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CITY OF  
**PORT PHILLIP**  
ABN 21 762 977 945

Miss Cheryl Scarlett  
Secretary  
House Of Representatives - Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander Affairs Committee

Dear Miss Scarlett

**CITY OF PORT PHILLIP - GOOD NEWS OF INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT  
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
SUBMISSION**

On behalf of City of Port Phillip, Mayor, councillors and staff I wish to thank the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs for providing the opportunity to describe examples of good news on Indigenous employment. We have produced positive social justice outcomes through targeted Indigenous employment initiatives and by way of this submission bring these successes to your attention.

The City of Port Phillip submission aims to meet the requirements outlined in the Standing Committee on Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Affairs Terms of Reference. The submission provides the committee with a brief overview of our process and significant factors that have contributed to positive Indigenous employment outcomes. Following the overview, recommendations are offered. These intend to inform future federal policy development along with the attached supporting documentation demonstrating practical examples to move forward on Indigenous employment.

- City of Port Phillip Indigenous Recruitment Strategy 1997
- Memorandum of Understanding between City of Port Phillip and its Indigenous Community 2002
- City of Port Phillip Indigenous Employment Program 2004

Please refer to the attached City of Port Phillip submission developed by our Coordinator: Indigenous Policy and Programs.

Yours sincerely

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**City of Port Phillip Submission – House of Representatives Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Committee**

**Communication and policy development**

The City of Port Phillip's decade long commitment to its and the broader Aboriginal community started through advice from the City of Port Phillip – ATSIC Koorie Working Party in 1995. As a result the 1999 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Indigenous Community was born. The 1999 MOU was amended in 2002 and forms the basis for current policy and planning development.

**Recommendation:**

- Promote the benefits of a formal Indigenous advisory mechanism to facilitate dialogue between community and local government
- Local government develop relationships with their local Indigenous communities aiming to produce formal agreements or understandings with clear outcome driven objectives.
- Federal government to initially provide local government with access to a substantial grant program aiming to build internal capacity in order to undertake Indigenous employment initiatives

**EEO exempted staffing**

The City of Port Phillip has employed an Indigenous Arts Officer since 1994. This placement continues to advocate for the inclusion and employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists across council and community programs. As a result we have directly provided more than 500 employment and economic development opportunity for the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders.

Councils Aboriginal Liaison Officer position was created in 1995. The officer internally promotes the inclusion of Indigenous content in the majority of council's policy and programs including internal and contractor employment. In addition to this the officer facilitates the Aboriginal Advisory Committee seeking input and direction from the local community on policy and programs that impact on their lives.

Owing to the specialist skills required the role was reclassified to a more senior level in 2004.

The functions of the Coordinator Aboriginal Policy and Programs have recently been broadened to suit the changing needs of the organisation.

**Recommendation:**

- Seek to employ and place EEO exempted positions in sections of the organisation that produce employment opportunities that match the skills set of the wider Indigenous community
- Establish career pathways and succession planning strategies that can develop the skills of Indigenous staff to become leaders in decision-making roles.



### **Programs, Strategies and Initiatives**

The 1997 Indigenous Recruitment Strategy employed 16 Aboriginal staff in Structured Training Employment Program traineeships over 3-years. The main objective of the strategy to increase the number of Indigenous employees and provide professional cultural development for staff was achieved.

The 2004 –05 Indigenous Employment Program intends to employ, support, train and retain Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders. The program continues to build on the successes of the 1997 – 2001 strategy.

