



THE AUSTRALIAN
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

C
A
E
P
R
entre for
boriginal
conomic
olicy
esearch

**The future shape of
ABSTUDY: practical and
policy implications of the
recent proposed changes**

R.G. Schwab and S.F. Campbell

No. 140/1997



DISCUSSION PAPER

Series Note

The Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) was established in March 1990 under an agreement between The Australian National University (ANU) and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC). CAEPR operates as an independent research unit within the University's Faculty of Arts and is funded by ATSIC, the Commonwealth Department of Social Security and the ANU. CAEPR's principal objectives are to undertake research to:

- investigate the stimulation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development and issues relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and unemployment.
- identify and analyse the factors affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the labour force; and
- assist in the development of government strategies aimed at raising the level of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the labour market.

The Director of the Centre is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor of the ANU and receives assistance in formulating the Centre's research priorities from an Advisory Committee consisting of five senior academics nominated by the Vice-Chancellor and four representatives nominated by ATSIC, the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs and the Department of Social Security.

CAEPR Discussion Papers are intended as a forum for the rapid dissemination of refereed papers on research that falls within the CAEPR ambit. These papers are produced for discussion and comment within the research community and Aboriginal affairs policy arena. Many are subsequently published in academic journals. Publications can be purchased from:

Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research
2nd Floor, J.G. Crawford Building
Faculty of Arts
The Australian National University
Canberra ACT 0200
Telephone 02 - 6279 8211
Facsimile 02 - 6249 2789

Abstracts or Summaries of all CAEPR Discussion Papers can be found at the following World Wide Web address: <http://online.anu.edu/caepr>

As with all CAEPR publications, the views expressed in this Discussion Paper are those of the author(s) and do not reflect an official CAEPR position.

Professor Jon Altman
Director, CAEPR
The Australian National University
September 1997

**The future shape of ABSTUDY:
practical and policy
implications of the recent
proposed changes**

R.G. Schwab and S.F. Campbell

No. 140/1997

ISSN 1036-1774
ISBN 0 7315 2575 2

Dr R.G. (Jerry) Schwab is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Faculty of Arts, The Australian National University. Shirley Campbell is Academic Coordinator for Indigenous Students, Faculty of Arts, The Australian National University.

THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Published weekly, except for two issues combined annually in November and December.
Subscription price, \$5.00 per annum in advance.
Single copies, 15 cents.
Entered as second-class matter, May 2, 1917.
Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917.
Postage paid at Chicago, Ill., and at additional mailing offices.
Postmaster: Send address changes in advance.

Published by the American Medical Association, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago 10, Ill.
Editor: J. C. Thompson, M.D., 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago 10, Ill.
Business Manager: J. C. Thompson, M.D., 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago 10, Ill.
Copyright, 1935, by American Medical Association

Subscription orders, notices of change of address, notices of subscription termination, and all correspondence should be sent to the Business Manager, American Medical Association, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago 10, Ill.

Reprints of articles in this journal may be obtained from the American Medical Association, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago 10, Ill.

Advertisements in this journal may be obtained from the American Medical Association, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago 10, Ill.

Copyright, 1935, by American Medical Association

Table of Contents

Summary	v
Acknowledgments.....	vii
Introduction.....	1
Patterns of participation and expenditure.....	2
The links between education and employment	4
The future shape of ABSTUDY.....	5
Living Allowance	7
Incidentals and Additional Incidentals Allowance	8
School Fees Allowance	9
Fares Allowance.....	10
Travel interstate for certificate or 'enabling' courses	10
Compassionate travel.....	10
Travel for dependents.....	11
Graduation travel	11
Eligibility and Awards	11
Away From Base Assistance.....	12
New South Wales: a closer look	13
Reflections on the announced ABSTUDY changes: cause for alarm?	16
Considerations for the future.....	18
Notes	19
Appendices	20
References.....	22

Figures

Figure 1	ABSTUDY and AUSTUDY beneficiaries 1988-1996	2
Figure 2	ABSTUDY expenditures 1988-1996	3
Figure 3	Summary of announced ABSTUDY changes effective 1 January 1998	6
Figure 4	Comparisons of relative allowances: AUSTUDY 1997, ABSTUDY 1997 and ABSTUDY 1998	7

Appendices

Table A1	ABSTUDY and AUSTUDY beneficiaries 1988-1996	20
Table A2	ABSTUDY expenditures 1988-1996	20
Figure A1	New South Wales Universities' Block Release Courses	21

Summary

ABSTUDY, the Aboriginal Study Assistance Scheme, is one of the most contentious special programs in indigenous affairs. In May 1997 the Howard Government announced a number of changes to ABSTUDY, including substantial reductions in funding by fiscal year 2000-01; these changes are to go into effect from 1 January 1998. This paper has been prepared to provide an overview of the announced changes and speculate on some of the possible outcomes.

Nationally, the number of ABSTUDY participants has fluctuated only marginally over the past several years, increasing from 40,813 in 1988 to 48,769 in 1996. Expenditure on ABSTUDY grew from \$81.1 million to \$121.6 million during this same period. Calculated in 1988-89 dollars, expenditure between 1988 and 1996 increased 12 per cent while the Consumer Price Index increased by 34 per cent. As part of the announced ABSTUDY changes, the Government has projected reductions in outlays of \$38.7 million by fiscal year 2000-01. Even with low levels of inflation, the proposed cuts to ABSTUDY represent a significant drop in Government expenditure.

Overview of the announced changes

Effective 1 January 1998, ABSTUDY benefits will be subject to a range of additional restrictions:

- Living Allowance: where ABSTUDY had employed a 'sudden death' cut off, from 1998 the cut-off will be replaced by an abatement scheme with a threshold well below current cut-off levels.
- Additional Incidentals Allowance: there is currently no limit to the allowance (except for Masters and PhD students for whom a \$2,000 limit applies). From 1998, the allowance will be capped at \$2,000 for all students.
- School Fees Allowance: beginning in 1998, the applicant (or the partner of the applicant) must qualify for Government assistance to be eligible for this allowance.
- Fares Allowance: travel interstate for certificate or enabling courses will no longer be allowed; compassionate travel will be limited to two return trips per year; travel home will be restricted where the student has brought dependent family members to the place of study; and fare assistance to attend a graduation ceremony will be restricted.
- Eligibility and awards: from 1998, students will be eligible for ABSTUDY assistance for only one undergraduate and two postgraduate courses.
- Away From Base Assistance: from 1998, this assistance will be restricted to a maximum of two return trips of no more than four weeks duration per year. Courses composed wholly or substantially of Away From Base components will no longer be eligible for coverage under ABSTUDY.

Considerations for the future

It is impossible to project the full impact of the announced changes at the present time; necessary data on current participants are not accessible and figures for indigenous enrolments will not be available until well after the changes have gone into effect. Some predictions are possible, however. For example, while DEETYA staff have estimated that 550 students would be affected by the changes to the Away From Base component of ABSTUDY, research undertaken for this paper indicates that as many as 868 students in eight universities across 11 campuses could be affected immediately by these changes in the State of New South Wales alone.

The authors conclude that there is a serious disjunction between the Government's announced commitment to improving educational outcomes for indigenous Australians and reductions in a program developed specifically to improve the educational and employment prospects of a socially and economically disadvantaged segment of the population. From a policy perspective, it is puzzling that plans to pare back a program that many would argue has been instrumental in increasing indigenous access and participation in education were announced before the Government's formal review of the program had been started, let alone completed. Further, the lack of detail on cost savings and the absence of any educational rationale leaves a distinct impression that this is an ideological and politically-driven exercise rather than one based on sound educational or economic principles. The issues are not merely political ones. If indigenous access to education is impeded, participation will decline. If participation declines, employment opportunities will likely decline as well. If employment opportunities decline the social welfare bill, and associated negative externalities for Australia, will increase.

