

Newsletter

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Issue Five September 2008

Division of Indigenous Education, Training and the Arts

Welcome from the ADG

Welcome to the fifth issue of the newsletter of the Division of Indigenous Education, Training and the Arts.

This month's launch of the cross-departmental *Positive Dreaming, Solid Futures* strategy draws our attention to services and programs that will increase Indigenous labour force participation, skills levels and qualifications and build stronger communities.

We have plenty of work to do to achieve parity with non-Indigenous Australians, but we are making a difference: statistics show the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with higher qualifications is on the rise.

Thank you for your continuing support.

Terry Kearney, Assistant Director-General

New employment and training strategy unveiled

Minister for Education, Training and the Arts Rod Welford last week announced a new strategy to increase employment among Indigenous people in Queensland.

Mr Welford said *Positive Dreaming, Solid Futures: the Queensland Government's Indigenous Employment and Training Strategy 2008-2011* represented a new and sustained effort to improve labour force participation by Indigenous Queenslanders.

"The combination of the strength of the Queensland economy, low unemployment and skills and labour shortages gives us a unique opportunity to do something constructive to improve the livelihoods and prospects of Indigenous people," Mr Welford said.

"Skills training and jobs are fundamental to achieving economic and social wellbeing, both for individual Indigenous people and communities.

"During the process of consultations with Indigenous people in producing the *Positive Dreaming, Solid Futures* strategy, the overwhelming desire was to ensure training led to employment. There also needs to be improved targeting of government investment and mentoring for Indigenous enterprise development."

Target industries will include the resources, construction, tourism, primary industry and community services industries.

Positive Dreaming, Solid Futures commits to four priority areas:

- maximising employment through strategic alliances
- skilling individuals for work
- building capabilities in communities to enhance community and economic development opportunities
- aligning employment support and training to the needs of Indigenous Queenslanders

Mr Welford said the strategy would be accompanied by a multi-agency implementation plan led by the Departments of Education, Training and the Arts and Employment and Industrial Relations.

For further information visit www.deta.qld.gov.au/positivedreaming

Young writers gain international audience

Six Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will have their books published internationally as winners of the Young Indigenous Writers Awards announced in Townsville last week.

The winners were chosen from among 85 entries from 16 North Queensland state schools at a special event at the Riverway Arts Centre, opened by Minister for Education, Training and the Arts Rod Welford.

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"Interest in the writing competition has surged this year with more than three times the number of entries received last year," Mr Welford said.

"The awards are about exposing Indigenous children to literacy, especially through the critical national primary school benchmarking years of 3, 5 and 7."

The students' work will be published through Canadian company Trafford Publishing and available in mid-December on the Internet and from major booksellers. The winners will have their own web page and their work archived in the National Archives of Canada.

Winners in each category also receive a laptop computer, \$200 book voucher and trophy and their school receives \$500 towards the cost of activities for Indigenous students.

The Young Indigenous Writers Awards are open to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 3 to 7 attending state schools in North Queensland and Mackay Whitsunday regions. Students were required to write and illustrate by drawings or photographs an eight to 16-page book.

Twenty entries came from the Mackay Whitsunday region, 41 from Townsville district and 24 from Mount Isa district, including six from Normanton.

The winners were:

North Queensland regional award, photographic category: *Me, Myself and My Precious Memories* by Kimberley Marshall, Year 7, Healy State School, Mount Isa.

North Queensland regional award, remote category: *A day in the life of Jasmine, a Richmond girl*, by Jasmine Carson, Year 5 at Richmond State School, Richmond.

Mackay-Whitsunday regional award, photographic category: *This book is about my life – Me, Myself and I* by Ariel Horne, Year 6, Clermont State School, Clermont.

Mackay-Whitsunday regional award, illustrated category: *About my family, friends and I* by Joneece Bickey, Year 7, Andergrove State School, Mackay.

Townsville District award illustrated category: *I am* by Cyra Burns, Year 7, Heatley State School, Heatley.

Mount Isa District award illustrated category: *The Sacred Rock* by Larrae Lucas, Year 6, Sunset State School, Mount Isa.

Indigenous population reaches 1788 level

An Australian National University expert says the Indigenous population is back to 1788 levels.

New figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics say Australia's Indigenous population has reached 500,000, or 2.5 per cent of the total population.

John Taylor from the Australian National University says the increasing population is partly due to a high Indigenous birth rate.

He also says the Indigenous population is increasing because more people are willing to identify themselves as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders.

"The lower end of estimates of population of the continent in 1788 was half a million. So you could look at this, in a way, as saying we've arrived back at the beginning, so to speak," Mr Taylor said.

Cherbourg art stars at QUT

Wadjalang Kambuwal, Jinda, Nguri ... the names of the 28 tribal groups who were moved to the Cherbourg mission in 1903 are depicted on a 70-metre billboard on Brisbane's busy Kelvin Grove Road.

It heralds the presence of an exhibition of art by Cherbourg State School students at the QUT Creative Industries precinct.

Cherbourg principal Jo Ross said the exhibition was the culmination of five years' collaboration with artists Geoff Bonney and Peter Widmer of Ratartat.