### **Recommendations:**

- Begin with a recruitment strategy that seeks to significantly increase the number of Indigenous employees by 2-10%. This increase provides support for both existing staff and the new Indigenous staff
- Provide Indigenous cultural exchange mechanisms that allow for staff to interact and increase their understanding of Indigenous Australians cultural variations and difference.
- Produce a strategy that is adaptive and measurable and
- Attempt to provide jobs that meet the current skills set or future skills set of the Indigenous Community.
- Ensure the initial program can be reviewed, assessed and is responsive to the changing needs of the Indigenous community and the employer
- Retain STEP traineeship funding and cadetships programs
- Continue to provide funding for all ages (not only youth)
- Continue to support and resource Indigenous specific employer advocacy and service groups. These organisations are fundamental to the success of targeted employment because they make it easy for employer to source and support organisation and their staff. We have found it near impossible to source and support candidates with the removal of funding from Diversity@work services.
- Create metropolitan based Indigenous Employment Centre in Victoria
- Schedule funding for traineeships with VET academic timelines allowing for work plan and training plan alignment creating an environment of relevance and structure.
- Use TAFE to provide training for traineeships. They usually have an Indigenous unit for additional support.

Mikael Simpson Smith  
City of Port Phillip  
Coordinator Indigenous Policy and Programs

# Memorandum of Understanding Between City of Port Phillip and its and its Indigenous Community

## Introduction

The development of a MOU with the Port Phillip Indigenous community was endorsed by Council on the 16th of December 1998. It sought to achieve common goals to advance reconciliation and to apply the citizenship rights of the Port Phillip Indigenous community.

The MOU was appropriately developed and launched in March 1999 and along with the Indigenous Action Plan firmly demonstrates the City of Port Phillip's commitment towards its goals.

This 2002 version represents a review and thus an update of the original MOU. The formulation of a new stream-lined approach to advising Council on all issues relating to service provision for the Indigenous community and Indigenous issues affecting all the community, underpins the strategic approach of the 2002 version.

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- Principles
- Collaboration – Communication
- Employment – Economic development
- Indigenous Land Management and Protection– Cultural Protocols Cultural Protocols
- Social Justice – Equality

## Commitment

Signatories to the Memorandum:

- Mayor, City of Port Phillip
- Binjirru ATSIC Regional Council ATSIC
- Ngwala Willumbong Cooperative
- Elders and representatives of the Kulin Nation people
- Indigenous community representative/s
- CEO, City of Port Phillip

## Understandings

The City of Port Phillip has demonstrated a commitment to working collaboratively with the Indigenous community in striving to improve its service outcomes and thus the quality of life of the Indigenous community

This document outlines a set of principles with a strategic framework that ensures council is action oriented towards its goals



Key characteristics of this document and the Indigenous action plan are rooted in the principles of human rights

## Principles

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### Council

- acknowledges that Indigenous Australians were the first people on this land
- is committed to providing a formal framework for the Indigenous community to have an impact on Council decisions
- is committed to working with the Indigenous community and supporting the efforts of non-Indigenous Australians in understanding Indigenous culture and values
- will continue to demonstrate commitment to change in response to its evaluations of programs and services
- will take a leadership role in facilitating change within the general community towards services and programs that impact on the Indigenous community

## Principles

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### The Indigenous community

- is committed to working with Council in the developmental process of providing accessible and appropriate local government services for the benefit of their community and therefore the whole community
- is committed to working together so that its programs and services have a greater opportunity to create sustainable change

## Collaboration & Communication

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- The City of Port Phillip will receive policy advice and guidance from a dynamic, new Indigenous Advisory Committee
- Membership of this committee will be drawn from Indigenous programs and services who are directly effected by Council's operations
- Key senior Council representatives will also be integral to this initiative
- This new stream lined approach will allow for a coordinated effort by Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders
- Assessment and evaluation of Council's service effectiveness to its diverse community will be more culturally sensitive

## Employment & Economic development

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- Council's Indigenous Recruitment Strategy forms the basis of its commitment to Indigenous employment and economic development in the area
- In addition to this strategy Council will provide leadership and direction to develop further employment and business opportunities within the wider community



## Culture & respect

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### Management and protection of sites of Indigenous cultural significance

- Public land for which Council is the responsible authority, and that is an identified site of cultural significance, or that may be site of cultural significance, subject to native title interest, is required to be protected by Council according to relevant legislation
- Furthermore, Council will develop a formal Indigenous Cultural Heritage Management and Protection Protocol, in accordance with the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984
- The Indigenous Advisory Committee will provide advice to Council for the programming of significant cultural reconciliatory events reconciliatory events

