

NORTHERN TERRITORY PUBLIC SECTOR

INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT TOOL KIT



Office of the Commissioner for
Public Employment

COMMISSIONER'S FOREWORD

I am delighted to introduce the Northern Territory Public Sector (NTPS) Indigenous Employment Tool Kit. This is an exciting addition to the increasing number of initiatives being developed across Government and strengthens our commitment to implementing the NTPS Indigenous Employment & Career Development Strategy 2002–2006.

The public sector plays an important role in the employment of Indigenous people in the Northern Territory. Indigenous people represent 28% of the Northern Territory (NT) population but comprise only 6.2% (1,006) of the Northern Territory Public Sector (NTPS) workforce¹.

Given that Indigenous people make up a significant proportion of the NT population, it is imperative that we, as the single largest employer in the NT provide Indigenous people every opportunity to contribute as full and active participants in the labour market.

The growing number of initiatives across the NTPS is encouraging and highlights the ongoing need for us to focus, implement, integrate and review these initiatives over the short to medium term if we are to achieve and build on successful Indigenous employment strategies.

When the NTPS' Indigenous Employment & Career Development Strategy was launched in 2002, one of the most common responses received from managers was 'how do we recruit and retain Indigenous people?' followed thereafter by 'we have tried this before and failed'.

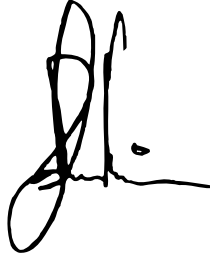
Created after extensive consultation with the Indigenous community, from an across agency and across industry perspective, this Tool Kit explains what can and does work. It is based on a spirit of cooperation that is committed to internal and external partnerships. The challenge now is to build upon this good work and truly make a difference.

It is acknowledged that there are no easy or 'silver bullet' solutions to achieving Indigenous employment outcomes. Nothing less than our full commitment and hard work is required for real outcomes to be attained.



¹ OCPE Statistician, February 2005

I trust all managers and employers will use the NTPS Indigenous Employment Tool Kit as a practical reference to improving Indigenous employment outcomes and I encourage all Indigenous employees to make the most of the information contained in this Tool Kit to help them achieve their personal and professional development, family and community goals.



JOHN KIRWAN
Commissioner for Public Employment

March 2005

contents

Glossary

Acknowledgements

About the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE)

About the Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA)

About the Indigenous Employment & Career Development Strategy (IECDS)

Who is this Tool Kit for?

Stakeholder feedback

How to read the Indigenous Employment Tool Kit

Northern Territory Geography

SECTION A: Information for employers, managers and supervisors

Introduction

Demographics of the NTPS

Why a focus on Indigenous employment?

Employee turnover in the NTPS

Benefits of employing Indigenous people

Recruitment and Selection in the NTPS

Advertising

Merit based employment and selection

The merit selection guide

Job descriptions

The Job Analysis Questionnaire and Job Evaluation System

Alternative Interview Processes for Indigenous employees

Entry Level Programs for Indigenous people in the NTPS

Creating the right environment

Induction

Communicating Effectively

Cross cultural awareness

Managing equity and diversity

What is equity?
What is diversity?
Achieving equality
Meeting the cultural obligations of Indigenous employees
Career Development & Retention
Mentoring
Coaching
Supervision
Making the most of role models
Performance Management
Work life balance
Achieving Work/Life Balance through flexible work options
Regional and remote workforce development
The Manager's role in supporting Indigenous employees
in remote communities
Remote Workforce Development (RWD) Strategy

Quick Tips Reference Guide

SECTION B: FAQ for Indigenous employees

SECTION C: Good Practice Case Studies

MARVIN Communication Platform Software
Kigaruk Indigenous Men's Leadership
Development Program
Pugarli Journey:
An EDP5 Challenge Project Report
Indigenous employment at Alice Springs Desert Park
Indigenous Employment Forums
Indigenous Policy Capacity Building program
Trainee Development Program, Northern Territory
Tourist Commission
Learning Communities in group schools east
NT Government Indigenous Economic
Development Taskforce

SECTION D: Summary of support services, union contacts, further reading and information

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Stakeholder Feedback Sheet
Appendix 2 – Sample Indigenous Employment Strategy
Appendix 3 – Mentoring Framework
Appendix 4 – Indigenous Employment Checklist
Appendix 5 – Planning for Indigenous Apprenticeships & Cadets
Appendix 6 – Union bodies in the NT

GLOSSARY

CDEP	Community Development Employment Program
CDU	Charles Darwin University
CLC	Central Land Council
CPE	Commissioner for Public Employment
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DCIS	Department of Corporate and Information Services
DEWR	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
DSDS	Darwin Skills Development Scheme
EDP	Executive Development Program
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunities
HR	Human Resource
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPAA	Institute of Public Administration Australia
MARVIN	Messaging Architecture for the Retrieval of Versatile Information and News
NLC	Northern Land Council
NAP	National Apprenticeship Program
NICP	National Indigenous Cadetship Program
NT	Northern Territory
NTG	Northern Territory Government
NTPS	Northern Territory Public Sector
NTTC	Northern Territory Tourist Commission
OCPE	Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PSEMA	Public Sector Employment & Management Act
SWIPE	Sector Wide Induction Program for Employees
TDP	Training Development Program

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In preparing the Northern Territory Public Sector Indigenous² Employment Tool Kit, the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE) acknowledges and thanks the contributions made by Indigenous community representatives and organisations, the Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) NT, the Northern Territory Chamber of Commerce and Industry,³ Government departments and other stakeholder groups throughout the Territory.

In particular, the leadership of the then President of IPAA (NT), John Carroll, in suggesting and championing the Indigenous Employment Forums throughout the regional areas of the NT was critical. These forums have been an invaluable source of feedback in refining this document.

ABOUT THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

The Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE)⁴ fulfils the role of the statutory employer for Northern Territory Public Sector (NTPS) staff by establishing policy and workplace practice frameworks for the management of all public sector employees. The NTPS is the single largest employer in the NT, with approximately 16,000 employees.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AUSTRALIA (IPAA) NT DIVISION

IPAA⁵ is a voluntary, non-profit professional association of public sector employees, academics, students and persons who are interested in fostering the quality of public sector management and administration in Australia. The Institute has a national membership in excess of 5000 individuals, with Divisions in all States and Territories.

² For the purpose of this Tool Kit, the terms *Indigenous* and *Aboriginal* and *Torres Strait Islander* are used interchangeably and relate to *Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander* people in Australia.

³ www.ntcci.com.au/Indigenous

⁴ www.nt.gov.au/ocpe

⁵ www.ipaa.org.au/

ABOUT THE NTPS INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2002—2006⁶

The Northern Territory Government (NTG) values the unique diverse skills and experience of Indigenous people and is committed to providing equal employment opportunities for Indigenous people in the NTPS.

The aim of the NTPS Indigenous Employment & Career Development Strategy 2002 – 2006 is to address critical under-representation of Indigenous people in the NTPS workforce by providing a range of appropriate recruitment, retention and career development initiatives.

WHO IS THIS TOOL KIT FOR?

The Indigenous Employment Tool Kit has been designed as a practical reference point for employers, managers, supervisors and Indigenous employees of the NTPS.

The Tool Kit is intended to be a living document that will continually evolve with the changing needs of the Indigenous community and the NTPS. For this purpose, the layout of the Tool Kit allows for relevant information to be inserted or removed as required.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

To ensure the Tool Kit is informative and based on contemporary practice, feedback from stakeholders is a critical part of the ongoing process. The Tool Kit will be reviewed and updated every 12 months. Comments and feedback are encouraged and appreciated.

Refer to Appendix 1 for a copy of the feedback sheet.

HOW TO READ THE INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT TOOL KIT

This Tool Kit is not intended to be prescriptive or exhaustive. Rather it is meant to be a practical guide for managers and HR practitioners in recruiting and retaining Indigenous employees in the NTPS workforce.

The Tool Kit is presented in four main sections:

- SECTION A: *Information for employers, managers and supervisors*
- SECTION B: *Information for Indigenous employees*
- SECTION C: *Good Practice Case Study examples*
- SECTION D: *Summary of support services, further reading and information*

NORTHERN TERRITORY GEOGRAPHY⁷

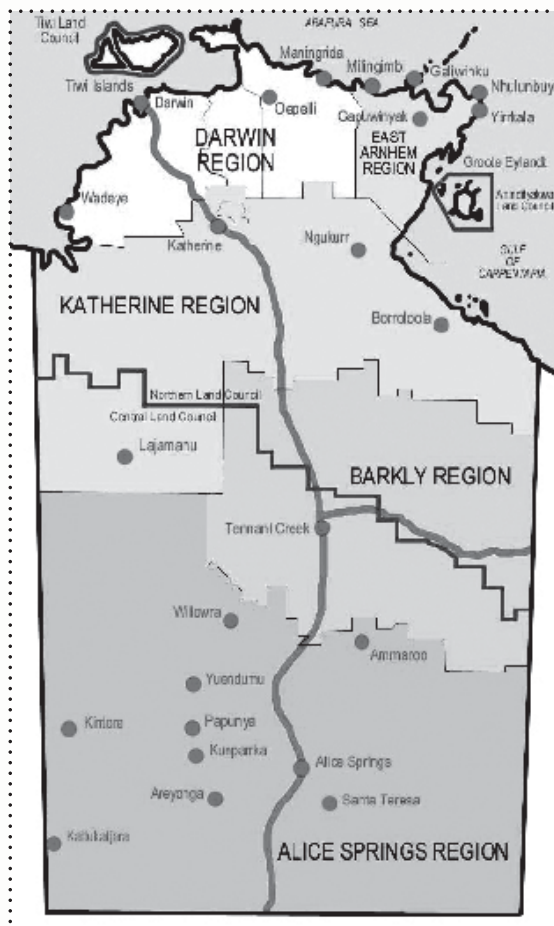
The following table and map demonstrate the diversity of Indigenous language groups across the Northern Territory. This is not a complete listing. For further information contact:

Aboriginal Interpreter Service
Darwin (08) 8999 8353
Alice Springs (08) 8951 5576

Diwurruwurru-Jaru Aboriginal Corporation
(Katherine Regional Aboriginal Language Centre)
Katherine (08) 8971 1233

Papulu Apparr-Kari Language Centre
Tennant Creek (08) 8962 3270

Wadeye Aboriginal Languages Centre
Wadeye (Port Keats) (08) 8978 2677



⁷ *Employing Indigenous Territorians Handbook, Chamber of Commerce, Northern Territory, 2004*

Location	Language	Alt. Name
Maningrida	Ndjobbanna	
	Burarra	
	Ndjobbanna	
	Nakarra	
	Rembarranga	
	Wurlaki	
	Kunbarlang	
Oenpelli	Kunwinjku	Gunbalanya
Tiwi Islands	Modern Tiwi	
Wadeye	Murrinh-patha	Port Keats
Groote Eylandt	Anindilyakwa	
Yirrkala	Rirratjingu, Gumatj, Djapu	
Gunyangara	Gumatj, Galpu	Ski beach
Galiwin'ku	Djambarrbuyngu, Gupapuyngu, Gumatj, Galpu	Elcho Island
Gapuwiyak	Gupapuyngu, Djambarrpuynu, Dha'wangu	Lake Evella
Milingimbi	Gupapuyngu, Wangurri	Yurrwi
Ramingining	Gupapuyngu, Ganalbingu, Manharngu	Warrk
Katherine	Kriol, Wardaman, Gurindji, Jawoyn	
Ngukurr	Kriol, Ngalakgan	
Lajamanu	Warlpiri	
Dagaragu	Gurindji	
Tennant Creek	Alyawarr, Warlmanpa, Warlpiri, Warumungu	
Ammaroo	Alyawarr	
Ltyente Purte	Eastern Arrente, Central Arrente	Santa Teresa
Alice Springs	Luritja	
& South	Eastern Arrente, Central Arrente, Western Arrente, Southern Arrente	
Kunparrka	Warlpiri, Western Arrente, Papunya Luritja, Luritja	Haast Bluff
Papunya	Warlpiri, Western Arrente, Papunya Luritja, Luritja	
Kintore	Pintupi	Walangkura
Areyonga	Pitjantjatjara, Western Arrente, Luritja	
Kaltukatjara	Pitjantjatjara, Ngaanyatjarra, Ngaatjatjarra	Docker River
Yuendumu	Warlpiri	
Willowra	Warlpiri	

SECTION A

INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYERS

INTRODUCTION

The Tool Kit is designed to provide a framework for employers to establish strategies to recruit and retain Indigenous people in the workforce.

Key initiatives include marketing the Northern Territory Public Sector (NTPS) as a preferred employer; developing leadership capacity, establishing innovative, contemporary and efficient recruitment practices to attract and retain a skilled Indigenous workforce and to provide flexible work practices for a diverse range of employee needs.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE NTPS

The NTPS is a relatively small workforce when compared to other Australian States and Territories, yet it supports arguably the most remote workforce in the world and like other jurisdictions, will need to work hard to meet the significant challenges of future workforce planning. There is understandably a strong degree of optimism in the capacity of the NTPS to be a lead figure in the advancement of effective and progressive strategies in the workforce.

The challenges for workforce development in the NTPS are manifold. Fundamental to the future effectiveness of the NTPS is dependent on the achievement of a workforce that is broadly reflective of the community that it serves. The policy aim of the Tool Kit is to develop, attract and retain talented Indigenous employees.

As the largest employer in the NT, the NTPS and its staff are the largest provider and consumer of services, thereby having a significant influence on the local economy.

INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT IN THE NTPS

As of March 2005, Indigenous people represented 6.2% (1,006) of the NTPS workforce. This is an increase from 4.6% in 2002, a total increase of 40%.

Agencies have undertaken a range of activities, including a review of their data collection systems, developing or refining monitoring and reporting systems, establishing agency implementation plans and reviewing recruitment and retention practices to ensure that agencies' strategies are more inclusive of, and target, Indigenous people.

Implementation of the *Indigenous Employment & Career Development Strategy* across agencies is monitored regularly, with progress reports submitted to Cabinet every six months. To access copies of the IECDS progress reports go to: www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/Indigenous

WHY A FOCUS ON INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT?

Building a workforce with the right skills to deliver quality outcomes and outputs in today's environment is challenging for all employers. The challenge is made greater by an ageing population creating a shrinking labour market, reluctance to view the public sector as an employer of choice and competition with the private sector for skilled labour.

At almost a third of the population in the NT, Indigenous people represent a stable segment of the workforce that can significantly reduce turnover costs and assist in addressing skills shortages and the ageing workforce.

