

Education and training

...‘Literacy, literacy, literacy’ It is the crucial component of any success anywhere.¹

Education

- 5.1 Analysis of the 2001 Census data shows that low educational levels in the Indigenous population explains over 50 per cent of the employment differential between Indigenous and other Australians.² There remains a substantial difference between educational achievement for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians although some progress is being made.³
- 5.2 All of the Indigenous groups that Mr Michael Winer knew of had education as a priority.⁴

Improved educational outcomes for Indigenous Australians contribute directly to improvements in a range of other spheres of life, including health, employment, home ownership, civic responsibility and reduced substance abuse. Education contributes to economic growth through its effect

1 Mr Michael Winer, Chief Executive Officer, Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 July 2005, p. 37.

2 Centre of Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, *Submission No. 72*, p. 4.

3 Department of Education, Science and Training, *Submission No. 107*, p. 4.

4 Mr Michael Winer, Chief Executive Officer, Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 July 2005, p. 38; see also Mr Daniel Tucker, Director and Owner, Carey Mining Pty Ltd, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 October 2005, p. 47.

on labour productivity, technological innovation and adaptation, economic, organisational and individual flexibility and the investment environment.⁵

5.3 Rev Dr Goondarra stressed that education for the children is the only way to find employment.⁶ Education is the key to a positive future and it is about talking to communities about their aspirations and how they might achieve those aspirations.⁷

5.4 In many areas there are jobs available and the goal is to achieve a skills match. The Cape York Indigenous Employment Strategy identified a range of employment opportunities in the region:

We knew the jobs were there, but the problem is the capacity of people to take up those jobs with their poor educational attainment levels and the skills and expertise that are required to secure some of those jobs.⁸

5.5 The responsibility for funding and delivery of education is primarily that of the states and territories. The Australian Government provides Indigenous specific funding to supplement the mainstream programs.⁹ The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy program guides initiatives aimed at closing the educational divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.¹⁰

5.6 Improving the education outcomes for Indigenous students is a priority for the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs for the quadrennium 2005-2008.¹¹

We are working a lot better in urban environments than in the remote, no doubt about that. Certainly in terms of our

5 Department of Education, Science and Training, *Submission No. 107*, p. 2. See also Mr Anthony Greer, Group Manager, Indigenous and Transitions Group, Department of Education, Science and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 August 2005, p. 35.

6 Reverend Dr Djiniyini Goondarra, Chairman, Arnhemland Progress Association Inc, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 58.

7 Mr Dennis Bree, Chairman, Northern Territory Government Task Force on Indigenous Economic Development, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, pp. 3, 5.

8 Mr Ron Weatherall, Executive Director, Employment and Indigenous Initiatives, Queensland Department of Employment and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 11.

9 Mr Anthony Greer, Group Manager, Indigenous and Transitions Group, Department of Education, Science and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 August 2005, p. 35.

10 Mr Anthony Greer, Group Manager, Indigenous and Transitions Group, Department of Education, Science and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 August 2005, p. 35.

11 Mr Anthony Greer, Group Manager, Indigenous and Transitions Group, Department of Education, Science and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 August 2005, p. 35.

leverage – and it is essentially a state responsibility ... Much more meaningful performance criteria about what the states are doing with those resources is built in now.¹²

5.7 The federal government's approach for 2005-08 is to direct its resources to programs that have demonstrably improved outcomes. Mr Anthony Greer commented that 'Initiatives are being directed towards promoting systemic change and developing flexible whole-of-government approaches to education delivery'.¹³

5.8 The Northern Territory Office of Commissioner of Public Sector Employment saw a whole-of-government, whole-of-community approach as critical.¹⁴ The Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination commented that:

What the education department does in a particular area in a particular community has long been done often without the knowledge or any linkage with what other agencies are doing. That I think has been recognised as one of the reasons why government assistance and investment has not been as effective as it might be and many of the problems have actually got worse.¹⁵

5.9 Government must be clear about the training, education and development programs needed and how this will be measured and what accountability frameworks should be established.¹⁶

5.10 Mrs Eileen Shaw from the Institute for Aboriginal Development stressed that if an Aboriginal person has numeracy and literacy skills, they have the power to make choices and that is self-determination.¹⁷

That is what education does: it gives you the strength of choice, and that choice is in respect of employment, health, housing and your living skills – to be able to not leave your bankbook with the bank because you are taking care of it and

12 Mr Bernie Yates, Deputy Secretary, Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, *Transcript of Evidence*, 22 May 2006, p. 18.

13 Mr Anthony Greer, Group Manager, Indigenous and Transitions Group, Department of Education, Science and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 August 2005, p. 35.

14 Ms Ah Chin, Principal Advisor Indigenous Policy, Office of Commissioner for Public Employment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 20.

15 Mr Wayne Gibbons, Associate Secretary, Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 May 2005, p. 6.

16 Ms Ah Chin, Principal Advisor Indigenous Policy, Office of Commissioner for Public Employment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 21.

17 Mrs Eileen Shaw, Director, Institute for Aboriginal Development, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, p. 5.

you are managing your own life. That is why we think very strongly that employment itself has to be looked at from a holistic viewpoint, not in isolation from health, housing, culture and education, because all of those things, as we all know, play a part in where we get in the future and what our career path, or occupational path, might be.¹⁸

Culturally appropriate approaches

- 5.11 While Aboriginal numeracy and literacy levels are still below that of non-Indigenous Australians, this is improving and many of the programs already in place will continue to improve this situation.¹⁹ There is a range of different literacy and numeracy models being trialled. To be successful, these models need to be culturally appropriate and learning should be relevant to their daily lives.²⁰
- 5.12 Indigenous children love learning and would be interested in material that is of relevance.²¹ To encourage young people to undertake education we need to know where their priorities are and develop a curriculum that is appropriate.²² Pilbara Iron and the Roebourne High School are looking at the provision of more relevant school programs for years 9-12 and the inclusion of paid work experience which will pay more than CDEP.²³
- 5.13 The material in the curriculum must be presented in a culturally appropriate way.²⁴ Indigenous children may need a hands-on approach to learning without the 'whole school based theory stuff'.²⁵

18 Mrs Eileen Shaw, Director, Institute for Aboriginal Development, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, p. 5.

19 Mr William Muir, Vice President, Aboriginal Education Council (New South Wales) Inc, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2006, p. 19; Department of Education, Science and Training, *Submission No. 107*, p. 5; Mr Anthony Greer, Group Manager, Indigenous and Transitions Group, Department of Education, Science and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 August 2005, p. 36

20 Ms Melanie Stutsel, Director, Environmental and Social Policy, Minerals Council of Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 February 2006, p. 12.

