



# 4<sup>TH</sup> INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT NATIONAL ROUNDTABLE

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## **Introduction: Acknowledgement to the traditional owners of the land – the Whadjuk people – both past and present**

- The Local Government Support Unit manages grant funding for Indigenous employment in regional councils. Positions funded were for entry level or near-entry-level and a wage subsidy of 50:50.
- The grant program commenced in January 2009 addressing the cessation of CDEP, and a partnership was agreed to between the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Northern Territory Government supporting Indigenous employment in the Northern Territory Regional Councils.
- In the Northern Territory, Local Government is the largest employer of Indigenous staff.



## JOB NUMBERS PER SHIRE COUNCIL 2011-12

REGIONAL COUNCIL	TOTAL POSITION NUMBERS 2011-12
BARKLY	73
BELYUEN	1
CENTRAL DESERT	30
EAST ARNHEM	54
MACDONNELL	104
ROPER GULF	62
TIWI ISLANDS	32
VICTORIA DALY	69
WEST ARNHEM	39
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>464</b>

NOTE: the job total estimation was 530 positions for Indigenous people in regional councils

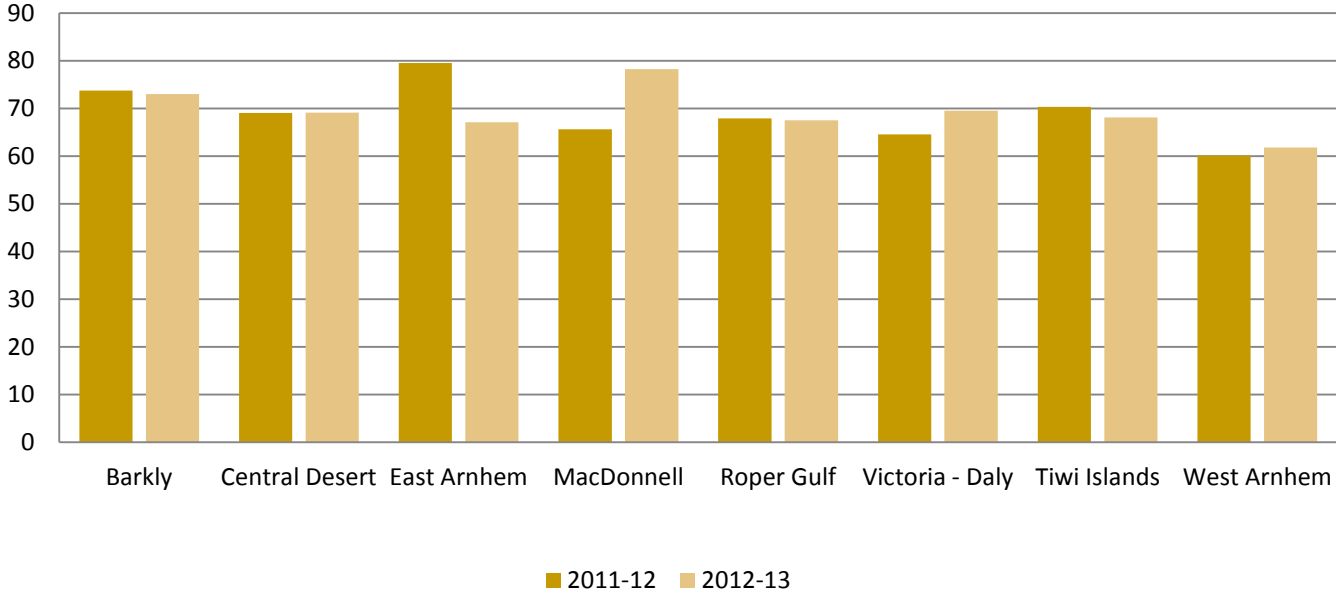


## NOVEMBER 2013 FIGURES: Job Statistics

REGIONAL COUNCIL	SHIRE TOTAL	INDIGENOUS	INDIGENOUS %
BARKLY	297	218	73.4%
BELYUEN	21	16	76%
CENTRAL DESERT	270	176	69%
EAST ARNHEM	322	215	66.77%
MACDONNELL	430	337	78.5%
ROPER GULF	358	239	66%
TIWI ISLANDS	188	140	74.46%
VICTORIA DALY	360	234	72.5%
WEST ARNHEM	187	108	57.75%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2 433</b>	<b>1 683</b>	<b>69.17%</b>

