

Welcome from the ADG

Welcome to the first edition of *DIETF News* for 2010 and my first column as Assistant Director-General.

I have already met with some of you and hope to meet with more stakeholders throughout the year and keep you informed of our projects along the way.

I would like to thank Steve Armitage for his work while acting ADG and am pleased his knowledge and expertise will continue in the division as Executive Director Indigenous Education.

I look forward to the challenges ahead and working in partnership to help close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous student outcomes.

Feel free to [email](#) me if you have any news or projects you would like to bring to my attention.

Let us work together to make this a productive year and I will report back on our achievements next edition.

Ian Mackie

Assistant Director-General

STATEWIDE NEWS

All welcome at reconciliation afternoon

All Queenslanders are invited to participate in *An Afternoon of Reconciliation Activities* to commemorate the National Apology in 2008.

February 13 marks the second anniversary of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's apology to the stolen generations.

The Department is committed to closing the gap in education and training between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Queenslanders.

To commemorate the National Apology in 2008 all Queenslanders are encouraged to attend an [An Afternoon of Reconciliation Activities](#) tomorrow with a forum at 2.00 pm, a city walk at 5.00 pm, and finishing at 7.00 pm with a free barbeque at Kurilpa Park.

QIECC Secretariat staff relocate to Inala

The Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Committee (QIECC) Secretariat staff relocated from their Brisbane office to Inala this month.

The following Secretariat staff are now based at 47 Kittyhawk Avenue, Inala:

- Robert Ah Wing, Principal Executive Officer, Phone 3372 5066, and
- Angelina Hurley, Project Officer, Phone 3372 5066.

Secretariat staff provide administrative and secretarial support to the QIECC which is an independent body that directly advises the Queensland Minister for Education and Training and the Federal Minister for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations regarding issues concerning or related to Indigenous education, training and higher education.

The Committee is comprised of Indigenous members with significant expertise in Indigenous education and training.

The Committee brings together a broad range of skills and experience, and a commitment to work hard to improve education standards and experiences for Indigenous students in Queensland.

Expressions of Interest advertised for new members of the [QIECC Committee](#) have now closed.

Be honoured for promoting reconciliation

Are you working with a business, community organisation or government department that promotes reconciliation?

Lodge your nominations now for the 2010 Reconciliation Awards for Business.

The Reconciliation Awards for Business recognise businesses and community organisations who are taking positive steps in advancing reconciliation in Queensland. It doesn't matter how big or small the organisation is - everyone is encouraged to apply.

Edition 13: February 2010

The awards offer \$25,000 in prize money and recognition in five categories:

- Emerging Business
- Established Business
- Community Organisation
- Partnerships, and
- Premier's Reconciliation Award.

The Reconciliation Awards for Business began in 2003, and have previously recognised a variety of outstanding initiatives including traineeships, cultural education tours, mentoring programs, community health strategies and Indigenous art projects.

Nominations for the [Reconciliation Awards for Business](#) close on March 12. Winners will be announced during Reconciliation Week, May 27 to June 3.

Discussion paper on education released

The Premier Anna Bligh and Minister for Education and Training Geoff Wilson released a discussion paper on the future of education this month.

The paper, *A Flying Start for Queensland Children*, discusses the challenges facing education, outlines some new initiatives the Government is putting in place and puts on the table some key proposals for change.

New initiatives include establishing an army of volunteer "Queensland Ready Readers" for primary schools, delivering a statewide reading awareness campaign to encourage parents and carers to regularly read to babies and young children, and making sure teachers have the best training, including around student discipline issues.

Proposals for discussion include moving Year 7 to secondary school and ensuring high performance standards for all schools.

Key Indigenous issues raised in the paper include:

- that there continues to be significantly poorer outcomes for some groups of children, such as Indigenous students,

students from remote areas and students from low socio-economic backgrounds, and

- in Queensland's remote Indigenous communities, the Bound for Success program is providing a highly successful early childhood program for children in the two years before Year 1.

