROUP: Yes.

Boy 5: It would make it easier in the rest of school, because then you would know what you have to strive for." (YA-19-6-10)

Student Pre-Questionnaire Results

Who do students look to for advice on career information?

Three questions were asked of students about the helpfulness of selected individuals in their life about jobs, training and general advice on matters of importance. The general categories these fell into included school personnel, family and friends and outside agencies involving training, employment or working with youth.

In this sample, parents and immediate relations were overwhelmingly the most helpful in providing advice on jobs, training and general information for both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous students. This family trend was further extended to family members like aunts and uncles for both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous students. Of note was the fact that Indigenous students broadened their family advice to include more extended family members than did the Non-Indigenous students.

Within the school environment teachers, careers advisers appeared to be helpful for most students. Of least help were the school counsellor, principal and deputy principal. The Aboriginal Education Assistant was seen as a good source of career and training/study advice by Indigenous students.

Outside agencies such as Commonwealth Employment Service (CES), Centre Link, Technical and Further Education Colleges (TAFE), Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) were neutral on the scale i.e. neither helpful nor not helpful.

Interestingly enough, within this study, friends of students either inside or outside of school appear to play a minor role in giving advice in careers and training matters. However, there is a significant variation across gender in both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous students which indicates that females have a higher regard for advice from friends both within and outside of school on job information.

Level of Knowledge about Careers and Related Issues

In general the data indicated that all areas surrounding knowledge about the job and training market covered in questions from 64 to 84 in the pre-questionnaire remain undefined, i.e. students' responses have not indicated either a good or poor

knowledge of these issues. This result is similar for both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous students. While this result does not provide an opportunity to target particular items for action, it does indicate a fertile ground for increased activity across all areas of career education for students in the study.

Student Confidence

Students were asked to indicate their level of confidence on three areas of asking questions about jobs and training, and applying for a job. The data indicated on each of these questions, a relatively high level of initial confidence was held by all students.

Significant Findings in Section 1 of Pre-Program Questionnaire

There was significant difference between T-tests comparing the responses of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous students on four key question items which included household completion of year 12 and in the area of part-time work or work experience. Indigenous respondents also indicated that they saw their racial background as having little if no effect on their ongoing career and training. Unfortunately due to time and resource constraints, broader analysis of data less strategically relevant to the research could not be undertaken but the researcher intends to pursue in more detail some of this outstanding data analysis.

The results on the question concerning whether people you lived with had completed year 12 was virtually an opposing mirror of the Indigenous (40%) and Non-Indigenous (59%) respondents answering 'yes'. This result is consistent with the statistical data (Long et al, 1999) available which highlights low levels of school completion to year 12.

Also unsurprisingly are the advantages gained in the part-time employment and access to work experience by Non-Indigenous students. Some 50% of Non-Indigenous students had some form of paid employment compared to 32% of Indigenous students. This inequity in access to labour market experiences was further reflected in the exposure of work experience opportunities Indigenous students indicating only 22% had been involved compared to 35% of Non-Indigenous students. In analysing who received payment for such work experience nearly twice as many Non-Indigenous (49%) students than Indigenous (27%) had received payment.

The majority of Indigenous students felt that their Indigenous background would in general not play a major role in issues of employment nor education or training. This response is surprising especially considering the conflicting evidence gained in focus groups of both students and the community. Factors in this result maybe the age of the students involved and their limited experience to date with outside employment and training opportunities. However, the result parallels a level of confidence of the same group of students in response to questions in the pre and post questionnaire, which covered the domain of levels of confidence and saw very strong initial results. However, a significant negative shift in post results which may have indicated, as they began to understand more about the process, the less confident they became. This issue was not part of the post questionnaire so could not be measured across the program implementation for any change. The outcome of this data would justify further data gathering within this domain to see if such attitudes are consistent over several school years.

Students' sense of their career options and aspirations as a result of participating in the program

Career options

Indigenous student focus groups indicated that the program had improved their understanding of career options, although the results were described by students in

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

terms of the outcomes as, 'improved a little', 'a bit' and 'sort of'. Given the limited timeframe associated with the program such responses need to be viewed in context of the scope of the program. Some comments from Indigenous students, which indicated some personal outcomes, include:

"Student: Like they have levels (*different entry qualifications*) there are some where you have to go to high school then to uni or there are other jobs where you can drop out in year 10 and go to TAFE and stuff." (IA-17-9-5)

And;

"Researcher: Do you think it has helped you know about jobs?

Student: Helped.