Acknowledgments

An earlier version of this paper was presented to a seminar at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research. We would like to thank Mr Geoff Hansen, a consultant for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) who has been involved in a review of ABSTUDY for ATSIC, for acting as a discussant at that seminar. Staff and students associated with indigenous support centres within the universities of New South Wales were very generous in providing the data which informed our analysis. In particular we would like to thank Ms Laurel Williams, Acting Director, Wollotuka Centre and Ms Gail Garvey, Director, Aboriginal Student Liaison Office, Faculty of Medicine both from the University of Newcastle; Dr Kathleen Clapham, Head Yooroang Garang Centre, Faculty of Health Sciences, and Ms Janet Mooney, Director, Koori Centre both from the University of Sydney; Ms Ann Flood, Director, Goolangullia Centre, University of Western Sydney; Ms Tracey Hill, Director, Warawara Centre, Macquarie University; Mr Bill Harrison, Director, Aboriginal Education Centre, University of Wollongong; Mr. Linton Howarth, Director, Wammarra Centre, Charles Sturt University; Mr Bob Morgan, Director, Jumbunna Centre, University of Technology, Sydney; and Mr Ken Ralph, Director, Aboriginal Support Centre, Australian Catholic University, Sydney. Staff from the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs were helpful in providing us with available data. In particular we would like to thank Dr Peter Whitney, Assistant Secretary, Student Assistance Policy Branch and Ms Megan Summers for providing access to unpublished data on expenditure and participation. A draft of the final paper was greatly enhanced through insightful comments from Professor Jon Altman, Dr Boyd Hunter, Dr Will Sanders, and Dr John Taylor of the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research. Finally, we would like to thank Hilary Bek for editorial assistance and Jennifer Braid for her layout and production efforts.

Introduction

ABSTUDY, the Aboriginal Study Assistance Scheme, is one of the most contentious special programs in indigenous affairs. It is poorly understood by many in the community and is sometimes cited as a program that provides an unfair advantage to indigenous students and their families. Recently the Howard Government has voiced concern over the degree to which ABSTUDY is meeting the needs of the disadvantaged and in May 1997 announced a number of changes to ABSTUDY, including substantial reductions in funding by fiscal year 2000–01. At the same time, the Government announced its intention to conduct a review of the program 'to ensure funds are more efficiently targeted' (Vanstone 1997a). Monitoring change in the educational status of indigenous people often suffers from a time-lag between the implementation of particular policies and the measurement of their impact. It will be difficult to assess the impact of the announced changes for some time. However, given the importance of education as a contributor to many social indicators, and given the substantial nature of the program changes outlined by the Government, this paper has been prepared to provide an overview of the announced changes and speculate on some of the possible outcomes—particularly for those studying in New South Wales universities, institutions with which the authors are most familiar—rather than wait to review the effects at some point in the future. This approach is being taken with the aim of contributing to the policy discussion and debate that will form part of the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs' (DEETYA) review of the program.

ABSTUDY first appeared as a Commonwealth Government program in 1969 as the Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme. The scheme was designed to foster indigenous participation in education after secondary schooling. ABSTUDY provided grants for courses of study at universities, colleges of advanced education, technical colleges, centres of vocational training and other institutions. In the financial year 1968–69, a total of \$62,177 was spent on the ABSTUDY scheme. During that first year, 115 grants were made by the Commonwealth and administered through the Commonwealth Department of Education and Science.¹ Individual grants included a living allowance of \$1,100 per annum, with an additional \$7 per week for a spouse and \$2.50 for each dependent child. Compulsory course fees were met and a book and equipment allowance to the value of \$100 per year was provided. Up to three return fares were available annually to facilitate study by students in rural or remote areas; these were intended to allow students to return home during the normal term breaks. Married students with dependent children received one return fare per year for their families (Williams and Chambers 1986; Watts 1976).

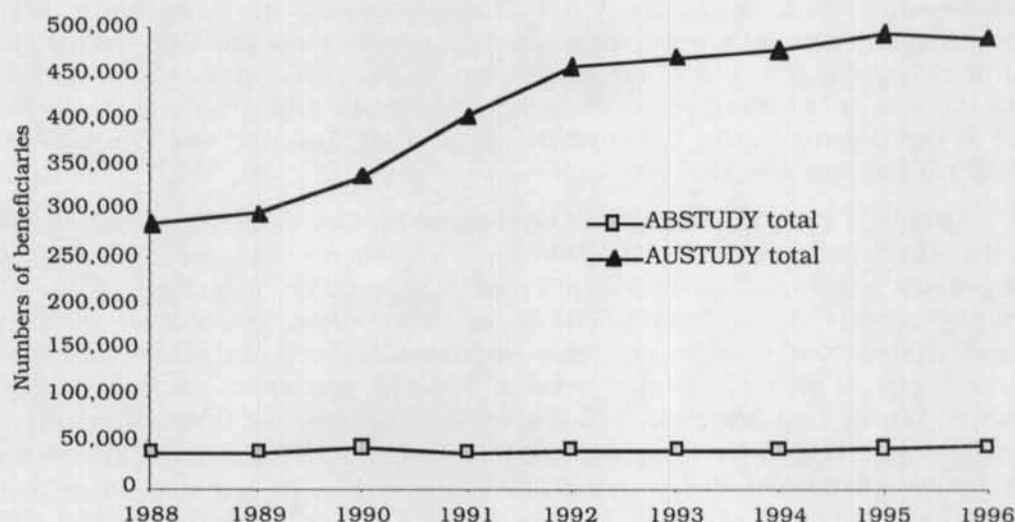
ABSTUDY, now referred to as the Aboriginal Study Assistance Scheme, retains today much of the general shape and purpose of that initial program. The scheme now extends beyond the original emphasis on tertiary studies to include focused assistance for indigenous people wanting to complete secondary, and in some cases, primary school studies. To qualify for ABSTUDY, an individual must

meet three conditions: he or she must be an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person; must be enrolled in and studying an approved course; and cannot be a recipient of other government assistance, with the exception of pensions (DEETYA 1997a: 5).

Patterns of participation and expenditure

Nationally, the number of ABSTUDY participants has fluctuated only marginally over the past several years, increasing from 40,813 in 1988 to 48,769 in 1996, (an increase of about 20 per cent). During this same period of time, AUSTUDY, the Commonwealth's study assistance scheme for disadvantaged students, grew at a more rapid rate, from 289,036 in 1988 to 489,541 in 1996 (an increase of about 69 per cent). These patterns of relative growth are depicted in Figure 1 and Appendix A1.

Figure 1. ABSTUDY and AUSTUDY beneficiaries 1988-1996



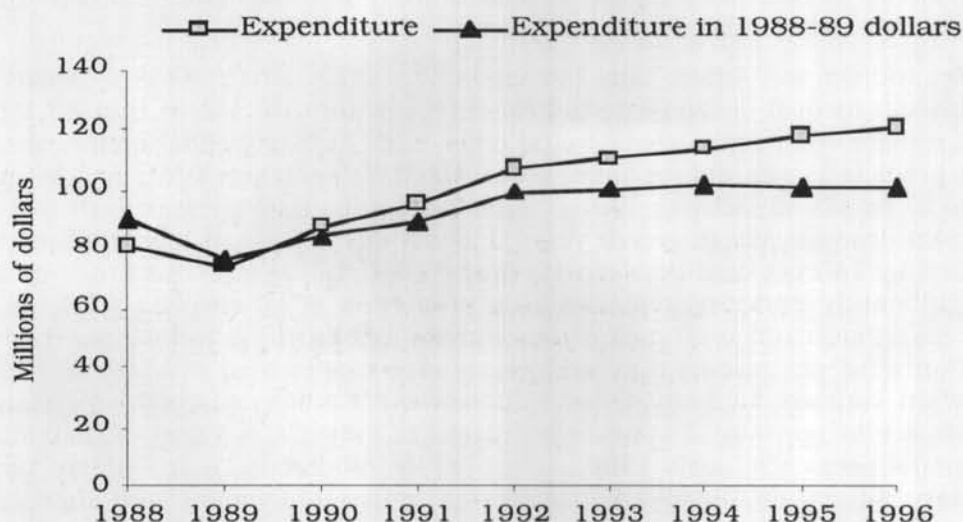
Source: Unpublished data from DEETYA

Expenditure on ABSTUDY had grown from about \$81.1 million in 1988 to over \$121.6 million by 1996 (an increase of about 50 per cent). A significant shift in ABSTUDY expenditure between the education sectors occurred from 1988 to 1996. In 1988 the expenditure was almost equally divided between school (\$39 million) and tertiary (\$42 million) students. By 1996 increasing tertiary enrolments attracted a relatively greater proportion of ABSTUDY funds to support

