



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

**REPORT ON THE PROVISION OF SCHOOL EDUCATION SERVICES
FOR REMOTE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES IN THE NORTHERN
TERRITORY**

REPORT NUMBER 27

AUGUST 1996

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(in attendance during inquiry)

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(Chairman)

Mr John Bailey, MLA

Mrs Loraine Braham, MLA

Mr Denis Burke, MLA

Mr Brian Ede, MLA

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AEP	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy
AESIP	Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program
AHW	Aboriginal Health Worker
AIC	Assistance to Isolated Children
APETAC	Aboriginal Programs Employment and Training Advisory Council
ASSPA	Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness Program
ATAS	Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
B Ed	Bachelor of Education
C/W	Commonwealth
CAAMA	Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association
CEC	Community Education Centre
Committee	Public Accounts Committee
DARE	Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program
DEET	Department of Employment, Education and Training
DHLG	Department of Housing and Local Government
Dip T	Diploma of Teaching
EFTSU	Equivalent Full-Time Student Unit
ESL	English as a Second Language
Feppi (not abbreviation)	NT Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
LGANT	Local Government Association of the Northern Territory
MAP	Multilevel Assessment Program
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs
NAEP	National Aboriginal Education Policy
NCOM	Northern Territory Computing and Communications
NEPS	National Equity Program for Schools
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
NTDE	Northern Territory Department of Education
NTETA	Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority
NTSCS	Northern Territory Secondary Correspondence School
NTU	Northern Territory University
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
Ph D	Doctor of Philosophy
QLD	Queensland
SA	South Australia
SEG	Senior Executive Group, Northern Territory Department of Education
SPP	Special Purpose Payments
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TEABBA	Top End Aboriginal Bush Broadcasting Association
VEGAS	Vocational and Educational Guidance for Aboriginals Scheme
Vic	Victoria
VRD	Victoria River Downs
WA	Western Australia
Year K	Kindergarten

NORTHERN TERRITORY PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

STATUS OF THE COMMITTEE

The Northern Territory Public Accounts Committee was established by temporary Standing Order 21A of the Legislative Assembly on 16 August 1986.

The Committee's status was altered, by way of a motion of the Chief Minister on 23 August 1988, from a Sessional Committee on a trial basis to a Standing Committee of the Parliament.

As a Committee of the Legislative Assembly, its authority is derived from the *Northern Territory (Self Government) Act* (of the Commonwealth) and the *Legislative Assembly (Powers and Privileges) Act* (of the Northern Territory).

The committee is comprised of five (5) members, presently three (3) Government and two (2) Opposition members.

DUTIES OF THE COMMITTEE

The duties of the Committee under Standing Orders 21A (2) are:

- (a) to examine the accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the Northern Territory and each statement and report transmitted to the Legislative Assembly by the Auditor-General, pursuant to the *Financial Management Act*;
- (b) to report to the Legislative Assembly with such comments as it thinks fit, any item or matters in or arising in connection with the receipt or disbursement of the moneys to which they relate, to which the Committee is of the opinion that the attention of Parliament should be drawn;
- (c) to report to the Legislative Assembly any alteration which the Committee thinks desirable in the form of the public accounts or in the method of keeping them or in the method of receipt, control, issue or payment of public moneys;
- (d) to inquire into and report to the Legislative Assembly on any question in connection with the public accounts of the Territory -
 - (i) which is referred to it by a resolution of the Assembly; or
 - (ii) which is referred to it by the Administrator or a Minister; and
- (e) to examine the reports of the Auditor-General laid before the Legislative Assembly with the accounts of a Public Authority of the Northern Territory (including any documents annexed or appended to those reports).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS in attendance during Inquiry

The Members of the Public Accounts Committee are:

Mr Rick Setter, MLA - Chairman

Appointed 17 May 1988

Appointed Chairman 25 August 1994

Country Liberal Party

Member for Jingili. First elected 1984.

Chairman of Committees.

Other Committees: Publications (Chairman); Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers (Chairman); Standing Orders.

Mr John Bailey, MLA

Appointed 4 December 1990

Australian Labor Party

Member for Wanguri. First elected 1989.

Shadow Minister for Treasury; Education & Training; Youth and Young Families; and TIO.

Other Committees: Constitutional Development; Environment

Mrs Loraine Braham, MLA

Appointed 27 June 1994

Country Liberal Party

Member for Braitling. First elected 1994

Deputy Chairman of Committees

Other Committees: Use and Abuse of Alcohol by the Community; Euthanasia.

Hon. Denis Burke, MLA

Appointed 23 August 1994

Discharged 15 August 1995

Country Liberal Party

Member for Brennan. First elected 1994

Appointed Minister for Power and Water, Work Health and Territory Insurance effective 26 June 1995

Mr Brian Ede, MLA

Reappointed 27 June 1994

Australian Labor Party

Member for Stuart. First elected 1983.

Other Committees: Constitutional Development; Standing Orders

Mr Philip Mitchell, MLA

Appointed 15 August 1995

Country Liberal Party

Member for Millner. First elected 1994

Other Committees: Publications; Constitutional Development; Environment.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Pursuant to paragraph 2(d)(ii) of Standing Order 21A, the Minister for Education and Training, the Hon. Fred Finch, MLA, referred the following matter to the Standing Committee of Public Accounts for inquiry and report:

The accounts of receipt and expenditure for the provision of school education services for remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory, including in that inquiry and report the accounts of receipt and expenditure for Commonwealth Government funded school education activities in remote Aboriginal communities which are administered by the Northern Territory, with particular reference to the following matters in relation to the abovementioned accounts:

- (a) the mechanisms and criteria for the allocation of resources to schools, including a comparison of the allocative mechanisms of the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth;
- (b) the consultation process with Aboriginal people which aid in targeting expenditure to areas of most need;
- (c) the effectiveness of the financial administration and expenditure, including an assessment of the percentage of programme funds spent on the administration of those funds;
- (d) the effectiveness of the financial accountability arrangements, indicating whether expenditure was within legislative requirements and for the purposes intended; and
- (e) the evaluation procedures for these programmes, including an assessment by the Committee of the effectiveness of programme evaluations by the Department of Education and the Commonwealth.

1 December 1994

CONDUCT OF INQUIRY

In mid-December 1994, the Committee corresponded with Northern Territory Government Agencies, local government councils, incorporated Aboriginal associations, remote schools, Commonwealth departments, land councils, Aboriginal organisations and other interested parties. A Call for Expressions of Interest, was advertised in the major regional press. Closing date for receipt of expressions of interest was Friday, 3 February 1995.

The Committee received 30 responses, declaring intentions to lodge submissions.

In mid-February, further advertisements in the press in each major centre in the Northern Territory sought written submissions to be lodged by Friday, 21 April 1995. The Committee also wrote to each of the 30 respondees who expressed an interest in participating in this inquiry and to all local government councils and remote schools. Thirteen written submissions were received and are listed in Appendix A.

Hearings were held in Darwin and Alice Springs (Appendix B) and in 10 remote Aboriginal communities (Appendix C) over the period from February 1995 to May 1996.

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

The Northern Territory has been concerned about the low levels of achievement in Aboriginal schools and the many factors influencing student learning outcomes. This report is in response to a reference received from the Minister for Education, the Hon. Fred Finch, MLA, referred the Provision of School Education Services for Remote Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory to the Public Accounts Committee in December, 1994.

Hearings were scheduled in Darwin, Alice Springs, Batchelor and in 10 remote Aboriginal communities where various Northern Territory, Commonwealth Government and Aboriginal agencies provided evidence. At the 10 remote Aboriginal communities visited, school staff and local government bodies addressed the Committee.

Very early in the Committee's work it became evident that other matters, such as housing and health have a major impact on education. It was also noted that Australia ranks amongst the lowest OECD countries where expenditure on school education is concerned. These issues were considered to have greater bearing on the subject than some of the particular matters referred to it by the Minister and have been given precedence in the report.

While shortcomings in the provision of school education services are acknowledged, the Committee also agrees that the gap between levels of literacy and numeracy achieved in urban and remote schools will not be closed until Aboriginal communities really want the gap closed and provide their children with the support and guidance required to achieve that end.

I extend my thanks to Committee members for their efforts in this Inquiry. Although it has not been possible to achieve a totally unanimous approach in this complex matter which has such far reaching implications for the development of the Northern Territory, the positive approach taken by Committee members is greatly appreciated.

On behalf of the committee I extend my thanks to the Committee Secretariat: Jenny Mollah; Ron Kirkman; and Judy Herring, for their assistance in the conduct of the Inquiry and preparation of this report.

**RICK SETTER, MLA
CHAIRMAN**

PREAMBLE

During this Inquiry, the Public Accounts Committee received conclusive evidence that students in remote Aboriginal communities are achieving very low standards in reading and mathematics when compared with students in urban schools. While 10 year old students in urban schools average Year Five (5) level in both subjects and 12 year old students in urban schools average Year Seven (7) levels, 11-16 year old students in remote Aboriginal schools only average about Year Three (3) level. The Committee believes that about Year Seven (7) level literacy and numeracy are required for a citizen to function effectively in mainstream Australia and that about Year 10 level literacy and numeracy are required to take on a management role within the community.

Many Aboriginal parents are unaware of how poorly their children are achieving when compared with their urban counterparts. Their aspirations for their children are that they should remain as valuable members of their own communities - able to participate in traditional cultural activities fully and with skills in English and mathematics which will enable them to negotiate where necessary with the wider community. All students in those communities, therefore, will need to be literate and numerate to Year 7 level and people aspiring to leadership roles within their communities will need Year 10 levels.

Evidence provided to the Committee, and frequently referred to publicly, shows that severe overcrowding in housing in Aboriginal communities is almost universal. This is the basis of many health and social problems which impede effective learning at school. Children who suffer serious hearing loss, are malnourished and have insufficient sleep cannot learn effectively.

Health and social problems also lead to poor attendance and unpunctuality which are also recognised as major impediments to effective learning. In some communities the extensive time devoted to local cultural activities further restricts the time in school. Expectations expressed to the Committee ranged from English only and no traditional culture in school time to a heavy bias towards those aspects of local Aboriginal life. The Committee believes that Aboriginal parents, who have the legal responsibility in the Northern Territory to ensure that their children attend school regularly, need continued assistance in developing a schooling culture and an acceptance of their role in the education process.

The Committee is also convinced that significantly increased resource levels are required to make a real difference to student learning outcomes in remote Aboriginal communities. Most urgent needs include: suitable housing for all; due attention to ESL needs; continuing and appropriate support for Aboriginal teachers; and increased resources for primary and secondary education.

Based on the above evidence the Public Accounts Committee decided to approach recommendations with the following philosophical beliefs in mind.

Philosophical Beliefs

- The Northern Territory Government has the responsibility for providing quality school education services to all children of compulsory school age in the Northern Territory.
- The Commonwealth policy of horizontal fiscal equalisation must ensure that adequate funding is available for disadvantaged groups, such as Aboriginals living in

remote communities, to have access to quality education services. The NT Government needs to apply the same principle in distributing education funding across the Territory.

- The Northern Territory Government is obliged to ensure that all students are given the opportunity to attain English literacy and numeracy to at least Year Seven (7) level. Interim targets need to be set to measure progress towards this objective.
- Aboriginal communities in remote areas need support to develop a schooling culture.
- To meet the Government's and Aboriginal communities' wishes, flexible approaches to the provision of school education services are required.
- As a part of the process generally known as Aboriginalisation, Aboriginal communities should be major parties in the decision making processes as to the level to which their schools will be staffed by Aboriginal teachers and include Aboriginal culture and language in their schools' curriculums. A full understanding of the ramifications of these decisions must be ensured.
- Ongoing professional development must be available to ensure that Aboriginal teachers will eventually be able to take sole responsibility for their classes.
- Schools need to be resourced to a level which will allow them to cater for the special physical and mental needs of children adversely affected by endemic health and social problems in remote communities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After most evidence had been collected the Committee agreed that to come up with recommendations that all members might accept, it would first have to agree on a set of guiding philosophical beliefs. These are set out in the Preamble to this Report.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 provides an overview of education services to remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory, of written submissions to the Committee and of the Committee's hearings. In its overview of education services the report gives statistics on schools and students in remote communities. This overview discusses student enrolment and attendance and makes recommendations on how these problems may be addressed.

The Committee believes that poverty is a major factor influencing poor educational outcomes in remote Aboriginal communities and makes recommendations in this area.

The Committee's sources of information are outlined briefly in Chapter 1.

The report addresses the definition of remote. Remote is defined loosely at present and means very different things in different parts of Australia. As provision of services to remote Aboriginal communities in the NT is heavily dependent on the principles of fiscal equalisation, 'dispersion' and 'remoteness' must be defined precisely if the NT is to receive its fair share of Commonwealth funding. Currently the degrees of remoteness are not adequately taken into account in Commonwealth Grants Commission calculations.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 addresses the major issues relating to the provision of school education services in remote Aboriginal communities but which are not specified in the Terms of Reference. These issues and consequent recommendations include the following matters:

- The extremely low literacy and numeracy levels achieved in Aboriginal schools.
- The Commonwealth Government is urged to support ESL programs for Aboriginal students at least to the same level as it does for migrant students.
- The need to develop early literacy skills is addressed.
- Primary education is under-funded in relation to secondary education.
- Provision of a full secondary education in each and every remote community is not currently possible. Methods of addressing this shortcoming are recommended.
- Students in remote Aboriginal schools have less access to special education provisions than do their peers in urban schools. It is recommended that this imbalance be addressed.
- The severe and virtually universal problem of overcrowded housing in Aboriginal communities is a major impediment to successful education programs in schools. As well as

leading to health and social problems, overcrowding does not allow the development of an educational home environment for children nor of a schooling culture for their parents.

- A great deal of evidence was provided which points to a need for co-ordination of social justice services to remote Aboriginal communities. This applies particularly to education, health and housing. Neither education nor health problems can be solved in isolation.
- Issues relating to the supported process known as the Aboriginalisation of schools are addressed.
- Australian schools are funded at much lower levels than are provided by most OECD countries. This deficiency needs to be addressed at Commonwealth and Territory levels.

Chapter 3

The first of the Terms of Reference, ‘the mechanisms and criteria for the allocation of resources to schools, including a comparison of the allocative mechanisms of the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth’, is explored in this chapter.

Figures provided by the NT and the Commonwealth show the amounts each spend on education in the NT and where funds are expended. Because NT and Commonwealth funding to schools do not base funding on the same 12 month period and because Commonwealth figures in some programs are not held against the NT separately, figures provided are best estimates but thought to be very close to actual expenditure.

Clearly more is spent per capita in remote schools than in urban schools. There is some question as to whether additional funding to remote schools is sufficiently weighted to take all disadvantage factors into account.

Receipt of funding from a number of sources is confusing to schools. Funding based on submission is seen as disadvantageous to remote schools with inexperienced staff and especially to schools with Aboriginal teachers in senior positions. The Committee believes that all funding to schools should be through the NT and, with the exception of funding for facilities and possibly major program initiatives, formula based. This allows for transparency of funding procedures, equity, and long term planning and evaluation.

If the Federal Government accedes to the unanimous request from Premiers and Chief Ministers, that all SPP funding for school education go direct to States and Territories, many of the problems identified in this area will be solved.

Mechanisms for allocating funds should be compatible with methods of delivery of service. The Committee supports self management of schools and recommends that co-ordinated social justice programs be provided where appropriate.

Chapter 4

Terms of Reference (b), 'The consultation process with Aboriginal people which aid in targeting expenditure to areas of most need', is addressed in Chapter 4.

The Committee believes that extensive consultation occurs but is largely ineffective in the eyes of Aboriginal people living in remote communities. Some ways of increasing the effectiveness of consultation are suggested.

- Research into effective consultative processes with Aboriginal communities needs to be funded.
- Officers consulting with communities should receive appropriate prior training.
- Regional education committees based on language groups should be established as focal points for consultation.
- The method of appointing members to Feppi should be revised.
- Feppi members should receive appropriate training to act as representatives and spokespersons for their constituents.

Consultation processes need to be in line with methods of service delivery. Where co-ordinated social justice programs are being provided, communities should have appropriately trained liaison officers appointed.

The Committee also noted that effective consultation can only occur when the consultant has adequate prior knowledge of a community. Appropriate profiles should be available on all Aboriginal communities in the NT. The NT Office of Aboriginal Development is the logical agency to develop and maintain such profiles.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 addresses Terms of Reference (c), 'The effectiveness of the financial administration and expenditure, including an assessment of the percentage of program funds spent on the administration of those funds'.

Costs of administering programs in the NT are significantly affected by economy of scale. This is recognised by the Commonwealth Grants Commission in recommending comparative levels of funding to the States and Territories. It is also reflected in administration costs charged against Commonwealth Specific Purpose Programs. The high proportion of the NT education budget allocated to Aboriginal education when compared with amounts other States spend preclude the NT from carrying on-costs from other sources.

The Committee found no evidence of 'double dipping'. Although there may be a possibility for this to occur at the school or individual level it should be picked up by audits and would be within the normal limits of risk management.

There can be no doubt that having funding through both the NT and Commonwealth Governments some duplication of administration costs occurs. Savings would result if all funding for education were administered by the NT.

Chapter 6

Term of Reference (d), ‘the effectiveness of the financial accountability agreements, indicating whether expenditure was within legislative requirements and for the purposes intended’, is discussed in Chapter 6.

Procedures and support are in place to ensure financial accountability of provision of services to remote Aboriginal communities. Concern has been expressed that School Council legislation is more flexible in this respect than the *Financial Management Act*.

Funding from two major sources, NT and Commonwealth, is a cause of possible problems. Commonwealth funded programs may be subject to multiple audits. This may well result in some programs being audited several times and others rarely, if at all. This is another reason for all education funding being administered through the NT Department of Education.

Chapter 7

Terms of Reference (e), ‘the evaluation procedures for these programmes, including an assessment by the Committee of the effectiveness of programme evaluations by the Department of Education and the Commonwealth’, is addressed in Chapter 7.

The Multilevel Assessment Program is conducted annually in all primary schools in the NT. The tests are undertaken in reading and mathematics in Years 5 and 7 in urban schools and by 11-16 year old students in Aboriginal schools. Results of these tests clearly demonstrate that students in remote, Aboriginal communities are some years behind their urban counterparts in reading and maths. The results understate the problem as many Aboriginal students are exempted from the tests where their teachers assess their inability to achieve any success and many are absent during the testing period.

The Northern Territory is one of the States/Territories which conducts system wide testing of all students at set year levels on an annual basis. System wide analyses of results are published and available to the public. Individual student results are made available only to the student’s school. Overall schools results are sent to their respective school councils in urban schools which can make comparisons between their own school and Territory results. The Committee believes that this should also happen in Aboriginal schools.

Bilingual programs are evaluated on a cyclical basis. Community members are involved in preparation for, and conduct of, evaluations. Programs may be modified following appraisal. The Committee found that communities are very supportive of their bilingual programs even though some expressed concern at the level of English being attained. Evidence was provided to show that bilingual schools, on average, achieve results slightly below the average of non-bilingual schools in the Multilevel Assessment Program.

The Committee, however, supports the continuation of bilingual education because of its success in supporting cultural identity, raising self-esteem, assisting language maintenance, and supporting community wishes, but believe it should be subject to review.

The bilingual appraisal process does not make reference to a school's achievement in the Multilevel Assessment Program. The Committee believes that it should.

There is little evaluation of educational outcomes of programs funded by the Commonwealth National Equity for Schools programs or through the Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program, (AESIP). The Committee is convinced that it is not possible to evaluate short term education programs effectively. Evaluation of these programs tends to measure things such as the number of Aboriginal people employed; the number of children receiving assistance; the resources provided; and funds spent according to approvals given, rather than changes to student learning outcomes.

The Committee recommends that educational programs be long term to allow for appropriate planning and evaluation.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 briefly addresses some current national developments in education.

It is only in the last decade that a national approach to education has begun to emerge. In late 1995 the Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs accepted a national approach to Aboriginal education for the first time.

The Committee supports such moves and believes that even more clearly defined national goals are required, especially in the area of student learning outcomes in Aboriginal schools.

The Committee believes that emerging technology should be used to the fullest extent in the delivery of school education services to remote Aboriginal communities. Although expensive to install and maintain the Committee is convinced that new technologies can assist teachers in many areas and are more cost efficient than options such as sending students to boarding schools.

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

No.	RECOMMENDATION	Page No.
1	<p>1.1 That the NT Department of Education develops a database which tracks children's enrolment and attendance history;</p> <p>1.2 that the NT Department of Education develops pilot programs to improve attendance in selected communities;</p> <p>1.3 that media campaigns promoting attendance at school be directed specifically at Aboriginal communities;</p> <p>1.4 that the NT Department of Education supports school communities which propose variations to the school day and school year which do not reduce the required time at school but which address cultural needs of specific communities; and</p> <p>1.5 that the NT Department of Education structures staff development so as not to disrupt education programs or disadvantage teachers in remote localities.</p>	5
2	<p>2.1 That the Office of Aboriginal Development find appropriate materials on community development and the defeat of poverty in all its forms and ensure its dissemination throughout Aboriginal communities and organisations;</p> <p>2.2 that the Federal and NT Governments ensure that all Government programs are delivered in a manner which is directed towards the overriding goals of community development and economic independence; and</p> <p>2.3 that the Office of Aboriginal Development develop programs to create opportunities for communities to work towards economic independence.</p>	7
3	<p>That the Commonwealth Grants Commission accept 'access disadvantage' as being a disability factor to be included in their assessment of needs for the purpose of financial assistance grants. Degrees of 'access disability' should be acknowledged in the process and be able to be catered for by the formula.</p>	11
4	<p>That ESL programs for Aboriginal children be funded to ESL - General Support or ESL New Arrivals as minimum levels, recognising that many of them, especially in the Northern Territory, have greater needs than new arrivals to Australia.</p>	15

No.	RECOMMENDATION	Page No.
5	<p>5.1 That funding for primary education be sufficient to introduce and maintain early literacy programs such as 'First Steps' and 'Reading Recovery'; and</p> <p>5.2 that the NT Department of Education encourages schools in small remote Aboriginal communities to enrol pre school aged children and resource schools accordingly.</p>	17
6	<p>6.1 That funding for primary education be distributed according to the principles of horizontal fiscal equalisation;</p> <p>6.2 that the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory increase per capita funding for primary education to match that provided for secondary education;</p> <p>6.3 that whenever possible small communities should be consulted with regard to the appointment of Head Teachers; and</p> <p>6.4 that the staffing formula for Aboriginal schools be revised to ensure that Head Teachers have a release time sufficient to undertake their administrative duties.</p>	20
7	<p>7.1 That tutorial support be made available for students working in remote Aboriginal schools and enrolled with the Northern Territory Secondary Correspondence School;</p> <p>7.2 that maximum use be made of developing technologies to assist in the provision of secondary education in remote communities; and</p> <p>7.3 that the concept of regional facilities for secondary-aged students be investigated.</p>	24
8	<p>8.1 That research into, and development of, appropriate assessment instruments for Aboriginal children be funded; and</p> <p>8.2 that Aboriginal children from remote communities requiring special education be provided with assistance on the same basis as for children in urban centres.</p>	25

Report on the Provision of School Education Services for Remote Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory

No.	RECOMMENDATION	Page No.
9	<p>9.1 That the Commonwealth, Northern Territory and Community Governments embark on a greatly expanded program of accommodation for remote Aboriginal communities;</p> <p>9.2 that accommodation units appropriate to the communities' needs be developed in conjunction with communities as a matter of highest priority; and</p> <p>9.2 that Aboriginal people moving into new accommodation be provided with intensive and on-going education and support with regard to living in such accommodation.</p>	26
10	That the Northern Territory Government review its policy of not providing industry housing for local recruits.	26
11	That the Northern Territory Government investigates the possibility of providing a pool of accommodation in communities for public sector employees recruited from outside those communities.	27
12	<p>12.1 That the Northern Territory Government provides coordinated social justice programs (education, health, housing and social security) to Aboriginal people living in remote communities;</p> <p>12.2 that the Commonwealth increase funding to the National Indigenous Hearing Program to a level where every community has access to a specially appointed Aboriginal Health Worker;</p> <p>12.3 that there be further negotiation of bilateral agreements between the NT and the Commonwealth, specifying consultative, planning, coordination and funding requirements;</p> <p>12.4 that regionally based inter-governmental and inter-service planning bodies be established; and</p> <p>12.5 that appropriate nutrition programs for students be put in place in communities where these are considered essential.</p>	29
13	That programs to assist communities to develop a schooling culture be devised and widely implemented.	30

No.	RECOMMENDATION	Page No.
14	<p>14.1 That the Northern Territory Government continues to support the process of Aboriginalisation of schools in remote Aboriginal communities;</p> <p>14.2 that the Northern Territory Government continues to support mentor programs for newly graduated Aboriginal teachers or Aboriginal teachers in promotion positions;</p> <p>14.3 that Aboriginal teachers be given the opportunity, and encouraged, to undertake continuing professional development;</p> <p>14.4 that teacher training institutions plan for targeted increases in literacy and numeracy levels of students at graduation;</p> <p>14.5 that the number of support staff in Aboriginal schools be based on the number of teachers regardless of their Aboriginality; and</p> <p>14.6 that the formula which generates teaching staff for remote Aboriginal schools be modified to ensure that there is a sufficient number of fluent speakers of standard English on staff.</p>	35
15	<p>15.1 That the NT Department of Education increases the relief teacher component of the allocation to remote schools to allow for reimbursement of associated travel and living expenses;</p> <p>15.2 that the NT Department of Education establishes a pool of teachers prepared to act as relief and/or replacement teachers for remote schools; and</p> <p>15.3 that senior Departmental officers and Feppi members work with communities to help them understand the difficulty in recruiting suitable teachers and the communities' possible role in inducting new teachers.</p>	36
16	<p>16.1 That school communities be encouraged to develop education agreements with the Department of Education; and</p> <p>16.2 that agreements between the NT Government and communities relating to the provision of co-ordinated social justice services, include communities' educational strategies.</p>	37

Report on the Provision of School Education Services for Remote Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory

No.	RECOMMENDATION	Page No.
17	<p>17.1 That, if all education funding flows directly from the NT Department of Education, any savings made by reducing duplication of costs in administering school education be redirected to school education programs;</p> <p>17.2 that further research into the Disability Factors which influence funding to the states concentrate on remote Aboriginal communities; and</p> <p>17.3 that the Northern Territory Government works through the Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs and the Council of Australian Governments to increase expenditure on school education, by planned increments, to average OECD levels.</p>	39
18	<p>18.1 That the Northern Territory Government supports the maintenance of the Fiscal Equalisation policy by which the Commonwealth funds the States and Territories;</p> <p>18.2 that the Commonwealth, States and Territories accept common, agreed policies for school education which will enable all available funding to be channelled through one authority in each State or Territory;</p> <p>18.3 that the disbursement of NT funds to schools should be in accordance with the principles of horizontal fiscal equalisation;</p> <p>18.4 that funds to schools be disbursed by suitable formulas except for capital works, minor new works, repairs and maintenance and major new educational initiatives which should be based on submission;</p> <p>18.5 that schools be funded on a triennial rather than an annual basis;</p> <p>18.6 that the Northern Territory Department of Education distribute per capita funding to remote schools with an access disadvantage allowance calculated according to a formula such as the Griffith Access Service Frame;</p> <p>18.7 that DEET supplies schools with a computerised pro forma for ABSTUDY claim forms; and</p> <p>18.8 that NT Government Agencies report expenditure in their Annual Reports to Parliament against frameworks which reflect the policy of horizontal fiscal equalisation.</p>	53

No.	RECOMMENDATION	Page No.
19	<p>19.1 That the Northern Territory Government trials co-ordinated social justice service provision in selected communities with effective community governance, for a period of five years. Communities to be selected by agreement between Government and individual communities. Education levels to be evaluated before and after the trials to enable progress to be assessed accurately; and</p> <p>19.2 that Aboriginal communities that request greater control of their schools be assisted by Government to acquire the necessary skills and be further encouraged to progress through the devolution stages to the fullest possible extent. The long-term goal would be fully self-managed schools in the Government system.</p>	57
20	That the Northern Territory Government resources and empowers the Office of Aboriginal Development to co-ordinate the provision of services to remote Aboriginal communities.	58
21	<p>21.1 That the Northern Territory Government establishes and resources regional education advisory committees, based on languages spoken, as the major target for consultation on education in remote communities;</p> <p>21.2 that the membership of Feppi be revised to include representatives from regional education advisory committees and joint ASSPA committees in urban areas;</p> <p>2.13 that the NT Government funds the development and publication of a handbook on effective consultation methodology with Aboriginal communities;</p> <p>21.4 that superintendents, principals, head teachers and other Departmental officers who need to consult with Aboriginal communities receive appropriate cross-cultural awareness training prior to taking up their positions;</p> <p>21.5 that all new Feppi members receive appropriate training; and</p> <p>21.6 that principals and head teachers appointed to remote communities receive appropriate training to assist them in their role as liaison agents between communities and the NT Department of Education.</p>	69
22	That the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Governments resource the NT Office of Aboriginal Development to develop and maintain comprehensive databases on all Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.	70
23	That all funding for school education, both for Specific Purpose Programs and Direct Grants, be given by the Commonwealth to the NT to administer.	76

Report on the Provision of School Education Services for Remote Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory

No.	RECOMMENDATION	Page No.
24	<p>24.1 That the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Governments co-operate to reduce the duplication of audits which may be required of Commonwealth funded programs;</p> <p>24.2 that the Department of Education Audit Committee ensures that all programs are subject to internal audit on a cyclical basis; and</p> <p>2.4.3 that the Department of Education continues to ensure that program managers and small schools have sufficient support to enable them to meet their financial accountability responsibilities.</p>	81
25	<p>25.1 That the Multilevel Assessment Program be enhanced so that longitudinal trends in student learning outcomes can be assessed;</p> <p>25.2 that the MAP tests be extended down to Stage One (1) level so that more students can experience some success in the tests;</p> <p>25.3 that the testing be made compulsory for all 11-16 year old students in Aboriginal schools; and</p> <p>25.4 that a simplified analysis of results go to school councils in Aboriginal communities. The analysis should include the schools' overall results showing a comparison with the average of Aboriginal schools and with NT wide standards.</p>	86
26	<p>26.1 That future appraisals of programs in bilingual schools make specific reference to a school's performance in the Multilevel Assessment Program in reading and mathematics, with the appraisal committee having access to their schools' total results and that the communities be informed of their outcomes;</p> <p>26.2 that future appraisals in bilingual schools set goals for increased English literacy and numeracy levels; and</p> <p>26.3 that an independent review be established to assess the role of bilingual education in the NT system.</p>	87
27	<p>27.1 That the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training, and Youth Affairs agrees to gather baseline data which clearly identifies Aboriginal student learning outcomes in English and mathematics, and in a manner which allows Australia-wide decisions to be made; and</p> <p>27.2 that appropriate, achievable short and long term goals with complementary performance indicators be developed so that trends in student learning outcomes in Aboriginal schools across Australia can be evaluated.</p>	89

No.	RECOMMENDATION	Page No.
28	That Special Purpose funding for education from the Commonwealth to the states and Territories be of a long-term nature so that predictable programs can be put in place along with long term evaluation procedures.	90
29	That the NT Department of Education make maximum use of developments in technology to improve the provision of school education services to remote Aboriginal communities.	94

CHAPTER 1

<h3>1. INTRODUCTION</h3>

1.1. Schooling for Remote Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory

In his written submission to the Committee, Fong (1995) provides the following statistics:

- There are 6000 Aboriginal students in remote communities.
- There is a total of 83 schools plus 53 homeland learning centres.
- 18 of the 83 schools are Community Education Centres (CECs).
- Education is provided through English as a Second Language (ESL) or bilingual programs.
- There are 21 bilingual schools.
- Children from remote Aboriginal communities are also enrolled in three boarding colleges, the two schools of the air, and the NT Secondary Correspondence School.

