

# Child care work recognised

■ Rourke Walsh

A Kununurra-based educator has been nominated for a major gong at this year's Australian Family Early Education and Care Awards.

Stephanie Woerde will vie for the Educator of the Year title after she was recognised for her work coordinating the Miriwoong Language Nest program at the Kununurra Early Learning Centre.

Ms Woerde said the nomination had come as a surprise, given her background was not in teaching, but it was exciting nonetheless.

"My academic background is actually in anthropology and community development so it may not immediately make sense to picture me working in the early childhood education and care setting," she said.

"However, in taking on the challenge of establishing the Miriwoong Language Nest program, it has become very clear that early childhood development is integral to community development more generally."

"After all, it is children who represent the community leaders and role models of the future."

The Miriwoong Language Nest is a culturally responsive education program that centres on native language immersion and is regularly delivered to more than 200 children each week.

Ms Woerde, who works for the

**Miriwoong Language Nest co-ordinator Stephanie Woerde (centre) with fellow educators Rita Boombie and Rozanne Bilminga and children who take part in the program.** Picture: Rourke Walsh

Miriwoong Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre, said it was a joy to be involved in a program that generated so much pride and positivity in the community.

"At its core, the Miriwoong Language Nest program is about helping children, even some of the most vulnerable, to believe in themselves and to celebrate each other," she said.

"It feels a little overwhelming to be singled out in the spotlight without my wonderful team of Miriwoong co-workers, without whom, the program wouldn't be what or where it is today.

"Together, we've shared our unique backgrounds and experiences and put great heart and energy into co-designing and delivering a program that ultimately educates and cares for local children

in a culturally sensitive, stimulating and significant way."

Judging chairman and Australian Family managing director Paul Clancy said finalists would be announced on May 6 before the State-based category winners were revealed on June 5.

The national winners will be announced at the Australian Family Early Education and Care Awards Gala Event on June 19.



# Language changes lives

A Kununurra Aboriginal language centre has been recognised at a national community awards ceremony for a program aimed at young children.

Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre picked up the Organisation Award at the HESTA Community Sector Awards in Sydney late last month.

The program hopes to preserve the Miriwoong language by engaging with children through storytelling, songs, games, and arts and crafts.

Chairwoman Rita Boombi said more than 200 children had been involved through partnerships with childcare centres and schools.

Program facilitator Stephanie Woerde said the program had made a difference in the children involved, Miriwoong Elders, and the community.

"There is now an increased knowledge of the local Miriwoong language ... providing greater assurance that it will continue to be part of community life for generations to come," she said.

HESTA chief executive Debby Blakey said they were proud to acknowledge the centre for teaching young Aboriginal children their native language and helping transform their lives.

The awards not only provide recognition to the service but also a monetary boost with a \$10,000 development grant from the awards sponsor ME.

Ms Boombi said the grant meant they could publish more books aimed at youngsters wanting to learn Miriwoong.

Ms Blakey said the work of the award winners had significantly improved the lives of individuals and communities often over a long period of time and in difficult circumstances.

"We are proud to acknowledge their achievements and give them the recognition they deserve," she said.

The centre topped four other finalists from across the nation at the awards.

The other finalists were Alzheimer's Australia Victoria, the Northern Territory's Barkly Youth Services, Victoria's Swags for Homeless, and The Salvation Army Tasmania.



**The Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre's Stephanie Woerde, Rita Boombi and Glenda Grange with their award for a program aimed at young children.** Picture: Stu Morley



# Language program gets awards nod

■ Rourke Walsh

A Kununurra-based language and culture centre has been named a finalist in the 2015 HESTA Community Sector Awards.

Mirima Dawang Woorlab-ger-ring Language and Culture Centre has won praise for its Miriwoong Language Nest program, which aims to revitalise the endangered language through activities with young children including storytelling, songs and games.

MDWg chairwoman Rita Boombi said more than 200 children had taken part in the program.

