



**Report to the Legislative Assembly
of the Australian Capital Territory**

Performance In

Indigenous Education



Eleventh report covering calendar year 2005

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Photographs in this report are of NAIDOC Week celebrations at Isabella Plains Primary School. Permission has been received for the photographs to be published in this report.

Overview

This is the eleventh report to the ACT Legislative Assembly on Indigenous education, covering the period January-December 2005.

During 2005 initiatives funded in the 2004-05 budget to support Indigenous students and their families were implemented. These initiatives included:

- Expansion of the Koori preschool program
- Literacy and numeracy support through the employment of an additional 3.5 Indigenous Literacy and Numeracy consultants
- Transition, leadership and mentoring and family support.

As a result of these initiatives, there has been an increase in the number of Indigenous children accessing preschool programs, a targeted program to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes of students in primary schools has been put in place, and progress has been made in establishing the networks required for the further implementation of leadership, mentoring and transitions programs.

Further information on these initiatives is contained in this report.

At the August 2005 census, there were 927 Indigenous students enrolled in ACT government schools. This is a slight increase on 917 in the February 2005 census.

In the ACT Assessment Program, the achievement of Year 3 students in reading was pleasing, with the proportion of Year 3 Indigenous students achieving the national benchmark or better at 95%, the same as for non-Indigenous students. Writing benchmarks for Indigenous students fluctuated and there was improvement in the Numeracy results for Years 3 and 5 Indigenous students. However, caution needs to be exercised when comparing the results for Indigenous students over time. The small number of Indigenous students in each year level means that the movement of a few students can change the percentage results significantly and it is not necessarily the same cohort of students that is being measured over time.

Indigenous people continue to experience disadvantage and do not achieve educational outcomes equal to those of the rest of the student population. ACT Indigenous students have better outcomes than those in other states and territories. However, it is acknowledged that the focus must be directed at narrowing the gap between the educational achievements of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Results achieved in 2005 are reported against the following indicators and strategic areas:

- Overcoming racism and valuing diversity
- Forming genuine and ongoing partnerships with Indigenous communities
- Early school engagement and performance (preschool to year 3)
- Positive childhood and transition to adulthood
- Years 10 and 12 retention and attainment.

Overcoming racism and valuing diversity

Equity and Diversity Plan 2003 - 2005

The Department of Education and Training's Equity and Diversity Plan outlines the department's aim to expand employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians and to develop the capacity of the workforce to understand and respond to the cultural, educational and social needs of Indigenous people.

The department's commitment to recruiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees through targeted advertising of departmental vacancies in the *National Indigenous Times* and the *Koori Mail* resulted in an increase from 27 Indigenous employees at 30 June 2004 to 40 Indigenous employees at 30 June 2005.

As part of a strategy to provide effective services to Indigenous students, the department's Indigenous Home School Liaison Officers (IH/SLO) enrolled in a certificate level course in Community Services. During 2005, 18 IH/SLOs completed studies and were awarded a *Certificate IV in Community Services*. Other officers have enrolled in the course and are working after hours to complete the requirements. This strategy is part of a department-funded initiative to ensure a more skilled workforce.

Another component of the Equity and Diversity Plan is to provide Indigenous cultural awareness training and multicultural awareness training to all staff. Activities during the reporting period are outlined below:

- Newly inducted staff attended cross-cultural awareness sessions as part of their orientation program
- *Reconciliation, Learning and Leading together* – a cultural awareness program for teachers of Indigenous students was delivered to 26 teachers
- Acknowledgement of country – all schools, colleges and central office branches have put in place strategies to show respect for the Ngunnawal people as part of their operation.

Acknowledgement of country

I wish to acknowledge the country we are meeting on - the lands of the Ngunnawal people, the traditional owners. I respect their continuing culture and the unique contribution they make to the life of this area.

Overcoming racism

All ACT Government schools appoint a minimum of one anti-racism contact officer for students. The role of the officer is to support any student who considers they have experienced racial discrimination, harassment or vilification and to assist in the resolution of complaints.

All government schools are required to record complaints of racism through the MAZE administration system. During this reporting period, there was one report of a racism related issue. This was investigated and resolved at the school level.

The department's process for resolving issues of racism is set out in the school policy *Combating Racism in Schools and the Workplace*. Options available to staff and/or students experiencing racist behaviour range from informal mechanisms to formal lodgement of complaints.