1.1.1. Homeland Learning Centres

Homeland learning centres, sometimes called outstations, are not treated by the Department of Education as schools. They are attached administratively to schools in larger communities. They are staffed with one or more Aboriginal assistant teachers, based on formula, who are assisted by visiting teachers based at the hub schools. As for the establishment of a school, the minimum of twelve (12) students is required for the establishment of a Homeland Learning Centre.

Homeland learning centres operate in a variety of ways. Some offer full day programs while others only have half days education programs allowing children to participate in traditional activities for the remainder of the day or the assistant teacher to participate in staff development activities with the visiting teacher. Visiting teachers may spend from one day to four and a half days per week at the homeland learning centre.

Homeland learning centres may become schools in their own right when:

- the community requests it;
- the community has proven stability in the location;
- the community is prepared to have a non-local living in their community;

- there is an adequate source of power and suitable water; and
- there is suitable accommodation for a teacher.

As at May 1996, there were 854 students enrolled in homeland learning centres. While these students attract funding from the NT and the Commonwealth, the learning centres are treated by the Commonwealth as part of the hub school and their locations are not taken into account by the Grants Commission when considering dispersion.

1.1.2. Student Enrolment

Evidence has been provided to show that many Aboriginals in the NT are not enrolled at school. Comparing enrolment figures provided by the NT Department of Education with Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census figures it is found that in 1994 34.51% of 3-4 year old Aboriginal children are enrolled compared with 56.75% of non-Aboriginal children; 95.74% of 5-12 year old Aboriginal children are enrolled compared with 97.05% of non-Aboriginal children; and 57.80% of 13-17 year old Aboriginal are enrolled compared with 90.48% of non-Aboriginal children.

The most heartening information provided is that the percentage of 5-12 year olds (primary aged) has increased from 79.78% in 1986 to 95.74% in 1994.

The percentage of 3-4 year old Aboriginal children is disappointing as 3 year olds may attend preschool in Aboriginal communities if accompanied by parents whereas children have to be four years old to be enrolled in an urban preschool.

According to the NT Department of Education, the funding provided by the Commonwealth to the NT for school education is based on school enrolments, not ABS figures on the total age cohort of the population.

1.1.3. Student Attendance

Attendance rates of students living in remote Aboriginal communities are significantly lower than attendance rates in urban primary schools. Figures provided by NTDE show:

	Maximum	Minimum	Mean
Aboriginal Schools	92.4	40.1	71.1
Urban Primary Schools	91.5	87.9	90.7

Table 1: Attendance Rate (%) : In Northern Territory - 1994.

Schools are required to supply enrolment and attendance data on eight set dates each year. The data, which are stored centrally, provide the information on which schools are resourced.

It is widely believed that poor attendance rates in Aboriginal schools are a significant reason for poor educational outcomes. The full picture is probably worse than the figures show as students are removed from their class rolls after an unexplained absence of three weeks. Such students may have enrolled at another school but are more likely to be at

another community where there is no school, at another community and not attending school, or visiting an urban centre and not attending school.

Evidence provided to the Committee indicated that children are marked present if they attend at any time during the day. Many children are frequently late for school and others leave before the day's lessons are over and possibly as soon as morning recess time.

Some reasons given for poor attendance include:

- Families are very mobile; moving between outstations and larger communities, from community to community, and between communities and urban centres.
- Parents do not have a schooling culture. Although they say they appreciate the need for children to attend regularly they do not make their children go to school. A frequent reason given for this was that within Aboriginal culture parents do not make children do things they do not want to do.
- Poor health keeps children away from school.
- Social problems within communities discourage children from attending school.
- Cultural responsibilities are given precedence over school attendance.
- Teacher involvement in staff development sometimes closes small schools, frequently disrupts education programs, and may help teach communities that regular attendance at school is not really important.

Northern Territory, Commonwealth and combined programs have been implemented over the years, with little or no apparent long-term effect to date, to improve attendance of Aboriginal children at school. These programs include:

- encouraging parents to participate in school councils and ASSPA committees;
- developing more interesting and relevant curriculum materials;
- encouragement of the use of Aboriginal language in bilingual and language programs;
- encouragement of the inclusion of aspects of local culture in the school curriculum;
increased employment of Aboriginal staff including teachers and teachers in promotional positions; and
- appointment, by formula, of home liaison officers to larger schools.

The Committee believes that the following further measures should be investigated in an attempt to improve school attendance in remote Aboriginal communities:

- Explore with individual communities and teachers the possibility of altering daily school timetables and annual calendars to see if flexible times which address cultural responsibilities and climatic matters may improve attendance.
- Extend the media campaign which is designed to encourage Aboriginal parents to send their children to school regularly.
- Establish pilot programs in selected schools. The Committee suggests that pilot programs be funded and additional resources be made available for use at the school council's discretion for programs such as the following:
 - running parent awareness or schooling culture development programs;
 - employing teachers to work with marginalised groups of children who will not attend;
 - employing school/home liaison officers; and
 - busing children to school.

The Committee recommends that communities selected for these pilot programs would:

- already have proven commitment to improving attendance and have achieved at least 70% attendance;
 - be prepared to enact local government by-laws which could be supported by the NT Government to provide some penalty for parents who do not send their children to school regularly.
- Investigate models used successfully elsewhere to handle itinerant students.
 - Develop a database which is easily accessible by all schools and is able to track children's movements between schools and attendance accurately.

Under the *Education Act* in the Northern Territory, parents clearly have the responsibility to educate their children. Provisions within the Act to prosecute parents who do not comply are rarely enforced and have not been enforced in Aboriginal communities. The Committee believes that it is more appropriate in the short term to attempt to implement the above program than to take the advice of the NT ATSIC State Advisory Committee and enforce the compulsory attendance provisions of the *Education Act*. While acknowledging that parents have this responsibility, the Committee believes that all relevant sections of government, particularly the Department of Education, should work with Aboriginal people in an effort to improve school attendance.

RECOMMENDATION 1.

- 1.1 That the NT Department of Education develop a database which tracks children's enrolment and attendance history;**
- 1.2 that the NT Department of Education develops pilot programs to improve attendance in selected communities;**
- 1.3 that media campaigns promoting attendance at school be directed specifically at Aboriginal communities;**
- 1.4 that the NT Department of Education supports school communities which propose variations to the school day and school year which do not reduce the required time at school but which address cultural needs of specific communities; and**
- 1.5 that the NT Department of Education structures staff development so as not to disrupt education programs or disadvantage teachers in remote localities.**

Low attendance rates affect funding to schools as schools are staffed and funded on adjusted enrolment, not actual enrolment. Schools which have an attendance of 90% or better are resourced on enrolment. Schools which have an attendance of less than 90% are resourced on attendance plus 10%.

Examples:

- a) A school with an enrolment of 400 students and an attendance of 90% or better is resourced for 400 students
- b) A school with an enrolment of 400 students and an attendance of 75% is resourced for 75% of 400 + 10%, ie. 330 students.

MCEETYA (1995, p. 39) recommends the consideration of 'the level of transient students in the allocation of funding to schools'.

It is claimed sometimes that resourcing schools to adjusted enrolment does not allow school staff to concentrate sufficient time on fostering increased attendance and that there will be a resulting downward spiral of attendance. Attendance records do not support this belief. Figures provided by the NTDE and based on data on enrolment and attendance supplied by schools show that from 1985 to 1995 average attendance of children in remote Aboriginal schools has varied little with no trend either upwards or downwards, but always within 2.5% of the mean for the 11 years. At the same time enrolment has increased by 12% compared with a total NT increase of 11%. The Committee is concerned that there is not accurate information regarding the number of Aboriginal children not enrolled at school.

Specific programs for Aboriginal students have as a main aim, increasing attendance at school. Achieving that aim will, therefore, add significantly to the cost of school education to the Northern Territory. It is estimated that an additional \$5m would be required if all students enrolled at school attended regularly. It would cost significantly more if those not

enrolled at school attended throughout the compulsory years of schooling. The lack of accurate data on children not enrolled at schools and where they live in the NT makes it impossible to estimate that additional cost.

Many remote communities, like Millingimbi, argue that schools should be resourced on total enrolment or even total potential enrolment.

1.1.4. Adjusting Staffing to Fluctuating Enrolments

There is also a common belief that schools lose teachers as soon as numbers drop below formula. This rarely occurs. The Superintendent has considerable discretion in this matter. The Superintendent consults with the Principal, Head Teacher or community and has the power not to enforce reductions if he is convinced that the reduced enrolment is of a temporary nature.

1. Entitlement Variation During the Year

Alteration to a school's entitlement (either + or -) will only be made in the following circumstances

- In a Primary School where the numbers of students rise 11 above the higher figure in the formula range or fall 11 below the lower figure in the schedules range, eg. in the range 67-88, an increase occurs at 99, a decrease occurs at 56.
- With respect to Secondary Schools and schools in predominantly Aboriginal communities the formula for teacher equivalent range contains staged steps which provide a similar effect as above.

2. Staff Changes During a Year

- An increase in staffing occurs at the beginning of the next school term or at other times by agreement with the Superintendent.
- A reduction in staffing occurs at the end of a school term, by attrition, or at other times by agreement with the Superintendent.

(Source: Department of Education Guidelines)

1.2. Poverty

There are well-documented studies on the inter-relationship between poverty and health and educational outcomes. Poverty in Aboriginal communities is not confined to relative income levels but includes a poverty of spirit; a feeling of helplessness that verges on hopelessness.

The kinship system precludes an individual achieving material wealth more than marginally greater than their peers. A lack of individual money management skills acts as a brake on the accumulation of wealth by the group.

The poverty cycle has become so intense that a large majority of rural Aboriginal people form a permanent under-class in Territory society. They do not see the values and norms of mainstream society as being applicable to them nor do they see the method of achieving parity in the social mainstream as being available to them.

This has a very substantial effect on the way people view education, access education and utilise the results of education.

A substantial amount of research has been done measuring the extent of Aboriginal disadvantage across a wide range of areas. Very little literature is available on means of breaking out of poverty traps.

RECOMMENDATION 2.

- 2.1 That the Office of Aboriginal Development find appropriate materials on community development and the defeat of poverty in all its forms and ensure its dissemination throughout Aboriginal communities and organisations;**
- 2.2 that the Federal and NT Governments ensure that all Government programs are delivered in a manner which is directed towards the overriding goals of community development and economic independence; and**
- 2.3 that the Office of Aboriginal Development develop programs to create opportunities for communities to work towards economic independence.**

1.3. Overview of Submissions

Of the correspondence received, a total of 13 are considered as submissions. These are listed in Appendix A.

The submission from Mr Noel Mifsud, Principal of Xavier Community Education Centre, provides a brief outline of his perception of the issue.

Professor Don Watts provided a copy of a paper, titled 'Social Justice for Aboriginal People - The White Man's Challenge', which he presented in 1993.

Mr James Gaykarnangu, Chairman, Milingimbi Community Inc. made brief comments on the terms of reference.

The Commissioner of Police, Mr Brian Bates, outlined the Police's involvement through school based constables and the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program as they relate to remote Aboriginal schools.

Ms Catherine Potter, Adult Educator at Kintore lists a series of concerns based on her perception of what happens in remote schools/communities.

Mr Michael Fong, Secretary, NT Department of Education, provided a detailed analysis of provision of education in remote schools, supporting documentation relating to Aboriginal Education Programs (AEP), and briefly addressed the terms of reference. The Secretary has co-operated fully to ensure that the Committee has had access to officers who have provided further information to address the terms of reference.

Mr Peter Strachan, Regional Management DEET, Alice Springs, discusses Commonwealth programs relating to the topic, his view on their success and makes recommendations.

Ms Mary Lovett, First Assistant Secretary, DEET, Canberra, provided documents detailing Commonwealth programs and the 'Final Report of the National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' (Yunupingu) published in 1995.

Ms Katherine Henderson, Secretary, NT Department of Health & Community Services, addresses, in the main, relationships between health and education, programs relating to those relationships, and recommends greater emphasis on more appropriate health education in remote, Aboriginal schools.

Mr K.B. Clarke, A/Under Treasurer, NT Treasury, provided budget details relating to education in the NT.

Mr Lyal Mackintosh, NT Department of Industries and Development, commented on school councils purchasing supplies from interstate rather than from local suppliers.

Mr R.J. Beadman, NT Department of Lands, Housing and Local Government, commented on the need to include domestic science [home economics] skills in the curriculum and to improve literacy and numeracy skills.

Mr R. Mangan, Conservation Commission of the NT, provided details of the Junior Ranger Program as it applies to remote, Aboriginal Schools.

1.4. Overview of Evidence Gathered by the Public Accounts Committee

Appendix B lists 18 Public Accounts Committee hearings in Darwin and Alice Springs. Appendix C lists 26 hearings in remote communities across the NT. Communities were selected to provide a sample of most types of schools in the Territory. They included:

- small and large schools;
- schools with and without homeland learning centres;
- schools with and without bilingual programs;
- schools with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal principals;
- Government and Catholic Mission schools; and
- schools from each region in the NT.

Witnesses to the Committee addressed all aspects of the Terms of Reference. Unanimous concern regarding the provision of school education services to remote Aboriginal communities in the NT was expressed. Major issues raised are addressed in Chapter 2 of this report.

Further evidence was gathered from a wide range of expert witnesses and from current literature.

1.5. Definitions

Across the Australian education scene there are common problems in defining 'remote' or 'rural' as distinct from 'urban' when attempting to address equity issues. 'Remote' is the term generally used as a descriptor in programs such as the Country Area Program component of the National Equity Program for Schools (NEPS). Schools in the NT receive an 'isolation' factor in their per capita funding levels to the states and territories.

Defining remoteness accurately is of vital importance in funding for the NT. All of the NT is remote in comparison with any of the other States. Costs in Darwin are much higher than any of the other capital cities as evidenced by the regular publication by the Australian Bureau of Statistics of the cost of a weekly shopping order. All centres in the NT are remote from Darwin by interstate standards. In the NT context Katherine is close to Darwin. In the states there are many large towns or cities within 300 kilometres of their capital cities. If remote Aboriginal communities are to have equity, by any of its many definitions, of service provision then funding from the Commonwealth to the states and within the NT should be based, in part, on a clearly defined dispersion factor.

This has not been done in the NT. A small state like Victoria is addressing this problem as the following evidence shows and the NT should work towards defining access disability as it applies to the Northern Territory.

A recent publication of the Directorate of School Education, Victoria (1995) recommends:

1. That a rural school size adjustment factor be introduced for schools in non-metropolitan and non-provincial locations in the following enrolment ranges:
 - primary schools with fewer than 175 students
 - secondary colleges with fewer than 500 students
2. That a location index be introduced to compensate schools in non-metropolitan locations for the higher distance-related administrative and curriculum support costs arising from each school's location.
3. That the location index be simple and transparent and based on the distance of each school from:
 - Melbourne
 - the nearest provincial centre with more than 20,000 inhabitants
 - the nearest primary or secondary school, as appropriate, above the rural school size adjustment factor threshold (p. 11).

At present, the Victorian Directorate of School Education classes a school more than 30 km from a population centre of less than 1000 as rural and provides additional staff and per capita resources. The report goes on to say:

The Griffith Service Access Frame ... has distance as one of its components ... it also includes an index of economic resources, handled separately in Victoria through the students at educational risk element, thus making the model unsuitable [for Victoria] (p. 38).

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (1993) publication, Rhetoric or Reality, says:

4.124 Disadvantaged Schools Program funds are currently allocated by DEET using an Index of Disadvantage which produces the most bizarre results in the ranking of schools. In the Northern Territory, it produces a ranking of schools that is so skewed that remote Aboriginal schools such as Mamaruni, Umbakumba, Papunya and Docker River, which are extremely poor Aboriginal communities, all score well above the Australian mean level of socio-economic disadvantage. In fact, Mamaruni, on Croker Island, generates the highest score in the Northern Territory, higher than schools in the wealthiest areas of Darwin. The Committee agrees with the Northern Territory Government that such an outcome is patently ridiculous (p. 89).

Rurality and Participation in Schooling, a report commissioned for the Commonwealth of Australia (1993), recommends that:

- 1 A descriptive definition of rural locations should be based upon demographic criteria, namely population size of centre and density (p. 41)
- and
- 11 Under these circumstances, preference should be given to an index capable of taking into account educational factors over a more general purpose index of remoteness. An example is the index of accessibility produced by the Griffith Service Access Frame (p. 43).

Mooney (1995) defined equity as 'equal access for equal need'. This definition is highly suitable when considering the provision of school education services to remote Aboriginal communities. The notion of 'access' to services can be much more clearly defined and calculated than can the term 'remote'. 'Remote' means very different things in different contexts; eg. Victoria and the Northern Territory.

The Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET), with regard to the Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA) program, defines 'remote' as any place more than 300 km from a city with a population in excess of 50,000. Communities within that range may also be defined as remote.

Rye (1995) stated that the Commonwealth Grants Commission calculates 'remote' on distance only. Type or quality of roads is not taken into consideration (p. 6).

Fong (1995) defines an Aboriginal community thus:

A community is regarded as Aboriginal by the Department if the majority of its members are Aboriginal and the majority of students enrolled in the school in the community are Aboriginal (pp. 2-3).

Fong (1995) prefers the term 'access disadvantage' to 'remote'. In his submission (p. 2), he states that 'a community is access disadvantaged, for school education purposes, if its members cannot access the full range of school education services'.

Based on the above, Fong would define a remote Aboriginal community as one where 'the majority of its members are Aboriginal and the community is access disadvantaged'.

Fong (1995) recommends that the Northern Territory Department of Education's definition of a remote Aboriginal community (p. 2) be adopted for the purpose of this inquiry.

RECOMMENDATION 3.

That the Commonwealth Grants Commission accept 'access disadvantage' as being a disability factor to be included in their assessment of needs for the purpose of financial assistance grants. Degrees of 'access disability' should be acknowledged in the process and be able to be catered for by the formula.

CHAPTER 2

2. MAJOR ISSUES

There are major issues related to school education in remote Aboriginal communities, some of which are not addressed in the Terms of Reference but which have been raised in submissions or from further evidence provided to the Committee and during visits to remote communities.

2.1. Student Achievement

The most disturbing finding of the Committee is the extremely poor levels of literacy and numeracy being achieved in remote Aboriginal schools in the Northern Territory. The average attainment levels in the Multilevel Assessment Program conducted in these schools is mid Year Three (3). Students attempting the tests are 11 to 16 years of age. In urban primary schools children aged eight (8) achieve Year Three (3) level and 11 to 16 year old achieve at Year Five (5) to Year 10 levels. It can be seen, therefore, that students in remote Aboriginal schools are, at best, three (3) years behind their urban counterparts and, at worst, seven (7) years behind.

As bad as they are, the above results present a picture which is better than the real situation. Students whose teachers believe they are not able to score on the tests are exempt from them. There is a significant number of exemptions each year. If all students attempted the tests, average results would be below Year Three (3) level. There are very few secondary aged students in remote Aboriginal communities working at Year 10 level. There are no results, therefore, which can be used to show just how 15 year old students compare with their age peers in urban schools.

This matter is addressed in more detail in Chapter 7.

2.2. English as a Second Language (ESL)

Both Strachan (1995) and Fong (1995) claim that students covered by this inquiry should be treated as English as a Second Language (ESL) students.

Strachan says:

English as a Second Language - It is well known that for these students English is the second, third or even fourth language with the predominant language spoken at home and on the Community, everywhere but at school. Until the student : teacher ratio is reduced to at least 10:1 no breakthrough will be made in remote area education (p. 3).

Fong says:

The Department campaigned long and hard with the Commonwealth Department for it to recognise that Aboriginal students have ESL support needs. 1993 was the first year that the Territory was funded for the ESL support needs of Aboriginal students. The Commonwealth still does not fund

those needs in the Territory to the same extent as it does for migrant students. The Commonwealth still does not recognise that some Aboriginal students have ESL intensive support needs (p. 14).

The NT Department of Education claims that Aboriginal children are still not properly acknowledged in Commonwealth funding for ESL through the National Equity Programs for Schools initiatives.

The Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) (1995–3) says:

Many indigenous children have special learning needs because English is not their first language (p. 13).

MCEETYA (1995) states that:

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students do not speak standard Australian English as their first language or first dialect. Access to ESL or English language acquisition programs and teaching strategies is crucial for the development of proficiency in English language, particularly in the early years (p. 57).

DEET, however, still does not fully acknowledge this need when it comes to funding.

After many years of argument, Aboriginal children could be included in the ESL - General Support Element in 1993. Commonwealth funding to the NT for this element rose from \$368,000 in 1992 to \$842,000 in 1993. The Department claims that this was still short by \$48,000 when the number of students needing such support is taken into account and this gap has not subsequently been closed. The additional funding has been directed to staff development for teachers, mainly from remote schools, in ESL methodology. Very few teachers in remote schools received preservice training in this area.

In addition, Aboriginal children who speak no English, or very little English, are still not entitled to the level of assistance provided to migrant children under the ESL - New Arrivals program. The Northern Territory has recorded this in the National Report on Schooling in Australia in both 1993 and 1994; and attempted to have the matter redressed through Minister to Minister correspondence; through submission to the Commonwealth Grants Commission; and at meetings whenever appropriate. This clearly discriminates against Aboriginal children in the NT, especially in the light of the 1991 Census figures.

The following information is based on extrapolation of figures from Table 1.1 and Table 3.6 (Castles, 1991 Census).

Aboriginals comprise 22.7% of the NT's population whereas in WA, the State with the next highest proportion of Aboriginals, only 2.6% of the population are Aboriginals. Even these disproportionate figures do not tell the full story as far as Aboriginality affects education in the NT.

79% of NT Aboriginals speak an indigenous language. The next highest figures are in WA and SA where 23% of their Aboriginal population speak an indigenous language. Figures are still further distorted when one looks at Aboriginals who claimed to speak English 'not well' or 'not at all'. The NT has 68% of all Aboriginals who do not speak English well and 76% of all Aboriginals who do not speak English at all. SA is second in both of these categories with 13% and 11% respectively. 25% of NT Aboriginals, that is 5.67% of the NT's population are

Aboriginals who speak English 'not well' or 'not at all'. If these figures are extrapolated to the 37,543 children who were enrolled in all NT schools at the 1994 school enrolment census, 2129 were Aboriginal children who require intensive ESL support. Most of these would be in remote Aboriginal communities. There would only be 915 Aboriginal children requiring this level of assistance across the rest of Australia.

Rye (1995, pp. 31-32) claimed that there is insufficient data to consider additional funding for Aboriginals who do not speak English as a first language.

The Committee believes, and there is wide support to claim that the Commonwealth should be providing this support through a program similar to the ESL - New Arrivals program.

The New Arrivals program provides \$2,861 per student as a one-off payment which is designed to support the student in an intensive English program for six months. While most 'New Arrivals' live in urban areas and would be mixing regularly with native English speakers, Aboriginal children in remote communities often only hear English at school. If their teacher is a local Aboriginal they would hear even less standard English spoken at school. It is likely that children in such situations really require an intensive English program for the equivalent of a year.

If it were to accept responsibility for providing intensive English for Aboriginal children, even at only the 'New Arrivals' level, the Commonwealth would need to find around \$870,888 per annum to meet this need. That is assuming that 10% of the children involved were new to the education system each year. The figure would, in fact, probably, be somewhat higher due to the age structures of Aboriginal communities. This is an insignificant additional amount when considering the Commonwealth's expenditure on education.

On the other hand the NT would gain \$609,106. This would make a significant difference in providing for the educational needs of children in remote Aboriginal communities.

RECOMMENDATION 4.

That ESL programs for Aboriginal children be funded to ESL - General Support or ESL New Arrivals as minimum levels, recognising that many of them, especially in the Northern Territory, have greater needs than new arrivals to Australia.

2.3. Early Literacy

There is a wealth of evidence available to support the need to focus on the early years of schooling, particularly in the area of literacy. This is particularly significant for children in remote Aboriginal communities. It is widely recognised that children's achievement in the early years of schooling depends significantly on support from the parents and the home environment. This includes a secure environment where there are books and educational toys in the home; where parents read to children, teach them to count and talk about what happens at school; and include children in activities which prepare them for school or support what the school is doing.

Children in Aboriginal communities rarely get this type of support. Raising levels of literacy and numeracy levels in these communities, therefore, depends on the school to a much greater extent than elsewhere and is a long-term project.

The Centre for Applied Educational Research (1994) claims that it is cheaper and more effective to introduce a program such as 'Reading Recovery' than to follow some of the more traditional methods such as repeating a grade, being involved in a disadvantaged program or through special education. The following extrapolations from Tables 6.7 and 6.8 on p. 101 demonstrate this. Costs are in \$US.

Repeating a grade costs \$5,208 per student, ongoing disadvantaged program \$4,715, special education \$9,906, and Reading Recovery \$2,063. They calculate the net savings per Reading Recovery teacher at \$13,244.

The study further claims that while little evidence exists to prove conclusively that extra resources enhance outcomes:

This study finds strong grounds for believing that a highly effective use of resources would be to target students in the early years of schooling and to focus on improved literacy teaching for all students and intensive intervention programs for those identified as at risk with the aim of significantly reducing the proportion of students with literacy problems. The problem is real and can be quantified. It is a problem with enormous negative consequences for the individuals concerned and for society as a whole, but it is a problem which can be successfully tackled. Programs now exist which are known to be effective and the cost of making such programs available in all schools is not beyond the means of education systems given the right commitment (p. 106).

The study estimated that the cost of implementing effective programs over a four year period in Australian dollars to be \$66.03m (Table 7.1, p. 111).

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (1992) said:

The Committee's view has been that so far in the implementation of the Aboriginal Education Policy more attention has been concentrated on the secondary and tertiary sectors. The initial stages have been neglected. The Commonwealth, too, in its response to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, acknowledged 'that there is a large unmet demand for early childhood programs and that access to existing funding is limited' (p. 60).

It recommends that:

The Department of Employment, Education and Training extend the Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA) Program scheme to pre-schools to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not culturally isolated and receive every support from their own community. (Recommendation 17) (p. 65).

Pre school children attracted ASSPA funding in 1996.

MCEETYA (1995, p. 59) supported Yunupingu (1995, p. 91) quoted elsewhere with regard to the need for early achievement of literacy and numeracy.

Attendance at pre school is acknowledged as a means of developing early literacy and a schooling culture in both parents and young children. In the NT pre schools are an integral part of primary schools in larger communities. Whereas children must have turned four before they can be enrolled at pre schools in urban areas, three year olds can also be enrolled at pre schools in remote communities if their parents attend with them.

While 56.75% of non-Aboriginal 3 and 4 year old children are enrolled at schools only 34.51% of Aboriginal children participate in pre school education despite being permitted to enrol at the age of 3. This is largely due to the high number of children in small remote communities where there are no pre schools. Some small schools in these communities enrol pre school aged children along with their primary aged students. The Committee recommends that the NT Department of Education encourages schools in small, remote Aboriginal communities to enrol pre school aged children as a matter of course and resource schools accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION 5.

- 5.1 That funding for primary education be sufficient to introduce and maintain early literacy programs such as ‘First Steps’ and ‘Reading Recovery’; and**
- 5.2 that the NT Department of Education encourages schools in small remote Aboriginal communities to enrol pre school aged children and resource schools accordingly.**

2.4. Primary Education

Primary education, which in the NT caters for children from 5 to 12 years of age, lays the foundation for all future education. There is a wealth of evidence to prove that a sound educational foundation is not being achieved in primary schools in remote Aboriginal communities in the NT.

In 1994, 95.74% of Aboriginal children in the NT were enrolled at school. This compared favourably with non-Aboriginal children of whom 97.05% were enrolled. System-wide testing proves conclusively, however, that Aboriginal children, particularly those living in remote areas, are achieving very poorly compared with their non-Aboriginal counterparts.

Issues such as inadequate housing, poor health, the lack of a schooling culture, and the fact that the children do not speak English as their native language impact enormously on children’s education. Another major obstacle which must be overcome before these children can achieve literacy and numeracy levels attained by children in urban schools is the inadequacy of funding to education to address the issues effectively.

Marginson, Martin and Williamson (1995), say that:

The foundations of literacy are laid in the early childhood and primary education years. Early childhood and primary education are the foundation years where basic skills and attitudes to learning are developed. What happens at this level shapes the rest of education: fail here and the lost ground may never be recovered.

Yet early learning is the weakest part of our education system. In distributing resources and improving outcomes, we have often focused on secondary and post-school education to the neglect of primary. We spend much less on primary education despite its educational importance (p. 45).

Included among the recommendations of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training (1993) (The Crawford Committee) were:

The Crawford Committee recommends among other things that:

- 1a. The Minister for Employment, Education and Training seek [sic] the agreement of the Australian Education Council to revise funding arrangements for the school sectors, and
- 1b. Commonwealth and State Government funding to the primary sector be increased, over the next three financial years, to the equivalent general per student levels of the secondary sector.
4. The Minister for Employment Education and Training seek [sic] the agreement of the Australian Education Council to require -
 - a. A minimum of four years training for new teachers including a significant compulsory component devoted to language and literacy,
 - b. All new teachers to undertake a unit of special education,
 - c. All new teachers of Years K to 3 to be trained in early education, and
 - d. All literacy training include [sic] specific instruction in the range of teaching strategies.
5. The Commonwealth Government increase funding to tertiary institutions to enable all preservice teacher education to be extended to four years.
- 8a. The Minister for Employment, Education and Training together with the Western Australian Minister for Education encourage all States and Territories which are reviewing their curricula, to adopt the First Steps program, and
9. The Commonwealth Government fund the establishment of a national Reading Recovery Tutor training program at appropriate tertiary institutions.

These recommendations have significant additional funding implications for all governments, especially the Commonwealth Government. To date the only outcome has been the addition of new National Equity Programs for Schools initiatives funded through Commonwealth Programs; Early Literacy Component and Literacy and Learning. For 1995 the Northern Territory has received \$229,000 in these programs. This amount does little to address the recommendations of the Crawford Committee. Further, this money became available by the cessation of other programs such as the Country Areas - National program and there is no guarantee that it will continue.