21 Mr Larry Kickett, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 44; Miss Jenny McGuire, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 44.

22 Ms Ah Chin, Principal Advisor Indigenous Policy, Office of Commissioner for Public Employment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 33.

23 Mrs Kellie McCrum, Superintendent Training and Development, Pilbara Iron, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 October 2005, p. 21.

24 Mrs Eileen Shaw, Director, Institute for Aboriginal Development, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, p. 2.

25 Mr James Remedio, Radio Manager, Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 July 2005, p. 9.

... if it is more about how they can develop life skills at that age - what are some of the life skills they need to build up their confidence as young kids in communities faced with all of these challenges?²⁶

- 5.14 The Scaffolding Literacy approach²⁷, *What Works*,²⁸ and the altering lives one at a time Program (ALTA-1)²⁹ were some of the success stories with an emphasis on cultural appropriateness presented to the Committee.
- 5.15 There is a need for adult literacy training in a way suited to Aboriginal people.³⁰ Tangentyere Council report greater success in numeracy and literacy training with people in employment when they can see the relevance.³¹ The Government is working on numeracy and literacy skills for employment which will enable employees to read signs in the workplace to address the basic occupational health and safety issues.³² The Workplace English Language and Literacy programme integrates this training with the vocational training to meet their employment and training needs.³³

Pre-school preparation

- 5.16 Primary schools need to provide young Aboriginal people with literacy and numeracy skills to enable them to progress through high school. Adequate antenatal care and the forming of good habits in preschools and childcare are needed to address issues arising prior to enrolling in schools. Pilbara Iron are working on an early years program to assist children up to six years, to ensure they are not

-
- 26 Ms Ah Chin, Principal Advisor Indigenous Policy, Office of Commissioner for Public Employment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 33.
- 27 Department of Education, Science and Training, *Submission No. 107*, p. 6; Mr Anthony Greer, Group Manager, Indigenous and Transitions Group, Department of Education, Science and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 August 2005, p. 41.
- 28 Mr Anthony Greer, Group Manager, Indigenous and Transitions Group, Department of Education, Science and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 August 2005, p. 44; Department of Education, Science and Training, *Submission No. 107*, p. 7.
- 29 Mrs Lynley Tucker, Owner, Carey Mining Pty Ltd, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 October 2005, p. 47.
- 30 Mrs Kellie McCrum, Superintendent Training and Development, Pilbara Iron, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 October 2005, p. 26.
- 31 Ms Maria Harvey, Assistant Manager, Tangentyere Job Shop, Tangentyere Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, p. 32.
- 32 Mr Bob Harvey, Manager, Indigenous Employment and Business Group, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Transcript of Evidence*, 22 May 2006, p. 5.
- 33 Department of Education, Science and Training, *Submission No. 107*, p. 13.

behind children who have had an opportunity to attend kindergarten.³⁴

- 5.17 Economists focus on cognitive abilities rather than non-cognitive abilities such as motivation and persistent self-discipline.³⁵

... economists have systematically discounted non-cognitive abilities when estimating factors underlying labour market disadvantage. The importance of this is that non-cognitive abilities are formed early in life and are likely to be heavily influenced by the family in the early years.³⁶

- 5.18 Dr Boyd Hunter referred to an underinvestment in Indigenous preschool education and suggested that remediation of any lack of fundamental skills occurs at an early age. He emphasised that while the focus is currently on adults, the problem lies in the quality of the skills acquired at an early age:

... skill begets skill and learning begets learning. There are several critical or sensitive periods in the lives of young children. Once a child falls behind in fundamental skills, he is likely to remain behind. Remediation for impoverished early environments becomes progressively more costly the later you attempt to intervene. Most investments in education, training and labour market programs are positive, but returns to early investment are particularly large because the later investments build on the early investments ...³⁷

School attendance and retention

- 5.19 In 2003 there was an improvement in Indigenous retention rates across most year levels.³⁸ Apparent retention rates for Indigenous students from the beginning of secondary school to both year 10 and year 12 have increased over the last five years.³⁹ For example, at

34 Mr Lennis Connors, Community Liaison Officer, Pilbara Iron, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 22.

35 Dr Boyd Hunter, Fellow, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 February 2006, p. 13.

36 Dr Boyd Hunter, Fellow, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 February 2006, p. 13.

37 Dr Boyd Hunter, Fellow, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 February 2006, p. 14.

38 Department of Education, Science and Training, *Submission No. 107*, p. 4.

39 Productivity Commission, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2007 Indigenous Report*, 1 June 2007, Sect 3.3, p. 3.25.

Geraldton previously, on average 5 young men would complete year 12 while in 2005 there were 27 in year 12.⁴⁰

5.20 The Productivity Commission reported that:

- In 2006, 21 per cent of 15 year old Indigenous people were not participating in school education. Only 5 per cent of non-Indigenous 15 year olds were not participating in school education;
- In 2006, Indigenous students were half as likely as non-Indigenous students to continue to year 12;
- In 2006, 31.8 per cent of Indigenous people aged 17 years were participating in school compared to 64.7 per cent of non-Indigenous people of that age; and
- In 2004-05, a smaller proportion (22.1 per cent) of Indigenous people than non-Indigenous people (46.6 per cent) had completed year 12.⁴¹

5.21 Retention rates are still an issue in secondary education but the trend is encouraging in some areas. School retention is underpinned by 'ownership, sense of pride and identity, kids aspiring, parents aspiring with kids, feeling part of the social and economic matrix of your community, and using institutions as a pathway'.⁴² Children at school do not know what they want to do.⁴³

5.22 Ms Kylie Bloomfield saw getting the children to attend school as 'a big problem'. In relation to endowment payments, she believes that:

A lot of parents get their money but a lot of it is spent in other ways, some good and some bad ... Why not make sure that that if parents are planning on getting their endowment, they have proof that their kids are going to school.⁴⁴

5.23 The *Dare to Lead* program engages principals to commit to improving educational outcomes through systemic change through improving

40 Mr Craig Brierty, Project Manager, Clontarf Foundation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 69.

41 Productivity Commission, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2007 Indigenous Report*, 1 June 2007, Sect 3.3, pp. 3.20, 3.24.

42 Mr Paul Briggs, President, Rumbalara Football and Netball Inc, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 13.

