POSITIVE SIGNS FOR BUNDJALUNG ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE AND CULTURE NEST

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Victor Dominello today visited Goonellabah Public School, a school participating in the Bundjalung Aboriginal Language and Culture Nest, to discuss the Nest’s achievements to date with the whole school community.

Mr Dominello, who was joined by Member for Lismore Thomas George, said he was keen to get a first-hand progress report on the Bundjalung Nest, which was officially launched in February.

“The Bundjalung Language and Culture Nest curriculum is available to more than 12,300 students, including 1,800 Aboriginal students from 34 public schools across the Northern Rivers,” Mr Dominello said.

“Five Language and Culture Nests have been established across the State under OCHRE, the NSW Government’s Plan for Aboriginal affairs. The initiative enables students to develop pride in their identity and encourages them to stay at school.

“The Nests aim to create enduring partnerships between schools, TAFEs, universities and Aboriginal communities to connect language resources and speakers – providing a pathway to learn language from cradle to grave.

“There are currently four language tutors teaching students within the Bundjalung Nest and a dedicated teacher will be appointed in November to assist with the development of teaching resources and help grow the number of tutors and teachers.

“So far we have seen the completion of a revised K-10 Scope and Sequence for Aboriginal Languages and positive initial discussions with North Coast TAFE about the development of Certificates I, II and III in Aboriginal Languages.

“The new Scope and Sequence will ensure the community’s collective knowledge is incorporated into a comprehensive framework for the teaching of Aboriginal languages.

“The guide reflects the connection between Aboriginal language and culture, with students learning about local totems, the environment and traditional customs and practices.

“The Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc. and the NSW Board of Studies have also held over a dozen meetings with local language speakers and teachers to get their input into units of study for Aboriginal languages,” he said.

Member for Lismore Thomas George said the Nest had the potential to become a centre of excellence for the teaching of Bundjalung language and culture.
“Speaking with students and staff at Goonellabah Public School today, it is encouraging to see the local community’s commitment to revitalising the teaching of traditional language.

The progress already made is a testament to the hard work of everyone involved,” Mr George said.

The communities within the Bundjalung Language and Culture Nest include: Bonalbo, Coraki, Evans Head, Ballina, Lismore, Casino, Kyogle, Tweed Heads, Tabulam, Woodenbong and Grafton.

The State’s four other Nests are based in Coffs Harbour (Gumbaynggirr), Dubbo (North West Wiradjuri), Wilcannia (Paakantji) and Lightning Ridge (Gamilaraay/Yuwaalaraay/Yuwaalayaay).

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