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AVCC COMMITMENT TO INDIGENOUS HIGHER EDUCATION REINFORCED IN KIMBERLEY MEETINGS

Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee President, Professor Deryck Schreuder said discussions conducted in the Kimberley region with local Indigenous leaders had strengthened relationships and generated useful and constructive conversation. Professor Schreuder extended his gratitude to the local Rubibi people for their generous hosting of Vice-Chancellors at the Minyirr Park in Broome yesterday.

“The AVCC has a long history of supporting higher education initiatives among Indigenous Australians and through effective lobbying has influenced government proposal to improve Indigenous education.

“However, there still remains a significantly low representation of Aboriginal youth within our university system,” Professor Schreuder said.

“The average age of Aboriginal students who enter university is 30 years, almost a decade older than any other group. Of these, two-thirds are women and this statistic starkly emphasises the lack of representation of young Indigenous males within the higher education sector.

“The talks with Indigenous leaders have provided thoughtful insight into the reasons why this is the case and has reinforced that both Indigenous leaders and Vice-Chancellors are concerned and committed to getting more Aboriginal students into university.

“The opportunity of talking with local leaders, Carol Martin and Pat Dodson gave Vice-Chancellors a clearer understanding of sensitive cultural issues, and has provided us with strategies to consider for the future. Sitting down and discussing these issues within the local community was a rewarding and educational experience.

“Collectively, Vice-Chancellors can now utilise information from yesterday's discussions, to work towards improving opportunities for our Indigenous youth within the university system.

“We cannot make this happen in isolation, however, and we will be actively engaging with our Indigenous community to ensure our progress remains focused.

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