



MEDIA RELEASE

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Education Minister Fails Indigenous Children and Families

Tangentyere is appalled by the decision by the Education Minister to close Irrkerlantye Learning Centre. It is an example of the Government failing indigenous people in education. Over the past 20 years Tangentyere Council has assumed responsible for all major initiatives to ensure education is afforded to Town Camp children and indigenous children, due to the failure of the mainstream education system.

Mr. Tilmouth, Executive Director of Tangentyere Council states that “Yipirinya School, Irrkerlantye Learning Centre and Yarrenyty Arltere Learning Centre have all been a response by the indigenous community to get children into education due to Departments inability to deliver to our communities. They have been driven by families and supported by Tangentyere Council. Without these schools many of our children would never have entered education.”

He says, “Irrkerlantye is an example of the community helping themselves. 9 years ago none of these children were engaged in education. The grandmothers have worked for 9 years to establish this centre, to get their kids into school and to give them an opportunity. We have supported these children and their families to achieve their aim and create a purpose and a future that they did not have before. These families achieved what the department was never able to achieve – getting kids to school. We have taken a holistic approach to education to make sure that it is relevant and can be successful”

Mr. Tilmouth recognises that these kids are still behind in their numeracy and literacy outcomes and states. “We must ensure that our children have the educational outcomes that all other children are able to achieve. There are many children under the benchmark across the territory and this must be addressed. Closing down a learning centre that has had absolute success in engaging kids into education is not the answer. The department has used accelerated literacy programs and other measures in mainstream institutions that are also failing, but seem unwilling to look at options for Irrkerlantye. Why dismantle a school that has families and children successfully learning in a shared community environment. This environment supports children and the whole of family. It is an indigenous solution that is being destroyed.”

Tangentyere calls on the Government to reconsider their decision and to undertake further negotiations with the community and agencies such as Tangentyere Council to find a more effective solution to their concerns.

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