



SENATOR THE HON NICK MINCHIN

Minister for Finance and Administration
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate

- 9 MAY 2005

Mr Barry Wakelin MP
Chairman
Standing Committee on Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Affairs
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Submission No.	62
Date Received	13-5-05

Dear Barry,

Thank you for your letter of 16 March 2005 concerning the Indigenous Employment Inquiry being conducted by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs.

The Finance Portfolio supports increasing Indigenous participation in the Australian Public Service (APS). A number of initiatives and programmes have been implemented within the Finance portfolio to increase the level of Indigenous employees.

Currently the Department of Finance and Administration (Finance) is contributing towards Indigenous employment by participating in the *National Indigenous Cadetship Programme* being run by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. To date, the results have been positive with Finance receiving two high calibre cadets.

One cadet is in the process of completing their final year of study, with a view to being placed into Finance in January 2006. The other cadet has successfully completed their final year and joined Finance as part of the 2005 graduate programme in January 2005.

The *Indigenous Graduate Recruitment Initiative* is a programme being run by the APS Commission. Finance is working in partnership with the APS Commission, through this Initiative, to:

- address the declining representation rates of Indigenous Australians in the APS;
- increase the number of Indigenous graduates in the APS; and
- increase the number of Indigenous employees who will work in non-indigenous related policy, programme and service delivery areas.

In 2006, Finance is aiming to recruit five graduates from this Initiative.

Finance also supports the *Indigenous Leadership Programme* which is also run by the APS Commission. This Programme focuses on resolving key obstacles to Indigenous employment, and in particular the retention of Indigenous employees. The Programme requires agencies to nominate motivated potential APS leaders with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background to develop capacities and aspirations to perform in leadership roles.

Finance has agreed in principle with the objective of the Programme and has offered work placements for appropriate candidates. The Programme was advertised internally inviting staff to participate if relevant to their development. An appropriate officer within Finance has been identified for the Leadership Programme however due to work commitments it is unlikely that the officer will be able to take up the placement in the first Programme which is scheduled for April, 2005.

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) within my portfolio, recruits approximately 45 Community Election Information Officers (CEIOs) at the APS 4 level to visit and inform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities about the importance of participating in and the arrangements for electoral events. CEIOs are employed in all States and Territories at federal election time.

CEIOs receive formal and on-the-job training and conduct programmes of information and education visits throughout their own local areas prior to electoral events.

A mandatory criterion relating to workplace diversity is included in selection criteria for all AEC recruitment. Training for all staff in the APS and AEC values and code of conduct, including workplace diversity issues, took place during 2003/04.

The AEC uses identified selection criteria asking for specific skills in relation to working with Indigenous people when recruiting staff at the APS 2, APS 3 and APS 6 levels to work in Divisional Offices in the following locations:

Cowper – NSW
Grey – SA
Gwydir – NSW
Herbert – QLD
Kalgoorlie – WA

Kennedy – QLD
Leichhardt – QLD
Lingiari – NT
Maranoa – QLD
Solomon – NT

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Minchin', written in a cursive style.

Nick Minchin