
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

# Official Committee Hansard

# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AFFAIRS

**Reference: Needs of urban dwelling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples**

TUESDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2000

MURRIN MURRIN, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AFFAIRS**

**Wednesday, 1 November 2000**

**Members:** Mr Lieberman *(Chair)*, Mrs Draper, Mr Haase, Ms Hoare, Mr Katter, Mr Lloyd, Mr Melham, Mr Quick, Mr Snowdon and Mr Wakelin

**Members in attendance:** Mrs Draper, Mr Haase, Ms Hoare, Mr Lieberman, Mr Lloyd, Mr Melham, Mr Quick, Mr Snowdon and Mr Wakelin

## Terms of reference for the inquiry:

To inquire into and report on:

The present and ongoing needs of country and metropolitan urban dwelling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Among other matters, the Committee will consider:

1. the nature of existing programs and services available to urban dwelling indigenous Australians, including ways to more effectively deliver services considering the special needs of these people;
2. ways to extend the involvement of urban indigenous people in decision making affecting their local communities, including partnership governance arrangements;
3. the situation and needs of indigenous young people in urban areas, especially relating to health, education, employment, and homelessness (including access to services funded from the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program);
4. the maintenance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in urban areas, including, where appropriate, ways in which such maintenance can be encouraged;
5. opportunities for economic independence in urban areas; and
6. urban housing needs and the particular problems and difficulties associated with urban areas.

**Committee met at 11.24 a.m.**

**Participants**

**BARNES, Mrs Bronwyn, Government Affairs, Anaconda Nickel Ltd**

**BISWAS, Mr Sandeep, Anaconda Nickel Operations Ltd**

**CANNING, Mr David, Training Officer, Anaconda Nickel Operations Ltd**

**CANNING, Mrs Sadie Miriam, Director, SMC Vending Operations**

**HANCOCK, Mr Alex, Site Administration Manager, Anaconda Nickel Operations Ltd**

**HARKIN, Mr James, Manager, Bidarn Pty Ltd**

**HARKIN, Ms Maisie, Director, Bidarn Pty Ltd (Industrial Cleaning)**

**JURY, Mr John Richard, Manager Community Development, Anaconda Nickel Ltd**

**McEVOY, Mr Phil, Laverton-Leonora Cross Cultural Association**

**PARKER, Mr Barrie, General Manager, Anglogold**

**CHAIR**—Welcome to this roundtable hearing. Please make your presentation.

*Overhead transparencies were then shown—*

**Mr JURY**—These guys here are two of our last batch. This fellow, Ron Williams, is actually two-on, two-off. He works in Anaconda. He is also the Chairman of the Bay of Isles Aboriginal Corporation. He is rapt because he gets two weeks to do his stuff in his Aboriginal corporation and he gets two weeks working for Anaconda and he is getting nearly $50,000 a year to do it. So he has a great life. That is from Esperance. There is young Clinton and Murray. We are trying to put Murray into Bulong at the moment; he is working for a CDEP corporation. He dropped out due to personal choice that he made, and it was not work related. That is the only time we lose these guys here, usually—from personal choice. Clinton Reid works in exploration work. He is actually one of the team that goes out to the officer basin and finds all the water and stuff like that.

Basically, I sat down and worked out what our indigenous commitment really was. The real commitment of what my job is about, and everyone else's job is about really, is about recognising that the benefits that this creates should be shared by the community. We also recognise that indigenous training and employment improves the skills base. Remember what I said this morning: it is all about improving the regional skills base. The way we do it is by establishing the VTEC centre—the John Forrest VTEC. We have used that as the base model, to actually allow us to get people into jobs. So it becomes basically the pivotal methodology we use to get people into various things.

You have seen that one before, as you obviously know. One of the things that you probably do not think about is that it is all really nice to have all these wonderful projects; if these projects do eventuate in the next five years, we will require between 800 and 1,000 process

operators. These people do not exist; they have to be trained. If this VTEC trained 100 people for the next five years, it would not fill the demand for processing workers. These projects also have the potential to create a significant skill shortage within the industry. We have already seen that two years ago and that is why we have gone down the path of trying to develop the VTEC—because we know that we need to start training people now, because in three or four years we will not be able to get enough people.

Based on figures I had a couple of weeks ago, at the moment we have about 91 Aboriginal people working on site in one related area or another: 60 of them work for indigenous contractors; 12 work for our contracting and service providers; and 19 work for Anaconda Nickel operations. We did have 25 but some of those guys have successfully transferred to other areas like Bulong and have got jobs elsewhere. These 91 people inject $7 million back into their local community, so we have actually increased regional wealth by $7 million just by taking on board this strategy.

If we just talk about the contractors for the moment: where we actually have our contracting arrangements, we have contracting at site on operations in things like small plant maintenance services. They do engines; they haul the fuel. We have a village store and laundry being run. Our laundry is a commercial laundry. That laundry washes all the linen from this site and has also recently picked up Granny Smith Mine, and hopefully through an arrangement with Eurest will actually pick up more work in becoming more focused in washing laundry from other areas around the region. A long-term view would be to set up something central that all regional washing could go through. There is opportunity in that for both of the enterprises to develop that far.

There is also an opportunity for people like the Eurest caterers to get synergies, because if you set something up in, say, Leonora you would not be paying the $7,000 or $8,000 a year accommodation costs. So it makes it much more useful for them and they can increase the margins all round if they can do that. We have our industrial cleaners. They do most of our offices and a lot of buildings around the site. We support an indigenous drilling company where we can and where we have work that can be tendered, we do. We have a haulage contract at the moment which is under negotiation with interested parties. That will be looking at moving ore from our Murrin Murrin East tenaments up to site for processing. We have labour hire, waste management, skip truck, waste carting and general contracting through another indigenous operation and we have a small JV in maintenance and engineering as well. They are the contractors that we actually have and the businesses that we support. The total net wealth of all those indigenous contracts put together is around $5 million.

The real challenges that we face when dealing with indigenous people are obviously things like poor match of skills to work. You have things like drivers licences. If these people lose their drivers licence, a lot of the time they might as well be marooned; it makes it very difficult to get around, particularly if they lose their drivers licence because they have not paid a fine or something like that and they have their licence suspended. Because these people move around and may never have actually got that piece of paper because of the way they move around and do their family business, what happens is that they get pulled up one day and then they get fined for driving without a licence and then they get their licences suspended again. A punitive thing like that totally destroys any opportunity you have. These driving convictions can be a problem particularly for government, as you know. And obviously there is the challenge of cultural

commitments. A lot of people do not understand the cultural commitments and what it really means.

