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Cc: Committee, ATSIA (REPS)
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BY: ATSIA

Hi Cheryl

I apologise for this late response re your inquiry into indigenous employment & hope this info isn't too late to action. My staff & I have been extremely busy placing our indigenous clients into employment and therefore haven't been able to find the time to forward above info to you.

Please find attached strategies & areas of improvement for employing indigenous jobseekers in first attachment. Also attached is an article from the Department of Employment & Workplace Relations monthly bulletin "Employment Extra" which features an article about some of our clients we placed into employment at the local council (page 14 - if you would like a copy I can send you one)

We have a huge success story at present. After months of negotiating with our local council, we placed 6 koori jobseekers with the local council for 6 months, with the possibility traineeships after the 6 months. All 6 clients completed the program & 5 have continued with the council in temporary work. One of the clients, who is 50 yrs plus & his major barrier to gaining employment was alcohol, finished the 6 month program & was able to support his 4 kids, which he couldn't do before the job.

His employment consultant then assisted this client to apply for a position with the local CDEP as a co-ordinator finding jobs for CDEP participants. Our client was successful & now has fulltime permanent job for 18 months. Because of this position, the client will be able to manage his alcohol, be able to look after his kids & also help other kooris find jobs which he so wants to do as he is coming of age as an elder.

Another excellent result from the koori placements is the Bega Valley Shire Council, through Mission Australia Bega, has advertised for the first time, designated indigenous traineeship positions for outdoor crew. Our 5 clients still with council & other koori clients we have placed since then are applying for the full time positions.

Bega Mission Australia has been proactive in placing indigenous jobseekers into employment for some time. I am very privileged to have had a close working relationship with the Wallaga Lake community, Umbarra Cultural Centre & Wallaga Lake CDEP for 17 continuous years through my involvement with the community as a trainer, co-ordinator, mentor, advisor & close friend.

We are more than happy to assist with your inquiry however we can as our commitment to the indigenous community is infinite. I was invited to attend the Mature Age Jobseekers into Employment inquiry by the House of Representatives about 6-7 years ago as I was co-ordinating the State funded Mature Workers Program. The case studies I presented are mentioned in the publication "Mature Age that Counts"

We wish you all the very best with this inquiry & look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your time in considering our strategies & areas of improvement.

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"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us"
 Ralph Waldo Emerson

Strategies and Improvements for Placing Indigenous People into Employment

Key Strategies Mission Australia Employment Services Bega utilize when placing Indigenous clients into jobs:

- Mission Australia Bega & Eden has a Memorandum of Understanding with Wallaga Lake CDEP
- Long term relationship (17 years) with indigenous community = trust factor
- Long term relationship with employers. Employers trust we will support employer and client and have a commitment to make it work for all stakeholders
- Both client and employer receive consistent face to face & telephone contact while client is in workplace
- Ability to identify issues both for employers and clients and resolve quickly within 24 hrs through effective communication,
- Extensive training/coaching for jobseekers in work ethics, presentation, employer expectations & job retention skills **before placement**
- Extensive pre-employment meetings at the workplace with all stakeholders addressing concerns & questions
- Open door arrangement with Mission Australia staff & services manager to discuss concerns at any time
- Ensure Job match is appropriate –
 - Outdoor work
 - Group starting together at same time
 - Buddy system
- Offer wage subsidies and 24 hour support
- **Co-operate collaboratively with other indigenous employment programs re NCAP, CDEP, Lands Council**
- Subsidise accommodation, transport, uniforms, equipment for work
- Organize and pay for pre-employment and “on the job” training with TAFE & other RTOs
- Assist with resumes, job applications and interview techniques
- Mediate and negotiate work place conditions with employer re hours, days, cultural differences
- Discuss career paths re traineeships, apprenticeships
- Strategic plan with result being long term employment outcomes

Improvements required to increase Indigenous employment placements

- Additional financial support for employers who employ more than one indigenous person at one time. This will assist indigenous employees to feel more comfortable in the workplace by having support from each other (buddy system)
- Incentives for Elders to become involved in active job seeking participation with jobseekers
- Centrelink staff inform & explain the active participation model to indigenous jobseekers in an environment appropriate to jobseeker
- State government develop indigenous employment policy for local government to implement as compulsory designated positions (relevant to population re 1 employee to 1,000 population)
- Funding for Job Network Members to employ an indigenous employee to conduct post placement support with indigenous clients in employment
- Indigenous car license program
- Drug & alcohol education programs
- Job Network Members able to submit participation reports on non activity (CDEP) clients and Centerlink explain to indigenous job seekers the consequences of Participation Reports
- Funding provided to schools for Indigenous career counselors and teachers' aides
- Training programs for career counselors for indigenous jobseekers
- Financial support for assisting indigenous clients becoming "Job Ready" to Job Network Members (pre employment and personal development)
- All indigenous jobseekers be classified as highly disadvantaged
- National and State survey targeted at employers to assess employer attitude towards employing an indigenous person
 - **Outcome – Develop educational/cross cultural program for employers**
 - **Media (TV) benefits of indigenous employment**
- Long term strategic training /employment programs – 5 years
- Funding made available at 6, 13, 26, 39 and 52 weeks
- Literacy and numeracy mentor support "on the job"