

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COMMENTS ON *MODELLING OF POST-COMPULSORY SCHOOL ENROLMENTS* BY STEPHEN LAMB

SES

- Results relating to SES, measured by SEIFA, are not reliable. This is accepted by the report, which implies that the SES effect is being picked up in the indigeneity and remoteness variables (on the basis that there is an inverse relationship on average between SES and indigeneity/remoteness).
 - This indicates a substantial problem, as SES and indigeneity may be correlated on average, but the relative pattern of SES and indigeneity differs significantly across States. In particular, WA has relatively high SES but also high indigeneity. The Lamb analysis doubly understates WA policy neutral enrolments by assigning too high a value to indigeneity, and too low a value to SES.
- SEIFA indexes are best used at a fine geographic level (CDs if possible – see ABS Cat. No. 2039.0, page 30) – however, the Lamb analysis is based on Statistical Sub-Divisions.

STATES AS “POLICY” VARIABLES

- The State variables should not be described as policy variables. They capture both policy and non-policy State-specific impacts.
 - Moreover, these impacts may not work in the same direction.
- The introduction of the State “policy” variables causes “language background” to change from an insignificant to a significant variable, while “unemployment” changes from significant to insignificant. This highlights how the modelling results and State “policy” variables should be interpreted with great caution.
- The interaction between policy and non-policy differences may be complex. For example, if States have similar policies for mainstream students, but different policies for particular student groups, this may have unpredictable effects on the modelled “policy” and “non-policy” influences.

THE 80/20 SPLIT BETWEEN POLICY AND NON-POLICY EFFECTS

- The report applies the national derived 80/20 split uniformly across the States. However, the policy impact varies across States.