




Common ground, Uncommon results Closing the gap



Business Council
of Australia



A better quality of life for all Australians
depends on envisioning different sorts
of connections between business,
government and the community

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Cover: **Penny Evans, *Seepage*, 2009** The artwork speaks of the seepage of floodplains and of subterranean waters percolating through an overlay of the seemingly indelible patternmaking of cultural and environmental human industry.

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Uncommon partnerships can help us achieve common goals

The Business Council of Australia (BCA) works to achieve economic, social and environmental goals that will benefit Australians now and into the future. Our vision is to help make Australia the best place in the world in which to live, learn, work and do business. This report, *Common Ground, Uncommon Results: Closing the Gap*, compiled with the assistance of KPMG, is the second report of the Indigenous engagement efforts of the membership of the BCA, and is being released as a companion report to the BCA 2010 Annual Review.



Introduction



In 2008, the Business Council of Australia committed to a number of initiatives aimed at delivering better opportunities and outcomes for Indigenous Australians, in turn benefitting all Australians. This was a first for the BCA.

One commitment was to report annually on the Indigenous engagement strategies, outcomes and experiences of BCA member companies.

In October 2009 the BCA released its first report fulfilling this commitment. The findings and conclusions of that report, *Many Connections, One Goal: Closing the Gap*, were well received and contributed to raising awareness of the efforts of Australia's largest companies. The findings also provided a solid base for the BCA to engage with its members, Indigenous organisations, government and other stakeholders on ways to further improve opportunities for Indigenous Australians.

This report marks the second instalment of the BCA's reporting on the Indigenous engagement efforts of its membership. It confirms that BCA members are showing real leadership in committing their people and companies to playing a significant role in helping to close the gap on Indigenous disadvantage in Australia.

More companies are now actively involved across a wide range of initiatives. All are doing so with the strong backing of their chief executives. And they are motivated by a desire to see genuine, long-term progress.

This is clearly demonstrated by the collaboration among BCA member companies. Those making progress are willing to share their experiences and are proactive in doing so. Those just finding their way are prepared to listen and learn. It is also reflected in the breadth of collaboration with other stakeholders, especially with Indigenous organisations and communities, which survey respondents regard as a hallmark of genuine, sustainable progress.

Those who wish to find fault in the survey results will be able to do so. There is clearly scope for more companies to be involved, progress has proved to be slower and harder than expected, and there remain many challenges.

‘BCA members recognise that being a successful business leader involves taking a leadership role in the broader community. Gathering information through the Indigenous engagement survey allows us to promote their courage and commitment, share lessons learnt and replicate good ideas.’

– Graham Bradley AM, President, Business Council of Australia

Nevertheless, this report highlights that BCA members are finding innovative ways to tackle the challenges. They are also finding that their experiences can provide valuable lessons for other companies. And even though many companies are realising that the challenges facing Indigenous Australians and their communities are greater than first understood – and tackling them is harder than expected – many companies have come to appreciate the benefits to all Australians of closing the gap. BCA members believe there is strong common ground between business, the community and all sides of politics, which provides reason to be optimistic about the progress that might be achieved in the years ahead.

In reporting on the Indigenous engagement strategies, outcomes and experiences of BCA member companies, the aim is to:

- Raise awareness about what business can do to improve opportunities and outcomes for Indigenous Australians.
- Share information about what works, what doesn’t and why.
- Encourage more businesses to develop their own business case, approach and commitments.
- Promote collaboration.

Throughout this report, the term ‘Indigenous’ is used to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Methodology

This report contains an analysis of information collected through an online survey prepared and conducted by KPMG in conjunction with the BCA.

The survey sought to identify the types of Indigenous initiatives BCA member companies have implemented, the motives for adopting those initiatives, lessons learnt, challenges faced and views on how the BCA can contribute to supporting Indigenous engagement.

The survey was made available to all BCA members for completion in July and August 2010. A number of changes were made to the 2009 survey questionnaire in an effort to strengthen the quality of information obtained. However, in order to enable an analysis of trends over time, the majority of questions have remained the same.

Survey results have been augmented by publicly available material and member company feedback through forums such as the BCA's Business-Indigenous Network.

Respondents

The survey was made available to all BCA members, and 46 responses were received. The response rate represents around 40 per cent of the BCA's total membership, a slight improvement on last year, and a credible result given the increase in total membership over the past year. Our aim remains to increase the response rate to well above 50 per cent.

Reflecting the membership characteristics of the BCA, respondents are large employers, with 89 per cent of respondents employing more than 1,000 people and 20 per cent employing over 20,000 people. The majority have national operations. Of those respondents that do not, most are based in New South Wales.

Industry representation is broad, with all industry sectors represented in the survey results except agriculture and tourism and hospitality.

All companies that completed last year's survey participated again this year, with only one exception.

Key findings for 2010

Engagement

The vast majority of survey respondents (87 per cent, or 40 companies) have implemented one or more Indigenous engagement initiatives, and 65 per cent (or 30 companies) have a dedicated employee overseeing their implementation. This suggests that companies participating in the survey are among the most active in the BCA membership in adopting Indigenous strategies.

The most frequently adopted initiatives continue to focus on education and employment. But there is tremendous diversity in the types of initiatives being developed and implemented by BCA member companies. Other initiatives cited include housing, health and wellbeing programs, community partnerships and investments, cultural awareness, support for artistic and cultural festivals and programs, legal clinics, the provision of non-sniffing fuel, and support for Indigenous business development.

Employment

Around half of survey respondents currently seek to identify their Indigenous employees. Larger employers are more likely to do so, and all of the largest employers who responded to the survey seek to identify Indigenous employees. Where companies seek to identify Indigenous employees, identification remains the prerogative of individuals and not all choose to be identified. Recorded employment figures therefore understate the number of Indigenous employees for many companies.

Among respondents who seek to identify Indigenous employees:

- one company has no Indigenous employees
- four companies have fewer than 11 Indigenous employees
- five companies have between 11 and 50 Indigenous employees
- 15 companies have 51 or more Indigenous employees.

On reflection, these results do not provide as clear a picture as they could of the status of Indigenous employment in BCA member companies.

This is because the survey question relating to the number of Indigenous employees limited the upper response to '51 employees or more'.

Subsequent feedback from the companies in this category confirms that Indigenous employment numbers are often well in excess of 51 employees. For some companies, 'more than 51 Indigenous employees' means around 75 employees; for most it means Indigenous employment levels in the range of 200 to 500, but for a couple it means Indigenous employment levels in the range of 1000 to 1500. Next year's survey will address this issue with greater clarity.

Indigenous employment and/or traineeship schemes have been implemented by 63 per cent of respondents (29 companies), and 11 companies (24 per cent of respondents) are signatories to the Australian Employment Covenant (AEC).

As a result of these strategies, over the past year:

- six companies have added more than 51 Indigenous employees/trainees
- five companies have added between 31–50
- four companies have added between 21–30
- five have added between 11–20
- three companies have added fewer than 11 Indigenous employees/trainees
- six have not added any additional Indigenous employees/trainees.

