

3RD NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EMPLOYMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROUNDTABLE

1-4 December 2013, Cairns, Queensland

PROGRAM

The aims of the Roundtable are to:

- ❖ Share knowledge and information, and showcase and celebrate successful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment initiatives in Local Government which involve either direct employment, or indirect employment through council support for local Indigenous businesses.
- ❖ Learn from and build on approaches and strategies of successful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Programs.
- ❖ Improve access and opportunity, and the recruitment and retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the Local Government sector.
- ❖ Explore progress of key elements of the National Indigenous Employment in Local Government Position Paper – Closing the Gap Through Place-based Employment.
- ❖ Explore and discuss key issues and outcomes from the Roundtable and develop a communique to be sent to the Federal Government Indigenous Advisory Committee for consideration in its review.

SUNDAY 1 DECEMBER Holiday Inn, Cairns

6:00pm Welcome drinks by the bar

MONDAY 2 DECEMBER Lakefield Room, Holiday Inn, Cairns

8:00am Registration and arrival tea and coffee

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

8:30am Welcome to Country – Mr **Gudjugudju Fourmile**, descendant of the Gimuy Walubarra Yidinji people of Cairns

8:45am Introduction – The Hon **Margaret Reynolds**, ACELG Chair

9:10am Welcome – Mayor **Bob Manning** OAM, Cairns Regional Council

Cairns Regional Council has had a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) since 2011, and is the first local government in Queensland to have a RAP endorsed by Reconciliation Australia. Cairns Regional Council also has an Indigenous Employment Strategy, which is a three-year action plan to improve Council's performance in recruiting and retaining Indigenous employees. In addition, Council has a First Peoples Advisory Committee, and an active Indigenous engagement policy. Mayor Bob Manning is an ex-Vietnam vet and former CEO of the Cairns Port Authority and Longreach Shire Council.

9:45am Questions and Discussion

10:00am Morning tea and coffee

*The facilitator for the day will be Professor **John Martin**, Chair, ACELG National Local Government Workforce Development Reference Group & Director, Centre for Sustainable Regional Communities, La Trobe University*

CASE STUDIES – INNOVATIVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EMPLOYMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVES

10:15am Case Study A: 'Workforce training and development, remote building solutions, modular homes, and a back to country pastoral initiative' – **Bruce Martin**, CEO, Aak Puul Ngantam (APN) Cape York, Qld

APN Cape York is an organisation established for, and owned by, the community of Aurukun, representing families from the Watson River south to the Kendall River. Aak Puul Ngantam translates as 'Our father's father's country' and refers directly to our ancestral homelands. The area of Aurukun spans 750,000 hectares and includes a vast area of spectacular coastal wetlands and country of major ecological significance. Bruce Martin is a Wik man from Cape Keer Weer on the Western side of Cape York Peninsula, with a commitment to bringing about balanced social, cultural and economic change for his people. In 2011, through this commitment, Bruce established Aak Puul Ngantam as a conduit for the future prosperity for his people. He was recently announced as a member of the Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council.

10:45am Case Study B: 'Innovative Local Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Capacity Building Initiatives' – **Amos Njaramba**, CEO, Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council, Qld

Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council provides services to the residents living in Napranum community. Napranum, meaning 'meeting place', is located 819 kilometres North West of Cairns on the western side of the Cape York Peninsula. Napranum is home to approximately 1000 Indigenous people who are descended from as many as 40 different groups from around Cape York Peninsula. The Chief Executive Officer, Mr Amos Njaramba would particularly like to welcome visitors to the beaches at Pennefather, which are some of the best in Queensland, with great camping opportunities.

11:15am Case Study C: 'Wagirra Trail Project employment initiative' – **Cassandra Storm**, Project Leader Wagirra, Community and Recreation, Albury City Council, NSW

The Wagirra Trail is a two-metre wide shared pathway. The name Wagirra reflects the significance of the river to local Aboriginal people, and the heritage of those who have constructed it. Wagirra is a Wiradjuri word that means to "step on the ground". The trail and associated works are being built and managed under Albury City's Aboriginal Employment and Training Program. Four trainees, two Leading Hands, a Supervisor and a Team Leader make up the Wagirra Trail crew. Unlike many short-term employment initiatives, the Wagirra Trail traineeships are three years in duration and aim to develop future leaders and mentors in the Aboriginal community. The Wagirra Trail project provides the platform for Albury City to work in partnership with the local Aboriginal community to create a genuine long-term employment program which in turn will deliver to the city a valuable asset with significant recreation, tourism and cottage industry spinoffs.