Researcher: It has, how has it helped you?

Student: Widened the perspective of what the jobs are out there.

Researcher: Yeh, and in what way.

Student: Instead of having narrow path you can follow a wide (*one*)." (OA-Pos-2)

Students who were primarily Non-Indigenous, undertaking the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program* as part of perspectives to existing curriculum indicated in focus group discussion there appeared to be no significant change in career options. However, the results seemed to be dependent on the delivery of the curriculum and enthusiasm of the teachers. Positive affirmation of the perspectives in two focus groups was evident and in later discussion with the co-ordinator of the program it was indicated that both these teachers developed their own perspectives. On the negative side one group of students indicated that they only did Aboriginal studies in History and it had little or nothing to do with career education. While in another case study, the students obviously gained some very positive insight into career opportunities, which had emanated from work done within Art classes. While the example of History proved of little assistance to students, the Art perspective did succeed in broadening and stimulating student interest in new possibilities in careers in this field:

"Researcher: What did you do?

Student: Careers in Art.

Researcher: Yeah, and what did that involve?

Student: Looking at research and having a career involved in Art.

Researcher: Yeah and what did you do?

Student: I did photography.

Student: Fashion design.

Student: Interior decorator.

Student: Graphic design.

Student: Camera operator.

Researcher: Camera Operator. How did you find that part of the course?

Student: It was in books that I got given.

Researcher: So you got a whole lot of resources?

Student: It was in Job Guide." (IP-17-9-3)

Focus group discussion indicated that Indigenous students tended to increase their scope of career options and this was especially so in the rural case studies. The intervention seemed to expose these students to a broader base of career options and possibilities. In two of the case studies, benefit was gained by taking the students on an excursion and exposing them to both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous employment and training opportunities.

There was a noticeable shift in the Indigenous students' desire to stay on at school. There appeared to be in many instances, a clearer understanding of the role of education in gaining employment, as indicated in the following comments by students:

"Researcher: ...has it (ACAP) motivated you to want to stay on at school, hasn't really changed, or you feel you are going to leave earlier than you first anticipated?

Student: I don't want to come to school, but I have to.

Researcher: So has it changed?

Student: Yeah.

Researcher: It has, all right.

Student: I'm going to year 12, so it has made me stay at school.

Researcher: So it has, it has made you think about that.

Student: Same as William." (IA-17-9-8)

And;

"Researcher: ...what was the most important thing to you that you learnt from the course? Any ideas?

Student: Stay at school.

Researcher: Stayed at school, yep?

Student: Do not leave at a young age, like at year 9 or 10.

Researcher: That's O.K. No he can say it, so not to leave at a young age, why?

Student: Like, you won't be employed by a job, or anything and you wouldn't know nothing about getting a job." (OA-Pos-4)

Career aspirations

There was no discernible evidence of change in career aspirations except with the most isolated of the Indigenous students in the rural case studies. The *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program* provided these students a worthwhile extension into careers training that appeared to be extremely lacking. While this program provided an increased exposure to local career options and involved the local community via guest speakers, further exposure to broader career bases would extend the outcomes of this positive approach.

The age of the participants needs to be carefully considered in any assessment of the aspirations of the students at this time. While no major variance in aspirations was noted in the qualitative data gathered during focus groups, this could be a direct result for many, of the perception of career decisions being a long way off. However, in making this statement, the Non-Indigenous students still had a far more established understanding of the link between competitive performance at school and its impact on career expectations.

"Student: It's not really a hard thing about getting a job cause like it is going to be hard for her going to year 11 or 12, but because like the more you go to school the more you learn. You go to a job, like you are lucky enough to get a highly paid good car and all that. Like it all pays off in the end. Cause you are like, I've got to go school for another 2 years and see in another 5 years you are a millionaire and you have got a mad house and it's like it all pays of at one time." (TP-4-9-5)

Post Program Questionnaire Outcomes

Overview

Of the 288 Non-Aboriginal and 100 Aboriginal pre-questionnaire responses only 120 Non-Aboriginal and 35 Aboriginal students had responded to both pre and post questionnaires (representing 42% Non-Indigenous and 35% Indigenous). The data indicated that no significant change took place post program on the majority of data

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

gathered from the pre and post questionnaire for all students and more specifically for Aboriginal students.

