

***Good Job***

**Success with Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander Employment Strategies**

## Foreword

**Good Job** looks at what makes for good practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategies operating in the NSW Public Sector. It was written by an Aboriginal person experienced in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment issues for the use of Aboriginal Employment Strategy Co-ordinators.

Primarily, it focuses on the work of four key agencies, Pacific Power, the Department of Courts Administration, TAFE Commission and the University of NSW.

Throughout the development of this project many examples of good practice were identified. Unfortunately, not all these examples could be included in this document.

The author, Gavin Jones, has focused on the fundamental aspects involved in the challenging field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment. In particular, he has examined agency practices which have resulted in successful employment strategies and successful outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

*Good Job* is not a step-by-step instruction book, it is a guide. It should be used as a reference to assist you develop or implement your Aboriginal Employment Strategy in ways which best suit your agency.

Please note references to Aboriginal people throughout this document refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Many agencies and individuals have assisted in the development of *Good Job*. I would like to specifically thank and acknowledge the valuable contribution of the following:

- Gavin Jones, who researched and wrote the document. Gavin's commitment to the task, and his ability to come to the heart of employment issues as they affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have resulted in a book that will benefit agencies across the NSW Public Sector.
- Debbie Nelson, Agency EEO Manager and Adviser on Aboriginal Employment in the Office of the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment. Debbie made an outstanding contribution to the document by her practical understanding of community and employment issues and provided support to Gavin throughout the project.
- The Chief Executive Officers and staff of the four agencies which provided case studies: the Department of Courts Administration, Pacific Power, TAFE Commission and the University of NSW for their strong support for and good practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment.
- The Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinators in these agencies: Joanne Selfe, Department of Courts Administration; Peter Stanford, Pacific Power; Tony Slater, TAFE Commission; and Wilhameena Power, University of NSW, all of whom were most generous with their time and energy.
- The Office of the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Reference Group member agencies: the Department of

Community Services, the Department of Courts Administration, the Department of Industrial Relations Employment Training and Further Education, Office of Aboriginal Affairs, Pacific Power, State Rail Authority of NSW and the Water Board for their guidance to the project.

- Other agencies and organisations which have contributed: ABC Television, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Network, the Department of Conservation and Land Management, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, NSW Anti-Discrimination Board, Roads and Traffic Authority, Qantas, State Rail Authority of NSW and the Water Board.

Carol Davies

Director

Equal Opportunity in Public Employment

## **Establishing the Strategy**

### **Consultation with Community Groups and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organisations**

To get your Aboriginal Employment Strategy working you will need to do some important groundwork. In the first instance, this means conducting effective consultation with Aboriginal people.

Consultation means genuinely letting people know what is going on and providing a real opportunity for them to put their views forward and have them considered.

Consultation is about talking with and listening to people; Aboriginal people in your agency, Aboriginal people in community organisations around NSW and Aboriginal people in other government agencies.

Aboriginal people cannot support you, your Strategy or your agency if they do not understand what it is they are supporting. It is easier for Aboriginal people to support your Strategy if they have played a role in its development.

Effective consultation means you listen, talk, ask questions and listen again. Talk and listen to as many people as you can about your agency and your Strategy. Discuss the plans you have and ask people what they think.

There are many people around NSW who have knowledge and experience in the area of Aboriginal employment. These people have seen Strategies work to the benefit of Aboriginal people, and they have seen other Strategies which were not as successful.

The way you consult will differ depending on the individual person, organisation or community. Consultation may be an informal talk or a more formal meeting.

Where possible, write notes that could be included in a report on your consultation so you can be sure of representing the views of others properly.

The most relevant organisations or people to consult with will differ depending on where you are and what you are doing. You may need to consult with a Local Lands Council, Aboriginal training providers, State Government agencies, or all of these.

Fundamental areas for consultation are the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Network (ATSIEN), local Aboriginal community groups, Local Lands Councils, Aboriginal people who use the services of your agency and Aboriginal people within your agency.

ATSIEN is an ideal place to start your consultation process. Members of ATSIEN will talk with and listen to you about your Strategy and agency. They can help point you in the right direction to other community organisations you may wish to talk with or inform about your Strategy.

Once you have consulted with all of these important groups, you should have enough information to have a realistic understanding of community views.

## **Good Practice**

### **The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Network**

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Network (ATSIEN) is a formal network of people involved in the employment and training of Aboriginal people in NSW. ATSIEN is co-ordinated from Sydney, with membership from around NSW.

This network meets six times a year to discuss issues important to the future of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment, to report on progress of agencies employing Aboriginal people, and to offer support for people working in Aboriginal employment.

ATSIEN has membership of more than 50 organisations including Aboriginal community groups, Aboriginal organisations, Federal, State and Local Governments as well as major private sector employers and small business people.

ATSIEN is an example of good practice in consultation with Aboriginal organisations, because there is so much knowledge, experience and skill in one place which can be accessed. Agencies are encouraged to use ATSIEN wherever possible.

## **Consultation within the Agency**

Usually an Aboriginal Employment Strategy is the responsibility of the Human Resources area or Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) section, although this may vary from agency to agency.

It is important for the Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator to talk to all relevant people in the agency.

It is necessary to have formal consultation processes established with these areas. However, informal consultation such as a telephone call or dropping in for a talk are also effective. These are steps towards opening up good communication and will help you gain the support of the Human Resources and EEO people. With support comes ownership of the Strategy, ownership of its success and ownership of the problems which may arise. The contribution of people in other areas of the agency is of great value.

Remember that consultation doesn't end once the Strategy is written. Agency staff need to be regularly updated on what is happening, what is going to happen and how it will happen.

If you are consulting with people outside Aboriginal networks, for example with the Office of Director of Equal Employment Opportunity in Public Employment they may want something in writing which formally asks them what they think, such as a draft document on which they can comment.

## **Good Practice**

### **University of NSW**

The University of NSW conducted extensive consultation within the University over 12 months prior to finalising its Strategy. This consultation was conducted by the Director of Equal Employment Opportunity in close liaison with the Human Services and Aboriginal Education areas.

Many people including the University Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunity in Employment, the Staff Development Advisory Committee, the Vice Chancellor, the Director of Affirmative Action and the Deputy Vice Chancellor were formally consulted and briefed on the rationale of the Strategy and asked to provide advice and comments on its development.

Consultations were conducted on a one-to-one basis with ample time for individuals to consider the Strategy and its implications for the University and provide feedback on their thoughts and concerns. This early consultation and input has led to support and ownership of the Strategy at all levels of the University.

All people who participated in the consultation process during the development of the Strategy were acknowledged and thanked in the final document.

## **Job Titles and Duty Statements**

Each agency calls the Aboriginal person who sets up and runs the Aboriginal Employment Strategy the title which best suits the agency.

The position title may be an Aboriginal Employment Administrator, Officer, Co-ordinator, Liaison Officer or Policy Officer.

Whatever the title, the work is generally very similar. This person is either the contact for all Aboriginal issues within the agency, or more specifically the officer who has responsibility for writing, implementing, co-ordinating and monitoring the Aboriginal Employment Strategy.

There is no standard, agreed statement of duties for this position across the Public Sector. Rather, agencies develop their own duty statements or position descriptions to suit their individual needs.

If you are working in an agency trying to establish such a position or working in a position which is already described as an Aboriginal Employment Officer, read other duty statements and compare them to yours. This will give you a greater understanding of how you should look at your position or compare what you are doing with other people across the Public Sector.

Once you have done this, write the position description and get it approved. Ensure that, like all other jobs in the agency, the Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator's job is evaluated under your agency's job evaluation system.

In some agencies there is just one officer working on her or his own, doing the work involved in developing and implementing a Strategy, while in other agencies there may be a unit of Aboriginal people.

In agencies where there is a unit of more than one Aboriginal person, individual duty statements should be developed for each officer. The duties of the head officer in the unit should include supervision of the other staff in the unit.

## **Good Practice**

### **Pacific Power**

In Pacific Power, the job title of the position with responsibility for the Aboriginal Employment Strategy is called the Aboriginal Liaison Officer. It is located in the Aboriginal Development Unit, a part of Employee Services. This officer reports to the Staffing Services Manager.

The job description for this position is very detailed. It covers the purpose, activities, organisational context, function, knowledge required, interpersonal skills and challenges associated with the job.

The general description of the position is as follows:

- To provide the Executive of Pacific Power with the expertise and knowledge to meet Pacific Power's obligations under the NSW Government Public Sector Aboriginal Employment Development Strategy
- To develop, implement, monitor, evaluate and update programs and initiatives which contribute to achieving the goals of Pacific Power's Aboriginal Employment and Development Strategy
- To provide Pacific Power Business Unit Management with direction and advice in all matters pertaining to Aboriginal Employment and Development
- To investigate and acquire maximum funding from external providers to achieve the most cost effective methods of implementing Pacific Power's Aboriginal Employment Strategy

Duties associated with achieving these goals include advice to site managers, management and executive on recruitment, career development, cultural awareness, promotion and marketing.

## **Skills Required**

The Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator position is one which requires skills across a number of areas.

Many of these skills can be built upon when you take up the position of Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator. The most important skill is the capacity to learn quickly. Others include ability to write reports and analyse issues, consultation skills, an awareness of Aboriginal employment and social issues and a good understanding of and commitment to EEO principles.

Some skills that can be learnt on the job may include human resource management, financial management, presentation skills, staff training issues and planning.

Take an honest look at what skills you have and what you need to improve on.

Talk to your supervisor about your job and what is involved. Your agency would have a staff training and development area which would offer training courses in various areas. Take advantage of what is offered.

A good place to start is with your word processing skills. Being comfortable with a computer, and being able to use one to produce documents is extremely important and helps to communicate effectively at all levels.

## **Good Practice**

### **All Agencies**

All agencies which took part in this research demonstrated a strong appreciation of the skills required to be an effective Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator.

Differences between agencies are the position description and classification which seems to vary depending on the size of the agency, the number of staff involved in the Strategy, and the variety of duties.

## **Appropriate Placement of the Strategy**

The placement of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy in the agency is important for its success. The best place for a Strategy will differ from agency to agency. In some agencies it may be best situated within the Personnel or Human Resources Unit while in others it may be best placed in the EEO Unit.

