



Report of the Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Programs

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COMMITTEE OF REVIEW OF ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

Our Reference :

Your Reference :

Chairman: Mr Mick Miller

27 August 1985

Dear Ministers

On 25 October 1984 you announced the appointment and terms of reference of the Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Programs.

We are pleased to present our Report.

Yours sincerely

MICK MILLER
CHAIRMAN

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Jim Morrison

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BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

The Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Programs was appointed in October 1984 by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, the Hon. Ralph Willis MP and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon. Clyde Holding MP. It was asked to examine all Commonwealth government Aboriginal employment and training programs to determine whether they are still appropriate to the needs of Aboriginal people and if a more effective labour market strategy can be established to improve their employment situation. The membership of the Committee, its terms of reference and its administrative arrangements and staffing are outlined in Appendix 1 to this Report.

During the course of the Review, the Committee received 305 written submissions from the organisations and individuals listed in Appendix 2. The consultation phase of the Review lasted for six months, from December 1984 to May 1985. The Committee visited a number of centres in each State and Territory as listed in Appendix 3, to meet with representatives of Aboriginal organisations, Commonwealth and State government departments and authorities, local government authorities, employers, trade unions, educational institutions, and former and current participants in the programs.

Four research projects into issues of particular concern to the Review were commissioned by the Committee. These research projects are listed in Appendix 4.

In this Report we have adopted the convention of using "Aboriginal" to include people of the Torres Strait Islands. It will be noted, however, that we refer at the beginning of each chapter to "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people". We do this deliberately to remind readers that due consideration needs to be given to the people of the Torres Strait who, in our view, are too often overlooked in terms of government policies, programs and services.

1. OVERVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As we approach the year of Australia's bi-centennial celebrations it remains overwhelmingly obvious that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have little cause for celebration. To say that their employment situation has reached a crisis point would be an understatement. Despite the gains that have been made in some areas, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a group remain the most disadvantaged people in Australian society.

This Report represents a concerted attempt to propose changes in employment and training arrangements that, we hope, reflect the continually expressed wishes of Aboriginal people as they were made to us. Of particular importance are changes in the ways in which governments relate to Aboriginal people and communities. Moreover, the Committee's findings attempt to build on the examples of successful Aboriginal initiatives that the Committee has observed around Australia. The Report should be seen as a blueprint for government support for Aboriginal people's ability to provide for their own livelihood. In the Committee's view, a continuation of the present arrangements, even with considerably more financial support, is unlikely to change significantly the economic status of Aboriginal people in the coming decades. On the other hand, the adoption of the new initiatives and the structural changes proposed in this Review could, the Committee believes, bring about a radical change in direction and generate greater confidence within the Aboriginal community. The choice for government is clear.

1.1 OVERVIEW

Since the Referendum in 1967, inability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to gain a livelihood and, in particular, to share in opportunities for employment has been of particular concern to Commonwealth governments. Increasing resources have been devoted to analysing the nature and causes of this inability and to devising means to overcome it. In this task attention has been concentrated on the disproportionate rates of unemployment affecting these people and on the factors inhibiting their access to the labour market.

It has been, and continues to be, difficult to accurately measure the extent of the problem. At various times different rates of unemployment have been used in promoting awareness of the problem. What is certain, however, is that Aboriginal unemployment is always considerably in excess of that for the general population in proportional terms. The most recent information available suggests that Aboriginal people are unemployed at a rate of some five or six times that of the total Australian labour force. This certainly places them in a situation of much greater deprivation than any other identifiable group in the labour force. Moreover, at the time of this Report, some 23 000 Aboriginal people are registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) as seeking full-time work.

In 1977 the Commonwealth government instituted a National Employment Strategy for Aboriginals (NESA), as the policy and program framework to deal

with the Aboriginal unemployment situation. The object of the NESAs was to reduce Aboriginal unemployment to a level similar to that of the rest of the workforce. It would achieve this through:

- the reallocation of unemployment benefit funds to allow remote communities to create work;
- a national promotional campaign to stimulate Aboriginal employment in the private sector;
- additional work by the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) to refer and place Aboriginal clients as a result of the promotional campaign;
- efforts to increase Aboriginal employment in Commonwealth government agencies, including direct recruitment; possible increases in staff ceilings; government contract employment; a training scheme to make use of government facilities to train Aboriginal people for the regular labour market;
- increased CES activity generally in Aboriginal employment placement and training;
- increased training opportunities through labour market programs, both on-the-job and formal;
- urging State governments to promote Aboriginal employment in their own areas and with local government;
- consideration of legislation for positive discrimination (affirmative action);
- review of the situation by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations; and
- promotion by the Minister for Education of a redirection of education programs to prepare Aboriginal people for a work environment or job training.

