15 April 2008

Remote Indigenous Student Congratulated on Degree

Education Minister Marion Scrymgour today congratulated 21 year old Lianna Brown on becoming the first Indigenous Territorian to complete senior secondary schooling in a very remote community and then go on to graduate from university.

The former Kalkaringi Community Education Centre student, who received the highest Northern Territory Certificate of Education (NTCE) score for an Indigenous student in 2003, will graduate today from South Australia’s Flinders University with a degree in Cultural Tourism.

Ms Scrymgour congratulated Lianna and her family on the achievement.

“It’s a great personal milestone – and will inspire other Indigenous kids as they go through school,” Ms Scrymgour said.

The achievement of Lianna and two of her classmates, Rhonda Rankin and Meshach Paddy, was recorded in the award winning short film From Little Things, Big Things Grow produced in 2004 by the NT Department of Employment, Education and Training and Simon Says productions.

Ms Scrymgour said regular attendance, hard work and dedicated teachers made it possible for these Year 12 students to achieve a Territory Entrance Rank as well as completing their NTCE.

“I applaud their success, but also recognise the need to do more to improve Indigenous education – and that’s why the Territory Government is implementing its Closing the Gap package – and working with the Commonwealth - to address Indigenous disadvantage.”

Rhonda Rankin is now employed in Darwin furthering her training as part of Mission Australia’s Indigenous Youth Mobility program, and Meshach Paddy is
an apprentice undertaking a Certificate in Indigenous Education Work as an apprentice at Kalkaringi School.

Also back in the Northern Territory, Lianna is now working for the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and The Arts as a park ranger in Gregory National Park just north of her traditional country.

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