



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Education**

Media Statement

Attention: News Editor / Chief of Staff

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Murchison's mining companies to mentor students.

Aboriginal employees at three of the Murchison's major mining companies will be called on to mentor secondary students at schools throughout the region as part of a new \$15,000, three-part program funded by the Cooperative Murchison Community Education Initiative.

The Initiative, which comprises Crosslands Resources Ltd, Sinosteel Midwest Corporation Limited, and Oakajee Port and Rail Pty Ltd, will fund the mentoring program, as well as provide financial incentives for graduation and playgroup sessions at local schools.

Welcoming the funding agreements with the Cooperative Murchison Community Education Initiative (CMCE) today, Director General Sharyn O'Neill said the programs funded through the partnership offered exciting opportunities for students in the Murchison area.

"We need to boost literacy and numeracy levels and get more students graduating, which is why the Department developed the Murchison Education Strategy now being supported by the CMCE," she said.

"One of the key elements is the mentoring program by Aboriginal employees in the mining sector.

"We want students, most of whom are Aboriginal, to identify with their mentors and see a future career in the mining sector as a result.

"There are many different career pathways in the mining industry, ranging from office-based to site-based work."

Ms O'Neill said students would also be encouraged to stay on at school and complete a Certificate I in Leadership Development – an essential prerequisite for a career in the mining industry.

"By offering each Year 10 student in the participating schools a financial incentive of \$300 to complete this qualification, we hope to significantly increase graduation rates," she said.

The third part of the funding agreement is to develop reading and writing skills in the early years, to help get children ready for compulsory learning.

"The CMCE has agreed to provide \$900 to each school that holds a playgroup session - \$500 to run the group and \$400 to buy story books to be raffled for attendance," Ms O'Neill said.

"Research shows for children to be successful in learning to read they need to have heard 1000 stories before they start school.

"That is why programs such as this are so important in preparing children for learning."

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