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TASMANIAN COLLEGE WINS NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AWARD

A small senior secondary college in Tasmania has won the Australian Education Union's National Reconciliation award for 2003.

AEU Federal Aboriginal Education Officer Darcel Moyle says **Claremont College** will be presented with the award (**11.15am, 163 Greenhill Road Parkside**) as part of the AEU's Annual Indigenous Seminar, being held this year in Adelaide.

Ms Moyle says Claremont clinched the award for its initiative, its determination to improve outtcomes and its commitment to the principles of fairness, justice and equity.

"Claremont College in Hobart's working-class northern suburbs is the smallest of the city's 3 secondary colleges but has shown itself to be amongst the most progressive in Australia in relation to Indigenous studies" Ms Moyle says.

"In a little over 18 months, Claremont College has devised and implemented a 7 stage "Aboriginal Education Strategic Plan" to make Indigenous education a major focus of its formal partnership agreement with the community. It's the only school with such a plan in the state."

"Already it's having an impact – Aboriginal students have increased from 107 in 2001 to 153 in 2002, good work for a school of 1400 students. There are 2 Aboriginal teachers and an Aboriginal Education Worker amongst the 83 staff."

"The carefully structured plan started by ensuring staff attended an Aboriginal Cross-Cultural training course as a condition of employment" Ms Moyle says.

"The school then purchased a large Aboriginal flag. A small amount of adverse comment was swiftly dealt with by the school Principal, and the Aboriginal flag is now the only flag displayed at Claremont."

"The college also initiated an Aboriginal "Elder in residence" project. In April last year Auntie Eva Richardson became the only elder in residence at a Tasmanian schools, where she works weekly with staff and students."

"In May the college unveiled an Aboriginal Students and Community Centre, which has proven a valuable place for students to study and relax and a focal point for indigenous education initiatives."

"An arts and cultural education program has been established, and plans are afoot to sponsor a NAIDOC week art exhibition this year. Other future activities include the development of a College Aboriginal Cultural Garden and walking trail, and inclusion of an Aboriginal Studies course in the curriculum for 2003" she says.

"The AEU applauds Claremont College for its progressive attitude. It's acted to overcome past injustices and set a fine example of reconciliation to schools everywhere. It just goes to show that even small schools can achieve big things if they have the dedication and commitment to do so" Ms Moyle says.

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