



Saturday 19 July, 2008
For immediate release

FUNDING BOOST FOR INDIGENOUS INSTITUTE

Deputy Prime Minister, Julia Gillard will today announce \$6.75 million in funding for the Richmond Football Club to establish the Australian Institute for Indigenous Learning and Skills Development.

The Richmond Football Club has been working in close association with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) for some time to look at ways to close the gap for indigenous students and young people, Richmond CEO Steven Wright said.

"The Richmond Football Club is grateful to the Deputy Prime Minister and DEEWR for supporting this very important indigenous initiative," Mr Wright said.

The cornerstone of this initiative will be the creation of the REAL (Richmond Emerging Aboriginal Leadership) camps. These development camps will provide experiences in four broad areas; personal development, skill acquisition, role modelling and mentoring, and health and lifestyle education.

Richard Tambling, who has been a vocal supporter of the proposal, said today: "this is a great day for bridging the gap with indigenous kids and there is no better way to do it than through footy, given over 87,000 indigenous people are involved in AFL Australia wide."

"The Deputy Prime Minister has already flagged as a priority increasing school attendances among indigenous students, improving literacy and numeracy, and improving the health of indigenous young people through prevention, education and sport. We believe our Institute will compliment current and future government policy in this area," Mr Wright said.

Richmond President Gary March said: "The institute will be a high profile, new and innovative way in which positive outcomes for Indigenous youth can be achieved."

The four programs that could be conducted as part of the Institute are:

1. **The REAL (Richmond Emerging Aboriginal Leadership) Program** - for 14 and 15-year-old boys and girls.
2. **The PEPS (Pre Employment Skills) Program** - focussing on basic skills development to enable indigenous young people to apply for employment and cope with the rigours and disciplines needed in the full time workforce - 16 to 17-year-olds.
3. **The VET (Vocation Education and Training) Program** - targeting 17-18-year-olds, as well as potential employers.
4. Opening employment opportunities through Richmond Football Club's involvement with corporate Australia.

The Richmond Football Club has well known credentials in working with Indigenous communities and these include:

- The successful implementation of an AFL Fostership program in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek;

- The indigenous leadership programs conducted through the public housing estates in inner Melbourne;
- The promotion of indigenous issues and wider public education through the annual "Dreamtime at the G" game held at the MCG each year between Richmond and Essendon.
- Three towers Auskick and Kickstart Program for Multicultural and Indigenous children from inner Melbourne public housing estates;
- Leadership and debate about indigenous issues through our players such as Joel Bowden and Richard Tambling.

The Institute will be part of the \$20 million facelift that has been earmarked for Punt Road Oval with construction due to commence imminently. The Institute will co-share its facilities with the new redevelopment at Punt Road Oval which will include;

- A new gymnasium
- An Indoor Sports and Multi Purpose Centre
- Conference centre for groups of up to 300 people
- Catering and hospitality facilities
- Four tutorial rooms
- Refurbishment of the existing swimming pool complex
- Office administration for the Institute
- A multi media lecture theatre and
- Environmentally sustainable initiatives such as relaying and reshaping the playing surface to include drought resistant grasses, solar hot water systems, new drainage to capture recycled water and the ability to harvest water off the roof of the Jack Dyer Grandstand.

"It is pleasing that we are able to make this significant announcement during the Richmond Football Club's centenary year. We look forward to Punt Road Oval once again becoming the centre of community life for the residents of inner Melbourne," Mr March said.

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