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LAND COUNCIL**
Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life

MEDIA RELEASE

Learning on Country Program expands to four new remote schools

Tuesday 20 October 2026

The Northern Land Council's (NLC) Learning on Country (LoC) Program is expanding from 14 to 18 remote community school sites, creating new opportunities for Aboriginal students to engage in on-country learning, strengthen cultural knowledge and explore pathways to further education, training and employment.

This significant expansion will formally welcome the Nawarddeken Academy schools at Mamadawerre, Manmoyi and Kabulwarnamyo homelands into the program in partnership with Warddeken Land Management, alongside Bulman–Weemol School in partnership with Mimal Land Management.

The expansion is expected to engage an additional 90 to 115 middle and senior secondary students each year while creating part-time employment opportunities for approximately 35 to 50 local cultural educators and community members.

Growing the program across the NLC's seven regions helps connect ranger groups with children in remote schools in two-way learning. This way, students can learn about culture on country with rangers as role models.

The Learning on Country Program has been operating successfully since 2012, bringing together schools, Traditional Owners, ranger groups and local communities to deliver culturally responsive, two-way learning that connects classroom education with Country, culture and future employment opportunities.

This proven model continues to improve school engagement while supporting the transfer of cultural knowledge and creating pathways into vocational education, training and jobs.

The Learning on Country model is underpinned by Aboriginal leadership and community governance, earning national recognition through the 2024 Indigenous Governance Awards.

The expansion demonstrates the program's capacity to extend its reach and impact through the ongoing funding support from National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA).

The NLC's Learning on Country program is currently delivered across 14 remote communities and has demonstrated strong outcomes in student engagement, attendance, education pathways and employment opportunities.



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Quote attributable to NLC Chairperson, Matthew Ryan.

"Learning on Country succeeds because it is led and guided by Traditional Owners. It gives young people the opportunity to learn outside the classroom, strengthen their identity and culture, and develop the skills and confidence to succeed in both worlds."

"This expansion means more students are able to benefit from strong partnerships between schools, ranger groups, Elders and local communities, while creating more pathways into further education, training and employment."

Quote attributable to Jodie Vallak, Vice Principal: Nawarddeen Academy

"This support from NIAA which has allowed us to join the Learning on Country Program will strengthen the work already happening across Mamadawerre, Manmoyi and Kabulwarnamyo to create new opportunities for students to learn from Rangers, Elders and senior knowledge holders."

"The program will help us formalise and strengthen the intergenerational transfer of knowledge that has always been at the heart of our communities."

Rangers already play an important role in Learning on Country, and this partnership will create more opportunities for young people to build confidence, strengthen their cultural identity, and develop pathways from school into meaningful employment and leadership roles in their communities."

Quote attributable to Dom Nicholls, CEO Mimal Land Management

"The strength of Learning on Country has always been the network of schools, communities and organisations learning from one another. That shared knowledge is what has made the program so powerful, and this funding will support students at Bulman–Weemol and enable us to build on that foundation and further strengthen the opportunities available to young people."

"One of the greatest successes is seeing students who participated in Learning on Country 10 or 12 years ago now returning as adults, taking on leadership roles and helping deliver programs for the next generation. That intergenerational success shows the lasting impact Learning on Country can have for young people, families and communities."

The additional sites will be supported through existing program funding and will extend the Learning on Country model to more remote community schools across the NLC region.



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Media Contact

Brigitte Brown – Communications Lead, Learning on Country Program

0400 480 066

Brigitte@aaeventspr.com.au

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