MID YEAR NEWSLETTER 2016

We hope you’ll enjoy reading about our activities over the past 6 months and our exciting plans for the remainder of the year.

If you would like to contribute to our End of Financial Year campaign, please fill out and return the attached form. To give online, visit givenow.com.au/aboriginalliteracyfoundation

Remember, all donations over $2 are fully tax deductible.

ALF ONLINE

If you would like to subscribe to our monthly e-newsletter, please send an email to info@aboriginalliteracyfoundation.org

You can also view the previous issues under the ‘Media’ tab on our website aboriginalliteracyfoundation.org

If you haven’t joined us on Facebook yet, we would love to see you there! You can find us at facebook.com/aboriginalliteracyfoundation for all the latest news around Indigenous literacy. Our online community has grown to include over 3900 of you, and we are very grateful for the support!

If you are on Twitter, head on over and follow us at twitter.com/Aboriginal_Lit. We currently have over 1800 followers and are steadily expanding!

BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR

It is easier now more so than ever before to become a monthly donor using GiveNow, which is an online donation platform where you can opt to give a recurring donation. We have received over $180,000 through GiveNow since we joined in 2011!

You can make a one-off or recurring donation by visiting givenow.com.au/aboriginalliteracyfoundation

If you aren’t online yet, you can also become a monthly donor by calling us on (03) 9650 1006.
The first half of the year has been an outstanding success for the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation. We have been able to develop our Homework Clubs in Bacchus Marsh, Ballarat and Melton and we are set to expand further into Western Victoria and Gippsland later in the year. This is a really good initiative that will help support literacy skills in hundreds of young Indigenous Australians.

I am particularly pleased with our ongoing relationship with Djerriwarrh Health Services and AIME who have been wonderful to work with in the Melton Indigenous Study Assistance Program.

Our Books for Learning program is set to resume in the next half of the year. In 2015, we distributed over 300,000 books to some of the most remote locations in Australia. Among other recipients was the Melbourne Indigenous Transition School where our books went towards the establishment of a library.

Another important initiative is the introduction of an Indigenous language supplement to our Digital Literacy Hub. This will enable us to create a new version of our successful Healthy Living Series with Indigenous languages. This initiative is driven towards multilingual communities in the Northern Territory and we believe it will be a key prospect in keeping Indigenous languages alive.

A special thank you to all of our supporters who helped us maintain our progression. It is only through your efforts that we are able to do the work that we do.

Dr Anthony Cree, OAM
CEO
Our Literacy Heritage Camps have been our longest running and most successful program. Beginning in Ballarat in Western Victoria, our camps combine fast tracked literacy and numeracy tuition, with a strong cultural element.

We are fortunate to have had the support of local elders who always bring a wealth of knowledge to these days.

A typical day of our Literacy and Heritage Camp consists of testing, tutorial sessions and education games followed by cultural and recreational activities.

**TESTING**

Based on ACER and Schonell diagnostic and assessment testing, students are taken through a light session partnered with a tutor or guardian. We are then able to gauge the level of reading proficiency so that tutors can then provide material of an appropriate standard. It also allows us to gauge the level of improvement of participants, some of whom also attend our Homework Clubs.

**TUTORIAL SESSIONS**

The tutorial sessions are conducted in a relaxed environment with parents and guardians welcome to sit in as students are taken through worksheets with our tutors. Usually, time is divided between the worksheets and computers – where students have the opportunity to play the latest educational computer games.

**CULTURAL ACTIVITIES**

After a healthy lunch, students are taken through a cultural activity where they learn traditional artistic techniques not commonly taught in their schools. We have been immensely fortunate to have talented local artists such as Janet Curtain and Billy Blackall leading classes on dot painting and basket weaving. Guided tours are also led by elders around significant locations in the area. We try to help our students discover the heritage and stories behind the sights in their own town – which are often closer than they think.

The days are usually rounded out by a recreational activity which is usually horse riding, providing for the weather.

One of the special aspects of these days is watching parents and guardians step forward and lending their own insights and skills to the day, and allowing their children to see them in a new light.

While literacy and numeracy remain at the fore of our organisation’s mission – we consider these cultural experiences to be vitally important. Combining a safe learning environment with fun and engaging activities helps to separate our camps from ‘just another day at school’.

Our most recent Literacy Camp was held on the 28th of May. We will be planning a Literacy Camp to be held in Bairnsdale in July. Email info@aboriginalliteracyfoundation.org for more information.
**Melton Indigenous Study Assistance**

The Melton Study Assistance Program was launched last year, in partnership with Djerriwarrh Health Services, AIME and Melton High School.

The Thursday afternoon sessions seek to create a safe space for students to work on their studies, where Aboriginal Literacy Foundation tutors are on hand to provide assistance.

The afternoons also seek to provide education on wider life skills. This year, a dietician from Djerriwarrh Health Services has taught students how to create nutritionally balanced meals for a family of four, at a cost of only $7.50.

The partnership with AIME also allows for mentoring opportunities to be arranged for students and we hope that this ongoing engagement will assist students through their schooling and into higher education or vocational training.

We are proud to be associated with all three groups and are thrilled with the response from students and their families.

**Bacchus Marsh and Darley Homework Club**

The Bacchus Marsh Homework Club meets every Tuesday afternoon to provide tuition for up to fifty Indigenous children and parents. The tutors, Lynn Kelly and Lisa McGlade are both ATAS registered Aboriginal tutors and have more than 40 years' experience between them.

