

# DETAC's *The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People*

11 NOV 2005

RECEIVED

## Background

DETAC's *The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People* aims to increase participation and retention rates of NSW Aboriginal people in apprenticeships and traineeships. The project was launched in August 2004 and has continued with a road show around NSW in 2005 to inform employers and the Aboriginal community about the benefits of apprenticeships/traineeships and the support networks in place for Aboriginal people and for their employers.

DETAC has engaged key Aboriginal ambassadors, Jimmy Little, veteran entertainer, Rhoda Roberts, arts/media personality and Bo De La Cruz, womens' touch football champion. The ambassadors accompany the roadshow and speak at events to encourage local Aboriginal participation and endorsement.

*The Way Ahead* with its unique combination of support programs is the first of its kind in NSW. In regional locations, events are informed by local factors, such as the employer population, the Aboriginal community, availability of training opportunities and community attitudes. DETAC staff in regional offices provide local profiles and DET Aboriginal Training Coordinators (ATCs) provide key Aboriginal community links.

*The Way Ahead* comprises a Mentoring Program providing Aboriginal New Apprentices with support services from trained, Aboriginal mentors; pre-employment training - generic skills increasing job readiness; industry specific pre-vocational training; career development programs developing leadership and self-esteem; a road show for employers and Aboriginal community members and cultural awareness training for all DETAC staff.

At the commencement of the program in August 2004, the aim was to increase participation by 10%. After twelve months, DETAC Aboriginal apprentice and trainee numbers had increased by 130%.

## **Mentor Program**

DETNAC funds the training of Aboriginal mentors. Sixteen mentors graduated in March 2005 after undergoing a two week training course in Dubbo in November 2004. Mentors are paid for their regular meetings with Aboriginal New Apprentices who have requested support (at no cost to the employer). Additional mentors are currently being trained to support more remote areas of NSW. There are currently 58 Aboriginal New Apprentices being mentored.

## **Pre-Employment and Pre-Vocational Training**

During the first half of 2005, DETNAC provided pre-employment training to coincide with each Way Ahead event. During a two week period employers were identified and possible traineeships coordinated by Indigenous Employment Specialists (IES) - contracted by DETNAC.

Industry specific pre-vocational training will also be held. DETNAC, Property Services Group Training and the Restaurant and Caterer's Association also conducted pre-vocational training for Aboriginal people in Hospitality and Catering in October 2005.

## **Career Development Program**

*The Way Ahead* career development program was conducted in conjunction with the Group Training Association of NSW at Milson Island Sport and Recreation Camp in January 2005 to develop leadership/team building skills in Aboriginal New Apprentices. 20 Aboriginal apprentices and trainees participated in this event which was held over four days. Another Career Development Program will be held in Autumn 2006.

## **Consultation**

In order to coordinate *The Way Ahead*, DETNAC has consulted with various agencies including: DET New Careers for Aboriginal People (NCAP ) officers, DET Aboriginal Enterprise Development Officers (AEDOs), Community Development Employment Projects (CDEPs), Industry Coordination Centres (ICCs), Industry Employment Centres (IECs), Centrelink, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), TAFE Aboriginal Development Managers, Local Aboriginal Land Councils and job networks.

## **Outcomes**

*The Way Ahead* aim is tangible outcomes for Aboriginal people in vocational education and training and supporting strategies are evaluated in terms of their potential to support this outcome. Programs are designed for maximum impact on employer and Aboriginal communities and are adjusted in response to ongoing evaluation findings. The project is fully funded by DETNAC and is community and business focused.

Promotion of *The Way Ahead* has focused on local media coverage in each area where a Way Ahead event has been held. DETNAC has produced a variety of promotional materials and also sponsored a "Deadlys" award for the Aboriginal New Apprentice of 2005. This was a new award instigated by DETNAC to acknowledge successful participants in VET in NSW.

Self-esteem, initiative building, motivation and community development are the qualitative outcomes of the project.

Other outcomes include:

- bringing together employers and Aboriginal community members at events
- provision of generic skills for employment through pre-employment training

- Aboriginal New Apprentices benefit from DETNAC mentoring which prevents the development of issues due to cultural, social or family pressures
- Aboriginal New Apprentices are able to develop personally and enhance their workplace contribution by attending career development programs
- Way Ahead ambassadors provide inspiration to Aboriginal community members in regional areas
- Employers are educated through Way Ahead events, good news stories, local case studies and profiling as to the advantages of employing an Aboriginal person

Contacts:

Phillip Moore, Director DETNAC, tel 9243 8355

David Collins, General Manager State Training Services, tel 9561 8171