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Introduction

In 1999, 461 candidates sat for the Higher School Certificate examination in Aboriginal Studies. This was a decline of more than 60 students from the candidature in 1998.

The questions were received positively by candidates and allowed them to display their depth of knowledge and understanding of contemporary issues. Directions to students were clear and the stimulus material provided was considered to be both thought-provoking and relevant to the set questions.

Responses reflected candidates' detailed knowledge and understanding of both the themes and respective aspects of the course. They also illustrated the grasp many students have regarding issues and progress made by indigenous communities, not only within Australia, but also in the international context. It is encouraging to note the involvement of Aboriginal communities in the teaching of the course, as shown in candidates' responses which required a regional/community focus.

This is a course which is not only unique in Australia, but can also make a difference both personally and on the national scale. As it is often a difficult subject to introduce and maintain in secondary schools, congratulations should be extended to those centres that do so for their dedication and perseverance in teaching and learning from it.

The criteria for marking were reached after the reading and discussion of papers by Senior Examiners and Pilot Markers with the Examination Committee also having input into the forming and framing of such criteria. These were refined in the briefing sessions and were such that students' abilities and knowledge were rewarded in the subsequent formal marking operations.

ABORIGINAL STUDIES

Section I – Context

Short Answers (20 marks)

Question 1

General Comments

The question incorporated stimulus material in the form of a poster and a poem. Candidates were asked to respond by using a combination of their own knowledge and the stimulus material provided. Responses generally displayed a sound grasp of the question and the purpose of the stimulus material and some students were able to integrate both the sources and their own knowledge in their responses.

Specific Comments

Only a few candidates took the opportunity to use their own knowledge, particularly that gained from their regional/community studies, to support the arguments presented. This was particularly the case in Part (g). It was apparent that the policy of integration was poorly understood by the majority of the students and it was felt that this needs to be addressed for future examinations. Future candidates are encouraged to incorporate their regional/community knowledge in their responses.

Parts (a) (b) (c)

These questions required students either to name or list information. A significant number gained full marks as they were able to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the link between the questions and the stimulus material. Excellent responses embellished or qualified issues with additional, relevant information gleaned from their study of the course as a whole. It was most encouraging to find that many responses went beyond the question in terms of detail and analysis, although it was not necessary to do so.

Part (d)

This was, by far, the least satisfactorily answered part from Question 1. The policy of 'Integration' was poorly understood by the majority of candidates who, more often than not, confused it with either the policy of Assimilation or Reconciliation. Only a few responses showed a clear understanding of the policy and its aims. The best candidates discussed the importance and value of Aboriginal culture within the context of the wider Australian community.

Part (e)

The misunderstanding shown in Part (d) resulted in a high degree of repetition in answers to this question. In excellent responses, students showed their perception of the importance of Reconciliation as a process and also included reference to the Council for Reconciliation, the Council's Vision Statement, the 8 Point Agenda and the recent draft document.

Average candidates responses tended to show a firm understanding of the concept but failed to address the process. Below average responses showed only a vague or superficial understanding of Reconciliation and tended either to paraphrase or merely quote from the poem.

Part (f)

This question provided candidates with the opportunity to provide a critical appraisal of both the given sources and to show how each of these address the issue of improving race relations. Interpretations of both sources were found consistently in excellent responses, where students were mindful of addressing the importance of how these sources examined the improvement of race relations in Australia.

Weaker candidates responses mentioned only one of the sources, and tended to quote from the source without providing any meaningful analysis or addressing the issue of improvement of race relations. Where both sources were mentioned, there tended to be an obvious imbalance in subsequent analysis.

Part (g)

This was a challenging question. Superior responses critically examined the quotation and linked this to on-going effects of historical experiences. Excellent responses dealt thoroughly with two or more past issues and provided wide-ranging discussion on such issues as Land Rights, Invasion or The Stolen Generation. Here, too, candidates were able to view Reconciliation as the key to resolving many of these contentious issues and their scripts succeeded in coming to a judgement regarding the extent to which these past issues have been resolved.