Officers from the Indigenous Education Section work with schools on issues around cultural awareness to enhance understanding and prevention of incidents of racism.



NAIDOC Week celebrations at Isabella Plains Primary School

Forming genuine and on-going partnerships with Indigenous communities

Enhanced home/school liaison

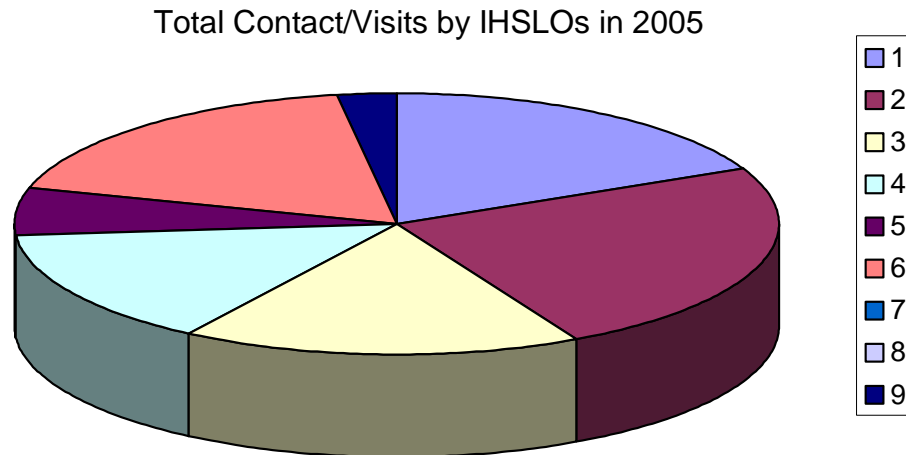
IH/SLOs primarily support teachers and students in schools from preschool to year 10. These officers also work with families of Indigenous students to strengthen communication between the school and home and to enhance the support provided to Indigenous students.

In the context of their work, IH/SLOs have identified reasons for visits to and contact with parents of Indigenous students. These are summarised in the table below.

REASON FOR VISIT/MEETING	
1.	Attendance/Absenteeism
2.	Behaviour
3.	Grades/Academic progress/Individual Learning Plans
4.	Developing alternate plans
5.	Personal/Family matters/Substance misuse/Medical
6.	Home-school communication
7.	Juvenile Justice
8.	Bullying
9.	Racism

Based on records of meetings or contact with parents of Indigenous students as well as work within the school, the total number of visits made by IH/SLOs throughout 2005 was 483. Approximately 440 visits were made in 2004.

The frequency of the 2005 visits is represented by the following figure.



Note: There were no visits required in relation to bullying or racism

The majority of visits were related to the concerns raised about the behaviour of Indigenous students. Associated with that issue is time spent working with school personnel and parents developing and/or discussing alternate learning/attendance programs.

Parent involvement

In 2005 the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) abolished the Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA) program. This change in provision and process has contributed to a decline in the number of Indigenous parents working with or being involved in decision-making activities within schools.

The ASSPA program was replaced by the Whole of School Intervention Strategy, which is still aimed at involving Indigenous parents in educational decision-making at the local level. The strategy comprises two elements

- the Parent School Partnership Initiative (PSPI), and
- the Homework Centres.

The Parent School Partnership Initiative is aimed at promoting partnerships between Indigenous parents/families/communities and schools to develop and implement innovative approaches to accelerating outcomes for Indigenous students. Seventy-one ACT schools have accessed funding, either individually or as part of a cluster of schools, under this initiative. The approved proposals focus on developing the English literacy and numeracy skills of Indigenous students.

One of the approved proposals involves students from the Weston campus of Canberra College and Stromlo High School acting as mentors for Indigenous students enrolled in Arawang, Weston Creek, Rivett and Chapman Primary schools.

One high school and one school cluster made up of a college, high school and two primary schools accessed Homework Centre funding in 2005. Whilst this number is fewer than might have been expected, schools and Indigenous communities require a period of adjustment around changes to Commonwealth funding guidelines.

The Department of Education and Training is working with officers from the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Technology to develop strategies aimed at assisting schools to develop more strategic approaches to addressing Indigenous education. These will be distributed to schools in 2006.

ACT Indigenous Education Consultative Body

The ACT Indigenous Education Consultative Body (IECB) is comprised of Indigenous parents and community members from the ACT, including Jervis Bay. There are also members representing the Catholic Education Commission, Canberra Institute of Technology and the Department of Education and Training.