43 Ms Marilyn Smith, Manager, Footprints Forward, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 July 2005, p. 7.

44 Ms Kylie Bloomfield, Guide, Alice Springs Desert Park, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, p. 74.

- literacy and completion rates and revising their curricula and school programmes to develop an understanding of Indigenous culture.⁴⁵
- 5.24 The characteristics of highly effective schools include strong and effective school leaders; learning as the central purpose of the school; teachers who are well trained; strong school culture; parent and community involvement; and well developed systems to monitor and evaluate performance.⁴⁶
- 5.25 The concept of schools as community centres also has the advantages of linking the school with the community, role models for students and provision of local employment and support for the local economy, the development of individual self-esteem and career paths for Indigenous people. There would be greater co-ordination of effort and more effective educational and support programs if the pre-schools, community nurse and other community support personnel were attached to the local school.⁴⁷
- 5.26 Clontarf College begin working with primary school children. There is an opportunity to present them with the normal pathway in terms of education to employment and the range of opportunities that education opens up.⁴⁸ The example was given of the Argyle agreement under which students continuing until year 10:
- ... are guaranteed a trial on the mine in three different roles. If they prove to be successful in one of those careers then they are picked up and employed by the industry. If they go to year 12 then they are guaranteed a job, whatever form that job might take. It will be as senior a job as that person is interested in and capable of doing. They will continue to mentor them and build them through that process.⁴⁹
- 5.27 There are also homework centres for primary and high school students.⁵⁰ The Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation provides an after school program designed to foster secondary education to year 12.⁵¹ This program recognises the different learning approaches of

45 Department of Education, Science and Training, *Submission No. 107*, p. 6.

46 Department of Education, Science and Training, *Submission No. 107*, p. 6.

47 Aboriginal Education Council (NSW) Inc, *Submission No. 38*, p. 1.

48 Mr Craig Brierty, Project Manager, Clontarf Foundation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 70.

49 Ms Melanie Stutsel, Director, Environmental and Social Policy, Minerals Council of Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 February 2006, p. 12.

50 Mr Lennis Connors, Community Liaison Officer, Pilbara Iron, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 22.

51 South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy, *Submission No. 89*, p. 2.

Aboriginal children and is designed to increase literacy, numeracy and study skills.⁵²

Post secondary education

5.28 The Productivity Commission reported that:

- There has been an increase in the proportion of Indigenous people participating in post secondary education;
- The proportion of Indigenous people with a qualification of certificate level 3 or above increased from 8.3 per cent in 1994 to 20.8 per cent in 2004-05
- In 2004-05, non-Indigenous people were more than twice as likely as Indigenous people to have completed a post secondary qualification of certificate level 3 or above; and
- Higher education success rates (between 2001 and 2004) and TAFE pass rates (between 2002 and 2005) increased for Indigenous students.⁵³

Postsecondary numbers have also risen. Of particular note is the increase in the number of Indigenous new apprenticeships from 6,260 in 2001 to 10,100 in 2004, an increase of 61 per cent. The number of Indigenous students in the vocational education and training system in 2003 was 58,087. As a percentage of all students in VET, that had increased from 3.1 per cent to 3.4 per cent in 2003. Indigenous higher education numbers have also risen, from 8,661 in 2001 to 8,895 in 2004, and the percentage of Indigenous higher education students studying at bachelor level or above rose from 67.4 per cent to 76.4 per cent.⁵⁴

5.29 Clontarf College commented that one of the advantages is that by remaining at school until year 12 enables these young people to 'mature enormously'.⁵⁵ The Clontarf Foundation is a non-profit organisation established to mentor boys, to develop their self esteem

52 South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy, *Submission No. 89*, p. 2.

53 Productivity Commission, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2007 Indigenous Report*, 1 June 2007, Sect 3.3, p. 3.30.

54 Mr Anthony Greer, Group Manager, Indigenous and Transitions Group, Department of Education, Science and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 August 2005, p. 36.

55 Mr Craig Brierty, Project manager, Clontarf Foundation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 69.

and support their progression in the school environment by taking them out of a destructive environment.⁵⁶

They want to go out and live more and be able to do other things, but they do not know what. That is half the problem: they just do not know what is out there.⁵⁷

- 5.30 There are a number of other initiatives aimed at increasing school attendance such as the 'no school, no pool' approach, nutritional programs such as providing breakfast, encouraging the presence of Indigenous Aboriginal and Islander Education Workers or parents in the classroom, providing communities with buses, schools becoming more welcoming places and curricula being more culturally inclusive.⁵⁸ Another successful program is Crocfest which assists with school retention as it attracts them to stay at school and is a long-term training program.⁵⁹
- 5.31 Other suggestions include for remote communities which have primary school facilities, that one classroom be allocated to a high school teacher. This would negate the need for young people to leave their communities to get a secondary education.⁶⁰ There has been a great deal of publicity and discussion about policies to increase school attendance levels. The Committee would like to see appropriate consultation with each of the school communities to determine the best policy approach for each area.

Recommendation 7

- 5.32 **The Committee recommends that given the importance of education to future employment possibilities, the Government consider requests from Indigenous communities in relation to their preferred options for stronger incentives to encourage school attendance.**

56 Mr Wayne Gibbons, Associate Secretary, Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 May 2005, p. 3.

57 Ms Marilyn Smith, Manager, Footprints Forward, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 July 2005, p. 17.

58 Mr Anthony Greer, Group Manager, Indigenous and Transitions Group, Department of Education, Science and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 August 2005, pp. 41-42.

59 Mr Mark Blackburn, Director, Corporate and Technical Services, Alice Springs Town Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, p. 24.

60 Queensland Indigenous Local Government Association, *Submission No. 81*, p. 2.

Parental involvement

5.33 Mr William Muir attributed the lack of attraction of education to Aboriginal people to not providing an education for the parents and grandparents who are role models for young people.⁶¹ Evidence to the Committee stressed the need to get parents and families more involved to improve educational levels.⁶² Parents need to be convinced that there are benefits in children going to school.⁶³ In families where there have been generations of unemployment, the parents may not be aware of the career options for their children.⁶⁴

You have got to work with the parents. The parents have to want their kids at school, and the parents have to get their kids fed and dressed for school. The parents are the key.⁶⁵

5.34 The *Parent School Partnership Initiative* aims to improve school attendance, literacy and numeracy outcomes, and increased retention.⁶⁶ This is part of the *Whole of School Intervention Strategy* which encourages parents, communities and schools to partner in strategies to overcome local barriers affecting Indigenous educational outcomes.⁶⁷

5.35 Rio Tinto believes that it is important to present to students positive employment options at the end of their schooling and every six months meets with the student and their parents to see how they are tracking to achieve that outcome.⁶⁸

61 Mr William Muir, Vice President, Aboriginal Education Council (New South Wales) Inc, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2006, p. 19.

62 Mr Lennis Connors, Community Liaison Officer, Pilbara Iron, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 October 2005, p. 22; see also Miss Jenny McGuire and Mr Larry Kickett, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 43.