In average responses, students tended to ignore the quotation or the need to make a judgement, although they were able to discuss two or more issues in a coherent though somewhat imbalanced manner.

Below average responses tended to be either too brief, factually inaccurate, or lacking in depth of analysis. Little, if any, attempt was made to address the extent to which past issues had been resolved. The quotation was generally ignored, as also were the sources.

Example of an Excellent Response For Question 1 Part (g):

Ways in which past issues have been resolved are the formation of initiatives such as the Aboriginal Education Policy, the Aboriginal Studies program and the AECG (Aboriginal Educational Consultative Group), which inform and educate Australians about the Aboriginal culture and break down the urban myths or racism previously enforced.

The granting of citizenship rights and the right to vote was a momentous act by the Australian public to recognise finally, the equality, worth and value of Aborigines and to give them the right to make decisions and to have laws made for them.

To an extent, Native Title is helping Aborigines reclaim land which had been violently taken from them. This is not a total solution, but a positive move towards Aborigines' rights to their traditional lands.

The Stolen Generation had an inquiry into the removal of Aboriginal children and this concluded that Aborigines were certainly wrongfully taken by the Government. Initiatives like Link-Up help Aborigines claim back their traditional lives and reunite them with family and the land.

Section II – Aspects

Regional Studies (40 marks)

Question 2 – Cultural Expression

Above Average Responses

These responses incorporated the following features:

- Addressed all parts of the question, giving a balanced response.
- Selection of TWO significant issues and how their effect is presented through music and/or dance.
- A range of comprehensive and accurate community-specific examples.
- Detailed knowledge of how music and/or dance promote an understanding of Aboriginal culture.

Average Responses

These responses incorporated the following features:

- Addressed all parts of the question, although answers to Part (c) tended to be a more generalised selection of TWO significant issues and some understanding of how their effect is presented through music and/or dance.
- Some community-specific examples.
- A sound understanding of music and/or dance, although lacking a focus on the promotion of Aboriginal identity.
- A tendency to ‘describe’ rather than ‘explain’ in Part (c).

Below Average Responses

These responses were noteworthy for the following features:

- Examples in Part (a) tended to be inaccurate. For instance, the Rugby League player Cliff Lyons was listed as a dancer.
- A focus in Part (b) on dance and/or music without linking this to the selection of significant issues.
- Description of Aboriginal dance and/or music without reference to the promotion of understanding Aboriginal identity through dance and /or music.
- Lack of community-specific examples.
- Lack of relevant detail.

Specific Comments

- (a) Problems arose because some examples were either not contemporary or were non-Aboriginal. Some were not related to music and/or dance.
- (b) Although examples used by candidates were mostly predictable, some did use a local community performer. Only the best responses discussed the importance of the mode of presentation and the audience it would attract.
- (c) Many candidates are still not identifying a region and simply refer to broad national examples in their responses. A number wrote in general terms about cultural expression and did not focus solely on dance and/or music. The majority of candidates seemed to have difficulty in linking culture to identity and in showing an understanding of why its promotion was important.

Question 3 – Economic Systems

There was a significant increase in the number of candidates who attempted this question this year.

Above Average Responses

These responses contained the following features:

- They adopted a balanced approach to all parts of the question.
- A detailed outline was given of TWO ways in which contact affected Aboriginal land use.
- Detailed explanation was given of the extent to which economic independence is being achieved in candidates' chosen regional study.
- A range of community-specific and relevant examples was provided.

Average Responses

In these responses:

- General understanding of the question was shown, although Part (c) tended to be descriptive.
- General understanding was apparent of the impact of contact on land use.
- Some understanding was shown of the ways in which economic independence is being achieved by Aboriginal communities, although responses tended to 'describe' rather than 'explain'.
- Some community-specific examples were used, though these tended to be very general in nature.

