

*They are lining up and they want to work. That is contrary to what a lot of people locally believe, especially the big employers. They think that our mob just do not want to work; that they have been on the dole and CDEP for too long. These projects are proving that that is wrong because they are definitely lining up.*¹

The positives

2.1 The key motivation for Indigenous employment was described as:

... it is having a job. It is being able to go to work, being part of a team and a community, being independent, getting those wages every week and having that money that they did not have before so that they can buy for the family and provide for the family.²

2.2 The sustainability of Indigenous employment was attributed to an interest in the type of work and financial benefits which enables them to support families and have a lifestyle of their choice.³

A steady job remains the best means of overcoming disadvantage in our society. People in work are financially better off, they acquire skills and experience and they are more closely connected with the communities.⁴

1 Mr John Berto, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Northern Land Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 44.
2 Mrs Kathleen Boyne, Service Manager, Mission Australia Employment Initiatives, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 December 2005, p. 9.
3 Mrs Kellie McCrum, Superintendent Training and Development, Pilbara Iron, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 October 2005, p. 23; Mr Lennis Connors, Community Liaison Officer, Pilbara Iron, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, pp. 23-24.
4 The Hon John Howard, Prime Minister, 3 May 2005, Menzies Lecture, *Australian Families: Prosperity, Choice and Fairness*, p. 12.

Successful Indigenous Employment programs

Private sector employment

- 2.3 The private sector is and will continue to be the driver of future opportunities for Indigenous employment due to the significant skills shortages in many industries. The minerals industry for example is facing severe skills shortages particularly in engineering, construction and operational trades during the current expansion phase.⁵
- 2.4 There are also Indigenous employment programs designed to develop projects with industry such as the Corporate Leaders for Indigenous Employment program.⁶ In the banking industry for example, the National Australia Bank and Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited have a number of initiatives for increasing Indigenous employment and see this as part of their corporate responsibility to the community of Australia.⁷
- 2.5 Self-employment is another growth area. Records show that Indigenous people have about 4.8 per cent business activity compared to non-Indigenous self-employed levels of 16 per cent.⁸ Dr Dennis Foley believes that there is far in excess of this number.⁹ Small business owners would not be required to register their Indigenous background, so this figure cannot be determined.

Opportunities from the land

- 2.6 Utilising Indigenous land interests for the economic gain of Indigenous communities has been the subject of considerable public debate recently. This impetus has underpinned changes to the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act (Northern Territory) 1976 (Commonwealth)* and aspects of the Native Title Reform process. While the issues surrounding native title and land rights are complex, and an exhaustive discussion exceeds the scope of the
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5 Minerals Council of Australia, *Submission No. 118*, p. 1.

6 Mr Bob Harvey, Group Manager, Indigenous Employment and Business Group, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 August 2005, p. 4.

7 Mr Craig Buller, Regional Manager, Engagement and Culture, National Australia Bank, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, pp. 42-44, 46-47; Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited, *Submission No. 71*, pp. 1-2.

8 Dr Dennis Foley, *Transcript of Evidence*, 23 May 2005, p. 3.

9 Dr Dennis Foley, *Transcript of Evidence*, 16 October 2006, p. 10.

Committee's inquiry, this chapter explores positive examples of employment opportunities for Indigenous communities derived from their land interests.

Minerals industry

2.7 In the minerals industry, 60 per cent of their operations have neighbouring Indigenous communities.¹⁰ The mining industry has a vested interest in Indigenous land and communities; many resources are located on Indigenous land interests and companies need workers.

If skills are one of the capacity constraints then that, of course, will moderate our capacity to take advantage of the opportunities on the back of the supercycle driven by the industrialisation and urbanisation of developing economies, particularly in Asia. We see a significant opportunity which exists in developing a skilled Indigenous workforce that can capitalise on the employment and business opportunities in those regions ...¹¹

2.8 For many remote communities where the job market is weakest, the mining industry is the largest private sector employer,¹² a trend which seems set to continue. The Yamatji Marlpa Barna Baba Maaja Aboriginal Corporation submitted that:

There is no doubt that there have been two significant developments in Western Australia in the past ten years for Aboriginal people – the Native Title Act and the resources boom.¹³

2.9 The Minerals Council of Australia (MCA) told the Committee:

We provide a diverse range of employment opportunities across the professions, skills and services. We are currently the largest employer of Indigenous Australians in Australia, with around five per cent of our workforce being Indigenous Australians. As the provider of the only significant mainstream economic activity in most of the rural and regional Indigenous communities, we recognise that not only are we in a good position but that we can

10 Mr Mitchell Hooke, Chief Executive Officer, Minerals Council of Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 February 2006, p. 1.

11 Mr Mitchell Hooke, Chief Executive Officer, Minerals Council of Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 February 2006, p. 1.

12 Mr Mitchell Hooke, Chief Executive Officer, Minerals Council of Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 February 2006, p. 1.

13 Yamatji Marlpa Barna Baba Maaja Aboriginal Corporation, *Submission No. 98*, p. 3.

actually do more to increase the positive benefits to Indigenous communities from our activities.¹⁴

2.10 In June 2005 the MCA and the Australian Government signed a five year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) designed to increase Indigenous participation in mining.¹⁵ The MCA has undertaken to increase employment and economic outcomes for Indigenous communities, while the Government is tasked with improving service delivery.

2.11 In February 2006, mineral companies had entered into over 350 agreements with Indigenous groups across 200 minerals operations.¹⁶ Numerous types of agreements, such as native title, heritage and land use agreements, have been reached. Many of these agreements have included employment and training provisions.¹⁷

2.12 The Committee was told that native title legislation has provided the strategic framework for employment opportunities:

Real opportunities exist for Indigenous employment through the native title future act process. As such, it considers that employment and training are outcomes that should be at the heart of future act negotiations with mining companies and other proponents ... Additionally, agreements with mining companies often have the result of wealth flowing, through traditional owners, to the rural and regional community at large.¹⁸

2.13 The Committee received some positive and promising evidence on the jobs that were being leveraged from exploration, mining and other developments by Indigenous communities, despite concerns about the efficacy of agreements to deliver benefits.¹⁹ The South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy (SACOME) was very positive about the processes that had been developed in South Australia to expedite exploration Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUA)s across the state:

14 Mr Mitchell Hooke, Chief Executive Officer, Minerals Council of Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 February 2006, p. 1.

15 The Minerals Council of Australia, MOU between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Minerals Council of Australia, *Exhibit No. 146*, pp. 1-3.

16 Mr Mitchell Hooke, Chief Executive Officer, Minerals Council of Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 February 2006, p. 3.

17 Professor Marcia Langton, *Submission No. 66*, pp. 2-5.

18 Yamatji Marlpa Barna Baba Maaja Aboriginal Corporation, *Submission No. 98*, p. 2.

19 For example O'Faircheallaigh C, 'Indigenous Participation in Environmental Management of Mining Projects: the role of negotiated agreements', *Environmental Politics*, Vol. 14 (4), November 2005, pp. 629-647.

They are demonstrably more effective than litigation, particularly in building future relationships.²⁰

Rio Tinto Ltd

- 2.14 Since 1996, the Rio Tinto Group has signed seven mine and 60 exploration agreements with Indigenous groups resulting in an estimated \$400 million being invested into communities.²¹ Rio Tinto currently has 700 Indigenous employees which equates to 7 per cent of their work force.²²
- 2.15 The Committee views Rio Tinto's Argyle Diamond Mine's Indigenous Employment Strategy as a 'best practice model'. The company focuses on recruiting locally, and has set high targets for Indigenous employment and retention. Since 2000 Aboriginal employment has gone from less than five per cent to 23 per cent. Targets have been reset and it is hoped that by 2010, 40 per cent of the workforce will be Aboriginal. Argyle attributes its success to two strategies:
- A four day hiring and selection process which is culturally appropriate but still provides a robust assessment of candidates' employability; and
 - Training programs to skill-up Indigenous people, so that they can assist with the development of their communities. In 2003 Argyle entered into a contract with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) to employ 150 trainees, which has resulted in 73 apprentices and trainees. Additionally, the mine's procurement contracts require contractors to employ local Indigenous people.²³
- 2.16 Through a Shared Responsibility Agreement (SRA), the Australian Government and the involved Indigenous communities are also working to improve employment outcomes from the Argyle Diamond Mine. An education and training fund has been sponsored jointly by the Australian Government and the Gelganyem Trust, which draws on royalties received through the Argyle Diamond ILUA. The support provided by the trust will include funding for tertiary scholarships, educational travel, traineeships and boarding fees.²⁴

20 South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy, *Submission No. 89*, p. 1.

21 Rio Tinto Ltd, *Submission No. 80*, p. 6.

22 Rio Tinto Ltd, *Submission No. 80*, pp. 8-9.

23 Rio Tinto Ltd, *Submission No. 80*, pp. 9, 23.

24 Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, *Supplementary Submission No. 73a*, Attachment B; Agreements Database, Gelganyem 'Education and Training' Shared Responsibility Agreement (SRA) (2005), <http://www.atns.net.au/biogs/A002885b.htm>, (accessed 5 September 2006).