the tertiary sector (\$75 million) as compared to the school (\$47 million) sector. This shift has arisen from the increased emphasis placed upon developing better access and participation rates within the tertiary sector. In the period between 1988 and 1996 measures have been adopted by all Australian universities to offer alternative entry into and enhanced support within universities (National Board of Employment, Education and Training 1997). The figures showing an increase, however, are misleading. If these same expenditures are calculated in real dollars (deflated for inflation), growth in spending is far more modest. In 1988-89 dollars, expenditure between 1988 and 1996 increased only 12 per cent; during this period the Consumer Price Index increased by 34 per cent. Patterns of expenditure are shown in Figure 2 and Appendix A2.

As part of the announced ABSTUDY changes, the Government has projected reductions in outlays of \$38.7 million by fiscal year 2000-01. These cuts were estimated at \$5 million in 1997-98, \$10.9 million in 1998-99, \$11.2 million in 1999-2000 and \$11.6 million in 2000-01 (Vanstone 1997a; Senate Legislation Committee 1997a, Answer to Questions on Notice No. 119). Even with low levels of inflation, the proposed cuts to ABSTUDY represent what will most likely be a significant drop in Government expenditure.

Figure 2. ABSTUDY expenditures 1988-1996



Source: Unpublished data from DEETYA

The links between education and employment

Low levels of indigenous employment remain one of the most intractable of contemporary social issues and it is likely that current reforms in industrial relations and labour market programs will, if anything, exacerbate this problem (Taylor and Altman 1997). The reduction of targeted programs for indigenous people in favour of mainstream programs seems a potentially unpromising policy approach. Research has shown that among a range of variables, Aboriginality itself substantially decreases the probability of being in full- or part-time employment and increases the likelihood of being unemployed or not in the labour force (Daly 1995). There is, however, ample statistical evidence to indicate links between education and employment for indigenous Australians (Jones 1991; Ross 1991; Australian Bureau of Statistics/Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (ABS/CAEPR) 1996). Yet those links are not always as predictable as one might think. An investigation into the economic benefits of secondary education for indigenous males, for example, revealed only a modest gain in income for those who completed Year 12 studies; those who had completed studies to Year 12 were still markedly behind non-indigenous Australians with the same level of education in terms of income (Chapman 1991). On the other hand, it has been shown that post-secondary education yields a significant income dividend for indigenous people (Daly and Liu 1995). Together, the various investigations suggest that education, particularly post-secondary education, is critical to increasing indigenous employment and income.

Yet indigenous Australians lag far behind other Australians in terms of participation in post-secondary studies. A recent analysis shows that 83.1 per cent of indigenous people aged 15 and older have no post-school qualifications but, as predicted by earlier research, those who have such qualifications are more likely to be employed (Schwab 1997). At the tertiary level, indigenous participation has grown dramatically in recent years. Indeed, enrolments in higher education expanded by 140 per cent between 1988 and 1996, but indigenous students are still significantly under-represented as a proportion of all enrolled students. A closer examination of the types of enrolments among these indigenous higher education students reveals they are greatly over-represented in lower level and 'non-award' courses; for example, over 20 per cent of indigenous higher education students are in non-award courses compared to only 1.4 per cent of their non-indigenous peers (Schwab 1996). Thus while education, particularly post-secondary education, is clearly associated with employment and increased income, indigenous post-secondary students as a cohort are still attempting to catch up to the participation and outcome levels of other Australians. ABSTUDY, the core indigenous student assistance scheme, supports many of these students and any reduction in such assistance needs to be considered carefully in terms of its potential impact on patterns of access and participation to education and ultimately employment.

The future shape of ABSTUDY

ABSTUDY or its various components has been formally reviewed several times since its inception. A major evaluation of the program was conducted by the Commonwealth Department of Education in 1984 (Williams and Chambers 1986) and a project audit was conducted by the Auditor-General in 1991 (Australian National Audit Office 1991). Another evaluation was conducted by the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) in 1995 (Byrne et al. 1995) but the report remains in draft form and has not been publicly released. A major review by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) is currently underway and DEETYA has recently announced the initiation of another review which is scheduled for completion in December 1997 (Vanstone 1997b).

The Howard Government signalled its intentions to implement changes to indigenous education programs soon after it came to power, but the specific details of those intended changes as they related to ABSTUDY only emerged with the release of the 1997 Budget papers. The changes announced for implementation from 1 January 1998 target six varieties of allowance, eligibility and award:

- Living Allowance
- Additional Incidentals Allowance
- School Fees Allowance
- Travel
- Eligibility and Awards
- Away from Base Allowance

The changes are summarised in Figure 3. In the sections that follow, the announced changes to ABSTUDY for each of these areas will be examined in detail. Finally, the potential impact of these on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in education will be discussed.

Figure 3. Summary of announced ABSTUDY changes effective 1 January 1998

	1997	1998
Living Allowance	Income test: 'sudden death' cut-off when student, partner or parental income reaches identified upper income limit (full-time Masters or PhD excepted).	Income test for all students: abatement (gradual reduction) as student, partner or parental income rises above prescribed thresholds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student: \$6,000 • partner: \$14,690 • parent: \$23,350
Additional Incidentals Allowance	Unlimited after student contribution of \$370 (Masters or PhD students maximum \$2,000).	All students maximum of \$2,000. Exceptions: not stated.
School Fees Allowance	\$150 per year (for all students under 16 years).	\$150 per year (for eligible students under 16 years). Applicant or partner must qualify for Government assistance.
Fares Allowance: travel for certificate or enabling courses	No limit.	No interstate travel to attend such courses.
for compassionate reasons	No limit.	Two return trips per year.
for dependents	Student allowed to bring dependent family members to place of study and claim travel home during the year.	If student has used fares allowance to bring family members to place of study, student cannot claim allowance to travel home during the year.
graduation travel	One return journey within Australia to place of study.	One return journey within Australia to place of study. If student moves to different home location, travel equivalent only to previous travel entitlement.
Eligibility and Awards	No limit on number of courses.	Limit of one undergraduate and two postgraduate courses. No limit to certificate and enabling courses.
Away from Base Assistance	'Reasonable costs', no limits. Exceptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2000 limit MA/PhD • limit 2 testing and assessment programs per year. 	Maximum 4 weeks and 2 return trips per year. No interstate travel for certificate or enabling tertiary courses. No funds for courses wholly or substantially of away from base components.