## Social Justice & Equality

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- Council remains committed to its Indigenous Action Plan Action Plan and its process of evaluation and review in line with Council's planning process
- The new Indigenous Advisory Committee will form an integral part of this evaluation and review





## **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders 1997 employment strategy**

High unemployment and low socio-economic status are two critical factors that have combined to make Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) people one of the most disadvantaged groups in Australia. In particular, ATSI people experience a much higher level of unemployment than non-Aboriginal people and when in employment, Aborigines are found in a narrower range of occupations, promotions and skills.

Because of the types of work offered and the community-based nature of our employment opportunities, the City of Port Phillip is ideally placed to employ Aboriginal people from its own community. The benefits for the City of Port Phillip include enhanced relationships with local Aboriginal communities, a more diverse work force better reflecting our diverse community, and a contribution to a more equitable social environment. The CoPP ATSI Employment Strategy is not only designed to help a particular group. Rather, it is a strategy that aims to empower managers and staff to allow indigenous Australians to help City of Port Phillip to achieve its business goals and success in the local community.

This strategy is developed as part of the City of Port Phillip's EEO direction and will initiate the development of an Affirmative Action Plan for the organisation. The strategy will cover a 3-year period, with an Action Plan prepared every 12 months reflecting expected achievements for that period. A progress report will be prepared at the end of every 12-month period. Consultation with union representatives, CoPP Aboriginal Policy Development Officer and community groups will be a significant factor in the development and implementation of a realistic, workable and achievable strategy.

### **Implementing the strategy**

In order to implement the strategy Organisation Development will undertake the following:

- Conduct an EEO survey of all staff to clarify current representation of ATSI staff
- Provide a training and development program
- Provide career counselling for existing ATSI staff
- Appoint mentors for local workplace support
- Establish an ATSI network which will meet as required to overcome isolation
- Re-distribute anti-discrimination information
- Provide a harassment free workplace and aggressively deal with racial harassment/discrimination
- Advise EAP provider of strategy
- Encourage ATSI staff to access skill development programs to enhance their abilities to move within the organisation
- Assist in specific skill development consistent with career planning goals.  
Eg. General business/professional training/communication skills and on-the-job training
- Further develop and enhance the relationship of the organisation City of Port Phillip with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Consult with Aboriginal community groups via ATSI Policy Officer
- Participate with local schools/training programs
- Be aware of established Aboriginal community services and programs

### **Ongoing process**

To support the strategy Organisation Development will:

- Provide data to line managers on current representation of Koori's within the organisation



- Work with managers to identify suitable potential vacancies, in both blue and white collar divisions
- Participate as a member of all selection panels for identified positions
- Provide a career counselling service and training and development plan for all new ATSI employees
- Identify suitable mentors
- Manage the provision of cross cultural awareness training
- Internally distribute and market the strategy
- Monitor, evaluate and report on the progress of the strategy

### **ATSI policy officer**

The ATSI policy officer will facilitate the achievement of the strategy objectives by:

- Liaising with local employment groups and community services and identifying activities, opportunities and new mechanisms for increasing ABTSI recruitment opportunities
- Working with managers to identify suitable potential vacancies, not only in the blue collar areas but in the white collar divisions also
- Supporting and monitoring a mentor program
- Identifying activities, opportunities and new mechanisms within the local community for increasing ABTSI recruitment opportunities
- Publicly marketing the strategy where possible

### **Management responsibility**

Managers in the organisation will facilitate achievement of the strategy objectives by:

- Reviewing the employee composition of their divisions in terms of equity
- Identifying suitable positions and reporting potential vacancies to Organisation Development as they arise
- Signing and supporting (financially and in principal) training and development plans and participating in career counselling as required
- Supporting a mentor program on a day-to-day basis
- Developing an awareness of cross-cultural difficulties when assessing applicants suitability for vacancies
- Identifying activities, opportunities and new mechanisms within the local community for increasing ABTSI recruitment opportunities

### **Chief executive officer's role**

The CEO will facilitate the achievement of the strategy objectives by:

- Endorsing the strategy document with a covering statement of support relating to EEO/AA and diversity in relation to the local community
- Liaising with the councillors on local ATSI issues
- Encouraging managers to actively support the strategy
- Publicly marketing the strategy in suitable forums when they arise
- Identifying activities, opportunities and new mechanisms within the local community for increasing ABTSI recruitment opportunities.





