



Performance in Indigenous Education

Report to the Legislative Assembly of the Australian Capital Territory

Annual Report 2008



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Introduction

In 2000, the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Legislative Assembly requested that a report on Indigenous education be tabled in the Assembly every six months. In 2006, the ACT Legislative Assembly agreed to amend the reporting timeframe to allow for the preparation of a progress report covering January to June and an annual report for the January to December period.

This is the third annual report to the ACT Legislative Assembly on Indigenous education and covers the period January to December 2008 inclusive.

In 2006 the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) endorsed the report *Australian Directions in Indigenous Education 2005-2008*¹. The report's recommendations sought to accelerate the pace of change by engaging Indigenous children and young people in learning. Implementation of the MCEETYA report recommendations provided a basis for jurisdictions to address key indicators of Indigenous disadvantage endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 2003.

The ACT is working consistently to address the recommendations of the Australian Directions report. Initiatives implemented to date include a specific goal within principal's performance agreements to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes, the development of personalised learning plans for every Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student, and establishing partnership agreements between schools and their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school community.

In addition, the *Accepting the Challenge* school leadership initiative has focussed on building the knowledge of all school principals and deputy principals to better meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The implementation of the quality teaching model also provides a framework to support the learning outcomes of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

¹ Available from the publications section of the MCEETYA website <http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/>

This report demonstrates the achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in education and training, as well as particular actions being undertaken by the ACT Department of Education and Training (the Department) to continue to support their enhanced learning outcomes. The report addresses enrolment and attendance, performance in the early childhood years, high school and college, and pathways to training, employment and higher education. It describes the progress of initiatives in school leadership and quality teaching, partnerships with the community, industry and universities and provides an overview of strategies to attract and retain more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the Department.

For the first time the performance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students on the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is reported. In May 2008 students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 across Australia participated in NAPLAN, with the results providing a baseline to allow school and student performance to be monitored over time.

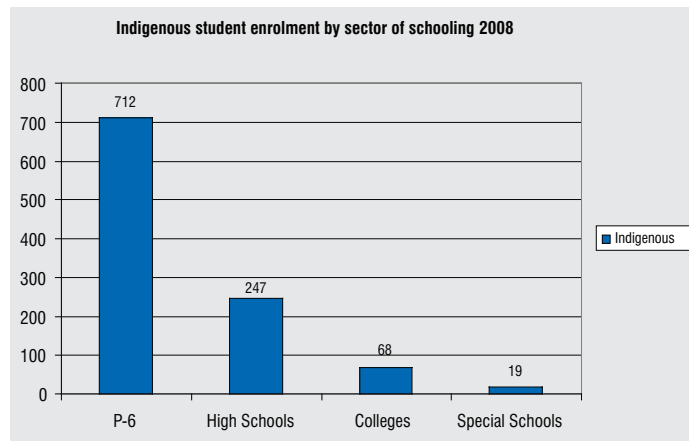
This report also provides information about the recognition of significant events including Reconciliation, National Aborigines' and Torres Strait Islanders' (NAIDOC) Week and the apology to the stolen generations, and how elements of these impact on the work in schools.

Enrolments

P-12 student enrolments

The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population at 19 August 2008 was 4 282², representing 1.3% of all people in the Territory. The *ACT Public School Census - August 2008* reported 38 025 preschool to year 12 students enrolled in ACT public schools. Of that total, 1 047³, or 2.8 %, identified as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Figure 1 provides the distribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across the years of schooling.

Figure 1: 2008 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments by school sector⁴



The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of the ACT is widely dispersed and this is reflected in the distribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in each of the northern, central and southern school districts (Table 1). The mobility of students within and between schools continues to present challenges for schools, particularly in their efforts to provide ongoing learning

2 Australian Bureau of Statistics cat. 3238.0.55.001

3 This figure includes a relatively small number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait students who attend more than one preschool program.

4 It should be noted that due to an anomaly in the ACT Public Schools Census – August 2008, there is a discrepancy of one student between the total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in ACT public schools and the totals of Indigenous students by sector. This is due to a very small number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attending more than one preschool program.

programs and support to assist with student learning outcomes. This factor is often compounded by the movement of families between the ACT and other jurisdictions due to family and community commitments in the parents' home community.

Table 1: Distribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by school district

	Northern Schools District (32 schools and colleges)	Central Schools District (27 schools and colleges)	Southern Schools District (25 schools and colleges)	Total
Total Enrolment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students (August 2008)	339	298	410	1 047

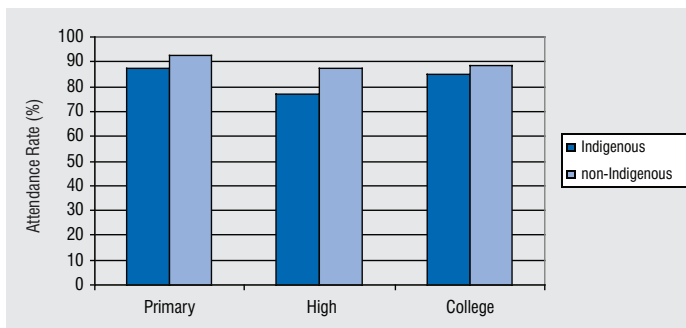
Attendance

In 2008 the attendance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at primary school was 88% - an improvement of 6% over 2007. Attendance in the high school sector was 75% in 2008 – down from 88.9% in 2007. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in colleges, there was little difference in the attendance rates between 2007 and 2008.

In 2008, work continued with Indigenous Education Officers (IEOs) and schools establishing a clear set of priorities to enable IEOs to deliver more focused support. Attendance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across all sectors and the engagement of parents and caregivers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were identified as priority areas and will continue to be the focus for IEOs and schools in 2009.

Figure 2 compares the attendance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to that of non-Indigenous students across the primary, high school and college sectors.

