Reference No. 57
Responsibility for the preparation of this research summary rests with the authors of the MCEETYA report *Education, Training and Indigenous Futures: CAEPR Policy Research 1990–2007* and not the original author(s) of the summarised material.

Title of Research:
The Indigenous Community Governance Project (ICGP)

Research Publication:
Further key insights from the Indigenous Community Governance Project 2006

Name of Researcher(s):
J. Hunt and D.E. Smith

Time period:
2005-2006

Geographic location:
Urban, rural and remote locations of Australia

Methodology:
Based on detailed evidence from over a dozen different ‘case studies’ of Indigenous governance in action, the ICGP’s findings are drawn from a diverse range of community, geographical, cultural and political settings across Australia.

Aims:
This paper summarises the key issues that emerged from the comparative analysis of the ICGP’s field-based research carried out in 2006.

Selected findings and insights:
The ICGP raised the following issues during 2006:
• the conceptual and cultural complexity of Indigenous governance systems
• the important role of ‘nodal leadership’ in building legitimate, accountable governance
• the prevalence and flexibility of Indigenous models of networked governance
• the identification of shared Indigenous design principles and institutions for governance
• the identification of key factors that sustain and undermine cultural legitimacy
• the urgent need to invest now in governance capacity development, and
• the ongoing role and impact of the ‘governance capacity’ of governments.

The research findings confirm that an externally imposed ‘one size fits all’ approach to addressing Indigenous governance was unlikely to be workable or sustainable; indeed, it may be counterproductive.

Organisational structures and representative arrangements needed to respond to different local and cultural conditions. But by analysing all the case study research, the ICGP was able to identify deep-seated principles and culturally-based institutions that Indigenous groups appeared to share in common, and which they were using to do their governance-building work, whether that be in rural, urban or remote communities.
Educational implications:

At the level of developing partnerships between schools, training providers, key agencies, business and Indigenous communities and organisations in local support networks as envisaged in Domain 5 on *Pathways to Training, Employment and Higher Education governance issues*, as identified by CAEPR research, become important.

There are two elements that need to be highlighted if progress is to be made in establishing effective partnerships among these key stakeholders:

- Improving the capacity of Indigenous organisations to participate in the proposed educational partnerships; [community capacity building] and

- Improving the capacity of government agencies and the private sector to participate in partnership arrangements [government agency capacity building]

These two elements reflect the two issues identified at the school community level where:

- Indigenous parent/carer community members may need increased skills and understandings about educational policy, programs and resourcing issues when negotiating educational agreements regarding their children’s education; [parent/carer capacity building] and

- school principals and staff may require professional development opportunities to increase their understandings of Indigenous cultural values, traditions and priorities. [staff development]

Relevance:

*Introductory Topic: Culture, Community and Family Life*

*Domain 2: School and Community Education Partnerships*

Use and negotiation of educational partnership agreements between schools and communities

Educational partnership agreements and SRAs

Related papers:

For main report see