Being located within the recruitment area of the agency allows the Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator easy access to information on what jobs are becoming vacant and new developments in recruitment practices, so that positions can be incorporated into the Strategy.

Some agencies have found it important to have a separate Aboriginal Unit to both co-ordinate the Aboriginal Employment Strategy and work with others on Aboriginal issues and policy as required.

Wherever it is situated, the information needs to be sent out across the agency, and consultation occurs with all relevant people.

## **Good Practice**

### **Department of Courts Administration**

The Aboriginal Employment Strategy in the Department of Courts Administration is co-ordinated from within its own Aboriginal Employment Unit, called NORIMBAH. This unit is staffed by three Aboriginal people at relatively senior levels (Clerk Grade 10, and 5/6).

The Unit, located within the Employee Services Division, reports directly to the Director-General and has close contact with the EEO Unit.

NORIMBAH publishes information sheets, newsletters and its own Annual Report.

Being located with other workers in Employee Services Unit allows Aboriginal Employment Officers to have their fingers on the pulse of employment activities and exist as part of, not separate to, the Department's recruitment activities.

## **Establishing a Strategy Steering Committee**

The term 'steering committee' may seem bureaucratic, but experience has shown that a well-structured steering committee is very useful.

An Aboriginal Employment Steering Committee is a group of people, primarily from the agency, who have an interest in Aboriginal employment and are able to help provide input and assistance in making the Strategy successful. Membership of the committee should be limited to those who can help with the establishment and implementation of the Strategy. Questions need to be asked about what each person brings to the committee and what benefit each person will be to Aboriginal people wanting to gain employment with the agency.

Where possible membership of the committee should consist of a significant proportion of Aboriginal people. For agencies providing services directly to Aboriginal people like health and education, membership may include community participation. The convenor of the committee should be the most senior person possible.

Meetings should be conducted professionally with agreed agendas and time frames.

An Aboriginal Employment Strategy Steering Committee should be formed as early as possible. The committee is best formed in the development stage of the Strategy.

The purpose of the Steering Committee is to provide advice on all aspects of the Strategy and give guidance and support on other issues related to the Strategy. It is also a forum to keep all sections of the agency informed of the Strategy's progress.

Clear terms of reference for the Committee are important.

If your Strategy is co-funded by the Federal Department of Employment Education and Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) or the NSW Department of Education and Training, a representative from one or both of these Departments should be on the committee. These departments are particularly interested in the financial aspects of the Strategy, therefore reporting expenditure needs to be a regular agenda item.

## **Good Practice**

### **Department of Courts Administration**

The Department of Courts Administration has an Aboriginal Issues Steering Committee. The Aboriginal Employment Strategy is the responsibility of this Committee. This

Committee is a forum for all Aboriginal issues affecting the Department to be discussed at a senior level.

Aboriginal employment is put into the context of other Departmental policy and program activities and the effect this has on the delivery of services to Aboriginal clients and their employment.

On the Aboriginal Issues Steering Committee is the Director-General, the Directors of Community Justice and Probation Services, the Under Sheriff, the Chief Executive Officer of the Supreme Court, the Executive Officer, Senior Aboriginal Policy Officer, Aboriginal Employment Officers, an Aboriginal Chamber Magistrate, the Director Legal and Legislative Services, and the Director Employment Services.

It is important to note the Director-General chairs the Aboriginal Issues Steering Committee. This gives an indication of the high level commitment of the Director-General to the Strategy.

The Committee meets quarterly and it is through this forum that key senior personnel are informed about national activities in Aboriginal affairs, specifically as they relate to Aboriginal people, law, justice and the operations of the Department.

## **Marketing and Promoting Your Strategy to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People**

An agency quickly gains a reputation around Aboriginal communities as being a good place for Aboriginal people to work.

If the agency is thought not to be an Aboriginal-friendly organisation, news travels even faster. Misunderstandings occur easily.

For this reason it is important to deliver information to communities about your agency first-hand. This communication needs to be accurate. There is no need to exaggerate what your agency is doing. Communicate clearly and accurately what your agency offers Aboriginal people, the procedure people have to go through to get jobs, and any help available for them.

‘You can’t run an employment Strategy from a desk,’ (Peter Stanford, Pacific Power).

If you lose interest in community communications, then Aboriginal community people will lose interest in your agency.

Placing an advertisement in a newspaper stating that Aboriginal people are encouraged to apply for vacant positions is not enough.

### **Good Practice**

#### **Pacific Power**

Each year Pacific Power launches a major recruitment drive, consisting of information days and employment testing in Aboriginal communities across NSW.

It is largely because of these community contact days that Aboriginal people look to Pacific Power as a good employer and support the Strategy.

There is a regular presence of Pacific Power in various Aboriginal communities around NSW and strong links with Aboriginal people in these communities. The Aboriginal Employment

Co-ordinator makes direct contact with community leaders when planning these days, and maintains contact afterwards. This is done by travelling to communities and arranging activities in close liaison with the community.

## **Marketing and Promoting the Strategy to Other Agencies**

Most agencies would experience similar issues with establishing and implementing a Strategy. For this reason it is important to network with the people doing similar work across the Public Sector and to share your ideas, problems and solutions.

Other agencies need to know and understand what is going on in your agency and you need to know and understand what is happening across the Sector.

### **Good Practice**

#### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Network**

Through the joint knowledge, experience and skills available to it, ATSIEN, has been able to organise a number of successful joint ventures including cultural career expos in major shopping centres at Bondi Junction and Marrickville.

ATSIEN was also used as the model for the establishment of similar networks in South Australia and Victoria as agencies recognised the benefits of regular communication between Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinators.

## **Marketing and Promoting of Aboriginal People to Your Agency**

The Aboriginal Employment coordinator is the ambassador for the Aboriginal Employment Strategy and often for Aboriginal people in an agency.

Many people in an agency do not understand the cultures, experiences and issues facing Aboriginal people.

For this reason, many people may judge all Aboriginal people by the Aboriginal Employment Strategy Co-ordinator. This is something the person in that job should understand.

### **Good Practice**

#### **TAFE Commission**

TAFE Commission has a number of internal mechanisms to promote its Aboriginal staff and its Aboriginal Employment Strategy.

A regular TAFE newsletter features articles and staff profiles on Aboriginal people employed under the Strategy. In addition, TAFE prepares a number of publications which go across the TAFE system, such as information packages and course guides.

The TAFE Aboriginal Employment Strategy document is written in a clear and easy to read format, highlighting the reason for the Strategy and the roles and responsibilities of each TAFE Institute.

In addition, Aboriginal people have a strong presence in the TAFE structure holding approximately 250 jobs across the State.

## **Designing a Strategy to Fit the Agency**

Every agency has different people, structures, corporate cultures and histories. This influences their approach to business, policy and programs and their approach to Aboriginal recruitment and career development.

Some agencies are centralised in metropolitan Sydney, some are rural based. Some agencies mainly develop policy, while others deliver face-to-face services in urban, rural and remote areas of the State.

Because of these differences, it is vital that the Aboriginal Employment Strategy is designed to suit the individual agency.

An effective Strategy is one which assists the organisation in the achievement of its corporate business goals as well as meets Aboriginal people's needs and expectations in employment and training.

### **Good Practice**

#### **Department of Courts Administration**

The Department of Courts Administration Strategy has focused on service delivery for Aboriginal people and therefore employment opportunities are primarily in service delivery areas such as Courts, Sheriff's Offices, and in Community Justice Centres and Probation Services.

To achieve support for the Strategy and incorporate it in the overall agency culture, the Department used a variety of methods. These methods included:

- The establishment of the Strategy was written as an 'Objective' in the Department's Corporate Plan and Business Plan and in the Client Service Guide
- The implementation of the Strategy was incorporated into the Department's Annual Report to Parliament
- Implementation of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy was written into the performance agreements of key senior personnel

These ensured the Strategy was not out on its own. It has organised support and ownership from the agency.

## **Getting Your Strategy Written**

An important part of developing an Aboriginal Employment Strategy is writing the Strategy document.

The Strategy document outlines the ways your agency plans to recruit, train and offer career development opportunities for Aboriginal people.

All elements of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy should be outlined in the Strategy document together with a rationale for the Strategy and information about the agency.

The process of developing this strategy document includes the following:

### **What is your agency's vision for Aboriginal employment?**

Strategic planning is a process used in NSW Public Sector management. Strategic planning has many elements, one of which is articulating the agency's vision.

So, what is a vision? A vision is the ideal future position of your agency in relation to Aboriginal employment. Think about what you want to happen and how your agency will look once your Strategy has been successful.

A vision is a short statement which focuses on the results of your Strategy. Most importantly your vision should inspire and motivate you and your agency into action.

In developing a vision statement you should:

- decide what would be the position of Aboriginal employment in an ideal situation
- be positive and inspirational; and
- be brief

### **Knowing the world in which you work**

The next step in developing an effective Strategy is to have a good look at your agency and in particular those who have most to gain from the Strategy.

All agencies have their own particular organisational culture. Culture refers to the set of beliefs, attitudes and behaviour patterns which an agency has developed over time to adjust to its environment.

While culture is all of these things it is frequently unrecognised. People know that they do certain tasks in certain ways but they don't know why, 'It's just the way things are done around here'.

For an employment strategy to be really effective, it needs to operate within the agency's context and challenge the agency's culture.

As you are looking at your agency's culture you will identify those people who are key players. That is, those who can help you get things done, those who have the most to gain from a Strategy and those who are committed to the agency's development.

By identifying the key players and their needs you can get results which ensure everyone is a winner. It is important to know who your key players are so you can plan what has to be done and by whom.

### **Consultation — the way to gain commitment**

Throughout the development and implementation of your Strategy you will need to consult closely with those who will have responsibility for implementing its actions. Consultation must occur before, during and at the time of the final draft and it must occur throughout its implementation.

### **Charting the course**

When you have your vision firmly directed towards the future and you know the opportunities and threats within your agency, you need to start developing the Strategy's purpose or its objectives.

You may think that this is what you did in developing your vision. The difference is that the objectives are much more specific.

Objectives need to be: clear, realistic, have a target date, have a person nominated to take responsibility and state exactly what strategies will be used and what will be achieved.

### **Achieving your objectives**

Once you have developed a plan for the future, based on your agency's specific objectives, you need to write the specifics of how you will achieve those objectives.