All members are ministerially appointed for a term of up to three years at the Minister's discretion. The members of the IECB elect the Chairperson for a period of up to three years.

The IECB is required to meet three times each year as part of their funding agreement with the Commonwealth's Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). However the Body can meet more regularly to discuss issues pertaining to the education and training of Indigenous people in the ACT. During 2005 the IECB met a total of eight times.

Representatives of the IECB have participated in meetings with the Department of Education and Training to discuss and provide advice on issues that impact on the educational outcomes of Indigenous students.

Early school engagement and performance (preschool to year 3)

Koori preschool

International studies have found that Australia's Indigenous children have lower school enrolment rates than non-Indigenous children (*Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage, Key Indicators 2005, Report of the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision*). An OECD report also found that attendance at preschool and school has a significant impact on later academic success (OECD 2004).

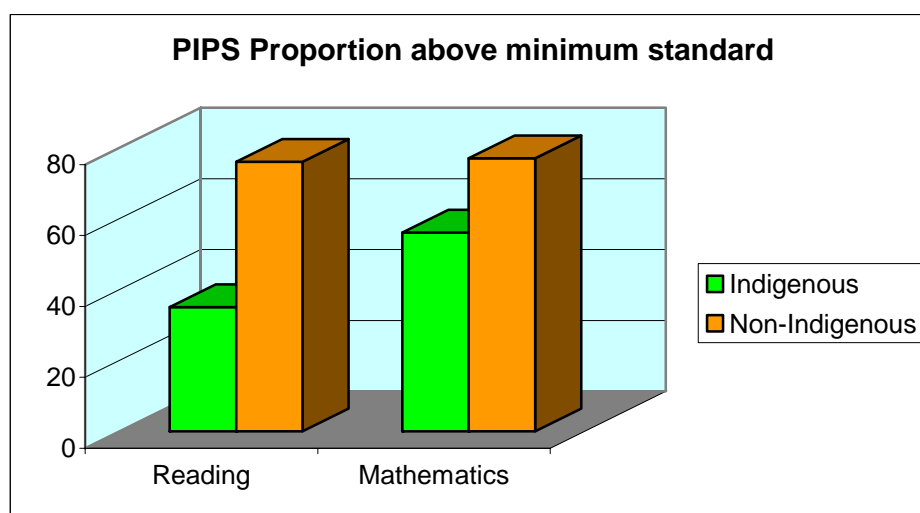
Ngunnawal was selected as the site for the fifth Koori preschool following a demographic study to ensure that the new site would be readily accessible for the largest number of potential Indigenous students. Ngunnawal Koori Preschool opened at the beginning of 2005. Other preschools are located at Wanniasa Hills, Holt, Calwell and Narrabundah. All sites operate two days per week from 9 am till 1 pm.

The extended sessions and the new site have resulted in an increase in enrolments at preschool by Indigenous children. The February 2005 preschool census indicated that 95 Indigenous children were attending preschool including thirty-three children in attendance at Jervis Bay. At the August 2005 census this number has increased to 132. A small number of children were enrolled in more than one preschool setting (i.e. a Koori preschool and a mainstream preschool), during the reporting period.

Literacy and Numeracy kindergarten outcomes

All kindergarten students are assessed in aspects of literacy and numeracy on entry to kindergarten, and again at the end of that year to ascertain progress.

The following table shows the proportion of Kindergarten students whose Performance in Primary Schools (PIPS) assessment was above the cut score in reading and mathematics in 2005. The cut score is at the minimum standard in reading and mathematics expected at the commencement of Kindergarten.



The following tables show the progress in 2005 of students who commenced school with low skills in reading and mathematics.

Outcome of November PIPS assessment compared to February PIPS assessment for Kindergarten students identified in the lower 20% in February 2005 (i.e. progress over time).

Note – total higher than 100% is due to rounding.