The Centre for Applied Educational Research in its report (1994), as part of a review by the Commonwealth Government of recurrent funding for government primary schools, makes the following statements:

1.1.1 Concerns over funding Levels

In making a commitment to review its general recurrent funding program for government primary schools, the Commonwealth Government was responding to concerns expressed by parent bodies,

teacher organisations and other groups over the level of resources available to many government primary schools and at the negative impact of reduced education expenditure brought about by a generally unfavourable economic climate and specific budgetary problems being confronted at the state/territory level.

Concern over levels of funding has not been confined to parents and teachers, however, ... the Business Council of Australia has recently drawn attention to Australia's low ranking among OECD countries in expenditure on school education in an open letter to the Prime Minister (p. 1) ...

There has been a need to redefine the nature of post-compulsory schooling as well as to accommodate unprecedented growth in participation rates. As a consequence, there has been correspondingly less attention paid to the early years of schooling and to the importance of these years in developing the basic skills and attitudes underpinning all future learning. ...

Inevitably, attention focuses on the 'failures' rather than the 'successes'. The majority of young students quickly acquire basic competencies in reading and writing in the first two or three years of schooling. These are the successes of the primary schools. The minority who do not make progress quickly fall behind, loose [sic] motivation and self esteem and hence become harder and harder to assist with effective remedial assistance. While a minority of individuals, they still constitute a very significant proportion of the population and the impact of their failure to acquire adequate literacy skills is massive (p. 7).

Without doubt, almost all Aboriginal students in remote communities in the NT fall into this 'minority of individuals'.

The Directorate of School Education, Victoria (1995) says:

In general terms, these issues were concerned with the disparity in per capita funding between primary and secondary, and reducing this where no educational rationale was evident; reiteration of the view that no case exists for shifting resources from secondary to primary; ... (p. 7).

OECD (1992) provides data to show that while Australia is among the top OECD nations regarding expenditure on post school education, its expenditure on school education is only 66% of the OECD average. This is an indication that Australia is not spending enough in this area to provide world-standard school education for all of its children.

In its own report, DEET (1995-3) says:

There is no time to be lost in implementing successful strategies for providing all indigenous students, wherever they live or go for their education, with the skills necessary to become literate and numerate (p. 4),

and:

This Government has taken the lead in accelerating efforts to achieve educational equity for indigenous people. At the very heart of human rights and equal opportunities is the fundamental right of indigenous Australians, as for all other Australians, not to have options closed off from them by circumstances which are not of their own making and can be overcome (p. 5),

and:

It costs 8 to 10 times more to provide remediation for educational problems in later life if the service is not successful the first time. The costs in human terms are inestimable but the sad facts contained in the Report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody represent a grave warning just on the economic costs (p. 14),

and:

Elsewhere in the Review there is also comment about the terms and conditions of employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers. ... [who] play a crucial role in encouraging and facilitating indigenous peoples' access to, participation in, and experiences from education. ... provide a vital link between the home, community and school ... promote the positive values of attending school regularly, of taking advantage of tutorial assistance and homework facilities, and of participating as valued members of ASSPA committees (p. 3).

Crean (1995-2) says:

Every dollar spent now on education saves \$8-10 dollars later on. If we don't provide culturally appropriate and relevant education we face a hefty cost in terms of remedial training and assistance later in life.

Providing 'access' type courses to adults is extremely expensive but must continue while schooling continues to be ineffective. The aim of primary schooling must be to have all children leave with appropriate levels of literacy and numeracy.

The Committee found that small communities are rarely consulted regarding the appointment of a Head Teacher. It is recognised that this can be difficult when appointments need to be made at short notice; when community members may be difficult to contact; and when teachers prepared to work in one-teacher schools in remote Aboriginal communities are scarce.

Small communities visited, however, stressed the need to have a teacher who will be compatible with community values and who will be an important community member.

The Committee was also convinced that Head Teachers have significant administrative loads on top of teaching duties and important roles as community members. The Committee believes that their teaching loads should be reduced to assist them in undertaking their other duties effectively.

RECOMMENDATION 6.

- 6.1 That funding for primary education be distributed according to the principles of horizontal fiscal equalisation;**
- 6.2 that the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory increase per capita funding for primary education to match that provided for secondary education;**
- 6.3 that whenever possible small communities should be consulted with regard to the appointment of Head Teachers; and**
- 6.4 that the staffing formula for Aboriginal schools be revised to ensure that Head Teachers have a release time sufficient to undertake their administrative duties.**

2.5. Secondary Education

2.5.1. Outcomes

As discussed in section 2.1, p. 13 and section 7.2, pp. 83-84 secondary aged students in remote Aboriginal communities are only achieving lower primary standard reading and mathematics. That means that they are at least five (5) years, and in many cases more than eight (8) years, below grade for age standard.

2.5.2. Participation

Participation in education by secondary aged Aboriginal students across the NT at 57.80% is extremely low when compared with non-Aboriginal students at 90.48%. These figures are derived from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Cat. Nos. 4107.7, 3201.0, and 4190.0 relating to detailed findings of the 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey. While participation at this level in remote communities cannot be assessed with any accuracy it can be assumed that it is well below 57.80%. It is believed that less than 10% of secondary aged students in remote Aboriginal communities are working in mainstream secondary courses at age for grade level.

Marginson, Martin and Williamson (1995, p. 15) claim that Australia, like other OECD countries, has experienced a decrease in 15 to 19 year olds in employment over recent decades despite a significant increase in the number of such people. The significant increase in participation in senior schooling has kept unemployment levels down well below what they would have been if students hadn't stayed longer at school.

Strachan (1995) draws attention to the lack of post primary or secondary facilities in remote communities.

2.5.3. Education for Secondary-aged Students

Until the establishment of Community Education Centres (CECs) in eight communities in 1988, secondary aged students in the larger remote Aboriginal communities attended post primary classes. As most of the students were at primary level they followed primary courses which provided for no certification at the end of a student's schooling. The introduction of CECs also saw the introduction of registered courses which lead to certification. Foundation and General Studies courses are at primary levels but written in contexts suitable for secondary aged students. Foundation Studies is a course designed to take students to achieve Year 4 levels. General Studies is a course designed to take students on to achieve Year 7 levels. Students who successfully complete General Studies are ready for normal secondary studies. Some students in CECs are enrolled with the Northern Territory Secondary Correspondence School (NTSCS) and follow secondary courses.

At present there are 20 CECs in the NT. Not all have appropriate facilities for technical studies and home economics. Some 35 schools, including urban high schools, have students following CEC courses. The courses are also used in some adult education settings.

The Northern Territory Department of Education policy on the establishment of programs for secondary aged students is: 'An 'approved' post-primary program is one approved by the Superintendent. The minimum enrolment for an approved post-primary program is 24'.

This is considered to be the minimum number of students for whom a viable program can be provided. Policy throughout Australia on this issue is similar. In many parts of the country secondary aged students are bused to central schools. This is what occurs in rural areas close to major Northern Territory centres. Secondary aged students who live too far from regional centres to travel by bus to high schools can enrol at the NT Secondary Correspondence School (NTSCS) or similar schools in other states or attend boarding schools. Both Yirara and Kormilda Colleges have waiting lists so attendance at a boarding school is not an option for some students from remote communities.

2.5.4. Mixed Mode Delivery

Enrolment at the NTSCS requires that some support for the student is available, usually from the home. Unfortunately for them, there are many Aboriginal secondary aged students scattered throughout the Northern Territory in small communities who have neither access to a secondary school nor suitable support from home to enrol in the NTSCS.

Two of the Aboriginal Education Program (AEP) Initiatives are addressing this issue. One is aimed at curriculum development for mixed-mode delivery and another is trialing the use of electronic communications.

The Head Teacher of one of the schools mentioned by Strachan (1995) advised verbally that there are now 16 students at that school studying NTSCS courses in five subjects (English, maths, social education, science and textiles) with Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme and technology support and achieving up to Year 10 level. Three years ago secondary aged students at that school were only studying English and mathematics. This is a significant advancement in a short time. Another larger school has more than 40 students enrolled in secondary courses with support from the NTSCS, computer technology and interactive video.

NTDE has advised that dual enrolment at the home school and the NTSCS is under consideration. Dual enrolment means that both the home school and the NTSCS would be staffed and resourced for those students. At present, students can be enrolled at only one school. Where there are too few secondary aged students to warrant a separate teacher, and this will be the case in the majority of Aboriginal schools, ATAS support will still be required. A problem in many remote communities is the absence of appropriate people to act as tutors. The need to make maximum use of developing technologies is addressed in Recommendations 7 & 29.

The Committee noted at Yulara that the Department of Education funds a supervisor/tutor for a small group of secondary students enrolled with the NTSCS. The Committee believes that this type of support should be available to small groups of secondary aged students enrolled with NTSCS wherever they may be located in the NT. That support is essential in small Aboriginal communities.

2.5.5. Standard Secondary Education

There are now two CECs with students completing General Studies and ready for secondary courses in sufficient numbers to be considering seeking the status of area schools. This will require facilities for technical studies, home economics and science. It

is an indication that there is some progress being made towards the achievement of secondary education in remote Aboriginal communities.

2.5.6. Boarding Schools

A significant number of students from remote Aboriginal communities attend boarding schools in urban centres in the NT and interstate. While a large majority of these students are enrolled in CEC courses, some are participating in normal secondary courses.

2.5.7. Regional Facilities for Secondary-aged Students

Virtually all small communities visited support the provision of secondary education in their own communities but many realised this is not a real option.

The Central Land Council (1996) and the Nyangatjatjara Aboriginal Corporation (1996) support the development of regional boarding institutions to cater for secondary aged children. While this concept is supported by some communities it is opposed by others. It is a concept which merits further investigation.

2.5.8. Funding Considerations

In a recent article in the Australian Council for Educational Administration's publication 'Directions in Education', Alan Larcombe says:

A study prepared for the Commonwealth Government reveals that, on average, per student spending levels on schooling in other OECD countries are one and a half times higher than per student spending in Australia (The Centre for Applied Educational Research, 1994, pp. 66-7).

That suggests that Australia is not spending enough on education across the board. If the Commonwealth were to boost funding for education to OECD average levels, the additional 50% spent on education in remote, Aboriginal communities would greatly assist in addressing the short falls described in submissions.

DEET (1995-3) says:

Despite this, the fact remains that indigenous students from remote locations often have no education option for their secondary schooling other than boarding school. The weight of this situation is not to be underestimated, because for many students and their families, as well as the boarding schools themselves, the need for additional resources to accommodate these needs is great (p. 6).

This is correct for the many very small communities but options discussed above are possible for larger communities which are still not large enough to support full secondary schooling. Such options are not cheap as they may require dual enrolment, advanced technology, and the need for some form of tutorial assistance where teachers may have near full primary loads. Comparisons can be drawn with the very high costs of educating students through boarding schools.

RECOMMENDATION 7.

- 7.1 That tutorial support be made available for students working in remote Aboriginal schools and enrolled with the Northern Territory Secondary Correspondence School;**
- 7.2 that maximum use be made of developing technologies to assist in the provision of secondary education in remote communities; and**
- 7.3 that the concept of regional facilities for secondary-aged students be investigated.**

2.6. Special Education

It is generally accepted that between 2½% and 10% of a normal school population will require special education assistance at some stage during their schooling life. The abnormally high rates of health and social problems in remote Aboriginal communities would indicate that a much higher percentage of these children require assistance. The high incidence of otitis media results in high rates of hearing impairment and foetal alcohol syndrome which is common in some communities is considered to be the most common factor in congenital abnormalities. These are just two of the health factors affecting children.

It could be expected that up to 10% of the 6000 students, ie. 600 students, enrolled in our remote Aboriginal schools require special education assistance. In fact, many fewer are receiving direct assistance. It is not possible to state this number precisely.

The Improved Hearing for Aboriginal Students program funded by the Aboriginal Education Program funds five specialists, based in urban areas, to work with children, teaching staff, health staff and parents in remote schools. Most children in remote communities are receiving some benefit from programs initiated by these staff. Some schools also have been supported by a number of trials using FM radio, microphones etc, and some children are provided with hearing aids.

A small number of specialist staff based in regional offices provide a range of services to students in remote schools. Part-time instructors are employed on over 20 communities providing individual support to 39 students. There are 32 students boarding in urban centres and attending special schools or special units. In addition there are special education teachers appointed to two schools in remote areas.

It is obvious that there are significant unmet special education needs in remote Aboriginal communities.

Apart from the cost of provision of services to isolated communities there are several other factors which mitigate against their implementation. These include:

- national shortages of special education teachers - especially those prepared to go to remote areas;
- many children requiring assistance are among the poorest school attendees. It is extremely difficult, therefore, to match the attendance of a child with the arrival of a visiting specialist to assess the child's needs; and

- lack of tests appropriate to assess the intellectual needs of Aboriginal children from traditional backgrounds.

Jones (1996) adds:

- irregular attendance of the student;
- finding a member of the community who is willing to work with the student. (In many cases because of the severity of the disability, the level of management required and the cultural implications should something unforeseen happen, community members are reluctant to offer their services. The onus is then on the mother or a close family member to work as the part-time instructor in the school;) (p.2) and
- all students identified with sensory - neural hearing loss are fitted with hearing aids and for these to be effective they must be worn at home and at school. In remote communities many of the students do not use the hearing aids for social and cultural reasons and they will often not attend school if they are made to wear them. Therefore, it is better they attend school without the aids. Also, some students are so profoundly deaf, hearing aids do not assist them (p.3).

RECOMMENDATION 8.

- 8.1 That research into, and development of, appropriate assessment instruments for Aboriginal children be funded; and**
- 8.2 that Aboriginal children from remote communities requiring special education be provided with assistance on the same basis as for children in urban centres.**

2.7. Housing

Housing was identified as a major problem in communities visited.

2.7.1. Housing for the Total Community

It is agreed by Commonwealth and Territory Governments and by community members that there is a drastic shortage of housing in Aboriginal communities. On the surface this may appear to have little to do with this inquiry. Severe overcrowding or lack of housing, however, are partly responsible for social and health problems which have a negative impact on the outcomes of schooling in remote Aboriginal communities. A home which has books and educational toys and provides a secure environment is considered essential to children experiencing success at school.

There is also ample evidence that the economic life of housing in remote Aboriginal communities is much shorter than for housing in urban areas of the NT. This is due, in part, to overcrowding but is also due to some people not knowing how to care for houses.

When providing additional housing, the type of accommodation to be provided must be negotiated with Aboriginal needs being taken into consideration. When moving into new

accommodation Aboriginal families must be provided with support and education with regard to living in such accommodation.

RECOMMENDATION 9.

- 9.1 That the Commonwealth, Northern Territory and Community Governments embark on a greatly expanded program of accommodation for remote Aboriginal communities;**
- 9.2 that accommodation units appropriate to the communities' needs be developed in conjunction with communities as a matter of highest priority; and**
- 9.2 that Aboriginal people moving into new accommodation be provided with intensive and on-going education and support with regard to living in such accommodation.**

2.7.2. Housing for Local Recruits

The Northern Territory Government's policy of not providing special housing for local recruits is almost universally unpopular, especially among Aboriginal people, on remote communities. Community members argue that the practice:

- discriminates against local Aboriginals;
- does not acknowledge the status of trained Aboriginal teachers; and
- does not provide trained local teachers with accommodation which is suitable for lesson preparation.

The Government's policy is based on the following:

- Housing local people is the responsibility of the local government organisation in the community.
- In remote communities allocation of housing is the responsibility of local community government councils. In allocating housing councils should give priority to community members who are making the most valuable contributions to their communities.
- Appropriate housing is essential to attract non-local professionals.
- It is difficult and often expensive to remove a local recruit from industry housing if that person resigns or an increase in non-local staff is unavoidable.

RECOMMENDATION 10.

That the Northern Territory Government review its policy of not providing industry housing for local recruits.

2.7.3. Housing for External Recruits

For the foreseeable future there will be a need to provide accommodation for public sector employees recruited from outside the local community. Several witnesses suggested that there should be a pool of such accommodation in each community rather than having separate housing for education, health, police and other Government employees. The community council would be responsible for allocating such housing.

RECOMMENDATION 11.

That the Northern Territory Government investigates the possibility of providing a pool of accommodation in communities for public sector employees recruited from outside those communities.

2.8. Education and Health

Henderson (1995) says:

In remote Aboriginal communities, health outcomes and education outcomes are inextricably linked to the extent that success in one domain cannot be achieved without the other. As a consequence, policies and funding practices in either area has a direct influence on the other, thereby highlighting the need for greater consultation and negotiation between departments (p. 2).

Fong (1995, p. 18) also mentions a link between education and health needs in Aboriginal communities.

The Menzies School of Health Research Annual Report (1994) says:

Such chronic infection damages the middle ear, leading to poor hearing, to poor language development, and difficulties with schooling and employment in later life (p. 38).

Strachan (1995) says 'concentration and learning capacities are affected by poor nutrition and ... ear infections' (p. 3).

In its 1995 submission to the Senate Inquiry into Early Childhood Education the Australian College of Education stated that:

if adequate early childhood education is to be provided to all Australian children there is a need for co-ordinated social justice strategies across the various areas of education, health, housing and social security. To treat early childhood education in isolation from the provision of other services aimed at supporting the carers of young children can only perpetuate inequalities (p. 4).

One of the recommendations of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (1993) was:

the Prime Minister seeks adoption by the Council of Australian Governments of the Access and Equity Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within each State and Territory and also seeks the implementation of the co-operation and co-ordination in the delivery of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as already agreed to at the Council's meeting in December 1992; (Recommendation 27) (p. 70).

Henderson (1995, p. 13) discusses the effective NT Aboriginal Hearing Program which is currently jointly run by health and education throughout remote schools and communities. Bates (1995) describes the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program which has been revised for use, and successfully run in, remote Aboriginal schools by NT police officers.

Rioli (1996), Schmitzer (1995), the Draft Framework Agreement (1996), MCEETYA (1995) and the Office of Northern Development (1994) support an integrated approach to social justice services to remote, Aboriginal communities. In fact, the Office of Northern Development, (1994) first recommendation is that:

The development of a North Australia Social Justice Strategy requires a commitment by the three spheres of government to expedite reforms that ensure the provision of more innovative models of service delivery relevant to the needs of people resident in rural and remote areas consistent with those already identified in this report. These reforms include the achievement of greater efficiencies by:

- simplifying bureaucratic funding structures;
- streamlining accountability requirements; improving inter-departmental cooperation;
- developing regionally based inter-governmental planning bodies;
- expanding the availability of relevant cost efficient and innovative service delivery models;
- promoting local compliance with access and equity measures; and
- considering the scope for further negotiation of bilateral agreements between the States/Territories and the Commonwealth, specifying consultative, planning, coordination and funding requirements (p. 106).

Caldwell and Caldwell (1995) stated that:

In the last two decades the examination of the relationship between parental education and child mortality has become a major activity ... and there is such widespread agreement in the findings that they have been described as one of the most certain conclusions in the social sciences (p. 2).

DEET (1995-3) says:

Poverty, ill-health and low self-esteem can still limit the ability of many indigenous people to participate in education (p. 13).

The Department of Human Services and Health (1995, pp. 16–19) proposes to spend \$5.7 m over the next four years on a National Indigenous Hearing Program; Children aged 0-5 years being the target group. The program goal is:

By the year 2010, the hearing health status in the 0-5 age groups is the same for non-indigenous and indigenous Australian populations.

One of their performance indicators is:

... a minimum of one specialist 'hearing health' designated AHW position established in all indigenous communities where ear disease and hearing problems are identified as a major health problem by 1997.

These are laudable goals. Once again, however, proposed funding is insufficient to meet them. Each of the major Aboriginal communities in the NT would require a full time Aboriginal Health Worker position and other positions would need to be shared between small communities. There is no way that the NT's share of \$5.7m over four years could meet this need.

RECOMMENDATION 12.

- 12.1 That the Northern Territory Government provides coordinated social justice programs (education, health, housing and social security) to Aboriginal people living in remote communities;**
- 12.2 that the Commonwealth increase funding to the National Indigenous Hearing Program to a level where every community has access to a specially appointed Aboriginal Health Worker;**
- 12.3 that there be further negotiation of bilateral agreements between the NT and the Commonwealth, specifying consultative, planning, coordination and funding requirements;**
- 12.4 that regionally based inter-governmental and inter-service planning bodies be established; and**
- 12.5 that appropriate nutrition programs for students be put in place in communities where these are considered essential.**

2.9. Developing a 'Schooling Culture'

Very low attendance patterns are a feature of schooling in remote Aboriginal communities. While attendance in urban primary schools in the NT averages about 90%, attendance in remote schools averages about 70%. There is no doubt that there is a high correlation between poor attendance and poor achievement.

Some blame for poor attendance is aimed at the schooling system which is often accused of not providing interesting programs that encourage children's attendance. Research would probably find that primary children in urban schools do not attend primarily because of the interest of programs offered but because of parents' insistence that they go to school. From regular attendance children experience success and develop an interest in what is being offered.

A principal of a remote school defined this as a 'schooling culture'. He claimed that the lack of such a culture in remote communities resulted in parents agreeing that regular attendance is important but then not insisting that their children go to school. It was widely claimed that Aboriginal culture does not support forcing children to do things they did not want to do except where traditional custom is involved.

The Community Liaison Officer at one community visited claimed that rhetoric from Aboriginals strongly supported schooling but that their actions did not support their rhetoric. Another witness claimed that ceremonies were of paramount importance over summer months and football was first priority in winter.

Added to the schooling culture is the provision of an educational environment in the home. This is not possible in the living conditions in most Aboriginal homes in remote communities.

Governments must accept, therefore, that attendance rates and results in English and mathematics will not improve to the level of the wider community until there is both the will and the opportunity to develop a 'schooling culture' in Aboriginal communities. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSIC) State Advisory Committee claimed that funding should be made available to develop and run parent awareness programs. ASSPA was designed, in part, to fund such programs.

Services provided to communities, therefore, need to be tailored to meet the contexts of individual communities. This necessitates flexibility in both provision of services and expectations of student learning outcomes.

Part of Feppi's role as outlined in Section 4.3 is to encourage parents to send their children to school regularly. Evidence provided indicates that Feppi has achieved little, if any, success in this area.

RECOMMENDATION 13.

That programs to assist communities to develop a schooling culture be devised and widely implemented.

2.10. Aboriginalisation

The process of moving towards schools being staff by Aboriginal teachers and controlled by Aboriginal councils is commonly known as Aboriginalisation. Some of the issues involved in the process of Aboriginalisation are addressed in this section of the report.

2.10.1. Lowering Academic Standards in Aboriginal Schools

There is considerable anecdotal evidence that school children in remote Aboriginal communities are not attaining the standards of literacy in English or mathematics which were achieved by some students a generation or so ago under the various mission systems. No scientific evidence has been found to support this contention but the frequency with which empirical evidence was provided by individuals who taught and/or learned under earlier systems is convincing. Reasons suggested for this include:

- children then enjoyed better health than they do now;
- a high level of attendance was enforced under mission influence; and
- able students were selected for further education in southern states.

Similarly, empirical evidence suggests that children in remote Aboriginal schools are receiving a broader education than ever before. Reasons given for making this claim include:

- children are gaining a better knowledge of their own language and culture;

- children are gaining greater self-esteem and cultural identity through the acceptance of their language and culture as valid and worthwhile learning outcomes;
- children are gaining a better understanding of the outside world through excursions and modern technology; and
- many more children are being exposed to schooling today.

2.10.2. Aboriginal Culture and Language

Community Government Councils and school staff in most communities visited believe that there is a need to teach some traditional culture and local language/s at the school. The amount of time and resources put into these curriculum activities varied significantly from community to community. There needs to be flexibility, therefore, on how these needs are provided for by governments. That flexibility also necessitates schools working with their ASSPA committees, school councils and community government councils to determine local policy.

As indicated by some schools visited, these programs can be funded through a number of sources. These include:

- part time instructor funding to all NT schools. A notional amount of \$16.64 (1995-96) per capita for primary students in schools' one line budgets;
- ASSPA funding of \$200 per primary student in remote communities (Commonwealth - DEET);
- disadvantaged school and country areas general component of the National Equity Program for Schools; and
- support for Aboriginal Languages in Schools and Aboriginal Resource Officers elements of the Aboriginal Education Program.

Other than the part time instructor funding provided by the NT Government, and to some extent the ASSPA funding, funding is reliant on the success of submissions and cannot therefore, be built into long term program arrangements.

This problem could be solved if Recommendations 18.2 and 23 of this report were implemented.

Those recommendations urge that all funding to schools be channelled through respective state/territory education departments and that the Commonwealth and states/territories accept common, agreed policies for school education.

2.10.3. Teacher Training

Teachers currently employed in the Northern Territory have been recruited from four major groups; interstate recruitment, NT University graduates, Batchelor College graduates, and trained teachers who have moved to the NT and been recruited locally. There are some 500

teachers working in the remote, Aboriginal schools. Of these 100 were trained at Batchelor College.

In most instances, teacher training institutions in Australia are totally funded by the Commonwealth through DEET. NTU and Batchelor College have, until the 1995/96 financial year, been co-funded by the NT Government to reducing levels. NT funding to these institutions is due to end in the 1995-96 financial year.

Neither DEET nor either of the NT teacher training institutions could provide figures for the cost of training a teacher. They did provide levels of funding provided by DEET for each Equivalent Full Time Student Unit (EFTSU). They cannot be translated accurately to a cost of training a teacher because of the number of students who drop out of courses, the number who take longer than expected time to complete courses, and various other anomalies.

The following figures, therefore, need to be considered in that light.

NTU is funded by DEET at \$10,500 per EFTSU per annum. According to DEET this is 20% higher than EFTSU paid to institutions in other States. The Diploma of Teaching (Dip.T) course normally requires three years to complete while the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) course takes four years. Teachers may be employed in the NT with a Dip.T while many take another year and complete a B.Ed before seeking employment. Assuming that the basic qualification is completed in three years it is estimated that it costs \$31,500 to train a teacher at NTU. Some students would be in receipt of either AUSTUDY or ABSTUDY.

Batchelor College is funded by DEET at \$14,800 per EFTSU per annum. According to the Director of Batchelor College costs have been reduced by 50% over the last 10 years. Aboriginal teachers may be employed in Aboriginal schools, usually their home communities, after completing an Associate Diploma which is designed as a three year course. From 1997, the Associate Diploma will not be accepted by the NT Department of Education as a satisfactory prerequisite for teaching. Teachers will require a Dip. T as a minimum training level. Batchelor's Dip.T course is designed to take four years although most students take five, usually spread over a considerably longer period, interspersed with working as assistant teachers and/or teachers in their local schools. If teachers completed their training in the minimum time, it would cost \$59,200 to train a teacher at Batchelor College to Dip.T level. All trainees would be eligible for some assistance through ABSTUDY.

Very few NTU graduates are appointed to remote schools while most Batchelor College graduates are. The above figures illustrate another additional cost of providing school education services in Aboriginal communities. The additional costs involved are considered to be a sound investment in that the appointment of Aboriginal teachers have benefits as outlined in sections 2.10.5 and 2.10.6.

It was agreed strongly by the Head Teacher of one remote school visited that neophyte teachers should not be appointed to remote Aboriginal schools. He claimed that they should develop their teaching skills in urban schools in the NT before transferring to Aboriginal schools. This is recognised at the system level. NTU graduates are not normally appointed to remote schools. On the other hand, Batchelor College graduates

almost always commence teaching in Aboriginal schools. In addition, the number of vacancies which occur in remote schools exceeds the number of experienced teachers applying for positions. It is often necessary, therefore, to recruit neophyte teachers from interstate to fill vacancies.

2.10.4. Batchelor College Graduates

The Director of Batchelor College said that teachers graduating at Diploma level are considered to be at the same level as teachers with a Dip.T from any other institution in Australia. They are eligible for employment in any primary school in the NT. The Commonwealth Government is now insisting on quality assurance from institutions of higher education. Batchelor College was one of the first such institutions in Australia to have an officer appointed to a senior level with quality assurance being the major emphasis of the position. As with any university, there is no external moderation of higher education graduates.

The Director of Batchelor College advised that the majority of students there enrolled as mature aged students with considerable experience as assistant teachers and of their cultural heritage. Their literacy and numeracy levels at entrance, however, are about upper primary and lower primary respectively. During the Committee's hearing at Batchelor College the Director surmised that it would be 20 years before all students entered teacher training courses following successful completion of secondary education.

Much of the additional year in the Dip. T course is devoted to increasing literacy and numeracy standards and all courses at Batchelor are designed to meet the ESL needs of the students. Those Aboriginals who commence teaching at Associate Diploma level would not yet have reached levels of literacy and numeracy expected of teachers with a Dip.T.

As mentioned earlier, Gaykarnangu (1995) 'questioned whether teachers had the necessary skills to teach these basics [literacy and numeracy]'

The NT Co-ordination Committee (1992) said:

Another major concern is that Aboriginal teachers are being certified despite not reaching a post-primary standard themselves (p. 13).

Buckley (1996) interviewed five teachers who had between five and fifteen years experience in remote schools and had worked with Batchelor College graduates. Each teacher interviewed claimed that the training provided by Batchelor College concentrates on the personal development of the trainee rather than teaching skills which will be required after graduation.

This is a commonly held belief although there is no research evidence to either prove or disprove it.

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (1992) said:

Teachers are being trained but they are not staying in the system. The reasons for these defections are various. Many graduates are attracted to better paying jobs, particularly in

the public service. A number of Aboriginal officers in the Department of Employment, Education and Training were originally teachers as were some officers in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission. Ex teachers are also to be found on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission regional councils and a significant proportion of members of the Aboriginal education consultative groups also have a teaching background (p. 72).

It is a common belief that this is also the case in the NT. While this may be a cost and a problem for education, it is providing more highly qualified Aboriginals to work in other areas of Aboriginal development.

2.10.5. The Role of Aboriginal Teachers

All the literature reviewed and the large majority of witnesses who addressed the Public Accounts Committee supported the employment of Aboriginal teachers. With a thorough knowledge of local contexts, language and culture they are perceived as the most appropriate teachers for children in remote Aboriginal communities. Here again empirical evidence indicates that the levels of English literacy and mathematics of Aboriginal teachers are lower than those of their non-Aboriginal counterparts. Much anecdotal evidence says that many Aboriginal teachers in remote communities are only literate in English and numerate to upper primary or lower secondary levels.

If this is the case, and there is every reason to believe it is so, then it must be accepted that we either have Aboriginal teachers with initial lower student learning outcomes in English and mathematics or that the process of Aboriginalisation be ceased. Several witnesses who supported the concept of Aboriginalisation recommended that the process should not be rushed. The Committee believes that the process of Aboriginalisation should continue and that Aboriginal teachers be given the opportunity, and encouraged to undergo continuing professional development. Continuing upgrading of entrance requirements by Batchelor College, modification of courses and training levels required by NT Department of Education are addressing this over time.

2.10.6. Aboriginal Teachers in Promotional Positions

The process of Aboriginalisation of promotional positions in remote Aboriginal communities has meant that trained Aboriginal teachers get accelerated promotion with assistance of mentors. This has meant that there are now Aboriginal principals who have had little teaching or administrative experience and little knowledge of the education system as a whole when compared with principals in urban schools. This process has been strongly supported by the NT Department of Education.

