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Professor Deryck M Schreuder
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Our Ref: F2977
Your Ref:

20 September 2002

Mr Bob Goddard
Higher Education Review Secretariat
Location Code 701
Dept. of Education, Science and Training
GPO Box 9880
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Goddard

1383 -

Higher Education Review - Response to 'Achieving Equitable and Appropriate Outcomes - Indigenous Australians in Higher Education'

.... I now attach the last of the UWA's responses to the 'Crossroads' series of papers, as I foreshadowed in my letter of 13 September 2002.

The attached submission has been prepared by our School of Indigenous Studies and presents an Indigenous view of the matters raised in the Issues Paper. I would like, in this covering letter, to add some UWA-specific additional comments to provide a 'UWA Perspective' and context for the response.

First, it is important to note that the very existence of a School of Indigenous Studies at UWA reflects an acknowledgment by the University of the importance of Indigenous knowledge and governance issues in our new structure. The transformation of our existing Indigenous centres into a full School in our restructure will provide greater Indigenous involvement in University governance, and a greater degree of autonomy than previous arrangements. This in turn will provide a more secure structural basis for supporting Indigenous knowledge system through mainstream teaching and research. The move complements the designation by the University of Indigenous studies as one of the areas of strategic opportunity and priority identified in our academic plan.

Secondly, I would like to emphasise the UWA focus on access to professional degrees for Indigenous students, rather than a focus on bridging programmes specifically for Indigenous students. This has been a very successful strategy but necessarily means substantially fewer numbers, and consequently a lower share of Indigenous Support Funding (ISF). Apart from our highly successful Law and Medicine entry programmes, curriculum revision in courses such as Medicine and Social Work have provided more substantial Aboriginal studies content which will

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support UWA's commitment to access to full professional degree programmes for Indigenous students

I believe the approach at UWA, while not typical of the sector generally, is an excellent example of an approach guided by the principles of fitness for purpose, comparative advantage, and the mainstreaming of Indigenous issues in particular, and equity and diversity programmes more generally in our systems.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deryck M Schreuder', with a large loop at the end.

**Professor Deryck M Schreuder
Vice-Chancellor and President**

Enc.



Response to Issues Paper

'Achieving Equitable and Appropriate Outcomes - Indigenous Australians in Higher Education'

Prepared by the School of Indigenous Studies

INTRODUCTION

1. This response paper offers a view based on UWA experiences, but as the School of Indigenous Studies provides a snapshot view of the broader Australian situation, it is hoped the suggested strategies are fully taken into consideration by the Minister and the federal government.
2. The Issues Paper provides a fairly good coverage of the main things that are weak in delivery and generally poorly funded in Indigenous Higher Education. It highlights the fact that Indigenous students are still under-represented in higher education, that the number of Indigenous academics employed by universities still falls well behind an equitable share, and that Indigenous Support Funding (ISF) has failed to keep up to the rising costs of Indigenous centres and units. The Paper poses a number of questions that require answers.
3. While strategies can be suggested for many areas, real change will not occur unless the key issues relating to the recognition of Indigenous knowledge systems and the inclusion of Indigenous peoples in the highest decision-making processes of universities and the sector as a whole, are addressed. Unfortunately the Issues Paper does not explicitly do this (nor are such issues considered in the other DEST Issues Papers).

KEY ISSUES

2. Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Governance

- 2.1 Indigenous knowledge systems are a vital part of the knowledge capital of Australia and the key to understanding Australia. To ignore the lifestyles, value systems, traditions, beliefs, knowledge and skills inherent in the Indigenous communities is to jeopardise any long-term sustainable development in Australia.
- 2.2 Indigenous communities are the original 'knowledge nations' promoting lifetime learning and sustainability. Indigenous communities are relationship-based societies where people are recognised as the greatest asset. Indigenous knowledge is developed and preserved by Indigenous communities and continues to develop in relation to changing historical circumstances.
- 2.3 The Australian Higher Education system needs to recognise the contribution that Indigenous peoples make to universities and the rights of Indigenous peoples to develop their knowledge systems within and outside of universities. **Recognition of these rights entails the provision of resources that enable these rights to be fully exercised.**

