

MEDIA RELEASE

**Minister for Ageing
Minister for Disability Services
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
The Hon. Paul Lynch MP**



10 May 2010

Aboriginal language grants applications open

The NSW Government is building on its commitment to the preservation and revitalisation of Aboriginal languages with extra funding for a grant program.

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Paul Lynch said the Government would set aside \$300,000 – an increase of \$100,000 – for community language projects around the State.

The program consists of:

- a \$100,000 small grants program of up to \$5000 per project
- \$200,000 for larger one-off grants

Mr Lynch also announced a \$100,000 partnership with the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc to hold a State-wide Aboriginal languages forum and a number of regional workshops.

“The forum will showcase the best Aboriginal community language activities and discuss current issues with Aboriginal language revitalisation and education,” he said.

Mr Lynch said language was a key part of tackling Aboriginal disadvantage.

“The teaching of languages can encourage more Aboriginal students to excel in literacy and feel more confident in the school environment,” he said.

“It’s a key reason why every school in New South Wales now has access to materials to assist the teaching of Aboriginal languages,” Mr Lynch said.

“The community language grants provides another avenue for the protection and revitalisation of Aboriginal languages,” he said.

“To see a young Aboriginal person in Bourke or La Perouse speaking the language of their elders is truly inspiring,” Mr Lynch said.

“Australia’s Aboriginal people have the longest living culture in the world,” he said.

“For Aboriginal people, language is a direct link to their identity, land and country and reflects their unique cultural concepts, spirituality and way of looking at the world,” Mr Lynch said.

“For more than 20 years, Aboriginal people have made it clear that they want their languages back as a vital part of their culture, identity and pride,” he said.

Guidelines and application forms are available at www.alrrc.nsw.gov.au or www.daa.nsw.gov.au and by contacting Gayle Caldwell on 02 9219 0741.

Closing date for submissions is Friday, 11 June, 2010.

Aboriginal language facts

- Over the past 5 years, the NSW Government has provided \$1.02 million to support 690 Aboriginal languages
- NSW was the first government in Australia to adopt a formal Aboriginal languages policy
- Before the arrival of Europeans, at least 70 Aboriginal languages and dialects were spoken in the area now called NSW – now there are only about 20 distinct Aboriginal languages used

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