

MEDIA ALERT

18 April 2017

New Aboriginal literacy program to launch at Toronto Library

A new partnership to improve the literacy of school-aged Aboriginal children will be launched at Toronto Library on **Friday 21 April at 10am**.

The Aboriginal Literacy Improvement Program is a partnership between Lake Macquarie City Council's Lake Mac Libraries and social purpose organisation Life Without Barriers.

Council's Manager Cultural Services, Jacqui Hemsley, said the partnership will draw on the existing resources available through Toronto Library's Aboriginal Knowledge Centre, to help improve literacy rates among school-aged children and promote great connections with Aboriginal heritage.

"Council is strongly committed to promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture throughout the City, so we're pleased to be partnering with Life Without Barriers to deliver this ongoing program of events relating to digital literacy, family history, art and storytelling," Ms Hemsley said. "The program will begin with our new after-school event, Stories in the Big Blue Chair, and continue with sessions throughout the July school holidays."

Life Without Barriers State Lead for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Initiatives, Les Ahoy said, "This program introduces literacy resources to Aboriginal children which encourages reading and engagement with books, thus improving their literacy skills. Through the program parents and carers will be encouraged to read books with their children. And in doing so, they will be empowered to be the role models for their children."

Life Without Barriers Chief Executive, Claire Robbs said, "At Life Without Barriers we believe that reconciliation must live in the hearts and minds of all Australians. We must work together to improve education, cultural, spiritual, physical and emotional wellbeing in young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We are thrilled to be a part of this wonderful program and partnership that strengthens our community and celebrates the history, cultures and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people."

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MEDIA OPPORTUNITY: Cultural introduction to Toronto Library

The new Aboriginal Literacy Improvement Program will launch with an event at Toronto Library, which will feature a tour of the Aboriginal Knowledge Centre, storytelling, art workshops, the Possum Tracks Adventure Trail, live performances and bush tucker taste testing.

When: Friday 21 April, 10.00am – 12noon

Where: Toronto Library, corner Brighton Avenue and Pemell Street, Toronto

To attend the media opportunity, contact Abby Edwards from Life Without Barriers below:

Abby Edwards

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About Life Without Barriers: Life Without Barriers (LWB) is one of Australia's largest leading social purpose organisations, working in more than 300 communities across all states and territories. Its major areas of operations include family support and out-of-home care, mental health services, youth justice, disability services, community based aged care, homelessness services, support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and support to refugees and asylum seekers.

About Lake Macquarie City Council: Lake Macquarie City is the seventh largest regional City in NSW, with a population of more than 205,000 located in nine town centres and 90 villages. The City offers an incredible lifestyle, with world-class infrastructure, engaged and connected communities, a strong and diversified local economy, and superb natural beauty.