



INDIGENOUS EDUCATION CONSULTATIVE BODIES (IECBs)

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 14th September 2016

Canberra

"OUR VOICE MATTERS"

Over the last two days the representatives of the Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies (IECBs) have been in Canberra meeting with the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, Shadow Minister for Education, the Hon Andrew Giles MP, Shadow Assistant Minister for Schools; Assistant Minister the Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP, Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care; the Hon Linda Burney MP, Shadow Minister for Human Services; Senator Malarndirri McCarthy, Labor Senator from the Northern Territory, and other politicians and senior government officials. The IECBs are calling for the reinvestment in Aboriginal expertise at the national level in education and training.

The national IECB network reiterated the need for governments, decision-makers and policy makers to engage closely with the IECBs and directly benefit from the experience and connection that IECBs have with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities all around Australia.

The NSW representative, Ms Cindy Berwick, said "The IECBs have strong and established community networks and therefore are an invaluable asset and resource for developing programs to effect change for our people."

"As a result of ministerial changes and the IAS [Indigenous Advancement Strategy], we have seen a regression in planning, with the Federal government doing things for us, not with us," said Mr Lionel Bamblett, the Victorian representative.

These meetings come at a time that in recent months has seen scathing criticism that the Indigenous Advancement Strategy is 'out of touch' and indeed, has resulted in the loss of federal funding for community organisations and structures including that of the national IECB network.

"The transfer of Indigenous education from the Education portfolio to Prime Minister & Cabinet has been a retrograde step, and as a result we have diminished capacity to influence the mainstream education and training agenda," said Professor Peter Buckskin, the South Australian representative.

"The IECBs are here to ensure the community voice on education is heard and addressed. Across Australia, IECBs are the peak community advocacy and advisory bodies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education within their jurisdiction", said Ms Fiona Petersen, the ACT representative. The IECBs will continue to advocate on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. They will continue to share their first-hand empirical knowledge and support those decision makers who are willing to listen so that the educational needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities can be met.



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