# 1

# Introduction

- 1.1 Labour force participation rates for Indigenous people still remain well below the levels for non-Indigenous Australians. There have, however, been some improvements in Indigenous employment rates and in the diversification of the types of careers being pursued by Indigenous Australians.
- 1.2 The Committee undertook an inquiry into positive examples of Indigenous employment to highlight some of the outcomes and identify the factors that have contributed to these successes. The Committee believes that this will provide an insight into opportunities to address many of the long standing issues which have led to Indigenous underparticipation in the employment journey.

# **Referral to the Committee**

1.3 On 14 March 2005, the then Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Senator the Hon Amanda Vanstone, referred to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs the following terms of reference for an inquiry into Indigenous employment:

#### Inquiry into Indigenous Employment

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; and
- (2) assess what significant factors have contributed to those positive outcomes identified, including what contribution practical reconciliation has made.<sup>1</sup>

# **Conduct of the inquiry**

- 1.4 The Committee advertised and sought submissions in March 2005. Additionally the Chairman wrote to the relevant Federal Ministers, all Members of Parliament, State Premiers, Chief Ministers, Aboriginal corporations, organisations and individuals seeking submissions to the inquiry.
- 1.5 The Committee advertised the inquiry several times in *The Australian* and wrote to media outlets throughout Australia. The inquiry has been reported on *Skynews* on a number of occasions.
- 1.6 One hundred and twenty four submissions and 13 supplementary submissions were received in response to the invitations to comment on the terms of reference. A list of submissions received by the Committee is at Appendix A. A list of other documents of relevance to the inquiry that were formally received by the Committee as exhibits is at Appendix B.
- 1.7 The Committee took evidence at public hearings and private briefings from 23 May 2005 until May 2007 (listed in Appendix C) in:
  - Adelaide (SA)
  - Brisbane, Cairns, Weipa and Thursday Island (QLD)
  - Canberra (ACT)
  - Darwin, Alice Springs and Maningrida (NT)
  - Kalgoorlie, Perth, Kununurra and Broome (WA)
  - Melbourne (VIC)
  - Sydney and Bega (NSW).

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<sup>1</sup> The Minister's referral was made pursuant to House Standing Order 215b.

## Indigenous successes

1.8 The Committee received numerous success stories of individuals, Indigenous employment programs, and the establishment of small businesses and enterprises. This Chapter showcases a small sample of these to illustrate the diversity and magnitude of the achievements.

## Definition of successful employment outcomes

1.9 The concept of employment was for some straight forward; 'a job is a job which enables a person to maintain themselves and their family'.<sup>2</sup> There was also a wide range of other interpretations. Therefore, the Committee's approach to what constituted a successful employment outcome was to accept a broad concept that would accommodate most definitions used by the authors of submissions and to focus on the positive outcomes and underlying factors that resulted in these successes. While sustainable employment is the optimal outcome, the Committee accepts advances in relation to training, work readiness or in employment as positive outcomes. The Committee is mindful, however, that the optimal prosperous future for Indigenous Australians lies in employment links with mainstream labour markets.

## Definition of successful Indigenous organisations and enterprises

1.10 In relation to Indigenous organisations, Dr Patrick Sullivan, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, believed that the definition of Indigenous success is the same as everyone else's:

> They want efficient organisations that deliver the services that they set out to deliver; they want them to do it in a fair and balanced manner, and they want their processes to be transparent. They want the outcomes that the rest of us expect: safe communities, things that, as we all know, are sorely lacking in many parts of Australia. So it is not that difficult, I think, to determine what is successful on that basis.<sup>3</sup>

1.11 Dr Dennis Foley defined success based on the banks' classification of a successful small business in entrepreneurship as 'being in business for

<sup>2</sup> Mr Anthony Cutcliffe, Director, The Eureka Project Pty Ltd, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Dr Patrick Sullivan, Visiting Research Fellow, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 September 2005, p. 2.

