

Cooee



A newsletter for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Issue No 1 - January 2003

“Cooee” – The first edition

Welcome to the first edition of the Indigenous Network Newsletter.

The aim of this Newsletter is to provide support and information to Indigenous employees within the Northern Territory Public Sector (NTPS) by providing information on a range of training, career development, community events and other issues.

The concept of this newsletter grew out of many discussions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the NTPS as it is considered an effective mechanism for sharing information and keeping in contact with each other.

National Indigenous Cadetship Program (NICP)

Negotiations have been finalised between the NTPS and the Commonwealth’s Department of Employment and Workplace Relations for the NICP Cadetship program.

Commencing from this year, the NICP Cadetship Program (previously funded under the Structured Training and Employment Program (STEP) has been established under a new program, called the National Indigenous Cadetship Project (NICP).

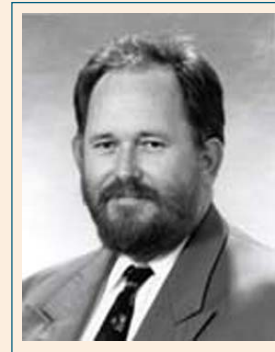
The objective of NICP is to increase the long term employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the NTPS by providing participants with the necessary qualifications for future employment in the professional, policy and technical areas of the NTPS.

NICP is open to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enrolled in, or planning to enrol in, a degree course in a tertiary institution. Eligible applicants must be a resident of the Northern Territory.

Cadets will be employed by an agency within the NTPS throughout the cadetship. The agency will provide the Cadet with work placements (on-the-job component) during major semester breaks.



A message from the Commissioner



*The Commissioner for Public Employment
John Kirwan*

As the Commissioner for Public Employment, I welcome the launch of this newsletter, and the opportunity to explain why I support this critical initiative.

It is clear from local national and international experience that real and sustainable improvements in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, education and well-being can be achieved by having our Indigenous community able to access and hold real jobs.

With a job comes the other benefits of self respect, role modelling and economic capacity which allows each of us to reach our full potential and to be able help our family and community reach theirs.

These aspirations are one of the reasons why so many people have migrated to Australia. We need to ensure this opportunity is made available to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the NT by the largest employer in the NT, the Northern Territory Public Sector.

Success will come when we see lower staff turnover rates, local staff being promoted into senior positions, the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person appointed as a CEO and when the “Southerners”, New Zealanders and Canadians come to the Northern Territory to see how well we are doing it!

The challenge is clear. The policy has been developed, the commitment from the Government is explicit. Now the hard work comes from implementing the policy.

I wish you all well in this very important and challenging pursuit.

John Kirwan

Equity and Diversity Awards 2002

Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) and Northern Territory Public Sector

Each year Northern Territory public sector organisations are invited to submit nominations on innovative initiatives which improve equity and diversity in the public sector.

This years theme for nominations were judged on initiatives that:

- ◆ specifically address recruitment, retention and/or career program for EEO group members: women, people with a disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- ◆ have progressed the integration or workplace diversity into the corporate planning and operational activities of an organisation; or
- ◆ Aim to maximise the benefits of a diverse workforce.



Open, Special and Regional Category Winners.....

The winners are:

“OPEN CATEGORY”

*Department of Health and Community Services
Aboriginal Health Worker Renal Training Program -
Nightcliff Renal Unit.*

The incidence of renal failure amongst Aboriginal community members is four times higher than the non-Aboriginal population. The program goal was to train Aboriginal Health Workers (AHWs) to care for Aboriginal renal patients in the community or in the chronic dialysis setting but there was no acknowledged accredited AHW Renal Training Program operating in the Territory.

Considerable effort was put into researching, developing and revising a training package that suited the AHWs. Seven AHWs entered training with six successfully completing the course. There are currently five AHWs currently working in dialysis with the sixth person choosing to work in the communities in education. One AHW has successfully managed the Tiwi Dialysis Centre for a period of twelve months. A real success story.

“SPECIAL CATEGORY”

*Department of Health & Community Services,
Provider Support Unit - Family and Children’s
Services as core partner of Cooperative Research
Centre for Aboriginal and Tropic Health for
“Aboriginal Child Protection Advisor (ACPA)”.*

This nomination supports the Aboriginal Community Worker Career Strategy and the Department’s Strategy 21 directions by increasing Aboriginal involvement in the health workforce and strengthening community capacity. FACS acknowledged that to have a strong and effective program operating for the community they have to recruit a workforce that represents the diversity of the population whom it services.

