

Leading by example

Self-determination of Indigenous people

How do we work together to provide improved opportunities for Indigenous employment across Australia?

When we ask ourselves this question we must first consider the need to do things with Aboriginal people not to or for Aboriginal people.

Words such as "ownership" and "empowerment" will only resonate truly if they are backed by policy that is inclusive of Indigenous Australians from the outset.¹

- 4.1 Evidence received by the Committee indicates that successful policy initiatives must engage Indigenous people and their communities. Programs accepted or understood by the communities are more likely to succeed.
- 4.2 The involvement of respected Elders and Aboriginal community members is the key to success.² The Umoona Aged Care Aboriginal Corporation runs the aged care program within a residential care facility at Coober Pedy in South Australia. The organisation is managed by a board comprising Aboriginal Elders who set values

1 Paper by Anthony Kelly, AFL Northern Territory, *Exhibit 107*, p. 1.

2 Jason Solomon, *Submission No. 116*, p. 1.

and priorities and make decisions about the service and this is one of the reasons for the program's success.³

- 4.3 The Yamatji Marlpa Barna Baba Maaja Aboriginal Corporation in Western Australia expressed support for the working group model utilised in the negotiation of shared responsibility agreements and regional partnership agreements. They stated, 'Working groups have the potential to take a leadership role in strategic planning for their communities and the success of this model means that governments do not have to re-invent the wheel when it comes to engaging with Aboriginal communities.'⁴
- 4.4 As well as engaging Aboriginal people, it is important that employment and training programs are delivered in ways that permit them to eventually become providers of these programs in their own communities.⁵ In this way, these initiatives deliver not only the employment and training they are intended to provide, but also opportunities for the development of leadership skills within Indigenous communities. This is important in combating a lack of expectation and aspiration among Indigenous community members to roles of community leadership that have in some cases been produced by a history of non-Indigenous management of assets.⁶

Role models

- 4.5 A number of submissions noted the important function that role models play in Aboriginal communities.⁷ The New South Wales Government noted that the current generation of professional Aboriginal people are likely to be one of the first members of their family to have earned a degree or other qualification, and it is important that they are recognised as role models.⁸

3 Umoona Aged Care Aboriginal Corporation, *Submission No. 31*, p. 2.

4 Yamatji Marlpa Barna Baba Maaja Aboriginal Corporation, *Submission No. 98*, p. 3.

5 South Australian Government, *Submission No. 110*, p. 8.

6 Ms Kate Flamsteed and Mr Barry Golding, *Learning through Indigenous business: the role of vocational education and training in Indigenous enterprise and community development*, Australian Government, Canberra, 2005, p. 31.

7 For example see Ms Lesley Podesta, First Assistant Secretary, Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, *Transcript of Evidence*, 6 February 2006, p. 17; Aboriginal Education Council (NSW) Inc, *Submission No. 38*, p. 2.

8 New South Wales Government, *Submission No. 111*, p. 30.

It is like a speedboat: they are pulling the skiers through, who are their brothers, their sisters or their cousins. They are the real role models for the new kids coming through. That is why we are doing it.⁹

4.6 Role models can be a means of providing inspiration to Indigenous youth by providing them with an example as to how they can succeed and what they can aspire to.¹⁰ Indigenous people who have succeeded in gaining employment as rangers and who participate in community land management programs are perceived as important role models in their communities, and provide an understanding of how the progression from school into these jobs occurs.¹¹

4.7 The importance of having successful Indigenous role models in communities was also discussed by Mrs Priscilla Collins, Chief Executive Officer of the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association:

When young kids in town see an Aboriginal person working, even if it is in a bank, they will say, 'I can do that if Aboriginal people can do those sorts of things.' When I was young, I saw Sally Axton working at a bank and I thought, 'This is the first time I've seen an Aboriginal person working in a bank.' For me, that was a huge thing.¹²

4.8 When young people see a local Aboriginal person working they say that if they can do it, I can do it too.¹³

4.9 Young people can be role models for others in the community. Through their participation in activities such as the Rumbalara Football and Netball Inc, young people have been able to be in a public environment and to share and show their culture and put their identity in a public place.¹⁴

9 Mr Bruce McQualter, Regional Manager, NSW North West, ANZ Regional and Rural Banking, Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 February 2006, p. 3.

10 Mayor Fran Kilgarriff, Alice Springs Town Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, pp. 18-19.

11 Ms Tina Bain, Central Land Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, p. 53; Mr David Alexander, Central Land Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, p. 58.

12 Mrs Priscilla Collins, Chief Executive Officer, Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 July 2005, p. 9.

13 Mrs Priscilla Collins, Chief Executive Officer, Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 July 2005, pp. 9-10.

14 Mr Paul Briggs, President, Rumbalara Football and Netball Inc, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 10.

