



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

## Official Committee Hansard

# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES  
STRAIT ISLANDER AFFAIRS

(Subcommittee)

**Reference: Indigenous employment**

FRIDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2006

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**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AFFAIRS**  
**Friday, 17 February 2006**

**Members:** Mr Wakelin (*Chair*), Dr Lawrence (*Deputy Chair*), Ms Annette Ellis, Mr Garrett, Mr Robb, Mr Slipper, Mr Snowdon, Dr Southcott, Mr Tuckey and Mrs Vale

**Members in attendance:** Ms Annette Ellis, Mr Slipper, Dr Southcott and Mr Wakelin

**Terms of reference for the inquiry:**

To inquire into and report on:

Positive factors and examples amongst Indigenous communities and individuals, which have improved employment outcomes in both the public and private sectors; and

1. recommend to the government ways this can inform future policy development; and
2. assess what significant factors have contributed to those positive outcomes identified, including what contribution practical reconciliation\* has made.

\*The Committee has defined 'practical reconciliation' in this context to include all government services.

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**Subcommittee met at 8.28 am**

**FOWLER, Dr James Craig, Deputy Chief Executive, Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology**

**HUTCHINSON, Mr Lou, Director, Employment Programs, Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology**

**RATHMAN, Mr David John, Executive Director, Aboriginal Education, Employment Strategies Unit, Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology**

**CHAIR (Mr Wakelin)**—I declare open this public hearing of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs inquiry into Indigenous employment and welcome everybody today. I particularly welcome representatives of the South Australian government. Do you have any comments to make on the capacity in which you appear?

**Mr Rathman**—I also work in education and children's services. It is a fifty-fifty job split.

**CHAIR**—Thank you. As you would know, these are proceedings of the parliament but we do not require you to give evidence under oath. We simply need to recognise they are direct proceedings of the House of Representatives. Dr Fowler, we invite you to make some brief opening comments. Then we can have a reasonably informal discussion about the issues that we are endeavouring to bring out and put before our parliament.

**Dr Fowler**—Thank you very much, Chair. I will make a few comments just to set the context. First of all, I have only recently assumed this role with a departmental restructure, so I will be relying partly on the expertise of my colleagues. The submission we provided you is dated mid-June and we hope to bring you information to keep you more up to date on that matter. You would be perhaps aware of, but I would like to bring to your attention, the policy drivers and the reasons for our thinking in this area—that is, the state government as of March 2004 with the launch of South Australia's strategic plan has a very focused effort in the pursuit of 79 targets, which are set out in that plan. It is worthy of referring to the one specific target that is related to Indigenous peoples. It is under objective 6, Expanding opportunity. I would like to read that in full. It is:

Aboriginal wellbeing: Reduce the gap between the outcomes for South Australia's Aboriginal population and those of the rest of South Australia's population, particularly in relation to health, life expectancy, employment, school retention rates and imprisonment.

I can assure you that the minds of the entire public service have been directed towards the delivery of the many targets in the state's strategic plan, including that item. The submission was signed on 15 June 2005 and we will be providing updates. Just to set further context, our minister is the Hon. Steph Key, the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education. If you refer, for example, to the Australian Bureau of Statistics labour market outcome for South Australia—the most recent date is last month—that shows that the unemployment rate in South Australia has now slipped down very satisfactorily towards five per cent and we are indeed second on that scale, only headed by Western Australia. That trend for the unemployment rate for youth over the last 12 months is also heading down.

In that sense, South Australia is a state where there are improving employment opportunities and we are here today to talk specifically about matters of Indigenous employment. Very broadly, our department is pursuing effectively four streams of effort. I will briefly outline those in relation to support of Indigenous employment. The first stream is specific employment programs branded under a generic set of programs that are referred to by us as SA Works. Lou Hutchinson is the director responsible for those works. The department also is pursuing Indigenous people who are apprentices and trainees in training contracts in South Australia. We are concerned about those elements and we are concerned about the Indigenous involvement in, participation in and completion of educational programs in the general VET section and in particular in TAFE SA.

I would like to note that DFEEST is a relatively large department of some 3,500 people, and a particular element of the state strategic plan refers to increasing the percentage of the Aboriginal population in the South Australian public sector from 1.2 to two per cent within five years. The department has a quite specific strategic plan to raise the number of its own employees who are Indigenous peoples. David's area is responsible for driving that as well. My colleagues might be pleased to add a few things, or we can move straight to questions.

**CHAIR**—They should feel welcome to do so. Thank you, Dr Fowler.

**Mr Hutchinson**—As Craig has outlined, there are a range of activities and programs in place under the four categories. Certainly the submission which was put up in June is an indicative of the types of activities that are being undertaken. Perhaps the area where I am most connected is what in old terminology might have been labour market type programs. The South Australia Works program—which has a state government allocation of about \$23 million a year and is supplemented by many other sources of leveraged funding including Commonwealth and other agencies, community and industry—has a target of assisting about 20,000 people a year. We have a target of achieving about 7,000 employment outcomes out of those 20,000 participants.

Within that program, there are a number of programs which are specifically Indigenous, including an apprenticeship program, an Aboriginal employment program and a major training provider, outside of the public provider system of TAFE, which is the Tauondi College. It is for the most part funded and supported under the South Australia Works program. Alongside that we have as part of South Australia Works a major regional program, which is state wide. It is located across 17 regions of the state. There also are public sector activities within that program. We have a major community element in the program through adult community education and community based provision. As I said, we have a number of specific Indigenous programs, but in all other programs we do set targets and quarantine effort to ensure Indigenous participation in those programs. I am quite happy to run through that for you, but I will be able to leave some detailed information for the committee, with contact points if you have follow-up areas.

**CHAIR**—That would be much appreciated.

**Mr Hutchinson**—We have worked closely with David's area. In the current year, between a combination of specific programs for Indigenous people, public sector effort and regional and community effort, at this point we think we have achieved somewhere in the vicinity of 750 employment outcomes with about 2,000 Aboriginal participants. For instance, one area that we are most proud of is the Aboriginal Apprenticeship Program. That program started about 2½



years ago. We have 120 full-time Indigenous people in apprenticeships and traineeships. We have concentrated upon apprenticeships of three- to four-year terms. We recruit an additional 50 each year. We have just had our first graduates from that program. It is a unique program to the extent that its retention rates are extremely high. We are looking at 90 per cent retention rates. We have structured the programs so that we do not rely heavily on public sector patronage. We rely very heavily on penetrating the private sector. We do that by providing a team of mentors and ongoing support officers. We do a lot of pre-employment training and career guidance for the groups.

**CHAIR**—In terms of that outcome, what is the spread like across urban and regional areas?

**Mr Hutchinson**—We have been very conscious of that, too. It is in the vicinity of fifty-fifty, which is much better than the traditional spread between metropolitan and regional South Australia. We have been able to follow that through because of the other regional elements in the program. We have concentrated in the Upper Spencer and Murraylands and the Riverland. We have focused not so much on the south-east, where there does not tend to be the same demand for—

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Can I just interrupt. Are they done in clusters of any kind? What is the spread of the employment place and the geography? Are there groups of apprentices in one location supporting each other as well?

**Mr Hutchinson**—We have concentrated on accessing enterprise level opportunities, but what we have built into the program, being very conscious of that isolation, is that every apprentice has a mentor. We work very closely with the employers. Each apprentice is designated a departmental officer. The visits are frequent—once or twice a month—both with employer and apprentice. We organise during the year to on about four occasions bring the whole group together and we make sure, when we have the graduation programs or events, that the whole of the program is brought together.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—What is the spread of industry?

**Mr Hutchinson**—It is broad. We certainly have all the traditional manufacturing and building trades. We did have a particular focus on those two areas in terms of the individual's interests and our own skill shortage registers. Those are the trades which are usually the most hard to come by, particularly in regional SA. For instance, on the Eyre Peninsula you just cannot get them, and after the events of last February that has been exacerbated. One thing that we linked to the program after the bushfire was to recruit additional Indigenous young people into traineeships, particularly on forest and fauna regeneration projects.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Do you have female participants?

**Mr Hutchinson**—Yes, we do. Females comprise about a third of the program. I would be the first to admit that they have not penetrated to the same extent as males into the non-traditional areas for women, but that is something that we are working on.

**Mr Rathman**—You were asking, Barry, about the location of students across the state. In terms of Indigenous TAFE students, the regions reflect a large number in regional areas but

usually where there are concentrations of Aboriginal population—that is, areas like Port Augusta and the far west coast. Picking up on Lou's point, on the west coast we have done some work to get greater levels of apprenticeships and there have been some groups going through the industry areas that they link to in that region, which are basically around building trades, and there has been a successful program run out of there. Our focus in TAFE has really looked at trying to increase the number of people who are in certificate III and above and to reduce the numbers that are in lower certificate areas. In fact, since 2001 there has been about a five per cent increase in the number of people who are in certificate III, but we still suffer from a fairly sizeable attendance and retention issue when it comes to secondary education, although we have seen a trend now that is encouraging. We would like to see a high level of attainment at the highest level of education. It has moved from year 9 and is now reflecting a year 10 level of completion. That is encouraging.

On Lou's point about the number of people who are involved in apprenticeships, what we have seen is that the number of contracts of training has increased substantially in South Australia. Something in the order of 613 Indigenous people commenced contracts of training in 2004. In 2001 there were only 458, so we have seen a steady increase in the number of contracts of employment. The other thing that we are concentrating on—and Lou mentioned this—is trying to give effective mentor support because, increasingly, one issue is retention, sustaining people's continued employment, and there needs to be quite a bit of follow-up there. In all of the programs that are funded either nationally or within South Australia there has been a lack of focus on mentoring because there has been this heavy emphasis in the old ANTA structure on worrying more about student hours and than about retaining people to completion. We have had a lot of start-up, which gives us very good student hours, but retention and completion is, I think, a very important focus.

Departmentally, we are relooking at how we resource mentoring and support to keep people in their learning. I do not think it is often acknowledged that Aboriginal people are sometimes in the position, as Harvard University describes it, of being positive deviants. It is a form of positive deviance to have a job, to go to training. You are not actually the norm. When you think that 47 per cent of Aboriginal people in South Australia are unemployed or not in the workforce at all—

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—They are extraordinary.

**Mr Rathman**—they are extraordinary people and they need extraordinary levels of support, and we do not give it.

**CHAIR**—Harvard was mentioned there. Harvard have been quite pioneering in a lot of this stuff, haven't they?

**Mr Rathman**—Yes, and I think we often overlook the fact that supporting someone to stay in a job is pretty critical when you have intergenerational unemployment. It is important to continue the trend of people being connected with real jobs, but somewhere along the line people have to acknowledge that there has to be some level of supplementation. If that is not there, people will not succeed, given the literacy and numeracy levels. Nationally, I think Aboriginal people are about 26 months behind the rest of the population. That is an issue that we have to attend to. Part of why Aboriginal people have continued to be in certificates I and II when they

get to post-secondary education is that their literacy levels are adequate for them to go on to high-level certificates.

**CHAIR**—It is a national issue, isn't it?

**Mr Rathman**—Yes.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—In relation to the mentoring process, you mentioned that there was a bit of an emphasis on the private sector. Who are the mentors? Who supplies them? Are any of them Indigenous? For those who are not Indigenous, is cultural training delivered to them before they take that role on? Can you discuss how that is actually done?

**Mr Hutchinson**—The departmental officers are Indigenous officers. They come out of our Indigenous works program, which is part of the overall program. Actually, they are not all Indigenous. Rob Lucas, who is the starring light, is non-Indigenous. The mentoring actually takes place through the building of the relationship between those departmental officers, the employers and picking out people in the workplace.

One of the problems we have across all of our programs is that 'The road to hell is often paved with good intentions.' It is about cultural awareness and sensitivity and, departmentally, we are addressing that in our internal programs. It is something that we are trying to spread through the program. The Aboriginal Apprenticeship Program has been successful in doing that. Many of the individuals who work with the apprentices are tradespeople themselves and, through the exposure and the relationship with the departmental staff, are coming to grips with it. That is not the best way of describing it. They are starting to appreciate how useful and relevant it is. In our own program areas, we are trying to get all of our officers through those types of awareness programs.

Picking up on David's last point about raising the qualification level and being able to sustain a pathway for people, we are all particularly proud of Tauondi College, in that it has that cultural sensitivity and community approach to the students as well.

**CHAIR**—How long has that been going?

**Mr Hutchinson**—It has been going a long time—30 years—but I like to think that it has really been going for the last 10 years.

**CHAIR**—One of the former ATSIC commissioners, Klynton Wanganeen—forgive me; I am not sure if he was linked to that particular program—when the outcomes were measured, delivered some outstanding results from mentoring people.

**Mr Hutchinson**—Funding is a mechanical issue. The college was being funded on an annual basis. We have got away from that. We have made a four-year commitment for \$8 million in funding over the next 3½ years. The college is making significant links now with the public provider and particularly with schools. It is heavily involved in VET in Schools, so that we have a passage for students. We have significantly started to raise from certificate I, certificate II, into the certificate III diploma levels in their offerings. It is not all a bed of roses. There have been plenty of issues and many things to address.

**CHAIR**—Is it under the umbrella of TAFE?

**Mr Hutchinson**—No. It is independent, in my view, but it operates to TAFE conditions. I think that is a parity issue, and it should be so. It is independent, it has an independent council, but it also has a close relationship with the Commonwealth, of course, in terms of funding. It is one of the stars and we certainly want to provide that with the sustainability that it is going to need.

**CHAIR**—I would like to go onto three or four other issues and head in another direction. How does the South Australian government define ‘employment’ of Indigenous people? What is your definition—similar to or the variation on? We have a witness coming around lunch-time to talk about the discipline that they apply for variations in work practice et cetera. Can we also talk a little bit about culture and how we deal with that. It is hard to define. What does that mean? We all have our ideas but it helps if we can talk about it.

**Mr Rathman**—I should probably say something about that. There are variations. The public sector tries to accommodate diversity in the workforce. I am not sure that that is the case in the private sector; I think it is more rigid there, a bit more anglicised in its approach to the work. In a recent enterprise bargaining agreement in respect to the Aboriginal education workforce, there has been a condition provided for cultural leave. It is very specific about the conditions that will apply. It is specifically to allow for cultural considerations to be taken into our sort of work practice so that we are able to reflect an adequate response, particularly to people that come from traditional regional areas. There is a large workforce from the education department in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands so there is certainly consideration given to them. In the public sector it is a work in progress to ensure that we are responsive to various groups. We have to acknowledge that there is diversity within the Aboriginal population. That is not often taken into consideration. We are trying to address that in various agreements. In DFEEST, all of the executives will go through cultural awareness, which is something unique in the organisation; it has not happened before. That will then flow down through the system. But it is not excusing the need for disciplines. You cannot be an engineer and expect to have a different standard apply: the fact is you have to do engineering in the required international standard.

**CHAIR**—That is right. It leads to some fairly sad outcomes if those false expectations are created. It is quite a balance.

**Mr Rathman**—That is my point about the deviance issue. It is a question that we as Aboriginal people have to address as well—how we make the move from our own position of high unemployment to one of having employment, but also not losing our cultural integrity in that process. That is our business.

**CHAIR**—David, I thank you for that because this is not an easy subject anywhere in Australia. I have a belief that the more we talk about it and understand it, the better chance we have of getting a positive outcome.

**Mr Rathman**—The problem for us—and I am talking as an Aboriginal person now—is that, the more we have bureaucrats telling us how to live our lives, the less likely we are going to get true independence and democracy. I believe if you have your own money you have choice in this sort of democracy, whereas if you do not have money in your pocket, you have no choice. We

probably have more people telling us how to live our lives than anybody else: the general public think that they know what is best for us as well.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—You have more people criticising you when you get it wrong.

**Mr Rathman**—Exactly.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—I think that is the most cutting, frankly.

**Mr Rathman**—One of the things that governments in Australia have to really think about is the question of sustaining some of their commitment, because they chop and change every five minutes. As soon as they see a problem, they want to chop it up. I am accused of not delivering when I do not control the show. If I controlled the show, then maybe I could deliver. At the same time, it is important that we recognise that Aboriginal people are vulnerable to scrutiny, probably more than any group.

**CHAIR**—That is an excellent contribution. Another matter is entrepreneurship. We had a fellow helping our first witness—Dennis Foley—who has, it almost seems, made it his life work to understand Indigenous entrepreneurship and how it works across Australia. It is a wonderful piece of work and it is ongoing. Has that come across the radar at all? You are talking about control and taking charge of your own lives.

This is one of the parts of the jigsaw, I am sure, and there are notable examples. I always think of the great pioneer David Unaipon. He was one of the shining lights. I would like a quick comment on entrepreneurship and small business, and I know about Yalata. If you know of Dennis Foley's work, you might like to comment on that as well.

**Dr Fowler**—I am happy to provide a little bit of extra information in that area. It is my understanding that cabinet has very recently considered the South Australian Aboriginal economic development strategy. I believe, because this is very recent, that this document is going to be open to public consultation in the coming months; within the new government, I would assume. I do not know whether cabinet has released and approved the content of that yet, because it virtually is off the printing blocks, but the position is that there is a very strong thread throughout that document in relation to entrepreneurship.

I would, for example, point to the trade and economic development department launching what they referred to as the Young Indigenous Entrepreneur Program. There are a range of activities and a really clear focus on potential microfinancing projects and looking to see how Indigenous people can run their own show, as David has indicated. That could potentially be in the areas of tourism, arts, fishing and aquaculture—perhaps transport logistics in the resources area in the upper Spencer Gulf—where Indigenous people run their own companies and can be subcontracted into work. That is something that the state will be pursuing.

It is interesting that you mention David Unaipon, because you might have seen a very nice example—a recognition—of his work. The Science Technology and Innovation Directorate in our department, as a reconciliation activity, working with David Airey and other parts of the department, launched the David Unaipon innovation awards.

**CHAIR**—I was not aware of that.

**Dr Fowler**—I can send you some information about that. In a sense, it was young Indigenous kids from across the state in a competition—in a sort of digital arts creative area but lauding superheroes in a comic book way—which brought together understanding of principles of science and the importance of water and conservation and those sorts of things but in quite a fun graphics way. It is going to be an annual award, and we will be looking to expand the David Unaipon innovation awards in the state. We would be happy to provide you with that extra information.

**CHAIR**—Thank you for that.

**Dr Fowler**—The other area of activity that the state, through TAFE, is taking great consideration of is Indigenous intellectual property. There have been a series of forums conducted across the state with Indigenous groups, particularly in areas of food and native medicines, with the view to looking at how we ensure that the benefit of any commercial activities goes to the real owners of that information. I believe David's group has been participating in that and he can give you some more information.

**Mr Rathman**—That is partly about encouraging entrepreneurs in that area. It is a sensitive area, but regrettably it has been caught up in the native title issue. The one or two examples that we had that clearly demonstrated some opportunity, people referred back to their own people and suddenly it got caught up in the native title scenario.

It is stuck there, but we are still hopeful that there can be some movement. We provided people from Crown Law and others in the government to go around and do the forums, and there was a lot of general interest. That is about encouraging entrepreneurship, as opposed to transferring that knowledge and losing it, but also protecting the intellectual property.

In Lou's area, with the apprenticeship program, a number of people are looking at setting up their own businesses. Once they get a skill—and hairdressing is a good example—they are then interested in setting up a business. Some of the tradespeople are looking at subcontracting. Barry, you would know from your electorate that there is a lot of subcontracting done but it is not done by Aboriginal people. So the idea is to look at encouraging greater subcontracted developments. With apprenticeships and training, we are talking about a fifth and sixth year, so that you provide a fifth and sixth year of support in how to set up your own business and become a subcontractor.

**CHAIR**—At Ernabella, or Pukatja, there is a wonderful little fabricating business. I should be able to remember the name; we were up there a week or two ago. They are now the preferred suppliers to AHA for framed security doors and that sort of thing. It is an inspiration. It is in the old store at Ernabella. Do you know the project?

**Mr Rathman**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—Do you remember the name? Russell someone is the name of the fellow that is leading it. There is a sort of frustration or a tension between the ICC and the shared responsibility agreements and how you do all that and link it into the COAG trial. Nevertheless,

it was inspiring to see the outcome from this with Indigenous people of various ages. But exactly that point, about continuing it beyond the three or four years and developing the skills, if I have understood you correctly. The quality is excellent and what they are doing is inspirational. That has happened within the last six to 12 months.

**Mr Hutchinson**—I think we are all conscious that, particularly in areas like the APY—just going back to David's comment about chopping and changing—that project is a rebirth of what was there before.

**CHAIR**—The fellow that is driving it was there, wasn't he?

**Mr Hutchinson**—We had terrific building and construction programs running there, building the accommodation et cetera. Hopefully, we will get some sustainability into the process, not an ownership, which does not allow things to be cleaved off.

**CHAIR**—All strength to you! I want to ask about CDEP, and I will go to your submission in terms of the CDEP administration arrangements and the financial incentives for moving participants into employment rather than providing funds per participant. That seemed to capture this evolving concept that CDEP is not a destination but part of the journey. I welcome the statement. Would anyone like to add to that? This is a moving feast anyway, but you may have noticed something in the last year or two that we might be able to pick up on with CDEP.

**Mr Rathman**—I think it is a bit early in terms of trying to establish whether the changes will substantially move the type of mindset, but I think it is essential because in our area we look at the trends and the way things are moving. One of the things we found in a survey that we did about two years ago was that some of the CDEP participants were due for long service leave. That is how long they had been there.

I would not have thought that is the purpose of CDEP, and that is why we were wanting to make these statements about it being part of a journey, not an end in itself. It is very good for the national unemployment figures, but it certainly does not do much for the people in it if that is their long-term outcome. They are going to be stuck, and I think it is a sad irony if someone is going to be there 10 years and due for long service leave.

**CHAIR**—That is a pretty telling comment. The last point is just a general request for your comment on anything that is really sticking out in terms of the federal policies, the linkages, this greater emphasis on the partnership between governments—those sorts of things. There might be a couple of points you could offer us in terms of the relationship. It does not matter who the government of the day is. Is there anything in the principles that we might be learning or doing a little better? There is this chopping and changing that Lou has mentioned. Is there anything there that you want to comment on? It is fraught with challenges.

**Mr Hutchinson**—It is, but I will refer to one point particularly: the entrepreneurial track. David and I have had a number of discussions and meetings over the years, and there is a bit of a sad history of criticism and that type of thing, but that seems to be one of the most difficult areas in which to get a coalition of effort. As Craig has outlined, the new policy may make some changes to this, but we would have been looking at providing from a state perspective the workforce requirements. It was always difficult then to look at the capital infrastructure type

support and the ongoing support. That will be one area where both the Commonwealth and stage governments, I would have thought, could have a closer understanding of—if you are going to pursue that and look to genuinely increase it—how we can actually bring our systems of support and assistance together. David and I have talked about that over the years.

**CHAIR**—It is a huge challenge, but it just has to move that way if we are going to serve the people that we say that we are trying to serve.

**Mr Hutchinson**—One of the contentions is: where does the seed capital come from? There are issues like that. That immediately brings in a complicated arrangement that invariably does not go anywhere.

**CHAIR**—I must admit, I have felt at times that federal governments come in and provide capital but they tend to leave the state with the ongoing costs, and what does that really mean in terms of budgetary situations? I can understand why a state government would be wary about how it might address that over the longer term if the federal government has offered something which is a short-term and defined situation. All of those sorts of things come into it as well.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—I am going to go back a bit, if I may, for just a minute. Lou, going back to the apprentices, where do you get them from? How do you get them into the programs? Do you target them? How is the linkage happening at the beginning?

**Mr Hutchinson**—From within the overall program, and certainly not just those confined to DFEEEST. There are many programs that we target. For instance, within the SA Works program we also have what we call the Aboriginal Employment Register and that is run out of the Indigenous works area. We have about 1,700 people on the register. We select them from there. We also try to look at local people. We have referred to the Spencer Gulf and the Eyre Peninsula. There are a whole range of areas to recruit from, and programs that are running.

In the team that looks after the program from the Indigenous works area there are about five or six full-time people who do that sort of targeting. That is why we have such a good split between regional and metropolitan—because they are out there. They are in Port Augusta; they are in Port Lincoln; they are on the West Coast. When I say we ‘target’, we certainly do, but we would also be picking up people who are interested.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—You are doing it in a fairly proactive way. You are getting out there and not just leaving it up to the youngsters to find their way. That is what I wanted to clarify. It takes that effort.

