



QLD: Troubled Qld indigenous school reopens

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The Djarragun indigenous college has reopened a far north Queensland campus that was closed last year during investigations of an alleged funding scam. Djarragun, once described by Aboriginal leader Noel Pearson as a "beacon of hope" for indigenous children, was investigated last year for allegedly claiming \$3 million in funding for students who did not exist.

Mr Pearson has since secured financial backing to clear the independent school's debts and overhauled the curriculum and is in the process of taking over the school through the Cape York Institute. Djarragun's Wangetti campus, north of Cairns, was reopened for the new school year on Monday, after being closed for six months.

Consulting principal Don Anderson said the school was keen to revive the positive results it had achieved in the past and leave the headline-grabbing controversies behind it. "Efforts have concentrated on education reform, which have produced an improved academic curriculum," he said. "Any child now has the opportunity to receive a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) and front-door entrance to university."

The school is still the subject of a police and federal government investigation, but charges are yet to be laid. Former principal Jean Illingworth, who was stood down in March, has denied any wrongdoing. A statement from the Cape York Institute said the organisation expected to officially take over the school "in the coming weeks".

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