Below Average Responses

In these responses:

- Misunderstanding was shown in all parts of the question.
- Brevity was a common fault.
- Lack of community-specific examples was common.
- Lack of knowledge about what was meant by economic independence was common.

Specific Comments

- (a) On the whole, the topic was handled well by the candidates who chose this question.
- (b) In superior responses, candidates were able to trace the impact on Aboriginal land use from contact to contemporary times. Most candidates were able to name TWO ways in which contact with non-Aboriginal people has impacted on land use. It was pleasing to note that some candidates were able to include specific policies in their responses and to link these to impact on land use.
- (c) Many candidates misunderstood the notion of 'extent' in their responses. A number of candidates also failed to discuss the ways or means in which economic independence in a specific region was being achieved in a contemporary context. Superior responses provided a range of ways economic independence has been obtained and maintained a focus on the extent to which this has been achieved. Some candidates were able to provide excellent examples of specific communities in terms of practices or enterprises.

Question 4 – Education

There was a marked decline in the number of students who attempted this question from those who did so in previous examinations.

Above Average Responses

These responses included the following features:

- A balanced approach was adopted to all parts of the question.

- A detailed outline of the role of two organisations and/or agencies was given.
- A detailed explanation was given of the extent to which empowerment is being achieved in the candidate's chosen region through education.
- A range of community-specific and relevant examples was provided.

Average Responses

- A general understanding of the question was demonstrated, although Part (c) tended to be descriptive.
- A general understanding was shown of the role of organisations and/or agencies whose main role is the provision of education for Aboriginal peoples.
- Some understanding was apparent of the ways in which empowerment is being achieved by Aboriginal communities through education, although these responses tended to 'describe' rather than 'explain'.
- Some community-specific examples were given, though these tended to be very general.

Below Average Responses

- Misunderstanding was shown in all parts of the question.
- Responses lacked detail.
- Lack of community-specific examples.
- Lack of knowledge of what was meant by 'empowerment'.

Specific Comments

Those who attempted this question found difficulty in listing FOUR organisations and/or agencies whose main role was provision of educational opportunities for Aboriginal people. Candidates tended to describe educational practices or the roles of Aboriginal communities in Part (c) without discussing the extent to which empowerment had been achieved as a result of their actions. It was, however, pleasing to see the variety of community-specific examples used in this response.

Question 5 – Law and Politics

This was by far the least popular question of this section.

Excellent Responses

These responses were noteworthy for the following:

- Candidates analysed and addressed each part of the question, adopting a balanced approach to each part.
- They provided an integrated account of how Aboriginal communities are achieving legal and political equality.
- Comprehensive and accurate regional examples were given.
- Detailed knowledge was shown of the effects of government policies and practices on the lives of Aboriginal people.

Above Average Responses

These responses provided the following features:

- They addressed all parts of the question, adopting a balanced approach to each.
- They gave detailed explanation of how Aboriginal communities are achieving legal and political equality.
- A variety of factual regional examples were provided.
- Solid understanding was shown of the effects of government policies and practices on Aboriginal communities.

Average Responses

These responses provided the following features:

- General understanding of the question, although the approach to answering the question was unbalanced.
- They attempted to show how Aboriginal communities were achieving political and legal equality, but many focussed too heavily on legal or political inequality.
- They provided general regional examples rather than specific examples.
- Average understanding of the effects of government policies and practices on Aboriginal people was shown in these examples.

Below Average Responses

These responses showed the following:

- Candidates in this category did not understand the nature of the question or its components.
- They failed to show how Aboriginal communities are achieving political and legal equality.
- They provided general examples that generally were not specifically linked to a region.
- They mentioned government policies and/or practices but showed no understanding of their effects on Aboriginal people.