We need young Aboriginal kids on the shop floor and in the tea rooms sharing the experience in a healthy way, so it is not just about having a job and then gritting your teeth, bearing down and putting up with all the crap that goes on around racist attitudes, so that you can sustain a job.¹⁵

- 4.10 Mr Vincent Forrester made the point that nothing gives young people more pride than earning an award wage.¹⁶ In remote areas, apprentices have become role models and have been a source of community pride which is important in increasing participation in education.¹⁷ One of the attractions of the community ranger programs is the uniform and the badge and the role models that others can aspire to.¹⁸

We used Alice Springs people. Once we got one person in there, and the others saw him in his garb and his big steel capped boots, that impressed them. They thought, 'We want a job too.' You would be surprised how many people have come and said, 'We want a job there' – especially with the colossal pay they get to go home with.¹⁹

- 4.11 People returning to the local area provide role models for others and this can assist in bringing the community up to speed.²⁰ The minerals industry also draws people from urban areas:

The other point is that people are often drawn to urban areas because they see no employment opportunities in the communities in which they live ... As an employer in rural and regional Australia, we see direct benefit to being able to attract some of those people who have moved to urban Australia from those regions back into the communities,

15 Mr Paul Briggs, President, Rumbalara Football and Netball Inc, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 10.

16 Mr Vincent Forrester, Guide, Alice Springs Desert Park, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, p. 67.

17 Mr William Tilmouth, Executive Director, Tangentyere Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, p. 28; Tangentyere Council, *Supplementary Submission No. 69a*, p. 3.

18 Mr David Alexander, Manager, Land Management, Central Land Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, p. 58.

19 Ms Marilyn Smith, Manager, Footprints Forward, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 July 2005, p. 25.

20 Mr David Ross, Project Manager, Northern Land Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 44.

where they can be more attached to their families and society.²¹

- 4.12 The Committee received evidence that very little is taught about Indigenous people or culture generally in schools and universities.²² The Committee was told that the wider public needs to be educated about successful Indigenous people to ensure that they are utilised as role models for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.²³
- 4.13 The Committee recognises the importance of highlighting success stories and the difference that positive role models can have on the lives on young Indigenous people. Initiatives such as Crocfest have an important role to play in encouraging awareness and cultural pride in Aboriginal young people.²⁴ However, seeking to enhance visibility must be balanced with the cultural and personal preferences of Indigenous individuals.²⁵
- 4.14 Corrugation Road is performing this important function through their television program *Beyond their Limits*. This is the longest running television program produced in the history of Imparja television and features interviews with young and old Indigenous people, role models such as sports men and women with public profiles, who have overcome barriers and limitations in order to succeed. Issues such as drugs and alcohol, family and community are important themes of the shows.²⁶ Mr Paul Deeming, CEO of Corrugation Road summed up their philosophy:

We are all about good stories, positive stories, and developing wellbeing and self-esteem and pride in the communities.²⁷

People in the community need to know the good things that are happening.²⁸

21 Ms Melanie Stutsel, Director, Environmental and Social Policy, Minerals Council of Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 February 2006, p. 17.

22 Dr Christina Cregan, *Submission No. 11*, p. 1.

23 Dr Dennis Foley, *Transcript of Evidence*, 23 May 2005, p. 10.

24 See <http://www.crocfestivals.org.au/>.

25 Ms Joy Wii, Community Planning and Development Officer, Cairns City Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 July 2005, p. 20.

26 Mr Paul Deeming, *Exhibit No. 20*.

27 Mr Paul Deeming, Chief Executive Officer, Corrugation Road, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 62.

28 Mr Paul Deeming, Chief Executive Officer, Corrugation Road, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 69.

Importance of sport

There are two key things that encourage people to be part of community: one is sport ... The second one is employment. If you are employed you are part of a community.²⁹

- 4.15 Role models in sport are important because boys see they can succeed.³⁰ Sport can be an important vehicle for getting Indigenous youth involved in the community and building self-confidence.³¹

...engaging kids in football had a big impact on their behaviour and conduct during the day and how they felt about themselves.³²

- 4.16 Sporting role models are held in very high regard, particularly by Aboriginal youth.³³ Mr William Muir, Vice President of the Aboriginal Education Council in New South Wales, told the Committee:

... each year I visit all of our secondary scholarship holders throughout the state. One of the questions I asked the students this time was to name an Indigenous person who has succeeded, who has achieved. Over 90 per cent of the responses from these students at secondary school level were sporting heroes.³⁴

- 4.17 Sporting role models are used to good effect by the Clontarf Foundation, which runs football academies geared towards retaining young Indigenous men to Grade 12 and then placing them in employment. Role models are an important part of the success of the program, which has significantly increased the number of young Indigenous men staying at school in areas where the program operates. A high profile sporting person is usually affiliated with the program, to attract students in the first place. Staff from the program provide positive models for the way that adults interact – men with

29 Mr John Corboy, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 3.

30 Mayor Fran Kilgariff, Alice Springs Town Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, p. 19.

31 Mr Craig Brierty, Project Manager, Clontarf Foundation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, pp. 72-3.