12 months or more and still showing a profit'.<sup>4</sup> A successful Indigenous business is also:

... not defined by the level of funding or profit gained through the business but in how they can assist in sharing the wealth amongst community, clan or family group members or through the provision of employment provided to its members.<sup>5</sup>

## **Practical reconciliation**

1.12 Practical reconciliation was a term that became part of the Australian Government's policy in early 2000.<sup>6</sup> The Prime Minister described practical reconciliation in the following terms:

National reconciliation calls for more than recognition of the damaging impact on people's lives of the mistaken practices of the past. It also calls for clear focus on the future. It calls for practical policy-making that effectively addresses current indigenous disadvantage particularly in areas such as employment, health, education and housing.<sup>7</sup>

1.13 Dr Boyd Hunter saw practical reconciliation as 'an achievement of, or aspiration towards positive outcomes for Indigenous people relative to other Australians'.<sup>8</sup>

Reconciliation must deliver benefits to all sectors of the community within a framework of Social Justice and Aboriginal Economic Development.<sup>9</sup>

1.14 Mr William Tilmouth described the process of practical reconciliation to the Committee:

You open the doors for us; we will walk through them with gusto.<sup>10</sup>

- 4 Dr Dennis Foley, *Transcript of Evidence*, 23 May 2005, p. 11.
- 5 Queensland Government, Submission No. 105, p. 8.
- 6 For example: Prime Minister the Hon John Howard MP, at the launch of the National Indigenous Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, 29 March 2000, http://www.pm.gov.au/news/speeches/2000/address2903.htm, p. 1, accessed 9 October 2006.
- 7 Prime Minister John Howard, cited in A Pratt, *Practising Reconciliation? The politics of Reconciliation in the Australian Parliament, 1991-2000, 2005, p. 131.*
- 8 Dr Boyd Hunter, Fellow, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 February 2006, p. 13.
- 9 Great Southern Development Commission, *Submission No. 68*, p. 4.

1.15 For the purposes of the current inquiry 'practical reconciliation' has been defined as the achievement of improved outcomes measured by international benchmarks by practical measures rather than symbolic gestures. Specifically, it aims to bridge the divide, between Indigenous and other Australians, in the areas of health, employment, education, housing, law and justice. Participation in the mainstream economy is based on the belief in the value of economic independence derived from a reasonable education and an awareness of the skills needed to participate.

The other process by which you measure the interaction and the reconciliation is by putting in place strategies that are the same as are available to other Australians. So, making sure that Indigenous people have access to a whole range of employment services, whether they be through the Job Network, Indigenous employment programs, the personal support program or other programs.<sup>11</sup>

#### **Overview**

1.16 In many regions the Indigenous population is growing more rapidly than the total population and will therefore provide a higher proportion of the potential workforce of the future.<sup>12</sup> It is important that Indigenous employment opportunities increase at a rate comparable to the increase in the number of Indigenous workers available, particularly at this time because of the skills shortages in many areas.

#### Socio-economic status

1.17 While the focus of this inquiry is on positive examples of Indigenous employment, the interconnectedness with housing, health and education

<sup>10</sup> Mr William Tilmouth, Executive Director, Tangentyere Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, p. 43.

<sup>11</sup> Mr Bob Harvey, Group Manager, Indigenous Employment and Business Group, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Transcript of Evidence*, 22 May 2006, pp. 10-11.

<sup>12</sup> For example, see Barwon Darling Alliance, *Submission No. 57*, p. 2; Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Inc, *Submission No. 101*, pp. 5-6; Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Submission No. 108*, p. 29; Ms Jody Broun, Director General, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, New South Wales, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2006, p. 81; Mrs Kellie McCrum, Superintendent Training and Development, Pilbara Iron, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 October 2005, p. 21; Mr Bruce Harvey, Chief Advisor, Aboriginal and Community Relations, Rio Tinto Ltd, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 34; Minerals Council of Australia, *Submission No. 118*, p. 1.

requires at least a brief comment to provide the context in which the conclusions in this report are reached.