All students demonstrated a significant negative change on 15 of the questions. Post program, this response indicated a shift in the area of family influence on job and training advice and included changes in parents, other relatives, grandparents, aunts and uncles. This change, while significant in the data, needs to be considered in light of the fact that even with such a change, family still was deemed helpful, e.g. in the parents' case, the post response still indicated 87.3% of respondents thought parents were helpful and 47.5% of these, thought very helpful. There were also significant changes in the knowledge bases on seven questions including issues such as the role of qualifications, training location and transport, and job advertisement. Finally there was a significant shift which indicated that students were less confident on all three of the questions seeking confidence levels about asking questions about jobs or training and applying for a job.

In the Indigenous students' responses, six question items changed significantly on helpfulness and career knowledge scales and these were equally distributed between being positive and negative movements. The school counsellor was seen as more helpful (but still seen overall as less helpful) and the knowledge base on enrolment into post school training/education and equal employment opportunity increased closer to the mean for all students.

19 items on the questionnaire brought significant change in both pre and post program evaluation on issues of gender across all students. In general females had higher expectations on advice received by peers, outside school friends and agencies involved in careers and similarly higher results than males on family advice in pre-questionnaires. However, females had lower opinions about the helpfulness of the school counsellor and lower career knowledge bases than did the males.

In post-questionnaires data for all students, females had significantly higher regard for the helpfulness of school peers and friends than did their male counterparts. Indigenous students did not show this trend and the data indicated significant difference only on two questions on parents for advice on jobs (lower than males) and a higher regard of employment agencies' advice.

Advice to students

The data indicated that family, both nuclear and extended, play the most dominant role in providing advice to students in the study and parents are the most influential (representing 91.7% of helpful responses) which supports the literature on this finding (Pascoe, 1996; Gool and Patton, 1999; and Lysaght et al, 1999.).

For all females, peers and outside friends played an important role in providing advice on job, training/study and important matters, which differed from all males. This outcome is supported in the literature by Gool and Patton, (1999); and Horrigan et al (1996).

Within the school domain the post questionnaire results did not significantly change the pre questionnaire responses that indicated teachers and careers advisers were moderately helpful on careers issues but, in the teachers' case, not seen as important sources of advice as family.

Knowledge about Careers and Related Issues

The study was not conclusive in the level of knowledge on career information that was available to the students participating. The level of knowledge has not substantially changed for all student respondents and also for the Indigenous subset. However, results indicated that while students did not conclusively indicate areas of need or areas of substantial knowledge base, it would be reasonable to conclude that

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

there is a need to increase career training and education for this group of students to raise their knowledge and skills in this domain.

Seven questions eliciting students' knowledge on the role the School and Higher School Certificates, study opportunity, job qualifications, location of training and associated travel requirements to attend, and where to find job advertisements, displayed a negative shift in post program analysis. This negative shift could indicate a response that represents a better understanding of the issues involved in each of these items and hence a greater appreciation in fact of their importance. As an example, if we look at the responses to the students' knowledge of the role the School and Higher School Certificates play in getting a job/training/further study after leaving school, students indicated that since doing the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program*, they knew less. This may in fact be a response to developing a better understanding of the role these Certificates play and hence a greater appreciation of the need to know more about them.

Student Confidence

On all three questions on student confidence there was a negative significant change in the pre/post analysis on data gathered for all students. The questionnaire covered levels of confidence students had in asking questions about jobs, study/training and applying for a job. On each of these questions the students initial responses displayed a high level of confidence, however, after completing the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program*, their responses were very much to the middle of the scale. Again, this could represent an improvement in understanding of the demands and increased complexities associated with these personal tasks and then a corresponding decrease in confidence. If this is the case, then a more realistic understanding of the demands of the employment market could be a better starting place to build on skills and confidence. In focus groups, students indicated consistently that one of their most significant obstacles surrounded lack of confidence, initial seeking of work and going for an interview. This would therefore support the above theory in the loss of confidence indicated in the analysis of the pre/post questionnaire responses.

Key findings

What are the critical issues which impact on Aboriginal students' career aspirations?

There have been many issues identified which impact on Indigenous students' career aspirations. In most instances these critical issues are more a system of the current social, political and economic circumstances which provide almost insurmountable obstacles to equitable career outcomes. However complex and difficult these obstacles at times may seem, the research indicated that both the Indigenous students and community are looking to the school to assist in breaking down these barriers.

