



## ***Media Statement***

13 June 2006

### **Bunbury Principal wins top Aboriginal Education award**

Felicity Dear, Principal of Bunbury's unique Djidi Djidi Aboriginal School, has won the prestigious 2006 Outstanding Leadership in Aboriginal Education Awards for her contribution to Indigenous education.

Ms Dear has won \$10,000 to cover travel, accommodation and other costs so she can visit other schools and education systems in Australasia to study ways of improving education for Aboriginal students.

The award was announced by Aboriginal Education and Training director Mr Robert Somerville AM at a ceremony held during the Western Australian Primary Principals' Association (WAPPA) conference.

Ms Dear said she was overjoyed at winning the award, which is a joint initiative of WAPPA, the Department of Education and Training and the Australian Government's Dare to lead to program, as it was a great honour to be recognised for doing a job which she loved.

"It also recognises the fantastic team effort by the staff, students, the school board and the whole community that makes Djidi Djidi such a successful school," she said.

"My six years at the school have been very rewarding and I have loved working with the Aboriginal Community to improve students' literacy and numeracy."

Under Ms Dear's leadership the school has achieved literacy and numeracy students which are above the Western Australian Literacy and Numeracy Assessments (WALNA) benchmarks.

In 2005 almost every Djidi Djidi student exceeded the bench mark in the WALNA Year three and Year seven reading and numeracy testing – 100 per cent of the Year seven students were in the top 25 per cent of similar schools in their band for reading.

In numeracy 100 per cent of Djidi Djidi students were also in the top 25 per cent.

Ms Dear attributed this success to the high level of parent support and their participation in their children's education, culturally inclusive school programs and the staff's commitment and passion for Aboriginal education.

"Our language program has made a huge difference because the children are taking the language back to their families," Ms Dear said.

"This is important because in the south-west a lot of the language has been lost. It instils a sense of pride in their culture when they can pick up their own language once again."

Bunbury Education District, District Director Neil Milligan said Ms Dear was a positive example for principals in the Bunbury region and her leadership was inspirational and informative.

He said Ms Dear is held in the highest regard by other principals and teachers for her dynamic leadership and a belief that success is achievable.

(ENDS)

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