

MEDIA RELEASE

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Council youth empowerment project raises roof in Ngukurr

Younger residents of a remote Roper Gulf community have heard from a star of the national hip-hop scene that past challenges do not impede future potential during a youth mentoring and empowerment project at the weekend.

Roper Gulf Regional Council hosted the Right Path Project in Ngukurr on April 8 and 9, an initiative which provided youth under 24 with access to a range of sport and recreation activities, information sessions and support services designed to increase engagement and self-esteem.

In a bid to boost participant engagement, the Council flew Nigerian-born Australian singer-songwriter Tim Omaji, aka Timomatic, to the community, about 300 kilometres east of Katherine, to talk about the challenges he had encountered on his journey becoming one of the country's best-known hip-hop performers.

After being welcomed with traditional dance and a smoking ceremony on the Saturday, Timomatic chaired a series of mentoring sessions, during which he told youth they should not let obstacles dampen their ambition.

"A lot of you have had challenges, I know that, but don't let that stop you doing what you want to do," he said.

"The rest of your life starts right now."

Following a community barbecue, Timomatic took to the stage in front of about 450 screaming fans for a concert that celebrated music and dance, youth empowerment and Indigenous culture.

The Council's Director of Community and Council Services, Sharon Hillen, said the organisation was proud to have delivered a once-in-a-lifetime experience for Ngukurr residents through the Right Path Project.

"We want youth to be a part of our story and get involved in the decision-making processes of Council," she explained.

"More than 50 per cent of Ngukurr residents are under 24, and many face problems or barriers, which for one reason or another lead them to be disengaged from community.

“In partnership with the Federal Government, through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy, Council has created a program which reaches out to these kids to help them to find the right path to realise their dreams and enter into areas of interest, whether it be sport, work, arts or culture.

“Having Timomatic in Ngukurr to talk to the kids about his own life and challenges, play sport with them and then perform a concert allowed Council to really drive home the message that youth are the future of communities.”

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For further information, please contact the Communications Coordinator on 0427 674 212 or at roper.governance@ropergulf.nt.gov.au.