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# **CLOSING THE GAP THROUGH PLACE-BASED EMPLOYMENT**

## **A National Indigenous Employment Strategy for Local Government**

**Interim Position Paper and Demonstration Projects**

**Presentation to the National Local Government Workforce Development Forum**

**17 APRIL 2012**

## INTRODUCTION

- Early 2012 - ACELG commissioned work to develop an Interim National Indigenous Employment Strategy for Local Government
- The Strategy is to be set within the wider Local Government National Workforce Development Strategy – needs shaping, aligning, linked to new data
- The draft Interim Strategy contains a continuum of key elements and specific actions critical to the successful recruitment and retention of Indigenous employees – allows you to pick where you are and what you might do based on needs and capacity within the LGA

## The Process

- Green Paper '*Closing the Gap Through Place-based employment Local Government Indigenous Employment Program 2010*' - consultation with Indigenous leaders, including LG Indigenous CEOs; key people involved in Indigenous employment programs; other stakeholders
  - *Purpose - commence a conversation and seek feedback*
- National Roundtable on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment in Local Government on 26-27 July 2011
  - *Purpose - inform development of potential cross sectoral and intergovernmental partnerships and alliances and replicable and sustainable demonstration projects*
- This Forum
  - *Purpose - seeking feedback on the draft National LG Interim Workforce Strategy and this conceptual approach to an Indigenous Employment Strategy for LG*
- Further consultation with key stakeholders.

## Key Messages

- Take account of remote, rural, regional, urban and metropolitan areas
- Targeted to assist Councillors and Senior Management of Local Governments
- Driving the decision to develop an Indigenous Employment Strategy lies with CEOs and senior managers - not just HR but also Finance, Administration, Planning, Infrastructure and Community Services
- Some Local Government Organisations just starting; others well advanced; in some places sustainability will be difficult without a strategy
- Starting now may get you there in 10 years

## Key Messages

- Change in approach from establishing a Local Government Indigenous Employment program to a strategic approach targeting the attraction, recruitment, employment and retention of Indigenous people in core positions within Local Government
- Program support and services provided by Australian and State and Territory Government but not as the principal funders of positions
- Grow the regional workforce and address skill shortages by utilising previously under-employed and under-utilised local populations
- Incorporating diverse cultures within an organisation is a management issue
- Linked to Local Governments' role in achieving the COAG targets

## **Workforce Demographics Driving the Need**

- The National LG Workforce Strategy and data paper paints the picture
- An Ageing Workforce
  - The non-Indigenous Australian workforce getting older
  - The Indigenous population is a lot younger
- Labour supply issues in many local areas
- Skill gaps and shortages in many places and nationally in some occupations

## The Business Case for Indigenous Employment in Local Government

- **The need to grow new talent** to avoid a talent war, particularly in regional and remote areas and where there is mining activity
  - Competition for limited pools of skills and labour will increase as the economy improves
- **Direct benefits** for Local Government include:
  - Filling jobs where there have been difficulties
  - Having a pool of local employees who can move between projects as demand changes
  - A stable workforce living at home, not intent on leaving the region, and participating in local community groups and activities
  - LG an employer of choice locally
  - Indigenous perspectives can add value to business outcomes

## The Business Case for Indigenous Employment in Local Government

- **Mutual benefits**
- For LG and local Indigenous groups the creation of a sustainable regional workforce
- Example - the Minerals Council in a MOU with the Australian Govt
  - *Local workforces and communities with shared aspirations to create societal value from minerals development*
  - *Committed to building and maintaining a social licence to operate*
  - *Mutual benefits of Indigenous engagement and sustainable local communities*
- **LG is a place-based employer with national reach**
- **Contributing to the COAG Targets**



## **An Interim National Indigenous Employment Strategy for Local Government**

### **Strategic Objectives**

- **A framework to assist councils** to increase the number of Indigenous people working in Local Government
- **Access** an ‘untapped’ talent pool as the next phase in the war for talent is just around the corner
- **Provide** additional talent to work in local government to alleviate skills shortages and the ageing workforce crisis that started to impact the sector severely from 2011
- **Provide** secure and sustainable ‘place-based’ employment opportunities to Indigenous people