The coordinator is Sue Bacon, a wonderful Indigenous lady who is extremely well respected in the community and does an excellent job organising the Club.

**Ballarat Junior Homework Club**

Every Thursday, the Junior Homework Club takes place at the ALF rooms in Ballarat. The Club attracts Indigenous children from Ballarat schools and also from as far away as Smythesdale and Ballan. Head tutor, Lynnette Kelly has more than twenty years' experience in Aboriginal primary literacy tuition and is popular with students and parents alike.

*Our Ballarat offices also host our ‘Attain’ program for young Indigenous males. See the following page for more information.*

**Future Expansion**

The Aboriginal Literacy Foundation will be adding to our Tutorial programs across Victoria, with the introduction of an after school Tutorial Mentoring program in Bairnsdale and Hamilton.

The Bairnsdale Homework Club is set to commence in July, with Hamilton to follow.

We are thrilled with to be able to actively engage with local Indigenous communities look forward to putting plans in place to expanding our tutorial programs to other states across Australia.

If you have a child who would like to attend or have any enquiries, don’t hesitate to contact us at info@aboriginalliteracyfoundation.org
THE ATTAIN PROGRAM - INDIGENOUS BOYS MIND AND BODY HEALTH

The Attain Program is now in its second year in Ballarat. It caters for boys and young men who have literacy difficulties who have an interest in sport and fitness.

Each week, the program offers a two hour literacy session. In return for attendance, participants are given a pass for up to two hours a week at a nearby gym.

The program succeeds on a number of levels: Any social stigma associated with the ‘nerdiness’ of academic achievement is counteracted by the high stakes nature of sport and training.

The mental benefits of exercise have been well documented and this is very important for an age group approaching adulthood and coping with the day to day stress of school, relationships and other external pressures.

It is an indication of the success of this program, that it has been attracting a demographic with the highest dropout rate in schools – clearly the combination of sport, gym training and literacy is one that works.

Several other Aboriginal groups and government departments have also inquired about the possibility of using this program elsewhere – especially in inner city Sydney and Melbourne.

THE ASPIRE PROGRAM - INDIGENOUS GIRLS TUTELAGE AND MENTORING

The Aspire Program is an aspirational program of academic tutelage and personal mentoring which has been designed to advance the education and life possibilities of young Indigenous girls. Literacy education for Indigenous girls and young women is one of the highest priorities of the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation.

Our Aspire programs over the past twelve months have centred on Melbourne, as well as regional centres in Victoria through participants of our Homework Clubs and Literacy Camps.

In the 2nd half of 2016, we will be introducing Aspire programs in Bairnsdale (for East Victoria and Southern NSW) and Hamilton (for West Victoria and South Australia). We feel sure that this initiative will have a very positive effect on young Aboriginal women in the regions.

As the African proverb says, “If you educate a man, you educate one person. If you educate a woman, you educate a nation.”

The Aspire program means the whole community benefits.

DIGITAL LITERACY HUB

The Aboriginal Literacy Foundation’s Digital Literacy Hub will be entering its next phase of development later in the year. Known as the Indigenous Language Supplement, the hub will be offering for the first time, our Healthy Living Series in the most widely spoken Indigenous languages. The Healthy Living series was published by the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation in 2011 for use with early childhood readers. Unlike most children’s books, illustrations depict scenes relevant to Indigenous children in remote communities.

It should be considered, that many towns, predominantly in the Northern Territory are multi-lingual. For example, schools in the Yolngu communities in North Eastern Arnhem Land use Djangbangpuyuugu as the language of instruction – but there is scarce reading material in these traditional languages.

We believe that fluency in English is important for interaction with wider Australia – yet it is also important for the traditions of Indigenous people to be maintained for future generations.

Based on the feedback we have received, we will be seeking to improve the usability of the Hub and also expand our library of books.
The Books for Learning program has been operating since 2011, when 5000 literacy packs were distributed across the Mid North Coast and Hunter regions of New South Wales.

The program has expanded year by year and we are delighted to report that 2015 alone saw the distribution of over 300,000 books.

Reading and being read to is crucial to a child's development and we have delivered books to some of the most remote communities in Australia where access to books is often not available.

This would not be possible without the generous donations of our supporters and the work of community partners on the ground.

When our warehouse tenancy was lost at the end of 2015, a massive distribution of books commenced and many Indigenous community groups were among the recipients. Aboriginal Literacy Foundation books went towards the establishment of a library at the Melbourne Indigenous Transition School and the libraries at our Homework Clubs in Bacchus Marsh and Ballarat were also replenished.

The pause allows us to reflect on what has been a hugely successful program which has improved the lives of thousands of Indigenous children around Australia. We thank all those who have made contributions and also the many volunteers who have helped sort books by the pallet load.

BACKPACK SPONSORSHIP
The Aboriginal Literacy Foundation is seeking expressions of interest for an opportunity to sponsor the next batch of backpacks which will provide for the program for the next 2 years.

If this sounds like a good fit for your business or organisation, then please contact info@aboriginalliteracyfoundation.org
THANK YOU TO ALL OUR MAJOR SPONSORS AND PARTNERS. YOUR SUPPORT IS ENORMOUSLY APPRECIATED.

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