About 22% of the Northern Territory's population are young people aged between 12 and 25. Indigenous people comprise 35% of the youth population. This proportion is significantly higher than the overall Indigenous population rate of 28%. Of these young Indigenous people, 68% live in remote communities. Currently 40% of school aged children in the NT are Indigenous, with predictions that this has the potential to increase to 50%.

This indicates that Indigenous people are more likely to make up a significant proportion of the workforce.

As the largest employer in the NT, the NTPS has a critical role in the development and employment of young people.

Creating opportunities for young people making the transition from school into the workforce, such as graduate employment, cadetships and new apprenticeships, will help to build the skilled workforce we need.

EMPLOYEE TURNOVER IN THE NTPS

The cost of turnover is difficult to quantify, however, it is generally regarded that the cost of an employee leaving the NTPS is between 80% and 150% of their salary.

While the NTPS has a core set of employees who have a record of stable employment (27% of the sector has 10 years or more of continuous service)⁸, the average annual turnover is high at around 26%. Indigenous people are less likely to move out of the NT and therefore would contribute to a more stable workforce.

In this context, Indigenous people in the NT, if afforded the opportunity for advancement in the workforce, would be the primary source of input and stability in the labour market. In this way Indigenous people can contribute significantly in reducing the costs associated with high turnover of staff.

⁸ OCPE Conference Paper, March 2004 "Closing the GAP: Government As Partners — Working collaboratively with Community Organisations to develop sustainable Indigenous employment outcomes".

BENEFITS OF EMPLOYING INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

For employers, some of the many benefits of employing Indigenous people in the workforce have already been discussed, including their capacity to be the primary source of input and stability in the labour market and their considerable potential for reducing the costs associated with high staff turnover. Other benefits to employers include:

- Accessing local staff
 - Fulfilling agencies' corporate and social responsibilities
 - Increasing the pool of skilled Indigenous people
 - Utilising the unique skills and perspectives of Indigenous people
 - Expanding the knowledge and cultural awareness of non-Indigenous staff
 - Contributing to the longer term improvements in the health and economic independence of Indigenous people
 - Providing a bridge to better cultural understanding between all Australians.
- TIP: Take an investment approach to employing Indigenous people – see the advantages in investing for the future.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION IN THE NTPS

Recruitment and selection begins with the use of effective recruitment processes. When trying to recruit an Indigenous employee, agencies should consider the use of alternative media for job advertisements.

ADVERTISING

Using a variety of media channels and networks to advertise vacancies to the broader Indigenous community will help to increase the pool of Indigenous applicants and build the reputation of your agency in its commitment to employing Indigenous people.

Prior to advertising, review the job description to ensure it does not discriminate against or disadvantage Indigenous job seekers. Think about the type of skills, attributes and knowledge the job requires.

When advertising, use internal Indigenous staff networks to disseminate the vacancy through the NTPS and broader Indigenous community.

Ensure the selection panel has the appropriate experience and cross cultural awareness to minimise any potential disadvantage to Indigenous applicants. The panel should comprise at least one Indigenous representative.

MERIT-BASED EMPLOYMENT AND SELECTION

In the NTPS, employment is based on the merit principle. This is defined in the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act* as “the capacity of the person to perform particular duties, having regard to the person’s knowledge, skills, qualifications and experience and the potential for future development of the person in employment in the Public Sector.”

‘I was quite nervous when I started my first job. My confidence was really low, as I wasn’t sure if I could do the job, but as time went by, with the support of my boss and work mates, my confidence grew and now I’ve been working full time for over 20 years. My family couldn’t be prouder.’

Indigenous NTPS employee.

THE MERIT SELECTION GUIDE

A merit selection guide has been developed to assist agencies in the recruitment process. To view this, go to www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/publications_forms/merit-selection-guide/

For further information on how to write job applications check out www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/careers/applicants/apply.shtml or www.jobsearch.gov.au/

For further information refer to Appendix 4 – Indigenous Employment Checklist.

TIP: Ensure all selection panels include an Indigenous representative or employee.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

A job description describes the job with sufficient information to enable an applicant to gain a clear understanding of the job requirements and the skills needed to successfully achieve the outcomes of the job.

It is important to ensure that job descriptions cover all requirements and skills used in a job, including any skills specific to Indigenous people. Agencies should consider adding the following criteria to job descriptions for jobs requiring ongoing contact with Indigenous people:

- Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of Indigenous Australian societies and cultures, and the issues affecting these cultures in Australian society, including being able to show an awareness of, and respect for, the different value systems inherent in Indigenous cultures and an awareness of the particular disadvantages faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in society.
- Demonstrated ability to communicate sensitively and effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including an understanding of the formal and informal patterns of communication in Indigenous cultures and a sensitivity to the social and political decision making processes in those cultures.

THE JOB ANALYSIS QUESTIONNAIRE AND JOB EVALUATION SYSTEM

In the NTPS, job descriptions are developed based on the information contained in the Job Analysis Questionnaire (JAQ).

The JAQ is a document which describes the primary objective, responsibilities and accountabilities of the job together with the qualifications and experience needed to do the job.

Each JAQ has a series of questions that assist supervisors and employees to analyse and describe the job.

A panel uses the information to evaluate the job under the Job Evaluation System (JES). Managers should ensure that Indigenous employees are assisted by advisors trained in the JES system (whose training includes Indigenous issues) when filling out a JAQ. Some skills used only by Indigenous employees in their jobs, such as Indigenous language skills, should be acknowledged.

- TIPS:
- Showcase your agency to the Indigenous community through advertising vacancies and promoting your agency in Indigenous media, local and regional networks, at expos and through the use of positive role models.
- Review the job description to ensure it does not discriminate against or disadvantage Indigenous job seekers
- Use internal Indigenous staff networks to disseminate the vacancy
- Ensure the selection panel has the appropriate experience and cross cultural awareness to minimise any potential disadvantage to Indigenous applicants
- Provide job readiness training for Indigenous people interested in working in your agency and support existing staff in applying for jobs and preparing for interviews.

ALTERNATIVE INTERVIEW PROCESSES FOR INDIGENOUS EMPLOYEES

When selecting applicants, managers are encouraged to apply alternative techniques in selecting applicants that are outside of the traditional interview process.

Techniques may include:

- Use of assessment centres in the selection process
- Selection panel providing applicants with interview questions a day prior to the interview
- Selection panels encouraging the inclusion of demonstrations as applicable
- Inviting the applicant to be accompanied by a support person or family member
- Ensuring Indigenous people are represented on the interview panel.

TIP: Provide apprenticeships targeting Indigenous people. Apprenticeships are an effective way to create base grade entry level positions for young people in the NTPS.

ENTRY LEVEL PROGRAMS FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN THE NTPS

Entry level programs continue to be used as a significant recruitment strategy for Indigenous people in the NTPS, with Indigenous people comprising 61% of all apprenticeships in 2004. Entry level programs have proven to be a successful strategy to train and skill Indigenous employees.

Note: Mature aged people are not excluded from the entry level programs. Agencies are encouraged to offer similar employment opportunities to mature aged Indigenous job seekers.

TIP: Share your expertise and knowledge; encourage Indigenous employees to ask questions when they need to know something about the work environment.

To ensure successful outcomes, training and development must assist the Indigenous employee in their career development, align to the agency's core business and form part of an integrated career pathway for the employee.

'No one in my family ever worked before me; so when I started work, I was worried I'd get the sack if I didn't know everything about the job straight away'.

Indigenous NTPS employee.

The Entry Level Programs coordinated through the Department of Corporate and Information Systems (DCIS) involve delivery of practical services, strategies and tools that reflect workforce development needs for those employees in the early stages of their NTPS career. Entry Level Programs offered are as follows.

Apprenticeships

- General Apprenticeships
- Apprenticeships specifically targeting Indigenous people.

The NTPS National Apprenticeship Program provides opportunities for the NTPS to develop young people who are leaving school and to engage those who have left school and who have developed an interest in working in government. Additionally, it provides an opportunity for existing employees to change their careers.

Indigenous people seeking a New Apprenticeship should discuss this directly with agency HR staff or go through the DCIS Entry Level Program.

National Indigenous Cadetship Program

The National Indigenous Cadetship Program (NICP) is a recruitment program developed in partnership with the Department of Workplace Relation (DEWR) which offers opportunities for Indigenous people to obtain under graduate qualifications.

Cadets undertake full time study, and are provided on-the-job training during major semester breaks. Upon successful completion of the cadetship, cadets are offered a permanent appointment to the NTPS. For more information ring DCIS on (08) 8999 1087.

GRADUATE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Graduate Development Program is a one or two year program that is available Territory wide and enables graduates to obtain employment in the public sector at appropriate and attractive remuneration levels and to participate in a program of professional development. For more information ring DCIS on (08) 8999 1087.

For further information about apprenticeships and cadetships, refer to Appendix 5.

VACATION EMPLOYMENT FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Activities undertaken by the Entry Level Programs Unit are underpinned by a commitment to strengthening the quality of learning partnerships within organisations, the provision of practical policies along with appropriate help and advice.

'Being interviewed for a job makes me nervous, because sometimes the interview panel use unfamiliar words or jargon that I don't understand. I worry that I'll never get a job when this happens to me!'

NTPS Indigenous employee.

For more information ring DCIS on (08) 8999 1087.

- TIP: Interview Panels
- should try to use
- everyday language that
- Indigenous applicants will
- be able to understand.

CREATING THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

Supporting Indigenous employees is a critical factor in valuing an inclusive workforce. Employees who feel they are supported and valued in the workplace are more likely to remain employed in the organisation.

This support may be through both informal and formal channels and include induction, mentoring, coaching and appropriate supervision.

INDUCTION

Induction is an important part of support in the workplace. As with all new staff, Indigenous employees should participate in a workplace induction program to help them understand internal procedures and processes.

Induction should be carried out as soon as possible after the employee has started, ideally in the first week. See the Indigenous Employment Checklist, Induction section for relevant information.

There is also a Sector Wide Induction Program for Employees (SWIPE) available online through the DCIS website which provides information of the structure and purpose of the whole of the NTPS.

The SWIPE program provides employees with the opportunity to understand how the government system works, how various agencies operate and how the budget process affects each agency and the work that is done. The program is designed for people at all levels from base grade, to middle and senior managers and professionals.

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

Promoting and actively inviting open and honest two-way communication with Indigenous employees is a critical but under-utilised communication strategy. Both the employee and manager need to understand what is expected of them and express what they expect of each other to minimise miscommunication in the workplace.

Developing trust, making time to talk with each other, not always about work, is an appropriate way for both parties to get to know each other and establish a foundation of trust, support and mutual respect. It is important for both parties to not jump to assumptions early on, to be aware of stereotypes and allow enough time to get to know each other. It is important to be aware of the different communication styles required for different settings.

Managers should also provide regular feedback to Indigenous employees on their performance, with the opportunity for positive feedback and honest direction on areas for professional development. Learning plans should be developed (often within the performance management system) with all employees, and are a particularly useful strategy in providing support for the Indigenous employee. (Refer to information on Performance Management in this section.)

TIP: Lead by example. Be aware of how you communicate and interact with people and encourage other staff to do the same.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY

A myriad of cultures are represented in the NT. There are many benefits to the employer by having an organisation that supports and appreciates cultural diversity. Cross cultural awareness programs provide the tools for managers to recruit Indigenous people and deal with practical issues that may arise in the workplace. It will also improve and build on the knowledge and understanding by employers and managers of the diversity within Indigenous cultures.

While cross cultural programs are not a mandatory requirement for managers or supervisors in the NTPS, staff are strongly encouraged to participate in these programs. Staff who participate in cross cultural awareness programs frequently demonstrate a new set of behaviours and attitudes that are respectful and supportive of all cultures.

Cultural competency training enables staff in agencies to:

- gain a greater understanding of issues specific to Indigenous people
- increase the agency's effectiveness in recruiting Indigenous people
- develop the skills and knowledge needed to assist Indigenous people entering and remaining in the NTPS workforce, and
- deliver culturally appropriate services.

- TIP: Provide access to
- cross-cultural training
- for Indigenous and
- non-Indigenous staff
- to promote two-way
- learning.

The benefits of cultural competency for agencies include:

- increased staff satisfaction
- creating a work environment which is inclusive of, and values, diversity in the work place
- improved retention of Indigenous staff
- the delivery of culturally appropriate policies, programs and services
- increased efficiency and effectiveness of an agency's business.

To view a sample of an Indigenous Employment Strategy, refer to Appendix 2

MANAGING EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

Equity and diversity are core values of the NTPS. A major goal is to promote the importance of valuing workplace difference and to encourage agencies to include equity and diversity principles in everyday workplace practices

What is equity?

Equity is simply about giving everyone a “fair go”, with appropriate access to training opportunities, to fair working conditions and to opportunities for promotion. It is about providing everyone with an equal opportunity to make the most of their talents and abilities in the workplace.

What is diversity?

Workplace diversity is a management and leadership approach aimed at creating an inclusive environment that values and utilises the contributions of people of different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives.

As an employer, the NTPS seeks to maintain:

- A workforce that is a reflection of the diverse community of the NT so that we are better able to service that community
- An inclusive work environment that values the contributions of people of different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives
- A workplace that is free from harassment and discrimination
- Merit-based selection processes for recruitment and promotion.

Achieving equity and diversity is the foundation for success in today's workplace. For any organisation to reach its full potential, it needs to value the diverse experience, knowledge and skills of its employees. Issues impacting on the workforce such as a shrinking labour market, the ageing workforce and increased skill shortages will have a significant impact on the workforce locally and globally.

Promote sound belief systems and use role models to contribute to a culturally supportive environment.

Be prepared to seek diverse views on issues from an Indigenous perspective.

TIP: Recognise the diversity within the Indigenous community; don't assume one size fits all.

ACHIEVING EQUALITY

“Equality does not always mean treating people the same. There are two types of equality, ‘formal’ equality and ‘substantive’ equality. Formal equality is treating everyone the same.

Substantive equality allows different groups to be treated differently so that they can, in the end, enjoy their human rights equally” (Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission).⁹

Achieving substantive equality for Indigenous people can come from mutual support, respect, understanding and cross-cultural communication between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The promotion of individual belief systems and the use of role models will contribute to a culturally supportive environment.

The spectrum of Indigenous languages, cultures, knowledge and experience in the NTPS is diverse. Your role as a manager is to encourage people to adopt realistic, inclusive and appropriate ways of thinking and behaving, particularly those working in rural and remote communities.

MEETING THE CULTURAL OBLIGATIONS OF INDIGENOUS EMPLOYEES

Supporting Indigenous staff to meet their cultural obligations is an important consideration for managers.

