

HOW TO MAKE TRAINING WORK IN REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Laynhapuy Homelands propose an integrated approach to ensure effective and meaningful delivery of training in the remote homelands which cover an area of 6,500 square kilometres. There are significant barriers to training, employment and economic development, and the current resources and structure of the delivery are not adequate, and are of little benefit to those who need it most.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Training/Education

- ✓ *Fund organisations to employ Training Coordinators and in-house Trainers*
- ✓ *Build corp of skilled Yolngu through 'Train the Trainer' process*
- ✓ *Expedite VIIP application (DEST) for training facilities in Hub Homelands*
- ✓ *Fund multi-purpose Trades Training Centre at Garrthalala*
- ✓ *Commence accommodation hostel college& teacher accommodation at Garrthalala*
- ✓ *Training budget linked by formula to participant numbers*

Community Development

- ✓ *Ensure Community Development is reinstated as one of the core focus's of reformed CDEP*
- ✓ *Engage a Youth Development Officer*
- ✓ *Support Laynhapuy's pilot plan to self finance Yolngu housing*
- ✓ *Reinstate Life Skills & Home Management as CDEP activities*

Business Development

- ✓ *Fund organisations to employ Business Development/ Project officer*
- ✓ *Link seed funding through CDEP participant levels to progress business plans to implementation stage as per 14 Point Plan for CDEP Reform*
- ✓ *Enhance Government Business Development resources at a regional level*

CDEP vs Work for the Dole (WfD)

- ✓ *Absorb WfD clients into CDEP programs*
- ✓ *Transfer resources from Job Network Members (JNM) to CDEP's to offer a comprehensive range of service*
- ✓ *Invest assets and resources into local communities, rather than external JNM in remote areas*

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BRIEF OVERVIEW OF LHAI

Laynhapuy Homelands Association Inc (LHAI) is a member owned Aboriginal organisation incorporated under the NT Association Act to provide services to its members in the homelands of East Arnhem Land.

LHAI has operated for over 20 years, and now is a strong, medium-sized association operating a range of services to Homeland members and external communities. These services include housing management, municipal services, infrastructure, mechanical workshop, aviation, protection of culture and country, advocacy, income management assistance, and CDEP works programs. LHAI now has over 70% Yolngu staff, including the CEO.

ISSUES:

- **ISSUE 1. Unsatisfactory training provision, delivery, resources and outcomes**
 - o Laynhapuy Training Coordinator and 'shadow' Yolngu positions funding to cease from DEWR as at 30 June 2008
 - o inadequate provision for English literacy and numeracy & inconsistent delivery
 - o existing intergenerational gap resulting in severe skills and trades shortage
 - o lack of directional focus for secondary students to transition into meaningful training, employment and business opportunities (creating a void which may result in disengagement with learning and social exclusion)
 - o lack of progress with VIIP application to DEST for training facilities in Hub Homelands 15 months ago
 - o lack of accommodation for students/people accessing schooling/training

Recommendation:

- ✓ *Fund Laynhapuy Training Coordinator role and shadow Yolngu assistant role through multi year contract to allow for planning, implementation and meaningful outcomes.*
- ✓ *Engage & employ full time in house trainers at Laynhapuy within the Training Section - particularly literacy, numeracy, oracy through a dedicated mass literacy program and computer ITC skills program.*
- ✓ *Train the Trainer process in the homelands to encourage skill sharing and development.*
- ✓ *Expedite the VIIP application that LHAI lodged through DEET/DEST 15 months ago (through the Hub Pilot Program), to ensure provision of basic training facilities and trainers accommodation in the 'Hub' communities.*
- ✓ *Build a multi-purpose Trades Training Centre at Garthalala (that could also serve as IT, retail and admin training so Yolngu women are not excluded) to combat shortage of trades skills in the homelands and to support access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The Trades Training Centre can also be accessed by neighbouring communities.*

