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# TOPIC C1 – Making the Australian Apprenticeship system work for Indigenous Australians

Improving the participation of Indigenous Australians in Australian Apprentices is not something that will happen on its own. AACs, RTOs and other intermediaries need to be innovative and committed if they are to be successful in attracting and retaining Indigenous Australian Apprentices. This task presents challenges at every step in the Australian Apprenticeship process.

## Why should AACs and RTOs make the extra effort?

There is a great deal of information readily available about Australian Apprenticeships. For example, all AACs have a large amount of information, including detailed procedures, about the policies and processes that guide their everyday work.

**To find out more about general Australian Apprenticeships issues, you could:**

-  **Contact Industry Training Australia** ([www.aatinfo.com.au](http://www.aatinfo.com.au)), a DEST-funded organisation set up to provide information and support to AACs and RTOs. ITA produces the *Australian Apprenticeships Training update*, a fortnightly email to AACs and RTOs. Phone contact (03) 9326 5700.
-  **visit the website** [www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au](http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au)
-  **telephone 1800 639 629 to find out the location of the nearest Australian Apprenticeship Centre (AAC)**
-  **obtain brochures and other published material about Australian Apprenticeships.**

However, access to this kind of information does not guarantee an adequate level of participation and retention of Indigenous Australian Apprentices.

Indigenous Australians are disadvantaged by any common socio-economic measure. For example, life expectancy, health, education outcomes and incarceration rates for Indigenous Australians all indicate significant disadvantage. The unemployment rate for Indigenous Australians is estimated to be in excess of 20%, compared to the national average of less than 6%. However, the Indigenous rate would approach 50% if Community Development and Employment Project (CDEP) participants were counted as unemployed.

Education and employment are clearly an important part of the solution to all these inequalities. Participation and completion rates in vocational education and training have increased markedly since the inception of the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy* of 1989. However, Indigenous Australians still face unique challenges and barriers.

Their learning outcomes vary markedly with location. In urban regions, learners have access to a wide range of courses with both mainstream and Indigenous training providers. On completion of their programs, they also have more options for further training and employment than elsewhere. In regional and remote communities, learning outcomes are often limited by a shortage of work, reservations about moving away and the negative attitudes of the mainstream community towards employment of Indigenous workers. In remote areas, the learning outcomes are even poorer due to a lack of training providers, low functional English literacy and irregular attendance caused by the need to balance traditional contexts with mainstream program requirements.

Equality of opportunity for Indigenous people is unlikely to be achieved through seeking equality of treatment within the mainstream Australian Apprenticeship system. These problems are particularly apparent when applying mainstream funding and other administrative systems to Indigenous Australians living in regional and remote localities. To achieve fairer access for all Indigenous Australians you need to become proactive in creating situations in which they can compete successfully for the employment and training places available.

## Why should AACs and RTOs make the extra effort? (continued)

There is a widespread view that there is need for changing the approach to delivering Australian Apprenticeships for Indigenous Australians. Ideally, a community-based approach is required that recognises and build on factors such as:

- cultural sensitivities
- the circumstances that prevail in regional and remote locations
- the literacy, numeracy and life skills of Indigenous people
- the links required with other community developments, including CDEP
- non-attendance arising from mobility across communities
- seasonal conditions
- industrial relations issues
- the special needs of women, including their traditional family and community roles
- the community skills needs in training programs may take precedence over the packaging rules of accredited programs
- the notion that employment in communities may not be specifically tied to paid labour
- health issues, in particular hearing difficulties
- broken or irregular patterns of work.

If Indigenous Australians are to participate in the labour market more fully in the longer term, employers will require them to possess widely recognisable trade or other vocational education and training qualifications. If these longer-term goals are to be realised, AACs and RTOs and other intermediaries in the Australian Apprenticeship System will need to work together more effectively to break through some of the barriers mentioned above.

In this Resource Kit we provide you with information, advice and tools that will help position your organisation to make a difference in Australian Apprenticeship participation for this severely disadvantaged sector of the Australian community.

