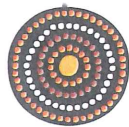


BP donates a million for scholarships plan



AUSTRALIAN
INDIGENOUS
EDUCATION
FOUNDATION

AN extra 60 indigenous students will have the opportunity to attend one of the nation's prestigious private boarding schools following the partnership announced yesterday between BP Australia and the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation.

BP became the latest Australian company to become a corporate partner with the AIEF, and will donate \$1 million over the next five years as part of the company's reconciliation action plan.

The AIEF was established by Andrew Penfold in 2007, and has grown, with the backing of some of the biggest names in corporate Australia, from offering one scholarship in 2008 to 150 scholarships in 15 schools in 2010 and about 230 places in 24 schools last year.

Mr Penfold said the support of BP would help the foundation in its two parallel programs, one paying for scholarships for students to attend boarding

school and the other for the pathways program supporting students after they left school.

Students in Year 12 receive individual support and guidance in identifying career interests and opportunities, and the foundation helps them settle into further education ranging from university to TAFE courses and apprenticeships, and helps find them jobs and accommodation.

Mr Penfold said over the past five years he had noticed an increasing appetite for philanthropic ventures in corporate Australia but companies used the same criteria for assessing charitable ventures as for any other business venture, assessing the scheme's track record and governance arrangements.

One key recommendation of the Gonski review into school funding was the establishment of a philanthropic fund to encourage private donations.

While supporting the idea, Mr Penfold said schools lacked the skills to present their programs in a business environment. Large businesses also tended to prefer specific-purpose programs across a number of schools.

JUSTINE FERRARI