



**Marion Scrymgour**  
MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Tuesday 14 October, 2008

## Education Restructure Includes Greater Emphasis on English

Education Minister Marion Scrymgour announced today that there would be a restructure of the Department of Education and Training, with a greater focus on teaching English.

Ms Scrymgour said a particular focus of the restructure would be delivering better educational outcomes in remote Indigenous communities.

“As part of that I’m also announcing today that the first four hours of education in all Northern Territory schools will be conducted in English,” Ms Scrymgour said.

“I am absolutely committed to making the changes needed to improve attendance rates and lift the literacy and numeracy results in our remote Indigenous schools.

“While the results we’re achieving in Darwin, Alice Springs and regional centres are comparable to schools in other similar parts of Australia – the results in remote schools are still unacceptable.”

Ms Scrymgour said the restructure would ensure the Department was set up in the best possible way to support teachers to improve results in urban, regional and remote schools.

- Assess the effectiveness of the Group school and Cluster organisational models for NT schools, currently small remote schools are managed as groups;
- Consider the adequacy of teaching and learning programs, particularly in remote schools;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the structure, reporting arrangements and support provided to schools by the department;
- Examine how to best support the Australian Government funded programs being delivered in the Territory; and
- Identify priority areas that need additional support.

The restructure will be completed early next year. There will be extensive consultation with teachers, parents, and key organisations including the Australian Education Union, the Council of Government School Organisations, the Association of NT School Educational Leaders and the NT Indigenous Education Council.

Ms Scrymgour said she recognised the requirement for all schools to teach all classes in English for the first four hours of each day would be contentious.

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“I support preserving our Indigenous languages and culture – but our Indigenous children need to be given the best possible chance to learn English.”

Ms Scrymgour also said she had asked the Acting Chief Executive of the Department, Dr Kevin Gillan to follow up on a number of priority initiatives that need to be implemented:

- Increasing the speed of delivery on commitments in relation to my Statement in April on Transforming Indigenous Education (available publicly on Hansard);
- Managing the Australian Government’s commitment of 200 additional teachers for remote schools; and
- The building of stronger directions for Early Childhood Education.

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