

Public Record

LEARNING LESSONS IMPLEMENTATION STEERING COMMITTEE (LLISC)

Crown Plaza Darwin
18 and 19 June 2003

Presentation

There were five presentations given at this meeting – each related to the implementation of particular *Learning Lessons* recommendations and the Indigenous Education Strategic Plan (IESP).

School Visits

LLISC Members attended classrooms at Ludmilla Primary School and were impressed by the following programs operating in Ludmilla School:

- Accelerated Literacy Program
- Secondary Education Program
- Performance by music program participants “Young Guns”

Summary

The issue of Indigenous student attendance was discussed extensively by the Committee. A number of recommendations regarding this issue were put forward.

The LLISC was impressed by the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) and made several recommendations regarding support for the further development of the program.

WEDNESDAY 18 JUNE 2003

1. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Future Directions for Secondary Education in the Northern Territory

Presenters:

Dr Gregor Ramsey	Principal Consultant
Rita Henry	Consultant
Prof. MaryAnn Bin-Sallik	Dean, Faculty of Indigenous Education and Research (FIRE) Charles Darwin University

The Northern Territory Government commissioned the review *Future Directions for Secondary Education in the Northern Territory*. The review was to examine all aspects of secondary education in the Territory, to suggest ways secondary education can better suit all young people of secondary school age and meet each school community's needs.

*This is the public record of the sixth meeting of the LLISC. The Minister for Employment, Education and Training endorsed all of the LLISC recommendations for action by DEET.

The review team described the extensive consultation they have undertaken in remote and urban centres.

Key findings of the Review were discussed and Committee members provided details and advice on a range of pressing issues:

- Standards in remote NT schools
- Importance of professional support to remote teachers
- The need for accurate and comprehensive comparative information to be provided by schools to Indigenous parents
- The benefits of regional on-site secondary providers
- The benefits of high quality boarding facilities for remote students
- Excellent dividends possible with targeted support and comprehensive monitoring for promising students.

The issue of attendance was discussed at length with consensus being that inducements or encouraging student attendance was likely to be more successful than penalising non-attenders.

2. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Tiwi Exploring Together

Presenters:

Dr. Gary Robinson	Director, Centre for North Australian and Asian Research, Charles Darwin University
Rebecca Pupangamirri	Senior Project Officer
Danny Munkara	Senior Project Officer
Reima Pryor	Research Officer, Charles Darwin University

The *Tiwi Exploring Together Program* aims to reduce the incidence of self-harm and suicide on the Tiwi Islands. The program works with Indigenous 6-12 year olds and their families, discussing parenting styles and building students' social skills. Statistics presented to the Committee show the program has improved student attendance and behavior in the classroom among its successful participants.

The program is currently able to accommodate 28 to 35 children per year. Funding for the project team including salaries, travel, materials etc, was approximately \$150,000 p.a., however it should be noted that this figure includes the program's development through its early operational phase. The presenters spoke about the range of functions which extend well beyond the program's capacity to see 28 to 35 children per year. Fuller development of these elements is foreshadowed for the future. The presenters urge that 'cost' information be set against a discussion of the full range of benefits and functions involved.

3. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

The Wadeye “Joined up Government Initiative”

Presenter:

Gayle De La Cruz	Director, Community Initiatives, Department Family and Community Services
Greg Gibbs	NT State Manager, Department of Education, Science and Training

The Wadeye ‘joined-up-government’ initiative is one of the Council of Australian Governments’ (COAG) Indigenous Community Coordination Pilots (ICCP) to improve the coordination and delivery of government services to targeted communities with a view to improving outcomes in those communities.

The Thamarrurr Council, which represent the 20 clans in the Wadeye region, has identified three priority areas for whole-of government effort in Wadeye:

- Women and families
- Youth
- Construction and housing

The Northern Territory, Commonwealth and Thamarrurr Council have drafted a *Shared Responsibility Agreement* to assist in pursuing achievements in these three areas. One of the main priorities for youth is education. On this issue, DEET is a member of a sub-group chaired by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). Specific initiatives were discussed.

4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Accelerated Literacy

Presenter:

Anna King	Acting Assistant Director, Consultancy Services, Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET)
Jan McQueen	Accelerated Literacy Coordinator, Nightcliff High School
Carmel Lawrence	Accelerated Literacy Coordinator, Ludmilla Primary School

Presenters discussed the trial of the Accelerated Literacy Program (ALP), currently in the ‘Establishment’ phase in six schools across the Northern Territory. Data from the first evaluation of the pilot demonstrate impressive improvements in the English literacy and attendance of students in the program. Most of these are Indigenous students.

The ‘Consolidation’ phase is due to commence in 2004. The Committee was supportive of the suggestion that the Charles Darwin University (CDU) be involved in the delivery of the ALP during this phase.