The Northern Land Council

- 2.17 The Northern Land Council's (NLC) 'Employment and Training Service' provides another good example of how employment opportunities can be leveraged through ILUAs.²⁵ In 2000, the NLC negotiated an ILUA with Adrail which created 50 Indigenous employment places. By 2002 the NLC had placed 150 people in employment. To date, the NLC has signed four ILUAs with developers (all of which have employment provisions) and they are negotiating numerous others.
- 2.18 The NLC work to a set of 'guiding principles' which ensures that developers commit to the provision of real jobs, and treat the NLC and Indigenous employees as an equal partner.²⁶ The key factors include the provision of comprehensive information, mentoring programs and support from management. Jobs are offered first to traditional owners, then to Aboriginal groups affected by a development and finally to other Aboriginal people.²⁷

Larrakia Development Corporation

- 2.19 In 2001 the Larrakia Development Corporation (LDC) negotiated with the Northern Territory Government to forgo their native title claim over Rosebery, Bellamack and Archer, in return for having first option to buy the land for residential sub-division.²⁸ Subsequently, the LDC has successfully developed the land and repaid the \$1.2 million borrowed. Mr Gregory Constantine, from the LDC, told the Committee:

The benefit of that is that we have been employing Larrakia through a number of different subcontractors and our civil contractors. We currently have eight Larrakia and other Indigenous people employed on-site. As a result of that, we have created over 70 other jobs in other industries through our direct contracts. Through Wickham Point we struck a deal with Bechtel and Konica Philips. They currently have 101 or 102 Larrakia and other non-Larrakia working on-site out there.²⁹

25 Northern Land Council, *Submission No. 103*, pp. 2-7.

26 Northern Land Council, *Submission No. 103*, p. 3.

27 Northern Land Council, *Submission No. 103*, p. 3.

28 Mr Gregory Constantine, Chief Executive Officer, Larrakia Development Corporation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 71.

29 Mr Gregory Constantine, Chief Executive Officer, Larrakia Development Corporation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 71.

- 2.20 Currently, the LDC is involved in the development of other land parcels over which they have relinquished native title.³⁰

Indigenous Land Corporation

- 2.21 The Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) is a Commonwealth statutory authority. The ILC assists with the acquisition and management of land with the purpose of providing economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits to Indigenous people.³¹ In their submission, the ILC highlighted their land acquisitions, pastoral program and the corporation's employment record, as furthering Indigenous employment.³²
- 2.22 The ILC has a stringent application process for land acquisition. Applicants must define their reason for acquiring the land and demonstrate their 'commitment and capacity to achieve their aspirations'.³³ The ILC retains the title of purchased land and it is leased by applicants.
- 2.23 The ILC's primary land management initiative is the Indigenous Pastoral Program (IPP). The IPP was established in 2003 with the signing of an MOU between the Northern Territory Government, the ILC, and the Northern and Central Land Councils.³⁴ The ILC submitted that at the time, the organisation was the nineteenth largest cattle producer in Australia, running approximately 38 000 head of cattle.³⁵

Managing cultural and natural heritage

- 2.24 Cultural and natural heritage management is a growing area of employment for Indigenous people. Jobs undertaken in this area include:
- participation in heritage clearance work to comply with state and Federal heritage legislation;
 - employment resulting from the joint management of national parks; and

30 Mr Gregory Constantine, Chief Executive Officer, Larrakia Development Corporation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 71.

31 Indigenous Land Corporation, *Submission No. 63*, p. 1.

32 Indigenous Land Corporation, *Submission No. 63*, pp. 1-4.

33 Indigenous Land Corporation, *Submission No. 63*, p. 1.

34 Indigenous Land Corporation, *Submission No. 63a*, p. 2.

35 Indigenous Land Corporation, *Submission No. 63*, p. 3.

- working to manage the natural and cultural assets on Indigenous sea and land interests and in other remote areas.³⁶
- 2.25 The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry provided the Committee with examples of bushcare and coastal monitoring projects.³⁷ The Committee noted the forestry program on the Tiwi Islands and the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation Marine Rangers.³⁸ Positive aspects of these projects have the potential to be replicated in other areas.

Construction on Indigenous land

2.26 Through the inclusion of Indigenous employment quotas in procurement guidelines, state governments are using their purchasing power to increase Indigenous participation in the construction industry. The evidence received by the Committee is outlined below. The associated training needs are discussed in Chapter 5 of this report.

2.27 The New South Wales Government told the Committee that construction provided an important opportunity for private sector employment.³⁹ To this end the New South Wales Government has developed Aboriginal housing and construction guidelines:⁴⁰

The government construction contracts must employ Aboriginal workers and engage Aboriginal contractors when the building is for Aboriginal community use or located in a region where there is a high Aboriginal population.⁴¹

2.28 In the case of Aboriginal housing a 'single select tender process' is used to encourage Aboriginal contractors to undertake the work:

Aboriginal builders submit a tender, including a price. The tender, the builder's capacity and financial credentials are reviewed using the same criteria applied to mainstream builders. The tender price may also be compared to mainstream builders for comparable

36 Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community Council, *Submission No. 91*, pp. 1-2; Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, *Submission No. 100*, pp. 1-3 and *Supplementary Submission 100a*, pp. 1-22; ACT Government, *Submission No. 60*, pp. 5-6; Alice Springs Desert Park, *Submission No. 84*, pp. 1-4.

37 Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, *Supplementary Submission No. 100a*, pp. 1-22.

38 Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, *Supplementary Submission No. 100a*, pp. 1-2.

39 Ms Jody Broun, Director General, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2005, pp. 82-83.

40 New South Wales Government, *Submission No. 111*, pp. 16-17.

41 Ms Jody Broun, Director General, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2005, p. 83.

work in the same locality. However, it is recognised that a higher tender price reflects the greater difficulties Aboriginal builders face in commencing and operating their enterprises, including meeting training needs. So, if the price is no greater than 10% of mainstream prices the tender is accepted, the builder is engaged for a trial period.⁴²

2.29 The Queensland Government requires 20 per cent local Indigenous employment on government funded capital works undertaken in Indigenous communities.⁴³

2.30 The Northern Territory Government, in partnership with the Commonwealth, have funded the Indigenous Housing Authority of the Northern Territory (IHANT). Mr Dennis Bree told the Committee:

What IHANT did with the support of the two governments was to guarantee a four- or five-year building program ... In the past, the excuse has always been, 'We can't train people through to apprenticeships because we only have a contract that'll last 12 months or 18 months.' So we have broken through that policy barrier. We are now expanding it to all Northern Territory government procurement in the bush, so that all procurement in the bush will be linked to longer term programs and Indigenous employment, either through traditional contracting methods or by contracting directly with communities.⁴⁴

2.31 In Central Australia, IHANT contracts Tangentyere Constructions to train building apprentices and oversee the construction of homes by apprentices. Approximately 70 per cent of the housing construction is undertaken by apprentices. Tangentyere Constructions employ qualified builder trainers and many apprentices are involved through the Structured Training and Employment Projects (STEP) or access CDEP top up.⁴⁵ Upon completion of apprenticeships, Indigenous builders can provide maintenance services in their communities or form mobile building teams to pursue employment opportunities elsewhere.⁴⁶

From the lessons drawn from our experiences we propose
comprehensive employment generation through an import

42 New South Wales Government, *Submission No. 111*, p. 17.

43 Queensland Government, *Submission No. 105*, p. 4.

44 Mr Dennis Bree, Chairman, Northern Territory Government Task Force on Indigenous Economic Development, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 7.

45 Tangentyere Council, *Submission No. 69*, pp. 4-5.

46 Mr Bob Harvey, Group Manager, Indigenous Employment and Business Group, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 August 2005, p. 18.

substitution model such as the successful central remote model for housing construction. This needs to be implemented across all areas of service provision, including roads and civil construction; stores; community services such as child care and aged care; essential services; financial services such as banking; administration, education and health.⁴⁷

- 2.32 The Committee acknowledges that engaging Indigenous people in the construction industry has the dual function of providing employment and assisting communities to become self sufficient. Thus, in turn the Committee supports state and territory governments' initiatives to actively encourage Indigenous involvement in the construction of houses and infrastructure on Indigenous land interests, and hopes that the lessons learnt can be transposed to other areas of service delivery.