Among those companies with employment or traineeship schemes in place, 21 incorporate formal employment or trainee targets. Specific Indigenous employment targets committed to by respondents are as follows:

- ‘under 20’ (five companies)
- 21–50 (four companies)
- 51–100 (three companies)
- 101–200 (two companies)
- 201–500 (four companies)
- 500+ (three companies).

Of the 21 companies with targets, one-third of companies indicate that they have met or exceeded them at this point in time. But it is important to acknowledge that given the long-term approach needed to sustain improved Indigenous employment outcomes, many targets apply over multiple years and still have time to run.

Success with Indigenous employment programs over time will be characterised by job retention and career progression. At present around 80 per cent of respondents do not know the average duration of employment of their Indigenous employees. Better information will be needed to support retention success and career pathways.

‘While not yet achieving success, there is a genuine engagement across the organisation to find ways to provide employment, within and beyond our walls, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.’

– Survey respondent

Reconciliation Action Plans

Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) provide a framework to enable companies to pursue reconciliation and formalise their contribution to closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage by committing to clear actions and targets.

A growing number of companies are formalising their Indigenous engagement commitments through RAPs. There are 14 survey respondents who have completed RAPs and a further 18 companies plan to develop a RAP within the next one to three years.

RAPs are more common among the relatively smaller BCA member companies (i.e. those with between 1,000 and 5,000 employees) and among the largest companies (i.e. those with over 20,000 employees). By industry, RAPs are more common in the business and professional services, financial services and mining sectors.

Collaboration

Collaboration continues to be a hallmark of BCA member company initiatives:

- 74 per cent of respondents (34 companies) work or partner with external organisations to deliver their Indigenous engagement programs and initiatives
- 85 per cent of respondents (39 companies) are prepared to share their experiences with others
- 87 per cent of respondents (40 companies) indicated that they are interested in working and collaborating with others on Indigenous issues and programs.

While a number of BCA member companies have a relatively long track record in dealing with Indigenous communities and people, for many others programs and engagement are relatively new. For this group, collaboration is driven by a desire to be as effective as possible, learn from the experiences and mistakes of others, and to ensure that program impact is positive and consistent with company brand and reputation.

A list of key partner organisations identified by survey respondents is included at the end of this report.

Key developments since 2009

The 2010 survey results confirm that BCA member companies are increasingly active in driving Indigenous engagement initiatives and strategies. Following is a snapshot of key developments since the 2009 survey:

- there has been a 30 per cent increase in the number of survey respondents, from 35 to 46
- 40 companies now have Indigenous engagement initiatives, compared with 28 last year
- 29 companies have Indigenous employment and/or traineeship strategies, compared with 21 last year
- 21 companies have specific Indigenous employment goals or targets, compared with 14 last year
- 14 companies have completed Reconciliation Action Plans, compared with 9 last year.

Behind the numbers

While the quantitative results are important in gauging what BCA member companies are doing, the survey also provides insightful qualitative feedback from companies about their initiatives, motivations and key challenges and successes.

Motives for engagement

Survey respondents were asked to summarise the main motives for their companies in developing Indigenous engagement initiatives. Not surprisingly, a range of often interrelated motives were outlined. The most commonly cited factors are discussed below.

Corporate social responsibility, community engagement and reputation

Many companies identified corporate social responsibility, community engagement and business reputation as factors motivating them in developing Indigenous engagement strategies.

For companies operating in remote locations, working in partnership with local Indigenous communities and developing long-term programs to support this engagement is seen as vital to sustaining business reputation and business viability in that region and more broadly. This in turn is linked directly to enduring shareholder value.

For other companies the link to Indigenous engagement is not as direct but is seen as part of wider strategies aimed at strengthening business relationships with local communities and customers. This type of community engagement is increasingly seen as an important foundation for companies' ongoing 'licence to operate'.

As broader community awareness and concerns about Indigenous disadvantage have increased, more companies have been motivated to explore what they and their employees can contribute.

A number of companies also noted that their Indigenous engagement strategies were driven by a desire to enable people working for them to make a direct and positive contribution to an important area of community need.

For some companies Indigenous engagement is, at least initially, driven by personal commitment from the chief executive and/or other senior executives and their desire to 'do the right thing'. In this context, the importance of reconciliation, at the individual, company and community-wide levels, was highlighted.

Workforce capabilities

Attracting and retaining staff, and building skills and workforce capabilities, are important priorities for all businesses. They continue to be important drivers of Indigenous engagement.

For most companies operating in remote locations, the benefits of securing a local and committed workforce through improved Indigenous employment outcomes have been recognised for some time. The resources boom has served to reinforce these benefits.

But companies operating in non-remote locations also recognise the benefits of better accessing all sources of underutilised potential in the community, and see Indigenous employment as a key element of their diversity programs.

The quality and credibility of diversity and community investment programs are important barometers of a company's culture for potential recruits – Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike. Many BCA members seek to ensure that their reputations as 'employers of choice' are supported by their Indigenous programs. Companies continue to report that potential employees focus on these initiatives and that staff morale and retention are boosted by the opportunity to participate in and contribute to Indigenous engagement programs.

Companies also acknowledge the increased leadership capacities and innovativeness of staff members directly and actively engaged in Indigenous initiatives, whether through cultural awareness training, mentoring, community investment programs, or secondments into Indigenous organisations.

Supporting 'closing the gap'

A number of respondents indicated that their company was motivated to adopt Indigenous engagement initiatives in order to support the federal government's 'closing the gap' commitments.

For some, this reflected an appreciation of the merits and boldness of the goal and the government's 'call to arms' for the wider community, including business, to play its part. For others, a sense of frustration at what governments have not been able to achieve in addressing Indigenous disadvantage, coupled with the need for new approaches and solutions, underpinned their actions.

Regardless of the motivation, all respondents citing the government's 'closing the gap' commitments as an important factor in their involvement clearly believe that the business sector has the potential to make a significant impact.

Signing on, and delivering

A few respondents indicated that initial commitments to doing a RAP and/or becoming signatories to the Australian Employment Covenant led to the development of more comprehensive Indigenous engagement strategies.

‘Our commitment to the AEC was a key factor in the development of our group-wide Indigenous Engagement Policy.’

– Survey respondent

Customer alignment

Companies also note that Indigenous engagement programs are driven by a desire to align with customer interests and needs, address gaps in service delivery, and increase the size and diversity of the customer base.

Successes

Survey respondents were asked to identify their successful Indigenous initiatives. As was the case last year, respondents continue to indicate that the majority of their initiatives are considered to be successful. And successes were reported in all major categories of initiatives. In this year's results, respondents also demonstrated more specific examples of success and pointed to a range of success factors.

It is also noteworthy that more respondents drew attention to the benefits accruing to their organisations and employees as a result of their involvement in various Indigenous initiatives. One respondent noted, for example, that Indigenous cultural awareness training had sparked broader discussions in their organisation around tolerance and understanding difference in the workplace.

While in some instances specific targets have not been met, particularly in respect of employment, many respondents indicated that solid progress is being made and expect learnings from experiences to date to improve future outcomes.