If you try and put together an indigenous business on top of the individual challenges that we were just talking about, one of the biggest killers for indigenous enterprises is ready access to capital. It is extremely difficult for them to get it. It is terribly hard for a small guy like Bill Bloggs and his semitrailer trucks. It is very difficult for him to out-compete with someone like Brambles. You have employees instability in some of those contracting groups. A lot of the time their business skills are not as good as they could be. Sometimes, they go with expectations where they have free-riders in that venture, where someone says, 'Oh, I am going to be the director and I am just going get a salary and a car and I am not going to participate in the work.' Obviously these can be overexpectations. Native title can play a role. Also the big one is fragmentation of assistance programs. An Aboriginal person wanting to start off a business has to deal with five or six different agencies and by the time you have got to about agency three, he is really just about at the end of his rope and does not progress any further.

Distilling it down, where we try and address it all is by upgrading the regional skills base, trying to get people or methods or practices or policies or programs that mitigate traditional barriers between us outside in the white culture and Aboriginal culture. Also we try and sit down and develop realistic business opportunities that are commercial, 'commercial' obviously being the operative word. As I try and explain to a lot of people, if you go in with an expectation of getting more than the commercial price, everybody will spend their time trying to work out how to get rid of you. If a business organisation is truly commercial, most people spend their time trying to find ways to support them because they are doing the right thing.

**Mr BISWAS**—Can I make a comment there. I am participating in regard to the ore haulage contract from Murrin Murrin East. We bring that on line. I have to tell you I was very, very happy to see the commercial type knowledge in action with them. There was no expectation of anything along that particular type of talk in terms of freebies or whatever. It is a straight, commercial venture, which tells me that in terms of business ventures there is a significant amount of maturity creeping in, in terms of the reality. Whatever ventures are done are commercial. So I was very happy to see that. We are making good progress.

**Mr JURY**—As a company, we do not have a problem with native title. We try and tell people that native title is fine; it gets you in the door and it is good to leave it there and use it as a doorstop to keep the door open. But if you try and use it as a crutch to support the business, generally speaking you will doom the whole thing from the word go. We respect it, by all means. As I said, it is used as an assistance mechanism rather than a punitive commercial cost.

When we started the VTEC, we made a conscious decision—and this is based on a paper I delivered years ago in Brisbane. It turns out when you actually crunch the numbers that ANTA funding that goes into the mining industry is only about 15 per cent. The industry average is 53 per cent. The mining industry is really not getting a lot of the public, federal, training dollars. I made the conscious decision that, if I was going to develop something, I wanted to run cost-neutral. I wanted to see if it was possible to access higher levels of those federal dollars. This industry pays 85 per cent of its own training. All other industry areas only pay for 47 per cent of training. It will not take too many brains to work out that you are talking two, three or four hundred million dollars of public funding that the mining industry is not accessing.

They are not accessing it for good reasons. One, proactive training has to be done here, not in Perth, and that is one of the biggest barriers that they have. The whole project was about how you develop a training centre on a mine site, where you could access that funding and increase that level and also reduce that burden on the organisation. The buildings that you are sitting in and those around us are worth around $400,000 or $500,000. We have been very lucky to have Ausco Building Systems come on board with us and provide that infrastructure to us at no cost because they believe in what we are doing as well. It is a great commitment from them. We have been very lucky. Anaconda commits power, water, electricity, maintenance and all that sort of stuff and commits most of the full-time salary to the whole thing as well, plus all the marketing that you have got in front of you. We pick up those costs.

The whole idea is to match people's skills to employment opportunity. We worked out that to do it properly there are three places you need to focus. There is vocational training for people between the ages of 20 and 45. There is enterprise development; you need to get in there and support all that. The third stream, which is where I really want to start focusing my attention—and maybe with a little bit of help from you guys and DETYA we could get that—is developing youth pathways. What happens with these kids around here is that once they leave year 10, if they make it that far, they are lost. We cannot pick them up until they are 18.

I have been trying to work out ways of putting funding models together where we can actually support them by finding work—there is plenty of work out there that they could do—and also at the same time do study. So they could earn and learn at the same time. That is where I am trying to focus my attention now. There are some huge challenges with that. A lot of the kids are initiated at 12 to 13 years old, so they will not go to school and things like that because they are now men, not kids. There are all sorts of other challenges as well that I am sure Sadie and Maisie would be able to tell us about. So that is the third stream. Underneath that, we are running workplace English, literacy and language, and underneath that we are running a mentoring program as well. We use mentors and resources from other places. We use a state funded body in Kalgoorlie to do mentoring for our people round Kalgoorlie. Obviously we use the state funded person who works with Phil at the LLCCA to assist us in mentoring the people as well.

In hindsight, you can chop mining operation into basically five parts. What we have done is basically feed and water the troops; the front end of it; dig the hole; maintain the plant, refine the ore, process the ore. So we actually backed up and looked for appropriate nationally accredited courses that took on the new training packages and the national competencies. They are the kinds of things that you can run. A lot of people can come straight in here. But a lot of people cannot, and that is our basic challenge at the moment. We do not have the funding for entry level training here. It no longer exists. We cannot access it. A lot of people who need it are a bit of a rough diamond who just needing polishing up. Then you can bring them here and train them up. They are denied access to something like this because the funding is just not available. It has gone, under the all the new rules and changes they did. The outcomes we try and have here—as I have said earlier—work because it is a closed training environment is to assist their personal growth—and they learn lifestyle, discipline and to get up in the morning at six. These guys will be in here at six in the morning ready for study. Some days they will not study all day but they have to be able to do 12 hours of activities a day. When we bring them here to start them off they do not start at 12 hours. They usually start between nine or 10 for a while and we just peg them back. By the time they are ready for work experience, they are starting at six

doing something and they are going all the way through the day. That might be a bit of training in the morning, a bit of sport in the afternoon or they might jump in a bus and go somewhere—to one of the mine sites or something like that.

The good thing about doing it here is that it exposes the guys to the supervisors from an early stage, so that the supervisors start feeling comfortable about employing the guys. They can actually watch them from a distance. I find that is a barrier because if you rock into someone's face and say, 'I want you to employ an Aboriginal person that I've trained,' they will put up the shutters straightaway. By having them here, the supervisors give Sandeep support because Sandeep spends time with the guys saying, 'You are going to do this in the yard. This is part of the policy of Anaconda.' Then they can watch the guys—they watch them in the mess, they watch them around the plant and stuff like that. The last thing they learn is all the stuff about rules and regulations, so by the time they get into the job, they are ready to go.

I covered this earlier while David was assisting me with the technology. This is basically the courses we have run. Eurest has also run a course here last year and out of that there were nine people employed. Some of those now have moved to other places as well. Eurest also has a very good program here. They have also worked out a casual labour pool, so people can come in for a couple of days and earn some money and that has also been a great boon, because it allows us to fill in the different levels. There are four real levels of engagement: there is casual; there is low level, like hospitality, catering, and trade assistant; then you go into plant operators—mobile plant; and then you go into the higher areas of process technicians. You know about the two that are running now.