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“The tribal names were painted on the terraces above the school oval by Year 5 students last year,” Ms Ross said.

The art in the exhibition was done by the children working with Elders, other community members and Ratartat to tell their stories in visual art, film and books.

“Our students love art as they express themselves well visually and it has inspired them in literacy and other areas,” Ms Ross said.

“The students’ attitude to all of their school work has improved – it involves teaching to their learning needs and styles in a way they understand.

“This has helped to halve the gap in educational outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in our region.”

The exhibition, *Cherbourg time: young black and deadly art 2003-2007*, is at The Block, QUT Creative Industries precinct, Kelvin Grove, Brisbane until September 19.

Students can watch Parliament in Cairns

Far North Queensland school students will have the chance to witness democracy in action when State Parliament sits in Cairns on October 28-30.

This is the third time Parliament has convened in a regional centre and the Government will again subsidise travel costs for students to attend the parliamentary sittings.

The School Student Visits Subsidy Scheme allows young people in rural and remote areas to participate in this historic event.

Students in Years 6 to 12 who attend schools located outside 100km from Cairns, but within the Far North Queensland Education region or the Mount Isa state electorate, will be eligible for a subsidy.

The scheme offers subsidies of between \$200 and \$500 for each student depending on their location. A total of \$75,000 has been allocated to support up to 191 students with travel and accommodation costs.

For further information contact John Howarth, Principal Advisor, Cairns region, Tel. 4046 5242.

More Indigenous Queenslanders qualified

Indigenous education is on the rise, with more than one-third of Indigenous Queenslanders aged 15 years and over holding an educational qualification, according to recently released figures.

The Queensland Treasury analysis of the 2006 Census also showed just over half (50.4 per cent) of all Queenslanders now have some sort of non-school educational qualification, up from 39 per cent at the 1996 census.

The rate of growth in non-school qualifications in Queensland has been faster than the national average with an increasing number of Queenslanders choosing to complete a certificate, bachelor degree, diploma or postgraduate degree.

While 45.6 per cent of Queensland females have non-school qualifications, 55.3 per cent of males have non-school qualifications.

Other key findings of the Office of Economic and Statistical Research Education in Queensland census bulletin include:

- Of all year 12 graduates, 93 per cent were either working or undertaking further study the following year.
- Rural Queensland tends to have a lower proportion of the population 15 years and over with a non-school qualification compared with cities or regional towns.
- Engineering and related technologies are the most popular qualification among males (30.4 per cent), followed by architecture and building (11.4 per cent), and management and commerce (10.3 per cent).

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- Management and commerce appear to be the most popular qualifications pursued by women (19.8 per cent); health (14.2 per cent), education (12.5 per cent), and society and culture (11.9 per cent) are also strongly represented.

The Census 2006 bulletin Education in Queensland is published by Queensland Treasury's Office of Economic and Statistical Research, and is available at www.oesr.qld.gov.au

TAFE students up for new art prize with heart

A talented Cairns TAFE Indigenous art student will soon be named the winner of an exciting opportunity to showcase their artwork at a Brisbane art exhibition in October.

TAFE Queensland, in partnership with the Heart Foundation, is offering the first Indigenous TAFE Student Art Award, a prize inspired by the quality and diversity of TAFE student art work.

The winning piece, judged on originality, skill in using the chosen medium and how it reflects the artists' culture, will feature in the 2008 Heart Foundation Aboriginal Art Exhibition at the State Library in Brisbane.

The winning student will be brought to Brisbane for the exhibition opening and their work will be shown alongside professional Indigenous artists: Lloyd Hornsby Gawura, Laurie Nilsen, Deb Taylor, Jennifer Herd and Bianco Beetson are showing in the exhibition and each donating one piece of work to the Heart Foundation to be auctioned at a special event on 10 October.

The exhibition opens on Tuesday, October 7, and runs until Sunday, October 12 at the State Library in Brisbane.

There will also be school workshops with artists in the talking circle at the State Library on October 9.

The Heart Foundation will be doing this again in May next year to coincide with the National Cardiologist conference at South Bank, when all Indigenous students through out the TAFE system in Queensland will be able to enter. After May, the exhibition will go on the road to Cairns, Townsville, Sydney, Melbourne and Armidale.

For more information contact Wendy Hornsby (0403383080) or email art@yuinart.com

Indigenous dance course a first

Performers from TAFE Queensland's only Indigenous dance program danced at the launch of *Positive Dreaming, Solid Futures* in Cairns last week.

The Certificate III in Indigenous Australian Dance Performance studies at Tropical North Queensland TAFE's Cairns campus is under the tutelage of TAFE teacher and former Bangarra Dance Theatre senior performer and rehearsal director Monica Stevens.

Six secondary school students are training part-time and three adults full-time in Indigenous and contemporary dance methods that prepares students for careers as professional performing artists.

The full-time Indigenous dance program is delivered five days per week at the Cairns TAFE campus.

For further information, contact TAFE's Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies on 4042 2640.