Responses to the paper can be made online at the [Queensland Government website](#) or by email, fax or post. Public consultation forums will also be held throughout the state.

Preamble introduced to Qld Constitution

In what was an historic event in Queensland's 150th birthday year, the Premier introduced into Parliament a new Preamble to the Constitution of Queensland, in November last year.

The new Preamble recognises the system of law, the importance of the environment and most importantly it recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first Australians, and first Queenslanders.

It makes a clear statement about the value of Indigenous Australians within Queensland as the original custodians of the land and will be another important step in the reconciliation journey.

The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council provided high level advice to the Queensland Government and played a crucial role in developing the wording for this historic Preamble.

The Advisory Council submitted a Statement of Recognition which has been included in the Bill.

Unlike the Australian Constitution, which can only be amended by referendum, the Queensland Constitution can be amended by an act of Parliament.

Debate on the Bill is expected in early 2010.

REGIONAL NEWS

Hammond Island knowledge centre opens

Queensland's 18th Indigenous Knowledge Centre has opened in the remote community of Hammond Island in the Torres Strait.

Development of the new centre was a collaborative project between the Torres Strait Island Regional Council and the State Library of Queensland.

The Indigenous Knowledge Centre will provide a community hub for sharing information, knowledge and cultural heritage.

The Hammond Island Indigenous Knowledge Centre provides a place for the community to gather, to socialise, to learn and to celebrate.

The centre will provide new opportunities for the members of the remote island community.

Indigenous Knowledge Centres provide access to conventional library services as well as an array of community-generated activities that will assist lifelong learning, improve social well-being and develop work and life skills for people of all ages.

The Knowledge Centres also provide a place to capture and preserve local history and traditions.

Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKC) currently exist in Aurukun, Badu, Boigu, Cherbourg, Dauan, Erub, Iama, Injinoo, Kubin Island, Lockhart River, Mabuiag, New Mapoon, Pormpuraaw, Poruma, Seisia, Wujal Wujal and Hope Vale.

The centres are a shared initiative between the local communities and the Queensland Government through the [State Library of Queensland](#).

They are owned, managed and staffed by the local Council and cater to the needs of the local community.

NATIONAL NEWS

Local Indigenous leaders Closing the Gap

The Australian Government has introduced 37 new Indigenous engagement officers to support the local leadership to build strong, independent communities.

The Indigenous engagement officers will work with their local communities to tackle a range of issues including housing, employment, health and community safety.

The Indigenous engagement officers are local people with an understanding of complex, cultural and social issues. They complement the work done by the Government business managers, providing guidance and advice on sensitive and tough issues.

As well, in the 29 communities identified in the Remote Service Delivery Strategy, Indigenous engagement officers are playing a pivotal role in working with their communities to put together their priorities for future economic and social development.

To promote Indigenous leadership, the Government is also holding more than 50 leadership development workshops over the next six months to foster stronger relationships with hundreds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This month there will be three, two-day national leadership programs for men and women in Cairns and Brisbane for about 175 participants.

With the employment of additional local Indigenous people as engagement officers, there will be at least 49 officers working in 44 communities across the country, to support the local leadership to build strong, independent communities.

Edition 13: February 2010**Knowledge Centre study underway**

Consultations have begun for a feasibility study into a National Indigenous Knowledge Centre.

The concept was first raised at last year's Australia 2020 Summit as a way to support and promote Indigenous cultures and knowledge to the wider community.

The Australia 2020 Summit identified nine key initiatives committed to by the Australian Government, including the broad contribution a National Indigenous Knowledge Centre would make to celebrating and strengthening Indigenous cultures and knowledge.

Indigenous leader and academic, Dr Jackie Huggins AM, is leading the community consultations which began in February.

Meetings have been held in Blacktown, New South Wales, and Kalgoorlie, Western Australia. Participants so far have been supportive of a National Indigenous Knowledge Centre and have commented on its importance in showcasing and sharing Indigenous culture with the wider community.

The M.I. Murren Trust, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, and the State Library of Queensland, will conduct the feasibility study.