Recommendation:

The Committee suggests that the Commonwealth Government be invited to support the establishment of a Centre for Education Interventions as part of the School for Social Science and Policy Research within the Institute of Advanced Studies at the Charles Darwin University with a major role in training teachers in the ALP methodology.

The Committee recommends that DEET sustain the ALP beyond 2006 and extend the program across a substantial number of schools.

5. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

DEET Enrolment, Attendance and Retention Strategy

Presenter:

Anna King	Acting Assistant Director, Consultancy Services Department of Employment, Education and Training
John Morgan	Acting General Manager Schools, Central Australia Department of Employment, Education and Training

The *Learning Lessons Review* recommended that a comprehensive attendance strategy be written to address the poor school attendance by Indigenous students. The DEET Enrolment, Attendance and Retention Strategy was endorsed by DEET Executive Group in May 2002. The LLISC was presented with an overview of the Strategy in order that further recommendations for the strategy could be made.

THURSDAY 19 JUNE 2003

INDIGENOUS MEMBERS PRE-MEETING

The Indigenous Members Pre-Meeting was cancelled due to a funeral.

LLISC FULL MEETING

1. Attendance

2. Discussion and Recommendations

The LLISC discussed actions and recommendations to the Minister in relation the presentations made to the LLISC on the 18 June 2003.

Future Directions for Secondary Education in the Northern Territory

Actions:

Learning Lessons Implementation Branch to forward a copy of the transcript of this LLISC meeting to the Future Directions Review team.

LLISC to write to the Future Directions Review team with the following suggestions:

- *Regional meetings should be held with past and present Indigenous teachers and principals to discuss the issues of non-attendance by secondary age Indigenous students.*
- *Schools should be strongly encouraged to explore the provision of classes at night for both children and adults as a means of improving student attendance.*

Tiwi Exploring Together

The LLISC was impressed that this program works with students and their families, not just students in isolation of their circumstances.

Recommendation:

DEET formally consider the possibility of expanding this program to other schools and that the cost of this program be weighed against the cost of not educating students.

Wadeye “Joined up Govt Initiative”

The LLISC noted this presentation.

Community Controlled Schools - Progress Report

The LLISC noted the briefing and the latest activity.

Accelerated Literacy Program

The LLISC was impressed by the outcomes reported.

Action:

The Minister be provided with a copy of the presentation slides with the meeting summary to assist in his consideration of the need to further support and expand the Accelerated Literacy Program.

The LLISC will write to the Commonwealth Government requesting funds to support the Accelerated Literacy Program through the Centre for Education Interventions as part of the School for Social Science and Policy Research within the Institute of Advanced Studies at the Charles Darwin University.

3. FACILITATED DISCUSSION POINT

Student Attendance and the Issue of Compulsion.

A brief summary of the legal implications of student non-attendance and a list of possible reasons that Indigenous students don't attend school was provided to Committee Members prior to the meeting. The Committee endorsed this list.

Recommendation:

The LLISC identified priority issues that contribute to poor attendance among Indigenous students in the Northern Territory and ask that DEET consider these in relation to the Learning Lessons Implementation Strategies:

- *Greater prominence should be given to Indigenous language and culture taught in schools, particularly in urban schools.*
- *Quality of teaching and poor relationships between school staff and the community and students are important factors and are impacted on by: high turnover; insufficient orientation; and unsupportive attitude of many teachers.*
- *Teachers' expectations of Indigenous students could be improved through performance management. All schools should have a performance management process which gives teachers feedback on their teaching and general performance.*
- *Principals need to understand that one of their primary roles is to ensure communication and strong links between the school and the rest of the community.*
- *Indigenous teachers should be supported through an Indigenous Teachers Network. This might involve annual forums and on going professional learning programs.*
- *There is a need to value remote teaching experience. Experience in remote schools should be a requirement of the Teachers of Exemplary Practice (TEP) program.*
- *Bridging programs such as the Ludmilla Secondary Program are required for some students entering secondary.*
- *There should be different programs for students who attend school regularly and those who do not.*
- *Many Indigenous people, particularly young people don't see the importance of education. Solutions and links to jobs and a positive future could be the focus of a NT wide education/attendance summit.*
- *Schools need to make young mothers feel welcome.*
- *Quality of infrastructure and school environment needs to improve.*
- *Issues related to the low-socioeconomic status of many Indigenous students, in particular poor health status are important factors. Schools should work closely with health service providers and communities to address health issues.*

4. LLISC Correspondence

The LLISC noted incoming and outgoing correspondence.

Action:

LLISC Members will consider and inform the Learning Lessons Implementation Branch of suitable nominations for membership of the Education Advisory Council.

5. Actions Arising From Previous Meetings (Report)

All of the actions, decisions and recommendations from previous LLISC meetings have been incorporated into the Action Table. The Committee noted progress.

6. Confirmation of Draft Meeting Record 18 and 19 March 2003

The LLISC confirmed the record of the last meeting as true and accurate.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 17 and 18 September 2003 in Darwin.