

MEDIA RELEASE

August 22 2013

Schools receive national recognition for focus on Aboriginal education

Five schools across the country have received national recognition for their work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The schools receiving *Dare to Lead* Award for Excellence in Leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education are:

High Achievement Awards

- Bray Park State School, Queensland
- Orange Public School, NSW
- Singleton High School, NSW

Achievement Awards

- Bowen State High School, Queensland
- Waterford West State School, Queensland

Principals Australia Institute is presenting the awards in recognition of the school's commitment to enhancing Aboriginal student outcomes and working in partnership with families and community.

Orange Public School was the first to receive their award last week.

The school's achievements include:

- Evidence of improved student performance – every Indigenous student achieved at or above national benchmarks in NAPLAN for 2010 and 2011
- Adjusting the school's maths curriculum with input from Aboriginal parents and a community advisory group to make the subject more engaging and relevant.

“We value every student in our school. We are delighted with the success of our strategies that ensure Aboriginal students achieve the best outcomes that they can. Our successes are founded in the ethos that it takes a community to raise a child and our community is an integral partner in this success,” said Toni MacDonald, Principal of Orange Public School.

Fifty-eight of the school’s 623 students are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Bray Park State School will receive their award at a ceremony next **Tuesday, August 27**.

The school’s achievements include:

- Closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students’ academic results
- Formation of an Indigenous Advisory committee that works closely with the school
- Strengthening links with elders and community members through Bunyabilla Inc – a community organisation supporting the local Indigenous community – which is located at the school.

“We are providing children with lots of opportunities whether academically at the top end with extension work, or at the other end with extra support in numeracy and literacy.” said Maree Mortlock, Principal of Bray Park State School.

A lunchtime ukulele group at Bray Park State School is just one creative example of the school’s efforts to build a positive school community. The group – open to all students – is a practical example of reconciliation in action. Some of the ukuleles have been hand-decorated in Indigenous artwork by the students.

Seventy-eight of the school’s 485 students are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The school is growing with the number of Indigenous students tripling since 2008.

“All the winners can be justifiably proud that they are making great strides in achieving positive outcomes with their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students,” says Peter O’Beirne – *Dare to Lead* National Project Director.

“I congratulate the principals, schools and their communities for working together in a strategic way. We know from what we see in schools in every part of our *Dare to Lead* network around the country that schools who work strategically to engage their Aboriginal parents and community and track their outcomes are well on the way to moving ahead.”

Dare to Lead is an initiative of Principals Australia Institute (PAI). PAI provides programs and services to help build effective, inspirational and sustainable leadership in Australia’s 10,000 government, Catholic and independent primary and secondary schools.

Media event: Award Ceremony

Tuesday August 27, 2 - 3 pm

Bray Park State School, 5-25 Hopetoun Street, Bray Park QLD

The ceremony will include representatives from the Aboriginal community. The student ukulele group will play.

Peter OBeirne, Maree Mortlock & others will be available for interview.

Media contact: Shannon Short - Principals Australia Institute

Ph: 08 8394 2155 Mob: 0419 276 676

Peter O'Beirne – *Dare to Lead* National Project Director

Mob: 0431 772 569