

AUSTRALIAN COMPETITION AND CONSUMER COMMISSION

Senate Inquiry into Indigenous Art and Craft Hearing

Question on Notice: Indigenous Employment and the ACCC

This response provides details regarding the focus of the ACCC's recruitment of Indigenous staff; the success of this program; and information about the ACCC's plans for Indigenous employment.

The ACCC has focused on attracting and recruiting Indigenous employees through its annual graduate program. This is the ACCC's only mass national recruitment program. It seeks to draw applications from graduates with qualifications in micro and regulatory economics, competition and consumer law, finance, commerce and other disciplines required for the work of the ACCC and the Australian Energy Regulator (AER). This is a strongly collegial program that provides a significant breadth and depth of formal training and on-the-job learning.

The graduate program has sought to market itself to Indigenous graduates through:

- Advertising broadly in the general community press and through targeted emails to students enrolled in preferred disciplines (economics, law, commerce, finance)
- Advertising in Indigenous press
- Promoting the program broadly to universities throughout Australia, including regional universities
- Utilising ACCC outreach staff to distribute information about the program directly to remote communities and to promote the program personally
- Ensuring that any potential applicant can easily discuss the program with relevant ACCC staff and are not only referred to online or written material
- Ensuring that clear and accurate information is provided about the work of the ACCC and AER.

For example, marketing for the 2006 graduate program (run in 2005) included advertising in a range of Indigenous press and also focused on promoting the program through direct contact with Indigenous student support services and student groups on university campuses.

From a total of 480 applications, the ACCC attracted three applications from graduates who identified as Indigenous or Torres Strait Islanders (two applicants were from the ACT and one was from Queensland). One of these graduates was selected, offered a position and completed the program in 2006. He is now working in the AER at the APS4 level, which is the standard exit level for ACCC graduates. His ongoing professional development is being managed through his participation in the APS Employment and Capability Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and through the ACCC's professional development program. These opportunities are provided to all Indigenous staff employed by the ACCC.

The ACCC recognises the desirability and need to increase the number of Indigenous staff employed nationally. It is actively seeking to improve its visibility within the undergraduate community and to better communicate the type and variety of work available to Indigenous undergraduates. It is also investigating alternative programs and approaches to ensure Indigenous employees are able to contribute to the work of the ACCC and AER.