When you think back to your vision and objectives you will have identified a number of key areas which have to be targeted for you to achieve your vision. In Aboriginal Employment Strategies key areas include: marketing; advertising; recruitment; selection; retention and training and career development.

Your objectives can be placed under the relevant key areas and appropriate strategies can be developed and actions identified.

An example of a good recruitment strategy could be:

'Branch Heads to recruit five Aboriginal people into professional traineeships or positions by July 199-.'

What makes this strategy a good one is that it has:

- **the action** — recruit into professional traineeships and positions
- **the person or people responsible** for the action — Branch Heads
- **a target date** — by July 199-; and
- **a performance measurement** — 'five Aboriginal people'

The main points to remember when developing your objectives and strategies are they are clear, action-oriented, responsibility is allocated, they have a specific target date and a specific performance measure or indicator.

A performance indicator will tell you if you have achieved your objectives and strategies or to what extent you have been successful. In other words, performance indicators will provide a measure of success for each objective, strategy or action.

### **Everyone should be part of the action**

Action plans detail step-by-step what will be done in your agency, by whom and by which date.

A point to remember is that you are not there to be responsible for everything. Ensure that people who are experts in their areas are responsible for actions and outcomes within that area. For example, the Training and Development Manager should be responsible for conducting a training needs analysis of Aboriginal staff and for identifying career paths for Strategy positions.

Your responsibility is to advise and assist the Manager to ensure the methods they use will result in achieving the Strategy outcomes.

An action plan is like a map which has all of the various routes and roads the agency can take to get to your destination, your vision.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

In developing your objectives and actions you will have built in:

- what will be achieved
- who will achieve it; and
- when it will be achieved

Because you have built these in, monitoring and evaluating your Strategy should follow easily.

Your job in monitoring is to keep in contact with those responsible for each action to ensure everything is on track, and if not, to help them develop alternative ways to achieve success.

It is important to remember that things change. For example, there may be changes to the structure or size of the agency. These changes may mean your objectives and your Strategy may also need to change.

A Steering Committee helps you monitor and guide the implementation of the Strategy.

It is good practice to have people outside of the process evaluate the Strategy. Independent evaluators could be people representing different areas of the agency, and Aboriginal staff, or external consultants.

What you are looking for in evaluation is objectivity, an objective view of how the Strategy has been implemented with suggestions for improvement.

The Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator and the members of the Steering Committee would have been involved in all steps and processes. What you need is a fresh approach to all that has happened and probably fresh ideas on how to improve the Strategy in the future.

## **Good Practice**

### **All Agencies**

All agencies used as part of this document have well written, clear Strategies with powerful visions, clear objectives and detailed actions.

Some are stronger in particular areas than others. All four agencies have written their Strategies in plain English, thereby making the Strategy accessible to Aboriginal staff at all levels.

### **Funding Your Strategy**

Funding is available to help agencies develop and implement Aboriginal Employment Strategies. Arranging funding is extremely important and will set the pace for activity in your Strategy over a three to five year period. Funding is available from external agencies and from within your agency's budget.

It is important to spend a lot of time working out the costs involved in the Strategy and to put all these costs down in writing. If you ask for too much money your agency may not be able to meet the requirements which go along with the funding. If you ask for too little, it may not be enough to do what you have planned. Money is not everything. It is available to encourage agencies to recruit and train Aboriginal people and to support your agency in its commitment. The commitment should be there long before the money is requested externally or allocated from the agency's budget.

It is a good idea to talk to people who have been involved in Aboriginal Employment Strategies and successfully negotiated funding. Find out what is involved, and the procedures you have to go through to obtain funding and what responsibilities go with accounting for it. Funding is calculated over a period of up to five years.

When you make a request for funding make sure all aspects are covered. This makes you, your agency, and your Strategy look good and shows you have thought about the Strategy carefully.

To get external funding your agency has to sign a contract stating you will meet your obligations. Your agency has to demonstrate that it is committed and is able to make the proposed Strategy work.

When your agency signs for money, it is committing the agency to the Strategy, and saying that when money stops, jobs stay.

It is up to your agency to negotiate a financial deal that is right for it and the funding agency. Negotiating about money is a serious business.

Remember, like other government agencies, funding agencies work on a financial year cycle, and have set budgets. So the time of year you make your proposal plays an important role in the success of your funding application. Talk with the funding agencies about the best time to make your application.

## **External Funding Agencies**

Apart from an agency's own budget, funding is available through the NSW Department of Education and Training, and the Department of Employment Education, Training, and Youth Affairs (DEETYA).

These agencies have different guidelines, requirements and reporting mechanisms, but overall the procedures are similar.

It is easier for all if you and your agency have a good understanding of the procedure before making your application. Remember that public servants have salary increases (increments), leave loading and superannuation contributions which have to be included in salary costs. Consult your finance branch when making these calculations.

Also remember the cost of advertising, training and career development, and the costs associated with running a large network meeting.

It is not up to the funding agency to pay for everything. It is your agency's Strategy, not the funding agency's, so your agency will have to meet a lot of the costs associated with implementing the Strategy. There are people to contact in the external funding agencies who can assist you. These are included in the contact list at the end of this book.

## **Gender Equity**

Even though Strategies are for the recruitment and career development of Aboriginal people, it is important not to neglect EEO principles, and address gender equity issues.

This means that we aim to recruit both men and women under the Strategy. Employment Strategies for Aboriginal people need to address the specific needs of Aboriginal women. Some issues to consider in your Strategy to address gender imbalances are:

- There should be female representation on selection panels, and where possible an Aboriginal woman
- All staff should be informed of their leave entitlements, including study and maternity leave provisions and flexible work practices
- All staff should have equal access to training and development opportunities, and training programs should be conducted at times which recognise family responsibilities
- Aboriginal women should be encouraged to apply for positions in non-traditional areas
- Aboriginal people should be given the opportunity to act in higher duties as positions become available
- Part-time work should be provided with the same opportunities for staff development and training as full-time employees
- There should be development and access to training programs specifically designed for Aboriginal women

## **Good Practice**

### **Department of Courts Administration**

At the Department of Courts Administration, programs have been included in the Strategy to assist in achieving equity for Aboriginal women in the agency.

Through communication, the Aboriginal Employment Unit has also identified concerns of Aboriginal women in the workplace during the first six months of their employment.

Addressing these concerns assists the Department to keep retention rates high. For example, the Aboriginal cadetship program states that the agency must have mechanisms to deal with racial and sexual harassment.

In addition the Aboriginal Employment Strategy specifically addresses issues important to Aboriginal women such as access to childcare and the need for specific career development opportunities.

## **Reasonable Adjustment**

Like other members of the community, some Aboriginal people looking for jobs have a disability which may mean adjustment to a job is required. This procedure is known as making reasonable adjustment, and is an important part of the NSW Government's EEO program.

Reasonable adjustment includes consideration of job design, access to the workplace, provision of equipment, changes to workplace design, and access to flexible work practices.

## **Good Practice**

### **Department of Courts Administration**

Within the Department of Courts Administration Aboriginal Employment Strategy, places were made available for Aboriginal people with disabilities.

The Aboriginal Employment Unit worked closely with the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service to ensure appropriate support, follow-up and monitoring for staff with disabilities.

The Senior Adviser, Aboriginal Issues, underwent training by the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service.

The Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service also visited the workplace while the new staff were settling in and assisted the agency with any specific needs required with regard to reasonable adjustment. Flexible working conditions were made available.

## **Support and Commitment — Management, Staff and Executive**

To a large degree the success of Aboriginal employment in an agency depends on the support and commitment of all people in the agency at all levels.

The people you are seeking support from are not only the Chief Executive Officer, senior executive and managers but the people you probably meet in the course of your job

everyday, such as the librarian and the office manager. The more people who understand and support the Strategy within your agency, the stronger your Strategy becomes.

The most powerful and influential person in the agency is the Chief Executive Officer. Her or his leadership is essential. If the Chief Executive Officer wants something done, it will get done.

The Chief Executive Officer needs to approve, support and own the Aboriginal Employment Strategy. The more committed the Chief Executive Officer is to the success of the Strategy, the more likely it is to succeed.

## **Good Practice**

### **Department of Courts Administration**

The Department of Courts Administration has support for its Aboriginal Employment Strategy within the agency at various levels. This commitment is nowhere more evident than with the Director-General.

The Director-General chairs the Aboriginal Issues Steering Committee. He also attends every meeting and has offered personal support on numerous occasions to Aboriginal staff in the agency.

This support at the most senior level demonstrates to all management and staff that the Department is serious about the Strategy, and serious about its success.

It is through this direct involvement and commitment that the Department has improved its record on Aboriginal employment, and is now regarded by many Aboriginal people involved in employment as one of the best.

## **Good Practice**

### **Pacific Power**

Support from managers, team leaders and the executive in Pacific Power is also led by the Chief Executive Officer. He, in conjunction with the Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator, has developed communication mechanisms for management to be kept informed of issues in regard to Aboriginal employment and career development and continually asserts his commitment to the Strategy.

These mechanisms enable management at all levels to know what is going on, and input their ideas into ways the Strategy can be enhanced.

In the Strategy document the Chief Executive has invited all managers of Pacific Power to work with him in the effective implementation of the Strategy.

# Establishing the Strategy: Points to Remember

## 1. Consultation

- who is to be consulted?
- how will they be consulted?
- what are realistic timeframes for the consultation?
- what resources do you need to achieve effective consultation?

## 2. Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator

- skills and knowledge analysis
- appropriate evaluation and grading of the position
- is the position located in an area with easy access to all human resources information and developments?

## 3. Strategy Steering Committee

- purpose and responsibilities of Committee
- membership of the Committee
- meetings — frequency, agenda, minutes, convenor

## 4. Strategy Structure and Plan - Vision

- does the Strategy vision and purpose clearly express the reasons for the strategy?
- does it reflect the culture and values of the agency?
- will it assist the agency to meet corporate objectives?
- does it reflect Aboriginal and Torres Islander peoples' employment and training needs and expectations?

## Objectives

- are the Strategy objectives clear?
- will they take the agency from its current position in regard to Aboriginal employment to where it wants to be (its vision)?
- do they meet the needs and expectations of Aboriginal people?
- are they specific in what they will achieve/by when/using what resources?
- what are the detailed steps which need to be put into action to implement the Strategy?
- how will you keep track of or monitor performance and results, who will be responsible for monitoring achievement of the objectives?

