

CRYING OUT FOR LEADERSHIP: the role of the Catholic System in Aboriginal Education

Introduction

In his monumental 1990 review of the 200 year relationship between Aboriginal people and Christianity, John Harris concluded that the spiritual, physical and material welfare of Aboriginal people has never attracted the interest or generosity of the Australian Catholic community in the way that the building and development of churches and schools has.¹

Historically this criticism is hard to refute. Since the advent of European settlement, the Catholic Church has been a follower rather than a leader in the development of improved relationships with Aboriginal people and has rarely been at the forefront in addressing the issues affecting Aboriginal people that have resulted from colonisation and dispossession.

The purpose of this paper is to briefly review the Catholic Church's historical involvement with Aboriginal people. More importantly, the paper also sets out to explore whether the Church has become more proactive in Aboriginal issues, particularly in education, since the watershed years of the 1986 Papal visit and the 1988 Bicentennial.

The Church and Aboriginal People in the Early Colonial Period

In the early colonial period there was only minimal contact between the Catholic Church and Aboriginal people. Missionary activity was largely left to the great Protestant evangelical societies of that era --- the London Missionary Society; the Church Missionary Society; the Wesleyan Missionary Society; and the Baptist Missionary Society

Initially this lack of interest could be attributed in large part to the inferior status of the Catholic Church in colonial society which reflected the entrenched legal discrimination against Catholics in Britain at that time. As well there was considerable official suspicion of the *Irishness* of the early Australian Church with almost all Catholics, including the first three priests in the colony, being transported Irish convicts.

Not surprisingly, Father John Therry, who in 1819 became the first official Catholic chaplain to NSW, focused the Church's mission on the particular needs of his Irish flock. He also set another precedent in devoting much of his considerable energy to establishing churches and schools.

Despite reports of his hurriedly conducting mass baptisms of Aboriginal infants during a corroboree², working with Aboriginal people in either a spiritual or material capacity seemed to have been low on Therry's priorities. Moreover, his abrasive and tactless character³ did nothing to endear him to colonial authorities and, even had he wanted to engage in missionary activity with Aboriginal people, he would have been unlikely to have received the official support that was extended to some of the evangelical missionaries at that time.

The 1834 appointment of John Bede Polding, as the first Catholic Archbishop of NSW began an era of more sophisticated leadership in the Australian Church. Polding was an English Benedictine and his English heritage and class origins helped establish a more cordial relationship with colonial authorities. As well, attitudes to Catholicism had softened following the British Parliament's passing of the 1829 Catholic Relief Act which had emancipated Catholics in Britain. This was reflected in Governor Bourke's Church Act of 1836 which extended state aid to all denominations in NSW instead of only to the Church of England.⁴

In this more liberal environment, Polding was able to broaden the Church's mission, demonstrate more progressive leadership and develop more positive relationships with the non Catholic elite in colonial society. In recent years, his interest in Aboriginal issues has been cited as an example of the Catholic Church's early interest in this area, most notably when he drew attention to the injustice of dispossession and suggested some compensation would be appropriate in his Lenten Pastoral of 1869:

*We have dispossessed Aboriginal people of the soil.
In natural justice then we are held to compensation.*⁵

Polding's vision on Aboriginal issues was fulsomely praised by Pope John Paul II during his 1986 visit to Australia:

*From the earliest times men like Archbishop Polding of Sydney opposed the legal fiction adopted by European settlers that this land was terra nullius – nobody's country. He strongly pleaded for the rights of the Aboriginal inhabitants to keep the traditional lands on which their whole society depended. The Church still supports you today.*⁶

However, the Pontiff's speech writers may have been indulging in some historical hyperbole when they wrote his Alice Springs speech for Polding was certainly not the first Christian Church leader to draw attention to the treatment of Aboriginal people and the injustice of dispossession.

Nor was he different from many Protestant clergy in finding Aboriginal people to be *intelligent, cheerful and very deserving* or in dismissing the contempt of many colonists for them as unjustified and distasteful. Like many Protestant clergy he also attributed the degradation of Aboriginal people to their *intercourse with Europeans*⁷, a view that was regularly promoted (with some justification) as a reason for segregating Aboriginal people on missions.