Diverse strategies

The diversity of Indigenous engagement strategies among BCA member companies is a positive sign that organisations are pursuing approaches to suit their business circumstances. Following is a summary of the key initiatives being undertaken by survey respondents.

Employment

As large employers, it is not surprising that many BCA member companies have employment and traineeship initiatives at the core of their Indigenous engagement commitments. Sixty-three per cent of respondents (29 companies) have employment/traineeship schemes in place, 46 per cent of respondents (21 companies) have specific targets and 11 are signatories to the AEC.

Companies have a range of approaches to increasing Indigenous employment. Some seek to support higher Indigenous employment by building relationships with local communities and job services providers to assist in the identification and recruitment of job-ready candidates.

Many companies also invest in and support significant pre-employment training to boost the pool of job-ready candidates, particularly among those that have been unemployed for longer periods.

Other companies have focused on school-based traineeships that build employment opportunities for students still at school and support student transition from school to work (see Exhibit 1).

A number of BCA member companies targeting higher Indigenous employment in their organisations are also looking to ensure that companies they contract with are adopting similar approaches and commitments.

A significant number of respondents noted that they access assistance and support from state and federal government departments, particularly through the federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), to augment their commitments.

Respondents actively seeking to increase Indigenous employment supported these efforts with cultural awareness training for their employees and through mentoring programs for Indigenous employees.

Companies continue to provide quite intensive support for some new Indigenous employees including through ongoing training (often in areas more typically associated with pre-employment) and assistance with transportation to and from work.

Exhibit 1

Success With School-Based Traineeships

ANZ

Since 2002, ANZ has recruited over 400 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees in branches around Australia. While completing Year 11 and Year 12 studies, trainees:

- work at least one day a week in an ANZ branch
- receive an income while learning new skills
- achieve a National Certificate qualification
- are supported by ANZ staff and Aboriginal mentors.

At the end of their traineeship, trainees are able to take on career opportunities with ANZ or other opportunities including further study.

Commonwealth Bank of Australia

Through its Indigenous school-based traineeships, the Commonwealth Bank of Australia provides 80 traineeship positions each year for Year 11 and 12 students to gain valuable employment skills while completing their studies. The trainees work primarily in the branch network, but the program has been expanded to provide diverse opportunities for students by offering traineeship positions in a range of business units such as Local Business Banking, Enterprise Services and Direct Banking.

The program provides career pathways for Indigenous high school students, and helps the bank identify and promote young talent. In 2009, more than 56 per cent of the program graduates gained permanent positions at the bank and many others moved on to higher education.

National Australia Bank Limited

National Australia Bank Limited (NAB) offers a diverse range of Indigenous employment entry points to the bank, including school-based traineeships for students in Years 11 and 12. These trainees study for the Business Administration Certificate II and receive on-the-job experience and mentoring from senior NAB employees and external partners.

NAB has steadily grown the number of school-based trainees since 2008 from a modest start of 10 traineeships to the employment of over 50 trainees in 2010. In 2011, NAB aims to further increase the number of traineeships and to continue offering successful graduates real jobs in branches around the country.

Sources: Information obtained from individual company websites. See anz.com, commbank.com.au and nab.com.au.

Scaling-up success: regional employment strategies

The BCA, through its members and in partnership with Jawun (formerly Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships), has supported efforts to develop regional approaches to lifting Indigenous employment.

Pursuing a regional, rather than company-by-company approach, gives greater visibility to business efforts and employment opportunities, enables businesses to collaborate and share resources, and creates a bigger pipeline of current and future job opportunities. Consistent with its broader model, Jawun also supports this regional approach by fostering collaboration among local organisations, and placing secondees from member companies into local Indigenous job services organisations to facilitate employment brokerage and to build long-term capacity and skills.

Jawun is currently piloting regional employment strategies in Shepparton and in Cairns with strong support and interest from BCA member companies (See Exhibit 2).

‘Secondments immerse our people in the real issues facing Indigenous business and allow them to meet with Indigenous leaders. Our people are able to play a hands-on role in tackling issues and building capacity.’

– Survey respondent

Exhibit 2

Early Progress in Regional Employment Strategies

Based on the identification of employment and social inclusion as top priorities by the Shepparton Aboriginal community, Jawun has sought to foster collaboration with key stakeholders in the region, including large local employers.

In February this year, Wesfarmers Limited CEO Richard Goyder visited Shepparton, bringing with him the company's Chief Financial Officer, Chief Human Resources Officer, Executive General Manager of Corporate Affairs and the heads of Wesfarmers' major businesses Coles, Kmart, Bunnings, Target, Insurance and Resources.

Jawun's approach to building collaboration with employers and local organisations is already reaping rewards in Shepparton.

So far:

- Fourteen job vacancies have been filled by Indigenous candidates at Coles, Kmart and Target.
- Bunnings is developing a work experience program with the Academy of Sport, Health and Education (a local Indigenous organisation also supported by Melbourne University).

- Blackwoods is mentoring Indigenous job seekers on preparing job applications and preparing for job interviews.
- Dick Smith and Tandy employees are mentoring local Indigenous school children.
- A secondee from KPMG is working to build local capacity in employment brokering with job services providers.

In Cairns, Jawun has placed a secondee from St. George Bank to facilitate regional employment brokering. A strong coalition of local Indigenous organisations has already been established. Coles and Westpac are actively engaged, and the aim is to create 50 new Indigenous job opportunities in Cairns by the end of 2010.

A new pre-employment training program (focusing on job opportunities in banking and finance) is expected to be run in early 2010. The Bureau of Meteorology is also involved and looking to create work experience opportunities.

Source: Jawun.

Education

A key issue for companies looking to lift Indigenous employment continues to be the availability of candidates with the skills needed by business, including basic literacy and numeracy for entry-level jobs.

In response to this, a significant number of BCA member companies are investing in strategies targeting improved education and skill development. The main programs being supported include:

- Partnerships with schools to:
 - build capacity
 - deepen understanding of business and employment opportunities
 - strengthen skill development in line with business needs.
- Programs targeting higher rates of school attendance, including by:
 - linking participation in school to participation in sport
 - supporting general health and wellbeing
 - mentoring programs such as the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience.
- Summer school programs, some of which target sector/industry-specific skills and opportunities, such as the Indigenous Australian Engineering Summer School.
- Targeted training programs, cadetships and apprenticeship programs working with local group training providers and TAFEs.
- Scholarships, both direct and through educational foundations like the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation, which was singled out for mention by quite a few survey respondents.
- Programs targeting basic skill needs, for example basic literacy for adults and financial literacy.

Exhibits 3 and 4 provide examples of some of the innovative programs through which BCA member companies are helping improve education and skill development in Indigenous communities.

‘Closing the gap requires the fostering of strong relationships with Indigenous people and their communities, the growth of genuine respect and the creation of opportunities.’

- Michael Rose, Allens Arthur Robinson 2009–10 Reconciliation Action Plan

Exhibit 3

Supporting Local Skill Development

In 2010, Leighton Holdings became a Jawun corporate partner, committing to a five-year relationship to support Indigenous communities in East Kimberley and Redfern–Waterloo.