Living Allowance

Living allowance is the core feature of ABSTUDY and is intended to assist the student in meeting day-to-day living expenses. Currently, ABSTUDY is income tested with a 'sudden death' cut-off of eligibility when the student, partner, or parental income reaches an identified upper limit. From 1998, the ABSTUDY Living Allowance will no longer include a 'sudden death' cut-off. Instead, the cut-off will be replaced by an abatement scheme whereby the allowance decreases proportionally when the income of the student, partner or parent exceeds a prescribed threshold. Details of thresholds for 1998 have not been announced yet, but current DEETYA documentation describing the changes employs the 1997 ABSTUDY figures which identify but do not implement a series of abatement thresholds for 1997. Given that the thresholds for ABSTUDY in 1997 are the same for AUSTUDY in 1997, it is likely the ABSTUDY 1998 thresholds for the commencement of abatement will align with the AUSTUDY 1998 figures. If this is true, the threshold for the commencement of partner income in 1998 will be \$14,690 per year for a 20 year old married student with no children. The ABSTUDY payment will decrease in proportion to the amount the partner's income exceeds that threshold up to the cut-off of \$28,493; that same student on AUSTUDY would be subject to a lower cut-off of \$26,493. Figure 4 provides several examples of the changes to living allowances students can expect through ABSTUDY for 1998. These are shown relative to ABSTUDY and AUSTUDY in 1997.²

In addition, changes in the Living Allowance will apply to many current and future postgraduate students. Where the 1997 ABSTUDY Living Allowance income test was not applied to full-time Masters or PhD students, these students will not be exempt from the test in 1998. Further, those postgraduate students who 'fail' the relevant income test (as yet undefined) may not be eligible for other, supplementary allowances such as relocation allowances, Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) or course fees, and thesis allowances (DEETYA 1997c).

The announced changes to the Living Allowance portion of ABSTUDY effectively move payments toward the levels available in AUSTUDY. Many applicants for ABSTUDY for 1998, especially those currently enrolled, will find their payments have been reduced. To the degree that ABSTUDY has facilitated access and participation in education, it can only be expected that some students will choose not to enter or continue their education when funding has been reduced from this year's levels. This could reduce any momentum gained in indigenous participation at secondary level from Years 10 to 12, and in tertiary education.

Figure 4. Comparisons of relative allowances: AUSTUDY 1997, ABSTUDY 1997 and ABSTUDY 1998

Student No. 1

- 18 year old, single, dependent full-time student, living at home
- Parental adjusted family income \$22,000, student income \$5,000

AUSTUDY 1997	ABSTUDY 1997	ABSTUDY 1998
\$4,546 per year	\$4,546 per year	\$4,546 per year

Student No. 2

- 20 year old, single dependent full-time student, living at home
- Parental adjusted family income \$30,000, student income \$5,000

AUSTUDY 1997	ABSTUDY 1997	ABSTUDY 1998
\$2,893 per year	\$4,546 per year	\$2,884 per year

Student No. 3

- 21 year old, married full-time student, living independent of parents
- Partner's adjusted income \$24,000, student income \$5000

AUSTUDY 1997	ABSTUDY 1997	ABSTUDY 1998
\$2,242 per year	\$10,094 per year	\$5,438 per year

Student No. 4

- 21 year old, married full-time student, living independent of parents
- Partner's adjusted income \$27,000, student income \$5000

AUSTUDY 1997	ABSTUDY 1997	ABSTUDY 1998
\$0 per year	\$10,093 per year	\$3,938 per year

Incidentals and Additional Incidentals Allowance

The Incidentals Allowance is a unique feature of ABSTUDY, contributing to expenses encountered at the beginning of each academic year by way of institutional fees, required textbooks, stationary and so on. There are two aspects to the Incidentals Allowance. The initial payment received at the beginning of the academic year is a one-off payment calculated against a student's period of study in that year. Those eligible for the Incidentals Allowance are: full-time and part-time tertiary students; full-time and part-time secondary students who are 18 or older at 1 January 1997; and full-time Masters and PhD students. There are currently no indications that these arrangements will be changed. The amount available for 1997 was \$352 for a full-time student.

The second component of the Incidentals Allowance, the Additional Incidentals Allowance, provides for 100 per cent reimbursement towards any essential course costs incurred over and above a specified amount. This allowance is intended to assist in meeting excess expenses for educational institution fees, textbooks, equipment and stationery beyond those provided for by the Incidentals

Allowance. The current (1997) ABSTUDY program requires students contribute \$370 dollars beyond the Incidentals Allowance towards the excess course costs after which the scheme will provide the balance. There is no limit to the Additional Incidentals Allowance at the moment except for Masters and PhD students for whom a \$2,000 limit applies. The 1998 program caps the allowance at \$2,000 for all students.

DEETYA staff anecdotally suggest that, 'approximately 10' students will be affected by the capping of the Additional Incidentals Allowance. According to their figures, in 1996 a total of 59 students claimed Additional Incidentals Allowances. Of those 59 students, payments made against 50 claims averaged \$500; well below the upper limit now set at \$2,000. Nine of the students, however, received on average \$6,500 each, or 77 per cent of the total additional allowance expenditure for 1996 (Senate Legislation Committee 1997b: 352).

Out of the total number of indigenous students eligible for the Additional Incidentals Allowance, a strikingly low number actually made a claim in 1996 and an even smaller number currently exceed the new capping level. It is predominantly visual arts, law, medical and health science students who go significantly above the prescribed amount of course expenditure. Considering the costs associated with these courses this is not surprising. Text books for law and medical courses range from \$30 to \$200 each. The equipment required to successfully complete a degree in medicine is essential and quite expensive. The range of materials needed in the Visual Arts is likewise costly. Indeed, it is surprising that more students are not making claims for Additional Incidentals Allowance. The process of claiming any additional incidentals currently requires considerable and painstaking record keeping by students, together with final verification of the expenditure as essential by course convenors. Though most students will not be affected by reductions in this allowance, students with genuinely high costs could be disadvantaged and their progress through high cost courses such as law or medicine where indigenous students are underrepresented may well be impeded.

School Fees Allowance

The School Fees Allowance provides up to \$150 per year to assist in meeting the costs of school fees levied by an educational institution. Beginning in 1998, applicant eligibility will depend on the applicant (or the partner of the applicant) who is living at home qualifying for Government assistance such as a Department of Social Security benefit, a Community Development Employment Projects scheme wage, or a Health Care Card. Clearly, this indirect means test will reduce the number of students who receive assistance with school fees, stationery and the like.

Fares Allowance

This allowance provides a range of assistance with the cost of travel for the purposes of participating in approved courses of study. Student travel allowances are affected by a range of changes in the 1998 program with repercussions on four types or conditions of travel: travel interstate for certificate or enabling courses, compassionate travel, travel for dependents, and graduation travel.

Travel interstate for certificate or 'enabling' courses

Many universities have developed certificate or enabling courses to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to gain the skills and experience they need to engage in tertiary studies. Often these courses have been specifically developed by a university to enable a prospective student to undertake full degree courses within that institution.

Prior to the 1997 budget announcement students have been able to receive travel, living and incidentals allowances to allow them to undertake these courses anywhere in Australia. However, this will no longer be the case as funding will not be available for students to undertake interstate courses. The restrictions are presumably based on the assumption that students should be able to undertake a certificate or enabling course within their own States or Territories. However, this ignores the real differences in tertiary institutions, the kinds of skills necessary for successful completion of specific courses, and incorrectly assumes that all enabling courses are the same or that all skill requirements are comparable. For example, it seems likely a student from a remote area who wishes to undertake study at an Indigenous Higher Education Centre in the southeast will be better prepared to study there if he or she completes the necessary enabling course at that institution rather than in a local TAFE.

Compassionate travel

Compassionate travel assistance is designed to allow students to return home to attend to a family illness or death of an immediate family member, the student's own illness, or for the student to participate in a community activity as required by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander law. Currently, ABSTUDY regulations place no limit on this allowance. Beginning in 1998, however, students will be limited to two return trips per year.

An example that portrays the actual use of compassionate travel at a university is instructive. The Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra has a high proportion of interstate students who could be expected to draw on this allowance. However, at the ANU it appears that claims for travel home for compassionate reasons are not common. In the last seven years, compassionate travel has only been used by eight indigenous students for a total of nine trips. Enrolments identified through the Jabal Centre have grown from 11 in 1989 to 52 in 1997. Clearly, in the period between 1989 and 1997, considering the growth of indigenous enrolments at the University, the rate at which students required

compassionate travel is relatively low. Given that the guidelines already specify the degree of the relationship for which assistance can be applied for compassionate travel and that death certificates must be supplied, it would seem that potential rorting of this allowance is unlikely.

