ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE AND CULTURE NEST

The launch of the State’s first Aboriginal Language and Culture Nest in Dubbo today aims to build students’ pride and identity and develop more Aboriginal language teachers.

Speaking in Dubbo, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Victor Dominello said the North West Wiradjuri Language and Culture Nest will create learning pathways for Aboriginal students, teachers and community members.

The North West Wiradjuri Language and Culture Nest is the first of an initial set of five to be established across the state.

“Today I was joined by Aboriginal Elders, representatives of the North West Wiradjuri communities and members of the entire learning cycle to sign a commitment statement to the revitalisation of Wiradjuri language and culture,” said Mr Dominello.

“Revitalising language and culture will help younger and older Aboriginal people to learn traditional languages, both within their communities and in schools.

“This will help build identity, self-esteem and pride.

“Proud young people want to go to school, and proud parents want their kids to do well at school.”

Rod Towney, Manager Aboriginal Education and Training Unit at TAFE Western and Councillor at Dubbo City Council, said he was very excited to be a part of the State’s first Aboriginal Language and Culture Nest.

“Teaching people their language makes them feel proud and boosts their self-esteem, particularly with the young people,” said Mr Towney.

“I would like as many people as possible to learn their own language, in this case Wiradjuri, and in other parts of the state their languages.”

Aunty Pat Doolan PSM, President of the Dubbo Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, said she was thrilled to see all the people at the launch, some travelling up to 800 kilometres to be there, showing their support of Aboriginal language.

“I support the Aboriginal Language and Culture Nest and have wanted this for years,” said Auntie Pat Doolan.

“I don’t speak the language because I came from the stolen generation. I want to see languages embraced more in education.

“It’s great to see Aboriginal children learn their language.”
The Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests will fill the gaps in learning pathways serving as a springboard for both school students and community members to study language, beginning from pre-school and continuing into high-school and further education.

“The Nests will work with schools; create links with TAFE and universities as well as establishing other community language programs,” said Mr Dominello.

Local Member for Dubbo Troy Grant said the North West Wiradjuri Language and Culture Nest will focus on the communities in and around Mudgee, Peak Hill, Wellington, Gilgandra, Narromine, Trangie and Dubbo, with Dubbo acting as the coordinating hub.

“The Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests to be initially established will cover Paarkintji/Barkindji, Gamlaraay, Wiradjuri, Bundjalung and Gumbaynggirr languages,” said Mr Grant.

“Each Aboriginal Language and Culture Nest will be a network of communities bound together by their connection by an Aboriginal language.”

The Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests aim to:

- Improve knowledge of, and competency in, local Aboriginal languages;
- Strengthen Aboriginal identity, pride and community resilience;
- Increase the number of language learners;
- Increase the number of language teachers; and
- Contribute to increased school attendance and retention.

Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests are a key initiative of *OCHRE - Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment* the NSW Government Plan for Aboriginal affairs, which identifies and describes major initiatives aimed at improving the lives of Aboriginal people in partnership with the Aboriginal community.


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