- TIP
- Factor in career
- development
- opportunities for
- Indigenous staff.

- TIP
- Identify the area/s of
- high turnover in your
- agency and develop
- a recruitment plan to
- attract, promote, develop
- and retain Indigenous
- people to these positions.
- Initiatives may include
- specifically targeting
- Indigenous students,
- graduates, apprentices,
- previous Indigenous
- employees and mature
- aged Indigenous men
- and women.

⁹ www.hreoc.gov.au/racial_discrimination/guide_law/special_measures.htm

CAREER DEVELOPMENT & RETENTION

TIP: Make use of workplace buddies and mentors to support and monitor staff satisfaction levels.

There is uncertainty surrounding the long term impact of an ageing workforce and the transformation of community values. However, there is enough evidence to predict that these forces, coupled with the projected shifts in the demographics of the NT, require urgent and critical attention to succession planning strategies.

The warning signs all point to the pressing need to develop an integrated and holistic approach to replacement planning that recognises differing cultural and generational perspectives.

A framework for developing an agency's succession management plan¹⁰ includes information which:

- Identifies staff development opportunities
- Forecasts areas of risk
- Encourages Indigenous employees to be active members in the workplace
- Ensures feedback and performance development mechanisms are in place
- Sets clear, realistic, and measurable performance objectives.

MENTORING

Mentoring means different things to different people. In the context of this Tool Kit, mentoring aims to provide support and directed learning to employees as part of their professional and personal development. Mentoring is often undertaken on an informal voluntary basis; usually it is negotiated between the employee and the mentor. Mentoring creates a reciprocal relationship that can be rewarding for the mentor, mentee and agency. For further tips on mentoring refer to Appendix 3.

The provision and promotion of mentoring in the workplace is increasingly being seen as a significant retention strategy. Employers that provide mentoring for Indigenous staff, either formally or informally, find that they experience greater success in retaining staff.

Cultivating mentoring as a part of the everyday workplace culture ensures that Indigenous employees who are mentored are provided with appropriate support, motivation and career development opportunities.

TIP: Actively develop a supported mentoring program in your agency. Talk to your HR staff and Indigenous employees regarding its development and implementation.

TIP: Actively promote the importance of coaching among senior staff.

Encourage Indigenous employees to seek coaching as part of their ongoing professional development or as a coach to other senior Indigenous and non-Indigenous managers.

¹⁰ OCPE Discussion Paper, 2004, *The Shape of Things to Come* or visit OCPE website at www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/publications_forms/discussion_papers/

COACHING

Coaching is usually seen as a means of developing senior staff within an organisation in order that they perform more effectively and reach their potential.

Coaching can assist senior Indigenous employees to develop their skills and knowledge, and create an environment for individual growth, purposeful action, and sustained improvement.

SUPERVISION

Supervision is probably the most direct form of support that staff will receive, as this normally takes place on a daily basis in the workplace.

Supervisors assist in developing fundamental business skills such as decision making, problem solving, planning, delegation, meeting management requirements, employee performance management and ensuring conformance to internal policies and regulations.

Research has shown that the majority of an employee's workplace satisfaction is a direct result of the relationship they have with their supervisor.

MAKING THE MOST OF ROLE MODELS

Promoting and supporting positive role models for Indigenous people is a practical way employers can support Indigenous people in the workplace.

Role models can also be accessed outside the NTPS, for example within industry, Indigenous organisations, or other institutions. Anecdotally, few employers actively use role models to attract Indigenous people to work for their respective organisations.

NTPS agency managers and supervisors are encouraged to actively promote the use of role models in the workplace. Benefits include:

- Increased NTPS productivity
- Improved team work
- Greater job satisfaction
- Inspired Indigenous employees who desire a career in the NTPS.

- TIP: Have senior staff
- promote the importance
- of role models and share
- stories about the positive
- impact a role model has
- had on their personal
- and professional
- development.

- TIP: Be innovative!
- Make it your challenge
- to employ Indigenous
- people in hard to fill
- positions by articulating
- career pathways in your
- agency for Indigenous
- people and school
- leavers. This not only
- increases the number of
- Indigenous people in your
- agency but solves the
- problem of filling hard to
- recruit positions within a
- shrinking labour market.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

TIP: Re-design jobs to suit Indigenous people who have additional family or community responsibilities.

TIP: Be sure to discuss the issue of flexible work practices with your Indigenous staff as part of your agency's regular performance management program.

TIP: To avoid possible grievances by Indigenous employees under Section 59 review of grievances – consider Indigenous requirements or needs and take early and appropriate mediation or other action towards resolution before formal action is commenced.

TIP: Empower and encourage Indigenous staff to exceed standards and expectations by actively promoting the performance management process as a proactive strategy in an employee's personal and professional development.

Performance management¹¹ is the process of identifying, evaluating and developing the work performance of employees so that the agency's goals and objectives are more effectively achieved.

While the same principles apply for Indigenous employees as they do for non-Indigenous employees, managing under-performance with Indigenous employees needs to be conducted sensitively and within an appropriate environment. This may sound straightforward, but there are areas of risk that can make the difference between an Indigenous employee aspiring to a career in the NTPS, or alternatively being left feeling demoralised and isolated.

Undertaking performance management can sometimes be a challenging experience for managers when they are required to discuss performance issues that may make them or the Indigenous staff member feel uncomfortable.

Promptly dealing with an issue at the appropriate time, with a sensitive, sensible approach, while being respectful, is likely to avoid difficult or awkward situations arising. This will assist the employee to address areas of poor performance and time management with confidence.

To discuss devising a performance management agreement framework or to obtain copies of one in your agency, contact your agency's HR unit. Alternatively, contact the OCPE on (08) 8999 4179.

WORK LIFE BALANCE

One of the major issues facing our workforce today is work and life balance¹²; an issue which is receiving increased attention at an international, national and local level.

The Government recognises that all employees have commitments and interests outside the workplace, including family, friends and recreational pursuits, which all contribute to their general health and well-being.

In the interest of achieving a stable, committed and capable workforce, the NTPS promotes greater flexibility¹³ in its employment arrangements, so agencies are more responsive to employees' personal commitments.

¹¹ www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/public_sector/employment_instructions/6

¹² www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/publications_forms/Work_Life_Balance_policy_booklet.pdf

¹³ www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/equity/flexible.shtml

Initiatives that are currently available to support work life balance include:

- Flexible working hours
- Home-based work
- Job sharing
- Part-time work
- Career breaks
- Part-year employment; and
- Short term absences for family and community responsibilities.

The NTPS 2004 – 2007 Certified Agreement contains provisions enhancing support for work life balance including:

- Acknowledgement that the Managing Work Life Balance in the NTPS Policy and Implementation Plan underpins the application of work life balance in the NTPS
- A commitment to fair and reasonable consideration of requests to access work life balance arrangements taking into account operational needs
- A commitment that employees using work life balance arrangements will have equal access to training and development, information and meetings as other employees
- The Equity, Diversity and Flexibility Standing Committee will oversee the introduction of flexible work practices in the NTPS.

Further, agreement has been reached to review, through the Equity, Diversity and Flexibility Standing Committee, a number of areas with the aim of broadening and promoting work life balance in the NTPS including, where practicable and feasible, the:

- Purchase of additional recreation leave
- Utilisation of recreation leave at half pay
- Introduction of ante-natal leave
- Introduction of paid paternity leave
- Combining a number of leave types into one 'personal' leave entitlement; and
- Mature age employment initiatives.

Further details are available at clause 46 of the Agreement.

(Adapted from the NTPS EBA Factsheet No.11, November 2004.

For further information, go to www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/publications/forms/eba-bulletins/work%20life%20balance.pdf).

- TIP: Managers and supervisors should be aware that Indigenous employees might need to stop working for extended periods of time for cultural or caring responsibilities. Career breaks can lead to mutually beneficial outcomes, through Indigenous employees meeting and responding to cultural and family responsibilities and applying these skills, knowledge and cultural expertise in the workplace.

ACHIEVING WORK LIFE BALANCE THROUGH FLEXIBLE WORK OPTIONS

Flexible work practices are employment arrangements that aim to achieve the best possible match between the business interests of employers and the personal/professional interests of individual employees. Research indicates implementing flexible work practices is becoming increasingly important in attracting and retaining employees. Examples of the flexible work practices used throughout the world include:

Career Breaks

Career breaks enable employees to take leave from their positions for extended periods of time and maintain the right to return to work at the same level of employment. This leave may involve recreation, long service, leave without pay or a combination of these. The reasons for taking a career break are varied and can range from dependent care responsibilities, study or travel.

Flexible Working Hours

Flexible working hours enable employees to have greater flexibility in their attendance patterns by varying start and finish times, length of breaks and the length of the working day. This allows the employee the use of flex-time credit to take time off or days off to meet specific personal needs, without reducing other leave credits.

Home Based Work

Home based work enables employees to work from their home rather than in the workplace. This may be occasional or on a regular basis.

Job Sharing

Job sharing involves one or more people sharing one full time position so that each is working part time. No two job sharing arrangements are necessarily alike and each arrangement is designed to suit the individual needs of the employee and employer.

Keep in Touch Schemes

Keep in touch schemes are designed to enable employees on extended leave to keep up to date with workplace developments. These are useful during maternity, parental, long service and unpaid leave.

Part Time Work

When an employee is working less than the full time hours for a job, they are considered a part time employee. The number of hours worked in part time positions does vary with arrangements designed to meet the needs of employees and employers.

Part Year Employment

Part year employment enables employees to take a number of weeks in unpaid leave each year. For example, an employee may wish to be on leave when their children are on school vacation and may negotiate for additional leave over the year, some of which will be unpaid leave.

Preferred Rostering

In this initiative, currently being used by the Western Australia Health Department, employees provide a list of preferred shifts. Where possible these preferences are accommodated.

Purchased Leave

Purchased leave is when employees work full time or part time at proportionally reduced pay to self-fund additional leave. The income earned is averaged and paid over the full period of work and leave.

Short Term Absences For Family & Community Responsibilities

Short term absences for family and community responsibilities involves approved leave to allow an employee to meet family and community responsibilities. This leave may be for a few hours or for a number of days. Sometimes these absences will involve rearranging work hours or using available leave entitlements.

Regional and Remote Workforce Development

Regional and remote areas of the NT contain huge economic, social, environmental and cultural wealth. They also present significant challenges of social and professional isolation, distance from major population and training centres, additional costs associated with accessing training and development opportunities and difficulties in arranging for replacement staffing in isolated communities.

Seventy-three percent of Indigenous people live on Aboriginal land where mainstream labour market opportunities are limited or non-existent. Most employment growth for Indigenous people has occurred in urban areas, with the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) accounting for almost 38% of new jobs. In rural and remote areas, CDEP accounts for 95% of new jobs¹⁴.

A major challenge in increasing the number of Indigenous people employed in remote communities is the limited access to employment where they live. More than 60% of the employment opportunities are within the Darwin and Palmerston areas, yet over 80% of the Indigenous population live outside these areas¹⁵.

- TIP: Promote different
- types of flexible work
- arrangements that
- employees may access.
- Arrangements can be
- negotiated on a case
- by case basis between
- the manager and the
- employee.

- TIP: Talk to your staff and
- encourage them to devise
- flexible work arrangements
- to better meet their family,
- work and community
- responsibilities. It will
- not only boost morale of
- staff, but can also have
- a positive impact on
- productivity and efficiency
- of your agency.

¹⁴ ABS Census 2001

¹⁵ ABS Census 2001

In the past 20 years, many Indigenous people have chosen to move from townships and urban areas to communities distant from mainstream labour markets and commercial opportunities¹⁶. Unless employers are able to create job opportunities in these communities, the high level of unemployment among Indigenous people will worsen.

If these demographic and labour market trends continue they will have major social and economic impacts on the Territory and will create worse living conditions than those that currently exist in some communities¹⁷.

The public sector has an important role in employing Indigenous people in the NT. Clearly, we must address this major disadvantage through the collaborative development of culturally appropriate education, training and employment systems to ensure that Indigenous people are able to participate in the labour market and derive the resultant benefits.

THE MANAGER'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS EMPLOYEES IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES

In recognising the unique challenges faced by Indigenous communities, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) adopted Convention No. 169 – the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention¹⁸. The Convention has gained recognition as the foremost international policy document on Indigenous and tribal peoples. It sets international standards, and seeks to bring governments, organisations of Indigenous and tribal peoples, and other people concerned together in the same dialogue.

A supporting document to this Convention is the ILO's Decent Work Agenda¹⁹. Decent work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organise and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

Decent work should be at the heart of global, national and local strategies for economic and social progress. It is central to efforts to reduce poverty, and a means for achieving equitable, inclusive and sustainable development.

¹⁶ Hunter, 1999

¹⁷ Arbon, et al, 2002

¹⁸ World of Work, No. 52, November 2004, International Labour Office, Geneva

¹⁹ Decent Work Agenda, International Labour Office, Geneva, www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/integration/decent/index.htm

These documents provide key reference points for managers in supporting Indigenous employees. Managers need to be sensitive to the additional pressures placed upon Indigenous employees by their family and the Indigenous community. In some instances, the Indigenous employee may be the only family member earning an income. This creates challenges for the Indigenous employee and may be a disincentive for the person to work.

For Indigenous people working in their communities, there is often no separation between their work and family commitments. By being up-front and openly discussing the work, family and community responsibilities and obligations, managers can provide support to their Indigenous staff.

Talking to and involving the Indigenous employee's family can also be helpful. Making the employee's role in the organisation and what is required of them in their job clear to their families can be an effective way to ensure families are aware of the employee's role and are better able to support them.

REMOTE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT (RWD) STRATEGY

In developing the Remote Workforce Development (RWD) Strategy²⁰, the NTG has created a whole-of-government approach to addressing significant regional and remote employees' workforce issues. The government has allocated \$1 million a year to improve development opportunities for about 2,000 employees across 132 remote communities.

Through the RWD Strategy, agencies are creating positions with a primary focus on regional and remote workforce issues. Initiatives to improve communication in remote communities are emerging, along with the stronger links being made between government, remote employees and Indigenous people. Most importantly, NTPS employees from regional centres and remote locations are driving change to develop and promote workforce processes, entitlements and benefits.

Under the Strategy, Indigenous and non-Indigenous remote based staff are eligible to apply for scholarships and grants to assist in their personal and professional development. An ageing population, recruitment and retention and low Indigenous employment rates mean developing sustainable regional and remote communities is essential for the NTPS' capacity to meet current and future workforce needs.