32 Mr Craig Brierty, Project Manager, Clontarf Foundation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 80.

33 Mayor Fran Kilgariff, Alice Springs Town Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, p. 19. See also Mr William Muir, Vice President, Aboriginal Education Council (New South Wales) Inc, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2005, p. 18.

34 Mr William Muir, Vice President, Aboriginal Education Council NSW, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2005, p. 18.

men, men with women, and women with women. Participants in the program run coaching clinics with younger Indigenous students and, once they complete Grade 12, join an alumnus and return to attend employment forums to attract other Indigenous boys into jobs.³⁵

4.18 In other words, the work being done by the Clontarf Foundation, has:

... used the boys' love of football and the respect of anyone in it to get their attention and to progressively build through that and leverage self-esteem.³⁶

4.19 As well as building self-esteem, the Clontarf Foundation has found that these programs can be used strategically to enhance opportunities.

Where it has been most effective is where we have been able to set up partnerships with TAFE and with the school. We have been able to encourage the school and TAFE to come up with programs that link into the footy. They will do TAFE units in sports and recreation and that will involve coaching clinics and doing coaching accreditation and umpiring accreditation so there is that link into footy. That is a really strong one.³⁷

Self-esteem

*As you build self-esteem, you build pride. Aboriginal people just want to be respected; they just want to be respected. And, as we build that respect, you will get peer pressure rolling onto the back end of the community.*³⁸

4.20 Employment is an important source of self-esteem for Indigenous individuals and communities. The importance of role models in building self-esteem has significance for the growth of Indigenous businesses. A lack of self-esteem can inhibit aspiring Indigenous

35 Mr Craig Brierty, Project Manager, Clontarf Foundation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, pp. 70, 73, 83.

36 Mr Wayne Gibbons, Associate Secretary, Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 May 2005, p. 4.

37 Mr Craig Brierty, Project Manager, Clontarf Foundation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, pp. 77-78.

38 Mr Richard Estens, Aboriginal Employment Strategy, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 November 2003, *Inquiry into Capacity Building in Indigenous communities*, House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, pp. 1388-1389.

entrepreneurs following through on their ideas.³⁹ Therefore many Indigenous Australians with poor employment outcomes are missing a crucial component for building confidence and self-esteem.

- 4.21 Mr Paul Briggs of the Rumbalara Football and Netball Club, expressed the view that respect and being valued is often missing from the equation:

Aspiring young Aboriginal kids in Shepparton do not feel respected or valued, and those are generational issues. They do not feel valued or respected in the educational sector, out on the streets or in the employment sector. They are very much fringe dwellers when it comes to social and economic participation.⁴⁰

- 4.22 Mission Australia has found when dealing with clients that 'unless you feel vaguely good about yourself, you will not get out of bed for anything'.⁴¹ This is an issue that needs to be addressed. Indigenous people need help to gain the confidence and self-esteem to see that they do have options.⁴² Mr Brierty supports the view that self esteem and feeling good about yourself leads to respect for others but self respect comes first.⁴³

Valuing people and culture

- 4.23 Evidence to the Committee clearly reflects the need for Indigenous people to feel valued if they are to pursue opportunities and achieve positive employment outcomes.⁴⁴ The Committee notes that an important part of positive self-esteem for Indigenous people is having their culture recognised and valued. There is also the importance and economic value of traditional and ceremonial leadership in communities that need to be considered.⁴⁵

39 Ms Kate Flamsteed and Mr Barry Golding, *Learning through Indigenous business: the role of vocational education and training in Indigenous enterprise and community development*, Australian Government, Canberra, 2005, p. 41.

40 Mr Paul Briggs, President, Rumbalara Football and Netball Club Inc., *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 10.

41 Ms Anne Hampshire, National Manager, Research and Social Policy, Mission Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2005, pp. 64-65.

42 Mr Ray Hansen, Chairperson and Founder, Koorlbardi Aboriginal Corporation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 61.

43 Mr Craig Brierty, Project Manager, Clontarf Foundation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2004, p. 84.

44 Mrs Sandra Rogers, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 64.

45 Mr Dennis Bree, Chairman, Northern Territory Government Task Force on Indigenous Economic Development, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 4.

4.24 The Chairperson on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Corporation has found:

... that you have to work on making Indigenous people feel good about themselves. I try to let them see that they are living in a tourism town and international tourists are interested in them and their culture. When someone is asking something about you, it makes you feel good.⁴⁶

4.25 Sports club President, Mr Paul Briggs observed that:

This also is underpinned by the value of Aboriginal identity in a place like Victoria and the culture in mainstream society of generational symptoms of data that describe Indigenous peoples as either disadvantaged or a deficit. This also underpins the self-esteem of young people and their willingness and ability to engage with the broader community and to engage in work or educational opportunities that present themselves in the Goulburn Valley.⁴⁷

4.26 It has been suggested that having a strong sense of culture provides a foundation for success in other areas.⁴⁸ Mission Australia informed the Committee that:

Many of our programs begin by working on self-esteem and on Indigenous background and culture, because that is a positive. We know cultural identity is a positive for resilience right across everything we do. Clients start to get their lives together and then employment comes. Unless you have a sense of who you are, a sense that life is possible and a sense of self-efficacy and think, 'Yes, I can achieve'.⁴⁹

4.27 Ms Sandra Rogers considers an important part of the process to building self-esteem is in acknowledging the contribution that Aboriginal people have made to building Australia.⁵⁰ Ms Rogers

46 Ms Bernice Kelly, Chairperson, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Corporation, Queensland, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 July 2005, pp. 20-21.