Specific Comments

- (a) A list was all that was needed: some students went into too much detail for the marks allocated for this part of the question.
- (b) The policies and/or practices outlined should have been taken from the list given in Part (a). Some answers were too detailed for the marks allocated and many candidates were repetitive in their comments for both policies/practices mentioned.
- (c) A division should have been made between legal and political equality: these terms were confused by many candidates who provided responses that were both unclear and weak. Many focussed more on legal aspects and failed to give details about political equality for Aborigines.

Question 6 – Land Rights

This proved to be another popular question and a full range of marks were awarded for the answers to this question.

Excellent Responses

These responses incorporated the following features:

- They analysed and addressed each part of the question, adopting a balanced approach.
- They showed thorough understanding of the importance of Land Rights to Aboriginal people;
- While maintaining a contemporary focus, they gave a comprehensive explanation of how Aboriginal communities are addressing Land Rights issues.
- They provided a variety of detailed and accurate regional examples.

Above Average Responses

These responses provided the following features:

- In dealing with all parts of the question in their response, candidates adopted a balanced approach.
- They showed understanding of the importance of Land Rights to Aboriginal people.

- While maintaining a contemporary focus, these responses lacked detail in explaining how Aboriginal communities have worked to achieve Land Rights.
- Solid understanding of the effects of government policies and practices was a feature of these responses.

Average Responses

These responses provided the following features:

- General understanding of the question was shown, although the approach to answering the question was unbalanced.
- Only a vague understanding of the importance of Land Rights to Aboriginal people was shown.
- They attempted to show that Aboriginal communities are dealing with Land Rights issues.
- They provided only general regional examples instead of referring to a specific region.

Below Average Responses

These responses provided the following features:

- They failed to understand the nature of the question or its components.
- They showed a poor understanding of the importance of Land Rights to Aboriginal people.
- They failed to demonstrate how Aboriginal communities have worked to achieve Land Rights.
- They provided an example or examples which were exaggerated and were not linked to a region.

Specific comments

- (a) This question was generally well answered. A number of candidates provided detailed responses.
- (b) The majority of responses provided too much detail for the marks allocated to this section. Some students had no understanding of the word ‘campaign’ and others could name Land Rights campaigns but gave incorrect information in Part (d).
- (c) Most candidates realised that the question asked for a contemporary response and linked the Land Rights legislation to the development in the local community. They identified the outcomes in terms of economic gains and measurable attitudes in their specific community, showing a variety of claims by and benefits to each community described. More than one way of responding was necessary and, ideally, examples were drawn from more than one region.

Question 7 – Health and Medicine

This was the most popular question of the section and a full range of marks was awarded.

Excellent Responses

These responses provided the following features:

- A balanced approach was adopted which analysed and addressed each part of the question.
- A sophisticated understanding of the health problems and issues facing Aboriginal communities was shown.
- A detailed and clear explanation of how political and social changes have improved the health status of Aboriginal communities was given.
- In-depth and accurate regional examples were provided.

Above Average Responses

These responses provided the following features:

- They addressed all parts of the question, adopting a balanced approach.
- A solid understanding was shown of the health problems and issues facing Aboriginal communities.

- A sound explanation was given of how political and social changes have improved the health status of Aboriginal communities.
- Factual regional examples were provided.

Average Responses

These responses provided the following features:

- Although the approach to answering the question was unbalanced, some understanding of the topic was shown.
- An average understanding of the health problems and issues facing Aboriginal communities was apparent.
- Although candidates attempted to explain changes that have improved the health status of Aboriginal communities, they also focussed on either political or social changes that have occurred.
- General regional examples were provided.

Below Average Responses

These responses provided the following features:

- They showed that candidates did not understand the nature of the question or its components.
- They showed a poor understanding of the health problems and issues facing Aboriginal communities.
- They failed to explain changes that have improved the health status of Aboriginal communities and showed no understanding of political or social changes.
- They provided an example or examples that were exaggerated and not linked to a region.