However, what is also clear from the research is that there appears little evidence that schools have embraced the most important and consistent aspect of policy development both within Indigenous communities and at state and national government levels over the past two decades, that of Indigenous self-determination. The most comprehensive finding of this research and supported in the literature, questionnaire and focus group results was that family (extended in the case of Indigenous students) and in particular parents/care givers are outstandingly the most important source of advice for all students. Parents have indicated that they are looking to the school to provide valuable leadership in filling in the gaps in the parents knowledge of career information. It would be logical to conclude that the school or some other provider like TAFE work directly with parents to increase their career knowledge, so that their base knowledge can be increased and hence improve their further influence on students. If schools are to embark on positive programs in careers or for that matter any educational initiative then it is paramount that it be done in close partnership with the Indigenous community.

The systemic and social issues confronting and impacting on Indigenous career aspirations can simply be articulated in a single word, racism. The task ahead of the most well meaning school staffs will be challenged consistently by ethnocentric, paternalistic, and racist bias that will make simple tasks like finding appropriate work experience placement a near impossible task, especially in some rural locations. There maybe some glimmer of hope in this daunting picture however given the positive responses gained in the pre-program questionnaire about the majority of students at this point in their lives, not seeing their Indigenous background as a barrier. Perhaps with positive intervention such positive perceptions can be built on, strengthened and maintained.

The literature and focus group findings indicated that geographical location and in particular rural isolation is an overpowering consideration on career opportunity and aspiration. Evidence gained through this research supported the literature with regard to identifying that the most isolated communities tended to suffer the most disadvantage in career aspiration and opportunity. Students' knowledge of the employment market tended to be more limited the more remote the community.

The literature clearly establishes a very positive link between educational attainment (especially at a tertiary level) and employment outcome. Both students and community discussion acknowledged this point and relevant elements of questionnaire responses indicated that students perhaps gained a greater understanding of the importance and link with regard to the School and Higher School Certificates and employment prospects. Some Indigenous students readily admitted that as a result of the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program* they were encouraged to consider staying on longer at school.

Given the complexity and obstacles facing Indigenous students in the careers marketplace, the research identified the importance of raising self-esteem and

confidence as a critical issue for students. Initial application and selection processes for employment are challenging for all students but the inherent concept of 'shame' within Indigenous society and fear of failure compound the complexity for Indigenous students.

Limitations in work experience, which are a result of issues such as isolation, demonstrable higher unemployment levels of Indigenous people, lack of willingness of employers to take on Indigenous students and Indigenous community preference for safer Indigenous work experience options, are other critical issues impacting on Indigenous students' career development opportunities.

Any program wishing to address career aspirations or more broadly career development for Indigenous students would need to carefully consider these issues in the conception, design, delivery and evaluation of any program. Of paramount consideration is the unquestionable role of Indigenous parent and community involvement.

What are the critical interactions between Aboriginal communities and the career aspirations of students? Do community expectations impact on those of their students?

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis indicated that parents/care-givers and in the instance of Indigenous students especially, the extended family played the most significant role in providing advice on careers. While the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program* aims emphasised the need for Indigenous community involvement and the literature on career programs for Indigenous students continually pointed to the need to involve the Indigenous community, little evidence was found that such involvement existed. The only evidence of Indigenous involvement included career visits or speakers, but very little in the way of active community involvement in the program beyond this.

In the case of Non-Indigenous students, parents and family contacts proved invaluable in increasing their awareness and understanding of the career market and in particular the competitive nature of employment and the strong link to successful school results. Indigenous students especially in rural communities had more limited career expectations and understanding of employment markets. In schools where similar socio-economic circumstances existed the data showed little difference between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous community expectations.

The research also pointed to the significant role that Indigenous community managed organisations play in the career experiences of Indigenous students. This point is particularly relevant to the critical role that the CDEP plays in higher populated more rural environments. The parents and community see Indigenous organisations as a safe and priority placement option for work experience and final employment destination. It is therefore critical that these, community chosen options, be closely tied to any careers program developed for schools. While the community is encouraging of these community organisations as a source of work experience and in many instances primary employment options, much co-ordination and partnerships need to be established with schools and TAFE colleges to extend this employment option. It is unreasonable and an impossible task for Indigenous organisations to be the sole source of employment opportunity. This responsibility may have such an onerous weight that it may in fact put in jeopardy the effective functioning of the organisation itself. It is quite clear that specific efforts need to be continued or where they have not started, commenced to develop a close working relationship with CDEP in communities to extend the transition into outside work opportunities.

The use of community identified positive Indigenous role models from both a local and broader community base was seen as a positive move by focus group participants. The use of Indigenous role models becomes critical in expanding the pool of potential

career options for students, especially in rural locations. Given the limited employment opportunity and experience available to Indigenous peoples it is important to expand not only the students' career horizons but also that of the parents and broader Indigenous community to improve advice from these key advisers to students.