- 1.18 In listening to the concerns in communities, housing, unemployment and education often feature and these are all social determinants of health.<sup>13</sup> Indigenous people remain disadvantaged across a range of areas of social concern compared to non-Indigenous Australians although there has been some progress in the key areas of employment, education, health and housing.<sup>14</sup>
- 1.19 The level of employment of Aboriginal people compared to the wider population is a key social indicator of the economic health and social wellbeing of the communities.<sup>15</sup> In summary, indicators of Indigenous economic and business development show that Indigenous Australians are three times more likely to be unemployed; self-employment levels and home ownership are one third that of non-Indigenous Australians; the median weekly income is less than 60 per cent that of non-Indigenous; and students are half as likely to complete year 12.<sup>16</sup>
- 1.20 Much of the evidence emphasised the interdependencies of a whole range of factors that impact on the potential success of employment initiatives.<sup>17</sup> Action taken to improve Indigenous employment outcomes needs to recognise and address the interrelated factors that can act as barriers to Indigenous employment.<sup>18</sup>
- 13 Mr Jonathon Link, Community Liaison and Development Officer, Mental Health Program, Royal Flying Doctor Service, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 July 2005, p. 52.
- 14 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and Australian Bureau of Statistics, *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples 2005*, pp. xx, 3. Available at: <a href="http://www.abs.gov.au">http://www.abs.gov.au</a>. See also Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, *Social Justice Report 2005*, Report No. 3/2005, p. 10. Available at: <a href="http://www.hreoc.gov.au/Social\_Justice/sjreport05/index.html">http://www.hreoc.gov.au/Social\_Justice/sjreport05/index.html</a>; New South Wales Government, *Submission No. 111*, p. 7.
- 15 Ms Jody Broun, Director General, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, New South Wales, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2006, p. 80.
- 16 Indigenous Business Australia, Submission No. 104, pp. 5-6.
- 17 Mr Wayne Gibbons, Associate Secretary, Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 May 2005, pp. 2-3; Mr Bob Harvey, Group Manager, Indigenous Employment and Business Group, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 August 2005, p. 7; Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, *Submission No. 101*, p. 4; Mr Paul Briggs, President, Rumbalara Football and Netball Club Inc, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 2; Institute for Aboriginal Development, *Submission No. 109*, p. 2; Miss Jenny McGuire, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 40.
- 18 For example, Ms Simone Haynes, Executive General Manger, Human Resources, Voyages Hotels and Resorts, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2005, p. 8; The Allen Consulting Group, Report to the Business Council of Australia, *Indigenous Communities and Australian Businesses – From little things big things grow*, October 2001, p. 103. This report is available at:

Unemployment is a direct impediment to economic participation, independence, health and educational outcomes ... Unemployment is closely linked to alcohol/drug abuse and the likelihood of interaction with the criminal justice system.<sup>19</sup>

#### Welfare dependence

Welfare dependency is an enemy to Indigenous advancement.<sup>20</sup>

- 1.21 The need to address welfare dependency was a persistent theme throughout the inquiry.<sup>21</sup> Ali-Curang Council Association Inc referred to the welfare mentality in that the 'government will always give us money no matter what **so why work!**'.<sup>22</sup>
- 1.22 There needs to be a real incentive to encourage people to move from welfare dependency to full time employment. People will need to benefit from entering employment or a business.<sup>23</sup> In addition to the peer pressure that will act against young Aboriginal people participating in the workforce, these people may have limited knowledge of what the job involves and what vocations are available:

... there is often a negative and/or hostile outlook towards anything non-Aboriginal, that makes it highly unlikely that children will be positive towards employment, or will understand what needs to happen to get into a job and then keep it.<sup>24</sup>

1.23 Mr Warren Mundine described the concept of employment as alien to the culture of those families that have experienced intergenerational unemployment:<sup>25</sup>

We need to look at activities that create sustainable employment in the long-term and in the short-term as well. Sometimes there is nothing wrong with short-term employment, working for a couple

<u>www.bca.com.au/upload/64489\_AllenConsultGroup.pdf</u>. See also Mrs Cheryle Taylor, Chief Executive Officer, Manguri Employment Services, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 2.