Specific Comments

- (a) Some candidates misinterpreted the words 'prior to invasion' and listed FOUR contemporary practices. A single reference to a bush medicine did not equate to a 'practice'.
- (b) Some candidates confused the question and gave TWO major causes of health problems instead of stating TWO major health problems AND outlining the causes for each.
- (c) Candidates found it difficult to distinguish between political and social changes and most described the health facilities available to Aborigines in their specific region.

Section III – Aspects

Comparative Studies (20 marks)

General Comments

Candidates were again offered the choice of either a structured or an unstructured essay in this section. Question 8 was the most popular question and the full range of marks was awarded. Interestingly, Question 9, the structured question, was not handled as well as Question 8. It was difficult to award maximum marks for responses to question 9. It was felt that this was due to the question requiring two comparative understanding and analysis of two Australian Aboriginal Communities.

Question 8

Above Average Responses

These responses contained the following features:

- A thorough understanding of all parts of the question.
- Detailed knowledge of the chosen Aboriginal and international communities, with clear identification and description of their locations.
- A range of community-specific examples which illustrated the ways in which each were addressing the on-going effects of their respective colonial experiences.
- Effective comparison and contrast of each community, as shown through the use of appropriate and community-specific examples.
- Concepts such as self-determination, empowerment and reconciliation were explained in terms of examining the ongoing effects of the respective colonial experiences of indigenous peoples, both in Australia and internationally.

Average Responses

These responses contained the following features:

- A lack of balance between colonial experiences in the past and the ways in which these were now being addressed by the respective chosen communities, ie responses tended to reflect a past rather than a present orientation.
- An imbalance in terms of discussing the responses on both communities; that is, one community tended to be dealt with in a relatively thorough manner, while the other was dealt with in only generalised terms.
- Responses tended to contain more ‘description’ than ‘comparative analysis’.
- Significant concepts were understood in only a general or superficial manner.

Below Average Responses

These responses contained the following features:

- A misunderstanding of what was meant by indigenous communities or indigenous peoples in general, and of an Australian and international community in particular.
- Discussion was limited to either colonial experiences or current events in the respective communities. There were no links to show the continuity between colonial experiences and their on-going effects.
- Generalised experiences of Aboriginal people were described without any discussion of how on-going effects were being dealt with by each community.
- Information was either irrelevant or inaccurate.

Specific Comments

Candidates in the Average or Below Average ranges tended merely to recount historical experiences without making any attempt to link these to contemporary or ongoing effects brought about by colonialism. There was also some confusion in distinguishing between indigenous peoples today.

Example of an Above Average Response for Question 8

Both the James Bay Cree Indians and the Wreck Bay Community have been significantly affected by colonial experiences. Both communities have suffered loss of languages, a change in diet, loss of culture, heritage and identity and the destruction of family and other relatives. In different and similar ways, both communities are striving to look to the future, reaffirm and revive their culture and address the ongoing effects that have been caused by such colonial experiences. Together, both communities are striving to bring new birth to a once forgotten heritage and culture. Self-determination, passion; and, a will to revive and sustain the past is driving such communities who continue to develop a diverse range of strategies, plans and programs to aid in moving on, and to assist in addressing the ongoing effects of their colonial experiences.

Both communities continue to struggle and fight, whilst maintaining a close relationship with the land. Barry Moone, of Wreck Bay said; “We want to take our people into the new millennium feeling as though they have achieved. And we will have the right to achieve. Our land is our Mother – it is continuous. It will always be that way. And we fight the past everyday. We fight the ramifications. But we’re learning to improve them, and move on and up – to bigger and better things”.

Question 9

Above Average Responses

These responses contained the following features:

- The chosen issues were clearly linked to the aspect selected by the candidate. Some issues were discussed in detail to ensure that the link to the chosen aspect was achieved. This was particularly evident in Part (a) of the question.
- Comprehensive knowledge of the issues in each chosen community was evident, along with a range of relevant, specific examples addressing the extent to which success had been achieved.
- A strict focus was maintained in comparing the two chosen communities, along with a balance between each.
- Evaluation of the observable measures of success which each chosen community had achieved.