What we do here is we pay them a $386 a week for the whole 20 weeks. We have funding that covers that. We have enough funding to pay for the coordinators and the mentors. We have enough funding to cover accommodation for 22 weeks but we cannot make our programs any longer, because we do not get enough funding to cover the accommodation costs any further than that. That is a big challenge for us, because there are some people we would like to have here for a little bit longer, depending on their skills level when they start. The fact that we cannot get increased funding for accommodation limits us, because we always have to take the best available Aboriginal people we can find who are going to be able to get through in 22 weeks. So the funding restrictions do cause a bit of angst there. We have funding that covers the cost of travel, so when the kids go back to Perth we have got a bit of an arrangement with WADOTE where they actually help pay for the kids bus or train fares back to Perth and also to get them on the bus to and from Kalgoorlie. All the training is delivered under the state TAFE system.

What it looks like in practice is that basically we use CDEP initiatives, we use WA Department of Training and Employment and we use, obviously, ATSIC to do CDEP as well. With this part of it here, because the administrative lump of money that comes with a CDEP placement is not needed to pay for set-up costs, tools or stuff like that, they have converted that into salary and just topped it up to $240. And then we top it up, using the DEWRSB money that we get, to $386.

We assist other industry people to help them recruit. We also provide mentors to other industry people. We make sure our mentors liaise with both supervisors and the recruits. And that is all free to them, which is pretty encouraging, because then they want to come on board.

Who is on board with us at the moment? Bulong Nickel Operations, Cawse Nickel Operations, Homestake Mining, the Windimurra Vanadium Project, Cook's Construction, BYAC Contracting and Alljays Contracting are all participating and taking graduates. That is the first thing.

What are the things that we need that would make it work for us better? What we need is better VET skills training in schools. That is really critical to us because otherwise we cannot start preparing those younger kids, at an earlier age. If we could, we would get a much better result. We cannot access development funding when they do not get a job. All funding is related to jobs and outcomes. And because the funding is related to jobs and outcomes, a lot of people, as I said earlier, do not get to access the training—it is just not there anymore. I will ask Phil to speak about it a little bit and Barrie might want to have a couple of words on it as well.

One thing that has been knocked on the head is CDEP participation, having participants on traineeships. That makes it really hard, particularly for a lot of Aboriginal corporations. Another thing that is really important from our point of view is that recognising that casual work is an outcome. DEWRSB and the government do not recognise that casual work is an outcome; they only recognise a full-time job. In some areas like here, casual work is, one, all they want and, two, all that is available. So industry should not be penalised for putting up its best shot and then, when it can only give them casual work, it does not get access to the funds.

The other thing we need is greater integration and collaboration of federal and state programs. They are just too diverse, too spread out. If someone goes into business they have to go to BEC, they have to go to ATSIC, they have to go to the Department of Commerce and Trade, then that goes to Deloitte's and that goes to a consultant. They go crazy. The thing we need is better information systems and material to assist people in their endeavours. We need something like a one-stop shop, somewhere you can go or a person you can go to who can facilitate it through for you. There is no funding around for that kind of thing.

What we would like to see is the federal agencies commence real industry dialogue and actually visit industry projects. When we were trying to get funding for this, we offered on two occasions in writing for people from DEWRSB to get on the plane, we would pay for it, and come over and just spend three days looking at what we are doing. Both times, those invitations were declined. They would have gained such a valuable insight and an understanding of how their programs worked on the ground if they had picked that up. They would have gone back with much greater knowledge. Trying to go into battle to get flexibility under DEWRSB in particular would be a lot easier if some of those people at the top spent time looking at what is really happening on the ground. Also, a lot of the federal programs are one size fits all. There needs to be better flexibility with that. We also need to have a look at more flexibility for the client base itself.

In conclusion, industry is well placed to facilitate significant improvement. We can do this, but we can only do it if we have got the support. We are only as good as the support we get. If we do not have it, it is just going to be really hard. We can do a lot. We have done a bit; we can do a lot more. There endeth the lesson.

Phil and Barrie, do you want to have a couple of words about some of the things you have been doing and some of the challenges you face?

**Mr PARKER**—I will say a couple of words. What I would like the committee to take back to Canberra from this region is a good news story. It is a bloody good news story; but it is a bloody good news story that you people can assist us in making a lot better. The efforts that the LLCCA have put in—I am a member of the LLCCA—and the efforts that Anaconda have put in to assist Aboriginal education in this area have, I sometimes feel, been despite the government. I know that is unfair and it is probably an exaggeration, but that is the way it feels sometimes.

The government, the bureaucrats, have to take an overview of what we are trying to do and pick up on a lot of the things that John has said—facilitating a one-stop shop, information, these sort of things, and filling this damn hole that we have got all the time whereby we cannot get funding, we cannot get interest, for educational programs that do not have a job outcome. Get the reality of the situation! We are operating from a very low educational, depressed, culturally difficult market. If we can start at that level and work our way up through what John is doing, that is the way we are going to get outcomes. That is where we need support, that is where we need it made easy for us. The jobs are there. The interest is there. The dynamics are there. The will is there.

John has talked about Anaconda. In addition to Anaconda, with its huge employment base, just in this region of Laverton and Leonora there are four of the biggest gold mines in Australia. Together we employ over 1,000 people. Within those 1,000 people, we probably turnover 400 jobs a year of which 200, I would guess, are at the entry level. They are the jobs for which people with basic education can apply. They are truck drivers, pit technicians and cleaners. The jobs are there.

At Sunrise Dam where we have 250 people, we currently have nine Aboriginals, who are only five per cent of our work force. It is not good enough. The jobs are there. What is going wrong? John has alluded to the load of effects. There are educational issues, getting people up to this base level. There are cultural issues. People really need mentors. They need people they can look up to. They need support. They need this connection between the level of affluence and a commitment to reach a degree of education so that they can hold down a job. All of these things that you and I learn from our fathers and our uncles and the rest of the community is missing with these people. These are the sorts of things that have to be tackled.

Then there are the sorts of things that John is saying about the overall cultural situation which we as employers and the educators really have to look at with regard to what is best for the Aboriginal community. The Aboriginals have to tell us. They have to be a part of it. It is very important that all of our initiatives in this region have had a huge Aboriginal input to us. They are the people who know what they want. If we can all work together, if you can facilitate a lot of these things to assist us in doing this, as I said at the beginning, with all our efforts, we can make this a bloody good news story.

**Mr HAASE**—If you would not mind taking some questions to get down to specifics. I have heard it said from three separate speakers that there is no funding for pre-job outcome training. That is what you are trying to tell us, I think. You made the point also, John, that you cannot get funding to prepare people for a training program that then has a job outcome. Surely you will have a fairly well worked out structure or process in mind that you have been looking for funding for, to know that you cannot get it. Will you explain that process to us so that we can take a more physical thing back with us in our mind?