- 19 New South Wales Government, Submission No. 111, p. 6.
- 20 Mr Jack Pearson, Submission No. 102, p. 5.
- 21 For example, see Mr Michael Winer, Chief Executive Officer, Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 July 2005, p. 35.
- 22 Ali-Curang Council Association, Submission No. 9, p. 1.
- 23 Mr Dennis Bree, Chairman, Northern Territory Government Task Force on Indigenous Economic Development, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 11.
- 24 Yulella Aboriginal Corporation, *Submission No.* 37, p. 1.
- 25 Mr Warren Mundine, Chief Executive Officer, New South Wales Native Title Services, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 February 2006, p. 30.

of months or two years and then moving on to another employment situation. A lot of people do that quite successfully. This is seen in a number of industries, especially in mining. We need to focus on the activities that get people into sustainable jobs, rather than actually looking at jobs.<sup>26</sup>

1.24 The Government has introduced a number of welfare reforms and will look at further reforms to welfare payments which will lead to employment for Indigenous people and an improvement in their wellbeing.<sup>27</sup> The current approach of the Australian Government is based on the proposition that 'the best form of family income comes from a job rather than a welfare payment' and that people on income support who have the capacity to work should be required to seek work to the level of their capacity.<sup>28</sup> One of the key objectives is the reduction of welfare dependence and an increase in private sector employment participation as this will take advantage of the growing economy.<sup>29</sup>

## Workforce trends

#### Workforce participation

- 1.25 Nationally there are a number of skills shortages and Australia's population is ageing which means that the situation will exacerbate while in many areas the Aboriginal population is younger and growing. There has been some progress in labour force participation rates, however, the rate of participation by Indigenous Australia still remains lower than that for non-Indigenous Australians.<sup>30</sup>
- 1.26 In 2004-2005, the labour force participation rate for Indigenous people was three quarters of that for non-Indigenous Australians (58.5 per cent compared to 78.1 per cent.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Mr Warren Mundine, Chief Executive Officer, New South Wales Native Title Services, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 February 2006, p. 30.

<sup>27</sup> Mr Bob Harvey, Group Manager, Indigenous Employment and Business Group, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Transcript of Evidence*, 22 May 2006, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> The Hon John Howard, Prime Minister, 3 May 2005, Menzies Lecture, *Australian Families: Prosperity, Choice and Fairness,* p. 11.

<sup>29</sup> Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Submission No. 108, p. 30.

<sup>30</sup> Employment rates are a proportion of the labour force and include those who are employed and those who are unemployed and looking for work. They also include CDEP participants unless otherwise stated.

<sup>31</sup> Productivity Commission, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2007 Indigenous Report*, 1 June 2007, Sect 3.5, p. 3.39. Figures adjusted for age difference.

| Year   | Indigenous Australians | Non-Indigenous Australians |
|--------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1971   | 45.6                   | 58.7                       |
| 1976   | 49.5                   | 61.4                       |
| 1981   | 47.3                   | 61.3                       |
| 1986   | 48.3                   | 63.1                       |
| 1991   | 53.5                   | 62.9                       |
| 1996   | 52.7                   | 61.9                       |
| 2001   | 52.1                   | 62.8                       |
| 200533 | 54.0                   | 73.3                       |

 Table 1.1
 Labour force participation rates (percentage) 1971 – 2001<sup>32</sup>

#### Full-time and part-time participation

1.27 The Productivity Commission found that in 2004-2005 Indigenous people in the labour force were more likely to be employed part-time (35.4 per cent compared to 27.7 per cent for non-Indigenous) and less likely to be employed full-time than non-Indigenous people (53.6 per cent compared to 68.5 per cent).<sup>34</sup> The Productivity Commission also found that for Indigenous people 'full time employment decreased with remoteness, while part time employment increased with remoteness' and that participation in Community Development and Employment Projects (CDEP) was a 'significant proportion of Indigenous employment in remote and very remote areas, accounting for 63.5 per cent of Indigenous employment in the public sector and 47.6 per cent of Indigenous employment in the private sector'.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Submission No. 108*, Appendix A, p. 32. DEWR defined participation rate as the proportion of the population who are employed or unemployed – age groups can vary but usually this relates to persons aged 15 and over.

<sup>33</sup> In August 2005, DEWR referred to 54 per cent workforce participation rate for Indigenous people, (15 to 64 years of age) compared to 73.3 per cent for the non-Indigenous population.