## What can AACs and RTOs do?

AACs and RTOs have a significant role in developing a better understanding of the Australian Apprenticeship system by potential Indigenous trainees, their parents and support networks. Crucial to this will be your ability to explain the system and make it work for them in their locality.

The flow chart *Pathways for Indigenous Australian Apprentices* on the following page will help you explain the particular pathway that may best suit your Indigenous clients. The chart may also be a useful tool for inducting new staff into your organisation. You may wish to amend/adapt the chart to suit your local context. For example, you may want to research the State/Territory initiatives and programs that will support your activities.

Your challenge is to make the information *accessible*. Most Indigenous job seekers and their families will struggle to understand the details of government policies and programs, particularly where they have low literacy and do not have English as a first language. Many jobseekers live in locations far removed from both Centrelink offices and Job Network members, AACs and RTOs. As a result, they may not understand how these services operate. They may also think that the services you offer are culturally inappropriate.



**See PART D Section 6 - Develop your own chart. The chart on page 3a is also available as a Word document in PART D Section D6. You can customise this document to suit your local needs.**

# How to use the *Pathways for Indigenous Australian Apprentices* flowchart

## 1 Growing the supply and demand of Australian Apprentices

How often do you hear: 'We would like to employ Indigenous trainees if only we could locate suitable, job ready candidates'? The fact is that there are plenty of potentially suitable candidates, but their level of disadvantage means that they are not usually competitive with non-Indigenous candidates. Their cultural background may also mean that they are reluctant to put themselves forward.

### You need to be proactive

You need to recognise that achieving improved Indigenous participation in Australian Apprenticeships will require a genuine commitment of energy and resources. AACs and RTOs can link with communities and employers to generate a supply of work ready Indigenous people rather than waiting for them to come to you.

### Identify local potential trainees

Start by identifying all the local sources of potential trainees. This means you will need to develop links with Indigenous communities, schools (check for VET in schools programs), CDEPs, Indigenous Employment Centres, Job Network staff and employers. You could also try to coordinate your visits to more remote communities with staff from these organisations.

### Word of mouth is important

Indigenous communities rely heavily on word of mouth for dissemination of information. Electronic or printed advertising has limited impact. Experience has shown that interacting with small groups of similar people at the early stages of contact is more productive than one-to-one involvement.

If you need to advertise, make sure you use Indigenous media such as Koori Mail, National Indigenous Times, Deadly Vibe and email networks to promote opportunities. Get involved with school activities and community events (eg. Crocfest, careers fairs, Rock Eisteddfod) to raise awareness of the Australian Apprenticeship system.



See PART C TOPIC C4 – Marketing Australian Apprenticeships to suit local needs.

### Work with employers

You will also need to work with employers to raise their awareness of Indigenous employment issues and how the cross-cultural challenges have been overcome elsewhere.



## 2 Assessing trainees' job readiness

Currently, staff of GTOs, Job Network members, CDEPs and IECs assess the entry-level skills of potential Australian Apprentices to maximise their chances of successful placement and retention in work.

Is there a role for AACs and RTOs in assessing trainee needs? Yes, by being proactive and forming partnerships with schools, employment agencies and employers you can raise awareness about the development and support needs of Indigenous Australians in your locality. IECs and CDEPs could be your potential partners. If they are able to help you with supply of potential Australian Apprentices, and you are able to assist with promoting interests of Indigenous jobseekers and providing pre-apprenticeship advice and training, there is potential for a 'win-win' outcome.

You should also consider linking with the coordinators of your local VET in Schools courses, particularly given the high take-up rates of Indigenous students in those courses. It may also be useful for AACs and RTOs to identify and liaise with their Local Community Partnership (LCP), which exists to serve the structured workplace learning of local high schools.

In assessing job readiness, you will need to be mindful that some Indigenous people may understate the personal and learning challenges that they face, or be unwilling to discuss their barriers to employment. As a result, they may be given inappropriate or adequate support from the outset.

## 3 Achieving the transition to work

Preparing Indigenous people for their encounter with the Australian Apprenticeship system is a key factor in their successful participation in the workforce at this level. Depending on their level of education, work experience and degree of social/cultural disadvantage, Indigenous Australians will require varying levels of pre-employment and/or pre-vocational training and/or advice to enable them to successfully make the transition to work via the Australian Apprenticeship system.

