



CLOSING THE GAP THROUGH PLACE-BASED EMPLOYMENT

Indigenous Employment in Local Government

Position Paper

**Presentation to ACELG-LGMA 2nd National Indigenous Employment in
Local Government Roundtable**

December 2012



A Framework for Increasing Indigenous Employment in Local Government



Objectives

- **A framework to assist councils** to increase the number of Indigenous people working in Local Government
- **Access** an ‘untapped’ talent pool
- **Provide** secure and sustainable ‘place-based’ employment opportunities to Indigenous people
- **Advocate and promote** the employment of Indigenous people by Local Government at least at a rate that reflects the local Indigenous population ratio
- **Provide** guidelines and best practice examples to encourage local implementation



The Framework – 8 Key Elements

- Committing to engagement
- Directly employing Indigenous workers
- Support for Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees
- Indirectly employing Indigenous workers
- Building alliances – collaboration is the key
- Support from governments
- Adopting good practice and communicating and celebrating achievements
- Monitoring and evaluating implementation



21 Actions Underpin the 8 Key Elements

1. Committing to engagement

- 1.1 Commitment by councillors and/or senior management to increasing the employment of local Indigenous people and engaging with local Indigenous communities to achieve this*
- 1.2 Community mapping and conversations – engaging and understanding your Indigenous communities*
- 1.3 A Statement of Commitment to Indigenous People or Memorandum of Understanding*
- 1.4 Reconciliation Action Plans*



21 Actions Underpin the 8 Key Elements

2. Directly employing Indigenous workers

2.1 Direct employment - human resource policies and practices reflect the cultural needs of Indigenous people

2.2 Establishing employment pathways



21 Actions Underpin the 8 Key Elements

3. Support for Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees

- 3.1 Develop managers to manage, including in diverse workforce environments*
- 3.2 Assisting new Indigenous employees to learn about the culture of the organisation*
- 3.3 Selecting and training dedicated staff to mentor and support Indigenous employees*
- 3.4 Building the capacity of Indigenous leaders and managers*
- 3.5 Ensuring employees have the necessary Foundation Skills for a career in local government and that opportunities are available to improve the vocational skills of Indigenous communities*
- 3.6 Support for Indigenous language and culture*



21 Actions Underpin the 8 Key Elements

4. Indirectly employing Indigenous workers

4.1 Implementing social procurement policies and supporting Indigenous owned and operated enterprises

4.2 Growing a trained workforce - utilising Group Training Organisations

5. Building alliances – collaboration is the key

5.1 With State, Territory and Commonwealth government departments and government and non-government agencies



21 Actions Underpin the 8 Key Elements

6. Support from governments

- 6.1 Assistance from the Australian government and State and Territory government departments and agencies*
- 6.2 Training and employment funding and related resources*

7. Adopting good practice and communicating and celebrating achievements

- 7.1 Learning from demonstration projects in local government*
- 7.2 Learning from private corporations*
- 7.3 Communicating and celebrating achievements*
- 7.4 Promoting home-grown talent*

8. Monitoring and evaluating implementation



Implementation

Step 1 Assessing current and/or future workforce needs

Preliminary actions needed within the context of the organisation's workforce strategy include:

- data on current workforce and forecast needs, including Indigenous participation in the organisation
- LGA profile data and Indigenous population in the community
- choosing strategies to address workforce needs
- the business case for developing a strategy
- assessing risks



Implementation

Step 2 Assessing current efforts to increase Indigenous employment

- Current position and efforts at engaging with Indigenous communities

Step 3 Deciding on a course of action to meet your needs and your capacity

- Depending on assessments in Steps 1 and 2 make choices from the 8 key elements and 21 actions
- These will vary across LGAs and locations and depend on capacity



Implementation

Step 4 Developing a detailed plan and setting a timetable for implementation

- commitment to engagement by council and/or senior management
- establishing a community profile with clear baseline information

followed by

- development of mechanisms which commit to in-principle support, in conjunction with local Indigenous organisations
- learning from others, building alliances and seeking support from governments

leading to

- setting targets to measure success
- action taken to employ Indigenous workers directly or indirectly and put in place support mechanisms to ensure retention



Implementation

Step 5 Monitor implementation to check on outcomes and refining strategies as required

Key questions should be framed to focus on appropriateness, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and legacy

This will take time – there is no quick, simple fix.

Not everything can be done immediately; detailed planning is needed in a sequential manner.



Indigenous Employment in Local Government

Demonstration Projects Underpin the Position Paper



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Six Areas of Focus

The six Demonstration Projects are now proposed to focus on:

- developing a local Indigenous employment strategy;
- Indigenous local government leadership and management;
- local government skills in demand projects;
- Indigenous owned and operated services;
- Reconciliation Action Planning; and
- support for Indigenous language and culture.



Developing a local Indigenous employment strategy

- **Proposal** - sponsor the development and implementation of a local Indigenous employment strategy in 2-3 regional groupings of Councils across Australia
- Build on the experience and success of LGAs which have developed strategies and of the private sector in developing their strategic approach
- Regional groupings involved drawn from:
 - metropolitan and regional and/or rural locations
 - mix of LGAs with high, medium and low Indigenous populations.



Developing a local Indigenous employment strategy

- **Task** - develop a strategy in line with the Position Paper and focused on the following, as a minimum:
 - council preparation and readiness;
 - establishment of Indigenous Community Advisory Committees;
 - Statements of Commitment to Reconciliation;
 - a commitment to Indigenous employment;
 - a plan which includes skilling, upgrading literacy and numeracy levels and personal support to underpin employment.
- LGAs identify funding they can contribute to the initiative.



