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**Ethnic diversity and equity in schooling within a cosmopolitan framework: a response to neoliberalism?**

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Drawing on research in south-western Sydney<sup>i</sup> on the new compulsory schooling age in NSW this paper critiques the neoliberal discourse that reifies individual self-interest over the ‘collective practice<sup>ii</sup>’ of families. It does this by harnessing cosmopolitan theory to critique the “choice biography<sup>iii</sup>” approach that permeates much of the research about aspirations. The paper examines how ethnicity and race gain explanatory power in the discourses of teachers when the pros and cons of the increased compulsory schooling age are discussed. There are competing discourses of individuation and choice versus processes of ethnicization and racialization. There are also strong gendered dimensions to how these discourses are invoked by teachers.