John Holland, a Leighton Holdings company, is a construction, engineering and services provider. Jawun facilitated a partnership between John Holland and the Redfern–Waterloo Authority (RWA) Les Tobler Centre and the Koori Job Ready Course in Construction. The course, which was founded in 2003 by Les Tobler OAM, has been managed by the RWA since 2005 and runs four times a year. Up to 20 students participate in an eight-week program, learning a range of key construction-related skills. In the past four years, more than 100 graduates have successfully graduated from the

course, with the majority finding employment in the construction industry and/or going on to further education.

A secondee from John Holland has worked with RWA staff at the Les Tobler Centre to help develop a sustainable business model for the centre and explore opportunities for the growth of its services. John Holland has also sponsored visits to interstate locations for centre staff.

In December 2010 it is proposed that John Holland will support a pilot Introductory Rail Skills Course to be run by the Les Tobler Centre, which will help to increase employment opportunities for members of the Aboriginal community in the rail sector.

Source: Jawun.

Exhibit 4

APPEAL Literacy Program

Together with the University of Queensland's Literacy for Life team, Medibank Health Solutions is working to identify and address adult literacy issues.

The ABS *Australian Literacy and Life Skills Survey* (2006) found survey participants not in the labour force tend to lack the minimum literacy required to meet the complex demands of everyday life and work in the emerging knowledge-based economy.

The APPEAL Literacy for Life Program addresses the literacy needs of those preparing for work or experiencing literacy-related difficulties at work. An individualised program is developed for each participant

based on their literacy profile, and group work can also be facilitated. The program includes learning activities that provide the underlying framework for reading and writing and which can be tailored to employment goals. Medibank Health Solutions professionals, trained and supported by the University of Queensland Literacy for Life Team, deliver the program.

Initial delivery of the program in remote Northern Territory communities has highlighted the need to further tailor the program to the literacy needs of those populations and to increase engagement efforts.

Source: Medibank Health Solutions.

‘Our Indigenous Partnership Strategy aligns our business with community and customer needs and holds the company accountable for and focused on delivering strategic outcomes.’

– Survey respondent

Indigenous business development

The growth of successful Indigenous businesses provides a clear ‘win-win’ in terms of directly fostering wealth creation and by generating flow-on benefits because Indigenous businesses tend to hire a high proportion of Indigenous employees.

BCA member companies are increasingly looking to link the growth of Indigenous businesses to their own growth through proactive procurement policies. This is being enabled through the Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council (AIMSC), which provides a direct business-to-business purchasing link between corporate Australia, government agencies and Indigenous-owned businesses. AIMSC enjoys very strong support among BCA member companies (see Exhibit 5).

While procurement is an important way in which Indigenous businesses can be supported, survey respondents reported other initiatives such as business mentoring and the provision of financial assistance (including through micro-finance programs).

Exhibit 5

A Successful Conduit for Indigenous Business Growth

The Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council was established in 2009 under a three-year pilot arrangement funded by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. AIMSC is supported by 43 members, 17 of which are BCA member companies, and has 53 certified Indigenous businesses.

To date \$1.26 million of goods and services have been purchased and \$3.9 million of contracts awarded through AIMSC.

Companies that are both AIMSC and BCA members include Allens Arthur Robinson, Australia Post, Citi Australia and New Zealand, Clayton Utz, Commonwealth Bank of Australia, ExxonMobil Australia Pty Ltd, FOXTEL Management Pty Limited, Freehills, IBM, Insurance Australia Group, KPMG, Lend Lease, Leighton Holdings Limited, National Australia Bank Limited, Qantas Airways Limited, Transfield Services and Wesfarmers Limited. Telstra Corporation Limited and Microsoft Pty Ltd are founding supporters.

Source: Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council.

Cultural awareness

Contributing to greater awareness of Indigenous culture and heritage is a priority for virtually all survey respondents. Companies see lifting cultural awareness as important in its own right, but also as a foundation for the effectiveness of other initiatives.

The majority of survey respondents have staff cultural awareness training programs in place. Many companies continue to use external consultants to assist in delivering these programs, while others are building in-house capabilities. Companies are making information about Indigenous culture and events available through their intranet sites, and some are actively promoting cultural awareness through their customer base and businesses (see Exhibit 6). At least one company has an e-learning program of Indigenous culture and history available for all staff.

Companies also continue to visibly demonstrate the importance of respect for Indigenous culture and heritage through acknowledgements of Traditional Owners and through Welcome to Country ceremonies.

Financial and in-kind support for Indigenous cultural activities are further channels through which BCA member companies provide support for cultural awareness. The display of Indigenous artwork and promotion of galleries, art shows and performance groups remain common avenues for engagement among survey respondents.

Exhibit 6
Spreading the Word on Indigenous Culture

Qantas engages its customers to promote shared pride in Indigenous culture through Qantas' Inflight Entertainment (IFE).

A key development is IFE's inclusion of 'Welcome to Country' with local Indigenous Elders in Sydney, Darwin and Cairns for the Qantas International Inflight Arrival video guides. Other cities are to follow.

Inflight programs such as 'Welcome Aboard' regularly feature Qantas Reconciliation Action Plan initiatives, for example the AFL Kickstart Program.

The What's On segment highlights key events on the Indigenous calendar, and Destination Guides include Indigenous activities available at key destinations. Inflight radio programming includes an Indigenous music segment and interviews with Indigenous Australians on *Talking Business* and the travel program *Up and Away*. In each quarter, the Qantas inflight magazine, *The Australian Way*, has reported a number of stories either on or incorporating Indigenous art, culture or tourism. The magazine also includes Indigenous events in its monthly Diary section.


Source: BCA summary of information contained in the *Qantas Reconciliation Action Plan Second Report 2009–10*.

New products and services

BCA member companies have implemented initiatives to develop goods and services that better meet the needs of Indigenous customers, and which provide greater diversity in products and services with a view to expanding the Indigenous and non-Indigenous customer base.

The major banks have developed dedicated Indigenous customer services teams, special information and inquiry lines, and tailored financial products to meet the needs of small businesses and customers in remote locations.

Two of the more unique product and service offerings developed by BCA members include the provision of non-sniffing Opal fuel by BP Australia, and the retransmission of National Indigenous Television (NITV) to FOXTEL subscribers.



‘FOXTEL are proud to be the first national carrier to offer the NITV service. FOXTEL is all about offering diversity of content and we are committed to showcasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content on the FOXTEL platform.’

– Kim Williams AM, FOXTEL Management Pty Limited,
www.nitv.org.au

Building capacity in Indigenous individuals, organisations and communities

Survey respondents highlight a growing focus on Indigenous partnerships and initiatives that build capacity for individuals, organisations and communities. The aim is to foster long-term sustainability by developing leadership capabilities, strong governance, and by enabling skills and knowledge transfers.

Companies are providing financial and in-kind assistance in support of projects such as the Victorian Indigenous Men’s Network, leadership programs (see Exhibit 7), and improved governance (see Exhibit 8).

