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Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs
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Office Manager
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Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Pathways and Participation Opportunities for Indigenous Australians in Employment and Business

Dear Standing Committee

Bara Barang Corporation Ltd (BBC) was represented at the Roundtable with Barang Regional Alliance at Kooindah Waters Hotel on Wednesday 28 April 2021.

We, the staff and Board of BBC, wish to provide additional information in our own right, particularly around the existing and future pathways for employment for Aboriginal young people on the NSW Central Coast. We will explain our approach (which is becoming known as, 'The Bara Barang Way') by briefly highlighting:

- Limitations of current employment services,
- a publication about successful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes,
- our partnership with a Central Coast business and worksite accredited training, and
- the benefit of utilising the expertise of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

The current iteration of employment services, Jobactive, has limited benefits for our people. The employment provider practice of 'creaming' (focussing on the most employable jobseekers) and 'parking' (ignoring those jobseekers deemed too difficult or challenging) is all too apparent on the Central Coast. Staff of these providers have very large caseloads and greatly varying levels of cultural competency.

The approach at BBC is aligned with the findings of the NCVER (the National Centre for Vocational Education Research) publication, 'Guide to success for organisations in achieving employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people' (Giddy, Lopez & Redman, 2009 (available via <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/guide-to-success-for-organisations-in-achieving-employment-outcomes-for-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people>, accessed 10/05/2021, hereon referred to as 'the Guide to success').

A key factor is effective mentoring, with holistic support, to respond to the full range of issues that Aboriginal people face to overcome barriers to employment. This is critical to the effectiveness of the approach and a core component in 'The Bara Barang Way' which is exemplified here in the BaraBarang collateral.



The significant factors when delivering holistic support include personalised attention to clients and employers alike, strategies for pre- and post-placement mentoring with high quality case management, identifying and addressing non-vocational issues (transport, clothing, accommodation, caring responsibilities, substance misuse) and providing intensive and practical support within a cultural network.

In the workplace, employers are supported to take on Aboriginal employees with the mentoring service providing cultural mediation when needed, building confidence and supporting both the client and the employer.

Operating in this manner has produced a win-win for BBC and our employer partner, Ebisglobal, a warehousing, logistics and process manufacturing business located in Tuggerah. Together we created an employment pathway that has resulted in six Aboriginal young people registered with us gaining employment at Ebisglobal. Photos are exhibited at (1), below.

To achieve job placements, we work collaboratively with over 15 referral agencies (such as Centrelink, Wesley Mission, Yerin Aboriginal Health Services, Coast Shelter and the like), building a talent pool of 47 screened and job ready clients with resumes, career plans and identified job preferences. All clients participate in our 'Dream Builders' program that teaches cultural education, work education and career planning skills. All registered clients presented with one or more of the following barriers, no car or license, mental health issues, addiction, cognitive impairment, limited or no work history, disengagement from school, homelessness and jobless households.

To expand vocational opportunities, BBC and Ebisglobal initiated industry training delivered by a Registered Training Organisation at the worksite. Aboriginal participants who were selected from our talent pool and considered a good match for the requirements of the job role were invited to undertake units of competency in Process Manufacturing and attend the training course at the worksite. The traditional application-interview process was avoided and skill acquisition, attendance and course completion were the main factors in securing paid employment. BBC and Ebisglobal will use this vocational training and job placement methodology again as their workforce is expanding. We are seeking other businesses to replicate the initiative in other areas of the Central Coast.

Training and employment project (highlighted in this submission, above)



*Cassie
working at
Ebisglobal,
Tuggerah.*



*Rodney
working at
Ebisglobal
(left) with
business
owner, Paul
Freeman
(right).*



Trainees in Process Manufacturing at Ebisglobal (Cassie, centre, with Sharon, the course trainer from BSI Learning RTO second from right and Chris Thew, Manager at Bara Barang Corporation Ltd far right).

The unique selling proposition or value-add that engaging with an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation, such as BBC, is the holistic and wrap-around approach that we have to our people.

The delivery of services in a culturally appropriate manner with the anchoring of Aboriginal identity, belonging and connection to the local Aboriginal community are foundational. This approach is beyond the quick wins of entry and short-term employment targets of Government and leads to sustainable employment and career progression that brings transformation in the lives of Aboriginal people, their families and the community. The entrepreneurial nature of ACCOs and Aboriginal business deserves greater recognition and is juxtaposed in the graphic below.

Thank you for the opportunity to consider this submission as part of your findings.

Regards,
Bara Barang Corporation Ltd.