Indigenous local government leadership and management

- **Proposal** – support the establishment of Indigenous leadership and management programs in LGAs which have high numbers of Indigenous employees, including those with Indigenous people within the senior management group and those with none
- **Task** - ACELG approach States with a significant number of LGAs having a high Indigenous population with a view to requesting them to each identify up to 2 LGAs which might be nominated to 'work up' proposals for the funding of a program



Indigenous local government leadership and management

- Program targeted towards:
 - management development for those already in management positions;
 - the development of pathways within the organization for existing and prospective indigenous employees to 'aspire to';
 - the development of skills aimed at 'grooming' Indigenous staff to move into supervision, coordination and management positions; and
 - Foundation Skills programs and VET programs to support the above
- LGAs to identify funding they can contribute.



Local government skills in demand projects

- **Proposal** - sponsor the development and implementation of a local Indigenous employment strategy which is focused on addressing skills in demand in 6-9 LGAs or grouping of LGAs in up to 6 of the following industry areas:
 - Automotive;
 - **Child care**, nursing and welfare workers;
 - Civil engineering;
 - **Environmental health**;
 - Planning and surveying;
 - Plumbing and electrical.
- Too big – refine to two



Local government skills in demand projects

- Addressing skills shortages requires:
 - the commitment to engagement with local Indigenous communities
 - human resource policies aimed at attraction, recruitment and retention of Indigenous workers in skills shortage areas
 - creating pathways for Indigenous school students and for existing workers
 - mentoring and support
 - the development of Foundation Skills
 - collaborating with governments and industry organizations
 - securing financial assistance to support
 - drawing on the key factors for success learnt by others



Local government skills in demand projects

- **Task** – seek nominations or EOIs showing evidence of:
 - work underway to develop an Indigenous employment strategy with local Indigenous communities
 - resources committed to Indigenous employment within LGA, or across grouping of LGAs, in skill shortage areas
 - incorporating para-professional training and support, including Foundation Skills for existing Indigenous employees
 - a plan to develop pathways within the organisation/s for existing Indigenous workers and/or school students
 - clear evidence of strong relationships with key partners



Indigenous owned and operated services

Proposal

- Undertake a stocktake of the arrangements developed within LGAs
- Highlight 6-10 case studies
 - where the key factors in success have the potential for replication and
 - where the approach has been developed in conjunction with local Indigenous community organisations



Indigenous owned and operated services

- LGAs to be involved would include:
 - those active in establishing or supporting the establishment of Indigenous community enterprises;
 - those which use social procurement arrangements to encourage the employment of Indigenous people;
 - those which use Indigenous community enterprises to provide services on a regular basis eg the AIMSC and other community enterprises;
 - those which regularly purchase from small and medium enterprises that are 50% Indigenous owned.
- **Task** – gathering information from State LGAs, DEEWR, FAHCSIA, DRALGAS, State govts, AIMSC, survey? EOI?
- Write up examples



Reconciliation Action Planning

Proposal - collect information to develop advice for LGAs:

- stocktake of actions in the sector at various levels;
- identify how less formal arrangements align with more formal RAPs;
- highlighting 8-12 best practice examples across Australia of LGAs which have developed a RAP:
 - the RAP/arrangement/agreement and the nature of focus on employment;
 - the process for development within the LGA and how progressed with local Indigenous communities;



Reconciliation Action Planning

- identify experience in addressing the 'enablers/barriers' to Indigenous engagement;
- identifying models and establishing a framework to guide them other LGAs in the development of a formal relationship with their local Indigenous community; and
- developing a self-assessment tool for LGAs to use to assess their progress against the Key Elements and Specific Actions outlined in the Position Paper.



Reconciliation Action Planning

- **Task** - a three stage process is envisaged:
 - information sought from State LGA Associations and LGMA's, DEEWR and FAHCSIA, as well as from State/Territory Departments of Employment and Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation Australia on known arrangements plus a brief survey of LGAs via State LGA associations;
 - an expression of interest invited from LGAs and the development of 8-12 case studies; and
 - the development of the framework and self-assessment tool.



Support for Indigenous language and culture

- House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs September 2012
 - language learning in Indigenous communities *Our Land Our Language: language learning in Indigenous communities.*
 - role of Indigenous languages in connection to culture, kinship, land and family was highlighted as was the devastation to communities that results when language is lost. Indigenous languages are the foundation for personal growth.



Support for Indigenous language and culture

- Recommendations
 - substantially increase funding to expand Indigenous Languages Support program and prioritise the development of language nests
 - establishing Language Nest programs in early childhood learning centres and preschools as set up under National Partnership Agreements.



Support for Indigenous language and culture

- Unfunded at this stage – national implementation would require many of the same factors underpinning the IKCs in Queensland and the Library and Knowledge Centres in the NT to be in place eg:
- partnerships involving use of Council owned facilities;
- engagement with locals to promote local leadership, participatory community development and community ownership;
- elders passing on language and culture to younger people - to young children.



Support for Indigenous language and culture

- **Proposal** - replicate strategies/programs to remove barriers to improving base level literacy and numeracy levels and developing potential for higher level skilling
- highlight examples from QLD IKC and NT L&KCs assisting Indigenous employees from LGAs
- Identifying Indigenous language and culture programs which improve their work readiness skills
- identify from an LGA perspective the key features of the current IKC and L&KC arrangements which could be incorporated in the roll-out of the language nests proposed for early childhood learning centres

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