63 Mr Michael Winer, Chief Executive Officer, Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 July 2005, p. 37.

64 Ms Bernice Kelly, Chairperson, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Corporation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 July 2005, p. 17.

65 Mr Michael Winer, Chief Executive Officer, Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 July 2005, p. 41. See also Mr Larry Kickett, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, pp. 43-44; Mr Ray Hansen, Chairperson and Founder, Koorlbardi Aboriginal Corporation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 58.

66 Department of Education, Science and Training, *Submission No. 107*, p. 8.

67 Department of Education, Science and Training, *Submission No. 107*, p. 8.

68 Mr Bruce Harvey, Chief Advisor, Aboriginal and Community Relations, Rio Tinto Ltd, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 36.

Aspirations

- 5.36 Ms Joy Wii believes that students at the end of primary school need to know about vocational matters and work experience as they have left by years 8 and 9.⁶⁹ The National Tertiary Education Union also referred to the low achievement rates in years 11 and 12 generally and made the point that strategies should target the high drop out rates in years 8 and 9.⁷⁰ Young Indigenous people can also see little point in remaining at school when they see older children who have attained their certificate ending up on CDEP anyway.⁷¹

Progression through school

- 5.37 Concern was expressed that Indigenous children are able to proceed through school on the basis of their age rather than what they have learnt.⁷² Children are facing a brick wall if they are getting to years 10 and 11 without being able to read or write.⁷³ The point was made that the education system should be accountable for their outcomes because those trying to get employment for these youngsters are accountable for their outcomes.⁷⁴

Indigenous tutors

- 5.38 Ms Lynda Ballantyne suggested that employing Indigenous people in schools provides an Indigenous role model and is particularly important. Indigenous adults are seen to value education while providing assistance to the teacher and acting as an interpreter.⁷⁵
- 5.39 In the past Indigenous tutors in classrooms have played a key role in assisting students.⁷⁶ Aboriginal Aides in schools led to many

69 Ms Joy Wii, Community Planning and Development Officer, Cairns City Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 July 2005, pp. 16-17.

70 Mr Joel Wright, Indigenous Officer, National Tertiary Education Union, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 28.

71 Mr John Corboy, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 4.

72 Ms Marilyn Smith, Manager, Footprints Forward, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 July 2005, p. 3.

73 Mr Larry Kickett, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 44. See also Ms Libby Morgan, Indigenous Employment Centre Manager, Cairns Regional Community Development and Employment Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 July 2005, p. 12.

74 Ms Libby Morgan, Indigenous Employment Centre Manager, Cairns Regional Community Development and Employment Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 July 2005, p. 12.

75 Ms Linda Ballantyne, *Submission No. 112*, p. 2.

76 Ms Bernice Kelly, Chairperson, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Corporation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 July 2005, p. 18.

undertaking further training such as teaching.⁷⁷ The *In-Class Tuition Evaluation* Report found the trial had impacted positively on Indigenous students achievement in literacy and numeracy and there was increased attendance.⁷⁸ The Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme assists Indigenous students meet the national literacy and numeracy benchmarks.⁷⁹

- 5.40 Throughout this Chapter a number of possible improvements to educational outcomes for Indigenous students have been referred to. The Committee strongly urges the Government to consider all possible enhancements to existing and new approaches that could have a potential impact positively on Indigenous educational outcomes.

Recommendation 8

- 5.41 **The Committee recommends that the Federal Government evaluate and fund a range of options to improve educational outcomes including but not limited to, Indigenous teaching aides, tutors and individualised learning plans.**

Transition to employment

- 5.42 Young people need to see a future in potential employment and there needs to be a smooth transition between school and the workforce. Kids in years 7 and 8 leave school because they believe they will be unemployed when they finish.⁸⁰ Pilbara Iron highlighted that the time between leaving school and moving into employment is when young people become disengaged with school and work.⁸¹
- 5.43 The challenge is to ensure that those completing their schooling do not enter the unemployment situation.⁸² To maximise the investment in education and employment programs, there needs to be a smooth

77 Aboriginal Education Council (NSW) Inc, *Submission No. 38*, p. 1.

78 Department of Education, Science and Training, *Submission No. 107*, pp. 7-8.

79 Department of Education, Science and Training, *Submission No. 107*, p. 8.

80 Mr Adrian Appo, Executive Officer, Ganbina Koori Economic Employment and Training Agency, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 73.

81 Mrs Kellie McCrum, Superintendent Training and Development, Pilbara Iron, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 October 2005, p. 20.

82 Mr Dennis Bree, Chairman, Northern Territory Government Task Force on Indigenous Economic Development, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 3.

transition between the two.⁸³ Young people need to be connected with the work force as soon as they leave school so they do not fall off the rails.⁸⁴

5.44 This can be achieved through partnerships between the schools, colleges, training providers, businesses and community groups.⁸⁵ Initiatives in Tasmania include the *Guaranteeing Futures* program to facilitate successful transitions from school to independent adulthood and the *oana mallacka* plan to increase access to vocational education for Aboriginal people.⁸⁶

5.45 East Kimberley Job Training emphasised the importance of still being there to assist with the transition to the next job:

If we lose them after they have got into that first job, that whole investment that we have spent – which can be extremely expensive – is out the window. It is gone. It is another transition that we have not managed.⁸⁷

5.46 A program in Shepparton that introduced students to business and industry and demystified this created those links.⁸⁸

Unfortunately, employment is still not what you know but who you know ... If you can do this, this and this, here's the employer that can give you a job.⁸⁹

Financial issues

5.47 Disruption of education as a result of poverty is one of the factors impacting on educational attainment.⁹⁰ Students from low socio-economic backgrounds have been shown to be more sensitive to changes in the cost of education.⁹¹

83 Tasmanian Government, *Submission No. 113*, p. 4.

84 Ms Jody Broun, Director General, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, New South Wales, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2006, p. 91.

85 Tasmanian Government, *Submission No. 113*, p. 4.

86 Tasmanian Government, *Submission No. 113*, pp. 4-5.

87 Mr Murray Coates, General Manager, East Kimberley Job Pathways, *Transcript of Evidence*, 18 July 2006, p. 11.

88 Mr Adrian Appo, Executive Officer, Ganbina Koori Economic Employment and Training Agency, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 74.

89 Mr Adrian Appo, Executive Officer, Ganbina Koori Economic Employment and Training Agency, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, pp. 77-78.

90 Department of Health and Ageing, *Submission No. 35*, p. 2 citing the report on *Reasons why Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students enter the Health Workforce*.

