



Yalu Aboriginal Corporation

Lot 361 Galiwinku NT 0822
www.yalu.org.au

9th September 2021

ATTN: National Indigenous Australian Agency

The following ideas are put forward by Yalu Aboriginal Corporation, Galiwinku NT

The ideas in this paper address: What are the key opportunities in your region that are not currently being addressed?

Background

Yalu is aware that work is ongoing to make placed based training and steps towards apprenticeships part of large-scale housing and other civil construction funded in remote communities' contracts. This does not address ongoing opportunities to grow and upskill the local indigenous workforce. It is a wait-start-stop cycle.

Most community discussions will have facts raised that under the mission times there was near full employment in Galiwinku and Galiwinku shipped more produce out than it shipped in. Local Indigenous people were trained as trades people and looking back there would have been an absence of formal apprenticeships hence the training was the trade assistant competency. Galiwinku was established to harvest cypris pine but spin off jobs including housebuilding and market garden started and thrived.

In the time prior to the 2007 'Intervention' Galiwinku like many remote communities had a local council and had local indigenous people doing the equivalent to trade assistant jobs and plant operator jobs I (grader and other plant machinery operation). This period was heavily reliant on trades contractors to do the trade positions and part of the reasoning can be attributed to employment laws particularly around occupational health and safety legislation.

With the implementation of the 'Shire' (East Arnhem Shire) the number of local indigenous employed in trade assistant level jobs in municipal services including upkeep of local roads was further downgraded under a business costing model – it was deemed simply cheaper to contract local road works out than maintain and replace plant machinery and maintain skilled indigenous positions. There are other factors that compounded the issues including requirement for formal trade assistant training and lack of opportunities for apprenticeship supervision.

Training and education were outsourced to a provider including CDP which had no requirement other than make 'job ready' with no real jobs to go to or low skilled tasks with no scope for 'job ownership and pride'.

Ideas for building practical employment opportunities and increasing the tertiary education outcomes.

Support for place based on job/off job training – mentor/professional development / employment mentorship and advice on ‘place based’ design of a culturally appropriate job/ workplace.

This would require recognition of ‘smaller scale’ indigenous employment opportunities, but the benefit of small scale is the scope to manage all the contingencies.

Contractors are supported to take on local indigenous traineeships – that may at best lead to apprenticeship ready local indigenous staff and or skilled indigenous trade assistant staff.

In remote Galiwinku there no local Indigenous trained electricians, plumbers, carpenters, home, and house maintenance indigenous staff. This is a missed opportunity. Consideration needs to be given to supporting small businesses to take on local Indigenous staff.

Barriers: one major deterrent is the cost to small business. The other barrier is supervision of local indigenous staff as the tradesperson model is built around very long hours of work 6 -7 days per week.

Yalu has had preliminary discussions with a local all trade contractor organisation around the model outlined below – they are supportive of the idea and have been involved in a similar venture on Groote Eylandt in partnership with a local Indigenous Organisation.

A draft model (1)

There should be a requirement that they hire/and train local indigenous support workers – recognising that there are specific trade qualifications to becoming an electrician/plumber/ carpenter etc. Specific on the job training/exposure that recognises local skills attainment maybe the encouragement and investment that builds confidence for local indigenous people to continue to gain tertiary skills required to take on a trade apprenticeship or become skilled trades assistants.

Employers need to be supported financially and with the mentorship burden outsourced to a local Aboriginal Corporation, who would be responsible for providing the on-ground mentorship and even the payroll for the local indigenous staff, rather than landing the complexities of culture/family/work life balance on the Business providing the skilled trade persons.

The benefits of this model would be a formal partnership between a ‘place based’ Aboriginal Corporation with local decision making and a small business which has qualified tradespersons and skilled labours.

To start with it could not be a path to full apprenticeship but a trades assistant traineeship.