Ms Boombi said the children benefited from a stronger sense of self-esteem and wellbeing and showed a more positive attitude towards learning and attending school.

Program facilitator Stephanie Woerde said the initiative had not only made a positive difference to the lives of the children involved, but also to Miriwoong elders and the broader community.

"There is now an increased

knowledge of the local Miriwoong language in the community, providing greater assurance that it will continue to be part of community life for generations to come," she said.

"Given that language is so intrinsically tied to culture, the program also helps to connect community members to the traditional culture more generally and sustains a strong sense of pride in that culture."

The language centre is one of five finalists for the Organisations Award, which recognises organisations which enhance the wellbeing of disadvantaged individuals and communities.

Finalists will be flown to Sydney for the awards dinner on June 25, where the winners will be revealed.

If it wins, the centre will receive a \$10,000 development grant.

The HESTA Community Sector Awards are presented in partnership with the Australian Council of Social Service as part of the ACOSS National Conference.



# Culture and dance mix to create unique school show

■ **Cally Dupe**

St Joseph's School Kununurra spread plenty of cheer at their end-of-year Christmas concert on Friday night.

Parents and teachers unfolded their chairs to watch the concert at the school's undercover area while students sang and danced to the theme of "favourite things".

Academic and effort awards were also handed out, with many teachers lauding their students as conscientious and hard-working.

School principal Janine Moore said students had brainstormed ideas and spent time with a contracted dance teacher during the year, which had helped them to "think outside the box" in relation to dance.

Pre-primary students took on a colourful version of the hokey-pokey and gave it a unique twist by singing the lyrics in Miriwoong.

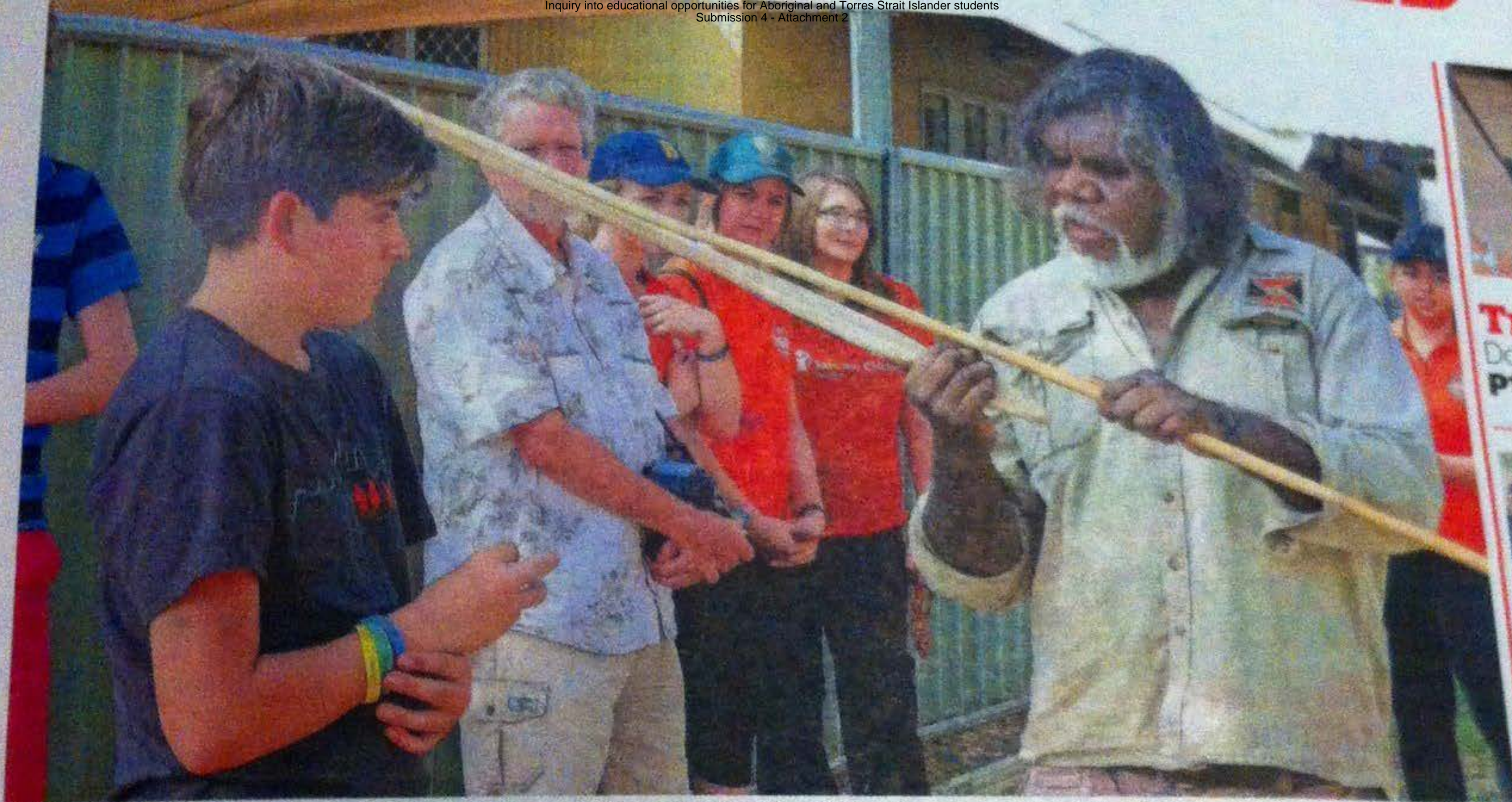
The students had been taught the words by the Mirima Dawang Woorlab-Gerring Language Centre's Language Nest team, which visits the school regularly.