11:45am Case Study D: 'Social enterprise employment solutions and regional capacity building' – Cr **John Weate**, Councillor, Great Lakes Council, NSW, and CEO, Great Lakes Community Resources; Consultant to Resource Recovery Australia

Resource Recovery Australia (RRA) work with local government and communities to broker, establish and scale social enterprises that sustainably manage waste and generate local training and employment opportunities. RRA work with peak industry bodies, social enterprise intermediaries, regional waste groups, strategists and industry consultants to achieve their goals. John Weate is the CEO of Great Lakes Community Resources, a multi award winning community development association specialising in social enterprise. He established the multi award winning resource recovery enterprise and co-founded the first Aboriginal design-licensing studio in Australia, Tobwabba Art. He has also been on local Council for 20 years and is a board member of WaterAid Australia.

12:15pm Questions and Discussion

12:45pm Lunch at Sirocco Restaurant, Holiday Inn

RELEVANT DATA AND CENSUS FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

1:45pm 'An evidence base for engaging with Indigenous people in local government: findings from the *Indigenous Population Project Series – 2011 Census Papers on Socioeconomic Outcomes*' – Dr **Nicholas Biddle**, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR), Australian National University

The Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) is Australia's foremost social science research body focusing on Indigenous economic and social policy from a national perspective. CAEPR aims to undertake social science research on Indigenous policy and development that is excellent by the best international and disciplinary standards and that informs intellectual understanding, public debate, policy formation and community action. Since 1990 it has established an unrivalled reputation and track record in a difficult public policy area of national significance. The principal objective of CAEPR is to undertake high-quality, independent research that will assist in furthering the social and economic development and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people throughout Australia. Dr Nicholas Biddle is an applied behavioural scientist and a Fellow at the Centre. He is currently working on the Indigenous Population project, funded by the Commonwealth and State/Territory Governments.

2:30pm 'Indigenous employment related findings from the Australian Local Government Workforce and Employment (ALGWE) Census' – **Melissa Gibbs**, Deputy Director, Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government

In late 2012 and early 2013, ACELG conducted the inaugural ALGWE Census, surveying councils around the country on a range of workforce and employment measures, including Indigenous employment. The census was coordinated by ACELG, with funding by the Australian Government. It was part of a national initiative by federal, state and territory local government ministers to improve local government workforce development. Melissa Gibbs is the Deputy Director of ACELG and was involved in the data collection and analysis. She began her role shortly after the establishment of the Centre in 2009, and also manages the Centre's Rural-Remote and Indigenous Local Government Program.

- 3:00pm** Afternoon tea and coffee
- 3:15pm** BREAKOUT SESSIONS: On the implications of the data findings and how they might impact local government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in the sector
- 4:00pm** End of Sessions

EVENING Monday 2 December Kuranda

Note: Advance bookings are required for the Tjapukai tour and dinner show

- 4:40pm** Travel by coach from Holiday Inn, Cairns to Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park, Kuranda

Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park enables guests to immerse themselves in traditional Tjapukai culture with authentic music, dance and storytelling by the Tjapukai people. The world's oldest living culture is brought to life by Aboriginal performers who engage guests with interactive activities such as didgeridoo playing, face painting and boomerang throwing and educate them about Cairns and the Great Barrier Reef's traditional rainforest people. Exciting audio-visual effects and professionally choreographed shows ensure the genuine cultural experience is entertaining. Founded more than 25 years ago, Tjapukai is Australia's largest Indigenous cultural park and is in the Guinness Book of Records as Australia's longest running stage show. The Cultural Park has been built on traditional Tjapukai land in a beautiful rainforest setting to highlight the environment enjoyed by the Indigenous people of the Cairns Wet Tropics rainforest.

- 5:00pm** Two-hour private guided tour through Tjapukai:

Didgeridoo Show
Bush food and medicine talk
Hunting and weapons talk
Boomerang and spear throwing

- 7:00pm** Tjapukai by Night 3 part dinner show:

Welcome drink on arrival
Quinkan Spirit performance
Lakeside fire-making ceremony
Private dinner performance
International buffet dinner

- 10-10:30pm** Return travel by coach from Kuranda to Holiday Inn, Cairns

TUESDAY 3 DECEMBER

Lakefield Room, Holiday Inn, Cairns

8.30am Arrival tea and coffee

9:00am Introduction – The Hon **Margaret Reynolds**, ACELG Chair

9:15am KEYNOTE ADDRESS: The Hon **David Crisafulli** MP, Queensland Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience

David Crisafulli was elected to Queensland parliament representing the seat of Mundingburra in March 2012, after serving eight years on Townsville City Council, the last four as Deputy Mayor. During that time he was a journalist, a government advisor and a small business operator. He was Minister for Local Government from April 2012 till February 2013, and since then has been Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience.