Indigenous Students	Mathematics	Reading
	% of the cohort	% of the cohort
Less than expected progress	33	35
Expected progress	48	38
Greater than expected progress	20	28

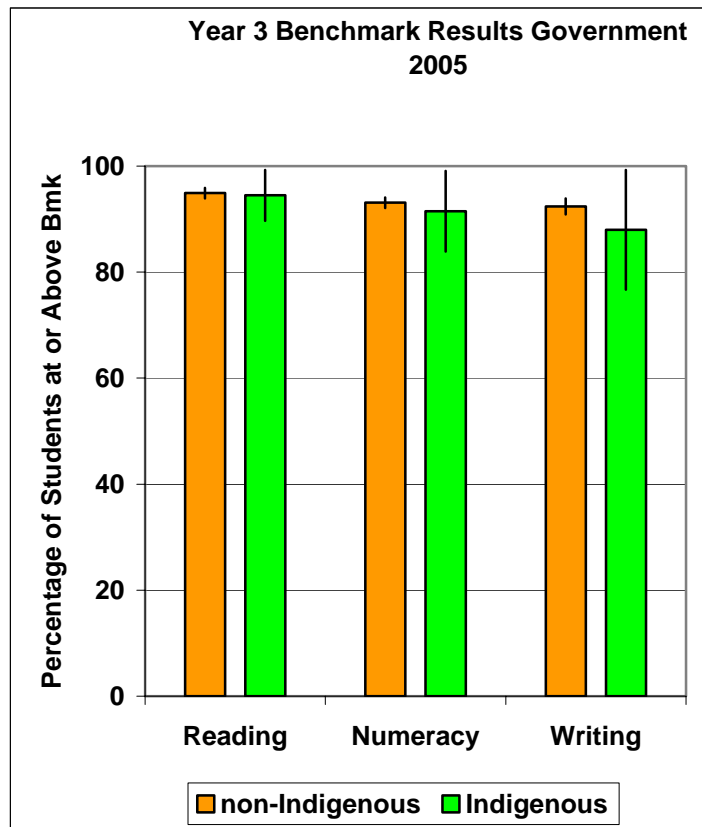
Non-Indigenous Students	Mathematics	Reading
	% of the cohort	% of the cohort
Less than expected progress	24	24
Expected progress	50	49
Greater than expected progress	26	27

For all students in PIPS (February and November) 68% of Indigenous students made expected or greater than expected progress in mathematics, while in reading, 66% made expected or greater than expected progress between assessments.

The students who made less than expected progress will be able to access support through the Learner Assistance program in schools and other early intervention programs that are established at the school level.

Year 3 Literacy and Numeracy

The improvement in the Year 3 Indigenous Reading and Numeracy results observed in 2004 was maintained in 2005 with 95% of students above the benchmark in reading and 93% above the benchmark in numeracy. The writing benchmark result (88%) for year 3 Indigenous students is lower than in 2004 (96%). However, caution must be exercised in placing too much emphasis on a change that is not statistically significant due to the small number assessed.



Forty-three year 3 students who were identified as being in the lower 20% of results for literacy and/or numeracy in the ACT Assessment Program in 2004 were targeted for intensive assistance from three full-time and one part-time Indigenous Literacy and Numeracy Consultants during 2005. There will be some indications of the effectiveness of this support when this group of students participates in the ACT Assessment Program as year 5 students in 2006.

Dreaming stories

Indigenous students in Years K-2 from Isabella Plains learnt Dreaming stories as part of their planned learning in English. Students chose one of the stories to dramatise for the end of year concert. The students performed the story of Tiddalik the Frog. They were assisted by officers of the Indigenous Education Section and members of their local community.

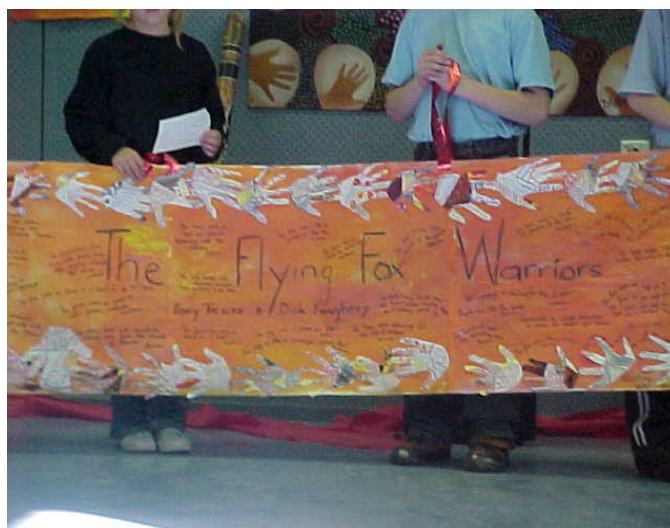
Student health

The Koori Preschool Program was awarded \$5000 for *Healthy Bodies, Healthy Lives*, through the ACT Government's *2005 Schools as Communities* Strategic Projects grants. Funding is being used for a variety of purposes, including support for:

- breakfast programs. The introduction of a 'brain food' breakfast after children have arrived at Koori preschool with the aim of ensuring that all students start the day with a healthy breakfast, for improved concentration and more involvement in the program.
- healthy snacks. Parents and carers were requested to supply snacks such as a sandwich and a piece of fruit for their children at each preschool session.
- educational resources, including books, games and puzzles, that promote exercise and healthy eating. The resources are being used to support teaching and learning programs.