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- ✓ *Invest in basic essential infrastructure in Garrthalala to support the multi-purpose Trades Training Centre.*
- ✓ *Build accommodation hostel at Garthalala to support the commitment of parents and students to attend school and training (as supported by Warren Snowdon during the election).*
- ✓ *Build teacher accommodation at Garthalala to compliment expansion of secondary school's role.*
- ✓ *Youth Development Officer to work with schools and CDEP to assist to provide a pathway for secondary students.*

➤ **ISSUE 2. Community Development**¹

- o *there are no training programs, resources or development units to engage youth in the homelands, leading to antisocial behaviour, disengagement and disillusionment*
- o *abolition of Life Skills and Home Management training programs/areas by DEWR through CDEP, has led to an increase in issues surrounding environmental and individual health. There is now a 4 year gap in community education in these areas, which needs to be urgently addressed*
- o *limited individual capacity to engage in the real economy, let alone develop businesses with low levels of financial literacy and numeracy*
- o *overcrowding has the potential to lead to social/health/economic dysfunction, reducing community capacity – the housing crisis needs to be resolved*

Recommendation:

- ✓ *Ensure community development remains as one of the core focus's of the new, reformed CDEP, as per the 14 Point Plan of Action for CDEP Reform and support engagement of community development workers. Government must recognise that without the solid foundation of strong traditional Indigenous leadership and community development, economic development will be difficult to attain and sustain*
- ✓ *Engage a Youth Development Officer with functions including Youth Diversionary Activities, Training links, Sport and Recreation, Arts development and Health promotion.*
- ✓ *Support Laynhapuy's plan for self finance housing in homelands (with Yolngu direction from environmentally sustainable concept and design, that uses natural resources, (including mud brick) and home owner sweat equity, through piloting a proposal in partnership with Habitat for Humanity.*
- ✓ *Reinstate the Life skills and Home Management programs as approved CDEP activities.*

¹ Community Development needs to be re-instated as one of the core focus's of homelands. After a meeting with Cape York Institute regarding their welfare reform project, it was established that part of the reason 'social norms' were collapsing in their area, was due to a significant lack of leadership, breakdown of the use of the traditional kinship system and a loss of connection to culture, land and sea. This is in stark contrast to most LHAJ homelands, where there is strong culture and commitment to developing the homelands.

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- ✓ *Promote management of financial literacy and numeracy outcomes through programs such as the pilot 'Money Business' program.*

➤ **ISSUE 3. Business Development**

- o There are many exciting business options for homelands communities and individuals, such as Two Way Learning Centre (Blue Mud Bay Eco-Tourism), AQIS contracts, Buymarr tourism, Yirralka Rangers IPA and development of recreational areas, border security, aviation, buffalo safaris, crocodile egg collection, mechanical workshop and civil works, indigenous building teams, bio-diversity conservation, seed collection and sales through Miyalk Ranger Program, arts, music development and much, much more; however resources on the ground limits development of these opportunities for the future
- o Too much emphasis is placed on consultants, (eg. feasibility studies and business plans ISBF) and loan facilities (IBA), without complimentary energy expenditure on grass roots support and assistance to establish economic/business development from conception to fruition.
- o The government has an unrealistic timeframe for progressing business cases through DEEWR etc – they need 3 – 5 years support, not 12 months to fit in with short term funding rounds
- o There are significant costs associated with supervision of trainees, apprentices and 'shadow' Yolngu positions, both financial and in terms of time commitments, leading to lost productivity

Recommendation:

- ✓ *Assist organisations such as LHAI to directly employ a Business or Project officer to assist homelands to progress proposals from conception to implementation and to undertake mentoring.*
- ✓ *Provide seed funding linked to CDEP through participant levels to support enterprise start up (as per 14 Point Plan for CDEP Reform).*
- ✓ *Enhance government business development resources at a regional level.*
- ✓ *Assist homelands to build community & economic capacity in the 'Hub' communities, rather than pushing people to regional areas.*
- ✓ *Strategic investment to support training of economic and business development.*
- ✓ *Training is an essential element of community development and job creation. CDEP organisations should have a training budget linked by formula to participant numbers (as per the 14 Point Plan of Action for CDEP Reform). This establishes a compulsory minimum annual training requirement.*
- ✓ *Promote greater recognition in Government that training imposes extra cost, resource and time demands on businesses that reduce productivity. The current level of STEP funding and assistance for Apprentices is not adequate enough to negate this effect, and needs to be increased across the board.*