Language Nest co-ordinator Stephanie Woerde said it was the first time in many years a school concert had included a Miriwoong performance item.

Other popular song choices included Justice Crew's new song Que Sera and The Sound of Music's Julie Andrew's classic My Favourite Things.

Students of all ages came together to finish the concert with a nativity scene.





David Newry shows off a spear during a spear-making workshop. Picture: Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre

# High-tech books help keep language and culture alive

■ Peter de Kruijff

Two books written in both English and the East Kimberley Miriwoong language were launched at the Kununurra Language Centre last week during NAIDOC celebrations.

Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre had an open day on July 6 to raise awareness of the need to preserve and revitalise the heritage of the Miriwoong people.

Speak-making workshops,

language classes and cultural videos were all part of the day, as well as the book launch.

Woorre-Worrem, My Community Flying Fox is a book written by Ingrid Ningarmara and her late mother that is a story of the people from the remote community exploring their country.

MDW marketing and communications co-ordinator Matthew Keast said the book included pictures of the community's people and showed them at their favourite activities,

such as fishing and camping. "It's probably one of our harder books in terms of language," he said.

"It goes through all the people and why they think the country is important and why it matters to them."

The second book, Yangge Yindajgoo, or Ask Me, was written by the language nest team at MDWg in collaboration with the children of Kununurra.

The book features the children asking and answering questions in Miriwoong.

Mr Keast said the books had

been printed with technology that allowed them to be used with audio pens that could pronounce the text written on the pages.

He said the books had been finished towards the end of last year, and were published with the help of funding from the Australia Council and an Optus community grant.

The language centre has been involved in the publishing of five other books so far, and has another set to be published about families and their day-to-day activities.

**Treat trou**  
Dog owners war  
P10

**Yee-ha**  
Brave souls  
for rodeo

**Fam**  
Ag sh  
CROW

**I**  
**P**  
**H**





Dreylin Simon-Meeway, 8, leads young Miriwoong dancers at the Mirima Language Centre in Kununurra.

# Centres adopt model

■ Cally Dupe

The Miriwoong language will make inroads into the minds of children when the first indigenous language sessions are held at local childcare centres this month.