Average Responses

These responses contained the following features:

- A general description of each chosen community, although a lack of effective comparative analysis of the chosen issues was evident.
- Fewer and more generalised community-specific examples were given which inferred rather than stated the extent to which success had been achieved.
- An imbalance of comparison between the two chosen communities was apparent; that is, one community was dealt with in a relatively thorough fashion, while the other received a more generalised treatment.
- A limited discussion of the success of each community was given.
- Responses tended to be more descriptive than analytical.

Below Average Responses

These responses contained the following features:

- Responses to Part (b) of the question were weak. Candidates concentrated on two of the aspects listed rather than issues relevant to the chosen aspect.
- While two Australian communities were identified, students failed to compare and contrast the experiences of each.
- A lack of community-specific examples and their link to observable measures of success was common.
- There was a lack of continuity or substance between Parts (a) (b) and (c) of the question.
- These responses generally suffered from brevity and lack of relevant information.

Specific Comments

There was a significant drop this year in the number of candidates who chose to answer the structured essay. There is strength in the argument that this was because the question asked students to compare two Australian Aboriginal communities, rather than an Australian regional and international study as has been the case in the last two years. Indeed, some candidates misread the question and failed to use two Australian communities in their responses. Instead, some used their international study, thus significantly disadvantaging themselves in terms of the mark that could be awarded.

In addition, some candidates appeared to be confused by Part (a) of the question and did not focus on specific issues from their chosen aspect. For example, the aspect of Cultural Expression was chosen and, instead of identifying such issues as intellectual property or cultural appropriation, candidates merely listed things such as song, dance, art, and ceremony. Clearly these are not issues, and such responses were subsequently disadvantaged in terms of the mark awarded.

There was also evidence that some candidates had little or very superficial understanding and knowledge of a second Aboriginal community. Candidates are advised that the Syllabus clearly states that TWO Aboriginal regional/community studies are to be attempted for each chosen aspect, and that the Comparative Section has the facility to examine these, as it has done this year.

Example of an Above Average Response to Parts (a) and (b)

Part (a): Four issues include: Drug & Alcohol Abuse; Health Centres; Bush Medicine, and Housing.

Part (b): Awabakal Community and Bulurru Community.

Awabakal	Bulurru
<p>Awabakal Medical Centre: 3 doctors, 3 dentists, healthcare workers, youth workers, HIV/AIDS + Sexual workers</p> <p>Programs & advice on a variety of issues including: nutrition, diabetes, drug and alcohol, HIV/AIDs, heart health, pre-natal, neo-natal, obesity, lifestyle diseases.</p> <p>Immunisation levels down, which saw people taking more care.</p> <p>Adequate health care, partnership with Hunter Health, paving the way for better health care in the Aboriginal community.</p>	<p>Bulurru Hospital: Run by Whites. Aboriginal people only go there if the local doctor, an Aboriginal woman's husband, does not have his surgery open. He describes his practice as a band aid, only just coping. More programs and initiatives needed.</p> <p>Not enough adequate health care or centres to care for the community. A lot of problems go unseen.</p>

Example of an Above Average Response to Part (c)

In the Cowra Wiradjuri area the issue of alcoholism is being dealt with very successfully. The Aboriginal Health Officers situated within the town educate people on alcoholism both at the Erambie Mission (in Cowra) and at the offices of the 'Weigelli' Drug and Alcohol Centre which has been built just outside the town, at Darby's Falls, with funds supplied from ATSIC. The centre provides accommodation, rehabilitation and support on the premises for up to twelve Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal people. Because the alcohol problem in Cowra also predominantly concerns children, in August 1999, a group of Aboriginal teenagers visited the Weigelli Centre. The establishments and education in the Lardil and Cowra Wiradjuri areas are all very successful, and so far the results have been very good, with people in both places eating more fresh food and children being educated about alcohol so then they do not become alcoholics when they get older.

