



THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP

Minister for Families and Social Services

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MEDIA RELEASE

Liberal-Nationals launch program to boost Indigenous youth employment through culture

The Federal Liberal-National Government has unveiled a \$1.83 million project in Western Sydney to reconnect at-risk young Indigenous people with their culture to boost their chances of employment.

Minister for Families and Social Services Paul Fletcher today launched the *Lead with Culture* project, which aims to provide up to 250 young Indigenous people with cultural workshops and activities to build connections to work and study.

"This trial project will run for up to 18 months and be operated by the KARI Foundation, one of Australia's leading community engagement providers for Indigenous families and children," Mr Fletcher said.

"KARI Foundation and the Department of Social Services have developed an innovative and practical cultural enrichment program, which will have enduring measurable change for Aboriginal youth and communities."

KARI Foundation was established in 1999 as an Aboriginal foster care agency and employs more than 140 people, with offices in Liverpool, Penrith and Roseberry.

KARI CEO Casey Ralph said *Lead with Culture* works collaboratively with educators, communities, government and businesses to build strength and pride in young Aboriginal people.

"Through *Lead with Culture*, participants will work with Indigenous counsellors, mentors and specialists to assess their health, education, lifestyle and cultural connections," Mr Ralph said.

"They will also be encouraged to set goals and develop and execute plans to engage with their culture, education and employment."

Australian Priority Investment Approach to Welfare data from 2015-16 confirms that at-risk young people may remain trapped in the welfare system for the long-term.

"If nothing changes for this group, 42 per cent are expected to be receiving income support payments in 10 years, and 33 per cent are expected to be receiving income support payments in 20 years," Mr Fletcher said.

The *Lead with Culture* project is being delivered under the \$96.1 million Try, Test and Learn Fund, which aims to provide evidence on how best to improve people's lives and reduce welfare dependency.

Young Indigenous people aged 16-21 can learn more about getting involved at www.kari.org.au.

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