Figure 2: 2008 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous student attendance by school sector



Early Childhood Education

Preschool programs

In the August 2008 Census there were 119 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in ACT public preschool programs, representing 3.0% of all ACT public school preschool enrolments. This is an increase of 26 children from the February 2008 Census figure of 93. It also represents an increase from 102 enrolments in August 2007.

A Koori preschool program operated at Ngunnawal and Holt preschools in the Northern Schools District, at Narrabundah Early Childhood Centre in the Central Schools District and at Calwell Primary School and Wanniasa School in the Southern Schools District. Twenty five students attending the Koori preschool program also attend a local preschool.

Through the Koori preschool program National Reconciliation Week 2008 was celebrated across all school districts. Children and families of the Calwell and Wanniasa Koori Preschool program worked alongside children in the local preschools to develop a group mural representing how the children come together to learn at the preschool. The artwork incorporated traditional Aboriginal art styles and contemporary colour combinations chosen by the children to demonstrate past, present and future. The murals, entitled 'hands of knowledge' will be exhibited in the Department's Indigenous Children's NAIDOC Art Exhibition in July 2009.

Children and families at Narrabundah Koori Preschool Program joined the local preschool community for a celebratory luncheon. The luncheon facilitated relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous community members.

Holt Koori Preschool Program children joined the local preschool group for indoor learning experiences. They also discussed the history of National Reconciliation Week. The

quality of this discussion can be captured by one four year old child who stated that the Stolen Generations story 'makes our hearts sad'.

Children and families at Ngunnawal Koori Preschool Program joined the local preschool group for indoor learning experiences. The children also finalised work on their dramatic play area based around a traditional campsite setting, including humpy and pretend fire.

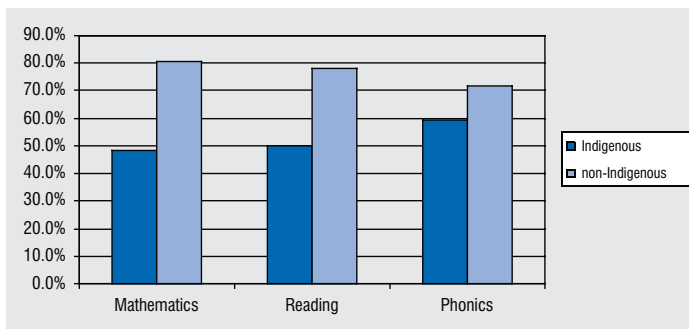
Literacy and numeracy achievements in kindergarten

All kindergarten students are assessed in aspects of English literacy and numeracy using the Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) assessment instrument on entry to kindergarten, and again at the end of the year to ascertain progress.

Kindergarten students assessed as meeting the minimum standard in February PIPS are considered to have commenced schooling with adequate preparation in mathematics and reading.

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kindergarten students whose PIPS assessment was at or above the minimum standard in mathematics, reading and phonics in 2008 is shown and compared against non-Indigenous students in Figure 3.

Figure 3: PIPS Proportion of students above minimum standard in February 2008



The results from the PIPS assessment conducted in November each year provide information about the level of progress that students have made since the February assessment. Due to the fact that there are only a few items assessed in phonics, the ability to report meaningful standardised scores and calculate progress is restricted. Progress is reported against mathematics and reading only.

In mathematics, 71% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students made expected or better than expected progress; in reading, 55% made expected or better than expected progress over the year.

Tables 2 and 3 show the comparison between the progress of kindergarten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students during 2008 for mathematics and reading.

Table 2: PIPS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students' progress in mathematics (November 2008)

Progress Level	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students (%)	Non-Indigenous Students (%)
1&2 Less than expected progress	29	25
3 Expected Progress	48	48
4&5 Better than expected progress	23	27

Table 3: PIPS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students' progress in reading (November 2008)

Progress Level	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (%)	Non-Indigenous (%)
1&2 Less than expected progress	45	25
3 Expected Progress	32	50
4&5 Better than expected progress	23	25

Those students who made less than expected progress in mathematics, reading and phonics will be among the target group for early intervention and support from the Indigenous Literacy and Numeracy Officers in 2009.

Supporting literacy and numeracy in the early years

As part of its response to the PIPS results a new initiative, funded by the ACT Government through the 2007-08 Second Appropriation Bill, expanded the number of Indigenous Literacy and Numeracy Officers (ILNOs) and resulted in a broader role being undertaken by the ILNOs to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from kindergarten to year 4. The revised model, requiring ILNOs to work directly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from Kindergarten to year 4 and their teachers, was introduced at the beginning of 2008. Four officers began in January 2008 with a fifth officer joining the team mid-year.

The focus of this initiative is to raise literacy and numeracy levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in ACT public schools. Subsequent goals involve ILNOs modelling the implementation of a balanced literacy and numeracy program that supports a differentiated curriculum and promotes inclusivity and engagement in learning.

Schools and students were selected using PIPS and data from the 2007 ACT Assessment Program (ACTAP). Seventeen primary schools were allocated support from an ILNO using this method of selection.

Throughout 2008, ILNOs were placed in primary schools to support classroom teachers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who were identified as being below system average in English literacy and/or numeracy. In collaboration with school staff, classroom strategies were developed and implemented to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' learning needs.

Further support was provided for ACT teachers through four half-day workshops that examined online resources, raised awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and ways of learning and facilitated a forum for networking and sharing. Eighty-eight teachers and support staff from 30 primary schools, five secondary schools and four other programs attended these workshops.

National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy – Years 3, 5, 7 and 9

NAPLAN 2008

The first National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) were conducted in May 2008 for all years 3, 5, 7 and 9 students in all schools. Students across Australia were assessed on the same test items in the domains of Reading, Writing, Language Conventions (Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation) and Numeracy. Prior to 2008, Australian students had undertaken different assessments that were developed specifically for each State and Territory. The information gathered from the 2008 NAPLAN process will be used to establish a set of baseline data to allow student progress to be monitored as they continue their schooling.

