

Specialist supports the role of culture in communities to keep kids safe this National ATSI Children's Day.

Friday, 1 August 2014

To mark National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Children's Day 2014 (Monday, 4 August), one of Australia's leading child development specialists has emphasised the importance of culture in the education and development of Indigenous children.

Co-director of Menzies Centre for Child Development and Education (CCDE), Associate Professor Gary Robinson, described the Indigenous Youth Life Skills Development program - currently being piloted in Maningrida, Northern Territory (NT), as very valuable in helping Indigenous children to flourish in their communities.

"The program aims to build resilience and social-emotional skills that help young people cope, make positive life choices, and avoid self-destructive behaviours," Assoc Professor Robinson said.

"This is particularly important for young people living in remote communities in the NT where access to many support services is almost non-existent."

Assoc Prof Robinson said the project had generated a lot of interest and community support.

"With the support of the Greats Youth Centre, the Maningrida College and teaching staff, we are working closely with middle school students on the pilot stages of this project. The aim is to help young people gain the skills for a better chance in life" said Assoc Professor Robinson today.

"This program will increase the capacity of the local community to support their children as they grow."

Assoc Prof Robinson said there were clear synergies with the program and this year's theme: *Kids in Culture — Strong, Proud, Resilient*.

National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Children's Day celebrates the importance of culture, and highlights the crucial role culture plays in keeping Indigenous children safe.

Read more about the Youth Life Skills Development project at:

<http://www.ccde.menzies.edu.au/our-projects/suicide-prevention-research/indigenous-youth-life-skills-development>

Read more about the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Children's Day (NATSICD) at: <http://aboriginalchildrensday.com.au/>

Media note:

Associate Professor Gary Robinson is co-director of The Centre for Child Development and Education. View his profile:

http://www.menzies.edu.au/page/Our_People/Researchers/Gary_Robinson/

Media contact:

Graham Ring, senior communications officer, Centre for Child Development and Education
0404 362 290

The Centre for Child Development and Education (CCDE) background

The Centre for Child Development and Education at the Menzies School of Health Research is a leader in applied research to break the inter-generational cycle of poor health, education and disadvantage experienced by Indigenous Australians. We have found that assisting children's early development and fostering their success at school is one of the most effective ways of breaking the inter-generational cycle of poor health and disadvantage. We work to change the way we deliver services so that we can provide more support to families who are raising children and ensure that children get a good start in life.