Hearing screening

Hearing tests conducted by Winnunga Nimmityjah Health Centre were conducted at all Koori preschools for 3, 4 and 5 year olds. Where there are areas of concern, results will be made available by parents/carers to teachers for appropriate follow up. This will ensure that children will receive appropriate early intervention where required.



Art and literature during NAIDOC Week at Isabella Plains

Indigenous culture

Throughout each year, Koori preschoolers have many opportunities to enhance their learning experiences and learn about their culture. Some 2005 highlights follow.

During the year Aboriginal people visited Koori Preschools to share aspects of their culture with the children. Visitors included Duncan Smith - of Wiradjuri Echo, and Larry Brandy – Leadership/Mentor Officer at the Indigenous Education Section.

Duncan visited during term two. He played the didgeridoo, showed the children how Aboriginal people used ochre during traditional dancing performances. He also explained the traditional use of Aboriginal artefacts and played a CD (Wombat Wobble) while the children acted out animal actions while dancing.

Larry visited during term three. He brought with him a wide variety of Aboriginal artefacts and explained their uses. He also encouraged the children to hold all these artefacts.

During his visit all the children were involved in role-play situations (eg kangaroos, emus and hunters). At the end of his presentation the boys were given boomerangs and the girls were given clap sticks, which they clapped together while performing a corroboree.

Excursions

Excursions into the Canberra community are an important part of Koori Preschool. In 2005 children visited the National Museum of Australia and the Canberra Museum and Gallery. These excursions involved the children and families from all five Koori Preschool sites meeting and sharing the experience. Following the excursions big books were made with the children to encourage the development of their literacy skills.

At the National Museum of Australia the children participated in the 'Bunyip Tracks' program presented by Trish Albert, the Senior Education Officer. They took part in the telling of a dreamtime story using puppets, learned about the uses of some aboriginal artefacts and finished off with a tour of the first Australian's Gallery.

The children participated in the 'What Artists Do' program at the Canberra Museum and Gallery. They were shown examples of paintings, sculpture, prints and quilts (some by Aboriginal artists) in the gallery and then given the opportunity to try these techniques whilst in the studio. The children's finished work was presented to them in the form of a portfolio.

Portfolios of work were compiled for each child enrolled at Koori Preschool this year. These portfolios illustrated the social, physical and cognitive (in particular literacy and numeracy), development of each child during the year. As well as samples of their art and craftwork the portfolios included photographic evidence of every child's participation in the Koori Preschool program. These portfolios were available for the children and their families to look at and read as they developed during the year. At the end of the school year they were given to each family.

Positive childhood and transition to adulthood.

Literacy and numeracy

The role of the Indigenous Literacy and Numeracy Consultants is aligned to assist with the implementation of the Department's Literacy and Numeracy Plan 2003 – 2005. The goals of this Plan are to:

- provide relevant and challenging literacy and numeracy learning for all students P-12
- improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students with inclusive teaching practices responsive to student diversity
- engage students in learning that prepares them for the literacies and numeracies of the future.

... has made steady improvement in reading skills, having moved from Level 7 to Level 14.