**Mr Hutchinson**—Yes. That is why we have been able to sustain it. If we do not put those resources into the program and sustain them, we will not get the retention rates, which is the very thing that David was talking about.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—What about when they have finished their apprenticeship? Have you got an experience yet that you could share with us of the attitude of employers in terms of the take-up rate, whether they stay with the current one they are training under or go into a new one? And is there any need for a lengthening of some mentoring arrangements to ensure that that process occurs, or is that okay?



**Mr Hutchinson**—The retention rate is good post completion but, as David said, there is an impetus on the part of those who have gone through and achieved. They feel able to move on. I do not want to sound like a braggart here, but the ones that are coming out as a result of the program are of a high quality.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—That is what we need to hear. But it doesn't happen by osmosis, does it?

**Mr Hutchinson**—No.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—It happens because the effort and the supports are in there.

**Mr Hutchinson**—They are high-quality. I know for a fact that a number have left their employer and their employer was regretful. That goes back to the old thing: 'I've done all the work and now they leave.' But what we try and do there, of course, is keep the feeder mechanism going.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—I have a couple of other quite different questions. I have said this to other people who have been in front of the committee, and that is the observation we could make about the Australian tourism industry. People coming to this country from overseas are given to believe that our Indigenous folk are just everywhere, because they are a commodity, if I can use that unfortunate term, in terms of our advertising. They are featured. Uluru, didgeridoos, all feature in our international advertising, and yet the observation could easily be made that we have a very poor level of training and employment at the national level in tourism generally for Indigenous people. There are some working in that industry, but not a lot.

I notice what you are doing is at Yalata and I am really interested in that particular project for two reasons: (1) because it seems to be a bit of an entrepreneurial thing and (2) because it is aimed fair and square at being an Indigenous tourism project. How long has it been going? I cannot think of anything better than an Indigenous Australian talking about Indigenous Australia and their culture to our visitors, but we do not see it enough. This is obviously a good project, from what is written in the submission. I am wondering if anybody has an opportunity to talk a little bit more about it or whether you could send us some more information about it.

**Mr Hutchinson**—We can do that. I have been trying to follow up with people on the West Coast and I do not have anything additional I can give to you now, but I will make sure that you get that.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—That would be good. I would like to know how long it has been going and just how successful it is, and whether it is seen as not an end in itself but a part of a process where people could learn and be trained within that particular project and then move on to other broader aspects of the tourism industry generally.

**Mr Hutchinson**—We have certainly raised the profile of tourism again at Tauondi College. Under the SA Works program and the TAFE program itself, recently we looked at a fairly major investment in terms of tourism and training for Indigenous people.

I take your point: it is about being visible and being out there. We are also running at state level the Workforce Development Fund. We have a couple of things that we are looking at for the tourism industry which are linked to the airport. We have not been allowed to mention the airport for a few months.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—You can, now that it is open.

**Mr Hutchinson**—In Saturday's *Advertiser*—tomorrow—there will be a major spread about, of all things, taxis. Under the Workforce Development Fund, we are looking to recruit 50 people into taxi-driving, but that is not the issue here. These taxi drivers will be trained as tourist guides. We have a target set in there for at least 20 of that 50 to be Indigenous. They are not just going to be driving taxis. They are going to be transporting. We have linked TAFE into that, the transport industry itself through the Industry Skills Council, and the target there is certainly to have a sensible visibility at our gateway for Indigenous culture and the attractions that are indigenous to South Australia.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Do you have a view about this, David?

**Mr Rathman**—The head of the bight is an interesting one because I was in Aboriginal Affairs when we actually fought the tourist commission about getting the head of the bight going. It was a chair of Yalata Council, who has now passed away, who was instrumental in coming to us and saying, 'It's a mess out there. There are a lot of feral white people all over the place out there.' He went to the state government with a proposal about development but the Tourism Commission people could not see the benefit of it. They do now, and they are happy to jump on board these days, but it took a lot of battling to get that going. It was only because the minister of the day—who happened to be a former premier, which helped a bit—was quite insistent that it would go ahead that we got the project up.

One of the things that is important from my point of view about the tourism side is that a lot of the areas need quite a bit of development and sometimes we do not sustain the commitment of support. I think there is and always has been talk about head of the bight being handed over to private interests to continue its development and they will employ Aboriginal people. That, to me, is a sad development because you want to try to sustain that as an opportunity for Aboriginal people.

The other concern that I have is the same with business development. We tend to overload the Aboriginal business development with a lot of extra trainees. One of the things I have tried to say is that you would not do that to other small businesses. You would not have 10 trainees in a store which can only support three staff. We often overload the poor souls who are trying to make a business out of it with a whole lot of extra needs. I believe that head of the bight is one example of where there has been a leap of faith now by the Tourism Commission and other people in supporting it, whereas previously there was not.

**CHAIR**—Can I add selfishly that it is part of my electorate and I can brag about it to a degree.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—You are just a boaster.

**CHAIR**—David has done an excellent job of giving us the background but it is really of international capacity as time goes on. We have the railway line and you can go by road.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—How would we get to it?

**CHAIR**—Ceduna or you can fly straight into Nullarbor or wherever and drive down.

**Mr Rathman**—You would fly straight into Nullarbor. That is probably the easiest.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—After that history, the thing with something like this, when it actually starts to work, is for us to look at it carefully and say, 'It is now doing what we would like it to do. Let's just make sure that we allow it to continue to happen, that we don't'—to put it colloquially—'stuff it up by overloading our expectations or anybody else's.' That is what you are saying and we do it again and again, historically in this country, in relation to some of these Indigenous community projects. The Desert Park in Alice Springs is another terrific example that seems to be working, from all of our observations on our visit there.

Again, it is just doing it at its pace, the pace it can manage, rather than everybody running around and saying, 'This is terrific. Now we'll get them to do all these other things.' It can be made into everything for everybody when it should just be promoted and resourced in its proper way.

**Mr Rathman**—Australia has an interesting attitude about welfare economics. It is very happy to give welfare assistance to cane farmers but will not assist Aboriginal people to have economic development in a supported economy. I wrote to a federal minister in my previous capacity some years ago, suggesting that there be supported economies. Tasmania would not survive without mainland taxpayers and yet we condemn Aboriginal people to put up with bureaucrats forever and a day. I find that quite tragic.

**CHAIR**—Talking about bureaucracy, I remember at Yalata the issue of the toilets. I do not think you were involved, but it was just painful.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—We are going to have to go there.

**CHAIR**—Yes, it is worth a look.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Just a final point, and it is another one in your submission that I have a very strong interest in—that is, the Indigenous enrolled nurses program. I had the pleasure of serving with Barry, under his chairmanship, on an inquiry five or six years ago now on Indigenous health. One of the issues that came through very strongly there was not just how we promote and support the training of Indigenous people into the health system itself—difficult as that may be, but we can do that—but when we have done that and they are adequately trained, how do we encourage them, if they so wish, to carry out their profession back in their own communities rather than leave their communities in that process?

I noticed in this particular part of the submission—this is as at June last year, obviously—that to date 21 Indigenous people have undertaken the training initiative at Port Augusta and

Ceduna—that is, the diploma after they have done the earlier training. Are you in a position to give us an update on how that is at the minute and what your views are on that generally?

**Mr Hutchinson**—David and I both would be able to talk about it. I will admit to you that the figure is not 21; it is 18. This has come about through particularly the regional program, SA Works, and working with the Aboriginal communities there. In the public sector, we have had traineeships and apprenticeships. These cadetships are the certificate III and certificate IV in non-contracted training. With the close connection between health and employment, the program was developed out of that. Within the Indigenous works element we found a budget and a methodology for delivering. The Health Commission has been particularly helpful to us.

For the Pika Wiya establishment in Port Augusta, we accessed a lot of Commonwealth money under the Skill Centre Program so that it is a trainer in its own right. That is certainly with the enrolled nursing level, but to go up to the diploma level, that is where we have to hook into the TAFE system. Those 18 people have progressed well. We have a further 40 on the books for the rest of this year.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—A further 40?

**Mr Hutchinson**—A further 40. The issue of retention among communities is not something that I have thought about but our target is that we have allocated, and we believe we are going to get, the 40 over the next six to 12 months. The main issue for us there is to retain them and keep them to the diploma levels and the registered nurse level.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—That is with a combination of state and Commonwealth money?

**Mr Hutchinson**—It is, yes.

**Dr Fowler**—We can provide an update on that program.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—That would be fantastic.

**Dr Fowler**—We would be happy to do that.

**Mr Hutchinson**—A number of these people have graduated. That is at the enrolled nurse level. The next secret bit is the higher qualification.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Understood.

**Mr Rathman**—Local retention of those people is very important. There was only one registered nurse, prior to this program, at Port Augusta Hospital. The health department, in parallel with this particular initiative, have brought in what they call Change Champions. They enable their executives and directors of nursing and other parts of their bureaucracy, particularly out in hospitals, to sign up to Change Champions—people who are committed to bring about change in terms of their practices and also workforce participation. The Pika Wiya exercise and the one at Ceduna are about developing centres of excellence. The point is that you have to raise the bar; you cannot accept mediocrity. Many of our Aboriginal people are unskilled in some of the health professions and in the early years area, the child development area. They have been

employed because they know the local community. Engagement is fine, but there is no substitute for skill.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Very evident, isn't it?

**Mr Rathman**—We have just finished a project on the Far West Coast—which included Yalata, Ceduna and some areas in between—around Environmental Health Week. This is another area where most of the people that are engaged are unskilled. In combination with Batchelor College in the Northern Territory and TAFE SA in Ceduna, we have put all their environmental health workers through a skill development program. This means that 60 per cent of the people who have completed that program will get a job; whereas previously they were unlikely to get any jobs.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—That is terrific. If there is anything you can send to update us on the progress of that, that would be fine.

**Mr Hutchinson**—I will make sure of that. There are two officers from my area who do the bulk of the work on it.

**CHAIR**—Gentlemen, thank you very much. We could go on at great length but our allocated time has arrived. We thank you for representing the South Australian government today.

**Dr Fowler**—Thank you very much for the opportunity. I have left my contact details. If you have anything further, we would be pleased to assist you.

[9.33 am]

**RIGNEY, Mr Craig, Apprentice Electrician, Adelaide City Council**

**STUTLEY, Mr Trevor, Human Resources Manager, Administration, Adelaide City Council**

**VARCOE, Mr Brian Wilfred, Development and Liaison Officer, Human Resources, Indigenous Trainees and Apprentices, Adelaide City Council**

**CHAIR**—I welcome representatives of Adelaide City Council. Whilst we do not require you to give evidence under oath, we remind you that these are proceedings of the parliament. Do you wish to make an opening statement to add to your submission, and then we can get into a reasonably informal discussion about where we are at?

**Mr Stutley**—We would like to thank you, firstly, for allowing us to make a submission and allowing us to appear today. We appreciate it.

**CHAIR**—Thank you for your hospitality too, since we are on your premises.

**Mr Stutley**—Back in about 2002, the Adelaide City Council identified the need to provide opportunities for Aboriginal people. We therefore went down a path of having an Aboriginal traineeship program, where we employed 17 trainees. The main aim of that program was to have a pool of future employees for the Adelaide City Council. We thought it was a very good opportunity for them to come on board and learn the skills that our people require and a good way to get people into the organisation, not just for our future but for the future of local government generally. We were offering skills that could apply at Adelaide City Council and at other local government organisations throughout South Australia. We were very keen to do that.

We believe that the program has been fairly successful, but along the way we have had a number of issues that have had to be addressed. I think some of those issues have been addressed very much by having Brian come on board as a mentor. He has been able to deal with the situations that have arisen and smooth those over. In the early stages of the program, we did not have that access, and a number of the traineeships went off the rails. Since Brian has been there, he has been able to liaise with the trainees, the team leaders and the management of the organisations to resolve those issues. We had a couple of traineeships late last year that were heading along a certain path and we were able to keep those on track. So we have been very committed to making sure that those traineeships run all the way. Most of that program is now coming to an end, but we are looking at how we can continue it into the future.

**Mr Varcoe**—I have written up a list of things that have been contributors to the Indigenous traineeship program—the building blocks into that—and the outcomes, as well as the barriers and issues that I have come across.

**CHAIR**—You might like to present those notes to add to your submission. Would that be acceptable to you?

**Mr Varcoe**—Yes. The building blocks included the reconciliation statement that the Adelaide City Council has had since 1997 and the National Sorry Day acknowledgment, working with the issues that Aboriginal people have had from past experience. Those things have been the building blocks to some of the success within the Adelaide City Council. We have taken a lot of little steps—achievements—and we have a lot of little goals to achieve in the near future, but then of course there are some big things that we would like to look at as well.

**CHAIR**—This is probably going into too much detail, and you will answer it in the way that you would like to, but in relation to the challenging issues that you faced at the end of last year and how you were able to keep them on track, can we just get an understanding—because these are the real challenges that we need to try and understand—of how you turned those things around.

**Mr Varcoe**—Some of that related to family issues. Those family issues related to a break-up and then, of course, custody of the children. When that was all getting to a balance, the trainee found out that his ex-wife was pregnant, which brought up another whole lot of issues. The council was very understanding about giving him a bit of time off to sort that out, but the process took a little bit longer than anticipated. There were extended family issues that made things a bit difficult. It was definitely a stressful time from Trevor's side and my side and also for the trainee, the team leader and the supervisor to help manage that, but at the same time we needed to work on the work environment as well. Trying to get that balance of time off, understanding and then actually achieving the work that needed to be done was very stressful and a lot of hard work to make sure the person saved their traineeship. The team leaders had an understanding of all that and of when was the right time to actually come back.

**CHAIR**—How you negotiate that and bring it to that satisfactory outcome is a real part of the challenge. I think it encapsulates the reality of what is happening.

**Mr Stutley**—You have a team that these people are working with who have very clear demands on what they need to deliver, so, when people are away, maybe then there is a bit more pressure on the other people. It was a matter of trying to sit down with the trainee and say, 'These are the demands on us,' talking to the team leaders or the managers and saying, 'You need to be mindful of this,' and trying to come up with that balance.

We were very successful because I think that our team leaders were very understanding and they had built some good relationships with those trainees, so they were prepared to give them the opportunity. I know at one stage one of the options was to close the traineeship off earlier, but we negotiated and they all ran their full terms, so we have had quite a good outcome on that. But it was a matter of trying to make sure you had the balance between understanding what the trainee needed to do and keeping the managers happy.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Would it be fair to say that it almost became on-the-job cultural training as well, in a funny way?

**Mr Stutley**—I think it is, and maybe that is one of the things that we have not done enough of. We have not actually done that, and we will look to doing more of it in the future. My view is that, when we put a trainee or Aboriginal person into any work group, maybe that work group should go through some cultural awareness training.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—My question was not meant to insinuate a criticism. It was actually to say that, with all the best intent for cultural training, sometimes an example that trots along then gives a realistic reason as to why you have to have that understanding; why it is necessary. That is what I am really getting at, I think.

**Mr Varcoe**—As the mentor and the bridge between the trainee, the manager and Adelaide City Council, I know everybody is keen to improve cultural awareness, but we need to consider the factors of time, money, time away from the work environment and not getting the jobs done. I would personally like to see half a day at least quarterly and an ongoing thing. Other factors come in that do not allow that time frame and the funding to come in. The council has been very good at trying to achieve those goals. We have definitely been discussing and trying to work out the best way that we can do that. That is one of the issues.

**CHAIR**—It is a feature of local government. A couple of us were at Bega before Christmas, and these same issues were raised. As you well understand, these are national concerns. What comes through quite often from local government is the way that it is local and the way that it does pursue, participate and just hang in there, where others might say, ‘This is all getting a bit hard.’ All strength to you for that.

I am sure it is in the submission, but I need to ask about issues around the federal sphere. Where is it obvious to you that we could offer greater support or a different approach which might assist what you do? Is there anything obvious? There is not a great interface, is there, on these sorts of issues between us and you?

**Mr Stutley**—From our point of view, we could not have survived without a mentor. That is something that we funded ourselves. We only have Brian two days a week, unfortunately, but we do have him two days a week. If we were going down the path again of having 17 or 18 Indigenous traineeships, then I would like part of the funding—I am pushing for money here; sorry—to be used for the employment of a full-time mentor. I think anybody going forward to any of these programs with a number of Aboriginal traineeships should have a mentor.

It is too difficult to leave it for the direct training company, and I think the person needs to be in house. The person can then quite easily develop very good rapport with our managers and can probably provide some of the cultural training on a whole range of issues. To me, that is the thing that has really saved our program. As I said, if we went down the path of a number of trainees again, I would definitely want a full-time person helping us with it.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Trevor, when the council made the decision to take on the traineeships and apprenticeships, as they have, did the council make the decision then or at a later date that the mentor was a necessary part of the process?

**Mr Stutley**—That was at a later date.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—That was the proof of the pudding, basically—that it was going to become a lot more successful?

**Mr Stutley**—We were having problems with it. We had a number of people who were put into roles where they were not suited, and we were really struggling with it. One of the things we



looked at to bring it back on track was who could mentor them. We had an Aboriginal person working for the organisation at that stage who took on that role. He did it for a couple of days a week and it started to move, it started to work better. When that person left the organisation, we went out and recruited Brian.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—You have done that at your own expense—nothing to do with any funding for apprenticeship programs?

**Mr Stutley**—No, that is at our own expense. Had we not done that, we would not have been able to maintain our contract with the relevant bodies to deliver what we needed to deliver.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—That is interesting.

**CHAIR**—It would be fair to say that the mentoring is the difference between success and not getting there?

**Mr Varcoe**—Absolutely.

**CHAIR**—It is that vital to it. It just stands out. We run into it everywhere.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—This is a constant.

**CHAIR**—Last Friday was one in particular.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—It is very clear when we hear you say that. I wanted to understand the process that you went through to find yourselves taking that financial decision. That is a commendable investment by council into the success of the training and employment through the Indigenous program.

**Mr Stutley**—I think it is an indication of our commitment to the program.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Absolutely.

**Mr Stutley**—As we go forward, it is going to be more difficult to employ people and find people to come and work for the Adelaide City Council or any council, or lots of organisations. The Indigenous and Aboriginal people are untapped but they are the people we need to start to work on.

**CHAIR**—In this process, from my note, you also went to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. How does that play out in reality? There are no resources specifically there for a mentor. Where does the department fit in and also Adelaide Community Development Employment Program and Maxima Group Training? There are obviously a number of players here. It would be useful for us if we could get a bit of the interplay here.

**Mr Varcoe**—I can probably speak on that side of things. With the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations we have put in an application for funding to run the traineeship program. That side of things was actually putting the submission in. My side of things as development liaison officer and mentor is putting those application forms in, meeting the

requirements for those application forms. Reporting on the forms of the contract actually takes a bit of the role away from mentoring the trainees. We need it.

**CHAIR**—Can we be specific here? This is very important from our perspective. Is it 20 pages when it could be two? Is it timing, and are forms lost? We need to know how the system works.

**Mr Varcoe**—For me to uphold the contract with DEWR, I have to keep a lot of documentation and reports which take me away from supporting the trainees and managers.

**CHAIR**—Let us get specific again. What percentage of time: 10 per cent of your time?

**Mr Varcoe**—I would say definitely 60 to 70 per cent in doing the paperwork for that, rather than spending the time with—

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Is that just your work with Adelaide City Council or your work with other people as well?

**Mr Varcoe**—The Adelaide City Council.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—So out of your two days a week—

**Mr Varcoe**—In the two days, 60 or 70 per cent is actually spending time doing the paperwork.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—The council is paying to get the paperwork done.

**CHAIR**—I am glad I asked that question.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—So am I.

**Mr Varcoe**—So therefore I guess it forms the grassroots of support and the trainees and mentoring and the team leaders and managers.

**CHAIR**—Let us get to the really tough part of this, because we are tough people from the federal government and we make every taxpayer's dollar pay. The Adelaide City Council says the same thing, I suppose. What could we do differently which would give the information, keep the integrity of the program and make sure that it was some kind of measurement? There must be a better way of doing this.

**Mr Varcoe**—I guess a support person could do that admin role or the paperwork role.

**CHAIR**—You see, that is more bureaucracy. Sorry to butt in, but I am wondering whether all this paperwork is necessary. Is there some way that we can cut down the paperwork?

**Mr Varcoe**—I have not even thought about that side of things.

**CHAIR**—If you come up with any good ideas, let us know. We need some help in this country, because we have run into this problem everywhere.

**Mr Stutley**—All of these groups helped us to deliver on our program, together with Maxima, the organisation that we employed most of our trainees through. We had to make a submission and, from that, they decided whether we would get funding. That was based on a number of outcomes. Having made that submission and having had it approved, the next submission should have been, ‘Well, okay, you’ve done well on the first one’—or ‘You haven’t’—‘Let’s tick the next one and move forward.’ I know that Brian spent a lot of time on that. I think the process should be to look back and say, ‘Well, Adelaide City Council, you did poorly; no more funding,’ or, ‘You met your outcomes, you met your goals, so here’s a one-pager that you need to fill in now and, yes, we will tick it and you go on with it.’

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—‘Don’t do another tertiary degree.’

**CHAIR**—Yes, get on with it. That is excellent. You can see where I am coming from. You have given me a wonderful response in terms of what is practical: ‘You have done the job. Let’s get on with it.’

**Mr Stutley**—I am finding that Brian is spending quite a bit of time putting that submission together when there are probably other things that he could do.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—How often do you have to do that? You put in the submission and you received the grant?

**Mr Stutley**—Yes. We are most probably in the process of doing the other one now.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—How long is a grant for?

**Mr Varcoe**—The one that we have now?

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Yes.

**Mr Varcoe**—That was for three years. It finishes in May.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—You have to do it again now for another three years?

**Mr Varcoe**—Yes. We are basically in the process for another two years.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Two years this time, not three?

**Mr Varcoe**—They have cut it back to two years.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—That is another interesting aspect. Why cut it back? Triennial funding is far more efficient than biennial funding.

**CHAIR**—We have the department head coming to see us in about a fortnight. We will be able to deal with some of these issues then. Craig, would you like to make some comments?

**Mr Rigney**—Certainly. The employment of Brian has made things a lot easier. Before Brian was employed, I did a 12-month traineeship and, after I had proved my abilities to everyone else and myself, I was offered an apprenticeship through a group training provider, hosted to the Adelaide City Council, which I took up. Having been there for 12 months—I am in my second year now—I have a good rapport with the new trainees. We did not have Brian in place so a lot of the problems were coming to me, and I did not have the training, certainly not the contacts or the knowledge, to help these guys as much as I would have liked.

I was banging my head against the wall. I was going in to see Barry White, our manager down there, the manager of city ops, and he was trying to help us as much as possible. That is when we really pushed—on Trevor's side of things as well—to get Brian on board to help us out. Although Brian does not have enough time to be out there physically—he is tied down with a lot of red tape—it has made a huge difference with small problems that pop up, as in last year; just to have the contact, to be able to say, 'Brian, can we do this? Can we do that?' We need funding, we need extra licences for trucks, EPVs, bobcats, forklifts—all that sort of stuff which Adelaide City Council push us to get because it benefits them, as well as being another ticket in our resume. Having Brian there has taken the pressure off me, in the sense that I was just a trainee cum apprentice, although I am 36 years old—that certainly helped because a lot of guys got to know me and looked up to me because I was a little bit older and a little bit wiser. I could give them a small amount of advice; I could not help them as much as I would have liked.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Craig, what are you training in?

**Mr Rigney**—Electrician.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Do you mind if I ask you what you were doing before you were able to take up the traineeship?

**Mr Rigney**—I did five years with Telstra as a communications officer, upgrading equipment in the exchanges in Adelaide and then in the country. I took a package from Telstra in the mid-nineties when they were downsizing. I then moved into pest control and stayed there until the year 2001, I think it was. Then I became a consultant for a pest control company called Termimesh. I was making really good money, had a company car, paid off the mortgage and bought a second house. I thought I needed a decent trade. I am a hands-on person. I like talking to people, getting out there and doing stuff. I started making inquiries, through various contacts, to the Adelaide City Council about their Indigenous employment programs. They said, 'In 12 months we'll have something,' so I kept in contact; it came up and I went through the process.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—And here you are.