“REGIONAL CATEGORY”

*Department of Infrastructure, Planning & Environment
Alice Springs Desert Park Indigenous Apprenticeship
Program - Alice Springs Desert Park.*

This program is assisting Indigenous people to gain marketable skills so as to be competitive in gaining employment, while at the same time furthering the goal of workplace diversity in a key operational area of the Department – the Alice Springs Desert Park. Opportunities for mutual exchange of useful information and the promotion of greater cultural awareness and understanding both for the agency’s staff and visitors to the Park has been an added advantage. The mentoring and support arrangements at both the Desert Park and Arrernte Council in the current program have been crucial to its success and represents an example of best practice for other NTPS agencies.

The results have been outstanding with six staff moving from designated Guide positions to other positions within the Park – five to permanent positions and one to a temporary position.

"ENCOURAGEMENT CATEGORY"

*Department of Health and Community Services
Pathways to Dimensional Learning Program -
Central Australian Alcohol and Other Drug Services.*

This program makes the transfer of information between people multi-dimensional. It enhances the overall learning experience and creates a training resource that is language and culture specific, is target group relevant and is able to be updated as necessary at little or no cost or time involved. This program is innovative and exciting with many possibilities for transferability across the public sector. An extremely impressive award-winning nomination.



Have you been SWIPED lately?

SWIPE (Sector Wide Induction Program for Employees) is an induction program which aims to provide employees with the opportunity to gain a wide perspective of the structure of the NTPS. The program offers new employees an understanding into how the government system works, how various agencies operate and how the budget process affects each agency.

SWIPE is designed for people at all levels throughout the public sector. Irrespective of the level you are employed at, your individual contribution is essential to the continuing achievements of the NTPS.

The aim of SWIPE is to provide employees with an opportunity to gain knowledge of:

- ◆ Government Frameworks
- ◆ Relationships between the Northern Territory Government (NTG) and the Northern Territory Public Sector (NTPS)
- ◆ Structure of the NTPS
- ◆ The Role of a Public Sector Employee

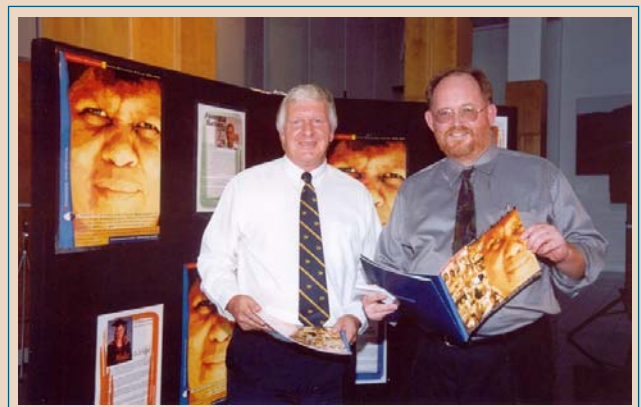
Contact: Department of Corporate and Information Services on 89993764

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

On the 20 November 2002, the Minister for Employment, Education and Training, Minister Stirling officially launched the NTPS Indigenous Employment & Career Development Strategy 2002-2006. This Strategy sets a new direction for Northern Territory Public Sector agencies to address the low representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Northern Territory Public Sector.

As by far the largest employer in the Territory, the Minister has made it quite clear that the NTPS is to set the example for other employers in the Territory. The Strategy places an increased emphasis on remote and regional recruitment to better reflect the customer base of the relevant service providers. The Strategy establishes regular reporting requirements to the Minister for Public Employment on each agency's progress against the intended outcomes of the Strategy.

NTPS agencies are required to set targets and establish benchmarks against these outcomes so that progress can be encouraged and monitored. Government's expectations are that this policy



The Minister for Employment, Education and Training, Hon Syd Stirling MLA and the Commissioner for Public Employment, John Kirwan.

will be successful and will require regular reporting on its implementation and progress in agencies.



The importance of Equal Employment Opportunity data

A well managed, diverse workforce can equip the Northern Territory Public Sector to meet future challenges. Accordingly, all employees, particularly Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander employees, are encouraged to enter their Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) details so that the different skills and competences that Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander employees bring to the workplace are recognised, valued and promoted through flexible employment practices.

Effective EEO data provides a framework to deliver to government responsive policy development and service delivery. The collation of EEO data is a critical tool in guiding the development of equitable human resource policies and strategies for the sector.

Human resource policies that support diversity can help the culture to continually adapt in response to new environmental demands. These policies are critical for attracting, selecting, motivating, developing and retaining a highly skilled, diverse group of employees. The adoption of language and strategies which are reflected in the community in which government serves, is recognised as being more effective to achieve business goals.

To enter your EEO details, employees can access this by either entering it directly onto the Personnel Information and Payroll System (PIPS) or via MyHR on the intranet for those agencies who have already started using this system. Alternatively, employees may wish to contact their respective salaries personnel and request that their EEO data be implemented.