Examples of successful organisations, enterprises and programs

- 2.33 The *Umoona Aged Care Aboriginal Corporation* runs the Aged Care Program within the Residential Care facility at Coober Pedy in outback South Australia which includes a bush camp for traditional elders. All members of the Aboriginal Community Board are Aboriginal Elders who set the values and priorities for the service.⁴⁸ The recruitment and retention rates for staff are high because the work is highly valued by the community and the 'sense of team is positive'.⁴⁹
- 2.34 Gavin and Alan Flick run a tourist art and craft store at Darling Harbour. When they first decided to go into business, they built up \$8,000 in working capital by creating rock art and selling it door-to-door. That capital provided the seed funding for a shop at The Rocks, and the business grew from there.⁵⁰
- 2.35 Vicki Docherty has built a successful business producing toy bears in New South Wales. Having originally established *Chester Bear Cottage*, run from her home in Newcastle, Vicki went on to establish a retail outlet called

47 Mr William Tilmouth, Executive Director, Tangentyere Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, p. 28.

48 Umoona Aged Care Aboriginal Corporation, *Submission No. 31*, p. 2.

49 Umoona Aged Care Aboriginal Corporation, *Submission No. 31*, p. 3.

50 Dr Dennis Foley, *Transcript of Evidence*, 23 May 2005, p. 13.

Golly Gosh. In 2004, she expanded the business by opening another retail outlet in a Newcastle shopping mall.⁵¹

- 2.36 The *Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA)* was established in 1980 to promote Aboriginal culture, language, dance and music 'while generating economic benefits such as training and employment of Aboriginal people in order for them to progress into the mainstream employment market'.⁵² CAAMA comprises Radio Broadcasting, Remote Aboriginal Communities Broadcasting Service, CAAMA Music, CAAMA Technical Services, CAAMA Shops, CAAMA Productions and *Imparja Televisions Pty Ltd*.⁵³
- 2.37 *Narana Creations* is an Aboriginal cultural education tourism centre in Grovedale, Victoria. Products sold include Indigenous art and craft, bush foods, and cultural education programs. *Narana Creations* has been named best Indigenous operation in Victoria for three consecutive years and is continuing to grow, with increasing numbers of visitors to the centre, cultural education programs provided to local and overseas students, and the establishment of an Indigenous café.⁵⁴
- 2.38 Joint ventures provide an opportunity to involve the private sector in economic development opportunities. The Tasmanian Investment Corporation (TIC) was formed in 1992. Through a joint venture vehicle with Indigenous Business Australia (IBA), TIC purchased the Burnie Shopping Complex, a 50 per cent interest in the Marine Culture Unit Trust that operates two oyster producing leases, and a 50 per cent interest in Gordon River Cruises. TIC has been able to repay its commercial loans from IBA and take full equity positions in each of the businesses. It has since sold the Burnie Shopping Complex to acquire more investments for its members.⁵⁵
- 2.39 Indigenous community members with relevant skills are well placed to win contracts for the delivery of community services in remote areas.⁵⁶ In New South Wales, an Indigenous woman developed a successful business, Red Earth Hair Studio in Lightning Ridge, with the assistance of the

51 New South Wales Government, *Submission No. 111*, p. 20.

52 Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, *Submission No. 32*, p. 1.

53 Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, *Submission No. 32*, pp. 1-2.

54 *Narana Creations*, *Submission No. 114*.

55 Indigenous Business Australia, *Submission No. 104*, p. 14.

56 Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Submission No. 108*, p. 29.

- Indigenous Self Employment Program Trial, conducted under the auspices of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.⁵⁷
- 2.40 Koori Business Network (KBN) has been another success story. During the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne, KBN had almost 200 Indigenous business people go through their doors, the majority of whom were in the arts area.⁵⁸ Art is important because of the link with culture and the potential to link this with cabinet making and other trades has seen the standard of art rising as the Indigenous art community mixes more.⁵⁹
- 2.41 The Indigenous Stock Exchange is also an excellent innovation for supporting the development of Indigenous businesses. It is an online forum where Indigenous businesses of all sizes can advertise ideas and proposals for viewing by potential sponsors, investors and mentors.⁶⁰
- 2.42 Another excellent example of a successful Indigenous enterprise is Carey Mining, a wholly-owned Aboriginal company that has been operating for over 10 years, and has employed hundreds of Aboriginal people. It is a contracting company that offers mining and other services. The company has assisted other Indigenous people with starting up.⁶¹
- 2.43 Ngarda Civil and Mining also has 130 Aboriginal people earning significant salaries out of a staff of 160 people.⁶² Employees are now being poached by other companies.
- 2.44 Yarnteen received a government grant a decade ago to set up a small grain business in a country town. The business has subsequently repaid the grant and expanded to become a major regional grain handler, which is Indigenous owned and managed.⁶³
- 2.45 Murrin Bridge Wines is Australia's first Aboriginal community-owned vineyard, begun nine years ago at Murrin Bridge near Lake Cargelligo. The label is performing well in the domestic market following a bronze

57 Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Submission No. 108*, p. 20.

58 Dr Dennis Foley, *Transcript of Evidence*, 16 October 2006, p. 2.

59 Dr Dennis Foley, *Transcript of Evidence*, 16 October 2006, pp. 7-8.

60 Indigenous Stock Exchange, <www.isx.org.au> (accessed 24 February 2006).

61 Mr Daniel Tuckey, Carey Mining, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 October 2005, p. 42.

62 Mr Ron Morony, General Manager, Indigenous Business Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 August 2005, p. 25.

63 Mr Wayne Gibbons, Associate Secretary, Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 May 2005, p. 3; Indigenous Business Australia, *Submission No. 104*, p. 19.

medal win at the Wagga Wine Show 2005 and successful release of Murrin Bridge Chardonnay and Shiraz.⁶⁴

- 2.46 Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships (IEP) also provided a range of examples of successful Indigenous enterprises, including a bus shuttle service between two communities, and businesses providing services in earthmoving, brick making, timber harvesting, native bee honey collecting, a houseboat, and a number of different tourism enterprises.⁶⁵
- 2.47 Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES) is a company operated and managed by Aboriginal people which works with business to find employment for Aboriginal people.⁶⁶ Aboriginal guards employed by Woolworths in Moree are seen by the community as protecting Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the Moree community. Ms Cathy Duncan believes that this is successful because it is returning 'the warriors' back to a position of protector of all in the community.⁶⁷
- 2.48 Cairns and District Regional Housing Corporation (CDHRC) achieve a 70 per cent Indigenous labour component on average for their programs.⁶⁸ CDHRC sees the creation of employment opportunities through money spent on housing.⁶⁹ Where possible they employ local people to undertake maintenance and repair work.⁷⁰
- ...we are a best practice business whose board of directors just so happens to be Indigenous and whose customers just so happen to be Indigenous.⁷¹
- 2.49 Department of Defence through NORFORCE employs 270 Indigenous soldiers. Soldiers are from rural and remote communities and NORFORCE is based on the Army Reserve model.⁷² NORFORCE's role is to provide reconnaissance and surveillance. The Aboriginal community

64 'Real Aussie bush wine the dream for Murrin', *Area News*, Griffith NSW, 9 January 2006, p. 8.

65 Mr Michael Winer, Chief Executive Officer, Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 July 2005, p. 31.

66 Ms Cathy Duncan, Director, Culture and Reputation, Aboriginal Employment Strategy, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 February 2006, p. 2.

67 Ms Cathy Duncan, Director, Culture and Reputation, Aboriginal Employment Strategy, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 February 2006, p. 11.