**Mr Rigney**—Here I am, yes. I took a huge pay cut. I am not sure if you are aware that the hourly rate for a traineeship is \$10. I have gone from \$22 to \$23 an hour to \$10 an hour. It is a huge stress on my wife more than on me; I am a pretty easygoing sort of chap. I look at the bigger picture, I suppose because I am older and I have been around a little bit more than the younger trainees. I stood back, looked at the bigger picture and, really, I wanted a job with a

trade, and also it is with local government. You get in here and you are set. You do the right thing and you have a good career in front of you.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—A lot of your colleagues that are going through, the newer ones, they are younger?

**Mr Rigney**—Yes.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—You are the grandfather of the trainees?

**Mr Rigney**—Pretty much. We have a lot of 16- to 19-, 20-year-olds.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—How are they coping? What is your observation?

**Mr Rigney**—At my level, they do have problems. The biggest problem that we have is cultural awareness, as Trevor pointed out. We work around it. There is a little bit of discrimination and racism out there, which we try and nip in the bud as quickly as we can. The biggest problem is that the trainees do not want to say anything. They will come to me: ‘Don’t say anything, Craig.’

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Or they will go to Brian.

**Mr Rigney**—That is right, because they do not want to be singled out and moved to another work gang. It is only human nature: some people put pressure on them and try to weed them out in that way. A lot of that goes unnoticed, because it comes to me. Quite often, if it does come to me, I will let Brian know.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—That is difficult in every work environment. It could be bullying or intimidation or, in this case, a touch of racism or whatever. You will always be reluctant, if you are in the minority, to come too far forward. The role that you have, Brian, seems so important in the scheme of things and it is useful to hear your views on funding and on how we can ensure that these programs succeed. Bullying and intimidation should be acknowledged and addressed in the programs.

**Mr Rigney**—The biggest problem is that it then creates reverse racism with these young gentlemen. All of a sudden they take a step back: ‘What am I doing here? Typical whitefella.’ I try and nip that in the bud straightaway and say, ‘Look, you’ve got to wear a little bit of this. It’s human nature. It’s going to happen for the rest of your life, but we can work it out. Don’t play into their hands.’ The minute they do that, their attitude changes, their work performance slips, and things start going downhill very quickly and very easily.

**CHAIR**—It is still of concern. You would hope that we would be moving forward a bit quicker.

**Mr Rigney**—Yes. It is only a minority that creates this problem.

**CHAIR**—But it still troubles me. It is something that troubles all of us.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—That is true. But the more these programs—and the individuals in them—succeed, the more of them there are, the better, and, from what we have heard this morning, the more success they are likely to have, if they are set up to succeed, not fail, by having mentoring and cultural programs et cetera built in around them. You are all nodding; you agree with that?

**Mr Rigney**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—Well said. Craig, is there anything else you would like to say?

**Mr Rigney**—No, I am fine.

**CHAIR**—Do you have any comments on CDEP? Are there any linkages there?

**Mr Varcoe**—Under the CDEP set-up, before I came on board, they had a good relationship with recruiting the new trainees through them. One of the good things about that was that the trainees already had that pre-employment ethics training and development. There was a better success rate with somebody who had already been doing it and was active in the workforce through CDEP. Since I have been on board, that has not been there. I know that with the CDEPs—their change of structure and creating their Indigenous employment centre within that—there have been a lot of changes on their side of things. The communication and the networking with CDEP are still there, but they need to be rebooted and revamped. That is from the CDEP side of things. We still have that connection there and the networking. Because we are at the end of our program now and trying to develop a new program, the networks will grow stronger again. There are no bad points and there are no good points at the moment. It is just in that middle area.

**CHAIR**—It is a bit latent at the moment?

**Mr Varcoe**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—It is backed up a bit. We had this discussion earlier with the South Australian government too, and something coming out of the government at the moment is that CDEP is part of the journey, not the destination.

**Mr Varcoe**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—Picking up that philosophy, I was wondering whether the change in CDEP is people adapting to it—it seems as though there is a bit of a refocus and they are still coming to grips with it, and obviously council has a number of contractors and a number of contracts go out—or whether, in relation to private enterprise and the entrepreneurs or whatever whom you would contract to, there is an Indigenous component to some of that. Or doesn't that come onto the horizon very much?

**Mr Varcoe**—That does not come onto the horizon very much.

**CHAIR**—My last question is to do with Indigenous coordination centres. Do you have any linkage with them at all? Do you know who they are and who the managers are or anything?

**Mr Varcoe**—I do not have contact with them directly. A good friend of mine is very close with the ICC, so it is through that avenue that I network with them and get their resources and information and all that type of stuff.

**CHAIR**—The ICC is adapting to a whole new world post-ATSIC, and we accept that, but we are really interested to understand how it is going. Does it have time to talk to council? Does it make itself aware and understand how you are going with your employment program and all those sorts of things?

**Mr Varcoe**—Personally, from the businesses, organisations and groups that I have been with in the past and that I am with now, I have had no contact directly with them.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—I admire council for making the decision that it did to financially invest in the mentoring side of the program. This is an observation that you may or may not be able to make, but through your connections with the Local Government Association, for argument's sake—I do not know how it works, because we do not have local councils in the ACT—is there any form of relationship or sharing of experiences about the employment and training of Indigenous people at the council level with other councils? Does that happen? Are you aware of any of those sorts of things? Is every council out there inventing its own wheel, or is this information shared? Do you have an observation to make in general terms?

**Mr Varcoe**—I could probably answer from the Indigenous perspective. I am also the chairperson of the Turkindi network. That is a local Aboriginal name meaning 'information sharing'. It is an incorporation that is classified as the Indigenous information network, and we coordinate groups, businesses and organisations to meet on a monthly basis to talk about the issues of employment, education and training. At that monthly meeting, we have the Adelaide City Council, of course—with me as the chairperson—the Campbelltown City Council and the Port Adelaide Enfield council. On other occasions, we have different councils that come on board.

Being on that and being a friend to people who are working in other councils, we are networking with a handful of councils. Now that I have been on board with this as the development and liaison officer within the council, people from different councils are ringing up and saying, 'Brian, we want to try this; we want to do this,' so we are networking with other councils. It seems like we are the leaders within South Australia for information for other councils which are making the ball roll within their areas and getting things done.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Following similar examples?

**Mr Varcoe**—Yes. They are learning from our mistakes, our success and our building blocks. Whether that has been on a large scale or on a small scale, I do not know because we cannot compare it with anything else.

**Mr Stutley**—I know there are a couple of other councils that have run Indigenous traineeship programs. The common denominator in all of them has been Maxima, which I think have been the group training provider for all of those programs. Whilst a number of HR managers from the larger councils meet on a regular basis, it has been more informal talks about how programs have gone and what have been some of the issues. We have also been guided by Maxima as to what

they found with the other programs. We have not sat down and analysed within ourselves how they have gone and what they have done.

I take your point. It is probably something we could do, because I think that we can share some of our experiences here with other councils that want to run those programs. We could probably also learn a bit from them, but we do not have a liaison group or a group that sits down and looks at those issues.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—It would also be interesting to know whether DEWR has that sort of measure. At a federal level, that is where we come in, but does DEWR have the ability to do some comparisons of where it works, why; where it does not, why not; and what sort of impact that then has on their policy formulation? I guess that would be a fair question at some point.

**CHAIR**—Really, the purpose of the inquiry is to try and understand why it is working and how it is working. The bottom line here is that we need everybody we can find to do the work in Australia. We know the demographics are changing and opportunities are emerging out of that, and we need to know what is working. That is what you were saying, Brian, in terms of leadership: what works, what does not and what the future is. Gentlemen, that is about it for us.

**Mr Varcoe**—I have written a handful of things here, if I could point out a couple.

**CHAIR**—Sure.

**Mr Varcoe**—One of the things, whether it is in-house or help from outside, is breaking the barriers within how the system works now. When it comes to the group-training side of things, the councils have been dealing with Maxima. That is how it has been in the past. On that note, not every Indigenous person will sign up with Maxima Group Training to get employment within the council. Breaking that mould of people having always dealt with Maxima through the council—we always deal with Maxima, so for me to find the great person who might be able to do that job but who is signed up with another group trainer just does not work. So basically just broadening those horizons and opening their minds on that side of things has been a big barrier for me to break.

**CHAIR**—Thank you for that.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Are you going to table those notes?

**Mr Varcoe**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—We will accept those as part of the evidence.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Thank you very much.

**CHAIR**—As I say, gentlemen, we are indebted to you for your time this morning. Thank you very much.

**Proceedings suspended from 10.10 am to 10.23 am**



**WALKER, Ms Stephanie, Native Title Officer, South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy**

**CHAIR**—We welcome the representative of the South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy. Do you have any comments to make on the capacity in which you appear?

**Ms Walker**—Yes. I am also the project officer for the Chamber of Mines and Energy in South Australia.

**CHAIR**—As you may have heard earlier, these are proceedings of the Australian parliament and we need to be cognisant of that, but we do not require you to give evidence on oath. We thank you for your submission. You might like to make a few opening comments just to give us a picture of where you see it is at and to add to your submission.

**Ms Walker**—I will try to comment from Parry's perspective because I do not think I have a lot more to add to what we put in. Parry Agius would have said to you this morning that we have a highly cooperative working arrangement and relationship, and it mainly comes up because of the Indigenous land use agreements, which are a statewide approach, and that has generated a lot of cooperation and collaboration.

Where we are at at the moment is that the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement Native Title Unit, through Parry Agius, is poised at a point where it can now start work to identify young and not so young Aboriginal people who might like to be employed in the resources industry. And I am now in a position to provide him with details of statistics that the various companies who are in production or about to go into production have identified as their needs through to 2014. Our first task is to start work on that. It will be highly cooperative and very dependent on cooperation.

We will then try and build that information into the skills centre—which I mention in the second phase of my submission—as mainstream, not as an aside, but we need to note that it is going to take a lot more resources than are required for an average city-dwelling white person. To assist young Indigenous people to be engaged with the resources industry is going to take quite a lot more work and effort in terms of health, assisting them with understanding the employer-employee arrangement, understanding the resources industry, having the industry understand the culture—which is very important in accommodating, attracting and retaining them in the industry—and what the traditional obligations are within family. All those are very important and we intend having those built in.

**CHAIR**—You are kept pretty busy on this, with the current state of the industry.

**Ms Walker**—It is very busy at the moment, not least because we have decided between the chamber, the ALRM and various state government departments to have a highly cooperative arrangement and a lot of collaboration in making all this happen. Let us not be naive about this: it is driven by the skills shortage. If ever we are going to focus the minds of everybody, it is going to be on that.

**CHAIR**—You would be aware of the arrangement with the Beverley mine.

**Ms Walker**—I am.

**CHAIR**—I am not sure what the ratio is there at the moment, but it was quite significant in earlier years.

**Ms Walker**—Of Aboriginal employees?

**CHAIR**—Yes.

**Ms Walker**—No, it is not. It is very low, disappointingly so. That will change, I think, with the new management. They are certainly highly committed now, as are all the companies—they are buying into the concept of the skills centre, which will not be a physical body. It will have a CEO who will identify all the various providers and make sure that that collaboration is fruitful.

**CHAIR**—You mentioned the technical college. What is your understanding of where that is at at the moment?

**Ms Walker**—Evolving. Most of their communication is through the business centres for the Spencer Gulf, as you probably know.

**CHAIR**—I was just going to add that I notice the focus on Whyalla. It is tending to come out of Port Augusta now in terms of the current agreements.

**Ms Walker**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—And you mentioned Coober Pedy and Roxby Downs. There is an intention to have a campus, if that is the word you use. There are various ‘nodes’—I think that is what you are saying.

**Ms Walker**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—At Roxby Downs.

**Ms Walker**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—That is evolving as they put their business plan together over these next few weeks or months.

**Ms Walker**—Yes, and that will just be another provider that we will take into account in the skills centre.

**CHAIR**—BHP Billiton have been quite proactive in these last few months as well.

**Ms Walker**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—I suppose I need to try and understand a little bit about them, and you have also mentioned Rio's approach and Janina Gawler. You obviously know of her work.

**Ms Walker**—I certainly do, yes. She was with Rio and was recruited from there to become the head of ANTA, which, as you know, no longer exists.

**CHAIR**—I had not caught up with that. Thank you for that. That was a little gap. We were with Comalco at Weipa in July, understanding the ambition for Indigenous employment there. Do you have any understanding of their program?

**Ms Walker**—I do not know Comalco's work. I am most familiar with Rio's, and I rank that as among the world's best practice, particularly in the Argyle diamond mine—probably even more so than the Pilbara program—in its success rate. No, I do not know that one.

**CHAIR**—It is part of Rio as well, I think.

**Ms Walker**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—They had very ambitious targets. We were just fascinated with the work which they have been putting in. We are benefiting from that. What struck you about Rio's work?

**Ms Walker**—The success rate in recruiting and retaining young Indigenous recruits, mainly through their apprenticeship program. One of their students is now going into mining engineering. Curtin University has a campus at Karratha, a fairly new one. He is a model child. I do not know if you have met this young man, who supports his wife, his brother and two children. He was married with two children at age 21 and he has acted *in loco parentis* to his brother. He came off the streets, basically. He was a street child and was put into the program and has been a star recruit. He is a very good advocate of other young Indigenous people in the area pursuing an education while pursuing, maintaining and respecting tradition and culture. He is growing into being an elder.

**CHAIR**—Can we talk a little bit about culture. I find it just about the most challenging part of this whole discussion on Indigenous issues: to try and understand how we harness the culture to give the positive outcomes. How do we harness the culture to get to the employment outcomes which the state government representative, David Rathman, was really quite good at articulating earlier? Do you have a view or are you able to add to our view about the definition of 'culture', how we adapt it, how we understand it, how we actually try and make it a productive partnership at the very least, if you understand what I am endeavouring to say?

**Ms Walker**—I do, and it is very much the crux of what I requested of you in my second phase of the submission. I think the very first and most pivotal thing we can do is respect the culture. We have denigrated the culture, mainly because it did not express itself in terms that we understood. We have had 200 years of denigration, and so the root of the way we operate through our negotiations now is respect for culture. Learning about the culture is probably the first point of call for white employees and, as you may or may not know, all of the resources industry requires its white employees and contractors to understand the culture in which they are working.

Being able to embrace and hold any culture that is not our own is always very difficult, but this is a remarkably different one. We can go to Bali and appreciate the Hindu culture there much more easily than we can an Aboriginal culture, which is not as tangible. But that is also its interest. Adapting to it and allowing it to function within the employment scene requires a lot of imagination and creativity on the part of managers.

I think Rio have quite a good way of dealing with it, and they can do it because of their resource base. If a young man or woman—but it is mostly a young man—has to absent himself from the workplace for a week to attend an aunt's funeral—and we are all aware of the death rate in Aboriginal communities; this might occur five or six times in a 12-month period—this can arouse a lot of jealousy and animosity amongst the white employees: 'Why can't I have this time off as well?' That is part of the challenge that the employment scene has to deal with and, mostly, in the resources industry they are familiar with it. An Aboriginal person is certainly allowed time off to fulfil all those family obligations and has only to communicate that fact to the supervisor. The person does not need to communicate it more broadly than that, and it is the respect for that that keeps that young person coming back to the employment workplace.

An Aboriginal liaison officer who might function between the supervisor and the young person and the family might deal with issues of prolonged absenteeism or unexpected absenteeism, and generally the company can just replace the person in absentia. But one of the things the Aboriginal community have to face is that, if they take more than X days as agreed by the company industrial agreement, over and above what is normal, they usually go on leave without pay. If possible, a young Aboriginal person will replace that person in the workplace. If that is not possible, a white person will frequently do so. It is also part of the culture at Rio and Argyle that they acculturate their white employees to understand what is happening—that there are not favours being given out over and above any other. But they do have that capacity to replace so that the business keeps functioning. A lot of small businesses just cannot do that. It is too difficult.

**CHAIR**—In our experience, in some of the medium tourist operators, what you see is the adaptation of Indigenous people to not let the team down, particularly when they comprise up to 85 per cent of the workforce, and in some cases we hear that even the funerals themselves adapt to a workplace, so there seems to be some give and take.

Can I talk about entrepreneurship. When we were in Western Australia, I was quite struck by an Indigenous mine owner who said, 'I don't ask anything of government other than an opportunity.' Are you aware of anything like that that might be occurring in South Australia?

**Ms Walker**—Yes. I have travelled quite a lot with the PhD student that we supported. It is very interesting talking to Aboriginal business owners who run a business, those who run a community business and those who run a business but cannot disassociate themselves and the business from their family obligations. There are very distinct markings. What she has found so far is that, if as an Aboriginal entrepreneur you fail to distinguish between the business and your family obligations, there is a 100 per cent failure rate. If you can disassociate it, you have as good a chance as anybody else of surviving as a business and contributing to the community.

There is a lot of work that we need to do in the wider community—you, me, industry and governments—to help Aboriginal people understand fiscal management. It is very complex.

Why wouldn't you put 100 per cent of the profits back into the community? Quite a lot of communities have the nous to say, 'Look, I think we'll employ a white manager who doesn't feel those family obligations and will manage the money for the health of the community but reports to an Aboriginal board.' That frequently happens. They are more successful for the community than someone tied down with obligations.

**CHAIR**—You may be aware of the Henry Walker Eltin group, which was regarded as the first South Australian company and was strongly sponsored by OneSteel as a result of previous agreements. I have not checked that in recent months, but you are aware of it?

**Ms Walker**—Yes, and it is still going and probably growing. Are you talking about Elly McNamara?

**CHAIR**—Yes, that is right.

**Dr SOUTHCOTT**—I would like to ask you about the after school program at Port Augusta which is starting this year. What sorts of needs do the students have there to gain a vocational education and training pathway?

**Ms Walker**—It is common to have a lack of numeracy and literacy. Again, you have family relationships built into the employment arrangement. It is about helping young Aboriginal people to understand that they can respect those and fulfil those obligations in a more creative way than just total abasement, I suppose you would say. That will be the concentration. They rely on one-on-one tutoring to get those children through, but they have a very high percentage success rate because of the intensity of that tutoring and support. It is aimed at helping Aboriginal people to succeed, not to fail. We are looking at other locations now for a second one, once we have started at Port Augusta.

**Dr SOUTHCOTT**—What area would you be looking at?

**Ms Walker**—We are scouting around for an industry development of any sort, but the most likely industry that is evolving in the outback is the resources industry. One company rang me yesterday, for instance, to say that they want to buy into that program in Port Augusta but they will be looking for something nearer themselves in future and probably will shift their sponsorship from one location to another or perhaps maintain both. It is a company that is highly committed to Indigenous welfare.

**CHAIR**—I would like to go back to where we started with the ALRM and try to understand why you and the chamber of mines see that relationship so critical. What are some of the drivers that have been brought to this employment situation?

**Ms Walker**—It is fairly simple. We have been negotiating Indigenous land use agreements for minerals exploration. At those negotiations, mainly the women have asked, 'What's in this for our kids?' and we have said quite openly—and it is in the agreement—that there is almost no opportunity at the exploration phase. 'But what about production?' they have said. So we have said, 'There's plenty of employment. Gee, I hope it works on the day.' We must undertake really meaningful efforts to enhance the chances of us maintaining these agreements at the point of renewal. I mentioned in the submission that the first claim comes up in 2008; in fact, a big mine

has already been found in the first claim and it will be in production. The Antikirinya people will be looking over the fence and saying, 'Are our kids here? Do we see them?' Certainly you will see them. They are very actively being recruited as we speak. That was the driver and that has become paramount in our negotiations. We are having to deal with local mums saying, 'We want something for our kids out of this and for our communities.'

**CHAIR**—Over what period?

**Ms Walker**—We did not expect it all to happen so quickly. If we had not had the combined forces of a massive skill shortage and a massive mine expansion with Roxby, Oxiana at Prominent Hill, Heathgate Resources et cetera, we probably would have still been doddling on. But it has all come to a head now and we really need cooperation between state and federal governments because the focus is not on politics; it is on Indigenous welfare. We must cross those bridges and make them work for these people. As Don Dunstan said, we have taken two hundred years to muck up the lives of Aboriginal people. It will probably take us 200 years to rectify the situation. I think we do have those obligations.

**CHAIR**—I would like to speak about these women a bit more. I think that you are right and that is where a lot of the drive is coming from on a whole lot of issues. What I would like to capture a bit more is the awareness about the importance of employment. The great challenge, it seems to me, is the Indigenous people themselves have to see the value of employment.

**Ms Walker**—Correct.

**CHAIR**—Let us be quite realistic: many do but many do not. That is why we have a 40 per cent participation rate rather than a 60 per cent participation rate. Many people do not see the value of employment but these women do. Do you have some handle on why they might see it as a really valuable step forward? They see a lot of other negatives.

**Ms Walker**—Yes, and it varies with levels of sophistication. We dealt with the Arabunna group, who predominantly live around Port Augusta but their traditional area is Marree. I was encircled by about 40 when I went up and that was the demand. It is the case to a lesser degree with the Antikirinya, but I do expect to have the same focus with the far west coast people because they are currently negotiating with a company expected to soon go into production. The ILUA negotiating team has been put aside to enable the community to deal with a mine coming up in their area. Some of them have issues about their children being engaged.

But you are quite right: communities do need to understand. Again, the Rio model is a very good one—intensive involvement among the employee, the family and the community, but without appearing to be intrusive. It has to be subtle, but it has to be clear. Then, of course, as with everything, one of the reasons we would probably concentrate on the Arabunna, if we can, is that we all look over each other's fences and see whose field is greener than our own. If you see something happening in one person's backyard that looks better than yours you find out why, so we will use that quite a lot. But we are very aware that that is an issue we will have to deal with.

**CHAIR**—Do you think that the value of employment is emerging?

**Ms Walker**—Very much so, and it is strongly expressed: ‘We do not want our children to continue on welfare.’

**CHAIR**—At Weipa, what struck me with this offshoot of rehab—and I wish I could remember the phrase because it is a wonderful definition—was that essentially they were saying, ‘We don’t encourage a dependency on welfare approach. It is not going to work. We encourage a participation approach based on the value of employment to oneself.’ They had a lovely phrase which I cannot remember; they put it so well. They said, ‘We are not interested in a dependency approach. It won’t work. It will not be sustainable. But, if we can have Indigenous people participating because it is within them and valuable to them, then we’ll do all we possibly can to facilitate and mentor where people can own it. That’s what will work. We cannot in any way support a dependency on welfare approach. It’s not going to work because we have seen all of that in the past.’ Do you identify with that as part of the ethos?

**Ms Walker**—That would be the view held by all industry. More to the point, Parry is someone who sees the need for some input into driving that change amongst some communities, because welfare dependency is very hard to break. If welfare is withdrawn by the government, you will start looking to your employed child to provide that welfare. An area like Ceduna has huge problems between women being employed as opposed to young men being employed. That is not seen as desirable by some members of that community and they will denigrate the girl and she will stop coming to work. Those are the problems that have to be dealt with. We are very aware of that. It is a big problem.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—The submission from the chamber comments that the chamber has an interest in the development of an Australian technical college—I do not know whether you talked about this before I came in—as a satellite to the proposal of the Whyalla Economic Development Board.

**CHAIR**—We just touched on it.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Can you discuss with us how you think that proposed college would contribute to the Indigenous employment outcomes directly or indirectly?

**Ms Walker**—We outlined in our submission that we supported it in general for all people seeking to educate themselves and work in the industry, but we thought specifically that, if they did engage in Indigenous employment, it was not to be dealt with in the same way. It is very different and touches on all those issues that we have discussed this morning. They must all be taken into consideration and managed in a much more sensitive way, which means more dollars. That is the crunch of the matter. If we do not put in the dollars, we are just saying, ‘Good luck to you. We don’t expect you to succeed and, if you do, it will be on your own merit.’ That is not good enough. We want successful Aboriginal people and we say this is going to take two generations. That is the general view of the resources industry—that it takes that long to make that change. We have to work out where it is and contribute to that discussion.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Earlier this morning we had an interesting discussion with people from the Adelaide City Council about the success or failure of apprenticeship and traineeship programs. The opinion of the Adelaide City Council was made very clear to us: even if you have all the greatest intent, unless you have a mentoring and liaison process set up for that—to the

point where they did it off their own financial backs to ensure that the programs they had would work—the programs will not work. Would you discuss that aspect of this whole approach a bit further? Obviously, from what you are saying, the chamber would share that sort of view.

