NEW FACILITY AT PAPUNYA GIVES IMPETUS TO REMOTE SECONDARY EDUCATION

One of the Western Desert’s oldest schools, Papunya School, today celebrated the opening of its new $1.05 million secondary multi-purpose facility, heralding a new era of education for the community.

The facility, funded by the Australian Government Capital Grants Programme, was officially opened by Senator Nigel Scullion. Member for McDonnell, Ms Alison Anderson attended the opening celebrations on behalf of the Minister for Employment, Education and Training, Syd Stirling.

The new facility includes two classrooms, a home economics room, a music room and recording studio, administration office, an all-weather outdoor education facility and a renovated pre-school facility, and includes a sophisticated Information and Technology infrastructure.

“It marks the dawn of an exciting era for the students of Papunya, most particularly with respect to the potential provision of approved secondary courses,” Ms Anderson said. “The NT Government is committed to providing secondary education in remote communities and this facility will substantially add to Papunya’s ability to deliver.”

Historically the youth of Papunya wishing to access mainstream secondary education have had to relocate mainly to urban boarding schools as only ungraded secondary programs have been offered at Papunya.

Ms Anderson said the Papunya School Council is very confident that with the advent of the new facility and delivery of mainstream secondary courses, they will be able to offer tailored programs for over 30 secondary aged students.

She praised the community for their assistance and commitment towards the major step of realising Papunya’s dream of providing accredited secondary education on-site.

School Council Chair, Ms Kapanani Anderson, said that the community had been waiting for this exciting development in the education of local men and women for a long time and it is an important.

“I have been involved in education at Papunya all my life, and for us to be able to teach the same courses that are taught in town secondary schools is something we have strived for,” she said.

Papunya is known nationally and internationally for its contribution to Indigenous art and music. The school site is considered the birthplace of the contemporary Indigenous art movement, when in 1971 artists were encouraged to produce acrylic representations of sand and body paintings. The locals value education, and almost all families are represented at community education days held twice per term.

Contact  Mandy Taylor  0414 634 159