91 New South Wales Government, *Submission No. 111*, p. 29.

- 5.48 The Aboriginal Education Council (AEC) believes that support for all levels from preschool to tertiary studies is important.⁹² For example, through scholarships provided by the AEC which target some students at risk, they are getting 70-75 per cent retention rates.⁹³ One of the main enablers to the successful completion of VET and higher education program is financial support.⁹⁴
- 5.49 There was a call for a revision of the Abstudy and HECS arrangements if it is to encourage young Aboriginal people to remain in the educational system.⁹⁵ Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Inc believes that the higher levels of income on CDEP compared to Abstudy or Austudy may be a disincentive to continuing education.⁹⁶ On the other hand, Tangentyere Council has not found that young people in Alice Springs leave school to join the CDEP:
- On the contrary, young people who commence CDEP have usually been out of school for several years, even if they are still teenagers. These young people often have literacy and numeracy problems as a consequence, to the extent that they are likely to be excluded from the wider job market without substantial assistance in this area.⁹⁷
- 5.50 The Central Land Council stressed the need for money management information to be available at the commencement of employment.⁹⁸ The wages received by Indigenous people appear to be a lot of money and they may leave after one or two pays. Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park have attempted to provide full time positions so that there is enough money to change the way that they live and to develop an addiction to a pay cheque.⁹⁹ Desert Park set up a second

92 Mr William Muir, Vice President, Aboriginal Education Council (New South Wales) Inc, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2006, p. 17.

93 Mr William Muir, Vice President, Aboriginal Education Council (New South Wales) Inc, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2005, p. 26.

94 Department of Health and Ageing, *Submission No. 35*, p. 2 citing the report on *Reasons why Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students enter the Health Workforce*.

95 Ms Jody Broun, Director General, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, New South Wales, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2006, p. 93; New South Wales Government, *Submission No. 111*, pp. 4-5.

96 Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Inc, *Submission No. 101*, p. 5.

97 Tangentyere Council, *Submission No. 69*, p. 13.

98 Mr Harold Howard, Employment Unit, Central Land Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, p. 57.

99 Mr Don Freeman, Managing Director, Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 July 2005, p. 6.

bank account for apprentices to avoid the inevitable sharing of income.¹⁰⁰

- 5.51 Greater financial literacy would benefit Indigenous people who previously could not manage their own affairs.¹⁰¹ Indigenous people working in the financial sector gain valuable skills to transfer to their communities. The Australian Bankers Association are working with Reconciliation Australia to increase financial literacy and there is access to bank services as well.¹⁰² The Australian and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd is also committed to improving financial literacy in Indigenous communities and supporting Indigenous enterprise through micro-financing initiatives.¹⁰³

Vocational Education and Training (VET)

*... the illiterate person of the 21st century will not be someone who cannot read or write; it will be someone who is unable to learn, unlearn and relearn.*¹⁰⁴

- 5.52 There have been a number of positive trends in VET training including an increase in the percentage of Indigenous people attending VET in the last few years, the number of new Indigenous Apprenticeships and the number of Indigenous people undertaking AQF Certificate III and IV, the increase in completion rates and a decrease in the failure rates.¹⁰⁵
- 5.53 Access to VET courses that lead to industry positions is critical to improving Indigenous jobseekers prospects of better careers, however, some do not meet entry-level requirements for industry.¹⁰⁶ The VET system needs to adapt to keep pace with the changing labour market and demographics of the Indigenous communities.¹⁰⁷
- 5.54 The levels of training wages means that young people are leaving apprenticeships and traineeships to meet the cost of living. The point

100 Mrs Jodie Clarkson, Guide Manager, Alice Springs Desert Park, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, p. 75.

101 Mr Jack Pearson, *Submission No. 102*, p. 6.

102 Mr Dan O'Brien, Head, Government Relations, Australia, National Australia Bank, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 49.

103 Australian and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd, *Submission No. 71*, p. 2.

104 Ms Eileen Deemal-Hall, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 July 2005, p. 43.

105 Department of Education, Science and Training, *Submission No. 107*, pp. 10-12; see also Productivity Commission, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2007 Indigenous Report*, 1 June 2007, Sect 3.4, p. 3.31.

106 See Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *Submission No. 64*, pp. 1, 3.

107 See Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *Submission No. 64*, p. 1.

was made that there are a range of government programs and assistance for families on low incomes. Under the whole-of-government approach, the Committee believes that it is important that those working on a training wages are aware of the assistance available.

- 5.55 There is room for improvement in the course completion rates, employment outcomes for Indigenous students and an increase in the number of Indigenous employees in Government VET systems.¹⁰⁸
- 5.56 The New South Wales Government identified the increase in the 'learning alliances' between industry and the VET sector as the challenge.¹⁰⁹ Vocational Education and Training must deliver industry-based skills to Indigenous jobseekers through more flexible delivery mechanisms and culturally appropriate training.
- 5.57 Rio Tinto has found the funded TAFE system not to be sufficiently flexible to deliver courses as and when they are needed by the mining industry.¹¹⁰ Future Indigenous employment policies need to produce outcomes that link skills development with skill shortages, the aspirations of the jobseekers and employer's needs.¹¹¹
- 5.58 In the construction industry, Indigenous building apprenticeships need some flexibility.¹¹² For instance, the Indigenous apprentices often find the wages too low to support themselves and their families and the need for employers to provide supervision and training that may limit productivity in the first years of the apprenticeships. There is scope for government funding assistance to offset employer costs and provide apprentices with a living wage.¹¹³
- 5.59 While it is appreciated that it is necessary to increase the skills levels to gain a higher income, young people are leaving apprenticeships and traineeships because they can earn more money working on the weekend and after school on the supermarket checkout.¹¹⁴ The cost of

108 Department of Education, Science and Training, *Submission No. 107*, p. 12.

109 New South Wales Government, *Submission No. 111*, p. 24.

110 Mr Bruce Harvey, Chief Advisor, Aboriginal and Community Relations, Rio Tinto Ltd, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 35; Rio Tinto, *Submission No. 80*, p. 4.

111 Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *Submission No. 64*, p. 1.

112 For example see *Northern Territory News*, 'Program Faces probe', 31 March 2006, p. 4.

113 Tangentyere Council, *Supplementary Submission 69a*, p. 2; Mr William Tilmouth, Executive Director, Tangentyere Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, pp. 27-28.

114 Ms Marilyn Smith, Manager, Footprints Forward, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 July 2005, p. 4; Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, *Submission No. 32*, p. 5.

living and the need for a car when transport is a problem are important.¹¹⁵

- 5.60 One initiative is the *Partners in a learning culture – the Way Forward*, a nationally agreed strategy to improve training opportunities and employment outcomes for Indigenous Australians in Vocational Education and Training. The blueprint has six areas of priority: building the capacity of the VET sector through Indigenous involvement; creating more pathways for Indigenous Australians from school to training and employment; improving funding frameworks; ensuring the development of culturally appropriate products and delivery; links to employment; and growing VET sector partnerships.