The NAPLAN assessments broadly reflect the curriculum content across all States and Territories, and the types of questions and test formats were chosen so that they would be familiar to teachers and students.

The use of a common scale that spans years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for each domain allows both the status of, and growth in, student achievement to be monitored and reported throughout a student's years of schooling. Each scale consists of ten bands to cover the full range of student achievement demonstrated by the tests across year 3 to year 9. The national achievement bands are provided to map the increasing complexity of the skills and understandings assessed by NAPLAN. Six of these bands are used for reporting student performance in each year level, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: NAPLAN testing bands

Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Bands 1-6	Bands 3-8	Bands 4-9	Bands 5-10

The national minimum standards at years 3, 5, 7 and 9 represent increasingly challenging skills and understandings and require progressively higher scores on the NAPLAN scale across the years of schooling. Table 5 shows the national minimum standards for each year.

Table 5: NAPLAN minimum standards

Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Band 2	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6

Students whose results are in the minimum standard band have typically demonstrated the basic elements of literacy and numeracy for the year level. Students whose results are in the lowest band (or below) for the year level are deemed to have not achieved the minimum standard. NAPLAN allows teachers to identify these students so they can be provided with focused intervention and additional support to help them achieve the skills they require to progress in schooling.

The total number of students tested, exempted⁵, absent or withdrawn⁶ are identified. Students who were exempted impact on the overall outcome, as they are included in the assessment results as being below the minimum standard. Withdrawn or absent students are not included in the results.

Performance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

The performance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by year level in NAPLAN 2008 is presented in Tables 6-13 below. There are two tables provided for each year level 3, 5, 7 and 9. Tables 6, 8, 10 and 12 provide information about the students' participation in NAPLAN and their results using mean scores. Tables 7, 9, 11 and 13 provide information about student performance relative to national minimum standards, including the percentage of students in band levels above and below this nationally agreed proficiency standard.

Caution needs to be taken when considering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student results in the ACT due to the small number of students that participated in the assessments in each year group.

5 Exempt students are students with a language background other than English, who arrived from overseas less than a year before the tests, and students with significant intellectual disabilities may be exempted from testing.

6 Students may be withdrawn from the testing program by their parent/carer. Withdrawals are intended to address issues such as religious beliefs and philosophical objections to testing.

Table 6: 2008 NAPLAN results for year 3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Domain	Total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students tested	Exempted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Absent or withdrawn Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mean	Non-Indigenous Mean
Reading	89	77	2	10	357.1 ± 19.8	415.4 ± 3.7
Writing	89	77	2	10	369.6 ± 18.6	417.7 ± 2.8
Spelling	89	78	2	9	334.5 ± 18.9	400.5 ± 3.2
Grammar and Punctuation	89	78	2	9	346.4 ± 22.0	411.6 ± 4.0
Numeracy	89	76	2	11	348.9 ± 17.1	408.1 ± 3.1

Table 7: 2008 NAPLAN: Percentage of year 3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students in Proficiency Bands

Domain	Below national minimum standard (%)		At national minimum standard (%)	Above national minimum standard (%)			
	Exempt	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6 and above
Reading	2.5	17.5	20.0	23.8	13.8	15.0	7.5
Writing	2.5	17.5	11.3	17.5	26.3	17.5	7.5
Spelling	2.5	17.3	29.6	21.0	19.8	3.7	6.2
Grammar and Punctuation	2.5	17.3	22.2	29.6	12.3	4.9	11.1
Numeracy	2.5	11.4	21.5	36.7	16.5	3.8	7.6

Table 8: 2008 NAPLAN results for year 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Domain	Total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students tested	Exempted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Absent or withdrawn Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mean	Non-Indigenous Mean
Reading	87	73	4	10	430.8 ± 17.9	497.8 ± 3.2
Writing	87	73	4	10	434.1 ± 14.5	483.8 ± 2.9
Spelling	87	74	4	9	445.1 ± 17.3	482.0 ± 2.9
Grammar and Punctuation	87	74	4	9	430.1 ± 21.5	508.3 ± 3.5
Numeracy	87	73	4	10	425.0 ± 11.9	479.7 ± 2.8

Table 9: 2008 NAPLAN: Percentage of year 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students in Proficiency Bands

Domain	Below national minimum standard (%)		At national minimum standard (%)	Above national minimum standard (%)			
	Exempt	Band 3 and below	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8 and above
Reading	5.2	18.2	22.1	33.8	11.7	6.5	2.6
Writing	5.2	14.3	27.3	27.3	20.8	5.2	0.0
Spelling	5.1	14.1	25.6	24.4	17.9	9.0	3.8
Grammar and Punctuation	5.1	17.9	16.7	33.3	20.5	3.8	2.6
Numeracy	5.2	10.4	45.5	22.1	11.7	5.2	0.0

Table 10: 2008 NAPLAN results for Year 7 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Domain	Total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students tested	Exempted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Absent or withdrawn Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mean	Non-Indigenous Mean
Reading	59	47	3	9	514.6 ± 16.6	545.3 ± 3.4
Writing	59	47	3	9	477.1 ± 16.9	519.0 ± 3.4
Spelling	59	46	3	10	506.7 ± 19.3	534.3 ± 3.1
Grammar and Punctuation	59	46	3	10	496.1 ± 19.9	536.1 ± 3.6
Numeracy	59	49	3	7	502.0 ± 15.5	546.0 ± 3.2

Table 11: 2008 NAPLAN: Percentage of year 7 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students in Proficiency Bands