NTPS staff based in remote areas of the NT can obtain further information on the RWD Strategy by contacting the OCPE on ph. 8999 3757 or visiting the OCPE website at www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/rwd.shtml

²⁰ www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/rwd/strategy.shtml

STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS POTENTIAL INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS²¹

By having an appreciation for some of the differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures, employers can better understand the issues and then work with employees to overcome them. Barriers tend to relate less to the employee's skills and more to miscommunications and misunderstandings between the employer and employee. When reading the following assessments, consider the fact that all people have individually diverse perspectives and world views. Be careful not to stereotype Indigenous people. These are examples only, and may not apply in all circumstances.

WORLD-VIEW

Indigenous people	Non-Indigenous people	Potential employment barriers	Possible solutions
May have a limited understanding of the obligations and workings of employed life.	May have a limited understanding of the obligations and workings of Indigenous life.	<p>Employers that have a bad experience with an Indigenous employee will resist employing Indigenous people again.</p> <p>Misunderstandings about the expectations of staff can create conflict.</p> <p>Non-Indigenous staff can sometimes misunderstand Indigenous staff.</p> <p>Indigenous staff may feel uncomfortable in a work environment, particularly where they are the sole Indigenous employee.</p>	<p>Recognise the diversity of Indigenous people and do not stereotype.</p> <p>Be clear and forthcoming about your level of support and expectations of all staff (Indigenous and non-Indigenous).</p> <p>Showcase your agency to potential Indigenous people through work experience opportunities, career and/or youth expos' and presentations, etc.</p> <p>Allow Indigenous staff to have a support network of people they can trust, such as mentors and workplace buddies.</p> <p>Provide cross-cultural training for all staff.</p>

²¹ Chamber of Commerce, 2004.

Indigenous people	Non-Indigenous people	Potential employment barriers	Possible solutions
May be sociocentric (the needs of society and relationships take first priority).	May be egocentric (personal needs take first priority).	Personal and family commitments may conflict with work commitments.	Provide a range of flexible work practices that suit both the needs of the workplace and the employee.
May live in a way that engages, respects and works with their environment.	May control and dominate their environment.	Approach to work may differ between Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff.	Offer and provide opportunities for all staff to approach their work in a range of methods that meet the outcomes of the agency and allows innovative team approaches to work.
May place an emphasis on spatial relations, such as where I am, where my family is, where my country is.	May place an emphasis on temporal relations, such as what time it is, when we will arrive, what time I am due?	Indigenous staff may become confused and frustrated by the different needs and expectations in the workplace.	Ensure clear communication to avoid misunderstandings.
May believe that names, language, kinship and place of origin are all interconnected, sacred and exist prior to the person.	May believe that names, language and relationships are assigned and learnt after birth.	Names may change and be difficult to pronounce.	Be respectful of names. Ask a third party for pronunciation or proper use. Referring to someone by your relationship can be more respectful provided the relationship is well established (uncle, aunty, brother, sister, etc).

QUICK TIPS REFERENCE GUIDE

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- Showcase your agency to the Indigenous community through advertising vacancies and promoting your agency in Indigenous media, local and regional networks, at expos and through the use of positive role models.
- Review job descriptions as vacancies arise to ensure they do not inhibit or discriminate against Indigenous job seekers.
- Use internal Indigenous staff networks to disseminate vacancies.
- Ensure the selection panel has the appropriate experience and cross cultural awareness to minimise any potential disadvantage to Indigenous applicants.
- Provide apprenticeships targeting Indigenous people. Apprenticeships are an effective way to create base grade entry level positions for young people in the NTPS.
- Share your expertise and knowledge; encourage Indigenous employees to ask questions when they need to know something about the work environment.
- Ensure all selection panels include an Indigenous representative or employee.
- Interview panels should try to use everyday language that is easy to understand.
- Identify the area/s of high turnover in your agency and develop a recruitment plan to attract, promote, develop and retain Indigenous people to these positions.
- Establish a working party to monitor and implement Indigenous employment strategies in your agency.
- Establish an Indigenous alumni that includes previous staff who have left the NTPS.
- Take the time to develop relationships with Indigenous people. Make contact with Indigenous representatives in other agencies, community-based Indigenous organisations and other institutions outside the NTPS.

CREATING THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

- Provide regular forums for Indigenous staff to meet and discuss key issues impacting on their retention and career development.
- Recognise the diversity within the Indigenous community; don't assume one size fits all.
- Promote sound belief systems and use role models to contribute to a culturally supportive environment.
- Be prepared to seek the world view on issues from an Indigenous perspective.
- Provide access to cross-cultural training for Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff to promote two-way learning.

- Lead by example. Be aware of how you communicate and interact with people and encourage other staff to do the same.
- Develop a supportive environment. Encourage people to ask questions and share their unique experience and skills.
- Re–design jobs to suit Indigenous people that have additional family or community responsibilities.
- Have senior staff promote the importance of role models and share stories about the positive impact a role model has had on their personal and professional development.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT & RETENTION

- Factor in career development opportunities for junior Indigenous staff to progress.
- Make use of workplace buddies and mentors to support and monitor staff satisfaction levels.
- Actively develop a supported mentoring program in your agency. Talk to your HR staff and Indigenous employees in its development and implementation.
- Actively promote the importance of coaching among senior staff. Encourage Indigenous employees to seek coaching as part of their ongoing professional development or as a coach to other senior Indigenous and non–Indigenous managers.
- Be innovative! Make it your challenge to employ Indigenous people in hard–to–fill positions by articulating career pathways in your agency for Indigenous people and school leavers.
- Provide “Family days” where the CEO arranges regular get togethers with all staff and their families. This takes a holistic view of the employee and is an excellent opportunity for Indigenous families to experience what an agency does, and how their family member contributes to the workplace.
- Provide job readiness training for Indigenous people interested in working in your agency and support existing staff in applying for jobs and preparing for interviews.
- Encourage Indigenous people to gain work experience through participating in job exchange and mobility programs.
- As part of the performance management program, talk to your staff and encourage them to devise flexible work practices to meet their family, work and community responsibilities.
- Be aware that Indigenous employees might need to stop working for extended periods of time for cultural or caring responsibilities. Career breaks can lead to mutually beneficial outcomes.
- Empower and encourage Indigenous staff to exceed standards and expectations by actively promoting the performance management process as a proactive strategy in an employees personal and professional development.
- To avoid possible grievances by Indigenous employees, consider any Indigenous requirements or needs in responding to matters and take early and appropriate mediation or other action towards resolution once an issue is raised.

SECTION B

FAQ for Indigenous employees

This Section aims to provide Indigenous employees with information that will assist and support them in the workplace. Employees may also contact their relevant HR Officer, line manager or union about conditions of service, entitlements, the EBA process or a problem in the workplace. For further information on unions, refer to Appendix 6.

GENERAL

Q: How do I find out more information about my agency?

A: You can either talk to your supervisor or you can go to www.nt.gov.au and click on the relevant agency and the subjects you are interested in. Talking with staff in the HR unit or people you know who work there may also be useful in helping you learn more about the agency.

Q: How can I keep informed on the latest Indigenous issues and events?

A: There are a number of Indigenous networks in various NTPS agencies. An Indigenous network is available for people interested in information. People can view or send information via email to the NTPS Indigenous network at eCooeeNT.yahoo.com. Also, ask your HR officer if the agency has an Indigenous Employment Strategy, so you can talk to the officer Agencies contact officer.

You may also want to visit OCPE's website at www.nt.gov.au/ocpe or contact OCPE on (08) 8999 4179.

Q: How do I find out what my conditions and entitlements are as an employee of the NTPS?

A: You can talk to your supervisor or relevant HR officer in the agency to discuss conditions of service and entitlements. You might also want to find information about conditions for employees by visiting:
www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/public_sector/bylaws/

Q: *How much is my pay?*

A: For information on current NTPS salary rates of pay, visit:
www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/public_sector/rates-of-pay/

Q: *What is a probationary period?*

A: All permanent employees go through a probationary period, usually 6 months. This helps the employer and employee determine if the job is right for them. For more information go to: www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/public_sector/employment_instructions/ei02.shtml#5.1

Q: *What are my core hours?*

A: Core hours are the hours employees are required to work each day, usually they are between 7 hours 21 minutes (e.g. 8.00am – 4.21pm) to 7 hours 36 minutes. Many workplaces in the NTPS work Monday to Friday between 6.00am and 6.00pm bandwidth. If in doubt, you should discuss core hours with your manager.

Q: *What is flex time and does it apply to me?*

A: Flexible work arrangements (flex-time) are usually available to most employees in the NTPS. You should discuss with your manager the specific arrangements appropriate to your work area. For further detailed information in relation to flexible time work arrangements in the NTPS, go to:
www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/equity/flexible.shtml

Q: *What are my ethical and moral responsibilities as an employee of the NTPS?*

A: The Code of Conduct provides specific guidance on a range of ethical and moral issues that may effect employees from time to time. Northern Territory Public Sector employees are in a rare position of trust requiring standards of behaviour that reflect community expectations. Wherever possible the Code of Conduct provides practical guidelines on how these ethical standards can be maintained and enhanced.

The Principles and Code of Conduct are part of the terms and conditions of the employment relationship. As such they are binding on all employees and must be observed by all, including Chief Executive Officers and the Commissioner for Public Employment. For further information on the Code of Conduct visit:
www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/publications_forms/conduct/

Q: *What are increments and how do they work?*

A: The position you work in will have a number of salary points or increment levels. When you start your new job, usually you will be paid at the first increment (i.e. bottom of the pay scale), after each year of employment, depending on satisfactory performance, you will move up one increment. This is in recognition of your increased knowledge, experience and skill level. See example below as a guide:

e.g. Administrative Officer 1 (AO1)

1 st year	\$29 903
2 nd year	\$30 392
3 rd year	\$30 880
4 th year	\$31 371
5 th year	\$32 006
6 th year	\$32 738

Q: *As a new employee, will I undertake workplace induction?*

A: Yes, all new staff should participate in a workplace induction program to help new employees understand internal procedures and processes. To find out more information, talk to your supervisor or HR unit.

There is also a Sector Wide Induction Program for Employees (SWIPE) which provides information on the structure and purpose of the whole of the NTPS. The program provides employees with the opportunity to understand how the government system works, how various agencies operate and how the budget process affects your agency and the work you do. The program is designed for people at all levels from base grade, to middle and senior managers and professionals. It is provided online with DCIS.

Q: *What is a Performance Management Plan and is it important for me?*

A: An effective Performance Management Plan (PMP) is designed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the agency through improved performance of its employees. The performance management process involves regular meetings with the manager and employee to identify performance requirements, provide feedback and assist with the employee's career development. The PMP is designed to ensure staff receive appropriate levels of support and training.

Performance management is important to all staff so that they are provided with regular support on their training and development needs. For additional information go to: www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/public_sector/employment_instructions/ei04.shtml

Q: *Where can I find information on training and development?*

A: For information on the types of programs or training available, talk to your manager or HR officer. You might also want to visit: www.nt.gov.au/dcis/training_dev/index.shtml

Q: *What is the NTPS' recruitment process?*

A: Any organisation recruiting employees wants the best person for the job. The NTPS is no different. We want to attract the right people for jobs in the NTPS . It is our intention to develop the NTPS as an employer of choice, to abide by our legislative requirements and to ensure the unique features of employment in the public sector are maintained.

Recruitment in the NTPS is based on the merit principle. One of the most important elements of recruitment in the NTPS, is addressing the selection criteria fully and providing your resume or CV. For detailed information go to: www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/public_sector/recadvpolicy.shtml

Agencies can nominate Indigenous employees to participate on Promotion Appeal Boards.

Q: *What is mentoring?*

A: Mentoring aims to provide support and directed learning to employees as part of their professional and personal development. Mentoring is negotiated between the employee and the mentor. If you are interested in having a mentor, you could approach your manager or HR officer in your agency.

Q: *What happens if I get sick and can't come to work?*

A: You will need to contact your manager or supervisor so you can notify them of your absence. After three consecutive days off sick you will be required to provide a medical certificate from your doctor.

Q: *What happens if I need to be away from work for short periods for family or community responsibilities?*

A: If you are aware of times when you may be required to be away from work, discuss this with your manager or supervisor to arrange flexible work options that meets both your needs and the needs of the work unit. By discussing this up-front before the situation arises, you are better able to agree on suitable arrangements with your manager. This is important where your manager needs to consider alternative work arrangements.

Q: *What support can I get for studying?*

A: For specific information on what level of support you can receive from your agency, talk to your supervisor or HR officer. There is provision under By-law 41 of the NT *Public Sector Employment and Management Act (PSEMA)* to assist people undertaking study at accredited institutions.

Q: *What can I do if I missed out on a promotion but believe I was the best applicant?*

A: If you were unsuccessful for a promotion and you believe that you have better claims (superior merit) for the job than the promotee you may be able to lodge a promotion appeal.

Promotions appeals are determined by an independent and impartial Promotions Appeal Board comprising a Chairperson nominated by the Commissioner for Public Employment, an Agency nominee and a Union nominee. Further information about the promotion appeal process is on the OCPE web site, or you may phone the Promotions Appeal and Review area on 8999 4129.

If you've applied for a a job but were not successful, contact the panel for post interview feedback.

PROMOTIONS APPEAL

Q: *Who should the Agency nominate for the Promotions Appeal Board?*

A: It is important that the agency nominee for a Promotions Appeal Board (PAB) is able to assist the PAB in considering the parties relative merits against the selection criteria; it is also important that the nominee does not have any potential conflict of interest (real or apparent) and is not in direct line of control over the vacancy. Where one or more of the parties is an Indigenous employee, or where Indigenous matters are included in the selection criteria, the Agency should also consider nominating an Indigenous person to the PAB.

Q: *What can I do if I think I am not being treated appropriately in the workplace?*

A: If you think that you are not being treated appropriately in the workplace (for example, you are not getting your correct entitlements, you have been treated unfairly, you are being harassed or victimised, or you have been through a flawed selection process) there are a few steps that should be followed.

Firstly, you should try to resolve your issues within your workplace through or with your supervisor or manager. If this is not successful you should try to resolve the matter through your agency's internal complaints or grievance process. If you are still not satisfied you may be able to request that the Commissioner for Public Employment review your treatment under S59 of the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act*.

You may find that assistance from a friend, colleague, mentor or your union will help you through these processes.

If you seek a review of your treatment under s59, it is likely that the first step in the process will be mediation between you and your agency. If mediation does occur, and you think it would be helpful, you could ask the person organising your mediation to try to get an Indigenous mediator. Further information about the s59 review process is on the OCPÉ web site, or you may phone the Promotions Appeal and Review area on 8999 4129.

