

# AIATSIS 2009

## PERSPECTIVES ON URBAN LIFE: CONNECTIONS AND RECONNECTIONS

Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge it lives in  
my town; Urban communities and  
engagement of Aboriginal students.

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# Michael Donovan

☉ Gumbayngirr man

☉ Various fields in health

- Enrolled Nurse

- Doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine

☉ Education

- Aboriginal Education Assistant

- Bachelor of Teaching (Primary) Honours Class 1

- Lecturer

- AECG – State, Regional, Local

- Research in Aboriginal education, Quality Teaching, Aboriginal languages & use of ICT tools

# What is this about

🌀 Developing partnerships with the local Aboriginal Community to engage ACK

🌀 Why

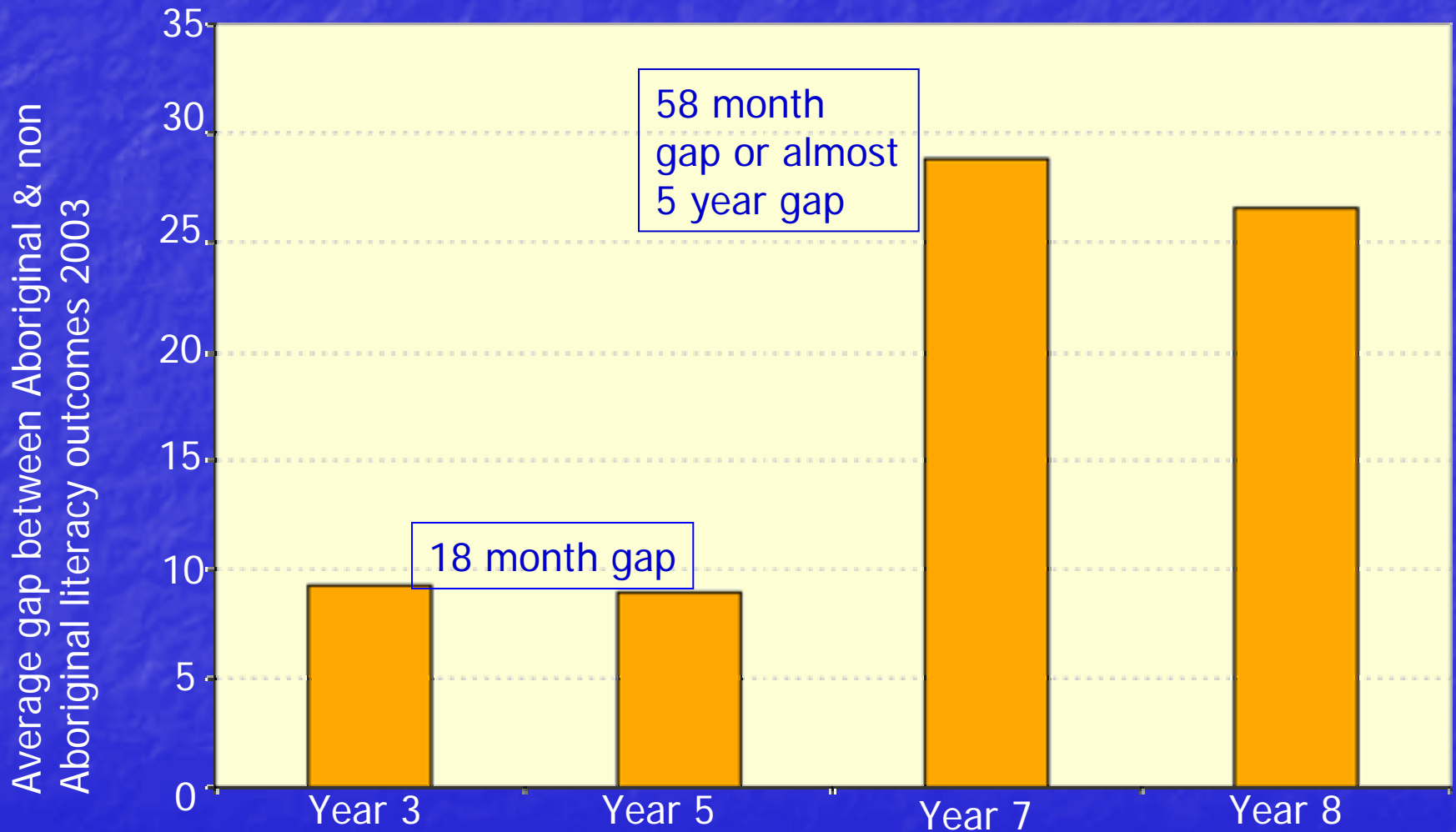
- 🌀 Highlighting Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge
- 🌀 Informing all students about local Aboriginal understandings
- 🌀 Engaging Aboriginal role models
- 🌀 Engaging Aboriginal students
- 🌀 Highlighting local content familiar to all students
- 🌀 Informing all students about Aboriginal Australia

# Why examine Aboriginal education

“Despite the many education initiatives implemented by the Commonwealth & NSW Governments over the past 20 years, Aboriginal students continue to be the most educationally disadvantaged student group in Australia.”