It is reasonable to expect that such principals are unable to provide the level of professional support to teachers in their schools, as is expected in urban schools or of non-Aboriginal principals in remote schools. Aboriginals in promotion positions provide excellent role models for their whole community.

2.10.7. Support for Aboriginal Teachers

Mentor schemes to assist recently graduated Aboriginal teachers and Aboriginal teachers in training for promotional positions are part of the cost of Aboriginalisation of teaching staff in remote communities. Most programs are funded by the Commonwealth through the

Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program (AESIP). Almost 50 Aboriginal teachers are being assisted by mentor programs; six in training for promotional positions. Twenty mentors are currently employed through AESIP Initiative 9, 'Increased Professional Support for Aboriginal Teachers', at a cost of \$1.2m in 1995.

From input from Feppi and the NT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Educators and from visits to schools it is clear that trained Aboriginal teachers need support from both mentors and assistant teachers.

Toyne (1996) suggested that ongoing professional development and support for Aboriginal teachers can be provided effectively with the assistance of new technologies.

RECOMMENDATION 14.

- 14.1 That the Northern Territory Government continues to support the process of Aboriginalisation of schools in remote Aboriginal communities;**
- 14.2 that the Northern Territory Government continues to support mentor programs for newly graduated Aboriginal teachers or Aboriginal teachers in promotion positions;**
- 14.3 that Aboriginal teachers be given the opportunity, and encouraged, to undertake continuing professional development;**
- 14.4 that teacher training institutions plan for targeted increases in literacy and numeracy levels of students at graduation;**
- 14.5 that the number of support staff in Aboriginal schools be based on the number of teachers regardless of their Aboriginality; and**
- 14.6 that the formula which generates teaching staff for remote Aboriginal schools be modified to ensure that there is a sufficient number of fluent speakers of standard English on staff.**

2.11. Staffing Schools in Aboriginal Communities

It is always difficult to recruit suitable teachers to work in remote Aboriginal schools. Experienced teachers in the NT system rarely apply to transfer to remote schools even with the prospect of accelerated promotion opportunities. Teachers, especially those with school-aged children, prefer to live in urban areas with a range of amenities and a familiar culture. The NT Department of Education has an agreement with the Australian Education Union (NT Branch) that neophyte teachers trained at the NTU will not be appointed to remote Aboriginal schools unless that is their express wish. In fact, the large majority of teachers trained at the NTU will only accept appointments in Darwin. Batchelor College graduates usually seek appointment to their home communities.

The Department depends almost entirely on interstate recruitment to fill vacancies in Aboriginal schools. Some interstate teacher training institutions, such as Monash University, have developed a special relationship with the NT. Some of their students fulfil a component of their practicum requirements in remote Aboriginal schools. A proportion of those students then seek

appointments in the NT. After gaining teaching experience some of those teachers then return to their home states. Few experienced teachers with a good teaching history respond to advertisements to teach in the NT. The Department of Education places advertisements in interstate newspapers when the pool of interviewed, satisfactory applicants is low. This may happen several times in a year.

Officers from the Department interview applicants in capital cities and other major centres interstate. Some applicants are interviewed by telephone. A significant proportion of applicants is deemed unsuitable for appointment.

A further problem in staffing remote schools is the shortage of relief teachers prepared to replace teachers on sick leave or participating in staff development activities. While remote schools are resourced to appoint relief teachers at the same per teacher rate as urban schools, they are not funded to recompense relief teachers for travel or accommodation expenses. These costs can be very high in the most remote schools, especially if travel by air is the only possible option. The Committee believes that funding for relief teachers in remote schools should be weighted to allow those teachers to be reimbursed associated travel and living expenses.

In the past the Department recruited a pool of teachers prepared to act as relief teachers and replacement teachers to fill vacancies as they occurred. Those pool positions were not popular and teachers sought transfers into vacancies, generally in urban schools, as soon as they arose. That policy was abandoned some years ago. The Committee believes that that policy should be reinstated with the major emphasis on a pool of teachers prepared to work in remote schools. This would have the added benefit of familiarising new recruits with the NT, the education system in the NT, and teaching in NT schools.

While the Committee believes that the Department must attract suitable teachers to remote schools it also believes that some communities could do more to welcome teachers, induct them into a new culture, and encourage them to stay. Senior Departmental officers and Feppi members need to work with communities so that they will understand the difficulty in recruiting teachers and their role in the induction of new teachers.

RECOMMENDATION 15.

- 15.1 That the NT Department of Education increases the relief teacher component of the allocation to remote schools to allow for reimbursement of associated travel and living expenses;**
- 15.2 that the NT Department of Education establishes a pool of teachers prepared to act as relief and/or replacement teachers for remote schools; and**
- 15.3 that senior Departmental officers and Feppi members work with communities to help them understand the difficulty in recruiting suitable teachers and the communities' possible role in inducting new teachers.**

2.12. Education Agreements

Several witnesses spoke of the need for the development of education agreements between individual communities and the NT Department of Education. Such agreements are essential

where communities seek co-ordinated social justice programs, bilingual programs, and/or extensive local control of their schools. Agreements could be an extension of schools' Action Plans for School Improvement and be negotiated by school councils, local government councils and the Department of Education.

Where a community and the NT Government are negotiating the provision of co-ordinated social justice services, the agreement reached should include the community's school education strategy.

RECOMMENDATION 16.

- 16.1 That school communities be encouraged to develop education agreements with the Department of Education; and**
- 16.2 that agreements between the NT Government and communities relating to the provision of co-ordinated social justice services, include communities' educational strategies.**

2.13. Funding Levels

The implementation of the above recommendations have significant implications for the need for increased levels of funding to education, especially in remote Aboriginal communities.

Marginson, Martin, and Williamson (1995) speaking generally about the education system in Australia say that:

The claim that there is no connection between improved educational resources and improved educational outcomes, has been used to justify both spending reductions and increased class sizes in government schools. It has even been suggested by the Institute of Public Affairs that we could save \$1.4 billion if all State education systems cut their resource levels to those of the lowest spending State (Queensland), and that cutting \$1.4 billion from education programs would make no difference to students' learning (!) (p. 21).

They go on to ask why other Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries do not accept that argument and that:

in every other field of economic production, economists believe there is a relationship between raw materials and labour inputs on one hand, and the production of goods or services on the other (p. 22).

Yunupingu (1995), stated that:

We are convinced that there will be no substantial improvement in educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students unless there is a concentrated effort and a major investment in literacy development by the Commonwealth and the education providers ... (p. 91)

Mifsud (1995, p. 3) asserts that 'the current levels of funding to Catholic Education barely leaves enough for staffing the programs. Additional funds have to be raised by schools ...'

Staff of schools visited claimed that funding was inadequate to meet such needs as: intensive ESL; cultural programs; sufficient staff; and local curriculum development.

The Australian Council of State School Organisations (1994) argues (pp. 1-2) that reduced spending on school education nationally over recent years is insupportable. It claims that far in excess of any increased funding has been needed to pay for the extraordinary growth in retention rates to Year 12. It further claims that 'since 1987-88, general revenue payments by the Commonwealth to the States ... have decreased in inflation adjusted terms by nearly 21 percent.' It goes on to say that:

Goals and priorities are not worth much without funded programs to support them. It [the Commonwealth] should expand general recurrent funding for government school education and loosen the reins on State and Territory Budgets by expanding general revenue grants (p. 2).

It is noted that the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) (1995) makes virtually no reference to a need for a higher level of funding, other than to say it 'supports all governments' endeavours to increase their level of financial effort in Aboriginal and Torres Strait education' (p. 85) and that '1996 will be a "baseline" year for the documentation of existing financial effort' (p. 85).

Unless all Australian governments start providing additional resources now to address needs in English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching, primary and secondary education, teacher training, and provision of co-ordinated social justice services, as outlined in preceding pages, the cost in both monetary and human terms of rectifying current problems in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education will increase.

There are three possible sources of additional funding which could be accessed to meet the needs identified.

- A) Savings made through reduced administration costs if all funds came to the NT from the Commonwealth as general recurrent grants rather than through SPP's or direct payments as per recommendations 17.1, 18.2 and 23.
- B) There are clear indications that Disability Factors as applied by the Commonwealth Grants Commission in recommending disbursement of Commonwealth funds do not take into account the full extent of the disadvantages experienced by Aboriginals living in remote Aboriginal communities.

Rye (1995) stated that:

- all Aboriginals are treated as Aboriginals whether they live in an urban area or in remote communities or speak English as a first language or not at all (p. 24);
- dispersion is not well catered for (p. 11);
- there is no fiscal equalisation on grants for capital works (p. 6) and these are significantly more expensive in remote communities;
- Aboriginal communities are being left further behind in communication technology (p. 12);

- the lack of Medicare and pharmaceutical benefits to remote communities is not taken into account (p. 27);
- it is too complicated to calculate all possible disadvantages (p. 22). [This would have little effect on other states but has a significant effect on the NT];
- the Grants Commission believes that many disadvantages experienced by Aboriginals are taken into account through the socio-economic Disability Factor (p. 30);
- there is insufficient data available for the NT and the states in many of the above areas on which the Grants Commission can make judgements; and
- further research needs to be undertaken in many of these areas.

Further Rye said that ‘sometimes one has to oversimplify’. The Committee strongly believes that this over-simplification is costing the NT dearly.

The Committee does not believe that sufficient weighting is provided by the socio-economic disability factor used by the Commonwealth Grants Commission to take account of Aboriginality.

Research into these and other issues relating to remote Aboriginal communities should result in the NT receiving a larger proportion of General Recurrent Grants from the Commonwealth.

- C) There is a wealth of evidence to show that Australia spends significantly less on school education than do most other OECD countries. This is referred to in Section 2.4, pp.17-18 and Section 2.5.6, p. 22 of this report.

The Committee believes that Australia must increase expenditure on school education by planned increments until spending in this area reaches at least the OECD average.

RECOMMENDATION 17.

- 17.1 That, if all education funding flows directly from the NT Department of Education, any savings made by reducing duplication of costs in administering school education be redirected to school education programs;**
- 17.2 that further research into the Disability Factors which influence funding to the states concentrate on remote Aboriginal communities; and**
- 17.3 that the Northern Territory Government works through the Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs and the Council of Australian Governments to increase expenditure on school education, by planned increments, to average OECD levels.**

CHAPTER 3

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE (a)

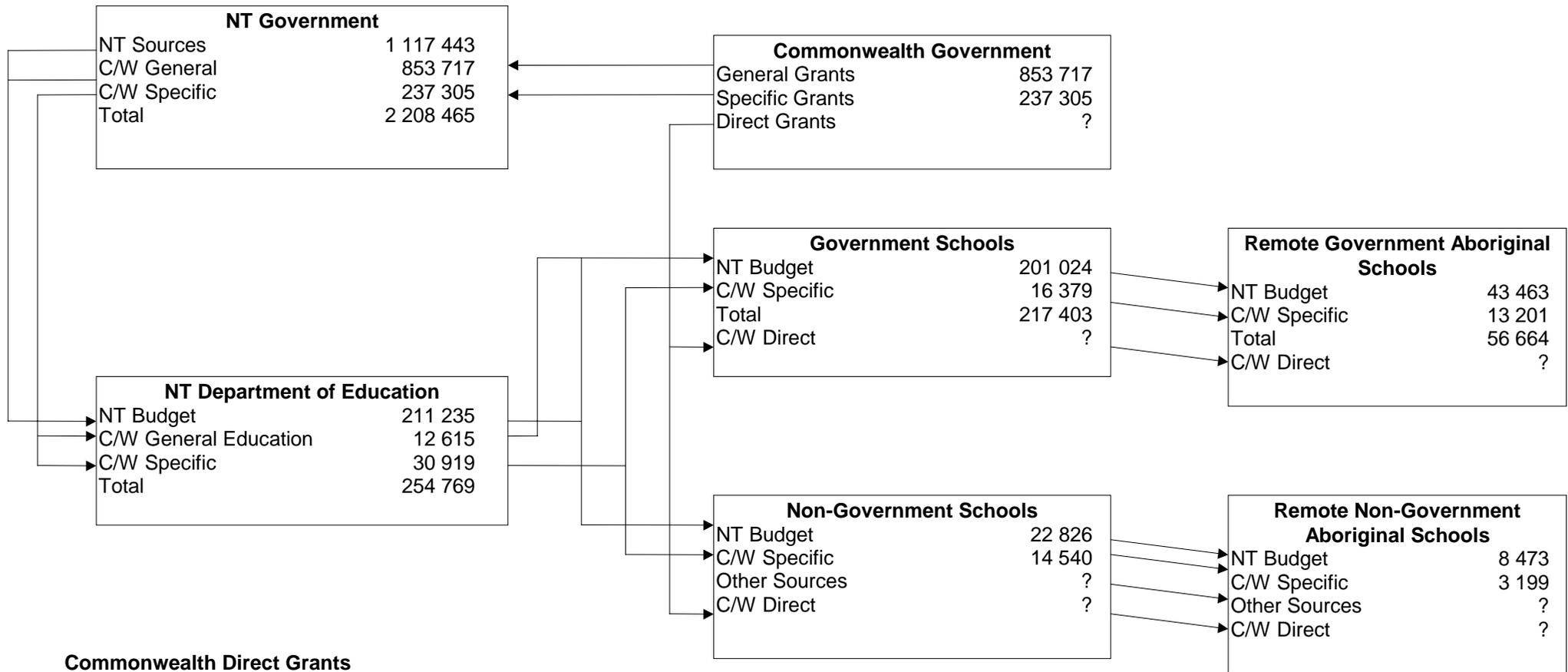
the mechanisms and criteria for the allocation of resources to schools, including a comparison of the allocative mechanisms of the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth

3.1. Expenditure on Education in the Northern Territory

The following table outlines expenditure on Education in the NT for 1994-95. This cannot be totally accurate because:

- Commonwealth funds are allocated on a calendar year basis while NT funds are allocated on a fiscal year basis. Therefore, spending in neither a calendar year nor a fiscal year can be accurately assessed;
- Commonwealth direct grants to parents to assist with school education in the NT cannot be calculated precisely due to DEET's data collection methods; and
- parent raised funds are not known outside of each individual school.

Sources of Funding for NT Remote Aboriginal Schools (\$'000s) (1994-95)



Commonwealth Direct Grants

DEET has advised that direct grants to Aboriginal parents in Northern Australia, which includes the Pilbara and Kimberley regions of WA, for 1994-95 are:

ATAS	\$ 2.8 m
ASSPA	\$ 2.4 m
VEGAS	\$ 0.4 m
AIC	\$ 1.0 m
Abstudy	<u>\$19.6 m</u>
Total	\$26.2 m

Table 2: Sources of Funding for Remote Aboriginal Schools in the NT - 1994-95. Information provided by NTDE.

The NT Department of Education has provided the following data which compares expenditure on primary and secondary education across the States and Territories. (Source: National Schools Statistics Collection Data)

	NT Expenditure	National Average
Primary-In-School	\$4751.63 per student	\$3024.53
Secondary-In-School	\$6530.37 per student	\$4085.53
Primary and Secondary-In-School	\$5261.88 per student	\$3460.53
Primary and Secondary-out-of-School	\$ 785.27 per student	\$ 224.26
Primary and Secondary Total	\$6047.15 per student	\$3684.79

Table 3: Relative Expenditure on Primary and Secondary Education. From National Schools Statistics Collection Data.

3.2. Comparison, Between States, of Funding Levels for School Education

The Government Finance Statistics, 1993-94 (ABS, Cat. No. 5512.0) provides the following figures which show the percentage of each State's/Territory's budget which is spent on school education. The figures show that the NT spends slightly below the Australian average in this area.

Current Outlays by Purpose for the State, Territory and Local Governments Combined, 1993-94 \$ million									
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	(d) Total
(a) Primary and Secondary Education	3,371	2,687	1,908	959	1,078	321	193	263	10,779
(b) Total Outlays by Purpose	22,406	17,573	9,992	6,622	6,417	2,185	1,292	1,073	67,195
(c) % of Total State Budget	15.05%	15.29%	19.10%	14.48%	16.80%	14.69%	14.94%	24.51%	16.04%

*Table 4: (a) & (b) Amount and Percentage of State Budgets Spent on School Education. Extrapolated from Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1993-94, Cat. No. 5512.0
(c) As calculated
(d) Totals may not equal sum of columns due to rounding*

3.3. Sources of Funding to Aboriginal Education in the Northern Territory

The Northern Territory Department of Education (1995) says:

In 1994-95, the Northern Territory Government spent \$79.5 million on providing education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students. The Commonwealth Government added to this funding, providing \$10.2 million through the Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program (AESIP) and \$6.8 million through other Commonwealth programs for school students (p. 2).

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This means that 82.5% of funding for Aboriginal Education comes through the NT Budget process. 10.5% comes from AESIP and a further 7% from other Commonwealth sources.

3.4. Cost of Education in Remote Aboriginal Communities

Yunupingu (1995) said:

One of the most worrying gaps in information is the absence of reliable expenditure data ... The total amount of money spent on education for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders is still not known (p. 102).

The fact that there is a lack of appropriate data on which to base or assess funding levels to remote Aboriginal communities is supported by MCEETYA (1995, p. 2), Mooney (1995, p. 2), Pearse (1995, p. 2), and Rye (1995, pp. 22, 30 & 31).

Fong (1995) and NT Treasury (1995) provide figures to show - as far as they are able - total amounts expended on education in the NT (Table 2, p. 41). Lovett provided details of Commonwealth programs and total expenditure on school education. NTDE, NT Treasury and DEET are unable to provide precise figures for direct Commonwealth funding to schools/individuals through programs such as Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA), Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Support (ATAS), Assistance to Isolated Children (AIC), or ABSTUDY. Funds for these programs are allocated on an individual basis and are not recorded by DEET against particular States/Territories.

Fong's (1995) submission also makes it clear that it is not possible to identify precisely how much is spent on school education in remote Aboriginal communities. Significantly costly variables such as recruitment and relocation of staff, housing, direct Commonwealth grants and training Aboriginal teachers are either not taken into account or cannot be apportioned on a cost per student basis. A revised estimate of the amount spent on educating a primary student in a remote school with a primary student in an urban schools is \$4,890 and \$3,310 per annum respectively (p. 12).

These expenditure figures are based on total student enrolment, not enrolment adjusted for attendance. Schools are resourced on adjusted enrolment.

The primary in-school expenditure per capita across Australia, according to the National Schools Statistics Collection for 1993-94 was:

Northern Territory	\$4,752
Western Australia	\$3,547
Australian Capital Territory	\$3,278
Tasmania	\$3,189
South Australia	\$3,080
Queensland	\$3,031
Victoria	\$2,885
New South Wales	\$2,866
Australian Average	\$3,025

Table 5: Comparative Expenditure on Primary, In-school Expenditure. From National Schools Statistics Collection Data.

3.5. Disbursement of NT Funds

Salaries are the greatest cost in the education budget. Teacher staffing is based on a formula which is almost the same for both urban and remote schools (Appendix D). Incentives such as freight free perishable allowances, rental subsidies, special teacher allowances, and fares to enable staff to leave communities during holidays, are a significant additional cost to education in remote areas of the NT. Remote Aboriginal schools have additional staff. Aboriginal assistant teachers are allocated, again on formula. Recognised bilingual schools are allocated further additional staff. (Fong 1995, pp. 11–12).

Operational funds allocated to schools by the Northern Territory Department of Education are based on a per capita formula.

Remote schools receive extra funding for vehicle fuel costs, freight costs, ... bilingual programs ... an allowance (the isolated allowance) to compensate for some of their extra costs due to geographical isolation (Fong 1995, p. 12).

The isolated allowance is 5%, 10% or 15% of per capita funding depending on level of isolation. The Committee believes that a model, such as the Griffith Services Access Frame, should be used for the disbursement of funds to remote communities. Such a model should be in line with the policy of horizontal fiscal equalisation.

Capital works and repairs and maintenance requests from schools, are initially prioritised by superintendents and then go through a process of Territory-wide prioritisation.

\$1 for \$1 and \$2 for \$1 grants from the Northern Territory Department of Education are provided in response to school submissions.

The superintendent in each region has a role in the allocation of some NT and Commonwealth funding to schools. This role includes:

- staffing schools according to formula and within an agreed budget;
- prioritisation of requests for finance for facilities and for \$ for \$ grants;
- comment on submissions for National Equity Programs for Schools funding;
- chair regional Commonwealth Programs Committee;
- comment on and/or prioritise requests for AEP Strategic Initiatives funding; and
- acting as Principal of Group School Management Councils which are serviced by registrars in regional offices and handle finances for groups of isolated schools.

The large majority of the NT funding to schools is on a weighted per capita basis. The ongoing and predictable nature of the funding allows for long-term planning by school communities through their Action Plans for School Improvement and longitudinal evaluation.

3.6. Disbursement of Commonwealth Funds

Conversely, the large majority of Commonwealth funding to schools is on an annual submission basis. Each specific program, and there are many of them, requires a separate submission and submissions must be directed to a variety of officers/locations. Submissions to the Public Accounts Committee do not generally favour this mechanism for the allocation of resources. Mifsud (1995) says:

... require successful completion of grant submissions. These submissions contain western linguistic biases ... and are too complex to allow full Aboriginal participation in their preparation ... There is no assurance that these positions will be available for the following year. Subsequently the programs are designed for one year only and both employment of staff and continuity of programs becomes a major problem ... Abstudy [sic] forms too complex for the Aboriginal people to complete independently (pp. 1–2).

Gaykarnangu (1995) said '(t)he present allocation of resources appears to present school councils with a dilemma'.

Potter (1995) said '(t)he submission system means that the applicant may have left the position before the grant was offered, the successor may have no interest in the proposed project'.

In addition to Fong's submission, appraisals of the 24 AESIP NT initiatives have been received. Fourteen of these include among their 'concerns' a lack of continuity. This is perhaps expressed best in the words of Initiative 23, Monitoring and Reporting on NAEP in the NT:

The biggest concern relates to uncertainty over the fate of Initiative 23 in 1996 and the third triennium. This has led to recruitment difficulties, and the likelihood that some talented staff will seek more stable employment elsewhere ...

This means that where people are employed through the Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program continuity is not guaranteed. This is of vital concern, particularly in programs designed to employ Aboriginals.

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (1993) claims that:

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people also have low levels of literacy. This alone poses a significant barrier to access to services. These people are unable to read or fully understand signs and written material, they are unable to complete forms without assistance and for many the shame and potential embarrassment is enough to deter them from entering a government office (p. 21).

A senior DEET officer based in Darwin said that this was one reason why some Aboriginal parents of children living at home and undertaking secondary courses at remote NT schools do not claim ABSTUDY. They may not be aware of their entitlements and may be daunted by the claim form.

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The Office of Northern Development (1994) states that:

Feedback from Aboriginal communities in particular indicated that the yearly funding cycle discourages long term forward planing. Common complaints include long waiting periods for funding approvals or rejections, sometimes up to eighteen months, and at times no feedback at all (p. 95).

Further evidence of problems with the plethora of Commonwealth programs, each requiring submissions, is provided by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (1993). The report states that:

The Department [DEET] claims that multiple, overlapping equity strategies confuse staff and dilute their effectiveness (p. 76).

The Auditor-General in Commonwealth of Australia (1994) suggests that agreements renewed annually do not allow for stability in the forward planning process for either the Commonwealth or the States that long-term agreements allow (p. 6).

The NT ATSIC State Advisory Committee agreed with that view.

If Commonwealth SPP funding to the NT for education continues, the NT should argue to have the funding on a triennial basis as has been agreed for NT Health for some programs. NT Education should extend triennial funding to schools involved in those programs.

Rye (1995), Chairperson of the Commonwealth Grants Commission, said that the proliferation of Special Purpose Payments is an inefficient method of distribution of funds (p. 17). Mooney (1995), at the same meeting, claimed that a single budget is required to manage a total program (p. 21).

Annual funding based on agreements and submissions has also led to underspending of AEP funds each year. While the Commonwealth has agreed to roll over most of the funds, the NT had to return \$159,198 from its 1994 allocation. Recent figures and reasons for underspending, as provided by the NT Department of Education (NTDE) are provided in the following section.

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3.7. Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Programs

Year	Allocation	Allocation Plus Roll Over	Expenditure	Roll Over to Next Year	Returned
1993	11 551 870	11 551 870	9 031 970	2 519 900	0
1994	12 010 000	14 529 900	13 070 702	1 300 000	159 198
1995	12 641 762	13 941 762			

Table 6: AESIP Allocations and Expenditure. (Figures provided by the NT Department of Education)

Reasons for under expenditure and returned funds:

1993 Delay in signing of Agreement (May 1994) resulted in late recruitment, therefore, late start in all operations.

1994 Approval for roll over not received until August. Difficulty in recruiting additional staff after commencement of second semester.

Actual funds unspent at 31/12/94 were \$1,388,071. Roll over approved for estimated figures provided in November 1994. Additional 88k [\$88,000] returned. Initiative #05 [employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Resource Officers]: Manager received verbal acquittals in December 1994, however, in early 1995 several schools returned a total of \$71,127.

NTDE advice is that underspending occurred again in 1995 despite agreements being signed early. NTDE advice is that a major reason is the inability to attract suitable applicants to positions to establish an Aboriginal unit in the Schools Policy Branch.

In October 1995, a workshop session was run with some 20 participants at the NT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Educators Annual Conference. The session addressed aspects of this inquiry. Participants in the workshop session were unanimous in supporting funding by formula over funding by submission.

Most schools visited in remote communities disliked funding based on submissions. They claimed that it is unfair as it disadvantages inexperienced staff, who predominate in remote schools, and Aboriginal staff. Annual funding was also seen as working against long term planning. Some schools claimed that some funding should be submission driven to allow schools, especially small schools to undertake major one-off programs.

The great bulk of the evidence found to date argues against funding based on annual submissions. This method of distributing Commonwealth funds has many shortfalls. It does not:

- allow for long-term planning;
- provide the long time-lines required for meaningful program evaluation;
- provide stable employment to attract the best applicants;

- allow for full participation of the many Aboriginals with poor English literacy levels; or
- permit teachers in remote communities to devote sufficient time to their main task - teaching children.

3.8. Direct Grants

As mentioned earlier, DEET cannot provide precise information on direct grants to Aboriginal parents and students in the NT. The NT is a part of DEET's Northern Australian Region which also includes the Pilbara and Kimberley regions of WA. Direct grants to Northern Australia for 1994 were:

• Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ATAS)	\$2.8m
• Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA)	\$2.4m
• Vocational and Educational Guidance for Aboriginals Scheme (VEGAS)	\$0.4m
• Assistance to Isolated Children (AIC)	\$1.0m
• ABSTUDY	\$19.6m
• TOTAL	\$26.2m

The following information is based on DEET (1995–2).

ABSTUDY is available to:

- primary school students aged 14 years or over as at 1 January in the year for which they apply;
- secondary school students; and
- students studying full-time or part-time after having left school.

ABSTUDY assistance level depends on:

- the course the student is studying;
- the student's age;
- whether the student needs to live away from home;
- whether ABSTUDY considers the student dependent on parents/guardians or independent; and
- how much the student, the student's partner, or parents/guardians earn.

Living allowance is means-tested.

Fares allowance - beginning and end of each term - Actual cost

At Boarding School - Living Allowance can be paid direct to school.

3.8.1. ABSTUDY Assistance to School Students in the Northern Territory

DEET is unable to provide precise details of ABSTUDY payments to school students in the NT. They have advised that 55% of Aboriginals who reside in their data area of Northern Australia live in the NT and that age profiles in north western WA and the NT

are similar. They have also advised that the average cost to ABSTUDY of a secondary student at a boarding school in the NT is \$10,374. ABSTUDY advice is that secondary aged students living at home are entitled to allowances of \$670 pa. The NT Department of Education has advised that there are 686 Aboriginal students attending boarding schools in the NT and that there are 1152 secondary students in other Aboriginal schools in the NT. The following figures are extrapolated from the above information:

ABSTUDY payments to Northern Territorians	\$10.78 m
ABSTUDY payments to students at boarding schools in the NT	\$7.117 m
ABSTUDY payments to secondary aged students living in remote communities	\$0.772 m
Total ABSTUDY to NT school students	\$7.889 m

DEET advised that a significant number of parents with secondary children at school in remote communities do not claim ABSTUDY, so total payments are less than \$7.889m. The remainder of ABSTUDY would be going to post secondary students.

3.8.2. Problems associated with ABSTUDY

- The majority of parents in remote communities cannot fill out the five page application form without considerable assistance.
- Although living and school fee allowances can be paid direct to schools, no payment can be made until claim forms have been processed. Schools often have to go to DEET to have problems sorted out. Schools eventually get almost all they are owed.
- Time delay between students leaving school and DEET ceasing payments to parents means that parents may have significant amounts to return. DEET usually catches up with parents when the students re-enrol or siblings enrol.
- Parents complain that ABSTUDY does not allow any funding for parents to visit boarding schools where such visits would be beneficial to students.
- ABSTUDY does not provide assistance for students to return to home communities to participate in vital cultural ceremonies.
- Anecdotal evidence received by the Committee indicated that the school fee portion of ABSTUDY aid to parents is often not directed to the purpose for which it is intended.

Problems associated with assisting parents to claim ABSTUDY were elaborated at length with staff in most remote schools visited. DEET must make schools which have students entitled to claim ABSTUDY thoroughly familiar with the processes by which they can claim fees.

3.9. Grants Commission

The following extract from Commonwealth Grants Commission, Report on General Revenue Grant Relativities, 1995 Update clearly indicates that SPP Grants for Aboriginal Purposes, such as the AEP programs reduce the general revenue grant to the NT.

- Grants for Aboriginal Purposes. The increased importance of these grants in the standard budget reflects the increasing emphasis given to improving services to Aboriginals by the Commonwealth. In addition, the Northern Territory is receiving a larger share of the grants and New South Wales a smaller share. As a result, the Northern Territory's share of general revenue grants fell and New South Wales' share increased (p. 333).

From the growth of SPP funding over recent years, and the consequent reduction in general revenue assistance, it is clear that the Commonwealth is increasing control of State/Territory policy and that States/Territories are becoming more and more dependent on funding based on submissions. The Commonwealth of Australia (1994) report substantiates this claim as did Rye (1995, p.2).

	1989-90	1993-94
Commonwealth payments to or through States	\$26.4b	\$32.1b
SPP Payments	\$12.7b	\$16.7b
Proportion SPPs	48%	53%
Number of SPP Programs	73	90

Table 7: Growth in payments to or through the States. From Commonwealth of Australia (1994, p. 1).

Rye (1995) claimed:

that a proliferation of SPPs is a pretty inefficient way of conducting Commonwealth/State financial relations. They are very costly to administer, both at the Commonwealth level and on the state level (p. 17).

3.10. Channelling all Education Funds through One Agency

Channelling all funds through one agency is clearly in line with the National Commitment to Improved Outcomes in the Delivery of Programs and Services for Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders signed by the Council of Australian Governments on 7 December 1992. (From Commonwealth and Northern Territory, 1995, p. 1).