## Indigenous Employment Program 2004 - 2005

### Executive Summary

The City of Port Phillip's (CoPP) Indigenous Employment Program (IEP) aims to employ, support, train and retain Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders (A&TSI). The CoPP continues to demonstrate commitment to Indigenous Employment seeking to improve poor socio-economic levels through a variety of employment and economic development initiatives

A joint City of Port Phillip / A&TSI C Koorie Working Party was established in 1995. As a result, the 1999 Memorandum of Understanding with the Indigenous Community (MOU) was implemented. The 2004 Indigenous Employment Program is an initiative of the updated MOU 2002.

The Indigenous Policy and Programs Unit part of the Social & Cultural Planning & Policy Department contributes to council's Community & Cultural Vitality Division. The goal of Community & Cultural Vitality Division is, "To develop resilient and fair communities by ensuring residents are effectively and appropriately supported in accessing services and resources in the city" and "to support the conditions that allow all communities within Port Phillip to experience and enjoy diversity of values, beliefs and aspirations." These goals correspond with the overall objectives of the IEP 2004. Achieving the IEP 2004 objectives seeks to create a culturally diverse workplace that thrives on respect, relationships and honesty key to our organisations culture.

Providing sustainable ongoing employment opportunities for A&TSI is important to this council. Local government is well positioned to make a real difference to deliver social justice outcomes and contribute to practical reconciliation. Increased A&TSI participation in service delivers has the potential to dissolve historical stereotypes and misconceptions of A&TSI people and their culture.

Removing perceived barriers to employment and accepting A&TSI as an important part of council seeks to highlight CoPP mission as a culturally inclusive organisation and demonstrate best practice in the local government sector making it an employer of choice for A&TSI people

### Purpose

Nationally the Indigenous unemployment rate in 2001 was 17.5% (ABS, 2001), in comparison to the wider communities 6% (ABS, 2001). The Community Development & Employment Program (CDEP) has been compared to the work for the dole scheme and resourced by Centre Link and employs 26.5% (ABS, 2001) of the total A&TSI population. These two figures combined, highlights an alarming A&TSI unemployment rate of 44% (ABS, 2001). This statistic reinforces the need for targeted employment initiatives and local government is well positioned to make a difference.

According to the 2001 Australian Bureau of Statistics the Victorian A&TSI unemployment rate is around 18%. (ABS, 2001) and does not include CDEP participants

The A&TSI community in the City of Port Phillip (CoPP) make up 0.31% of the total population. The unemployment rate of A&TSI in CoPP is 21% compared to 6% in the wider CoPP community.

A&TSI experience a much higher level of unemployment than the wider community and when in employment, Aboriginal people are found in a narrower range of occupations, promotions and skills. The type of work offered and the community-based nature of our services make obvious, why the City of Port Phillip is ideally placed to be a leader on A&TSI employment and economic development initiatives.