Travel for dependents

In the current program, the fares for any dependents of a student are paid to allow the dependents to accompany the student on approved travel at the commencement and end of study, during courses of more than one semester, during school vacations and/or for compassionate travel. From 1998, travel for students with dependents is restricted; if a student has used his or her fare allowance entitlement to bring family members to live at his or her place of study, that student cannot be paid an allowance to travel home during the year to reunite with his or her extended family and community.

Graduation travel

Graduation travel is an entitlement designed to enable a student who has completed a course of at least two years' duration or a postgraduate degree to attend his or her graduation ceremony. Currently, and also in 1998, a student is allowed one return journey within Australia to the place of study in order to attend his or her graduation ceremony. Beginning in 1998, however, a new policy restricts this travel allowance. Specifically, if a student moves to a different home location, that student's graduation travel entitlement will be equivalent only to the previous travel entitlement. For example, a student who enrolled while living at home in Bourke but studies and completes a degree in Sydney and then moves to Perth will only qualify for a graduation travel entitlement equivalent to a return fare between Bourke and Sydney.

The various fares allowance changes will affect indigenous students in a variety of ways. Those who require bridging or enabling courses but who ultimately wish to enrol in a unique or 'national' program in another State or Territory such as might be offered by one of the Indigenous Higher Education Centres will find they need to begin their studies at a local institution instead. Such individuals are effectively forced to undertake not one but two disruptive moves and acclimatisation to two different institutions. It is possible that there will be some decline in participation as a result. Similarly, students who are faced with restrictions on compassionate travel or travel for dependents are effectively being faced with choices between family and community cultural obligations on the one hand, and education on the other. These are formidable obstacles for individuals who are venturing forth into new and unknown educational arenas.

Eligibility and Awards

At the present time (1997) there is no limit on the number of courses a student may undertake with assistance. The changes announced for 1998 will

restrict any particular student receiving ABSTUDY assistance to one undergraduate and two postgraduate courses. ABSTUDY assistance for certificate and enabling courses, however, will remain unlimited.

For some degrees, and some indigenous students, the only assured entry into a particular program is by possession of another degree. Numerous cases exist in universities throughout the country whereby an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student gained entry to a program because they had demonstrated, through the acquisition of a prior degree, an ability to complete a course of study and obtain a recognised degree. This is particularly so for students trying to gain entry into medical and law programs. The learning pathway for indigenous students is not the same as that for other populations within Australia. Many indigenous Australians need to 'test the waters' of an educational system which may have failed them in the past. Most come to universities without the skills necessary to achieve higher degrees, and require an opportunity to catch-up and gain familiarity with the educational system before then can progress. Achieving one degree may buoy the student with the necessary confidence to tackle, for example, a medical degree.

Potentially, this new restriction, limiting the number of degrees a student is eligible to undertake with ABSTUDY assistance, may have the most significant impact at the postgraduate level. Should an individual wish to pursue a further degree, but only achieved a Bachelor degree in the first instance, that student is almost always compelled to undertake a Graduate Diploma, a Master of Letters (MLitt) or some other 'qualifying' higher degree. As 'qualifying' degrees to move into Masters and PhD programs these may not be eligible for ABSTUDY support. It is unclear how the Government will apply course definitions which restrict students to one undergraduate and two postgraduate courses.

Away From Base Assistance

This allowance provides funding to enable students to travel away from the normal place of residence for a short time to participate in residential schools, field trips, testing or assessment programs, and placements. The entitlements can include fares allowances, meals, accommodation, and living allowances. Currently, the program allows payments of 'reasonable costs' and there is no specific limit on the allowance other than a ceiling of \$2,000 for Masters and PhD students and a limit placed upon two testing and assessments per year. From 1998, Away From Base Assistance payments will be restricted to a maximum of two return trips per year of no more than four weeks duration per year. Courses composed wholly or substantially of away from base components will no longer be eligible for coverage under ABSTUDY. The changes made to the Away From Base component of ABSTUDY could have considerable impact on indigenous students currently enrolled and could reduce the participation levels and completion rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in some higher education courses.

Residential components of various course structures have, over the last decade or so, undergone considerable development towards what is now

commonly referred to as 'Block Release' delivery. The Block Release mode of study has been developed by TAFE and universities across the country to more effectively cater for the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, enabling a far greater level of participation in courses which improve the employment prospects of indigenous Australians. Through the Block Release mode of delivery, individuals are able to engage in study to improve their employment and career prospects while at the same time remaining in employment and/or within their communities. This is cost-effective in that whole families do not have to be relocated for extended periods so that the student can attend university or TAFE courses not available closer to home. The Block Release programs have been designed to allow students who otherwise would not participate to acquire essential skills and experience in a broad range of areas that may enable them to progress through certificate, diploma and higher degree courses if they so choose.

Universities are only able to offer Block Release programs with any integrity if they are able to bring the students onto campus for a specified number of intensive, short-term residentials. These are already limited to the absolute essential length and number so as to not compromise the degrees being offered and to limit the number of disruptions to the students, their families and their employment. Proposals for all degree courses, including those offered through Block Release, must go to the relevant academic committees within universities to ensure equivalent quality across all degree programs. Restrictions on the number and duration of these residential courses may significantly affect the integrity and viability of the degrees being offered through this study mode. As many Block Release programs require considerably more than the maximum four weeks per year in intensive residentials, the proposed changes could lead to the demise of many if not most of these programs. The effect could be that those students currently engaged in a course offered through Block Release mode will not be able to complete their studies.³

There is a significant learning pathway common within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities which begins with individuals becoming involved in specific, skill based courses that may lead onto the Year 12 certificate and/or enabling courses delivered via Block Release mode. Having achieved certificate level qualifications, individuals are thus prepared to study for a diploma or undergraduate degree. Indeed, some may continue to post graduate study. The announced changes may impede if not block access to this learning pathway.

New South Wales: a closer look

As noted earlier, it is impossible to assess the impact of education policy ahead of the implementation of that policy, but it is possible to undertake some informed speculation. Predicting the impact of changes to benefits such as ABSTUDY living allowances is impossible without access to DEETYA data and DEETYA staff have indicated they do not have the capacity to undertake requests

for data for external purposes. Still there are other avenues for exploring the potential impact of some of the announced changes. An illustrative discussion of the anticipated effect of changes to the Away From Base component of ABSTUDY is presented below.

During the Senate Legislation Committee meetings for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs on 5 June 1997, DEETYA staff estimated that 550 students would be affected by the changes to the Away From Base component of ABSTUDY (Senate Legislation Committee, 1997b:353). In this section the paper attempts to predict the impact of these changes in a single State. While it is obviously impossible to gauge the impact until 1988 enrolment figures can be assessed (and those will not be available until well after the announced changes are in place), staff of the indigenous support centres are well placed to predict the likely impacts. Indeed, they are in the middle of adjusting (and closing) programs in anticipation of changes to indigenous student enrolments resulting from the changes to the Away From Base component of ABSTUDY. The data used in the following projections were gathered by staff from indigenous support centres in New South Wales universities and supplied to the authors through the New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory Aboriginal Higher Education Network.

The New South Wales figures show that as many as 868 students in eight universities across 11 campuses could be affected immediately by these changes in that State alone (Appendix Figure A1). It is important to note that while New South Wales has the highest number of indigenous higher education enrolments (1,875 in 1996), this State still only accounts for 27 per cent of indigenous higher education enrolments across the country (Schwab 1996).

From the points of view of staff in various New South Wales universities, the impact of the proposed changes to ABSTUDY are likely to be far greater than estimated by DEETYA. A closer look at four examples of affected programs will further illustrate the dimensions of the expected impact on programs in New South Wales alone.

University of Sydney

A substantial part of the teaching conducted through the Centre for Indigenous Health Studies is via Block Release delivery at the Cumberland campus and has been provided to communities throughout rural New South Wales for more than a decade. Currently, there are 152 students enrolled in these programs.