The Mirima Dawang Woollab-gerring Language and Culture Centre, which runs an immersion-based language nest at their Kununurra premise, will take games and activities from the nest into local childcare centres.

Language nest facilitators have created books, songs and ac-

tivities for children to use when they are in the 45-minute sessions — where no English will be spoken.

Following a native language model trialled in New Zealand, the immersion-based learning for zero to five year olds involves no explicit teaching.

“It’s more a way of surrounding children in the language in a natural environment. So all simple directions will be given in Miriwoong,” nest facilitator Stephanie Woerde said.

The program has three partners so far — Save the Children’s mobile play-scheme, Gawooleng

Yawoodeng Centre on Pindan Avenue, and the Kununurra Early Learning centre on Ironwood Drive.

Indigenous and non-indigenous children are welcome to take part.

“It gives a bit of cultural awareness at the same time and gives the indigenous children an opportunity to build a bit of self-esteem,” Miss Woerde said.

“The reason we are starting with the kids is because really, they are at the optimum age for learning a new language. Our ultimate goal is to take the sessions back into local schools.”

## SWEK NEWS

KEEPING YOU INFORMED

### STORY OF THE WEEK

#### Road Repairs Update



The Shire would like to advise the community that staff are working at full capacity in order to clean up and repair the damage caused by the recent floods. Some repairs may be a temporary measure until the full extent of the damage has been determined and Federal Government approval has been obtained to commence re-

instatement works. Whilst emergency repairs are underway the Shire may not have the resources to carry out normal maintenance programs.

The Shire would like to thank the community for their patience while the aftermath of the flooding is dealt with.

### WHAT'S NEW

#### Shire Ovals Closed Until Further Notice



Inspections of the Kununurra Town Oval and the Kununurra Agricultural Society Oval have been carried out following the heavy rainfall and recent flooding.

Both ovals are closed as there is still a significant amount of surface water in parts. To ensure long term preservation and allow the grounds to dry out the community are asked to stay off the ovals until further notice.

The grounds will be inspected daily and will be reopened for public and sporting use as soon as possible.

#### Boat Ramps

Water Corporation have advised the Shire that the lake level has been raised enough for boats to use the Celebrity Tree Park and Swim Beach boat ramps.

Boaters are urged to exercise caution as the level of the lake is at the wet season level which is lower than normal.

#### Funding and Grants Workshop

The Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley and the Department of Sport and Recreation would like to invite the community to the Funding and Grants Workshop on Tuesday 11 March, 7am – 8.30am in the Argyle Room at the Pinctada Kimberley Grande.

Funding and Grants are an important source of revenue for Club projects such as funding trips, qualifying coaches or officials, equipment or assisting with club facilities.

This workshop will expose club committee members to relevant funding bodies and the types of grants and funding they can offer sport and recreation clubs in our region, including the Shire and the Department of Sport and Recreation.

To attend this workshop RSVP to the Shire’s Club Development Officer no later than Friday 7 March on 0409 002 771 or mail@swek.wa.gov.au

#### Airport flight details

The Shire is pleased to announce that airport flight details can now be viewed on our website. This new feature is an excellent tool for passengers to easily access their flight information.

#### Kids @ the library

Want to get the kids out of the house? There is plenty on at Kununurra Community Library to keep the little ones busy.

Tuesday 8:15am, Rhyme time  
Tuesday 6:00pm, Bedtime stories  
Thursday 8:30am, Story time  
Friday 9:00am, Rhyme time

For more information on what’s on, contact the library on 9169 1227.



#### Adopt a Pet

“Sandy” is looking for a forever home.

She is a beautiful 6 month old, black and tan shepherd X. If you would like to meet Sandy please contact one of the rangers on 9168 4100.



#### “Like” us on Facebook

### PUBLIC NOTICES

#### Next Ordinary Council Meeting

5.00pm, Tuesday 25 February 2014 at the Wyndham Council Chambers. Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings. Meeting dates are subject to change. Contact the Shire for up-to-date information.