Domain	Below national minimum standard (%)		At national minimum standard (%)	Above national minimum standard (%)			
	Exempt	Band 4 and below	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8	Band 9 & above
Reading	6.9	3.4	25.9	27.6	24.1	10.3	1.7
Writing	6.9	15.5	17.2	44.8	15.5	0.0	0.0
Spelling	7.0	12.3	14.0	33.3	15.8	14.0	3.5
Grammar and Punctuation	7.0	12.3	19.3	28.1	21.1	10.5	1.8
Numeracy	6.7	8.3	30.0	18.3	28.3	8.3	0.0

Table 12: 2008 NAPLAN results for Year 9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Domain	Total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students tested	Exempted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Absent or withdrawn Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mean	Non-Indigenous Mean
Reading	63	35	3	25	550.8 ± 28.0	590.7 ± 3.2
Writing	63	37	3	23	494.4 ± 42.9	550.9 ± 4.6
Spelling	63	40	3	20	543.9 ± 21.3	578.7 ± 3.2
Grammar and Punctuation	63	40	3	20	525.2 ± 26.4	579.1 ± 3.7
Numeracy	63	36	3	24	548.3 ± 20.7	585.3 ± 3.1

Table 13: 2008 NAPLAN: Percentage of year 9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students in Proficiency Bands

Domain	Below national minimum standard (%)		At national minimum standard (%)	Above national minimum standard (%)			
	Exempt	Band 5 and below	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8	Band 9	Band 10 & above
Reading	7.0	11.6	20.9	32.6	11.6	11.6	4.7
Writing	6.7	22.2	28.9	15.6	20.0	4.4	2.2
Spelling	6.1	12.2	20.4	36.7	10.2	14.3	0.0
Grammar and Punctuation	6.1	22.4	26.5	24.5	16.3	0.0	4.1
Numeracy	6.8	20.5	27.3	11.4	20.5	13.6	0.0

Across Australia and in the ACT, the mean scores for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is significantly different to the mean scores of non-Indigenous students across all year levels and all assessments.

Overall the mean achievement scores of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in all strands is significantly lower than the mean achievement scores of non-Indigenous students across all year levels. On average, this places Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students between 18 and 24 months behind their non-Indigenous peers. Whilst this gap in performance exists, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the ACT outperform their peers in all other Australian states and territories.

In the ACT, the greatest difference in performance compared with non-Indigenous occurred at year 3 in grammar and punctuation, spelling and writing. The difference in the mean score performance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students compared to non-Indigenous students, across each of the domains is the smallest at year 7. For instance, in reading, the difference between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous mean score performance is around 63 points in years 3 and 5, falling to 40 points by year 7 and increasing slightly to 50 points by year 9.

While some students achieved in the top two proficiency bands at each year level, a disproportionate number were represented in the lower bands of performance compared to non-Indigenous students. No Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student achieved in the top band of numeracy in years 5, 7 and 9 or the top band of writing in years 5 and 7⁷.

At year 7 in reading, writing, spelling and numeracy, the performance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students while behind, was not significantly different to their non-indigenous peers. In the ACT, a greater proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieved above the national minimum standard in all tests and all year levels when compared to the national results.

For non-Indigenous students in the ACT, participations rates in NAPLAN approximate that of the national results which decline towards year 9. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation rates, locally and nationally, are below the non-Indigenous rates. In the ACT, for Year 7 (80%) and Year 9 (74%), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation is below the Year 7 (88%) and Year 9 (80%) national averages.

While ACT exemption figures resemble those of the national data-set, the absent or withdrawn results for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the ACT are higher, particularly in Year 7 (20%) and Year 9 (26%) against the national comparison of Year 7 (12%) and Year 9 (20%).

7 For comparison with non-Indigenous student outcomes refer to the National Report: Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy 2008 available at <http://www.naplan.edu.au/>

High School and College Achievements

Year 10 performance

Fifty one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were enrolled in year 10 in 2008. Of those, 44 (86.3%) received a year 10 certificate compared with 93.5% non-Indigenous students.

In 2007 there were 56 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in year 10. Of those, 53 (94.6%) received a year 10 certificate compared with 97.6% non-Indigenous students.

Year 12 performance

Table 14 below highlights the achievements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who were enrolled in Year 12 in 2008 compared with the 2007 cohort. Five of the students who achieved a Year 12 certificate also completed a VET certificate.

Table 14: Achievements of Year 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Qualification	2007	2008
Year 12 Certificate	24	23
Year 12 Certificate and VET Certificate	10	5
VET Certificate but no Year 12 Certificate	7	1
Neither VET nor Year 12 Certificate	8	9

Of the students who did not receive a Year 12 certificate, one partially completed a VET certificate.

Australian School-Based Apprenticeships

Throughout 2008 the Department worked with the Structured Training and Employment Projects (STEP) – Employment and Related Service (ERS) providers in the ACT to promote opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students available through an Australian School-based Apprenticeship (ASBA) pathway. The STEP ERS is funded by the Australian Government and aims to achieve sustainable employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians by providing employers with one or more of the following services:

- pre-employment support services that may include the provision of training and the development and implementation of recruitment strategies
- employment placement services to assist them place and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in their workplaces
- mentoring services to help them retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian employees.

The Department provided referral services to the STEP ERS providers in the ACT identifying suitable target schools that had a strong history of participation in the ASBA program and had an identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student population.

A total of seven of the 299 students who commenced an Australian School-Based Apprenticeship in the ACT in 2008 identified as being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and were enrolled in an ACT public high school. Table 15 shows the industry sectors and number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who commenced a school-based apprenticeship in 2008.

Table 15: 2008 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander apprentice commencements by industry sector

Business Area	Number of students
Business	1
General construction	2
Hospitality	1
Children's services	1
Transport and logistics	1
Make-up services	1

This represents a modest increase over previous years with five ASBA commencements in 2005 and four in 2007.

