



NINTI ONE **CRC** **REMOTE ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION**



Flinders
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MEDIA RELEASE

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REIMAGINING REMOTE ABORIGINAL SCHOOLING

Aboriginal children in remote areas are in need of a school curriculum that has relevance to their lives and values, according to speakers at a public lecture organised by Flinders University, to be held in Alice Springs on Wednesday.

Red Dirt Curriculum: Reimagining Remote Education is the title of this year's Sidney Myer Rural Lecture, which will be presented at the Business and Innovation Centre in Alice Springs at 7.30pm on 18 September.

The lecture is held in conjunction with Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation (CRC-REP).

The lecture will be presented by four remote educators:

- Karina Lester of the Mobile Language Team from the University of Adelaide's Discipline of Linguistics
- Makinti Minutjukur, Director of the Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Education Committee (PYEC)
- Sam Osborne, Senior Research Fellow with the Remote Educations System Project at the CRC for Remote Economic Participation
- Katrini Tjitayi, former PYEC Director, School Improvement Coordinator, APY Lands.

The lecture will invite listeners to consider what knowledge it is that matters to young people in the APY (Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara) Lands in north west South Australia, and what form a contextualised 'red dirt' curriculum would look like if the core elements of remote education were re-imagined.

Professor John Halsey, the Sidney Myer Chair of Rural Education and Communities at Flinders University, said that there was a compelling argument to be made for a major rethinking of approaches

to education in remote Aboriginal communities, rather than tinkering to achieve superficial improvements.

“Merely working with existing school structures and processes, such as extending the school year, will not address the very fundamental issues of what people believe and value, and therefore what motivates them to engage,” Professor Halsey said.

He said there are good reasons to question whether homogenised, metro-centric ideas of what constitutes success in education have relevance or utility in such a disparate environment.

“Red Dirt Curriculum is an invitation to radically change the point of privileging about what sort of knowledge is valued by whom and why, and then build on and out, rather than starting from a Western standpoint of ‘this is what you have to know and be able to do’,” he said.

A follow-up workshop will be held from 9-11am on Thursday.

Professor Halsey said the lecture is very timely given the on-going search for how education might become more enjoyable and successful for Aboriginal children and families, especially those living in remote areas.

“This project, and our partnership with Flinders University, is an important part of the CRC-REP research program. Together we aim to apply our research findings to develop real solutions for people living in remote areas.”

“Education is vital to us all. We need to understand and consider ways to make education relevant to all children so they are able to realise opportunities and live fulfilling lives, “ says CRC-REP Managing Director, Ms Jan Ferguson.

For more information, see www.flinders.edu.au/events or contact Marja van Breda on 8201 7529.

For information about CRC-REP’s Remote Education Systems research project, see www.crc-rep.com.au/research/remoteeducationsystems

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