➤ **ISSUE 4. CDEP vs WfD (Work for the Dole)**

(Laynhapuy Homelands, East Arnhem Land, N.T) 05.03.08

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- o There are no functioning Work for the Dole programs in the Laynhapuy Homelands
- o Job Networks only service remote areas on a FIFO basis
- o There is a duplication of service, CDEP and WfD competing for the same training resources for the same CDEP clients, and both being paid for same outcomes
- o WfD as a 'mainstream' program, does not respect the traditional way of life and culture, is inflexible, does not allow Top Up money to be earned, and is negatively described and understood by Aboriginal people here as 'welfare'
- o Lack of literacy and numeracy means that often people do not know what they are signing up for, many have thought they were signing up for CDEP
- o The majority of people signed up to WfD would rather be on the CDEP program
- o WfD is a punitive program and is not viewed as a 'job', as opposed to CDEP
- o CDEP although subsidised, is viewed as 'real jobs' and people have pride in their individual jobs and the contribution they make. The resources, capital, staffing and efforts go back into the community, not into a mainstream business with no links to the communities they service
- o External service providers rarely have the networks or links that existing CDEP organisations have developed over long periods of time
- o The structure of funding of CDEP allows greater flexibility and innovation than WfD, (although 3 year contracts, rather than 12 months, would enhance these benefits further)
- o CDEP is better linked with training opportunities, as the JNM have confirmed that accredited training is harder to secure through the WfD program. Training credits earned through this program must also be used within a timeframe, which is unworkable in remote communities due to lack of available trainers.² CDEP affords the opportunity to develop community infrastructure and provides community services and has strong links to benefits at NT and National levels (eg. IPA). The community development approach recognises that there is value to the National Estate and the nation through people staying on country, conducting traditional land management and cultural site maintenance activities, whilst maintaining health and wellbeing
- o Existing CDEP places/funding are inadequate to meet demand from the community

Recommendation:

² Statistics using 2002 NATSIS data show that in very remote areas, 84-89% of people work more than 16 hours, and 20% of people within the CDEP workforce work fulltime, or more than 35 hours. The research has found that in CDEP communities, there is a greater labour force participation than in non CDEP communities. Altman, Gray and Levitus (2005) shows that CDEP workers in very remote regions earn over \$100 more than those on unemployment benefits. It has been documented that there is a higher participation in customary economy and in community, recreational and group activities, all of which build social capital. Evidence points to the fact that CDEP workers have a higher level of engagement than those on welfare, or Work for the Dole and even the employed (or unsubsidised positions).

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- ✓ Where a successful CDEP program is in place, able bodied people should be employees within this program, and WfD clients absorbed.
- ✓ Building projects that are funded by Government should be supported through CDEP, not WfD, and building contracts should require this where CDEP's have capacity.
- ✓ CDEP participants should be able to contribute 'sweat equity' through LHA's proposed home building project (mud bricks) in partnership with Habitat for Humanity.
- ✓ Transfer resources from JNM to CDEP's in remote areas, whereby a more comprehensive service can be offered, so that assets and resources are invested into the local community, rather than into FIFO JNM's.
- ✓ Accept that there is a limited job market in remote areas, and that rigidity promoted by WfD, militates against creation of innovative and flexible training and employment development.
- ✓ Building and investing in a reformed CDEP is more productive and cost effective than pursuing failed WfD programs in remote areas.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

People have always lived in these remote homelands, however, more people have moved back during the 70's in the homeland development movement initiated by Yolngu, and it is unlikely that they will move to regional areas through the proposed 'job mobility circles' in this area.

Homelands people have consistently argued for investment into their homelands in order to build capacity through education, employment, community development, and business opportunities, in order to support their vision of living and working on country.

Training has consistently failed to be delivered on the ground in these areas during the roll out of the NTER.