68 Mr Jack Szydzik, *Transcript of Evidence*, 15 May 2007, p. 11.

69 Mr Jack Szydzik, *Transcript of Evidence*, 15 May 2007, p. 11.

70 Mr Jack Szydzik, *Transcript of Evidence*, 15 May 2007, p. 16.

71 Mr Jack Szydzik, *Transcript of Evidence*, 15 May 2007, p. 17.

72 Lieutenant Colonel Richard Parker, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 September 2006, p. 1.

- assistance project run at Borooloola has resulted in McArthur River Mining employing young people who were trained in that project.⁷³
- 2.50 In New South Wales, Aboriginal small business operators are in construction, retail, property and business services, manufacturing and agriculture, forestry and fishing industries.⁷⁴ There are a number of programs operated by the NSW Department of State and Regional Development.⁷⁵
- 2.51 The Euraba Paper Company is a successful story which started out as a group of women from Toomelah Mission wanting to start an enterprise, and has evolved into a business making paper for stationery, art, cards and certificates that employs 10 people and exports internationally.⁷⁶ Other successful enterprises include Yamagurra in Brewarrina.⁷⁷
- 2.52 A college in Gordonvale provides a travelling hair care service to remote communities in the Cape. The service has had a positive effect in these communities and is now recruiting young people to obtain certification and take their skills back to their communities to set up businesses there.⁷⁸
- 2.53 Amanbidji Station is a project to restore Indigenous land to a pastoral productive venture. The program was developed through the combined efforts of land councils, primary industry group, the Indigenous Land Corporation and employment and training to provide persistent, long term support.⁷⁹
- 2.54 The Arnhemland Progress Association has five member communities and a Board of Directors comprising of Indigenous representatives from the communities, employs 200 Indigenous people, 140 staff have certificate level qualifications. The stores have an annual turn-over of \$30 million with \$4 million returned to the communities in the form of wages, store

73 Lieutenant Colonel Richard Parker, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 September 2006, pp. 11-12.

74 New South Wales Government, *Submission No. 111*, p. 18.

75 New South Wales Government, *Submission No. 111*, p. 19.

76 Ms Jody Broun, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, New South Wales, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2005, p. 89.

77 New South Wales Government, *Submission No. 111*, p. 20.

78 Mr Johnathan Link, Royal Flying Doctors Service, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 July 2005, p. 53.

79 Mr Dennis Bree, Chairman, Northern Territory Government Task Force on Indigenous Economic Development, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 4.

improvements and benevolent programs.⁸⁰ A store committee for each community determines how the profits are spent in their community.⁸¹

- 2.55 Indigenous entrepreneurs have developed successful aquaculture, agriculture, tourism and arts industries.⁸² The Caring for Country program operated by the Northern Land Council provides services to the quarantine service and to parks and wildlife, developing a wild food collection, growing of traditional foods, providing turtles for aquariums and other activities that are economically productive.⁸³ There are about 500 people involved but there is a potential for three to four times that number.⁸⁴
- 2.56 *RW and ML Hookey Contracting* was established in 1998 with 3 employees and one truck. The company now has 25 employees and over 40 pieces of equipment and contracts include Century Mines.⁸⁵
- 2.57 *Guurbi Tours*, in Hope Vale, is a successful tourist enterprise developed by Mr Wilfred (Willie) Gordon. The tour uses rock art to encourage tourists to reflect on their own identity and sense of belonging. The tour has had some very positive feedback and a large operator to Cape York changed its itinerary specifically to include *Guurbi Tours*.⁸⁶

Public sector

Australian Public Service

- 2.58 The Australian Public Service Commission has developed the *APS Employment and Capability Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees*, which has five parts.⁸⁷ Fifty seven per cent of APS Indigenous

80 Mr Alastair King, General Manager, Arnhemland Progress Association Inc, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, pp. 52-53; Arnhemland Progress Association Inc, *Submission No. 24*.

81 Reverend Dr Djinyini Goondarra, Chairman, Arnhemland Progress Association Inc, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 57.

82 Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Submission No. 108*, p. 29.

83 Mr Dennis Bree, Chairman, Northern Territory Government Task Force on Indigenous Economic Development, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 3.

84 Mr Dennis Bree, Chairman, Northern Territory Government Task Force on Indigenous Economic Development, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 6.

85 RW and ML Hookey Contracting, www.hookeycontracting-mtisa.com.au/about.html, accessed 2 April 2007.

86 Judy Bennett & Wilfred Gordon, 'Social Capital and the Indigenous Entrepreneur' (2005/2006) *Australian Prospect*, Summer, pp. 17-18.

87 Ms Lynne Tacy, Deputy Commissioner, Australian Public Service Commission, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 May 2006, p. 1.

employees are in capital cities, 9 per cent in metropolitan areas, 22 per cent in rural and 13 per cent in remote areas.⁸⁸

- 2.59 The Committee received a number of submissions from Australian Government Departments showcasing their successful Indigenous employment programs. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has an *Indigenous Recruitment and Career Development Strategy 2004-2007*. In May 2005, DFAT had 35 Indigenous employees and has established an Indigenous Task Force to provide a forum to discuss issues with senior management. DFAT recruits through general recruitment, the National Indigenous Cadetship Program, Graduate Trainee Program, Corporate and Financial Management Trainee and has three identified Indigenous positions.⁸⁹
- 2.60 The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry employs 23 Indigenous officers in the Northern Australian Quarantine Strategy to protect Australia from the entry of exotic pests, diseases and weeds.⁹⁰
- 2.61 Indigenous employees in the Department of Education, Science and Training constitute 9.8 per cent of the total staffing.⁹¹ DEST has the highest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the APS.⁹² The *Yarrangi Plan* is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment and Career Development Plan which provides a broad framework for recruitment and career progression and support for Indigenous employees.⁹³

Australian Capital Territory

- 2.62 The higher level of participation in the ACT reflects better engagement and skills than is the case nationally. For example 19.7 per cent of people over the age of 15 have a degree.⁹⁴ Indigenous incomes in the ACT are comparable to those of non-Indigenous people nationally but lag behind non-Indigenous people in the ACT.⁹⁵

88 Ms Ngaire Hosking, Group Manager, Evaluation, Australian Public Service Commission, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 May 2006, p. 5.

89 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Submission No. 86*, pp. 1-2.

90 Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, *Submission No. 100*, p. 1.

91 Department of Education, Science and Training, *Submission No. 107*, p. 17.

92 Ms Ngaire Hosking, Group Manager, Evaluation, Australian Public Service Commission, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 May 2006, p. 6.

93 Department of Education, Science and Training, *Submission No. 107*, p. 17.

94 Australian Capital Territory Government, *Submission No. 60*, pp. 1-2.

95 Australian Capital Territory Government, *Submission No. 60*, p. 1.

- 2.63 The ACT public service has as a priority the improvement of employment opportunities to enhance the skills and experience of Indigenous people and set an example for industry.⁹⁶ The government is committed to establishing an Indigenous Business Support Officer within Business ACT to facilitate Indigenous business access to mainstream programs, providing seminars and networking opportunities for Indigenous businesses and the inclusion of cultural awareness training for relevant staff.⁹⁷

Northern Territory

- 2.64 The Northern Territory Task Force on Indigenous Economic Development was established as a high level coordinating body comprising representatives from the Northern Territory Government, the Australian Government, Indigenous organisations and the private sector. The Task Force has developed the Northern Territory Indigenous Economic Development Strategy.⁹⁸
- 2.65 Six per cent of the Northern Territory public sector identify as Indigenous, however, 28 per cent of the population is Indigenous.⁹⁹ This represents a 40 per cent increase since 2002 when the Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy was introduced.¹⁰⁰ Other initiatives in the Northern Territory include a public sector Indigenous employment toolkit, the Kigaruk Indigenous Men's Leadership Development Program, the Lookrukin Indigenous Women's Leadership Development program and the Indigenous Employment Forums.¹⁰¹

It cannot be emphasised enough that a critical part of the approach has been the strong and clear message to agencies that Indigenous employment must be mainstream. Simply tacking it on as an add-on to core business is not going to work. History shows that.¹⁰²

96 Australian Capital Territory Government, *Submission No. 60*, p. 4.

97 Australian Capital Territory Government, *Submission No. 60*, pp. 3-4.

98 Mr Dennis Bree, Chairman, Northern Territory Government Task Force on Indigenous Economic Development, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 1.

99 Ms Ah Chin, Principal Advisor Indigenous Policy, Office of Commissioner for Public Employment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 19.

100 Ms Ah Chin, Principal Advisor Indigenous Policy, Office of Commissioner for Public Employment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 19.

101 Ms Ah Chin, Principal Advisor Indigenous Policy, Office of Commissioner for Public Employment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 20.

102 Ms Ah Chin, Principal Advisor Indigenous Policy, Office of Commissioner for Public Employment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 20.