**Mr PARKER**—Can I handball that one to Phil?

**Mr HAASE**—To whomever can answer it best.

**Mr JURY**—There are two answers to it. There is a long and a short answer. The short answer is a one liner. A lot of the time we cannot get interest. We cannot get enough interest for people to come and say, 'Maybe you are right; maybe we should look at that.' It is all about flexibility.

**Mr HAASE**—Can you describe to us just what this process would look like, what period of time, where, what sorts of costs, what sorts of courses, what sorts of lecturers? Can you run us through that?

**Mr McEVOY**—We can conduct the whole thing through Curtin University at Kalgoorlie. We are talking about an adult certificate of general education, either 1, 2 or 3. I would envisage a six-month development training program at a low cost of about $1,500 per person. For $50,000 a year, I could be developing 30 individuals each year at the LLCCA. As I said, for $50,000, you would probably only need three or four of them to end up with a job and the Commonwealth comes out in front.

**Mr HAASE**—So they would be accommodated at home, just as they are now?

**Mr McEVOY**—Yes.

**Mr HAASE**—For a lecture theatre you would use rooms at the LLCCA.

**Mr McEVOY**—Yes, in the training rooms in Laverton.

**Mr HAASE**—Who would the trainers and personnel be? Would they be from Curtin or contracted people?

**Mr McEVOY**—Yes, Curtin University—both.

**Mr HAASE**—Where would they be accommodated?

**Mr McEVOY**—In accommodation in Laverton.

**Mr HAASE**—What size batches would there be? There is an economy of scale, I understand, but you would need it to be on a one to one basis or a low class number per lecturer. What do you envisage there?

**Mr McEVOY**—Six or eight people per class.

**Mr HAASE**—Six or eight to one?

**Mr McEVOY**—Yes. With respect to accommodation for students, there is always family nearby. It has never been a great problem.

**Mr HAASE**—Have you studied the potential numbers involved? What would you net in the Laverton area?

**Mr McEVOY**—Probably 60 to 80 individuals.

**Mr HAASE**—Per annum?

**Mr McEVOY**—No. It is only about 30. We are really looking at quality instead of quantity.

**Mr HAASE**—You want to be able to knock out about 30 per year and 15 per six months?

**Mr McEVOY**—Yes.

**Mr HAASE**—Fifteen at $1,500 for six months?

**Mr McEVOY**—Yes. We are not talking about a lot of money.

**Mr LLOYD**—Has any funding been available for this before? John was talking about funding not being available but has it been available before?

**Mr JURY**—If you go back to the years when DEETYA existed, there was an enormous amount of funding available, and you could get it. You could access quite a lot of developmental funding to get people up to the bar so that you could then bring them here. The people we are talking about cannot come here. They cannot pass a drug test. Some of them have alcohol problems. Some of them are not literate enough. Some of them have social challenges that they do not even know how to deal with. These people are denied access to a place like this because they cannot come here. There is not the funding there any more.

It is okay to say from the state point of view, 'TAFE does all that,' but TAFE is not here. It is only here because people like me or Phil set up a framework which makes it attractive for them to come along. That is all this is. This is not a whole new education institution. This is a framework that we have set up that allows us to deliver what we want to do. That funding has since gone, with the new initiatives that funding has to be linked to jobs and outcomes. I do not have a problem with that. I have a problem with the fact that it makes people only take the best people they can. If you are going to get paid $5,000, $6,000 or $7,000 for every job outcome, you will take the best people, because if they do not make it through, you lose that funding. If you use that funding to offset accommodation costs or training costs, you then put the company at risk.

The other thing is that if you try to set up a long-term program without appropriate funding, when the hard times come and the nickel price drops down to $3,000 a tonne, it is projects like these that are the first things that get kicked off site because they have to cut costs. That is why we have gone down the path of saying that this is something we need to set up for the next 10, 15 or 20 years. Anaconda is here for 50-plus years. We have an opportunity to make a generational change. Granny Smith is probably going to be around for another 15 or 20 years and I do not think Barrie is going anywhere for a while either, having regard to the way they are going. So these large mining companies are going to be around for a long time and they have this opportunity, but they are denied the chance to do something collectively because we do not

have access to people who are prepared to sit down with us and say, 'That's a great idea. Let's run with that.'

Sure, I hear the other side of the story. People tell me, 'Yeah, but you should see how many millions of dollars we've wasted.' I can understand that. Maybe those programs have been poorly focused and have had poor outcomes, but we have all learned from that and we have all gone forward from that. We are all at the point now where we recognise that if we do not do something collectively, as an industry, even though we do our own individual things, it does not matter because we still have to do it better. The lot of the Aboriginal people is not going to improve. You know that their population is growing at twice the rate of the Australian population. You know that CDEP is going to be at risk unless some good, determinable outcomes start to come out of those programs.

**CHAIR**—If you put together a submission which said, 'From this region's point of view, we have the following projects planned which are about to go to the development stage. We will require'—as you said earlier, John—'up to a thousand process workers,' when you have no hope of fulfilling the numbers that are there. 'We are going to need them over the following few years.' Local representatives—from the bottom up—of indigenous people in this area who want their young people to get training and work support using some of the funds that have been available throughout Australia for indigenous programs—$2.3 billion currently this year—could say, 'We support some of our region's money being allocated to a contracted project with employers such as Anaconda, and the amount we need to kick this off is X thousand dollars.' Is that the sort of thing you are talking about—an action plan that is based on actual outcomes that you are vitally involved with?

**Mr JURY**—Yes. Look at Bronwyn's earlier work before I joined Anaconda. She developed a great action plan. She went to the government saying, 'We can do this. All we want is $18 million over four years.' But that was just too far out, too far over the horizon. It was not even close to the policy mark so it totally missed the goalposts in their opinion, although in Anaconda's opinion it was a fair call, because we knew that if we could access appropriately targeted funding we could make a difference. Look at what we and the other mining companies that are here have done. Collectively we have made a difference in 130 people's lives.

**CHAIR**—I know that today approximately 15 per cent of your on-site work force is made up of local indigenous people. You have 90-odd people employed out of about 600, which is a very high percentage. It is one of the highest I have heard about in Australia. It is a very high percentage achieved in a period of two or three years, which is an amazing base to build a submission on.

**Mr JURY**—It has not been without pain.

**CHAIR**—Yes.

**Mrs BARNES**—I think it is important to recognise that 2½ years of work has gone into getting Anaconda and VTEC to where they are today—2½ years of negotiating with a multitude of state and federal government bodies and being told, time and time again, that training would not be paid for by the government unless it came with a guaranteed employment outcome. You are talking about people that have literacy and numeracy difficulties getting to the stage where

they grow to be productive in the work force on a high tech plant like Murrin Murrin; they are just not people that are going to make the grade. So you are always perpetuating the cycle, but we can only deliver a limited amount of training to each person. If we have a high quality individual who has some good schooling behind them, that is great; they can go to VTEC. If you are talking about somebody who has left school at year 8 level or has a very limited education, you can only spend the same amount of money on that person, so you are only ever going to get them up to a certain level. This is where the wheels start to come off, because there is no future; there is no developing people for them to be able to be participating members of the community. This is why it has been so difficult to understand the position on funding, particularly funding for training.

