



To The Chair and Chief Executive Officer of Children's Ground

I am writing to both thank Children's Ground for the beneficial partnership and appreciate and commend the work Children's Ground do as an agent of social change in the Kakadu community.

Firstly I want to share my appreciation for the beneficial partnership that exists between the school and Children's Ground for the improvement of educational outcomes for Bininj children in Kakadu. Our partnership is a truly collaborative one, both sides contributing their different expertise and resources to ensure benefit for all children and their families. At a strategic level the partnership provides an opportunity to vision, plan, resource and advocate for a private-public collaboration to improve educational access, participation and achievement for children and adolescents of Kakadu. At an operational level the partnership case manages the teaching, learning and wellbeing of children and teenagers than their families; exchanges expertise and resources; identifies and connects and with the families of young children in Kakadu in 0-8 years; and engages Bininj families in making decisions about education and employees Bininj staff.

The impacts of the partnership are numerous:

- Educational choice for Bininj families;
- Shared knowledge of who are the children (0-8years) and families living in Kakadu and targeting of services and supports to ensure they connect with schooling;
- A young man with a disability, attending the school, has been able to pursue his artistic strengths and use these to commence an enterprise with the mentorship and guidance of Damien, Abel and the other artists;
- Young children with initially poor attendance patterns coming to school nearly every day, an example being a nine year old boy whose attendance has grown from 30% ( Term 1, 2015) to 91% (Term 1, 2016)
- Children having opportunities to engage in first language and culture activities whilst attending school at either the centre or the school, an example is that between 10-15 students attending the school go on a camp each term with Children's Ground and over 20 attend the after-hours program;
- Children developing English language and literacy through intensive ESL supports from both partners, an example of this is the recent achievement of a six year old boy who has had variable attendance patterns at both sites for two years, up until recently where attendance is over 80%, and limited engagement in academic/English language and literacy learning up until



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recently, when he developed the reading knowledge and skills to independently read a very simple picture book;

- Wellbeing and counselling support for children, young people and their families through regular communication, meetings, and support plan development between the school, families and the Children's Ground Family Wellbeing Officer. This has provided essential, important and often, urgent, support to children, young people and their families.
- Employment opportunities for Bininj teenagers (after hours program) and adults (classroom support/co –teachers/tutors);
- Improved communication between school and Bininhj families;
- School has access to first nations cultural knowledge and expertise; and
- Shared events and celebrations.

The second reason I am writing is to commend Children's Ground Board, employees, and partners on the contribution Children's Ground is making to the lives of children and their families living in Kakadu. I have lived and worked in East Arnhem for the past six years and frequently visited at least 8 very remote communities. There is no single organisation, service provider, program, funded initiative like Children's Ground, no coordinated model like Children's Ground - even close to those with the best intentions and resources. I see Children's Ground as an organisation of highly committed, engaged and people with a strong sense of purpose and passion; in a container made up of the evidence based theory of action, principles, model and practices; in mutually beneficial partnerships with agencies such as school, make for the unique and sustainable approach to positive, strengths based, intergenerational change that I see emerging in my short time here.

So thank you to Jane, Roxanne, Sue, Felicity and the wellbeing team, Bininj staff and families, teaching teams, after hours team, Perlin and the Nutrition team, Morle Boys and John, Damien and the artists, and the all the team at Jabiru for their relentless effort, strong belief and passion, high level of knowledge and skill in partnering with the school to ensure all Bininj children have access, are participating in and having success in their education.

Regards

Privacy

Learne Dunne, Principal Jabiru Area School

24 October 2016