

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

### SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2004-2005 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

**Outcome:** 1

**Output Group:** 1.2 – Assistance to individuals including those with special needs.

#### **DEST Question No. E716\_05**

Senator Ridgeway provided in writing.

#### **Question:**

What are your plans for developing trust between your government department and Indigenous people, particularly at the community level?

#### **Answer:**

*DEST and Indigenous communities*

The platform for maintaining and building goodwill and respect between DEST and Indigenous communities is the extensive experience of its state and district office staff. 45 percent of the staff working in the DEST state and district network are Indigenous and this supports a working relationship with Indigenous communities based on mutual respect and trust.

The Department's strong relationships with Indigenous communities has been demonstrated during DEST's involvement in the COAG Trial. In the Murdi Paaki Region, DEST and other Australian Government agencies, together with NSW government agencies and local government, have developed a working relationship with the 16 Indigenous communities built on the respect and trust that was established prior to the commencement of the COAG Trial.