

MEDIA RELEASE

23 January 2014

“Back to School” -Remote School Attendance Strategy to be implemented in Roper Gulf Schools for Term 1.

Roper Gulf Regional Council Mayor Tony Jack has announced that the Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS), a new federally funded program to support families to encourage children to attend school regularly and on time, and reduce truancy, will start in local schools at Barunga, Beswick and Bulman early in the first term. This program will be staffed through the Roper Gulf Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP), an Australian Government initiative.

The Commonwealth Government has offered over \$800,000 for Roper Gulf RJCP to supervise the school attendance strategy in three towns. Mayor Jack explained that the school attendance supervisors will work from early morning with families to get their kids ready and on time for school, and assist families to overcome barriers to participation in the education system.

“They will not have any coercive powers and they are there to encourage and support families so their kids attend school on time. This is an unusual role for local government but the Councillors and I know how important school attendance is in giving our kids a strong start in life and we are happy to support this program through our RJCP contract.

School attendance in some of our schools is unacceptably low and having local people, known to families, to help them to encourage their kids to attend will hopefully build a more positive attitude to school attendance. This is just part of the story. It is also about encouraging more stable home lives especially normal sleeping patterns and simple things like providing appropriate breakfast nutrition so kids are ready and able to deal with school. It is also often about families having the opportunity to find work and purpose and providing positive role models.

Kids who miss school quickly fall behind, often missing keystone learning and those who do not attend school regularly can be disruptive to other students and often fall into anti social behaviour.

We are very young communities here in Roper Gulf and residents often come from very disadvantaged backgrounds. We can't afford a significant number of our children to fall into a hopeless state by avoiding school. It is also a challenge to our Government and educators to ensure that schools respect culture and support our at-risk kids through appropriate staffing levels and teaching resources”



People interested in the RSAS roles are encouraged to contact their local RJCP office.

For further details please direct your inquiries to
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END.