



NORTHERN
LAND COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life

Learning on Country: connecting school students to work on country

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Learning on Country program expected to involve 1000 students by 2020

More than 80 school principals, teachers, rangers and ranger coordinators, Learning on Country coordinators and Indigenous cultural advisors came together for a three-day Learning on Country forum in Darwin last week.

Managed by NLC's Caring for Country branch, the Learning on Country program is a secondary school based Indigenous ranger facilitated program that links Australian curriculum subjects with field based experiential learning and data collection.

During the forum, the newly established Learning on Country Steering Committee met for the first time and one of its first actions was to elect a chairperson, Mr Lirripiya Mununggurr, Cultural Manager for the Yirralka Rangers in Yirrikala.

The forum offered delegates opportunities for information sharing and included practitioner workshops, with presentations from teachers, researchers and education specialists about the different education and training streams available to students, and how these are being applied in schools across the Northern Territory.

Northern Land Council Learning on Country program manager Anna Morgan said the program is expected to grow over the next 12 months.

"Based on advice from the Learning on Country sites, its estimated student participation in the program's activities will exceed 1000 students during the 2020 school year," she said.

Currently there are 15 Learning on Country sites, including Maningrida, Yirrikala Homelands, Yirrikala, Galiwin'ku, Angurugu and Umbakumba (Groote Eylandt), Milingimbi, Ramingining, Gapuwiyak, Beswick, Barunga, Borroloola, Gunbalanya, Ngukurr and Numbulwar.

Ms Morgan said collaboration between remote community schools and Aboriginal ranger groups was essential to the success of this flagship program to deliver community identified outcomes by bringing together the school curriculum and on-country activities.

Newly elected chairperson of the Learning on Country Steering Committee Mr Mununggurr said the Committee would be taking action around future proofing the program, which includes working closely with the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) with the aim of securing longer term funding.

“In addition, we will continue a program evaluation to demonstrate the cultural appropriateness and educational success achieved through student participation in the program,” Mr Mununggurr said.

#ENDS

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