**Mr PARKER**—Let us underline that, Bronwyn. I am a manager. I have a board and I have shareholders. I can justify training for people who have a job outcome. I cannot justify training when it is for literacy skills, life skills, hygiene, diet—this vast plethora of things that you and I learned when we were four or five years old but which we have to teach to people who are fairly mature in a lot of cases. To me, this is government's job. It is not industry's job. It is industry's job to take them to the next stage.

**CHAIR**—I am not against that. In fact, I support that. What gets me is that the substantial contribution made to states, for example, in education and training is thrown—as we heard again yesterday in Kalgoorlie—at so many young people, indigenous people particularly, who say, 'School doesn't mean anything to us—we're off. There is no challenge.' So it is a matter of government prioritising some of our funding through the states to hit those targets and then using people like you with the skills to take those people on. That, I think, is the way to go.

**Mr PARKER**—It would be a powerful study to realise why because our culture instils in us certain values and we find that so many people do not seem to have these values.

**CHAIR**—I understand that.

**Mr WAKELIN**—Would a DEWSRB official investigate that?

**Mr JURY**—We have brought them up from state level. We have made the invitation twice to Canberra and they have said no, they were not interested.

**Mr WAKELIN**—When you say the state level, that is the state level of the federal department?

**Mr JURY**—Peter Bass has not come up, but Peter Donovan has. He is the manager of the indigenous employment strategies. Peter finds his problem is that he has to get everything cleared through Canberra, so in some ways his hands are tied anyway. It is okay for us to go to Peter, but we find that the only way we can get results is that we have to go to Canberra. You have got this road block.

**CHAIR**—You guys are can-do people; we like to think we are. If my committee was prepared to broker a roundtable between the federal senior people in the various portfolio areas—with the approval of their ministers and permanent heads—and some industry and community people like you, and, for half a day, lock the door and make everyone talk about the

problem, with us chairing it and acting as honest brokers, we might be able to get some streams going for you.

**Mr JURY**—I do not have a problem with that.

**CHAIR**—We need to confront it. We do not have the jurisdiction to tell which department to spend what, but if we get them in the one room at the one time, talking on a focused issue just like this, we might get some outcome.

**Mr WAKELIN**—You make a good point, Chairman, about state responsibilities. We are in a federation and the debate has been about falling between the gaps. We have to minimise the gaps. And there is a very real issue about the role of government versus the role of the private enterprise.

**Mr JURY**—Barry is right—I cannot go to the board and say, 'Guys, I want to spend $200,000 improving the social skills of a bunch of people.'

**CHAIR**—I understand that.

**Mr QUICK**—There has always been in this committee a bipartisan approach to problem solving. I mentioned yesterday the mentality where everybody says, 'We don't have enough money' or 'It doesn't fit the criteria.' I just think that you blokes have got the runs on the board in a whole range of areas. As Barrie said, the bureaucrats in Canberra want to link the training to the jobs, and the harder it is the less flexible they appear to be. You have got a huge potential for jobs in this neck of the woods and you are imparting skills to people that they can transport anywhere in the bloody world. Mining is not just in Western Australia, it is across the whole world. It is like training as a chef: once you have got your qualifications and you have had some experience, you can pack up and go wherever you like. And we are talking about people who are going to get jobs at $40,000, so they are taxpayers. If you divide $40,000 into $14 million it does not seem a whole lot of bums on seats if people have got actually jobs.I agree with Barry. I would be interested in some of the young people articulating to the bureaucrats and the economists about just how much of this has radically transformed their lives and about the role that various people in this room have played in that, despite us. You could have said, 'It is too hard. It is a promise of aid, but we will get on with our job of looking after our shareholders.' But you have not done that. You made the promise and you stuck to it, despite us. I think it is important that, having heard what you are on about, we go back and do what a leader does, which, in this case, is to flush out a few places and get people to think about what is going on.

**Mrs BARNES**—The problem is that we have done that over and over again.

**Mr QUICK**—We are in a situation—

**CHAIR**—At the federal level.

**Mrs BARNES**—We have had ministers and bureaucrats coming here non-stop over a period of 2½ years. They come and see the opportunities. There is a guarantee of 114 jobs in Anaconda over a period of four years, which we are well on target to meet. They talk to students and people who have contracts with Anaconda, and it has not made one iota of difference. The only

thing that seems to work here—and only just recently—is a continuous letter writing campaign to Canberra, accompanied by a few threats.

**Mr JURY**—You will only get a response when you say, 'Sorry, I am going to have to send all the students home because I have got no funding to keep them here.'

**Mrs BARNES**—We cannot pay them.

**Mr JURY**—We cannot pay.

**Mr LLOYD**—Which ministers have you had?

**Mrs BARNES**—Which ministers have we had!

**Mr JURY**—Mate, the list would be that long! We have sat them all down and showed them the socioeconomic benefits—

**Mr LLOYD**—It is important for us to know which federal ministers you have had here. If you have any figures—

**Mr JURY**—We gave gone to Canberra and made representations to Ministers Herron, Kemp and Reith. They have been very big suppporters of us a lot of the time, which is really good.

**Mrs BARNES**—It has been raised with the PM's office. The last time it was raised in a meeting with the PM's office was in May when we said, 'We are at our wits end. What can we do?' That is when the letter writing started between the PM's office, Reith's office and Anaconda. It was a bit like the three-ringed circus until somebody got a free kick at the state level.

**Mr QUICK**—Through you, Mr Chairman, I think that, as part of our meeting next Wednesday, we should arrange for departmental people from Aboriginal Affairs and DETYA to attend so that we can say to them that we were out here last Wednesday. That would warn them of what we are on about so that they can get all the relevant correspondence. They will not be able to say that they cannot find it. They will have been forewarned that we have been up here, that we know what is going on and that we want some answers.

**Mr HAASE**—I think we need some further clarification.

**Ms HOARE**—We spoke to people yesterday about being a Job Network provider: if you had the funds as a Job Network provider, would you be able to provide this pre-job personal development training? We have not mentioned to committee colleagues—I notice that Minister Abbott was not one of the those on the list—that, if LLCCA were granted some out-of-tender Job Network provider status and allocated the funding for a process that is in place to work with so many highly disadvantaged people, Phil and his team would be able to provide the pre-job personal development professional training.

**Mr McEVOY**—I actually asked the State Manager of DEWRSB but he said that they cannot go outside the tender process.

**Ms HOARE**—Minister Abbott?

**Mr McEVOY**—Someone else.

**CHAIR**—I will call on Barry, now. Just a general observation: we must not pre-empt the findings of our current inquiry, as you can understand. But there is $2.3 billion worth of indigenous-specific funding and the minister has asked this committee to go out into the community and test whether it is working or not working. We are not on a witch hunt; we are trying to find the most powerful ways of benefiting indigenous people, particularly young people. In fact, the minister has required us, under the terms of reference, to focus our attention on young people. So, what we are talking about here is actually within our jurisdiction in this current inquiry. I think it would be a good thing to focus on. Barry, you were about to offer some advice?