## 5. Marketing

What methods and resources are needed to market the Strategy to:

- Aboriginal people and communities
- agency staff
- other agencies?

## Implementing the Strategy

### Strategy Positions

The Aboriginal community needs more people with skills in a broader range of employment areas. To redress the huge imbalances of the past it is necessary to take an active and strategic approach to employment.

An Aboriginal Employment Strategy is just that, an employment strategy, which is very different to a job creation strategy.

The reason for a Strategy is to put Aboriginal people into jobs which traditionally have not been accessible to them and which traditionally have been held by people other than Aboriginal people. An Aboriginal Employment Strategy is therefore not about creating jobs for Aboriginal people only while Strategy funding is available, it is about recruiting and training Aboriginal people into permanent positions.

When writing your Strategy, it should state how many Aboriginal people would be expected to join the agency workforce each year for the length of the Strategy, where these people will be placed in the agency, and at what level or classification.

Where positions will be located has to be agreed to by your agency and any external funding agency as part of the Strategy Agreement or Strategy Contract. Positions earmarked in the Strategy, regardless of the funding source, should be nominated as Strategy positions for Aboriginal people.

On occasions, it may be necessary for the agency to negotiate additional Strategy positions.

If it is necessary to negotiate additional positions for Aboriginal people, as part of your Strategy, these positions are then nominated as Aboriginal Employment Strategy positions. This may require an exemption under the Anti-Discrimination Act. For information contact the Anti-Discrimination Board.

### Good Practice

#### University of NSW

The University of NSW has specific targets for its Strategy — 50 positions in total over five years. While specific positions are written into the Strategy, it is through the support of schools within the University and negotiations by the Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator,

the Director of Equal Employment Opportunity and the Aboriginal Education Program that jobs are earmarked as Aboriginal Employment Strategy positions.

Jobs at the University are in a wide range of areas including, greenkeeping, graphic design, administration and computing.

A major achievement of the Strategy is the establishment of an academic arm to the Strategy whereby academic positions such as associate lecturer and lecturer are being earmarked as Strategy positions.

## **Targets and Benchmarks**

Most Aboriginal Employment Strategies include numerical targets, that is, the number of Aboriginal staff the agency expects to recruit in a particular period.

While numerical targets are an important part of a Strategy, targets need to be more than just numbers.

An Aboriginal Employment Strategy is about Aboriginal people, access to jobs, social justice, commitment, support and cultural sensitivity and service delivery. All these factors are difficult to monitor in terms of numerical targets. Some targets need to focus on actions taken, rather than numbers alone.

For example, a Chief Executive Officer may issue a direction to all senior executives to attend an intensive Cultural Awareness Training Conference, including an overnight visit to an Aboriginal community. This may raise their awareness and be a successful outcome in itself. However, the success of such an activity cannot be measured against a numerical target.

Alternatively, an agency which meets its numerical targets rapidly, for example, quickly recruiting 40 people into base-grade positions throughout the agency, may lose most of these people through lack of support and understanding. So, although a numerical target has been met in the short term, the Strategy may not be successful in the long term.

Therefore, meeting numerical targets is not necessarily the only measure of the success of an Aboriginal Employment Strategy.

Setting numerical targets does, however, allow the agency to strive towards a goal. If the goal is too high, employment targets can be adjusted.

## **Good Practice**

### **Department of Courts Administration**

Prior to the Aboriginal Employment Strategy, 22 Aboriginal people were employed in the Department of Courts Administration. Currently 70 people are employed under its Strategy. The Department set a numerical target in 1994 of seven people. More than 24 people have been recruited in this period, which more than meets their target. This level of recruitment has been achieved without compromising any of the needs of Aboriginal people, and is consistent with the principles of job-related merit selection.

Since commencing the Strategy, the Department has not lost any base-grade recruits. Only three Aboriginal people are no longer employed under the Strategy, one as a result of a redundancy, and two were promoted to senior positions outside the agency.

## **Advertising Positions**

Once you have positions to be placed under your Strategy, the work has only just begun.

Next you have to fill jobs with the best people possible.

To get the best people, it is good to have a strong field to choose from. To get a strong field you have to get as many people applying for your jobs as possible.

You should think very carefully about how you can attract as many people as possible to your jobs. Leave nothing to chance. There is obviously a lot more to recruitment than placing a job advertisement in the newspaper.

There are a lot of different ways of getting as many Aboriginal people as possible applying for your jobs.

The majority of jobs in the Public Sector have to be advertised in the press. Your agency will have a policy and procedures on the placement of employment advertisements, including the size allowed, which you will have to keep in mind when you are writing the advertisement.

The advertisement should be written by yourself or another Aboriginal person. Think when you are writing the advertisement who you are writing it for — Aboriginal people.

Before you begin writing the advertisement make sure you have all the necessary information so that you can present a clear, realistic outline of what the job is, what the duties are, what the salary is and where it is located. A long advertisement is not more impressive, so try and keep it short and to the point.

Also have a look at job advertisements in the *Koori Mail* (an Aboriginal newspaper, published in Lismore, and circulated all around Australia) and in mainstream newspapers to get some idea about which advertisements are well-written and which are not.

Don't make the job sound like something it is not. Make sure the person whose name appears as contact officer in the advertisement is available to take enquiries until applications close.

The person who is going to talk about the job should be the contact in the newspaper. If you are not going to take the calls and deal with the enquiries, don't put your name in the newspaper as the contact person.

When you have written your advertisement you have to decide where you want to place it. You have some choices about this. You can use *Koori Mail*, however, not all Aboriginal people have access to this newspaper, or read it on a regular basis, so don't rely on it alone.

Most community radio and television stations have an Aboriginal program on which you could talk about your Strategy and the jobs available.

Depending on the job, mainstream papers can be used. The *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Australian* have very large employment sections on the weekends. Many people say the *Daily Telegraph* is a good paper to place job advertisements to attract Aboriginal people in NSW.

Local papers are also very good if your jobs are located outside Sydney.

Just as important and effective as the media is the Aboriginal network — word of mouth, putting the word out around the Aboriginal communities. Tell as many people as you can about the jobs. Display advertisements in medical services, community centres or child care centres.

It is a good idea to produce a more detailed handout written along the lines of the press advertisement. A handout can be sent around to organisations and passed around by people who may know the kind of people you are looking for.

The Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) also posts vacancies on their job boards. A lot of CES Offices have a vacancy board especially for Aboriginal people. Most CES Offices have an Aboriginal contact officer. Ask to speak with this person at your local CES. Where possible deal with the same person all the time so that the CES develops a history of your Strategy.

Make sure you ask to either see or have read to you what the CES are putting on the board. Because they only have a limited amount of space available, sometimes what they write on the card may not express what the job is really like.

If you want the vacancy to be issued across the State, make sure you ask for that to happen. Otherwise, the job vacancy may only be issued in the region of that particular CES Office.

You will probably have a CES Office you deal with all the time. Enquiries from other CES Offices around the State will come into that office. Make sure the CES contact officer knows all the details of the job, so she or he can take enquiries and refer people to you as appropriate.

If your Strategy has an Aboriginal logo or identifier, use it on all your media and other written information to applicants. If your agency does not have a logo, try and get one, otherwise use some Aboriginal designs on information where possible. This makes the jobs stand out, and appear more inviting to people. It shows other Aboriginal people are in the agency.

You could also develop a package which has information on the job, the agency, Aboriginal people in the agency and particularly guidelines on applying for jobs in your agency.

## **Good Practice**

### **QANTAS Maintenance Engineers and Flight Attendants**

The procedure to become an apprentice engineer (maintenance) or flight attendant with Qantas has many steps. They include a written application, an aptitude test and an interview.

To attract enough Aboriginal people to these positions, QANTAS with the CES and Aboriginal Programs in the Department of Employment, Education and Training undertook a multi-levelled recruitment campaign.

The Aboriginal contact officer from the CES attended all meetings in regard to recruitment and knew about all the procedures applicants had to go through.

Applications were forwarded from the CES Office as well as from QANTAS. All CES Offices in the State were contacted in writing in regard to the positions, and provided with details of the application procedures.

QANTAS ran a number of information days around the country, where Aboriginal staff from QANTAS together with the mainstream recruitment officers discussed positions and application procedures.

The final result was 30 applications for engineer positions and more than 60 applications for flight attendant positions.

### **Information for Applicants**

Positions should have the agency's Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator as well as the supervisor of the advertised job as contact officers for the position.

By having both people as contacts, you give applicants a choice of who to talk to. This is especially helpful when you have a lot of enquiries because you will be on the telephone a great deal.

By providing this choice you also encourage the supervisor to take ownership and responsibility for the position.

While you may get a lot of enquiries from your advertisements, you have to convert as many of these enquiries as possible into applications.

Ask if people need help with their applications. Talk to them about what work they have done in the past and what they are doing now and how that relates to the advertised position.

A lot of Aboriginal people underestimate the quality of the work they have done in their lives and how useful this work is for other jobs. Talk to people about what they have done and tell them to include it in their applications.

Many jobs require applications written in a certain way, and many people have not been shown how to write a job application for Government jobs. The more help you can provide the better.

If you are using the CES to help with your recruitment, make sure they are equipped with detailed information to deal accurately with any enquiries.

## **Good Practice**

### **Pacific Power**

Pacific Power has recruitment covered on all fronts.

Peter Stanford, the Aboriginal Liaison Officer travels throughout the year to Aboriginal communities conducting information days and testing where Aboriginal people are told about Pacific Power, how it is structured, and the types of jobs offered specifically to Aboriginal people.

Peter conveys information direct to teachers, community leaders and to young people about the jobs, and provides them with details of testing dates and application procedures. He offers all the help possible with writing resumes and application letters.

'From the moment an Aboriginal person picks up the phone to ask about a job we may have going she or he is in constant contact with another Aboriginal person who walks them through the whole process,' Peter says.

### **Water Board**

To make sure Aboriginal applicants fully understand the recruitment process the Water Board has developed a pamphlet describing how to apply for positions.

The Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator also provides interested applicants with training and information, which help people to recognise their skills and put these skills down on paper in the format required.

## **Interviewing**

The aim of an interview is to enable a panel of people to gain a good understanding of each applicant, thereby evaluating and selecting the best person for the vacant position.