In practice, however, Polding did little to actively address this injustice. Like John Therry before him - and most of the Australian Catholic hierarchy since - Polding was too preoccupied with the organisation and administration of the Church to devote much time or significant resources to Aboriginal concerns. The pressures of establishing and maintaining a Catholic systemic school system in competition with the National (Public) system were particularly demanding. The organisation, recruitment and training of clergy; ecclesiastical and secular politics; and inter denominational rivalries all had higher priority for him.⁸

Like others of his era, he could have seen little hope for the remnants of this *dying race* and, with only 35 priests ministering to about 55,000 Catholics of mainly Irish descent⁹, he could not spare any local priests to minister to Aboriginal people or take up their concerns.¹⁰

His most significant initiative in Aboriginal affairs was the establishment of a mission on Stradbroke Island in 1843. But this was short-lived and ended in failure. The Italian Passionists who he had persuaded to come to Australia to establish the mission had little English and this made efforts at communication with the Aboriginal people there even more complicated than on other missions. They quickly abandoned attempts to work with the adults and focused on the children whom they attempted to remove from their parents and elders. Failure was inevitable and in 1847 this first Catholic mission closed in frustration and cultural misunderstandings.¹¹

Nevertheless, it is understandable that the Church now highlights Polding's attitudes on Aboriginal issues, for such forthrightness that he occasionally displayed would not again be heard from the leadership of the Australian Catholic Church for more than 100 years.

The Great Australian Silence in the Church

The Catholic Church's silence on Aboriginal issues for the much of the 19th and 20th centuries was, in some ways, just another manifestation of the *great Australian silence*¹² that permeated Australia society at that time and a reflection of the deeply ingrained belief in Australian society at the time that Aboriginal people were a *dying race* and *doomed to extinction*. However the Church's disproportionately low involvement in Aboriginal mission work suggests that it had less interest than other denominations in Aboriginal issues and gave a relatively low priority to even *smoothing the pillow of the dying race*.

Perhaps discouraged by the early failure at Stradbroke Island the Catholic Church lagged behind others in missionary work with Aboriginal people. Of 215 missions established throughout Australia in the 19th and 20th centuries only 43 (20%) were Catholic and more than half of these were in Western Australia. In New South Wales the mission at Bowraville was the only Catholic mission of seven ever established in this state.¹³ Even the Columbans, the most prominent Australian Catholic missionary order, have had little involvement with Aboriginal communities. While one of the order's four strategic priorities is the *promotion of solidarity with the poor and the earth*, it appears to have seen more opportunity for applying this in overseas missions than in Australia.¹⁴

It could be argued that the Church's lack of involvement in mission work is now a blessing as, with the benefit of hindsight, the role of the missions in Aboriginal Australia is now seen, at best, as problematic and misguided. However, many of those involved in mission work are still remembered fondly by older Aboriginal people for they were often idealistic and genuinely attempting to assist while others blithely ignored the trauma and suffering of the apparently *dying race*. The missions have also been important, albeit in most cases inadvertently, in the maintenance and revival of many Aboriginal languages and other aspects of culture as well as in tracing family histories.¹⁵

They also provided the education that allowed Aboriginal leaders like Bessie Cameron, William Barak and William Cooper to emerge at the end of the 19th Century and Charles Perkins, Lowitja O'Donoghue and Noel Pearson in the third quarter of the 20th Century. The relatively low level involvement of the Catholic Church in this educational work has impacted on its immediate relationship with Aboriginal people and communities for, of all the major Christian churches, *it is the Catholic Church which has found most difficulty in recognising and empowering Aboriginal Christian leaders*.¹⁶

Clearly, for much of the 19th and 20th centuries there was no real direction or leadership from the Catholic hierarchy on Aboriginal issues and this leadership vacuum supports the criticism of the late Father Ted Kennedy that *the Bishops of Australia were very negligent regarding Aborigines* and even that *racism was a real problem among Catholics in Australia*.¹⁷

The Beginnings of Catholic Involvement in Aboriginal Education

Despite the lack of leadership, however, there have always been maverick Catholic clergy who were willing to involve themselves in Aboriginal issues. One who is reasonably well known is Dom Salvado, the charismatic Spanish Benedictine who established the New Norcia Mission in Western Australia in the middle of the 19th Century. Less well known are some anonymous nuns at Yass to whom the beginnings of Catholic involvement in the school education of Aboriginal people can probably be traced in 1883.