This transition works well when the progress of individuals is tracked. In some jurisdictions, a coordinator tracks every young Indigenous student in the local high schools through years 9 to 12 to ensure a post-school outcome in further education or employment. The coordinator works with all stakeholders (Indigenous community, parents, teachers, support agencies) to enable the young people to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

AACs and RTOs can access a variety of assistance through Government agencies, Job Network Providers, Indigenous Employment Centres and similar organisations to support this transition.

It is vital that you have a working knowledge of both Commonwealth programs and initiatives that are available in your state or territory. Some examples are listed below:

### Australian Apprenticeships Access Program (AAAP)

AAAP provides eligible job seekers with formal training, tailored support and assistance, job search, support and placement into either a Australian Apprenticeship, employment or further education or training. Job seekers who participate in AAAP cannot participate in other programs concurrently, with the exception of the Jobs Pathway Program and the Community Development and Employment program.



[www.AAAP.dest.gov.au](http://www.AAAP.dest.gov.au)

### Vocational learning and VET in Schools

Under the National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty First Century, students have access to VET in Schools programs in the post-compulsory years. The options include:

- VET in Schools – vocational learning undertaken as part of a senior secondary certificate and leading to credit towards a recognised VET qualification
- School-based Australian Apprenticeships – provide the opportunity to gain a VET qualification and undertake employment while also undertaking a senior secondary certificate. Under these arrangements, the student is both a full-time student and part-time employee.



[www.dest.gov.au/schools/vocationaleducation/programmes](http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/vocationaleducation/programmes)

## **Group Training Australian Apprenticeships Targeted Incentives Program**

The Group Training Australian Apprenticeships Targeted Initiatives Program is a Commonwealth strategy aimed at strengthening the capacity of the Group Training sector to generate Australian Apprenticeships. The program supports growth in Australian Apprenticeships not funded through mainstream Joint Policy funding arrangements. It is focused on markets considered to be critical, challenging or under-served in areas of national, state or regional importance and attempts to establish an ongoing demand for Australian Apprenticeships in those markets.



[www.gtalt.com.au](http://www.gtalt.com.au)

## **Job Placement, Employment and Training Program (JPET)**

The Job Placement, Employment and Training (JPET) Program assists young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness or facing similar severe problems. It assists in ways which not only help them with their income and personal support needs, but which also ensures they secure career paths and sustainable futures. JPET targets young people aged 15-21 years. Priority is given to 15 to 18 year olds. A AAAP participant cannot participate in JPET concurrently as AAAP services may overlap with JPET services.



[www.dewr.gov.au](http://www.dewr.gov.au)

## **Youth Pathways**

Youth Pathways helps young people get through school and make the transition from school to further education, training or work. Each participant receives an assessment that determines their individual needs, followed by personalised assistance which may include: personal development; support to remain in or return to school; transition planning; referral to vocational education and training programmes and providers of other support services; as well as ongoing support throughout the service period.



[www.youthpathways.dest.gov.au](http://www.youthpathways.dest.gov.au)

## **Jobs Education and Training (JET)**

The Jobs Education and Training (JET) Program aims to improve the financial circumstances of Parenting Payment recipients and some other customer groups by helping them to enter or re-enter the workforce. Emphasis is placed on improving long-term labour market competitiveness and career development through education and training. Job seekers eligible to participate in AAAP and the JET Program may not do so concurrently.



[www.facs.gov.au](http://www.facs.gov.au)

## Personal Support Program (PSP)

The Personal Support Program commenced on 1 July 2002 and replaces and expands the Community Support Program.

PSP will assist people on income support who have multiple non-vocational problems making it difficult for them to work or benefit from assistance to find employment. These obstacles may include homelessness, drug and alcohol problems, psychological conditions and domestic violence.



[www.workplace.gov.au/psp/](http://www.workplace.gov.au/psp/)

## Community Development Employment Program (CDEP)

The CDEP provides work for unemployed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in community managed activities which assist individuals in acquiring skills which benefit the community, develop business enterprises and/or lead to unsubsidised employment.