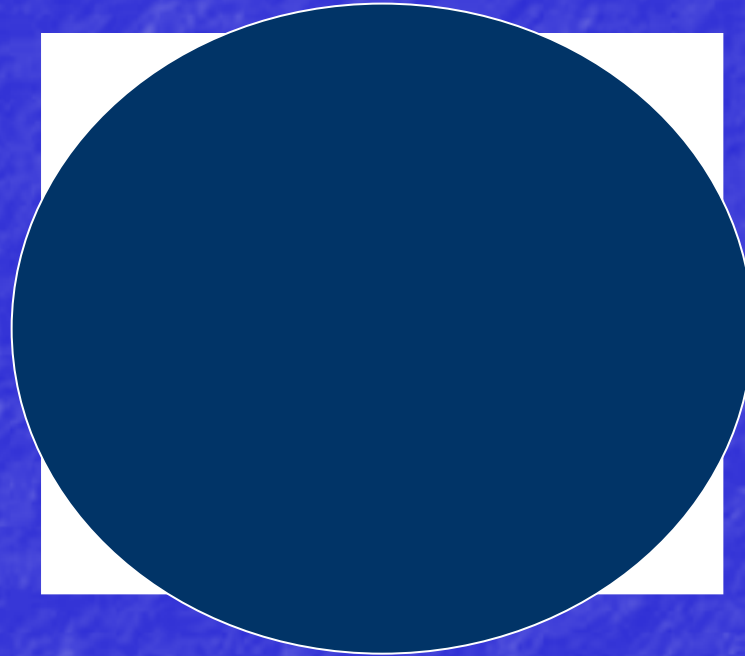
DET Media Release, 20 October 2003.

# Literacy gap



# Why do a comparison

Aboriginal Education



Western Education

“The NSW AECG strongly believes that real change in Aboriginal education and training outcomes can only happen through proper partnerships of all stakeholders...The NSW AECG focus is on all communities having input into Aboriginal education at the local level. This will empower our people and contribute to improving outcomes in Aboriginal education and training”

Cindy Berwick NSW AECG President 2009

# What ACK does urban Communities have?

- ⊗ Knowledge is important in Aboriginal communities
- ⊗ Aboriginal Communities hold onto story & understandings & retell when it is appropriate
- ⊗ Aboriginal society is dynamic & living
- ⊗ ACK is not only traditional understandings but local histories, transitional knowledges & explaining Aboriginal Communities in a contemporary society
- ⊗ Urban Aboriginal societies core values & beliefs are no different from non urban Aboriginal communities core values & beliefs



# Why consult with Aboriginal Community

- ☉ Authenticity
- ☉ View of content/ issues from a local Aboriginal viewpoint
- ☉ To develop a long-term partnership to exists in the school and the community
- ☉ To develop an on-going processes that are established and maintained by schools
- ☉ Engaging the local depth of understanding of Country
- ☉ Cultural Knowledge is the least used element of QT (Amosa 2007)

“Aboriginal people are the owners and custodians of their knowledge and culture. They have the right to be consulted when aspects of Aboriginal history and culture are being incorporated into the school curriculum.” NSW BOS 2008, 2.

# Benefits from consultation

- ④ Gaining an Aboriginal viewpoint on local issues or local environment
- ④ Engaging Aboriginal students & informing all students about Aboriginal Australia
- ④ Hearing first hand experiences from people who have lived the experiences being addressed
- ④ Children can readily comprehend they are learning about real people & how government policies and community attitudes affected people in the past
- ④ Aboriginal people have control over what their children are taught, how children are taught & what resources from the community will be utilised
- ④ The self esteem & pride in culture of Aboriginal students is maintained & supported.

“Consultation with Aboriginal communities is essential in the development of meaningful Aboriginal perspectives and studies across the curriculum. The involvement of Aboriginal people in the development and implementation of learning programs allows a genuine exploration of Aboriginal history, languages, culture and contemporary issues. Building a relationship between schools and their local Aboriginal community will enhance the learning experience of students, and promote Reconciliation through better understanding”

Board of Studies 2008, i

# What is consultation?

- Ⓢ Development of an effective working partnership
- Ⓢ Ongoing relationship that benefits all participants
- Ⓢ Processes that determine content of & implementation procedures for implementing Aboriginal perspectives
- Ⓢ A 2-way process where each group gains from the relationship

“Quality consultation requires respect, trust and openness, with a focus on building a partnership with Aboriginal people that is equal and genuine.”