47 Mr Paul Briggs, President, Rumbalara Football and Netball Club Inc., *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 2.

48 Ms Eileen Deemal-Hall, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 July 2005, p. 43.

49 Ms Anne Hampshire, National Manager, Research and Social Policy, Mission Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2005, p. 65.

50 Mrs Sandra Rogers, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 64.

added that 'people need to be valued. I do not think that Aboriginal people feel valued'.⁵¹

- 4.28 Manguri Employment Services try to send the message to their Indigenous job seekers that:

They might not have a job, they might not have this, but as Indigenous people what they have to offer back to the community has no price on it.⁵²

- 4.29 Mr Hugh Woodbury believes that people working in parks and wildlife are important role models for young Indigenous people because they are working on the land and looking after the culture.⁵³ Ms Kylie Bloomfield told the Committee that:

I always wanted to be a ranger. This is one of the biggest role modelling places in town. When kids see you down the street, they're singing out 'ranger' this, 'ranger' that – especially when you go to the schools.⁵⁴

- 4.30 Raising Indigenous visibility is important.⁵⁵ Ms Cathy Duncan from Aboriginal Employment Strategy, made the point that:

For any grandma who has been through the process of Aboriginal affairs in this country, seeing their grandchild standing at the front counter of any bank or in any job is always going to bring a community along because they have always wanted a place for their children.⁵⁶

- 4.31 As more Indigenous people join the corporate sector, they are potentially role models for young Indigenous people. It is important, however, that successful individuals put themselves forward as role models.⁵⁷

... but you need to have examples from that community. You need to see people who actually came from there, lived that

51 Mrs Sandra Rogers, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 63.

52 Mrs Cheryl Taylor, Chief Executive Officer, Manguri Employment Services, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 11.

53 Mr Hugh Woodbury, T1 Ranger, Parks and Wildlife Service, Northern Territory, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, p. 69.

54 Ms Kylie Bloomfield, Guide, Alice Springs Desert Park, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, p. 69.

55 For example see Mr Paul Briggs, President, Rumbalara Football and Netball Club Inc, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 10.

56 Ms Cathy Duncan, Director, Culture and Reputation, Aboriginal Employment Strategy, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 February 2006, p. 14.

57 Mr Jack Pearson, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 November 2005, p. 9.

life and were able to break that cycle. We need to bring them back and do a lot more role modelling to show people that they can achieve things. Frankly, there are a lot of people out there who do not see any future. They do not see education as a way of breaking out of poverty or breaking out of the situation that they are in. They just do not see a future for themselves. That is a problem we have in a lot of these rural communities.⁵⁸

- 4.32 Mr Paul Briggs acknowledged that cultural enhancement and celebration within the community was one of the things they had started looking at under the COAG process to address issues of value and respect.⁵⁹ However, he feels that:

There is a lot of work that has to be done on building confidence, because generational confidence has been dented. We need to build confidence in the long term and support civic leaders, industry leaders, Aboriginal leaders and others to work on a solution.⁶⁰

Mentors

- 4.33 Mentoring relationships are an important factor in the success of Indigenous employment and training programs.⁶¹ For many Indigenous people, entry into the workforce can be overwhelming, and the presence of a mentor can help to make this difficult transition

58 Mr Warren Mundine, Chief Executive Officer, New South Wales Native Title Services, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 February 2006, p. 37.

59 Mr Paul Briggs, President, Rumbalara Football and Netball Club Inc, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 10.

60 Mr Paul Briggs, President, Rumbalara Football and Netball Club Inc, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 10.

61 Adelaide City Council, *Submission No. 65*, p. 2; Jason Solomon, *Submission No. 116*, p. 1; Mr Harold Howard, Central Land Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, p. 54; Ms Sheryl Sandy, Brisbane City Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 23; Ms Simone Haynes, Voyagers Hotel and Resorts, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2005, p. 4; Mr Anthony Dann, Chairperson, Yamatji Marlpa Barna Baba Maaja Aboriginal Corporation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 24; Mrs Kathleen Boyne, Service Manager, Mission Australia Employment Initiatives, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 December 2005, p. 4; Mr Trevor Stutley, Human Resources Manager, Administration, Adelaide City Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 February 2006, p. 16; Bloodwood Tree Association Inc, *Submission No. 34*, p. 3; Dubbo City Council, *Submission No. 56*, pp. 1-2.

easier.⁶² People living in Indigenous communities may not have the same networks to mentor them when they commence employment and this can impact on their confidence.⁶³

4.34 Many witnesses referred to mentoring as essential to success for many individuals and a recurring theme of the more successful employment outcomes was mentoring support. Mentoring is referred to throughout this report (for example Chapter 3 – business mentoring, Chapter 6 employment and trainee mentoring).