Participants receiving assistance under CDEP are eligible for assistance under AAAP if registered with Centrelink and can only be referred to AAAP if they have not been already referred to Intensive Assistance (IA).



[www.indigenous.gov.au](http://www.indigenous.gov.au) (search for 'CDEP')



## Abstudy

The Indigenous Study Assistance Scheme can assist Indigenous students with:

Living expenses	Accommodation expenses (rent, boarding fees, residential costs);
Education expenses	School fees, books and equipment, incidentals, thesis costs,
Fares	To travel to study each term/semester if they need to study away from home and prescription medicines.



[www.dest.gov.au/schools/indigenous/abstudy.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/indigenous/abstudy.htm)

## Wage Assistance

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) provides a wage subsidy over 26 weeks for an ongoing full-time job, or a proportionate amount for ongoing part-time work (of a minimum of 20 hrs per week).



[www.dewr.gov.au](http://www.dewr.gov.au) (search for 'wage assistance')

## Structured Training and Employment Projects (STEP)

DEWR provides funding per participant that is flexible and could include:

- support to develop an Indigenous Employment Strategy
- pre-employment and formal training that helps job seekers' transition to identified jobs
- wage assistance delivery and development of cross-cultural awareness training packages for other staff
- mentoring and career development training
- marketing and other initiatives to facilitate the supply of suitable job seekers.



[www.workplace.gov.au](http://www.workplace.gov.au) (search for 'STEP' or look under the 'Indigenous Programmes' tab)

## Job Network Services

Job Network is a national network of around 200 private, community and government organisations contracted by DEWR to provide support services to unemployed people, particularly the long-term unemployed. AAAP participants placed into a payable outcome by a Job Network provider delivering Job Search Training and Intensive Assistance (IA) cannot be claimed as a payable outcome for the Job Network provider.



[www.workplace.gov.au](http://www.workplace.gov.au) (look under 'job network' tab)

## Indigenous Education Centres (IECs)

IECs have been established to help their CDEP participants take up ongoing employment outside of CDEP. IECs are not in competition with Job Network. By participating in the IEC, many participants are now starting to see the benefits of receiving assistance from Job Network. A key role of IECs is to help facilitate access to Job Network in order to increase the assistance available to IEC participants. IEC participants can be in Job Network at the same time as being in an IEC.



[www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/ESDisplay](http://www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/ESDisplay)

## State and Territory initiatives

There is also a range of State and Territory initiatives that are designed to support the transition of Indigenous people to work.



**Look at the following websites to obtain up-to-date State/Territory information that is relevant to your location:**

ACT	Department of Education and Training	<a href="http://www.decs.act.gov.au">www.decs.act.gov.au</a>
QLD	Department of Employment and Training	<a href="http://www.trainandemploy.qld.gov.au">www.trainandemploy.qld.gov.au</a>
NSW	Department of Education and Training	<a href="http://www.det.nsw.edu.gov.au">www.det.nsw.edu.gov.au</a>
NT	Department of Employment, Education and Training	<a href="http://www.deet.nt.gov.au">www.deet.nt.gov.au</a>
SA	Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology	<a href="http://www.dfeest.sa.gov.au">www.dfeest.sa.gov.au</a>
TAS	Department of Education	<a href="http://www.opcet.tas.gov.au">www.opcet.tas.gov.au</a>
VIC	Department of Education and Training	<a href="http://www.det.vic.gov.au">www.det.vic.gov.au</a>
WA	Department of Education and Training	<a href="http://www.det.wa.gov.au">www.det.wa.gov.au</a>

## 4 Collaborating to recruit Indigenous Australian Apprentices

Employer confidence in engaging Indigenous Australian Apprentices will be enhanced where they can demonstrate they are job ready and of immediate use in the workplace. This means that it is vital that Indigenous Australian Apprentices are placed in jobs that they are interested in, for which they have some aptitude, and where they are more likely to fit into the particular workplace culture.

Of equal importance is that there are acceptance and support within the community for Indigenous young people entering employment and training positions. Therefore, you may need to ensure that the role is explained to parents and other influential community people.