Q: *How should an agency respond to an employee's request for a review of treatment in employment?*

A: Employees seek reviews of treatment in employment for a wide range of issues. It is important that each request is considered and responded to as soon as possible. Where an Indigenous employee is seeking a review it is also important to be sensitive to the employee's cultural requirements/needs in considering and responding to the matters raised.

Q: *What can I do if I would like to speak to a trained counsellor?*

A: The Northern Territory Public Sector has established a panel of qualified service providers to deliver Employee and Family Assistance Programs to all NT Government agencies.

These services are aimed at assisting employees (and their immediate families where involved) with issues such as interpersonal conflicts, work related problems, stress, relationship and family problems, financial difficulties, career issues, grief, trauma, alcohol and substance abuse problems, counselling of supervisors and managers to increase their effectiveness in managing people, mediation services and critical incidents.

Advice about the panel members used in each agency can be obtained through your agency's HR contact.

- TIP: Train Indigenous
- employees to become
- mediators and
- investigators.

SECTION C

Good practice case studies

MARVIN COMMUNICATION PLATFORM SOFTWARE

MARVIN (Messaging Architecture for the Retrieval of Versatile Information and News) is a multi-award winning internationally recognised character-based software platform created in partnership with industry and community.

MARVIN allows inexpensive, flexible and relevant health²⁷, education²⁸ and governance resources to be created with the community, by the community and for the community. MARVIN is an innovative and engaging software platform created in the NT. It embodies a philosophy of empowerment and ownership.

From a technical perspective MARVIN²⁹ is a complete character-based resource and e-learning development platform. It allows the creation of culturally specific and multi-lingual policy, education and health promotion materials ranging from interactive e-learning lessons to paper-based flip-charts. It is very easy to use and immensely powerful. MARVIN is at home in advanced and sophisticated IT environments, as it is in some of the most remote and isolated communities in Australia and the world.

More than all of this though, MARVIN represents one of the most fundamental shifts in the way learning and knowledge is shared between cultures and language groups – especially in interactions between governments and the people they serve. MARVIN is a unique blend of humanity with technology, making technology less imposing and fostering relationships between peoples and cultures in a way that emphasises our common humanity.

Prior to the development of the MARVIN platform the production of relevant bi-lingual region and community specific offline and online health, education and training materials and resources in the NT and indeed Australia was practically prohibitive. Given the diversity of geography, technological infrastructure, language and culture within these regions, often the best resources that could be made available were either too generic or lacked relevance or were not able to be replicated elsewhere.

²⁷ www.health.nt.gov.au/

²⁸ www.deet.gov.au/

²⁹ www.nt.gov.au/health/news/2004/news_marvin_win.shtml

The development of the MARVIN Platform has radically altered this equation with the ability for even those who are not familiar with technology to create, develop and maintain high end language and people specific multi-media applications and resources that are made in the community, by the community, for the community.

What has been achieved is the opening of new pathways for technology to be used and valued by those who have previously used it the least; we have created an enabling tool that is poised to make a significant contribution to developing countries all over the world.

KIGARUK INDIGENOUS MEN'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Established as an initiative under the *NTPS Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy 2002–2006*³⁰, the Kigaruk Indigenous Men's Leadership Development Program³¹ is a pilot program developed as a career enhancing initiative for Indigenous males employed within the NTPS.

The program specifically targets Indigenous men and is customised to provide a high level, significant learning experience with the aim of redressing the very low numbers of Indigenous men employed in the NTPS.

All twenty five participants in the first course successfully passed the academic requirements to qualify them for a Diploma of Business (Frontline Management). All participants graduated at Charles Darwin University (CDU)³² in May 2004.

The success of the program was due in part to the strong level of support provided to participants by the Program Coordinator and to the support the provided to each other.

³⁰ www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/Indigenous/sstrategy.shtml

³¹ www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/swd/ldp/kigaruk.shtml

³² www.cdu.edu.au/

“BRIDGING THE GAP AND WORKING EFFECTIVELY: RECOGNISING AND ADDRESSING CULTURAL DISSONANCE TO INCREASE INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT”

(The following excerpts from *Pugarli Journey: An EDP5 Challenge Project Report* have been reproduced here in this case study with the kind permission of the team members – for a full copy of the report please contact Claire Kilgariff 89995811 or Jean-Luc Revel 89917401)

INTRODUCTION

A team of executives in the NTPS undertook a project focus on the cultural dissonance that inhibits recruitment and retention of Indigenous people in the NTPS.

Our research is based on work in the areas of complex adaptive systems (CAS) and the opportunities for innovative solutions to difficult problems when diversity is allowed to be expressed and form new organisational patterns (Dooley, 1996; Monk, 1998; Dee Hock, 1999, Olson & Eoyang, 2001).

To collect information the Team relied on focus group and individual interviews with young and mature Indigenous people in and outside the NTPS. We deliberately decided to use a qualitative research process through ethnography when interacting with focus groups and interview participants. Ethnography engages researchers and participants in reflection for identifying the needs of diverse groups and developing bridging strategies to capitalise on diversity in organisations (Graue, 2004).

Our findings confirm that cultural divergence between non-Indigenous organisations and Indigenous people is an inhibitor to employment and retention of Indigenous employees. Amongst the significant cultural dissonance reported to the Team are; individualism versus group approach to career and work, workplace communication often intimidating, and a different concept of family/cultural obligations. We also obtained practical solutions to bridging the cultural gaps from Indigenous participants. Those solutions often mirror findings contained in other research carried out in the NT and jurisdictions in Australia and abroad on the inclusion of Indigenous people in non-Indigenous work places.

Having a pool of mentors, recognising Indigenous knowledge, sharing cross cultural learning and experiences to Indigenous and non-Indigenous people were identified as important issues to the Team.

PURPOSE

Provide the Executive Leadership with some practical tools to make employment in the NTPS more attractive to Indigenous Territorians.

The team's vision is for a more inclusive NTPS workforce that reflects the diverse cultural profiles and values of the community it serves, and allows individual employees and their organisations to engage profitably with diversity for the benefit of the entire NT community.

THE PROBLEM

The Northern Territory Public Sector, as a major employer, faces the challenge that Indigenous Territorians are under represented in the workforce. While Indigenous Territorians represent 28% of the population only approximately 6% are employed by the NT Public Sector (OCPE 2004).

The ability to recruit and retain young Indigenous Territorians will be critical to the future of the NT Public Sector and determinant in building a Public Service reflecting the cultural diversity and aspirations of the NT community. From a strategic aspect our problem represent a breakpoint (Strebel 1992) and, if handled appropriately, an opportunity for the NT Government, its Public Sector and the community. Breakpoints can be created, anticipated or exploited (Strebel 1992) and in this instance we are examining the benefits that will be derived from anticipation and exploitation of a growing phenomenon. While anticipation is described as a minimalist strategic approach, by contrast exploitation of breakpoints is '...often an intuitive process' (Stace & Dunphy 2001, p.67) that will create new opportunities for organisations with the vision to capitalise on those opportunities.

The following issues were identified as significant breakpoints during a workshop with D. Stace held as part of EDP5 module 3.

Issues:

- Indigenous youth bubble
- Lack of Indigenous employment
- Workforce/skills shortage
- Aging workforce
- Need for more Indigenous people to work in agencies critical to Indigenous Territorians e.g. Health & Education.

Opportunities:

- Increase the benefits of cultural richness and diversity.
- Benefit the NT community through employment opportunities and innovation as a result of bridging the gap between divergent cultures.
- Increased self-esteem and influence for Indigenous Territorians.
- Economic potential of unique knowledge base.

Inhibitors:

- Lack of education and training
- Lack of confidence
- Geographic location
- Cultural dissonance

While the four inhibitors listed above are believed to be significant, in the context of bridging the cultural gap and increasing Indigenous employment, the team decided to focus its report on the issues related to lack of confidence and cultural dissonance. Issues associated with lack of education and geographical location are also considered to be significant inhibitors but beyond the resources and scope of this project/report.

STRATEGIC INTENT

Increase the awareness of the opportunities and benefits that can be accrued from a greater inclusion of Indigenous people in the NTPS as a strategy that will:

- Contribute to achieving an NTPS staff profile more aligned with the NT population profile.
- Contribute to reducing future Indigenous youth unemployment.
- Increase local recruitment and retention while reducing recruitment costs.
- Contribute to moving the NTPS culture in a direction that will better reflect community diversity;
- Assist the NTPS to become a leader in promoting workplace environments and a culture more conducive to the employment of Indigenous people; and
- Use diversity to profit organisations through increased innovation, creativity and client focus.

DISCUSSION OF KEY FINDINGS

The team discovered that very little research material is available concerning the specific culture of the NTPS or public sector organisations in general. Robbins and Barnwell (1994, p.375) state that a number of definitions of organisational culture fits a central theme, they describe it as "...a system of shared meaning." or put more simply "...the way things are done around here." When doing a search against culture on public sector organisation's web sites the information provided usually relates to ethical behaviour, fairness and increased efficiency. Efficiency is featured very prominently, with individualism also showing as characteristic of public sector cultures that value high performance from individual employees.

INDIVIDUALISM V GROUP

A significant cultural dissonance was the focus on the individual versus group. A common theme in all focus groups and interviews was that Indigenous participants of all ages and backgrounds found the focus on individualism in the public sector challenging and intimidating. This translated into behaviours that they believed were often interpreted by others as a lack of ambition, drive and self-management.

Focus group participants found it difficult to operate within a work culture where to succeed you must push yourself ahead in competition with other employees. One of the groups made the interesting observation that even with Indigenous people some distinction could be made. It was offered that Indigenous people from remote areas were less prepared to promote themselves than their urban counterparts. Participants reported feeling most comfortable in work places that focussed on teams which encouraged and rewarded collaborative work practices.

RECOGNITION OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

A common theme was the perception that although there is currently a great focus on the importance of attracting and retaining Indigenous staff, they do not feel valued for their Indigenous knowledge. They felt workplaces wanted to have Indigenous staff but they were expected to act like everyone else. In other words "We are wanted for the colour of our skins but not the way we do things"

A number of people reported feeling that they were not heard. Participants made the point that currently there is no recognition of cultural knowledge as relevant knowledge to the public sector. Time spent learning and developing cultural knowledge is not recognised for the purpose of study leave.

COMMUNICATION

Another cultural dissonance mentioned by a number of participants was the way people spoke together. Indigenous people reported often feeling left out, ignored and disempowered by the prevailing models of communication. The things they felt most uncomfortable with were the adversarial nature of much conversation especially in meetings, when the focus seem to be on maximising the difference between points of view rather than finding convergence.

Another aspect of conversational culture the focus group participants discussed was the rapid-fire mode of conversation, where people often spoke over the top of one another and seem not to listen. They reported that in general Indigenous people tend to speak one at a time and allow far greater time for thinking between speakers. A couple of participants also commented on the preference for Indigenous people to speak about one topic, rather than many at a time. Direct eye contact in a face to face conversation was reported as being a contributing factor to feeling stress and anxiety. Rather, participants reported that Indigenous people tend to prefer a non confrontational side by side conversation with a focal point somewhere between the two conversationalists.

RECRUITMENT PROCESSES

Public sector selection processes were cited as a significant barrier from advertising through to starting a new job. In general the whole process is regarded as intimidating and unpleasant.

Young people in particular reported not being aware of what jobs are available to them or jobs to which they would be well suited. NTPS method of advertising jobs via the gazettal process makes it difficult for Indigenous people. Most people felt they did not have the literacy skills to write a good job application. Surprisingly, even a number of people who appeared very successful and confident expressed this same view.

The interview process is not completely understood and can be intimidating. A less formal selection system involving practical demonstration of skills would suit Indigenous applicants better.

The concept of merit selection when interviewer knows the applicants, seemed quite illogical and time wasting to some of the young trainees. To them it seemed like some unintelligible game that they could not decipher.

WORK LIFE BALANCE

Reports from remote staff highlight the enormous pressure some Indigenous staff are under constantly. For them work is not an eight to four twenty one experience, rather they are involved constantly with community demands on their time and emotions. Another aspect of this is the stress experienced by these staff when trying to reconcile NTPS and community expectations and cultures.

FAMILY/CULTURAL OBLIGATIONS

Participants indicated that for them family obligations were extremely important and even the most career focussed were likely to choose family commitments over work priorities. One participant also stressed the impact on her of the broader Indigenous community expectation that family commitment would be upheld. A number of participants indicated that these obligations could be negotiated but that time was sometimes needed to do this.

All participants commented on the cultural dissonance between work culture and observing cultural traditions. In particular one woman described “the burden of grief” many Indigenous people carry constantly, due to the current frequency of deaths in the Indigenous community. They felt they were constantly juggling expectations of work and community and sometimes they made decisions about priorities that were not understood by work colleagues.

CONCEPT OF FAMILY

Participants were keen to point out that family was a much more encompassing concept to Indigenous people than non-Indigenous and found it one of the most difficult cultural dissonance to understand. As one participant expressed it “we think you mob are unnatural the way you go away from your country and family. We know who we are because of our family they keep us safe, they are all part of us”.

Indigenous family includes a much wider circle than most non-Indigenous people. This has a big impact on the time required to fulfil family obligations.

Some young participants expressed the view that finding a partner and having children came first followed by study and career development. This is very different to the white Australian work culture that puts career first with a growing trend for people to have children much later in life, if at all.

CAREER PLANNING AND RETENTION

One clear message coming out of the focus groups meetings with Indigenous people is that it is not enough to support education and training programs for young Indigenous people.

In order to be attracted to the NTPS, Indigenous people require an awareness of what job opportunities are available to potential entrants, as we have found that they are usually unaware of the wide range of career paths on offer. Participants indicated having some difficulties in managing and/or planning a career on completion of their training.

Many of the participants stressed the importance of accessing career planning and felt this was an area of significant skill deficit amongst Indigenous employees.

There is an equally strong need to actively target and facilitate young Indigenous people entry into the workforce through existing cadetships and/or apprenticeships and then provide them with appropriate induction and on going workplace/career assistance. For example we received comments about agencies spending time and money on training young Indigenous people but not engaging them in career planning on completion of their training.

A number of participants related how uncomfortable they felt in workplaces with no other Indigenous staff. This was especially true of the younger people. They suggested workplaces try to develop “pods” of Indigenous staff in a similar mode to the current DIPE group of ranger trainees. With appropriate performance management coaching and career planning people then develop the skills and confidence to move to other workplaces.

IMPORTANCE OF MENTORS

All focus groups and interviewees stressed the importance of mentors. Some could cite positive experiences with mentors, others regretted the lack of a culture of mentoring, and difficulties faced without a mentor. One interviewee compared traditional Indigenous instructional style to mentoring and expressed the view that mentoring was an expected behaviour for Indigenous people.

