

EMRIP/angela 041

Angela Robinson

**Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP)  
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**Australian statement – Education study**

Australia congratulates the Expert Mechanism on the completion of its first study on the subject of Indigenous education. The Australian Government was grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the study.

The Australian Government is pleased with the continued international focus on improving the educational outcomes of Indigenous peoples and welcomes the focus of the Expert Mechanism on an issue of such critical importance. Australia has been involved in international efforts in this regard: in December last year Australia hosted the World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Education and in 2007 hosted the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Seminar on Indigenous Education.

The Australian Government acknowledges that there is a gap between the educational outcomes of Indigenous Australians and other Australians. Bridging this gap is a national priority.

From 1 January 2009, the State and Territory governments of Australia – which have primary responsibility for education – have joined with the Federal Government to agree on ambitious targets to halve the gaps in reading, writing and numeracy achievement by 2018 and halve the gaps in senior secondary or equivalent attainment by 2020. These agreements contain commitments to provide disaggregated data on Indigenous Australians, a key observation of the Expert Mechanism. Key reforms have been agreed including strategies to enhance pathways for Indigenous people into the education workforce, again an important observation of the Expert Mechanism.

Governments of Australia provide funding to community controlled schools, but with around 86% of Indigenous students enrolled in government schools, the Australian Government recognises that mainstream education provision will need to better address the needs of Indigenous students. Governments of Australia are currently working with Indigenous Australians to develop an action plan for education through which it is hoped to build into mainstream education systems the necessary reforms to improve outcomes of Indigenous Australians.

The continued international focus on Indigenous education will provide more opportunities for countries with Indigenous populations to learn from each other. Australia's Indigenous peoples can make a valuable contribution in this regard. We look forward to these exchanges building a better future for the Indigenous peoples of the world.