



ARDS

Aboriginal Resource and Development Services Inc.

MEDIA RELEASE

for immediate release 4 February 2008

Turning the tide on Indigenous literacy and numeracy ... and it doesn't cost a fortune!

“Northern Territory Education - the worst performing for the most money” according to the latest figures released by the Productivity Commission in its report on government services (www.pc.gov.au/).

“More teachers, doctors and police will not turn the tide on this appalling statistic,” said Richard Trudgen, CEO of Aboriginal Resource Development Services (ARDS) Inc., “because these professionals are not trained to teach and/or communicate in a cross-cultural / cross-language environment. Many come for a while and then leave, frustrated at their attempts to help”.

“We need to stop wasting money and people's lives.”

“The old way of bringing English speaking teachers in to teach Yolngu people in a foreign language (English) just does not work.”

ARDS, a non-profit educational organisation, is working towards a Yolngu Matha e-learning classroom. This online resource will teach Yolngu people English, maths, world history and modern science.

The Yolngu Matha e-learning classroom will be used in a number of ways. For thousands of years Yolngu adults have taught their children how to function successfully in their world. With this tool Yolngu adults will again be able to do that, offering their children support in contemporary education setting. Yolngu adults could use it to become proficient in English and then use the same tool to teach their own children. Some students may use it to teach themselves. The Yolngu Matha e-learning classroom would also be a revolutionary tool for teachers struggling to work in a foreign language with Yolngu students.

This initiative is designed to put education back into the hands of the Yolngu people.

Yolngu elders have asked that ARDS become involved in the literacy and numeracy challenge using our successful education methodology, as we have been working with the Yolngu (Indigenous) people of north-eastern Arnhem Land for many decades.

One of ARDS' current educational tools is "Yolngu Radio". This provides Yolngu listeners with information about government policy, health, substance abuse, family violence, diabetes, legal and economic issues, plus learning English (go to www.ards.com.au/hear_programs.htm to hear some programs).

Yolngu Radio is unique as it uses Yolngu Matha, the people's language, and their worldview to provide real understanding to answers they have about the world around them. Yolngu Radio would also be used to support the e-learning classroom.

Yolngu Radio started against all odds and has now been broadcasting successfully since 2004.

"Imagine the possibilities: a classroom that will follow the student when they move for seasonal and cultural reasons." said Richard Trudgen, "This is how we can turn the tide on Indigenous numeracy and literacy figures. This is the way of the future, so we need to start NOW."

For further information contact: Richard Trudgen phone (08) 8987 3910

www.ards.com.

DARWIN OFFICE
191 Stuart Highway Parap NT 0820
PO Box 36921 Winnellie NT 0821
Telephone: 08 8982 3444
Facsimile: 08 8982 3499
Email: admin@ards.com.au

WINNELLIE OFFICE
374 Stuart Highway Winnellie NT 0821
PO Box 36921 Winnellie NT 0821
Telephone: 08 8984 4174
Facsimile: 08 8984 4192
Email: winnellie@ards.com.au

NHULUNBUY OFFICE
19 Pera Circuit Nhulunbuy NT 0881
PO Box 1671 Nhulunbuy NT 0881
Telephone: 08 8987 3910
Facsimile: 08 8987 3912
Email: nhulun@ards.com.au