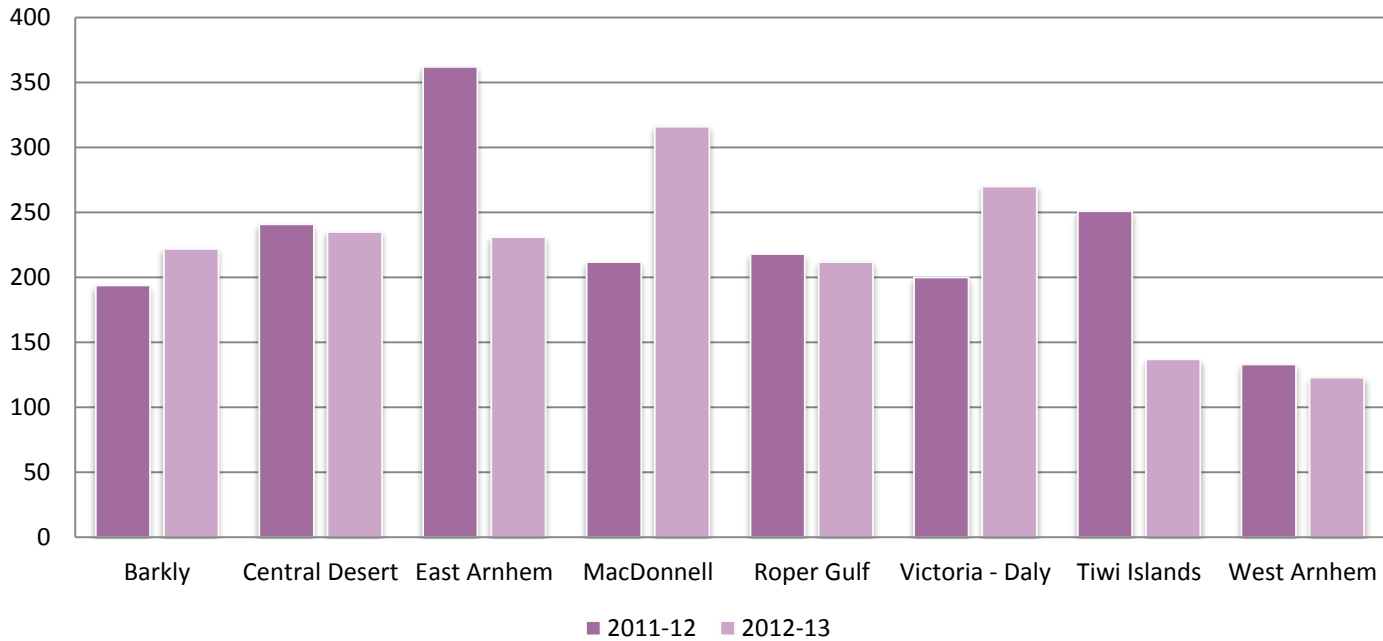


### Percentage of Indigenous Staff in Regional Offices





### Indigenous Staff in Regional Offices





# INDIGENOUS JOBS PACKAGE

## The package:

### Overview – 3 years of the program with Commonwealth partnership

- The Australian and Northern Territory Governments had introduced a three year funding package to support real and sustainable jobs in delivering core local government services.
- The package was initially supported in partnership with the Commonwealth Government and Northern Territory Government on cessation of CDEP.

## The three elements were:

- Mentoring Program;
- Matched Grant Funding; and
- Local Area Traffic Management.



It also had flexibility to provide support for supervisory and other positions as warranted: the program was targeted to provide support in core services only.

