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LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL AND
ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW
COMMITTEE

1st June 2007

Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee
Secretariat
LCARC
Parliamentary Annexe
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Submission: Hands on Parliament - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples'
participation in Queensland's democratic processes

My comments focus around. Recommendations 10 and 11.

The governments both Australian and State have endeavoured to implement a number of different strategies in the area of employment and training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Past history has shown that retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are poor as compared to the broader mainstream community. These retention rates cover the entire spectrum from primary, secondary and tertiary education through to employment in government institutions.

To attract, engage, employ, train and retain, appropriate mechanisms need to be established prior to commencing any initiative.

There are three areas for consideration:

- (1) Internal support in the workplace
- (2) Whilst at the training facility
- (3) External support

These mechanisms need to work hand-in-hand to ensure effective success.

Internal support in the workplace

- Mentoring
- Appropriate supervision
- Networking with other Indigenous people in the workplace, possibly the Indigenous Liaison Officers as per Recommendation 21

Whilst at the training facility

- Tutoring opportunities
- Indigenous Units within the training facility if available

External support

- This would largely involve support from peripheral organisations such as the Indigenous Employment and Training Managers from the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations
- Mentoring
- Opportunities to networking with Indigenous community network meetings or similar

The abovementioned points have at some time or other all aided in retention. This submission proposes that this be taken one step further.

The advertisement for any position should include an identical position but under the title "Project Officer" with a limited timeframe of 18 months with possible extension. This timeframe would largely be governed by the level of training that is required to qualify for the advertised position and training requirements for the original appointee.

The original appointee would then "Shadow" the Project Officer for a period of 5 months. This would provide the original appointee sufficient time to get a good understanding of the primary duties and functions of the position. This would be an appropriate period to assess all the necessary skills which need to be developed for the original appointee to competently function in the position.

The following 12 months would involve the original appointee undertaking studies so that some type of formal qualifications may be obtained. A similar arrangement is currently being rolled out through the Australian Government's National Indigenous Cadetship Program. This program however, is projected over the period of an undergraduate degree. The difference with this proposal is that the original appointee gets the 5 months experience prior to study and will therefore be more able to grasp the concepts and compartmentalise what is being taught through the learning institution. The original appointee may then be in a position to submit activities for Recognition of Prior Learning.

The last month of the 18 month period would simply be a transition and handover period.


This process would however entail extra costs for the advertisement of the two advertised positions but one could and should also have the added clause under sections 24,25 and section 105 of the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)* as section 25 states that:

"it is a genuine occupational requirement that this position be filled by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person".

If the State Government would adopt a similar approach i.e. growing people into the reality and practicalities of the workforce there would be increased attendance and better retention rates in many Indigenous communities.

Past history has shown that advertisements for Indigenous focussed positions have not prevented non-Indigenous people from applying. Often the Indigenous person has not performed as well as the non-Indigenous person, who invariably gets appointed. This is very disempowering for Aboriginal people and others within that department or workers linked to the core functions of that position.

Establishing what has been mentioned in this submission would greatly enhance Indigenous people participating in government democratic processes. Why? Word travels through the "Murri (Aboriginal) Grape vine" quicker than Telstra's optic fibre cables. This shadowing approach will help towards building better relationships and move one step closer to conciliation with Aboriginal people and help narrow the cultural divide.


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R.J. Doyle