Does the Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program have an effect on the career aspirations of students?

The data indicated that the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program* had limited effect on the career aspirations of students overall. However, in the cases of Indigenous students the data gathered within focus groups clearly indicated improvement in understanding, knowledge base, and broadened career options which were principally gained through the component of the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program* specifically designed for Indigenous students. Overwhelmingly the Indigenous students felt that they would be happy to recommend the program to other Indigenous students and had the following comments on recommending the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program*:

“Student 1: Because some (*Indigenous students*) don't know what they want to do you know, and it just gives them ideas and like tell them where they have to go.

Student 2: To make it a better chance to get a job.

Student 3: The earlier (*Indigenous students*) start learning the better experienced they would be.”(IA-17-9-9)

The curriculum perspectives approach component of the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program* appeared to have little effect on students as reflected in the analysis of the pre and post questionnaires for Non-Indigenous students who primarily undertook this program. However, data gathered in focus group sessions indicated that the perspectives approach had mixed results with students and this appeared to be directly related, as previously mentioned, to the enthusiasm of the individual teachers. The outcomes were evenly split between the four case studies, two demonstrating very positive changes and two very little change and one of the students in the focus group was even a little angry that he, "had to do the Aborigines again!" The results of the research were therefore inconclusive on the effectiveness of the perspectives program.

No substantive example could be found in the four specific case study schools where the Indigenous community was involved in the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program*. In most instances the primary contact with the community was via the distribution of the parental informed consent which emanated from this research. Two schools indicated that the community was involved via work site visits or through visiting role model programs in the more adventurous and successful programs delivered. The community was a major focus of the original aims and objectives of the program and it was disappointing to find only very limited involvement especially considering the major policy demands in this regard at state and national levels.

Conclusion - What conclusions can be drawn from this research?

The literature and supporting data gathered through this research indicates the enormous complexity of Indigenous education and employment. Compounding this complexity is the diversity surrounding each of the communities within the pilot. The qualitative research indicated that each location had to contend with differing variables and especially different levels of directly relevant employment issues and factors which impact significantly on the capacity to deliver any sense of a 'standard' program in the area of careers development. It is imperative that each school develop programs which take a detailed account of the social, geographic and economic situations confronting it. The research quite clearly indicated significant variance especially between rural and urban case studies and further variance between each of these geographic locations, which demands local consideration and development/adaptation of the most appropriate program to meet individual school population needs. It was evidenced from the research that each school tended to develop and adapt their own programs around the core curriculum developed for the *Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program*. Such individual development should be further encouraged and the program flexible enough to adapt to such local initiatives.

Interventions such as the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program* being reviewed within this research, are extremely vulnerable to the full effects of social justice issues in the truest possible sense in the community. The very motivation for such a positive action for Indigenous students confronts the foundations of the inequity of society and places the most vulnerable, Indigenous youth, in the continued reminder of the immediacy of racism. In aspects of the research and demonstrated in frank statements in focus groups the dominant reminder was of the reality that being Aboriginal meant that your career aspirations needed to be consistently monitored by this single most dominant inhibitor. Students and parents persistently raised the issue as a major obstacle confronting the achievement of equity in the labour force. However, in the students' case some hope may exist as quite often they tended to perhaps unrealistically and in some regard hopefully perceive that even though they saw it as an issue they still had a vision of some type of employment in the future. Such positive perceptions were obviously evident in the pre-program quantitative data analysis. Quite often this vision of employment was steeped with the realisation that in especially the rural case studies, such employment would be with local Aboriginal organisations and in particular in a career destination with the Community Development Employment Program.

The significant and important message to inform the further development of careers programs is the need to ensure that Indigenous students are prepared emotionally and intellectually with skills and knowledge to counter racism that they will confront either within their education and training or in the employment market. To increase the capacity of students to maintain high levels of career aspiration students must be well prepared for the potential racial knock backs and education and work environments to which they aspire.

While it is well beyond the scope of this pilot *Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program* to significantly shift the social justice dimension of the community, the implementation of social justice perspectives into the mainstream syllabuses as argued in the literature by Hughes (1995), is worthy of pursuit and mandatory in terms of the NSW Aboriginal Education Policy. Further development in the curriculum perspective in career education must therefore be continued to be pursued.