When interviewing Aboriginal people, get as many Aboriginal people on the panel as you can. Panel members can come from all over the agency not just the Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator. It is a good practice to include at least one external person on the panel.

Discuss with the panel the skills and abilities required of the person and what your agency is looking for, and the type of experience that is necessary.

Make sure the room where you are holding the interviews is welcoming and not 'interrogation style' with everyone sitting behind a desk.

Because a lot of Aboriginal people are not used to being interviewed, it is important to make them feel as relaxed as possible. We all know how hard interviews are, and if it is one of your first interviews it is even harder.

The more relaxed you make the person being interviewed, the more realistic your understanding of her or his abilities will be because they will be able to give you more information about themselves.

It is a good idea to give the interview questions to all applicants before the interview. This gives people a chance to consider answers and have time to relax and collect their thoughts.

Make sure you welcome the applicant, and introduce yourself and everyone else on the panel. Outline where everybody is from and what their role is on the panel.

Ask questions slowly and do not use jargon. If someone is not from your agency, they will not understand the initials or names of programs or abbreviations your agency uses.

Take note as to whether or not the person understands what you are asking. There is nothing wrong with asking if she or he would like a question repeated or said in a different way.

It is important to take notes during the interview to keep track of what applicants are saying. Remember to listen and respond to answers as well. Do not have your head down during the whole interview taking notes. This is off-putting and rude.

At the end of the interview, thank the person for coming, and let them know the process you will be going through to come to your decision about the job. Tell applicants how long your decision will take to make and how they will be hearing whether or not they got the job.

When the panel's recommendation is approved, let everybody know whether or not they got the job. Make yourself available to talk with people who did not get the job to discuss why they did not get it. Give them feedback on their interview that you think would help them get the next job they apply for.

Training is available for interviewing. The Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator will probably be doing a lot of interviewing. If you have not already had training in this area, you should arrange it as it will greatly benefit both you and the Strategy.

## **Good Practice**

### **National Parks and Wildlife Service**

The National Parks and Wildlife Service offers Aboriginal applicants the opportunity to bring a support person with them to the interview.

### **University of NSW**

The University of NSW has a policy which requires all selection panels for Strategy positions to have a minimum 50% Aboriginal representation. It is not unusual for all selection panel members to be Aboriginal people.

Gender equity and community representation are also important considerations for the selection panels. Every attempt is made to ensure that the panels have equal gender representation and include a member of a local Aboriginal community.

## **Induction**

Apart from the application process, induction is the first contact new recruits have with your agency. It is important to get off on the right foot and do a good job welcoming people into the agency and letting them know how things work.

Induction for Aboriginal people will differ from agency to agency, nevertheless, induction should be largely handled by other Aboriginal staff.

Induction should include things like: the structure of the agency, the agency's role and functions, the rights and responsibilities of employees, the particular policies of the agency (such as its Code of Conduct, EEO, harassment and grievance policies). Other information should include conditions of employment, career paths, key people in the agency and their roles, training and development options and reporting lines and responsibilities.

### **Good Practice**

#### **TAFE Commission**

There is a general induction for all new staff who commence employment with TAFE.

It is planned that Aboriginal staff will also get induction specifically designed for them. In the first instance, all Aboriginal people are put onto an Aboriginal TAFE Network mailing list for receiving information and networking within TAFE.

A formal induction program for Aboriginal staff is currently being designed and will be in place by February 1995. This program will possibly be run twice a year over two days. TAFE Institutes will send new Aboriginal staff to the induction. Career development will form part of the induction program for each staff member.

TAFE is also looking at developing a resource kit for new staff. This will provide new employees with information on Aboriginal services in TAFE, and make new Aboriginal staff aware of the type of support available.

### **Good Practice**

#### **Roads and Traffic Authority**

The Roads and Traffic Authority conducted training specifically for recruits under the Strategy. This training included the fundamentals such as leave, pay, hours and other working conditions as well as sessions on handling racism in the workplace and career planning.

The program also provided a number of Aboriginal employee role models who shared their career experiences with the new recruits.

## **Cultural Awareness Training**

Cultural awareness training can take many forms within the agency. There is a need for all staff to have an understanding of cultural diversity and issues facing Aboriginal people.

Agencies should consider conducting Aboriginal cultural awareness training for all staff, particularly those supervising or dealing regularly with Aboriginal employees or clients.

Cultural awareness training can provide managers, supervisors, human resources staff, members of selection panels and customer service staff with an understanding of the issues facing Aboriginal people in the workplace and with skills for communicating effectively with Aboriginal people.

Cultural awareness training should include sessions such as history, contemporary society, Aboriginal kinship systems and family responsibilities. Given the diversity of Aboriginal people and cultures a most effective way of presenting cultural awareness training is with the input of local Aboriginal community people.

### **Good Practice**

#### **Department of Conservation and Land Management**

The Department of Conservation and Land Management is planning cultural awareness training for its entire staff of about 2,500 people.

Aboriginal staff and management within the Department recognised a need existed and have negotiated and planned a quality cultural awareness training program.

The Cultural Awareness Training Framework took about six months to develop and Aboriginal staff worked hard to address the needs and expectations of Aboriginal and other people in the agency.

Now the Department's Cultural Awareness Training Framework has been developed, and is directly relevant to land management. Aboriginal trainers will be brought in and briefed on the Department's needs and expectations and will conduct appropriate programs based on the material the Department has developed.

This approach included much consultation with management and Aboriginal and other staff across the agency and in other agencies and with community members.

### **Grievances**

The Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator will most likely be the first point of contact if someone employed under the Strategy has a problem in the workplace or wants to make a formal complaint against another staff member.

It is important you understand the seriousness of this role, and that you receive some formal training in dealing with grievances. Do not start advising staff who have formal grievances if you don't know what you are doing. Grievance handling is a specialised area and there will probably be a specific section in your agency for dealing with grievances. Make sure you know who works in this area, and that they know who you are.

Let staff employed under the Strategy know who these people are in case they do not want to go through you to lodge their grievance.

## **Good Practice**

### **State Rail Authority of NSW Employee Complaints Service**

The State Rail Authority of NSW has an Aboriginal employee trained and skilled in complaint handling located in the section specifically designed for staff complaints and grievances.

In State Rail there are about 10 Aboriginal contact officers located across NSW regions. The role of these people is to issue information about a range of issues for Aboriginal people, including grievance handling procedures and resolving complaints.

## **Dealing with Harassment**

Harassment is any type of unwelcome or unreciprocated behaviour that can make a person feel intimidated, offended, belittled, or apprehensive in her or his workplace.

Harassment can take many forms including verbal abuse or threats, jokes, comments about sex, race, age or disability, writing on posters (especially posters with people from a particular race), displaying posters of a sexual nature, playing practical jokes, or persistent touching.

Harassment in any form is offensive and unacceptable. Harassment can be AGAINST THE LAW.

It is the agency's responsibility to maintain business-like standards of behaviour at work. If staff are feeling harassed at work it is the employers' responsibility to fix it, otherwise they are liable.

If a staff member has a complaint, that person has the right to choose how her or his complaint is dealt with, either inside or outside the agency.

It is advisable that complaints of harassment are heard within the agency in the first instance. However, any person with a complaint of harassment is entitled to go to an external agency.

External agencies who can advise or deal with harassment cases are: unions, the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Community Justice Centres and accredited mediators.

## **Good Practice**

### **NSW Anti-Discrimination Board Aboriginal Outreach Program**

The Anti-Discrimination Board has started an Aboriginal Outreach Program.

Under the Program two Aboriginal staff members from the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board act as liaison officers for Aboriginal communities throughout NSW. It is their job to investigate and conciliate complaints of discrimination from Aboriginal people all over

NSW and to implement a planned and structured Outreach Program. This program aims to:

- inform Aboriginal organisations and individuals about the Board, anti-discrimination laws and its services
- consult with Aboriginal organisations and individuals about the effectiveness, or otherwise, of the current processes at the Board and current anti-discrimination law
- where appropriate immediately investigate and conciliate complaints of discrimination while visiting regional areas
- educate the major groups who may discriminate against Aboriginal people (for example public and private sector employers, local government, hoteliers and club managers, real estate agents, retailers and other goods and service providers) about discrimination and how to avoid it. This education includes discussion about the myths that still exist about Aboriginal people

### **Internal Support and Participation**

In every agency the majority of staff are not Aboriginal. The role of the Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator is to put Aboriginal people into jobs which have not traditionally been available to them.

This job is easier if all people within the agency offer support and assistance.

People can more easily support you if they understand what it is you are doing, and how and why you are doing it. Talk to people and promote yourself and your Strategy as something that will benefit the agency and all people who work in it.

### **Good Practice**

#### **Department of Courts Administration — Information Technology**

When the people from the Information Technology Section arrived to fix the computers in the Aboriginal Employment Unit at the Department of Courts Administration they asked what the Unit did.

After a detailed explanation by the Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator, the Information Technology officer went back to his area. He called back a few weeks later with a request to participate in the Strategy with an offer of jobs.

The Department now has two positions for Aboriginal Computer Programmers and Information Technology Officers as part of its Strategy.

## **Implementing the Strategy:**

## **Points to Remember**

### **1. Strategy Positions**

- do any of the Strategy positions need an exemption under the Anti-Discrimination Act?
- do all positions have a realistic position description which has been evaluated using the agency's job evaluation system?
- have career paths been identified for each strategy position?

### **2. Advertising Strategy Positions**

- is the advertisement easy to understand and a clear and realistic reflection of the job and work environment?
- have arrangements been made for advertising through Aboriginal media outlets?
- has the CES been contacted and given clear instructions to advertise the position State-wide?

### **3. Information for Applicants**

- has a Contact Officer(s) been nominated for the position?
- is there an information package which includes:
  - how to apply for the job
  - information on the agency
  - information on the position and direct working environment
  - information on Aboriginal people within the agency?

### **4. Interviewing**

- who are the most appropriate people to have on the panel?
- is the interview environment comfortable?
- what interview procedures will be adopted to ensure the panel make the an informed choice based on merit?

### **5. Induction**

- is the induction being developed by Aboriginal people?
- does the course include all fundamental information on the agency's policies and procedures?
- is there information or sessions to assist recruits to understand the agency's methods of working?
- is career planning a component of the induction course?

# Training and Development

## On-the-Job

A lot of jobs require a person to have some very specific skills related to the job, or specific knowledge of a particular work related area.