In examining the NESAs, the Committee discovered no evidence of its having been implemented as a cohesive Strategy. Certainly action has been taken on many of the parts (with notable exceptions discussed below), but it has not been operated as a whole. Indeed various parts of the Strategy have gradually changed independently of the others, and responsibility for the integrity of the whole has not been accepted by any particular agency.

Some aspects of the NESAs proposals intended to improve the Commonwealth government performance were not acted upon at all. For example, the proposal to consider staff ceiling increases for government departments to employ more Aboriginal staff seems to have been dismissed (and promptly forgotten) at bureaucratic level, without reconsideration of the proposal by the government. Also, the possible use of government contracts to assist Aboriginal employment has not been adequately dealt with. (The Committee notes the resurrection of this issue in relation to Tindal Air Base at Katherine, Northern Territory). The Commonwealth Department of Education (CDE) did little to promote a redirection of education to better prepare Aboriginal people for a work environment. There was no consideration of possible legislation for positive

discrimination (in contrast to the very active consideration now being given by the government to such legislation for women). Finally, the on-going review function was not carried out. The explanation for the lack of action in these matters can only have been a lack of bureaucratic commitment and failure to identify where responsibility for the Strategy as a whole has rested in the government machine.

The Committee has observed that some measure of progress was made with respect to aspects of the NESAs. The Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DEIR) expanded its Aboriginal employment and training budget considerably, and the Public Service Board has slowly developed a few base level recruitment programs for Aboriginal people. The efforts in other areas have shown, at best, disappointing results. Despite this, it has taken until 1985 for the NESAs to be reviewed.

Generally, the Strategy can be said to have had only marginal impact on the overall Aboriginal employment situation. This is so despite the fact that it has involved many thousands of Aboriginal people. It is true that there are now Aboriginal people in types of jobs which they would not have held previously. But the root causes of the problem remain as firmly entrenched as ever, and the general employment situation for Aboriginal people has, as usual, been much more markedly affected by the economic downturn than has that of the total population. It also remains virtually unaffected by the economic growth of the past two years.

The Committee concluded that the disappointing results from the NESAs cannot be attributed solely to the Strategy itself, despite its shortcomings. Its performance must also be assessed in the light of the total economic situation and, even more generally, in terms of the total approach to Aboriginal affairs by the government and indeed the Australian community. It is in that approach that the reasons must be sought for Aboriginal economic dependence and the high levels of Aboriginal unemployment.

Thus we have been forced to look beyond the capacity of current programs to reduce Aboriginal unemployment "to a level comparable with that of the general community" (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations News Release, 25 October 1984), and to consider the social and structural problems faced by Aboriginal people in providing for their livelihood. There are some fundamental questions which must be answered if those problems are to be overcome.

Is the assumption implicit in the programs that work for wages and salaries is the most appropriate and practicable basis for earning a livelihood, valid for all Aboriginal people?

The Committee is satisfied that in the present economic circumstances of many Aboriginal people, this option is not in fact open to them and that for social and cultural reasons many of them reject it. In the more remote areas which were not colonised to the extent of others, and where Aboriginal traditional custom and law remain very strong, people have removed themselves from the enforced change of life-style encompassed by a western style economy. In so doing they have not rejected entirely any relationship with the wider society and economy, but have chosen to maintain a life-style compatible with their traditional culture. Rather, they are trying to develop an economic base for that life-style using a mix of components from their own traditional

hunter-gatherer subsistence economy together with appropriate components of the wider market based economy. Not only does this Committee support their right to seek such a mix, it believes the decision makes economic sense. In the Report we suggest that such groups can, given appropriate types and levels of assistance, provide for their livelihood in ways and at a level suited to their needs. We consider it important that the Australian community recognises the right of Aboriginal people to this option.

Not all Aboriginal people have the same concept of the mix of traditional Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal components in their life-style. Many of them, who have chosen or have felt compelled to live in an urban context, accept the employment for wage or salary basis for their livelihood to a greater extent than those who have remained in an isolated rural environment. While other possibilities do, to some extent, exist for these urban dwellers, it is important that their access to the mainstream labour market should be the subject of special consideration.

Is provision for the immediate physical and social welfare of Aboriginal people a sufficient basis for their survival as a group within Australia?