Australian National University Secondary College project

Towards the end of 2007, the Department and the Australian National University's (ANU) medical faculty agreed to establish a mentoring relationship between the faculty and year 11 students that the Department identified to take part in the ANU Secondary College (ANUSC) program. It was agreed that:

- a program of support would be developed for students to link them to the medical faculty on a regular basis during the ANUSC year 11 and 12 program
- the support program would be provided for other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who were not in the ANUSC program, but may be interested in a medical career
- for students who successfully completed the ANUSC program, followed by an ANU science degree, early entry to the Post Graduate Medical degree at the ANU would be given.

One Aboriginal student expressed interest in the program in 2008. That student was accepted into the program and in December 2008 completed year 11.

At the end of the 2008 school year, three Indigenous students had expressed interest in the program. One student has been accepted into the program after successfully completing the entry assessment. The other two students chose to withdraw before the entry assessment was conducted.

Action research in schools – Melrose High School

As a component of the School Leadership in Indigenous Education Program, Melrose High School was supported to undertake an action research project to investigate the success of its Indigenous Studies Centre, which has been provided at the school for three years.

Teachers at Melrose High School have conducted action research into the benefits of the continued provision of the classroom teacher at the Indigenous Studies Centre. They have prepared a report which will be available in Term 1 of 2009.

The school initially received support through the Indigenous education programs funded by the Australian Government. Those funds allowed the school to employ a classroom teacher on a part-time basis and to acquire student resources.

The teacher and students have continued to use a dedicated room to provide an environment that is conducive to learning as well as being a place where students could gather in small groups and discuss aspects of their learning. In 2008, the room provided a welcoming environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students. Student work is displayed on walls around the room and opportunities are provided for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to give presentations about aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to students in other classes.

Pathways to Training and Employment

Post school qualifications

During 2008 a total of 287 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were reported as being enrolled in Certificate III, Certificate IV, Diploma and Advanced Diploma courses funded by the Australian Government under the Skilling Australia's Workforce initiative.

Figure 4: 2008 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student participation in post school qualifications

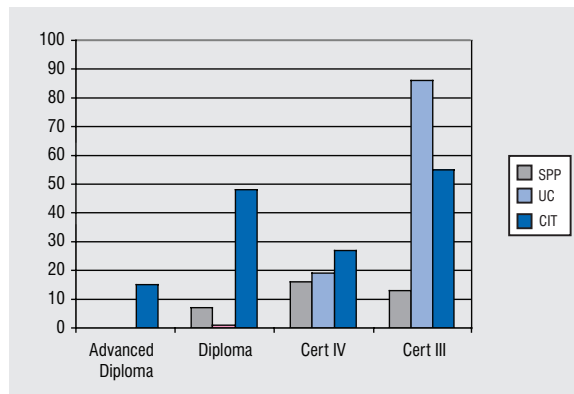


Figure 4 above indicates the preferred training provider and related support that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are accessing for post-school qualifications. User Choice (UC) and Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) are the most accessed providers for Certificate III and IV. A strong preference is shown for the CIT for Diploma and Advanced Diploma courses. There are a small number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are accessing courses under the Strategic Priorities Program (SPP). The SPP is one of the schedules under the contractual arrangement for the ACT Competitive Allocation for Skills Initiatives (CASI). The funding is designed to provide training opportunities for priority industry areas on the SPP list and priority groups that are not eligible to undertake other publicly funded training. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are one of the identified priority groups supported by funding.

One hundred and twenty-nine Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders were enrolled in Certificate III courses that included Business, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Arts and Information Technology, while 57 were enrolled in Certificate IV courses that included Training and Assessment, Fitness and Alcohol and Other Drugs. Two Indigenous Education Officers employed by the Department completed the Certificate IV Alcohol and Other Drugs course in 2008.

Fifty-six students who undertook studies at Diploma level enrolled in courses that included Youth Work, Community Welfare Work and Public Safety (Forensic Investigations), while the Advanced Diploma attracted 16 students into Accounting, Community Services Work, Computer Forensics and Journalism courses, amongst others.

Of the 287 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who were enrolled in the above course types, the CIT attracted a total of 145 students.

School Leadership

School Leadership in Indigenous Education

The Department received funds under the 2007-08 Second Appropriation Bill to implement a suite of initiatives to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students over a four year period. One element was development of a professional learning program for school leaders. Data collection and analysis, strategic planning for improved outcomes, culturally inclusive curriculum and community engagement were some of the topics identified as focus areas for the program. These topics were explored through presentations, the distribution of research papers, collegiate discussions and local research projects.

On 31 July 2008, the School Leadership in Indigenous Education Program was officially launched. The launch of *Accepting the Challenge – Improving learning outcomes of Indigenous students* was followed by a conference for principals of ACT public schools and Department program managers. In addition to providing a comprehensive overview of the data collected by the Department, the conference allowed time for participants to discuss how that data is used and what other data is required.

2008 saw the formal implementation of a strategy for ACT public schools, where they began compiling evidence about what is working successfully in schools to achieve improved learning outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This component of the school leadership program is reported in more detail later in the section focusing on strengthening organisational capacity.

The School Leadership in Indigenous Education program was supported by two former principals. Their work included visits to individual schools or clusters of schools to assist with planning and implementing activities as part of the program. That planning resulted in a number of individual schools and clusters of schools developing initiatives around reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content in their curriculum.

During August and October 2008 workshops were held for deputy principals. Participants engaged in discussions with representatives of the University of Canberra about post-school pathways and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The conferences and related workshops also provided opportunities for participants to hear from Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people, including local and national educators, academics and former students of the ACT public school system, and to engage in discussion about what can be done in schools to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

A total of 178 educational leaders from ACT public schools participated in the first year of the professional learning program.

Outcomes of discussions at the conferences and workshops for principals and deputies and at the local school cluster level indicate a number of priorities being identified for action in 2009. Examples of those priorities include:

- Schools in the Calwell cluster established key areas to work on in 2008 and 2009. These include improving attendance and participation rates and the literacy and numeracy outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across six schools in the cluster.
- The Melrose cluster determined that a major focus was around building on existing strengths of the cluster, including awareness about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures for staff and students.
- Forrest, Red Hill, Narrabundah and Yarralumla Primary Schools agreed that connectedness and relationships and setting high academic expectations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will be their major focus in 2009.