Benefits – suits the demographics – is a way to give recognition or make possible recognition that suits the current circumstances – alleviates some of the onerous barriers – including OH&S legislation, trade ship qualifications, workers compensation insurance.

The model – should be ‘placed base’ – small scale and could be used as a pilot.

The benefits include recognition that local Indigenous staff are a worthwhile investment.

Employment opportunity in social and community services

Funding through Government to deliver community services needs to include a policy of assistance to have local indigenous staff have supported on the job training and opportunities for formal training and opportunities for ‘short term placements’ in Government Departments.

Government prefers to fund local Aboriginal Organisations to deliver ‘placed based’ community services – it ticks off a measure in the closing of the gap strategies however, it appears that no work is done in overcoming

the barriers to achieve traineeships that lead to tertiary level skilled jobs including welfare officers, youth officers, social workers etc.

Yalu Aboriginal Corporation delivers family and children's services including on the ground child protection work, family support, and receives numerous referrals for domestic violence cases where our senior Indigenous staff intervene and provide cultural mentoring and cultural discipline/sanctions to the perpetrator and wrap around support for the family including mentoring and teaching good parental skills. Yalu also works with children/youth involved in Volatile Substance Abuse (VSA) and their families.

Missed opportunities

There are missed opportunities to provide on the job and off the job training for local Indigenous staff to be trained to a point where they are ready to take on formal training to become the future youth workers, welfare officers and social workers.

Funding to deliver the services does not include support for training – mostly the training is held in Darwin or Nhulunbuy – is one off and not structured into a building skills package.

Whilst opportunities for online training are always taken, the training is not structured for a complete beginner and delivered in a culturally appropriate way. One reason behind this is the reliance on training packages developed and delivered on a contractual basis – 'one size fits all'.

A draft model (2)

Support for 'place based' Aboriginal organisation who deliver child and family services to empower local Indigenous workers with recognition of the very important cultural integrity skills they bring to this work and build onto that with tailored training individually paced so as not to overwhelm. The aim is to enable local Indigenous people to become the skilled community and social welfare workers, welfare officers, youth officers and social workers.

There is a skills gap in this area even though it is a growth area that includes child protection, wrap around services for families at risk, youth workers, aged care workers and support for NDIS clients.

Opportunities for 'short term' placements in non-Indigenous organisations delivering similar services can be the catalyst to empowering young Indigenous people to progress with their professional development.

This is a chance for two-way learning as all 'place based' work is dependent on local cultural orientation. It is also an opportunity to provide ongoing mentoring and broaden the networks of local Indigenous staff.

Barriers: funding to employ staff so that there is work coverage whilst some are offline training, shyness as young Indigenous people often need the support of an Indigenous mentor to attend seminars and formal training if it is held off their community.

In Conclusion

Yalu Aboriginal Corporation recognises the importance of cultural tourism and cultural arts and crafts as employment opportunities but not all remote communities have enough of those opportunities to build up a skilled work force. Not all communities have Aboriginal Organisations that have access to royalties to invest in building up a skilled Indigenous workplace.

Recognition needs to be given for small scale job development that goes beyond low skilled work which supports contracted organisations to deliver services.

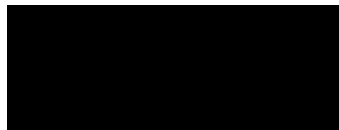
Recognition of the power of 'place based' local decision making needs to be a factor in the plan for creating employment opportunities particularly in remote areas with limited job opportunities. Large scale employment models do not fit and work in remote communities. Fly in fly out based employment schemes/contractors should not be the dominant strategy.

Yalu Aboriginal Corporation Board and Executive Management are pleased to have had the opportunity to provide comment on the Indigenous Specific Employment Program development.

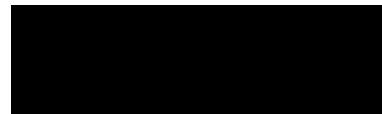
With regards,



Cultural Program Manager
Deputy Chair



Business Manager



Chief Executive Officer