The research substantiates the importance of parent and Indigenous community involvement in all aspects of program concept, design, delivery and evaluation. The community's role in being the primary and most important advisers to students cannot

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

be underestimated and therefore the need to develop genuine partnerships between the school and its parents and community is the most fundamental and foundation step of any effective program. This essential element was missing in the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program* at a school implementation level and while outcomes were generally positive for Indigenous students, these results could have been further enhanced with closer Indigenous community partnerships.

The research points clearly to the need for intervention for Indigenous students on career education and for this to commence at the earliest possible time. The *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program* has provided a sound starting base for further development and intervention in this field of study. The data indicated that Indigenous students do not have the same level or knowledge in the area of career aspiration as Non-Indigenous students. Specific Indigenous interventions similar to those conducted in other states, and building on the specific Indigenous units of work in the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program*, would seem a more fruitful use of limited resources. As the research findings on the perspectives component of *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program* were inconclusive it is suggested that further more specific longer term evaluation take place.

The role of Indigenous community organisations in general and more specifically the CDEP is a very important factor in Indigenous employment and needs to be a major consideration in any program endeavouring to address Indigenous careers aspirations. Program development at all levels needs to contemplate the potential conflicting objectives, which may unintentionally place programs in undesirable competition for students resulting often in early school leaving where students take up CDEP employment options. Career paths need to be established between CDEP, schools, further training through TAFE and other employment options.

Other important but less dominant outcomes of the research are:

- Schools, through focus groups, are seen as a major source of career education by all students, and Indigenous parents and the community and an expansion of this role in schools is strongly recommended.
- More constructive work needs to commence to secure genuine Indigenous community participation in school programs in general and more specifically in any career education intervention. Evidence in focus groups indicated that careers visits and guest speakers from the community proved most effective strategies in expanding career options and developing positive role models.
- There needs to be improved and expanded access to work experience for Indigenous students who as the quantitative questionnaire data indicated, have significantly less access to paid and unpaid work experience. Due to the limited and often reported racism encountered in the local rural employment markets some positive simulated work experience models may need to be developed.
- Females put greater faith in friends for advice than do males and this is a shared phenomenon between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous students that emerged from the questionnaires and was strongly supported in the literature.
- The quantitative data provided little evidence of significant results from the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program* intervention, but this could be due to a number of factors, including less than optimum implementation timeframes, commitment of teachers especially with regard to the perspective approach to the program and the low return rate of questionnaires. Qualitative data gained in focus groups would indicate that the success of the perspective intervention was extremely reliant on the quality and enthusiasm of the teachers delivering the program. Some very positive outcomes were however overshadowed by some very poor delivery in other areas. More specific evaluation needs to be done in this area.
- Exposure to broader career examples and options outside of the local domain was seen as both important and essential for Indigenous students. Considerable benefit was derived from exposure to role models and work place visits and interactions outside the local community domain.

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

- It is strongly urged that closer collaboration should be embarked upon with the Curriculum Support Directorate to facilitate complementary development of the *Work Education Support Document* and the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program*. This could be achieved by recommending each other's work or ideally, in the future, the *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program* considerably merged with the *Work Education Support Document* or at least recommended as an addition to this document.

The *Aboriginal Careers Aspirations Program* research was unfortunately compromised due to inappropriate timing and time constraints. The relatively short start up timeframe and only having one short term to implement caused a level of expediency which did not optimise the potential outcome. Implementation in the shortened term in the lead up to the Olympics was a further contributing compromising factor. This timeframe also created difficulty in implementation of the research and subsequently final data gathering and slow return of data forced an extension of timeframes.

Bibliography

- Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Training Advisory Council.
1998 Building pathways: school-industry workplace learning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples', Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Training Advisory Council, Melbourne.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Training Advisory Council.
1999 Partners in a learning culture, Australia's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander vocational education and training strategy, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Training Advisory Council, Broadmeadow.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Training Advisory Council and Australian Student Traineeship
1999 WADU - National Vocational Learning Strategy for Young Indigenous Australians. Unpublished paper.
- Ainley, J., Malley, J. and Lamb, S.
1997 Thematic Review of the Transition from Initial Education to Working Live:Australia Background Paper. Melbourne, ACER
- Altman, J.C.
1997 The CDEP Scheme in a New Policy Environment: Options for Change? Discussion Paper No. 148, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy and Research (CAEPR)
- Altman, J.C. (ed.)
1991 Aboriginal Employment Equity by the Year 2000. Research monograph No.2, CAEPR
- Anderson, L., Courtenay, P., Morris, L., Schurmans, R., and Stehens, C.
1995 "They Just Don't Wanna Know." Central Queensland University, Rockhampton, unpublished report.
- Arthur, W. S.
1999 "Careers, aspirations and the meaning of work in remote Australia: Torres Strait." Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research Discussion Paper No. 190, Australian National University.
- Australian Parliament Senate Employment Education and Training References Committee.
1996 Report of the Inquiry into Education and Training in Correctional Facilities. Canberra
- Barnett, Chris.
1998 "Cross-Sectoral Approaches Combining Career and Vocational Education in Schools in Western Australia." Australian Journal of Career Development. Vol.7 Number 3, Spring. Pp. 8-9.
- Carrington, K
1990 "Truancy, Schooling and Juvenile Justice: She Says She Hates School", Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology, 23: 259-268

