MEDIA RELEASE

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STUDY LINKS DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY TO POSITIVE INDIGENOUS LEARNING OUTCOMES

A book released today by The Australian National University’s Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, suggests that digital technology may be key to improving education outcomes for Indigenous youths living in remote communities.

‘Learning Spaces’ is a three-year study funded by The Fred Hollows Foundation and the Australian Research Council. It offers a unique and compelling guide for community members, policy makers and education facilitators to rethink their approaches to learning.

Having documented positive results throughout the course of the study, co-authors Dr. Inge Kral and Dr. Robert G. Schwab believe the study shows it is possible to re-engage young Indigenous adults lost to regular schooling systems, with education and life long learning.

“In our research we’ve noticed that although many young people may be walking away from compulsory schooling and training, they are not rejecting learning,” Dr. Schwab said.

“Our observations and interactions with young people indicate that when alternative learning opportunities are available, youth are participating and successful outcomes are being attained.”

Central to their findings, the result of three years collaboration with two-dozen Indigenous youths from remote communities is the creation of what they call ‘learning spaces’ - together with the use of new media technologies to encourage engagement with learning.

“In recent years media organisations, schools and youth centres have tapped into digital media as a way of engaging young people. With an increase to these resources, young people are now producing and controlling new forms of cultural production,” Dr. Kral said.

“As a consequence we are witnessing a new wave of oral and written language activity as youths experiment with the production of computer based, multi-modal text.”
“We also identified the importance of what we call ‘learning spaces.’ This is where Indigenous participants have control over their physical space, time and resources to acquire and practice relevant new skills — and allow productive processes to take place.”

“In these ‘learning spaces’ they have the freedom to explore and express their contemporary Indigenous identity.”

‘Learning Spaces’ is a book that promotes approaches to successfully re-engage young Indigenous adults with learning. It is aimed at members of Indigenous communities, as well as education facilitators and policy makers.


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MEDIA CALL: Author Dr. Inge Kral from The Australian National University will be available for interviews on Wednesday 3rd October.

To arrange an interview, please contact Dr. Inge Kral: 0438526827 or (02) 61250481