You may also need to consider the impact of previous experiences of job search and pre-vocational programs on potential apprentices. They may be reluctant to undertake the same activity again and express legitimate scepticism that anything better will result this time around.

One selling point may be that the Australian Apprenticeship system, unlike CDEP, will lead to a nationally recognised qualification that is portable in the labour market. It also provides them with structured and supported work experience, which should they choose to, can enable them to return to their communities to share the knowledge and skills they have gained.

## 5 Helping the employer to support Indigenous Australian Apprentices

You can't assume that, once an Indigenous trainee is placed, the hard work has been completed. The fact is that most Indigenous Australian Apprentices do not complete their training. Both the employer and Australian Apprentice may require support in adjusting to the cross-cultural issues that will threaten the continuation of the training. It may also be important to ensure that the employer is fully informed of the range of financial and other support that is available. As well, care in the selection of an RTO that has an understanding of the needs of Indigenous learners may be important to achieving a successful outcome.

## 6 Retaining Indigenous Australian Apprentices

One of the best ways of helping Australian Apprentices to complete their program is through assisting them to identify and overcome potential barriers as they arise. Mentoring by staff experienced in working with Indigenous trainees, community role models and trainers significantly improves outcomes for Indigenous Australian Apprentices. The challenges they face are often related to the need for Indigenous Australians to learn and work in unfamiliar cultural settings. For example, a mentor may be able to work with the trainee and employer to balance cultural and workplace needs. The following scenarios illustrate common issues that may need to be discussed:

- A trainee from a remote community and working in the city may be required to return to the community for three months due to a death in the family. The trainee knows that their employer cannot hold the job for that time frame and that they are only entitled to three days leave.
- A trainee is concerned that they will lose their job because the 'family' turns up each Thursday payday waiting to collect the trainee's pay.
- A trainee is having trouble settling into the workplace. They are trying hard and react to situations with what they see as appropriate behaviour. However, they have noticed that other staff seem to react differently in these situations.
- A trainee who is seen as shy has received feedback from their supervisor that in order to fit in, they need to speak up more and have eye contact with people when they speak to them.

### What to do next?

Look at the six key strategies in the flow chart (on page 3a) for enhancing participation and retention of Indigenous Australian Apprentices and use the questions for each to get started.

1. **Growing the supply and demand of Australian Apprentices**  
Have you identified all potential sources of Indigenous trainees in your locality?  
Are you aware of cultural factors that may inhibit Indigenous people putting themselves forward?  
Is your marketing working?
2. **Assessing a trainee's job readiness**  
Is there a role for your organisation in assessing, or helping others to assess, a trainee's job readiness?  
Are any literacy and numeracy barriers identified and is there a strategy for addressing them early?
3. **Achieving the transition to work**  
Do you know of all the available support programs and whether your clients are eligible?
4. **Collaborating to recruit Indigenous Australian Apprentices**  
Can you develop new partnerships to increase the number of job ready trainees?
5. **Helping the employer to support Indigenous Australian Apprentices**  
Can you provide, or arrange for, additional support for employers while Australian Apprentices adjust to the culture of work?
6. **Retaining Indigenous Australian Apprentices**  
Can you provide or arrange for mentoring, tutoring and additional support to keep Australian Apprentices in their jobs?  
Are you aware of RTOs that have a track record of successful training of Indigenous Australian Apprentices?

If you are not sure where to start, look at the Case Studies to see how other organisations are succeeding.



**Each Topic has Case Studies related to different aspects of building your organisation's capacities to engage in Indigenous Australian Apprenticeships.**

# CASE STUDIES

## City of Latrobe

The City of Latrobe commenced a project in July 2003 to place Indigenous people into Australian Apprenticeships both within the council and with other local employers. With financial support from STEP, the target was to commence 40 Australian Apprenticeships over a three-year period.

Initial results from the program are very encouraging, with 49 placements in the first year. Retention levels have been high and participant feedback very positive.