Pro bono advice and services, including reviewing contracts and legal documents and representing Indigenous organisations in legal proceedings, are common commitments made by survey respondents in the legal field. Likewise, financial institutions provide pro bono financial advice and planning. More broadly, companies continue to provide mentoring and other advice to Indigenous organisations.

In providing pro bono support and assistance, companies are not only contributing time and resources, they are transferring valuable skills and knowledge and in some instances intellectual property. These contributions provide ongoing benefits to individuals and communities.

Exhibit 7

Investing in Indigenous Youth Leadership

Boral sponsors Outward Bound Aboriginal Leadership Programs for Indigenous secondary school students (recent programs were for students in Kempsey and Western Sydney). The programs see promising Aboriginal youths,

who have a proven commitment to their education and community, spend time ‘roughing it’ at a camping-style leadership program.

Source: boral.com.au.

Exhibit 8

Indigenous Governance Awards and Toolkit

‘Let’s learn from what works and let’s breed that success. Good Indigenous governance and leadership need to be supported as they are the foundation for success.’

– Professor Mick Dodson AM, Chair, Indigenous Governance Awards

The Indigenous Governance Awards were created by Reconciliation Australia in partnership with BHP Billiton to identify, celebrate and promote effective Indigenous governance. The 2010 winners were Carbon Media Events and the Laynhapuy Homelands Association.

Carbon Media Events

Carbon is a privately owned new media production company. Set up in 2006, Carbon has broken the mould of traditional production houses by offering design and delivery of content across all genres and platforms: television, internet and mobile.

Carbon is wholly Aboriginal-owned and passionate about promoting Indigenous culture, languages and people using the latest technology. They produced the highly acclaimed Indigenous children’s spelling and grammar game show *Letterbox*, which is now broadcast on ABC3, National Indigenous Television and the Australia Network.

Laynhapuy Homelands Association

Providing services to 24 permanently occupied remote homelands over 10,500 square

kilometres in North East Arnhem Land, the Laynhapuy Homelands Association supports and sustains these communities.

Since 1985 Laynhapuy has had the responsibility to supply the structure and support for the development of homeland facilities and services, to maintain the land, the culture and the Wanga (homelands centre) for future generations and to support them in the achievement of self-sufficiency in the management and determination of the Yolngu people.

In closing the awards ceremony, the Honourable Jenny Macklin, Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, remarked that the diversity of these two successful organisations – one focused on maintaining traditional culture and homelands, the other built on 21st-century technology – stands as a testament to genuine reconciliation and opportunity in Australia.

An Indigenous Governance Toolkit developed by Reconciliation Australia with the support of BHP Billiton is available at reconciliation.org.au/governance.

Source: Reconciliation Australia.

A growing number of survey respondents are developing strategic and innovative partnerships across Indigenous communities and organisations, often with government support, to develop lasting solutions to community challenges and aspirations. This includes making available members of their organisations to work in Indigenous organisations and communities on a secondment basis for extended periods of time (see Exhibit 9).

The chief executives of many of these companies also make time to visit the communities in which their companies are working to better understand the needs and aspirations of those communities, but also to learn firsthand what community–corporate partnerships are capable of achieving.

While the aim of these partnerships is fundamentally to assist Indigenous individuals and communities to build their own opportunities over time, benefits flow to all parties. Companies consistently report that their employees gain significantly from the two-way learning that is at the core of these partnerships.

Exhibit 9

Jawun – Indigenous Corporate Partnerships

Formerly known as Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships, Jawun is an organisation that enjoys strong support from the BCA and its members.

Jawun brings corporate–community partners together to build capacity at the individual, organisational and community levels and to secure resources for priority community projects.

Jawun has been operating in Cape York since 2001. In 2006 an office was established in the Goulburn–Murray district of Victoria. In 2010 Jawun commenced work in the Redfern–Waterloo area of Sydney and the East Kimberley region in Western Australia.

In July 2010, Jawun organised an inaugural CEOs trip to the East Kimberley. Among those participating in that trip, which included visits around Kununurra, Halls Creek and the remote town of Ringers Soak, were the Chief Executives of Allens Arthur Robinson, The Boston Consulting Group, Wesfarmers Limited and Mallesons Stephens Jaques.

The following BCA members are now corporate partners with Jawun: The Westpac Group, The Boston Consulting Group, Freehills, IBM, KMPG, National Australia Bank Limited, Leighton Holdings Limited and Wesfarmers Limited.

Source: BCA summary of material provided by Jawun.

Challenges

While most respondents remain highly optimistic about their Indigenous engagement initiatives, they are also up-front about the challenges involved. The time, effort and resourcing required to deliver successful programs is significant and often greater than expected and initially planned for. Respondents also frequently cite the need for flexibility and revisions to program goals.

Employment

Respondents focused heavily on the challenges faced in regard to Indigenous employment objectives.

By far the biggest challenge continuing to face survey respondents is identifying so-called 'job-ready' Indigenous candidates. There are several aspects to this.

First is the pool of available potential trainees and job candidates. Companies continue to report that many Indigenous candidates do not have the basic skills needed to achieve entry-level employment. Poor literacy is specifically mentioned. This is the case even for individuals who have completed secondary school. Companies are also noting increased competition for Indigenous candidates.

Second is the challenge of matching skill needs/positions with available candidates, particularly if there are limited entry-level positions available. Identifying potential candidates and matching them to job opportunities is time- and resource-intensive. Companies report dissatisfaction with the quality of support provided by job services providers in identifying suitable candidates and assisting them to achieve appropriate job-readiness, with one saying that this network is 'highly ineffective'.

In terms of internal resources, survey respondents commented that human resources (HR) teams can be slow to take up specific Indigenous employment and retention strategies and/or that these teams can lack the knowledge and expertise to achieve and sustain better Indigenous employment outcomes. Designing recruitment strategies that meet the needs of the company and Indigenous job seekers is not always straightforward. And building internal HR capabilities can take time. A further challenge relates to implementation of national HR strategies and employment goals when hiring is done locally or on a business or project-by-project basis. The fragmentation and lack of collaboration among job services providers is seen to exacerbate these challenges.

Even when successful candidates have been placed, ensuring ongoing retention also requires significant time and resourcing. The intensity of support required can erode internal support.

Developing effective mentoring programs and securing suitable mentors, particularly among existing Indigenous employees, are additional issues raised by respondents. Managing cultural leave and appropriate policies to deal with this has also presented challenges for some respondents.

Several respondents noted that lack of self-identification among Indigenous employees, potential trainees and job candidates is hampering efforts to benchmark employment levels and goals with any accuracy.

In remote locations, 'fitness for work' continues to be an issue for employers. Community dysfunction can undermine Indigenous employment programs. Access to suitable housing in remote and regional communities can also be a barrier to higher levels of Indigenous employment.

Many of these challenges have also been highlighted through the work of the Australian Employment Covenant (see Exhibit 10).

Better pathways for Indigenous youth into employment and further education are needed. That means taking action to prevent Indigenous youth seeing 'no future and no hope'.

