**SUBMISSION TO THE NATIONAL INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIA AGENCY**

Future of Indigenous Advancement Strategy - Indigenous specific employment investment.

Indigenous Skills, Engagement and Employment Program (ISEP).

**Submission on behalf of the North Coast Aboriginal Development Alliance. (NCADA)**

10th September, 2021.

### 1 How should the Indigenous skills, engagement and employment Program (ISEP) work alongside the new employment services model and the new remote engagement program to build work-ready skills and connect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to rewarding, sustainable jobs?

Need to break through the “It’s not what you know it’s who you know”, mentality of rural NSW (Australia) particularly when trying to influence the private sector employment barrier.

The private sector, being small business and the Big End of town need to be influenced that there are major gains in supporting Aboriginal employment initiatives.

A model approach of better co-ordination, targeted investment and long-term planning for individual employment goals and career advancement can bring long term benefits to potential employers and the Aboriginal people and their families involved.

### 2. How could IAS investment be designed to be more flexible and responsive at the regional level, and better meet the needs of the community for Indigenous job seekers and employers?

Will there be a mechanism for the local / regional pool of investment funds to support the growth of partnerships and opportunities with potential employers, employment services providers and the local / regional Aboriginal voice, ie, NCADA (other LDM Alliances).

This would be essential to ensure investment is relevant to the high localised need.

Land use and management.

NIAA should invests in Aboriginal land owner’s (LALCs and Native Title Owners) to allow the use of their land towards their economic aspirations and resulting prosperity.

Supporting young people to gain employment by establishing employment plans focusing on entry, training, skills development and role capacity building, resulting in career advancement.

Develop links to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, Industry, small business owners and niche business and products. Entry points into these employment providers would support the development of Aboriginal people aspiring to own their own businesses, but in a planned and co-ordinated manner with employment stakeholders / partners.

Under the ISEP strong links / partnerships need to be built with ACCO’s, Industry groups, targeted private sector and the “Big End of Town”.

### 3. How should results of the new ISEP program be measured, monitored and evaluated to ensure investment contributes to closing the gap in employment outcomes?

Potentially the should be in line with the tools used by NSW Treasury to monitor, measure and evaluate their outcomes under the Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Framework.

This approach may provide consistency of reporting and evaluation.

### 4. How can we embed shared-decision making in community-based workforce planning?

An important first step is being made aware at an early stage of planning of any major capital works, key infra-structure programs that will require high focus on localised employment opportunities.

New hospitals, highway construction, infra-structure projects all require large scale recruitment and sustained employment for the period of the construction. It would be more beneficial to be aware and at the planning table when these major projects are at that planning development stage, than the current reality that Aboriginal employment is an after-thought, well after contracts have been signed and in most cases key major works are about to commence.

NCADA supports the inclusion of Aboriginal employment services as a key player in the development of future partnerships. Our communities have been calling for more jobs opportunities particularly for our young people. Traineeships and apprenticeships must lead to secure employment options, not just for the sake of providing short course for the trainers benefit.

Better co-ordination of skills development and training between secondary schools, TAFE and Universities to educate our young people and provide real support for their progress. This is where the idea of an employment plan highlights the need for better co-ordination between the key skills development and employer groups.

Students should be encouraged in their later years of education to look at niche areas of employment, accountants, human resources, allied health providers etc where strong supports in the form of scholarships are required to encourage young Aboriginal people to consider these areas as potential long term career goals.

New partnerships in these niche areas of trading / professional careers would assist in supporting the individual person in these roles choosing a career “outside the box”.

### 5. How can the ISEP encourage potential employers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to provide safe and culturally appropriate work environments? How can employers better value the skills and perspectives of Indigenous employees?

This can be achieved. There are benefits to supporting the whole family rather than just an individual by giving them a job is potentially the key message that need to be translated to potential employers.

Mainstream does not fully understand or appreciate the significance of the contribution that secure employment can play on the overall health and wellbeing of the Aboriginal family unit.

There is far too much emphasis on individual reward. We need to educate about the rewards to the wider community by enhancing employment rates for Aboriginal people.

The role that employed people play as role models and mentors should be celebrated as it does have a positive influence on younger children and their desires to emulate their hero’s.

Positive change will be made when our people are seen as making a major contribution to the wider community, by employment, this impacts on both Aboriginal and mainstream perceptions.

### 6. How should the ISEP consider a local focus?

NCADA was set up under the Local Decision Making (LDM) program as part of the NSW governments OCHRE Framework.

This essentially recognises NCADA as the local / regional voice of Indigenous People when seeking feedback on assessment, evaluation and planning programs for Indigenous individuals, people their and families.

NCADA has been established since 2019 but their roots go back to the initial implementation of the LDM program at approximately 2013.

Over the past two years NCADA has been building the foundation as a key representative forum for government service and funding bodies to link with when seeking co-design contributions from the Indigenous perspective.

NCADA wishes to continue in this role working through the development of the ISEP and preparing the community for the developing changes highlighted in the supporting briefing documents.

NCADA welcomes the opportunity to have further conversations with NIAA and other key partners in the employment and training space in the very near future.