$6.06 Million to Give Territory Kids a Great Start in Life

Eight additional Attendance and Truancy officers will be employed across the NT to help re-engage students with education as part of a $6.06 million investment in education under the Every Child Every Day Strategy from the 2012-13 budget to improve attendance and give Territory kids the best start in life.

Minister for Education and Training Chris Burns today announced additional funding across a range of measures to support and expand re-engagement and positive behaviour in schools programs, including the establishment of a re-engagement service in Darwin.

“The record funding builds on our existing re-engagement and behavioural programs designed to give our kids a great start in life, which have already seen 364 kids back in the classroom,” said Dr Burns.

"All Territory children need to go to school every day and if they do, they get a great education. We know that attendance directly impacts on learning outcomes, including literacy and numeracy and that early intervention can change people lives.

"We have excellent schools all across the Territory, with hard working and supportive teachers, innovative programs and fantastic facilities to help kids learn.

“These additional measures will provide our schools with the resources they need to effectively re-engage kids and provide them with a pathway to jobs, further study and the ability to contribute well to society.

"An additional $790 000 from Budget 2012 will go towards employing the additional eight Attendance and Truancy officers, based in Arnhem, Barkly and Katherine regions with the total number of Truancy officers in the Territory now 30.

"We are seeing real results from this initiative with 364 kids re-engaged with school since the program commenced in June 2011, resulting from 303 conferences with students and their parents, and the development of 344 attendance plans with students and their families.

“Data from Term 3, 2011 shows approximately 480 more students at school on any given day in Darwin and Palmerston than at the same time in 2010.

"Importantly, $3.02 million to fund operations of a re-engagement service and $0.8 million for fit out of the facility will be provided for the Darwin based service, using the format of a similar successful centre already established in Alice Springs."
"The service will provide innovative and targeted learning for those kids who have disengaged from school and are at risk of not developing the basic skills needed to contribute effectively to society.

"Our Positive Learning Centres will also receive a boost, with $1.1 million to expand the Centres in Palmerston, Alice Springs, Katherine and Darwin and $350 000 to expand support services and resources for the program.

"The work of the Henderson Government in the area of attendance and re-engagement across a range of programs is showing great results, with over 1350 students participating in the Clontarf Academies and Girls Academy programs.

"We are showing improvements in 11 out of 12 NAPLAN testing areas and we are closing the gap at a faster rate than any other jurisdiction," Dr Burns said.

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