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

- CESCEO NATSIEP Working Group
1999 School to Work Transition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students, draft, unpublished.
- Chapman, B.
1991 Aboriginal employment, income and human capital: towards a conceptual framework, in J.C. Altman (ed.), 1991
- Collins, Jacinta (Chair)
2000 Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education References Committee, Katu Kalpa - Report on the inquiry into the effectiveness of education and training programs for Indigenous Australians, March. Commonwealth of Australia
- Commonwealth of Australia
1998 School to Work Transition for Indigenous Australians, Commonwealth DETYA, unpublished.
- Cope, B., Kalantzis, M., McDaniel, M., McGinty, S., Nakata, M., Purdon, A., Solomon, N., Stanton, R.
1995 Assessment and Access to Adult Literacy Programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People Wishing to Participate In Vocational Education and Training. DEET Australian Language and Literacy Policy Project. Canberra: Department of Employment, Education and Training.
- Daly, A.E.
1992 Education and Employment for Young Indigenous Australians, 1986 to 1991. Discussion Paper No. 50. Canberra CAEPR
- Daly, A.E. and Liu Jin
1995 Estimating the Private Rate of Return to Education for Indigenous Australians. Discussion Paper No. 97. Canberra, CAEPR
- Department of Employment, Education and Training
1989 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy. Canberra DEET.
- Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs
2000 What Works? Explorations in Improving outcomes for Indigenous students: The National Coordination and Evaluation Report on the Strategic Results Projects, ACSA.
- Education Queensland
2000 Enhancing Career Opportunities - 1999 Performance Report on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Career Aspirations Pathways Program (AICAPP). Education Queensland, Brisbane
- Golding, B.
1996 'Education and training pathways: no end to travelling'. Paper to 'Learning and Work: the Challenges', Fourth International Conference on Post Compulsory Education and Training, 2-4 December, Gold Coast

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

- Golding, B. and Volkoff, V.
1998 'Learner attributes and their outcomes: intentions and outcomes in Indigenous VET from a longitudinal study', Paper to second National Indigenous Peoples' Training Conference "Challenging Pathways", 9-12 March, Surfers Paradise.
- Golding, B., Volkoff, V., Ferrier, F.
1997 Stocktake of Equity Reports and Literature in Vocational Education and Training, ANTA, Brisbane.
- Gool, S. and Patton, W.
1999 "Career aspirations of young Aboriginal Women." Australian Journal of Career Development. Vol. 8, Number 1, Autumn, Pp. 26-31
- Groome, H.
1995 Working purposefully with Aboriginal students. Social Science Press, Wentworth Falls.
- Groome, H and Hamilton, A
1995 Meeting the needs of Aboriginal adolescents, National Board of Employment, Education and Training Commissioned Report No 35, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.
- Herbert, J.
1995 "Gender Issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Girls - Exploring Issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Boys", The Aboriginal Child At School, 23 (2) Pp. 9-16
- Herbert, J., Anderson, L., Price, D. and Stehbens, C.
1998 "If they Learn Us Right..." A Study of the Factors Affecting the Attendance, Suspension and Exclusion of Aboriginal Students' in Secondary Schools. Project supported by partnership between Australian Centre for Equity through Education and the National Children's Youth Law Centre.
- Horrigan, L., Poole, M. and Nielsen, S.
1996 "Gender Differences in Support Networks." Australian Journal of Career Development. Vol. 5, Number 3, Spring.
- Hunter, B.
1996 The Determinants of Indigenous Employment Outcomes: The Importance of Education and Training. Discussion Paper No. 115. Canberra, CAEPR
- Hughes, Cathy.
1995 "Career Education and Educating for Social Justice." Australian Journal of Career Development. Vol. 4 Number 2, Winter. Pp. 12-14.
- Hunter, B. and Borland, J.
1996 The Interrelationships between Arrest and Employment: More Evidence on the Social Determinants of Indigenous Employment. Discussion Paper No. 136, Canberra, CAEPR
- Hunter, B. and Schwab, R.G.
1998 The Determinants of Indigenous Educational Outcomes. Discussion

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

Paper No. 160. Canberra, CAEPR.