Training

*They could be the best-trained people in Australia, but they are continually going back to college and there are no employment outcomes because they have not got the experience. It is a catch-22 situation.*¹¹⁶

- 5.61 Regionally relevant skills are required for the current ‘demand driven’ environment.

Training should not be provided just to increase participation rates. It is essential to focus on improving the outcomes of Indigenous people in training through courses structured to meet the needs and aspirations of their communities. It must be relevant to the local labour market.¹¹⁷

- 5.62 There is a heavy training component in the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle program in Queensland which has seen 91 000 people in jobs since 1998 and 12 per cent of participants are Indigenous.¹¹⁸ In Queensland there has been an increase in the number of Indigenous people in training and education and they are

115 See Ms Marilyn Smith, Manager, Footprints Forward, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 July 2005, p. 4, Mr Douglas Taylor, Acting T2 Specialist Guide (Cross Cultural), Alice Spring Desert Park, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, p. 68.

116 Mr Larry Kickett, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2005, p. 40.

117 Commonwealth Grants Commission, 2001, *Report on Indigenous Funding 2001*, Canberra, Commonwealth of Australia, p. 227.

118 Mr Bernie Carlon, General Manager, Employment and Indigenous Initiatives, Queensland Department of Employment and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, pp. 3-4.

achieving at only slightly under the non-Indigenous rate.¹¹⁹ However, the increase in numbers is not as much as hoped for and many of these are in Certificate I and II courses.¹²⁰

- 5.63 The success of the training programs at the Adelaide City Council reflects the endorsement by the Executive Management Team, mentoring by an Aboriginal person, and a close working relationship between the trainee, mentor, team leaders and managers, cultural awareness training for other staff and links between the Reconciliation Officer, Reconciliation Committee, mentor, Human Resources Business Unit and other Business Units across Council.¹²¹
- 5.64 A number of companies are working collaboratively so that a small number of companies do not provide all the training effort while others use chequebook recruitment.¹²²
- 5.65 The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations commented on giving people the basic requirements to get them into a job and then training within the job to improve outcomes through a more flexible training approach.¹²³
- 5.66 Tangentyere Council emphasised that:
- ... training that works best has an emphasis on practical, skills based learning; it occurs in groups, so there is group support and encouragement; the trainer-instructor is Indigenous or has plenty of experience working with Indigenous people; it includes accreditation as part of the process and outcomes; and it builds on learning as part of the project or a contract so that participants learn the requirements of budgets, deadlines and quality control.¹²⁴

119 Mr Bernie Carlon, General Manager, Employment and Indigenous Initiatives, Queensland Department of Employment and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 3.

120 Mr Bernie Carlon, General Manager, Employment and Indigenous Initiatives, Queensland Department of Employment and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 3.

121 Adelaide City Council, *Submission No. 65*, p. 2.

122 Mr Bruce Harvey, Chief Advisor, Aboriginal and Community Relations, Rio Tinto Ltd, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 33.

123 Mr Bob Harvey, Group Manager, Indigenous Employment and Business Group, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 August 2005, p. 12.

124 Mr William Tilmouth, Executive Director, Tangentyere Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, p. 27.

- 5.67 Offering traineeships to Indigenous people was not without its challenges. The City of Port Phillip are reviewing their policy of having trainees because of the level of support required:
- I found that it was difficult for business units to support Indigenous trainees and to also provide the level of commitment required to nurture and grow a person into a job-ready candidate from relatively no employment experience or qualifications.¹²⁵
- 5.68 One of the important points raised in evidence was the temptation to overload successful Indigenous businesses with trainees which may impact heavily on their financial viability. Many businesses do not have Indigenous skills development as a priority because of the impact on their bottom line.¹²⁶
- 5.69 The Regional Environmental Employment Program emphasises practical employment related activity more than the written word.¹²⁷ The Larrakia Development Corporation noted that they provide people with training once they are employed:
- We are not interested in training. Training comes once you are employed. Kelvin has about 50 or 60 of the most trained unemployed blackfellas you will ever find out at Karawa Park. We get them jobs then we train them.¹²⁸
- 5.70 Mr Lester Davis made the point that:
- ... we have always looked to try and make one dollar do two jobs. So if you get a federal road grant, you turn it into a training program; you build the roads, people learn the skills and acquire outcomes. If you have it around a mine site, you tag it to employment outcomes, or something tangible that serves as a model.¹²⁹
- 5.71 The Blacktown City Council recruited six AFL trainees; three Indigenous positions and three generalist traineeships. Due to the

125 Mr Mikael Smith, Coordinator, Aboriginal and Multicultural Policy and Programs, City of Port Phillip Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 April 2006, p. 52.

126 Indigenous Business Australia, *Submission No. 104*, p. 25.

127 Ms Anne Hampshire, National Manager, Research and Social Policy, Mission Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2005, p. 63.

128 Mr Gregory Constantine, Chief Executive Officer, Larrakia Development Corporation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 72.

129 Mr Lester Davis, Manager, Learning and Development, Newmont Australia Ltd, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 October 2005, p. 35.

overwhelming number of applications for the generalist positions, two of these were given to Indigenous people.¹³⁰

- 5.72 Dr Dennis Foley commented on the number of Caucasians who are willing to provide training in industry skills to Indigenous people.¹³¹ If tradespeople retiring in urban areas could be encouraged to train Indigenous youths in industry skills it could be of assistance.¹³² Indigenous Community Volunteers have completed 450 projects to transfer skills to Indigenous people since September 2001.¹³³ The Committee commends this important contribution to skills transfer.

Training and distance

- 5.73 Distance is certainly an issue when it comes to accessing training. Face to face training is an important part of the way Indigenous people learn.¹³⁴ Trainees and apprentices have to travel to TAFE colleges even when there are sufficient numbers to warrant flexible delivery.¹³⁵ The Committee was also told that Indigenous trainees in the Kimberley cannot undertake their training in the nearest facility because it is in the Northern Territory.¹³⁶
- 5.74 The cost of training can be higher in remote areas and this can limit 'user's choice' as there are not the same opportunities for competitive tendering for training.¹³⁷ The Bloodwood Tree Association believes that additional training, even on a 'fly in fly out' basis could increase community capacity building to facilitate training.¹³⁸ The example was given of the Kooljaman resort where a tutor is travelling 3.5 hours to provide training to the four Indigenous people working at the resort.¹³⁹

130 Ms Lisa Giacomelli, Manager, Community Development, Blacktown City Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 August 2005, p. 28.

