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Centre for  
Appropriate  
Technology

SECURING SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS  
through appropriate technology

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**INQUIRY INTO INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT**

Submission from the Centre for Appropriate Technology  
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**Introduction**

In preparing this submission, we have elected to present some examples from our experience of employment for Indigenous people. These fall into three categories:

1. Stories from our regular radio program called *Our Place*. We have enclosed CD versions of the relevant programs;
2. Examples from our education and training programs;
3. Experiences from our work in the Kimberley, through CAT's Derby office.

In conclusion, this submission draws some of the lessons from this experience and presents it as significant factors that the Inquiry may wish to take into account in its deliberations.

**Background to the Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT)**

The Centre for Appropriate Technology or CAT is a non-government organisation (NGO) that is independently governed by an Indigenous Board.

- Our Vision:* Happy and Safe communities of Indigenous People  
*Our Purpose:* To secure sustainable livelihoods through appropriate technology  
*Our Outcomes:* Informed, capable Indigenous people  
Access to technical services  
Opportunities for enterprise and trading  
Supportive policy and program frameworks  
Networks and partnerships

*Aim:* To secure sustainable livelihoods through appropriate technology

It is our conviction that the application of appropriate technology:

- brings improved well-being
- enables people to apply resources and skills
- facilitates work, enterprise and trading
- helps to secure these opportunities

CAT has twenty five years' experience in understanding the meeting the specific needs of remote communities. We use three steps:

1. Needs – listening to people identifying needs, issues and problems
2. Choices – investigating a range of technology options with the community to arrive at the best approach
3. Challenges – supporting people to meet the unique technical challenges of living in remote Australia.

CAT works through partnership such as those that have led to the Desert Peoples Centre, and the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre. We run several programs in partnership with Rio Tinto.

**INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING STORIES  
FROM  
"OUR PLACE" RADIO SEGMENTS**

*Volume 3 Edition 8      Theme:      Sea Rangers of Borrooloola*

**Names:**      FELICITY CHAPMAN AND RICHARD DIXON  
                    Community: Borrooloola in South West Gulf of NT

**Training and Employment:**

What the Sea Rangers actually do on the sea in regards to researching and monitoring of Dugongs and Sea Turtles on coastline and surrounding islands

Traditional owners noticed the fat in sea turtles turning black, concerns put forward by Traditional Owners that Dugongs and Sea Turtles need to be tested. This is how Sea Rangers began in Borrooloola, boat donated, only 4 staff. Send tissue samples to Darwin to be tested

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*Volume 3 Edition 9      Theme:      Partnership of Mawa Assoc and McArthur River Mine*

**Names:**      Traditional Owner KEITH RORY AND BILL BAIRD of McArthur River Mine  
                    Community: Borrooloola in South West Gulf of NT

**Training and Employment:**

Part 1 of partnership, of how Mawa and McArthur River Mine are working closely together in training and employment for Indigenous community of Borrooloola

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*Volume 3 Edition 10      Theme:      Partnership of Mawa Assoc and McArthur River Mine*

**Names:**      Traditional Owners MAX FINLAY AND SAMUEL EVANS, also BILL BAIRD of McArthur River Mine  
                    Community; Borrooloola in South West Gulf of NT

**Training and Employment:**

Part 2 of Partnership of how Mawa and McArthur River Mine are working closely together in training and employment for Indigenous community of Borrooloola. We take a more in depth look at Mawa's 31% stake in the Bing Bong Port facility.