Kenway, Jane.

1993 Enhancing girls' post-school options - Recommendations for policy, curriculum, professional development and research. Department of Employment Education and Training, Canberra

Likert, R.

1932 "A technique for the measurement of attitudes." Archives of Psychology, No. 140.

Long, M, Frigo, T., and Batten, M.

1999 The school to work transition of Indigenous Australians. A review of the literature and statistical analysis. Canberra, Australian Council for Educational Research.

Lysaght, K., Tuck, B. and Adair, V.

1999 "Parental Employment status, gender, ethnic identity and the employment commitment of adolescents in New Zealand." Australian Journal of Career Development, Vol. 8 Number 2, Winter 1999, Pp.26-29

MCEETYA

2000 Report of MCEETYA Taskforce on Indigenous Education, MCEETYA Secretariat, Melbourne.

McInerney, D. M.

1991 Key Determinants of Motivation of Non-traditional Aboriginal Students in School Settings: Recommendations for Educational Change. Australian Journal of Education Vol.35, No. 2. Pp. 154-174

McIntyre, J., Freeland, J., Melville, B., and Schwenke, C.

1999 Early school leaves at risk, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Adelaide.

McIntyre, J., W.Ardler, Warner, T. Morley, N. Solomon, and L. Spindler.

1996 Culture Matters: Community Report: Reporting on a Project to Explore What Factors Affect the Outcomes of Vocational Education and Training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. Sydney, RCVET.

McMahon, M. and Carroll, J.

1999 "Implementing a Developmental Career Education Program Using A K-12 Framework." Australian Journal of Career Development. Vol.8 Number 3, Spring. Pp.38-44.

McRae, D. et al

2000 What works? - Explorations in improving outcomes for Indigenous Students. A report prepared for the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs by the IESIP SRP National Coordination and Evaluation Team. Australian Curriculum Studies Association and National Curriculum, Canberra.

Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs

2000 Discussion Paper - Achieving Educational Equity for Australia's

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Revised April 2000

- Ministerial Council, Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs.
1999 The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century, MCEETYA Secretariat, Melbourne.
- Munns, G. and McFadden, M.
1997 "First Chance Second Chance, or Last Chance? Resistance and Response to Education." Paper presented to Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, Brisbane, Australia, 30th November - 4 December
- Nasir, T.
1996 Aboriginal and Islander Tertiary Aspirations Program. Australian Journal of Career Development. 5(2). 7-11.
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey.
1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey, 1994, ABS Cat. No. 4190.0
- NSW Board of Studies
1996 A Statement of Career Education Outcomes Years 7-12. NSW Board of Studies, Sydney
- NSW Department of School Education
1996 Aboriginal Education Policy. NSW Department of School Education, Sydney.
- Partington, G.
1998 No Simple Solutions Exist: Perspectives on Education as the Key to Change. In Partington (Ed). Perspectives on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education. Katoomba Social Science Press.
- Pascoe, Neil.
1996 The Development of Knowledge and Attitudes about Career Options and Australia's Economic Future: Report of Focus Groups - Commissioned Report No. 46, National Board of Employment, Education and Training Schools Council, March. Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.
- Penny, A.
1995 Aboriginal and Islander career aspirations program. Australian Journal of Career Development 4 (1), 12-13.
- Puplick, Chris
1997 "Discrimination and the World of Work Acoming." Australian Journal of Career Development. Vol. 6, Number 1, Autumn. Pp.39-42.
- Rigney, D., Rigney, L. and Hughes, P.
1998 Report on Aboriginal Students and the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE). Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia. Wayville, South Australia
- Schwab, R.
1997 "Post-compulsory education and training for Indigenous Australians."

Aboriginal Careers Aspiration Program - Evaluative Research

Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research Discussion Paper No. 131, Australian National University.

Spicer, I.
1997

Independent Review of the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) Scheme. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

Teasdale, J. and Teasdale, R.
1996

Pathways to Where?: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participation in Vocational Education and Training: Leabrook, South Australia: NCVET

Watson, T. J.
1995

Sociology, Work and Industry. Routledge, London

Attachments

Pre- Program Questionnaire

Post-Program Questionnaire

Letter to Principals

Participants' Information Sheet and Consent Form