Often these skills are not taught at a TAFE or University because they are unique to an individual agency. Even if they are taught at an educational institution or form part of a training course, the only people who have a working knowledge of the information are people currently doing the work.

Examples of these skills are: record systems in a mail or archive centre, computer systems or a particular way an agency may service customers at a front counter.

In these instances on-the-job training is an efficient and effective way for these skills to be passed on to new Aboriginal employees.

On-the-job training should be taken seriously, and given the same value and be of the same quality as other types of training. Consideration needs to be given to what should be taught on-the-job, how they should be taught and how supervisors can check that skills have been learned.

The way that on-the-job training is delivered, especially technical skills training, may determine if a new employee learns the skills or not. This will directly influence their comfort in a job.

A 'buddy' in the workplace for new employees is considered a very effective way of teaching and learning for Aboriginal people. This gives new employees someone to teach them, then a chance to do it for themselves and someone for support and assistance in the workplace, if needed.

Someone has to teach new people how to use these systems and follow-up to make sure that they are comfortable with them.

While a lot can be taught in a classroom, it is not until you have a customer with a difficult enquiry in front of a new staff member, and only when a computer delivers the necessary answers, that you really know if training has been successful.

A bad experience may mean you lose a top quality Aboriginal person, because they were not yet comfortable with the system or were insecure about their knowledge and ability.

Some aspects of jobs are very complex. Because people have been working in a job for a long time they may not realise what it is like to be new and trying to learn everything for the first time.

You can't rely on existing staff to keep remembering that the new Aboriginal people may need help, so definite processes need to be put in place to address this.

## Good Practice

## **Water Board Customer Service Agents**

On the job training is provided to Water Board customer service officers. This training ensures that officers have or acquire the skills to perform all areas of the job.

Training includes telephone techniques, quality management, customer relations, dealing with difficult customers and the use of many computer programs.

## **Personal Skills Training**

As well as developing skills for work, Aboriginal employees may need other training to help them succeed in the workplace. A lot of people take their personal skills for granted such as being able to get up and speak in front of a group. Some Aboriginal people need training in these areas to perform at their best in the workplace.

Personal skills are about operating effectively in the workplace, and being able to communicate with confidence, negotiate about work and effectively service a wide range of agency clients.

Training could be in interpersonal communication, negotiation skills, public speaking and time management. Its all about confidence and being comfortable that you can do the job.

## **Good Practice**

### **Roads and Traffic Authority**

The Roads and Traffic Authority has conducted quality personal development training for Aboriginal employees with the aim of increasing self esteem, confidence and workplace communication.

These courses formed an overall Aboriginal specific Personal Skills Training Program, facilitated and managed by the Aboriginal Liaison Officer.

These courses included interpersonal skills, negotiation skills, effective writing and job seeking skills.

## **Career Planning**

Everybody likes to know where their job fits within the agency, and what the skills and experience they gain in one job can lead to. This is called planning a career, and is something others are often taught from an early age. Career planning however, is something a lot of Aboriginal people may not be familiar with.

Many Aboriginal people devalue the experiences they have had in their lives and how the skills they gain from community activity are relevant to the workforce.

Time needs to be spent with Aboriginal people in the workforce, explaining their job, the skills they need, how to look at themselves and improve their skills and how the skills they have can be transferred to other jobs.

Encourage all Aboriginal employees to set long-term, realistic career goals, and work with them to develop plans to achieve these goals.

## **Good Practice**

### **University of NSW**

The Professional Development Centre within the University of NSW works with the Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator and Aboriginal staff to develop personal and professional development plans.

The plans outline the skill and education needs of the individual, specific actions to undertake and when the action will be taken. The Professional Development Centre and the Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator provide extensive assistance and support to progress individual development plans.

### **Office of the Director of Equal Employment Opportunity in Public Employment**

In 1993 the Office of the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment developed and ran an intensive management development program for Aboriginal people in the NSW Public Sector.

Seventeen people attended the course which was held over 16 weeks. The content of the course included detailed theoretical and practical studies on middle management in the NSW Public Sector.

A major component of the course was two project placements in agencies other than participants' home agency. All participants found this component extremely beneficial in providing them with a new perspective on themselves and with a broad range of skills they could use to do their jobs.

Some outcomes of this course included 50% of graduates returning to their agency in higher graded opportunities in either substantive or acting capacities, 75% of these being women.

100% of graduates developed realistic career plans and expressed increased confidence in their ability to achieve their career goals.

## **Mentoring**

A mentor is a role model, teacher and guide. In most agencies mentoring has generally occurred informally as senior people assisted younger and less experienced staff. A formal and structured mentoring program provides a process which is specifically designed to create effective mentoring relationships to quickly identify and solve problems, and to evaluate the results for mentorees (the employee being mentored), mentors and the agency.

Mentoring helps people who traditionally have not had access to executives and senior people who can pass on valuable knowledge which may help them to change their work situation.

Mentors provide employees with information about the politics of the agency, its values, ideology and history. Mentors can also discuss the skills and competencies necessary for progression to more senior levels and pathways to achieve this progression.

## **Good Practice**

### **ABC Television**

When Aboriginal trainees begin with ABC Television, mentoring is initially conducted by the Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator and other senior Aboriginal staff.

Once the initial settling in period is over, trainees are encouraged to seek out and approach managers in their own Department of the ABC to be their mentor. Only managers who have undergone cultural awareness training can be mentors to Aboriginal staff.

Managers are given time during working hours to meet with Aboriginal staff to discuss work, training and how the mentorees feel they are going.

Not all Aboriginal trainees have a mentor. All are encouraged to pursue a mentor, but if they don't feel it necessary, mentoring is not imposed.

This system has been in operation for about eight years, mainly in the production and news departments.

## **Secondment**

A secondment is when someone from another agency or from a different area of the same agency takes up a position for a period of time to do a particular job or project. This can be useful for both the host and sponsor agencies.

The host agency will get a person with the skills and knowledge required to do a particular job or project, while the sponsor agency has the opportunity to have someone new in a position for a period of time, as well as getting the original person back at the end of a period fresh with new ideas and experiences.

Many Aboriginal people working throughout the sector have worked in only one or two positions, thus they have had limited opportunities developing new skills, knowledge and experience. Secondments provide this opportunity.

## **Good Practice**

### **Water Board**

Ron Saunders started with the Water Board 10 years ago as a labourer. Throughout his time with the Board Ron has progressed through different jobs. He has worked on gangs, on building sites, and has extensive knowledge of the Water Board's procedures and operations.

At the moment Ron holds a permanent position with the Income Management Group of the Water Board, with responsibility for rate recovery, meter testing and customer liaison.

Ron has held this position for about five year, and feels that he has gone as far as he can in his career without further training and experiences.

Recently an opportunity for a three month secondment into the Health and Equal Employment Opportunity area became available, offering Ron new experiences, contacts and knowledge of the health and EEO activities in the Water Board.

Through this secondment, Ron has undergone a major career development exercise, extremely beneficial for his future. The Health and EEO area has provided him with a career planning exercise focussing on his training needs, provided him with a sound knowledge of the work involved in Aboriginal employment. He has also made contacts across the NSW Public Sector to further his employment and career development.

Ron will return to his original position with new skills and be a more developed and motivated member of staff, with more experience and a greater understanding of the operations of the Water Board.

### **Assistance for staff to Undertake Further Education**

The NSW workforce and Aboriginal communities need more Aboriginal people with a comprehensive formal education.

Formal education provides a person with a qualifications such as a Higher School Certificate, a TAFE certificate or university degree. It also exposes individuals to a creative learning environment which will affect her or his approach and outlook on work.

For these reasons an Aboriginal person with a formal education has much to contribute to an agency and to the Aboriginal community.

Agencies should develop strategies to increase the number of Aboriginal people completing formal studies.

### **Good Practice**

#### **Pacific Power**

A stated objective in Pacific Power's Aboriginal Employment Strategy is to increase the number of Aboriginal people with tertiary qualifications.

To achieve this objective, Pacific Power provides a tertiary scholarship for an Aboriginal person for the first year of university study in a relevant engineering or business degree.

The scholarship is open to all Aboriginal people across the State and is valued at \$10,000.

#### **Roads and Traffic Authority**

The Roads and Traffic Authority offered two scholarships in 1993 to Aboriginal people undertaking formal studies.

One scholarship was awarded to an Aboriginal Year 12 student to help her finish senior high school, and the other was a mature age person returning to further studies.

Both these scholarships were offered to community people, not just to Roads and Traffic Authority staff.

## **Training and Development:**

### **Points to Remember**

#### **1. Training**

##### **Technical/personal training plan**

- what are the technical and personal training needs of Aboriginal staff?
- what existing programs/packages exist to meet identified needs?
- how will the training needs be met?
- what is the timeframe for training to be provided?
- who is responsible?

#### **2. Development Opportunities**

- secondments to other branches of the agency or to other agencies
- special projects — what projects and where?
- Aboriginal staff access to or membership of agency committees
- acting in higher graded positions
- interchange program with other agencies

#### **3. Mentoring**

##### **Information on mentoring**

- what makes a good mentor and mentor relationship?
- who wants to be a mentor?
- who wants to be mentored?
- strategies for linking mentors and mentorees?
- your role in the mentoring relationship — resource and advice

#### **4. Assistance for Further Studies**

- secondary, tertiary and professional accreditation studies
- scholarships

- incorporation of an Aboriginal component into existing agency study programs
- flexible leave arrangements in recognition of the modes of conduct of Aboriginal education programs offered through tertiary institutions
- awards or recognition of achievements in study

## **Staff Networks**

### **Staff Support**

New Aboriginal staff need to know there are other Aboriginal people out there for support, someone to ask how the job is going, someone who has been through the same experiences of starting work in a Public Sector agency, someone who understands the isolation they may experience.

Some Aboriginal Employment Strategies are so big that it is not possible for the Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator to have regular contact with staff, while other Strategies are small enough for the Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator to see staff almost every day.

Whatever the case, it is important that staff know you are there if they need help, and they know how to go about getting help.

When giving support to people is part of your job, it is important to tell people how you can support them, so they can learn from you.

This is a step towards empowerment, and ultimately leads to people being able to support themselves.

The Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator is the key person offering support to staff. If young people come into town from the country, they may not want to call their parents who may be 1,000 kilometres away.