The study will recommend possible roles and models for a National Indigenous Knowledge Centre.

Members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, along with the wider community, are invited to provide submissions and participate in the consultations.

Written submissions are invited and close on March 31.

For more information, visit the [National Indigenous Knowledge Centre Project website](#).

Report reveals children eating healthier

Indigenous parents living in Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) communities have reported that their children are eating more and are healthier, since the introduction of income management.

Three quarters of the people surveyed as part of an Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report said they are spending more on food, and half are buying more fruit and vegetables.

More than half of the people interviewed reported there was less gambling (63.3 per cent), less drinking (60.9 per cent) and less harassment for money (52.1 per cent).

[The Report](#) on the evaluation of income management in the Northern Territory collated existing data as well as conducting new surveys with 76 people on income management in four communities and focus groups involving 167 stakeholders.

The Australian Government implemented income management in 73 NT Indigenous communities and town camps as a key measure to protect children and make communities safer.

About 16,000 people are currently subject to income management in the NT.

Under income management, 50 per cent of income support and family payments is set aside so it can be spent on items essential for the wellbeing of children including food, rent and clothing. Income managed funds cannot be spent on alcohol, cigarettes or gambling.

The NTER Review Board commissioned independent research by CIRCA in August and September 2008, which found that most support for income management came from women who were caring for young children, larger families and/or people with disabilities.

Edition 13: February 2010**New award category for NAIDOC Week**

The contribution made by Indigenous Australians to the conservation of the Australian environment will be recognised in NAIDOC Week celebrations later this year.

A new award category, the Caring for Country Award, has been included by the National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC).

The new award will highlight the work of many Indigenous Australians in the preservation of Australia's unique plant and animal life.

The award also reflects this year's NAIDOC theme - *Unsung Heroes - Closing the Gap by Leading Their Way*.

NAIDOC Week, which begins on July 4, showcases Indigenous people's achievements and their contributions to the nation.

Nominations for the 2010 National NAIDOC Poster Competition and Awards are now open and Indigenous Australians are encouraged to nominate fellow community members.

The competition ends March 31 and nominations for the [2010 Awards](#) close April 30.

Voluntary income management expanded

Voluntary income management has been expanded across the four Cape York Welfare Reform communities to help people better manage their budgets to meet the costs of everyday essentials such as food, rent, clothing and utilities.

Currently 110 people are on conditional income management in Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge as part of a joint partnership between the Queensland and Australian Governments, and the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership.

Income management is helping to ensure welfare payments are spent in the interests of children.

The Australian and Queensland Governments are working with the four Cape York communities to

rebuild social norms, and promote personal responsibility.

The fifth quarterly [Family Responsibilities Commission \(FRC\) report](#) was tabled in the Queensland Parliament in December last year.

The report showed improvements in school attendance between Term 3 2008 and Term 3 2009, with increases at Aurukun (21.5 per cent), Coen (5.5 per cent) and Mossman Gorge (2.2 per cent).

The Hope Vale community experienced a 6.7 per cent drop in attendance.

The FRC acknowledged the ongoing efforts of the Department of Education and Training and Attendance Case Managers to engage with parents and school aged children to ensure attendance.

IN BRIEF**FOGS Indigenous Employment & Careers Expo**

The first [Former Origin Greats \(FOGS\) Indigenous Employment and Careers Expo](#) for 2010 will be held on April 28 at the Cairns Convention Centre. The six expo series last year had over 10,000 job seekers and school leavers and over 200 exhibitors attending the events.

Positive Schools conference on May 20

[Positive Schools 2010](#) offers an opportunity to better understand mental health issues within schools and colleges with a clear focus on finding solutions and achieving sustainable positive outcomes. There is also an exclusive pre-conference event with Jane Elliott, the iconic creator of Brown Eyes Blue Eyes.

We welcome your contributions.

This newsletter is published by the [Division of Indigenous Education and Training Futures](#) in the Department of Education and Training. Please send contributions to the Editor, [Lisa Connors](#).