

Relationships the X-factor in Aboriginal People's advancement

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"Relationships, relationships, relationships — I can't stress this enough," Federation's Aboriginal Education Coordinator told teachers at Annual Conference.

"That's what encourages, inspires, motivates and builds lifelong connections," she said. "It's the X-factor to Aboriginal Peoples' advancement."

"Remember that teacher who made a difference in your life?"

"It's what you do in your classroom, in your school and in your community that influences our children and their families," Ms Emzin-Boyd also said.

It is now eight years since the union's Annual Conference endorsed the policy "Aboriginal Education — 25 Year Approach: the Way Forward".

"This document is only the start to many actions and honest conversations that you as teachers/parents and your students can have to address and encapsulate your school environment, in the direction of Aboriginal Education for all students," Ms Emzin-Boyd said.

"Your starting point might be small, but significantly huge, such as introducing the Acknowledgment of Country or the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags — free from your Federal Member."

Ms Emzin-Boyd said improving education standards helps to increase employment rates, levels of health, housing and wellbeing of the nation's First Peoples.

She said she was disappointed only three of the Close the Gap targets were on track:

- halve the gap in child mortality by 2018
- 95 per cent of all Indigenous four-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education by 2025
- halve the gap in Year 12 attainment by 2020.

The nation is not on track for the targets to:

- close the gap in school attendance by 2018
- halve the gap in reading and numeracy by 2018
- halve the gap in employment by 2018
- close the gap in life expectancy by 2031.



“This situation is appalling, incomprehensible and inexcusable for Australia,” Ms Emzin-Boyd said.

“Governments must be accountable for their lack of resourcing and funding and their lack of ability to take heed of the First Peoples’ voices and directions.”