



Department of Industry and Resources
Government of Western Australia

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Mr A P O'Gorman MLA
Chair
Community Development and Justice Standing Committee
Parliament House
Harvest Terrace
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Mr O'Gorman

SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES IN GOVERNMENT

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee's *'Inquiry into Collaborative Approaches in Government'*.

The Department of Industry and Resources (DoIR), facilitates the State's economic development by delivering services and solutions to enhance Western Australia's business environment and ensure continued growth. The Aboriginal Economic Development Division (AED) within DoIR that has responsibility for the management of Aboriginal economic development through building partnerships with industry and the government sector.

Collaboration with other agencies is integral to the work AED does in assisting Aboriginal people to achieve economic independence and prosperity. The attached submission outlines the following projects as examples of successful collaboration:

1. Indigenous Art Projects;
2. Regional Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Employment in Port Hedland; and
3. Aboriginal Economic Development Officers.

The submission also outlines AED's involvement in the Gordon Inquiry Senior Officer's Group, a project that from AED's perspective provides an example of unsuccessful cross-government cohesiveness in addressing Indigenous communities.



If you would like further information on these projects, please do not hesitate to contact

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide a submission to your Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Limerick". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "J".

Jim Limerick
Director General
DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY AND RESOURCES

Att 7.3.08

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE STANDING COMMITTEE - INQUIRY INTO COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES IN GOVERNMENT

**Submission from Aboriginal Economic Development Division (AED),
Department of Industry and Resources (DoIR)**

Indigenous Art Projects

Aboriginal Economic Development Division (AED) has fostered the development of a high level tri-party working group of State and Commonwealth agencies and relevant non-government organisations working in the arts industry to bring numerous benefits to the coordination of Indigenous arts in Western Australia. An Industry Working Group was established with representatives from AED, Department of Culture and the Arts (DCA) and the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and Arts (DEWHA), each with an interest in the coordination of Indigenous arts services and activities.

The group has successfully overcome a number of challenges to achieve considerable success in the coordination of services for the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, East Pilbara, Noongar (Metropolitan and South-West) country and the Roebourne area. The group has grappled with differing funding priorities between the agencies, national versus local delivery issues and the tension between funding rounds and the implementation of strategic plans to reach a common alignment in working on these projects.

In addition to collaboration on specific art projects, the group has successfully coordinated strategic and sustainable approaches on a number of broader issues that benefit all parties in the Indigenous arts industry including art fraud, provenance, data sharing and in particular commercialisation.

By working together, the group has achieved greater flexibility and responsiveness for Indigenous art groups by providing adaptable funding and support options that provide for greater opportunities for increased sales and other revenue. The group has also helped create a synchronicity between the agencies when dealing with higher levels of government and in framing and supporting initiatives such as AED's *Arts Commercialisation Strategy*. The Strategy has ultimately contributed to an increased commercial position by increasing sales revenue to art centres, increasing income per artist and increasing the total number of artists participating.

Outside of its involvement in the Industry Working Group, AED also works directly with a number of government and non-government agencies in coordinating services and opportunities for Indigenous arts enterprise. Three specific projects are outlined below:

- 1) Martumili Artists, East Pilbara - The partnership between the Martumili Artists in the East Pilbara with the Shire of East Pilbara, DCA and AED has led to a highly successful arts enterprise in the Pilbara. The Pilbara Development Commission, the Commonwealth Government and BHP Billiton have also recently joined the group as partners.

- 2) The Mungart Boodja Center, Katanning – The Center is a collaboration of the Great Southern Development Commission, Shire of Katanning and AED who joined with Mungart Boodja to secure Commonwealth and Lotterywest support to boost art services across the Great Southern Region and develop the first and only Noongar arts enterprise in Western Australia.
- 3) Ngaanyatjarra Lands - AED has been instrumental in creating agency linkages in support of arts, enterprise and self-employment initiatives in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands. The regional governance training program, a partnership between AED and the community centres has become a major industry forum that incorporates a number of organisations across the tri-state border area (WA, NT and SA border regions). The stability and profile of these activities has given other agencies, in particular the Commonwealth, the confidence to support the communities' aspirations. This project has resulted in increased and more effective development in this remote region.

Other examples of AED's direct involvement with Arts Centres can be found with the Roebourne Art Group, Mid West Indigenous Arts Strategy and Halls Creek.

Regional Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Employment in Port Hedland

The Regional Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Employment in Port Hedland was signed on 7 November 2006 and sets out strategic approaches and projects for joint innovative action by Indigenous owned businesses, Indigenous organisations and communities, Industry, non government organisations and the Commonwealth, State and local governments to increase employment levels of Indigenous people in the Port Hedland region. The Agreement runs to June 2011 and Aboriginal Economic Development (AED) is one of 14 signatories. The parties share a vision for the region which aims to address Indigenous disadvantage and supports Indigenous people to take up opportunities in the mainstream economy.