Supporting people is very different to making decisions for people. The role of support is giving people options and providing them with what may be the possible consequences of various options.

Support as part of the Strategy also extends to supporting supervisors, knowing how the supervisor is going with their new staff, if there are any problems, and offering advice and guidance.

The Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator may come across a conflict situation. The role of the Co-ordinator is to support all those involved and assist in the processes for a solution. This is a difficult role. The Co-ordinator can not give unquestioning support to Aboriginal people and involve themselves in the conflict as well. The Co-ordinator needs a good understanding of the situation and to look at what the best outcome will be for all.

In the process of resolving the conflict, things may get heated. However that means everybody is getting the problem off their chest and expressing how they see the situation.

Keep the discussion to the issues and the job, not the people and the personalities. If you are likely to be involved in a lot of conflict resolution you should get some appropriate training.

## **Good Practice**

### **ABC Television**

'If staff support is not there, staff are not there,' according to Marje Anderson, Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator ABC Television.

'You could lose someone really good because of something that is really easily fixed.'

At the ABC staff support starts from the moment someone makes an enquiry about a job. If people don't get the job, the ABC lets them know why, where their skills are lacking, and what can be done to improve their chances of getting a job next time.

If people from out of town join ABC TV, people from the ABC welcome them, take them around the city, and introduce them to key Aboriginal people in the local community.

Within ABC Television, all new staff get a contact list of all Aboriginal staff, and their telephone numbers. Although new staff may not meet everybody at once, the Aboriginal contact list shows new staff that there are other Aboriginal people in the same organisation.

## **What are Aboriginal Staff Networks and Why Do We Have Them?**

Depending on how a Strategy is structured, Aboriginal people could work throughout an agency and never meet each other. Most places have a variety of jobs, with people working at many different locations.

While it is ideal for Aboriginal people to work together, in many instances this is not possible. This may cause isolation.

If an Aboriginal person is in this situation and feeling isolated it does not mean that person dislikes their colleagues, or feels uncomfortable working with them. It just means that there are no other Aboriginal people around them in the workplace.

The Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator has to be active in building ways to combat the feeling of isolation, by letting people know there are other Aboriginal people in the agency and being active in encouraging all Aboriginal people to communicate with each other.

When Aboriginal people who work in the same agency (or across agencies) get together to talk about work, this is called networking. Networking and staff networks are an important part of an Aboriginal Employment Strategy and provide vital support and career development.

You don't have to physically locate people together in a conference room every few months or so to have a staff network. The important thing is that everybody knows there are other Aboriginal people in the agency who they can talk to about work.

## **Good Practice**

### **TAFE Commission**

TAFE has a lot of Aboriginal people working across the agency in a wide variety of positions.

When a new staff member begins work they are placed on an Aboriginal Staff data base and are provided with the details of all other Aboriginal staff in the agency.

Twice a year there is a State-wide Aboriginal TAFE Network meeting which all Aboriginal staff are invited and encouraged to attend. There is an Aboriginal working party elected by Aboriginal staff to arrange the meetings and staff development. The working party meets at least six times a year.

### **Informal Network Meetings**

There are two types of network meetings, formal and informal. Both are useful and valuable for your Aboriginal Employment Strategy.

Informal network meetings can be any type of gatherings, where staff are introduced and find out who everybody is and what everybody does.

Informal arrangements are useful as people do not have to get up in front of a group and speak. In formal situations often the vocal people get to say the most and the quiet ones don't get to say anything.

Someone who may not have the confidence to stand in front of 30 people and ask a question, may feel comfortable asking that same question over lunch.

Informal meetings could take the form of a lunch, barbeque or morning tea with the purpose of welcoming new staff or saying good-bye to people leaving.

The Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator could arrange these functions. Make sure everybody knows when they are happening and that they are invited. If you have staff located too far away from you, try and help them arrange something for themselves.

Remember these are informal social events and should remain informal. Not everybody is a party person and loves to meet new people and chat. Don't drag someone to a social event if they don't want to be there.

## **Good Practice**

### **TAFE Commission**

Barbeques at TAFE are a good way of informally meeting other Aboriginal people and other employees in TAFE.

On occasion, there is an Aboriginal specific TAFE course running. At sometime in this course, the Aboriginal TAFE staff at the Institutes get together with other staff, and have lunch. This is an informal network meeting.

### **Formal Network Meetings**

Formal network meetings are very useful for bringing Aboriginal people together to discuss Aboriginal employment as well as other issues affecting Aboriginal staff.

They are more useful in some respects than informal meetings because they are official. Everything is on the table and the agency officially hosts the event, giving it legitimacy. By hosting these formal meetings, the agency is saying it supports Aboriginal people coming together to discuss the Strategy. By supporting these meetings, the agency is also saying it wants to listen to what Aboriginal people have to say.

If something needs to be discussed and a decision made by Aboriginal staff, bring the issue to the Network meeting and have it placed on the agenda.

If you are having a formal network meeting be prepared for it to take up time and for it to come out of the agency budget.

There should be a detailed agenda which has been developed through consultation with a good cross section of Aboriginal staff as well as management.

If possible, run it formally, with a welcome and opening address from someone important. Write minutes.

When you take minutes of a meeting, don't write down everything everybody says. Just write the decisions and what action is going to be taken, who is going to take the action, and when. If you think some discussion points are particularly important include them but don't fall into the trap of writing down everything everybody says.

Network meetings should be held fairly regularly, at least once a year. Because it is difficult and expensive to bring everybody together, you should capitalise on the opportunity to do anything else you need to do when you have got people together, for example, a network meeting day could be used to run a staff training course as well.

Running a meeting like this is a big job and requires a lot of organisation. You can do a course to learn how to run workshops and be a discussion leader or a facilitator.

### **Good Practice**

#### **TAFE Commission**

Aboriginal staff have to apply to attend the workshops and attendance is restricted. Most staff get to attend at least one network meeting a year. These meetings are hosted in different regions throughout the State.

TAFE encourages local Aboriginal community involvement in the meetings. The involvement is the formal welcome and address to the full forum of Aboriginal staff on the first day of the meeting. The introduction sets the scene for a sharing program with cultural ties.

Some staff training courses that have been part of the Aboriginal TAFE Network meetings include, Selection Committee Techniques, Advanced Communication, Conflict Management, Accounting, Desktop Publishing, Computing, Writing Styles Techniques and Assertiveness Skills.

Management and executive across TAFE attend and are available to answer questions in an open forum.

## **Staff Contact Lists**

Maintaining an accurate contact list of all Aboriginal staff within your agency is a good idea. It means you know how many people are in your agency, and where they are working. This is handy for reporting and for when you are asked for this information.

An accurate contact list also means that everybody in the agency can quickly find people to exchange information, ask questions or seek clarification.

When new people start work in the agency, give them a copy of this list with their names already on it. It shows them there are other Aboriginal people in the agency, and they are part of that network of people.

Prior to establishing such a list check with the Human Resource Manager regarding the agency's privacy considerations just to make sure that you can develop such a list, and more importantly who will have access to the list.

### **Good Practice**

#### **TAFE Commission**

When Aboriginal staff commence in TAFE, their names and locations are entered onto the Aboriginal staff data base. This list is maintained by the Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator and circulated to all Aboriginal staff.

## **Staff Networks: Points to Remember**

### **1. Aboriginal Staff Networks**

- identify the reasons and benefits for the agency and Aboriginal staff in establishing a network
- what is the aim of the network?
- what does it want to do?
- keep network members up to date with what is happening in the agency

- develop a contact list of all Aboriginal staff which includes names, work locations and telephone numbers
- identify the best ways for Aboriginal staff to get together (eg, formal meetings with all Aboriginal staff once a year or regional staff meetings twice a year)
- establish links between the network and agency management
- provide management with regular reports on network activities, concerns, and issues
- marketing of the network to Aboriginal staff, not everyone wants to be part of a network
- marketing of the network within the agency

## **2. Informal Network Meetings**

- aim of the meeting
- casual and friendly atmosphere
- establish one person as the contact for the meeting

## **3. Formal Meetings**

- aim of the meeting
- pre-meeting arrangements:
  - venue, catering, travel arrangements, pre-conference reading, childcare, access, travel assistance
- formal meeting procedures
  - agenda, Aboriginal staff should set the agenda items
- invite Aboriginal role models to speak at the meeting
- Aboriginal participants should determine how to conduct the meeting, that is, who will chair what sessions, who will introduce which speakers
- be flexible, do not sacrifice good discussion just to stick to the agenda times
- formalise the network
  - constitution, objectives, executive group, frequency of meetings, resources and the role of executive group
- evaluation — is this the best way to meet, what would people like to discuss at future meetings, what did they think about the sessions, speakers and materials, what did they think of the venue, how can the organisation of the meeting be improved in the future?

## **Evaluation and Monitoring**

## **What is Evaluation and How Is It Conducted?**

An Aboriginal Employment Strategy needs evaluation mechanisms built into it from the beginning so the agency can gauge and report its success and identify where the Strategy may not be going well.

The way the agency is going to measure the success of the Strategy should be clearly defined from the beginning so everybody knows the role of the Co-ordinator, the needs of other people, what will be achieved, by whom, and using what resources.

These evaluation mechanisms need to be built into the Strategy from the beginning, not brought into place half way through.

It is unfair to suddenly start evaluating effectiveness of the Strategy based on aspects that have never before been addressed. That is changing the rules half way through the match.

You should have input into the development of evaluation mechanisms from the beginning and be consulted about the best way to evaluate the Strategy.

Evaluation should be an issue discussed at the Aboriginal Employment Strategy Steering Committee in the establishment stage of the Strategy.

The most obvious way to evaluate a Strategy is by counting the number of positions secured under the Strategy, the number of Aboriginal people employed into these jobs, and the number of people who stay in the agency.

Then compare these employment numbers to the stated aims of the Strategy and check if the agency is achieving what it hoped to achieve when it commenced.

As stated in Targets and Benchmarks number crunching on its own is not the only way of looking at successful outcomes of an Aboriginal Employment Strategy.

Evaluation of a Strategy should consider numbers of Aboriginal people being employed, the types of positions, grading of positions and the effect the placement of Aboriginal people has on the culture and the business of the agency. Training and support networks are also part of the evaluation.

Any formal evaluation of a Strategy should be conducted by independent Aboriginal people in close consultation with the Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator, Equal Employment Opportunity Unit and other appropriate members of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy Steering Committee.