Faced with the uncertainty brought about by the changes to ABSTUDY, and in particular the Away From Base component, the Centre staff made a decision to postpone (and perhaps cancel) an important initiative. A new postgraduate course structure consisting of a Graduate Diploma and articulated Masters Degree in Aboriginal Community Health which would have been offered through Block Release mode, was being developed for commencement in 1998. Staff at the Centre have already been informed by DEETYA personnel that they will no longer

fund students enrolled in the Aboriginal health worker programs which utilise field placements outside students' own communities.

Staff have estimated that the proposed changes will affect a total of 209 students enrolled in the Faculty of Health Sciences in 1997. Of these, 174 students will be affected by changes to living allowances. A total of 186 students comprising 151 indigenous students and 35 non-indigenous students will be directly affected by changes to Away From Base assistance.

University of Newcastle

A significant aspect of the Bachelor of Medicine degree involves clinical field placements; these are required of third, fourth and fifth year medical students. Year 3 students are required to do a 'country term' lasting ten weeks, as well as an eight week elective. All are formally assessed and they are encouraged to widen their base for a broader experience by choosing interstate and overseas electives. Year 4 students have six terms of six weeks duration where they are to rotate through wards not always in a local hospital. Year 5 students have an eight week elective where they are encouraged to go interstate or overseas to broaden their experience. These placements will no longer be funded through Away From Base components of ABSTUDY. The effect on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students may be to restrict their ability to complete the course, thus reducing the number of indigenous medical graduates from this institution.

University of Wollongong

The Bachelor of Health Science, Indigenous Health program currently has 25 students enrolled. The course is delivered via Block Release mode. Students attend three intensive weekends per semester on campus. Course assignments are then completed by students back in their own communities. Students in this course are typically employed in health and community service positions in their home communities. Many have come, for example, from Aboriginal medical services, departments of community services, the juvenile justice system, community health centres, hospital liaison offices, and health education programs.

The degree is designed in Block Release mode to meet the employment and community needs of the students. University of Wollongong staff anticipate a decline in student participation if the course is packaged in any other way. While a few students are from out of State, the majority are from communities ranging from the southern and south-western suburbs of Sydney and along the coastal strip south of Wollongong to the Victorian border. These students would find it difficult to complete a 'traditional' course; without the support of Away From Base funds, the university may not be able to continue the program.

University of Western Sydney

The Aboriginal Rural Education Program (AREP) at the Macarthur Campus is structured so that students attend five two-week residential blocks per year. The Program is designed so that students in the Diploma of Indigenous Australian Cultural Studies can choose to extend their studies through an articulated program. The Diploma can lead into one of the two Bachelor degrees. Half of the 94 students enrolled in the Diploma have transferred into the Bachelor program. The catchment area for this program ranges over country New South Wales with a small number resident in the Sydney region and a small number resident in Dubbo.

With the proposed cuts to Away From Base, staff of the Goolangullia Centre believe the program is in jeopardy and that the Centre is under threat of closure; its principal focus is the delivery of the AREP. Students currently studying are unlikely to complete their courses as employment and family obligations prevent them from enrolling as full-time students and relocating to the Macarthur Campus. Elimination of such programs would particularly affect Aboriginal communities in small towns and remote areas, communities most in need of the skills tertiary graduates can bring. Plans to increase the number of degree courses available via Block Release mode and offered through the Goolangullia Centre now appear unlikely to proceed.

The examples above illustrate the degree to which the announced restrictions on Away From Base Assistance are expected to affect indigenous students and programs within their institutions. The demise of Block Release programs in New South Wales alone would likely affect 868 students in such programs. Students enrolled in programs that survive the cuts and continue with their current structures will need to cover the costs of Away From Base activities through some other means or forego participation. Students in many of these programs have already indicated they will not be able to continue with their studies if these cuts occur. The impact in terms of access would be particularly significant in that many students use Block Release studies as an educational pathway. Many of these students would probably not have entered tertiary studies through any other means.

Reflections on the announced ABSTUDY changes: cause for alarm?

DEETYA have acknowledged that there are some serious difficulties in the blanket applicability of the announced changes to all institutions, and consultations initiated with some institutions have begun in an attempt to resolve some of these problems. The difficulties arise out of the complexity of indigenous education across the country and it is a positive sign that the Department has acknowledged the need to examine this problem more fully and possibly apply some discretion in implementation. Yet a careful examination of even a handful of

programs in a single State suggests the issues are broad ranging and that there is a real danger that gains in indigenous participation in education across the country may be eroded by the announced changes to ABSTUDY.

There have been indications over the past few years of Government interest in a greater alignment of ABSTUDY and AUSTUDY. The announced changes for ABSTUDY in 1998 are a significant step in that direction. While the Government has retained several distinct features of ABSTUDY in recognition of the unique needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the close alignment of the abatement rate applied to living allowances, for example, appears to signal the intention to move towards a single, all inclusive student support program. From a policy perspective, it is important to consider if best outcomes will result from the Government implementing changes that appear to reduce or restrict benefits to members of a disadvantaged group before a careful review of the program has been completed.

After reviewing the announced changes and the Department's responses to questions before the Senate Legislation Committee it is difficult to conclude that the changes were informed by careful and appropriate consideration of educational outcomes. There is little to indicate thorough research on impact and nothing to suggest that these changes were shaped by considerations of evidence for the growing success in indigenous educational policy or practice. It is particularly ironic that a program that many would argue has been instrumental in increasing indigenous access and participation in education is being pared back before the formal review of the program has been started, let alone completed.

A disturbing outcome of the announced changes is that there will be an immediate affect on all current students; there will be no maintenance of entitlements to continuing students. Rather, entitlements will be eliminated, reduced or restricted. The lack of any attempt to progressively implement the changes so as not to disrupt the study of existing students, as was the case with changes to the HECS fees, is puzzling, particularly when the target group is recognised to be especially educationally and socioeconomically disadvantaged. It is not surprising that reports from indigenous education support centres across the country indicate many students who are currently enrolled are anticipating their withdrawal from studies.

Finally, many of the announced changes to ABSTUDY seem to ignore the distribution of the indigenous population which is comparatively more rural and remote than the rest of the Australian population. According to the 1996 Census, about twice as many indigenous Australians live in rural areas as do other Australians, and many of the changes affecting travel and Away From Base assistance will have considerable impact on indigenous students from rural areas. Again, it is inappropriate that policy changes seem not to have considered the negative impact upon students already locationally disadvantaged.

Considerations for the future

For over 25 years, education policy has focused on increasing the involvement, access, participation, and equitable and appropriate outcomes for indigenous people. Educators, administrators and governments have examined, discussed, and recommended a range of options and identified a variety of goals, priorities and strategies (Schwab 1995). While policy discussions have often been repetitive, on the practical level some important advances have been made. In higher education, for example, there are more indigenous people participating in education and completing degrees than ever before. However, while many indigenous people call for an even higher level of indigenous participation, the percentage of indigenous people participating at all levels of education remains well below that of other Australians (Schwab 1996). It is also clear, however, that some of the conditions which stimulate success are now well known. In the last decade the financial and logistical support provided to Aboriginal Education Advisors in schools and Student Support Centres in universities have played an important role in increasing participation and completion rates of indigenous students (Bourke, Burden and Moore 1996). It is crucial at this time that any future policy development promotes rather than stifles the increasing levels of indigenous participation in education.

The Government has announced its commitment to improving the education outcomes of Indigenous Australians (Vanstone 1997a). To achieve this, it is imperative that policy and programs aimed at improving indigenous engagement with education recognise, as the base line, the continuing economic and educational disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Indeed, care should be taken to protect and enhance programs that have demonstrated the achievement of greater participation and graduation rates, particularly those that 'enable' students to progress through the education system. Given the Government's commitment to improved outcomes and in the context of the educational and social disadvantage of indigenous Australians, one would hope the Government's policy and program changes would be guided by knowledge and evidence of effective educational and administrative practice and not dictated only by budget considerations.