131 Dr Dennis Foley, *Transcript of Evidence*, 16 October 2006, p. 8.

132 Dr Dennis Foley, *Transcript of Evidence*, 16 October 2006, p. 9.

133 Mr Joseph Elu, Co-Chair, Indigenous Community Volunteers, *Transcript of Evidence*, 4 December 2006, p. 1.

134 Mr Ronald Burns, Training Adviser, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 3.

135 Rio Tinto Ltd, *Submission No. 80*, p. 17.

136 Rio Tinto Ltd, *Submission No. 80*, p. 17.

137 Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *Submission No. 64*, p. 5.

138 Bloodwood Tree Association Inc, *Submission No. 34*, p. 3.

139 Mr Ronald Burns, Training Adviser, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 3.

- 5.75 Ms Bain from the Central Land Council commented on the need for training on their own country for land management programs.¹⁴⁰ People with no skills are moving into larger centres and this can have other associated problems.¹⁴¹

Training flexibility

- 5.76 There was a call for more flexible delivery of training programs. Face to face training is an important part of the way Indigenous people learn.¹⁴² The points raised included:
- the need for trainees and apprentices to travel to TAFE colleges even when there are sufficient numbers to warrant flexible delivery;¹⁴³
 - a preference to undertake their training in the nearest facility even if it is in another jurisdiction;¹⁴⁴
 - the higher cost of training in remote areas can limit 'user's choice';¹⁴⁵
 - there was a call for additional training, even if it is on a fly in fly out basis;¹⁴⁶
 - the TAFE system operates on the school year and does not take into account the wet and dry seasons which determine when people are based in their communities or on site;¹⁴⁷ and
 - school based apprenticeships should accept a greater range of vocations.¹⁴⁸

Funding arrangements

- 5.77 The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) called for a 'demand driven' approach to funding priorities which would

140 Ms Tina Bain, Regional Land Management Coordinator, Central Land Council, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 July 2005, p. 55.

141 Mr Greg Constantine, Chief Executive Officer, Larrakia Development Corporation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 July 2005, p. 72.

142 Mr Ronald Burns, Training Adviser, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 3.

143 Rio Tinto Ltd, *Submission No. 80*, p. 17.

144 Rio Tinto Ltd, *Submission No. 80*, p. 17.

145 Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *Submission No. 64*, p. 5.

146 Bloodwood Tree Association Inc, *Submission No. 34*, p. 3.

147 Rio Tinto, *Submission No. 80*, p. 17.

148 Ms Marilyn Smith, Manager, Footprints Forward, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 July 2005, p. 5.

provide incentives for training providers to address the needs of employers and encourage competition between training providers.¹⁴⁹ The current approach of having government authorities determining training needs has limited the flexibility and capacity for initiatives to meet the needs of Indigenous clients.¹⁵⁰

The funding priorities set by Governments needs to be flexible enough to meet the ever changing needs of Indigenous participants and the ability to respond to industry demands in locations with significant numbers of Indigenous jobseekers.¹⁵¹

- 5.78 In situations where accredited training is not available locally, funding is not available to send employees interstate.¹⁵² The current funding arrangements do not have sufficient flexibility to address some particular training requirements.¹⁵³ CAAMA called for flexible training programs with specified milestones and outcomes to be achieved to ensure accountability.¹⁵⁴
- 5.79 Adelaide City Council believes that some traineeships should be funded for three years as this would allow the integration and successful transition to full time employment.¹⁵⁵ Funding for a three year traineeship is now difficult because it has become 'so bitsy' that it just becomes impossible to try to piece together.¹⁵⁶ Apprenticeships must offer structured accredited training for sufficient time to allow the completion of the qualification.¹⁵⁷
- 5.80 The supplementary funding provided by the Australian Government is to target specific interventions to accelerate Indigenous students' learning outcomes.¹⁵⁸ Ms Linda Ballantyne added that:

Schools/TAFE would need extra funding to bring in trainers eg English Language trainers, teachers aide trainers etc. This might seem a lot of money on top of the 'new' salaries but when weighed up against dole payments, community

149 Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *Submission No. 64*, p. 5.

150 Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *Submission No. 64*, p. 5.

151 Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *Submission No. 64*, p. 5.

152 Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, *Submission No. 32*, p. 4.

153 Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, *Submission No. 32*, p. 4.

154 Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, *Submission No. 32*, pp. 4-5.

155 Adelaide City Council, *Submission No. 65*, p. 2.

156 Mrs Priscilla Collins, Chief Executive Officer, Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 July 2005, p. 2.

157 Tangentyere Council, *Submission No. 69*, p. 13.

158 Department of Education, Science and Training, *Submission No. 107*, p. 2.

diversionary programs, community renewal programs, extra policing, violence and vandalism and all other health and welfare issues ... the cost is not that high.¹⁵⁹

- 5.81 On example of success in this approach is Tangentyere Constructions which found the availability of three year funding for the building apprentices program enables them to complete their Certificate III in General Construction.¹⁶⁰
- 5.82 The Committee remains concerned that sufficient strategies have not been developed to enable greater continuity of funding for programs and projects and assurance that future funding will be available if projects successfully meet the terms set out in each agreement.

Training incentives

- 5.83 Umoona Aged Care Aboriginal Corporation stressed the point that the training incentives may be adequate in normal circumstances but training for Indigenous people can require extra work, backfill wages and study resources.¹⁶¹ They suggested that training and employment criteria could be incorporated in agreements as part of the mutual obligation clause. The Aboriginal organisation could outline the performance indicators and policy backup in return for an agreed funding increase.¹⁶² A clear statement of organisational responsibilities is an important part of the mutual obligations and there needs to be accountability.¹⁶³ CAAMA supported an approach to encourage education/training:

The incentive for providers to pursue education or training outcomes could be strengthened through linking the education/training outcome fee to milestones reflecting retention in and completion of education or training.¹⁶⁴

The need for formal qualifications

- 5.84 It was suggested that in some situations a more flexible approach to qualifications could be appropriate. Indigenous Business Australia commented that 'many of the existing training packages are above the

159 Ms Linda Ballantyne, *Submission No. 112*, p. 4.

160 Tangentyere Council, *Submission No. 69*, p. 6.

161 Umoona Aged Care Aboriginal Corporation, *Submission No. 31*, p. 5; See also Melbourne and Adelaide transcripts.

162 Umoona Aged Care Aboriginal Corporation, *Submission No. 31*, p. 6.

163 Umoona Aged Care Aboriginal Corporation, *Submission No. 31*, p. 6.

164 Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, *Submission No. 32*, p. 6.