4.35 People who usually mentor Indigenous people are not usually successful business people.⁶⁴

Six out of 10 Aboriginal people are on a government benefit and our clientele is the top three out of that six, not the bottom welfare mob. If you have a third of Aboriginal people moving through society okay, at AES we get the next third going with them through the commercial world. We are then giving the Aboriginal communities a mandate to take on the back end of the community – as you build self-esteem and pride you generate peer pressure. That is the game plan.⁶⁵

4.36 Mentoring has an important part to play in providing support for both Indigenous employees and non-Indigenous employers.⁶⁶ Mentoring needs to be structured and ongoing and provide support for both the mentor and mentees.⁶⁷ Even in situations where the mentor is also Indigenous, the differences in traditional cultures from

62 Mrs Kerri Colegate, Site Coordinator, Manguri Employment Services, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 2.

63 Mr Simon Hawkins, Executive Director, Yamatji Marlpa Barna Baba Maaja Aboriginal Corporation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 32.

64 Ms Lynette Riley-Mundine, Director, Operations, Aboriginal Employment Strategy, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 February 2006, p. 13.

65 Mr Richard Estens, Chairman, Aboriginal Employment Strategy, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 February 2006, p. 13.

66 Ms Marilyn Smith, Manager, Footprints Forward, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 July 2005, p. 15; Miss Jane Lawton, State Operations Manager, Northern Territory, Mission Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2005, p. 46; Ms Cathy Duncan, Director, Culture and Reputation, Aboriginal Employment Strategy, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 February 2006, p. 9.

67 Ms Anne Hampshire, National Manager, Research and Social Policy, Mission Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2005, p. 44; Miss Jane Lawton, State Operations Manager, Northern Territory, Mission Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2005, p. 45.

one area to another tribal group means that appropriate mentoring needs to be in a cultural context.⁶⁸

- 4.37 The Queensland Government is having significant success by providing mentoring support as this can address low self esteem and low educational achievement.⁶⁹ Alice Springs Desert Park capitalise on the things that the recruits are already good at and have expectations of their staff to build self-esteem through mentoring.⁷⁰
- 4.38 The Committee believes that the provision of funding for training and employment for Indigenous people must include adequate resources for mentoring to ensure the best possible outcomes.

Recommendation 6

- 4.39 **The Committee recommends that the Federal Government provide adequate resources for mentoring in addition to the funding provided for training and employment of Indigenous Australians.**
- 4.40 dEadly mOb is an organisation that aims to create online opportunities for Indigenous young people, who actively interact with and upload to the organisation's website. The organisation connects young people to strong role models through its mentoring program, involving mentors from a range of jobs who are able to tell their stories and provide career advice.⁷¹
- 4.41 Ms Lane made the point that there is a web site for mentors on dEadly mOb but there are a number of people in organisations who are not listed on the site.⁷² The Committee appreciates that mentoring others can add a significant burden to the individuals involved but this appears to provide the best opportunities for others.

68 Miss Jane Lawton, State Operations Manager, Northern Territory, Mission Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2005, pp. 46-47.

69 Mr Bernie Carlon, General Manager, Employment and Indigenous Initiatives, Queensland Department of Employment and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 4.

70 Alice Springs Desert Park, *Submission No. 84*, p. 2.

71 dEadly mOb, <www.deadlymob.org> (viewed 24 February 2006).

72 Ms Joanne Lane, Consultant, Imparja Television and Human Resources Officers, Alice Springs Town Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 July 2005, p. 23.

- 4.42 Support can assist in working through the differences between 'whitefella' bureaucratic requirements and Aboriginal culture.⁷³ Mentoring is part of the training process and everyone identifies with that.⁷⁴

The magic that makes this work: it is sort of like the game of football, Aussie Rules, where you are allowed to shepherd. The school based trainee is holding the ball and the parents, the AES, the mentors, the school and the bank manager and employees are basically shepherding the child from all the influences that are hitting normal 15, 16 or 17-year-olds. Especially when their mates learn that they work in a bank – the worst of all evils – it is up to that partnership to protect that child. That is the magic of it; the mentoring is the unique thing that I have not seen in any other situation like this.⁷⁵

- 4.43 Mentoring is not rocket science and is common in private industry and in large corporations.⁷⁶ Mentoring, support and encouragement are critical.⁷⁷

Nobody for a long while will be able to remove the difficulty and the hard work. It is going to be hard work regardless, because money does not fix those things. I think that has been proved over many years.⁷⁸

- 4.44 Mrs Kathleen Boyne commented that money is the short term reward and if it is not in the heart then it is not sustainable:

I think sometimes that encouragement is more sustainable than money.⁷⁹

- 4.45 Mentoring takes a number of forms. Mentoring can link the cultural difference between Aboriginal lives and the culture in the

73 City of Marion, *Submission No. 28*, p. 1.

74 Mr Bob Harvey, Group Manager, Indigenous Employment and Business Group, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 August 2005, p. 16.