- 2.66 The Northern Territory Public Service (NTPS) *Indigenous Employment & Career Development Strategy 2002-2006* requires bi-annual progress reports to Cabinet from agencies.¹⁰³ The Commissioner reports on cultural diversity, recruitment and retention, career development and management and leadership and the information on Equal Employment Opportunity data is collected on Census days for agencies.¹⁰⁴ These reports have been a significant factor in the increase in the number of Indigenous employment policies and programs across the NTPS.¹⁰⁵
- 2.67 Other initiatives include the Indigenous Policy Capacity Building Program, secondment and job exchange programs, forums for CEOs and Indigenous employees, Indigenous media advertising, appropriate selection practices and the ongoing promotion and marketing of Indigenous employment initiatives.¹⁰⁶

Queensland

- 2.68 Partnerships Queensland is a strategic policy framework for Indigenous matters. The policy objectives are strong families, strong culture, safe place, healthy living and skilled and prosperous people and communities.¹⁰⁷ This brings together a business approach 'based on partnerships, community engagement, improved governance, better performance, more accountable service providers and shared responsibility'.¹⁰⁸ The Queensland Government is in partnerships with industry, employer groups, unions and Indigenous communities to build private and community sector commitment to employing Indigenous people.¹⁰⁹ One such opportunity is land use agreement developments.¹¹⁰

103 Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment, *Submission No. 33*, p. 1.

104 Ms Ah Chin, Principal Advisor Indigenous Policy, Office of Commissioner for Public Employment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 20; Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment, *Submission No. 33*, p. 3.

105 Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment, *Submission No. 33*, p. 1.

106 Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment, *Submission No. 33*, p. 3

107 Mr Bernie Carlon, General Manager, Employment and Indigenous Initiatives, Queensland Department of Employment and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 1; Queensland Government, *Submission No. 105*, p. 3.

108 Mr Bernie Carlon, General Manager, Employment and Indigenous Initiatives, Queensland Department of Employment and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 1; Queensland Government, *Submission No. 105*, p. 3.

109 Mr Ron Weatherall, Executive Director, Employment and Indigenous Initiatives, Queensland Department of Employment and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 15.

110 Mr Ron Weatherall, Executive Director, Employment and Indigenous Initiatives, Queensland Department of Employment and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 15.

- 2.69 The key elements in relation to the skilled and prosperous people and communities are leadership and capacity building, education and training, employment and the economy.¹¹¹ The Queensland government has assigned champions from the CEO level to particular Indigenous communities.¹¹²
- 2.70 Under the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle (BUC) program, 8247 Indigenous people (which is 61.9 per cent of those assisted), were still in employment twelve months later.¹¹³ By combining the BUC program with CDEP people are able to undertake a 12 month traineeship rather than two days per week.¹¹⁴ The Indigenous Employment and Training Support Program provides culturally appropriate support and the completion rates for Indigenous apprentices and trainees are nearly normal completion rates.¹¹⁵ The BUC program includes the Indigenous Employment and Training Managers Program and the Indigenous Employment Policy for Queensland Government Building and Civil Construction Projects.¹¹⁶

In 1986 Indigenous unemployment was 34 and non-Indigenous unemployment was 11 per cent. In 2001 Indigenous unemployment had dropped to 20 per cent, a drop of 14 per cent. In 2001 non-Indigenous unemployment had dropped to 8.2 per cent, so that had only dropped three per cent.¹¹⁷

New South Wales

- 2.71 The *Two Ways Together* has a coordinating role in priority areas such as economic development, culture, heritage, justice and education in the whole-of-government actions.¹¹⁸ Cluster groups have been established. The Economic Development cluster group includes federal and state

111 Mr Bernie Carlon, General Manager, Employment and Indigenous Initiatives, Queensland Department of Employment and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 1.

112 Mr Ron Weatherall, Executive Director, Employment and Indigenous Initiatives, Queensland Department of Employment and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 6.

113 Mr Bernie Carlon, General Manager, Employment and Indigenous Initiatives, Queensland Department of Employment and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 4; Queensland Government, *Submission No. 105*, p. 4.

114 Mr Bernie Carlon, General Manager, Employment and Indigenous Initiatives, Queensland Department of Employment and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 6.

115 Mr Bernie Carlon, General Manager, Employment and Indigenous Initiatives, Queensland Department of Employment and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 4.

116 Queensland Government, *Submission No. 105*, p. 4.

117 Mr Kelvin Tytherleigh, Manager, Organisational Development and Governance Unit, Caboolture Shire Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 35.

118 Ms Jody Broun, Director General, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, New South Wales, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2006, p. 81.

agencies and peak Aboriginal bodies and focuses on employment, enterprise development, asset utilisation and training and skills development.¹¹⁹ The employment priority actions include Aboriginal participation in self-employment and public and private sector employment.¹²⁰

- 2.72 There are also Government strategies to increase Indigenous employment in the private sector.¹²¹ Government construction contracts in Aboriginal communities or in regions where there is a high Aboriginal population are required to employ Aboriginal workers and engage Aboriginal contractors through the *Aboriginal Participation in Construction Guidelines*.¹²² Other contracts can also have the guidelines applied.¹²³ The *New Procurement Opportunities for Aboriginal Enterprises Pilot Program* links State Government procurement with Aboriginal enterprises.¹²⁴
- 2.73 The Aboriginal Employment Strategy in New South Wales has a two per cent Aboriginal employment target and recognises that Aboriginal employment in the public sector will improve service delivery to Aboriginal people and communities.¹²⁵ Strategies to achieve this include Aboriginal identified positions and targeting of mainstream programs.¹²⁶ This target can be exceeded by agencies depending on the client base and the needs of the clients and the location of the office.¹²⁷ The Indigenous Australian Engineering Summer School, the Aboriginal Employment in Practice Support Strategy, Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Program and the Aboriginal Cadetship Program link tertiary education to the

119 Ms Jody Broun, Director General, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, New South Wales, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2006, p. 81.

120 Ms Jody Broun, Director General, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, New South Wales, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2006, p. 81.

121 New South Wales Government, *Submission No. 111*, p. 8.

122 Ms Jody Broun, Director General, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, New South Wales, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2006, p. 83.

123 Ms Jody Broun, Director General, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, New South Wales, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2006, p. 83.

124 New South Wales Government, *Submission No. 111*, p. 8.

125 Ms Jody Broun, Director General, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, New South Wales, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2006, p. 82; New South Wales Government, *Submission No. 111*, p. 4.

126 Ms Jody Broun, Director General, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, New South Wales, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2006, p. 82.

127 Ms Jody Broun, Director General, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, New South Wales, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2006, p. 82.

public sector.¹²⁸ The partnerships arrangements contribute to the success of these strategies.¹²⁹

South Australia

- 2.74 The South Australian Government have a *Doing it right* policy framework to ensure that Indigenous South Australians have the 'same opportunities to share in the social and economic advantages of living in the state'.¹³⁰ The *South Australia Works* strategy has priority areas in Regions at Work and Indigenous Works relating to Indigenous employment.¹³¹ These initiatives include Tauondi College, Aboriginal Apprenticeship Program, Indigenous Enrolled Nurses Program, Yatala tourism West Coast building, Environmental Health Worker Training TAFE SA/school based training and employment, public sector employment, Kuka Kanyini Land Management Program, native foods project and arts based training.¹³²
- 2.75 The South Australian Government has 120 full time apprenticeships and traineeships and is looking at 90 per cent retention rate.¹³³ The program is across urban and regional areas, and includes the private sector. The Government provides pre-employment training, career guidance, mentors and ongoing support officers.¹³⁴
- 2.76 The South Australian Government saw commonality in a number of factors contributing to successful indigenous employment outcomes:
- One-on-one case management for participants and their employers;
 - Effective mentoring;
 - Regular follow up visits;
 - Commitment and perseverance;
 - Knowledge of Indigenous culture and potential impacts on employment;

128 Ms Jody Broun, Director General, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, New South Wales, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2006, p. 82.

129 Ms Jody Broun, Director General, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, New South Wales, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2006, p. 82.

130 South Australian Government, *Submission No. 110*, p. 1.

131 South Australian Government, *Submission No. 110*, p. 1.

132 South Australian Government, *Submission No. 110*, pp. 1-6.

133 Mr Lou Hutchinson, Director, Employment Programs, Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology, South Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 February 2006, p. 3.

134 Mr Lou Hutchinson, Director, Employment Programs, Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology, South Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 February 2006, p. 3.