**Mr HAASE**—No, I just want some further clarification so that we all, as a committee, understand exactly where we want to go here. The current program in place, of six months training, is being funded. Is that funding secure?

**Mr JURY**—I doubt whether it is secure because you rely on the goodwill of people to continue their support; there are no negotiated agreements. The funding from DEWRSB is on a contract by contract arrangement and the funding from the state is on a contract arrangement, too. I would like to give Sadie and Maisie an opportunity to speak because they have been very patient and they have listened to us. It would be nice to let them have a bit of time to talk about how they see it, whether they think there is—

**CHAIR**—Sadie, please go ahead.

**Mrs CANNING**—I have lived in this area all my life. I started off at Mount Margaret mission—I believe you are going to see Mount Margaret this afternoon. That was many years ago, of course. I had my education there. We only had two hours a day education at Mount Margaret when we went to school; there weren't the teachers there to do it. I am telling you about my education because I believe that education is very, very important, and I don't think we are getting the appropriate standard of education for Aboriginal communities. I think we emphasise a lot of other things instead of the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. Aboriginal kids know social studies and that sort of thing, they pick that up themselves. Both black and white, if they are taught to read and write, will pick things up later on: if they want to advance they can. I believe we have to go back to the basics. I believe we have, in a sense, taken a backward step in Aboriginal education. I don't think we are up there. There are lots of kids in this area who cannot read or write, and that goes for white kids as well.

As I said, I believe in education and that has to be number one priority in schools. I have read that in the new curriculum coming out that, apart from reading skills and maths, to my dismay, Aboriginal English is going to be taught in schools. What is Aboriginal English?

**Mr LLOYD**—I was going to ask you that question.

**Mrs CANNING**—What is Aboriginal English? My understanding is that it is creole. In this area we do not speak creole at all. Up in the north they do, but we do not speak it here. I would hate to see creole brought into the schools here—you are going to talk pidgin English. We are going to get our work opportunities by speaking plain English, like all of the people here speak. We are not going to get any work opportunities if we speak creole in this country. The other thing that I would like to mention, as an indigenous business operator, is ATSIC. Does ATSIC come into your terms of reference?

**CHAIR**—Yes.

**Mrs CANNING**—Indigenous people are behind the eight ball to start off with, because they do not have funding to start their businesses. With Maisie, we have to tender the same as everybody else does. Sometimes Aboriginal people have not got the funding to start off a business, so you ask ATSIC for funding. You put in your submission and everything else, and you wait months and months. By the time the tender process has gone, you are still left behind here, waiting for ATSIC to make up their minds on whether you are eligible for funding.

That has happened to my daughter. I will give you a demonstration about her. She is a veterinarian. She applied for ATSIC funding, and she had to wait nine months for funding. In the meantime, she got herself into debt because she was waiting. She has just started off in a business. These are the sorts of things happening to Aboriginal people all the time through ATSIC funding. They are not quick enough, and you are left behind all the time, because ATSIC just take their time with funding.

**CHAIR**—Is your daughter going to a local bank to talk it over with them?

**Mrs CANNING**—She could not get anything from a local bank because she did not have any assets, so she had to rely on ATSIC.

**Mr LLOYD**—This is a common example we have seen in our previous inquiry.

**Mrs CANNING**—She did not have any assets. She is just a young girl, she has just done her university training as a vet, and she wanted to go into business with another girl who is a Torres Strait Islander. They have got this business, but they had to wait nine months for ATSIC funding. That put them in debt because ATSIC is way behind in helping Aboriginal people. They are supposed to be there helping Aboriginal people. You can go to the bank if you have got a house or something like that—you will probably get a better deal and you are left alone.

**CHAIR**—Yesterday in Kalgoorlie we met some very good people, but we did discover that there were four housing cooperatives, each of them with separate administration, attempting to provide some of the housing needs of indigenous people in that area. It was obvious to them and us that there ought to be one amalgamated organisation, because the client base is not large enough to justify four. I am just using that as an example. Isn't there, within this region, an enormous amount of realisation that if the money that comes in from the various government programs were used in a more efficient way you would get more outcomes? You would get, for example, some money for training or preparation of people for jobs and all of that, rather than it being eaten up with four different administrations administering a handful of houses.

I wonder if you have any comments or advice to give, because it is very sensitive. We do not want to go back to Canberra and say, 'Dismantle all the local Aboriginal community groups,' because that would look as if white man, again, is telling Aboriginal people how to run their affairs. Why can't the money that is in this region, that comes from the taxpayer, be used to fund the programs that you obviously want? How do we get the local Aboriginal leaders to think that way and to tackle that? Have you any advice?

**Mrs CANNING**—Unfortunately, we are a divided mob.

**CHAIR**—Okay, give us the truth.

**Mrs CANNING**—I am telling you the truth. We are a divided mob, and we want things for ourselves. Different areas and different groups of people want things for themselves. The same applies with the native title stuff. We have been trying to get native title holders all together. We have come within this region and brought 28 together with the NEIB. With the north-western region—with Koara and with Wutha—they have come in as a group. I do not know if you have seen it in the paper. It is a purely economic situation—if native title goes we have got something for the three groups, and that covers a big part of this area. We have come into this one group. But, unfortunately, as individuals we cannot seem to come together. The word 'jealousy' comes in—that is the truth. We are jealous of one another's achievements and so on. I am just speaking the truth.

**Ms HOARE**—That is not unique to the Aboriginal community either.

**Mrs CANNING**—You are jealous of that group so you want that area.

**CHAIR**—I used to be the Minister for Health in Victoria. All the health people were wonderful people, but they were jealous and would do anything to knock off their competitor for the scarce money. I know what you mean.

**Mrs CANNING**—We would like to come together and we have tried. There is a good example here in retail. You have the Wongai tribe, the Koara tribe and the Wutha tribe up there. There are various tribes in this VTEC now. There is still that little bit of jealousy that goes on. The Wongais think that because this is our area we want just the Wongai people to be employed here. But I am of the impression that we are all blackfellas together and we all come together. It does not matter where we come from; we are all together. We have had the same problems and they have had the same problems. They cannot get jobs in their region and some of them come into this area to be part of this area. There is intermarriage now between the two groups and even from the north. I have a nephew that is married to a Kimberley girl so we are gradually coming together.

