



## PRESS RELEASE

### Will mobile classrooms hook kids?

A radical plan to increase the fleet of mobile pre-schools in the Northern Territory could address the crisis of Indigenous education, according to a top researcher.

Speaking at this week's international population conference, Dr Nick McTurk, Research Associate with School for Social and Policy Research, Charles Darwin University (CDU) said the provision of preschool through mobile teachers and locally trained co-ordinators were a favoured option of Federal and Territory governments.

His research is building upon the strong correlation between education and health and the inter-generational effects of low levels of literacy on health outcomes.

This significant foundation work was recently undertaken via CDU's School for Social Policy Research and the independent NT-based research organisation Menzies School of Health Research.

"An intense intervention is needed early in the lives of many Indigenous children to break the burdens of morbidity and low levels of life passed from generation to generation," he said.

The transient nature of many Indigenous peoples creates challenges for traditional education models.

Nick said his research aims to develop strategies in sync with the social and cultural needs of Indigenous people.

"Education providers including the Northern Territory Government and CDU are recognising this and are taking a proactive look at what works for communities," he said.

"Exploring what form this early intervention should take and how it can be delivered in a socio-culturally appropriate way is crucial."

Dr McTurk is one of the prominent researchers tackling issues relevant to the Territory during the Australian Population Association 14th Biennial Conference, at the Alice Springs Convention Centre which runs from today (Monday June 30) until Thursday July 3.

More than 100 experts from CDU and across the globe are discussing issues surrounding demographic changes of the 21st Century with particular focus on Indigenous demography, policy responses to demographic change, and demography of Australia's northern neighbours.

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**CONTACTS OVERLEAF -**



Australian Population Association

14th Biennial Conference



## Contacts

Media enquiries about the APA Conference: Shane Thamm or Rebekah Zechner at the School for Social and Policy Research, Charles Darwin University.

Shane Thamm: 61 8 8946 6153 or 0413 937 727 [shane.thamm@cdu.edu.au](mailto:shane.thamm@cdu.edu.au)

Rebekah Zechner: 61 8 8946 6940 [rebekah.zechner@cdu.edu.au](mailto:rebekah.zechner@cdu.edu.au)

## About the conference

The 14th biennial conference of the Australian Population Association (<http://www.apa.org.au/>) will be held in Alice Springs from Monday 30th June to Thursday 3rd July 2008 at the Alice Springs Convention Centre.

The conference will share international perspectives on contemporary population issues. The keynote speaker program features highly respected international population experts, and a comprehensive program of concurrent sessions based on the conference themes of:

- Indigenous demography
- Policy responses to demographic change; and
- The demography of Australia's northern neighbours

For full details, including the conference program, go to [www.nt.gov.au/ntt/apa2008/](http://www.nt.gov.au/ntt/apa2008/)