Though the Church had shown little interest in the education or welfare of Aborigines to that time¹⁸, there were, in 1882, five Aboriginal students enrolled in the convent school attached to St Augustine's Catholic church in the town. This was quite remarkable as a school census that year had revealed a total of only 189 Aboriginal students in any form of schooling in NSW, 170 of them in National schools and only 2 others, apart from the 5 at Yass, in Catholic schools.¹⁹

Clearly, however, the children in the convent school at Yass were stimulating interest in education among the local Aboriginal community for, in 1883, 15 Aboriginal students attempted to enrol at the Public School that had recently been opened in the town. Their admission caused considerable consternation amongst the local townspeople and the school's board of management threatened to boycott the school and withdraw all the white children unless the Aboriginal students were expelled.

A Departmental Inspector was sent to investigate and, when he reported that the Aboriginal students had dirty habits and their presence in the school was offensive to students and teachers, the Minister for Education, George Reid, expelled them.²⁰

The Minister considered sending the children to the nearest reserve schools at Maloga or Warangesda. But that proved impracticable and he then asked the local police to explore sites in Yass where an Aboriginal school could be established separate from the National school.

The situation became even more embarrassing when the Catholic school in Yass, which had accepted Aboriginal students for several years, decided to establish a special classroom for the 15 expelled Aboriginal students and allocated one of their nuns to teach them.²¹

The government's discomfort was further increased when the Catholic school submitted an application for State aid to assist with the 15 students. This was quickly rejected as the government had only recently abolished State Aid through its *Public Instruction Act (1880)*.

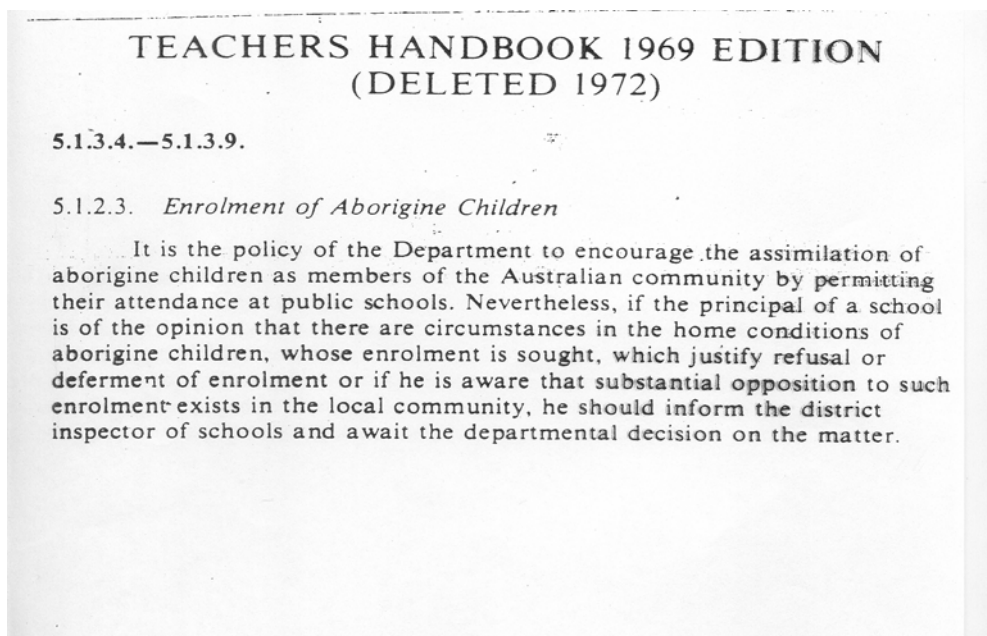


The following year, perhaps to cover his embarrassment and justify the expulsion, the Minister issued a policy statement concerning the enrolment of Aboriginal children:

As a general rule no child, whatever its creed or colour or circumstances ought to be excluded from a public school. But cases may arise, especially amongst the Aboriginal tribes where the admission of a child or children may be prejudicial to the whole school. At the same time I cannot regard with any satisfaction the excluding of children from the means of instruction because of the errors or neglect of their parents and I think some steps ought to be taken by the Department to meet such a case as that of the Aboriginal children at Yass by offering facilities for the instruction of children whom it may be necessary on sanitary grounds to keep out of the ordinary schools.

George Reid, NSW Minister for Education
30th January 1884²²

This set an unfortunate precedent for the directive was incorporated into the Departmental Teachers' Handbook. There it remained as a regulation that, for almost 100 years till 1972, allowed Principals to exclude Aboriginal students from their schools if their enrolment faced significant opposition from the local non Aboriginal community:



Sadly, too, the Catholic system did not embrace the compassionate precedent set by the nuns at Yass. What became of the 15 Aboriginal students is unknown. However, it has been rare over the next 125 years for Aboriginal students to again feel as welcome in Catholic schools as they must have at Yass in 1883. A comparison of enrolments in the Catholic and State systems (see Table 1 below) suggests that, for whatever reason and despite the Department's discriminatory regulations, they came to be much more accepted within the State system than in Catholic schools.

**Table 1
Comparative Enrolment of Aboriginal Students in
NSW DET Schools and NSW CEO Schools²³**

School Type	2004 Aboriginal Enrolment	% of Total Enrolment
Catholic: K-6	1,787	7.6%
DET: K-6	21,627	92.3%
Catholic: 7-12	919	7.1%
DET: 7-12	11992	92.9%
Catholic: Total	2706	7.4%
DET: Total	33619	92.6%

Growing Awareness in the Church during the 1970s and 1980s

Nevertheless, the unknown nuns at Yass were followed by other individual clergy whose involvement with Aboriginal people and their problems marked them as mavericks within the Church.

Numbers of these *maverick* clergy became active in Aboriginal issues around the time of the Papal visits to Australia in 1970 and 1986 both of which can be seen as crucial in developing the Church's involvement with Aboriginal people and issues.²⁴

During his 1970 visit to Sydney, Paul VI addressed a meeting of Aboriginal people (facilitated by Father Eugene Stockton – the newly appointed chaplain to Aboriginal people). A year later Father Ted Kennedy began his own remarkable community ministry at St Vincent's parish in Redfern, initially along with Father John Butcher and Father Fergus Breslan.²⁵ Over the years Kennedy's ministry at Redfern would at times be embarrassing to the Church in Sydney and it did not always have the support of the local hierarchy.

It was also in 1971 that the Sydney Archdiocese, perhaps emboldened by the Pope's expression interest in Aboriginal people, established an Aboriginal Affairs Sub Committee and several Catholic agencies began a period of greater involvement with Aboriginal organisations and communities.²⁶ The remarkable Shirley Smith (Mum Shirl), who was an important influence on Kennedy, was invited onto the Sub Committee and, through her participation, she influenced many others within the Church to be more active in taking up Aboriginal concerns.

There was growing awareness in the community about Aboriginal issues at this time and these developments in the Church should also be seen in the context of the social and political developments in Aboriginal affairs that characterised the Whitlam era all of which influenced the 1978 Social Justice Statement of the Catholic Bishops of Australia.

Aborigines --- a Statement of Concern was surprisingly forthright in describing the nature of dispossession and the contemporary injustices that were a direct consequence of European colonisation and it urged Catholics to work for justice for Aboriginal Australians. Other denominations were also taking a much more political approach to Aboriginal social justice issues at this time and, in 1981, the Australian Council of Churches issued a similar critical statement to that issued by the Catholic Bishops in 1978.²⁷

The 1986 Papal Visit: a new approach to Catholic engagement with Aboriginal Communities.