**CHAIR**—Thank you for that. It is another insight. To me, if we had those fine young people we have had here today in a room of community leaders and they said, 'There are another 50 or 60 young people like us, some of whom have dropped out of school early, who, if given six months preliminary education and training, could be like us today. Would you please for the next 12 months start to do all your meetings thinking about your budgets to do that rather than trying to do everything else and ending up doing nothing at the end of the year. Try to do just one special thing—

**Mrs CANNING**—I think you know that I do encourage the Neongars who come here and they carry on what you are doing. Maybe you hear things that Wongais do not want you—I am a Wongai but I accept you in this area. I am an elder in this area so you are accepted into this area. That is the way it should be.

**CHAIR**—Yes.

**Mr HAASE**—I know that you have a very senior status locally, Sadie, and you have just confessed to your belief in the importance of education. For the last two days we have been discussing the dilemma of Aboriginal youth not having a satisfactory level of education. Do you have any suggestions as to how government can encourage a greater understanding in the minds of Aboriginal families today of the importance of education for children in the community?

**Mrs CANNING**—Firstly, I must say that the Aboriginal parents must take their responsibility. They have to. There are a lot of parents out there who are not taking their responsibilities. I see that in town and I live there. I see that in town and I see kids walking the streets. My heart recently has been really on youth. I am a Christian and I pray about these things. I pray that the Lord will guide me as to the youth in Leonora. I will just give you a little testimony. One night I came home about one o'clock in the morning from Kalgoorlie and I came through Leonora. There were packs of kids walking around, some about this high. Usually I say, 'Those wretched little kids. You need a kick in the backside. Get home.'

The Lord touched my heart that night and I saw those kids in a different light. I saw them as lost souls running around town. What are we adults sitting here doing for these kids? What am I as a Christian doing for these kids? It has been in my heart ever since. I was talking to the young fellow here, Phil McEvoy from LLCCA, at morning tea and telling him of that experience. I would like to see a youth centre, a drop-in centre, where these kids can go to, which they can call home, and which they can go into and do things. A lot of those kids do not have parents who can look after them. They just roll with themselves.

**Mr HAASE**—So is it a fact that there are not parents or are you saying there is not a parent about?

**Mrs CANNING**—The parents are not taking the responsibility of doing it.

**Mr HAASE**—How can we get that message across to parents and change their attitude?

**Mrs CANNING**—I am not sure how you can. I speak to them on a personal level and say, 'You send your kids to school. The opportunity is there.' If the kids do not go to school, we say that they are mungjongs. We say, 'They will be a mungjongs all their lives.' It is up to the parents too. Obviously, we can blame the school teachers—schools have some responsibility as far as teaching goes. But for everyday things it is the parents' responsibility, as with white kids. It is the parents' responsibility; it is not the teachers'.

**Mr HAASE**—Would you care to comment about the safety net of welfare? A lot of my Kimberley elders tell me how they hate the welfare pattern. They wish the government would stop making it so easy for their kids to get food in their belly through no personal effort—it just happens. Can you comment on that?

**Mrs CANNING**—It is the same with us. We do not want the welfare mentality all our lives. We want to break away from that mentality or attitude that it is welfare all the time. Some of the parents complain about that welfare—'They are getting money too easily for doing nothing.'

**Mr QUICK**—You had young people raised today as role models. You would use those out in the community far more effectively by liaising with parents in the community to say, 'Look, I was a mungjong. I decided to get involved in VTEC. Look at me now. I met my potential beyond my wildest dreams.' Use them to accentuate the positive.

**Mrs CANNING**—You have to have this; there are not very many mentors at the moment.

**Mr QUICK**—All you need is three in a hundred or 200.

**Mrs CANNING**—We have gone up there. There is a lost generation—they have died, they have all gone. We have to start afresh with young people now. Those aged 45 to 50 have just about all gone—the one generation after us. We are first generation out of the bush. Our mothers and fathers did not know how to read or write; they came straight out of the bush. We were taken away with the stolen generation and put into a home at Mount Margaret and we are the result of Mount Margaret.

**Mr HAASE**—You mentioned the education you got at Mount Margaret. I have personal opinions as to mission education versus the education of today. I wonder if you would like to offer some contrasts as to the method you were taught, the imperative of education when you were at Mount Margaret and what you know of the education system today.

**Mrs CANNING**—We had a very strict English teacher. Actually she was an aristocrat. She used to attend all the Buckingham Palace balls with someone and used to spend her other time at Mount Margaret teaching us. She was a staunch monarchist. We had to stand for *God Save the Queen*. We had to do all of that. But she was very good. What she said to us in the classroom was this: 'You are here to learn English. Once you walk out of that classroom door, you can speak whatever language you want.' We would speak our language outside, but in that classroom it was English only. That is how we learned English. She gave us reading, writing and maths. We played our tables—two ones are two, two twos are four—it was like a game. We had mental arithmetic and flash boards. They used to have balls for multiplication and subtraction. It was all for mental use. Everything was memorised. We did not have things on the board. We had to memorise every word, every verse and every text.

**Mr HAASE**—What do you know about today's methods?

**Mrs CANNING**—I am not quite sure about today's methods. I only know that they are not giving results.

**Mr LLOYD**—So the education you got from the mission gave you the opportunities that you have today?

**Mrs CANNING**—Yes.

**Mr LLOYD**—You are saying that that lost generation never got that educational opportunity, and that that is where we lost it, so we have to somehow pick up that new generation now.

**Mrs CANNING**—You have to pick up with the new generation now because there is nothing for these people. I fear for them.

**Mr LLOYD**—Do you have much contact with your ATSIC commissioner and your elected Aboriginal leaders?

**Ms HARKIN**—No, we do not.

**Mrs CANNING**—We do not have any contact. ATSIC is far removed.

**Mr LLOYD**—That annoys me because they are your elected representatives. As I have said in previous meetings, I am responsible to my 80,000 constituents—if I am not in contact with them they will give me the flick. It seems to me that your elected representatives are not keeping in contact and are not listening to your concerns. A huge amount of money is funded from the federal government through to ATSIC, which is meant to come through onto the ground. I do not see that there is that communication.

**Mrs CANNING**—Because it does not come through to the ground.

**Mr CANNING**—I am Sadie's son. In terms of the education, Mum was from that earlier generation. I am in my 30s, so I am in that group which came a little bit after. For my age group, I am the only one—plus my sister—who has a degree. I have a commerce degree . My sister has a veterinary degree. We are the only two role models from our area who have moved to that level. I was lucky. Mum had a good job. She was a very good role model for us and gave us that education. I am about to become a father myself and have a child in Leonora. One thing I can see from the education in Leonora is that all the schoolteachers who come up here are new graduates. They spend their first two years in Leonora and then go back to Perth. They do their time. They learn their education and make their problems and faults with the Aboriginal kids. Then they go. They do not pass on that knowledge. Then you get another two years with another new one and that is what follows through. You never get that consistency. In Mum's time, they had dedicated, consistent teachers who taught them, gave them the knowledge and gave them the dedication. We do not have that for our people. We do not have that any more.