<sup>34</sup> Productivity Commission, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2007 Indigenous Report*, 1 June 2007, Sect 11.1, p. 11.3. Figures adjusted for age difference.

<sup>35</sup> Productivity Commission, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2007 Indigenous Report*, 1 June 2007, Sect 11.1, p. 11.3.

#### Public and private sector participation

1.28 Indigenous people were more likely to be employed in the public sector than non-Indigenous people (33.1 per cent of the labour force compared to 16.5 per cent after adjusting for age difference).<sup>36</sup> In the private sector non-Indigenous people were 78.5 per cent and Indigenous people were 54.8 per cent of the labour force (after adjusting for age differences).<sup>37</sup> Further private sector employment for Indigenous people (including CDEP participation) decreased while public sector employment increased with remoteness.<sup>38</sup>

#### **Regional and remote**

- 1.29 In urban areas Indigenous people can access the local labour markets and mainstream opportunities. In some areas of regional and remote Australia, however, labour markets and employment infrastructure are virtually non-existent. In very remote areas in 2004-2005, 35.6 per cent of Indigenous people in the labour force were participating in CDEP.<sup>39</sup>
- 1.30 The Department added that there has been some progress in Indigenous Job Network placements in regional areas where the unemployment rates have been higher historically:

| Table 1.2 | Indigenous J | ob Network Placements |
|-----------|--------------|-----------------------|
|           |              |                       |

| Fiscal Year | Metropolitan | Regional | Remote | Total  |
|-------------|--------------|----------|--------|--------|
| 2004-05     | 12,800       | 23,000   | 3,200  | 39,000 |
| 2005-Apr06  | 11,800       | 22,000   | 3,000  | 36,800 |

*Source DEWR Administrative data, Supplementary Submission No. 108a, p. 3. (Data is 10 months to end of April 2006)* 

<sup>36</sup> Productivity Commission, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators* 2007 *Indigenous Report*, 1 June 2007, Sect 11.1, p. 11.14.

<sup>37</sup> Productivity Commission, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators* 2007 *Indigenous Report*, 1 June 2007, Sect 11.1, p. 11.14.

<sup>38</sup> Productivity Commission, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators* 2007 *Indigenous Report*, 1 June 2007, Sect 11.1, pp. 11.14-11.15.

<sup>39</sup> Productivity Commission, Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2007 Indigenous Report, 1 June 2007, Sect 3.5, p. 3.50.

#### Unemployment

- 1.31 In 2001, Indigenous unemployment was 20 per cent while that of the Australian population was 7.3 per cent.<sup>40</sup> The unemployment rate for Indigenous people fell from 22.9 per cent in 2002 to 15.4 per cent in 2004-2005.<sup>41</sup> Unemployment data for the Australian population for the same period in 2004-2005 was 5.2 per cent.<sup>42</sup> The Productivity Commission reported the unemployment rate for Indigenous people in 2004-2005 as 12.9 per cent compared to 4.4 per cent for non-Indigenous Australians after adjusting for age differences.<sup>43</sup>
- 1.32 The Productivity Commission found that the long-term unemployment rate was five times higher than that for non-Indigenous people (4.7 per cent of the labour force compared to 0.9 per cent after taking into account different age structures).<sup>44</sup> Mr Bob Harvey reported, however, that there were encouraging signs in a reduction in long-term unemployment and the uptake of non-CDEP employment.<sup>45</sup>
- 1.33 There were a number of improvements since 1996 identified in the 2002 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey:
  - Encouraging signs in the reduction of long-term Indigenous unemployment;
  - Very high perceptions of job security among employed Indigenous Australians. Around 88 per cent of employed Indigenous Australians expected to be in the same job in 12 months;
  - A significant proportion of employment growth occurred outside of Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP). Non-CDEP employment accounted for nearly 70 per cent of the increase in total employment for Indigenous employment between 1994 and 2002; and

45 Mr Bob Harvey, Group Manager, Indigenous Employment and Business Group, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 August 2005, p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Supplementary Submission No. 108e,* p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> Mr Bob Harvey, Group Manager, Indigenous Employment and Business Group, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 August 2005, p. 1; DEWR, *Supplementary Submission 108c*, p. 1; *Supplementary Submission No. 108e*, p. 4.

