

Our Ref: 2005/7

Strategic Workforce Development

Barry Wakelin MP  
Chairman  
Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra, ACT 2600

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BY: ATSLA

Dear Chairman

Thank you for your letter of 16 March 2005, in which you requested information on what the Northern Territory Public Sector (NTPS), is currently doing to increase Indigenous employment. The NTPS has developed a range of best practice initiatives, which are contributing to positive Indigenous employment outcomes. The information provided below summarises key areas of activity.

### **The NTPS Indigenous Employment & Career Development Strategy 2002-2006**

Following a review of the original *Aboriginal Employment & Career Development Strategy 1995-2000*, the Northern Territory Government launched the *NTPS' Indigenous Employment & Career Development Strategy 2002-2006* (the Strategy) in November 2002.

The review of the Strategy identified a lack of accountability as a barrier to increasing Indigenous employment. Accordingly, the Strategy requires bi-annual progress reports to Cabinet from across NTPS agencies. These reports provide a transparent and accountable reporting framework which has been a significant factor in contributing to the growing number of Indigenous employment policies and programs across the NTPS. The progress reports monitor trends and provide longitudinal analyses on Indigenous employment across the NTPS.

Since the launch of the Strategy, Indigenous employment participation rates in the NTPS have increased from 4.6% (725) to 6.3% (1,056) as of March 2005, representing a 40% increase in Indigenous people employed in the NTPS.

A copy of the *NTPS Indigenous Employment & Career Development Strategy* and the first two progress reports are enclosed for your information. To access further information on Indigenous employment in the NTPS, please visit OCPE's website at <http://www.nt.gov.au:8080/ocpe/indigenous/>

With the *NTPS Indigenous Employment & Career Development Strategy* now in its third consecutive year of implementation, this Office will continue to work closely with agencies and engages with stakeholders to monitor progress. We believe the increasing number of Indigenous employment initiatives we are seeing across NTPS agencies is consistent with best practice models.

It is the experience of the NTPS that Indigenous employment policy development requires holistic integrated approaches to deliver positive employment outcomes.

A number of critical factors have contributed to the success of the *NTPS Indigenous Employment & Career Development Strategy*, they include:

- Actively engaging Indigenous people in the planning, development, implementation, consultation and review of the forums
- Showcasing positive case studies on Indigenous recruitment, career development and retention strategies
- Establishing transparent and accountable systems and processes that monitor outcomes
- The need to have champions at a senior level
- The need to be responsible for driving and coordinating the process at a local and regional level
- Developing strategies developed at a systemic level
- The importance of developing partnerships, networks and interactions across sectors to be more flexible, innovative and inclusive of the Indigenous community
- Having greater flexibility in all aspects of employment, including pre-recruitment, recruitment, job design and career pathways
- Executive and management staff supporting and championing Indigenous employment in the workplace
- Having greater opportunities for work placements in communities, particularly in regional and remote areas where access to jobs is limited.

### **Indigenous Employment Forums**

An example of the growing number of Indigenous employment best practice initiatives includes the development of the Indigenous Employment Forums, which were conducted in partnership with this Office and the Institute of Public Administration (IPAA) NT.

The forums were successful in effectively engaging with Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders, which helped inform the content of the recently launched *NTPS Indigenous Employment Tool Kit*. A critical success factor of the forums was the active involvement of local people throughout the forum process.

### **NTPS Indigenous Employment Tool Kit**

The *NTPS Indigenous Employment Tool Kit* is a practical resource designed as a reference for Indigenous employees and to assist employers and managers to increase Indigenous employment through the development of appropriate recruitment and retention strategies.

### **Kigaruk Indigenous Men's Leadership Development Program**

The *Kigaruk Indigenous Men's Leadership Development Program* was piloted for Indigenous men in 2004. It is an accredited program that aims to facilitate personal and career development for participants. Successful completion of the Program qualifies participants for a Diploma of Business (Frontline Management).

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.

A similar process has been undertaken with the Leadership Development Program for Indigenous women that is currently under development and will commence in July 2005, to run concurrently with the next *Kigaruk Indigenous Men's Leadership Development Program*.

## Best Practice

Other examples of best practice initiatives include:

- Development of an Indigenous Policy Capacity Building Program
- Secondment arrangements and job exchange programs for Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff
- Census days in agencies to collect Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) data
- Regular forums with Chief Executive Officers and Indigenous employees
- Indigenous media advertising and selection practices to attract Indigenous people, including involving Indigenous representatives on interview panels for vacancies
- On-going promotion and marketing of Indigenous employment initiatives within the workforce to showcase best practice and good news stories.

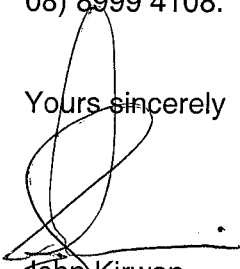
## Summary

We acknowledge there are no easy or 'silver bullet' solutions to achieving positive results and that hard work and persistent efforts are required to achieve tangible increases to Indigenous employment outcomes.

The current momentum across the sector is encouraging. Actively promoting small wins and giving due recognition to agencies and staff committed to advancing Indigenous employment is critical in building and maintaining this momentum.

I trust the information provided is useful. If you require additional information on Indigenous employment, please contact Wendy Ah Chin, Principal Advisor, Indigenous Policy on phone: 08) 8999 4108.

Yours sincerely



John Kirwan  
Commissioner for Public Employment

AS April 2005