Exhibit 10

Lessons from the Australian Employment Covenant

The Australian Employment Covenant was launched in October 2008 with the aim of securing the commitment of 50,000 jobs for Indigenous Australians. It is a national, multi-industry initiative supported by federal and state governments.

The role of the AEC under the covenant signed with the federal government is to:

- Increase awareness of Indigenous disparity/disadvantage that could be removed through sustainable employment.
- Work with employers to have them commit to employ Indigenous Australians.
- Provide DEEWR and Job Services Australia (JSA) with the details of jobs and skills required for an Indigenous Australian to be able to undertake such employment.
- Work with employers to maximise retention of Indigenous employees.
- Work with Indigenous communities to promote the benefits of real sustainable employment.

At present 140 companies across 14 industry sectors have made 22,000 job commitments.

Based on the experience of the AEC and its member companies, key issues related to improved Indigenous employment outcomes include:

- A very high proportion of registered Indigenous job seekers have significant or severe barriers to employment. In other words,

there is a series of factors that mean they do not have the minimum ‘work-ready’ skills. Significant, effective investment in building the capacity of Indigenous job seekers is required.

- Better pathways for Indigenous youth into employment and further education are needed. That means taking action to prevent Indigenous youth seeing ‘no future and no hope’ and disengaging from education at an early age, even if they continue to attend school.
- AEC member employers are doing a remarkable job of supporting Indigenous job seekers in the workplace (with reported retention rates as high as 86 per cent). Outside the workplace, though, many Indigenous Australians find the social environment unconducive to maintaining employment. External mentors can assist in supporting Indigenous employees as they progress through the first few days, weeks and months of sustainable employment, with many doing so for the first time.
- The current JSA model does not promote collaboration. Most JSAs have large case loads, which limits time with Indigenous job seekers. The outcomes are high rates of job ‘churn’ and low retention.
- There is too much ‘training for training’s sake’. Training needs to be more flexible and be better aligned to employer and industry requirements.

Source: BCA summary of material provided by the Australian Employment Covenant.

Education

There is a need to examine the quality of educational outcomes being achieved when companies report that Indigenous job applicants who have completed secondary school do not have the required literacy and numeracy skills for entry-level jobs. Feedback also points to a lack of knowledge among Indigenous students and school-leavers of business and employment opportunities and the expectations that attach to those opportunities.

For survey respondents looking to develop traineeships and partnerships with schools and TAFEs, the key challenges remain identifying potential organisations to work with, and potential candidates (including because of a reluctance to self-identify).

Building partnerships

Constructive collaboration is a key determinant of successful programs for most survey respondents. But establishing successful enduring partnerships is seen as quite a challenge for many respondents, and likewise for Indigenous communities and organisations.

Identifying suitable potential partners is a key barrier for companies just starting their Indigenous programs. Even when potential partners are identified, many companies find they underestimate the time needed to build and maintain meaningful and trusting partnerships and networks with Indigenous communities.

While building partnerships usually takes longer than predicted, they often subsequently deliver deeper and more enduring benefits than expected. Managing competing priorities and stakeholders within Indigenous communities can also be an important issue.

Many survey respondents seek to work with governments in the pursuit of their Indigenous initiatives. While positive feedback is provided in some areas, companies continue to express frustration around the timeliness, flexibility and effectiveness of government support and programs.

Realistic goals and sustained commitment

An important challenge, according to survey respondents, is setting realistic targets and expectations for Indigenous programs. Managing expectations among 'can-do' business leaders and executives is an important aspect.

There is a temptation, at least in the early stages, to over-promise on outcomes and underestimate the costs and time required to achieve those outcomes. Missed targets and budget overruns can quickly erode buy-in and internal support.

The time taken to achieve often incremental results can make it difficult to maintain enthusiasm and focus, particularly as businesses evolve and competing priorities emerge. This trend is exacerbated if program expectations are not clearly and widely communicated.

A number of respondents also note that internal culture and entrenched staff attitudes can undermine programs. These can be harder to overcome if programs look to be failing. Achieving buy-in from 'technical' staff was flagged as a particular challenge.

Procurement

The key issue cited by survey respondents in relation to procurement through Indigenous businesses is the cost and time involved in managing contracts with a larger number of relatively small businesses.

'It can be difficult to manage the expectations of leaders and employees in a high-performing corporate environment. While there are visible "wins" for those connected directly to the work, Indigenous initiatives generally take time to develop and longer to translate to tangible, visible successes in the eyes of the business and its employees.'

– Survey respondent

Lessons

Perhaps not surprisingly, many of the key lessons learnt through engagement activities to date remain unchanged from last year, while others have evolved based on further experience and feedback.

Get involved

More BCA members have developed Indigenous engagement strategies over the past 12 months and the key message remains the same. These programs are delivering benefits to Indigenous communities and they are also producing significant benefits for the companies involved and their individual employees. The weight of numbers continues to reinforce the view that business can and should play an important role in enabling better opportunities and outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

Build a solid business case

There will always be an unlimited number of projects seeking business support. Unless there is a clear focus and rationale for engagement, ongoing commitment will be difficult to sustain. Companies are more likely to add real value and maintain their engagement through initiatives and partnerships that are consistent with their core business and priorities and align well with the interests of key stakeholders. This is true for Indigenous engagement initiatives just as it is for other community engagement strategies.

Lead from the top

Leadership from the top underpins successful and sustainable Indigenous engagement. This leadership secures the financial and other resources needed to underpin long-term programs. And chief executives and senior executives are best placed to communicate to employees and shareholders the goals and rationale for Indigenous programs.

Feedback from this year's survey shows that a number of chief executives kick-started broader engagement strategies by taking the first step to commit their organisations to specific initiatives such as a RAP or signing on to the AEC.

Build cultural knowledge and respect

Developing a broad understanding of Indigenous culture throughout an organisation remains crucial to successful Indigenous engagement. This message came through even more strongly in the 2010 survey results.

Improved cultural awareness contributes to greater buy-in to and ownership of programs. It increases understanding of the challenges faced by Indigenous Australians and communities, and promotes opportunities for two-way learning. Companies report that cultural awareness training has inspired employees to directly engage in initiatives such as mentoring. Cultural awareness programs also remain important in the recruitment and retention of Indigenous employees.

Cultural awareness programs that are able to be adapted to the needs and knowledge of individuals tend to be more effective, as are company-wide programs characterised by high and consistent participation.

Because of their size and profile, BCA member companies can play a leadership role in supporting cultural knowledge and respect.

Accountability and communication count

Establishing a solid framework for engagement and communicating it clearly and widely helps to sustain high-level commitments, even if program details change.

Communication of Indigenous programs is also fundamental to securing buy-in beyond those directly responsible for program development and implementation. And, while it is important to be realistic, articulating long-term objectives and targets and reporting progress helps to put incremental achievements in context and maintain program focus.

RAPs are a useful and established framework for Indigenous engagement. The process of developing a RAP contributes to greater clarity around commitments and actions and can be used to build ownership of initiatives throughout an organisation. Many companies use the public launches of RAPs to communicate their commitments and create a sense of solidarity across employees and other stakeholders.

