



Gladys Berejiklian

Premier of NSW

Sarah Mitchell

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

Stuart Ayres

Minister for Western Sydney

MEDIA RELEASE

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ABORIGINAL CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE ANOTHER STEP CLOSER TO OPENING ITS DOORS

A fully owned Aboriginal construction business will build the NSW Government's \$20 million Aboriginal Centre for Excellence, which will support young Aboriginal people in making the transition from school into further employment and education.

Premier Gladys Berejiklian announced Pacific Services Group was the successful tenderer to build the Aboriginal Centre for Excellence at the former Whalan High School in Western Sydney.

"The Aboriginal Centre for Excellence will provide vital support for young Aboriginal people in realising their dreams in their chosen field of work or study, right in the heart of Western Sydney," Ms Berejiklian said.

"It is so fitting to be making this announcement during NAIDOC Week, which celebrates the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal people right across the country."

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Sarah Mitchell said Pacific Services Group was the perfect fit for the project.

"This is an award winning, 100 per cent Aboriginal owned construction business with fantastic ambitions for the Aboriginal Centre for Excellence project – that of achieving 50 per cent direct employment of Aboriginal Australians, and 20 per cent sub-contractor engagement," Ms Mitchell said.

"We look forward to seeing construction beginning on this project later this month.

"I would encourage everyone, no matter what your background – to get out and about and celebrate what makes Australia's culture and history so rich during NAIDOC Week celebrations."

Pacific Services Group is a wholly owned Aboriginal business with more than 150 employees nationwide, with more than 35 per cent being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders. They have undertaken building and construction work for the Department of Defence, the Australian Taxation Office, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of Human Service.

Minister for Western Sydney Stuart Ayres said the new facility would provide young Aboriginal people in Western Sydney with opportunities and support, especially as they make the transition from the school environment into further education and employment.

"When the NSW Government committed \$20 million for the establishment of the centre, we wanted to ensure young Aboriginal people are equipped to seize the opportunities stemming from this growth and investment," Mr Ayres said.

The Aboriginal Centre for Excellence is one of several initiatives rolling out to support Aboriginal communities in NSW. The NSW Government in May announced its Aboriginal Procurement Policy (APP), which targets three per cent of Government goods and services contracts to be offered to Aboriginal owned businesses. In conjunction with the existing Aboriginal Participation in Construction policy, the APP will support an average of 1000 Aboriginal jobs a year over the next three years.

In the 2018-19 Budget, the NSW Government committed:

- \$10 million over four years for a social impact investment to improve Aboriginal economic development opportunities;
- \$2.8 million to establish the nation's first Aboriginal Languages Trust;
- \$33.1 million over four years for a new Aboriginal Social Housing Strategy; and
- \$3.75 million to support up to 1000 additional places to expand the Clontarf Foundation's program in NSW schools as it works to improve education, life skills, self-esteem and employment prospects for young Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders.

The Aboriginal Centre for Excellence is due to open its doors in November 2018.

For new images of the Centre, click here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/elxbzbezcx3ao2c/AAAUYMxa8KUr7QTq8AKAFyCza?dl=0>

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