



NSW AECG Inc. MEDIA RELEASE – May 2022

NSW AECG FILM LAUNCH 'HONOURING OUR ABORIGINAL EDUCATION OFFICERS'

The NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group coordinated an event at the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence on Tuesday, May 24 to launch the film 'Honouring Our Aboriginal Education Officers'. The film features Aunty Ruth Simms, the longest standing Aboriginal Education Officer (AEO) in NSW. Aunty Ruth, who is also a NSW AECG Life Member, has served in the AEO role for 45 years. The event focussed on honouring AEOs across NSW and celebrating Aunty Ruth's dedication, commitment and passion for the education of Aboriginal students and all students. Whilst the spotlight was on Aunty Ruth the NSW AECG acknowledges all Aboriginal Education Officers and the importance of their role across NSW.

Approximately 40 people attended the event including Elders, AEOs, Senior Department of Education representatives, NSW AECG Life Members, family members of Aunty Ruth, and former and current teachers and principals.

After an Acknowledgement of Country was given in Cadigal language by Alexandria Park Students, Leigh Ridgeway, Vice President of the NSW AECG, opened the event by honouring Aunty Ruth as the longest serving AEO and honouring the work of all AEOs across NSW. He also stated *"I feel the Department of Education should be employing more AEOs in our schools. Aboriginal student numbers are increasing and our students like all students need support. More AEOs will help our students and communities engage with education."*

Life Members and former NSW AECG President and Vice President, Bob Morgan and John Lester spoke at the event about the history around the AEO role, the AECG's related work and they both acknowledged Aunty Ruth's significant contribution.



Aunty Ruth with, from left, Pat Cavanagh, Bob Morgan and John Lester



Aunty Ruth with Catherine Trindall

Catherine Trindall, President of the NSW AECG, said that *“it’s wonderful that we’ve been able to recognise and honour Aunty Ruth Simms in this way. The NSW AECG will look forward to distributing the film to schools across the state and to support professionally developing school leadership and teachers so that they can work more effectively with their AEOs. We will also work towards increasing our advocacy efforts to the NSW Department of Education to better recognise and value the importance of the AEO role.”*

Aunty Ruth Simms closed the event. *“I’d like to thank the NSW AECG for putting on this event and we really appreciate and thank everyone who made the journey to be here today...and I really appreciate Bob and John’s contribution and I would like to acknowledge all AEOs.”*



Aunty Ruth with her brother Vic Simms and daughter Trudy Trindall

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