- 2.4 The fact that Indigenous people continue to be excluded from structurally important decision-making bodies in universities, means that Indigenous knowledge, Indigenous issues, Indigenous ethics, mechanisms for self-determinism and Indigenous empowerment are hardly ever discussed at policy or funding body levels, and a meaningful partnership between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is never achieved.
- 2.5 Recognition of the full range of services provided by Indigenous centres to universities as a whole, including high level policy advice, necessitates the appointment of Indigenous staff at appropriate classification levels. In 2001, only 20 Indigenous academic staff (out of a total of 227) were above Senior Lecturer (Table 6, page 15). Across the five Western Australian universities, there was only ONE Professorial appointment (Professorial Fellow) and it is fixed-term, not ongoing. A similar problem exists in many other universities and is in part due to the failure of universities to recognise the Indigenous knowledge, experience, and 'cultural' qualifications that Indigenous staff bring to the positions. Some Indigenous staff heading up Indigenous units are in administrative positions and/or at levels inappropriate to the 'leadership' role they are required to fulfil.
- 2.6. Governance structures in universities that have meaningful involvement of Indigenous staff in decision-making in their vertical power structure, and which make space for the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge systems, have a much better chance of succeeding in all areas of Indigenous operations, including student participation and excellence.
- 2.7 Suggested Strategies (Apply to para. 130, dot points 1, 2, 5, 8)
- **Universities and Government/DEST recognise Indigenous knowledge systems and include that recognition when making judgements involving Indigenous higher education staff and students, or when developing programmes or courses.**
 - **Indigenous centres, educators and researchers are fully involved at critical points in the governance of each institution through membership of, or advice to, key decision making bodies in teaching and learning, research, funding and budgets.**
 - **Universities provide appropriate resources to enable Indigenous centres/educators to fully participate in university decision-making. This means additional funding and staffing to Indigenous centres as well as the appointment of Indigenous staff, particularly heads of Indigenous centres, at academic levels that reflect the leadership and policy direction they provide.**
 - **Government/DEST support and consult with Indigenous centres and associations (such as the National Indigenous Higher Education Network) in the higher education sector, at a national level on policy and funding issues. This could include DEST sponsorship of two national meetings of Indigenous centres/associations per year.**

3. Indigenous Support Funding (ISF)

- 3.1 The level of Indigenous Support Funding (paras 18 and 19, page 5) has remained fairly constant since 1996. The Issues Paper states that "ISF allocations total \$23.7 million compared to \$5.3 million in 1996 (2002 prices)." As the actual sum allocated for ISF in 1996 was \$20.95 million, this would indicate that the dollar price has changed about 446% in 6 years, which seems a bit steep. In reality, and as supported by the statement that "the outcomes of the ISF formula may result in less support per student being provided when national numbers of students are increasing"¹, the ISF funding level has only risen by 7.7% over the past 6 years - perhaps in line with cost of living rises. This small increase has not kept up with huge cost rises associated with the increase in Indigenous student enrolments over that time, and other rises outlined in the UWA/CUT submission to the Minister (submission 169). The converse situation mentioned in para. 88 (declining student numbers means increased per student funding) has not occurred over the whole period in (at least) most universities, but may have occurred in a few universities over perhaps 1 or 2 years. Rises in costs in those universities would still have absorbed any increase.
- 3.2 The actual formula for funding, whilst not perfect, is not the reason for the dollar reduction per student - **the low level of total ISF funding is**. It is quite correct to assume (para. 92) that Indigenous units are "too stretched to ensure that the support is fully effective..." but centres and units are generally working to their full capacity in their attempts to recruit and support students, to foster Aboriginal identity and culture and to provide suitable and adequate services in other areas of the universities. Teaching activities in centres and units have proven to be an additional drain on ISF, but sometimes it has been a necessity in order to have an Indigenous presence in higher education teaching (see para. 79). Guest lectures span the university in a range of disciplines, and Indigenous centres also often take a community relations role across the University, not only in liaising with Indigenous communities and ensuring the correct cultural protocols are followed for significant events on campus, but also in relation to visiting academics and foreign dignitaries who have an interest in meeting with Indigenous people. (None of these activities are actually funded). There has often been an expectation that short courses, such as Cross-Cultural Training, 'should be provided free' by Indigenous units, who are not directly funded by universities for such courses, nor have they really been accommodated in the ISF formula.
- 3.3 Suggested Strategies (Apply to para. 130, dot points 5, 10)
- **Indigenous Support Funding must be increased to reflect the real cost of supporting Indigenous students.**
 - **Universities need to be encouraged to match, or add to, Indigenous Support Funding with an allocation from their own budgets.**

