

Painting and Decorating Services Pty. Ltd.

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BY: ALIA

Submission No. 22
Date Received

Date 8th July 2008

The Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Submission to Inquiry into increasing Indigenous business opportunities.

Dear Secretary,

Ability Plus is an Aboriginal owned business. We are fully licensed and insured and Ability Plus has more than 30 years experience in the painting industry, including heritage painting, commercial painting and domestic painting.

Our company has always endeavoured to give people in the Aboriginal community apprenticeships and ongoing jobs for the future.

The terms of Reference of your Inquiry refer to "the feasibility of adapting the US minority business/development council model to the Australian context".

Last month we attended a private briefing on this topic in Sydney. We were invited to join about six other Indigenous entrepreneurs and business owners in a discussion about how a US based model like the one you refer to would assist us as business owners.

It is true to say that all in the room became very interested and quite excited about the prospects this could have for our people. The model does not rely upon Government programs but actually helps Indigenous businesses build business relationships with business in the Australian economy.

By participating in this model we see that our prospects for new and better business opportunities will help us grow the business. Growth in our business means we are able to employ more Indigenous apprentices and trades people both male and female. Besides the financial independence the business provides us, this is what we get the most satisfaction from. For us to employ more of our youth from our communities – it is a great source of pride for us.

Ability Plus has had a great deal of success in employing Indigenous youth. This is partly due to the fact that we, as owners of the business are Aboriginal, and we perhaps better understand the backgrounds that these youths come from. Some of these young people will go on to start their own business – having seen the example we have provided for them. All of them also get exposure to some Aboriginal people who have gone out and built their own business. This won't be for everyone, but

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you would be surprised how many Aboriginal people are so interested in being in business for themselves.

During the meeting in Sydney, this was a very common theme. The Indigenous business owners spoke more about getting Aboriginal people in to their business than they did about the extra money that would be produced from participating in the Supplier Diversity model. Plus everyone knew of other Aboriginal people who would benefit from the model.

So, if your Inquiry is seeking to judge the merits of the introduction of this model into Australia, we would very much endorse the view that this would be a very positive development for Indigenous Australia.

Yours Sincerely

Daryll and Jennene Brown

Directors

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