75 Mr Bruce McQualter, Regional Manager, NSW North West. ANZ Regional and Rural Banking, Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 February 2006, p. 6.

76 Mr Warren Mundine, Chief Executive Officer, New South Wales Native Title Services, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 February 2006, p. 35.

77 Mr Leigh Cleghorn, Manager, Umoona Aged Care Aboriginal Corporation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 February 2006, p. 62.

78 Mr Leigh Cleghorn, Manager, Umoona Aged Care Aboriginal Corporation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 February 2006, p. 62.

79 Mrs Kathleen Boyne, Service Manager, Mission Australia Employment Initiatives, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 December 2005, p. 10.

workplace.⁸⁰ The Brisbane City Council *Indigenous Career Development and Mentoring Program*, for example, includes cultural awareness training for mentors, individual career development programs for mentees and training in roles and responsibilities for both mentors and mentees.⁸¹

- 4.46 Footprints Forward, an Alice Springs initiative, mentors Indigenous youth through the transition into employment, education and training. The job also involves liaising with employers about the problems mentees face and helping them through their orientation.⁸² Ms Marilyn Smith explained:

So many young people just do not know how to go about things. They are too ashamed to ask so they will just sit down and think, 'Oh well, it will happen one day,' and in the end they just do nothing all day apart from watching TV or whatever. Or perhaps they are working and they do not know what to do ... Just having somebody there to support them has been good.⁸³

- 4.47 It is important that mentoring relationships are developed properly, facilitated by appropriate cultural awareness training and support for mentors as well as mentees. There must be a clear understanding of the cultural context of mentoring, such as what constitutes women's business or men's business, the differences between skin groups, and the 'fear factor' that may arise where a traditional Indigenous person is in a mentoring relationship with a non-traditional Indigenous person.⁸⁴

- 4.48 Mission Australia believes that mentoring should be mainstream:

Aboriginal people are acutely alert to the 'shame' factor and not wanting to be considered different or less capable than others. Every one needs and can benefit from a mentor or a network of support and there is no shame involved. In fact,

80 Mr Andrew West, Manager, Kaurua Business and Heritage Centre, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 February 2006, p. 80.

81 Brisbane City Council, *Submission No. 74*, pp. 4-5.

82 Ms Marilyn Smith, Manager, Footprints Forward, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 July 2005, pp. 3-4.

83 Ms Marilyn Smith, Manager, Footprints Forward, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 July 2005, pp. 14-15.

84 Miss Jane Lawton, State Operations Manager, Northern Territory, Mission Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2005, pp. 44-47.

smart people look for mentors and supporters in every aspect of their lives.⁸⁵

Current leadership initiatives

Community and private initiatives

4.49 There are a number of exciting leadership initiatives currently underway in communities around Australia. For example, the AFL encourages leadership through its Kickstart program, which involves children from Indigenous communities learning football skills.⁸⁶ The AFL Kickstart program is about building leadership skills and not about the best footballers.⁸⁷ The skills learnt in communication and working with others can be transferred to life experiences.⁸⁸

... it was not just about playing AFL, how much money you earned or anything like that, which are the general questions that you get from kids; it was more along the lines of lifestyle choices, getting an education, employment after football and recognising that they are a very small percentage of the AFL population and there are thousands of other people out there who would have liked to have played AFL at the highest level but could not. Now they have to get on with day-to-day business like getting a job, going to work, going to school.⁸⁹

4.50 The Committee is also aware of a number of leadership and youth development programs being developed by the Cape York Institute. These include:

- Higher Expectations (in partnership with the Macquarie Bank Foundation), to enable Cape York students to attend select Queensland boarding schools;
- The Youth Talent Development Program, which aims to nurture highly educated and skilled Indigenous role models aged 17-30 from Cape York by providing them with the long term support to maximise their achievements in education, employment and

85 Mission Australia, *Submission No. 90*, p. 6.

86 Mr Brenton Toy, Project and Training Development Officer, AFL Northern Territory Ltd, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, pp. 68-69.

87 Mr Brenton Toy, Project and Training Development Officer, AFL Northern Territory Ltd, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 64.

88 Mr Brenton Toy, Project and Training Development Officer, AFL Northern Territory Ltd, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 64.