Some of the key ingredients of success were:

- Pre-employment training – it was felt that this initial support was essential to:
  - boost confidence and self esteem of the participants
  - support the recruitment process by identifying participants who were interested and committed
  - provide awareness and understanding of the mainstream workplace culture and environment
  - provide basic work readiness skills to enable them to 'hit the ground running'
- cross-cultural training – provided for both council staff and other local employers
- appointment of an Indigenous facilitator with 'single minded determination' to make the program work.

According to the author of the project's report: 'In order to drive a program such as this, the facilitator needs to be:

- very passionate about the project, and driven to succeed
- able to understand regional issues
- very determined, diligent and reliable
- very direct
- very selective – this accounts for the high retention rate
- able to organise effective pre-employment training to (a) up-skill the participants and (b) test out the participants to see which ones are worthy of employment
- in possession of excellent contact and sales skills
- intuitive – know when to apply pressure, and when not to
- able to operate as the link between companies and the community
- able to work effectively with both the public and private sectors
- impartial, having no bias or allegiance to any particular Indigenous family, and therefore be able to communicate effectively with any family
- firm with the Australian Apprentices, and not tolerate inappropriate behaviour
- well informed about the pathways and the incentives that are available to each applicant, and how to put together an appropriate financial package involving stakeholders who can provide relevant training and support
- able to take the load off employers by doing the fine-tuning (financials, contract, etc); if left to the employers, time is often an issue, and lack of follow-up means that Australian Apprentices are not taken on.'

[SOURCE: Anna Hagan (2004), *SkillsPlus Indigenous Project Report*, unpublished report commissioned by DEST]



Contact: [Latrobe@latrobe.vic.gov.au](mailto:Latrobe@latrobe.vic.gov.au)

## CASE STUDIES

### School-based Australian Apprenticeships – The WA model

There are many examples of school-based Australian Apprenticeships throughout Australia and most include support measures to engage young Indigenous learners in vocational pathways. One of the most innovative is the Certificate I in Work Readiness, first offered to Indigenous students in 2003. Unlike most school-based models, the Australian Apprenticeship is offered in year 10, prior to the traditional schooling exit point for many Indigenous students.

The Western Australian (WA) model includes 180 hours in school-based training and 120 hours of paid work experience. The Certificate includes ten units mainly from the Business Services Training Package. There is capacity within the program to include components specified by Indigenous communities in order to develop multi-skilled young people to address skills needs within their community. For example, one RTO meets with employers, parents and Indigenous community leaders in culturally appropriate settings to design and monitor the training. The program links with the more traditional Certificate II school-based VET course offered to Year 11 students. The employer role is performed by GTOs with funding from Structured Training and Employment Projects (STEP).

Initial results have been outstanding in achieving school retention into Year 11. Of the approximately 390 places offered in 2003, nearly three quarters completed the Certificate and/or returned to Year 11. The WA model provides an avenue to engage Year 10 students in practical and interesting activities while providing a modest income from their off-job work experience to supplement parental support. Note that it is not possible to engage students prior to Year 10 as the industrial arrangements require that the students have attained an age of 14 years and nine months.



[www.det.wa.gov.au](http://www.det.wa.gov.au)

### Northern Territory AAC – Community Contact Officers

The NT AAC employs local people on Indigenous communities as Community Contact Officers (CCOs) to support the organisation's regular field activities. The initiative reflects a belief that the Australian Apprenticeship system is confusing to communities and would benefit from the presence of an informed resident who can:

- support the AAC between regular field visits
- explain how the system works in local language and in the local setting.

In the words of the AAC's information brochure, the 'full list of jobs is to:

- visit all of the Australian Apprentices working in the community before each visit by the field officer to let them know that the field officer is coming and why, and to try and make sure they are available
- act as an interpreter when the field officer visits to explain about the visit and Australian Apprenticeships to Australian Apprentices, employers, and any other group that wants or needs information or advice
- contact the Australian Apprenticeship Centre if they are told about a problem that is happening.'

The CCOs are employed directly by the AAC on an hourly basis, or by the local community council, including an administration fee. The CCOs are required to 'be reliable, and have the respect of the local community. They need to speak and understand English and have a good command of local languages.'