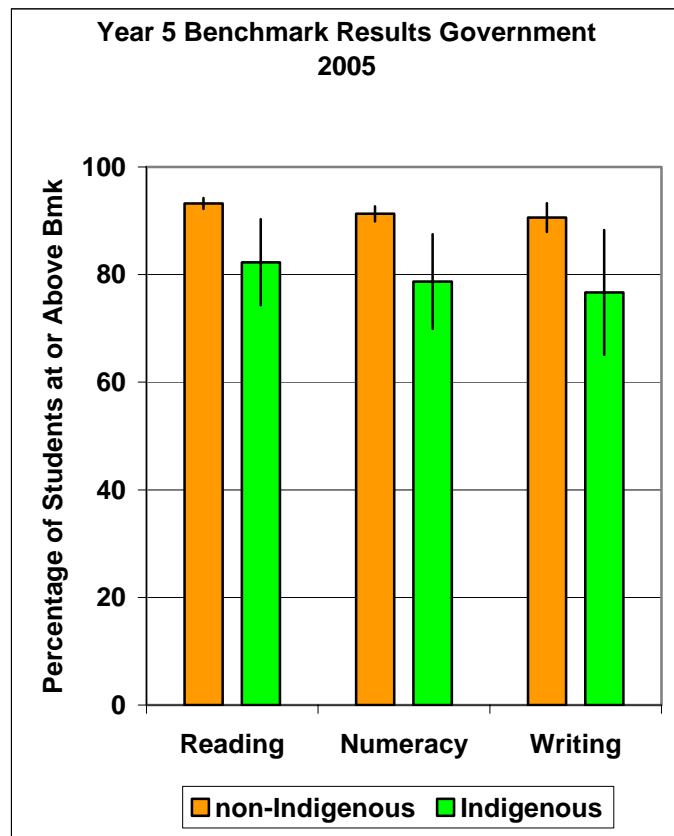
Reading is now happening with greater confidence and fluency.

In particular the Literacy and Numeracy Consultants support identified Indigenous students through the following:

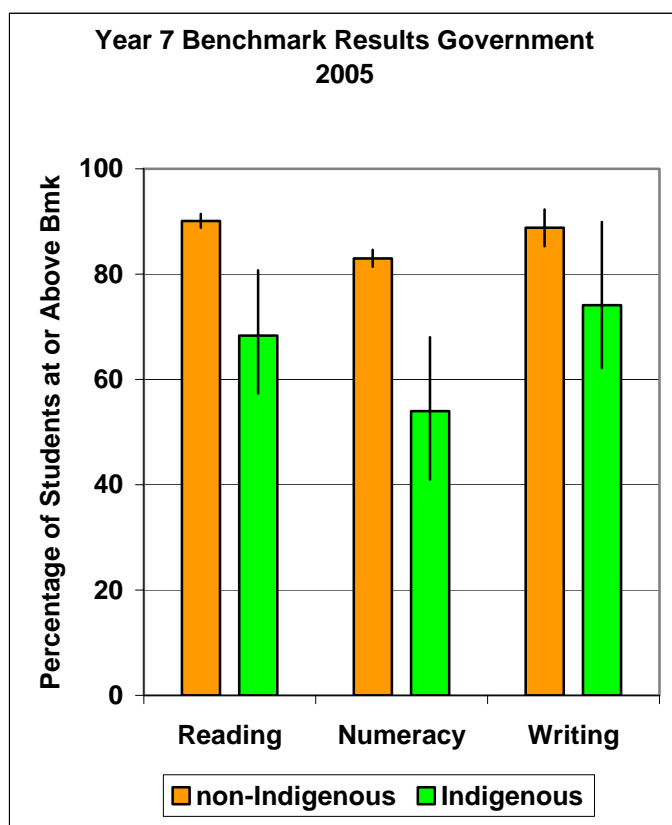
- providing intensive support to Indigenous students who are not achieving at expected levels
- implementation of effective intervention and support programs.
- establishing links with the literacy and numeracy coordinators within schools
- providing support to schools when using data and analyses to develop effective literacy and numeracy teaching programs for Indigenous students
- assisting schools and teachers develop culturally inclusive literacy and numeracy programs.

ACT Assessment Program

There was a pleasing improvement in the results of Year 5 Indigenous students in numeracy with 81% above the benchmark compared to 71% in 2004. The proportions of Year 5 Indigenous students above the benchmark in reading (85%) and Writing (80%) are similar to those in 2004.



As in all states and territories, Indigenous students' results are not as strong as they continue their schooling. The performance of ACT Year 7 Indigenous students in 2005 is below that of non-Indigenous students in all benchmark strands. This performance can be attributed to many factors beyond the school, but also to the level of student engagement, attendance and expectations.



Year 9 Literacy and Numeracy Outcomes

In the ACT, year 9 students in government schools complete system assessments in literacy & numeracy. However, there are currently no national benchmarks for comparative reporting of achievement as not all states and territories undertake system literacy and numeracy assessment in year 9.

National benchmarks will be set for year 9 students when the national testing in literacy and numeracy is introduced. This is currently scheduled to occur in 2007.

ACT schools receive individual and school data for year 9 students linked to the national profiles. Schools use this information to identify strengths and areas for development for individual students and groups of students.

Schools exercise caution when comparing the results for Indigenous students over time and across profile levels, as the very small number of Indigenous students in each year level means that the movement of one student can change the percentage results significantly.