*The facilitator for the day will be **John Ravlic**, Chief Executive, Local Government Managers Australia*

CROSS-BORDER PERSPECTIVES

9:45am ‘Cross-border Local Government Perspectives: Northern Territory, Queensland and Papua New Guinea. Similarities and differences; and reflections on Indigenous employment and mentoring’ – **John Japp**, CEO, East Arnhem Shire Council, NT

After spending 17 years in Papua New Guinea as a Senior Lecturer at the Madang Marine College, John Japp returned to Australia with his family. He’s recently completed a three year contract as the CEO of Aurukun Shire in Cape York and before that he was CEO at Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council, also in Far North Queensland. He brings with him a wealth of experience from his time abroad and in North Queensland. With the tremendous potential in East Arnhem, he is looking at expanding and improving services for the communities, and looks forward to working on improving the capabilities together.

10:15am ‘Victoria’s Aboriginal Employment Project Journey’ – **Lidia Thorpe**, Aboriginal Employment Project Advisor, Municipal Association of Victoria

The Victorian Aboriginal community is active and resilient, and has a strong sense of identity and cultural connection. It is also a relatively young, urbanised community with half of the Indigenous population living in metropolitan Melbourne. The Aboriginal Employment Project aims to achieve a commitment from Victorian councils to increase employment of Aboriginal people and develop actionable strategies. The Aboriginal employment adviser for this project is Lidia Thorpe, a Gonnai and Gunditjmarra woman from the south-east and western districts of Victoria.

10:45am Morning tea and coffee

MENTORING STORIES AND STRATEGIES

11:00am ‘Our stories of mentoring – supporting capabilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly in early childhood education through the Yarn Up program and others’ – **Eileen Heywood**, Principal Consultant, Heywood Consulting, and **Cathy Hazzard**, Centre for Managed Strategies, Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE, Qld

Heywood Consulting has had the privilege of designing and facilitating over twelve Indigenous mentoring programs (for the Community Services Skilling Plan) since 2008. That work has taken them all over Queensland and they have partnered with Elders and key community members to write resources to support Indigenous mentoring. Heywood Consulting recognises the pain, injustice and loss

that has been inflicted on Australia's first nation people. Strengths based approaches provide a means to build on the reserves of dignity, strength and hope that exist in all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Cathy Hazzard is one of the Managers at the Centre for Managed Strategies, Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE and her main focus area of work is Early Childhood Education and Child Health. She will also input into the session about capability building through mentoring, by spending a short amount of the time on the Yarn Up program that her team has been involved with for some time. This includes mentoring early childhood educators in particular who work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

11:40am Case study on workforce development – **Julie Cook**, Human Resource Manager; **Carole Unwin**, Skills and Development Coordinator; and **Tara Wilsmore**, Mentor Retention Coordinator, Roper Gulf Shire, NT

Roper Gulf Shire Council's representatives will talk about their council's journey in developing a robust workforce development program, and share learnings made along the way particularly in relation to mentoring and cover work absences.

12:15pm Questions and Discussion

12:30pm Lunch at Sirocco Restaurant, Holiday Inn

CULTURE AND 'LIFE PROMOTION'

1:30pm 'Creating the right internal culture to attract and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in a local government context' – **Sharona Torrens**, Director Workplace Ready Program, Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia is the national organisation promoting reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader Australian community. The vision is for an Australia that recognises and respects the special place, culture, rights and contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and where good relationships between First Australians and other Australians become the foundation for local strength and success; and the enhancement of our national wellbeing. Achieving understanding involves raising awareness of, and learning about, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. In that context, it is important to understand the internal culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in order to understand their attraction and retention. Sharona Torrens has been working in this field for quite a number of years, and is now the Director of the Workplace Ready Program at Reconciliation Australia.

