

Ref: GE1242/1

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Submission No.	51
Date Received	9-5-05

The Secretary  
Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
**CANBERRA ACT 2600**

Dear Secretary

**RE: INQUIRY INTO INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT**

Alice Springs Town Council has liaised with a range of Indigenous Organisations in Alice Springs and is pleased to submit the following comments to assist the Standing Committee in their deliberations.

Indigenous residents currently made up almost one third of the population of Alice Springs, but do not have a corresponding participation rate in the economy. Key objectives of the *Alice Springs Town Council Strategic Plan 2004-2009* aim to address this situation and increase indigenous people in the economy.

There are many successful examples of indigenous employment which have had positive outcomes in Alice Springs including the Aboriginal Liaison Team at the Alice Springs Hospital, Aboriginal Liaison Officer in the Alice Springs Library, Alice Springs Fertile Ground Company and the Tangentyere Job Shop.

The Alice Springs Hospital Aboriginal Liaison Team (ALOs), consisted of five Aboriginal Liaison Officers. This was a well functioning team mainly due to the ALOs having clear roles and expectations. The ALOs were highly respected and the Manager worked hard at developing their profile at the hospital. The hospital and the community valued what they did, their skills were seen as highly specialised which gave them pride in their work and the service they provided to the patients and the organisation as interpreters was considered essential. The process of developing the ALOs role in the Hospital was long and difficult. A key to the success of the program was the commitment and support from the Manager as well as the Hospital.

In 2001 the Alice Springs Town Council and Tangentyere Council entered into a partnership to establish a green waste recycling facility in Alice Springs known as the fertile Ground Company. The Company has been operating since 2002. The operations provides opportunities for participants of the Commonwealth Development Employment Programs.

The Commonwealth Development Employment Programs have provided real outcomes in indigenous employment in Alice Springs. The Tangentyere Job Shop has assisted in the recruitment of Indigenous workers at Alice Springs Council including the Aboriginal Liaison Officer. The Aboriginal Liaison Officer is recognised as providing a valuable role in the Alice Springs Town

Council Library. The Library is seen as a welcoming environment for many aboriginal members of our community who access a range of services to support their life long learning.

Alice Springs Town Council has also awarded several contracts to ACM Arrernte to complete river walks. ACM Arrernte is an aboriginal work training program. Alice Springs Town Council in awarding contracts to ACM Arrente has reinforced the positive impact of this training program.

The basis of recognition and respect for indigenous people lies with an understanding and awareness of indigenous cultures and the issues facing indigenous people today within and outside the workplace. All new employees at Alice Springs Town Council undertake cross cultural training awareness so they can understand the challenges currently faced by our local indigenous communities.

I am sure that the Committee would value from a visit to the Alice Springs Region to see many best practices in indigenous employment. There is an ongoing need for co-operative efforts of all levels of government to reflect the needs and aspirations of our indigenous communities.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M D Blackburn', followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Mark Blackburn  
**Acting Chief Executive Officer**