

NEWS RELEASE

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BHP BILLITON SUPPORTS RECONCILIATION IN SCHOOLS

BHP Billiton has reaffirmed its support for Aboriginal Australia by announcing a A\$3.9 million partnership with Reconciliation Australia to deliver the *Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning* national program to promote reconciliation and teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history in schools.

The Narragunnawali program launched today in Adelaide is designed to support the more than 21,000 early learning, primary and secondary schools in Australia to develop environments that foster a higher level of knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions.

BHP Billiton Vice President Community Relations and Sustainability, Ian Wood, said BHP Billiton Sustainable Communities' support of the Narragunnawali program built on a long standing relationship with Reconciliation Australia.

"I am delighted to announce that BHP Billiton will partner with Reconciliation Australia and contribute A\$3.9 million over four years to the Narragunnawali program," Mr Wood said.

"This is the tenth year of our relationship with Reconciliation Australia and we continue to be excited and encouraged by their work to create positive change in the community.

"We are acutely aware that Indigenous people often have a very special connection to the land, and we work closely with individual communities as well as with specialist organisations, like Reconciliation Australia, to ensure we have a positive impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

"Reconciliation is a very important community goal which has the potential to deliver economic, social and cultural benefits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous people. Reconciliation is about unity, respect and equity, and knowledge is essential to achieving this. All Australians should understand the history of our nation, its first people and their rich culture."

The program will provide school communities with the tools they need to increase understanding of the cultures by assisting schools to develop online Reconciliation Action Plans, providing curriculum resources and implementing a professional learning component for teachers.

Reconciliation Australia CEO, Justin Mohamed, said the Narragunnawali program is the culmination of several years of careful planning and close cooperation with Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies, teachers, students and all levels of Australian education sectors.

“Through this program, Reconciliation Australia will help guide Australian schools and early learning services to curriculum resources and professional learning strategies that will assist teachers and educators,” Mr Mohamed said.

“Australian schools and early learning services have the ability to facilitate the achievement of our primary goal—to build better relationships between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for the benefit of all Australians.”

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