The School Leadership in Indigenous Education Program will continue in 2009, and will support school leaders with ongoing planning that will contribute to improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Dare to Lead

The Department continued to support the *Dare to Lead* program throughout 2008. In collaboration with the ACT *Dare to Lead* coordinator, two of the three action area coordinators (who are principals of public schools) arranged activities and workshops for school principals, deputy principals and interested teachers. Workshop and activity topics included:

- how to use and access the *Dare to Lead* resources in their schools.
- springtime at Birrigai
- cultural tour of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Studies (AIATSIS).

A key workshop titled *Accessing ACT Resources* was delivered during Reconciliation Week in 2008 and provided school leaders and teachers with information about the ways that places such as the National Museum of Australia, Reconciliation Place and the National Gallery could be used to support curriculum initiatives that are inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content.

The Department continued to promote and encourage public schools in the ACT to become members of the *Dare to Lead* program and by the end of the 2008 school year there was a total of 78 Dare to Lead schools representing 94% of public schools in the ACT, an increase of eight public schools since 2007.

“Moorditj”, a compact disk and associated materials, was one of the most popular resource sets used in schools during 2008. The contents of that resource supported teachers to integrate aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures with classroom activities.

Member schools were provided with regular newsletters and other publications that could be used at the local school level to initiate and guide discussions about activities that could be implemented to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The ongoing partnership between the Department and the *Dare to Lead* program coordinator for the ACT was enhanced throughout 2008. The *Dare to Lead* coordinator worked with officers in the Department to assist public schools with activities concerning building relationships with parents and caregivers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The *Dare to Lead* program will be continued in 2009 and the aim for the Department is to ensure that 100% of schools and colleges become members of this program. The *Dare to Lead* coordinator and Action Area coordinators for the ACT ensure that member schools receive nationally developed resource materials and are provided with information about professional development opportunities both in the ACT and elsewhere.

Quality Teaching

Every Chance to Learn

Every Chance to Learn is the curriculum framework for preschool to year 10 in all ACT schools. A major challenge for the Department was to ensure that public schools were supported in the development and implementation of local curriculum plans, including the appropriate identification and incorporation of content relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their cultures.

A key example of how schools met that challenge was the opportunities provided for all students to learn more about the stolen generations and the importance of the national apology for all Australians. Schools were assisted in accessing lesson plans and related materials which were developed in other jurisdictions.

Parent/School partnership initiatives

The Australian Government provided funds directly to four ACT public schools that applied for funding to implement activities related to their Whole of School Intervention Strategy. The strategy has two elements aimed at involving communities and parents working with schools and other organisations to improve the educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. They are Parent School Partnership Initiatives (PSPI) and Homework Centres.

All five units in the Koori Preschool Program were funded through the PSPI program to support families to engage with schooling. Funding supported a number of initiatives, including:

- providing healthy lunchbox workshops for families, facilitated by dietitians from ACT Health
- workshops on school readiness for parents/carers
- printing of clothing with group logos
- transport to and from excursions
- cooking experiences with family members.

In 2008, after school hours Homework Centres operated at Kaleen High School and Melba Copland Secondary School catering for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in those high schools and the local primary schools. While funds are provided by the Australian Government to employ tutors at the homework centres, the Department made a comparable investment through the provision of rooms, computers, stationery as well as the time of teachers committed to preparing activities for students who attend these centres. Forty students participated in the homework centres.

Separate to the Australian Government Homework Centres initiative, the Lyneham High School cluster and Gilmore Primary School supported the provision of similar after school activities.

Resources for schools

The majority of public schools in the ACT have been provided with all current materials produced by the *Dare to Lead* program in 2008.

Materials published by Jacaranda Press and the National Museum of Australia were on display at the deputy principals' workshop with representatives from each organisation making time to provide additional information as requested by participants.

The National Museum of Australia invited school leaders to consider hosting staff and cluster meetings at the Museum. That offer was accepted by the Stromlo cluster of schools involving Stromlo High School, Canberra College, Arawang, Chapman and Duffy Primary Schools. The Museum also offers guided tours led by trained hosts and takes visitors through different displays. One display of significance in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education is the First Australians gallery. It provides an insight into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' history, cultures, spirituality and connections to country. The tour is designed to give an insight into Australia's Indigenous history and is a valuable experience for teachers and school leaders.

Indij Readers

Through a series of meetings with key representatives of Indij Readers Ltd, a Sydney-based company, the Department brokered the provision of a selection of the readers for all ACT public primary schools. Four copies of each book in series one, two and three were provided for the ten schools that reported the highest number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. These readers were accompanied by teachers' guides, which include cultural notes, guided reading lesson plans and reproducible masters for every book in each series.

All of the stories provided by Indij Readers are aligned with the readers in Rigby Benchmark Reading Scheme, which is being used in the majority of ACT primary schools.

Schools that received only a sample of the readers have indicated that they will identify the topics and levels most needed in the school and purchase additional copies of those titles in 2009.

Feedback from schools in the short time that these resources have been available for students suggests that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students are very interested in the stories which include topics such as sport, bush tucker, family and pets.

Creating Dreamtime Stories

In 2007 and 2008, Black Mountain School received \$2 500 from the Australian Government and \$5 000 from the ACT Department of Education and Training to implement a project titled "*Creating Dreamtime Stories*". The main aim of the project was to provide opportunities for students to enhance or develop their understanding of themselves and others by telling their stories through painting, dance and song.

On Track

The On Track program, funded through the ACT Government Community Inclusion Fund initiative since 2005 continued to operate from Narrabundah Primary School in 2008 after receiving an extension of funds for the 2008 calendar year. In November 2008, the Department was advised that projects funded under the auspices of the ACT Government's Community Inclusion Fund provision would be extended until the end of June 2009.