- Finding the right participant/employer match;
- Focussing on quality not quantity;
- Accessibility and flexibility;
- Ability to build a level of trust;
- Training programs able to be delivered locally;
- Ability to forge good links, working relationships and partnerships with key stakeholders in the region including Indigenous community members, CDEPs, job network providers, Indigenous support organisations and industry.¹³⁵

Tasmania

- 2.77 Indigenous Tasmanians are disadvantaged compared to the non-Indigenous population on a number of indicators but performs well compared to other jurisdictions in relation to education, labour force participation and employment.¹³⁶
- 2.78 Labour force participation by Indigenous people in Tasmania is approximately 55 per cent and is the second highest in Australia and has improved substantially over the period 1994 to 2002.¹³⁷ Indigenous long-term unemployment as a percentage of Indigenous people is the highest in Australia.¹³⁸ Non-Indigenous people are 1.5 times as likely to be self employed than Indigenous people in Tasmania.¹³⁹
- 2.79 The Tasmanian Government is negotiating Local Government Partnership Agreements with individual and regional groupings of local councils across the State which includes promoting links between local government and the Aboriginal community.¹⁴⁰ Strategies can then be developed to address the key issues that affect the Indigenous people in the municipality.¹⁴¹
- 2.80 Partnership agreements promote links between local councils and Aboriginal communities and cover:
- Measures to enhance economic development and employment opportunities for Indigenous people;
 - Strategies to improve the level of participation of Indigenous people in Local Government;

135 South Australian Government, *Submission No. 110*, p. 7.

136 Tasmanian Government, *Submission No. 113*, p. 1.

137 Tasmanian Government, *Submission No. 113*, p. 2.

138 Tasmanian Government, *Submission No. 113*, p. 2.

139 Tasmanian Government, *Submission No. 113*, p. 2.

140 Tasmanian Government, *Submission No. 113*, p. 3.

141 Tasmanian Government, *Submission No. 113*, p. 3.

- Promoting understanding of Indigenous issues in the wider community;
 - Sustaining the reconciliation process by encouraging public support and participation; and
 - Taking joint action to reduce social disadvantage in the Aboriginal community.¹⁴²
- 2.81 Employment initiatives in Tasmania include Partnership in Jobs, State Government Aboriginal Employment Strategy, Aboriginal Employment Policy Officers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Fixed Term Employment Register, Aboriginal Tourism Development Plan and the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery Indigenous Employment Initiative.¹⁴³

Victoria

- 2.82 *The Challenges in Addressing Disadvantage in Victoria, Report on progress Identifying Future Directions and A Fairer Victoria, Creating Opportunity and Addressing Disadvantage* links skills acquisition to employment and investment opportunities and the capacity to participate in community life.¹⁴⁴ A partnership approach is being used to build individual and community capacity which increase their choice and control over opportunities in life.¹⁴⁵
- 2.83 *The Jobs for Victoria* targets a number of disadvantaged groups including Indigenous people and aims to get young Victorians into sustainable jobs.¹⁴⁶ As part of the *Jobs for Young People program*, (JYP) wage subsidies are provided to local councils offering apprenticeships and traineeships. This is to assist communities to meet future skills and employment needs and to support the growth of industries and jobs.¹⁴⁷ Other programs include the *Community Jobs Program*, the *Regional Jobs Package 2005* and *Ladders to Success*.¹⁴⁸
- 2.84 There has been an increase in Indigenous employment related activities throughout the public sector and the Indigenous Employment Strategy, *Wur-cum barra*, has been extended to include statutory authorities and positions in community organisations.¹⁴⁹ The Youth Employment Scheme

142 Tasmanian Government, *Submission No. 113*, p. 3.

143 Tasmanian Government, *Submission No. 113*, pp. 6-8.

144 Victorian Government, *Submission No. 94*, p. 3.

145 Victorian Government, *Submission No. 94*, p. 3.

146 Victorian Government, *Submission No. 94*, p. 9.

147 Victorian Government, *Submission No. 94*, p. 9.

148 Victorian Government, *Submission No. 94*, pp. 11-12.

149 Victorian Government, *Submission No. 94*, p. 4.

(YES) provides wage subsidies to State Government departments to provide apprenticeships and traineeships.¹⁵⁰ An Indigenous Employment Coordinator has been appointed to increase the participation in and completion of the JYP and YES programs.¹⁵¹

- 2.85 Innovative partnership programs between departments and the Indigenous community are building on positive outcomes.¹⁵² These include Parks Victoria and Department of Justice. These programs are based on capacity building and pathways, recruitment, career development, changing workplace culture and Indigenous community organisations.¹⁵³

Western Australia

- 2.86 One example of the Western Australian approach is the *listening looking learning: An Aboriginal Tourism Strategy for Western Australia 2006- 2010* to ensure sustainable Aboriginal participation in the tourism industry and provide Aboriginal people with ongoing opportunities to add cultural and commercial value to the WA tourism industry, for mutual benefit.¹⁵⁴
- 2.87 The Statement of Commitment was agreed between the Western Australian Government and the Aboriginal people of Western Australia which is pertinent to the *Indigenous Employment in the WA Public Sector – Valuing the Difference*.¹⁵⁵ In 2001, the public sector in Western Australia had an employment rate for Indigenous people of 16.1 per cent while in private industry the rate was 36.2 per cent and 25.5 per cent were on CDEP.¹⁵⁶ Government administration and defence provided significant employment opportunities in most regions.¹⁵⁷
- 2.88 The MATES program is a successful example within the Department of Environment and Conservation which aims to achieve 10-15 per cent Aboriginal employees across the State.¹⁵⁸

150 Victorian Government, *Submission No. 94*, p. 10.

151 Victorian Government, *Submission No. 94*, p. 10.

152 Victorian Government, *Submission No. 94*, p. 4.

153 Victorian Government, *Submission No. 94*, pp. 4-6.

154 Tourism Western Australia, *listening looking learning An Aboriginal Tourism Strategy for Western Australia 2006-2010*, September 2006, p. 2.

155 Office of Equal Employment Opportunity, Western Australia, *Indigenous Employment in the WA Public Sector – Valuing the Difference*, November 2002, Forward.

156 2005 WA Report *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage*, p. 217.

157 2005 WA Report *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage*, p. 218.

158 Minister Mark McGowan, *Naturebase*, 13 November 2006, p. 1, <http://www.naturebase.net/content/view/2516/770/>, accessed on 4 May 2007.

Local Government policies

- 2.89 A number of local government councils have or are in the process of developing reconciliation plans appropriate to their situation.¹⁵⁹ The City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder has a Reconciliation Committee of Council, an Indigenous Framework Agreement, and a set of Indigenous Consultation Protocols for the city.¹⁶⁰ Mr Ian Fletcher, Chief Executive Officer, City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder believes that local government has a greater capacity to deliver, particularly outside the metropolitan areas.¹⁶¹
- 2.90 The Brisbane City Council (BCC) believes in bringing together policies such as the *Living in Brisbane 2010* and the *Great Employer-Clever Workforce* policies and promotes a workplace culture that values and respects diversity.¹⁶² BCC's Indigenous Employment Program includes support (Indigenous cultural awareness) and mentoring programs and Indigenous reference groups.¹⁶³ Council is seen as an employer of choice in the Indigenous community with the percentage of Indigenous people working at the Council more than doubling since 2000-2001.¹⁶⁴ Ms Sheryl Sandy added that people now understand that there is a business case for equity and diversity in better policy, better service delivery, and better customer service.¹⁶⁵
- 2.91 Also in Queensland, the Caboolture Shire Council stressed the importance of getting the organisational culture right and using an aspirational model.¹⁶⁶ The Torres Strait Shire Council has achieved a 95 per cent Indigenous employment level and is one of the biggest employers of Indigenous people in the region.¹⁶⁷
- 2.92 In New South Wales, the Gosford City Council has an Aboriginal Development Officer whose tasks include the development of an Aboriginal Employment Strategy.¹⁶⁸ Blacktown City Council have

159 For example City of Stonnington, *Submission No. 39*, p. 1.

160 City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, *Submission No. 43*, p. 1.

161 Mr Ian Fletcher, Chief Executive Officer, City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 October 2005, p. 6.

162 Mr Les Collins, Indigenous Employment Strategist, Brisbane City Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 18.

163 Brisbane City Council, *Submission No. 74*, pp. 2-7.

164 Brisbane City Council, *Submission No. 74*, p. 7.

165 Ms Sheryl Sandy, Equity and Diversity Specialist, Brisbane City Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 19.

166 Mr Kelvin Tytherleigh, Manager, Organisational Development and Governance Unit, Caboolture Shire Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 36.

