LISMORE WELCOMES ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE AND CULTURE NEST

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Victor Dominello today launched the Bundjalung Aboriginal Language and Culture Nest in Lismore and said it would serve to strengthen pride and identity among students, encouraging them to stay at school.

The Nests will create partnerships between schools, TAFEs, universities and Aboriginal communities to connect language resources and provide a pathway to learn a traditional language from cradle to grave.

Bundjalung Aboriginal Language and Culture Nest is one of five being established across the state as part of ŌCHRE – Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment – the NSW Government Plan for Aboriginal affairs.

“Our remaining Aboriginal languages are in danger of dying out if we do not make a long-term investment to train more learners and teachers.

“The Nests aim to build a stronger sense of self-esteem and identity among students – fostering greater engagement at school and improving educational outcomes.

“Proud young people want to go to school and proud parent want their children to succeed at school,” Mr Dominello said.

“When we consulted over 1,200 Aboriginal community representatives before the creation of ŌCHRE, the revitalisation of language and culture was the number one thing people asked us to focus on.

“The NSW Government listened and in partnership with Aboriginal communities we have established five Nests, each representing a network of communities bound together by their connection to an Aboriginal language group.

“The Nests have already seen the creation of a K-10 Scope and Sequence – ensuring there is a comprehensive curriculum to develop students’ knowledge and build on their expertise year after year,” he said.

“Today I was pleased to join Aboriginal Elders, teachers, students, academics and Bundjalung community members to official launch the Nest at Southern Cross University.

Member for Lismore Thomas George said he welcomed the opening of the Nest and hoped it would service as a centre of excellence for the teaching of Bundjalung language and culture.
“The proud history of the Bundjalung people is told through its language and by training more speakers and teachers, the Nest will preserve its teaching for future generations of Aboriginal children.

The Nest includes the communities of Bonalbo, Coraki, Evans Head, Ballina, Lismore, Casino, Kyogle, Woodenbong and Grafton – covering 36 schools (primary and secondary).

NSW Human Rights Ambassador, Andrew Penfold AM said Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests supported the objectives of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

“I have learnt over time that language and culture are the pillars upon which young people build their identity within a community – be that a family, a school or a workplace.

“International research shows us that the transmission of histories, oral traditions and philosophies is integral to maintaining indigenous cultures.

“I have no doubt that if we save Aboriginal languages, we can help preserve traditional culture,” Mr Penfold said.

Mr Dominello launched the Gumbaynggirr Nest in Coffs Harbour yesterday and the North West Wiradjuri Nest in Dubbo in October last year.

During 2014, two more Nests will official launched: Wilcannia –Paarkkintji/Barkindjii and Lightning Ridge – Gamilaraay/Yuwaalaraay.


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