The Committee rejects outright any notion that Aboriginal people receive greater assistance in this area than do other people. It is a basic right of all Australians to have comparable access to sustenance, shelter, health care and education. Not only is this a right but it is an investment in the future of the country as the basic resource of any society is its members. For many Aboriginal people, not only is the investment not being made (particularly through the provision of appropriate education), but basic facilities are still not provided.

The preservation of inequity tempered by benevolent or grudging charity which continues to characterise the welfare approach of Australian governments to Aboriginal people cannot continue.

The future of Aboriginal people, including their opportunities for employment and other sources of income, can be secured only if they share in access to and ownership of the nation's resources. The single greatest step which can be taken by government is the recognition of this fact and the application of policies and programs to bring it about.

Each of these questions highlights the need for an effective Aboriginal economy as the basis for their future. Aboriginal communities differ widely in the social and material context in which they live but all of them have wholly or largely been deprived of the traditional economy on which their forebears depended. Effective replacements for that traditional economy must be developed appropriate to their various contexts. This Report seeks to explore the nature of those replacements and the changes necessary to develop them.

The Committee accepts the findings of the Committee of Inquiry into Labour Market Programs (1985), Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Labour Market Programs, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, that the solutions to unemployment generally must be sought in macroeconomic policy rather than in labour market programs. However, as the Aboriginal population of Australia is both small and distinctive, we believe government can and should address this problem of the Aboriginal economy regardless of the total economic situation, although effective macroeconomic policies will certainly

make this easier. The special Aboriginal problem will call both for significant modifications of policies for the regular labour market and for policies directed at other potential sources of livelihood.

In recommending that more be done to assist Aboriginal development the Committee is aware of the present dilemma of the Australian government (and to some extent State and Territory governments) as regards the apparent backlash from the wider community. Our examination of the situation suggests that whatever backlash there is, is based on ignorance. It reflects unfounded fears created by vested interest groups, particularly those concerned about Aboriginal land rights. In a sense the stance taken by these vested interests is no different in make-up from the resistance of some groups to the requirement for safeguarding the environment when economic developments are being contemplated. We believe the majority of Australian people still wish to see justice done for Aboriginal Australians and will support government policies and programs to that end. A broad education program is necessary to dissipate these fears and to emphasise the benefits to the community at large of healthy and economically independent Aboriginal communities.

Throughout our deliberations we have sought to recognise the variety of Aboriginal communities and the problems which confront them. Thus we have considered the problems of

- Aboriginal people seeking work in the open labour market and being deterred by:
 - lack of educational skills;
 - racism from employers, workmates and government staff;
 - competition from other workers.
- Aboriginal communities with little or no economic infrastructure, seeking to develop;
- Aboriginal groups engaged in highly productive work on their own land with rewards in non-cash income but lacking an adequate cash component;
- people living on small marginal tracts of land with no security of tenure;
- communities making up large proportions of a total town population but with virtually no access to the resources of the area.

Each category exhibited its own particular characteristics and while there are some generally applicable directions for policy (e.g. education, training, housing etc) each calls for a strategy for development which takes account of these characteristics.

The implications for the operation of government programs are quite clear. Local planning and decision-making involving close co-ordination of the various agencies, by the Aboriginal people and their organisations, are essential. The concentration of decision-making in centralised bureaucracies cannot effectively address this situation. It implies a lack of trust of the local people's ability to plan and implement strategies and permits only less than honest consultation with Aboriginal people.

It is difficult for local deliverers and interpreters of government policy and programs to consult effectively with Aboriginal people when no-one is aware of the parameters of that consultation. The Committee found that 'consultation' frequently was interpreted as either seeking 'I want' statements from Aboriginal people with no effort to explain policy or program purposes, or inhibiting discussion by informing them of rigidly interpreted guidelines.

Ignorance of both the thrust of policy and the details of programs is widespread. This frequently reflects the concentration of policy and program determination at the national level. A shift to local level planning as the foundation of national policies and programs would remove a great deal of the tension brought about through lack of knowledge.

The Committee wishes the government to be aware that in Aboriginal communities there is widespread dissatisfaction with existing employment and training programs. The Committee shares much of this dissatisfaction. Accordingly we are recommending some quite fundamental changes. At the same time we have been concerned to avoid wholesale change for the sake of change. There are some sound aspects of most of the current programs. These we wish to retain as the foundation on which to build a new phase of a more comprehensive and more flexible NESAs.

Such flexibility requires a pluralist approach which will make it possible for Aboriginal people to select from a range of programs what is appropriate for their own circumstances and this will be possible only if they are provided with the policy and program information that facilitates well-informed choice.

