BUDGET INVESTS IN NSW COMMUNITIES

A new plan that includes reforms to support more Aboriginal children to stay at school, transition to work and builds local decision making skills is one of the key initiatives supported in the 2013-14 State Budget, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Victor Dominello said today.

The NSW Government’s plan for Aboriginal affairs – known as OCHRE (Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment) – will receive a total of $4.7 million per annum.

“OCHRE puts Aboriginal people at the heart of decision making and focusses on education, employment and accountability,” Mr Dominello said.

“Legislation will be introduced this year to establish an independent Aboriginal Council and Coordinator General, to provide a stronger Aboriginal voice in Government and to monitor and publicly report on the plan, so real improvements occur within Aboriginal communities,” Mr Dominello said.

$69 million will support Aboriginal communities, veterans, young people, volunteers and our vibrant multicultural communities. This includes $10 million to the Community Relations Commission (CRC) to foster continued multicultural harmony in NSW and maximise the social and economic benefits of living in a diverse society.

“Support will continue for the successful Premier’s Harmony Dinner and Premier’s Multicultural Media Awards. In addition the CRC’s Multicultural Advantage Grants program will distribute $1.4 million in partnership, inclusion and sponsorship grants to support local initiatives that bring people from diverse backgrounds together as Australians.”

Mr Dominello, who is also the Minister responsible for Youth Affairs, said young people will benefit from more than $3 million in grant funding for innovative youth leadership projects, over $200,000 for local Youth Week events and continued support for the Youth Advisory Council and youth advocacy.

“An empowered and supported youth leads to stronger communities,” Mr Dominello said. Mr Dominello said $600,000 in grants will also flow to schools, students and community groups to increase public awareness of the Anzac legacy and support for our veterans.

“This includes $100,000 for the Anzac Community Grants Program that helps young people and multicultural groups to share the Anzac story; $250,000 for grants to repair and restore Community War Memorials; and $250,000 to send high school students to visit overseas battlefield sites through the Premier’s ANZAC Memorial Scholarship program,” Mr Dominello said.

Mr Dominello said further work with community NGOs and the corporate sector will advance the NSW Government’s Volunteer Strategy, including ongoing initiatives such as boosting recognition of volunteers.

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