The 1986 Papal visit to Australia of John Paul II undoubtedly marked a turning point in the engagement of the Australian Catholic Church with Aboriginal people and issues. His speech in Alice Springs on the 29th November is still regarded as the watershed directing Catholic engagement with Aboriginal Australia.

In it he clearly stated the vital importance of this for the Church when he said:

*. . . . the Church itself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others.*²⁸

The Pope's Blatherskie Park speech was reinforced the following year by an ecumenical message, *A Just and Proper Settlement*, which was issued in anticipation that Aboriginal issues could be lost in the Bicentennial celebrations planned for 1988.

Twenty years later, in yet another Bishop's Social Justice Statement on Aboriginal issues, Bishop Christopher Saunders of Broome suggests that the 1986 vision of the Pope has not yet been fully achieved. The full impact and significance of the 1986 speech *is still being realised*, he wrote, *as the nation, the Catholic Church and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to travel the path towards true respect and reconciliation.*²⁹

In this most recent statement the Bishop's recalled the 4 most salient issues raised in the Pope's 1986 speech 1986:

1. the challenge to preserve Indigenous culture and ensure an inclusive, multicultural Australia;
2. the need to seek and explore points of agreement between the Indigenous and Christian traditions;
3. the challenge of learning from the Indigenous people about ways to manage and preserve our fragile environment; and
4. the need, as a nation, to move towards true reconciliation.

The Bishops identified some examples of progress on the first three of these issues. However, they concluded that the manifestations of social and economic disadvantage and community dysfunction still starkly evident in indicators of poor health, high unemployment, and high rates of incarceration in Aboriginal communities meant that there is still a great deal to be done to achieve genuine reconciliation.

In emphasising the challenge that remained the Bishops cited both the late Pope and the present one, Benedict XVI, who in May 2006 advised the new Australian ambassador to the Vatican that *in regard to the Aboriginal people*

*. . . . there is still much to be achieved. . . . Commitment to truth opens the way to lasting reconciliation through the healing process of asking forgiveness and granting forgiveness. – two indispensable elements for peace. In this way our memory is purified, our hearts are made serene, and our future is filled with a well-founded hope in the peace which springs from truth.*³⁰

Five years earlier John Paul II had been more specific when he advised governments:

*... to pursue with still greater energy programs to improve the conditions and standard of living of indigenous groups in the vital areas of health, **education** and housing.*³¹

Clearly, though only the late Pope referred to it specifically, education is a key area in both the fostering of reconciliation and in addressing the many disadvantages that Aboriginal people suffer as a direct consequence of their dispossession.

What then, has the Australian Catholic school system done to take up these responsibilities?

Development of Aboriginal Education Policies and Their Implementation in Catholic Schools

In July 1988, the middle of Australia's Bicentennial year, the Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Schools Board introduced the first Aboriginal Education Policy (AEP) in the Catholic system.

This was not an original policy and its principal strategies appear to have been largely derived from the original AEP that had been introduced by the NSW Department of Education seven years earlier. Like the Departmental policy it focused on:

- ◆ the development of Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum and, *where appropriate ...separate courses in Aboriginal Studies*;
- ◆ the development of positive self concepts and pride in identity in Aboriginal students;
- ◆ the use of culturally appropriate strategies in teaching Aboriginal students; and consultation with the Aboriginal community; and
- ◆ staff development to promote awareness of cultural bias in existing practices and resources;

The rationale or philosophical bases for the two policies were also similar, each reflecting some of the national angst about the colonial past and the search for a national identity that had accompanied the Bicentennial celebration. Thus, both emphasised the need to respect the *innate dignity* and cultural identity of all students and the need for all students to have knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal culture and heritage and of Australian history, including the impact of dispossession. The two policies also stressed that their implementation would contribute to the *transformation* of society by contributing to social cohesion and social justice.

Two aspects of the Archdiocesan policy distinguished it from DET's earlier policy which, at that time, was still regarded as optional by many schools. Remarkably the Sydney CEO policy had mandatory provisions including directions to school Principals to provide staff development in Aboriginal Education and to appoint a contact person or committee for the development of the policy.