## Cairns Region Group Training – The tyranny of distance

Cairns Region Group Training (CRGT) services an area of some 300,000 square kilometres in Far North Queensland. The company currently employs approximately 222 Indigenous apprentices and trainees, comprising 22% of its total employment level of 1,000. Their success in providing training opportunities in many remote areas of far north Queensland can be attributed to adopting best practice approaches in terms of:

- **organisation structure:** the company incorporates a Cape York and Torres Strait Island Division, managed by an Indigenous person, employing five field officers and three support staff. They have a field staff presence permanently on the ground in both Bamaga and Weipa.
- **training delivery:** formal training is now conducted within the communities with trainers being flown into remote locations (as opposed to sending apprentices away on block release).
- **partnerships:** CRGT is an integral part of the Cape York Partnerships team, and through its Indigenous division works closely with many community councils on Cape York. For example, CRGT has a close working relationship with Comalco's Weipa bauxite mine. As part of managing the company's apprentices, CRGT maintains an Indigenous field officer at Weipa to support the Indigenous apprentices and liaise with local community people.



[www.crgt.com.au](http://www.crgt.com.au)



See Reference List at end of TOPIC C1

## Quinn Santo – A focus on delivery

Quinn Santo is a private training company based in South Australia that provides literacy and numeracy courses to Indigenous communities, principally through the Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) program. They have relationships with 33 communities in SA and 20 in WA. They believe that the 'content' of literacy and numeracy is not the issue; more important is the 'delivery' – how to get the content to the right people in the right way.

Their secret is to:

- go to their place
- use their culture
- involve local decision makers in the communities in genuine consultation in the design of courses.

Quinn Santo's delivery relies heavily on practical, straightforward, life-based tools and methods. The challenge is to respond to individual needs in a community sensitive way. In this way, Quinn Santo is able to provide programs that address both the individual and communal need. In implementing that process, over 200 real jobs were acquired for Indigenous people in WA for the year 2003/2004.



**Contact: Roger Welch**

**Email:** [r.welsh@smartchat.net.au](mailto:r.welsh@smartchat.net.au)

**Tel:** (08) 8211 6952

**Fax:** (08) 8410 3090

# CASE STUDY

## Murrin Bridge

Members of the Indigenous community in the Murrin Bridge/Lake Cargelligo area of NSW have used the Australian Apprenticeship system as a springboard to ongoing commercial work in the building and construction industry.

Over the last four years a group of 12 Indigenous males (aged 17-39) have undertaken a Certificate III in Construction (Carpentry and Joinery). This program was delivered by TAFE NSW – Riverina Institute, Lake Cargelligo Campus. At the completion of the program they formed a construction company – called Kalinga – and are competing successfully for construction contracts (mainstream and Indigenous).

In addition, a group of nine Indigenous women are in their second year of a Certificate III in Construction (Painting and Decorating) and have completed a number of high profile restoration projects within the Lake Cargelligo township.

The establishment of the building and construction program stems from research by Lake Cargelligo Campus into the local/regional Indigenous housing infrastructure. It revealed that the two local Land Councils (Murrin Bridge and Cargellegong) have control over all the Indigenous housing construction and maintenance work to these properties in Lake Cargelligo and surrounding towns/villages with a total value of \$4.2 million. The research also revealed the difficulty the Land Councils faced when attempting to engage the services of tradespeople to construct new dwellings and to maintain existing real estate. It is now hoped that 'Kalinga' Building Construction and Maintenance Aboriginal Corporation will fill that void.

The Murrin Bridge community is well known for the commercial production of Murrin Bridge wines. The Murrin Bridge Vinyard Aboriginal Corporation provides long term employment and training for community members, as well as funding for other community projects and enterprises.

[SOURCE: Bernard Tierney, Email: Bernard.Tierney@tafensw.edu.au]

# REFERENCES

## Further Reading

There is a vast amount of information available to help you to build your capability to support Indigenous Australians. Some useful references have been provided elsewhere in this Kit to inform particular issues. We have selected some additional references to help you become better informed about:

- what governments are doing to enhance Indigenous services
- how other community organisations are responding to the challenge
- current research issues.

