



ILLAWARRA ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

WARRIGAL EMPLOYMENT

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Feedback on new Indigenous Skills and Employment Program (ISEP)

Dear NIAA,

As a participant of the new Indigenous Skills Employment Program (ISEP) consultation, Wollongong South Coast, Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation's Warrigal Employment provides the following feedback to assist with co-design to meet the needs of all involved and is useable to stakeholders.

Warrigal Employment's feedback will concentrate on the processes and procedures needed in the new co-design of NIAA's Indigenous Skills Employment Program.

1. Administration

The new ISEP administration needs to be streamlined to ensure staff administering the program and managing the contract are spending quality time working with Aboriginal jobseekers to skill, train and place them into meaningful employment. NIAA's Tailored Assistance Employment Grant (TAEG) - Jobs, Land, Economy, Program (JLEP) is currently labour intensive and duplicates information.

An example of the processes and procedures to claim a training placement for \$200 requires the following paperwork/forms/evidence before a payment can be made under JLEP:

- Claim for Payment form
- Intensive work prep plan
- Participation form
- Evidence: Letter of offer
- Training commencement advice form
- Invoice

These processes can involve up to several stakeholders and numerous procedures followed by the JLEP Provider. **Example:** Employer to JLEP provider, JLEP provider to Jobseeker/Job Active/community, Job Active to Employer, Employer to JLEP Provider, JLEP provider to Training provider, JLEP provider to Jobseeker, JLEP provider to Finance, JLEP provider to NIAA Contract Manager.

If one part of the process or evidence is missed this will result in the JLEP provider going back procedures in attempt to gain an outcome. This is a lot of work for the JLEP providers, confusing for jobseekers for little numeration. This process needs to be made simpler and less time consuming.

2. Reporting

Recommendation that all forms and reports are submitted online through a portal. This process will ensure all claims and evidence are submitted as per NIAA procedures. Moving claims through a portal in an orderly manner frees up providers mailboxes and protect confidentiality and privacy. Currently all JLEP administration processes of evidence and reporting are paper based, yet NIAA's Koori Strong program reports online. ISEP should have a reporting procedure that provide a



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dashboard for providers and NIAA Contract Manager's to use as a point of reference at Performance Monitoring meetings. The KPI's should be more in line with supporting the employment closing the gap targets, not Aboriginal people falling though the gaps.

3. Payments

JLEP is paid on outcomes that are weighted with the higher outcomes at 26 weeks. Warrigal Employment recommend under the new ISEP model that payments are a mixture of weighted and bulk payments and paid as a percentage.

Example: 67 training, 67 employment placements, total commitment \$400,000. A payment of 20% of total commitment could be paid on execution of contract, \$80,000. The balance of contract \$320,000 can still be weighted as providers meet KPIs and targets set in partnership with NIAA. This allows providers the creativity and freedom to achieve their KPIs and meet contractual obligations.

4. Brokerage

The new ISEP requires a brokerage payment to manage the investment providers can put into securing, retaining, and meeting jobseeker needs and expectations. Whilst Warrigal Employment acknowledge that some Aboriginal jobseekers should seek assistance from their Employment Consultant there are times and incidence where Warrigal Employment is better placed to make this decision to achieve the desired outcome and to ensure a consistent level of service delivery.

5. Mentoring

Mentoring should be paid as a bulk payment in instalments to ensure mentoring KPI's are met. This will allow Warrigal Employment to be strategic in how Aboriginal Mentors are utilised in achieving employment and training outcomes. This model ensures activities are delivered in a culturally appropriate way that meet the needs of Aboriginal jobseekers and employers. Having autonomy to administrating mentor funding enables Warrigal Employment to maximise the Mentors at the times most vital in the jobseeker's employment and training lifecycle.

6. Training to meet local and regional skills gaps

The new ISEP model needs to allow for trust in local providers, industry, and stakeholder groups to work together to skill up and train Aboriginal jobseekers in the absence of a guaranteed job prior to the commencement. Training and skills should be delivered in line with local workforce needs with the understanding that each labour market is unique and providers of ISEP are responsive to feedback from Job Active provider, industry and peak agencies regarding the skills needs of Indigenous caseloads OR placing Aboriginal jobseekers into employment opportunities to match Aboriginal peoples and community aspirations and geographical locations (place based).

Kind Regards



Warrigal Employment Manager

14th September 2021