4. Funding for 'Successful' Outcomes

- 4.1 Although the Issues Paper identifies a 15.8% increase since 1996 in undergraduate education programmes and 12.2% in postgraduate programmes, the number of Indigenous students participating in higher education still lags behind the mainstream population percentage, and figures for the past couple of years are not that encouraging. Paragraph 49 states that performance against the goals of equity of access and participation for Indigenous students needs to be improved. The rates of completion of compulsory years of schooling education for Indigenous students and

¹ Issues Paper, para 88, page 23, and as stated in UWA/CUT submission #169, p.4.

the rates of completion in non-compulsory years of schooling need to be improved significantly also. The pool of mature-aged students with adequate skills levels for university entry is not bottomless, although they still contribute largely to student numbers and Indigenous education centres and units are battling to improve access and participation rates, expected by DEST, over relatively short timeframes. Enabling courses have shown to be vital in WA for Indigenous people to increase their academic skills to a level suitable for university entry.

- 4.2 Indigenous centres that are achieving high graduation rates, particularly in non-traditional areas of study, should be commended. Appropriate recognition of prior knowledge, particularly with regard to Indigenous knowledge and experience, needs to be given to mature-aged Indigenous commencing students, wherever possible.
- 4.3 In the Issues Paper (para 130, dot point 5), the question is posed "How best can governments and higher education institutions work together to improve the effectiveness of government funded programmes? For example, would it be most appropriate to ensure funding formulae for all programmes have greater rewards for successful outcomes?"
- 4.4 This issue has been on the table for many years. The key issue is how we define and measure 'successful outcomes'. To date there has been no Indigenous involvement in determining 'successful outcomes' or developing appropriate performance indicators.
- 4.5 The problem with current national performance indicators is they do not recognise the huge differences between programmes. Consider for example 'graduation rates' (presumably the most successful outcome). At UWA a higher proportion of Indigenous students are in professional degree courses (Law, Engineering, Medicine,) that require a minimum of 4-6 years of study compared to many universities that have a majority of students in 1 year Certificate, 2 year Associate degree or 3 year Bachelor degree programmes.
- 4.6 Medicine is the most problematic with a minimum 6 years study required to qualify as a doctor (MBBS). As most Indigenous students lack sufficient Physics/Chemistry background to be successful in first year Medicine, they often undertake a year in Science and/or the Aboriginal Orientation course prior to medicine, extending the total study period to 7-8 years. Therefore, in terms of course completions/graduation rates, Indigenous medicine students are completing the equivalent of 2 bachelor or 3 associate degrees.
- 4.7 All Indigenous centres strive for 'successful outcomes' and rewarding through funding could be viable. However it depends on defining 'success' and ensuring comparisons between courses are 'like to like'.
- 4.8 Suggested Strategies (Apply to para. 130, dot point 5)
 - **The development of measures of 'successful' outcomes or other performance indicators must be made in partnership with Indigenous educators/centres.**
 - **Measures of 'success' must be able to reflect the needs, aspirations and priorities of diverse Indigenous communities.**
 - **DEST acknowledge and appropriately reward universities that are achieving good Indigenous graduation rates at undergraduate and postgraduate degree levels, particularly in non-traditional areas.**

5. Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ATAS)

- 5.1 ATAS is essential to Indigenous students' participation and success in higher education. However the funding formula for ATAS in regard to administration costs is unrealistic for universities with small to medium enrolments of Indigenous students, the majority of whom are often enrolled in mainstream courses. The additional costs of administering ATAS, particularly given the heavy reporting requirements, must be absorbed by Indigenous centres, which in effect means subsidisation from ISF.
- 5.2 In professional degree areas, tuition is often most effective when the tutor is employed on a full-time (or fractional) basis, but this is no longer allowed under ATAS. There are also restrictions against the use of ATAS in enabling courses.
- 5.3 Suggested strategies (Apply to para. 130, dot point 10)
- **Increase the percentage ATAS allocates to administrative costs for universities with small to medium enrolments.**
 - **Increase the flexibility of ATAS guidelines to include the employment of full-time or fractional tutors and make them less restrictive for enabling students.**