**Ms Walker**—Yes, all the industry builds that in. They assume that that will be needed. Because of the high levels of cooperation between state government, industry and the chamber at the moment, we would probably help share those costs.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Do you mean the program costs?

**Ms Walker**—Absolutely. They see that they will not succeed otherwise; they feel they will not have community respect. For example, the Antikirinya is a very vocal community as far as Oxiana is concerned and they do not see themselves as having success without that. It is an absolute given.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—And is the industry willing, so far, to stand the cost of that themselves?

**Ms Walker**—Yes. Very few operators do not. Those who do not stand that cost fail—that is a lesson they have learnt. BHP, which was WMC, did not have liaison officers. The last time I surveyed them personally, in 2001-02, out of 900 employees they had one person identified as Indigenous—that is not good. BHP has an approach to its Indigenous relationships very much the same as Rio. They model their programs on that program.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—It is becoming more and more evident, isn't it, Chair, wherever we go? We were in Sydney last week talking to an organisation that liaises with banks. The same thing was being said again and again, so it is becoming quite evident. The question that we should consider, or that the government should consider, is whether programs that are funded by government should actually carry that component within them because—and I am not being disrespectful to BHP when I say this—not every business is a BHP, so resources around what I am referring to are not readily available for everybody. Adelaide City Council has made that decision themselves but taken it on their own financial back. A fair consideration is to what degree we allow the funding to continue the way it is with none of that support mechanism built into it.

**Ms Walker**—Yes. If your mindset is that the program is designed to ensure success, that would be an essential component rather than an optional component. How you manage that is the issue. Probably the way probably to manage this concept of a skill centre would be to contribute towards that component so that it can be managed fairly by the people on the ground, who know exactly what the needs are for each business.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Again forgive me, because I do not know if this has been asked or discussed, but how would you describe the relationship that the industry has with DEWR? Is it a fruitful one? Is it open and accessible?

**Ms Walker**—I think you would have to ask industry to comment on that specifically. What industry is saying in general is that they are bewildered because suddenly we no longer have just one mine in South Australia but a mushrooming of mines and they are having to venture out for



the first time. Do you know how many providers there are for Aboriginal services? There are over 26. Where do you go for what? Not one of them, of course, offers you an Aboriginal liaison officer or mentor.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Funny that.

**Ms Walker**—Yes. So that is why they fund those. But they often provide that funding after having learnt from nasty experiences where young people have lost opportunities, and we have all had those burn-out moments in employment.

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much for that.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—You may not be able to answer this, but are you aware of whether DEWR, in measuring the success of traineeships, apprenticeship programs and so on, surveys or keeps some kind of note of where they those liaison and mentoring processes are succeeding?

**Ms Walker**—I presume they do, insofar as—

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—I would like to presume they do, but I am not quite sure.

**Ms Walker**—I do not know. I have had a lot of anecdotal figures given to me by DEWR, though I have had very little personal contact with DEWR. They have just given me a grant to pull all this together for the resources industry for Aboriginal people, but I have had very little contact with them.

**CHAIR**—That is an excellent exchange. As you spoke I was thinking of Janina Gawler. She used this wonderful phrase in a previous inquiry: ‘When one deals with government one learns infinite patience.’ That sums it up perfectly. I would offer one comment and you may wish to respond: I believe that, whilst resources are important, that is not the key issue now. The key issue is the skill with which the corporate sector particularly, with their intellectual capacity and their incentive, offers and interrelates. It is not the money, it is the skill and how it is offered. I think that is what I have learnt in the last 12 months.

**Ms Walker**—Have you had a chance to pick this document up?

**CHAIR**—No.

**Ms Walker**—Obtain a copy. It is worth having, mainly because I think it sets out quite clearly that the aim of all this activity is to build sustainable communities. The resources industry happens to be there today but might be gone tomorrow. It has to leave behind a wealth of knowledge, experience and ability. That is the aim of the industry. They will be adopting that. We will be using that in our negotiations. They adopt and utilise that.

**CHAIR**—Are you familiar with the document?

**Ms Walker**—Would you like me to leave you that one?

**CHAIR**—Thank you. We will accept that as part of our evidence.

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**Ms Walker**—Yes. It is a good tool, it is well done and it is based on industry experience and knowledge.

**CHAIR**—We appreciate that. We could go on at great length, but we need to move on.

**Ms Walker**—You do. Thank you for your time.

**CHAIR**—Thank you. We deeply appreciate your time this morning.

**Ms Walker**—Good luck! I look forward to a very positive recommendation in response.

**CHAIR**—We look forward to that, too.

[11.03 am]

**TULLOCH, Mr Paul, Manager, Strategic Planning, City of Onkaparinga**

**CHAIR**—We welcome you this morning as the representative of the City of Onkaparinga.

**Mr Tulloch**—Thanks very much.

**CHAIR**—Do you have any comments to make on the capacity in which you appear?

**Mr Tulloch**—Yes. I do appear also on behalf of three other councils—Marion, Holdfast Bay and Yankalilla—as part of a partnership for the Tappa Iri agreement. I am also the interim chairperson of the very newly established Tappa Iri business centre.

**CHAIR**—Whilst we do not require witnesses to give evidence under oath, these are proceedings of the parliament. Would you like to add to your submission for a few brief minutes, and then we can get into some discussion.

**Mr Tulloch**—Certainly. Because it is a fairly new initiative, I would like to make about a five-minute statement to update.

**CHAIR**—That will be great. Thank you.

**Mr Tulloch**—I think I sent through a recent updated copy of the original agreement that you have.

**CHAIR**—Yes.

**Mr Tulloch**—That was signed off in September last year. There were significant changes to the original that you have.

**CHAIR**—Thank you.

**Mr Tulloch**—Whilst the councils employ Aboriginal people through traineeships and in their general workforce in a manner no doubt similar to other councils around Australia, it is this new approach to employment that is the focus of the agreement and will be the focus of my comments this morning. Mr Andrew West and Ms Lynette Crocker will also make some references later in the day, I think, from different viewpoints.

In the term of reference there is some noting of the word ‘reconciliation’ and, whilst this does not overly feature in the document, make no mistake that it is a very purposeful and practical attempt to progress meaningful reconciliation at the regional level. It is an ambitious joint venture that, in part, seeks to provide opportunity for Aboriginal people to develop marketable skills in an area that is to their inherent advantage—that is, cultural heritage—and apply these skills to an area of identified demand within the region. Heritage is an inherently positive focus, rather than the many areas of disadvantage with their associated welfare paradigms. I make the

point though that, whilst it has taken three years to develop the agreement, this is still very early days in its implementation.

As part of the agreement the business centre was established and became operational about the middle of last year. It employs a manager cum business development officer, a part-time office finance person and a trainee clerical officer cum receptionist. Since that time it has created some significant business partnerships with prominent tourist and land developers in particular that have resulted in the employment of a number of Kaurna heritage advisers for advice on sensitive places and issues, interpretation for landscape, buildings and signage, welcomes and cultural performance, natural resource management and, for earthworks monitoring, unearthed remains.

This client base includes the development sections of the four councils themselves, and some state guidelines and the federal government as well as the private industry mentioned above. It is envisaged that down the track the business centre will encourage individuals to fledge separate businesses and the centre has a relationship with the Adelaide Indigenous business incubator. Progress to date, of course, has not been without its ups and downs as the centre negotiates some internal Kaurna politics, the demand for certainty from its clients and the intricacies of dealing with government agencies where needed.

One of the points that the committee was wanting to look at was significant factors in success, and I would like to point out four to you this morning: firstly, the platform of heritage as the basis for employment. This is Kaurna's competitive advantage, as I said, and it is something that also connects and resonates with the wider community as it relates more broadly to reconciliation as well. It is an area that various Kaurna individuals have previously been involved in, but in a sporadic and ad hoc manner.

The second factor is the real determination by positive Aboriginal individuals who are local leaders to advocate, cajole, persist in moving people forward and away from a welfare mentality. Associated with this, it has been important to be robust enough not to get distracted by or too involved with parties whose agenda may be working at odds with the objectives of Tappa Iri. This is, as I say, pertinent for councils as they need to respect varying viewpoints in the general community and it is certainly very true for Kaurna leaders within the Kaurna community.

The third factor is an appropriate and flexible framework. It is very difficult for Aboriginal people, at least in Adelaide, to step into a business environment alone. In this case the framework is provided by the councils themselves and is embodied in the agreement. This allows for a focal point in the business centre which is visible, and a central point for potential partners, whilst providing office facilities and a much needed business environment rather than a community environment. This framework provides an association with a strong venture partner—the councils—whom many Kaurna people are familiar with.

The last factor is getting started and getting some runs on the board, establishing contracts and a workplace and, in terms of the agreement, pulling the weeds out as we go—so really having a discussion about what we are doing, not having a discussion about what we are not doing.

There are one or two enhancements to be made, even in these early days. The centre is refocusing on delivering ample business opportunities within the region and within the agreement and cutting back on those wider issues outside the framework.

There has been a bit of a tendency at the centre to try and tackle wider issues, more fundamental issues, because of its link with the Kaurna Heritage Board, and we are trying to bring that back at this stage. The centre is attempting to get more stability into the people that it employs. There is certainly scope for improvement in reliability and commitment, willingness to develop skills, ability to interact and present well with clients. A lack of adequate literacy skills has been an issue for some people, but it is beyond the scope of the centre to remedy that.

**CHAIR**—We will need to start wrapping up in a minute or two. Could you summarise a little bit?

**Mr Tulloch**—Certainly. I will finalise on some suggested policy directions for government, which I guess you will be interested in.

**CHAIR**—That is of great interest to us, yes.

**Mr Tulloch**—Whilst this agreement has been formally lauded at federal and state government levels for its grassroots substance and wide-ranging vision, there has been little tangible recognition that would link funding opportunities to priority projects within the agreement. To illustrate the point perhaps, the agreement's national recognition from DOTARS last year could be more directly communicated to DEWR and to other federal government agencies that would make partnerships around specific priorities much easier to negotiate. Additionally, support for areas such as skills development that would be applicable to the actual things within the agreement, not just any old things—such as tourism, business operations, important places, natural resource management—would be fundamental and really make its mark within the agreement framework.

More broadly, the federal government could recognise genuine significant grassroots reconciliation measures, particularly if they take up the skills based market opportunities that are there, and support these directly rather than through different frameworks. Finally, a note rather than a recommendation that urban situations are very different from remote or regional areas, and federal and state policy and resources and legislation seem to be geared at these areas in particular, although in South Australia more Aboriginal people live in urban situations, albeit they are scattered amongst the metropolitan area and larger regional centres. Thank you.

**CHAIR**—That last point is very important and we are grappling with that regularly.

**Dr SOUTHCOTT**—I would like to get to that point. I am very interested in that, because I have the City of Holdfast Bay, City of Marion and the City of Onkaparinga all within my electorate. How many Kaurna people would you say would be clients for the business centre? Do you have a handle on that?

**Mr Tulloch**—Andrew West this afternoon will probably talk a little bit more on that. He is the manager of the business centre. There is a list of probably eight to 10 individuals who are providing services on an ongoing basis. They certainly would not equate to eight FTEs at this stage. There is another Kaurna person who works within the office situation and there are other projects that are lined up that will bring other people online, too.

**Dr SOUTHCOTT**—What was the motivation to get the four councils to collaborate on this?

**Mr Tulloch**—I think because this is a region south of Adelaide, it is a region that is being developed at the moment in terms of residential and other urban development, and the natural places there at the moment are the basis for heritage concerns but also are a connector into the wider community; there are special places for both and that creates a joint point of interest. Council's broader agenda is about reconciliation practically. The business centre was one of the significant platforms within it. There is an area of critical mass that is important, but with more bodies comes the difficulty of coordinating those bodies as well, which has always been a challenge.

**Dr SOUTHCOTT**—Do you offer services right across metropolitan Adelaide and the Fleurieu Peninsula as well?

**Mr Tulloch**—We do. Kurna country stretches from Cape Jervis in the south up to Port Pirie, more or less, in the north. We are about the bottom third of that. The vision through the Kurna Heritage Board was about coming together and being able to provide services across that area. We are finding that a bit challenging at the moment, and we are coming back into this southern region to get the best bang for our buck really.

**Dr SOUTHCOTT**—Thank you.

**CHAIR**—I would like to go to the urban, rural, remote challenge. This is an issue that we grapple with all the time. There is a focus—whether it is petrol sniffing in Central Australia or whether it is a violent incident somewhere or whether it is Redfern—to the world. There is this difference. I would like to flesh it out a little, in an attempt to define the difference, and then attempt to define the appropriate policy response. Can you talk about the difference? You and I would probably have not dissimilar views about what the difference is.

**Mr Tulloch**—In regional and remote areas, Aboriginal people live together in a much more identifiable community. In an area like Adelaide, Kurna people are scattered throughout the metropolitan area and do not form the same community that there would be in a regional setting. Therefore, it is harder for people to engage with 'the community' because it is disparate and, in many senses, factionalised. In centres like Adelaide there have been other Aboriginal people coming in; the take-up of land has been very quick around the centres and the issues about dispossession are much more acute in metropolitan areas.

From a policy point of view, it is hard to know who to deal with. I would suggest it is very difficult to find a representative view; certainly not a unified view. Your question, Andrew, was, 'Why come together?' It is about coming together on an initiative rather than on a group of people, and to move forward on something instead of trying to move forward on 'who'.

**CHAIR**—You are given something to give you hope of a cohesive response and a focus on resolutions.

**Mr Tulloch**—Yes. Before the agreement, there was an attempt for about four or five years to come together to discuss issues in what was called the Tjilbruke Dreaming Forum—and that was certainly mentioned at the forum—and to begin to talk to traditional owners about these development issues and wanting to incorporate that inherent identity into council decision making et cetera. The forum ran for four or five years, but was very challenging because people

were just talking about issues, not only to do with that region but broader issues around Aboriginal affairs generally. It became very challenging in that environment because there was nothing to move forward on. There was always something negative to talk about, instead of something positive to move forward on. That, I think, was the real difference between a forum for discussion and an agreement for action. It does separate, as well, those people that want to move forward.

**CHAIR**—Congratulations. You may want to respond to this comment. The great irony of Redfern is that you stand there and look straight to the Sydney CBD and realise that it is some of the most valuable real estate in Australia and yet it has bedevilled everybody forever as to how you turn it into a positive.

When you were speaking I was thinking of what is an international example now, and that is, as I understand it, people coming in from outside. I applaud what you are trying to do because it just seems absurd to me that we have this incredibly valuable resource going nowhere—in fact, being a pain in the butt for Australia. I leave that there. I need to ask about the ICCs—the Indigenous coordination centres. Is there any contact awareness? Are you able to comment on that?

**Mr Tulloch**—Again, Andrew West will talk to you more directly about that. That is his role there. Certainly the centre is involved with the ICC, with the Aboriginal Lands Trust, with the Indigenous Land Corporation, with DEWR, the OIPC.

**CHAIR**—That is fine. The CDEP may be the same but perhaps this is more specific to a city council or to your group of councils.

**Mr Tulloch**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—So you might have a comment on that.

**Mr Tulloch**—Yes. Certainly Andrew has looked at CDEP. I make the point again, though, that this is about real jobs about real demand and sustainable employment and return back to Kurna communities, not just to individuals.

**CHAIR**—You are probably aware of the policy change in CDEP which is endeavouring to make it part of the journey, not the first or last. You may have covered this, and I apologise if you have. I know you have mentioned the Adelaide Indigenous business centre, but I would just like to try and understand a little more. How long has it been going and what is the general structure there?

**Mr Tulloch**—The business centre itself?

**CHAIR**—Yes. I presume we are talking about the Adelaide Indigenous business incubator. Are we talking about the same thing?

**Mr Tulloch**—Sorry, that is a separate entity in Adelaide here, and there is the Kurna Tappa Iri business centre.

**CHAIR**—Let us talk about both, then, and any relationship or none. It would be very valuable to get some comments on the principles of the business.

**Mr Tulloch**—The establishment of the business centre to be able to do heritage business in a viable and visible and supported way was one of the first things that Kurna people really wanted to do, right back. We started this in November 2002 and I reckon that was the first thing that we discussed back then.. It was people doing the business administration activities literally, on the kitchen table et cetera, to bring it together and capitalise on the business opportunity, which is really there, particularly in areas that are developing.

The business sets up in a business environment. It runs on business principles. It needs to attract clients that will pay real money for services that are required. It reports to a board. It does not report to the Kurna Heritage Board, although the Kurna Heritage Board is the legal owner of it. It reports to a board and it governs itself on commercial principles. It certainly seeks partnerships for various programs, with whomever it can find, really. That can be public and private; it does both.

It has a relationship with the Adelaide business incubator. The business incubator is doing some work for the business centre at the moment, but it is envisaged down the track that Aboriginal and Kurna people may fledge their own businesses through the centre, which will need some support from an agency like the incubator, and so we have set that up.

**CHAIR**—In relation to business awareness, is there very much happening there? Are there many Indigenous businesses that you are aware of? It is probably outside your brief, but you put such a strong focus there as well. How is that going? Are there many Indigenous businesses that you are aware of?

**Mr Tulloch**—In the Adelaide region there are not. Other people would be more qualified to answer, but my perspective on it is that there are not. There are some businesses that are operating out of institutions like Tauondi and the museum and the Botanic Gardens, and they are largely, I think, operating out of some supportive structure one way or another.

My comments before about needing Aboriginal people, just needing in a business sense to have some framework to operate from, is important down there as well, but I do make the point that another stage of that will be to give people the confidence and the skills to develop—around heritage, as we would see it—businesses that might be—

**CHAIR**—That, of course, is not exclusive.

**Mr Tulloch**—But not exclusively, yes.

**CHAIR**—Within the specific local government areas themselves do you have a picture of how much Indigenous employment there might be within councils or within contractors, or any other entity?

**Mr Tulloch**—I do not, really. All of the councils employ Indigenous people via traineeships or in their general workforce and they have their own policies about that, as we do. I do not have specific figures.



**CHAIR**—Thank you very much for a comprehensive discussion and for the focus on urban-rural demand. We grapple all the time with how we might understand it better—the member for Canberra on my left, the member for Grey in front of you, and the member for Boothby on my right. Is there anything you would like to conclude with?

**Mr Tulloch**—No, that is fine.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Can I just say something?

**CHAIR**—Sorry, Annette.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—First of all I want to say how much of a pleasure it is to see the local Kurna language in that paper. I do not think I can remember seeing a similar thing on other documents and it is impressive to see that there. And forgive me, because I was not here when you started, but you made a comment in your recommendation about knowing where to go and how to access what is needed. Could you just elaborate a little bit on that for me. I came in as you were saying that and I just want to pick up all that you were saying.

**Mr Tulloch**—I think it would be no surprise that there are a number of different agencies dealing with Aboriginal issues on a whole range of things. The point that I was really making was that this is an agreement that has been recognised by federal government and state government; but, to take federal government, through DOTARS. It was recognised for its wide breadth of scope, from which it would then be seen that there would be scope for other federal government agencies to be interested in its initiatives. If there was communication from DOTARS through to other agencies we would not have to go cold-calling, as it were, on those agencies. There would already be an understanding and a priority perhaps from federal government that this was something worth running with and it would not be necessary to prove your bona fides again and again and again.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—You are really talking about the ability for a more whole-of-government type reaction or consideration.

**Mr Tulloch**—That is right. There is an office now, as I understand, for policy coordination, but it goes beyond policy coordination to have the support networks that are required.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Yes. The reason I was asking for that clarification was because part of our terms of reference is looking at the possible outcomes of practical reconciliation and this document, from my quick look at it, seems to be full of that intent. I am not making a critical comment. I am just saying that when an opportunity like this comes along for government to see what effort has been put into creating a document which is so indicative of practical reconciliation across the board, it would be good to think that there is a mechanism in that process to recognise that at federal level. Maybe we need to work on how we do that better.

**Mr Tulloch**—I think in what you say, too, there is a sense that sometimes it needs to be bottom up rather than top down.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Sure.

**Mr Tulloch**—And back to your point, Andrew: I think the four councils felt that if they could get together and get going, we would pull others along the way.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—That is the good thing about it.

**Mr Tulloch**—Yes.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—That is the recognised advantage of this.

**Mr Tulloch**—Rather than waiting until we have all the balls lined up.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Exactly, yes.

**CHAIR**—And not always relying on someone else to do it.

**Mr Tulloch**—Yes. This is our community. This is our region.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—I think the four councils ought to be commended for the effort that has gone into it.

**CHAIR**—Yes, and I am indebted to Annette, because I had the second dot point about the departmental focus and I had totally overlooked it.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—That is fine. Thanks.

**CHAIR**—It just reminds us, I think, of this tricky part of governance and government—where does it sit? Really, the philosophy of the ICCs is a little bit about what we are talking about—bringing this together—and how you add value to the whole deal is not reinventing the wheel every five minutes.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Exactly.

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much.

[11.31 am]

**GALVIN, Mr David John, General Manager, Indigenous Land Corporation**

**CHAIR**—I welcome to our inquiry today a representative of the Indigenous Land Corporation. You would be aware that these are proceedings of the parliament, but we do not require you to give evidence under oath. Would you like to make a brief opening statement?

**Mr Galvin**—No, thank you, Mr Chair. I will just answer questions.

**CHAIR**—How much land does the ILC currently hold on behalf of Indigenous people and what is the balance between rural and urban?

**Mr Galvin**—We have purchased approximately 191 properties throughout Australia, with an area of close to 5.2 million hectares and a probable worth of about \$160 million. The split between urban and rural is overwhelmingly rural. However, that trend has dramatically changed over the last two years, with the purchase of a lot more urban properties as we have changed the criteria for the purchase of land. From the beginning of the ILC in 1995 to, say, 2001, it was primarily for cultural reasons and therefore went to traditional owners.

After the stocktake of properties that took place in 2000, where we looked at 152 purchases, we found that only about 15 per cent of those properties were achieving their benefits and outcomes, so we have changed the application criteria for land to the ILC. Principally, the act says we shall purchase land for the economic, social, cultural and environmental benefit of Indigenous people, so now we have a full stream process where you apply for land under one of those criteria.

If you have an economic application, it has to be demonstrated to have economic and business potential and employment outcomes. If you have a social application, whether it is for an aged care centre or whatever, you have to show your primary purpose. That has therefore turned around the application process. Most people are now putting in applications under the social program, and I would say that close to 85 per cent of them are now in the urban areas, whether it be a rural town or a city.

**CHAIR**—That is a good, comprehensive response. Do you measure the Indigenous employment that might be within some of these categories?

**Mr Galvin**—Over the time of the ILC's purchases, because it was principally for cultural reasons, the employment outcomes have not been great. In fact, people were not looking at employment outcomes. They were looking at return of country, with that being the main benefit. The stocktake proved that that was not a major benefit. In fact, it could have been detrimental to people because they did not have the skills to run the properties.

**CHAIR**—Obviously, the services might have been totally inappropriate, too.

**Mr Galvin**—Absolutely. The social applications we are getting, or the cultural ones, are usually going to organisations that have a track record of delivery. We are assisting them in having improved premises where they can conduct their business better, whether it is a women's shelter at Laverton in Western Australia or whether it is the Wyanga aged care centre in Redfern. We are not particularly looking at employment outcomes over and above what people have but better service delivery to Indigenous people.

Where we are making an impact on the employment side of things is under the land management arm of the ILC, where we are assisting—again, predominantly in rural and remote areas—in getting Indigenous properties which were once in a pastoral estate back into production. This has proven quite successful. We have the Kimberley Indigenous Management Support Project, which won the Prime Minister's award for excellence in service delivery last year. What it is doing is providing management support and assistance to Indigenous pastoral operators to beef up their skills in management capacity, training and herd management. That then creates ongoing employment. Do you want any stats on that?

**CHAIR**—I think it would be useful. As you know, we are looking for positive outcomes, and that is quite a significant turnaround from what was happening to what is happening now. I think the issues of how it feeds into the general community and how it alters the so-called fabric are also important. That is probably wider than the brief, but go on.

**Mr Galvin**—I will give you an example of that. The ILC also has a business arm and runs businesses. We run approximately 44,000 head of cattle across Australia. I think we are the nineteenth biggest cattle producer in Australia. In 2004-05 we created about 105 Indigenous jobs.