*Volume 3 Edition 12 Theme: Moses, a Tradition Ranger looking after his Country*

**Names:** MOSES WIRRAPUNDA  
Community: Dhurruputjpi Homelands, Gove Peninsula East  
Arnhem Land

**Training and Employment:**

Sitting down under a tree in Dhurruputjpi with Moses, we talked about how he is being trained as a Ranger. He spoke about dealing with wild buffaloes, wild pigs, cane toads, and how big fishing nets from huge boats are killing turtles

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*Volume 3 Edition 16 Theme: Indigenous Cane Toad Research Centre Proposal*

**Names:** MARK NOONAN AND GRAEME SAWYER of Frog Watch NT  
Community: Top end of the Northern Territory

Training and Employment: A proposal was put forward to the Northern Territory Government that there should be an Indigenous Cane Toad Research Centre, where both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can relay information to, on the behaviour of cane toads etc. But proposal was knocked back. We also take a look at the invention of a new cane toad trap

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*Volume 3 Edition 21 Theme: Future Dreams and Hopes of Wadeye*

**Names:** DALE SEANIGER, Deputy Council Clarke and Consultant Bill Ivory  
Community: Wadeye, used to be known as Port Keats, west of Darwin

Training and Employment: We take an in-depth look at how Wadeye have re-structured their governance system, which now takes in all the many clan groups of this region. Each clan now has their own plan, in how they want to develop their country, like for tourism so that there is training in gaining new skills, and in the end employment, thus creating a livelihood in their homeland

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*Volume 4 Edition 2 Theme: General Principles to do with Indigenous Businesses in Remote Regions*

**Name:** MATT FAGAN from Kakadu Community Development  
Community: Jabiru in Arnhem Land

Training and Employment: Matt Fagan talks about what he believes are the wrong ways and the right ways of how you go about approaching and helping Indigenous people in remote regions to begin their small business as a livelihood.

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Volume 4 Edition 3      Theme: *Marcus Guthia – Dreams of Becoming a Stockman*

**Name:**            MARCUS GUTHIA, is a teenager, also John Isgar from the Raminginning Resource Centre  
Community: Raminginning in Arnhem Land

**Training and Employment:**

A diversionary programme was set up by elders of Raminginning. Young men go to Mawongi station to learn new skills, like fencing etc. Marcus Guthia is a success story, in that he enrolled himself into rural college, as he has a dream of becoming a stockman.

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Volume 4 Edition 5      Theme: *Youthworx and Kormilda College*

**Names:**            SHARON SPARKS of Youthworx and JENNY DA SILVA of Kormilda College Community: Darwin

Training and Employment: We hear how Youthworx NT and Kormilda College are supporting Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in work placements. We look at how VET programmes support youth, in that when they leave high school, they have an understanding of the responsibilities in the workforce

<b>Success stories from our Education and Training Section</b>
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**Trainee Name:**      LIONEL BUZZACOTT  
**Program:**            Irrkerlantye ADT 1

**Outcome:**            Lionel successfully completed Certificate 1 in Applied Design & Technology.

Lionel is now working for Territory Housing as Environmental Health Officer.

**Why was this a positive outcome:**

Yes, Environmental Health Worker is one of the employment pathways identified for ADT.

**How was this outcome achieved:**

Lionel told me that doing the course gave him the experience and confidence to do his job. The program was a mixture of On and Off the Job training. A certain amount was delivered here at CAT which involved theory and simulations and also planning and estimating for the practical projects (On the Job) which were connected to Irrkerlantye Learning Centre and Ingerreke Outstation Resource Centre.

**Trainee Name:** BRETT NELSON  
**Program:** ATWORK Certificate II

**Outcome:** Successfully completed the course.

Now employed as a Field Officer with the Kimberly Land Council.  
Works mainly with outstations regarding their technology needs.

**Why was this a positive outcome:**

Brett continues to be full of praise for the ATWORK course, particularly the idea of Technacy and the way in which the course was taught (practical, project based, community issues/needs). It set him up well for the type of work that he finds himself employed in.

**How was this outcome achieved:**

Brett is self motivated. He went out and found the sort of work that suited him.

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**Trainee Name:** REX STUART

**Program:** ATWORK I & II; Automotive I & II

**Outcome:** Successful completion of Applied Design & Technology Certificate I & II and Automotive Certificate I & II. Rex is now employed as an Apprentice with Henry Walker Eltin

**Why was this a positive outcome:**

Rex was an early school leaver, and soon found himself going down hill. Since coming to CAT he has got his life back on track and moving toward bigger and better things.