6. Enabling Courses

- 6.1 According to the Issues Paper, enabling courses "... generally cover basic university skills such as report writing, library use and time-management" (para 22, page 6). Outcomes of enabling courses, measured by transition rates to degree studies are generally criticised as being too low. Such generalisation fails to differentiate adequately between enabling courses, acknowledge the long term and associated education outcomes, or recognise the essential role they have played in accessing some professional degree areas.
- 6.2 UWA, through its School of Indigenous Studies, conducts three enabling courses – the Aboriginal Orientation Course, the Pre-Law Programme, and the Pre-Medicine Programme.
- 6.3 *The Aboriginal Orientation Course* can be studied over one or two semesters depending upon entry level skills and the course for which the student is preparing. The standard is set reasonably high to ensure that students are able to meet the requisite high levels of competency that UWA requires, particularly in the professional degree areas. The Orientation course does not just offer generic study skills, but units in Physics, Chemistry, Maths, Human Biology and Social Sciences. It has successfully prepared students for Medicine, Law, Science, Engineering and Social Work. One of three Indigenous doctors to graduate from UWA in the past two years came through the Orientation course. Another ex-Orientation student will graduate as a doctor at the end of this year.
- 6.4 *The Pre-Law and Pre-Medicine Programmes* are short intensive 'enabling' courses that have very high transition rates to degree studies (above 75%) followed by 'success' in Law (LLB and Postgraduate) and Medicine (MBBS).

- 6.5 The UWA enabling courses have high teaching and support costs due to relatively low student numbers and what is actually trying to be achieved educationally – preparation for success in highly competitive and difficult study areas that often require extensive background knowledge. This cannot be achieved simply or cheaply and the University contributes resources to support the programmes. Restrictions on the use of ATAS in enabling courses further penalise the courses and the Indigenous students enrolled in them. Due to low numbers of Indigenous secondary students in WA attaining university entry-level qualifications from schools (particularly in Maths and Science), enabling courses are vital in improving Indigenous student access to and participation in higher education.
- 6.6 While some higher education enabling course transition rates appear low, VET sector does not appear to have even achieved these levels of success in the transition of Indigenous students from its 'multi-field education' area of study (enabling) to recognised fields of study such as the AQF Certificate IV (para 12, page 3). It is difficult to feel VET would then be able to prepare Indigenous students for the more difficult transition to University courses.
- 6.7 Suggested Strategies (Apply to para. 130, dot points 9 and 10)
- **DEST should continue funding relevant and successful enabling courses in universities at levels that consider the full implications of each course, that improve the access of potential students to university degree courses, and that meet Indigenous community needs.**

7. Financial Support for Indigenous Students

- 7.1 The abolition of the Equity and Merit Scholarships, which benefited a considerable number of Indigenous students, along with Abstudy changes, has impacted on the ability of students to survive financially and, subsequently, upon the numbers of students entering university and staying in higher education studies. The downgrading of Abstudy entitlements has had a larger than officially recognised effect on Indigenous access and retention. Many premature assertions about the effect of the changes have been made, but for those working on the ground, in Indigenous centres, the changes have been noticeably adverse. Students have often opted out of Abstudy wherever they could access other assistance, such as scholarships or cadetships.
- 7.2 The suggestion that consideration be given "to forming partnerships between the Commonwealth, higher education institutions and professional organisations to offer HECS exempt places, cadetships, and/or scholarships in professional fields for Indigenous students who have shown commitment and good performance" (para. 108) is commended. However, the government is urged to reconsider a similar scheme to the axed Equity and Merit Scholarship scheme, for commencing Indigenous students. A vital need also exists for scholarships to encourage Indigenous students to stay on to complete an Honours year, as this is a group that constantly misses out on other scholarships.
- 7.3 The number of scholarships that are identified for Indigenous students only, as listed in para. 107, is very small compared with those that are readily available to all Australian students, or even for mainstream students in a single university. Most of the mainstream scholarships are too competitive for Indigenous students to win, particularly those Indigenous students entering from a lower educational skills background. There are few if any scholarships and no cadetships available for enabling students who remain reliant on Abstudy, though an increasing number are means-tested out.

7.4 Cadetships have proven to be lifesavers for many Indigenous students battling to survive on Abstudy payments. They have also greatly improved employment opportunities in many areas that previously were not considered by Indigenous students (see para. 107). The federal government should be commended for this initiative. However, in some states, such as in Western Australia, very few cadetship opportunities have opened up in state government areas, and even less in corporations or private companies, and more needs to be done to publicise the advantages for business and to encourage employers to 'take on' Indigenous cadets.