level required by Indigenous learners'.¹⁶⁵ TAFE courses can provide non-accredited training which builds individual and community capacity but then there is a need to encourage higher qualifications and skills that are competitive in the mainstream labour market.¹⁶⁶ The point was made that at the end of the day, people do not get jobs because they have qualifications, they get jobs because they have skills.¹⁶⁷ Mr Anthony Greer suggested that one such way could be the recognition of prior learning.¹⁶⁸

- 5.85 There are precedents. In Western Australia there is a move to reduce carpentry apprenticeships to two years allowing people to specialise in fields such as housing.¹⁶⁹ The Queensland Government offered an essential services traineeship, however few people participated.¹⁷⁰ Because of the complexity, however, not all trades will have this type of option. Some licenses are necessary for occupational health and safety skills need to be kept up to date and these qualifications need to be the same standard state wide.¹⁷¹

Cadetships

- 5.86 There was significant support for the Aboriginal Cadet Scheme. The cadet scheme enables Indigenous Australians to be employed by government departments and gain relevant experience while completing their university studies. This provides the cadet with practical experience, the government agency with a valuable resource and the opportunity for non-Indigenous employees to work along side the cadet.¹⁷² Flinders University also has an Indigenous Cadetship program in conjunction with the Cooperative Research

165 Indigenous Business Australia, *Submission 104*, p. 25.

166 Mr Ron Weatherall, Executive Director, Employment and Indigenous Initiatives, Queensland Department of Employment and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 9.

167 Mr Bernie Carlon, General Manager, Employment and Indigenous Initiatives, Queensland Department of Employment and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 9.

168 Mr Anthony Greer, Group Manager, Indigenous and Transitions Group, Department of Education, Science and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 August 2005, p. 45.

169 Mr Lester Davis, Manager, Learning and Development, Newmont Australia Ltd, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 October 2005, p. 37.

170 Mr Bernie Carlon, General Manager, Employment and Indigenous Initiatives, Queensland Department of Employment and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 8.

171 Mr Bernie Carlon, General Manager, Employment and Indigenous Initiatives, Queensland Department of Employment and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 July 2005, p. 8.

172 Dr Jocelyne Scutt, *Submission No. 61*, pp. 2-3.

Centre for Aboriginal Health for a student to complete a Bachelor in Environmental Health on a full-time basis.¹⁷³

- 5.87 The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry acknowledges the success of the program for university studies and would like to see the Cadetship program extended to trade qualifications particularly in industries that are experiencing skills shortages.¹⁷⁴ Rio Tinto has employed 23 cadets in areas such as law, mining engineering, environmental science, business administration and accounting.¹⁷⁵ Mr Jack Pearson also suggested that Indigenous apprentices have the opportunity to include a mobility program as part of their trade training and commented on the advantages of a national TAFE system.¹⁷⁶
- 5.88 The Committee would like to see the National Indigenous Cadet Scheme expanded as this appears to be an effective way of achieving a long-term increase in the number of qualified Indigenous staff across the public service.

Recommendation 9

- 5.89 **The Committee recommends that the Government:**
- **review the National Indigenous Cadet Scheme to identify the most productive avenues for its expansion;**
 - **actively promote cadetships to Indigenous students at the matriculation level as a means of continuing their education; and**
 - **provide public service rotational opportunities for Indigenous cadets in Indigenous organisations and in the private sector.**
- 5.90 The WELL program and the STEP programs are employment entry level programs and in some situations there is now a need for management cadet assistance or marketing cadets. It may need a

173 Flinders University, *Submission No. 70*, p. 2.

174 Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *Submission No. 64*, p. 5.

175 Rio Tinto, *Submission No. 80*, p. 8.

176 Mr Jack Pearson, *Submission No. 102*, p. 5.

different type of program to support those wishing to move up within an organisation.¹⁷⁷

Rotational opportunities

- 5.91 Mr Jack Pearson argued strongly for a mechanism that provided an opportunity for Indigenous people working in Aboriginal organisations to be able to spend some time in government departments to ensure that young leaders understood the way government processes work, how to put in funding applications and which agencies to contact.¹⁷⁸ The model envisioned would be a merit based process which enabled some rotations through portfolios with responsibility for Indigenous affairs similar to the graduate program currently in the Australian Public Service.¹⁷⁹
- 5.92 The Committee believes that the establishment of the Indigenous Coordination Centres in regional areas allows additional opportunities that would enable the approach to be considered.

Recommendation 10

- 5.93 **The Committee recommends that the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination develop a model which allows Indigenous employees of non-government organisations to experience work within the public sector.**

Concluding comments

- 5.94 Education is clearly the key to future Indigenous employment opportunities. Average education levels of Indigenous people remain below the achievements of the non-Indigenous population. There have been a number of initiatives introduced in government policies recently and the success and sustainability of these initiatives remains to be seen.

177 Mr Don Freeman, Managing Director, Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 July 2005, p. 22.

178 Mr Jack Pearson, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 November 2005, pp. 1-2; Mr Jack Pearson, *Submission No. 102*, p. 4.

179 Mr Jack Pearson, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 November 2005, pp. 1-2.

- 5.95 The Committee notes the *Australian Directions in Indigenous Education 2005-2008* report of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs released last year.¹⁸⁰ The Committee supports the suggested directions outlined in the report and in particular would like to see steps taken to 'ensure that schools, in partnership with parents/ caregivers, deliver personalised learning to all Indigenous students that includes targets against key learning outcomes and incorporates family involvement strategies'.¹⁸¹ The Committee believes that this approach has already been demonstrated as best practice by industry.
- 5.96 Unless governments can meet this challenge, future Indigenous employment cannot hope to meet its true potential. The national skills shortage provides Australia with an opportunity to provide economic independence for the majority of Indigenous people.
- The clear role of educators is to prepare children for the future, not the past. The future is an economic one and not necessarily in a remote community. The change in direction will attract reactionary criticism from those whose careers are based on extracting rents from the current regime. The criticism should be expected as a sign that the new direction is the right direction. The new policy direction must not apply different standards to Aboriginal children. It must fundamentally treat Aboriginal children as children.¹⁸²
- 5.97 Literacy and numeracy skills are essential for most employment options and are important for occupational health and safety requirements in many jobs. Some progress has been made in work readiness programs. There is also considerable work being done to increase the relevance and effectiveness of vocational education and training programs.

180 Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, *Australian Directions in Indigenous Education 2005-2008*, Prepared by the AESOC Senior Officials Working Party on Indigenous Education, July 2006.

181 Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, *Australian Directions in Indigenous Education 2005-2008*, Prepared by the AESOC Senior Officials Working Party on Indigenous Education, July 2006, p. 10.

182 Hon Dr Gary Johns, *Aboriginal Education: Remote Schools and the Real Economy*, The Menzies Research Centre Ltd, May 2006, p. 26.