### **Indigenous Australians: Port Phillip vs. Mainstream Data**

Indigenous	Port	Port	Port	Port	Port	Port	MSD	MSD	MSD
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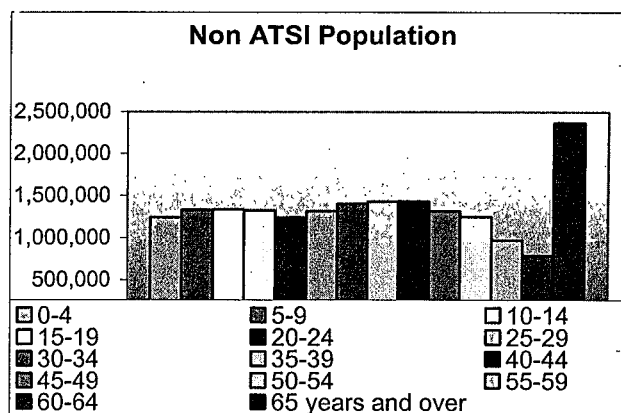
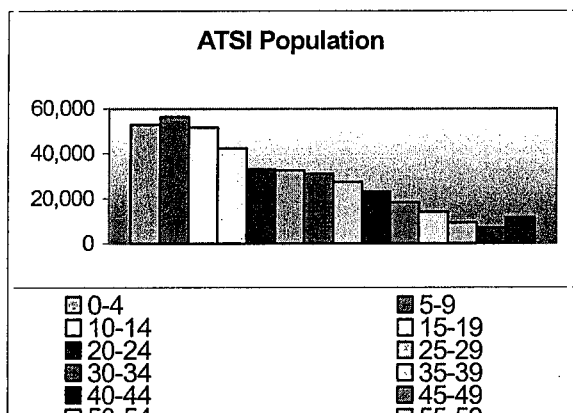
Australians	Phillip 1991 Number	Phillip 1991 %	Phillip 1996 Number	Phillip 1996 %	Phillip 2001 Number	Phillip 2001 %	1991 %	1996 %	2001 %
<b>Aboriginal</b>	190	0.27	197	0.27	224	0.29	0.26	0.28	0.31
<b>Torres Strait Islander *</b>	*	*	31	0.04	26	0.03	*	0.05	0.03
<b>Both Aboriginal and TSI</b>	*	*	8	0.01	9	0.01	*	0.02	0.02
<b>TOTAL</b>	190*	0.27*	236	0.33	259	0.33	0.26*	0.36	0.36

### Education

The Victorian A&TSI community is one of the highest vocationally educated groups in the state. With around 30% (ABS 2001) completing or having completed some type of VET (Vocational Education & Training).

### Demographics

The age demographics of A&TSI are remarkably different in comparison to the wider community. The chart below provides evidence of a younger rapidly expanding A&TSI population with 50% of the total under the age of 19 (2001 ABS). These statistics demonstrate the need to provide access to sustainable employment for young A&TSI.



### Objectives

- Employ, support, train and retain A&TSI
- Create a work environment that embraces the value of cultural diversity with respect.
- Provide a VET based employment pathway that meets the needs and aspirations of both the City of Port Phillip (CoPP) and A&TSI employees.
- Seek to build the capacity of CoPP to understand the cultural variations of A&TSI.
- Continue to build on the successes of previous CoPP A&TSI employment initiatives
- Seek to alleviate A&TSI poor socio economic levels and welfare dependency through employment and economic development policy, programs and initiatives.

### Strategies

- Employ, support, train and retain 2 A&TSI in traineeships positions per annum.
- Employ, support, train and retain a minimum of 2 permanent A&TSI per annum.

- Develop innovative processes to increase the number of A&TSI job applicants
- Continue to work in partnership with employment agencies
- Promote, recruit for and maintain an A&TSI employee network
- Develop flexible, adaptive and sustainable training for A&TSI employees and CoPP staff.
- Rigorously seek and promote employment and economic development opportunities for A&TSI on CoPP festivals, events, ceremonies and cultural programs
- Brazenly seek and promote the employment of A&TSI in local businesses, local faith based and non-government organisations.
- Act as a conduit for local A&TSI to access economic development opportunities
- Source funding for traineeship program

### 5 tiers to employment

The 5-tiers to employment provides an adaptable framework aiming to create a sustainable and supportive employment platform. With 5 options of employment the program seeks to make employment, support and training easier to achieve.