7.5 Suggested Strategies (Apply to para. 130, dot points 9 and 10)

- **DEST to fund and launch additional Indigenous scholarships that are based on financial need, study potential and progress results, rather than on pre-entry academic achievement.**
- **Establish a national Indigenous Honours year scholarship system.**
- **Encourage universities to offer more Indigenous scholarships from university budgets or through external corporate funding.**
- **Abstudy entitlements need to recognise Indigenous disadvantage; an essential first step is lowering the age of Independence to 21.**
- **Continue promoting Indigenous Undergraduate Cadetships, particularly through state governments and corporate sponsors, in addition to the commonwealth government.**
- **Exempt Indigenous students from HECS obligations.**

8. Schools Programmes

8.1 UWA has always had a major schools outreach programme for Indigenous students due to the low achievement and retention of Aboriginal students in secondary schooling in WA. This includes *Discovery Day* (Year 8 students), *Medicine Careers Camp* (state-wide, Years 10/11), *the Year 12 Seminar* (state-wide, Year 12 students) expos and school visits. There are increasing requests for an extension to primary schools.

8.2 The Schools outreach is seen as essential as many schools still do not encourage, and some actively discourage, Aboriginal students from aspiring to university study. However, the programme is expensive and while attracting some VEGAS funding it is on a piecemeal basis. Travel costs are extremely high in WA and add significantly to overall costs. Additional and longer term funding support needs to be given to this area.

9. Indigenous Staff

9.1 The Paper acknowledges that "relatively few Indigenous people are being employed in the higher education sector itself", and two sentences later states that "Indigenous academics and non-academics are increasing significantly" (para. 56). While the number may be steadily increasing (particularly since HECE obligations became enforceable) there is still a large percentage of Indigenous staff employed in short-term, contractual, untenured positions, compared with non-Indigenous staff. The long hiatus in ISF funding increases and the uncertainty of future funding has exacerbated

the problem. A positive injection of funds to overcome the problems, including a statement of recognition of the permanent status of Indigenous education in higher education would remove much of the uncertainty, and would allow centres and units to meet their pressing staff shortages. An increase in staffing numbers would assist in alleviating the incredibly high workloads of existing staff in most centres and units. This would also ensure that the positive comments about Indigenous educators' interaction with Indigenous students (paras. 75 and 77) remain a reality, and would (in conjunction with other suggested initiatives) assist in ensuring that Indigenous educators and researchers "contribute to the development of practical strategies to improve Indigenous higher education outcomes" (para. 76). Increasing demand for Indigenous Studies teaching by both domestic and overseas students in Australian universities has added to the workloads of Indigenous staff, and an increase in staffing would assist in meeting this need.

9.2 Suggested Strategies (Apply to para. 130, dot point 1)

- **Increase ISF funding to a level that allows Indigenous centres and units to employ adequate permanent staff in order to function appropriately, and which ensures they can fulfil their full support and teaching roles, and which allows flexibility for adequate staff development.**
- **Universities must ensure Indigenous academic staff are appointed at appropriate levels, particularly where they head Indigenous units.**

10. Understanding Indigenous Issues

- 10.1 In considering the question "How best can higher education institutions promote an understanding of Indigenous issues and understandings amongst students and staff?" (para 130, dot point 2), the most pressing issue that needs to be addressed is racism.
- 10.2 The higher education sector needs to publicly recognise that racism against Indigenous people is endemic in universities and continues to exist, despite equity policies and guidelines. Individual universities and the AVCC must prioritise the elimination of racism against Indigenous peoples. This includes systemic and institutional racism, which is often more difficult to recognise.
- 10.3 Cross-cultural awareness training programmes should be provided by, or in consultation with, the Indigenous centres, to all staff including senior management. Indigenous Centres need to be appropriately funded to develop and deliver these courses for the universities. Funding should not come from current Indigenous Support Funding (ISF), but from staff training/development funds (DEST and Universities).
- 10.4 Demonstrated understanding of Indigenous issues needs to be included in selection and promotion requirements for all academic staff and any staff in key decision making positions in universities. (A commitment to Equal Opportunity principles, which is commonly on the selection criteria for many universities' appointments is not sufficient.)

10.5 Suggested Strategies (Apply to para 130, dot point 2)

- **Cross-cultural and anti-racist training should be mandatory for all university staff and form part of selection criteria for appointment and promotion.**
- **Indigenous centres need to be resourced to develop Indigenous studies across campus.**

11. Indigenous Research

11.1 ARC Discovery - Indigenous Researcher Development

Paragraph 27 of the Issues Paper indicates that 53 Indigenous researchers have received IRD grants since 1996. Considering that academic staff in universities have risen from 124 in 1996 to 227 in 2001 (table 6) and that Indigenous postgraduate students in higher degrees have risen from 332 in 1996 to 433 in 2001, and that more than this have passed through the system over time, 53 grants appears to be rather low, particularly given that they are supposed to be for 'development'. The IRD grant, while useful, provides limited research funding for a relatively small number of 'eligible' Indigenous researchers. It does not address wider research issues for Indigenous centres and the Indigenous higher education sector as a whole.