2:00pm 'Indigenous suicide prevention: Unemployment as a major risk factor' – **Mary Kyle** and **Paul Neal**, Life Promotion Officers, Yarrabah Life Promotion Program, Gurriny Yealamucka Health Service, Qld

Yarrabah Family Life Promotion program is a community developed, 'holistic' response to address clusters of suicide among young people within Yarrabah and communities with links to Yarrabah. The program encompasses suicide prevention, intervention, after-care and 'life promotion'. The Family Life Promotion program provides counselling and referral support for Yarrabah clients who are dealing with anxiety, depression, mental health problems and/or who are risk of suicide/self-harm. Clients can be referred by health professionals, the police, or concerned family, friends and community members. The program works closely with the social and emotional health team within Gurriny Yealamucka Health Services, local Priests and Pastors, Yarrabah Police, as well as the Mental Health unit within Yarrabah Health Service and is part of the Cairns Suicide Committee.

LANGUAGE AND WALKING IN TWO WORLDS

2:30pm 'The trailblazing iStories: a digital arts project that enables Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people to create, produce and use context-specific bilingual literacy materials to digitalize stories of times past' – **Diane Kearney**, Regional Manager Children & Family Services, East Arnhem Shire Council, NT

East Arnhem Shire Council won an Active Arts Award in April 2013 for their iStories initiative, a project which has enabled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Groote Eylandt to capture and preserve stories of times gone past. iStories has been an exceptional project in which the Council partnered with the Anindilyakwa, NT Libraries, and numerous other stakeholders, to ensure the arts and culture of the people is brought to a global audience. iStories is a digital arts project that enables Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people to create, produce and use context-specific bilingual literacy materials to digitalise stories of times past. iStories is highly successful model of cultural and community engagement with technology: for creative expression, learning, accessing information, communicating with family and friends, digitalised recording, preserving and sharing of contemporary and historical stories.

3:00pm 'Walking in Two Worlds' – **Rosanna De Santis**, Director of Community and Corporate Services, Tiwi Islands Shire Council, NT

Rosanna de Santis has a rich blended heritage, both Italian and Aboriginal. She joined the NT Police Force, as a cadet, and for 23 years policed in locations all over the NT. Besides working in general policing, Rosanna has worked in crime prevention and police training. Recently Rosanna took leave-without-pay from the NT Police Force to take up the role of Director of Corporate and Community Services for the Tiwi Islands Shire Council. Rosanna's observations on walking in two worlds will include Aboriginal leadership and increasing community capacity.

3:30pm Questions and Discussion

3:45pm Afternoon tea and coffee

4:00pm BREAKOUT SESSIONS: Discussing key issues raised during the day

5:00pm Wrap up of key issues, messages and outcomes. Discussion of key messages to carry forward into the next day's Practice Informing Policy session, and for final Roundtable Communique

5:30pm End of Sessions

Evening free

WEDNESDAY 4 DECEMBER

Lakefield Room, Holiday Inn

PRACTICE INFORMING POLICY – NATIONAL ROUNDTABLE

8.00am Arrival tea and coffee

8:30am Introduction and summary – **John Ravlic**, Chief Executive, Local Government Managers Australia

9:00am KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Mr **David Kempton** MP, Queensland Assistant Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

David Kempton was elected to Queensland parliament representing the seat of Cook in March 2012. Prior to his election, he was a lawyer in Cooktown specialising in pastoral lease tenure, native title, vegetation management, water and land management issues. He was also involved in the Northern cattle industry. For a short period in 2012 he was Parliamentary Secretary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, and since May 2012 he has served as Assistant Minister.

Program is subject to change without notice

9:30am The final half-day of the Roundtable, to be facilitated by **John Ravlic**, CEO of LGMA, will focus on relevant Federal and State / Territory status reports on programs and initiatives and how they may assist and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in local government.

This will include facilitated discussions and updates by representatives from federal and jurisdictional agencies and Departments of Local Government and/or Indigenous Affairs. There will be opportunities to discuss relevant issues related to the ways in which practice can inform policy with various stakeholders.

Issues for discussion to include key points raised by delegates during the Roundtable as well as stakeholder issues already raised, such as:

- How can Local Government work more effectively with relevant Federal, State and Territory Government departments on strategic planning?
- How can Local Government improve engagement with and commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on the one hand, and also improve community knowledge and awareness of the sector and the variety of place-based careers available?
- Implications of the national Indigenous Jobs and Training Funding Review
- What have been the impacts and consequences of the introduction of Remote Jobs and Communities' Program (RJCP) funding, and funding results, on the local government sector in remote Australia?

10:30am Morning tea and coffee

10:45am Session continues

1:00pm Working lunch

1:30pm Summary of key issues and concluding remarks

2:00pm **END OF ROUNDTABLE**