1. Traineeships – Permanent full time ongoing position with accredited training
2. Permanent CoPP Positions- Permanent full time ongoing position.
3. Contract – Usually with festivals and event or arts, and cultural programs
4. Position transfer - Should the skill level of a current employee be below the required standard, a transfer to a traineeship may be proposed.
5. Trainee to Permanent CoPP employee - Should a trainee be offered and wish to undertake any position with CoPP during the 12-traineeship,

### Application Process

Applicants are encouraged to address the key selection criteria upon application. All vacancies are listed on the CoPP website and Seek.com.au

All applications received from Diversity @ work are forwarded to CoPP Organisation Development (HR). Duplicate applications are sent from Diversity @ work to the Coordinator Indigenous Policy and Programs. With this process in place the Coordinator, Indigenous Policy and Programs will seek dialogue with the recruiting department, actively promoting the candidate with the intention of securing and interview for the candidate.

The IEP application process aims to reduce perceived barriers to interview and increases potential to be considered for the job increasing the chance of employment

### Communication

Indigenous Policy and Programs in partnership with Organisational Development will work with business units to understand their employment needs and at the same time promote the IEP 2004 and other diversity employment opportunities. This partnership seeks to create both a barrier free recruitment process and improve managers and their team's awareness of alternative approaches to recruitment and workplace diversity.

CoPP relationship with Diversity@work aims to both promote the CoPP as an employer of choice and distributes vacancies to the Victorian Aboriginal community, thereby increasing access to employment opportunities.

The Coordinator Indigenous Policy and Programs is responsible for ensuring the IEP 2004 is monitored, promoted and evaluated through work plans and action plans. In order to achieve the IEP 2004 objectives the coordinator is centrally positioned within the program structure acting as a conduit that brokers training, support mechanisms at all levels and information to all stakeholders.

### Indigenous Employee Network

The Indigenous Employee Network (IEN) comprises current CoPP A&TSI employees. New A&TSI staffs have the opportunity and are encourage attend. It is expected formal meetings will be held 6 times per year. The IEN was established to reduce the impact of employee isolation and attempts to create additional support.

## Partners

### Diversity@work

Diversity@work specialist Indigenous recruitment services provide a cost effective service for employers to distribute vacancies to the broad Victorian Indigenous Community, individual Indigenous community members, Victorian Job Network Providers and list position vacancies on their website. Generally speaking diversity assists both employers and the community to employ and be employed. No other employment service in Victoria provides this unique service. Diversity @ work are the CoPP conduit to the A&TSI community and vital resource to the success of the IEP 2004

### The Department of Victorian Communities

The Department of Victorian Communities Jobs for Young People program will provides a one-off wage subsidy of up to \$9,000 paid in full upon completing of a traineeship program.

### Sustainable Learning

Our learning opportunities will encourage a web-based culture and re-iterate the organisation's eight behaviours. In our attempts to build a sustainable organisation and to demonstrate that we act as a 'web-based' organisation, it is important that this is reflected in the training that we deliver to our staff.

To achieve this, we require anyone facilitating and/or delivering training for the City of Port Phillip incorporate and support the following components within the delivery of the training:

- Use personal insight as an outcome to achieve sustainable learning. Participants will reflect on what they do and the impact that it has on others and the organisation. The content of the program is to include participant's real life experiences & connect them with new ways of thinking.
- Encourage staff to use dialogue in their day to day work which acknowledges that many different views & experiences will ultimately improve ourselves and support the vision of the Council and facilitate good working relationships across the organisation.
- Build strong relationships to ensure consistent application of the learning across the organisation.
- Strategy to tap into each person individually so that they become active learners not passive recipients of information involving them to take responsibility to apply the learning.
  - Preparing all participants to discuss & apply the learning in the new situations not envisaged at the time of learning.
  - Recognition that paradox often exists in complex situations and promotes exploration of 'what angle do we fly?'
  - Embracing responsible risk taking and recognising the impact of their actions on others.
  - A process to evaluate the success of a 'sustainable' learning approach, which focuses on actual behaviours, delivered in the workplace