The Housing Agreement signed in 1995 should be seen as the forerunner of agreements in all service provision areas. While it was undoubtedly difficult to reach such an agreement, it will be infinitely more difficult in complex areas such as education where current needs and long-term evaluation are much harder to assess. Increased difficulty is no reason, however, to ignore the need for across-tier coordination.

The Housing Agreement refers to linking programs such as education (p. 2). It refers to a pooling of funds (p. 3), agreed policies/strategies (p. 5) and defines the management structure (pp. 7–8). By providing the Program Manager, the Northern Territory can be seen clearly to

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retain its major role in the provision of housing. A similar model could be adopted in education.

The Draft Proposal for Coordinated Care Trial for the NT (1996) is a move in the Health field in a similar direction. Trials are planned for the Katherine Region and the Tiwi Islands. The coordinated approach in health obviously faces more problems than confronted in housing. Education should be following health's lead in this area.

Accessing all funding through one agency is the preferred option for remote schools. They claim that it is difficult to become familiar with all sources of funding at present.

Implementing this option would require major changes in the Commonwealth's and States' thinking and current practice. It would also require the agreement of all States and the ACT. It is most likely that the States and the ACT would support the NT on this issue.

In 1991 the Australian Education Council recommended:

that school education is a shared responsibility of the Commonwealth and States/Territories in which the Commonwealth involvement in the operational management of school education should be reduced to the greatest possible extent, whilst ensuring that national objectives are able to be met. (Centre of Applied Educational Research, 1994, p. 2).

Unfortunately, the matter lapsed at Premiers Conference level.

It would rely on the Commonwealth having trust in the States/Territories to implement nationally agreed policies.

Advantages of funding through one agency:

- clearly reasserts the States' and Territories' responsibility for education;
- allows for co-ordination of all educational services within the NT framework;
- reduces duplication of administration costs to the minimum;
- allows for long term planning and evaluation of educational programs;
- allows for predicability and security of funding;
- removes the unfair practice of remote, Aboriginal communities having to write submissions;
- makes for transparency in funding arrangements;
- would be simple to implement mechanically;
- would enhance the development of national policies in education;
- would probably be supported by the Australian Education Union. It is not dissimilar to their proposal in Marginson et al (1995), 'Creating an Education Nation for the Year 2000'; and
- it would allow priorities to be set within the total education budget.

Disadvantages:

- probable difficulty in convincing the Commonwealth to agree with this system;
- there would be difficulties in achieving policies acceptable to the Commonwealth and all States and Territories.

3.11. Horizontal Fiscal Equalisation

Funding from the Commonwealth to the states is based on the principle of horizontal fiscal equalisation. This policy is essential in providing adequate funding to remote Aboriginal communities. Fiscal equalisation is meant to take into account all disability factors incurred in providing standard services to all Australians. There are many disability factors among which are included dispersion, socio-economic levels and Aboriginality. The Committee is convinced that the NT is disadvantaged because some disability factors do not fully recognise the needs of people living in remote Aboriginal communities. The proportion of the NT population living in such situations is very high when compared with any of the states or the ACT.

The Office of Northern Development (1994) states:

Threats to the maintenance of Fiscal Equalisation

Equity principles are an integral part of regional development in Australia, and in political terms are a central part of policies ranging from social justice through to regional economic reform. The current arguments being mounted by the major States of New South Wales and Victoria seeking changes aimed at reducing the emphasis on locational factors in Commonwealth Grants Commission calculations were viewed by many as the single biggest threat to the continued promotion of social justice in rural and remote areas. The rule of equalisation, applied by the Commonwealth Grants Commission recommendations, helps ensure that the States and Territories have the opportunity, through the maintenance of their fiscal capacity, to provide an adequate standard of services to their citizens (p. 94).

As the needs for funding Aboriginal education in the NT are so great the Committee believes that any SPP funding for that purpose should be treated by the exclusion method. At present these funds are treated by the inclusion method, thus greatly reducing General Revenue Grants (GRG) to the NT.

3.12. Allocating Funds to Schools

The disbursement of the majority of Northern Territory funds by the formula method is generally seen as equitable and NT funds account for 82.5% of the total expenditure on Aboriginal education. Many witnesses, however, were not happy with some of the formulas used. The Committee believes that allocation of most resources by suitable formulas should be maintained. Allocation as a result of annual submission is unpopular and does not allow for long term planning or evaluation.

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, funds should be allocated to schools through a formula such as the Griffith Service Access Frame which is in line with the principle of fiscal equalisation.

RECOMMENDATION 18.

- 18.1 That the Northern Territory Government supports the maintenance of the Fiscal Equalisation policy by which the Commonwealth funds the States and Territories;**
- 18.2 that the Commonwealth, States and Territories accept common, agreed policies for school education which will enable all available funding to be channelled through one authority in each State or Territory;**
- 18.3 that the disbursement of NT funds to schools should be in accordance with the principles of horizontal fiscal equalisation;**
- 18.4 that funds to schools be disbursed by suitable formulas except for capital works, minor new works, repairs and maintenance and major new educational initiatives which should be based on submission;**
- 18.5 that schools be funded on a triennial rather than an annual basis;**
- 18.6 that the Northern Territory Department of Education distribute per capita funding to remote schools with an access disadvantage allowance calculated according to a formula such as the Griffith Access Service Frame;**
- 18.7 that DEET supplies schools with a computerised pro forma for ABSTUDY claim forms; and**
- 18.8 that NT Government Agencies report expenditure in their Annual Reports to Parliament against frameworks which reflect the policy of horizontal fiscal equalisation.**

3.13. Methods of Delivery of School Education Services to Remote Communities

When considering methods of allocating resources, methods of delivery of school education services to remote Aboriginal communities also need to be considered. The Central Land Council (1996) claimed that 'you'll never get one model that works everywhere'. The following options arise from submissions received and the literature reviewed.

3.13.1. Option 1 : Maintain the status quo

At present all remote Aboriginal schools, except for five Catholic mission schools, are administered in conjunction with urban schools by the NT Department of Education.

Advantages:

- provides unified, transparent administration of school education services in the Northern Territory;
- is a system well known to the Northern Territory community and educators; and

- does not require new or additional administrative support.

Disadvantages:

- may not fully take into account special needs of individual communities; and
- is not accepted by many Aboriginal people as appropriate in their quest for self determination.

3.13.2. Option 2 : Establish a separate, Remote Aboriginal Education Authority

This option was suggested by Strachan (1995). It has been suggested on various occasions in the past by various people.

Advantages:

- would be dealing only with remote Aboriginal schools; and
- would develop expertise in this field.

Disadvantages:

- would fragment the delivery of education in the Northern Territory;
- would require the establishment of a new, separate administration system and, therefore, incur additional costs;
- would not cater for the many Aboriginal children in urban areas or those who move between urban and remote communities;
- would still have to interact with the 'urban' education authority regarding secondary aged students and students moving between urban and remote schools; and
- it would be extremely difficult to establish a quality, stable teaching service.

This option is not recommended.

3.13.3. Option 3 : Encourage self-management of schools in remote Aboriginal communities

This option has considerable support from Aboriginals and literature reviewed. The Commonwealth Grants Commission (1992) transcript of its conference with Aboriginal organisations provides evidence that the Northern and Central Land Councils:

If Aboriginal people have the opportunity to do these things [education] themselves, they couldn't do any worse than what is being done at the present time (Ross, p. 18);

and leaders from at least six communities from Arnhem Land to Central Australia wanted direct funding to communities to provide their own school education services.

Thompson (1995) comments on moves to privatise schools in Australia and overseas. Barnett and Abbatt (1994) in discussing improving health in indigenous communities claim that services organised by external organisations are unlikely to have a lasting impact. Shimpo (1978, pp. 175–6) also stresses the point that significant improvements

will not occur until people are given control of their own destinies. Downing (1969, p. 29) too, says 'The authority for decision making and consequent action must rest finally with the client community'. The Northern Territory Co-ordination Committee (1992, p. 13) said 'that there is a greater need for education to be relevant to the communities ... and to take an active role in school operations could greatly improve this service'. Crough (1992, p. 33) claims that the Commonwealth Grants Commission could assess remote communities, then 'the decision about who ... administers the schools ... could then be determined by the Aboriginal people living in the community'.

The Northern Territory Department of Housing and Local Government Association of the Northern Territory have recently (Feb. 1996) been funded to implement a joint project to implement a Skills Development Project for Councils on Remote and Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory.

The project has a prime focus on meeting the social justice needs of Aboriginal and remote Australians through the development of enhanced community management skills. Over a period of three years, the project aims to build on the skill levels of Aboriginal elected members in the Northern Territory, and thereby improve the potential of local government to address the social and development issues faced by their communities (p. 1).

If the project is successful, Aboriginal communities will be in a better position to be able to control their own schools. The Committee is aware that it will take some years for this to occur and will require close co-operation between the NT Government and strong school councils backed by their communities.

On the other hand, at the Annual Conference of the Northern Territory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Educators held in Alice Springs in October 1995, Mr Peter Buckskin, Assistant Secretary, Aboriginal Education Branch, DEET, Canberra, claimed that current private Aboriginal schools across Australia are producing the poorest results for Aboriginal children of all schools involved in Aboriginal education. This is despite his claim, at the same conference, that Yipirinya, the only private Aboriginal primary school in the Northern Territory, is the highest Commonwealth funded private school in Australia.

In addressing Terms of Reference (e), later in this report, evidence of the extremely poor standards of reading and mathematics being achieved by students in remote Aboriginal schools is provided. This indicates that in the short term there will be few people in these communities with the levels of literacy and numeracy required to run their own schools effectively.

Mooney (1995) cautioned that Australia should move down the road to privatisation in Aboriginal organisations gradually. Several witnesses before the Committee gave the same advice.

Advantages:

- would meet demands from many Aboriginal people;
- it is widely claimed that long term advances can only be achieved if indigenous people accept responsibility for their own development; and
- should provide educational programs relevant to individual Aboriginal communities.

Disadvantages:

- private Aboriginal schools in Australia have had little success to date;
- very few Aboriginal communities have the skills in finance, administration and education to run their own schools;
- would require new funding procedures to be agreed to and implemented by the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments; and
- private, remote Aboriginal schools would probably have great difficulty in recruiting suitable staff.

3.13.4. Option 4 : Provide co-ordinated social justice services, including education, health, housing, law and economic development

This option is strongly supported by the Australian College of Education (1995), Wolfe (1989, p. 7), Phillpot (1990, p. 132), the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (1993, p. 88), Marginson, Martin and Williamson (1995), Commonwealth Grants Commission (1992, p. 15), Crough (1992, pp. 32–3), Shimpo (1978, p. 158), Rioli (1996), Schmitzer (1994, p. 4), MCEETYA (1995, pp. 2, 4, 46 & 55), DHLG and LGANT (1996, p. 1), Draft Framework Agreement (1996, pp. 2, 5 & 10), and Office of Northern Development (1994, pp. 54, 79, 82, 104 and 106).

DHLG and LGANT (1996, p. 5) will be targeting specific communities for training. Targeting communities is seen as the most effective method of introducing a co-ordinated approach to community development.

Griffith (1995, p. 10) claimed that it is possible to distribute funds to meet identified community needs. Shimpo (1978, p. 158) recommended a return to a situation similar to having an ‘administrator’ in each community who could co-ordinate consultation between government and the community. He also advocated that there be only one Government department controlling services to remote Aboriginal communities (p. ii). The Northern Territory Co-ordination Committee (1992, p. 16) suggested that there needs to be an ‘all-of-government’ approach to the provision of services to remote Aboriginal communities.

Advantages:

- provides a co-ordinated approach;
- ensures that service providers work together for the benefit of the community;
- reduces the number of groups needing to consult with a community;

- leads to more effective consultation with communities; and
- lessens confusion created by a multiplicity of overlapping social justice programs.

Disadvantages:

- perceived loss of some control by Northern Territory Government Departments; and
- requires different methods of resource allocation from those used for the rest of the community.

Adopting this option would require Government and communities reaching joint decisions and working together to draw up appropriate contracts which include assessable goals.

RECOMMENDATION 19.

- 19.1 That the Northern Territory Government trials co-ordinated social justice service provision in selected communities with effective community governance, for a period of five years. Communities to be selected by agreement between Government and individual communities. Education levels to be evaluated before and after the trials to enable progress to be assessed accurately; and**
- 19.2 that Aboriginal communities that request greater control of their schools be assisted by Government to acquire the necessary skills and be further encouraged to progress through the devolution stages to the fullest possible extent. The long-term goal would be fully self-managed schools in the Government system.**

3.14. Current Lack of Co-ordination

The above wide range of expert opinion stresses the need for co-ordination across both tiers and sectors of government. The Office of Aboriginal Development was established in the Northern Territory and should provide such co-ordination.

Despite a widely recognised need, there is little evidence that much co-ordination is really happening. There are projects and proposals being implemented by sections of departments or even groups of departments. Many of these are highly commendable but their authors are unaware of similar projects or research being conducted by other sections of government.

A typical example of lack of co-ordination of projects affecting Aboriginal communities is in the area of communication. Projects/research of which the Committee is aware, and there are probably others, include:

- Department of Education - provision of secondary programs for students in remote, Aboriginal communities;
- Office of Aboriginal Development - development of community profiles. To date, these are well short of meeting the needs of all agencies, each of which develops its own as and when required;

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- DHLG and LGANT - propose innovative telecommunication links at remote community libraries; and
- Strategic Services group (NCOM), Treasury - proposal to upgrade co-ordinated communication services to remote communities.

Each of the above impacts on the provision of education services, in fact on most social justice services, to remote Aboriginal communities. While each project is designed to meet the specific needs of particular user groups, there are obvious areas of overlap and duplication. It appears that none of the project managers is fully aware of what the others are doing.

Proper co-ordination of such proposals would reduce the total cost to Government through a reduction of duplication. It should also ensure that compatible technologies were used, eliminating the need for future expense in bringing incompatible systems into line with each other.

Further, consultation with communities could be carried out by one group rather than by four groups. This would greatly reduce the time consumed by, and confusion created in, Aboriginal communities.

There are problems which have not been solved, or worse, problems created due to a lack of co-ordination. Individuals within Agencies do not have the time to research what all other agencies are doing and should not have to depend on a hit-and-miss approach to find out what is happening in other sections of government. If there are to be significant short-term improvements in the delivery of government services to Aboriginal communities then there must be more effective co-ordination of services.

It is necessary for Government to identify one agency that is sufficiently resourced and given sufficient teeth to ensure co-ordination of services.

RECOMMENDATION 20.

That the Northern Territory Government resources and empowers the Office of Aboriginal Development to co-ordinate the provision of services to remote Aboriginal communities.

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Report on the Provision of School Education Services for Remote Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory

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CHAPTER 4

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE (b)

the consultation process with Aboriginal people which aid in targeting expenditure to areas of most need

4.1. Literature on Consultation with Aboriginal Communities

There is no substantial academic literature on consultation with Aboriginal communities. As this is such an important part of government business in Australia, particularly in the Northern Territory, it is research which deserves government support. The Committee's ability to identify and recommend alternative consultation mechanisms and improvements to existing mechanisms in consultation with all participants is limited.

There are, however, many people who are considered by colleagues to be effective communicators with Aboriginal people. There is also much written on this topic in pamphlets and academic work, often based on Northern Territory experience. While effective communication must be the basis on which effective consultation is built, it does not, in itself, provide the answers required when governments or other organisations want to know what Aboriginal communities think about specific policies or proposals.

4.2. Effective Communication and Consultation

There can be no doubt that past experiences between Aboriginal people and governments have been fraught with problems resulting from ineffective communication. This is best expressed in quotes from Bain (1992), and reflects the views of many writers:

White man never tell Aborigine everything.

You can work with Aborigines all your life. They can teach you a lot; then something happens and you find you don't know them. You can't get to know a black (p. 5).

Stuart Phillipot is considered by the NT University and the Commissioner for Public Employment as an expert on cross-cultural communication and has given presentations at Executive Management Programs. In a telephone conversation, he claimed that there are four main prerequisites for successful communication with Aboriginal communities. These are listed below and supported by literature.

1. An appreciation of the culture of the group being visited.

It is essential to take into account the differences in cultural values both between communities and between communities and the wider NT values.

Different approaches are needed, for example, when dealing with communities in Central Australia and Arnhem Land. This view is supported by Harris (pp. 3, 4, 9, 15 & 17), Bain (1992, pp. 221 & 228), Phillpot (1990, p. 137), Department of Aboriginal Affairs (1983, pp. 1 & 3–6) and Downing (1969, p. 17).

2. Some knowledge of the local language.

This is supported by Department of Aboriginal Affairs (1992, p. 2), Pride (1985, pp. 183 & 191) and Downing (1969, p. 9). Members at a Feppi meeting in August 1995, said that the use of interpreters is required.

3. Some knowledge of the local political power brokers.

This is supported by Department of Aboriginal Affairs (1992, p. 7) and Downing (1969, p. 15).

4. Time to do the job properly.

One quick visit is not enough. This is supported by Harris (p. 3), Department of Aboriginal Affairs (1992, p. 6) and Bain (1992, pp. 112, 221, 229 & 231). Members at the August 1995 Feppi meeting claimed that the two months which they were given to seek responses to a list of questions was the minimum time required to seek the opinions of their constituents.

The literature suggests that there are at least three further prerequisites:

5. Appropriate personal qualities.

This is recommended by Harris (p. 3), Downing (1969, pp. 11 & 13) and Department of Aboriginal Affairs (1992, p. 3).

6. Appropriate training.

This is supported by Department of Aboriginal Affairs (1992, p. 1), Phillpot (1990, pp. 137 & 146), Watts (1982, p. 139) and Barnett and Abbatt (1994, p. 7).

7. A knowledge of the system (in this case - Education).

This is advocated by Watts (1982, p. 139).

4.3. Feppi

Feppi, the Northern Territory Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, was established in the late 1970s to gather and convey Aboriginal views on education to the Minister for Education. Its membership and role were redefined in 1991. Feppi's objectives and role are detailed in Feppi Newsletter Nov 1994 (p. 14). They include advising the Minister for Education on all aspects of Aboriginal education, participating on appropriate national bodies, consulting with communities, and assisting communities address education challenges.

Membership is a Chairperson, nine regional representatives - Arnhem, Barkly, Darwin, VRD, Katherine, West Darwin, Pitjantjatjara, Lake Mackay and Alice Springs/Sandover - and nine specialist members - Employment and Training, TAFE, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers, Secondary Education, Non-Government, Aboriginal Students, Early Childhood, Primary Education and Higher Education. Feppi Council is serviced by a small secretariat based in Darwin and one person in Alice Springs.

Members are appointed by the Minister following receipt of nominations resulting from advertisements in the press. In some States, Aboriginal Education Consultative Group members are elected by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In the past, this has been a contentious issue in the Northern Territory.

4.3.1. NT Department of Education's Views of Feppi

In his written submission Fong (1995) said:

Feppi [the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group established to advise the NT Minister for Education on matters relating to Aboriginal education] is represented on:

the Northern Territory Board of Studies - a member of Feppi chairs the Board's Aboriginal Education Standing Committee;

the Education Advisory Council and its Specific Purpose Programs Sub-Committee;

Regional Programs Committees; and

interview panels to appoint staff to positions within Aboriginal Education Program curriculum projects.

The membership of the Aboriginal Education Standing Committee of the Board of Studies is predominantly Aboriginal. This Committee is responsible for advising the Board of the appropriateness of curriculum material for Aboriginal students... (p. 15)

Feppi was a major player in the development of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy, Strategic Plan for the Northern Territory 1993-1995 Triennium. They undertook wide consultation to elicit the view of Aboriginals living in remote communities.

The Northern Territory Aboriginal Education Policy Monitoring Group, (1993-1) says:

The Northern Territory Strategic Plan Working Party

In October 1991, the Northern Territory AEP Monitoring Group appointed a Working Party to assist in the development of a Northern Territory AEP Strategic Plan for the 1993-95 triennium.

The Strategic Plan Working Party, like the Monitoring Group itself, comprised representatives of Feppi, (the Northern Territory Aboriginal Education Consultative Group), the Northern Territory Department of Education (NTDE) and the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET).

During this period, Feppi conducted 23 meetings involving Aboriginal people from 76 communities to provide further input to the Strategic Plan. [Consultation undertaken by Feppi members and Aboriginal Education Liaison Officers.]

This phase of the consultation process resulted in 32 responses being received, and suggested amendments have been incorporated in this document, which has been made available as a public record of input into the Northern Territory strategic planning process (p. 1).

Feppi was involved in every stage of the development of that Strategic Plan except for the actual writing of the document. This led to delays when the Minister realised that two of Feppi's major recommendations had not been included and the document had to be rewritten incorporating those omissions. The Committee believes that Feppi should be involved in writing the next Strategic Plan.

The AEP Monitoring Group went on to say:

Completion of the Strategic Plan.

The AEP Monitoring Group has endorsed this document as a record of the public consultation which has occurred.

The Northern Territory Minister for Education and Commonwealth Minister for Aboriginal Affairs have also endorsed this Strategic Plan as a blueprint for the further development of Aboriginal education in the Northern Territory to guide practice in Aboriginal education over the 1993-95 triennial period.

To ensure the continued relevance of these strategies, they will be reviewed in mid 1994 as part of the 1996-98 triennium strategic planning process (p. 1).

4.3.2. Feppi's Views of its Effectiveness

At its appearance before the Public Accounts Committee in October 1995, Feppi claimed that its role is still evolving, that it is expected by communities to advise them as well as the Minister for Education, and that it believes that it is working effectively. Its required involvement in a wide range of committees ensures that it has a voice in education which is heard more and more consistently.

4.3.3. Community Perceptions of Feppi

At their annual conference in Alice Springs in October 1995, members of the NT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Educators advised that Feppi is not seen as effective by Aboriginal communities. They claimed that Feppi:

- is not known by some Aboriginal educators;
- does not visit communities regularly;
- members should be elected - possibly in conjunction with ATSIC regional elections;

- does not follow up requests from communities;
- should have field officers to assist them; and
- should have a toll-free number so that Aboriginal staff in schools can ring them confidentially.

Aboriginal staff and community members at communities visited concurred with most of the above comments. One community councillor said that 'Feppi has forgotten this country'. This is despite the fact that the principal of the school on that community is a member of Feppi. It would appear that Feppi members are not fully aware of their roles. This view was repeated in another community which had had representatives on Feppi in the past.

4.3.4. Feppi's Fit with Prerequisites for Effective Consultation

Feppi members would probably meet requirements numbered 1, 2, 3 and 5 (pp. 60-60). Few would have had training for the position or a sound knowledge of the education system in the Northern Territory. As most are in employment it is certain that they do not have the time to visit their constituents and gain a real knowledge of what their constituents want. Feppi members advised that unless their employment took them to communities in their area they made few, if any, visits to communities other than their own. As mentioned earlier, Feppi members from remote communities may not be talking about Feppi in their home communities, let alone in neighbouring communities.

Under these circumstances it is difficult to see how members could be meeting the majority of their major objectives as listed earlier.

4.3.5. Composition of Feppi

As mentioned earlier in this section, the composition of Feppi is of concern to Aboriginals. Many have said that all members should be elected by Aboriginals.

In its consultations with Aboriginal people regarding the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, the Northern Territory Office of Aboriginal Development (1995), found that:

The value of the current consultative mechanism on Aboriginal education was raised as a concern by a number of groups. Dissatisfaction was expressed with the process for the selection of membership of the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group and there is a desire for it to become a decision making committee rather than continue its advisory role (p. 33).

On the other hand, MCEETYA (1995), said that:

The notion that all advisory groups must be totally independent - that their membership be only elected community members preferably not employed by any provider - is not helpful in creating partnerships that work for the implementation of operational plans.

The philosophy and politics that underpin the call for total independence are well understood. However, in order to advance educational outcomes in Australian systems or institutions the participation of Indigenous people in education decision-making must include as many people as possible at every level of operations (p. 11).

The Committee believes that if the NT Government retains Feppi as its major source of advice on Aboriginal education then it should be restructured along the lines suggested in Section 4.8.

4.4. Consultation by the Northern Territory Department of Education

Superintendents, each of whom is responsible for education in a region of the Northern Territory, are the main Departmental consultants with communities. Their position descriptions include as essential or desirable qualities:

- Proven capacity to work in a collegiate and consultative manner with Principals and School Councils.
- Ability to operate successfully in a cross cultural setting often with traditional adults.
- Awareness of the social, cultural and economic and personal factors which will have an influence and consequence when making management policy decisions in areas of job related responsibilities.

Other Departmental officers who may be required to consult with communities include curriculum advisory staff, Facilities and Contracts Section staff, and ear health specialists.

4.4.1. Departmental Officers' Fit with Prerequisites for Effective Consultation

Depending on their previous experience, Departmental consultants may meet fewer of the prerequisites than do Feppi members. They should have a sound knowledge of the education system (7) and appropriate personal qualities (5). It is highly problematical whether they have an appreciation of the culture of specific communities, a knowledge of the local language (or be accompanied by interpreters), or a knowledge of the local politics/power brokers. It is almost certain that they will have received no training to act as consultants with Aboriginal communities. It is also almost certain that they will have insufficient time to consult effectively. There is no doubt that some Departmental officers have developed considerable networks and expertise over a period of time.

4.4.2. Community Perceptions of Departmental Officers

During discussions between community members and the Committee the major emphasis when looking at consultation was focussed on the role of Feppi. Mention was made by two witnesses that visiting Departmental officers usually only met with the school staff. Witnesses in two other communities stated that Departmental officers had been very helpful in trying to solve specific problems.

The committee believes that this highlights the need for Principals and Head Teachers in remote schools to emphasise their role as liaison officers between the Department and their communities in their discussions with community leaders.

4.5. Consultation by DEET Officers

DEET officers also play a role in consultation with Aboriginal communities regarding the provision of school education services. Their role is limited to direct funding programs such as ASSPA, ABSTUDY, VEGAS, and ATAS. In some cases they, too, rely on Principals and Head Teachers to liaise with parents. Staff in most schools visited claimed that they spent considerable time helping parents finalise applications for ABSTUDY.

4.5.1. DEET Field Officers' Fit with Prerequisites for Effective Consultation

Although DEET Field Officers usually know DEET programs they rarely have a sound understanding of how those programs fit into the whole schooling process in remote Aboriginal communities. They are generally not senior officers who could be expected to have a sound knowledge of either Aboriginal communities or education policies.

4.5.2. Community Perceptions of DEET Field Officers

Few communities visited commented on DEET Field Officers. Some said that they rarely saw them. The Committee believes that few Aboriginal people in communities are really aware that NT Department and DEET officers represent different levels of government.

4.6. Communities' Views on Consultation

Written submissions to the Committee vary markedly on their perceptions of the effectiveness of the consultation process.

Mifsud (1995) says:

... the consultation process with Aboriginal people in targeting key areas of expenditure is both sound and broad enough to allow a wide scope for educational expenditure (p. 2).

Gaykarnangu (1995) says:

... education policy is based too much on needs perceived by distant bureaucrats 'in carpetland' ... and not based on the development needs of the community.

Potter (1995) says:

Consultation seldom happens in the language of the community ... Areas of need are then decided by the articulate English speakers ... Competent English speakers may be called on by many government departments even on the same day ... Aboriginal people are increasingly cynical of Government Departments that have no money for them but still drive solo in new Toyotas.

It was illuminating to listen to members of community councils talk about agreements they had reached with government agencies, particularly in the health field. After reading agreements which had been discussed and listening to people talk about what was happening it became obvious that the majority of council members did not fully understand the

complexities of the health issues being addressed nor the responsibilities they had accepted as signatories to those agreements.

It would be advantageous to all parties to agreements between communities and agencies if a neutral observer could be present at discussions to ensure that Aboriginal communities were making informed decisions.

The Committee senses a high level of cynicism in Aboriginal communities regarding consultation. There seems to be a growing reluctance to enter into agreements because of their perceptions that the outcomes of consultation do not match their memories of the consultation which occurred. They often see no outcomes of consultation which has taken up considerable amounts of their time. Schools/communities do not believe that their requests have been met if:

- funding is insufficient to meet all requests, eg. the initiative to employ Aboriginal Education Workers as a part of the AEP was limited to less than \$1m but submissions exceeded \$2m. Therefore, more than half of the requests were unmet;
- by the time individual requests are prioritised and moulded with similar requests to develop programs, individual communities cannot recognise that their requests are largely met;
- despite extensive consultation, it may have been ineffective for reasons outlined by Potter (1995), ie. 'Consultation seldom happens in the language of the community. Areas of need are then decided by articulate English speakers';
- Aboriginal people being consulted may not share the concept basis on which the consultant makes assumptions and decisions;
- people, generally, claim that consultation has not occurred, or been ineffective, if they don't get their own way in the end; and
- by the time the submission is approved the author may have left the community and his/her replacement is not interested in continuing with the project.

Feppi and the NT Aboriginal and Torres Strati Islander Corporation for Educators claimed that more use should be made of media such as television and radio to inform Aboriginal people of education programs and policies. They would then be in a better position to make informed decisions when visited by consultants.

4.7. Number of Visitors to Communities

Potter (1995) and Northern Territory Co-ordination Committee (1992, p. 12) comment on the excessive number of departments and agencies which consult with Aboriginal communities. This can lead to confusion, the build up of unreasonable expectations and apathy. The number of education consultants who visit communities has already been mentioned. Other large departments probably have similar numbers of people visiting communities. A rationalisation in the number of such visits should be high on the Government's agenda.

Officers working with communities should make clear whether they are providing information or seeking community input to future decisions. The use of modern technology should be used instead of visits wherever possible.

4.8. Committee Findings

While there is evidence of extensive consultation with Aboriginals regarding school education, there remains a sense in remote communities that there is a lack of effective consultation.

The Committee is convinced that methods of consultation which are seen as effective by communities must be introduced. As Aboriginal people living in remote communities frequently have very different world views from those shared by the wider community, one way of finalising any consultation process would be to provide feedback at later meetings.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Feppi is seen by Aboriginal communities as ineffective. The Committee believes that one reason for the perceived failure of Feppi is that it has been under-resourced. Members have not been able to meet regularly with their constituents. They have not been able to provide feedback to the communities with which they have consulted and are not readily available to speak to people seeking advice.

The Committee is convinced that consultation with Aboriginal communities will only become effective if it is based on regions delineated by languages spoken rather than by some arbitrary geographical boundary which divides language groups and includes non-traditional alliances of groups. The Committee believes that the NT Department of Education should redraw its regional boundaries to fit in with language groups. This would have the effect of reducing the number of major languages spoken in the region and should enhance the effectiveness of consultation.

4.8.1. Education Committees in Language Regions

Linguistic regions should become the focal points for consultation with Aboriginal communities across the Territory. These regions should have education committees established and resourced so that they are able to function effectively and to be seen to be functioning effectively by the communities they service.

4.8.2. Feppi Membership

The Committee believes that the membership of Feppi should be revised to include representatives of education committees from linguistic groups in remote areas and of combined ASSPA groups in urban centres. Such a composition could ensure better representation across the NT. Feppi would be too large to be functional, however, if all language groups were represented. Combining those groups would be a realistic way of making Feppi a workable size. There may still be the need to have specialist members on Feppi to ensure that decisions taken are made on an appropriate knowledge base.

