



Northern Land Council

Jobs and Careers

Bridging the gap between Indigenous jobseekers and Industry for the long-term benefit of all

The ground-breaking FIVE-YEAR-FUNDED

(by all stakeholders except DEWR)

MOU and strategy

Continuity: broadening the focus for long-term success

[This should be read in conjunction with the “start here” power point presentation].

- In order to foster *continuity* of jobs and career pathways, we are currently broadening our focus from major projects on Aboriginal land, to pro-actively developing strategies with specific, targeted, industries which can provide long-term jobs and careers for Aboriginal people. We are targeting mining, construction, pastoral, hospitality and retail.
- I'd like to share with you the newly-signed pastoral strategy which we expect will be a model for future negotiations as it incorporates all the necessary elements from the 5P strategy with an first for us – five year funding.

The pastoral strategy

Off work-for-dole and into real jobs

Patricia Karvelas

INDIGENOUS people will be forced off Aboriginal work-for-dole programs and into local jobs under a plan to be unveiled tomorrow by Employment Minister Kevin Andrews.

Under the plan, every new person to sign up to Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) will also be forced to sign up to the local Job Network provider, who will have to find them work.

Where a job is available locally, the Indigenous person will have to quit CDEP and take the local job.

"If there's a real job in the area, then obviously we want people in the real job rather than just in CDEP," Mr Andrews said.

"One of the things we are considering, at the moment, is direct registration of people going on to CDEP with the Job Network," he said.

"That means when you went into a CDEP program you would be directly registered with the Job Network and you would be in the mainstream job-seeking market.

"We think this will lead to more people moving off CDEP into real jobs, because in many areas there are jobs there.

"It takes people into where the jobs are available, and where people are looking out for employees, rather than just being parked off at the side on CDEP."

"If you're in the Job Network, all the processes of the Job Network apply to that person -- that are considered when jobs are coming around."

But people who are already on CDEP will not be exposed to the new system, which is aimed at reuniting Indigenous people.

"We are looking at it in terms of new entrants into the CDEP, not so much the current ones," Mr Andrews said.

"Our concern is people in urban areas, particularly young people." Last week, the Indigenous Land Corporation, a taxpayer-funded body that is responsible for leasing land and businesses to support Indigenous entrepreneurs, put forward a "real to work" plan after years of frustration at trying to recruit and retain workers from Aboriginal communities.

ILC chairwoman Shirley McPherson said the situation was so dire that the organization had been forced to recruit backpackers to run some of its eight cattle properties and tourist resorts that were intended to provide work opportunities and hope to Indigenous Australians.

Ms McPherson said 40 per cent of 85 workers were white.

Mr Andrews said the Job Network plan was similar to the ILC suggestion.

"I think most people who are thinking of this area are all thinking around the same sort of themes, and that is how do we get people into real economic activity and real jobs?"

He said the Job Network would have an incentive through out-come payments to get Indigenous people jobs.

"My view is CDEP should be primarily a stepping stone to a job," the minister said.

Last October Minister Andrews said on the National Indigenous Council suggested a five-year cap be imposed on work-for-the-dole programs.

Mr Andrews said that forcing people into mainstream jobs, rather than simply providing welfare payments, would lead to more long-term commitments.

National Indigenous Council chairwoman Sue Gordon said last week that unemployment problems within Aboriginal communities were being exacerbated by a culture within some CDEPs not to enforce work-for-the-dole requirements.

"The Australian" Wed March 1 2006

Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) chairperson, Shirley McPherson quoted in *The Australian*, (March 1, 2006) about the participation rate of Aboriginal workers in the pastoral industry: she said....."**the situation was so dire that the ILC had been forced to recruit backpackers to run some of its eight cattle properties and tourist resorts, which were intended to provide work opportunities and hope to Indigenous Australians**"

This is exactly what the Pastoral strategy has been designed to address.

There *are* real jobs in the pastoral industry – a shortfall of 300 employees at the last count - and there have been some successful training programmes run in the past, but the problem has been that they have only been short-term as they can only get one-off, short-term funding from government.

This means that these programmes have not had **continuity** or been sustainable and have not had proper **career pathways** to jobs and careers **in the long term**.

This situation also draws attention to the crucial nature of applying ALL the elements of our 5Ps model, especially sufficient resources to manage the JTM plan providing mentoring support and training to workers to continue with their career.

The Pastoral Strategy: Amazingly amazing: a 5-year funding commitment!