11.2 Indigenous Higher Education Centres

UWA was successful in its bid to obtain one of the six Commonwealth funded Indigenous Higher Education Centres, establishing The Centre for Indigenous History and the Arts (CIHA). Despite being highly successful in producing community based Indigenous oral history publications, providing oral history research skills training for communities and developing valuable Indigenous research skills and experience, Commonwealth funding has now ceased.

Though supported by the University, CIHA is now in a constrained and precarious funding position, as are other Indigenous Higher Education Centres. It has proven more difficult than anticipated for these centres to attract external commercial funding for Indigenous research projects, and it has been equally challenging for Indigenous researchers to win ARC grants. Commonwealth funding was not provided over a long enough period to enable these centres to become self-sustaining, nor has it been a 'healthy' enough financial climate for universities to fully fund them at the end of the establishment period.

11.3 Barriers to research

Indigenous academics' are hindered in applying for research funds, and/or undertaking research by heavy academic and administrative work loads, cultural and family obligations, fixed-term contracts, limited access to study leave provisions and the lack of adequate and secure funding for the Indigenous centres in which most work.

The barriers to Indigenous researchers that Herbert et al express (para. 127), and which were supported by UWA/CUT (submission 169), regardless of the ARC's awareness, continue to block success in funding bids for Indigenous researchers. **The final decisions for funding grants are not made by Indigenous people.** While Indigenous researchers experience so many difficulties in having their competencies and qualifications acknowledged, and Indigenous knowledge systems and methodologies recognised as valid, it will continue to be difficult to entice Indigenous

academic staff who have Bachelor degrees into higher research degree programmes. Recognition and incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and knowledge systems through Indigenous university staff, are vital for all areas of higher education, not just in research.

11.4 Suggested Strategies (Apply to para 130, dot points 1, 2, 10, 11, 12)

- **As Indigenous Australians are the most researched in the world, but the vast majority of this research has been on rather than by Indigenous people, it is imperative that Indigenous academics be given an opportunity to claim this ground. This requires a long term funding initiative that ensures that an equitable share of overall higher education research funding is directed to Indigenous centres and researchers.**
- **The Commonwealth should provide further funding for Indigenous Higher Education Centres (of Research Excellence), ensuring that universities involved strategise to access external funding as part of their overall university research funding processes.**
- **There needs to be Indigenous representation on all ARC research funding decision-making committees (not just the IRD) and Indigenous input into the setting of national research priorities.**
- **Research funding bodies must recognise that the skills, qualifications, experience, research priorities, methodology and research frameworks may be different for Indigenous researchers and these differences need to be recognised when making funding decisions.**

CONCLUDING REMARKS

12. While it may seem as if the suggested strategies appear to unduly focus on funding and resourcing this cannot be avoided if we are to make real change. Part of the difficulty is that insufficient funding has been directed to Indigenous higher education in the past. The most significant pool of money has been ISF but this is shrinking in real terms and the substantial allocation of research funds to establish the Indigenous Higher Education Centres has now ceased. There has been no dedicated funding available for the development of 'Indigenous studies' teaching by the Indigenous centres.
13. If no additional Commonwealth funds are available for ISF, Indigenous teaching, Indigenous research and the recognition of Indigenous knowledge systems, then there must be a redirection of an equitable share of Commonwealth higher education funds, particularly teaching and research, into Indigenous higher education.
14. Universities should commit to Indigenous higher education by developing secure and appropriate resources and funding bases for Indigenous centres at the institutional level by:
 - matching or adding to ISF funding for Indigenous students;
 - allocating an equitable share of teaching and research funding to enable Indigenous centres to develop teaching and research initiatives;

- allocating funds 'off the top' of university budgets to properly compensate Indigenous centres for the full ranges of services and advice they provide to the university as a whole not just on Indigenous education but on wider Indigenous issues and cultural protocols
15. For universities that are unwilling to do this, DEST/the Commonwealth may need to do this at the national level. DEST/the Commonwealth will also need to ensure Indigenous higher education has an equitable share of teaching and research funds allocated through national mechanisms such as the ARC.

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