

“Closing The Gap” In Kempsey

Girls Academy Program Launches At Two Schools In The Region

The Girls Academy, an initiative to support and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls, is launching at two sites in Kempsey, New South Wales this week in a bid to close achievement gaps and boost academic performance.

The Kempsey Girls Academy will be officially opened by Member for Oxley and Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight The Hon. Melinda Pavey, MP on 27 June at Kempsey High School, and Kempsey Shire Council Mayor Liz Campbell will officially open the Melville Girls Academy at Melville High School on 29 June.

The Girls Academy works within local school systems to provide high school age Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls with support to prosper in school and pursue their goals. The Girls Academy program has the ‘Big 4’ objectives - increase school attendance, advance academic and personal achievement, improve year 12 graduation rates and facilitate post-school transition planning. The Girls Academy is the flagship program for Role Models and Leaders Australia Ltd, a not for profit charitable organisation founded in 2004 by Olympian and champion basketballer Ricky Grace (MEdL, BPolSc) to address the inequity in investment in educational support programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls.

"The Girls Academy supports young women to engage in their education, achieve their goals and strengthen their communities," said Ricky Grace, CEO and Founder of the Girls Academy. "Our program aims to increase the skills, employability, health and well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls throughout Australia."

Mr Grace said, "With support from both Federal and State Governments along with backing from major corporate and philanthropic organisations the Girls Academy aims to expand the Girls Academy to 2,500 girls enrolled nationwide by the end of the year, with 800 girls enrolled in New South Wales alone."

"Support from the NSW Government and Department of Education has been crucial to the Academy's successful expansion in New South Wales. We also thank each school for their commitment to the program," continued Mr Grace.

Minister Pavey said "This is a very valuable opportunity for the girls of the Macleay - at both Kempsey and Melville High Schools. I encourage all to embrace it truly; occasions such as this can - and should - be used to make a real and lasting difference in life. Girls, go for it!"

Mayor Liz Campbell said "It is wonderful to have the Girls Academy established in Kempsey. This is another step in developing our young Aboriginal people through education, mentoring and activities that will make them the leaders of the future. This Academy compliments other work being undertaken at both Kempsey and Melville High Schools through the Clontarf Foundation for young males. We welcome the Girls Academy to the Macleay Valley."

Kempsey High School Principal, Mr Mick Eller said, "The opening of the Kempsey High School Girls Academy is a significant step in enabling our Aboriginal Girls to achieve improvements in their attendance and engagement. Our wish for them is that they will go on to meaningful further education and careers. I sincerely thank Role Models and Leaders Australia, the Federal and State governments and generous donors for their assistance in making the Girls Academy a reality at Kempsey High School".

Melville High School Principal, Mr Jeff Hollingsworth said, "Melville High School has welcomed the initiative from Role Models and Leaders Australia, to establish a Girls Academy at this school. The potential improvement in the lives and outcomes of our students will be immense, and I congratulate and thank all those who have supported us in this process. It has been demonstrated in a short time that the program and staff can have an impact on our girls and their families which was difficult to achieve without such support."

About the Events

The Kempsey Girls Academy Official Opening will take place on Tuesday 27 June 5 pm – 7 pm at Kempsey High School, 13 Broughton Street, Kempsey NSW 2440.

The Melville Girls Academy Official Opening will take place on Thursday 29 June 5 pm – 7 pm at Melville High School, 44-50 Nicholson Street, South Kempsey NSW 2440.

About the Girls Academy

The Girls Academy program is the leading provider of school-based programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls in Australia. The program works within the local school system to support high school girls to engage in education and pursue their goals through mentoring, sport, cultural and empowerment programs. The program is centred around an Academy room in each school where a minimum of two mentors deliver a program to achieve the 'Big 4' objectives - increase school attendance; advance academic and personal achievement; improve year 12 graduation rates and facilitate post-school transition planning. The program is community driven and tailored to the needs of each community.

The Girls Academy Program is the flagship program of Role Models and Leaders Australia Ltd, a not for profit charitable organisation founded in 2004 by Olympian and champion basketballer Ricky Grace (MEdL, BPolSc) to addresses the inequity in investment in educational support programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls.

Further information at <http://www.girlsacademy.com.au/>

Contacts

Lucy McClean

0412 283 252

mailto: lucy@girlsacademy.com.au