**CHAIR**—That is a lot of cattle and, consequently, a lot of jobs.

**Mr Galvin**—Yes. To the end of November, it was about 87 jobs. A lot of these are seasonal and come and go. At Laura, for instance, we have Crocodile-Welcome Station which we brought into production 18 months ago. It has 3,000 head of cattle. In 2005 it employed 40 people. It was a run down cattle property, with a lot of fencing. DEWR are now providing a mentor and five good trainee positions there, where people will be able to get their certificate in beef production et cetera.

I had an ABC journo ring me up just after Christmas. He had been to Laura. He is a rural reporter. He has been covering the cape for 20 years. He said, 'I went into the pub at Laura, Dave, and there were about 30 Aboriginal blokes, four white blokes.' He said, 'That's the best I've ever seen Laura. The people are saying it, they are talking about working at Croc and Welcome, pride back into the community.' He said, 'I wanted to ring you up and say it's working.'

**CHAIR**—He was not ringing you up to nail you?

**Mr Galvin**—No, which was a change. But that is a positive.

**CHAIR**—That is wonderful. The Office of the Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations or ORAC: you are independent but the issue around ORAC and the changes in ORAC in terms of

the legislative changes and the encouragement of being a bit more proactive, do they cut across any of your work or is your work totally separate?

**Mr Galvin**—No, it does cut across our work because we have divested 117 properties approximately. Most of them are under ORAC because Aboriginal corporations hold titles to those properties. We are working closely with ORAC to develop governance and capacity building programs jointly for those Aboriginal corporations, the capacity to manage the ORAC requirements and also the capacity to manage the properties. There are two different angles there. We liaise with ORAC quite a lot. A handful of those corporations are in difficulty, therefore we need a good, close working relationship with them.

**CHAIR**—That is excellent.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Thanks very much for travelling to Adelaide.

**Mr Galvin**—No problems. I was coming back from Perth anyway.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Does the ILC have a relationship with CDEP? Does CDEP fit into how you operate?

**Mr Galvin**—For instance on Crocodile and Welcome we give the Laura CDEP scope to do works on the station. Most of our fencing work was done by Aboriginal contractors who have private contracting companies or non-Indigenous contractors who employ Indigenous people. For instance, there is a lot of fencing to be done around Aboriginal rock art. This is called the Quinkan Galleries which are now world famous, in the top 10 rock art in the world, so it is not a job that has to be rushed and done quickly. We give the opportunities to the CDEP to put in for jobs. We pay them a contract. If their workers work just a normal two days, they would get their CDEP. If not, they would have to be paid the award wages through that contract. So we give people opportunities and skills across a whole range of activities.

A very successful program is the TEALMES program in the Northern Territory—the Top End Aboriginal Employment Management Strategy—which is primarily for remote areas. It does use CDEP. That has given 50 people on CDEP real work in managing their land. The Timber Creek TEALMES operation has managed to go from just doing land management on their own country to now winning fencing contracts and weed contracts on other properties, so it has built up the skills of those people and actually given them real jobs. They have a year's worth of work contracted. The one at Gunbalanya in Arnhem Land has branched out to working for quarantine on contract, pig-shooting for the Export Board market.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—So what you are saying is that your observation through both the ILC and outside of it is that—am I correct in saying?—you are seeing a number of people who are on CDEP actually leave CDEP, or temporarily float on and off?

**Mr Galvin**—Temporarily float on and off. In the Timber Creek arrangement probably a few people have. We do have our concerns about CDEP in other aspects, which I can expand on if you wish me to.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Yes, please do.

**Mr Galvin**—We believe that CDEP can work against full-time employment. What we see on a number of our cattle properties is that we offer positions and those positions are usually taken up at the start of the season. We might have a camp of up to 14 people at Roebuck Plains and eight people at Myroodah/Luluigui, but as the season goes on people drop off because they can go back to CDEP without any discouragement or punishment. The chairperson of the ILC and the board are very concerned about this. The chairperson wrote to the then minister Amanda Vanstone saying that we should be looking at having say six trials across the ILC businesses or non-ILC businesses, where people could not return to income support while they have a job with the ILC. We find that you cannot develop people's skills if they drop on and off. There are numerous jobs on mainstream pastoral properties that are close to the ILC that cannot get people to work.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—I am not asking this to defend what they do but I need to understand: are you in a position to say what sort of real ballpark percentage of those jobs where people just give it up and go back are actually fairly strongly physically away from their country?

**Mr Galvin**—No, quite the opposite.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—I need to hear and understand what we are talking about because that is sometimes used as a reason.

**Mr Galvin**—Myroodah/Luluigui Station, in the Kimberleys, runs say 16,000 head of cattle and has 500 people within 25 minutes drive. It is very hard to get people to stick to it.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—What is your view of why?

**Mr Galvin**—It is a social malaise. There are not enough role models; there are problems with alcohol and drugs.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—A difficult community in that sense.

**Mr Galvin**—Yes. We have some extremely good people. Two young blokes who work for us there could be anything, but come halfway through the season and they are back not working with us and they can just drift back to the CDEP. There is no disincentive not to be with us. Two of them would be working full time for us throughout the year. One should be training up as the head stockman and then going on. This is a person of 21.

**CHAIR**—He could be a manager at some point.

**Mr Galvin**—No problem.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—We could have a discussion for hours, which we cannot—and this is getting into political philosophy to some degree—on whether, in a community like that as you describe it, the penalty is the way to do it or we come in at another level and say, 'What is it that is actually socially underpinning this community and how do we start at that level?' I do not think you can do anything without that being looked at.

**Mr Galvin**—It is two-pronged. I will table the letter from the chairperson.

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much.

**Mr Galvin**—The point is that the training, the support and the mentoring for those young people to prevent them from falling back into the community and the malaise that is there has to underpin their transformation to full-time work, because people have not worked full time before. They do not have role models either.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—We have non-Indigenous families in this country with exactly the same issue. Whether we talk about penalty in those cases or other things, it is the same thing. It is just a case of how you crack that nut, and that is a long discussion that we could have forever.

**CHAIR**—But it is very important.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Yes.

**Mr Galvin**—We see it as a tragedy, because we—

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—The potential is enormous.

**Mr Galvin**—have the potential there. In the Northern Territory, for instance, the board has just approved the continuation of the Indigenous Pastoral Project, which is a combination of the ILC, the land councils, the Northern Territory government, DEWR and the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association—1,200 jobs in the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory. They cannot get people to fill the jobs. We have had some good, successful training programs out of Elliott. That is breaking the cycle and it is breaking down stereotypes in the pastoral industry as well. That is why the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association being part of it is so good. We can see development happening there. In 10 years time 95 per cent of those jobs should be Indigenous, and the majority of those people would not be working today. So we have to transfer them over.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—You need some pretty fulsome programs. You are not suggesting this, and neither am I, but the penalty of CDEP being taken away—I am just hypothesising here—does not solve anything either. It is a case of asking, 'Where and how do we enter this community; at what level? How long will it take?' acknowledging that it will take that long and not getting carried away if it does.

**Mr Galvin**—It is part of the equation.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Exactly. That is part of the thinking as well.

**CHAIR**—That is an excellent discussion. In relation to the linkages with ICCs, you have a national perspective—

**Mr Galvin**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—but I would be interested to try and understand where the ILC and the ICCs come together. Is there any connection?

**Mr Galvin**—There are connections. We sit on coordination committees in most states. The ICCs are brought into projects that we are running with. For instance, we have one at Home Valley outside Kununurra. It is a parcel of property with a tourism business. I think we are running 21 trainees through the tourism side of that this year. The ICC and DEWR are involved in coordinating that. It is the same up on the Crocodile-Welcome Station. We were working in the COAG trials at Tjurabalan in Western Australia. We were principally running on the cattle side, and that has been quite successful.

We are working hand in hand with ICCs, as we see. For instance, up in the Pitjantjatjara lands, which is probably coordinated by an ICC out of Alice, they are running a program so that children do not get into petrol sniffing. We are supplying \$250,000 for that program, principally for vehicles and things, so that they can get the kids out and back into their country et cetera. Where there are programs that we can assist with and coordinate, we get on very well and work together.

**CHAIR**—This is a little bit off the track, but it goes back to the pastoral properties. As you would be aware, the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands—inalienable freehold title—were taken over from pastoralists 25-30 years. Now we see the reversal. We now have the pastoral industry coming back—some of the bigger operators coming back—and leasing the land and making investments into the land. That seems to be happening around Australia.

**Mr Galvin**—That is correct.

**CHAIR**—Some of your neighbours would be having that happen. In fact, you may be choosing to run some of your properties that way as well. Could you comment on what we saw was a fairly purist approach—the cultural reasons. You have already been there, but it reminds me about the outcomes that are occurring not just for the ILC—and you are probably doing some of that—but the Aboriginal land, which would not be ILC, going that way as well.

**Mr Galvin**—In the Northern Territory the Indigenous Pastoral Project, which I have mentioned, is looking to get Indigenous-held land that was once pastoral property, and some that is not, back into production. It is an extensive change for people who were, say, granted properties way back to 1973 to now say, 'The cattle business has not been running there for 20 years. There is no work out there. The reasons are lack of management or perhaps infighting within the group. Let's see if we can get this back into production.'

**CHAIR**—I have a few of those within my own electorate.

**Mr Galvin**—In the Northern Territory we go through a tender process. It is all open and above board. The community has to be onside. They get governance training through this. A lot of those places in the Northern Territory have quite substantial communities on them—100-odd people. This has been going for 2½ years, and we have 14,000 head of cattle back on those properties. We are under negotiation at the moment to increase that to a further 40,000 head.



In excess of 10,500 square kilometres of property has been brought back, so a million and a half hectares, with 53 seasonal contracting jobs, 21 successful traineeships, 60 participants at the partial training workshops in Alice Springs, in excess of 100 company directors trained, developing business plans over 11 properties of 21,000 square kilometres and over \$1.5 million worth of capital development. What is going on in the Northern Territory is a revolution. It has full support from federal and state governments, the two land councils and the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association.

**CHAIR**—That is good news.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—It can work when all the bits are in the right place.

**Mr Galvin**—On Wednesday the board agreed to fund this for another five years; \$2.6 million.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—It has also been given a length of time to allow it to—

**Mr Galvin**—It has to.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—That is the point.

**Mr Galvin**—It is breaking down things that have not occurred in the Territory, where you have pastoralists who were not happy because Indigenous land was not being managed. That has meant feral animals, weeds—

**CHAIR**—Cranky neighbours.

**Mr Galvin**—and cranky neighbours. It has built back a bit of esprit de corps there within people and it is working extremely well.

**CHAIR**—That is a wonderful comment. I am glad, by some fluke, that I asked the question. It is just wonderful. That has to go into our report as one of the great opportunities.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—What is the name of it again?

**Mr Galvin**—Indigenous Pastoral Program of the Northern Territory.

**CHAIR**—Will you table some of that?

**Mr Galvin**—I can table a brief on that.

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—That would be terrific.

**CHAIR**—Are you using FarmBis?

**Mr Galvin**—Absolutely. We have working relationships, joint funding relationships, with South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia, Queensland, Northern Territory. It works extremely well.

**CHAIR**—You have raised another question, which is critical to this issue in my opinion—I think in the committee’s opinion—of business and enterprise. You talk about the training of 110 directors.

**Mr Galvin**—Company directors, yes, through FarmBis.

**CHAIR**—Through FarmBis, okay. I had not made the connection.

**Mr Galvin**—That is a joint program that we do in the Northern Territory. FarmBis funds 50 per cent and we fund the other 50 per cent.

**CHAIR**—I use this fellow quite regularly. This is from within the mining industry, an Indigenous mine owner. He said, ‘I don’t want anything from the government except an opportunity.’ That was music to my ears, but it is revolutionary. I think that is an appropriate word to use.

**Mr Galvin**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—But how important do you regard those directorships to be?

**Mr Galvin**—Absolutely important. In the Northern Territory people are then getting lease fees for these properties, and they have to know how to manage those funds or there is no point in getting the lease fees. There are employment opportunities, because there are now working cattle there, and some of them are getting substantial funds. For instance, there is a group at Balbarini and at Carpentaria station in the Northern Territory, who will be getting access to about \$150,000 per year. I mention them; they would be proud to know I have. They have made a decision themselves that that money is to be in a trust fund and is not to be touched. The lease is a 10-year lease. They will have near \$1.5 million with interest and whatever and then they will decide at the 10-year period whether they want to get back into cattle or not. You need the governance. You need to know how to manage the money. It is absolutely crucial. And people need to work together, as well, for a common purpose rather than all going off at tangents.

I think a very good example is the ex-Durack property, Kildirk Station, on the border of Western Australia, which has been subject to one of those ‘dynasty’ programs, where you see the tragedy of what has happened there. That has now been leased out to Consolidated, a private operator. About 500 square kilometres is for the groups there and they are running their own herd in conjunction with the private operator, who is teaching them how to work cattle again and how to manage it as a business. I was out there when they did their first muster in 15 years and brought in 1,700 head of cattle, and the pride in that community was just amazing. We had 20 people working there in the yards. They are getting skills again.

There was a considerable amount of corporate governance work that went into Kildirk to enable them to come to the conclusion that they could lease their property and that it was not, as the chair mentioned, giving away their property. There was a big mind change—it was just

enormous—and without that governance work with them, they would never have come to that conclusion. You have to underpin their decisions by working it through in a corporate governance way: understanding what a lessee will do; understanding that the community cannot go and leave the gates open; understanding that they cannot go and knock over a killer et cetera. It is about being able to work together and to have a mutually beneficial arrangement.

**CHAIR**—After so many years the cattle would have been pretty feral and I imagine you would have had to have some sort of insurance.

**Mr Galvin**—It was a sight to see. Amazingly enough, though, there was a tremendous amount of good Brahman blood going through a lot of those cattle. There was a Brahman herd that went feral over a 15-year period.

**CHAIR**—It would be almost like discovering those cattle that escaped from the First Fleet. Thank you, David. We are indebted to you.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Thank you very much.

**Mr Galvin**—No problem.

**CHAIR**—There is one further imposition. You may not be able to do it, but it seems to me that there is still a story here.

**Mr Galvin**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—You may have done your projections within ILC about where you are at.

**Mr Galvin**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—You started from, say, the 2000 audit.

**Mr Galvin**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—The 2000 audit to now, and then some projections. The movement in employment, it seems to me, would have been huge. It is outside your brief, but there seems to be the impact on your neighbours and a whole lot of things that you have engendered, as well.

**Mr Galvin**—Absolutely.

**CHAIR**—If you have something on that, you might give us a bit of projection.

**Mr Galvin**—Shall do.

**CHAIR**—It is deeply appreciated.

**Mr Galvin**—But that will become exponential when we transfer what we were mentioning before about CDEP into jobs, which means not being able to just return to CDEP but taking up

those jobs in the mainstream pastoral industry. That is where the key to employment of Indigenous people in the rural and remote areas belongs.

**CHAIR**—If you get those signals right, it is a very large leap ahead.

**Mr Galvin**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—I can talk about some of the older Indigenous people, some of whom would have passed on by now. Their eyes just light up when they think back 20 to 30 years, and then they look at this period and—

**Mr Galvin**—And they dim very quickly.

**CHAIR**—Exactly.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—You are going to table that letter you wrote to the minister, too, aren't you?

**Mr Galvin**—Yes.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—I will be very interested to see that. I am sitting here now, Barry, just imagining what the ILC or us or anybody else can do in terms of the whole-of-government approach. Again, this is not critical. I am just thinking about the whole-of-government approach to the solutions that are required in communities like the one we have talked about, and how we come to grips with what we really need to do and allow the time for it to happen and have the resources there to encourage it to happen.

**Proceedings suspended from 12.07 pm to 12.55 pm**

**CLEGHORN, Mr Leigh, Manager, Umoona Aged Care Aboriginal Corporation**

**CHAIR**—I declare this committee open again and welcome Mr Leigh Cleghorn. I am obliged to remind you that these are proceedings of the parliament. We do not require evidence to be given under oath, but I need to preface my comments with that remark. Thank you for your submission. You may like to add some opening comments for a few minutes, then we will have a fairly informal discussion about some of the very good points in your submission.

**Mr Cleghorn**—I am the manager of Aboriginal aged care in Coober Pedy, but I have had around 20 years experience with Aboriginal organisations in Central Australia in management, community development, project management, adult education and training, and I thank you again for the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry.

I want to go over a couple of things from the original submission. Umoona Aged Care is a successful aged care facility by any measure, providing residential and day care. It is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year. The facility is only three years old. Coober Pedy is a very remote location, as you probably know, with very high unemployment levels and no existing qualified workforce when we went there.

The service delivery that we have is successful, I believe, for several reasons, two of them being the Aboriginal community board controlling the facility—the elders form the board; they are the clients as well as the controllers of the organisation—and the strategies that we have for staff selection, motivation, retention and training. For that to be successful, we need to provide the opportunities first of all for accredited training and create innovative programs. We have created an apprenticeship in aged care that we have worked through with the state department of education and training, Rob Lucas in particular. We have a three-year apprenticeship in aged care that we started there. I believe it is the first time at least in South Australia, if not Australia, that that has been done.

The training for dealing with aged care in Coober Pedy also needs to take into account the clients' traditional beliefs and background, which is a strong part of what we do using CDEP. CDEP is important to us. I know that CDEP has its detractors for lots of good reasons. However, by using it to create legitimate workplace employment for people—the way CDEP, as I understand it, was always meant to work—it has been very beneficial. Every permanent person now at Umoona Aged Care, apart from myself, started on CDEP two days a week, extra work from aged care slowly building into a traineeship and full-time work; so CDEP can work.

The key points in the submission are clearly defined selection criteria, individually tailoring training courses, effective mentoring. It includes mentoring by the elders themselves. The elders—our old people, clients and residents—take an active part in mentoring all the workers there, including me; very much so. There is not a day goes past we do not learn something from the old people at Umoona Aged Care.

Other key points are using CDEP, normal things such as comfortable, supportive workplaces and providing good financial opportunities for staff, such as extra shifts and overtime. We offer counselling not just at work but outside of work. It is an approach of having to know what goes

on in people's lives. I am sure you are aware that Aboriginal people's lives can be quite full of drama, disruption and disadvantage at times. You have to be aware of those things when creating good programs.

Regarding mutual obligation and reward, we have strict guidelines. We work within very strict parameters at aged care. People like structure and there is a mutual obligation. We have responsibilities as workers, all of us, towards old people, to the clients, and we have responsibilities to each other in the way that we work together. Those things need to be understood.

I am sure it is understood that all these ideas have supported training and a comfortable workplace. They are not new. They are generally accepted as essential to positive outcomes in employment. I think the difference, as I said in the submission, is constant, concentrated hard work to turn that theory into reality. It is not as simple as it sounds. People are well aware of all the things that go towards good employment but keeping it going and doing the hard work to make sure it is working all the time is itself hard work.

We use an informal research process of always revisiting what we have done, replanning, trying other things, reviewing, constantly doing that. You need to allow time for things to work or not work, then perhaps giving them up and trying something else. You need to be flexible, adapting to changes constantly on a daily, weekly, even hourly basis sometimes. They are the main points from the original submission.

I would like to add things that have happened there since May last year. We are very proud that we won a mainstream award from the Minister for Vocational and Technical Education, Gary Hardgrave, an award for excellency in apprenticeships and traineeships. There were 22 of those national awards, I think. We are the only Aboriginal organisation that won one and about the only service organisation, I think, going by the other people. We are quite proud of that.

To go alongside that, we had our HACC appraisal. All the HACC services, Home and Community Care services, are appraised every three years. It is like an accreditation process. We scored 20 out of 20 for that. We were very pleased with that. That is the other side of it—that, yes, training and employment, but we are there to provide a service. We are told it is unheard of to get 20 out of 20, especially for your first three-yearly appraisal.

Probably most importantly, there are two senior management positions beneath my position that do all the work. Those two people left in the past 12 months and have been replaced by Aboriginal people from within the organisation, who started on CDEP like everybody else and are now the HACC team leader and the finance manager of the organisation, so our program works. What we do works, and the energy and hard work put into it is worthwhile.

The present challenges we have in this transitional process are that we need to consolidate our new structure. I am the only non-Aboriginal person in a full-time position at aged care now and when I leave there will not be any.

It has always been the plan to progress towards that, but we need to consolidate now for a while—more mentoring and more mentor training—and there are difficulties. It has not worked perfectly, of course. We are going to have to spend about a year, I would think, putting in some

extra hard work at the level of those two positions. They are perfectly prepared to do it—really keen—and that will see the organisation grow and continue to be a model, I believe, in how things can work, particularly in Coober Pedy, which is not an easy place.

In conclusion, successful Indigenous employment requires an understanding of the total situation and concentrated, constant hard work put into innovative training, mentoring and support. As I said, I believe that the solutions already exist. They just need to be entrenched.

**CHAIR**—Thank you, Leigh. You are right, CDEP has had many lives, many comments and a long history, but for all of that, given the job situation in a community like Coober Pedy, it has had its positive side as well.

**Mr Cleghorn**—True.

**CHAIR**—Could you comment on any changes that might help facilitate an improvement in the years ahead.

**Mr Cleghorn**—I would like to see it concentrate outside the traditional areas that it seems to have been bogged down in, particularly in Central Australia and remote areas. Since its inception, it seems to be a given that it becomes the rubbish removal organisation, the cleaning up around the place organisation and the art and craft centre for women. That is not really leading to serious long-term employment. More people outside the general area of knowledge of CDEP should know more about it and know the uses that can be made of it. We do not have CDEP approaching us to place people; we find people that want to work for us and we go to CDEP and say, 'We'd like these people put on CDEP,' and they will come to Umoona Aged Care. We will look after everything they do. They do not really have to have anything to do with Bungala CDEP. We will send in the time sheets. They are employees the same as every other employee.

I do not believe that CDEP sees itself as providing more than those basic services. I have run CDEPs in communities in the Northern Territory, and there is not the expectation that it is a serious pathway into employment. One of the things that they have come along with quite recently is getting people off CDEP and saying they should be in full-time employment. We look like taking over the aged care service in Oodnadatta. They have simply taken the workers out there off CDEP and said the organisation could afford to employ them full time—a sort of arbitrary decision that is going to make it very hard. There are probably three people that will lose work out there because of that.

Sure, I understand the policy Australia-wide for getting people off CDEP, of putting pressure on organisations to employ people full time just because they have been on CDEP for 12 months or whatever. But I think there needs to be a bit of room for a case by case assessment, particularly in remote areas. The way it works now, it is very handy for us to be able to have two days a week where we are not paying the wages, but we do not have people just for two days. We always have them for more days and give them extra work to make it a livable wage, with the view of them working for us full time.

I would prefer for us to decide when is the right time rather than have something forced on us that we simply cannot cope with. It finishes up with the people not being able to have work at all.

**CHAIR**—Particularly given the reality of the job market in many parts of Australia.

**Mr Cleghorn**—Yes. Coober Pedy is one area and Oodnadatta is another. Where on earth are you going to find another job in Oodnadatta?

**CHAIR**—That is right.

**Mr SLIPPER**—How far from Adelaide are those two places?

**Mr Cleghorn**—Coober Pedy is about 800 kilometres and Oodnadatta is another 200 kilometres on from that to the north-east. Coober Pedy is on the Stuart Highway but Oodnadatta really is nowhere.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Would they be in your electorate, Mr Chairman?

**CHAIR**—They are, indeed. That is a fair way, and it is only halfway to Alice Springs.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—I have never been to Oodnadatta.

**CHAIR**—In your submission you talk about:

Some of the personal stories of lives turned around, futures to look forward to and plain survival ...

This is the guts of some of this story.

**Mr Cleghorn**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—Can we talk a little bit about that.

**Mr Cleghorn**—I am really glad you asked that. I was hoping I would be able to fit that into a question somewhere, because that really is the important part of it. Anecdotally, a couple of instances perhaps: an Aboriginal woman in her early 40s started aged care work on CDEP. It was the first real job she had ever had in her life. She had had a few problems in life with substance misuse and a few other things, including poverty. The oldies helped her, and she helped herself as well with a traineeship. She gained a Certificate III in Community Services (Aged Care) and is employable anywhere now as an aged care worker. In fact, she is an extraordinarily valued member. She owns a car, breeds dogs now and has a completely different life. She is someone I am very proud of.