Minutes of the January Ordinary Council Meeting are available on the Shire’s website

#### Contact Details

T | 9168 4100 PO Box 614 Kununurra 6743  
F | 9168 1798 20 Coolibah Drive KUNUNURRA  
E | mail@swek.wa.gov.au Koolama Street WYNDHAM  
W | www.swek.wa.gov.au 8.00am - 4.00pm MON - FRI



## The benefits of expanding WA’s natural gas industry in the Canning Basin



Providing local jobs and training



Wellpads have a very small footprint



Existing site after rehabilitation

Developing a tight gas industry in WA could ensure long term energy security to WA, as well as contribute to the State’s economic prosperity and to Australia’s overall economy.

The Canning Basin’s gas resource, if proven, also has an important role to play in providing direct and long term benefits for Traditional Owners and the local and regional community.

Buru Energy is firmly committed to strengthening the economic sustainability of local communities, including Aboriginal communities.

The environmental benefits are also a crucial consideration. Realising the potential of the Canning Basin’s natural gas reserve will help shift the world’s reliance from coal to gas which will contribute significantly to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.



Delivering Western Australia’s energy future

call: 1800 002 156 • email: community@buruenergy.com • web: www.buruenergy.com/engage





**Rita Boombi, Rosemary Boombi, Sylvia Simon, Stephanie Woerde, Glennis Galbat-Newry and Terrence Carlton are involved in the Miriwoong Language Nest program that has been nominated for a major award. Picture: Rourke Walsh**

## Language program nominated for award

■ Rourke Walsh

The Miriwoong Language Nest program has been nominated as a finalist in the WA Regional Achievement and Community Awards.

The awards pay tribute to individuals, communities, businesses and groups that make contributions to regional and rural areas.

Run from the Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre, the Language Nest teaches about 200 children traditional Miriwoong language and culture each week.

Language Nest facilitator Stephanie Woerde said the team was honoured to have been nominated.

"The Miriwoong Language Nest team formally launched its Language Nest initiative in March this year and have continued to see the program grow from strength to strength," she said.

"It is positively working to not only revitalise Kununurra's critically endangered Miriwoong language, but also to instil an important sense of self-esteem, intercultural awareness, empathy and respect among all children involved."

Ms Woerde said the program had been delivered to indigenous and non-indigenous children at the Pindan Centre, CSSU's Kununurra Early Learning Centre, Save the Children's mobile play scheme and the early years at Kununurra District High School and St Joseph's Catholic Primary School.

She said the immersion-based native language education program aimed to teach more speakers of the language now spoken fluently by fewer than 20 people.

Team members will attend the presentation dinner in Perth on November 14.



# Tradition stays alive through language

■ Cally Dupe

It is thousands of years old and one of the world's oldest, but the Miriwoong language has almost been forgotten.

The Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Cultural Centre in Kununurra is trying to revive the local dialect by teaching it to young children.

More than 200 students are learning basic Miriwoong each week through the centre's Language Nest Program.

The program made inroads into three local childcare cen-



**Miriwoong engagement officers Rosa and Rita Boombi with language nest facilitator Stephanie Woerde and children Brodie Worrigal, 4, Christopher Winton, 4, and Remy Blunden, 2.** Picture: Cally Dupe

tres in March this year and has now extended into pre-primary and kindergarten classes at St Joseph's School and Kununurra District High School.

Students are taught by a team of Miriwoong language engagement officers with the support of Language Nest fa-

cilitator Stephanie Woerde.

Ms Woerde said while the Aboriginal language was yet to be formally introduced into Australian schools, she had experienced a great response by students and teachers so far.

She also said it was often the students who were leading the way with the Miriwoong lan-

guage. "Often we have children who pick up on it so fast, they are saying the words before we can get them out," she said.

The program now has five partners—Save the Children's mobile play-scheme, the Gawooleng Yawoodeng Centre, CSSU Early Learning Centre and the two schools.