



INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, TRAINING AND SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT POLICY

PRINCIPLES OF INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, TRAINING AND SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

ACCI advocates, through its general employment policy, support for an employment system that enables all Australians to be competitive in the employment market. This means providing people with a sound general education, marketable skills and developing education and training systems which keep pace with the skill needs of business.

ACCI, through its education and training policy, promotes equality of education opportunities and options for groups with special needs, including Indigenous Australians.

ACCI recognises that measures aimed at growing Indigenous participation in the business sector are positive steps to creating and maintaining an economic base and a move away from welfare dependency for Indigenous Australians.

The underpinning principles in this area recognise the shared responsibility of all Australians in developing a responsive Australian employment, education and training system which takes account of:

- the importance of Indigenous community leadership seeking genuine employment, education and training outcomes;
- a reduction in welfare dependency through mutual obligation and development of appropriate strategies to encourage employment in the general labour market;
- the recognition of the diverse location of Indigenous peoples in Australia, particularly in rural and remote communities;
- the considerable potential that Indigenous Australians have in contributing to the national economy; and
- the role business can play in offering more jobs to Indigenous job seekers.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

ACCI acknowledges that Indigenous Australians remain the most disadvantaged group in the labour market and advocates the need for specific policy responses.

Indigenous Employment Policy

ACCI supports employment policies which:

- assist Indigenous Australians to have access to private sector employment as distinct from community and public sector options;

- recognise the importance of New Apprenticeships as one of the most important options for employers to open up opportunities for Indigenous job seekers to enter private sector employment;
- include the promotion of private sector employment opportunities to Indigenous communities and individuals;
- continuously develop labour force skills and knowledge of Indigenous job seekers and the community generally;
- link available labour, particularly in remote areas, with available employment opportunities;
- ensure the design of labour market programs to meet individual and business needs;
- implement adequate pre-employment assistance to meet the needs of the job seeker and employer;
- establish appropriate support mechanisms for Indigenous people employed in the private sector, particularly in small business;
- encourage and facilitate cross-cultural awareness training for non-Indigenous businesses and their employees to develop an awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural issues within the workplace;
- encourage the development and implementation of structured induction training programs for Indigenous employees, with an emphasis on employee obligations and responsibilities within the workplace;
- establish targeted employer incentives which relate to ongoing placement with the employer;
- provide incentive to Community Development Employment Projects to encourage participants to gain nationally recognised skills and qualifications and structured workplace learning and experience in private sector companies;
- maintain publicly funded employment services; and
- adequately respond to the needs of Indigenous job seekers and prospective employers.

Indigenous Education and Training Policy

ACCI supports education and training policies which:

- strengthen the focus on sound basics such as English language, literacy and numeracy at primary and secondary school level;
- improve, and regularly test, on a nationally agreed and consistent basis, literacy and numeracy standards and develop appropriate intervention strategies;
- focus on nationally consistent outcomes for Indigenous students and achieve standards which are comparable to international standards of best practice;
- maximise education and training pathways from school to the workplace, particularly to assist in increasing retention rates for Indigenous school students;
- respond to the growing need for students to undertake workplace learning programs which develop links with industry and create pathways to further training and employment in the private sector;
- improve and integrate careers education, employability skills and enterprise education principles into the education and training system to provide Indigenous students with an understanding and potential of the range of pathways

available;

- provide for the adoption of an enterprising culture, particularly by young Australians;
- develop culturally specific support documentation for nationally accredited training packages to encourage use in Indigenous communities;
- fully implement “user choice” in Indigenous communities to ensure they benefit from training providers delivering training to meet their needs;
- develop more flexible delivery mechanisms including online delivery to enable nationally recognised training to be offered to remote communities; and
- continue to encourage further education and training, including university and vocational education and training.

Indigenous Small Business Development Policy

ACCI supports special Indigenous small business development policies which:

- provide targeted and cost effective improved business planning advice, mentoring and assistance to support new and established small business opportunities;
- promote outsourcing partnerships and joint venture arrangements to encourage new Indigenous entrepreneurs into the small business sector;
- foster partnerships with the business community, particularly through membership of employer organisations to allow access to professional services and business networks;
- encourage a recognition by government that the circumstances and needs of Indigenous people in small business may be different, particularly operating on community land and that fixed term assistance should be directed to address their special needs;
- promote greater access to, and increased involvement of, Indigenous small business in government purchasing; and
- assist Indigenous small businesses to develop by providing alternatives to reliance on government assistance.

THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

Adaptable and dynamic employment, education and training systems provide business with a competitive edge to compete in the global economy. ACCI plays an active part in the development, monitoring and evaluation of education and training policies and initiatives and labour market policies and programs. This is in recognition that the growing support for the development of responsive systems which enable business to draw on workers in emerging labour markets and meet new industry needs is pivotal to the achievement of the short and long term economic goals of Australia.

ACCI supports an increased and ongoing partnership between industry, government and the community. In particular, the coordination of the delivery of employment, education and training initiatives is essential to ensure that government, community and private sector initiatives lead to greater marketable skills and increased employment and business development opportunities for Indigenous Australians.

For this purpose, a range of forums and consultative committees have been established, which enable industry and government to work together in reforming the employment and training system to better meet the needs of industry and Indigenous peoples.

The special focus on developing Indigenous small businesses recognises the need to encourage private sector participation both in employment and entrepreneurial endeavour. This will assist in breaking the existing welfare dependency and provide role models from within the Indigenous community.

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