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The Secretary of the Committee
Standing Committee on
Torres Strait Islander Affairs

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Inquiry into Indigenous Employment Submission by Voyages Terms of Reference

That the Committee inquire into positive factors and examples amongst Indigenous communities and individuals, which have improved employment outcomes in both the public and private sectors; and

1. Recommend to the government ways this can inform future policy development;
2. Assess what significant factors have contributed to those positive outcomes identified, including what contribution practical reconciliation had made.

Voyages is an Australian travel company, providing experience-based holidays in spectacular wilderness locations including the Red Centre, Top End, Queensland and Tasmania. Voyages operate award-winning properties such as Ayers Rock Resort, Longitude 131°, Lizard Island, Silky Oaks Lodge, Odyssey Tours & Safaris and Cradle Mountain Lodge.

To date, no Anangu (local people from the Uluru Area) have been employed on the program. This is largely due to the lack of "job ready" applicants from the local area. As a result, current employees in the program have been sourced from other areas or cities.

In 2004 Voyages joined the Corporate Leaders for Indigenous Employment Program, entering into a Structured Training and Employment Program (STEP) with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR). The contract provides that Voyages will employ 20 new Indigenous employees throughout its business in a 12 month period, ending June 2005. The contract specifies that 15 employees are to be engaged on a full-time basis, and of those, 14 must complete a Certificate 2,3 or 4 in Hospitality/Tourism operations and one will complete a Certificate 3 or 4 Traineeship in Customer Contact.

A further five participants would be employed on a part-time basis and would also be required to complete Certificate level training.

To ensure that the program is successful an Indigenous Employment Co-ordinator has been employed to oversee the program. Ayers Rock Resort has the largest employment target and, as such, this is where the co-ordinator is based.



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The reason being that under the STEP Contract participants in the program must be signed up to, and satisfactorily complete, a minimum Certificate II level of training. Language and literacy issues affect the local communities and generally prohibit the majority of local Indigenous people from attaining this kind of qualification.

We believe that a "two pronged" approach to Indigenous employment in our business is appropriate. The first approach is aimed at creating employment for local indigenous people and is a "transition to work program". We have had some success in this approach which is described below. We would like to see this program gain some formal recognition as we believe that it is the foundation to ensuring that the Structured Employment and Training Program is successful

The second is the STEP as outlined above. It is important that we continue to offer this program so that after working through the "transition to work program" indigenous employees continue to be provided with education which will further enhance their skills

Transition to Work Programs

We have been working with the local communities to raise the job readiness and work awareness of local Indigenous job seekers through pre-employment transitional programs including Work Observation (students 12 -14) and Work Experience (students aged 15+ and adults). This has been implemented at Ayers Rock Resort in conjunction with Nyangatjatjara Corporation - servicing Mutijulu, Imanpa and Docker River Communities - via the Nyangatjatjara College and also the Nyangatjatjara Job Network Agency

In a two week period in late 2004, more than 30 Anangu of all ages undertook work experience in various Resort Departments. We believe that this type of program is essential if we are to succeed in our endeavours to recruit local indigenous employees into our business

Further success has been gained in the following example at our Kings Canyon Resort:

Ukaka Homeland Learning Centre

On Wednesday 151 December 2004, 4 students from the Ukaka Community graduated from Charles Darwin University. The students were enrolled in a Certificate I in Horticulture and completed their practical component with the Grounds & Landscaping Department of Kings Canyon Resort

The work experience program commenced in approximately October 2003, when the school teacher Sarah Wall approached the resort asking if a work experience program would be possible. The Grounds & Landscaping Manager at the time, Jeremy Marron, was keen to get the program running and did so with the introduction of the George Gill Bar "Beer Garden" project



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Starting from what would have been considered bushland; Jeremy landscaped a design which the Ukaka Work Experience students assisted with on a weekly basis. The four students involved were Jillian Seven, Adeline Driffin, Mervin Jako, Siddie Jako. At the completion of the "Beer Garden" and the transition in management to Tim Davidson, the students then turned to practical requirements such as plant propagation, turf care and renovation, irrigation, reticulation and many more competencies required under the certificate. The students learned the use of equipment including ride-on mowers, whipper-snipper and various hand tools

The graduation was attended by Kings Canyon Resort management and community members including Sid Coultard (community elder) who was extremely thankful for the opportunity given to the children of his community and hopes that the program can continue in the future

Upon visiting the community for their graduation, Siddie and teacher Sarah showed us the skills they had gained and used in their own communities. This included the set up of a potting shed, initial stages of a community vegetable garden and the planting of various sustainable plants for the area

The resort and the Grounds & Landscaping Department received a plaque for appreciation

We would be happy to participate further in the inquiry and our contact details are as follows

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Yours sincerely

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