89 Mr Brenton Toy, Project and Training Development Officer, AFL Northern Territory Ltd, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 65.

leadership, including leadership training and professional mentoring; and

- The Leadership Development project, which is engaged in the development of a collegiate of Cape York Indigenous leaders and potential leaders who share common goals of family, community, and regional transformation, and who are prepared to commit themselves to personal and professional growth to achieve this end.⁹⁰

4.51 All of the Aboriginal organisations in the Darwin area reserve places on their governing boards or committees for representatives from the Larrakia people.⁹¹

... there are key components of Indigenous people who are starting to realise and rationalise the benefits of working together and looking towards offering something for their children.⁹²

4.52 Mr Warren Mundine described himself as optimistic:

I am an optimist and we are living in exciting times. The leadership is changing: we have a younger, more articulate, more educated leadership coming forward. A good example of that is the number of Aboriginals now standing for parliament and getting elected. We have just seen the preselection in Western Australia of a 31-year-old constitutional lawyer, Ben Wyatt. Twenty years ago who would have thought of an Aboriginal doing that?⁹³

Corporate leadership

4.53 Leadership from corporations is a key aspect of the future for Indigenous employment. The Committee supports the approach of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy in working with a range of corporations in increasing employment opportunities for Indigenous people. Mr Dick Estens commented that:

90 Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership, <<http://www.cyi.org.au/default.aspx>> (accessed at 8 February 2006).

91 Mr Kelvin Costello, Coordinator, Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, pp. 73, 75.

92 Mr Kelvin Costello, Coordinator, Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 74.

93 Mr Warren Mundine, Chief Executive Officer, New South Wales Native Title Services, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 February 2006, p. 40.

... generally corporate Australia are really important to us because as we move forward with the whole company, if you take corporate Australia out of the main street, you've probably got 60 or 70% of jobs coz your other jobs are left to small family businesses generally.⁹⁴

- 4.54 The mining industry has some sound models which have been developed over 25 to 30 years of experience and corporate knowledge. Newmont Australia Ltd identified the two key aspects that move mining companies to Indigenous employment:
- There is a business case that leads to involvement with communities, in Indigenous activities, and reconciliation programs; and
 - The social license which reflects respect for the environment, safety and communities in which mining operations operate and live.⁹⁵
- 4.55 In relation to other corporate bodies, Mr Jack Pearson commented that:
- There is a lot of goodwill in the private sector and a lot of desire for corporates to get involved. One hurdle the corporates have to get over is themselves. They need to understand the Indigenous policies and framework – not that they have to be full bottle about it – particularly with respect to employing Indigenous people in their organisations. There could be some crosspollination of people.⁹⁶
- 4.56 The Committee believes that there is a real need for corporate leadership to increase Indigenous employment and an opportunity to significantly increase employment levels while addressing the skills shortages currently facing Australia. Evidence to the Committee presented a clear view that corporates believe it is too hard and can readily trot out a series of excuses about why it cannot be done. The Committee believes that this will change as the number of successes increases.
- 4.57 The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry conceded that private enterprises are under no real obligation to take on Indigenous

94 Mr Richard Estens, *Imagine the Future by Learning from the Past – Aboriginal Employment Strategy: Working together*, Speech to the 2005 Communities in Control Conference convened by Our Community and Centacare Catholic Family Services, June 2005, p. 11.

95 Mr Lester Davis, Manager, Learning and Development, Newmont Australia Ltd, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 October 2005, p. 33.

96 Mr Jack Pearson, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 November 2005, p. 4.

employees and there is a low percentage who do.⁹⁷ The reason businesses do not pursue this approach:

It is expertise. They do not want to go in blindly. I think that is basically it. They do not have the expertise to access communities. They do not know how to talk to communities. They do not know how to set up a strategy. For a recruitment strategy, for instance, the process is to find the right publications to put an advertisement in and that sort of thing. I think that has been their main barrier – the expertise in how they go about it.⁹⁸

- 4.58 Australia Post has increased the number of Indigenous Australians employed by 400 per cent since 1988 when an Indigenous employment strategy commenced.⁹⁹ Currently there are 625 Indigenous Australians employed which is 1.8 per cent of the workforce. Australia Post has a target of 2 per cent.¹⁰⁰ This success is attributed to a strong commitment from senior management and a planned sustained approach.¹⁰¹ The strategy is about ‘providing real, ongoing jobs and real opportunities for Indigenous Australians.’¹⁰²

Leadership across all levels of the system is important; having shared leadership at the Ministerial, senior executive and planning levels, and at the level of service delivery, assists in achieving both process and impact outcomes. Building the capabilities of leaders from both communities and governments to work differently is an important strategy for sustained change.¹⁰³

97 Mr Dean O’Neil, National Manager, Indigenous Employment and Training, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 November 2005, pp. 6-8.

98 Mr Dean O’Neil, National Manager, Indigenous Employment and Training, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 8.

99 Mr Rod McDonald, Group Manager, Human Resources, Australia Post, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 16.

100 Mr Rod McDonald, Group Manager, Human Resources, Australia Post, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 16.

101 Mr Rod McDonald, Group Manager, Human Resources, Australia Post, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 16.