**How was this outcome achieved:**

Rex is self-motivated and reliable. He enjoys learning practical skills and this is reflected by his attendance in training. Rex first came to CAT in 2004 to study ATWORK in which he successfully completed certificates I & II. He then enrolled in Automotive certificate I, during this course, Rex volunteered to drive, the vehicle his class built for the 2004 demolition derby. At the start of 2005 Rex showed his enthusiasm by attending training during holidays to start certificate II in Automotive. While studying, Rex attended work experience with Henry Walker Eltin and made such an impression that he is now in employment as an Apprentice Mechanic.

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## Examples from CAT's work in the Kimberley

The CAT Derby Office has a combination of Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff all working in programs involving planned maintenance and construction of appropriate infrastructure in remote Indigenous communities in the Kimberley. In addition to these programs in Derby there is a Technical Support program that among other things offers support and encouragement in the various aspects of people's livelihoods, including employment and enterprise opportunities.

In particular, the Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT) offer work study opportunities for Indigenous people currently in or emerging from tertiary or other studies. The Derby office has taken on 5 such students since 2001. Currently CAT Derby has a Derby High School Year 12 student working one day per week in the office.

### Successful initiatives

Indigenous employment initiatives in the CAT Derby/Kimberley area can be categorised loosely as the **staff recruitment process** and the **tender call process**.

### Staff recruitment process

The Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT) offer employment opportunities for Indigenous people currently in or emerging from tertiary studies. One such initiative was to advertise and offer a **cadetship** for a suitable Indigenous person for the CAT office in Derby.

The successful candidate was Seth McCann, who is now in his second year at the James Cook University in Townsville, Queensland. Seth is studying Chemical Science.

Seth makes the journey from Queensland to Derby in the WA Kimberley each semester, and works with the Regional Technical Manager and Technical Officers in the Derby Office. Already Seth's contribution to the CAT Derby programs is as follows:-

- Community water sampling and analysis using a mini-laboratory
- Participating in and inspecting various aquaculture enterprises in the Kimberley communities.
- Assisting with contract supervision on road works and maintenance, with a longer term view to soil mechanics.

Other Indigenous employment initiatives have been to **specifically encourage Indigenous applications** for positions vacant within the CAT Derby Office. This has seen the successful employment of Ernie Hunter (retired), David D'Antoine (Bushlight Program) and Rhona Bin Hitam as the Administration Officer in CAT Derby.

Both employees are effectively contributing to the outputs and outcomes of the CAT Derby Office, and are positive, enthusiastic and wanting to commit to their jobs long term.

**Tender call process**

CAT Derby project manages several civil works programs throughout the Kimberley. The civil works involve the planned maintenance, re-construction and construction of roads, airstrips, firebreaks and waste management land fill sites.

As Project Managers, CAT Derby encourage tendering civil works contractors to employ local Indigenous plant operators. This is done through the tender document and during the tender assessment stage. Further encouragement is offered throughout the contract works.

There are currently four Indigenous plant operators working with and/or between two earthmoving contractors in the Derby area, and have been on the job for 3 years so far.



## **Conclusion: Factors that contribute to positive outcomes**

Using the examples presented above and in the accompanying radio programs, we conclude that the following factors have been important in achieving successful employment outcomes for Indigenous people within our organisation:

- A Board with a broad and long-term vision for the organisation.
- A Board that has an overall national interest in improving livelihoods for Indigenous people, rather than local or regional interest only.
- A Board committed to furthering adult education, training and employment prospects, through in-house adult education programs, and employing staff with adult education backgrounds.
- Established staff with long-term experience in remote Indigenous communities and who are able to support new people and provide a degree of mentoring.
- Staff with a successful record of involvement within Indigenous affairs.
- Encouraging and targeting Indigenous applicants through the advertising and recruitment process for positions vacant, and following through with appropriate support and further education and training.
- Positive attitude of the Indigenous employee.
- An environment encouraging Indigenous people to look after Indigenous affairs, but also then offering support/backup, such as further training and education, capacity building partnerships and mentoring.

*Centre for Appropriate Technology*  
*13<sup>th</sup> May 2005*