



Yarnteen wins Microsoft community grant

*Microsoft will provide funding and resources
to foster digital inclusion in Indigenous communities*

Sydney, Australia – xx February 2007: Microsoft Australia today announced that it had awarded a grant valued at more than AU\$347,000* which includes, software and curriculum to the Yarnteen Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders Corporation (Yarnteen).

The grant, which has been made possible through Microsoft's *Unlimited Potential* community program, will help Yarnteen expand its Information and Communications Technology (ICT) literacy training programs in Indigenous communities throughout Australia. Unlimited Potential, which was launched by Microsoft Chairman Mr Bill Gates during a visit to Australia in 2004, aims to improve computer literacy and foster digital inclusion in disadvantaged communities through funding, resources and software donations.

The grant will help Yarnteen expand the outreach of the Unlimited Potential training program to rural and remote areas through Yarnteen supporting other Indigenous Organisations that are using innovative ICT solutions to engage Indigenous people in learning ICT skills.

As a part of the grant Yarnteen will be providing Arwarbukarl Cultural Resource Association (ACRA) with support as ACRA continues to develop software programs that support the reclamation, revitalisation and recording of Indigenous languages. ACRA will launch a computer software program "Miromaa" at a Language/ICT forum ACRA is hosting, to be held in Newcastle later this year, aimed at exposing Indigenous people from all over Australia to available technology resources and learning opportunities to assist with Indigenous language programs nationally.

As the Miromaa program is implemented in language centers throughout the country ACRA, with Yarnteen's support, will be providing complimentary ICT training utilising the Microsoft 'Unlimited Potential' curriculum.

Of over 250 known Australian languages, only 50 languages are still spoken today. World-wide concern with language endangerment singled Australia out as the continent where languages are disappearing the fastest. Both Yarnteen and ACRA realize the importance of using ICT in the recording of Indigenous culture and history for generations to come and Microsoft is playing an important role in their work to support bridging the digital divide that exists here in Australia for Indigenous people.

As another part of the grant, Microsoft will provide Yarnteen with specially developed curriculum and learning materials that can be rolled out in each of the centres. Yarnteen also uses Microsoft support to complement the learning materials by developing resources that assist trainers in optimising ICT training outcomes when engaging with Indigenous learners.

Microsoft Australia's Community Affairs Manager, Mr Paul Clark, said that Yarnteen had an excellent reputation and track record for achieving real and beneficial results for Indigenous Australians.

"Yarnteen is kicking goals by providing training opportunities that are moving Indigenous Australians into employment, as well as helping them to start and operate businesses in a sustainable manner," said Mr Clark.

"ICT has become so important in recent years, and computer skills are now a prerequisite for many jobs. Microsoft believes that everyone should have the opportunity to develop them and that's why

* Based on an exchange rate of AU\$1.00 = US\$0.78

we're partnering with Yarnteen, who we believe can make a real difference to the lives of many Indigenous Australians," he said.

Ms Emma McKenny, Yarnteen, said that the Australia's Indigenous communities faced a multitude of challenges and that Microsoft's support in providing increased access to ICT is playing an important role in addressing them.

"For example, success rates of Indigenous ICT students is well below average when compared with non-Indigenous students," she said.

"Indigenous unemployment is also more than triple the rate for non-Indigenous people.

"Yarnteen is working on a range of community initiatives, like providing ICT training, to overcome these issues."

Microsoft Australia has partnered with Yarnteen for six years to address issues around access and training in ICT for Indigenous people and their communities.

Microsoft Australia has awarded over AU\$2.2 million to Australian community organisations, including Yarnteen, as part of its latest round of grants. In total, Microsoft will distribute more than AU\$9.8 million in grants throughout the Asia Pacific region, benefiting the lives of more than 3,000,000 people through a network of more than 820 CTLCs.

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