The program provided the following activities for 45 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attending 28 public schools across the ACT:

- Traditional games
- Hip hop and urban dance workshops
- Team building and problem solving activities
- Sports, health and fitness
- Visits to Questacon, National Art Gallery and National Museum of Australia
- Rock and water program
- ICT activities resulting in a PowerPoint presentation and short video.

In Term 4 of 2008 an evaluation was undertaken to obtain information from teachers, parents and caregivers and students. That information provided an opportunity for the Management Committee to plan how the program will be delivered in the first half of 2009.

In 2009 the On Track program will be relocated to Richardson Primary School.

Partnerships and Consultation

School and community partnership agreements

In 2008, the Department continued its efforts to involve parents and caregivers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in their child's education. A key approach was to establish relationships between the school and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. With a focus on implementing recommendations in the school and community partnership agreement domain of the MCEETYA Report *Australian Directions in Indigenous Education 2005-2008*, three clusters of schools comprising the college, high school and primary school sectors were formed to pursue work around establishing relationships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of the schools.

On 4 December 2008, principals of the schools in the Lake Ginninderra cluster formally signed an agreement with representatives of the various Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the cluster. Principals took a copy of the agreement back to their respective schools to engage teachers, parents and caregivers in discussions about how to achieve the statements in their agreement. The Lake Ginninderra Cluster is comprised of Lake Ginninderra College, Kaleen and Canberra High Schools, Kaleen, Giralang, Macquarie Maribyrnong and Aranda Primary Schools.

In the Wanniasa Cluster, Wanniasa School has assumed the lead role and is supported by Erindale College, Wanniasa Hills, Monash, Taylor and Urambi Primary Schools. In the Lyneham Cluster participating schools are Dickson College, Lyneham and Campbell High Schools, Ainslie, Majura, Lyneham, Campbell, Turner, O'Connor Cooperative School and North Ainslie Primary Schools. At the end of the 2008 school year, each cluster had identified a number of dates for meetings in 2009 with the aim of continuing discussions and finalising agreements.

In other parts of Canberra throughout 2008, high schools have taken a leading role in working with local primary

schools to progress the development of a school and community partnership agreement. Leading high schools are Caroline Chisholm School, Stromlo High School, Calwell High School and Melrose High School.

Another element of this work will be to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and community members to apply for membership of school boards and other committees.

Integrated Service Delivery Project

This program commenced in October 2006 with the aim of providing a more focused and integrated approach to the delivery of support services. These services are directed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and their families who have been identified as being in the 'high risk' category. The Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services is the lead agency with representatives from the Department of Education and Training and ACT Health forming the cross-agency Management Committee.

A number of outcomes were identified by the Management Committee and project team. The educational outcomes from the program include improved school attendance and student learning outcomes.

In 2008, families identified 33 services that were required to support them on a regular basis. The program is being trialled with five families that were identified as having or requiring support from more than three agencies.

A cross-agency budget allocation in 2007-08 of \$416 000 over four years has enabled the Department to contribute an ASO6 officer to the program. That officer is a member of a team of four who will continue the trial for the first half of 2009 at which time a review of progress will assist in shaping the ongoing delivery of activities associated with the program.

Language Acquisition project – University of New England

In 2008, the Department, in collaboration with the ACT Indigenous Education Consultative Body (IECB) developed a research project focussing on the early years and language acquisition (including Aboriginal English) and how this relates to school readiness.

Procurement procedures for the project were completed in 2008 resulting in a team of educators from the University of New England being contracted to conduct research for the Department. In early 2009, the research team will meet with members of the project working group prior to commencement of visits to preschools and discussions with teachers and support staff.

This joint IECB and Department research project will be completed in 2009. This project will provide the Department with evidence relating to activities that could be delivered in schools to support English language acquisition in early childhood settings.

ACT Indigenous Education Consultative Body

In May 2008, the term of membership for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and community representatives of the IECB expired. The former Chairperson of the IECB continued to support the operation of the IECB, and with assistance from the Department, conducted community meetings to present information about the IECB.

At the five community meetings conducted across Canberra, attendees at the meetings were encouraged to apply for membership of the IECB by submitting an expression of interest by the end of September 2008. Applications were reviewed in late 2008 by a panel comprising the former Chairperson of the IECB, a representative of the ACT Indigenous Elected Body and a representative of the Department of Education and Training.

From this process, recommended applicants will form a new committee comprised of nine members instead of the previous 17. There will be two categories of membership:

- community members who must be residents of the ACT and
- parents who must have a child enrolled in a school in the ACT.

When established in 2009, the new committee will develop a strategic plan to guide the operation of the IECB on an annual basis. Included in this plan will be strategies that link the IECB with all education and training providers in the ACT, as well as the recently formed ACT Indigenous Elected Body.

A number of concerns were raised during discussions at the community meetings including:

- assistance available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with special needs
- issues experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in care
- balance of skills required by IECB members
- communication structures and procedures
- accountability and reporting to community.

These and other matters will be a focus for the IECB in 2009.

The IECB distributed newsletters in 2008 to provide information to parents and caregivers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, as well as continue to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to consider applying for membership of the committee. Newsletters and other promotional material were distributed at Boomanulla Oval at the beginning of NAIDOC Week in 2008.

Taskforce on Indigenous Affairs

The ACT Taskforce on Indigenous Affairs (Taskforce) has responsibility for driving the delivery of improved services and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of the ACT. The Taskforce is chaired by the Chief Executive of the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (DHCS) and includes as members the Chief Executives of ACT Health and the Department of Education and Training.