Section IV – The Synthesis

Question 10 (20 marks)

General Comments

This question attracted the smallest number of responses. The full range of marks was awarded. The majority of students easily identified a contemporary issue significant to Aboriginal peoples, with the majority choosing either Land Rights or The Stolen Generation. Candidates' responses also indicated that they made little or no use of the stimulus material provided with the question. Superior responses forged strong links between the listed themes, although the majority contained no observable link to the choice of themes. The choice of 1972 as a starting point for the development of a chosen issue was not adhered to in most responses.

Above Average Responses

These responses contained the following features:

- A thorough understanding of all parts of the question was evident.
- Strong links were made between the chosen theme and issue.
- Clear identification of an issue was made and its development since 1972 discussed.
- A clear contemporary focus was established.
- A range of community-specific examples was tied to both theme and issue.

Average Responses

These responses contained the following features:

- Identification of an issue, although many contained an imbalance between the historical or contextual backgrounds and focussed on the contemporary response.
- Identification of more than one issue, therefore they provided a less comprehensive coverage of development post-1972.
- Links between issue and theme were obviously weaker and tended to lack consistency throughout the response.
- Few community-specific examples were given; most tended to be more generalised in nature.
- An imbalance between description and analysis was common.

Below Average Responses

These responses contained the following features:

- Although they identified an issue, its development post-1972 was treated in a general or superficial manner.
- There was a lack of mention of specific events or persons significant to the development of the issue.
- There was a lack of community-specific examples and those chosen showed only a superficial relationship to the chosen theme.
- These responses tended to be too brief.

Specific Comments

No directions were given to candidates to include reference to the stimulus in their response. This differed from last year's examination, in which candidates were specifically instructed to use the

stimulus in their responses. At the same time, the stimulus provided did contain within it prompts and clues for candidates to use in their responses. Again, candidates are reminded that the course has a contemporary rather than an historical focus and examiners are looking for their understanding and knowledge of contemporary issues which are currently affecting indigenous communities.

Example of an Above Average Response

Since 1972 the issue of the Stolen Generation has become a largely debated issue. The 'Bringing Them Home' report published after the inquiry into the Stolen Generation has resulted in many issues arising from its findings and its recommendations. On a political level, the recommendations that an apology be made to the Aboriginal people by the government and the Prime Minister's refusal to comply with this has, in recent years, resulted in much controversy and many differing opinions..... On a social level, many of the social problems faced by Aboriginal people stem from the removal of people from their parents as children. Those people who were forcibly removed are more likely than others to assess their health status as being fair to poor, are more likely to have been arrested, and are not receiving a significantly higher income nor are they better educated than other members of society, or other Aboriginal people.

Question 11

General Comments

This was by far the most popular question in this section and accounted for the majority of responses. The full range of marks was rewarded for this question.

Above Average Responses

These responses contained the following features:

- Demonstration of a clear understanding of 'third world conditions' and provision of relevant examples.
- Exhibition of a sophisticated understanding of the importance of promoting Aboriginal culture at the Sydney Olympics. Students were able to explain the importance of this in a polydimensional fashion.
- Reflection of a high level of understanding of the concept of reconciliation in the context of the question.
- Provision of strong and observable links between the Olympic Games and the concept of reconciliation.
- A range of relevant and contemporary examples were used.
- Ability to discuss future implications for race relations in Australia.

Average Responses

These responses contained the following features:

- Limited understanding of 'third world conditions' and use of generalised examples.
- Generalised description of the promotion of Aboriginal culture at the Olympic Games.
- Outlined rather than discussed the effects of the Games on the progress of reconciliation.

Below Average Responses

These responses contained the following features:

- Confusion of 'third world conditions' with pre-contact Aboriginal lifestyles.
- General or superficial descriptions regarding the promotion of Aboriginal culture, without any explanation of the importance of such promotion.