### **Good Practice**

#### **Department of Courts Administration**

The Department of Courts Administration has developed a number of ways of evaluating their Aboriginal Employment Strategy.

These methods of evaluation are essentially ways of asking if the Strategy is working. Firstly, numbers of people being recruited and their career development opportunities and

retention rates are constantly being monitored and reported. The Department understands that to many people this is the bottom line.

The employment targets are the backbone of the Strategy and the numbers of staff in the agency is always of greatest importance. However, in addition many 'non-position' achievements like cultural awareness training and community liaison are considered. This is even more important in key agencies for Aboriginal people like the justice portfolio.

The success of the Department's Strategy is also looked at from a Client Service perspective. How well does the Department service Aboriginal people? Does this Strategy improve the way these services are delivered? This is evaluated by analysis of, for example, the numbers of Aboriginal people using the 'non-courtroom' services of the Department.

The impact of Aboriginal people working in the courts on Aboriginal people coming before the courts is another area to be considered in the evaluation.

In the Strategy document, the Department has identified several objectives for the Strategy and evaluates the success of the Strategy by assessing outcomes against these stated objectives. This keeps the focus of the Strategy well defined.

In short, the Department's philosophy is that the inclusion of Aboriginal people as mainstream staff in a variety of areas will strengthen the capacity of the Department to improve existing, and develop new, approaches for the delivery of justice for Aboriginal people.

## **Monitoring**

Aboriginal Employment Strategies vary in the period of time they cover. An appropriate length of a Strategy is usually between three and five years. In the course of any one year mechanisms need to be put in place to enable everyone involved to stop and look at the Strategy and decide how well it is working.

By doing this, key players in Aboriginal employment within the agency can ask, 'Is there anyway we can better manage this Strategy or build on what is already working?'

Most agencies monitor their Strategy on a quarterly basis through the provision of quarterly progress reports by the Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator to the Aboriginal Employment Steering Committee.

This committee considers all the recruitment and career development activity and well as 'non-salary' aspects of the Strategy, and makes comments and decides on actions to be taken.

It is a good idea to develop a standard format for monitoring and reporting so that each quarter everything which needs to be addressed will be.

Funding agencies such as the Department of Employment Education and Training are very interested in each agency developing effective ways of monitoring finances of the Strategy.

## **Good Practice**

### **Pacific Power**

Pacific Power is monitoring performance of its Aboriginal Employment Strategy all the time, regularly checking to ensure that all steps made are positive.

This means regularly checking with management and staff of Pacific Power about progress of staff already recruited and progress involved in planned recruitment activity.

Follow-up to activity in the form of a telephone call is often an effective way to informally access processes and outcomes of the Strategy. Asking people how things went, and finding out first-hand peoples' views are effective ways of monitoring activity under the Strategy.

At a more formal level, Pacific Power has quarterly Steering Committee meetings for the Strategy where management of Pacific Power together with some Aboriginal staff and line managers discuss what recruitment and career development has occurred in previous months and what further activities are planned.

In addition, Pacific Power regularly invites the Department of Employment Education and Training to attend Strategy meetings to discuss their specific issues in regard to finance and funding.

Quarterly reports are prepared and tabled in this forum for executive, management, other staff as well as the Department of Employment Education and Training for comments.

## **Reporting**

Strategy reporting can take a few forms, written and oral, formal and informal. All are important and have their place.

When done effectively, good reporting will keep all agency people informed of activity and help gain support for the Aboriginal Employment Strategy.

The purpose of reporting is that one person does not keep all the information about what is going on with the Strategy, rather one person receives information, considers it and then passes it on to others who need and want to know.

The way you pass on the information will differ, but often a written report is the best way.

You can also pass on information by placing articles in agency newsletters on the progress of the Strategy, participating in or sponsoring events or producing brochures and posters to circulate throughout the agency.

When something happens that impacts on the agency it is good to report it quickly. Then people with a view on a particular issue will give you advice on the best way to deal with it.

It is a good idea to feed information to those immediately concerned. If it is important, follow up with a short letter outlining the issue.

At the end of the quarter in the Aboriginal Employment Strategy Report, the Co-ordinator should write down all that has occurred and present this information to the Strategy Steering Committee.

Develop a standard format for reporting and stick to it. Sections in your report should include recruitment, staff training and career development, cross cultural awareness and marketing.

By reporting thoroughly, as the Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator you are letting everybody know what is going on. This gives others the opportunity to consider all activity and to comment.

## **Good Practice**

### **Pacific Power**

At Pacific Power those involved or interested are informed about what is going on. This is good reporting.

The Pacific Power Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator achieves this by a mixture of continuing informal conversations and briefing sessions, together with regular formal meetings and quarterly reports.

If something is happening which may impact on the Strategy the telephone is used quickly to spread the word and report on the activity and its implications.

In addition, comprehensive reports are prepared to forward information to management relevant staff and the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET).

Financial reports are prepared and forwarded to the Department of Employment, Education and Training outlining monies expended together with appropriate financial accounting reports.

At any time if someone asks what stage is the Strategy at, the answer can be quickly provided by many people at Pacific Power.

## **Evaluation and Monitoring: Points to Remember**

### **1. Monitoring**

- what needs/should be monitored?
- how will the Strategy be monitored and measured?
- establish when and to whom you need to report on the Strategy
- identify key individuals and areas to assist in the process of monitoring the Strategy
- negotiate with key individuals for specific timeframes to submit their information

### **2. Standard Report Format**

- develop a standard reporting format for all key areas which would include:
  - the number of people recruited under the Strategy
  - what positions/grades were people recruited into
  - what positions remain vacant
  - what is the retention percentage of recruits
  - the number of Aboriginal people undertaking training and development opportunities
  - the number of Aboriginal people acting in higher graded positions

- the movement of Aboriginal staff throughout agency (transfers, secondments, special projects)
- number of people attending and outcomes of Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training
- how is the Strategy being marketed to Aboriginal people, the agency and to other agencies?
- financial report

### **3. Standard Financial Report Format**

- develop a standard financial reporting format in conjunction with DEET/DIRETFE which would include:
  - how much has been spent of Strategy funds
  - how much and on what has DEET and DIRETFE's contribution been spent
  - how much and on what has the agency's contribution been spent
  - what are the projected spending figures for the next quarter/year

## **Contact List**

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Network**

ATSIEN is a network of people working in Aboriginal employment and training. A membership list can be obtained through the ATSIEN Chairperson.

PO Box N17  
PETERSHAM NSW 2049

### **Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment**

Employment Equity and Diversity is a central agency which can provide information on Aboriginal employment throughout the public sector.

Aboriginal Employment Adviser  
Employment Equity and Diversity  
Level 17, Bligh House, 4–6 Bligh Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000  
Tel: (02) 9228 4444  
Fax: (02) 8243 9484  
TTY: (02) 9228 3544

### **Department of Training and Education Co-ordination (DTEC)**

The Department administers the Aboriginal Employment Strategy for the NSW Public Sector and can provide information and resources for the development of strategies. The Department also maintains a list of organisations which have Aboriginal Employment Officers under the New Career for Aboriginals Program.

Senior Project Officer (Aboriginal)

DTEC

Locked Bag A4001

SYDNEY SOUTH NSW 2000

Tel: (02) 9269 3510

Fax: (02) 9264 2737

### **Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET)**

The Department is a primary funding body and can provide information and resources for the development and implementation of strategies.

Director, Aboriginal Programs

DEET

Locked Mail Bag

PO Box CC12

PARRAMATTA NSW 2123

Tel: (02) 9298 7462

Fax: (02) 9893 8832

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) (State Office)**

State Office can provide a wide range of information and resources in regards to employment, community consultation, cultural awareness and Aboriginal issues generally.

Information Officer

ATSIC

GPO Box 4193

SYDNEY NSW 2001

### **NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA)**

The Office can provide information and assistance in community consultation, the effectiveness of programs and strategies in regards to Aboriginal cultures and communities in NSW.

Senior Policy Co-ordinator DAA

Level 5

83 Clarence Street

SYDNEY NSW 2000

Tel: (02) 9290 8700

Fax: (02) 9262 2690

### **NSW Aboriginal Lands Council**

This central agency can provide a contact for all regional and local Aboriginal Land Councils throughout NSW.

Director

33 Argyle Street

PARRAMATTA NSW 2150

Tel: (02) 9689 4444

Fax: (02) 9687 1234

## **TAFE Commission**

TAFE employs Regional Aboriginal Co-ordinators throughout the State who could provide information on the local community particularly in relation to education. A list of Regional Aboriginal Co-ordinators and their locations can be obtained through the:

Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator

Tel: (02) 9244 5598

Fax: (02) 9244 5607

## **Aboriginal Education Units —Universities throughout NSW**

Most universities in NSW have Aboriginal Education and Resource Units. The Units can provide information on the local communities particularly in relation to education.

Charles Sturt University

Wammarra Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Centre

Tel: (0263) 38 4236

Fax: (0263) 38 4558

Macquarie University

Warawara Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Programs Unit

Tel: (02) 9850 8893 or 1800 066 465

Fax: (02) 9850 7735

Southern Cross University

Gungil Jindibah Centre

Tel: (0266) 20 3959

Fax: (0266) 20 3958

University of Newcastle

Wollotuka Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Centre

Tel: (0249) 21 6863

Fax: (0249) 21 6985

University of New England

Ooralta Aboriginal Centre

Tel: (0267) 73 3034

Fax:(0267) 72 3379

University of NSW

Aboriginal Research and Resource Centre

Tel: (02) 9385 2336

Fax: (02) 9385 1062

University of Sydney

Koori Centre

Tel: (02) 9351 2046

Fax: (02) 9351 6923

University of Technology, Sydney  
Jumbunna, Aboriginal Education Unit  
Tel: (02) 9514 1902  
Fax: (02) 9514 1894

University of Western Sydney  
Aboriginal Liaison Unit  
Tel: (02) 9678 7129  
Fax: (02) 9678 7102

University of Wollongong  
Aboriginal Education Centre  
Tel: (0242) 21 3776  
Fax: (0242) 21 4244

Aboriginal Media Groups/Contacts  
Koori Mail Newspaper  
PO Box 117  
Lismore NSW 2480  
Tel: (0266) 22 2666  
Fax: (0266) 22 2600