Artists head to bush schools in the Northern Territory

Artists will be placed in remote schools around the Northern Territory next week as part of an $800,000 initiative to boost students’ confidence, creativity and inter-personal skills.

Federal Minister for School Education Peter Garrett and Northern Territory Minister for the Arts and Museums Gerry McCarthy today announced the joint initiative, with the Gillard Government committing $500,000 and the Northern Territory Government committing $300,000.

“This program is unique in that these artists will work at the schools year-round rather than a few weeks to allow connections to develop between the artist, the students, the school and the community,” Mr McCarthy said.

Mr McCarthy said the aim was to show students and their families another benefit of going to school and to encourage parents and families to get involved in their child’s education.

“If every child goes to school every day in the Territory they get a great education,” he said.

The artists, which include theatre specialists, puppeteers, visual artists and circus performers, will develop and deliver multimedia, visual and performing arts programs in partnership with schools and communities.

The initiative targets the early years Transition to Year 3 and will be delivered by Northern Territory organisation Corrugated Iron Youth Arts.

Mr McCarthy said the Northern Territory Government is working toward being a world leader in providing education and training in remote settings, built around evidence-based practice and maximising the innovative use of information and communication technology.

Mr Garrett said the remote program structure was attractive to artists and more than 100 people from the Northern Territory, interstate and overseas applied.

“There were a lot of interesting and highly talented artists that applied for the postings at Shepherdson College in Galiwinku; Maningrida CEC, and the Warlpiri College, comprising of schools in Lajamanu, Willowra, Yuendumu and Nyirrpi,” he said.

Mr Garrett said the Gillard Government recognised the importance of arts education.
“Under the National Curriculum, every Australian student will be entitled to study the arts from kindergarten onwards, including music, visual arts and performing arts,” he said.

The Northern Territory is recognised as a world leader in providing education and training in remote settings, built around evidence-based practice and maximising the innovative use of information and communication technology.

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