A new survey of hundreds of participants who took part in wide ranging consultations among Aboriginal communities has confirmed community backing for reforms proposed by a NSW Government taskforce to boost opportunities for Aboriginal people.

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Victor Dominello said the survey of more than 400 people found there was overwhelming support for more economic opportunity, more language and culture, more local community decision making and more responsibility.

“The Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs has received positive feedback on the basis of our new approach to improve education outcomes, employment outcomes and service delivery,” Mr Dominello said.

The Taskforce, which includes senior government Ministers and senior Aboriginal leaders, is developing a new Government strategy for Aboriginal affairs after holding a series of consultations in communities across the state.

The survey on three proposed initiatives found that there was substantial support for:

- **Opportunity Hubs** giving school students pathways to real jobs by getting local employers involved in career planning at school;
- **Aboriginal Language and Culture** to motivate Aboriginal students to learn languages in communities and schools and better engage families in education so languages are preserved and used;
- **A Local Decision Making Model** to allow Aboriginal communities and non-government organisations to play a greater role in local service delivery.

The survey found that more than 96 per cent of participants agreed increased support for Aboriginal Language and Culture was either a “really good idea”, or “worth a go”.

“When I attended the community forums it was clear that people identified language as crucial in teaching culture and respect, building the confidence of Aboriginal people and strengthening a sense of identity,” Mr Dominello said.

One of the survey participants said: “Language in a school would bring confidence back to the kids and make them proud of their culture, giving them confidence they can do anything.”

More than 97 per cent of survey participants supported proposed Opportunity Hubs to coordinate employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal young people.
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A survey participant said: “The ideals of encouraging all youth, especially Aboriginal young people to have a good education and a chance at full and long time employment is a challenge that is well worth the efforts”.

The survey found that about 87 per cent of participants thought a move towards local decision making, giving communities a “real say”, was a worthwhile proposal.

“Don’t give up. It will not be easy but it can work,” one survey participant said.

Mr Dominello said it was important that the decision making process was community driven rather than government imposing ‘top down solutions.’

“These community meetings were valuable in testing the pulse of the community.

“I want to make it absolutely clear that the important information gathered from the consultations will be used by the Taskforce as the foundation of the NSW Government’s new Aboriginal affairs strategy.”

The NSW Government believes in the partnership with the Aboriginal community that allows transparency and the sharing of information.

“This is why we have released the Taskforce’s latest report, Getting It Right,” Mr Dominello said.

The Taskforce will release the new Aboriginal affairs strategy at the end of the year.

The report into the findings of the Round Two Consultations by the NSW Ministerial Taskforce for Aboriginal Affairs - Getting It Right – is available at www.daa.nsw.gov.au/taskforce/ynoursay or by phoning (02) 9219 0702.

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