NSW BOS 2008, 4

# Who to contact in local community

## ④ DET

- Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer (ACLO)
- SEO1, SEO2, Aboriginal Education Consultant (AEC)

## ④ AECG - Local or Regional or State

## ④ Aboriginal Land Councils

## ④ Aboriginal Cooperatives

## ④ Aboriginal Medical Services

## ④ Aboriginal Legal Services

## ④ Aboriginal Support networks

## ④ Local Government or Area Health Service

# How to make contact

- ☉ The consultation process can consist of the following sequence and will assist teachers in commencing this rewarding process:
  - ☉ identifying the local Aboriginal community
  - ☉ identifying the local and regional AECG
  - ☉ contacting systemic support networks
  - ☉ considering protocols making contact getting to know the community.

NSW BOS 2008, 8

# Getting to know the Aboriginal Community

- ☉ Making contact is very important for the Aboriginal Community
  - ☉ That is introducing yourself
- ☉ If working in a new Community go into the Community to visit Aboriginal organisations, allow the Community to get to know your face
- ☉ Never try to impress people with your level of education
- ☉ Become involved in community social events if invited
- ☉ If in a remote or small country town involve yourself in the local Community

# Protocols

- Ⓢ Introductory protocols are important
- Ⓢ Be patient when asking questions. Look, listen & learn
- Ⓢ Do not expect every Aboriginal person to talk publicly about Aboriginal cultures
- Ⓢ Some Aboriginal people might not openly express an opinion
- Ⓢ Remember that different families may have different values & cultural beliefs
- Ⓢ The use of silence should not be misunderstood
- Ⓢ There are different types of knowledge for example, spiritual knowledge & scientific knowledge & these may conflict
- Ⓢ Avoid jargon & do not use acronyms.
- Ⓢ Be prepared to accept that some questions may remain unanswered



# Protocols

- ☉ Deaths affect not just one family but a whole community.
- ☉ Family obligations affect many people in an Aboriginal community & may impact on previous obligations made to a school.
- ☉ Participation is attendance, some Aboriginal People may not speak at all just observe & take in the discussion
- ☉ Time is important, allow the Aboriginal Community to see what you want & allow them to go away to discuss issues privately, then meet again at a later date to go over the subject again

# Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge

# Why highlight Aboriginal culture?

*“Many teachers interviewed as part of the Review expressed a belief that Aboriginal students learn differently from other students. Teachers’ lack of awareness and understanding of Aboriginal students’ Aboriginality, culture and language may impact on their relationships and interactions with Aboriginal students, which may in turn impact on the way Aboriginal students respond or behave.”*

NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group 2004, 92

# ACK alive today

- Ⓜ Individual stories
- Ⓜ Histories
  - Personal
  - Community
- Ⓜ Stories about the local Country & the local Dreaming
- Ⓜ Local Knowledge
- Ⓜ Some stories of difference

# Involving the Aboriginal Community

- ⊗ Local content
  - Living & landscape
- ⊗ Difference
- ⊗ Positive educational tool for Aboriginal students
- ⊗ Can effectively include the Aboriginal Community in schools
- ⊗ Specific local Aboriginal knowledge but something all students recognise
- ⊗ QT – Significance dimension

# Why involve Aboriginal Community

*“We have our own unique ways of knowing, teaching and learning which are firmly grounded in the context of our ways of being. And yet we are thrust into the clothes of another system designed for different bodies, and we are fed ideologies which serve the interests of other peoples.”*

*Dodson 1998 (cited in Herbert)*

# 2003 Quality Teaching Framework

| Intellectual Quality      | Quality Learning Environment | Significance          |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Deep Knowledge            | Explicit Quality Criteria    | Background Knowledge  |
| Deep Understanding        | Engagement                   | Cultural Knowledge    |
| Problematic Knowledge     | High Expectations            | Knowledge Integration |
| Higher-Order Thinking     | Social Support               | Inclusivity           |
| Metalanguage              | Students self regulation     | Connectedness         |
| Substantive Communication | Student direction            | Narrative             |

# Aboriginal Pedagogic practices

- ☉ Recognition of culture in schools
- ☉ Learning placed in context to Aboriginal learner
- ☉ Significance to their world & world view
- ☉ Self direction with some responsible & choice in their learning
- ☉ Use of group & peer supported learning
- ☉ Recognition of difference in language & home life
- ☉ Content to be localised & relevant to support learning
- ☉ Learning environment to be safe
- ☉ Relationship between teacher & learner
- ☉ Dynamic teaching practices to support preferred Indigenous learning styles



# QTF V's Aboriginal Pedagogy

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# What does QT state

- ⊙ Elements of QT when including an Aboriginal guest engaging in ACK
  - Cultural Knowledge
  - Background Knowledge
  - Knowledge Integration
  - Connectedness
  - Narrative
  - Inclusivity
  - Engagement
  - High Expectations
  - Social Support

# References

- ☉ Amosa, W., Ladwig, J., Griffiths, T. & Gore, J., (2007) Equity effects of Quality Teaching: Closing the gap, Paper presented at the *Australian Association for Research in Education*, Fremantle, 25 – 29 November 2007.
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