Student attendance 2005

Throughout 2005 the average attendance of Indigenous students in Kindergarten to Year 6 was 88.7% of the total number of days schools were open. The average attendance for non-Indigenous students for the same period was 93.4% of the total number of days.

The average attendance of Indigenous students in Years 7-10 was 85.4%. The average for non-Indigenous students for the same period was 94.1%. The average number of days missed each term was 6.4 and 2.5 for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students respectively.

It is generally accepted that engaging parents and carers of Indigenous students in the education and learning programs of their children contributes to improved attendance patterns. Enhanced communication and liaison strategies between the home and school were an ongoing strategy throughout 2005.

ACT NAIDOC Student of the Year Awards

In 2005 the Award Scheme for the ACT to recognize the outstanding achievements and qualities of individual Indigenous students has continued. The scheme is an initiative of the Indigenous Education Consultative Body, an advisory group to the Minister of Education and Training.

In the past many Indigenous students have been recognized for their marvellous sporting achievements but the NAIDOC Student of the Year award also reflects the outstanding academic and social achievements being made by Indigenous students in our schools.

The students are recognised in a three-tier system that highlights:

- their outstanding academic progress,
- their positive self and cultural identity as a role model to other students, and
- their level of active citizenship and leadership within their school, particularly in the promotion of Indigenous cultural activities.

Students nominated have shown themselves to be excellent role models, not only for Indigenous students but also for all students in their school.

The winners of the 2005 NAIDOC Student of the Year were:

Primary: Louis Mokak, Majura Primary School

Secondary: Barry Parsons, Alfred Deakin High School
Stephanie Williams, Melba High School

“On Track”

Late in 2004 the department, through Narrabundah Primary School and Gugan Gulwan received \$300,000 from the Community Inclusion Fund for “On Track”, a project aimed at improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary students in the areas of attendance, behaviour, self-identity, literacy and numeracy. “On Track” followed on from the Birrigai Boys Program, which was a trial program operating in 2004.

“On Track” commenced in mid-2005 following the appointment of a full time classroom teacher. An Indigenous Home School Liaison Officer also supports the program.

The numbers of boys participating in the program throughout each term has varied according to needs identified by primary schools across the ACT.

It is planned that throughout 2006 there will be a stronger connection between the home school of each student and the coordinator of the “On Track program”. This is aimed at facilitating the collection and delivery of literacy programs that will build on those provided by the boy’s regular classroom teacher. In 2006 the “On Track” program will be expanded to include girls.

The outcomes for the program also form the basis for selection of students to participate in the program. These include:

- retention
- confidence
- attendance
- social skills
- behavioural issues
- literacy and numeracy skills.

During the week, the students participate in activities relating to culture, team building and bushwalking.

Throughout their time on the program all boys are put in touch with other agencies that can support them and their families.

Dare to Lead project

The Dare to Lead Project is an initiative of the Australian Principals' Association Professional Development Council. Schools without Indigenous enrolments who join the program make a formal commitment to ensuring that students develop an informed understanding of Indigenous peoples and their culture. Schools with Indigenous enrolments who join the program make an additional commitment to achieve improvements in literacy and retention outcomes for Indigenous students.

Seventy ACT government schools are now part of the coalition of schools that are committed to making a difference for Indigenous students. The ACT coalition of schools is in the process of establishing three Action Areas across the school districts and is creating professional development activities for teachers.

Joint high school/preschool literacy and numeracy program

An ACT Government youth grant of \$1000 is provided funding for a joint high school and preschool student program. The high school students visited preschools to assist the children with literacy and numeracy skills under the guidance of Koori Preschool staff.

Years 10 and 12 retention and attainment

Years 10 and 12 certification

86% of Indigenous year 10 students were awarded a Year 10 Certificate in 2005, compared with 97% of non-Indigenous students. These are similar results to 2004, when 87% of Indigenous students were awarded a Year 10 Certificate, compared with 97% of non-Indigenous students.

Twenty-five Indigenous students in ACT Government colleges in 2005 were awarded a Year 12 Certificate. Four of these students received a UAI. Four students also received a vocational education and training certificate.

Twelve year 12 students exited before completion of their year 12 Certificate. Of these, five students went into traineeships, one went to full time employment, one was awarded an apprenticeship and one moved interstate.

College transition program

The college transition program is aimed at assisting year 12 Indigenous students in their move from college to further education, training or employment.

