



NEW SOUTH WALES

30 October 2005

MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Frank Sartor MP

Minister for Planning

Minister for Redfern Waterloo

Minister for Science and Medical Research

Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer)

NATIONAL CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR ABORIGINAL YOUTH IN REDFERN

The old Redfern Public School will be transformed into a centre of Aboriginal cultural, social and sporting excellence under an agreement for the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) to commence negotiations for purchase of the site.

Minister for Redfern Waterloo Frank Sartor today announced the project, worth an estimated \$25 million including purchase costs would make a real difference to Indigenous youth from the local area and further afield.

“This site will be a showcase for Indigenous people and the entire Redfern-Waterloo community,” Mr Sartor said.

“It will provide a source of inspiration for kids and their families, as well as educational and other practical support measures through the presence of groups such as the Exodus Foundation.

“This National Aboriginal Youth Development Centre will form the heart of a new youth precinct for the local community, as outlined in the draft Redfern-Waterloo Human Services Plan.”

The Exodus Foundation, run by Reverend Bill Crews, will be one of the first groups to provide services from the site.

Negotiations are also underway with a number of Aboriginal sports organisations to run youth programs from the site.

Under a landmark deal brokered by the Redfern Waterloo Authority, the RWA, the Department of Education and ILC Chairperson Shirley McPherson today signed a Heads of Agreement for the sale of the school, which closed in 2002.

“The ILC believes this is a significant opportunity to create a national hub for indigenous sport and culture by refurbishing the School and the adjacent oval,” Ms McPherson said.

“We anticipate children will begin accessing services at the site from mid-2006.”

Education Minister Carmel Tebbutt said the Centre’s establishment would ensure the Redfern Public School site would continue to be used for community purposes.

“The NSW Government is committed to ensuring this site will be used for education and community purposes. This is an excellent outcome for the whole community,” Ms Tebbutt said.

Mr Sartor confirmed the Murawina Aboriginal Child Care Centre will maintain its long term lease at the site under any sale agreement.

“Murawina will be complemented by the presence of the Exodus Foundation, which has already made a real contribution to keeping kids from Redfern and Waterloo in school through its Ashfield tutoring program.”

Federal Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Senator Amanda Vanstone welcomed the announcement of the new Centre.

“I am very pleased that the Commonwealth, through the Indigenous Land Corporation is supporting this very worthwhile project,” Minister Vanstone said.

“The ILC was set up to buy land in places where native title was extinguished. It is important that the ILC purchases properties for Indigenous people in the cities as well as rural areas.

“This is prime land in the middle of Sydney that will become a lasting asset for Indigenous people and will become a focal point for Indigenous culture and achievement in sports in this great city.

“This project shows what can be possible where community organisations and State and Federal governments join forces. I congratulate all those involved.

“Funding commitment should allow the Centre to open its doors by the middle of next year.”

FACT SHEET

The agreement between the Department of Education and Training (DET), the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) and the Redfern Waterloo Authority (RWA) is for the sale of the Redfern Public School site to the ILC, following negotiation and agreement to commercial terms.

The ILC intends to establish a **National Aboriginal Youth Development Centre** of Indigenous cultural, social and sporting excellence, and retain heritage buildings and the sporting oval.

Potential programs at the Centre include:

- Sports clinics and education programs which help young Aborigines to connect;
- A sports development program to promote the talents and careers of young Aboriginal sportspeople, through regular workshops and competitions, and ongoing mentoring programs;
- A program for Indigenous girls and women to improve self esteem, encourage a healthy lifestyle and create a pathway for Indigenous sportspeople to reach elite levels;
- Leadership courses for youth.

The ILC has also agreed to accommodate the **Exodus Foundation** on the site. The Foundation, run by Reverend Bills Crews, operates a successful program from the Uniting Church at Ashfield. It approached the Redfern Waterloo Authority earlier this year seeking a suitable property to offer services to Redfern-Waterloo families from a local base.

The Foundation offers a range of programs including:

- The Exodus Tutorial Centre: helps young people aged 10 -14 to improve literacy, school attendance and behaviour. The last intake of 72 children at Ashfield included 14 indigenous students from Redfern. The aim of the Foundation is to offer the program to an initial 20 children before expanding to about 50 places.
- A lunchtime program for very young children.
- An afternoon program providing “top-up” education for children who need extra help and possibly offering adult programs.
- A meal service for needy Redfern people, similar to the Ashfield operation.

It is understood that the Exodus Foundation has obtained funding commitments from the Commonwealth and the private sector.

The **Murawina Child Care Centre** will remain on the premises. Established in 1973, Murawina is a full day-care centre catering for up to 60 children, part-funded by the Department of Community Services and the Commonwealth.