The references are as follows:

- Amanda Vanstone (2004), *Address to the Australian Government Executive Forum (SA)*, Friday 20 February 2004. Minister for Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
  - focuses on the COAG trials – governments and Indigenous people learning new ways of working together (called 'Shared Responsibility')
  - seeks to engender a new culture in government agencies – in which the first response to new ideas is 'let's look at how it could be done' rather than 'no, it doesn't meet the program guidelines'.
- Indigenous Communities Co-ordination Taskforce (2003), *Towards Better Outcomes for Indigenous Australians*, August 2003.
  - this publication and associated website outlines plans and initiatives associated with the COAG approach of 'Shared Responsibility Shared Future' to address Indigenous disadvantage



Available from [www.icc.gov.au](http://www.icc.gov.au)

- NCVET and Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council (2003), *Indigenous Australians in vocational education and training*: National research study for 2003-2006
  - through a consultation process NCVET has developed a research strategy linked to the four objectives of 'Partners in a Learning Culture'
  - research projects identified for 2003-2006 will provide the basis for AITAC to advise on strategies to improve Indigenous participation, attainment and outcomes in VET
  - problems identified were:
    - forms and duration of funding
    - competitive and commercial practices of some RTOs
    - types of provision available
    - amount and quality of student support
    - 'recycling' Indigenous clients through a number of lower-level courses.



Download from [www.ncvet.edu.au](http://www.ncvet.edu.au)

## REFERENCES (continued)

- Productivity Commission Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (2003), *Overcoming Indigenous disadvantage: Key indicators 2003*.
  - outlines major outcomes of Productivity Commission report on Indigenous disadvantage
  - makes some personal observations, such as:
    - the processes in most government agencies are not conducive to effective consultation with Indigenous people
    - the most effective measures are usually the result of 'serious listening'
    - equality of opportunity for Indigenous Australians is unlikely to be achieved merely through equality of treatment
    - governments are generally not well structured to deal with issues that transcend individual portfolio responsibilities. It is therefore essential that we learn from and build on the national COAG trials.



Download from [www.pc.gov.au](http://www.pc.gov.au)

- ANTA (2004), *Making the connections: 48 ways to progress equity in the national vocational education and training system*, report by Suzy McKenna under the Reframing the Future initiative:
  - provides insights into how VET practitioners and organisations are responding to a key challenge to improve opportunities for two equity groups (people with a disability and Indigenous Australians) to achieve access and successful outcomes from VET
  - 48 case studies presented. This Resources Kit has incorporated four case studies into this report:
    - Abmusic Aboriginal Corporation (WA)
    - University of Ballarat (TAFE Division)
    - TAFE NSW (Hunter Institute WA Branch)
    - Cooloola Sunshine Institute of TAFE (Queensland)



Download from the website of Group Training Australia, the national association for the group training network, at [www.grouptraining.com.au](http://www.grouptraining.com.au) (search under <About Group Training> <National Projects> then <Indigenous Australians>)

- ANTA (2002), *Partners in a Learning Culture: A best practice guide for employing Indigenous Australians through group training arrangements*, a joint initiative of ANTA, GTA Ltd and the Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council, July 2002:
  - documents creative and interesting approaches by GTOs based on interviews with 124 people in 18 GTOs
  - the report is designed to stimulate and inspire other GTOs to lead to further positive developments in the field.

## REFERENCES (continued)

- NCVER (2004), *Improving Indigenous completion rates in mainstream TAFE: An action research approach*
  - a study of four TAFE institutes in Queensland
  - context was that the successful completion rates of Indigenous students is lower nationally when compared with the overall population of students
  - relegating Indigenous education issues to Indigenous education units means that mainstream TAFE facilities are unprepared for increased number of Indigenous students in mainstream programs, leading to:
    - compartmentalisation of operations
    - poor coordination of cross-institutional processes
    - lack of opportunity in mainstream programs to develop Indigenous culture and sociological expertise
    - focus of funding on enrolments, rather than on completions
    - no inbuilt incentive to provide student support
    - need to integrate language, literacy and numeracy training with vocational teaching.



Download from [www.ncver.edu.au](http://www.ncver.edu.au) (search publications under 'Indigenous')