I am lucky. I have managed to move beyond that, and I am a role model for my people. That is where I want to come back to and that is where I need to be. I have to look at the generation beyond me. Even though I look as white as I am, I identify with all my Aboriginal roots because that is where I was brought up—here. That was probably what the Stolen Generation was about—producing me. I would have faded into society and lived without it, but I still retain my Aboriginality. I still remember my roots. I know who my great grandfather is. I know where my land is. That is where I am, and that is my situation. In education, that is what we have to look at. They have to bring back some dedicated teaching into these areas. Teachers need to give back a bit of the time they took to learn their skills before they go back to the city.

**Mr QUICK**—As a former school principal, that is an indictment of the system. Our best teachers are in the disadvantaged schools in Tasmania. In middle-class schools the kids learn

despite you, so you need the best teachers in the tougher schools and you need to compensate them. I think it is an indictment not only in this state but also in most of the states of Australia. We have seen a few Aboriginal schools in the Northern Territory, and you wonder why anyone would bother to send their kids there, whether they be black, white or brindle. It is actually appalling.

**Mr CANNING**—My stepson is in Leonora. In the space of the two years he has been there, his class has had three teachers. So how can they have consistency in the education?

**Mr LLOYD**—So they are basically using the outlying schools as an apprenticeship for the teachers?

**Mr CANNING**—They use them as a stepping stone.

**Mr LLOYD**—They come out of college and they send them bush for 12 months or two years saying, 'Learn your trade and then come back.'

**Mr HAASE**—Do you have any comment to make about criticism I hear from teachers all the time, that their reason for not staying in the bush is that the classes are so undisciplined and disruptive that it makes their life hell and they simply will not stay in the bush? Would you like to make a comment about that?

**Mr CANNING**—That is a part of it, but I think again, it is the resources that teachers have out here. Again, it is part of the excuses. I saw, when I was working in the town, there were the young teenage teachers, virtually the first year that they got out—their interests were the boys in Perth, they wanted to party. Their main ticket is back into Perth.

**Mr HAASE**—So you are suggesting that if they lived a slightly different lifestyle themselves and demonstrated a better dedication, they might get some respect?

**Mr QUICK**—You need mature teachers in tough situations.

**Mr CANNING**—And they are not mature enough to handle it, half the time.

**Mr HAASE**—A comment I get all the time, especially in points further north and east, is that first-year teachers come out with a very misty eyed, romantic point of view about going bush, and they spend two years having their own cultural experience. Is that borne out in—

**Mr CANNING**—Yes, that is what happens. That is exactly what I see. I saw that plenty of times before I started working and finished my degree. I worked in the supermarket in town for a couple of years and I used to see all these young schoolteachers as they came in and out—rotated and revolved or whatever. They used to spend a lot of their time at the pub.

**CHAIR**—That is very valuable and helpful, but I am just wondering if we could focus on some sort of action plan of what we need to do. There seems to be a consensus of concern that the pre-training employment—I am just trying to find a phrase that adequately describes it but pre-training employment seems to be what you are talking about—has resulted in a lot of

bureaucracy, correspondence and dialogue, but no result. So the question is whether we can assist in getting it refocussed. I would like to see, if it is possible, some of the correspondence. It might help us to identify it. Maybe that could be a beginning point.

I propose that in our first meeting back at Parliament House we take a few minutes just to see what the committee might be able to initiate by way of getting people together, smashing heads together, or whatever. Is that the committee's wish? That being the case, we will push on along those lines. We are not going to leave you here today with false promises or expectations. I know you understand this, but I want you to be absolutely aware of it. My way of doing business is that we have identified the real problem—I think we all accept that—we are not quite sure how we are going to resolve it, but we will have a look at it and see what we can do to help the process. Then we will come back and have another chat about that. Is that reasonable?

**Mrs BARNES**—That is great.

**Mr BISWAS**—I would just like to make one point, from my perspective. It is very important that whatever we do or whatever comes out of this is a long-term thing. It cannot be a six-month strategy; it has got to be a strategy underpinned by some long-term funding—be it three-year, five-year or whatever. That is the sort of commitment that we are looking for.

**CHAIR**—Yes, I understand that. We will do what we can. On Wednesday, 4 October we will be talking about you, so if your ears are burning, you will know that Canberra is talking about you. If we could get formally, through Barry Haase, I suggest, some of the key bits of correspondence—we will regard them as confidential; they will not be entered into the record as part of this inquiry—they will give us a bit of an insight to help us identify some of the people we might need to talk to.

**Mr QUICK**—These people also can put in submissions to our inquiry so that we can have some documentation and other people around Australia who are interested in this issue will see what is going on around this neck of the woods, which they might not necessarily understand.

**CHAIR**—That is right.

**Mr LLOYD**—Bronwyn, if the basis of the submission that you mentioned that you put in to the state head office is relevant and could be submitted to our inquiry, it would be very useful. We could weed some of that out.

**Mrs BARNES**—Okay.

**CHAIR**—There has been a lot said here today about the funding that used to be given and which now is not. You made the point, John, that it was a good system and it provided this training, et cetera, and then the rotten government chopped it out. But it is a fact that a great deal of that funding was not creating outcomes. When that training initiative was privatised, it simply became a commercial revolving door for processing people in exchange for money with no consideration of what was coming out the other end. That was the motivation for the situation as it is on the ground today. The rule is show me a job outcome and we will show you some funding. That is the status.

**Mr WAKELIN**—I get a sense that you are winding us up, Mr Chairman?

**CHAIR**—No.

**Mr WAKELIN**—We will need to anyway, I suspect. All I will say is that Barrie's comment earlier was one that will stay with me. This is a good news story. It may be succeeding in spite of us at times, but it is a good news story and it has been a pleasure to be part of this in this short period.

**Mr LLOYD**—The difficulty is that the changes that have been made to Job Network have been very successful in an urban area—where I am based—because they have changed all those issues and addressed all those issues. It is actually successful in an urban area but has created difficulties for you. So that is the complex nature of it.

**Mr JURY**—That is why you can never have one size fits all, and you cannot expect one mining company to answer all your questions. I threw that up to give you some idea of the levels. Without all those players, you could not do what we are doing here. Together we have the capacity to really do some great stuff here, but we need access to funding or some way of getting programs running in schools. We need to get the kids at schools, we need the ability to get these people over the bar and then we need the ability to get them all into a job. The will is there. The commitment is there. All we need is people to go into bat for us and give us a hand so we can set it up for the long haul. That is all we want to do really.

**CHAIR**—Time has caught up with us. I would like to briefly thank you all again: John and your team, Rennie and everybody, Sadie and your partner here today. It has been fantastic for us to share with you today and I think we have got a bit out of it. I hope that the inquiry we are doing now might be able to help you. We will do our best. To Hansard and our secretary, thank you very much for your work today as well.

Resolved (on motion by Mr Wakelin, seconded by Mr Quick):

That the committee authorises publication of the evidence given to it at the public hearing today.

**Committee adjourned at 12.48 p.m.**