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The Advocacy Role of CIRs

Presentation on
Resolution 4: Cultural Diversity and Education

By Dalma Jacobs,
AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN

Submissions

Australian Government



- Review of Higher Education Equity Program
- Building University Diversity Review
- Inquiry into Teacher Training
- HREOC Review of the Treatment of Children in Immigration Detention

Notes for page 2

- While much of our Advocacy at the NATIONAL level is generated through brilliant letters written by our President Jenny Strauss, Advocacy in relation to Cultural Diversity and Education has been mainly presented in the form of written submissions to specific Parliamentary Reviews - such as the first 3 examples and the fourth example to institutional reviews such as that of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.
- The first argued for much needed support to ensure that the Higher Education Sector requirements of Culturally Diverse Groups can be met. This is especially focused on the needs of indigenous Australians, people from non- English speaking backgrounds as well as for women from lower socio-economic groups
- The second was supposedly a very broad review of University Diversity but was limited by the terms of Reference. Unfortunately we have not seen much activity from this Review. AFUW argued that the First responsibility of National Government is to support the development and maintain quality of our existing non profit institutions (recognizing,encouraging and extending processes that build on the existing diversity - appropriate to to Australia's relatively small population and resource base). We also commented on the Definition of a University: to undertake research as well as teaching along with the requirement to include a range of disciplinary areas.
- Example three provided AFUW with another opportunity to restate requirements for education programs to recognize the needs of Indigenous students including bilingual teaching, train teachers to teach units of indigenous studies for all Australian students
- AFUW made a submission submission to this I review in 2002. The recently published Report identified deprivation of education as a major breach of obligations subscribed to by Australia under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Submissions

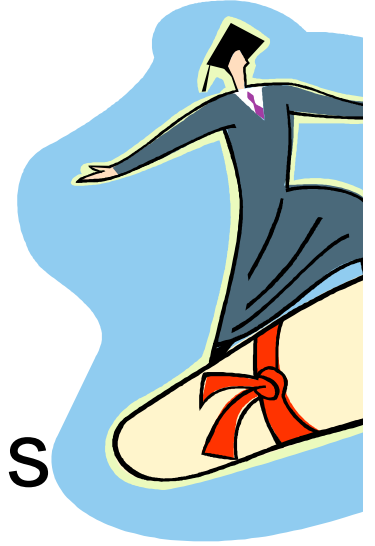
State Governments

- Inter-University Faculty of Education Consultation (Victoria)
- Funding for Education Programs for Migrant Students (Queensland)
- Review of Education and Training - re Temporary Residents (Victoria)

Notes for page 4

- At the state level, these three examples demonstrate different methods of Advocacy used successfully
- The first was a consultative process involving Faculty of Education staff that lead to the agency which accredits Teachers, adopting a policy that all Teacher Training should include one unit of Indigenous Studies
- The second was in the form of a letter to the State Government (Premier and 3 relevant Ministers) seeking additional funding for specific Education Programs for Refugees attending Secondary Schools. Some additional funding has subsequently been provided
- The last example is a written submission to a State Government Review. AFUW Victoria argued that the State Government has a responsibility to provide FREE education for children of temporary residents in Australia - those who are family members of: temporarily employed in businesses and institutions; refugees or asylum seekers; or on bridging or temporary protection visas or in immigration detention.

AFUW Scholarship Programmes etc



- Dedicated awards for Indigenous Students
- Booklets on Sources of Support for Indigenous Students
- Various support for Migrant Girls and Women accessing Education
- Mentoring of Hegg Hoffett Fund recipient - Huda Jibril

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- These last four examples of Cultural Diversity and Education Projects support either our advocacy work or have instigated some of our Advocacy activities
- Several State Associations have dedicated awards for indigenous students. Others have been award to indigenous students on merit
- AFUW (Vic and SA) have prepared and disseminated booklets for indigenous students in Secondary and Tertiary Education
- AFUW-Vic which awards its scholarships with disadvantage as an equal criterion with academic merit, counts a native language other than English as a possible source of disadvantage. It also provides small scale education grants to assist migrant and refugee women on the recommendation of a migrant NGO
- AFUW - Qld awards mini bursaries to facilitate entrance to mainstream Secondary Education; arranges English language classes and swimming classes in the privacy of a School for Girls are provided to Muslim girls. The teacher is approved by the families of the Girls.
- Graduate refugee from Ethiopia supported by the Hegg Hoffett Fund has been mentored by AFUWQ President Marion Jones who became her advocate and assisted her eventual successful application to full time employment
- I conclude this presentation with a photograph of one of award ceremonies which includes some proud family members of our culturally diverse awardees.
- Thanks you for your attention..