Participants cited the lack of availability of mentors to assist Indigenous employees in adapting to the NTPS culture as well as the technical aspects of the particular job being learned. The message given to the team was that mentors do not need to be Indigenous themselves and often the indicated preference was for a non-Indigenous mentor who is very conversant with the workplace its culture and the type of work expected of the mentee. However participants indicated that all mentors should have received cross-cultural awareness and mentor training prior to being expected to perform the role.

CROSS CULTURAL EFFECTIVENESS

Whilst participants all agreed a much more serious focus should be given to cross cultural effectiveness training /learning for non-Indigenous staff especially senior managers, they also stressed cross cultural learning should be two way. A number of people felt that if they had been given help to understand the culture of the public sector at an earlier age they would have been saved much confusion and been much more effective as employees.

TEXT BASED CULTURE

A major inhibitor cited by participants is the heavily text based work culture of the NTPS. This impacts in a number of ways:

- Acts as a barrier to recruitment through the written selection process. Even jobs, which do not require high levels of sophisticated literacy, demand written applications that often eliminate Indigenous applicants.
- Acts as a barrier to learning and development. Much work place learning and development is text based and individual rather than experiential and collaborative.

INDIGENOUS LEARNING STYLES

One interviewee articulated very clearly how Indigenous learning styles were often not catered for in mainstream workplaces. Indigenous people learned better through experiential learning, and responded well to modelling and mentoring. Understanding is usually gained by doing, not just talking about them. She reported that in her experience learning is through visual association and by imitation and doing something a number of times. Giving an Indigenous staff member a set of verbal or written instructions may result in objectives not being achieved because they have not understood what is wanted. If they are made to feel inadequate they are also unlikely to ask questions due to shyness and especially if they are made to feel conspicuous.

ROLE OF THE MANAGER

Participants were also very clear that managers often made the difference in the level of cultural diversity within a workplace.

- Good managers shouldn't be doing all the work of the organisation they should be focusing on their people
- They need to be good coaches. Be constructive and most importantly give direction and structure the workplace so people know what to expect and what to do.
- They need to listen carefully to their Indigenous employees and listen for what sort of help they need. They need to ask the right questions to hear what people are saying, and notice how people are behaving.

And finally a very clear message was that Indigenous employees must be given equal access to appropriate performance management. This point came up time and time again. Participants saw this as critical to them achieving success in their workplaces.

INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT AT ALICE SPRINGS DESERT PARK

“What I got out of it was pretty unexpected. Now I’ve got a career and (I am) also able to move up in the ranks or in different agencies in the Government”

Indigenous employee.

“Mentors and networks with the local Indigenous community are critical to the success of Indigenous employment at Alice Springs Desert Park”.

Indigenous employment and training play a vital role in the success of Alice Springs Desert Park. This success is demonstrated by the Park’s 2003 Broлга Award for significant tourist attractions. Opened in 1997, the Park introduces visitors to the natural and cultural environment of Central Australia. It also conducts research and captive breeding programs in line with the conservation needs of the NT. The Park has 50 employees of whom 22% are local Indigenous people. They are employed in the Guide, Zoology and Botany units; consisting of seven New Apprentices and four full time staff.

REASONS FOR EMPLOYING INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

1. The Park wants to be part of the local community and therefore wants to be an employer of all sections of the community
2. The Park presents the local cultural environment and Indigenous participation as a vital component
3. The Park believes that better Indigenous employment outcomes are essential for the sustainability of the NT tourism industry, for the NT economy and for a healthy way of life for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Territorians.

THE CHALLENGES

1. Finding suitably qualified and experienced applicants for entry level positions
2. Making the Park an employer of choice for Indigenous people.

OVERCOMING THESE CHALLENGES

1. Established a New Apprenticeship program.
2. Strong promotion and support for Equal Employment Opportunities³⁴, anti-discrimination³⁵, anti-harassment and cross-cultural awareness throughout the business.
3. Cross-cultural training for all staff.
4. Mentoring programs³⁶.
5. Reaching a critical mass of Indigenous staff in the workplace (employ more than one or two people).

³⁴ www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/public_sector/employment_instructions/ei11.shtml

³⁵ www.nt.gov.au/justice/adci/index800.html

³⁶ www.dsf.org.au/mentor/

6. Utilisation of existing employment provisions to service the cultural needs of staff.
7. The New Apprenticeship program is run as a partnership with Arrente Council, who provide mentoring outside the workplace.

STAFF RESPONSE

1. Retention rates are high.
2. Senior Indigenous people from the local community have taken positions in the Park.
3. Indicators suggest Indigenous employees enjoy working at the Park and the Park is accepted by local Indigenous community.
4. Hugh commenced a Guide Apprenticeship in 2001 and is now a T1 Aboriginal Park Guide at the Alice Springs Desert Park.

“My traineeship at the Desert Park provided all the experience I needed to either score a job at the Park itself or follow on with more study to look at other career paths. However, the most important thing was after the traineeship, it does not stop there. I obtained a T1 position at the Park and more training was provided and also field trips with Park Rangers where that’s the direction I would like to head in the later future. So what I got out of it was pretty unexpected. Now I’ve got a career and [I am] also able to move up in the ranks or in different agencies in the Government.”

Hugh Woodbury’s Recent Awards (as at 25 September 2003)

- 2002 Equity and Diversity Award – Winner
- 2003 Equity and Diversity Award – Commendation
- 2003 Brolga Award for Significant Attraction – Winner

Thanks to Graham Phelps from www.alicespringsdesertpark.com.au

INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT FORUMS

The IPAA (NT Division)³⁷ and OCPE³⁸ established the Indigenous Employment Forums which have been held in all the regions as a way to engage with the community and other key stakeholders on Indigenous employment issues.

The aim of the forums is to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee representation across the whole of the NT. The forums were designed to provide employers with the practical skills to employ Indigenous people and to establish good practice in the recruitment and retention of Indigenous people.

Phase I commenced in September 2003 and involved the sharing of policies and strategies between local, territory and federal government agencies, as well as Indigenous community organisations and the private business sector to increase the employment of Indigenous people. Key themes from the forums included:

- Discussing effective policies and strategies to attract and retain Indigenous people
- Mentoring and other effective retention strategies
- Creating and promoting role models
- Developing effective partnerships
- Developing effective career pathways for Indigenous employees
- Effective recruitment and retention strategies for Indigenous people
- Working towards sustainable Indigenous employment outcomes.

The forums were conducted in two phases to enable greater urban and regional participation. Phase I commenced in Darwin, followed by Phase II (the regional series), which commenced in Katherine and rolled out to Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and Nhulunbuy, with the series concluding in Darwin in December 2004.

The overarching theme for the forum series was, *“From Strategy to Reality: Successfully delivering Indigenous recruitment and career development in the Northern Territory”*.

Indigenous community groups and organisations, the business sector and interested individuals as well as local, state and federal government representatives participated at the forums.

Information from stakeholders throughout the forum process has been incorporated into the Indigenous Employment Tool Kit and has significantly contributed to the content of this document.

To provide feedback on the Indigenous Employment Tool Kit, refer to Appendix 1 for the Stakeholder Feedback Sheet.

³⁷ www.ipaa.org.au

³⁸ www.nt.gov.au/ocpe

INDIGENOUS POLICY CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF THE CHIEF MINISTER

In 2003, the Department of the Chief Minister implemented its *Indigenous Policy Capacity Building Program*. The program offers six month policy work placements to interested Indigenous employees. It aims to remove systemic barriers and provides Indigenous employees with the opportunity to access on-the-job policy training.

Three Indigenous employees were placed in policy units in 2003. Selection was made on the basis of an applicant's capacity to best benefit from working in the policy areas of the Department. Selection for the 2004 participants is currently taking place. The policy placements develop participant skill, knowledge and expertise as well as:

- enhances their career prospects
- increases the number of Indigenous people at all levels within NTPS policy areas
- increases the effectiveness of Indigenous contributions to policy and decision making affecting Indigenous people.

This program is an example of best practice for agencies to develop and implement effective policy support and career development for Indigenous employees.

TRAINEE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, NORTHERN TERRITORY TOURIST COMMISSION

'Learning matters if the NTTC is to ensure that it has the capacity to achieve its goals. Learning is not limited to training, it includes a range of programs designed to motivate, support and professionally grow the staff of the Commission.'

The Northern Territory Tourist Commission's (NTTC) Trainee Development Program is designed to provide New Apprentices (Trainees) with an opportunity to gain a nationally accredited qualification and work experience in a supported training environment. Whilst permanent employment is not guaranteed upon successful completion of the training year, all Trainee's of the 2004 have secured employment.

In 2005, one Trainee from both Darwin and Alice Springs have been offered the opportunity to complete a second year. They will study the next level of qualification and gain a further 12 months work experience. This program will not only benefit the Trainee but also provides a training environment for NTTC trainers to improve their skills and experience, ultimately fostering a learning culture within the NTTC. It is also an opportunity for the NTTC to 'grow its own' talent for future recruitment.

The program for 2005:–

Darwin: Five Indigenous Trainees studying Certificate III in Business, one 2nd year Trainee studying Certificate IV in Business.

Alice Springs: Two Trainees (1 Indigenous) studying Certificate III in Tourism (Retail Travel Sales), one 2nd year Trainee studying Certificate IV in Tourism.

For information on the program please contact:–

Darwin – Merryn Coleman (08) 8999 3875 or email
merryn.coleman@nt.gov.au

Alice Springs – Yasmin Wells on (08) 8951 8429 or email
yasmin.wells@nt.gov.au

LEARNING COMMUNITIES IN GROUP SCHOOLS EAST

Group School East comprises ten small to medium sized remote schools representing approximately 750 students, 100 school staff and 5 main language groups. English is a second, third or fourth language for all students and many staff. The schools are all several hundred kilometres out of Alice Springs.

Historically, remote Indigenous education in Central Australia has been hampered by limited opportunities for Indigenous staff to fully participate and take on leadership roles and high turnover rates of non-Indigenous teachers. These have contributed significantly to a fragmentation of educational programs and subsequent under-achievement for Indigenous student learning outcomes.

In 2003, a new and innovative approach commenced to try to address these problems, activities included a conference and workshops.

- A three-day Remote Schools Conference was held. One hundred and fifty Indigenous and one hundred non-Indigenous staff, plus fifty community members participated. Indigenous participants worked in language groups with linguists, enabling them to discuss issues in their first language. This provided a powerful forum for Indigenous staff to voice their beliefs and opinions about their community schools. Many staff through workshops and in other forums have continued to speak up about what is important for their communities and children.
- The conference was followed up by Learning Communities Workshops – the “Core Business” priorities from the Remote School Conference were incorporated into a ‘Learning Communities’ framework for ongoing collaborative dialogue and capacity building in each remote school setting. The Learning Communities workshops have proved effective in assisting school staff to celebrate current successes and forward planning.

The use of the model adopted by Group Schools East is an important step in the right direction which will ensure that Indigenous staff and community members are supported and heard in their efforts to work with the educational system to improve learning outcomes for their children and communities.

NT GOVERNMENT INDIGENOUS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASKFORCE

In 2003, a focus on Indigenous economic development emerged as a key Government strategy to address the lack of participation by Indigenous Territorians within the NT economy. As a result, the Government established a high-level Indigenous Economic Development Taskforce – reporting directly to Cabinet and supported by an Interdepartmental Committee.

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY'S CHALLENGE AHEAD

This is to address issues that are arising from the continuing population growth in Indigenous communities, they include inadequate health standards (e.g. alcoholism and substance abuse), over crowded housing, domestic and family violence, poor education, employment outcomes and economic poverty. A large proportion of Indigenous people affected by these issues live in remote areas of the Territory, far from services and economic activity.

In the main, Indigenous communities have been developed for administrative rather than economic reasons; so proximity to job opportunities or economic activity is coincidental, with resultant widespread high levels of prevailing welfare dependency.

THE APPROACH

The NTG recognises the need to address the challenge on a broad front. While health, housing, education, unemployment, welfare dependency and lack of economic activity are interlinked to each other and that all need to be systematically addressed, the role of the Taskforce is to focus on economic activity to provide a sustainable future and provide hope that education has an outcome and can lead to a better life. This approach is exemplified in the whole of government and whole of community approach of the Taskforce and the Interdepartmental Committee.

There is a need to ensure support for Indigenous people entering or attempting to enter the workforce or business. This support needs to be available throughout the continuum of encouraging the initial decision, through skill development and job placement. Support then needs to continue until the individual is embedded in the workforce. Support strategies may need to extend to family and the Indigenous community to ensure the pressures to return to the welfare economy are thwarted.

TASKFORCE STRATEGIES

The Taskforce efforts will focus on actions that will produce successes in the short to medium term.

The Taskforce has identified opportunities in many industries and is working in partnership with those industries and government agencies to achieve tangible outcomes. This includes employment activities in the public sector, the pastoral, horticultural, forestry, fisheries, retail, arts, tourist, and construction industries.

SECTION D

SUPPORT SERVICES & FURTHER READING

SUMMARY OF SERVICE PROVIDERS

DISCLAIMER: The information provided on the following pages is intended only as a guide. There are numerous quality providers able to be accessed through a range of panel contracts

To located current Job Network Service Providers go to:
jobsearch.gov.au/JNS/JobNetworkServices.aspx?ConType=JNS&WHCode=0&TextOnly=0

To locate current Indigenous Job Network Service Providers go to:
jobsearch.gov.au/JNS/jnsSearchResultsIASpec.aspx?WHCode=0&TextOnly=0&rgn=NT&st=19&CriType=ATSI&

Further information on service providers can be obtained from the NT Chamber of Commerce and available at
www.chambernt.com.au/Indigenous/SupportServices.pdf

The list is not intended to be prescriptive, but as a useful reference point only.