102 Mr Rod McDonald, Group Manager, Human Resources, Australia Post, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 17.

103 *Synopsis Review of the COAG Trial Evaluations; Report to the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination*, Morgan Disney & Associates Pty Ltd, Tracey Whetnall Consulting and Wis-Wei Consulting Pty Ltd, November 2006, p. 8.

Government initiatives

- 4.59 The Federal Government has a number of initiatives including the *Indigenous Leadership Program*,¹⁰⁴ the *Indigenous Women's Leadership Program*,¹⁰⁵ the *Business Leaders Initiative*,¹⁰⁶ and the *Indigenous Tourism Business Ready Program*.¹⁰⁷ Federal government funding is also available for mentoring through Job Network, which can contract an agency to deliver mentoring, or through Indigenous business support programs, if an Indigenous business wanted to deliver mentoring as a service.¹⁰⁸
- 4.60 There are a number of initiatives outlined at the state, territory and local level but only two are mentioned briefly here. The Northern Territory Government piloted the *Kigaruk Indigenous Men's Leadership Development Program* in 2003-2004. All 25 participants graduated in May 2004 with a Diploma of Business (Frontline Management) from Charles Darwin University. The success of the Kigaruk program was directly attributed to the consultation, development and evaluation processes undertaken with Indigenous men to meet their career developmental needs and aspirations. The *Lookrukin Indigenous Women's Leadership Development Pilot Program* is similarly designed for Indigenous women in the Northern Territory public service.¹⁰⁹
- 4.61 Brisbane City Council has two Indigenous reference groups that play an important role in providing representation for Indigenous employees of council and Indigenous people in the community. The Reference Group created its own vision of making Brisbane City Council 'the leading mainstream municipal employer of Indigenous people in Australia and thus contribute to the wellbeing of the

104 Senator The Hon Nick Minchin, Minister for Finance and Administration, *Submission No. 62*, p. 2; See also Australian Public Service Commission, <<http://www.apsc.gov.au/indigenousprograms/index.html>> (accessed 8 February 2006).

105 Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, <http://www.oipc.gov.au/programs/IndigenousWomensDevelopment>> (accessed at 8 February 2006).

106 An Australian Government Initiative, *Achieving Indigenous Economic Independence Indigenous Economic Development Strategy targeting jobs, business and assets*, 2005, p. 13.

107 Mrs Judy Freeman, Director of Marketing, Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 July 2005, p. 7.

108 Mr Bob Harvey, Group Manager, Indigenous Employment and Business Group, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 August 2005, p. 16.

109 Northern Territory Government, *Submission No. 33*, p. 2; 'Lookrukin: Indigenous Women's Leadership Development Pilot Program, Prospectus 2005/06', *Exhibit 75*; 'Kigaruk: an Indigenous Men's Leadership Development Program, Prospectus 2005/06'. *Exhibit 7*.

Indigenous community of Brisbane by delivering on equitable employment opportunities and outcomes.' Its role includes facilitating an enduring, substantial and productive relationship between the council and Brisbane's Indigenous community, and providing advice to council.¹¹⁰

The way forward

4.62 It is vital that the focus in delivery of employment and training programs in Indigenous communities be on equipping those communities with the ability to deliver those services themselves. This will lead to increased employment and self-determination, as well as developing leadership skills, allowing people to perform as mentors and role models in their own communities.

4.63 Ms Jody Broun saw the potential for successfully replicating projects in other places as governments not being interventionist and providing support to communities to develop their own ideas.¹¹¹

A lot of it comes down to community capacity and local leadership. Often you will see that something which is working fantastically in a local community has relied on one or two really strong people in the community doing the work. That is where it gets difficult to replicate it in lots of places. You are relying on leadership.¹¹²

4.64 The Committee believes that Indigenous community leadership is the way forward. Evidence to the Committee frequently referred to the failure of the whole-of-government approach to adequately take on board the views and aspirations of the community leaders. While it is clearly the intent of the whole-of-government approach through the Shared Responsibility Agreements to improve this aspect, there appears to be a residual 'disconnect' in many respects. While the Committee accepts that the whole-of-government approach is still on a learning curve, this is a fundamental aspect that requires urgent attention. The recent review of the COAG trials found that:

110 Brisbane City Council, *Submission No. 74*, pp. 6-7.

111 Ms Jody Broun, Director General, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, New South Wales, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2006, p. 90.

112 Ms Jody Broun, Director General, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, New South Wales, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2006, p. 90.

These place based approaches appear to work most effectively where there were clearly identifiable Indigenous communities with strong representative leadership and where government agencies play a facilitative leadership role, engaging across all levels of government and with community leaders.¹¹³

113 *Synopsis Review of the COAG Trial Evaluations; Report to the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination*, Morgan Disney & Associates Pty Ltd, Tracey Whetnall Consulting and Wis-Wei Consulting Pty Ltd, November 2006, p. 5.