

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIGHT ISLANDER
AFFAIRS

Capacity on building in Indigenous communities hearing of Monday 7 July 2003

EMPLOYMENT & WORKPLACE RELATIONS PORTFOLIO

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Outcome 1:

An effectively functioning labour market.

Output Group 1.2:

Labour market programme management and delivery

Output 1.2.2:

Employment Services

Question:

How NEIS is accessed in the Cape and what NEIS actually provides.

Answer:

NEIS is an Australian Government initiative which assists unemployed people to establish new small businesses and exit the social security system.

Full NEIS coverage across Australia has been achieved through the third Employment Services Contract (ESC3) and recent Fee for Service arrangements, including metropolitan, regional and remote areas. In ESC3 which covers the period 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2006, 44 NEIS providers have been contracted to provide NEIS at some 345 sites, 201 of which are full time and the remainder of which are part time or outreach sites.

Question:

Linkages with organisations such as Balkanu and Indigenous Enterprise to facilitate access to NEIS.

Answer:

Successful tenderers in ESC3 were required to demonstrate how they would deliver NEIS including training, assessment of business plans and mentoring support as well as how to provide services to the client groups within the labour market. In Employment Service Areas (ESAs) where there were five percent or more Indigenous Australians, tenderers were required to show how they planned to provide a service to this group in an appropriate and culturally sensitive manner, and how they would service remote clients.

Tenderers were also required to demonstrate links with local community and industry to assist in the delivery of NEIS services and outcomes, and an ability to provide geographic coverage in the tendered labour market.

Question:

Please explain how and why the Self Help Programme provider was selected for Cape York.

Answer:

The Self Help Programme aims to reduce welfare reliance through supporting Indigenous Australians to take up self-employment opportunities. The Programme assists individual Indigenous Australians by providing funds of up to \$5,500 (including GST), as a repayable grant, for non wage costs in establishing their own small business, providing financial literacy training, promoting self employment initiatives and providing business advice and support.

The Self Help Programme provider in Cape York was selected through a select tender process, where two New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS) providers were offered the opportunity to tender to trial the Government's Self Help Programme. NEIS providers were selected to deliver the trial programme due to their experience in business development and support. The particular NEIS providers were approached because they had received an Invitation to Treat for the Employment Services Contract 3 services as they were high performing providers.

Tender documentation required the providers to address a number of selection criteria including a capacity to deliver the required services, which involved an assessment of matters such as being able to deliver culturally appropriate services and coverage.

Taking into account the relative claims of each tenderer against the selection criteria, the Departmental delegate determined that Townsville Employment and Training Incorporated (now known as Success Employment) was the most suitable organisation, and was offered the contract to deliver the Self Help Programme during the trial period.

As part of the tender documentation the provider was required to develop a marketing strategy that displayed an awareness of key local Indigenous organisations to assist them reaching eligible individuals.