# An Interim National Indigenous Employment Strategy for Local Government

## Strategic Objectives

- **Advocate and promote** the employment of Indigenous people by Local Government at least at a rate that reflects the local Indigenous population ratio
- **Supply** the sector with a framework, guidelines and best/good practice examples to encourage local implementation
- **Deliver** Local Government Indigenous Employment Strategy demonstration projects with real and meaningful outcomes to guide the way for a national rollout

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# **An Interim National Indigenous Employment Strategy for Local Government**

## Key Elements of the Strategic Framework

- **Committing to engagement**
- **Developing in-principle support**
- **Directly employing Indigenous workers**
- **Support for Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees**
- **Indirectly employing Indigenous workers**
- **Building alliances – collaboration is the key**
- **Support from governments**
- **Learning from others**
- **Monitoring and evaluating implementation**

## Actions Underpinning the 9 Elements

### **Committing to engagement**

- 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*
- 2 Community mapping and conversations – engaging and understanding your Indigenous communities*

### **Developing in-principle support**

- 3 A Statement of Commitment to Indigenous People or Memorandum of Understanding*
- 4 Reconciliation Action Plans*

## Interim Strategy - Actions Underpinning the 9 Elements

### Directly employing Indigenous workers

*5 Direct Employment - Human Resource policies and practices reflect the cultural needs of Indigenous people*

### Support for Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees

*6 Develop managers to manage, including in diverse workforce environments, and to understand the influence of culture on workforce development issues*

*7 Assisting new Indigenous employees to learn about the culture of the organisation and select and train staff to mentor and support Indigenous employees*

*8 Building the capacity of Indigenous leadership and management roles*

*9 Training – literacy, numeracy and vocational skills for some members of Indigenous communities*

## **Interim Strategy - Actions Underpinning the 9 Elements**

### **Indirectly employing Indigenous workers**

*10 Implementing Social Procurement Policies and Supporting Indigenous Community Enterprises*

*11 Growing a Trained Workforce - Utilising Group Training Organisations*

## **Interim Strategy - Actions Underpinning the 9 Elements**

### **Building alliances – collaboration is the key**

*12 With State, Territory and Commonwealth Government Departments and Government and Non-Government Agencies*

### **Support from governments**

*13 Assistance from the Australian Government and State and Territory Departments and Agencies*

*14 Training and Employment Funding and Related Resources*

### **Learning from others**

*15 Learning from Demonstration Projects in Local Government*

*16 Learning from private corporations*



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## **Interim Strategy - Actions Underpinning the 9 Elements**

### **Monitoring and evaluating implementation**

*17 Monitoring and Evaluation*

## Implementation

- Step 1 Assessing the LGA profile and workforce data
- Step 2 Assessing the risks of action vs no action
- Step 3 Assessing the workforce choices to address the risks
- Step 4 Where an Indigenous Employment Strategy is one of the choices, assess current efforts to increase Indigenous employment
- Step 5 Deciding on a course of action to meet your needs and your capacity
- Step 6 Developing a detailed plan and setting a long timetable for implementation
- Step 7 Monitor implementation to check on outcomes

## Implementation

### Key factors for success

- *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage* - Productivity Commission report (Aug 2011) - highlighted that in the analysis of successful Indigenous programs, four factors stand out (as they did in the 2009):
  - co-operation between Indigenous people and government
  - ‘bottom up’ community involvement
  - ongoing government support
  - good governance, within Indigenous communities and within government

## Implementation

### Learning from others and leading by example

- *Best practice strategies for attraction and retention*
- *Learnings from other Indigenous employment initiatives*
- *“Competence rather than cultural competence”*
- *“Reframing our attitudes and expectations of Indigenous people”*

### Promote home-grown Indigenous talent

## **Demonstration Projects**

- The Green Paper proposed rolling out Local Government Indigenous Employment demonstration projects
- Potential to be rolled out in both a regional, rural, remote setting, and a metropolitan and municipal council, depending on relevance and greatest need
- National Roundtable on ATSI Employment in Local Government (July 2011) identified 6 areas for demonstration projects
- Detailed work now underway to progress this work

## **Six Areas of Focus for Demonstration Projects**

- Replication of the Latrobe City Council (Victoria) Indigenous Employment Program
- Local Government leadership and management – Management Skills
- Skills In Demand Projects incorporating para-professional training and support: engineering, building surveying, environmental health and planning
- Indigenous owned and operated services
- Reconciliation Action Planning
- Language, Knowledge and Media Hub – Language, Literacy, Numeracy and Foundation Skills.