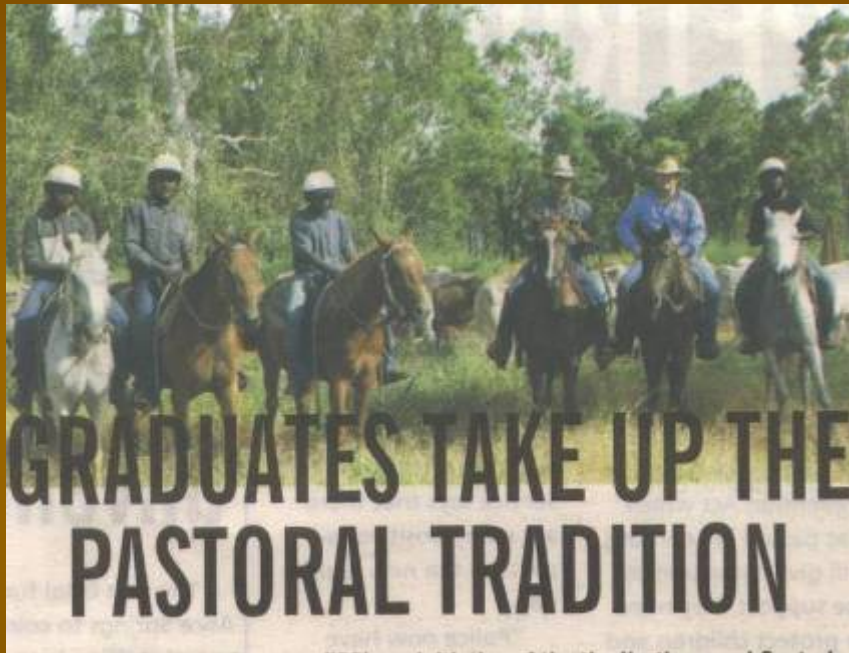
As many of you will know, the difficulty has always been that many government agencies do not think, or fund projects, in the long term. It is all-but impossible to get them to commit to more than one year at a time, which just perpetuates the stop/go work cycle which any business person will tell you is not effective, efficient or likely to get good results.

Happily most of the stakeholders in the Indigenous Pastoral Project (IPP) - led by the Indigenous Land Corporation and backed up by the NLC, CLC, NT government and NT Cattleman's Association (NTCA) - understand that a long-term approach with committed funding is crucial if we are to change anything and not just repeat the mistakes of the past. They have all committed to 5 years of funding and support. Unfortunately we have been unable to convince the Federal government and so far the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) has only committed to one year. We are not letting this stop the project.

The reason the pastoral strategy is looking so good is because we have a *long lead in time* and *sufficient committed resources*. The jobs are already there, the employers are on side and the local Indigenous people are keen to do the jobs. It is a question of ensuring they are all supported *for as long as it takes* – not just to the next election.

- History has shown that Aboriginal people are excellent stockmen but there is no reason why those who want to cannot train to be managers, stock inspectors, buyers or whatever. And with a properly-funded 5Ps model, this is all possible and leads to economic independence.

The next generation: young people can get a start in pastoral industry



Indigenous Pastoral Project (IPP)

Graduates of the first 13-week course teaching stockmen skills and realities of the world of work to local people. The courses and work are open to all ages, but we are trying to encourage young people to follow in the tradition.

"Commitment, responsibility and reliability. We try and drum that into their heads because we have stations that have committed themselves to taking these fellas on," says course mentor and trainer Bill Fordham.

The IPP has agreements with three major cattle companies to place course graduates on NT stations.

Conclusion

- In short, Native Title legislation and Land Rights Act have given Indigenous people the power to negotiate legally-binding agreements for use of their land.
 - We believe that in any land-use agreement it is crucial to include *detailed* provision for jobs, coupled with commitment to providing the resources to support local people to gain and keep those jobs.
 - It is particularly important to include provisions for young people as they can be overlooked.
 - It is just the beginning, but it is the foundation upon which the 5Ps are built. This way Indigenous people can work towards long-term jobs and a meaningful career. Only this way can this, and the next generation, break the destructive welfare-dependency cycle and achieve the economic independence necessary to gain more control over their lives.
 - Our experience shows that the way to achieve this is to foster a better understanding between industry and Indigenous jobseekers and then work to bridge the gap, so both sides understand the needs of the other.
 - This way leads to long-term benefits for all Australians.
- 