Where there have been achievements in indigenous access, participation, and outcomes in education, there has often been a corresponding recognition of cultural difference which has enabled these advances (Bourke, Burden and Moore 1996). Programs which encourage indigenous participation in education while simultaneously being responsive to family, community and cultural commitments have been powerful tools for bringing indigenous students into educational settings. The variety of course delivery modes have been instrumental in allowing individuals to choose the level of engagement, study environment, and method of study most suitable to them at particular stages of their lives. That some of these options are now under threat has led many educators to predict decreases in participation in higher education by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

It should also be noted that many of the advances in indigenous engagement with western education have emerged in the context of consultation with indigenous educators and the wider indigenous community. The announced ABSTUDY changes show little evidence of having arisen out of such consultation. Indeed, many of the changes will effectively reduce the flexibility of programs and remove discretionary powers to address unique problems or issues as they arise. These changes reverse 25 years of policy advice and practice highlighting the importance of consultation and the practical devolution of responsibility to institutions.

To date, only the broad outline of the announced ABSTUDY changes has emerged, but that outline has alarmed many indigenous students, educators and indigenous communities. All are concerned about what appear to be efforts to pare back a program developed specifically to improve the educational and employment prospects of a socially and economically disadvantaged segment of the population. In this sense, the symbolic impact of the announced changes must be acknowledged as well. Indigenous disadvantage is an emotive issue and the Government's actions will be examined and assessed carefully by observers both in Australia and abroad. The lack of detail on cost savings and the absence of any educational rationale leaves a distinct impression that this is an ideological and politically-driven exercise rather than one based on sound educational or economic principles. The concerns of many seem justifiable given the significance of the changes, and the fact that they were announced in advance of the current DEETYA ABSTUDY review.

There are some serious questions to be asked about the announced changes to ABSTUDY. Most importantly, there is a need for evidence that the announced cuts will not reverse hard won gains in indigenous access and participation in education at all levels. The issues are not merely political ones. If indigenous access to education is impeded, participation will decline. If participation declines, employment opportunities will likely decline as well. If employment opportunities decline the social welfare bill, and associated negative externalities for Australia, will increase.

Notes

1. In the early days of the scheme, students could receive more than one grant in any particular year. The number of grants is thus not a reliable indicator of the number of participants in this example.
2. The figures used for the comparisons in this figure are derived from DEETYA's handbooks for ABSTUDY (DEETYA 1997a) and AUSTUDY (DEETYA 1997b) and the DEETYA Budget 97 Questions and Answers documentation (DEETYA 1997c).
3. Though not directly related to the issue of ABSTUDY benefits, it should be noted that if such courses close, the staff administering and teaching in these courses will need to be re-deployed or become unemployed. Ironically, a high proportion of these staff are untenured indigenous academics who are in the early stages of their careers.

Appendices

Table A1. ABSTUDY and AUSTUDY beneficiaries 1988-1996

	ABSTUDY total	AUSTUDY total
1988	40,813	289,036
1989	40,358	299,438
1990	44,664	339,117
1991	40,281	404,766
1992	42,266	458,578
1993	42,309	469,159
1994	44,271	478,257
1995	45,835	495,026
1996	48,769	489,541

Source: Unpublished data from DEETYA

Table A2. ABSTUDY expenditures 1988-1996

	Expenditure (\$)	Expenditure (1988-89) dollars	CPI weighted average ^a
1988	81.1	90.7	89.4
1989	74.3	77.2	96.2
1990	87.5	84.8	103.2
1991	95.4	89.6	106.5
1992	107.5	99.9	107.6
1993	110.7	101.1	109.5
1994	114.0	102.1	111.6
1995	118.6	101.5	116.8
1996	121.6	101.5	119.8

Note: ^a Consumer Price Index (CPI) figures represent calendar year averages.

Sources: DEETYA and ABS

Figure A1. New South Wales Universities' Block Release Courses

University	Degree offered through Block Release Mode	Current Student Enrolment
University of Sydney	Aboriginal Education Assistants Program	
	• Certificate	22
	• Diploma	23
University of Sydney, Cumberland College	Aboriginal Health Science Preparatory Program	20
	Diploma in Health Science	101
	Bachelor in Health Science	31
University of Newcastle	Bachelor of Medicine, Clinical Field component	
	• year 3	5
	• year 4	5
	• year 5	1
University of Wollongong	Bachelor of Indigenous Health Science	22
	Graduate Diploma of Indigenous Health	7
	Master of Indigenous Health	12
University of Western Sydney, Macarthur Campus	Diploma of Indigenous Australian Cultural Studies	94
	Bachelor of Teaching	26
	Bachelor of Arts (Social Welfare Studies)	24
Hawkesbury Campus	Bachelor of Applied Science, Environmental Health	10
	Graduate Diploma, Social Ecology	4
Macquarie University	Diploma in Community Management	
	• year 1	34
	• year 2	28
	• year 3	12
Australian Catholic University, NSW	Diploma in Aboriginal Education	
	• year 1	30
	• year 2	23
	• year 3	16
	Bachelor of Teaching	
	• year 1	8
	• year 2	10
University of Technology, Sydney	Bachelor of Adult Education	
	• year 1	25
	• year 2	28
	• year 3	31
	Graduate Diploma, Community Organisations	
	• year 1	0
	• year 2	6
	• year 3	2
	Masters, Education	22
Charles Sturt University: Bathurst Campus	Bachelor of Education	33
	Bachelor of Welfare	63
	Bachelor of Health Science, Nursing	23
	Bachelor of Commerce	14
Albury Campus	Bachelor of Applied Science, Parks and Heritage	51
	Bachelor of Arts, Cultural Heritage Studies, Indigenous Broadcasting Strand	1
	Bachelor of Health Science, Occupational Therapy	1

References

- Australian Bureau of Statistics/Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (ABS/CAEPR) 1996. *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey 1994: Employment Outcomes for Indigenous Australians*, cat. no. 4199.0, ABS, Canberra.
- Australian National Audit Office 1991. *Project Audits: Department of Employment, Education and Training-Abstudy-Assistance for Isolated Children-protective Security*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.
- Bourke, C.J., Burden, J. and Moore, S. 1996. *Factors Affecting Performance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students at Australian Universities: A Case Study*, Evaluations and Investigations Program, Higher Education Division, Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Canberra.
- Byrne, A., Buchanan, K., Grant, R. and Beyers, S. 1995. An Evaluation of ABSTUDY, unpublished report prepared for the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.
- Chapman, B. 1991. 'Aboriginal employment, income and human capital: towards a conceptual framework', in J.C. Altman (ed.) *Aboriginal Employment Equity by the Year 2000*, Research Monograph No. 2, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, The Australian National University, Canberra.
- Daly, A.E. 1995. *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in the Australian Labour Market*, cat. no. 6253.0, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.
- Daly, A.E. and Liu, J. 1995. 'Estimating the private rate of return to education for indigenous Australians', *CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 97*, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, The Australian National University, Canberra.
- Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) 1997a. *ABSTUDY '97 Student Information Guide*, DEETYA, Canberra.
- Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) 1997b. *AUSTUDY Information Book 1997*, DEETYA, Canberra.
- Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) 1997c. *Budget 97 Questions and Answers: Student and Youth Support, Better Targeting for ABSTUDY*, DEETYA, Canberra.
- Jones, F. 1991. 'Economic status of Aboriginal and other Australians: an evaluation' in J.C. Altman (ed.) *Aboriginal Employment Equity by the Year 2000*, Research Monograph No. 2, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, The Australian National University, Canberra.
- National Board of Employment, Education and Training 1997. *A Review of Institutional Use of Commonwealth Higher Education Funding for Indigenous Australian Students*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.
- Ross, R. 1991. 'Employment prospects for Aboriginals in New South Wales', in J.C. Altman (ed.) *Aboriginal Employment Equity by the Year 2000*, Research Monograph No. 2, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, The Australian National University, Canberra.