167 Mayor Pedro Stephen, Torres Strait Shire Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 May 2007, p. 2.

168 Gosford City Council, *Submission No. 75*, p. 1.

- participated in the Local Government Aboriginal Employment Strategy and a partnership with the AFL. The Indigenous trainees are supervised by the Indigenous Community Development officer and work on projects that directly impact on the well-being of the Indigenous community.¹⁶⁹
- 2.93 In Victoria, the City of Port Phillip has an extensive strategy to employ Indigenous people and has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Indigenous community which is the basis for policy and planning development.¹⁷⁰ The Aboriginal Liaison Officer facilitates the Aboriginal Advisory Committee which seeks input on matters that impact of the Indigenous community.¹⁷¹ The City of Melbourne has an Indigenous Social and Economic Framework and an Indigenous Culture and Heritage Framework.¹⁷² Whitehorse City Council is working on a second Indigenous garden which provides employment opportunities and links with Toor-Rong CDEP and Swinburne Technical and Further Education College.¹⁷³
- 2.94 In South Australia, Adelaide City Council has a Council Reconciliation Committee and has up to 17 Aboriginal trainees across all Council Business Units.¹⁷⁴ The Human Resources Business Unit has an Aboriginal employee who provides mentoring to the trainees and this has proved to be important in the retention of Indigenous trainees.¹⁷⁵
- 2.95 Many councils have approached this through the provision of traineeships and/or cadetships.¹⁷⁶ However, now some local governments are becoming professionally focused with the outsourcing of cleaning, and also parks and gardens. They are the entry level areas of employment for Indigenous young men.¹⁷⁷

169 Blacktown City Council, *Submission No. 44*, pp. 1-2.

170 City of Port Philip, *Submission No. 47*, pp. 2-12.

171 City of Port Philip, *Submission No. 47*, p. 2.

172 Ms Colleen Lazenby, Manager, Community Safety and Well Being, City of Melbourne, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 50.

173 Ms Helen Killmier, Manager, Community Development, White Horse City Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, pp. 50-51.

174 Adelaide City Council, *Submission No. 65*, p. 1.

175 Adelaide City Council, *Submission No. 65*, p. 2.

176 For example, Shire of Campaspe, *Submission No. 46*, p. 1; Blacktown City Council, *Submission No. 44*, p. 1; Shire of Plantegenet, *Submission No. 18*, p. 1; Lismore City Council, *Submission No. 19*, p. 1; Armidale Dumaresq, *Submission No. 21*, p. 1; Caboolture Shire Council, *Submission No. 27*, p. 1; City of Melbourne, *Submission No. 29*, p. 1; The Council of the City of Shoalhaven, *Submission No. 79*, p. 1.

177 Mr Mikael Smith, Coordinator, Aboriginal and Multicultural Policy and Programs, City of Port Phillip Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 59.

Lessons for the future

Indigenous specific employment

- 2.96 There are a number of core success factors in increasing Indigenous employment opportunities. The Northern Land Council has found that a jobs agreement, senior management support and partnerships are key factors.¹⁷⁸ Another important aspect is the potential to move to mainstream positions because that is where the opportunities are, the management positions and higher wages.¹⁷⁹
- 2.97 There are Indigenous employment opportunities on major projects through Indigenous land use agreements which outline the employment and training outcomes.¹⁸⁰ Of the 560 agreements on the Agreements, Treaties and Negotiated Settlements Database, 108 contain employment and training provisions reflecting the greater importance placed on job creation in the decade commencing 1995.¹⁸¹

Community Development Employment Program

- 2.98 In regional areas, the mainstream economy is often underdeveloped in townships and non-existent on many outstations.¹⁸² In some areas, CDEP has provided employment opportunities. CDEP participation in the 'total remote areas' was 63.5 per cent of Indigenous employment in the public sector and 47.6 per cent of Indigenous employment in the private sector.¹⁸³
- 2.99 The New South Wales Government referred to CDEP as having a significant role in enabling Aboriginal communities to direct scarce resources to the needs of the community.¹⁸⁴ In Maningrida, CDEP participants provide most services, assisting with the delivery of health, housing, education and construction of infrastructure, community store, arts centre, café and service station.¹⁸⁵ In 2004-05:

178 Northern Land Council, *Submission No. 103*, p. 6.

179 Ms Jane Lawton, State Operations Manager, Northern Territory, Mission Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2005, p. 61.

180 Northern Land Council, *Submission No. 103*, pp. 2, 5.

181 Professor Marcia Langton, *Submission No. 66*, p. 2.

182 Professor Jon Altmann, *Submission No. 88*, p. 2.

183 Productivity Commission, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2007 Indigenous Report*, 1 June 2007, Sect 11.1, p. 11.15. Total remote comprises remote and very remote areas.

184 New South Wales Government, *Submission No. 111*, p. 4.

185 Professor Jon Altmann, *Submission No. 88*, p. 4.

CDEP participation comprised a significant proportion of Indigenous employment in remote and very remote areas, accounting for 64 per cent of Indigenous employment in the public sector and 48 per cent of Indigenous employment in the private sector.¹⁸⁶

- 2.100 The Indigenous Land Corporation, however, saw CDEP as having limited employment outcomes and actually as an impediment to Indigenous employment.¹⁸⁷ The Torres Strait Regional Authority also expressed concern that there are superannuation implications for those who have been on CDEP for long periods.¹⁸⁸ Policies are being designed to improve the skills of Indigenous people and to use CDEP as a stepping stone to employment.¹⁸⁹ Host agreements, wage subsidies and the STEP program are being used to encourage people to leave CDEP and move to full time employment.¹⁹⁰ Work is also being done on VET linkages and to increase participation, training and employment including work within the petrol-sniffing strategy.¹⁹¹

Recruitment approaches

- 2.101 Mr Larry Kickett also highlighted the cost saving in recruiting locally.¹⁹² Consideration needs to be given to the costs associated with recruiting someone from interstate or internationally, particularly in remote areas where there is a high turnover of staff. Indigenous people returning to the local area provide role models for others and there are substantial benefits to the employer as well as the employee. Appropriate recruitment processes can enhance the potential for the success of this approach.
- 2.102 There were a number of suggestions to increase the effectiveness of Indigenous recruitment approaches. The use of Indigenous media outlets, local newspapers; ads on notice boards in waiting rooms; school visits by

186 Productivity Commission, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2007 Indigenous Report*, 1 June 2007, Overview, p. 57.

187 Mr David Galvin, General Manager, Indigenous Land Corporation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 February 2006, p. 48.

188 Mr Wayne See Kee, General Manager, Torres Strait Regional Authority, *Transcript of Evidence*, 16 May 2007, p. 20.

189 Mr Bob Harvey, Group Manager, Indigenous Employment and Business Group, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Transcript of Evidence*, 22 May 2006, p. 13.

190 Mr Bob Harvey, Group Manager, Indigenous Employment and Business Group, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Transcript of Evidence*, 22 May 2006, p. 13.

191 Mr Bob Harvey, Group Manager, Indigenous Employment and Business Group, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Transcript of Evidence*, 22 May 2006, p. 2.

192 Mr Larry Kickett, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 46.

Indigenous staff to recruit young people for apprenticeships and traineeships; Indigenous staff telling others that this was a good place to work; a 'relationship thing' where the cultural relations staff make the opportunities known in the communities; word of mouth; local Indigenous organisations; job descriptions in plain English with input from the Traditional Owners; applications that do not require a computer; advertising posters at all the popular 'hang out joints'; emails to local Aboriginal organisations, families and individuals and personally through families and friends were all used.¹⁹³

- 2.103 Employers need to ensure that the recruitment process is not more complex than necessary and that the skills and abilities needed accurately reflect the actual needs of the job.¹⁹⁴ The panel should always include an Aboriginal person and interviews may be conducted outside in the open and the most important aspect is their interest in and commitment to the position.¹⁹⁵

Career development and progression

- 2.104 Indigenous people are now taking up employment in a broader cross-section of jobs.¹⁹⁶ This has not always been the case. The New South Wales Government commented that:

The current generation of professional Aboriginal people are most likely to be one of the first members of their family to have held a degree or other qualification, or to have possessed a position of prominence in the mainstream workforce. In that respect, recognising Aboriginal people (through career pathways and as role models) who contribute their expertise to policy development and program management is important.¹⁹⁷

- 2.105 The Productivity Commission also reported a higher representation of Indigenous Australians in the lower skilled occupations such as

193 See Ms Lyndal O'Neill, Manager, People Services, Brisbane City Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 25; Mr Les Collins, Indigenous Employment Strategist, Brisbane City Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, pp. 25-26; Mr Lester Davis, Manager, Learning and Development, Newmont Australia Ltd, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 October 2005, p. 37; Miss Jane Lawton, State Operations Manager, Northern Territory, Mission Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2005, p. 43; Alice Springs Desert Park, *Submission No. 84*, pp. 1-2.

