

MEDIA RELEASE

Reference: 1520

September 8, 2016

Community Grant turns page on push to preserve Indigenous language

A \$1500 Community Grant has helped develop a unique teaching resource that will create cultural awareness and help younger generations preserve the Alawa language.

The end result of the innovative project – which was a collaboration between the Minyerri Arts and Cultural Centre and Enterprise Learning Projects, and partially funded by Roper Gulf Regional Council – is the Alawa Colouring Book, and children from across the region could not wait to get their hands on a copy following its launch at the Katherine Public Library on September 7.

On its pages, the outlines of a range of animals are depicted beside their Alawa name, allowing children to engage and learn more about the language as they pick up their coloured pencils.

Minyerri Arts and Cultural Centre's Phelecia Daylight said she hoped the novel approach to language would make it more interesting for children.

"I hope kids learn more about language," she said.

"Maybe it makes language easier."

Enterprise Learning Project's Sarah Barrow helped spearhead the creation of the book and thanked the Council for its involvement.

"Language preservation is a priority for the Minyerri community; Elders know that language strengthens connection to culture," she explained at the launch.

"It's a terrible tragedy that over 150 traditional Aboriginal languages have been lost, so it was a privilege to work alongside the community to produce the colouring book.

"This grant was wonderful – it was very flexible, which was just what was needed for this project."

The Council's Chief Executive Officer, Michael Berto, congratulated stakeholders on the launch of the book and said it was a tremendous example of what could be achieved with funding through the Roper Gulf Regional Council Community Grants Program.

“This is what it’s all about,” he explained.

“The Community Grants Program is provided by Council to better communities in the Roper Gulf region, and what better way to do that than by creating something that will help preserve the Alawa language.”

The book is available at the Finch Cafe, Katherine Visitor Information Centre and via the Enterprise Learning Project website, with a digital copy also accessible for download at the Katherine Public Library.

Roper Gulf Regional Council’s Community Grants Program provides financial assistance of up to \$3000 for projects that will benefit community events and activities, economic development, or the physical or natural environment.

Round two is open from October 17 until November 25 and applications can be made by calling 08 8972 9038 or emailing grants.ropergulf@ropergulf.nt.gov.au.

END

For further information, please contact the Communications Co-ordinator on 0419 891 666 or at roper.governance@ropergulf.nt.gov.au.