We tend to go in families at Aged Care a bit. We have families of people who work there. There was a couple who came to us on CDEP and, as I said, we told CDEP we would like these two people to work for us. They said, 'Oh, them? Okay. It's the last chance they get, though. They're always moving around everywhere. They're hopeless. They won't stay with you.' That was over three years ago now. The husband is completing the third year of his apprenticeship. It



is not in aged care, although he is a great aged care worker. He is actually doing youth work, because that is what he wants to do. We do not see ourselves as restricting to aged care. We are a training organisation. He is finishing that off. His wife is our new finance manager since the last non-Indigenous person left. They have since had two babies. They have a four-wheel drive, which they are buying. They are good stories.

Another one that I hope will turn into a good story is a young fellow that started with us last year. Having young Aboriginal men doing aged care is quite difficult anyway and it is quite unusual. High-level aged care is not an easy job and it is not an attractive job. That young fellow was 16 then. He is doing his certificate III. He is fantastic with the old people. He had been having trouble at school and in his life, as a lot of young people do in Coober Pedy. Aged Care was very good to him and he is very good to Aged Care. He had an event in his life, just before Christmas, that has been very sad. That put him off the rails again and he stopped coming to work in mid-December, but we have been working with him and his family and he is now starting back at school doing year 11. We have arranged with the school for him to do a lot of his work at Aged Care—not TAFE subjects as such but to finish his certificate III. His English teacher says he could do a lot of work as project based work, doing work with old people.

We have an oral history program, a grandparents' knowledge program. He can do a lot of his core normal year 11 subjects as project work at Aged Care and I am hopeful that his life, which has never been easy for him, will get back on track. He is a fine young man and I think he will do well.

There are lots of other stories. I just like to see people down the shops on Thursday nights, going shopping with their kids and buying things for their kids. That is quite an achievement in a lot of remote Aboriginal places, as is people getting to the checkout counter and not having to worry about how many things they are going to have to take back. They might seem like little wins, but I see a lot of them as huge wins, showing the effect that a functioning organisation can have on a place.

**CHAIR**—They are vital wins, aren't they?

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Thank you very much, Leigh, for getting yourself down from Coober Pedy to talk with us. It is very good to have you here.

**Mr Cleghorn**—That is fine. Thanks. We think it is necessary.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—I want you, if you can, to elaborate a little bit for me. It is an aged care facility.

**Mr Cleghorn**—Yes.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—I think you have 18 residents.

**Mr Cleghorn**—We are funded for 14 but we have usually somewhere between 15 and 20.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—What category are they?

**Mr Cleghorn**—We are funded for six high-level care beds and eight independent living or low-level care beds. We also have 50 to 60 day clients. We have a day centre built into the facility. We do not have 50 or 60 each day, but we would have 20 to 30 people in there every day.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—And the day care centre runs five days a week?

**Mr Cleghorn**—The day care centre is five days a week, seven till seven. We pick them up in the morning. We take people shopping. We provide meals and washing facilities. Advocacy is a big thing: keeping people's lives on track, organisation, dealing with any number of organisations and companies that they have to deal with, those sorts of things.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Is that HACC funded?

**Mr Cleghorn**—That is the HACC program, yes. We mix the two together in work time, but of course in funding we have to keep it separate.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—On the staff training that you are doing, I think you said, did you not, that you are the only non-Indigenous person full time there now?

**Mr Cleghorn**—I am now, yes.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—What is the make-up of the staff? Are there enrolled nurses and aged care workers? What sort of mix do you have?

**Mr Cleghorn**—We have administrative staff. The finance manager is doing financial services. It used to be called accountancy; it is financial services now. Admin assistants have done front-line management courses. The workers do Certificate III in Community Services (Aged Care Work). They can go on to do enrolled nursing if they like, or youth work. For our high-level care, we contract. We are right next to the Coober Pedy Hospital. We own the rooms that our six high-care beds are in, but they are actually under the hospital roof. It is a unique situation that is being tried there for the first time. We contract the hospital to supply certain services, particularly the nursing services. We do not have to employ nurses. We pay the hospital 130-something thousand dollars a year out of our normal grant. We are funded, like anyone else, on a beds basis and so we provide, under a contract, a memorandum of understanding of what they will do, who will do what, how much for, those sorts of things.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—You would have in there somewhere—probably within HACC and probably within residential care—some dementia type cases as well?

**Mr Cleghorn**—Very much so, quite a high level, even with the independent living people. It is well known that Aboriginal people's life expectancy is under 50. The old people, the last group of people who were born in the bush and grew up in the bush, we have had there and some have been over 100. We have a couple in their 90s. The women, who are still very active in teaching grandkids, and some of whom the chairperson knows, are well into their 70s. They are extraordinarily active.

They have all buried most of their children and quite a few of their grandchildren, but they had that completely different start in life and they are extraordinarily healthy and active.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—It just shows what that different start in life can do.

**Mr Cleghorn**—They do live long enough to develop dementia as well. There are younger ones who have alcohol induced dementia. Yes, a lot of our independent residents have various stages of dementia.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Where is the training conducted for the workers that we are referring to?

**Mr Cleghorn**—We do it ourselves. There has to be a registered training provider, which is TAFE. It is based in Port Augusta and Kadina, hundreds of kilometres away.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—A long way away.

**Mr Cleghorn**—A long way away. They visit a couple of times a year. They have workbooks. We provide a day off a week. We used to do a full day a week. Now we do 1½ hours a day instead, because we could not afford to keep that up. But people do not do their study day at home; they come to work. We have a place set up for them with a computer with internet access.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—A classroom type environment.

**Mr Cleghorn**—And they have me and the other management people as mentors, and so they come to work to do their training.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—And where are they from, primarily?

**Mr Cleghorn**—Mainly from Coober Pedy, particularly originally. A lot move to Port Augusta and then come back again. In the main they are related to Coober Pedy families.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—When you go through the training process with these people, what are your retention levels in terms of longer term? You have only been open since 2000, but your retention level is pretty healthy?

**Mr Cleghorn**—Yes. When that report was done and we won the Minister's Award we had had 16 people start traineeships and 16 had either finished or were still going. We had a 100 per cent retention rate at that time.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—That is just fantastic to hear.

**Mr Cleghorn**—Yes. I worked in adult education 20 years ago when I first went to the AP lands. Yes, I understand how good that is! This young man that has gone back to school—we will keep him at it to retain our 100 per cent level, too.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Leigh, I do not know whether you can answer this, but if you had to say in one sentence what it is that you have got going there that is leading to all of that success,

given that so many people tell us how hard all this is, what do you think it is? What is the kernel of all of this that is making it work as well as it does for you there? It is a big question, in a sense.

**Mr Cleghorn**—I cannot do anything in one sentence.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—As many sentences as you need, Leigh!

**Mr Cleghorn**—I think there are two main things. Our members, the old people themselves, are incredibly supportive. They take their obligation towards grandchildren very seriously. It is a traditional obligation that skips a generation. You have responsibilities for your own generation, you are disharmonic with the next one and then you are harmonic with the one after that, and they take that very seriously. They feel let down in themselves if they do not carry it on. They see the destruction and despair around them more than we do, because it was not always like that in their lives. Their support and encouragement and mentoring of people is just critical. The other thing, really, from a whitefella's point of view, is hard work. Yes, it is hard. You bet it's hard! But it is so rewarding when you see how things can be done, and you simply have to stick at it. Yes, it is hard. It is meant to be hard, but it is worthwhile.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Is there anything at the federal level that could be done to make it easier or remove any blockages? If you could say, 'This is what I want at the federal level,' what would it be?

**Mr Cleghorn**—What I would like? Nobody for a long while will be able to remove the difficulty and the hard work. It is going to be hard work regardless, because money does not fix those things. I think that has been proved over many years.

However, I would like to see more accountability put on organisations, built in with an incentive scheme to help with training; but not just given for training. The people have to have a plan of what they are going to do and prove they are going to do it for this incentive on top of their normal funding. There needs to be accountability in their other funding as well. Too many organisations are allowed to go too far into dysfunction before anything is done about it. By the time something is done, it is too late.

There are funding agreements and rules and, yes, not all of them are fair all the time. I know that. But letting things go so far and then blaming the victim, in a way, when the accountability from federal and state funding bureaucracies is not making people accountable enough when things first start to go wrong and then expecting it to be fixed, is not the answer. The bureaucracy should be having more of a hand in what is going on all the time, perhaps a bit of input before it goes too far, so that people do not get an expectation of, 'That's how things are. That's how we can operate. The money keeps coming.'

Noel Pearson's stuff I find really encouraging, also Peter Sutton's. Peter Sutton is a bit more basic, less the economic side of things. When I read the things that they are writing now, the more contemporary view of Aboriginal affairs, I say to myself, 'They are writing about me. This is what I see every day. It actually is what is going on.' I would like that approach to things taken a lot further, a lot more put into it because I think it is possible. There was a time where I

probably did not think it was, that this bandaid stuff will go on forever, but I do believe it is possible to change things around.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Just to give me some background, Coober Pedy has how many people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous?

**Mr Cleghorn**—They say the population of Coober Pedy is about 3½ thousand. I think it is probably a bit more than that. The statistics say the Indigenous population is around 400, but the research that we and another organisation have done indicates that to be closer to 800. Aboriginal people do not fill in census forms a lot. There is a transient population from the Pitjantjatjara lands and other places that would add at least another 200 to that at times, so there would be an Indigenous population of anywhere between 600 and 1,000 at times.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Are there other aged care facilities in Coober Pedy?

**Mr Cleghorn**—Not facilities. There is a non-Indigenous home and community care service run by the hospital and health service but not a facility as such.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Are you able to cooperate?

**Mr Cleghorn**—Our HACC services have very different needs. I meet with them from time to time and we help each other when we can. The hospital of course is already helping us because we contract them to do high-level care.

**Mr SLIPPER**—It sounds like a really good idea, to be honest.

**Mr Cleghorn**—It is a good idea. It needs a lot more work done on it. This was a pilot, because the two cultures are so different. I do not mean cultures as in Indigenous and non-Indigenous, I mean the business type culture of the hospital being part of a huge bureaucracy and Umoona Aged Care being an independently incorporated Aboriginal organisation with a board of management and that is where the decision stops; so we have very different ways of carrying out our responsibilities. Those are the cultural challenges I meant, but we are working very hard and very positively on both sides to overcome those.

**Mr SLIPPER**—I might have missed it but I did not see in your submission the number of employees that you have.

**Mr Cleghorn**—It varies. We have 16 at the moment.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Sixteen full-time equivalents?

**Mr Cleghorn**—No, that includes casuals. Full-time equivalents would be 11 or 12.

**Mr SLIPPER**—In terms of the standards for your centre, are you judged by the Department of Health and Ageing by exactly the same criteria as non-Indigenous aged care facilities?

**Mr Cleghorn**—Yes. We are not accredited. We do not go through accreditation because Health and Ageing have two ways. You can do the accredited pathway, under the act, or flexible

funding. We are a flexibly funded aged care service, which means we get a different type of funding. It is looked at in a different way. We have a contract with them and we have to have certain standards of occupational health and safety, building standards and service.

**Mr SLIPPER**—But you could be flexibly funded even if you were non-Indigenous? It is an option?

**Mr Cleghorn**—Yes, as I understand it. The HACC part is definitely the same. There are national HACC standards that are the same everywhere.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Do you have any photographs of your centre? I am really interested in what you are doing there. Not here, I suppose?

**Mr Cleghorn**—Not here. I can certainly email you some.

**Mr SLIPPER**—I would like to see those. You say that you are the last non-Indigenous person. The 16 that you have all started on the CDEP program?

**Mr Cleghorn**—Yes.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Sorry, you said there were nine full-time equivalents.

**Mr Cleghorn**—About that, yes. At the moment we have one non-Indigenous casual. We have had other non-Indigenous staff in the past. One of our full-time people is not an Indigenous Australian. She is Maori. I just count her the same way, but she is not actually Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander. Perhaps there is a difference. But we have had non-Indigenous casual staff before and we probably will in the future.

**Mr SLIPPER**—How would your costing structure differ from a non-Indigenous institution in a similar locality?

**Mr Cleghorn**—It does not. There is no difference in the fundings on a formula on number of beds.

**Mr SLIPPER**—You seem to have an ability to give cultural leave. Presumably when a person is not working, that person would not be paid for that time and that is how you get 16 out of 16 people working in nine full-time equivalent positions? How could you afford, for instance, to give paid leave constantly for cultural purposes, if you are funded the same way as a non-Indigenous organisation?

**Mr Cleghorn**—There is only one person who has utilised that cultural leave and we do pay him on that. We see it as a very important part of his professional development. He is looking after old men. It needs to be a traditional initiated man to do that properly and, as much as possible, we do that. How do we afford it? We get extra funding from any number of places, that we apply for all over the place. We get training funds. The Commonwealth has given us an extra amount of money to cover training, backfill for people when they are training. We get respite money from Wesley care. We have considerable supplementary funding from the Department of

Health and Ageing. It is called viability supplement. At the moment that is \$117,000 a year. I was talking to them this morning and it is going to carry on next year.

**Mr SLIPPER**—So you are not actually funded the same way as non-Indigenous organisations. You might be with respect to aged care, but you do get this other assistance to enable you to do what you seek to do.

**Mr Cleghorn**—Yes. It is not automatic. They could get it too if they applied for it and it was seen that there was a need. We do not get it just because we are Indigenous. It is called a viability supplement but it is not necessarily an Indigenous thing. We need it to do what we are doing in a remote location. We also collect rent. All our residents pay rent. That is all part of the agreement. They pay a percentage of their pension. That does not matter if it is Indigenous or non-Indigenous aged care. That is the same all over the country.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Do you know of any other organisation that does similar work with similar results in other parts of the country?

**Mr Cleghorn**—In aged care?

**Mr SLIPPER**—Yes.

**Mr Cleghorn**—Not personally, no. I know of several other Indigenous aged care places, which are more focused on nursing and high-level palliative care.

**Mr SLIPPER**—I realise that there is a definition of being Indigenous, and I know what that is, but given the remoteness of Coober Pedy and given that you say that some of your residents were born in the bush, would you have a high level of Indigenous people who are wholly Indigenous, if that is the right word?

**Mr Cleghorn**—Yes, I know what you mean.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Wholly Indigenous or close to being wholly Indigenous?

**Mr Cleghorn**—It is difficult, isn't it?

**Mr SLIPPER**—Do you know what I mean?

**Mr Cleghorn**—Yes, I do, absolutely.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Because the cultural challenges you would have with people of that origin would be quite different from the cultural challenges you would have in my own area, where you could not even identify most Indigenous people as being Indigenous upon meeting them.

**Mr Cleghorn**—We have a very high level of people who have lived traditionally most of their lives.

**Mr SLIPPER**—There were once simple words to use but you cannot use those words any more.

**Mr Cleghorn**—People say ‘traditional’. I hate using that word, so I avoid it, but I have not come up with a better one.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Do you know what I mean?

**Mr Cleghorn**—I absolutely do. There are difficulties. English may be their second or third language. A lot of our workers have non-Indigenous parents and/or grandparents, because they are younger, but the clients are largely people who have Aboriginal parents and grandparents.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Aboriginal art is quite a passion with me. I see that you do painting at the centre.

**Mr Cleghorn**—Yes.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Do people sell the paintings? Are some of them quite successful painters?

**Mr Cleghorn**—We do not have any renowned or—

**Mr SLIPPER**—No Possums?

**Mr Cleghorn**—No Possums. He was at a community I was at once, though, at Yuelamu, Mount Allan.

**Mr SLIPPER**—You have your walls covered with his art, have you?

**Mr Cleghorn**—I would not be here if I did. They wouldn’t be on the wall any more either! The women do a lot of painting. They still like doing it, but they are not paintings that fetch a lot of money. They do more woodwork, carvings and making baskets with spinifex and emu feathers. They produce bush medicine and sell that, but it is not a sustainable business, or anything approaching it, and it will not be.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Are the Indigenous people in your centre from the same tribe or people or are they a mix of people from that part of South Australia?

**Mr Cleghorn**—They are virtually all Yankunytjatjara or Pitjantjatjara people but mainly just Yankunytjatjara-Antikirinya. Coober Pedy is right in Antikirinya country, and Yankunytjatjara is the overlap. They are mainly Yankunytjatjara-Antikirinya people—the same family.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Thank you.

**CHAIR**—You have reminded me of the older people and their health issues. There was a fellow in Port Augusta, who has since passed on, who lived to be well over 100. I think he passed on about six years ago. He served in two wars. You may even know who I am referring to. He was a well-recognised Aboriginal soldier who lived to be over 100. It is a really telling comment, isn’t it, on the issues of the last 50 years?

**Mr Cleghorn**—Yes.



**CHAIR**—There is a subset, and it is perhaps more of a state issue than a federal issue, but you reminded me of it with the migration this time of year and those issues that the Coober Pedy council is trying to deal with et cetera.

**Mr Cleghorn**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—Do you find a need to offer some respite? Is there much demand on your services in that migratory approach or doesn't it really affect you?

**Mr Cleghorn**—There is an enormous demand on our services, and we have to institute different security procedures. People come to Coober Pedy for any number of reasons—to access health services, schooling, visit family—which are probably quite true. The majority come to drink and cause trouble, and they are very successful at it, and they all have relatives at Aged Care. Our oldies' first rule is no alcohol. They never had and, of course, they have seen what it does to families. Starting a couple of weeks ago, we now lock the doors at lunchtime every day. We are now closed between 12 and one, if everybody is inside, just so that people can eat. We have had people in literally taking the food off the oldies' plates. The transient population in Coober Pedy is an enormous problem.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Where do they stay when they come under those circumstances? Do they camp outside?

**Mr Cleghorn**—Yes, some will camp out in the scrub. Others will just impose themselves on people who have houses. One of our old clients, who I am sure the chairperson knows, was brought up by Daisy Bates at Ooldea. It is a great story that she has to tell. She is fiercely independent and still lives in her own little house in Coober Pedy, and she was in my office in tears early this week because the drunks from Indulkana—her family—had broken through the door and made a mess and would not go away. She has to be in her 80s.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Gosh!

**Mr Cleghorn**—It is not fair.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—The chair might remember this. We were on another inquiry and we were up north somewhere. We were in a facility where similar things were happening. People were coming in from out of town and just setting up out on the lawn outside under the trees. Do you remember that?

**CHAIR**—Yes.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—They were basically just setting up as an adjunct to the facility. It was very difficult.

**Mr Cleghorn**—The old people have this responsibility and they are still living by their rules, but the relatives are using their rules—

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—And you are in the middle trying to cope with it all.

**Mr Cleghorn**—Yankunytjatjara-Pitjantjatjara people have a term ‘ngapartji ngapartji’, which is reciprocity. The whole culture is based on this. You do not have to say ‘please’ and ‘thank you’; it is built into this ngapartji ngapartji idea. Of course, the oldies live by that, but their young relatives who are influenced by other ideas simply make use of it and make old people’s lives more difficult.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—I am really pleased to hear that you are now there and that this facility is operating, because it was not there at the time that we were there. We are going back to 1998, 1999, 2000.

**CHAIR**—We were still agitating to get the thing built, weren’t we?

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Yes. I would like to think that if any one of us ever hit Coober Pedy, we could give you a ring and come and see the facility.

**Mr Cleghorn**—Absolutely. Please do.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Not that I am planning to go there, but I would like to think we could do that.

**Mr Cleghorn**—Yes, of course.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—There is not a lot of Indigenous aged care stuff around, so when we hear of it we like to see how it works.

**CHAIR**—It is quite extensive.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Yes, it is growing.

**Mr Cleghorn**—We often joke that one of the main reasons for our success at aged care is that none of us know anything about aged care. We have no background in health, aged care or anything else.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—We won’t tell the aged care people!

**Mr Cleghorn**—They know that and they are perfectly pleased with us.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—That is probably not a bad philosophy to have.

**Mr SLIPPER**—If you have 16 residents and a population of either 400 or maybe 800 Indigenous people, do you find you have a huge waiting list? Can you meet the demand?

**Mr Cleghorn**—Yes. We have a large waiting list. It is also impacted by the AP lands. The closest communities to us are on Pitjantjatjara-Yankunytjatjara lands. Indulkana, Mimili and Fregon are all Yankunytjatjara communities as well and are all of the same families. We have high-care residents and low-care residents who are actually from there, not from Coober Pedy. We have this extra load put on us because of some of the dysfunction in the AP lands in various areas in the provision of services.

**Mr SLIPPER**—AP lands stands for?

**CHAIR**—Anangu Pitjantjatjara.

**Mr Cleghorn**—Anangu Pitjantjatjara, at the top north-west corner of South Australia. I have worked there for 10 years.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Pit lands.

**Mr Cleghorn**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—Is there anything you would like to conclude with, Leigh?

**Mr Cleghorn**—No. Thanks a lot for letting me have a say. I would like to thank you for the questions. I was wondering what I was going to be asked, but they were things that I think really do go to the nub of what the issues are. Thank you very much.

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much.

**Proceedings suspended from 1.46 pm to 2.00 pm**

**CROCKER, Mrs Lynette Alice, Co-chair, Kurna Yerta Inc, Native Title Management Committee**

**MARKIC, Ms Dianne, HR adviser, Kurna Heritage Board**

**CHAIR**—I welcome Lynette Crocker. Do you have any comments to make on the capacity in which you appear?

**Mrs Crocker**—I am a Kurna elder of this country. I have just reached that stage, just last year, turning 60. I am interim chair of the Kurna Heritage Board. I am co-chair of the Kurna native title management committee, which is known as Kurna Yerta. Kurna is the people; Yerta means the land. I am also on the board of Natural Resource Management and on the steering committee for a four-nation group: Kurna, of course; Ngarrindjeri; Ngadjuri; and Permangk. I have also just been appointed on the dolphin sanctuary for Port Adelaide Enfield Council. They are just a few things I do.

**CHAIR**—You are pretty busy.

**Mr SLIPPER**—So metropolitan Indigenous peoples?

**Mrs Crocker**—Yes.

**Ms Markic**—I am a human resource practitioner and technical writer. I also devise quality assurance systems. I have worked with Mrs Lynette Crocker in a number of the Indigenous groups that she has belonged to over a number of years. Today primarily I am here as adjutant or assistant for the Kurna heritage group.

**CHAIR**—We do not require you to give evidence under oath, but these are proceedings of the parliament. Mrs Crocker, would you like to say a few words about the heritage board or the general issues? We have had the Onkaparinga council representative in, representing the local government areas.

**Mrs Crocker**—Who was that? Paul Tulloch?

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Yes, it was.

**CHAIR**—So we have got a little bit of a picture but you might like to say a few words about how you see it and how it is going.

**Mrs Crocker**—I suppose he talked about the Tappa Iri business centre and the Tappa Iri agreement.

**CHAIR**—Yes.

**Mrs Crocker**—I think the Tappa Iri agreement has been a landmark process that has happened in the four southern councils. That took a while to develop. It was two years of hard

slog to get it to where it is, through the elected members process and the community survey process. It was not all easy. We did have some knockers, who happened to be with Marion council. They were the ratepayers—the rights for ratepayers association—and they felt that we should not have been getting any of this help, and since the demise of ATSIC everybody is mainstream, so we should take it on the chin like everybody else does.

But I see the Tappa Iri agreement and the work that we have done with the four councils as the first step. It is not a treaty, it is an agreement, but to me this agreement may outweigh a treaty, in the context of how everybody else sees a treaty.

The reason for the Tappa Iri agreement is simply this: when we went for native title, which is about crown land, there was very little crown land left over our country. A lot of it had been extinguished. There were small parcels of crown land, and there still are, and all along the coast is part of the crown land development. The crown land became freehold land, the freehold land became community land and the community land is now in the control and care of the councils. That is one of the main reasons why we were looking for land to bury our skeletal remains near where they were taken from, according to the act.

Part of councils' responsibilities and obligations is across the social justice areas for Aboriginal people, which is housing, which is employment, which is also aged care, and the other is crime prevention. They have within their charters and mandates a responsibility for Aboriginal people because Aboriginal people live in council areas, too. The correlation is that we are trying to get together within the councils and have a model that the four southern councils might pick up and, in the future, the central councils and the northern councils. That is our long-term goal. We got there in two years of hard slog and hard work.