The grants were reassessed after 6 months and increased if councils were showing increases in:

- Strong grant uptake in the first half;
- Progress with a workforce development plan; and
- Progress with an Indigenous Workforce Mentoring Plan.

The goal was to reduce the staff turnover, absenteeism, and provide opportunities for more on-the-job training and structured skills development.

The mentors were assisting in recruitment practices and producing induction materials and exit interviews.



## Local Area Traffic Management

- This element of the grant funding was for road safety initiatives in remote communities, like signage and traffic calming.
- The package provided funding to employ an additional 530 jobs per annum to deliver local government services to provide certainty in funding so that jobs were long term opportunities.

## Services

- Local government services provided employment in civil works crews (road construction and maintenance, park and gardens, grass and weed management), waste collection and dump management, front desk and back office customer services, council building maintenance and plant maintenance.

## Matched Grant Funding

These positions were at level one through to level three:

- Community Liaison Officers;
- Customer Services Officers;
- Administration Officers / Administration Trainees / Executive Assistants;
- Office Cleaners;
- Library Officers and Library Assistants;
- Receptionists / Office Managers;
- Civil Works Supervisors / Civil Works Leading Hands / Civil Works Officers;
- Labourers / Plant Operators / Waste Management Workers;
- Coxswain / Ferry Operators;
- Youth Support Workers;
- Cultural Officers;
- Mechanics / Apprentice Mechanics / Trades Assistant Mechanical;
- Post Officer Assistants / Post Office Coordinators;
- Senior Works Officers / Labourers;
- Sport and Recreation Officers; and
- Pool Attendants.

## Managerial positions held in regional councils:

- The number of Indigenous people employed in managerial positions in regional councils varied. The average managerial employment expressed as a percentage for Indigenous people in regional councils is 30%. The range is from 8% to 50%.
- Managerial positions are defined as those of supervisor and above. Currently there is one regional council CEO who is Indigenous, however most managerial positions held are at supervisor level.
- Indigenous people in some regional councils make up well over 70% of the total workforce. In the case of MacDonnell Regional Council, it is at 80% Indigenous, whilst at Central Desert Regional Council it is at around 70%, with 33% of managers and supervisors being Indigenous.

## Learnings and successes

- The Indigenous Employment Program in Regional Councils has been received as a positive towards recognising meaningful employment in remote regions.
- It has given Indigenous people a sense of self belief and respect, also a regular income and of welfare with pride of being able to support families.
- There are councils that have found the program extremely helpful, by assisting them to employ people on a full-time basis and training opportunities to gain qualifications. One council has put an employee through training and he is now a fully qualified mechanic, with employment at their workshop.
- Councils have an average percentage rate of anywhere between 60% to 80% Indigenous staff and found that without the program, this would not be possible.

## Learnings and successes ...Cont...

- It provides support in creation of employment and assists in building a stronger community economy, plus the provision of delivering vital local government service functions.
- The program has been a success in supporting the councils to retain staff in remote regions where councils would otherwise find it very difficult to financially support them.
- The successes were also that it enabled the councils to focus resources on engaging community feedback in a structured way, by employing mentors.

## Benefits of the program funding

- Workforce Development
- Training and support
- Increased service provision from and by local people
- Administratively simple
- It ensured council operations within communities were available in each community, reducing the burden on council budgets to be able to supply service across the regions.



## Learnings

- It was found that workforce planning was a major issue when the Indigenous Employment Grant Program commenced. One council had difficulties in employing people and no clear directions for an Indigenous Workforce Development Strategy.
- Recruitment to find a mentor that fit the program was unsuccessful in one council. Applicants needed to understand working with Indigenous people, working in remote locations, cultural obligations and managing a transient workforce.
- Regional councils also found it difficult managing a workforce of Indigenous staff who were at entry level and having been unemployed for some periods (or welfare recipients). There was also the issue of actually getting staff to turn up for work on time and leaving without notifying anyone, especially their supervisors (unexplained absences).

**Any Queries, suggestions.....?**



**Thank you**