To further support Indigenous students enrolled in colleges and assist them to face the daily challenges of college life the Indigenous College Transition Officer has worked collaboratively with a number of colleges to deliver and monitor their development and progress by providing appropriate support. This has included the allocation by the college of up to two hours each week for Indigenous students to discuss and work towards resolving issues that impact on their success at college.

Leadership and mentoring program

An Indigenous Leadership and Mentoring Officer was recruited in June 2005 to coordinate the provision of leadership and mentoring support for Indigenous students in Year 10. The officer was involved in a variety of activities during the second semester, working closely with the College Transitions Officer.

A list of activities and achievements follows:

- Storytelling and Boomerang throwing with students at Mawson Primary as part of their NAIDOC Week activities
- Storytelling in schools for students as well as adults during NAIDOC Week
- Liaised with Torres Strait Islander performing artist re links/visits to schools
- Discussed Pathways for Indigenous students with Indigenous Contact teacher
- Worked with College Transitions Officer on the development of a program to support Indigenous students in Years 11 and 12. Program for implementation in 2006.
- Prepared materials/program for presenting Aboriginal culture talks as part of leadership program for students
- Negotiated involvement of Year 10 students in storytelling program as part of their leadership component
- Met with teachers of Year 10 students to discuss ways to manage anger from an Indigenous perspective
- Involved students in Years 10, 11 and 12 in storytelling activities
- Established contact with non-government training organisations with view to their involvement in future activities with Year 10 students
- Arranged and conducted visits to schools with IH/SLOs and College Transition Officer to speak with Year 10 Indigenous students
- Established links with personnel from the School based New Apprenticeship Program to work with Indigenous students in Year 10 from Melba High School.

'On Track' Visual Arts Exhibition

The "On Track" exhibition showcased the work of Indigenous students attending ACT high schools. The site for the exhibition in 2005 was Tuggeranong. Students, parents, teachers and community members were invited to come and enjoy the achievements of the students. An Indigenous Year 9 student acknowledged and paid respect to the traditional owners of the Land, the Ngunnawal people, and welcomed everyone to the exhibition.

The display consisted of assignments, paintings, drawings, photos, sculptures and models and many positive comments were received about the talents of those students who were exhibiting their work.



Michael Hilton talks to students at Isabella Plains Primary School about what NAIDOC means to Australia

Vocational Education & Training

The ACT Government's *Partners in a Learning Culture - ACT Indigenous Action Plan 2003-2005*, launched in 2003, guides the development of programs to address the vocational education and training needs of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT.

Employment and training opportunities for Indigenous people in New Apprenticeships, group training schemes, and through skill centres continues to be a feature of Indigenous education beyond schooling.

One hundred and forty three Indigenous people (80 male and 63 female) commenced apprenticeships and traineeships in 2005. This was a 10% increase on 2004 commencements. Forty Indigenous people commenced apprenticeships (up from 23 in 2004), mostly in the Building and Construction, and Tourism and Hospitality industries. The majority of the 103 trainees were in the Community Services and Health and the Business and Clerical sectors.

Vocational education and training is provided for Indigenous youth justice detainees in the Quamby Youth Detention Centre. Indigenous residents at Quamby's Hindmarsh Education Centre participate in horticulture, furniture construction, small engine maintenance, business studies and a community transition program.

Thirteen male and eight female Indigenous residents attended vocational programs in 2005.

It should be noted that vocational literacy and numeracy skills are embedded into the curriculum and addressed specifically in each training area as part of the training process.

Vocational Education and Training in ACT Colleges

Indigenous students participate in a range of vocational education and training programs in ACT Government colleges.

Three Indigenous students from ACT Government schools were involved in School Based New Apprenticeships in general construction and hairdressing during 2005, with one student completing the Apprenticeship in general construction.

Conclusion

The ACT Government is committed to improving education outcomes for Indigenous people. This report shows the wide range of growing programs and support available for Indigenous students and their families at all levels of education.

Teacher professional development, and system and school-based policy-making continue to highlight the importance of a concerted and collaborative approach to Indigenous issues. Positive models of affirmation are intrinsic to growing confidence and motivation in Indigenous students, some examples of these are described in this report.

Planning for the 2006 school year will need to build on the strategies already in place. To ensure that outcomes for Indigenous students begin to match those experienced by their non-Indigenous peers there will be a stronger emphasis on working collaboratively across all sectors of the Department of Education and Training.