Members of the Taskforce represented the ACT on working groups and committees associated with the Council of Australian Government's Indigenous Reform agenda. Of particular note is the opportunity for the ACT to contribute to the work related to early childhood education and drug and alcohol issues.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment

The number of employees in the Department of Education and Training who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander was 35 as at the end of the 2008. There were eight applicants who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in the recruitment round for 2009. Table 16 provides detail of the level and number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the Department.

Table 16: Department of Education and Training Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees 2008

Position/Classification	Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees
School Leader A – Manager	1
Senior Officer Grade B – Assistant Manager	1
School Leader C	2
Classroom Teacher	17
ASO 6	2
ASO 4 – Indigenous Education Officer	10
School Assistant (SA) 3 – Indigenous Education Worker	2
TOTAL	35

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are frequently called on to assist in activities organised across the Department. Examples of these activities include workshops related to curriculum, student services, literacy and numeracy and training and development for teachers. Two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are profiled in this report to exemplify the range of activities Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are involved in outside their general role.

Mr Lyle Swan, Indigenous Education Officer, supports the Department in activities to enhance the understanding that employees and students have about aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia. Mr Swan is one of two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees who were enrolled in undergraduate courses in education in 2008.

Mr Swan frequently works with teachers in classrooms presenting information to students about aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia. In Terms 3 and 4 of 2008, Mr Swan worked with an executive teacher at Telopea Park School to implement a strategy aimed at the high level of non-participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in language classes at the school. An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies class was established at the school and provided Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with opportunities to investigate aspects of their heritage, including language group and art forms.

Ms Vicki Lucas, Executive Officer, Early Years Learning regularly gives presentations to the early childhood sector on aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content in the curriculum offered in preschools, as well as providing valuable advice to teachers in the primary years. Ms Lucas also supports students at the University of Canberra where she presented three guest lectures to teacher education students in 2008, and presents guest lectures to teacher education students at the Australian Catholic University Watson campus. In 2008 Ms Lucas completed a Graduate Certificate in Adult Education.

Career development and support

In December 2008 the Department and the Australian Education Union supported four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to attend the World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Education, which was hosted by the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated in Melbourne.

The conference provided opportunities for participants to hear about strategies being implemented in other jurisdictions in Australia and internationally to meet the learning needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Topics presented included a focus on cultural education, especially language, early childhood education, community participation and decision making.

In addition to the valuable support that individual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees provide, the Department also provides professional learning and information for school staff on:

- respecting and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures
- acknowledging and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, including Aboriginal English, and contexts, and strategies relating to the explicit teaching of Standard Australian English.

Attraction and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff

Included in the Department's Equity and Diversity Plan 2006-2009 are a number of objectives and related strategies aimed at the employment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff across the Department. Strategies include:

- Promotion of the Charles Perkins Scholarships
- Supporting Indigenous Traineeships
- Formal and informal networking opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees across the ACT Government, including the development of career path opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Career paths for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff were discussed at meetings of the Equity and Diversity Committee during 2008. Whilst there are career pathways available for all staff, the priority for the Department has been the recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to advertised positions. Procedures to recruit three Indigenous Education Officers were completed at the end of 2008.

Charles Perkins Scholarship for Undergraduate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students

In 2003 the then Department of Education, Youth and Family Services initiated a partnership with the University of Canberra Ngunnawal Centre, which resulted in the annual awarding of two Charles Perkins Scholarships, to the value of \$2 000 each, to undergraduate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The scholarships assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with costs associated with their studies and support and encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in undertaking higher education. This initiative is part of the Department's commitment to support young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in attaining equitable access to educational opportunities, including tertiary education.

Nine applications were submitted for the two scholarships in 2008.

Indigenous Traineeship Program

The Department participated in the ACT Government's Pilot Indigenous Traineeship initiative by appointing two trainees – one each to Giralang and Richardson Primary Schools – where they worked in the Administrative Office of the school. One trainee completed the program and is now employed permanently by the Department.

ACT Government Indigenous Network

The Indigenous Employee Network was established at the end of 2007 and met six times throughout 2008. In 2008 management responsibility for the network was taken up by the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (DHCS) and provides opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff across all ACT Government agencies to meet and share information about their work and strategies that implemented to respond to a diverse range of concerns raised by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people in the ACT.

The Way Forward

In 2009 the ACT Government has committed to implementing the COAG targets to halve the gap for Indigenous students in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade; and at least halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates by 2020.

The ACT Government will implement a number of initiatives to address these COAG targets. Literacy and numeracy support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is being expanded, and a transition officer will assist in the movement of students between primary and high school. Additional mentoring and support will be delivered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who demonstrate an academic ability to progress to university level. Students will be identified in this program as early as year 5, and be supported through to year 12. Scholarship funding will also be provided for year 11 and 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who wish to study teaching at university.

In 2009, the Department will participate in a national research activity related to personalised learning plans for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The project is managed by the Australian Government and aims to produce a teacher resource package on good practice in the use of personalised learning plans.

The Department will work to develop a process that will enable the data collected through the school census to provide a more comprehensive and accurate mapping of trends over several years and consider strategies to address the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to the end of high school and into the college years. Combined with this will be the work to be undertaken by the Indigenous Education Officers and schools to implement effective attendance plans across all sectors of schooling.

The Department will continue to deliver on established initiatives in 2009. In addition, the Department will deliver the Teacher Professional Learning Fund initiative to provide

professional development for teachers that will support them to develop culturally inclusive curriculum plans and activities.

In 2009, the Department will continue to work collaboratively with other agencies and education and training providers to progress some of the work commenced in 2008. The education outcomes from the Integrated Services Delivery project are improved attendance and participation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The ongoing work with higher education and training providers will allow the Department to explore a wider range of training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in high schools and colleges.

In 2009 the Department will continue to put in place strategies to attract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to all areas of education with a particular focus on recruiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff with suitable experience and qualifications to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in schools. The collaborative partnerships established with tertiary educators and employer groups in the ACT will continue in 2009.