Of the other 10 dioceses in NSW, 8 --- Parramatta, Broken Bay, Maitland-Newcastle, Lismore, Armidale, Wilcannia-Forbes, Wollongong and Wagga Wagga --- have also developed Aboriginal Education Policies since 1988. As well Canberra-Goulbourn has a draft policy and only Bathurst has no policy document at all.

The development of Catholic AEPs is certainly to be welcomed as, without a policy, it is difficult indeed to monitor the needs and progress of Aboriginal students. This fundamental reality makes the slow emergence of these policies quite puzzling, particularly in Bathurst where there is a high Aboriginal population.

As well, unlike DET, no CEO has yet done a review of its AEP so that the effectiveness with which they are being implemented is open to considerable conjecture and anecdotal evidence suggests that implementation may be disappointing. In 2007, for instance, no Sydney diocesan school was offering 2 unit Aboriginal Studies. Nor were any Aboriginal teachers employed by Sydney diocesan schools. And implementation of the mandatory provisions relating to staff development and school committees are rare indeed.³²

Statistical data also suggests that one of the fundamental aims of all Catholic AEPs – to welcome Aboriginal students into their schools – is not working as well as might be hoped. Data on enrolments shows that the Aboriginal enrolment in Catholic schools throughout NSW represents only 1.54% of the total enrolment (Table 2).

Table 2
Aboriginal Student Enrolment
In CEO Schools (2005)³³

Diocese	K-6 Aboriginal Enrolment	7-12 Aboriginal Enrolment	Total Aboriginal Student Enrolment	% of Total Catholic School Enrolment
Armidale	302	107	409	13.07%
Bathurst	223	109	332	10.61%
Broken Bay	81	27	108	3.45%
Canberra/Goulburn	109	44	153	4.89%
Lismore	288	138	426	13.61%
Maitland/Newcastle	245	144	389	12.43%
Parramatta	168	188	356	11.38%
Sydney	232	119	351	11.22%
Wagga Wagga	108	60	168	5.37%
Wilcannia/Forbes	205	38	243	7.76%
Wollongong	129	64	193	6.17%
Total	2090	1038	3128	1.54%

There could be many reasons for this imbalance between the systems, including the possibility that racism remains *a real problem among Catholics in Australia with deep elements of racism in the school system.*³⁴

Whatever the reason for the relatively low enrolment figures, they do add to the perception that Catholic schools are not pulling their weight in Aboriginal education and that Catholic schools quickly transfer *problem* Aboriginal students to DET schools. As well, there is a perception that this *offloading* of the more difficult Aboriginal students by Catholic schools then contributes to a *brain drain* from DET schools as the systemic school in turn attracts the more capable students and those from better off families (regardless of religious affiliation).

If this is the case – and the evidence for it remains anecdotal – then Catholic systemic schools are still a long way from following the Papal directive to *pursue with still greater energy programs to improve the conditions and standard of living of indigenous groups in the vital area of education*³⁵; or even beginning to implement the rationale of the Sydney CEO's 1988 AEP that saw *education as one effective way of addressing the past, and moving into the future.*³⁶

Exemplary Programs in the Catholic System

To end this paper on a more positive note it is important to refer to some exemplary Aboriginal education programs which provide evidence of some leadership by the Catholic system in this most difficult of areas in education.

Recently, the success of the scholarship program that has been operating at St Joseph's College Hunters Hill has been highlighted in the media.³⁷ These scholarships have been provided by the generosity of some of the very wealthy and privileged alumni of this extremely wealthy private Catholic school. Less well known is Red Bend College in Forbes, a Catholic boarding school providing opportunities for Aboriginal students in a rural setting where they are much closer to home. This co-ed boarding school currently has 76 Aboriginal students enrolled and is going about its business in an unassuming way.