EMPLOYER INCENTIVES FOR AGENCIES

Name	Description	Eligibility	Support	Contact
New Apprenticeships	Combine practical work with structured training to achieve nationally recognised qualifications.	Most New Apprentices, including school-based New Apprentices	From \$1,375 depending on the disadvantage and need of the New Apprentice	New Apprenticeships Centre (NAC) NT on 1300 137 130 Commonwealth – www.newapprenticeships.gov.au/employer/incentives.asp
National Indigenous Cadetship Project (NICP)	Matching Indigenous full time university students with employers	Employers offering work for students in university holidays and employment at the end of the study	Study allowance for students while studying, up to \$15,400 annually	Commonwealth – DEWR Ph: 180 2102 www.workplace.gov.au/Indigenous

OTHER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ASSISTANCE

Name	Description	Eligibility	Support	Contact
Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL)	Funding for English language, literacy and numeracy skills training	Enterprises, representative bodies, local governments, and registered training organisations.	Up to 75% of training costs	Commonwealth – DEST Ph: 02) 6240 7333 www.dest.gov.au/ty/well
Training for Remote Youth (TRY) Program	Accredited training for youth in remote areas to enable them to prepare for employment or gain employment	Youth 14–19 located in regional and remote areas	Approximately \$1 mil p.a.	NT Government – DEET Ph: 08) 8901 1321 www.deet.nt.gov.au
DEET scholarships and bursaries	offers 70 scholarships annually	Various	Various	NT Government – DEET Ph: 08) 8901 1309 www.nt.gov.au/deet/etd

INDIGENOUS LAND MANAGEMENT

Name	Service	Location and Contact
Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA)	Sacred site searches and registration	Darwin Ph: 08) 8981 4700 Alice Springs Ph: 08) 8952 6366 www.nt.gov.au/aapa
Anindilyakwa Land Council	Land management and advocacy	Groote Eylandt Ph: 08 89876638
Central Land Council	Land management and advocacy	Alice Springs Ph: 08) 8951 6211 www.clc.org.au
Northern Land Council	Land management and advocacy	Darwin Ph: 08) 8920 5100 www.nlc.org.au
Tiwi Land Council	Land management and advocacy	Tiwi Islands Ph: 08) 89814898

INDIGENOUS COMMUNICATION

Name	Service	Location and Contact
Aboriginal Interpreter Service	Interpreting	Darwin Ph: 08) 8999 8353 Alice Springs Ph: 08) 8951 5576
Australian Cultural Heritage Management Pty. Ltd	Anthropology, Archaeology, Community Development, Cultural Heritage Management, Cultural Tourism, Native Title	Adelaide Ph: 08) 8172 2111 Email@achm.com.au
Aboriginal Resource and Development Services Inc. (ARDS)	Cross cultural Training, publications, Community radio	Darwin & Nhulunbuy Ph: 08) 8984 4174 www.ards.com.au
Cross Cultural Consultants	Cross-cultural training, mediation, Indigenous joint venture development	Darwin Ph: 08) 8981 2338 www.cccnt.com.au
Diwurruwurru–Jaru Aboriginal Corporation (Katherine Regional Aboriginal Language Centre)	Research, transmitting, interpreting & translating	Katherine Ph: 08) 8971 1233
Jajirdi	Cross cultural training, Translating, interpreting, community liaison.	Alice Springs Ph: 08 8952 8430 piiji@ozemail.com.au
Papulu Apparr–Kari Aboriginal Corporation	Cross cultural training, Mediation, Advocacy	Tennant Creek Ph: 08) 8962 3270 www.papak.com.au
Summer Institute of Linguistics	Translation Publications	Darwin Ph: 8922 5700 Alice Springs Ph: 8953 3057

INDIGENOUS MEDIA

Name	Service	Location and Contact
Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA)	Radio, music, video production	Alice Springs Ph: 08) 8951 9777 www.caama.com.au
Imparja	Television	Alice Springs Ph: 08) 8950 1411 www.imparja.com.au
Indigenous Times	Newspaper	National Ph: 1300 786 611, www.Indigenoustimes.com.au
Koori Mail	Newspaper	National Phone: 02) 6622 2666, enquiries@nit.com.au www.koorimail.com
Radio Larrakia	Radio	Darwin Ph: 08) 8948 4760 radiolarakia@internode.on.net
TEABBA Radio (Top End Aboriginal Bush Broadcasting Association)	Bush community Radio	Top End Ph: 08) 8948 3023 www.teabba.com.au

UNIONS NT

Unions NT have a stake in improving Indigenous employment, meeting employee expectations and increasing their levels of satisfaction in the workforce.

Unions NT support the NT Government's Indigenous Employment Tool Kit, enabling strategies and related initiatives to improve the recruitment and retention of Indigenous people in the Northern Territory Public Sector.

Unions NT agree with the NTPS that Indigenous employees should have genuine opportunities for unions to represent their interests. Unions are able to provide NTPS Indigenous employees with the pathway for representation of their interests. Industrial relations issues affecting working people are treated as a key priority, alongside the well being of the entire community.

For full contact details of unions in the NT, please refer to Appendix 6.

Union		Areas of Coverage
Australian Education Union	AEU	Teachers and teaching staff
Liquor Hospitality & Miscellaneous Union	LHMU	Aboriginal Health Workers Physical and Technical employees Aboriginal Organisations
Australian Manufacturing Work Union	AMWU	Metal Trades, Technicians and Technical Trainers
Australian Nursing Federation	ANF	Nurses
Assoc of Professional Engineers Scientists & Managers of Australia	APESMA	Engineers Managers Scientists
Communications Electrical Electronics & Plumbing Union	CEPU	Electrical workers
Community & Public Sector Union	CPSU	Clerical workers and Administration workers
Maritime Union of Australia	MUA	Port Authority workers
Transport Workers Union	TWU	Drivers

WHAT UNIONS HAVE ACHIEVED FOR WORKERS

The right of workers to form a union which elects its own independent representatives;	Award to ensure that employers observe minimum wages and working conditions;
Equal pay;	Long service leave;
Pay loading for evenings, nights and weekends;	Paid public holidays;
Periodic wage increases;	Maternity/adoption/parental leave;
Annual leave and leave loading;	Protective clothing and equipment provided by the employer;
Occupational health and safety laws;	Compensation for injury;
Occupational superannuation;	The right to be given notice and to be consulted about changes at work (e.g. new technology, planned retrenchments, new working arrangements);
Personal carer's leave.	www.actu.asn.au/

FURTHER READING AND INFORMATION

There are a number of useful protocols and publications listed at both:
www.Indigenous.gov.au and gunada.curtin.edu.au/circ.

For information on Abstudy, COAG Indigenous Initiative, Indigenous Ambassador's Programme, Indigenous Education and Training 2005–2008, Indigenous Education Direct Assistance Programme 2004, Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme, Indigenous Higher Education 2003 Budget Initiatives, Indigenous Support Funding, National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy and the Commonwealth Indigenous Education Programs, check out www.dest.gov.au/, Australian Government's Department of Education, Science and Training

ABC Australia "Message From Moree" (2003). Video. A Rymer Bayly Watson Production, www.abc.net.au/programsales, Price \$110.

Aboriginal Australia Map, Printed 2000, Compiled by Dr David Horton, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Edition 3, \$25, available from MapsNT.

Australian Government, Department of Education, Science & Training (2004). "Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (IESIP)" www.dest.gov.au/schools/Indigenous/iesip.htm#Working

Australian Public Service Commission "Indigenous Employment Strategy" retrieved February 4, 2005 from www.dewrsb.gov.au/publications/IndigenousStrategy/default.asp

Baker, R., Davies, J & Young, E (2001). "Working on Country – Contemporary Indigenous Management of Australia's Land and Coastal Regions". Oxford University Press, ISBN 0195512170, 375 pages, RRP AU\$49.95.

Chamber of Commerce (NT). "Employing Indigenous People Advisory Service"

www.ntcci.com.au/Indigenous/index.html

Couzos, S & Murray, R (2003) "Aboriginal Primary Health Care An Evidence-Based Approach" Oxford University Press, ISBN 0195516192, 704 pages, RRP AU\$95.00

Department of Employment, Training and Youth Affairs "Careers and Transitions".

www.detya.gov.au/directory/c_and_t.htm

Folds, R (2001) "Crossed Purposes the Pintupi & Australia's Indigenous Policy" UNSW Press, ISBN 0868406910, RRP \$39.95.

Hercus, L., Hodges, F., & Simpson, J (2002) "Indigenous place names". Pandanus Books, ISBN 1 74076 020 4, Price: \$38.

IAD Press (2002) "Central Australian Aboriginal Languages – Current Distribution", revised 2002, prepared by Robert Hoogenraad and Brenda Thornley, IAD Press. Colour map. Size: A2, Scale: approx 1: 4,000,000, 30 grams, \$15.00.

New South Wales, Premiers Department "Aboriginal Employment in Practice Support Strategy Guidelines 2004 – 06". www.eeo.nsw.gov.au/Indigenous/goodjob.htm

Northern Territory Public Sector "Indigenous Employment & Career Development Strategy 2002–2006"

www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/Indigenous/strategy.shtml

Northern Territory Public Sector Indigenous Economic Development Forums “*Seizing Our Economic Future*”. Retrieved from www.Indigenousforums.nt.gov.au/

Northern Territory Public Sector Entry Level Programs

www.nt.gov.au/dcis/entry_level_programs_unit/index.shtml

NTPS Job vacancies notes.nt.gov.au/dcis/RMS.nsf/NTGEmploymentHome?OpenForm

Our Place Magazine, four monthly magazine, Centre For Appropriate Technology,
Email: ourplace@icat.org.au or Phone: 08) 8951 4311.

Queensland Department of Employment and Training “Kaulder Jibbijah”.

www.trainandemploy.qld.gov.au/client/about/research_publications/strategic_policies/kaulder_jibbijah.htm

Queensland Government, Department of Employment & Training (2002). “*Indigenous Employment Policy, Information for Government Agencies*”.

www.trainandemploy.qld.gov.au/client/resources/about/research_publications/strategy_policy/pdf/policy1.pdf

The Allen Consulting Group (2001). “*Indigenous Communities & Australian Business – From little things big things grow*”.

www.bca.com.au/upload/64489_AllenConsultGroup.pdf.

Trudgen, R (2000). “*Why Warriors Lie Down and Die*”. Aboriginal Resource and Development Services Inc, RRP \$29.95

Victorian Office of Public Employment (2004) “*Wur-cum Barra Toolkit*” Victorian Government, Melbourne. Retrieved February 4, 2005 from www.ope.vic.gov.au/domino/web_notes/ope/rwp553.nsf/HeadingPagesDisplay/About+UsWur-cum+barraWur+cum+barra+Toolkit?OpenDocument

Walsh, F & Mitchell, P. (2002) “*Planning for Country – Cross-cultural approaches to decision-making on Aboriginal lands*”. Edited by Jukurrpa Books, \$45, 204pp, ISBN 1 86465 037 0

Western Australia Government, Public Sector Standards Commission “*Overcoming Workplace Barriers for Aboriginal People*” (1997). Retrieved February 4, 2005 from www.oeeo.wa.gov.au/equitkit.pdf

Western Australia Government, Public Sector Standards Commission, “*Are You Employing Aboriginal Staff?*” A Resource Kit for non-Aboriginal Supervisors of Aboriginal Staff, 1996, Retrieved February 4, 2005 from www.oeeo.wa.gov.au/employab

APPENDIX 1

TOOL KIT STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK SHEET

Please tick appropriate box or circle YES/NO as appropriate in response to these questions. Thank you for taking the time to complete the feedback sheet.

1. Do you identify as:

Indigenous

Non-Indigenous

2. Are you

male

female

3. Are you

a current employee of the NTPS

previously worked for the NTPS

interested in working in the NTPS

currently unemployed

self employed

in the private or non Government sector

4. If you are an employee of the NTPS, are you a :

HR manager

Line manager

Employee

Senior manager/executive officer

5. Do you think the information contained in the Indigenous Employment Tool Kit is useful for employers?

YES/NO

6. If yes, in what way?

7. Do you think the information is useful for Indigenous employees?

YES/NO

8. If yes, in what way?

9. How could the Indigenous Employment Tool Kit be improved?

10. What other resource or activity would be helpful for employers and Indigenous employees?

11. Other comments

Thank you for taking the time to fill this sheet out. **Please email the sheet to enquiries@ocpe.nt.gov.au or fax to 08) 8999 4186**

APPENDIX 2

SAMPLE INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

PRINCIPLES

- This Agency values an inclusive and diverse workforce.
- This Agency values the diverse knowledge, skills, histories, traditions and cultures of Indigenous people.
- This Agency seeks to provide employment opportunities for Indigenous people.
- An Implementation Plan should also be developed which articulates how each of the action areas are to be driven.

GOAL ONE:

BECOME AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Strategy	Actions	Who	When
Market your agency as an employer of choice for Indigenous people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify aspects of the workplace that may be of interest to Indigenous people. • Offer flexible work arrangements to applicants. • Provide mentoring to Indigenous employees. • Participate at student or career expos. • Offer open days for Indigenous people to visit workplaces and conduct tours • Employ two work experience students per year. • Establish relationships with Indigenous community groups and organisations. 		

Strategy	Actions	Who	When
Establish links with Indigenous employment service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for service provider representative to visit at least twice per year. • Email an update of operations to preferred service providers at least once per six months. • Participate in Indigenous Employment Register at recruitment stage. 		
Increase cross-cultural awareness for executives and all employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all staff undergo cross-cultural awareness training at least once. • Ensure all new employees undertake cross cultural training in the first six months. • Develop database to monitor and report on participation levels. 		
Put systems in place to address the specific needs of Indigenous staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine specific needs of Indigenous employees • Encourage mentors to visit the workplace regularly in the initial period after recruiting someone. • Provide regular forums for Indigenous staff to raise key workforce issues with management. 		
Develop a scholarship program based on your agency's skill shortages, targeting Indigenous people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop selection criteria. • Consult with relevant staff and relevant external stakeholders in preparing scholarship. • Advertise scholarships widely (refer to Checklist for Employing Indigenous people). 		

**GOAL TWO:
INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AT ALL LEVELS**

Strategy	Actions	Who	When
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review recruitment processes to ensure they are culturally appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a recruitment checklist Review job vacancies as they arise to ensure they are written in plain English to attract a wider audience of applicants. Develop protocols for recruiting and employing Indigenous people. Ensure an Indigenous representative is on all interview panels. Offer mentoring or coaching to new Indigenous employees. Where appropriate, assign a workplace buddy to Indigenous staff. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise the skills and contributions of Indigenous staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure job descriptions reflect the skills of each employee, including those recognised by the Indigenous community. Provide opportunities for staff to undertake accredited on-the-job training. Undergo annual staff performance assessments. Undertake training and work experience programs. Provide secondment arrangements and job exchange programs. Actively support Indigenous staff to access leadership development programs. 		

Strategy	Actions	Who	When
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide career progression opportunities for Indigenous employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide six-monthly goal-setting opportunities for staff. Enable Indigenous employees to develop their own career development plan and goals. Offer coaching and/or mentoring to Indigenous staff in middle and senior management positions. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a succession plan that gives Indigenous people opportunities to move into senior management and executive positions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge the career aspirations of staff. Select key positions to job share with Indigenous people. Assign Indigenous employees to divisions where they have opportunities for career development. 		