4.8.3. Towards Effective Consultation

During the Inquiry the Committee received a variety of recommendations on the consultation with remote Aboriginal communities. These include:

- maintaining the current system;
- the employment of liaison officers to work with Feppi, with regional superintendents, or based in communities; and
- establishing regional education committees based on linguistic groupings and revising the membership of Feppi to liaise with those regional committees.

The Committee supports the last of these options. It is recognised that significant additional funding will be required to established such a consultative mechanism but no effective mechanism could be put in place without increased expenditure.

RECOMMENDATION 21.

- 21.1 That the Northern Territory Government establishes and resources regional education advisory committees, based on languages spoken, as the major target for consultation on education in remote communities;**
- 21.2 that the membership of Feppi be revised to include representatives from regional education advisory committees and joint ASSPA committees in urban areas;**
- 21.3 that the NT Government funds the development and publication of a handbook on effective consultation methodology with Aboriginal communities;**
- 21.4 that superintendents, principals, head teachers and other Departmental officers who need to consult with Aboriginal communities receive appropriate cross-cultural awareness training prior to taking up their positions;**
- 21.5 that all new Feppi members receive appropriate training; and**
- 21.6 that principals and head teachers appointed to remote communities receive appropriate training to assist them in their role as liaison agents between communities and the NT Department of Education.**

4.9. Community Profiles

Planning for effective consultation requires thorough preparation. This necessitates a pre-existing sound knowledge of the community with which consultation is proposed. At this stage, comprehensive community profiles do not exist.

The Office of Aboriginal Development is endeavouring, with limited resources, to develop profiles. Each Department develops its own requirements-specific community profiles as required. Commonwealth departments are undertaking similar work. Even with all the

information on education, for instance, it is not possible to consult fully on education unless housing, health and other issues are taken into consideration. It would clearly be more cost efficient and effective if one authority were resourced and empowered to develop and maintain comprehensive profiles on all Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.

RECOMMENDATION 22.

That the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Governments resource the NT Office of Aboriginal Development to develop and maintain comprehensive databases on all Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.

Report on the Provision of School Education Services for Remote Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory

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CHAPTER 5

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE (c)

the effectiveness of the financial administration and expenditure, including an assessment of the percentage of programme funds spent on the administration of those funds

5.1. General Comment

The Committee found that the variety of sources of funding and the methods by which schools access those funds causes confusion in small, remote schools. Principals and head teachers, particularly those new to NT Education or newly promoted to those positions, take time to come to grips with the systems and are likely to miss out on tapping into some sources of funds.

The NT Department of Education clearly spells out procedures required to access NT funding in its Standard Devolution Package which was distributed in 1991. This has been updated and is expected to be in schools as the School Management Handbook in Semester 2, 1996.

DEET advertises its programs in a variety of booklets which change as programs change. This is confusing, especially when new programs are often introduced before the appropriate literature reaches schools. Programs such as ASSPA have some procedures changed nearly every year with different sub programs being allowed or disallowed without prior notice.

The Committee believes that schools would be much better served if all funds came from the NTDE and were disbursed according to known and ongoing procedures.

5.2. NT Department of Education

Fong (1995, pp 9–12) details sources of funding for education, 1994-1995, and provides a break-down of how those funds were expended. In his written submission, Clarke, Acting Under Treasurer, NT Treasury (1995, p. 2) confirms sources of funding. It should be noted that neither NTDE nor Treasury can accurately identify Commonwealth direct grants to schools/parents. This matter has been addressed in Section 3.1.

Fong (1995, p. 16) claims that 8.5% of expenditure on education for remote Aboriginal schools is spent on administration. That figure increases to 9.6% in other schools and 9.3% across the board. NTDE has advised that 'administration' includes: the cost of its Corporate Services Division, which includes personnel management (salaries etc.), human resource development, revenue and planning, facilities and contracts, and student assistance; regional administration including operations North and South and regional offices; and information systems.

Financial administration within the NTDE is governed by NT legislation and subject to audit. Funds which are disbursed to school councils, or group school management councils as is the case for the majority of small, remote schools, are also subject to audit.

5.3. Commonwealth Funding

The large majority of Commonwealth SPP funding to NT Education is for two major programs; the National Equity Program for Schools (NEPS) and the Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiative Program (AESIP generally known as AEP).

5.3.1. NEPS Agreements

There are many sub programs within the NEPS framework. The better known are the Disadvantaged Schools Program, the Country Areas Program and two ESL programs.

DEET (1994) published a Compendium of Agreements between the Commonwealth and the States/Territories with regard to the National Equity Program for Schools (NEPS). Administrative costs charged by each State/Territory, are as follows:

New South Wales	6%
Victoria	6%
Queensland	5%
Western Australia	6%
South Australia	6%
Tasmania	8%
Northern Territory	10%
Australian Capital Territory	8%

Table 8: NEPS Agreements between the Commonwealth and the States. From DEET (1994, pp. 251-2).

It can be seen from this table that at 10%, the NT charges are higher than other government systems which range from 5% to 8%. The next two highest charges, 8%, are by the next two smallest systems, the ACT and Tasmania. This supports the NT Department of Education argument that administrative costs escalate with diseconomy of scale. In other words, there is a minimum core of staff required to administer NEPS programs. More populous states spend considerably more than the NT, but require a lower percentage of their budgets, on administration.

Rye (1995, p. 4) stated that administrative scale is taken into account by the Grants Commission when recommending funding levels for the States and Territories. As SPPs are not subject to the application of disability factors as taken into account by the Grants Commission it is fair that the NT charge higher administrative costs than do the larger States with much lower percentages of their populations living in remote Aboriginal communities.

5.3.2. AESIP Agreements

Where Commonwealth Specific Purpose Payments for programs such as the AEP programs come to the NT and are used for the payment of full-time staff, the NT

Treasury retains an amount equivalent to 54% of the salaries as 'on-costs'. For example, in *Initiative 23: Monitoring and Reporting on the National Aboriginal Education Policy in the NT*, personnel costs are \$318,000 and on-costs \$171,000 for 1995. The Northern Territory Aboriginal Education Policy Monitoring Group, (1993-2, p. 94) states that on-costs comprise superannuation 20%, workers compensation insurance 3%, long service leave contribution 3%, property management 13%, and administration 15%. This is a public document. NT Treasury has confirmed this.

The NT Operational Plan is approved by Feppi and DEET. The Commonwealth approves of on-costs as charged by the NT as it has signed an agreement which confirms them.

Because of agreed confidentiality DEET was unable to provide details of agreements regarding Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program (AESIP) funding between the Commonwealth and the other States/Territories. Information on agreed administrative and on-costs charged was sought from each of the States.

WA, NSW and SA have provided details. The following comparisons are based on the information supplied.

- NT charges 54% against AESIP personnel costs.
- WA charges 5% and considers the other costs as part of their contribution to the Aboriginal Education Program (AEP).
- SA charges 18.6% against salaries and less than 5% on non-salary support costs. SA also considers other costs as part of its contribution to AEP.
- NSW charges 4.5% for administration and either 13.85% or 17.85% against salaries, depending on whether employees are casual or permanent.

It can be seen that the NT charges significantly more than those States. This is possibly because of administrative scale and that AESIP funding is a far smaller proportion of their spending on education than in the NT. On-costs such as superannuation, long service leave, and property management relating to AEP personnel costs are of little significance to the States' budgets but of major significance to the NT budget.

The figure of 54% for on-costs is not inflated if the research by the Commonwealth Grants Commission (1995-2) is accepted.

15. Another assumption made is that the average cost of employing labour is \$50 000, including on-costs. The ABS Labour Costs Australian Survey¹ estimates the average cost of labour at \$35 645 for 1991-92. This figure was considered inappropriate because it does not include on-costs such as office accommodation and other resource costs, such as computing equipment. The average cost of employing labour has also been estimated in the 'Guidelines for Costing Government Activities' prepared by the Department of Finance. Calculations using these guidelines and ABS data suggested that the average cost of labour was approximately \$76 000. This figure was considered to be excessive, and it was decided to use an estimate of \$50 000 in the calculations (pp. 474-5).

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics 1993, *Labour Costs, Australia, 1991-92*, Catalogue No. 6348.0, Canberra, p. 24.

Further, the Commonwealth has agreed to the Northern Territory's charge of 54%.

MCEETYA (1995, p. 84) states that:

- Systems and agencies will report annually on total resources for Indigenous education and training including the percentage of expenditure on administration and salary on-costs.

No change to the current system whereby the Northern Territory charges all administrative costs for Commonwealth funded programs against funds provided for those programs is recommended.

As described above, Commonwealth Specific Purpose Payments are administered through NTDE. There is no indication what administration of these programs costs the Commonwealth. A senior DEET officer in Darwin claims that, because of their varied work requirements and the number of programs covered, it is not possible to identify the proportion of its spending on education in the NT which is attributable to its administrative costs.

Strachan (1995) states that figures provided for expenditure of Direct Grants in the Alice Springs Region 'do not include the amounts spent on administering the program' (p. 2).

5.4. Potential for 'Double Dipping'

When considering this issue it is necessary to investigate at three levels: system; school; and individual.

At the system level there are formal agreements between the NT and the Commonwealth. These agreements are reached collaboratively between the NT Department of Education (NTDE), Feppi and DEET. Agreements such as the Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program (AESIP) are supported by administrative guidelines developed by NTDE and accepted by DEET. Departmental procedures and Internal Audit ensure that funding received is spent in accordance with agreements and either transferred to other programs, rolled over or returned to the Commonwealth when underspending occurs and outlined in Section 3.7. Problems previously experienced with schools' accounting mechanisms are mentioned in Chapter 6.

Similar checks and balances are in place at the school level. Expenditure at the school is usually under the control of the school council, or, in the case of remote schools, group school management council. School councils are obliged under legislation to have their books audited annually and financial statements are sent to the Secretary and checked. The NTDE insists that receipts provided for Government funds expended are originals. It is unlikely, but not impossible, for double dipping to occur at this level. It would be possible for individuals responsible for finance at the school level to misuse Government funds. This would probably be discovered by the school audit system or at Departmental level. Such fraud would almost certainly be within the normal bounds of risk management.

There may be some form of double dipping at the individual level where direct grants are made to parents. It has been mentioned earlier that parents in receipt of ABSTUDY may be overpaid - but this is usually followed up successfully by DEET - or they may not ensure that schools receive their share of DEET payments to them - again usually rectified by DEET. Again, problems in this area are within the normal bounds of risk management.

5.5. Duplication of Administration

With the Commonwealth contributing significant amounts, through DEET, to Aboriginal education there is no doubt that there is some duplication of administration required. If all funds were disbursed through NTDE a significant reduction in DEET staff could occur. NTDE would not require the same number of staff as were lost to DEET to carry out the work. The Premiers and Chief Ministers have asked that SPP funds for education be paid to them as untied grants. Acceding to this request would reduce some duplication. Handing over funding for direct grants would further reduce duplication.

If the NT were to administer direct grants other stumbling blocks to effective education services could also be removed. ABSTUDY claims and payments were seen as a real problem in almost all communities visited. In his written submission to the Committee Mifsud (1995) said:

We experience difficulties cancelling Abstudy [sic] for students who leave school. Our requests often go unheeded resulting in many unwanted debt repayments by those students involved.

Students receive school fee money in their first ABSTUDY cheque sent around December. Xavier attempts each year to retrieve this money as school fees from parents to assist with the purchase of books, stationery and other items. The task is near impossible.

We strongly recommend that the DEET allocation of consumable money from Abstudy/Austudy [sic] cheques meant for school fees be sent directly to schools in a separate cheque and not be part of the first cheque sent to parents. Our school programs, effectiveness and budgets are severely disadvantaged by the present system. Parents too are not fulfilling their financial responsibilities of their students education because of this system (p. 3).

The NT Department of Education could administer ABSTUDY much more effectively and efficiently through its existing information systems. ASSPA funding coming from the NT would increase the opportunities for effective co-operation between ASSPA committees and school councils.

Further programs with ABSTUDY are outlined in Section 3.8.2.

RECOMMENDATION 23.

That all funding for school education, both for Specific Purpose Programs and Direct Grants, be given by the Commonwealth to the NT to administer.

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CHAPTER 6

6. TERMS OF REFERENCE (d)

the effectiveness of the financial accountability arrangements, indicating whether expenditure was within legislative requirements and for the purposes intended

6.1. Introduction

From all the evidence obtained it would appear that effective financial accountability arrangements are now in place for both NT funds and Commonwealth Special Purpose funds administered by the NT. In recent years the Auditor-General had highlighted concerns regarding the audit procedures for school councils. Those concerns have been addressed. Schools have been advised of the revised procedures which will be included in the revision of the Standard Devolution Handbook as mentioned in 5.1. This should answer Gaykarnangu's (1995) concern expressed in his written submission to the Committee.

(T)he present allocation of resources appears to present school councils with a dilemma on the way in which funds are expended, further guidelines appear to be required.

Most schools visited believe that there are sufficient checks in place to ensure that both NT and Commonwealth funds are correctly expended. The general feeling was that this creates considerable administrative work, especially for head teaches in small schools, and that any more would be excessive.

6.2. Northern Territory Funds

All financial transactions of the Department, except those that occur in schools and group school management councils, are the subject of Northern Territory Financial legislation and guidelines. This includes transactions with funds provided by the Commonwealth. ... School councils are financially accountable to an annual general meeting of parents, to the Secretary and to the Minister ... Group school management councils are financially accountable to the Secretary (Fong, 1995, p. 17).

6.2.1. Audit Committee

The NT Department of Education established an Audit Committee in 1993 in compliance with the *Financial Management Act*.

The Committee is comprised of a senior officer from each of the Department's four divisions and the Colleges and is chaired by the Deputy Secretary Corporate Services.

The Audit Committee's role is to:

- provide advice to Senior Management on issues relating to internal and external audit, and financial and other accountability responsibilities;

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- co-ordinate and prepare an annual internal audit plan for approval by the Secretary;
- liaise with internal and external auditors;
- examine issues raised by external and internal audits and place emphasis on areas where the Audit Committee or the auditors believe special attention is necessary prior to endorsement by SEG;
- ensure that matters raised in audit reports are satisfactorily and promptly resolved;
- monitor, support and review the effectiveness of the internal audit function;
- identify auditable areas and rank by level of risk;
- review annual financial statements, auditors reports and other reporting requirements as necessary;
- confirm the timetable drawn up each year in association with external audits for the preparation and completion of any financial statements;
- approve the internal audit charter and subsequent amendments;
- review effectiveness of internal control in operation with respect to the various areas within the Department;
- co-ordinate audit tasks of internal and external auditors to ensure no duplication of work is undertaken by the auditor;
- investigate any departmental matter and have the ability to consult or appoint independent experts whenever necessary as approved by the Secretary;
- assess the appropriateness of accounting policies;
- consider any executive papers relating to the format of financial statements
- review the final draft financial statements; and
- other functions as approved by the Secretary.

The Audit Committee meets as required to deal with matters requiring its attention and reports to the Department of Education Senior Executive Group monthly. Audits of fifteen (15) programs were planned and completed for the 1995/96 financial year. Those programs were; Agency Financial Audit End of Year 1994/95, Maintenance of Effort - End of year 1994, Student Support Services, Local Area Networks, Travelling Allowance, Yirara College - Business Audit Plan, Feppi, Katherine House Student Hostel, Home Garaging, Asset Accounting and Control, Frog Hollow Education Centre, Sundry Debtors, Part-time Instructors, St John's College and St Philip's College. By July 1996 eight (8) programs were planned for audit during 1996/97.

Audits were proposed by the Auditor-General (four programs); Manager, Non Government Schools Liaison; and the Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services. The eleven (11) programs audited at the request of the last two mentioned officers were endorsed by the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee has effectively co-ordinated audits conducted by the Auditor-General, the Internal Audit Section of the Department of the Chief Minister and the Internal Audit Section of the Department of Education. The Audit Committee's role is being expanded to include evaluation of the programs within the Department of Education. It is expected that the Audit Committee's functions will be evaluated and reviewed within the next two (2) years.

6.2.2. Internal Audit

The Northern Territory Department of Education has recently established an Internal Audit Section. In recent years this function has been outsourced.

6.3. Commonwealth SPP Funds to the NT

The first triennium of the AEP commenced during 1990. In 1991 the Secretary sought an internal audit of three programs. That audit highlighted a range of poor financial practices. A further internal audit was carried out in 1993. The objectives of that audit were:

- to evaluate the adequacy of the financial control systems, which form the basis of acquittances for Commonwealth funding provided under the Aboriginal Education Program (AEP); and
- to report on material findings and make recommendations for improvement where appropriate. (From Internal Audit Bureau Report - 12 August 1993)

This audit found that there were still deficiencies in financial control systems and recommended that, in the absence of Commonwealth guidelines, the NTDE should develop its own. As a result two documents 'Standards and Procedures for the Administration of the Aboriginal Education Program' and 'Standards and Procedures for the Administration of Commonwealth Specific Purpose Programs' were developed and published in March 1994, and August 1994 respectively.

The AEP document details accountability instructions (Funds Certificates, Transactions Report, Expenditure Acquittal, Assets Report, and Expenditure Review), AEP Funded Vehicles, Assets Funded by AEP, Annual Acquittal to the Commonwealth, Variations, End-of-Year Commitments and Financial Reporting.

The Supervisor of each AEP Initiative is responsible to ensure all records are kept correctly. The Commonwealth Programs Financial Management Unit provides advice and support to Initiative Supervisors as required.

The minutes of the meeting of the NTDE AEP Operational Plan Monitoring Group, which met in September 1994, record that:

Peter Buckskin [Assistant Secretary, Aboriginal Education Branch, DEET, Canberra] commented that the manuals were a most useful resource. He indicated that he intended to circulate them to providers in other States as a model of good management practice (p. 2).

The NT Department of Education has advised the Committee in 1996 that:

1. *Standards and Procedures for the Administration of the Aboriginal Education Program and the Quick Reference Guide to Financial Procedures*

The above booklets were produced by the Budgets and Revenue Branch for use by AEP Initiative Managers, to assist in their work with Branch administration officers. While these administration officers have an extensive knowledge of Departmental codes, cashflows, reporting and monitoring mechanisms, etc, they were unsure as to the specific procedures to be used as AEP is an externally funded program. Due to this AEP has some different requirements, eg calendar year rather than financial years basis.

The Procedures [sic] booklet and Quick Reference Guide have been most useful as they clearly outline the procedures [sic] to be used. ... Branch Administration Officers have found

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AEP funding straight forward in its implementation, something which has been significantly assisted by the availability of the above booklets.

Staff in remote communities believe that satisfactory checks and balances are in place and that further accounting would be counter-productive.

Commonwealth Programs are subject to both internal and external audit at both Territory and Commonwealth level. In addition, most programs may also be audited at school, regional and Departmental levels. Although satisfactory safeguards are in place there is no guarantee that all aspects of the multitude of programs in place will be audited regularly. It is probably necessary to accept a reasonable level of risk management.

With a more co-ordinated approach to auditing and all funding channelled through one provider, it should be possible to audit programs more effectively and efficiently. The Commonwealth of Australia (1993) says on this issue:

2.60 Coordination of audit activity at the Commonwealth, State and Local Government levels is highly desirable for agreements where the ultimate recipients of the funds delivered under the program are potentially liable to being audited separately by each level of government. In extreme cases involving SPP grants to community organisations, no less than six different teams of auditors (internal and external audit at each level of government) could knock on the entity's door and ask to see the same records for a single grant payment that has already been reviewed by the entity's own auditors. Ideally, the recipients should only be audited once in any period in a manner that satisfies the needs of each level of audit and the results made available at a summary and non-identifying level to other interested auditors. An alternative scenario is at least as disturbing; that no independent auditing occurs given a lack of primary responsibility for funding by any one level of government, or simply a lack of coordination in the funding and accountability arrangements in place (p. 21).

6.4. Commonwealth Direct Funding

Financial accountability for Commonwealth direct funds to parents or parent groups does not lie with the NT. Strachan (1995) advises that DEET field officers visit schools to assist with the submissions and record keeping and that annual reports to DEET for programs such as ASSPA and ATAS must include acquittal of funds in accordance with approvals of the programs.

RECOMMENDATION 24.

- 24.1 That the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Governments co-operate to reduce the duplication of audits which may be required of Commonwealth funded programs;**
- 24.2 that the Department of Education Audit Committee ensures that all programs are subject to internal audit on a cyclical basis; and**
- 24.3 that the Department of Education continues to ensure that program managers and small schools have sufficient support to enable them to meet their financial accountability responsibilities.**

Public Accounts Committee

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CHAPTER 7

7. TERMS OF REFERENCE (e)

the evaluation procedures for these programmes, including an assessment by the Committee of the effectiveness of programme evaluations by the Department of Education and the Commonwealth

7.1. Comment from Submissions and Witnesses

Apart from the Fong's submission (1995), attached documents supplied, and further evidence provided on request, the submissions received largely do not address evaluation of particular programs. Comments are generally aimed at the low levels of achievement of students in remote Aboriginal schools.

Gaykarnangu (1995) claims 'that children were not leaving school with basic literacy and numeracy skills'. Potter (1995) states that:

DEET evaluation is more of a literacy exercise than a monitoring of student progress on long term goal (p. 2).

Strachan (1995) provides anecdotal evidence of poor achievement of students from remote Aboriginal schools. He claims that 209 of 229 students enrolled at Yirara College in 1995 were not capable of attempting secondary courses, supposedly after seven years of primary education in remote schools, and that 151 students were placed in Access classes which commence at Year 1 or Year 2 level. These comments were substantiated by witnesses at Yirara College. Strachan believes that this is evidence to show that the AEP has failed to reach its goals. He suggests that changing the school week in line with pay days may assist. He says that short-term goals should be set. Further, he suggests that a separate remote area education authority, be established by combining Commonwealth and NT contributions.

While some parents, who did not appear to be aware of levels of achievements, said that they were happy with the education their children were receiving, school staff and the majority of community council members and parents were well aware that students in remote Aboriginal communities are not attaining satisfactory levels in English and mathematics.

7.2. Evaluation of NTDE Programs

NTDE has provided the PAC with a wealth of material on program evaluation. In the early 1980s, compulsory testing in Reading and Mathematics at Years 5 and 7 was introduced in urban schools.

Soon after, separate tests for remote schools were developed and administered on an optional basis. Initially some students in some schools sat the tests. Over recent years testing became compulsory. Students in the 11-16 year old age range are now tested annually in reading and mathematics. The multilevel tests include questions graded from Year 2 to Year 5 or 6 level.

Teachers may exclude from testing children who, they believe, will be unable to score on the tests or will be able to attempt very few questions. The following extract from the Draft Report of Results of the 1994 Multilevel Assessment Program (MAP) in Non-Urban Schools is illuminating (Northern Territory Board of Studies, 1995–2). There were 2829 Aboriginal children, 11-16 years, enrolled in remote Aboriginal schools in the NT in 1994.

7.2.1. Overview of Results of MAP Tests, 1994

	Number of Questions	Number of Participants	Average score	Standard Deviation
Stage 2	31	1399	65.0%	27.5%
Stage 3	31	972	44.1%	30.4%
Stage 4	32	620	49.5%	32.3%
Stage 5	30	465	33.3%	21.3%
Stage 6	32	353	36.8%	24.1%

Table 9: Statistics for Stages in the 1994 Non-urban MAP Reading Test. From Northern Territory Board of Studies (1995, Table 6, p. 10).

When considering any statistics for the stages of the reading test, it is important to again remember that the proportion of students attempting each stage decreases at the higher stages. For example, the apparent ‘improvement’ in performance from Stage 3 to Stage 4 is likely to be caused by the smaller proportion of students who attempted Stage 4 (44%) when compared to Stage 3 (69%). Assuming that the students who continue to the higher stages are those with greater ability accounts for this apparent improvement (p. 10).

	Number of Questions	Number of Participants	Average score	Standard Deviation
Stage 2	20	1368	74.5%	24.4%
Stage 3	30	1446	66.7%	21.1%
Stage 4	30	1257	51.3%	21.6%
Stage 5	20	984	28.9%	18.0%

Table 10: Statistics for Stages in the 1994 Non-urban MAP Mathematics Test. From Northern Territory Board of Studies (1995, Table 9, p. 23).

When considering any statistics for the stages of the mathematics test, it is important to again remember that the sub-population of students attempting each stage is changing. Assuming that the students who continue to the higher stages were those with greater ability, it may be suggested that the decrease in average scores would in fact greater in real terms as only the more able students were attempting the higher stages (p. 24).

In reading only two thirds (2/3) attempted Stage (Year) 3 with an average score of 44.1%. Less than a half of those tested could attempt Stage 4 and a quarter attempted Stage 6, with an average of 36.8%.

In mathematics most students attempted Stage 3 and averaged 74.5%. Two thirds attempted Stage 5 but only averaged 28.9%.

In both reading and mathematics, students tested averaged an achievement of Year 3 level. Had those students who were exempted from the tests had scores taken into account, results would have been even worse. It must be remembered that students tested were from 11 - 16 years of age. Their age counterparts in urban schools would be achieving at Year 6 to Year 10 levels in reading and mathematics.

It can be seen, therefore, that students in remote Aboriginal schools are 3 or more years behind their urban peers.

7.2.2. Participation Patterns

The Northern Territory Board of Studies (1995) states:

More students attempted the mathematics test (1546) than the reading test (1407), with the difference partly accounted for by the number of exemptions for the reading test (178) being greater than the number for the mathematics test (98). The number of absent students was similar in both tests.

The proportion of students attempting each stage of the reading test decreased steadily from Stage 2 (99%) to Stage 6 (25%). This indicates that almost all students commenced the reading test at Stage 2 and continued until they experienced limited success ...

For the mathematics test, the proportion of students attempting each stage increased from Stage 2 (89%) to Stage 3 (94%), then decreased for Stage 4 (82%) and Stage 5 (64%). Having the greatest participation rate at Stage 3 suggests that a significant number of teachers elected to allow the more able students to commence at a higher stage. ... The high proportion of students continuing to Stage 5 suggests that if higher stages were included in future mathematics tests, they would be attempted by a larger proportion of students, therefore providing additional information (p. ii).

The above information and statistics give a clear picture of the achievement of students in remote Aboriginal communities.

The NT ATSIC State Advisory Committee argued that the NT Government should be concentrating on 'The Three R's' and insisting on appropriate student learning outcomes for Aboriginal children.

While the Multi-level Assessment Program provides sound information on the performance of students in Aboriginal schools and provides teachers with accurate information on students' strengths and weaknesses, it has not yet reached the stage where it can show whether students' learning outcomes are improving, or otherwise, over the years since testing commenced.

The level of support for the MAP varied among schools visited.

RECOMMENDATION 25.

- 25.1 That the Multilevel Assessment Program be enhanced so that longitudinal trends in student learning outcomes can be assessed;**
- 25.2 that the MAP tests be extended down to Stage One (1) level so that more students can experience some success in the tests;**
- 25.3 that the testing be made compulsory for all 11-16 year old students in Aboriginal schools; and**
- 25.4 that a simplified analysis of results go to school councils in Aboriginal communities. The analysis should include the schools' overall results showing a comparison with the average of Aboriginal schools and with NT wide standards.**

7.3. Evaluation of Bilingual Programs

There are 21 bilingual schools in the Northern Territory. At some stage since 1972, these school communities have had their requests to become bilingual schools approved and have subsequently received additional resources.

Bilingual programs are appraised on a regular basis. Community members are heavily involved in the preparation for the appraisal and represented on the appraisal committee. If the community is dissatisfied with the program, the program may be discontinued. This has rarely happened (Fong 1995, p. 18). In recent appraisals community members have strongly supported the retention of bilingual programs. Bilingual schools visited were unanimous in their support of bilingual education. Some stated a need for more English. Such matters are addressed through the appraisal process.

Devlin (1995) found that:

In the 20 years since bilingual programs were first established in the Northern Territory there have been important changes in the way evaluation has been conceived in policy terms and administered in practice. One discernible trend has been a growing emphasis on reporting community views and a diminishing reliance on more quantitative input such as student assessment data. It also seems that specialised input from linguists has been of declining importance to policy makers; in any event, it has been counterbalanced by other voices as community representatives and others are given an influential say.

The trend is heartening because it recognised the importance of Aboriginal people as key stakeholders in the evaluation process. What is less comforting, however, is that the evaluation procedures that are now in place do not appear to be making any use of the data on student performance obtained in the Primary Assessment Program, nor are obvious efforts being made to improve the technical adequacy of the evaluation model being employed. In view of the concerns about the deficiencies of bilingual evaluation procedures employed in the United States over the last two decades (Lam 1992), it would seem that bilingual evaluation practices in the NT also need to be continuously scrutinised and improved (p. 34).

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The Northern Territory Department of Education (1996) indicated that, on average, bilingual schools perform slightly less well than non-bilingual schools on the Multilevel Assessment Program tests in reading and mathematics.

Fowler in Northern Territory Department of Education (1996), said that:

arguments for bilingual education would, I think, generally now days go beyond considering only academic achievement to encompass issues such as cultural identify, self-esteem, language maintenance, self-determination, community wishes, national reconciliation and so on. So there is, in addition to the argument for academic achievement an argument can be put forward that bilingual programs do support the concepts I have just mentioned (p. 4).

The NT ATSC State Advisory Committee advised officers of the PAC that ‘bilingual education must take second place to teaching English’.

RECOMMENDATION 26.

- 26.1 That future appraisals of programs in bilingual schools make specific reference to a school’s performance in the Multilevel Assessment Program in reading and mathematics, with the appraisal committee having access to their schools’ total results and that the communities be informed of their outcomes;**
- 26.2 that future appraisals in bilingual schools set goals for increased English literacy and numeracy levels; and**
- 26.3 that an independent review be established to assess the role of bilingual education in the NT system.**

7.4. Evaluation of Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Programs (AESIP)

The NTDE has provided details of the reporting requirements for each of the Initiatives. Each Initiative supervisor must provide an end of year Performance Appraisal report, twice yearly Implementation Plan reports, financial reports and updates and be involved in the Initiative Appraisal process. NTDE also provided full details regarding the evaluation of one of the Initiatives as an example of the extent of the appraisal of each Initiative. The example selected is Initiative 6 (split into 6a and 6b for 1995) and includes the 1994 end of year report, the June 1995 Implementation Plan Report, and a copy of the full appraisal document used to develop the 1994 annual appraisal.

Initiative 6 was selected as an appropriate example because it contains elements which address a range of issues addressed by the AEP. These include:

- employment of Aboriginal people in curriculum development;
- consultation processes;
- developing materials which will help improve learning outcomes for Aboriginal children; and
- providing staff development for teaching staff in remote, Aboriginal schools.

Improving student learning outcomes is difficult to evaluate and only possible over a period of years. In this example time is required for consultation with schools while writing materials; having materials printed; and providing in-service courses for teachers on the use of the materials. System wide multilevel testing may then identify improvements in results. It would not be possible to claim with any certainty that improved results were a direct result of the new curriculum materials. Improvements could be the result of improved attendance, stronger parent support, better teachers, or other such changes. It could be expected, in fact, that results will get worse initially as participation rates increase.