<sup>42</sup> Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Supplementary Submission No. 108e, p. 4.

<sup>43</sup> Productivity Commission, Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2007 Indigenous Report, 1 June 2007, Sect 3.5, p. 3.39.

<sup>44</sup> Productivity Commission, Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2007 Indigenous Report, 1 June 2007, Sect 3.5, p. 3.52.

- The proportion of Indigenous Australians who rely on government pensions and benefits decreased from 55 per cent to 50 per cent in the eight years to 2002.<sup>46</sup>
- 1.34 The Government's current approach has an emphasis on local jobs for local people and is based on increasing the links with education and vocational training and the further development of industry strategies.<sup>47</sup> The Indigenous Economic Development Strategy was launched in November 2005, and has two main approaches; an employment toolkit and an economic development toolkit.<sup>48</sup> There are strategies and activities around work, asset and wealth management and industry strategies including minerals, pastoral, forestry, child care, hospitality, construction and tourism.<sup>49</sup> The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations advised that there was a continuing increase in numbers of Indigenous job seekers finding work:

Job Network placed over 47 900 Indigenous job seekers in work in the 12 months to end January 2007, an 11 per cent increase in work in the 12 months and a new annual record. In the 12 months to end of January 2007, more than 13 300 long term (13 week) jobs were recorded for Indigenous job seekers, an increase in seven per cent on the previous 12 month period and a new annual record.<sup>50</sup>

# Scope of the report

- 1.35 The report focuses on positive examples of Indigenous employment. While the discussion in the report does deal with some negative aspects, this is in the context of providing insight into avenues of improved practice. This report does not rehash these issues which have been extensively covered in other reports and the media.
- 1.36 Approaches to increasing employment options for Indigenous people are many and varied but there is commonality in the successful examples. Chapter 2 refers to some of these successes. Chapter 2 also looks at the range of employment opportunities Indigenous communities are deriving from their land interests, particularly in rural and remote areas. The

<sup>46</sup> Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Submission No. 108, p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> Mr Bob Harvey, Group Manager, Indigenous Employment and Business Group, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 August 2005, p. 4.

<sup>48</sup> Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Submission No. 108, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> Mr Bob Harvey, Group Manager, Indigenous Employment and Business Group, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Transcript of Evidence*, 22 May 2006, pp. 1-2.

<sup>50</sup> Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Submission No. 108d, p. 2.

mining industry is highlighted for its current and future role as a large employer of Indigenous people. The significant contributions of the pastoral sector, construction industry and heritage management, to employment outcomes, are outlined. The successes of the public sector in Indigenous employment are also included in this chapter.

- 1.37 Economic independence relates to opportunities and this is discussed in Chapter 3. Access to capital for entrepreneurs and sustainable businesses was a key issue along with money management, skills and mentoring.
- 1.38 Leadership is another key factor and there has been considerable progress which is outlined in Chapter 4. Mentoring has been shown to be instrumental in many of the success stories and is acknowledged as pivotal to future successes.
- 1.39 Education and training are key factors for future success and are addressed in Chapter 5. There are a number of successful examples but a great deal of work is needed to ensure that more Indigenous people have the opportunity to develop sufficient skills that will provide them with the skill level which can offer economic independence enjoyed by most non-Indigenous Australians.
- 1.40 There are a number of impediments to potentially successful programs which are referred to in Chapter 6. Education and training are of course pivotal to successful outcomes and any future achievements. Literacy and numeracy issues are paramount and therefore school retention and adult education are important. A number of impediments in relation to social factors are also briefly mentioned in Chapter 6.
- 1.41 Chapter 7 looks to the future. This Chapter briefly comments on the whole of community and the role of the whole-of-government approach to service delivery and the various views on the extent to which this has been successful. There has been significant progress in some areas but there remains a long way to go. This inquiry has clearly shown that more of the same will not work and the future does offer great hope.