



THE HON PETER GARRETT MP

Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth

MEDIA RELEASE

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\$7.5 million to help increase Indigenous teacher numbers

A new project researching the best ways to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in Australian schools is one of three Indigenous education schemes to be newly funded, School Education Minister Peter Garrett said today.

The projects, worth a total of \$9.5 million and announced as part of NAIDOC Week, will help schools, teachers and students across the entire country.

This includes \$7.5 million for the *More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers* project, which will see research conducted by the David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education at the University of South Australia. Scholarships will also be offered under the scheme.

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students make up around four per cent of the student population, and yet only one per cent of teachers are from Indigenous backgrounds,” Mr Garrett said.

“It’s vital that we find new, practical ways to encourage more Aboriginal people to pursue a career in teaching. Not only will this help provide positive role models for young Indigenous students, but it will also help non-Indigenous students learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, history and culture.”

UniSA research leader, Professor Peter Buckskin, said the University of South Australia has a proud history of engagement and support for Indigenous culture and education.

“This research project will underpin the development of many more Indigenous teachers, enriching the learning experience of all Australian children and in particular Indigenous children,” Prof Buckskin said.

“It also comes at a great time. With the implementation of a more culturally inclusive national curriculum and national standards for cultural inclusivity in teaching, there will be more opportunities for Indigenous teachers to bring their cultural knowledge to the classroom and take on leadership roles in the profession.”

Other projects to be funded include:

- \$1.8 million to develop best practice guidelines in teaching of Indigenous students, under the National Professional Standards for Teachers
- \$200,000 for the extension of the Tri-Border Attendance Strategy, which aims to increase school attendance rates among children from the communities in the Western Australia, South Australia and Northern Territory border country.

Mr Garrett said the Government had also amended regulations to give boarding schools in non-remote areas increased funding to support students from remote indigenous communities.

“The Gillard Government is very firm in its commitment to closing the gap in the education of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and the projects announced today will help us fulfil this ambition,” he said.

“Importantly, they also recognise the role Indigenous communities have to play, by increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders teachers and providing training and support for those already working in education.”

Minister’s Media Contact: Lisa Miller 0419124717

DEEWR Media: media@deewr.gov.au

Non-media queries: 1300 363 079

Details on other projects to receive funding

Implementing National Professional Standards for Teachers

The funding will help develop course components in university teaching courses, focusing on teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and perspectives in teaching materials. It will also help develop materials for current teachers to help them meet the Indigenous standards in the National Professional Standards. It will be run by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership.

Extension of the Tri-Border Attendance Strategy Project

This project helps schools in the tri-border area share information on enrolment and attendance details, meaning they are better able to track the school attendance of students who live in highly mobile communities and who move frequently between WA, SA and NT. The funding extends the project until the end of this year.