Three things that never come back; the spent arrow, the spoken word and the lost opportunity.

W.G.P



Discrimination is the enemy of progress

P. K. Shaw

Alice Springs Indigenous Employment Challenge

The Alice Springs Community is embracing an innovative new strategy to improve the quality of life of all people living in Alice Springs, the Indigenous Employment Challenge. The aim of the Challenge is to support 100 young Indigenous people to access and remain in employment in Alice Springs each year. The target group is young people who demonstrate an active interest in employment but require additional support to successfully maintain employment.

The Indigenous Employment Challenge has been facilitated by the Alice in Ten Quality of Life Project, and developed as a result of strong involvement and direction from representatives from all sectors of the Alice Springs community. Employers, particularly the business sector, called for a central point of contact to access information and support to help them to be more successful in employing Indigenous people. Many employers in Alice Springs have recognised the business benefit as well as the social benefits to be gained from increased employment of Indigenous people.



An Independent Footprints Forward Management Board, made up key business people and Indigenous leaders has been meeting since November 2002. The purpose of this specific board membership is to facilitate active partnership between the business community and the Indigenous community to create a better future for all people. Footprints Forward will be fully operational by the 1 July 2003 and will provide practical support for all potential employers, Indigenous employees and their families. Key strategies will include linking with students while at school, providing mentoring support and pre-employment training for employees and employers.

This is a great example of what can be achieved by the community taking a strong lead and forming partnerships with all levels of Government. The Alice Spring Council have been keen participants along with the Chamber of Commerce and the final outcome has been a funding partnership between the Management Board and the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Governments.



Tangentyere Council has also been a strong supporter of this initiative during the development stage and have agreed to second Peter Strachan for a seven month period to establish the independent incorporated organisation. Strachy will commence as Footprints Forward Inc. Manager/Consultant on the 10 February 2003 working from the Alice in Ten Quality of Life Project and will establish the Footprints Forward inc shop front as well as recruit and train an Indigenous Manager to take over the position independently by August 2003.

St Johns College – “Mining for Careers”

In early November the Community Services crew in the Department of Business, Industry and Resource Development (DBIRD) teamed up with St John’s College to take 40 Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander students on a circuit around the Top End to look at career opportunities in the mining industry.

The students visited gravel quarries at Humpty Doo and Mt Bundy, operating mines at Jabiru and Pine Creek, and looked at rehabilitated sites in Kakadu, Pine Creek and Batchelor. During these visits, students met with many Indigenous employees and learned a great deal about opportunities in the mining industry.

Students also visited an exotic timber plantation and a prawn farm, visited old plantations which had been rehabilitated and even got to pan for gold at the Pine Creek!

In all, the program has been a great success with students learning about the mining industry and its support services and, most importantly, increasing their understanding of what employment opportunities can come from the mineral resource industry.

Up-coming professional development courses

Course name	Duration	Cost
Effective Job Applications	1/2 day	\$50
Interview Skills	1/2 day	\$50
Career Management	1/2 day	\$50
Project Planning and Management	1 day	\$120

For more information on courses available:

Telephone:

Department of Corporate and Information Services (DCIS) on 89993764

or

Website:

uluru.nt.gov.au/dcis/productlines/training_dev/2002Calendar_new.doc
(for NTPS Employees only)

Some useful links...

- ◆ http://www.hreoc.gov.au/racial_discrimination/index.html
- ◆ <http://www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/Indigenous.shtml>
- ◆ <http://www.aifs.org.au/institute/conf/confmenu.html>
- ◆ <http://www.iqpc.com.au/cgi-bin/templates/0/home/aust.html>
- ◆ <http://www.vibe.com.au/>

Scholarships:

- ◆ <http://www.jcu.edu.au/prosp/casi.shtml>
- ◆ <http://www.ecu.edu.au/GraduateSchool/gsmain.html>
- ◆ <http://www.research.uwa.edu.au/schols/>
- ◆ <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/orh/qhrss/qhrss.html>
- ◆ <http://www.canberra.edu.au/stuadmin/scholarship.html>
- ◆ <http://www.curtin.edu.au/corporate/research/>



Pssst!

If you are aware, or know of any Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander employees who may not have access to an electronic copy of the newsletter, please either:

- ◆ print a copy out and forward it direct to them via internal mail or by fax machine, or
 - ◆ contact Wendy Ah Chin on the number below.
- Your assistance in circulating the newsletter is appreciated.



Contributions are sought for the newsletter. If you have an interesting article or information on an event or activity please contact Wendy Ah Chin on (ph) 89994108, (fax) 89994148 or via email at wendy.ah_chin@nt.gov.au.