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MEDIA RELEASE

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ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM HAS PRESCHOOLERS LEARNING WITH TRADITIONAL LANGUAGE

Aboriginal words are echoing through the classrooms of 16 public school preschools under an initiative to embed Aboriginal culture, language and identity at the earliest stages of learning.

The Aboriginal Language and Culture initiative is in its second year after a successful trial in 2021 with many of the pilot schools continuing with the program.

Minister for Education and Early Learning Sarah Mitchell said the program would help embed and nurture knowledge and practice of Aboriginal culture, languages and identity at the earliest stages of learning.

“Evaluations of the pilot program showed that participants’ confidence and numeracy and literacy skills improved,” Ms Mitchell said.

“Our research shows that Aboriginal students who feel connected with their culture are more likely to stay engaged with their education and aspire to finish school.

“This language program is a great example of reconciliation in action as it not only helps build a love of learning in our Aboriginal pre-schoolers it also opens the door for our non-Aboriginal students to the world’s oldest living culture.”

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Ben Franklin said it is critical for Aboriginal culture and language to be embedded in education to assure better outcomes in the community.

“By embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and language at the earliest opportunity we are giving all students the strongest foundation for future learning,” Mr Franklin said.

“Aboriginal people are the cultural strength of our nation, and everyone has a part to play when it comes to building knowledge and relationships that value the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.”

Preschools include the language during activities such as duck, duck goose using Aboriginal names, playing freeze to didgeridoo music, counting and giving directions in language, and cultural dances.

Schools with a high enrolment of Aboriginal pre-schoolers were eligible for grants to employ a community member or organisation to deliver an Aboriginal Language and Culture program to students.

The program is co-developed and delivered by an early childhood educator and an Aboriginal person. Each participating early childhood education centre delivers the program in association with their local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group.

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