Gerald McCarthy
Minister for Education

Gunbalunya School is Kicking Goals

19 January 2017

Acting Education Minister Gerry McCarthy today attended a year-12 graduation ceremony at Gunbalanya School in West Arnhem Land.

Mr McCarthy said the ceremony recognised the eight year-12 students who graduated at the school in 2016.

The ceremony also acknowledged the results of another two students who graduated with Work Ready qualifications, making them the first Year 12 graduates in the Territory to complete their schooling through a remote employment pathway.

“It is just fantastic to see young Indigenous people graduating from year 12 in their home communities, like Gunbalunya,” Mr McCarthy said.

“Last year across the Territory 37 Indigenous year-12 students graduated in their home communities and as a former teacher that is something I find really encouraging.

“As a government we will invest to ensure there is a growth in the number of Indigenous students completing year-12 because we recognise that positive academic results among this cohort of students are vital to the Territory’s future.

“When I was a teacher, there were no Indigenous year-12 graduates in remote communities, so I’m pleased that the people of Gunbalunya are celebrating such a significant number of graduates for 2016.

“As a government we are putting children at the centre of our decision making.

“That is why we are re-investing in education after the CLP ripped more than $100 million out of the system.

“We will invest an additional $20 million a year into the budgets of 151 government schools over the next four years as well as spend an extra $8 million a year to tackle challenging behaviours and support children with physical and mental disabilities.

“Our $2 million a year Healthy Life, Creative Life program will improve education outcomes through an integrated program of arts and sport.”
Mr McCarthy said Gunbalanya School was a great example of what can be achieved in the Territory’s remote areas.

The school is continuing to grow its service delivery with the campus including a child and family centre for children from birth to five years and a Families as First Teachers program, which caters for more than 40 families.

There is also a trade training centre, providing secondary students with school-to-job opportunities.

“In addition, the school community intends to work with local rangers in the Kakadu region to run culture camps for local and interstate visitors.

“I found today’s graduation ceremony a particularly positive experience to be part of. The community of Gunbalunya should be proud of all of its achievements,” Mr McCarthy said.

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