

Indigenous

Indigenous Mining Employee Training

One example of distinction in the mining sector is mining company GEMCO's long-term employee development strategy that began in 1996 with nine local Indigenous employees. The company has developed a staged employment and training approach linked to pay. Five Indigenous employees have completed the development program, and 21 Indigenous employees are currently participating in the program.

Indigenous economic development is an untapped business opportunity. The Territory Government is committed to Indigenous economic development for the benefit of Territory businesses and Territorians, and has established a task force to drive its strategies.

Additional funds of \$1.5 million to support Indigenous economic development have been approved for 2004-05.

Better education outcomes and increased literacy and numeracy levels and training that is linked to jobs are key components of improving Indigenous economic development. Indigenous education initiatives aim to achieve better outcomes at measured intervals, increase school attendance and retention rates, and improve literacy and numeracy levels.

A range of training exists that will build community capacity by addressing community labour shortages, establishing responsive, ongoing skills development, and providing adult community education. Work is continuing to prepare Indigenous youth for employment opportunities in the construction, hospitality, mining and metal fabrication industries. In 2003-04, 30 per cent of apprentices and trainees are Indigenous. Targeted support to enter and remain in the workforce or start a business is a priority area.

The Northern Territory Public Sector (NTPS) is the single largest employer in the Northern Territory, with about 14 500 full-time equivalent employees, 5.2 per cent of whom identify as Indigenous. The Territory Government has an Indigenous employment and career development strategy to increase the overall number of Indigenous people employed in the NTPS and to focus on developing careers of current Indigenous staff.

Training and employment activities are currently under way within six Aboriginal corporations, including hosting of apprentices, specialised training, sourcing trainees, and combining Community Development Employment Program and NTPS employment arrangements.

Mining is an increasingly important opportunity for Indigenous economic development. All major mines in the Northern Territory are on Indigenous land. Companies involved in the industry are generally committed to Indigenous employment and associated enterprise development.

Agreements between Indigenous Territorians and mine operators have resulted in improved training and employment opportunities for Indigenous people. It is anticipated that existing mining ventures will provide further economic development opportunities for Indigenous Territorians.

In 2004-05, approximately \$1.2 million will be directed toward Indigenous tourism development, including working closely with the Indigenous arts industry to which a further \$1.1 million has been committed.



Development

A number of initiatives in the horticultural, pastoral and fisheries sectors aim to improve employment outcomes for Indigenous people and involve collaboration between the Territory Government, land councils and the Indigenous Land Corporation including:

- establishment of a non-profit company, Centrefarm Aboriginal Horticulture Ltd, to help develop commercial horticulture on Indigenous land in Central Australia;
- identification of six areas suitable for commercial horticultural production between Apatula and Tennant Creek;
- promotion of an Indigenous bush food industry in Central Australia;
- bringing Indigenous land suitable for pastoral development back into economic production, with Indigenous-owned pastoral companies entering into joint arrangements with pastoralists; and
- utilising FarmBis to train Indigenous people, with training directly related to business management and farm operations.



Significant potential exists for activities such as fishing, aquaculture and caring for sea country. The establishment of Aboriginal Consultative Committees provides the infrastructure for consultation between coastal communities and land councils, the Northern Territory Seafood Council and the Amateur Fishing Association of the Northern Territory.

A joint forestry venture between Sylvatech and the Tiwi people has a long-term aim to employ 200 people full time and 150 seasonal workers, with benefits in education, training, employment contracts and royalties. To date, about 5 000 hectares have been planted with *Acacia mangium* for pulpwood, and this should increase by 5 000 hectares per year until the target 30 000 hectares is reached. It is estimated that the Tiwi Forestry Project will realise \$60 million a year at current prices when in full production.

Construction, repairs and maintenance of public housing stock create opportunities for economic activity and job creation across the Territory. In addition, housing management and construction programs provide opportunities for local Indigenous training and employment in the sector, including in remote communities.

There are currently just over 200 Indigenous people engaged in housing construction in remote areas. The ability to maintain continuity of work on communities is improving, creating an environment for Indigenous construction apprentices to complete their accredited training, and the Government's procurement policy encourages Indigenous employment through the use of Indigenous Building Teams.

Wherever possible, the Territory Government engages local Indigenous organisations to undertake road construction and maintenance works on Aboriginal land where they have proven capabilities and suitable construction plant. Indigenous training and employment requirements are specified in selected public tenders.

Indigenous Mining and Industry Services

The Indigenous Mining and Industry Services (IMIS) group is responsible for the delivery of minerals and energy knowledge-building programs in remote regions throughout the Territory.

In 2004-05, the Government has allocated \$0.9 million for operation of the IMIS group, including funds to relocate officers to the regions to better service Indigenous and mining industry clients.

Indigenous Arts

It is estimated that \$32 million per annum is currently generated from 5 000 Northern Territory Indigenous artists, which is 70 per cent of all Australian Indigenous artists and 25 per cent of all artists in Australia. The Indigenous arts industry is now supported with a Government strategy to create a range of employment opportunities in art and craft production, performance and story telling, administration and support services. As a result, it is expected that substantial revenue for individuals and home communities will be generated.