In making this Agreement, the parties have agreed to work together to establish partnerships and share responsibility for achieving measurable and sustainable improvements for people living in the Port Hedland Region. The Agreement has a particular focus on employment but recognises that effort is required in other areas to support improvements in employment outcomes.

The key targets are; (i) within five years reduce the rates of Indigenous unemployment in the Port Hedland region by 50%, and (ii) place at least 90 additional local Indigenous people in jobs in the Port Hedland region each year for the next five years.

The Regional Partnership Committee comprising at least one representative from each of the signatory bodies was established to support the Agreement and provide strategic leadership and a cohesive approach between parties.

The Committee oversees the implementation of the Agreement and monitors progress against project plans. The South Hedland Indigenous Coordination Center and the Regional Office of the Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA) provide secretariat services to the Committee.

At the ground level, an Implementation Team works directly with Indigenous organisations, service agencies, employer groups and governments to deliver the key outcomes of the agreement and reports directly to the Committee. The Implementation Team gains supports and assistance with the implementation of projects and ensures effective communication flows between this Agreement and others in the Pilbara Region.

A number of successful outcomes have been achieved through the Regional Partnership Agreement. In terms of direct employment outcomes in Port Hedland, Bloodwood Tree Association (BTA), a member of the Regional Partnership Agreement supported by AED, developed an entry level employment training program. Consequently BTA was contracted by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, in April 2007, to place 125 Indigenous people into work in the Port Hedland area. The program will source participants within the local community to undertake a comprehensive pre-employment program and provide ongoing mentoring to the individual once they are placed with an employer.

The issue of driver's licence as an essential qualification for working in the mining industry and an impediment for many Aboriginal people has also been taken up by the Regional Partnership Agreement. Newcrest Mining, a signatory to the Agreement has donated a dual control vehicle to BTA for driver training and also provides on-going wage support to employ Driving Instructors. In addition, BHP Billiton Iron Ore, another RPA signatory has provided a vehicle and funding for a truck to ensure prospective employees are able to obtain their driver's licence.

In addition, Regional Partnership Agreement signatories have tackled the difficult issue of housing in the Pilbara Region. The group successfully lobbied government to address the housing policy and the barriers it creates to getting employment. In response, the State Government has developed an initiative that provides flexibility to tenants so they can engage with mainstream employment opportunities and continue residing in public housing. Building on this success, the group has commenced the development of further initiatives such as consideration of community housing partnerships and accommodation alternatives for low income earners.

Aboriginal Economic Development Officers

The provision of Aboriginal Economic Development Officers (AEDOs) to Regional Development Commissions demonstrates collaboration across State and Commonwealth Government agencies to provide regional economic development assistance to Aboriginal people in Western Australia.

Aboriginal Economic Development's (AED) priority outcome is to assist Indigenous people to identify sustainable business and employment opportunities, foster business development and assist with building investment and asset ownership to create expanded wealth creation opportunities. Under this banner, AED has effectively joined up with the Regional Development Commissions, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and State Treasury to provide funding to Regional Development Commissions for the employment of AEDOs and related project activities in regional Western Australia.

The AEDOs provide a regional presence for each of these agencies and provide a complementary focus for joint activity. Since the program commenced in 1999, the placement of AEDOs in the regions has led to the development of Regional Partnership Agreements such as the RPA in Port Hedland (as outlined above) and opened doors for ongoing dialogue between agencies and better coordination of services in the region.

Gordon Inquiry Senior Officer's Group

In 2002/2003, the State Government established the Gordon Inquiry and committed \$75 million to support the response. The Government established a Senior Officer's Group made up of State Government agencies as a reference group to provide a collaborative approach to Indigenous communities and manage the implementation of the Gordon Inquiry recommendations under the direction of the Director General's Group. Aboriginal Economic Development (AED) joined the group in 2004.

One of the initiatives under the response was the establishment of the *Community Futures Fund* with \$400,000 allocated to the fund. By 2005, only \$80,000 of the total amount had been allocated for funding a joint research partnership project involving the Northern Territory regarding Indigenous Community Governance. At this time a request was made by the secretariat for AED to propose a table of potential projects to allocate the balance of funds. The projects were required to be based at Gordon Implementation sites and have a sustainable economic development focus. Project milestones and outcomes were to be reported through the Senior Officer's Group.

In response to the request, AED put forward a project request to the group related to Aboriginal economic development. From February 2005 to June 2005, AED waited for a decision from the Senior Officers Group. The matter was continually deferred and after some time of waiting for a result, AED finally withdrew participation in the Senior Officers Group.

AED considers the Senior Officer's Group as a less than successful collaboration between State Government agencies due to poor cohesion coupled with a tendency for individual agency concerns to override the common focus of implementing the Gordon Inquiry recommendations. The group appeared to lack adequate decision making powers, particularly in relation to the allocation of resources.