NEW DIRECTION IN ABORIGINAL POLICY

Coordinating employment and training opportunities within school and an increased focus on language and culture are features of the reform proposed by a NSW Government taskforce to radically boost opportunities for Aboriginal people.

The proposals are outlined in a progress report released today by the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs.

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Victor Dominello said the progress report is a step towards the NSW Government’s new Aboriginal affairs strategy, to be released at the end of the year.

“More economic opportunity, more language and culture, more local community decision making and more responsibility - this is the basis of our new approach,” Mr Dominello said.

“With more than one third of NSW’s Aboriginal people aged under 15, it’s vital that we and the Aboriginal community build this future in partnership.”

Mr Dominello said initiatives outlined in the report focus on achieving generational change through:

- giving school students pathways to real jobs by getting local employers involved in career planning;
- better supporting language and culture both in communities and in schools to better engage with families and motivate Aboriginal students to stay in school;
- building the capacity of Aboriginal communities and non-government organisations (NGOs) to play a greater role in local service delivery; and
- improving accountability – of and between government, NGOs, and communities – through independent public reporting and evidenced-based decision making.

The taskforce has announced nine community forums in August and September for people to have their say on the new directions and ideas under consideration by the Government and its Aboriginal partners on the taskforce.

“We’re going back out to communities for a second round of consultations, so people can check our proposals for themselves and let us know what they think and how we can best get things done in future,” Mr Dominello said.

To view the progress report, visit www.daa.nsw.gov.au/taskforce/yoursay.html or contact the Taskforce Secretariat at taskforce@dhs.nsw.gov.au.

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