There was a group of Kurna people—there were many groups within heritage for one thing or another—and they came together under a unity agreement, which was the basis to start our Tappa Iri agreement. Tappa means the road or the track; Iri means home. It is a way home for us. It is about resettlement, because we have never been settled, really, in our own state, and we—or my forefathers and Aboriginal ancestors—were the brunt of dispossession, because the Kurna people were the first to be taken from here. People from Kurna were put into Poonindie, which is over at Port Lincoln, and they were all mixed up and then dispersed again to the other missions all over the state.

We come from, I suppose, a dysfunctional process of coming from behind the eight ball and not having equity to start with when this experiment happened here in South Australia. But, having said that, we are trying to not dwell on the past but just glance back over our shoulders and see what happened to us. We want to move forward, and to move forward we need to have our nation employed in permanent positions, not in CDEP, which is two days a week, with money you cannot live on anyway.

It is considered sit-down money. The training that is supposed to come from there is not accredited training or it is too spasmodic and not everybody wants to be a hairdresser. There are other areas that you need training for, like in the caring situation and caring for ourselves in the future. The jobs have changed. What we would like to do is have the resources, the infrastructure moneys and capacity, to start creation of our own jobs, which would be probably in on-ground

works through natural resource management if we are caring for our country and caring for each other.

If we had the jobs that we could care for ourselves or the infrastructure and funding, we could do it ourselves. Instead of that, we have been on a promissory note for many years—as far back as I can remember—to have understudy projects and to backfill and permanent positions, but permanent positions is a thing of the past and there are all these workplace agreements that you have to enter into. But I suppose, having put the submission in and asked for an audit in this community about Aboriginal employment—we need help, the proper help to help us raise ourselves to the standard and to move on so we can start doing things for ourselves.

**CHAIR**—That is a pretty good description and I think it does give us a good picture. Do you mind if we just ask you a few questions?

**Mrs Crocker**—No, go ahead. I would prefer that.

**CHAIR**—That was wonderfully well put, thank you. You really do see employment as so important, don't you? It came through, I think. You see employment as really important, particularly for younger people, but for everybody.

**Mrs Crocker**—Yes. It seems like a hundred years ago, but when I was in Canberra and I worked for Aboriginal education we had an Abstudy program, and we still do, but it has been attacked. Back then Abstudy used to be like a legacy for us, that if you were not working you could enter into Abstudy and get a qualification. But then Abstudy became means tested and with the change of government and stuff like that, now you might as well not have Abstudy. You might as well just have Austudy. There used to be things within Abstudy that Aboriginal people saw as a benefit or it was helpful. We were nearly getting there. You know, we had a target for 80 teachers by the year 2000. We reached that target but they were not teaching in the schools.

They got taken up by administration and policy development, so they got trained to be a teacher but finished up being a policy-maker, an administrator and that in government. What they actually got trained for they were not actually doing and, of course, to get bigger wages. Junior teachers did not get much. To become a senior teacher you have to be in administration. It went through all of those sorts of things. I am not saying that some of the things that happened there were all wrong. I am not saying that at all, but I am saying that in the fullness of time what has actually happened to us as a society or part of the Australian society has not been as equitable or as commensurate with everybody else.

**CHAIR**—No, that is right.

**Mrs Crocker**—I can remember when the Schools Commission was around—that is going back quite a lot, but they were good things—and when the Department of Aboriginal Affairs was there. It is like an erosion of what we had. When we had the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, we had a senior minister. We had Charlie Perkins as secretary of the department.

**CHAIR**—I remember.

**Mrs Crocker**—When it became ATSIC, it was like it was downgraded. When it was a department we had two ministers, senior ministers that were in cabinet that looked after our affairs. When it become ATSIC we had one junior minister and it was downgraded, to me. Lots of times I had discussions with Gerry Hand.

**CHAIR**—Annette Ellis and I recall recommending that Indigenous affairs needed to go back into cabinet.

**Mrs Crocker**—Some of the good things that have happened have been thrown out and there has not been value added to some of the good things. Instead of that, they start again, try again. ‘We’ll try this,’ and it never seems to work.

**CHAIR**—I share your frustration as I suspect the majority of Australians do.

**Mrs Crocker**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—But what I was endeavouring to get to earlier was what came through in your submission; and remembering these are our terms of reference which we have to stay somewhere near because this whole business is such a wide-ranging thing. We are trying to think about positive employment outcomes. I was endeavouring to understand how important you felt employment was. I sensed that you felt that it is one of the building blocks.

**Mrs Crocker**—It is.

**CHAIR**—That has a whole lot of factors.

**Mrs Crocker**—It is a cornerstone.

**CHAIR**—I was interested in your view of why and how. The why I think I know but it is not for me to presume that, and to talk about employment and what it means.

**Mrs Crocker**—I suppose my mother just had a third-grade education. That was the only education she had on Point Pearce.

**CHAIR**—That is my electorate now.

**Mrs Crocker**—Is it? She had sight problems and one day she was naughty and she went from the back of the class to the front, so she could actually see the board. She said, ‘Oh, wow, I can understand what is going on now. I can read it.’ There were those sorts of health reasons and stuff like that, but she was very adamant with me and my sister, me in particular because we did not live on Point Pearce, we lived on the beach called Hollywood. Hollywood was the beach that people went from the mission when there were measles or something on and they had to move down there in camps.

Some stayed on the beach and others went back to the mission. My mother and father were ones that stayed there. He was a returned soldier and he set a well down there to get the water. That is how we lived, very humble beginnings. But from there and that humble beginnings, my mother taught me correspondence. I used to listen to the radio, or the wireless as it was then

known. I did not think I was disadvantaged. I thought everybody skipped and jumped on the beach and had nice parents that loved them and things like that.

It was not until I came here to Adelaide and went to school with my cousins that the racist element came near me. Education was always important to me. My mother instilled the work ethic into me. 'You don't get nothing for nothing. You get what you put into it,' et cetera.

**CHAIR**—I think I've heard that somewhere! My mother might have said that.

**Mrs Crocker**—She worked as a domestic, like a lot of our people did. My uncles and aunts worked as shearers and fishermen; all those other sorts of menial tasks that were seasonal work. They went away for seasons and so there was that coming and going. You wonder about what sorts of things said to you in your life start you thinking about what it is that shapes your life, and I think it was my mother: 'You must get an education. Every day you learn something new. Try to be positive.' I know it is really difficult, and I have been off the tracks a bit lately, but I want to move forward and I want our community to move forward.

I want some sort of legacy to be in place for our children for the future, whether it is around Kaurna knowledge and skills or whether it is around the whole state's Aboriginal culture. I think that is where it lies, because we could create jobs for ourselves rather than having them imposed on us: 'This is what you shall do.' We have never sat down and had the debate about what we really want.

**CHAIR**—We had a view earlier about the importance of independence and creating your own future.

**Mrs Crocker**—Yes.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—My electorate is Canberra, and you reminded me of Charlie Perkins and the old days. I do not know whether you, Lynette, or Di wants to answer this, but in your submission you say that you would like to think that this inquiry will:

... highlight gaps, overlaps and inconsistencies between State and Federal legislation, Acts and policies that contribute to positive and negative Indigenous employment outcomes.

Could you tell the committee, maybe as a priority, where you think we need to go with this.

**Mrs Crocker**—To me, the Commonwealth and state always have this bunfight, and I wanted to add another one in there actually, the local government, because they are a main player in there as well. I can remember back in the Canberra days that it was always this bunfight of, 'We'll pay so much and you pay so much.' It was always supplementary funding, to try and get the total funding for what you might want, from early childhood to higher education. There was always that tug of war being played rather than looking at a program that is going to be holistic. It seems that historically when there is a program with something good in it that actually works, it never gets funded again. It is always these other programs, that you know are going to fall over and that you know are not going to work for very long, that get the funding.



It has been really weird as to whether the criteria for both the state and the Commonwealth are similar or whether they just supplement one another. It is all about partnership and it is all about forging this new stuff.

‘Down with the welfare shackles and open the economic development, the capacity building and the infrastructure,’ and you need money to do those sorts of things. It is changing a mindset. It is not only us changing a mindset, it is helping the community to change from welfare to economic development. The whole world is like that, I know. We are all into regional funding and how we stack up in the region about what we want and stuff like that.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—The words ‘inconsistencies between state and federal’ may be crossing over. You are really talking about the lack of consistency or the lack of an overall approach; the lack of them coming together.

**Mrs Crocker**—Yes. What I am talking about is there being new arrangements about how we are going to do things with the demise of ATSIC. There has been a transition but there has not been any help for Aboriginal people to realise that transition, other than the new program. That is for the whole of government: ‘Put it in,’ and, ‘Clause 11 has the intellectual property rights,’ and, ‘If you don’t want to sign it, you won’t get the money.’ We are told all those sorts of things. That started people thinking about, ‘Well, what have we got left? Is it just our culture?’ Even that is being downgraded, or has never even been up there to be downgraded.

It is how we get on with one another. It is how everybody else engages Aboriginal people. All the service deliverers are saying now, ‘We want to know what the protocols are. We want to know what the protocols are for flying a flag. We want to know what the protocols are for doing all those sorts of things.’ There should be a benchmark within the Commonwealth and the state as to what we are going to do together for Aboriginal people.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—Do you want to add anything here, Di?

**Ms Markic**—I will expand on some points. I am looking at this, to start off with, in regard to education, because it is almost like, ‘There’s the biscuit, there’s the cup of tea,’ in most instances. If you do not have an education, no matter how rudimentary, you are not going to be able to get work of any sort. Everyone in the room knows that. It is accepted. Lynette and I met, ironically, at TAFE when I was doing some HR for a TAFE group. One of the things that I noticed was that there were gaps—that has already been referred to—in state and federal understanding of what happens with Indigenous training, education and employment, all leading to one another.

There were programs that were started that seemingly disappeared, just like Aladdin, and others that kept going without actually delivering anything. You wondered where the monitoring was by the body that was doing the funding in the first place. Lynette and I have both met certain public servants who appear to do nothing when they are meant to be involved themselves in either training or helping Indigenous persons get work or providing some sort of a benchmark as to what should be happening. That, again, is adding to the disparity in the state and federal systems, and I do not imagine for one second that we are the only state where this happens. I am not that naive.

In regard to future policy development, which is one of the terms of reference here, I am seeing it as being multilayered, because policy development that would affect employment, for example, has long-term ramifications for just about everything else.

We can have benchmarks that say, 'If you want to be an engineer, you need to do your secondary schooling, and then go to uni and do a four-, five-, six-year degree with postgrad—that sort of thing. A lot of the careers that some—I will say 'some'—Indigenous people want to get into would not require that and there is no understanding within the current education system as to what forms of accreditation are needed.

Everyone in the room is aware that we have some tremendously talented artists of many sorts who are Indigenous; in fact, this town hall probably has some artwork in it that Indigenous people have painted or prepared. Theoretically, they do not need a university or college degree; it is the relevance of their particular talent which has grown exponentially over the last 20 years. I am saying that employment does not necessarily mean that you need a degree, a masters or a PhD. It is looking at all things in regard to employment, not just someone who can design a building.

**CHAIR**—Yes.

**Ms Markic**—Defining what assistance is available for Indigenous people to gain employment: I have found that, through my work at TAFE and working at the now defunct language centre, to be scatty at the very least. Having had to do a research paper for one of Lynette's former boards, the amount of information that I could find within a defined period of time was in some instances scant, but what I found again was that there was disparity between federal and state departments in regard to information, even in regard to programs. I can name names and say that DCITA stood at the very top with lights and neons shining around them—trying to get certain information from them.

Future policy development needs to take into account not only national trends but also international, in recognition of what other countries are doing in regard to indigenous people, and the wealth and knowledge, skills and abilities they possess. It is also broadening the definition of 'employment'. I have found through my own involvement with TAFE and a number of other bodies that the monitoring of funded programs is interesting, to say the least. The type of information given to the public who are contemplating funding is very scattered.

One of the things that interested me at the language centre—and I have spoken about this ad nauseam to Lynette—was that there were a whole lot of bodies that appeared to be doing the same thing in the government but they do not talk to one another. That refers back to the point that I raised in the submission. I was contacting, for example, Australian National University, DCITA, Sydney university and we had blocks of funding, blocks of programs, but none of them were talking to anyone and, as a Kurna group, it would have been wonderful, to have some access to the wealth of information that they had.

The now defunct language centre was a repository for a huge amount of information on Aboriginal languages spoken in this state for as long as historical records have been available. It has now gone, for a number of reasons.

**Mr SLIPPER**—The records would have been retained, though.

**Mrs Crocker**—We hope so. We do not know where they are. We were asking for those to go back to each group.

**Ms Markic**—The relevance being that a lot of the information that was contained in there also referred to employment. That was the final point I was going to make. Do you have any questions, because all I have done is add on a little bit.

**Ms ANNETTE ELLIS**—No, that is fine.

**CHAIR**—That is fine. We need to start drawing to a conclusion. I do not have any other questions, but just so that I am reasonably clear on the things you have said: there are some issues about programs and there seems to be an eternal issue about Commonwealth-state, but that employment is important and we have a tradition there that we can draw on, even though it has been softer in perhaps the last 20 or 30 years, but that what we can do to improve their employment prospects are important to your people in the future.

**Mrs Crocker**—Yes.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Because the Kurna people largely live in the Adelaide metropolitan area, I imagine a large number of them would be almost fully integrated into the more general community. Would it be fair to say that most Kurna people would be working in general community employment—when I say that, I mean the sort of employment that non-Indigenous people would get—rather than in Indigenous-specific programs?

**Mrs Crocker**—Yes, people could think that, but I can tell you that with any sort of employment strategy the Kurna people do not get asked. Aboriginal people from other countries who come on our country get all the employment jobs. We never get offered any jobs.

**Mr SLIPPER**—I was generally saying that members of the Kurna people would be working out there in hotels and businesses, the same way as non-Indigenous people would be.

**Mrs Crocker**—Yes, if you can get a job. What I am saying to you is that I worked in other states and territories and I received far more respect in other states than what I have received back here in my own state, with regard to getting any of the jobs. There are not a lot of jobs in South Australia for Aboriginal people, and the ones that could or should make a difference go to people from other countries—like other states. They come here and they do not know the community and then it is all a big upset and it does not work out. You are continually trying to train someone to the ways that are here; not only the education ways and the new things that are happening. But we never get offered any understudy programs. That is not to say we want to come in the back door or we want to do anything else. A lot of us are proficient in our own rights, but we never get the jobs. That is what I am telling you.

There is one little thing that I would like to say that might make the way I feel clear to you. When I was involved in the Aboriginal education policy from early childhood to higher education, we did try to get up another sector which could be called community based education programs, but we could not get it up. We could not have the other sector. We had adult education

but really it is about community education; it is about our other indigenous communities around the world, how they have programs. They may be Community Aid Abroad programs about how to look after yourself and find water and grow things and all those sorts of things. But there could be—and I believe there should be—one around community based education and training programs, because when it is all boiled down where do you work and where are you most effective? It is supposed to be in your community. If you cannot help your own community and give back into the community, that is where I think there is a whole big gap. It is more than a gap; it is a precipice.

**CHAIR**—I hear you, Mrs Crocker. I am not sure that I can resolve that easily, but it has been raised with us before. I remember one very clear example in Western Australia but I cannot promise too much on that. I do appreciate you raising it with us. Thank you both very much for being with us today.

**Ms Markic**—Thank you for allowing us to speak.

**Mrs Crocker**—Thank you.

[2.40 pm]

**WEST, Mr Andrew Hosking, Manager, Kaurna Business and Heritage Centre**

**ACTING CHAIR**—I welcome Mr Andrew West to our proceedings.

**Mr West**—Thank you.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Thank you for joining us, Mr West. Do you have any comments to make on the capacity in which you appear?

**Mr West**—Yes. I also work as a consultant under Andrew H West and Associates.

**ACTING CHAIR**—While the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, the hearings are legal proceedings of the parliament and they warrant the same respect as proceedings of the House itself.

**Mr SLIPPER**—And we lock you up if you tell fibs!

**Mr West**—I will try not to.

**ACTING CHAIR**—And we usually ignore what Mr Slipper says.

**Mr West**—I will not tell any more fibs than most politicians. How's that!

**ACTING CHAIR**—As you know, we had the Onkaparinga council in this morning, and we have just had Mrs Crocker and Ms Markic here, but if you would like to have the advantage of addressing the committee briefly with an opening statement before we go any further, I welcome you to do that.

**Mr West**—Thank you. I want to give a little bit of my background, because I do have a lot of experience in a range of Aboriginal communities, and it is not just because I want to talk about myself, but there are things that have come out of my experience that I think are instructive.

I have worked as a business adviser since about 1987. Before that, I operated a number of small business partnerships in the arts, building and food industries. For eight years I managed the largest New Enterprise Incentive Scheme—or NIES program—in Australia. At its peak, the company I worked for assisted with the start-up of about 250 businesses a year in the Adelaide region. We also looked after Broken Hill for a time, and also the Port Pirie, Yorke Peninsula area of South Australia.

We provide training, mentoring and business planning assistance for those businesses. I have personally been involved in some way in the commencement of about 1,000 small businesses, most of those non-Indigenous, probably about five per cent Indigenous. Some of those are now quite large businesses. We were not just about big numbers, though. The measurement of success conducted by the then department—I think it was Employment, Education, Training and Youth

Affairs, but it has mutated quite a few times over the years. They determined their measurement by looking at the 18-month stage from when assistance ceased. The measure was simply the number of businesses still operating. There was one other measure which I cannot remember, but this was the main one.

Our numbers were consistently between 88 and 92 per cent, amongst the highest of all NIES agents at the time. A great deal of this success, we believed at the time and I still believe now, in addition to selection and training procedures, was the diligent mentoring program. The company ran mentoring, the theme that I want to talk quite a bit about today.

In about 1995 the company won a contract to deliver small business training in Indigenous communities across South Australia. I was able to draw on a large amount of experience for this particular project. I had also worked previously in cross-cultural settings in New Zealand and with the Australian Vietnamese community. Since this time I have assisted in the development of large numbers of Indigenous communities and individuals in most states of Australia. I think I am missing Queensland and New South Wales, but I have had involvement everywhere else as a consultant. I understand this inquiry is about Indigenous employment.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Yes.

**Mr West**—My starting point is that sustainable employment in non-Indigenous and Indigenous settings starts and finishes with sustainable, profitable businesses. While there is a huge need for training and support, which leads to employment, without sustainable businesses there can be no sustainable employment.

In urban areas, Indigenous people have some level of access to non-Indigenous businesses in which they can gain employment. In my experience, there still needs to be a great deal of support provided to many Aboriginal people in these situations. I am sorry to say that there is still prejudice out there in regard to the employment of Aboriginal people.

For those employers who do employ Aboriginal people, there is a need for mentoring support for both the Aboriginal employee and the employer. The employee will often come from a background of generational unemployment or have a peer group which devalues employment. In this situation young people in particular have no work role model to follow. The employer will not have experienced cultural business and the requirement for Aboriginal people to attend family and other matters above the number of days generally required by the non-Indigenous employee. Mentoring is a great way of linking cultural differences between Aboriginal lives and the culture of the workplace.

Back to employment opportunities through enterprise: there are some issues here which relate in particular to the Indigenous community and these link back to the support and mentoring alluded to earlier in relation to the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme and the employment of Indigenous apprentices and trainees, which I have just talked about. Nationally, in 2001 Indigenous people were three times less likely than other people to be self-employed, increasing to nine times less likely in very remote areas. That has come from this review that is under way at the moment. Why is this so? This is a relatively poorly researched area and in the time available I would like to offer a starting point to answering the ‘Why is it so?’ question.

Success in small business is due to a number of factors, including but not limited to the following. I have looked at all the research there is in this area and there is, surprisingly, not a lot, but family history of enterprise is a good indicator of success. Those people who have parents or close family with a history in business tend to do better in their own business. Generally, the higher the level of education the more successful a small business person becomes. Another factor is stability of policy direction. This is not only related to Indigenous business, but it is also an important factor here. Generally you will hear the business community saying, 'For goodness sake, don't change policy after three years. We can't operate like that,' especially in an international market.

Indigenous entrepreneurs are less common because, amongst other things, in relation to the above factors there is very little history of entrepreneurship in the Western sense of operating a business. Indigenous people by and large, as a result, have no close role models. The Indigenous community experiences lower than optimum education levels for a range of outcomes, including operating a business, and policy tends to change around election cycles or at least more frequently than is optimum for Indigenous communities to grasp and react to what are quite complex issues, operating a small business being one of these issues.

Fixing up the lack of entrepreneurial history and improving education levels is probably beyond my scope, certainly at this point, but support in the form of mentoring can be quite easily provided and the evidence, some of which I provided earlier, is that mentoring is very efficacious in this setting. Because many Aboriginal people are starting well behind their non-Indigenous peers, mentoring should be viewed as a long-term support. By 'long-term' I mean possibly up to 10 years, with the program tailored to suit each individual. And this policy must be locked in so that the program is not changed significantly after changes of ministers or governments. I am not picking on any particular government or minister, but it just seems to be the way the system is. Only in this way will mentoring begin to make up for the 'lack of success' factors—that is, no family history and lower than optimum education levels—for those Indigenous people wanting to create employment through enterprise.

It is also important to note that, in creating sustainable enterprise and employment, the vast majority of expertise needs to be brought and bought in. Community outsiders, largely non-Indigenous, are the main suppliers of business support. Communities also need to play their part in accepting outsiders in to manage or mentor Indigenous business, owned individually and/or communally. A mention should be made here, too, about communally owned business versus individually owned or family based businesses. It has certainly been my observation over the years that many within government and non-government organisations see the Indigenous community as one big happy family where communalism reigns. Is that right or wrong, Lynette? I will hear a resounding 'No' from the background in a minute!

This is not the case. If anything, communities are family based. Greater and greater individualism is evident also as communities urbanise. Therefore, there should be less emphasis on community based businesses and more emphasis on businesses run by individuals, in which wider family members will often be the only employees. A good example of this is at Ngaut Ngaut up on the River Murray in South Australia, where older members of a family manage a tourism operation, employ members of the family and are now training their own children to eventually manage and take over the business.

In summary, I think a worthy aim is to create an Indigenous economy that reflects non-Indigenous communities, one which includes enterprises of all kinds, even though in smaller communities you may not get a full range of business or services. They may never be established, as in any community. Only in reflecting the non-Indigenous economy can we hope to provide sustainable employment through enterprise, with appropriate cultural and profitable sustainability. We should not expect this to happen within the next electoral cycle or within our generation, maybe.

Aboriginal people have been in this country for about 60,000 years by the last count. Aborigines are incredibly patient people, in my experience, and I think we should be too if we are to successfully assist in creating modern, appropriate and sustainable Indigenous wealth creation and employment which interacts with the wider economy.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Thank you very much for that, Mr West. The Kurna Business and Heritage Centre are lucky to have the benefit of your background. Could you just outline for the sake of the committee where you see the business and heritage centre sitting in all of that? What do you see as its optimal goal?

**Mr West**—My view is that the business and heritage centre has to be able to stand on its own as a business over a period a time. We have three years of funding. We are currently one year into that funding. We may get another three years but that is not going to last forever. No funding ever does. My vision for that centre is that it runs a number of businesses in its own right and that those businesses are run along normal business lines—that is, that they seek profit. As a by-product, they employ people. That is not to be downgraded, but as a by-product effectively they employ people, rather than employ people and try to make money as a result. It does not work that way; no business does. That is how I see it if it is to be sustainable.

The other thing about the business centre is that, as we make profit, that goes into a trust fund so that then we can do so-called ‘good works’ in the community, or assist other people to start their own businesses, again as a by-product of what we do. But we have to pretty well stamp our credentials to say, ‘Look, we can run a business,’ before we can go and say, ‘We can help you run a business as well.’

**ACTING CHAIR**—You are just coming up to the end of the first year of the three-year term?

**Mr West**—Correct.

**ACTING CHAIR**—How do you think it is going so far? How do you see that tracking so far, in terms of your aims?

**Mr West**—It has had some setbacks. I am happy to admit that.

**ACTING CHAIR**—There would need to be, to be realistic, I guess.

**Mr West**—Yes. No business runs smoothly. Eighty per cent of new businesses fail. Ours will not fail but we have had to make changes. I am not going into the nitty-gritty of community politics, but community politics have been very difficult to negotiate, as they are in most communities. I do not think I am telling anything out of school—Lynette would probably back



me up on this—to say that Kaurna politics are probably some of the toughest I have seen played. That has been difficult but we are still there. The fact that we are there was one of the main outcomes of the Tappa Iri agreement that you would have heard about this morning. So in terms of tracking, we have done that.