The above example also demonstrates a weakness in the evaluation of AESIP programs. While they are important outcomes of educational programs, the most vital outcomes, student learning outcomes, were not evaluated.

That weakness is being addressed in 1996. Along with all States, the NT is in the process of developing benchmarks for Aboriginal education as a component of the 1997-1999 AESIP Triennium. While involvement in decision making; access to education; and enrolment, attendance and retention are addressed, educational outcomes are emphasised. These include

Non-urban MAP results

- 4.1. Average achievement estimate of all non-urban Aboriginal students in English and Maths by year compared to changes in the urban students results (1993, 1994, 1996) NAEP goal 14.
- 4.2. Changes in the average achievement estimate of all non-urban Aboriginal students in English and Maths by year compared to changes in the urban students results (1994, 1996) NAEP goal 14.
- 4.3. Proportion of Aboriginal students in non-urban schools attaining Stages 3 and 5 (1992, 1996) NAEP goal 14.

and

JSSC (Junior Secondary Years, 8 to 10)

- 4.7. No and percentage of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students as a proportion of the 15 year old Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cohorts who received as JSSC by year (1991, 1992, 1996) NAEP goal 14.
- 4.8. Mean achievement scores of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in the Year 10 Assessment in English and Maths (1991, 1992, 1996) NAEP goal 14 (p.4).

Given the short life of many AEP programs, it is virtually impossible to evaluate long term educational benefits deriving from them.

The Northern Territory Office of Aboriginal Development (1995) claims 'that the education levels of Aboriginal people are not improving at an acceptable rate at this stage' (p. 32).

Strachan (1995) claims that the AEP has failed to achieve its goals.

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The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (1992) states that:

4.4 The Committee acknowledges, as does the Schools Council, in a recent report, that because of the deep-rooted nature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage change in education is a slow process. 'Success in education can only be measured on a generational basis' (p. 57).

It would appear that some people have unrealistic expectations about the length of time required to increase student learning outcomes.

It is of concern, therefore, that DEET (1995-3) says:

accelerate the progress towards achieving the vital goal of achieving equity in indigenous education by the year 2001 (p. 13).

Setting unrealistic goals leads to further experience of failure. There is ample evidence to support such a claim. Funding which cannot meet children's ESL, primary education, secondary education, or health needs nor meet Yunupingu's (1995) and DEET (1995-3) recommended level of employment of Aboriginal people in schools, just cannot produce the desired results by the year 2001. Similarly, the majority of remote communities will not develop 'schooling cultures' in five years.

MCEETYA (1995, p. 91) aims, by April 1996, to have 'clear guidelines for the compilation of baseline data'. Accurate baseline data is essential if Australia is to measure gains in Aboriginal student learning outcomes. Despite its shortcomings the Multilevel Assessment Program provides information on some Aboriginal student achievement in reading and maths.

Western Australia's sample testing compares results of Aboriginal children with results of other students. New South Wales' system-wide testing also assesses the results of Aboriginal students. Some states have no system-wide testing programs.

There is a great deal of anecdotal evidence which claims that Aboriginal children generally are not achieving results which compare favourably with the total population. This is confirmed by testing in the Northern Territory and Western Australia. There is a real need to be able to identify essential programs across Australia.

RECOMMENDATION 27.

27.1 That the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training, and Youth Affairs agrees to gather baseline data which clearly identifies Aboriginal student learning outcomes in English and mathematics, and in a manner which allows Australia-wide decisions to be made; and

27.2 that appropriate, achievable short and long term goals with complementary performance indicators be developed so that trends in student learning outcomes in Aboriginal schools across Australia can be evaluated.

7.5. National Equity Programs for Schools (NEPS)

The Commonwealth funds 17 programs in NEPS according to DEET (1995, p. iii). These are co-ordinated in the Northern Territory by the Commonwealth Programs Management Unit in the NTDE.

Evaluation of each program is required and includes a Semester One Progress Report, a Project Evaluation Report, a Commitment/Expenditure Report, and an Acquittance of Commonwealth Funds Report.

Again one-off, year long (at the most) programs are impossible to evaluate against long term benefits to students.

7.6. Schools' Views of Evaluation of Commonwealth Programs

Most schools visited claimed that evaluation of Commonwealth programs was little more than a paper exercise, with little reference to improved student learning outcomes. The Committee is aware of only one program in one school which actually measured improvements in reading as a result of a Commonwealth program.

RECOMMENDATION 28.

That Special Purpose funding for education from the Commonwealth to the states and Territories be of a long-term nature so that predictable programs can be put in place along with long term evaluation procedures.

7.7. Commonwealth Direct Grants

As mentioned by Strachan (1995, p. 2), field officers are having an input into how funds are spent and grants, such as ASSPA, have to be properly acquitted at the end of each year. There is no attempt to evaluate whether these programs have any effect on student learning outcomes.

7.8. Summary

The above shows that there are specific, required evaluation procedures for the NT and Commonwealth funded programs for school education in remote Aboriginal communities. The required procedures, however, show that Commonwealth programs place no emphasis on student learning outcomes and the NT is only beginning to address them through the current Multilevel Assessment Program. There can be no room for complacency, however, until students in remote Aboriginal schools participate in the same testing programs as administered in urban schools.

The benchmarks proposed for the 1997-1999 triennium as mentioned in 7.4 are an indication of improvements in this area.

The Committee is convinced that short term programs such as those funded through the Commonwealth SPPs cannot be properly evaluated. This is another reason why the

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Committee believes that all Commonwealth funding for Aboriginal education should come to the States' and Territories' General Recurrent Grants but clearly earmarked and used for Aboriginal education.

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CHAPTER 8

8. CURRENT NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

8.1. A National Approach

Historically the Australian states and territories have guarded jealously their constitutional responsibilities for education. Problems which emerged from ignoring what others were doing in another area, railway gauges, were soon evident but are still being rectified a century later. Problems which have arisen in education were not so easily identified, have only recently been acknowledged, are being addressed in part, and may take decades to overcome.

Although the implications for requirements for physical resources to achieve a national approach to education are much less than those provided in developing a standard railway gauge, attitudinal differences are extremely difficult to overcome. While there is a need to have a national approach to all education it is even more essential to adopt a national approach to Aboriginal education where the need is greatest.

The Commonwealth and Northern Territory (1995) has provided a model in the bilateral agreement on housing. The Draft Framework Agreement between the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth (1996) makes a move in the right direction in health. Some initial moves towards a really national approach to education have occurred. The Australian Education Council (1989) Hobart Declaration on Schooling was probably the first move in this direction.

In part it says:

Ten national goals for Schooling will, for the first time, provide a framework for co-operation between Schools, States and Territories and the Commonwealth. The goals are intended to assist schools and systems to develop specific objectives and strategies, particularly in the areas of curriculum and assessment.

It also commenced moves to an Annual National Report on schooling; National collaboration in curriculum development; developing an appropriate handwriting style for Australian schools; common age of entry for Australian schools; and improving the quality of teaching. These moves have had little discernible effect on schooling in Australia to date.

MCEETYA (1995) is a progressive step towards a national approach to Aboriginal education. While it lists a wide range of strategies and provides performance indicators it largely ignores:

- identifying what Aboriginal students are achieving currently;
- stipulating agreed educational outcomes to be achieved over a specified time;
- the provision of funds to address identified needs; and

- addressing changes in behaviours and attitudes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples required to ensure that optimum use is made of services provided.

Achieving a national approach is possible without the Commonwealth assuming responsibility for education. What is required is national agreement on specific goals and adequate Commonwealth funding to the states and territories for them to be able to meet their responsibilities. All Commonwealth funding to States and Territories for Aboriginal education should be through General Recurrent Grants, based on the principles of fiscal equalisation, and clearly earmarked for, and expended on, Aboriginal education.

8.2. Use of New Technologies

The Committee is convinced that current and developing technologies in radio, television and computers, although expensive to initiate, can increase the effectiveness of the delivery of school education services in remote Aboriginal communities. In the long run it may be more cost effective to use technology in remote schools than to send students to boarding schools. They have a valuable place in:

- homeland learning centres;
- small primary schools;
- provision of secondary education;
- staff development; and
- school administration. In administration technology may provide finance administration, enrolment and attendance information, student information on transfer, and information on potential teacher recruits.

RECOMMENDATION 29.

That the NT Department of Education make maximum use of developments in technology to improve the provision of school education services to remote Aboriginal communities.

MINORITY REPORT

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MINORITY REPORT

Introduction

While the Report is critical of the lack of success in providing education to Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory we believe that it understates the gravity of that failure, and fails to sheet home the blame where it must lay. Worse still its parsimonious approach to solutions will give few people hope that the situation is about to start to change.

The Country Liberal Party has enjoyed uninterrupted power in the Northern Territory for the last twenty-two years; for the last eighteen it has had control of education.

There is no evidence to show that during that period it has had any positive impact on the appallingly low level of Aboriginal educational achievement. The anecdotal evidence provided by many who gave evidence is that the outcomes today are worse than they were twenty years ago.

Two startling facts stand out:-

1. The average level of achievement at the end of the primary years for rural Aboriginal students is somewhere between upper grade two and lower grade three.
2. No evidence could be provided of any child from a rural aboriginal school going on through the government secondary system on an age for grade basis in the Northern Territory and matriculating.

There can be no doubt that had either of these results pertained to children in Urban schools in the Northern Territory in any one year the government would have been summarily voted out of office. Had they continued for any period there would have been Royal Commission after Royal Commission. An incoming Government would have declared Education to be a disaster area, the world would have been combed for experts to advise on ways to overcome the disaster. Massive resources would have been allocated to ensure the success of new programs to solve the problem. all of this would have been totally justified.

Country Liberal Party Ministers cannot plead ignorance to what was going on under their administration. Nor can they claim that they did not have the resources to tackle the situation. In the first twelve years after Self-Government they happily ran up a billion dollars worth of debt constructing and propping up forays into Casinos and Tourism infrastructure, none of which provided anything but further losses until they were sold off at a great loss to private enterprise.

Given that here are currently 6,000 students in rural Aboriginal schools it is probable that some 15,000 to 20,000 Territorians have had their lives permanently blighted as a direct result of the Country Liberal's failures in the provision of rural education.

The results can now be seen by all Territorians who care to look. A very substantial proportion of Territorians are locked in an underclass with little chance of a future. There is a rising tide of bitterness and despair which exhibits itself in a number of ways.

The Rural Effect

On communities there is real frustration as many emerging leaders find they are unable to take on the to their own satisfaction the role and function of the non-Aboriginal staff who still hold positions with very substantial power. Most feel themselves ill-equipped and unable to carry out the day-to-day administrative tasks required and at a massive disadvantage when it comes to negotiating with the bureaucracy for the inputs needed to develop their communities.

All too often the frustration boils over into bouts of heavy drinking, violence, and mass sackings. It is deeply revealing of the Country Liberal Government's understanding of these issues that their response to these outbreaks is often to withdraw educational services from the community for a period.

The Urban Effect

The Country Liberal Party government goes to great pains to exhibit a fresh clean Territory image to interstate and overseas interests, while 'out of sight, out of mind' is the only way to describe the prevailing attitude to the realities of life on remote rural Aboriginal communities.

There is a growing awareness that the two faces of the Territory cannot continue in isolation. The poverty that is the reality of Territory Rural living is flowing over into the towns.

The reality of drunkenness, violence and anti-social behaviour among rural Aboriginal visitors to towns is a never ending source of comment, angst, and debate among Territorians of all races.

Young Aboriginal men in particular, having completed some eight to ten years of intermittent attendance at school, are increasingly taking to 'cruising and boozing'. This involves long periods of heavy drinking, drunk driving, bouts of destructive violence often directed against family members and elders, not to forget the anti-social behaviour, petty theft and damage to property that is so often the source of comment.

These young men are virtually unemployable without extensive and expensive retraining. They have little else to look forward to apart from a continuation of their current circumstance. The failure of the education system has handed them a life sentence of poverty, ill health, intermittent periods of jail and an early death.

They see little reason why they should repay the society that dealt them this hand in any but the most cavalier fashion. They do not accept the mores of that society and are increasingly inflicting casual violence against it.

Apart from the loss of social amity that is the direct urban result of this situation, urban dwellers pay ever increasing amounts in the way of taxes for police, welfare, incarceration,

and rehabilitation as well as increasing personal expenditure on insurance, home and vehicle security, etc.

All Territorians pay for the Country Liberal Government's failure to provide urban-equivalent education in Rural communities.

The high proportion of teachers in remote areas who have maintained their dedication and commitment in the face of the Government's disregard must be retained in the system. Unfortunately many of them have become so frustrated that they are planning to leave. This trend cannot be allowed to continue or their will be further doubts as to whether this Government has the ability along with the will to do something about this national disgrace.

Detailed Areas of Disagreement

Executive Summary

Chapter 7 (pp. xxiv-xxv)

Members Ede and Bailey see the call for further reports into bilingual education as a means of misdirecting attention from the primary result of this investigation. The fact is that neither ESL nor Bilingual school systems have delivered over any period results which can be described as anything but disgraceful.

The only hope for the future is in programs which enjoy the support of and have commitment from the community. The Education Department will only further damage its meagre stock of credibility if it is to engage in a battle over that part of the system which does enjoy high levels of support within the local community.

Main body of Report

Chapter 1

Section 1.1.3 School Attendance (pp. 2-6)

Members Ede and Bailey agree with the broad thrust of the 'further measures' proposed by the Committee but notes the lack of any conceptual basis for the selection of schools or for the pilot programs to run in them. We also point out the lack of any commitment to a level of funding.

We believe that schools should be funded to the level of the number of school-age children in the community. The number of teachers would not necessarily increase in the short term, indeed the mix of staff will change over time. Initially a number of positions would be taken up by specialists in the community development process. They should work with the community to ensure that the programs run in the school have the commitment of the community. Their needs to be a series of negotiated steps with government and community signing off on the agreements and the responsibilities undertaken by both sides.

It should be first made very clear what the current levels of student achievement are and the communities must be advised truthfully what the reasons are for the current failure. They must

be given a truthful account of the governments level of commitment to solving these problems and invited to join in their solutions.

It can be expected that communities will vary in the means by which they achieve targets such as high attendance levels, some will take an authoritarian, legalistic approach others not.

Many of the complex problems of the past can be overcome with the assistance of modern technology. It should be possible to track mobile families to ensure that the children are picked up by the system in their new community and that a fair precis of the student's achievement levels are available to the new teacher.

MINORITY RECOMMENDATION 1.6

that all schools in rural Aboriginal communities be staffed and resourced on the basis of the number of school age children living in the community.

We believe that the majority report indicating that attendance is stable and enrolments growing at a satisfactory pace is probably inaccurate. An increase in enrolment of 12% over a period of 11 years does not look as attractive when we take into account the Aboriginal birth rate which has stood at just over 3% for at least the last 15 years.

Figures on the number of school age children living in remote areas were not made available to the committee. From the above paragraph and knowing what we do of the number of twelve to thirteen year olds who simply drop out of the system, we believe that major budgetary savings accrue to the government each year through its decision to fund on the basis of adjusted attendance.

Section 1.2 Poverty (pp. 6-7)

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATION 2.3

That the Office of Aboriginal Development be relocated to the Dept. of the Chief Minister and given the overarching function of coordinating various departmental activities on communities to ensure that they are all based upon sound community development tenants and are directed at the defeat of poverty.

Chapter 2

Section 2.5.5 Standard Secondary Education (p. 22)

Members Ede and Bailey believe that this section completely understates the paucity of the Department's achievement in rural secondary education.

When Community Education Centres were first mooted in 1987 they were to finally bring some degree of secondary education to rural students. Eight years after the first CEC's were established the Department boasts two which are of a sufficient standard that they can start mainstream secondary education.

It is at places like Yuendumu and Atitjere where the community has fought the Department and introduced modern day computer or satellite based systems aided by local tutors that the real achievements have been made. These two communities between them probably have more rural Aboriginal secondary students studying mainstream secondary courses than the rest of the Territory's secondary schools combined.

Section 2.7.2 Housing for Local Recruits (p. 26)

We believe that the current government policy of not providing housing to local recruits is a prime cause of low morale among local recruits. They see it as the government's indication of the value it places in them and many feel that it is racist to boot.

The provision of housing to local recruits can be a very positive force in bringing good people forward to take on jobs, assisting them in carrying out those jobs in the very best manner and ensuring that they stay in the position.

ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDATION 10

That the Northern Territory Government reverse its policy of not providing housing to local recruits.

Chapter 3

Section 3.10 Channelling all Education Funds through One Agency (pp. 51-53)

While we do not disagree with the logic of the argument, we must point out that a Government which has been so demonstrably incompetent in the provision of primary and secondary education for remote Aboriginal students has something of a credibility gap when it asks to take on more.

Section 3.14 Current Lack of Co-ordination (pp. 58-59)

The majority report states that a lack of co-ordination is typical of government activity in communities, that it has a deleterious effect on communities, but that no-one should be blamed.

This is not good enough, the Department of the Chief Minister has the responsibility to coordinate government activity throughout the Territory and the Chief Minister should accept the blame and fix it.

AMENDED RECOMMENDATION 20

That the Northern Territory Government relocate the Office of Aboriginal Development within the Department of the Chief Minister and provide it with the power and the resources to coordinate the provision of services to remote Aboriginal Communities.

Chapter 5

Section 5.3 Commonwealth Funding (pp. 74-76)

The majority report goes to great lengths to attempt to justify the retention by N.T. Treasury of 54% of the salary component of Special Purpose Payments.

We believe it should be pointed out that other states which charge amounts of around 5% see this as a way of contributing themselves to Aboriginal Education. It is unfortunate that the polity with the highest proportion of Aboriginal constituents does not feel so generous.

Section 5.5 Duplication of Administration (p. 77)

Once again the majority is not taking into account the need for the Country Liberal Government to gain some credibility in the field of education before it tries to be given absolute trust and control. Our remarks in relation to point 3.10 apply.

Chapter 7

Section 7.3 Evaluation of Bilingual Programs (pp. 86-87)

Members Ede and Bailey see the call for further reports into bilingual education as a means of misdirecting attention from the primary result of this investigation. The fact is that neither ESL nor Bilingual school systems have delivered over any period results which can be described as anything but disgraceful.

The only hope for the future is in programs which enjoy the support of and have commitment from the community. The Education Department will only further damage its meagre stock of credibility if it is to engage in a battle over that part of the system which does enjoy high levels of support within the local community.

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APPENDICES

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List of Written Submissions to the Public Accounts Committee

SUBMISSION NO.	ORGANISATION	DATE RECEIVED
E1	Mr Noel Mifsud Principal Xavier Community Education Centre Nguiu BATHURST ISLAND NT 0822	27.2.95
E2	Mr Don Watts Chairman Trade Development Zone PMB 88 WINNELLIE NT 0821	21.12.94
E3	President Milingimbi Community Inc MILINGIMBI VIA DARWIN NT 0822.	24.4.95
E4	Mr Brian C Bates Commissioner of Police PO Box 39764 WINNELLIE NT 0821	24.4.95
E5	Ms Catherine Potter Adult Education, Kintore Community, PMB Alice Springs NT 0872	26.4.95
E6	Mr Michael Fong Secretary Department of Education GPO Box 4821 DARWIN NT 0801	4.4.95 28.4.95
E7	Mr Peter Strachan, Regional Manager Department of Employment, Education and Training PO Box 871 ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871	2.5.95

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SUBMISSION NO.	ORGANISATION	DATE RECEIVED
E8	Ms Mary Lovett First Assistant Secretary Student, Aboriginal Education and Youth Division GPO Box 9880 CANBERRA ACT 2601	10.5.95
E9	Secretary Department of Health & Community Services PO Box 40596 CASUARINA NT 0811	14.6.95
E10	A/Under Treasurer NT Treasury GPO Box 1974 DARWIN NT 0801	13.6.95
E11	Mr L. Mackintosh Secretary Department of Industries & Development GPO Box 4160 DARWIN NT 0801	23.12.94
E12	Mr R.J. Beadman Chief Executive Officer Department of Lands & Housing GPO Box 4450 DARWIN NT 0801	30.12.94
E13	Mr Ross Mangan Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory P O Box 496 PALMERSTON NT 0831	12.1.95

Public Accounts Committee Hearings in Darwin and Alice Springs

Date	Organisation/Agency	Witnesses
DARWIN		
8.2.95 Private	Office of the Auditor-General for the Northern Territory	Mr Iain Summers, Auditor-General
24.2.95 Private	Chairman and Secretary met with Northern Territory Department of Education	Mr Dennis Griffith, Director, Planning and Revenue Mr Chris Makepeace, Director, Schools Policy Dr C. Harry Payne, Assistant Secretary, Curriculum and Assessment
3.3.95 Private	Office of the Auditor-General for the Northern Territory	Mr Iain Summers, Auditor-General
7.3.95 Private	Northern Territory Department of Education	Mr Michael Fong, Secretary Mr Michael Higgins, Director, Management Services
3.5.95 Private	Northern Territory Department of Education	Mr David Cairns, Deputy Secretary, Schools Policy & Operations North Mr Dennis Griffith, Director, Planning and Revenue Mr Tom Pearse, Assistant Director, Planning & Revenue
9.8.95 Private	Northern Territory Treasury	Mr Tim McClelland, Acting Deputy Under Treasurer Mr John Ayre, Director, Public Finance Branch
9.8.95 Private	Northern Territory Department of Education	Mr Dennis Griffith, Director, Planning and Revenue
20.10.95 Private	FEPPi	Ms Lana Quall, Chairperson Ms Lenore Dembski, Specialist Member, Employment and Training Mr Joseph Brown, Darwin Regional Representative Mr Billy Jungarrayi Larry, Alice Springs/Sandover Regional Representative Mr Lindsey Jampijnpa Turner, Lake Mackay Regional Representative Mr Phil de la Cruz, Executive Officer

Date	Organisation/Agency	Witnesses
24.10.95 Private	Aboriginal Development Unit, NT Department of Education	Ms Lenore Dembski, Director Mr Paul Rider, Senior Training Co-ordinator Mr Chris Makepeace, Director, Schools Policy Mr John Wagner, Senior Training Co-ordinator Ms Lee Clarke, Senior Curriculum and Research Officer Mr Brian McGuinness, Senior Rural Development Co-ordinator
25.10.95 Public 8.3.96 Private	Commonwealth Grants Commission Northern Territory Department of Education	Mr Richard Rye, Chairman Mr Cliff Fowler, Chief Assessor Mr Sen Huang, Principal Research Officer Mr Paul Bubb, Principal Education Officer, Aboriginal Languages and Bilingual Education
BATCHELOR		
1.5.96 Public	Batchelor College	Mr John Ingram, Director Dr David McClay, Deputy Director (Operations) Dr John Henry, Assistant Director, Academic Development Ms Alison Worrell, Head of the School of Health Studies Mr Ron Watt, Head of the School of Educational Studies Mr Ron Stanton, Senior Lecturer, Centre for Education, Research and Development Mr Bill Baird, Senior Executive Officer, Council, Communities and Students Ms Holly Margerrison, Registrar
ALICE SPRINGS		
7.5.96 Public	Northern Territory Department of Education	Mr Noel Coutts, Superintendent, Alice Springs West Mr Russell Totham, Superintendent, Alice Springs East
7.5.96 Public	Central Land Council	Mr Leigh (Tracker) Tilmouth, Director, Ms Olga Havnen, Senior Policy Officer
7.5.96 Public	Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Inc.	Mr Kenny Laughton, Director Dr John Boffa, Medical Officer, Public Health Unit Ms Heather Brown, Branch Manager, Education and Training Unit

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Date	Organisation/Agency	Witnesses
7.5.96 Public	Yirara College	Pastor Paul Doecke, Principal Mr John Proeve, A/Deputy Principal (Academic) Mr Lester Kerber, Bursar Mr Tom Reuther, Chairman, Governing Council
7.5.96 Public	Alice Springs Town Council	Ms Carole Frost, Alderman Mr Rod Oliver, Alderman Mr Terry McCumiskey, Alderman Ms June Noble, Alderman
7.5.96 Public	Tanami Network	Mr Peter Toyne, Consultant

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Public Accounts Committee Hearings at Remote Aboriginal Communities

Date	Organisation/Agency	Witnesses
13.10.95 Private	Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School, Wadeye	Sister Elizabeth Little, Principal, Ms Margaret Rowe, Assistant Principal Mr Gerard Doyle, Assistant Principal Ms Martina Mullumbuk, Assistant Teacher Ms Ursula Kinthari, Teacher Ms Louise Djarkal, Teacher Mr Aloysius Kungul, Literacy Worker Mr Clezus Dumoo, Remote Area Teacher Education Student Mr Tobins Ngambe, Teacher
13.10.95 Private	Kardu Numida Incorporated, Wadeye	Mr Leon Melpi, President Mr Claude Narjic, Member Mr Terry Bollemor, Council Clerk Mr David Sutcliffe
7.3.96 Private	Belyuen Community Government Council, Belyuen	Mr Harry Singh, Chairman Mr Claude Holtze, Deputy President Mr Tony Singh, Councillor Ms Sandra Yarrowin, Councillor Ms Lorna Tennant, Bookkeeper
7.3.96 Private	Belyuen School, Belyuen	Ms Bev Bainbridge, Head Teacher Ms Marjorie Bilbil, Assistant Teacher Ms Linda Yarrowin, Assistant Teacher Ms Patsyann Jorrock, Assistant Teacher Ms Topsy Phillips, Assistant Teacher
19.3.96 Public	Maningrida Council Inc	Mr Gordon Machbirrbirr, Councillor and Assistant Council Clerk Mr Charlie Yirrwalla, Councillor Mr Roly Madjerr, Councillor Mr Alan Clough, Council Clerk
19.3.96 Public	Maningrida Community Education Centre	Mr Greg Jarvis, Principal Mr Alistair Scott, Assistant Principal Ms Miriam McDonald, Assistant Principal Mr Patrick Brown, Chairman, School Council

Public Accounts Committee

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Date	Organisation/Agency	Witnesses
19.3.96 Public	Homeland Centres and Yuyabol Action Group	Mr Patrick Brown, Chairman, School Council Mr Greg Jarvis, Principal Ms Helen Sharp, on behalf of Homeland Centres Mavis, Jimmy, Kathleen, Rita, Lena, Kathleen, Jeffrey, and Lily - Homeland Centre Teachers Mr David Bond, Executive Officer, Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation Mr Wayne Campion, Assistant Executive Officer, Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation Mr Billy Jimanwalla, Committee member of the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation
20.3.96 Public	Yirrkala Community Education Centre, Yirrkala Yirrkala Homelands School Yolnga Education Manager	Ms Nalwarri Ngurruwutthun, Principal Mr Leon White, Principal Ms Raymattja Marika Mununggiritj
20.3.96 Public	Yirrkala Schools Action Group	Ms Raymattja Marika Ms Banbapuy Maymuru Ms Walilwanga Yunupingu Ms Bamuniga Marika Ms Ngalawurr Mununggurr Ms Nalwarri Ngurruwutthun Ms Dinkirk Mununggurr Ms Merrikiyawuy Ganambarr Stubbs Ms Rarriwuy Marika Ms Djalinda Ulamari
20.3.96 Public	Yirrkala Dhanbul Community Association	Mr Wunyabi Marika, President Ms Bakamumu Marika, Vice Chairman Ms Raymattja Marika Mununggiritj, Council Member Ms Banbapuy Maymuru, Council Member Mr Djuwalpi Marika, Council Clerk Ms Banduk Marika, Council Member Mr Howard Amory, Community Educator, North East Arnhem Region Stephen Murdock, Nurse Consultant Ms Torogay Burunaagay, Senior Health Worker
21.3.96 Public	Principal St Frances Xavier School, Daly River	Ms Miriam-Rose Baumann, Principal Mr David Sutton, Assistant Principal Ms Deidre Lalor, Teacher Mentor
21.3.96 Public	Naiuyu Nambiyu Community Government Council, Daly River	Mr Mark Mullins, President Mr Jim Parry, Councillor Ms Bridgette Kikitin, Councillor Ms Miriam Rose Baumann, Councillor Mr Robert Lindsay, Councillor Mr Jimmy Numbatu, Councillor
26.3.96 Public	Yugul Mangi Community Government Council, Ngukurr	Mr David Daniels, President Mr Phillip Bush, Councillor

Report on the Provision of School Education Services for Remote Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory

Date	Organisation/Agency	Witnesses
26.3.96 Public	Ngukurr School, Ngukurr	Ms Gwen Rami, Principal Mr Neil Gibson, Assistant Principal/Mentor Ms Michelle Bennett, Teacher Ms Ann Maree Rogers, Teacher Mr David Daniels, President, Yugul Mangi Community Government Council Mr Robin Rogers, Councillor, Yugul Mangi Community Government Council
26.3.96 Public	Urapungu School, Urapungu	Ms Indu Parmar, Head Teacher Ms Margaret Duncan, Assistant Teacher Ms Jenine Williams, Teacher Ms Naomi Merry, Aboriginal Hearing Officer Mr David Daniels, Community Member
27.3.96 Public	Elliott District Community Government Council, Elliott	Ms Bonnie Absalom, Vice President Mr Ron Squires, Councillor Ms Kirsteen Squires, Councillor Ms Florene Bathern, Councillor Ms Dawn Jackson, Council Clerk
27.3.96 Public	Gurungu Corporation, Elliott	Mr Kevin Neade, President Ms Rosemary Neade, Councillor Mr Harold Ulamari, Coordinator Mr Dick Rogers, Councillor Mr Gordon Jackson, Councillor Ms Heather Dixon, Secretary Mr Oscar Wilson, Councillor Ms Alice Bell, Councillor Mr Raymond Winsley, Councillor Teresa, Councillor
27.3.96 Public	Elliott Community Education Centre, Elliott	Mr Ian Hopwood, Principal Ms Amy Lauder, School Councillor
8.5.96 Public	Wallace Rockhole School, Wallace Rockhole	Mr Paul Buckley, Head Teacher
8.5.96 Public	Wallace Rockhole Community Government Council, at Wallace Rockhole	Mr Ken Porter, Council Clerk Ms Gladys Porter, Council Member Mr Peter Abbott, Council Member Ms Rachel Abbott, Council Member Mr Max Baliva, Council Member Ms Kathy Abbott, Council Member Mr Bernard Abbott, Council Member Mr Edmond Rubuntja, Council Member Mr Peter Moketarinja, Council Member Mr John Abbott, Community Member Mr Ralph Abbott, Community Member
9.5.96 Public	Yulara School at Yulara	Mr Bob McNee, Head Teacher

Public Accounts Committee

Date	Organisation/Agency	Witnesses
9.5.96 Public	Yulara Health Services (Royal Flying Doctor Service)	Mr John Lynch, Executive Officer, Adelaide Dr Ross Peterkin, Medical Officer Ms Sally Young, Clinical Nurse Consultant Mr Tim Spokes, Clinical Nurse Consultant
9.5.96 Public	Mutitjulu Community Inc. at Mutitjulu	Mr John Willis, Community Liaison Officer Mr David Scholz, Health Administrator
9.5.96 Public	Mutitjulu School, Mutitjulu	Mr Barry Raborne, Teacher-in-Charge
10.5.96 Public	Nyangatjatjara Aboriginal Corporation at Uluru	Mr Laurie Gorman, Executive Officer