A number of BCA member companies have had RAPs in place for several years and provided additional feedback for this report on lessons learnt and the impact and evolution of RAPs (see Exhibit 11).

‘We have learnt that there needs to be flexibility in the scope of projects, and programs need to be tailored to individual communities or regions to be successful. This results in smaller coverage of programs in the community but provides a greater opportunity to develop strong and meaningful relationships with those communities that we work closely with.’

– Survey respondent

Exhibit 11

Top ten RAP lessons

- Use the process of developing a RAP to engage widely, build partnerships and explore innovative approaches
- Set targets that are aligned to what the business already does
- Start small and commit to pilot programs first
- Link program accountabilities to the core business functions they relate to – don’t leave it all to the HR or corporate affairs departments
- Use RAPs to disseminate best practice, set higher standards and create ‘competitive tensions’ across the business
- Executive involvement empowers RAPs
- Properly budget and allocate dedicated human resources to drive key initiatives in RAPs
- Use RAPs to communicate commitments and build credibility with stakeholders and communities
- Use annual RAP reviews to reflect honestly on progress and to revise commitments to ensure they remain valid and relevant to the business
- Use RAPs to spread good news and celebrate success

Source: BCA interviews with member companies.

RAPs are not the only avenue for communication and accountability, however, and BCA member companies employ many other methods to ensure widespread knowledge of Indigenous engagement programs and progress.

Commonly cited effective approaches include internal newsletters and newspapers, staff magazines, email updates, internal blogs, staff forums, ‘town hall’ briefings, dedicated employee intranets, and sustainability and annual reports.

‘The challenge ahead for all Australians is to ensure that we all have lives of opportunity, success, community and connection.’

- David Thodey, Telstra Corporation Limited 2010 Reconciliation Action Plan

Invest in partnerships

BCA member companies confirm that it pays to invest the time and effort needed to build successful partnerships.

The keys to successful partnerships include:

- clarity of expectations and responsibilities across partners
- mutual respect, trust and honesty
- open communication
- the establishment of realistic goals and timelines
- appropriate resourcing to support collaboration and to meet commitments
- flexibility
- a willingness among all involved to commit long term.

Businesses need to take the time to understand and genuinely respond to community needs and aspirations. But they must also be prepared to be clear about their own expectations.

Learn from others

Companies with experience are prepared to share their knowledge. It pays to heed this advice. Doing so can save time and energy and help ‘newcomers’ to avoid early and unnecessary missteps.

Review and revise

Programs rarely go as planned. Regular reviews allow progress to be assessed relative to desired long-term results. A preparedness to revise programs along the way as new challenges emerge or things don't work out as planned has proven to be a feature of enduring programs. Companies should also be prepared to review and revise internal policies and processes if these are creating barriers to successful outcomes.

Exhibit 12

ANZ learns the value of patience

Results take time and require patience and ongoing commitment. Some Indigenous organisations expressed initial reservations about working with ANZ because of past experiences with programs that, however well-intentioned, were too focused

on short-term results. To earn the trust and support of Indigenous organisations and communities, ANZ has had to demonstrate that we're here for the long haul.

Source: ANZ Reconciliation Action Plan progress report, 2008.

Update on BCA activities

As well as reporting on the Indigenous engagement strategies of its membership, the BCA committed to a range of additional initiatives.

To oversee these initiatives the BCA established an Indigenous Engagement Task Force. The current task force members are:

- Stephen Roberts** – Citi Australia and New Zealand (Chairman)
- Michael Andrew** – KPMG
- Andrew Forrest** – Fortescue Metals Group Limited
- Richard Goyder** – Wesfarmers Limited
- Steve Harker** – Morgan Stanley Australia Limited
- Ross Love** – The Boston Consulting Group
- Steve McCann** – Lend Lease
- Michael Rose** – Allens Arthur Robinson

A copy of the Indigenous Engagement Task Force's Statement of Intent can be found at **bca.com.au**.

Bringing scale to new solutions

The BCA has focused on improving coordination and bringing scale to projects by supporting the activities of a number of innovative national organisations.

Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council

There is significant scope to continue to grow the number of successful Indigenous businesses in Australia through the Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council. The BCA is a strategic partner to AIMSC and over the past year has actively promoted AIMSC among its members and other stakeholders. The BCA has also engaged with AIMSC to better understand the needs of the organisation and to support its successful growth through a number of channels. This has included providing feedback on key government policies, including the draft Indigenous Opportunities Policy related to government procurement, to ensure consistency with the AIMSC model and objectives.

The BCA is currently working with its membership and AIMSC to explore ways in which sustainable Indigenous business growth can be supported through the provision of appropriate business coaching.

Jawun – Indigenous Corporate Partnerships

The BCA has maintained its close working relationship with Jawun and continues to promote the benefits and opportunities provided through Jawun projects to its membership and more widely.

Jawun is the organisation through which the BCA has worked in support of regional solutions and employment strategies, initially in Shepparton but with new regional opportunities being pursued in areas such as Cairns and the East Kimberley.

The BCA and representatives from many of its members participated in Jawun's Gamarada Design Forum for Redfern–Waterloo. This forum sought to identify opportunities for companies to engage with an urban Indigenous community to exchange ideas on a 10-year plan for the Redfern–Waterloo community.

Along with supporting the 10-year program in Cape York, the BCA and its members are currently working with Jawun to explore the development of more effective and structured ways to disseminate best practice and facilitate efficient and effective collaboration.

Australian Employment Covenant

The BCA continues to promote the Australian Employment Covenant and encourage members to explore the benefits of becoming signatories. The BCA has also communicated key feedback and learnings from the AEC and its members to the federal government and its departments.

Support has also been provided for the newly established GenerationOne, which is a campaign to build grassroots support for 'closing the gap' and for the AEC. The BCA promoted the launch of GenerationOne and participated in one of its public ideas forums on Indigenous employment and education. Footage from this forum is available on YouTube.

Reconciliation Australia

The BCA continues to work with Reconciliation Australia to disseminate best practice and information sharing, better measure success in improving outcomes for Indigenous people and communities, and encourage and support the collaboration that underpins this success.

'In supporting Indigenous Australians to realise their aspirations, business is rolling up its sleeves and trying to make a difference. This year's challenges aren't going to be solved quickly – this is about long-term commitment.'

– Stephen Roberts, Chairman, BCA Indigenous Engagement Task Force

Partnership with the Koori Resource and Information Centre

In addition to its work with Jawun, the BCA has continued to engage with the Koori Resource and Information Centre in Shepparton in support of efforts to build opportunity and eliminate Indigenous disadvantage in the local Indigenous community.

The BCA funded research by Access Economics on the benefits of closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the Goulburn Valley. The research quantifies the economy-wide advantages from improving the quality of life of Indigenous Australians in this region of Victoria, including:

- the regional economy being 1.3 per cent – or \$61 million – larger in 2030
- annual increases in economic activity over the 20 years from 2010 to 2030 totalling \$216 million (in today's dollars)
- on average everyone in the region being over \$3000 better off in 2030
- total regional employment being 1.3 per cent higher by 2030.

