



College offered finance lifeline

Cairns Post
28 June 2011

PIONEERING education reforms that focus on innovative classroom teaching and strict attendance could be the key to the survival of embattled Djarragun College .

At a meeting on Sunday the Djarragun board agreed in principle to transfer ownership and operations to Cape York Partnerships, retaining a pastoral role for the Anglican Church. The independent school has fallen on hard times and reportedly owes up to \$3 million to the Federal Government for allegedly receiving funding for students who did not exist.

Headed by Noel Pearson, CYP has been a driving force in indigenous education reform through the Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy, which operates three schools in Cape communities.

Mr Pearson said it was time to get back to providing the best education possible to children who desperately need it and called on the community and government for their support. "Rebuilding will require a lot of work, but the foundations already laid down are very strong and must not be allowed to be wasted by the school's closure," Mr Pearson said.

He has assembled a highly experienced board that includes Tony Watt, an expert in independent schools and change transition and school principal of 37 years.

Dr Watt said he was feeling "positive and very excited" about working alongside Mr Pearson. And he hinted that the board would soon be announcing news of "incredible" financial backing that would underwrite the college 's operations for coming years.

"We have some financial heavyweights who understand what Noel Pearson and the elders right across the Cape are trying to achieve under the umbrella of welfare reform," he said.

"To work for schools that are educating kids from the most disadvantaged parts of society is hard, marrow-sapping work."