



FUN, ENERGETIC & DYNAMIC – NEO-LEARNING ENGAGES STUDENTS WITH LIVING CULTURE FROM THE PILBARA

Schools around Australia can now embrace an innovative mode of learning in continuous living culture with **NEO-Learning** - a fun and contemporary digital resource created by young people, now available as a virtual classroom with live educators anywhere in the country.

NEO-Learning is for young people, co-created by young Indigenous kids from Ieramagadu (Roebourne) in the Pilbara of Western Australia, with the first unit activated by Big hART's award-winning futuristic comic NEOMAD. With a dynamic, youthful energy and future heritage focus, NEO-Learning is a ground-breaking digital resource which celebrates living culture and supports teachers and students with an energetic mode of online learning. With instantly accessible, highly engaging Indigenous online content, videos and exercises, NEO-Learning fulfils cross-curriculum objectives across all states.

NEO-Learning champions the bright young future of Roebourne, a town on Ngarluma country but home to a number of language groups from across the Pilbara. It positions young people as teachers, who share with students nationally the living classroom on country. As Yindjibarndi woman Emily Sandy says...*"My country is a science lab, it's geography, it's a maths room, it's an art room, it's music, it's everything"*. NEO-Learning was also designed to fulfil the requirements of ACARA, the national curriculum reporting authority which requires all teachers in Australia to include Indigenous culture and history in their subjects. Currently 99% of teachers are from non-Indigenous backgrounds, which is the rationale behind the relevance and genuine need for lessons like these. NEO-Learning prioritises digital literacy pathways, with the view for employment for the future leaders of Roebourne.

NEO-Learning is being piloted in schools this year, with opportunities for teachers across the country to discover what this online resource offers. The first unit of study covers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, digital literacies, visual arts, literacy and numeracy. Children are invited to celebrate Ngarluma country in association with sci-fi comic NEOMAD. The unit offers students skills in digital drawing, inquiry-based activities, mind-mapping, geography and future numeracy.

Big hART has been working with the Roebourne community in the Pilbara for 10 years. The NEOMAD comic was created with over 40 young people in the community, through workshops in scriptwriting, literacy, photoshop, filmmaking and sound recording. NEOMAD follows the adventures of the Love Punks and Satellite Sisters in an imaginary world of spy bots, magic crystals and mysterious petroglyphs. The NEOMAD project went to LA, Korea and Poland, with the comic and iPad App winning many awards, including the Gold Ledger, Australia's most prestigious comic book award. NEO-Learning continues the legacy of NEOMAD, piloting its education opportunity with schools around the country in 2020.

NEO-Learning is supported by the Telstra Foundation Tech4Good program, a social innovation project which supports Big hART and four other charities to develop innovative digital solutions to some of Australia's biggest challenges. Telstra Foundation's support over the last 18 months has included high level mentoring, professional development, tech intel and business coaching which has aided the creation of a strong social impact business case and prototype. NEO-Learning is a proud partner of Reconciliation Australia.

Big hART makes art, builds community and drives change, working with communities to tell their stories through transformational art, and raising awareness of invisible issues. Founded in 1992, Big hART is Australia's leading arts and social change organization, and has worked in over 50 communities in urban, rural, regional and remote Australia and won over 45 awards.

Teachers can register now to visit the virtual classroom of NEO-Learning, with free sessions with live educators throughout Term 2 **HERE**. To find out more about NEO-Learning go to: <https://www.neolearningeducation.com>



All Media Enquiries to Bettina Richter, Big hART Media and Communications Manager
E: bettina@bighart.org M: +61 (0)414 441 860
W: bighart.org