List of Transcripts of Public Accounts Committee Hearings

Date	Organisation/Agency	Witnesses
8.2.95 Private	Office of the Auditor-General for the Northern Territory	Mr Iain Summers, Auditor-General
3.3.95 Private	Office of the Auditor-General for the Northern Territory	Mr Iain Summers, Auditor-General
7.3.95 Private	Northern Territory Department of Education	Mr Michael Fong, Secretary Mr Michael Higgins, Director, Management Services
3.5.95 Private	Northern Territory Department of Education	Mr David Cairns, Deputy Secretary, Schools Policy & Operations North Mr Dennis Griffith, Director, Planning and Revenue Mr Tom Pearce, Assistant Director, Planning & Revenue
9.8.95 Private	Northern Territory Treasury	Mr Tim McClelland, Acting Deputy Under Treasurer Mr John Ayre, Director, Public Finance Branch
9.8.95 Private	Northern Territory Department of Education	Mr Dennis Griffith, Director, Planning and Revenue
13.10.95 Private	Kardu Numida Incorporated, Wadeye	Mr Leon Melpi, President Mr Claude Narjic, Member Mr Terry Bollemor, Council Clerk Mr David Sutcliffe
20.10.95 Private	FEPPi	Ms Lana Quall, Chairperson Ms Lenore Dembski, Specialist Member, Employment and Training Mr Joseph Brown, Darwin Regional Representative Mr Billy Jungarrayi Larry, Alice Springs/Sandover Regional Representative Mr Lindsey Jampijnpa Turner, Lake Mackay Regional Representative Mr Phil de la Cruz, Executive Officer
24.10.95 Private	Aboriginal Development Unit, NT Department of Education	Ms Lenore Dembski, Director Mr Paul Rider, Senior Training Co-ordinator Mr Chris Makepeace, Director, Schools Policy Mr John Wagner, Senior Training Co-ordinator Ms Lee Clarke, Senior Curriculum and Research Officer Mr Brian McGuinness, Senior Rural Development Co-ordinator
25.10.95 Public	Commonwealth Grants Commission	Mr Richard Rye, Chairman

Public Accounts Committee

Date	Organisation/Agency	Witnesses
7.3.96 Private	Belyuen Community Government Council, Belyuen	Mr Harry Singh, Chairman Mr Claude Holtze, Deputy President Mr Tony Singh, Councillor Ms Sandra Yarrowin, Councillor Ms Lorna Tennant , Bookkeeper
7.3.96 Private	Belyuen School, Belyuen	Ms Bev Bainbridge, Head Teacher
7.3.96 Private	Belyuen School, Belyuen	Ms Bev Bainbridge, Head Teacher Ms Marjorie Bilbil, Assistant Teacher Ms Linda Yarrowin, Assistant Teacher Ms Patsyann Jorrock, Assistant Teacher Ms Topsy Phillips, Assistant Teacher
8.3.96 Private	Northern Territory Department of Education	Mr Cliff Fowler, Chief Assessor Mr Sen Huang, Principal Research Officer Mr Paul Bubb, Principal Education Officer, Aboriginal Languages and Bilingual Education
19.3.96 Public	Maningrida Council Inc	Mr Gordon Machbirrbirr, Councillor and Assistant Council Clerk Mr Charlie Yirrwalla, Councillor Mr Roly Madjerr, Councillor Mr Alan Clough, Council Clerk
19.3.96 Public	Maningrida Community Education Centre	Mr Greg Jarvis, Principal Mr Alistair Scott, Assistant Principal Ms Miriam McDonald, Assistant Principal Mr Patrick Brown, Chairman, School Council
19.3.96 Public	Homeland Centres and Yuyabol Action Group	Mr Patrick Brown, Chairman, School Council Mr Greg Jarvis, Principal Ms Helen Sharp, on behalf of Homeland Centres Mavis, Jimmy, Kathleen, Rita, Lena, Kathleen, Jeffrey, and Lily - Homeland Centre Teachers Mr David Bond, Executive Officer, Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation Mr Wayne Champion, Assistant Executive Officer, Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation Mr Billy Jimanwalla, Committee member of the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation
20.3.96 Public	Yirrkala Community Education Centre, Yirrkala Yirrkala Homelands School Yolnga Education Manager	Ms Nalwarri Ngurruwutthun, Principal Mr Leon White, Principal Ms Raymattja Marika Mununggiritj

Report on the Provision of School Education Services for Remote Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory

Date	Organisation/Agency	Witnesses
20.3.96 Public	Yirkkala Schools Action Group	Ms Raymattja Marika Ms Banbapuy Maymuru Ms Walilwanga Yunupingu Ms Bamuniga Marika Ms Ngalawurr Mununggurr Ms Nalwarri Ngurruwutthun Ms Dinkirrk Munuggurr Ms Merrikiyawuy Ganambarr Stubbs Ms Rarriwuy Marika Ms Djalinda Ulamari
20.3.96 Public	Yirkkala Dhanbul Community Association	Mr Wunyabi Marika, President Ms Bakamumu Marika, Vice Chairman Ms Raymattja Marika Mununggiritj, Council Member Ms Banbapuy Maymuru, Council Member Mr Djuwalpi Marika, Council Clerk Ms Banduk Marika, Council Member Mr Howard Amory, Community Educator, North East Arnhem Region Stephen Murdock, Nurse Consultant Ms Torogay Burunaagay, Senior Health Worker
21.3.96 Public	Principal St Frances Xavier School, Daly River	Ms Miriam-Rose Baumann, Principal Mr David Sutton, Assistant Principal Ms Deidre Lalor, Teacher Mentor
21.3.96 Public	Naiuyu Nambiyu Community Government Council, Daly River	Mr Mark Mullins, President Mr Jim Parry, Councillor Ms Bridgette Kikitin, Councillor Ms Miriam Rose Baumann, Councillor Mr Robert Lindsay, Councillor Mr Jimmy Numbatu, Councillor
26.3.96 Public	Yugul Mangi Community Government Council, Ngukurr	Mr David Daniels, President Mr Phillip Bush, Councillor
26.3.96 Public	Ngukurr School, Ngukurr	Ms Gwen Rami, Principal Mr Neil Gibson, Assistant Principal/Mentor Ms Michelle Bennett, Teacher Ms Ann Maree Rogers, Teacher Mr David Daniels, President, Yugul Mangi Community Government Council Mr Robin Rogers, Councillor, Yugul Mangi Community Government Council
27.3.96 Public	Elliott District Community Government Council, Elliott	Ms Bonnie Absalom, Vice President Mr Ron Squires, Councillor Ms Kirsteen Squires, Councillor Ms Florene Bathern, Councillor Ms Dawn Jackson, Council Clerk

Public Accounts Committee

Date	Organisation/Agency	Witnesses
27.3.96 Public	Gurungu Corporation, Elliott	Mr Kevin Neade, President Ms Rosemary Neade, Councillor Mr Harold Ulamari, Coordinator Mr Dick Rogers, Councillor Mr Gordon Jackson, Councillor Ms Heather Dixon, Secretary Mr Oscar Wilson, Councillor Ms Alice Bell, Councillor Mr Raymond Winsley, Councillor Teresa, Councillor
27.3.96 Public	Elliott Community Education Centre, Elliott	Mr Ian Hopwood, Principal Ms Amy Lauder, School Councillor
1.5.96 Public	Batchelor College	Mr John Ingram, Director Dr David McClay, Deputy Director (Operations) Dr John Henry, Assistant Director, Academic Development Ms Alison Worrell, Head of the School of Health Studies Mr Ron Watt, Head of the School of Educational Studies Mr Ron Stanton, Senior Lecturer, Centre for Education, Research and Development Mr Bill Baird, Senior Executive Officer, Council, Communities and Students Ms Holly Margerrison, Registrar
7.5.96 Public	Northern Territory Department of Education, Alice Springs	Mr Noel Coutts, Superintendent, Alice Springs West Mr Russell Totham, Superintendent, Alice Springs East
7.5.96 Public	Central Land Council, Alice Springs	Mr Leigh (Tracker) Tilmouth, Director, Ms Olga Havnen, Senior Policy Officer
7.5.96 Public	Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Inc., Alice Springs	Mr Kenny Laughton, Director Dr John Boffa, Medical Officer, Public Health Unit Ms Heather Brown, Branch Manager, Education and Training Unit
7.5.96 Public	Yirara College of the Finke River Mission Inc., Alice Springs	Pastor Paul Doecke, Principal Mr John Proeve, A/Deputy Principal (Academic) Mr Lester Kerber, Bursar Mr Tom Reuther, Chairman, Governing Council
7.5.96 Public	Alice Springs Town Council	Ms Carole Frost, Alderman Mr Rod Oliver, Alderman Mr Terry McCumiskey, Alderman Ms June Noble, Alderman
7.5.96 Public	Tanami Network, Alice Springs	Mr Peter Toyne, Consultant

Report on the Provision of School Education Services for Remote Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory

Date	Organisation/Agency	Witnesses
8.5.96 Public	Wallace Rockhole School	Mr Paul Buckley, Head Teacher
8.5.96 Public	Wallace Rockhole Community Government Council	Mr Ken Porter, Council Clerk Ms Gladys Porter, Council Member Mr Peter Abbott, Council Member Ms Rachel Abbott, Council Member Mr Max Baliva, Council Member Ms Kathy Abbott, Council Member Mr Bernard Abbott, Council Member Mr Edmond Rubuntja, Council Member Mr Peter Mocketarinja, Council Member Mr John Abbott, Community Member Mr Ralph Abbott, Community Member
9.5.96 Public	Yulara School	Mr Bob McNee, Head Teacher
9.5.96 Public	Yulara Health Services (Royal Flying Doctor Service)	Mr John Lynch, Executive Officer, Adelaide Dr Ross Peterkin, Medical Officer Ms Sally Young, Clinical Nurse Consultant Mr Tim Spokes, Clinical Nurse Consultant
9.5.96 Public	Mutitjulu Community Inc.	Mr John Willis, Community Liaison Officer Mr David Scholz, Health Administrator
9.5.96 Public	Mutitjulu School	Mr Barry Raborne, Teacher-in-Charge
10.5.96 Public	Nyangatjatjara Aboriginal Corporation, Uluru	Mr Laurie Gorman, Executive Officer

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APPENDIX E

Informal Discussions with Secretariat

Mr Peter Allan, Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services, NT Department of Education
Mr Troy Angus, Manager Statistics/Demography, NT Department of Education
Ms Coralyn Armstrong, PEO Human Resource Development, NT Department of Education
Mr John Ayre, Director, Financial Relations, NT Treasury
Mr Peter Bailey, Secretariat, NT Department of Education
Ms Bev Bainbridge, Head Teacher, Belyuen School
Ms Miriam-Rose Baumann, Principal, St Francis Xavier School, Daly River
Mr Graham Benjamin, Director, Equal Opportunities, NT Department of Education
Mr Damien Berger, Director Facilities, NT Department of Education
Mr Frank Brennan, Superintendent, Darwin North, NT Department of Education
Mr Isaac Brown, Past Chairman, Feppi
Mr Paul Bubb, PEO Aboriginal Language/Bilingual, NT Department of Education
Ms Jenny Buckley, A/Head Teacher, Harts Range School
Mr John Burchett, Director, Human Resource Management Branch, NT Department of Education
Mr Paul Buckley, Head Teacher, Wallace Rockhole School
Mr Aidan Burke, Executive Officer, Operations South, NT Department of Education
Mr Warren Bury, Superintendent Secondary, NT Department of Education
Mr David Cairns, Deputy Secretary, Schools Policy & Operations North, NT Department of Education
Mr David Coles, CEO, NT Office of Aboriginal Development
Ms Judi Conje, Cluster Schools Registrar, NT Department of Education
Mr Noel Coutts, Superintendent, Alice Springs East, NT Department of Education
Mr Ben Cubillo, Assistant Executive Officer, Feppi
Mr Vic Czernezkyj, Director, Secretariat, NT Department of Education
Mr Kevin Davis, Deputy Vice Chancellor, NTU
Ms Sue Davy, SEO Human Resources, NT Department of Education
Mr Phil de la Cruz, Executive Officer, Feppi
Ms Lenore Dempski, Director, Aboriginal Development, NT Department of Education
Mr Phil Elsegood, Consultant, Aboriginal issues
Mr Gordon Fietz, Finance Manager, Operations North, NT Department of Education
Mr Michael Fong, Secretary, NT Department of Education
Mr Cliff Fowler, Chief Assessor, NT Department of Education
Ms Mary Fox, Superintendent, Palmerston Rural, NT Department of Education
Mr Dennis Griffith, Director, Planning and Revenue, NT Department of Education
Mr Bill Griffiths, Director, Catholic Education Office
Mr Allan Haines, Department of Employment, Education and Training, Darwin
Ms Margie Hayes, Institute of Aboriginal Development
Ms Vivienne Hayward, PEO English, NT Department of Education
Mr Mike Higgins, Director, Management Services, NT Department of Education
Mr Les Holmes, Head Teacher, Harts Range School
Mr Ian Hopwood, Principal, Elliott CEC
Ms Margaret Howard, First Steps, Operations North, NT Department of Education

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Dr Wendy Hoy, Menzies School of Health Research
Dr John Ingram, Director, Batchelor College
Mr Greg Jarvis, Principal, Maningrida CEC
Mr Peter Jones, Executive Officer Aboriginal Education Policy, NT Department of Education
Mr John Kelly, ATSIC
Mr Lester Kerber, Registrar, Yirara College
Sr Elizabeth Little, Principal, OLSH School, Wadeye
Ms Mary Lovett, First Assistant Secretary, Department of Employment, Education and Training, Canberra
Mr Chris Makepeace, Director, Schools Policy, NT Department of Education
Ms Raymattja Marika, Yolngu Education Manager, Yirrkala
Mr Alden McCue, Superintendent, Katherine, NT Department of Education
Ms Jill McDonald, Administrative Officer, Commonwealth Programs, NT Department of Education
Mr Tim McClelland, NT Treasury
Mr Bob McNee, Head Teacher, Yulara School
Snr Constable Scotty Mitchell, NT Police Services
Mr John Morgan, Superintendent, Barkly, NT Department of Education
Mr Richard Mu, Senior Statistics Officer, NT Department of Education
Mr Tony Neale, Ear Health Co-ordinator, Menzies School of Health
Ms Nalwarri Ngarruwutthur, Principal, Yirrkala CEC
Ms Cecil Nielson, PEO TESC, NT Department of Education
Mr David Parish, PEO Aboriginal Program Support, NT Department of Education
Ms Indu Parmar, Head Teacher, Urapunga School
Dr Harry Payne, Deputy Secretary, Curriculum and Assessment, NT Department of Education
Mr Tom Pearce, Assistant Director, Planning and Revenue, NT Department of Education
Mr Stuart Philpot, Consultant, Aboriginal issues
Mr Rob Preswell, Community Liaison, NTETA
Mr Derek Pugh, Head Teacher, Pularumpi School
Ms Lana Quall, Chairperson, Feppi
Mr Graham Quan, Assistant Director, Budgets, NT Department of Education
Mr Terry Quong, SEO Human Resource Development, NT Department of Education
Mr Barry Raborne, Teacher-in-Charge, Mutitjulu School
Ms Gwen Rami, Principal, Ngukurr School
Mr John Rattigan, PEO, CEC Unit, NT Department of Education
Ms Marjorie Redgrave, Assistant Superintendent, Katherine, NT Department of Education
Ms Teresa Roe, Chairperson, Joint ASSPA Committees, Darwin
Ms Chris Ross, Chairperson, NT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Educators
Mr Huang Sen, Principal Research Officer, NT Department of Education
Ms Bron Sims, Assistant Superintendent, Operations South, NT Department of Education
Mr Geoff Sloan, PEO School Support Services, NT Department of Education
Mr Steve Smith, PIPS Co-ordinator, NT Department of Education
Ms Maria Stevens, Aboriginal Education Officer, NT Catholic Education Office
Mr Frank Stewart, Superintendent, East Arnhem, NT Department of Education
Mr William Thorn, Director Public Funding, DEET, Canberra
Ms Jo Toohey, Assistant Director, Secretariat, NT Department of Education
Mr Russell Totham, Superintendent, Alice Springs West, NT Department of Education

Report on the Provision of School Education Services for Remote Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory

Mr Jim Wansey, NT Department of Lands, Housing and Local Government

Mr Leon White, Principal, Yirrkala Homelands Schools

Mr Wes Whitmore, Assistant Secretary, Operations South, NT Department of Education

Mr Ralph Wiese, Superintendent, Darwin Centre, NT Department of Education

Mr Kevin Williams, Deputy Secretary, NT Department of Lands, Housing and Local Government

Mr Peter Winckler, Manager, Operations North, NT Department of Education

Mr Joe Yick, Demographer, NT Department of Education

Dr Robyn Young, Dean, Faculty of Education, Northern Territory University

Ms Ruth Young, WA Department of Education

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LIST OF RELEVANT TABLED PAPERS

DATE/ STATUS	DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION	DOCUMENT NO.
1.12.94 Private	Letter dated 1 December 1994 from the Hon. Fred Finch, MLA, Minister for Education and Training referring to the Committee for inquiry and report: "the accounts of receipt and expenditure for the provision of school education services for remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory"	1/123
8.2.95 Private	Minister for Education's response dated 1/2/95 to the Committee's request for clarification as to visitation of schools	7/125
8.2.95 Private	Report of the Evaluation of the National Aboriginal Health Strategy Report dated 20 January 1995 from Commissioner Stephen Gordon, Chairperson, National Aboriginal Health Strategy Evaluation Committee	
3.3.95 Private	Auditor-General advice on how to progress with inquiries into the Provision of School Education Services and Health Services to Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory dated 28 February 1995	1/126
31.5.95 Private	Department of Education - <i>The Griffith Service Access Frame, A Practical Model for both Quantifying Access to Services and Developing Population Profiles in North Australia's Remote and Rural Areas</i> , by D.A. Griffith	8/133
9.8.95 Private	Brief dated 9 June 1995 from Mr K. Clarke, NT Treasury covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NT Government total revenue; • proportion of Commonwealth grants; • a breakdown of Commonwealth grants; • an explanation of basis of distribution of the different grants by the Commonwealth; • an explanation of how the Commonwealth grants are treated in the NT budget process; and • details of the NT Government expenditure on Education and Health by activity and source of funding. 	9/135
9.8.95 Private	Letter dated 21 June 1995 from Mr J. Ayre, NT Treasury, attaching documents relating to the Commonwealth Grants Commission (CGC)	10/135
9.8.95 Private	Letter dated 23 June 1995 from Mr J. Ayre, NT Treasury, enclosing copies of Background Notes and transcripts of the Commonwealth Grants Commission's 1992 Conference with Aboriginal Organisations	11/135
9.8.95 Private	Letter dated 29 June 1995 from Ms J. Large, NT Treasury, giving an analysis of the 54% applied to oncosts and relevant current extracts on administrative operations of the Grants Commission	12/135
9.8.95 Private	Overhead projector diagram entitled <i>Sources of Funding for NT Remote Aboriginal Schools (\$'000s)(1994-95)</i>	24/135
22.9.95 Private	O.L.S.H. School, Wadeye, Port Keats - Vision Statement and Community Profile	10/136
20.10.95 Private	Feppi Councillor Handbook, tabled by Feppi representatives	1/140

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DATE/ STATUS	DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION	DOCUMENT NO.
20.10.95 Private	Feppi Newsletter - Nov 94, tabled by Feppi representatives	10/140
20.10.95 Private	Feppi - 1993 Annual Report, tabled by Feppi representatives	2/140
20.10.95 Private	Feppi - 1994 Annual Report, tabled by Feppi representatives	3/140
20.10.95 Private	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy - 1993 Strategic Plan Report for the Northern Territory, tabled by Feppi representatives	4/140
20.10.95 Private	Feppi Regional Groups' Report for meeting held in May - June 1994, tabled by Feppi representatives	5/140
20.10.95 Private	Feppi Regional Groups' Report for meeting held in September & October 1993, tabled by Feppi representatives	6/140
20.10.95 Private	AEP News, Issue no. 1, tabled by Feppi representatives	7/140
20.10.95 Private	Aboriginal Education News, Issue No. 4, tabled by Feppi representatives	8/140
20.10.95 Private	Aboriginal Education News, Issue No. 6, tabled by Feppi representatives	9/140
24.10.95 Private	Background papers provided by Ms L. Dembski, Director, Aboriginal Development Unit	13/141
25.10.95 Public	Composition of Public Sector Revenue and Own-Purpose Outlays in 1993-94 tabled by Mr R. Rye, Chairman, Commonwealth Grants Commission	25/142
25.10.95 Public	Fiscal Transfers 1994-95 tabled by Mr R. Rye, Chairman, Commonwealth Grants Commission	26/142
25.10.95 Public	SPPs as a Proportion of Commonwealth Grants tabled by Mr R. Rye, Chairman, Commonwealth Grants Commission	27/142
25.10.95 Public	Relative Cost of Service Provision Ratios, 1993-94 / Relative Revenue Raising Capacity Ratios, 1993-94, tabled by Mr R. Rye, Chairman, Commonwealth Grants Commission	28/142
25.10.95 Public	The Principle of Fiscal Equalisation, tabled by Mr R. Rye, Chairman, Commonwealth Grants Commission	29/142
25.10.95 Public	Disabilities, tabled by Mr R. Rye, Chairman, Commonwealth Grants Commission	30/142
25.10.95 Public	Some Important Disability Factors, tabled by Mr R. Rye, Chairman, Commonwealth Grants Commission	31/142
25.10.95 Public	Horizontal Fiscal Redistribution 1995-96, tabled by Mr R. Rye, Chairman, Commonwealth Grants Commission	32/142

Report on the Provision of School Education Services for Remote Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory

DATE/ STATUS	DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION	DOCUMENT NO.
25.10.95 Public	The Grants Commission and the Territory, tabled by Mr R. Rye, Chairman, Commonwealth Grants Commission	33/142
25.10.95 Public	Some Research Projects, tabled by Mr R. Rye, Chairman, Commonwealth Grants Commission	34/142
25.10.95 Public	The Steps in the Equalisation Process, tabled by Mr R. Rye, Chairman, Commonwealth Grants Commission	35/142
25.10.95 Public	NT Expenditure: Standardised vs. Actual (Per Capita) , tabled by Mr R. Rye, Chairman, Commonwealth Grants Commission	36/142
16.11.95 Private	Letter dated 26 October 1995 from NT Treasury - Commonwealth Grants Commission's Terms of Reference for the 1999 Review	13/143
9.2.96 Private	Letter dated 16 November 1995 from Feppi attaching Information as requested at the meeting of 20 October 1995: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feppi 1994 Annual Report • Feppi (Northern Territory Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Newsletter - Nov 94, ISSN 1323-2363 • Feppi Regional Groups' Report for meetings held in May-June 1994 • Feppi Terms of Reference 	8/146
9.2.96 Private	The Northern Territory Board of Studies: Results of the 1994 Multilevel Assessment Program in Non-Urban Schools - Report 2, 1995	9/146
29.2.96 Private	Community Background Briefing - Mutitjulu (Uluru/Ayers Rock)	3/147
29.2.96 Private	Article from <i>Alice Springs News</i> , Vol 3, Issue 4, February 1996: <u>Thugs rule Rock</u>	
29.2.96 Private	Community Background Briefing - Areyonga	5/147
7.3.96 Private	Community Profile - Belyuen - January 1996. Belyuen School, Profile, February 1996	2/148
8.3.96 Private	Briefing Paper on Multi-level Assessment Program - Results from Bilingual and Non-Bilingual Schools from Mr Cliff Fowler, Chief Assessor; Mr Huang Zheng Sen, Principal Research Officer; Mr Paul Bubb, Principal Education Officer; Department of Education	3/149
8.3.96 Private	<u>A National Strategy for the Education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples 1996-2002</u> , Ministerial Council on Education, Training and Youth Affairs	5/149
8.3.96 Private	<u>Aboriginal Education in the Northern Territory, Some Issues, Strategies and Outcomes</u> , Northern Territory Department of Education, December 1995	6/149
19.3.96 Public	<i>Manayingkarirra (Maningrida) Housing and Community Development Strategy Study 1993I</i> , Prepared on behalf of the Maningrida Council Incorporated tabled by Mr Alan Clough, Council Clerk	10/150
19.3.96 Public	Community Profile - Maningrida	2/150

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DATE/ STATUS	DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION	DOCUMENT NO.
19.3.96 Public	School Information Report - Maningrida Community Education Centre	6/150
20.3.96 Public	Community Background Briefing - Yirrkala	2/151
20.3.96 Public	East Arnhem Region Education List of Principals 1996 and 1996 Regional Overview & School Profiles	4/151
20.3.96 Public	Nambara Schools Organisational Chart, 18/3/96, tabled by Yirrkala Dhanbul Community Association	
21.3.96 Public	Community Profile - Nauiyu Nambiyu (Daly River), May 1994	2/152
21.3.96 Public	School Profile, St Frances Xavier School	4/152
26.3.96 Public	Community Profile - Ngukurr, Updated: January 1995	2/153
26.3.96 Public	Community Profile - Rittarangu (AKA Urapunga), dated 16 Feb 1996	2/154
26.3.96 Public	School Profile, Urapunga School	7/154
27.3.96 Public	Community Background Briefing - Elliott District Community Government Council	2/155
27.3.96 Public	School Profile (Precis) - Elliott Community Education Centre	11/155
27.3.96 Public	Responses to Questions re Public Accounts Committee from Paul Newman, Senior Teacher, Secondary Age School, Elliott CEC	13/155
27.3.96 Public	Elliott Community Education Centre, Responses to Questions re Public Accounts Committee from Ian Hopwood, Principal	14/155
28.3.96 Private	Department of Education Organisation Chart, January 1996	6/156

Report on the Provision of School Education Services for Remote Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory

DATE/ STATUS	DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION	DOCUMENT NO.
1.5.96 Public	<p>Documents forwarded from Batchelor College</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Batchelor College, <i>Let's Talk Training Business!</i> • Batchelor College, <i>A student guide to Batchelor College 1996</i> • Batchelor College, <i>The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Learning Centre</i> • Batchelor College, <i>Our College!</i> • <i>Batchelor Business</i> March 1996 • <i>Batchelor Business</i> February 1996 • Batchelor College, <i>Introducing Batchelor College 1996</i> • Batchelor College, <i>Batchelor College 1996 Courses</i> • Batchelor College, <i>Strategic Plan, Batchelor College</i> 	
1.5.96 Public	<p>Batchelor College documents tabled by Mr John Ingram, Director, during briefing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Batchelor Business</i>, April 1996 • Batchelor College, <i>Chronicle of Events 1965-1996</i> • William Baird, <i>Future Directions for Batchelor College, December 1995</i>, Educational Technology Unit, Batchelor College, 1996 • Batchelor College, <i>Batchelor College 1996 Courses</i>, Educational Technology Unit, Batchelor College, 1996 • Article from <i>inter alia</i>, April 11, 1996 entitled <u>The trouble with university league tables</u> • Batchelor College, <i>Beyond the College - Profiles of Graduates</i>, Graduate Publication Committee, Batchelor College 1994 • Ron Watt, Head, School of Educational Studies - Summary answers to questions during visit of Public Accounts Committee • Mr Ron Stanton, Senior Lecturer, Centre for Education, Research and Development <i>Attrition Rates in Education and Health Studies Courses at Batchelor</i>, 1 May 1996 • Dr David Henry, <i>Total strategic management and the quality assurance system</i> - 2 documents • Ms Alison Worrell, Head of the School of Health Studies - Summary of answers to questions concerning Aboriginal health prepared by • William Baird, Co-ordinator, Community Consultation Program, Batchelor College, <i>Stepping Forward together, Your Community and Batchelor College, Community Consultations 1995</i>, 20 June 1995 • Batchelor College, <i>Strategic Plan, Batchelor College</i> 	
7.5.96 Public	Alice Springs - Yirara College Profile	2/160
7.5.96 Public	Alice Springs - <i>Department of Education, PAC Inquiry, Provision of School Education Services for Remote Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory, dated 28 March 1996</i> tabled by Mr Noel Couatts, Superintendent, Alice Springs West, Department of Education	3/160

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DATE/ STATUS	DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION	DOCUMENT NO.
7.5.96 Public	Outline of Proposed Submission Contents of <i>National Indigenous Communications Network, Outline of the Proposed Establishment of Remote Digital Communications Sites in Indigenous Communities</i> , January 1996, tabled by Mr Peter Toyne, Tanami Network	4/160
7.5.96 Public	<i>Access to 128 Kbits per sec. For larger remote populations</i> tabled by Mr Peter Toyne, Tanami Network	5/160
8.5.96 Public	Wallace Rockhole Community Profile	2/161
8.5.96 Public	Wallace Rockhole School- Testimonial -Wallace Rockhole Northern Territory	6/161
8.5.96 Public	<i>Controversial and Difficult Issues in Aboriginal Teacher Education - Some Western Educators' Views of Aboriginal Teacher</i> , The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education, Volume 24 Number 1 (1996) tabled by Mr Paul Buckley, Head Teacher ,Wallace Rockhole School	8/161
8.5.96 Public	Wallace Rockhole School - <i>What Entitles a School to Legitimately Call Itself an Aboriginal School?</i> The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education, Volume 24 Number 1 (1996) tabled by Mr Paul Buckley, Head Teacher ,Wallace Rockhole School	9/161
9.5.96 Public	Yulara School Profile	3/162
10.5.96 Public	Community Background Briefing - Mutitjulu (Uluru/Ayers Rock)	2/163
10.5.96 Public	Mutitjulu School Briefing Notes	4/163
10.5.96 Public	Nyangatjatjara Aboriginal Corporation, Yulara - Document <i>Joint Planning Advisory Committee of the Northern Territory Submission for Registration of Nyangatjatjara Independent Secondary College, February 1996</i> tabled by Mr Laurie Gorman, Executive Officer Nyangatjatjara Aboriginal Corporation	1/164
10.5.96 Public	Nyangatjatjara Aboriginal Corporation, Yulara - Document <i>Impiyara Regional Council Inc., Anangu Walytjapiti Tjuta: Regional Planning for the Impiyara Region</i> , Glendle Schrader and Yami Lester, March 1993 tabled by Mr Laurie Gorman, Executive Officer Nyangatjatjara Aboriginal Corporation	2/164
21.5.96 Private	Annual Recreation Leave Entitlements vs Standown, prepared by NT Department of Education, 13 May 1996	1/166
21.5.96 Private	Facsimile from Department of Education dated 14 May 1996 re Participation Rates for Aboriginal Students 1986, 1991 & 1994	2/166
21.5.96 Private	The Northern Territory Board of Studies, 1995 Non-Urban Schools School/System Report - SAMPLE	3/166

