NSW BUDGET BUILDS STRONGER COMMUNITIES

A new system for background checks on people working with children is one of the key initiatives supported in the 2012-13 State Budget, Minister for Citizenship and Communities Victor Dominello said today.

A total of more than $73 million will be spent to strengthen and support communities in NSW, including $5.5 million to implement changes to the Working With Children Check.

“The new Working With Children Check, commencing later in the year, will allow for the full screening of both paid and unpaid child-related work, for the first time in NSW,” Mr Dominello said.

“Legislation will be tabled tomorrow to make the Working With Children Check simpler, safer and more widely available.

“Extensive public consultations have shown strong community support for an extended Working With Children Check to help make NSW a safer place for children.”

Mr Dominello said a further $3 million will be used to support youth-led and youth-driven activities that give young people a greater role in their local communities.

“A new youth program will support a wide range of activities to help young people engage in positive leadership and development,” he said.

Mr Dominello said $20 million in funding will support Aboriginal Affairs programs, including $800,000 for the development of a new whole-of-Government strategy for Aboriginal affairs in NSW.

“Our focus is on improvements in education, employment and service delivery to achieve real generational change in partnership with Aboriginal communities,” he said.

Mr Dominello said the Budget also delivers on the Government’s commitment to great and vibrant communities, including working with volunteers and harnessing cultural diversity.

“The NSW Government has committed $4.5 million over four years for a new Volunteering Strategy with initiatives that will give greater recognition, training and support to our State’s two million plus volunteers,” Mr Dominello said.

“In addition, the grant program of the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW has been reformed and increased to $1.4 million in 2012-13, an increase of $200,000.

“The NSW Government is determined to help more people from all walks of life make meaningful contributions to their communities,” Mr Dominello said.

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