- Schwab, R.G. 1995. 'Twenty years of policy recommendations for indigenous education: overview and research implications', *CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 92*, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, The Australian National University, Canberra.
- Schwab, R.G. 1996. 'Indigenous participation in higher education: culture, choice and human capital theory', *CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 122*, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, The Australian National University, Canberra.
- Schwab, R.G. 1997. 'Post-compulsory education and training for indigenous Australians', *CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 131*, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, The Australian National University, Canberra.
- Senate Legislation Committee 1997a. Answers to Questions on Notice, 97-98 Budget Hearing, Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Senate, Canberra.
- Senate Legislation Committee 1997b. Evidence of Transcripts, Estimates 97-98, Employment, Education and Training, Tuesday 5 June 1997, Senate, Canberra.
- Taylor, J. and Altman, J.C. 1997. *The Job Ahead: Escalating Economic Costs of Indigenous Employment Disparity*, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, Canberra.
- Vanstone, A. 1997a. 'More effective ABSTUDY spending', media release (V72/97, 13 May 1997), Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Canberra.
- Vanstone, A. 1997b. 'ABSTUDY review details announced', media release (V137/97, 5 August 1997), Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Canberra.
- Watts, B.H. 1976. *Access to Education: An Evaluation of the Aboriginal Secondary Grants Scheme*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.
- Williams, D. and Chambers, B. 1986. *An Evaluation of the Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research

For information on earlier CAEPR Discussion Papers and Research
Monographs please contact:

Publication Sales
Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research
Faculty of Arts
Australian National University
Canberra ACT 0200
Telephone: 02 - 6279 8211
Facsimile: 02 - 6249 2789

Abstracts or Summaries of all CAEPR Publications
can be found at the following WWW address:
<http://online.anu.edu/caepr/>

MONOGRAPH SERIES

1. *Aborigines in the Economy: A Select Annotated Bibliography of Policy-Relevant Research 1985-90*, L.M. Allen, J.C. Altman and E. Owen (with assistance from W.S. Arthur), 1991.
2. *Aboriginal Employment Equity by the Year 2000*, J.C. Altman (ed.), published for the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, 1991.
3. *A National Survey of Indigenous Australians: Options and Implications*, J.C. Altman (ed.), 1992.
4. *Indigenous Australians in the Economy: Abstracts of Research, 1991-92*, L.M. Roach and K.A. Probst, 1993.
5. *The Relative Economic Status of Indigenous Australians, 1986-91*, J. Taylor, 1993.
6. *Regional Change in the Economic Status of Indigenous Australians, 1986-91*, J. Taylor, 1993.
7. *Mabo and Native Title: Origins and Institutional Implications*, W. Sanders (ed.), 1994.
8. *The Housing Need of Indigenous Australians, 1991*, R. Jones, 1994.
9. *Indigenous Australians in the Economy: Abstracts of Research, 1993-94*, L.M. Roach and H.J. Bek, 1995.
10. *The Native Title Era: Emerging Issues for Research, Policy and Practice*, J. Finlayson and D.E. Smith (eds), 1995.
11. *The 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey: Findings and Future Prospects*, J.C. Altman and J. Taylor (eds), 1996.
12. *Fighting Over Country: Anthropological Perspectives*, D.E. Smith and J. Finlayson (eds), 1997.

RECENT DISCUSSION PAPERS

- 103/1996 *Policy implications of rising Aboriginal fertility in the early 1990s*, H. Tesfaghiorghis
- 104/1996 *Change in the relative occupational status of Indigenous workers, 1986-91*, J. Taylor and J. Liu.
- 105/1996 *Reforming financial aspects of the Native Title Act 1993: an economics perspective*, J.C. Altman.
- 106/1996 *Indigenous Australians and the socioeconomic status of urban neighbourhoods*, B. Hunter.
- 107/1996 *The comparative economic status of CDEP and non-CDEP community residents in the Northern Territory in 1991*, J.C. Altman and B. Hunter.
- 108/1996 *Indigenous participation in labour market and training programs*, J. Taylor and B. Hunter.
- 109/1996 *The economic status of Indigenous Australian households: a statistical and ethnographic analysis*, D.E. Smith and A.E. Daly.
- 110/1996 *Income poverty among Indigenous families with children: estimates from the 1991 Census*, R.T. Ross and A. Mikalauskas.
- 111/1996 *Having it 'both ways': the continuing complexities of community-controlled Indigenous education*, R.G. Schwab.
- 112/1996 *The geographic distribution of unemployment-related benefits and CDEP scheme employment*, J.C. Altman and B. Hunter.
- 113/1996 *The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commercial Development Corporation: a new approach to enterprise?*, W.S. Arthur.
- 114/1996 *CDEP as urban enterprise: the case of Yarrnteen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Corporation*, Newcastle, D.E. Smith.
- 115/1996 *The determinants of Indigenous employment outcomes: the importance of education and training*, B. Hunter.
- 116/1996 *Linking accountability and self-determination in Aboriginal organisations*, D.F. Martin and J.D. Finlayson.
- 117/1996 *Aboriginal health and institutional reform within Australian federalism*, I. Anderson and W. Sanders.
- 118/1996 *Short-term Indigenous population mobility and service delivery*, J. Taylor.
- 119/1996 *Indigenous labour force status to the year 2000: estimated impacts of recent Budget cuts*, B. Hunter and J. Taylor.
- 120/1996 *Community involvement in education: an exploration of American Indian education policy and implications for Australia*, R.G. Schwab.
- 121/1996 *Towards greater autonomy for Torres Strait: political and economic dimensions*, J.C. Altman, W.S. Arthur and W. Sanders.

- 122/1996 *Indigenous participation in higher education: culture, choice and human capital theory*, R.G. Schwab.
- 123/1996 *Estimating the social rate of return to education for Indigenous Australians*, P.N. Junankar and J. Liu.
- 124/1996 *The right to negotiate and native title future acts: implications of the Native Title Amendment Bill 1996*, D.E. Smith.
- 125/1996 *Native title and the petroleum industry: recent developments, options, risks and strategic choices*, J.C. Altman
- 126/1996 *Aboriginal economic development and land rights in the Northern Territory: past performance, current issues and strategic options*, J.C. Altman.
- 127/1997 *Indigenous poverty since the Henderson Report*, J.C. Altman and B. Hunter.
- 128/1997 *The opportunity costs of future Indigenous labour force status*, J. Taylor.
- 129/1997 *Native Title Representative Bodies: the challenge of strategic planning*, J. Finlayson.
- 130/1997 *The potential impact of the Workplace Relations and other Legislation Amendment Act 1996 on Indigenous employees*, B. Hunter.
- 131/1997 *Post-compulsory education and training for Indigenous Australians*, R.G. Schwab.
- 132/1997 *A Torres Strait Islanders Commission? Possibilities and issues*, W. Sanders and W.S. Arthur.
- 133/1997 *Service provision and service providers in a remote Queensland Community*, J.D. Finlayson.
- 134/1997 *Indigenous sole parent families: invisible and disadvantaged*, A.E. Daly and D.E. Smith.
- 135/1997 *Utilisation of native wildlife by indigenous Australians: commercial considerations*, J.C. Altman, L.M. Roach and L.E. Liddle.
- 136/1997 *The interrelationships between arrest and employment: more evidence on the social determinants of indigenous employment*, B. Hunter and J. Borland.
- 137/1997 *A profile of indigenous workers in the private sector*, J. Taylor and B. Hunter.
- 138/1997 *Indigenous TAFE graduates: patterns and implications*, R.G. Schwab
- 139/1997 *The right to negotiate and the miner's right: a case study of native title future act processes in Queensland*, J.D. Finlayson.
- 140/1997 *The future shape of ABSTUDY: practical and policy implications of the recent proposed changes*, R.G. Schwab and S.F. Campbell.
- 141/1997 *Opportunities and problems astride the welfare/work divide: the CDEP scheme in Australian social policy*, W. Sanders.