194 Miss Jane Lawton, State Operations Manager, Northern Territory, Mission Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2005, pp. 43-44.

195 Alice Springs Desert Park, *Submission No. 84*, p. 2.

196 Mr Bob Harvey, Group Manager, Indigenous Employment and Business Group, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Transcript of Evidence*, 22 May 2006, p. 8.

197 New South Wales Government, *Submission No. 111*, p. 30.

elementary clerical, sales and service workers and labourers than non-Indigenous employees (25.6 per cent compared to 16.1 per cent after adjusting for age differences).¹⁹⁸ There were also a significantly lower proportion of Indigenous people than non-Indigenous people in the occupational group requiring the highest skills levels (18.6 compared to 29.3 per cent after adjusting for age differences).¹⁹⁹

Career progression

2.106 Some submissions noted that Aboriginal employees in the workplace are often over-represented in low level and intermediate level positions, due to a lack of education and training opportunities.²⁰⁰ Commissioner John Kirwan discussed this issue in the context of movement into the professions:

When you look at the figures, what we have not done well – at the risk of sounding emotional, but I use this comment in other forums – is deal with the fact that they are still in job ghettos. If you look at the classification profile, basically it is Aboriginal people in Aboriginal jobs: in policy jobs, as health workers or in education. What we are yet to be successful at, albeit that it will take time, is the movement into the professions.²⁰¹

2.107 Increasing the number of Indigenous people holding higher level positions in the public and private sectors may also have an important flow-on effect in increasing Indigenous employment levels. The point has been made that although not all Indigenous people wish to climb the management ladder, those who do should be given the opportunity.²⁰²

2.108 There are already some initiatives seeking to address the issue of progression. The New South Wales Government noted that the Indigenous Cadetship Program is intended to increase Aboriginal representation in professional occupations and mainstream positions within government departments, thereby facilitating opportunities for progression into managerial positions.²⁰³

198 Productivity Commission, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2007 Indigenous Report*, 1 June 2007, Sect 11.1, p 11.17.

199 Productivity Commission, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2007 Indigenous Report*, 1 June 2007, Sect 11.1, p. 11.17.

200 New South Wales Government, *Submission No. 111*, p. 6.

201 Commissioner John Kirwan, Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment, Northern Territory, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 23.

202 Queensland Indigenous Local Government Association, *Submission No. 81*, p. 1.

203 New South Wales Government, *Submission No. 111*, p. 14.

- 2.109 Ms Lisa Giacomelli, Manager of Community Development at Blacktown City Council, noted that for Council's Indigenous trainees, an Indigenous supervisor was a key part of their success, as they felt that there was someone in the organisation they could relate to culturally, and it provided a friendly and supportive environment.²⁰⁴
- 2.110 Funding provided through the Community Broadcasting Foundation is aimed at addressing a shortage of suitably trained Indigenous broadcasters and administrators to fill senior salaried positions in Indigenous broadcasting. The funding is aimed particularly at station management skills, as well as basic broadcasting.²⁰⁵ Other organisations also have the expressed goal of improving the range of positions held by Indigenous people, including those that require professional qualifications.²⁰⁶
- 2.111 The Queensland Government in 2001 established the Wal-Meta Unit to achieve targets of 2.4 per cent Indigenous employees across the public sector by the end of 2002 and 2.4 per cent Indigenous representation at all salary levels in the public sector by the end of 2010. The Wal-Meta Unit's role is to assist in achieving these targets by increasing training and development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander public sector employees and breaking down existing employment barriers by providing cross cultural awareness training to government agencies.²⁰⁷ Mr Ron Weatherall, Executive Director of Employment and Indigenous Initiatives, stated:
- It is not only recruiting Indigenous people to the Australian public sector but providing them with career development opportunities so that they can advance to the highest level of jobs within the public sector.²⁰⁸
- 2.112 It was recommended by the Queensland Government that Indigenous recruitment within the Australian public sector could be enhanced by establishing targets across the public service at all levels. The provision of targets for Indigenous employment at all salary levels could assist in advancing the careers of Indigenous public sector employees. This will

204 Ms Lisa Giacomelli, Manager, Community Development, Blacktown City Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2005, p. 28.

205 Mr Rohan Buettel, Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, *Transcript of Evidence*, 6 February 2006, p. 33.

206 Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Inc, *Submission No. 101*, p. 2.

207 Queensland Government, *Submission No. 105*, p. 12.

208 Mr Ron Weatherall, Executive Director, Employment and Indigenous Initiatives, Queensland Department of Employment and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 16.

also help to create a larger pool of mentors for Indigenous people entering the public sector.

Job retention

- 2.113 The mining industry and a number of other private sector employers are having significant successes in this area. At Mission Australia Northern Territory, 70 per cent of the staff are Indigenous and they have a turnover rate of 2.5 per cent per annum.²⁰⁹
- 2.114 Australia Post has also had considerable success in this area. In Australia Post 1.7 per cent of the workforce are Indigenous Australians across all business streams and 27 per cent of full-time employees are above base grade level.²¹⁰ The strategy implemented by Australia Post includes appropriate induction programs, suitable workplaces, mentoring, networking with other Indigenous employees, flexible work options, development programs, cross-cultural awareness training and access to the Indigenous Employment Consultants.²¹¹
- 2.115 The Committee also heard that Indigenous employment success is the result of a layered approach which includes clearly defined and explained staff selection criteria; individually tailored training courses; effective mentoring; employment at the end of the training; use of CDEP; comfortable supportive workplace; financial opportunity for staff; clear expectations adhered to; defined structure to work within; understanding of social environment; counselling; responsibility and respect for all staff; mutual obligation reward; accountability; sustainability; and clear succession planning.²¹²
- 2.116 Role clarification in terms of governance and the individual's responsibilities was seen as an important factor in successful Indigenous employment.²¹³ Employees are treated equally and interaction and supervision are based on mutual respect.²¹⁴

209 Miss Jane Lawton, State Operations Manager, Northern Territory, Mission Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2005, pp. 43, 45.

210 Australia Post, *Submission No. 96*, p. 1.

211 Australia Post, *Submission No. 96*, p. 4.

212 Umoona Aged Care Aboriginal Corporation, *Submission No. 31*, p. 6.

213 City of Marion, *Submission No. 28*, p. 2; see also Umoona Aged Care Aboriginal Corporation, *Submission No. 31*, p. 3.

214 Umoona Aged Care Aboriginal Corporation, *Submission No. 31*, p. 5; Miss Jane Lawton, State Operations Manager, Northern Territory, Mission Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2005, pp. 45-46; Mr Craig Buller, Regional Manager, Engagement and Culture, National Australia Bank, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 42.

2.117 Sustainability of employment remains an important aspect.

Table 2.1 Sustainability of Job Network placements

	Placements	13 Weeks	26 Weeks
March 2005-06 ²¹⁵	43,900	9,400	7,000
July 2006 – March 2007 ²¹⁶	37,813	10,315	5,702

2.118 There is a lag time in getting longer term outcomes for the increasing number of people participating in the workforce.²¹⁷

Concluding comments

2.119 Everyone is now aware of Indigenous employment potential and there are a greater number of positions being offered.²¹⁸ This is also reflected in young people being more aware of the opportunities available for them and more are staying at school.²¹⁹

2.120 The skills shortages across Australia have provided a significant incentive to private companies to actively pursue Indigenous employees. The Committee sees much of the potential to increase Indigenous employment opportunities being in the private sector as they address these skills shortages.

2.121 The Committee acknowledges that the employment opportunities that can be leveraged from land are contingent on the location and nature of that land. As the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision stated:

215 Mr Bob Harvey, Group Manager, Indigenous Employment and Business Group, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Transcript of Evidence*, 22 May 2006, p. 8.

216 Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Supplementary Submission 108e*, p. 5.

217 Ms Joanne Caldwell, Group Manager, Intensive Support Unit, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Transcript of Evidence*, 22 May 2006, p. 9.

218 Miss Jenny McGuire, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 37.

219 Miss Jenny McGuire, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 37.

Opportunities to profit from mining, agriculture and tourism depend, respectively, on the presence of certain minerals, rainfall and soil fertility, and places and activities that appeal to tourists.²²⁰

- 2.122 The Committee believes that these positive examples and the others not mentioned in this report have set the stage for a brighter future in terms of Indigenous employment opportunities. Much has been achieved and much has been learnt. Australia's corporate leaders have shown the way and others will surely follow over the next few decades.

220 Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2005*, <http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/indigenous/keyindicators2005/overview/index.html>, accessed 25 September 2006.