



AT-RISK STUDENTS

The Independent Education of Australia acknowledges the research which shows that many 'At-Risk' students are not achieving well in particular curriculum areas. The IEUA supports studies which show that the issues are complex and that priority must be given to research and policy approaches around 'which boys and which girls' in terms of student participation in education and learning outcomes.

The IEUA believes that designated funding, staffing and professional development should be focused on curriculum and pedagogical strategies and flexible work place structures to assist disadvantaged students.

The IEUA calls on governments and education authorities to give urgent attention to resourcing the development and implementation of action plans which address the differential needs of disadvantaged students. Particular attention should be given to socioeconomic disadvantage, aboriginality, rurality and disability.

The IEUA also notes that it is essential that programs and interventionist strategies should also target the early years of schooling.

The IEUA supports the establishment of local community education planning bodies which would involve school communities, including parents, school staffs, students and other local community agencies, to look at the cooperative use of resources and access to services, and to examine models of support such as "full service schooling."

The IEUA calls on governments to provide resources to develop compendia of best practice case study strategies which have been developed and implemented in schools to assist educationally at risk students. These should reflect those programs and strategies which have:

- encouraged boys and girls to know and understand the breadth of curriculum choices in the post compulsory years of schooling and their implications for further education and training, employment opportunities and career paths, as well as for their personal interest and their social and emotional growth
- provided professional development to school staff about the changing nature of the labour market, the likely impact of globalisation on employment, training and skills development and the consequent impact of these changes on school curriculum, pedagogy and student subject choice.
- assisted teachers and support staff to develop pedagogical and curriculum approaches in order to positively engage those students in learning who are alienated and hostile about their school experience.

The IEUA calls on governments to develop funded programs which schools can access for the implementation of alternative models of educational provision to individual students who are disaffected with school and are at risk of dropping out from schooling altogether.