Mapping culture in Mossman

Some 17 Indigenous young people from the Mossman region are ensuring the traditions and customs of the Eastern Kuku Yalanji people remain alive for future generations with the area's first cultural heritage recording project.

The project, delivered by Tropical North Queensland TAFE, brings together the skills required to create and maintain a comprehensive database on items of cultural significance using state-of-the-art recording and mapping equipment.

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Participants will receive a Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management qualification.

The students will study digital recording and mapping skills, including video recording, photography, digital mapping, using a GPS and computer operation. The six-month, hands-on course also incorporates field excursions and recording the history of the Eastern Kuku Yalanji people.

The students will be able to design and develop an education tool that electronically catalogues places, traditions, flora, fauna and history relevant to their families, tribe and region.

The class marked the start of the program with a smoking ceremony conducted by Elders Judith Shuan, Bennet Walker and Agnes Burchill.

The cultural heritage recording project is funded by The Christensen Fund, a private foundation based in California dedicated to assisting organisations in the arts, natural sciences and education.

For more information contact Tropical North Queensland TAFE on 1300 656 959.

Experience at the helm of new Indigenous art fair

The first Cairns Indigenous Art Fair will be held on August 21-23, 2009 on the waterfront at Cairns' iconic Heritage Sheds.

The Art Fair will showcase the works of Aboriginal and Torres Strait artists from the Far North to local, national and international audiences.

The first artistic director is curator, arts producer and consultant Michael Snelling, well known to many in the visual arts world after his years at the Institute of Modern Art in Brisbane and as former Chief Executive Officer of Major Brisbane Festival.

Mr Snelling has been touring far north Queensland talking to artists and Indigenous art centres to gauge their concerns and direction on staging the art fair which will sell the best Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art. There will be a complementary

performing arts program and a symposium in partnership with James Cook University.

Torres Strait Islander artists go international

Award-winning artists Dennis Nona and Alick Tipoti have their bags packed for a series of overseas exhibitions that will take their work to the UK and the United States.

Badu Island-born Dennis is one of 40 contemporary artists exhibiting in *The Tropics: Views from the Middle of the Globe* at the Martin Gropius Bau in Berlin, September 12 – January 5, 2009.

His six-metre linocut called *Yawarr* has been selected for the show.

Dennis is celebrating again after winning the \$4000 Telstra Works on Paper award for his etching on paper. Winner of last year's \$40,000 Telstra Award for his 3.5m bronze crocodile *Ubirikubiri*, Dennis named this year's work after the morning star that tells Torres Strait Islanders that it is time to harvest the wild yams, kutai, gabua and saurr.

Alick Tipoti also has an important show at the Rebecca Hossack Gallery in London, September 18 – November 15. Both artists are also in an exhibition at the Robert Steele Gallery in New York during January and February 2009.

Alick has also picked up two prizes this year – the Fremantle Print Award \$3000 non-acquisitive prize for Kuyku Garpathamai Mabaig, and the Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award 2008 for his work Zugubal.

Torres Strait Cultural Festival next week

Students and teachers from throughout the Torres Strait will converge on Thursday Island next week to take part in the bi-annual Torres Strait Cultural Festival.

The *Winds of Zenadth* cultural festival will showcase the Torres Strait's cultural heritage and diversity.

College principal Don Anderson said students at Tagai State College's 17 campuses had been

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studying language and dance throughout the year and would showcase their talents at the festival.

This year for the first time, teachers will dance at the festival, with the support of community leaders.

The Department of Education, Training and the Arts is a major sponsor of the festival which draws thousands of participants and visitors to Thursday Island.

The festival runs from Sunday, September 15 to Saturday, September 20.

For more information, phone Torres Shire Council on 07 4069 1336 or visit www.torres.qld.gov.au

In Brief

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aspirations Program (ATSIAP) Student Challenge

September 10-11

Rockhampton State High School

For more information contact Sophie Yasso on 49384669 or email: sophie.yasso@deta.qld.gov.au

QIECC Annual Forum

October 15-16

Pacific International Hotel, Cairns

For more information visit

<http://www.qiecc.eq.edu.au> or call the QIECC Secretariat on 07 3237 0807.

Pearl Duncan and Bid O'Sullivan Teaching Scholarships

Applications close October 17, 2008. Offers of scholarships, dependent on being accepted into a teaching degree course in 2009, will be made to successful applicants by January 2009.

More information:

<http://education.qld.gov.au/staff/development/scholarships/indigenous> or contact Wendy Kirby on 3237 0698.

Indigenous Student Awards Night

October 17, Rockhampton

The Indigenous Students Awards Night 2008 in conjunction with Darumbal Community Youth Service Inc.

For more information, email: Deborah.IRWIN@deta.qld.gov.au

World Indigenous Peoples Conference: Education 2008 - "Indigenous education in the 21st Century – respecting tradition, shaping the future"

December 7 – 11

Rod Laver Arena, Melbourne, Victoria

www.wipce2008.com.au

We welcome your contributions

This newsletter is published monthly by the Division of Indigenous Education, Training and the Arts in the Department of Education, Training and the Arts.

Please send contributions of up to 100 words by the 20th of the month prior, to the editor:

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