The report was launched in Shepparton to coincide with Wesfarmers Limited CEO Richard Goyder's Dungala Kaiela Oration. The BCA also produced and distributed summary brochures outlining these benefits. A copy of the Access Economics report is available from the BCA website.

Connecting people and ideas

Through its membership and networks the BCA has sought to promote information sharing and collaboration across business, Indigenous organisations and communities, and government.

Business–Indigenous Network

The BCA has established a Business–Indigenous Network across member companies. Participants in the network are actively involved in the day-to-day management and oversight of their companies' Indigenous initiatives. The network has met with Senator Mark Arbib, then Minister for Employment Participation, senior bureaucrats from DEEWR, and representatives from the Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council, the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation, Aboriginal Employment Strategy, Jawun and Reconciliation Australia. The network also toured the newly established National Centre of Indigenous Excellence.

Indigenous Employment and Enterprise Action Group

Early this year the federal government hosted the 'Indigenous Employment: Everyone's Business' forum. The BCA was a partner in this forum and there was strong participation from BCA member companies. The forum provided an opportunity for Indigenous organisations to connect with the business sector and for all participants to share information. To progress ideas that emerged from the forum the federal government established an Indigenous Employment and Enterprise Action Group, which is currently chaired by the BCA.

The Role for the BCA

Survey respondents were asked to comment on ways in which the BCA could add value to the efforts of member companies, and one year on, how it might be more effective in doing so. The survey results confirmed a clear list of priority activities for the BCA, namely:

- facilitating information sharing
- acting as a clearing house for ideas
- promoting best practice case studies
- providing opportunities for networking and collaboration
- reporting on business efforts and impact
- lobbying government in support of more effective policies and streamlined programs/assistance
- playing a leadership role to lift awareness of Indigenous disadvantage and the business role in addressing this disadvantage
- building capacity in Indigenous organisations and communities.

Survey respondents singled out the Business–Indigenous Network for praise and support.

Areas where survey respondents felt the BCA could strengthen its contribution include the provision of more regular feedback, further efforts to foster collaboration, building stronger links to Indigenous businesses, and increasing the number of BCA member companies involved in Indigenous engagement activities.

Outstanding commitments and future priorities

The BCA will seek to continue to build on its current initiatives and commitments, with particular attention directed to the following outstanding commitments and priorities:

- The development of a RAP by the BCA Secretariat.
- Increasing Indigenous information and content available on the BCA website.
- Increasing participation in the Business–Indigenous Network and providing more regular feedback and information to participants.
- Establishing a forum for the Indigenous Engagement Task Force and other BCA members to meet with and support Indigenous business leaders (including through collaboration with the Indigenous Business Council of Australia).

What can you do to get involved?

The opportunities are endless, but here are some ideas to start with.

For individuals

- Increase your understanding of Indigenous culture and heritage and the challenges faced by Indigenous Australians and communities. You could start by:
 - Logging onto **reconciliation.org.au**, joining UnfinishedOz and checking out the reconciliation resources.
 - Logging onto **generationone.org.au**.
 - Having a look at the Prime Minister's Closing the Gap Report 2010 (available at **fahcsia.gov.au**).
- Consider ways in which you might participate in initiatives or provide support for an Indigenous project.
 - The list of organisations at the back of this report may provide ideas and inspiration.

For BCA member companies

- Join the BCA's Business-Indigenous Network.
- Initiate Indigenous cultural awareness training programs.
- Consider developing a Reconciliation Action Plan or signing onto the AEC.
- Talk with the other companies with Indigenous engagement strategies in place.
- Look for inspiration and potential partners among the organisations listed at the back of this report.
- Visit the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence and consider how your company might make use of these facilities for future events/programs.
- Participate in the BCA's 2011 Indigenous engagement survey.

Aboriginal Employment Strategy Ltd
www.aboriginalemploymentstrategy.com.au

Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement Inc.
www.alrm.org.au

Academy of Sport, Health and Education
www.ashe.com.au

Australian Employment Covenant
www.fiftythousandjobs.com.au

AFL SportsReady Ltd
www.aflsportsready.com.au

Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation
www.alpa.asn.au

Australian Rugby League
www.australianrugbyleague.com.au

Arrilla – Indigenous Consultants and Services
www.arrilla.com.au

Australian Film Television and Radio School
www.aftrs.edu.au

Australian Indigenous Education Foundation
www.aief.com.au

Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience
www.aimementoring.com

Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council
www.aimsc.org.au

Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
www.aiatsis.gov.au

The Aurora Project and Programs Pty Ltd
www.auroraproject.com.au

Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation
www.balkanu.com.au

Beacon Foundation
www.beaconfoundation.net

Books in Homes Australia
www.biha.com.au

Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership
www.cyi.org.au

Caritas Australia
www.caritas.org.au

Clontarf Foundation
www.clontarffootball.com

Corporate Culcha
www.corporateculcha.com.au

Creative Options Pty Ltd
www.creativeoptions.com.au

Dare to Lead
www.daretolead.edu.au

Desert Knowledge Australia
www.desertknowledge.com.au

Diversity Council Australia
www.dca.org.au

Diversity Dimensions
www.diversity-dimensions.com.au

Djarragun College
www.djarragun.qld.edu.au

First Nations Foundation
www.fnf.org.au

Fraynetwork Digital Storytelling
www.fraynetwork.com.au

The Fred Hollows Foundation
www.hollows.org

GenerationOne
www.generationone.org.au

Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service
www.goodshepvic.org.au

The Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation
www.pff.com.au

Indigenous Business Australia
www.iba.gov.au

Indigenous Community Volunteers
www.icv.com.au

Indigenous Coordination Centre
www.atns.net.au

Indigenous Customer Assistance Network
www.ican.org.au

Indigenous Success Australia
www.isagroup.com.au

Jawun – Indigenous Corporate Partnerships
www.jawun.org.au

Kinaway
www.kinaway.com.au

Message Stick
www.messagestick.com.au

Mission Australia
www.missionaustralia.com.au

NAIDOC
www.naidoc.org.au

National Centre of Indigenous Excellence
www.ncie.org.au

Reconciliation Australia
www.reconciliation.org.au

Relationships Australia
www.relationships.com.au

The Smith Family
www.thesmithfamily.com.au

Social Compass
www.socialcompass.com

Stronger Smarter Institute
www.strongersmarter.qut.edu.au

Tarwirri Inc.
www.tarwirri.com.au

Torres Strait Regional Authority
www.tsra.gov.au

Traditional Credit Union
www.tcu.com.au

UNSW – Nura Gili
www.nuragili.unsw.edu.au

ValueEdge Pty Ltd
www.valueedge.com.au

Winda Mara Aboriginal Corporation
www.wmac.org.au

Yalari
www.yalari.org

Yarnteen Ltd
www.yarnteen.com.au

Yothu Yindi Foundation
http://www.garma.telstra.com/yy_foundation.htm

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