



Office of the Hon Stuart Robert MP
Minister for Employment, Workforce, Skills, Small and Family Business
Acting Minister for Education and Youth

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Ms Margaret Corrigan
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Australian Council of TESOL Associations
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Dear Ms Corrigan and Dr Moore

Thank you for your correspondence of 22 September 2021 to the Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP, regarding the Australian Council of TESOL Associations' concerns. As this matter falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Acting Minister for Education and Youth, the Hon Stuart Robert MP, your correspondence has been referred to this office. I am responding on the Minister's behalf.

Minister Wyatt and Minister Robert work closely together to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are empowered to reach their full learning potential. This is a key part of the Australian Government's commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. In line with this, as part of releasing the Commonwealth's first Closing the Gap Implementation Plan in August 2021, the Government announced more than \$1 billion in new measures to achieve the Closing the Gap outcomes.

The Government is investing \$122 million in evidence-driven initiatives that are lifting participation in quality early childhood programs and improving school readiness by expanding the Connected Beginnings and Community Child Care Fund Restricted programs, replicating the successful Early Years Education Program and conducting an Early Learning Teaching Trial. The new measures will be designed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies, communities and services, and will enable local communities to develop and deliver culturally appropriate solutions that support local families to ensure children are healthy, happy and ready to thrive at school.

Further, the Government is investing \$126 million in evidence-based school education initiatives with a focus on improving education outcomes in the early school years and leveraging the success and resources of independent schools to set students up for success in later school years and beyond. This investment includes \$75 million to build three new residential schools and refurbish a fourth facility under the innovative Studio Schools Australia model to increase local schooling options on, or closer to, Country.

While the Australian Government makes a significant financial contribution to school education and plays a leadership role in setting and advocating for national priorities in education, State and Territory Governments and non-government education authorities are ultimately responsible for delivering school education and ensuring access to quality education within their jurisdiction, including professional development and employment of teachers, school principals and education directors.

As one example of the Government's commitment to supporting teacher quality, the Government is providing \$7.535 million over three years (2019–20 to 2021–22) to Teach for Australia to develop and pilot the Future Leaders Program (FLP). The objective of the FLP is to test an innovative approach to strengthen the school leadership pipeline and build capability in regional, rural and remote schools. It provides targeted leadership training to high achieving teachers with leadership potential, drawing on First Nation Australians' knowledges, principles and perspectives.

The Government also provided funding of \$1.6 million over 2018–19 to 2021–22 to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) to enhance Indigenous cultural competency in the Australian teacher workforce. AITSL is expected to provide a suite of professional learning tools and resources to support the development of competencies to ensure teachers and school leaders are culturally responsive to the diverse learning needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

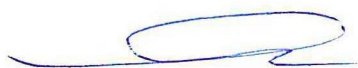
The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) has an important role in the Australian education system. It provides information on how well all students in Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 are gaining critical literacy and numeracy skills. It is the only national test that provides comparable data to parents, students and educators about the performance of students and schools. It is vital that we, as a nation, have data on how well Indigenous children in remote schools are performing in meeting national standards. It is also recognised that while NAPLAN assesses student abilities in literacy and numeracy, it does not assess other important aspects of schooling and does not provide a complete picture of how well a child is doing at school.

While it is expected that all students participate fully to gain an accurate assessment, the implementation of NAPLAN in each State or Territory is the responsibility of the relevant Test Administration Authority. In this case, the relevant authority is the Northern Territory Department of Education. If you have not done so already, you may wish to contact the Department on (08) 8999 5659 or via email at infocentre.det@nt.gov.au.

I have copied this letter to Minister Wyatt.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



Mike Bennett
Chief of Staff

9/3 / 2022