Far more humble schools in the Armidale Diocese are also developing, through their Catholic Schools Office, projects that have the potential to make equally significant if not great contributions to improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal students and their communities. These projects³⁸ include:

- ◆ The Wil Gaay (Clever Child) Program
- ◆ The *Count Me In Too Program*
- ◆ An Otitis Media strategy
- ◆ The Warraymalaya (Stand Together and Help Each Other) Retreat
- ◆ The Gamilaraay / Yewaalaraay Local Language Project

The Wil Gaay (Clever Child) Project

This project involves the use of a culturally appropriate assessment tool³⁹ to identify gifted but under achieving Indigenous students of 8 or 9 years of age. An initial diagnostic test of the student is followed by intervention and a second test to determine the impact of the intervention. Those identified as under achievers then participate in a 3 year program which also involves family and local community members. Peer motivation camps and on-line peer mentoring are also provided as part of the program. The program also provides teachers with professional development on strategies for addressing underachievement.

The Count Me In Too Program

This Armidale CSO's Count Me In Too program is based on a DET program of the same name. It provides professional development to teachers in diagnostic techniques for establishing a student's level in numeracy as well as in numeracy teaching strategies. It uses a *cascading model* of professional development by first training tutors who then return to their schools to train other teachers, Indigenous Education Assistants and parents – both in the tutor's home school and in surrounding schools. The training promotes the explicit teaching of strategic thinking and problem solving strategies in mathematics.

Otitis Media Project

To combat the effect of Otitis Media (Glue Ear) on Aboriginal students in its schools the Catholic Schools Office has installed Sound Field Amplification Systems in all classrooms with Aboriginal students in the Diocese. This has improved overall alertness and participation in classroom activities by allowed students with mild hearing loss to hear teachers much more clearly and improve their attention.

The Warraymalaya (Stand Together and Help Each Other) Retreat

This annual retreat targets Indigenous students in Years 8-12 and is designed to improve retention to Year 12. The camps expose students to positive Aboriginal role models and provide participants with access to a diocesan support network of peers with whom they can discuss issues that affect them at school.

The Gamilaraay / Yuwaalaraay Local Aboriginal Language Project

This program began in 1999 and grew out of the desire of local Indigenous parents to have their children taught local language and culture. The program has had a dramatic affect on the attendance and participation of Aboriginal students at the school and on the self esteem of Aboriginal students. It also resulted in a dramatic increase in Aboriginal enrolments at the school.⁴⁰

Conclusion

Together these programs represent a coherent strategy for addressing the needs of Aboriginal students in the Diocese and for effectively implementing the CSO's AEP. Though the strategies have not all been fully evaluated, anecdotal reports suggest that they are having a significant impact in improving retention rates and other outcomes as well as in developing the self esteem of the Aboriginal students involved. In the past 10 years these strategies have also contributed to a significant increase in the enrolment of Aboriginal students in Armidale Diocesan schools from less than 4% in 1998⁴¹ to more than 13% in 2005.⁴²

Much can be drawn from the apparent success of the Armidale Diocese in strenuously attempting to implement its AEP. This success seems to be related to the CSO's to develop a cohesive range of strategies that involve schools, families and communities together. The success of its strategic approach also seems to be dependent upon committed leadership from both the Director and many of his Principals and from an insistence on involving and empowering Aboriginal staff at all levels including the Regional Consultant, Aboriginal Education Assistants and Aboriginal Language Workers.

In other words it is an example of effective leadership in Aboriginal education at the Diocesan level.

It is an example that could, if followed in all CSOs, be of immense benefit to Aboriginal students throughout the State and allow the Catholic system to make more meaningful claims to leadership on Aboriginal issues.

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- 3 Nairn (1967; 341)
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- 6 Pope John Paul II, 1986
- 7 Thorne (1950); Harris (1990; 109)
- 8 Intra church rivalries included differences between the colony's Irish clergy and Polding's Benedictine monks. Inter Church rivalries often centred around education and involved differences with the Anglican Bishop Broughton and the Presbyterian, J.D. Lang
- 9 Nairn (1967; 345)
- 10 Thorne (1950); Harris (1990; 109)
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- 12 This term was created by the anthropologist, WEH Stanner, to describe the lack of interest shown by Australian historians in the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal peoples
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38 Information on these projects obtained from Cooke and Johnston (ud)
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