- Vague or broad statements regarding reconciliation without the establishment of links between the Olympic Games and the effects of the Games on progress towards reconciliation.

Specific Comments

The stimulus material provided relevance to the concepts and content referred to by the question. In Part (b) many candidates described the promotion of Aboriginal culture without adequately explaining the importance of this. Full marks could not be awarded because of this discrepancy. Part (c) created problems for a number of students because of its nature; that is, the Olympic Games are still a year away. Candidates are reminded that the nature of the Synthesis section is both contemporary and referring to the future. Questions regarding events in the near future could well be asked in future examinations and students are recommended to keep abreast of contemporary and current issues. The majority of candidates were unable to identify 'Dr. O'Donoghue' accurately and could not relate the stimulus to the question. Students are also reminded to include community-specific examples, if appropriate, in this section.

Example of an Above Average Response to Part (b)

It is important to promote Aboriginal culture at the Sydney Olympic Games to show the world that we are proud of this culture of our indigenous people, and that we recognise its validity and importance as being that of a race within our country. It is also important to promote Aboriginal culture as it instils a sense of pride in Aboriginal people and a feeling of respect in non-Aboriginal people.

The Olympic Games are an opportunity for Australia to 'showcase the culture of our people'. It is important that Australia shows the world our very unique and special heritage steeped within our indigenous people. As Dr. O'Donoghue said, it is 'The longest surviving indigenous culture in the world'. Aboriginal people need to express their culture to overcome adversities in society, and what better place to do it than at the Sydney Olympic Games?

Example of an Above Average Response to Part (c)

The Olympic Games will act as a catalyst, forcing changes to be made and further progress to be made in the reconciliation process. Under world scrutiny, Australia will be forced to acknowledge the extreme disparity in status of Aborigines and non-Aborigines and to see the true extent to which Australian apathy has allowed the degradation of Aboriginal cultures, witness the loss of languages and cultural practices. It could also bring about certain international pressure to force Australia to review the plight of the Aboriginal people. ... This could be a real opportunity to shed the barriers of past problems and to work towards a more constructive and positive future.

Question 12

General Comments

This question was the most ably answered in this section. The responses were clearly structured and students provided more content and community-specific examples. Many were able to identify contributions made by Aboriginal peoples in all three areas: cultural, sporting, and political life. Superior responses maintained a focus on the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, and indicated how this relationship has been affected by indigenous contributions. This question allowed students to provide local examples in their responses.

Above Average Responses

These responses contained the following features:

- Provision of a range of relevant examples which were specific to the question. For example, culture was dealt with in terms of art, poetry, music and dance.
- A consistent and strong focus on the effects that these examples had on the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.
- Examination of both positive and negative effects of race relations.
- A sophisticated understanding of the nature and relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

Average Responses

These responses contained the following:

- Some examples relevant to the question, although these tended to be high profile, national examples.
- Broad description of positive contributions and their effects on the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.
- An imbalance between the fields of contributions, with politics receiving minimal attention.

Below Average Responses

These responses contained the following features:

- A general discussion of indigenous contributions to Australia's cultural, sporting and political life.
- Only brief reference in terms of depth and detail.
- Lack of relevant examples.
- Superficial links on the effects of these contributions to the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

Example of an Above Average Response

Successful Aborigines such as Cathy Freeman, Jimmy Little, Eddie Mabo, Sally Morgan, Leah Purcell, Chris Moran, the Ella brothers, the Page brothers, and Pat O'Shane have gained world-wide recognition which has positively affected the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.

Local achievers such as Kevin Butler, Chris Moran, Joy Williams, Lorraine Brown and Betty Little also aid in improving and strengthening local relations as well as rekindling old ones, and forming new ones. Each of these Aboriginal people have made significant contributions to Australia's cultural, sporting and political life – and have created and improved relations and understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.