**GOAL THREE:
DEVELOP SYSTEMS TO MAINTAIN THE INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY**

Strategy	Actions	Who	When
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include workforce diversity status in reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report Indigenous employment status to CEO annually. Submit reports to OCPE every six months. Promote the importance of EEO data to employees. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign an Indigenous employment officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign an appropriate Indigenous employment officer. Ensure the officer is sufficiently briefed on their duties and the expectations of the business. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly evaluate Indigenous employment strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess Indigenous employment performance annually. Develop a steering committee to oversee the implementation and monitoring of the Indigenous Employment Strategy within the agency. 		

APPENDIX 3

MENTORING FRAMEWORK

Mentors DO	Mentors DO NOT
Develop an open, fair and supportive working environment.	Communicate in a way that marginalises or discriminates against Indigenous employees, or play favourites within the workplace.
Provide an objective view to the mentee.	Have a direct intrusive working relationship with the mentee.
Communicate with regularly and support the mentee.	Visit only when there is a problem.
Have a clear understanding of the role and relationship between a mentor and mentee.	Provide vague advice that is likely to confuse the mentee.
Build trusted relationships, built on confidentiality and two-way communication.	Make the mentee dependent on mentor for advice on any and all problems.
Help the mentee with action plans to achieve goals.	Impose their own solutions.
Help identify opportunities for growth and learning both in and away from the workplace.	Act as a 'know it all' expert on every issue.
Provide support and advice to the employer on issues impacting on the mentee.	Never let the mentee talk on their own behalf.
Have good listening, negotiation and conflict resolution skills.	Teach the mentee to argue with everyone.
Have credibility and empathy.	Always feel sorry for the Indigenous employee.
Provide the mentee with a referral to people or organisations that can assist as required.	Only refer the mentee when you're playing favourites.
Encourage the mentee to build their self-confidence.	Belittle the mentee and Indigenous people at every opportunity.
Provide constructive feedback.	Only give negative feedback.
Act as a sounding board for the mentee's ideas, problems and proposals.	Discredit any ideas that are not your own.
Build a positive inclusive approach.	Build a pessimistic exclusionary approach.
Turn situations and problems into learning experiences and exciting challenges.	Degrade the mentee, discourage the Indigenous employee from thinking through and learning from the process.
Advocate the mentee's value to the agency.	See the mentee only when a photo opportunity arises.
Model behaviour and act as a role model.	Teach the mentee to do as I say not as I do.
Establish clear boundaries and parameters.	Necessarily have to agree to anything.
Respond promptly to all messages.	Mentor outside work hours or socially.
Communicate regularly with the employer and other staff.	Show favour or bias.
Promote the importance of teamwork.	Create an 'us and them' feeling between Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff.

APPENDIX 4 INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT CHECKLIST

Planning for success	YES	NO
• Do you know your agency's reasons for employing Indigenous staff?		
• Have you identified ways to support Indigenous staff?		
• Are there any barriers that stop you from employing Indigenous people? How are they being addressed?		
• Do you need to advertise for each vacancy? For example, have you considered if there is an Indigenous employee in another area of your agency who may be interested in applying for or acting in the position?		
• Have you established partnerships with relevant internal and external groups and organisations to broaden networks and identify areas of synergy?		
• Is your agency fully committed to investing a little extra time and effort to achieve real Indigenous employment outcomes?		
• Have you developed an Indigenous employment strategy for your agency that's endorsed by Executive?		
• Have you established short, medium and long term objectives for your agency to improve Indigenous employment outcomes?		
• Do you promote—showcase your agency to Indigenous people? (e.g. work experience, presentations, forms, expos, workplace tours, etc)		
• Are you confident that Indigenous people want to work for your agency?		
• Does your agency take a 'whole of organisation' approach with a commitment from the CEO down?		
• Does your agency encourage team work?		
• Does your agency avoid stereotyping people?		

Getting support	YES	NO
• Are you promoting your agency to Indigenous people through work experience opportunities, presentations, forums and career expos?		
• Have you met with your agency's HR unit representatives to identify how to progress your agency's Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Strategy?		
• Are you utilising all available networks to access Indigenous jobseekers? (e.g. OCPE, DCIS, Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), and Group Training Organisations).		
• Have you contacted the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE) ³⁹ for more information on Ph: (08) 8999 4187		

Recruitment	YES	NO
• Have you reviewed job descriptions as vacancies arise, to ensure they are written in plain English, so job advertisements attract a wide pool of applicants that best reflect the requirements of the job?		
• Have you promoted your agency's business to clients?		
• Have you utilised a range of appropriate media for advertising job vacancies? (e.g. Koori Mail, National Indigenous Times, local and regional papers, word of mouth, Indigenous radio and through relevant Indigenous networks).		
• Do you conduct interviews in relaxed surroundings and in ways that would not be considered intimidating or bureaucratic?		
• Do you ensure that all recruitment panels include an Indigenous representative and have a gender balance?		
• Have you used appropriate methods to support applicants? (e.g. provide interview questions to applicants prior to the interview, allow support person in interview, etc).		

Induction	YES	NO
• Are the expectations of your agency and the Indigenous employee clear?		
• Have you introduced, inducted and made welcome new staff members?		
• Do you have mentors or workplace buddies in place for existing Indigenous staff and new recruits?		
• Have you clarified the work expectations of each staff member and their responsibilities?		
• Sometimes Indigenous people have cultural and family obligations. As a manager, have you provided information about supporting the employee through flexible work arrangements that are applicable to the job?		
• Are new staff aware of their wages and conditions of employment?		
• Have you made staff aware of the NTPS Indigenous Employment & Career Development Strategy ⁴⁰ ?		
• Have you explained the training and development opportunities available to Indigenous staff?		

Retention	YES	NO
• Does your agency have a succession management plan?		
• Do you communicate your expectations clearly and sensitively to your staff?		
• Do your staff communicate their expectations clearly and sensitively to you?		
• Do your Indigenous staff feel part of the team in the workplace?		
• Does your agency have a culture of trust and support?		
• Do you actively support and promote flexible work practices with staff?		

Career Development	YES	NO
• What is your agency doing in this area? (e.g. how effective is your advertising in terms of it reaching the Indigenous community? What job sharing arrangement or mobility programs do you have which Indigenous staff participate in?)		
• Does your agency have performance management plans in place for staff?		
• Do you have internal career pathways for Indigenous employees to develop their progression in the agency?		
• Are Indigenous employees involved in the policy development and decision making processes within your agency? (e.g. Board of Management etc).		
• Do you ensure that Indigenous staff are not discriminated against?		
• Do you ensure non-Indigenous staff do not promote stereotyping of Indigenous people?		
• Do you encourage Indigenous employees to participate in leadership and executive development programs?		
• Do you have a mobility program in your agency?		
• Do you actively support Indigenous staff to undertake study?		
• How many Indigenous staff undertaking study have accessed HECS fee reimbursements?		

⁴⁰ www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/Indigenous.shtml

THROUGH IMPROVING SUPPORT MECHANISMS, MANAGERS CAN ATTRACT INDIGENOUS EMPLOYEES BACK TO THE NTPS.

Separation/Exit interviews	YES	NO
• Does your agency do them? (If not, why not?)		
• Does your agency have opportunities for people to re-enter the workforce? (e.g. casual, part time, mature age workers etc).		
• Does your agency keep in contact with those that have exited the NTPS? (e.g. keep in contact with them to attract them back to the NTPS).		

APPENDIX 5

PLANNING FOR INDIGENOUS APPRENTICESHIPS & CADETS

Question	Issues to consider	Rationale
<p>What are the entry level position/s (e.g. AO1, AO2 or T1)</p> <p>Have you identified possible positions where the Indigenous apprentice can move on completion of the apprenticeship?</p>		This is a fundamental question. If you cannot provide a permanent job, then, do not proceed with the apprenticeship; as the aim of an apprenticeship should be to move people into full time employment, not just to provide training opportunities.
How many entry level positions (full time or part time) are there in your organisation? Including regional and/or remote areas.	Number of positions or vacancies per year	This will give you a strong indication of the likelihood of the Indigenous apprentice realizing a full time job.
Over the last 3–4 years in your agency, what was the minimum level of experience and training that was required of employees who have been appointed to entry level positions?	<p>Experience (years)</p> <p>Level and type of qualification</p>	<p>This can indicate how long your apprenticeship should run for and what formal qualification your Indigenous apprentice should have on completion</p> <p>(You should also check that your minimum requirements meet industry standards, so that the Indigenous apprentice is competitive within the labour market.)</p>
<p>Do you have two or more people in your workplace with adequate work skills, training skills and interpersonal skills who will be working alongside the Indigenous apprentice?</p> <p>Do they have the time in their workday to demonstrate, coach and train the Indigenous apprentice?</p>	Yes / No	<p>This will help to ensure that your Indigenous apprentice will receive suitable on the job training and supervision.</p> <p>Two or more suitably skilled people in the workplace is the preferred option. If you only have one suitably skilled person, it may be wise to not proceed with the apprenticeship unless you have a plan that will ensure that the Indigenous apprentice's training will not be compromised if that person goes on leave or leaves your organisation.</p>
Does your workplace have the capacity to take on more than one Indigenous apprentice? (Presuming there are adequate entry level vacancies in your organisation – see Q2)	Yes / No	Peer support from another Indigenous apprentice or mentor strongly enhances retention and completion rates!
Is cross-cultural training and EEO training compulsory in your workplace? Does your organisation positively promote the organisational and social benefits of supporting Indigenous employment to its employees?	Yes / No	This will help to ensure a supportive work environment for the Indigenous apprentice.
Will your organisation improve its service delivery outcomes, through employing an Indigenous people?	Yes / No	This can help you to ensure that the apprenticeship is a training position and not as a means for cheap labour. It will also help you to determine whether you will be able to easily accommodate off-the-job training.

Question	Issues to consider	Rationale
Does your organisation have a thorough induction program and clear documented work place procedures?	Yes / No	Indigenous apprentices may have little or no workplace experience or family history of workplace experience. Clear and thorough induction programs help the Indigenous apprentice to understand the workplace ground rules.
Are there Indigenous people currently employed in the workplace who could support the apprentice?	Yes / No	Successful outcomes can be delivered through role modelling, mentoring and a supportive workplace.
Do you have a plan for providing flexible work arrangements ⁴¹ for Indigenous staff who have cultural or community obligations?	Yes / No	Indigenous apprentices may require leave to attend a ceremony, funeral or meet family obligations that non-Indigenous staff do not. Determining an equitable way to manage these issues by making it clear from the outset can prevent difficulties arising.

APPENDIX 6

UNION BODIES IN THE NT

(CURRENT AS AT MARCH 2005)

Officer/Title/Company	Name	Physical Address	Postal Address	E-mail Address	Phone	Fax
Ms Louise Jones NT Representative Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers–Australia	Louise	84 Smith Street DARWIN NT 0800	GPO Box 353 DARWIN NT 0801	infont@apesma.asn.au	8981 8503	8941 3449
Ms Nadine Williams President Australian Education Union (NT Branch)	Nadine	2 Gardiner Street DARWIN NT 0800	GPO Box 4494 DARWIN NT 0801	president@aeunt.org.au	8981 3641	8981 1747
Mr Alan Perrin Secretary NT Branch Australian Education Union	Alan	2 Gardiner Street DARWIN NT 0800	GPO Box 4494 DARWIN NT 0801		8981 3641	8981 1747
Ms Irene Monro Branch Secretary Australian Liquor, Hospitality & Miscellaneous Workers' Union	Irene	1st Flr 38 Woods Street DARWIN NT 0800	GPO Box 32 DARWIN NT 0801	ntlhmu@lhum.org.au	8981 5611	8981 1060
Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation c/– Mick Saunders AMA Canberra	Mick		PO Box E115 KINGSTON ACT 2604		02 62705400	

Officer/Title/Company	Name	Physical Address	Postal Address	E-mail Address	Phone	Fax
Mr Jamey Robertson NT Organiser Australian Manufacturing Workers Union	Jamey	1st Flr, 38 Woods Street DARWIN NT 0800	GPO Box 4425 DARWIN NT 0801	jrobertson@amwu.asn.au	8941 1511	8941 0801
Mr Dennis Blackford Secretary Australian Nursing Federation (NT Branch)	Dennis	6/5 Tiwi Gardens TIWI NT 0810	GPO Box 42533 CASUARINA NT 0811	ntanf@octa4.net.au	8945 7589	8945 4171
Mr Alan Paton NT Organiser Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union	Alan	1st Flr, 38 Woods Street DARWIN NT 0800	GPO Box 4053 DARWIN NT 0801	alanpaton@octa4.net.au	8941 2300	8981 1770
Mr Rod Ellis Secretary Community and Public Sector Union	Rod	1st Flr, 38 Woods Street DARWIN NT 0800	GPO Box 458 DARWIN NT 0801	rod.ellis@cpsu.org.au	8982 8500	8981 5085
Mr Joe Gallagher President Unions NT	Joe	1st Flr, 38 Woods Street DARWIN NT 0800	GPO Box 1833 DARWIN NT 0801	nttlc@octa4.net.au	8941 0001	8946 6385
Mr Vince Kelly President NT Police Association Inc	Vince	5 Foelsche Street DARWIN NT 0800	GPO Box 2350 DARWIN NT 0801	admin@ntpa.com.au	8981 8840	8981 6219
Ms Dianne Yali Industrial Officer NT Police Association Inc	Dianne	5 Foelsche Street DARWIN NT 0800	GPO Box 2350 DARWIN NT 0801			
Mr Joel Couturaud Secretary NT Senior Prison Officers Association	Joel	Tivendale Road BERRIMAH NT 0829	GPO Box 1407 DARWIN NT 0801		8922 0111	8947 1306

Officer/Title/Company	Name	Physical Address	Postal Address	E-mail Address	Phone	Fax
Mr Peter McConnell Secretary NT Prison Officers' Association	Peter	Tivendale Rd BERRIMAH NT 0829	GPO Box 1407 DARWIN NT 0801		8922 0111	8984 4395
Mr Andrew Burford NT Branch Secretary Maritime Union of Australia	Andrew	Fort Hill Wharf	GPO Box 1174 DARWIN NT 0801		8981 6830	8941 1492
Mr John Cooper President NT Principals Association	John	C/- Anzac High School	PO Box 8220 ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871			
Mr Ian Gallacher Secretary Transport Workers Union of Australia	Peter	3/63 Winnellie Road, WINNELLIE	PO Box 39721 WINNELLIE NT 0821	nt@sa-nt.twu.com.au	8947 2194	8947 2217