In terms of some of the longer term projects, we have done work towards them. For one project in particular, a tourism project that involves the Tjilbruke Trail, which is an important Kaurna story here in South Australia, my guess is that we are looking at five years before we make any real headway on that. As I said earlier, we need to take a longer term view of this whole thing. Nothing is going to happen overnight. I do not believe that we will see a significant change in my generation. I am just being realistic.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Yes. Listening to your address to the committee just then, two things that come out to me like flashing neon lights that we are consistently hearing from other people are ‘mentoring’ and ‘longer term’ to allow all of the things to be in place to actually see success and not to panic unnecessarily. We are not going to see it overnight and people who expect that are being totally unfair and unrealistic. But those are your two major themes that I am picking up. I make that as a comment, but it matches what a lot of other people are telling us.

**Mr West**—The risk is that we become a bit complacent. I think there is a real sense of urgency that needs to be there but in terms of the outcomes we have to be patient.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Absolutely, and I think that is a very good way of putting it.

**Mr SLIPPER**—You say Kaurna politics are difficult. How many Kaurna people would there be? I probably should have asked Annette that question.

**Mr West**—There are about 5,000 or 6,000—something of that order.

**Mr SLIPPER**—You say that you are one year into what you are doing. How many employees do you currently have?

**Mr West**—The centre employs myself, a part-time accounts person and up until January we had a secretary, who has decided to go and get herself pregnant, so we are in the process of replacing her at the moment.

**Mr SLIPPER**—At this stage, you are not actually operating any businesses?

**Mr West**—We also employ a full-time equivalent—maybe two or three, but they are all part-time people and it is typical of the nature of work in these kinds of businesses.

**Mr SLIPPER**—What do they do?

**Mr West**—They do cultural monitoring. There are a lot of heritage sites down south where we are based, about half registered, a lot not registered with the department of Aboriginal affairs. Under the state heritage act, if a developer goes in there and destroys a site, the fines are something around the \$50,000 mark. So we sell insurance, basically. If we have monitors there

who are able to recognise things when earth is turned, then we advise the company to stop, what the process is from there, where they need to go to comply with the heritage act.

**Mr SLIPPER**—How are you funded and what would be your annual budget?

**Mr West**—We are funded through the four southern councils. They have put \$100,000 in in cash and up to \$100,000 in kind.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Each?

**Mr West**—No, in total. The City of Onkaparinga is the largest council in South Australia. They put half in. The three smaller councils put in an equal smaller amount. Our annual budget probably would be up around the \$200,000 mark, perhaps a bit over.

**Mr SLIPPER**—How would you spend that money? You have the wages, obviously.

**Mr West**—My salary, rent, telephone.

**Mr SLIPPER**—I am not asking what your salary is.

**Mr West**—No, I am saying in general there is my salary, which would be the biggest chunk at the moment. We need to operate a vehicle, we need to pay rent, we need to pay telephone, all the usual costs. Then we would pay out I would say roughly in the \$75,000 mark in terms of wages to the monitors.

**Mr SLIPPER**—What do you feel you have done really well in the last 12 months and what do you feel you have done poorly?

**Mr West**—We have kept the whole thing going, which is a major achievement. As I said, it is not telling any fibs out of school to say the Kurna politics are difficult. There have been a lot of things attempted in the past that have not come off. We have signed deals with AV Jennings for monitoring down south. We have signed a major deal with the Wirinna development, which is a development down near Yankalilla of 3,000 housing units over the next 10 years. We will start a nursery which will supply between five million and 10 million trees to that development over the next 10 or so years. There are some other things involved with that, but that is the major thing. That is worth potentially \$14 million over 10 years to the community, not in profit but in income. We have a number of other agreements, similar to that, with developers, and that has been our major focus in this first year.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Basically you are fully funded by the four councils?

**Mr West**—I would not say fully funded. I would say partly funded. About half of our budget comes from councils.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Any state or Commonwealth grants?

**Mr West**—None. We have just been notified that we received \$25,000 from the federal Department of the Environment and Heritage. We are trying to work with other federal

government departments, but they are reluctant, given the nature of the politics in the community at the moment. That has been a very difficult sell, but we are still working on it.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Would they be concerned that the outcomes are not quite what would justify government funding?

**Mr West**—Absolutely.

**Mr SLIPPER**—One of the problems we have in Australia is that a lot of people have historically seen quite a lot of money not well spent in the area of Indigenous affairs. I personally believe very strongly that if we could improve accountability and outcomes governments would be able to get the political support to spend more money on Indigenous affairs. I think that more needs to be spent, but until we can get better outcomes governments, regardless of political colour, will not get support from the community. For instance, in the area of health, it is a disgrace that Indigenous men live 20 years less than non-Indigenous men. We have thrown a lot of money at Indigenous health but our outcomes are not what we would like.

If we could improve the outcomes, governments would get support from the community to spend more to achieve even better outcomes. That was the point I was making about how you have performed over the last 12 months. What is the way forward?

**Mr West**—I could not agree with you more. Everybody would say, ‘Hurray,’ the community included, if we were able to improve the outcomes. I have worked in communities, as I say, all across Australia and I have seen some things that would make your hair curl, and it is not the blackfellas that are doing it; it is the whitefellas.

**Mr SLIPPER**—I have heard some disgraceful stories as well.

**Mr West**—I have held the view for a long time, and it is not through personal gain because I do not want to work out there in some of those communities—I will go in and consult but I will not work there; it is just not for me—that there are very poor levels of management amongst white managers out there. I do not believe that people that go out there to work are vetted very well. The responsibility, certainly back in ATSIC days, was put on the members of the community, who were in a no-win situation.

**Mr SLIPPER**—And often they were not experienced, were they?

**Mr West**—They had no experience. They could not even ring up and check somebody’s bona fides. They would not; they would take it on faith.

**Mr SLIPPER**—They call that self-management.

**Mr West**—I have views on that too, but we will not go into that here. I would go back to ATSIC and say, ‘Look, you’re putting public funds in here. You have a responsibility to make sure that these people are aboveboard.’ ‘No, that’s not our responsibility, that’s now the community’s money.’ I think government does have a responsibility there. I am not saying take over the role, but again provide support—real support—through the ICC or whoever it might be to make sure that those people’s bona fides are checked.

Not only that, I think the wages that are paid to do some of those jobs are piss poor, to be honest about it. I would not go out there and work for \$60,000 a year, no way in the world. It is too hard. If I am not prepared to do it, who do you end up with out there? You end with underqualified people, shysters and people who cannot get mainstream jobs. That has been my experience. If government was able to check their bona fides and offer what I call proper salaries for managers to work out there, I think you would see a big change in the outcomes.

**Mr SLIPPER**—I think governments for too long have been focused on the process—the concept of allowing self-determination—without being focused on the outcomes. Outcomes are really important to Indigenous people, I would think.

**Mr West**—Absolutely. Everybody wants to see the outcomes.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Then the general community will support governments to spend more, and more needs to be spent, but governments today cannot get support from the community because there are so many horrendous cases where money has been wasted. The community says, ‘If you’re going to waste money like that, governments can’t spend it the way it ought to be spent.’ It is a catch-22 situation.

**Mr West**—Again, in my experience, I have seen waste in communities that are being managed by Aboriginal people—no question of it—but I have seen far greater waste in communities that are being managed by whitefellas and/or the bureaucracy.

**Mr SLIPPER**—That is a fair comment too.

**Mr West**—It is only fair to say that.

**ACTING CHAIR**—What we are really talking about here—correct me if I have this wrong, and we have had this discussion with other people—is ensuring that, whether it is government involvement or Indigenous community involvement or departmental bureaucratic involvement, wherever it is coming from, the processes are in place honestly and are set up for success, not failure.

What you have been saying endorses the fact that in many cases they are set up to fail, because of the way the management is arranged or because of who has control of how the money is spent or whatever. In fact, if the things are drawn up with an expectation that responsibility goes in more than one spot—but you have to make sure that the thing has a chance of succeeding. I think that is where Peter is probably making a point about money going down the drain in the past. It goes down the drain in lots of other parts of Australia as well.

**Mr West**—To be fair to everybody involved, it is an incredibly complex situation.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Of course it is.

**Mr West**—When anybody says they have the answers, I just have to go away and laugh.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Absolutely, but in relation to the Karna Business and Heritage Centre, the information you shared with us about some of the contracts you have signed and some of the

arrangements that are going to come into play all indicate good things for the future, as long as we allow them to occur. They are not going to occur tomorrow. The urgency you talk about is correct, but we cannot allow the urgency to then override the processes that are needed for them to be allowed to happen.

**Mr West**—Absolutely.

**ACTING CHAIR**—The instance you just gave about the \$14 million to the community income at some point in the future is very good news, but we have to make sure that we allow that to happen. That is the point that I think we need to make. You must agree with that.

**Mr West**—Give it the time.

**ACTING CHAIR**—That is what I am saying.

**Mr West**—Give it the time and the support.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Exactly.

**Mr West**—Support is one thing but time is the other really important factor here.

**ACTING CHAIR**—The other thing is that success brings success, so the time factor is important in that sense. In this case, it is obviously a very fraught road. I think the success you have had so far is that the centre has been established and that the undertaking of the councils has been made. That is the biggest success, and the first year is just now the first chapter based on that huge base that must have taken so much energy and time to create. Once those things start to flow, then other things begin to flow. That is true too, is it not?

**Mr West**—Yes, I think so. If you have a role model within your family, you are lucky. I was very lucky. My father worked in a bank. You get that information by osmosis.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Absolutely.

**Mr West**—You do not have to work in a bank to understand. You listen to family discussions. The very things that are discussed at the family dinner table become part of you. If you do not have that role model, you are starting behind the eight ball.

**ACTING CHAIR**—It is a very hard nut to crack, isn't it?

**Mr West**—Yes.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Do you think the difficulties that you have quite frankly explained to us could put at risk the funding from the four councils?

**Mr West**—In what respect?

**Mr SLIPPER**—In the sense that you say that it has been more difficult to achieve what you wanted to achieve. Kurna politics happen to be extraordinarily complex. You are obviously not achieving what you had originally hoped to achieve within the original time frame. Are you finding with your sponsoring councils that there is a level of opposition to ongoing funding arising because what you sought to achieve when the agreement was signed is not necessarily being seen?

**Mr West**—There are two parts to that question. I need to explain that, when I said that I did not think we achieved what we should have, that was a very personal view. I am a high achiever. I do not like to sit around not achieving stuff. From the councils' point of view, I think they have been okay with the progress.

**Mr SLIPPER**—They are okay with the progress?

**Mr West**—Yes.

**Mr SLIPPER**—That is good.

**Mr West**—From a political point of view, it is always difficult at the local government level. Anybody can have any councillor's ear. You guys in Canberra are a little bit further away from the electorate. Not everybody can walk up to you in the street and bend your ear. If you are a local councillor, they can.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Come to my electorate!

**Mr West**—It is far more immediate in local government, and people will vent their opinions. They do not stand on ceremony always. The bureaucracy of council has been very supportive, and we have had key supporters amongst the councillors as well, but that is not to say that there has not been some pretty tough opposition to get past in the three years that it took to get the agreement in place. We do not need to stumble too much for those councillors to come baying, that is for sure. So far, yes, we still have their support. We are confident that we will get another three years funding, provided that we meet our outcomes.

**ACTING CHAIR**—As a committee, we join in wishing you all the very best of success in what is obviously an enormous undertaking. As I said a moment ago, I think we have to recognise that it has gone so far. You are actually now doing it. I want to thank you for coming in today and sharing your other knowledge—your earlier-gained knowledge—with us as well.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Also, thank you for your frankness, because people so often want to tell us about good stories.

**ACTING CHAIR**—We need to hear it as it is.

**Mr SLIPPER**—People are not always as frank about telling us about the difficulties.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Thank you very much, Mr West.

**Mr West**—I am 53 years old and I decided that there is no point in pussy-footing around any more. If you want change, you have to tell it how it is.

**ACTING CHAIR**—All the very best to you, to the community that you are working with and to the councils. Thank you.

[3.13 pm]

**O'CONNOR, Ms Luisa, Consultant: HR Service, Indigenous and Employment Schemes, University of South Australia**

**ACTING CHAIR**—I welcome Ms Luisa O'Connor.

**Ms O'Connor**—Thank you very much for allowing me to come and speak to you today at short notice.

**ACTING CHAIR**—It is a pleasure. Do you have any comments to make on the capacity in which you appear?

**Ms O'Connor**—Yes. I work as the consultant coordinating the Indigenous employment strategies within HR Services within Human Resources for the University of South Australia, and that is for about five or six campuses.

**ACTING CHAIR**—I thank you for coming here. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, the hearings are legal proceedings of the parliament and they warrant the same respect as proceedings of the House itself. We are here to hear what you have to say, Luisa, so please go ahead and talk to us.

**Ms O'Connor**—Thank you. I have been involved in this area for the last 20 years in the Indigenous employment area. I started off with CES, in those days, implementing the Indigenous employment programs.

**Mr SLIPPER**—CES where?

**Ms O'Connor**—Here in South Australia, in Adelaide. Then I took leave to work on a project with the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, funded by the department of employment. I spent six years managing the project for South Australia as Indigenous Employment Program manager. Then I was working at the University of Adelaide, and now the University of South Australia, coordinating the Indigenous employment strategy.

I would like to also say that we are proud that we were the first university in this state to run an Indigenous employment strategy, and only for the last two years—last year and this year—have we had Adelaide university and Flinders. I have been with the university since 2001, creating employment opportunities for all Indigenous people, and at the moment there are a lot of challenges and a lot of hard work.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Graduates?

**Ms O'Connor**—Everyone. Graduates and all people out there who are Indigenous who want to come into the university. My role is to advocate culturally and to advise management. One of the core parts of this program is now, after I have done research and interviewed all the Indigenous staff. I initially started with, 'What are the problems? What are the barriers?' and



some of the barriers were the lack of understanding, racism, institutional racism, all of that, and so out of that interview and that report we recommended and developed one of them, the strategic Indigenous cultural awareness mentoring, and that is what we are doing now. The total number of staff at the University of South Australia is 2,400 and 33 are Indigenous people.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Could you repeat that figure, please. Just repeat that sentence. I did not quite catch it.

**Ms O'Connor**—Two thousand four hundred.

**Mr SLIPPER**—You helped 2,400 people?

**Ms O'Connor**—No, I did not. That is the total number of staff of the University of South Australia, and out of that number there are only 33 Indigenous staff. We are hoping to pass 50 or 100, and what we are doing now is cultural awareness.

**ACTING CHAIR**—What sorts of staff positions are those 33 in, for example?

**Ms O'Connor**—There is one example at lecturer level, at a high level—D, C—and two general positions, level 9. That is only one or two. The rest are administration positions in levels 3 and 4, and they are mostly women. What I am trying to do, with the help and support of management, is to change that. We are looking at traineeships and apprenticeships, but also at Indigenous people who have completed their education to come forward and look at other areas and divisions of the university rather than just the Indigenous unit—because that is what is happening. I am sure you have heard of that. Only the Indigenous units within universities employed Indigenous people.

**Mr SLIPPER**—When you say that you are there to assist Indigenous employment opportunity, do you mean you are there to assist Indigenous employment opportunity within the hallowed halls of the University of South Australia or are you there as a unit to assist Indigenous employment placements more generally in the wider community?

**Ms O'Connor**—The first.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Are you there to focus on improved opportunities at the university?

**Ms O'Connor**—At the university, and I know that I cannot do that without the support of senior management. It is hard work without that support.

**Mr SLIPPER**—I imagine on the one hand in universities there is the merit principle: that they obviously want to appoint the best person for the job regardless of ethnic origin.

**Ms O'Connor**—Yes.

**Mr SLIPPER**—On the other hand, because there would be not the same number of higher educated Indigenous people, sometimes those two principles would clash, because often the best qualified person for lecturing positions and so on would not necessarily be Indigenous. How do you get around that conundrum?

**Ms O'Connor**—Tell me about it!

**ACTING CHAIR**—Do you have an affirmative action employment policy at the university for Indigenous people?

**Ms O'Connor**—We do have that.

**ACTING CHAIR**—But that would only apply if that were the case?

**Ms O'Connor**—I do not think we have that specifically but we are trying to have that. How many times I have brought that up about identified positions. That is a bit hard.

**ACTING CHAIR**—So it is really all merit based? The discussion of whether or not they are merit based would only be a discussion if there were a process to remove that merit—in other words, an affirmative action process as against merit based—so I imagine that they are competing like everybody else.

**Ms O'Connor**—Yes, competing like everybody else. On the other hand, I find myself—as a purely Indigenous person, a woman with qualifications—that it is hard as well from your own people, from Aboriginal men. They see you as a threat. That is another thing, if you are more qualified than they are academically; and not just from your own people but from everybody else, so it is hard.

**ACTING CHAIR**—It is called the glass ceiling.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Wouldn't you agree that in the Australia of 2006, if you get a well qualified, highly educated Indigenous person applying for a job, that everyone in the university would bend over backwards to give that person the job, all other things being equal, because we are so aware of the need to improve Indigenous involvement in higher education institutions?

**Ms O'Connor**—That should happen. But it does not happen.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Just like in politics, for instance, in the Liberal Party, if you get a candidate coming up for preselection and we do not have enough women and you have a high-quality woman and you have equally high-quality men, they will choose the woman every time, because we need more women.

**ACTING CHAIR**—I do not think the world is as idealistic as the way you paint the Liberal Party, Mr Slipper.

**Ms O'Connor**—That is what I would prefer to happen, but it does not happen.

**ACTING CHAIR**—If I can be provocative for a moment: women generally in Australia today talk about the glass ceiling. I think here we are talking about a slightly black glass ceiling.

**Ms O'Connor**—Yes.

**ACTING CHAIR**—There is nothing unusual about that, I would imagine.

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**Mr SLIPPER**—I know we are jumping about a bit. You told us the numbers are 33 out of 2,400-odd at your university. You mentioned the other two universities. Do they have a better record?

**Ms O'Connor**—Not really. We are better than they are in that area.

**Mr SLIPPER**—So you would have 33 out of 2,400 and they would have an even smaller proportion of Indigenous people?

**Ms O'Connor**—Yes. We have started way ahead in 2001 with a strategy. They only started last year and this year.

**ACTING CHAIR**—At least you have the strategy.

**Ms O'Connor**—At least we have that and the university have put themselves out to fund a position for an Indigenous person, like my role, whereas before they were applying for funding from the federal and state governments.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Just as a curiosity—I do not know if you will know this figure—do you have any idea out of the student population what proportion of the students at the university are Indigenous students?

**Ms O'Connor**—About 300? Do not put that down because I am only guessing.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Out of how many? What is the student population?

**Ms O'Connor**—The student population with us? There are Asians and all that; a lot of students. About 15,000.

**ACTING CHAIR**—So it is a very small proportion?

**Ms O'Connor**—Yes.

**ACTING CHAIR**—The other feeder to this is not that people who work in any position in a university have to have a university degree, but it seems that it is reflecting again through the process of education as well, the difficulty for progress. That is a whole other story about our systems.

**Ms O'Connor**—Yes.

**Mr SLIPPER**—And universities these days have become very competitive. My own local university on the Sunshine Coast takes prides that X number of per cent of their lecturers have doctorates, for instance, and there would not be that many people with doctorates who are Indigenous. You know the catch-22?

**Ms O'Connor**—Absolutely.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Universities often get judged by the quality of the academic qualifications of their teachers.

**Ms O'Connor**—We have that problem. It is a hard situation because then you have non-Indigenous people who are question why you have an Indigenous person without a PhD sitting at a level D or level E, when they have not done a PhD? We have that. I think every university will have that as well, so it is really hard. You would think the recruitment process should be transparent and consistent in the recruiting of people who have to be skilled in certain areas, whether it is a project or anything. But that does not happen either, so you are at a loss sometimes. Then we have our policy of recruitment, our procedure within that.

What we are doing really now is just carrying on with the cultural awareness, because those are the things that we have seen that might help with understanding why Indigenous people are recruited and coming in to sit at level B or level A without the academic qualification.

**Mr SLIPPER**—Do you think we can ever really solve the problem that you are hired to solve unless we get a bigger pool of highly educated Indigenous people? It is a bit like in the legal field. We get accused often of not having enough female Supreme Court judges, but to appoint half the bench from a pool of maybe five per cent of the available barristers with the experience is extraordinarily difficult. Until you have more educated Indigenous people, it is going to be hard to get them into those positions.

**Ms O'Connor**—Yes, that is the point but then the recruiting process is the other problem. I will give you an example without naming any names. The person has the qualifications. The person in charge of that interviewing panel is familiar with the person who is applying and knows that they have the qualification but has a personal issue against that person. So he or she fulfils the criteria of that position but he or she did not get an interview. That happens as well.

**ACTING CHAIR**—If we can draw all this together, if I may suggest we do that, what is the main message that you want this committee to take back with us in terms of trying to solve this issue. Do you have a view?

**Ms O'Connor**—Yes, I do. The main thing is to have a clear understanding of the complexities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and people, knowing the politics or understanding the politics within our people and how to manage the funding that is given out; to understand that politics. One thing that I want to push is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people need to be skilled and qualified in whatever position, and be supported. We need a lot of support, not just financially but mentoring; and we need support in acknowledging the skill of that Indigenous person rather than patronising them. That is another thing that demoralises a lot of people like myself.

**ACTING CHAIR**—It comes back to that basic understanding, doesn't it?

**Ms O'Connor**—Yes, understanding rather than—

**ACTING CHAIR**—Equal understanding.

**Ms O'Connor**—Yes, and it goes back to that point about doing unto others what you want done to yourself. It does not matter what colour they are or who they are. It is just having that acknowledgment of the person rather than thinking, 'They are one of them. I can patronise him or her.'

**Mr SLIPPER**—I can see there is a problem, but I do not quite know what the solution is because on the one hand you do not have a big enough pool of qualified Indigenous people and whatever the job calls for, the pool of non-Indigenous people would usually be more qualified than the pool of Indigenous people.

Because universities normally want to get the best qualified people, unfortunately Indigenous people seem to lose out. That is one observation. You highlighted the problems that you are having, but it seems to me that those problems cannot really be solved by the government of the day. Because universities are in charge of filling their own positions, this is a problem that should be solved from within the University of South Australia or Flinders University or Adelaide University. We cannot order universities to employ people.

**ACTING CHAIR**—That is absolutely correct.

**Ms O'Connor**—Yes.

**ACTING CHAIR**—We cannot order private enterprise to employ people either but we, as a committee, are taking evidence and hearing how partnerships are being formed between government, agencies of the government and public and private sector interests, all with a view to bettering the process of employment and training for Indigenous people. I agree entirely with Mr Slipper. However, we need to put it in the context of talking to other people as well and hearing their experiences. Some of them are very successful, and they are private sector successes. What we are trying to do, as a committee in this inquiry, is to hear where it is working and try and understand better how and why it is working and then to share that and to understand, in places where there is difficulty, why there is difficulty.

**Ms O'Connor**—Yes.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Today you have given us an example of where in some instances it is not working as well as in other instances. Maybe the universities, as an employing body, could think more seriously about what they may consider putting into place, as other private sector employers are doing and, in those cases, succeeding. I think that is the best way of summing that up. Would you agree?

**Ms O'Connor**—I agree with that. I came here thinking that I would share some of the—

**ACTING CHAIR**—Absolutely, and it is a very good thing to do. I think Peter would endorse entirely what I have just said.

**Mr SLIPPER**—You have shared with us most openly the problems that you have. We know the problems and we know we need more Indigenous people in universities. It is our job to try and come up with some solutions.

**Ms O'Connor**—Yes.

**ACTING CHAIR**—As I said a moment ago, we cannot order Rio Tinto either, but we are hearing about what they are doing and how it is working.

**Mr SLIPPER**—They are doing a good job.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Yes, and here we are hearing about where perhaps it is not working, which is just as valuable for us. Thank you very much for taking the time to listen in today—I noticed you in the room—and for taking the opportunity talk to us. We appreciate it.

**Ms O'Connor**—Thank you.

Resolved (on motion by **Mr Slipper**):

That this subcommittee authorises publication of the transcript of the evidence given before it at public hearing this day and that the subcommittee receive as evidence to the inquiry the four documents tabled today.

**Subcommittee adjourned at 3.33 pm**