Torres Strait Island Communities

Before going on to discuss the main findings and recommendations of the Report, the Committee wants to draw attention to the distinctive situation of the Torres Strait Island communities.

The people of the Torres Strait Islands are of course included in all of the government's programs for Aboriginal advancement. While we note that the government is careful to point out that this is the case, the Committee believes it is time these people were given more specific attention.

In particular we point out that the internal economic and political organisation of the Torres Strait Islander people requires due recognition. It is quite different from that of Aboriginal culture and this needs to be borne in mind in the process of government relationships with these people.

Further, we gained the impression that these people, as with a number of Aboriginal communities, rarely receive the degree of service which ought to be provided by government. No doubt this has to do with the difficulties of access to some of the groups at least. While in some senses this has enabled the people to get on with their lives without too much interference from government, we are concerned that the increasing external pressures from non-government sources may eventually see these people lose control of their resources, as has happened to the Aboriginal people of mainland Australia and Tasmania.

The Commonwealth government needs to consider carefully the future livelihood of the Torres Strait Island communities to ensure that they are able to maintain and develop their economic independence.

1.2 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The background data analysis which provided the statistical information used by the Committee to underpin the Review is set out in Part II of our Report. Analysis of these data, together with the written submissions to the Review, the oral consultations and on-site examination of programs in various places, enabled us to reach the conclusions on which our recommendations have been based. It is difficult to comprehend fully our recommendations without due consideration of that background material and we strongly urge those who will examine this Report to understand the context for our recommendations.

In Part III (Chapter 6) we seek to identify, fairly broadly, the deficiencies in the current approach to Aboriginal employment and training policy and programs, and point out the new directions needed for the future. We show that the NESAs were incomplete in that they did not adequately provide for a substantial section of the Aboriginal population, in particular those living in and around rural non-Aboriginal towns, and paid too little attention to potential sources of livelihood other than wage or salary employment.

Other deficiencies established were:

- the fact that parts of the Strategy were never implemented;
- the development, in the implementation of the Strategy, of an almost exclusive concern with short-term job creation, and a corresponding lack of emphasis on programs which facilitated permanent employment or long-term employment creation possibilities;
- a lack of cohesiveness in the implementation of elements of the Strategy due to a serious lack of co-ordination between departments and agencies;
- a failure to achieve long-term private sector commitment to Aboriginal employment via appropriate promotional activity; and
- a failure to extend the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) beyond a relatively small number of communities and to develop fully its potential as a tool for community development.

We also established that the problems of Aboriginal employment go beyond what can be achieved by employment and training programs. The whole question of the way in which Aboriginal people can provide for their livelihood in accordance with the life-style they choose raises structural matters which need to be addressed. These include access to and control of land and other resources, local government arrangements for Aboriginal towns, relationships with other forms of local government, access to development capital and involvement in particular industries.

It became apparent that even within existing policies Aboriginal communities do not always receive their appropriate share of government services and functional agencies of government often fail to carry out their

obligations effectively towards Aboriginal people. These deficiencies sometimes originated from the lack of clarity about the purposes of particular programs and the responsibilities of various funding sources. This has often led to duplication and overlap. Government has a responsibility to make clear what are its policies, who is responsible for them, and the parameters of what it is prepared to provide in the way of assistance and support to Aboriginal people. This is unlikely to be achieved until policies are designed for particular types of Aboriginal situations and until responsibility for planning and use of programs rests with Aboriginal people at the local level.

We urge the government to adopt a policy of support to Aboriginal people which goes beyond the welfare, housing and municipal services industries and which should be directed towards Aboriginal people becoming more independent by enabling them to provide for their own livelihood. Programs to achieve this end will be longer-term, involve real training and result in Aboriginal control of resources, as well as access to jobs in the regular labour market.

We turn, now, to the balance of the Report which deals with the specific changes we are recommending.

In Chapter 7 we are concerned with the effectiveness of education for Aboriginal people. There can be no argument that education is fundamental to improving Aboriginal employment and provision for livelihood. There can be, equally, no argument that the education system is continuing to fail Aboriginal people.

A fundamental issue here is the provision for Aboriginal education. In some areas no schooling is available, particularly at the secondary level, because of the remoteness of Aboriginal communities. The alternative offered is for Aboriginal children to leave their communities for schools in another and culturally alien environment. This situation effectively places many Aboriginal people in a position whereby they are unfairly forced to choose between having education for their children or having their children remain in communities to participate in cultural traditions. No other group in Australian society is asked to forsake its religious practices in order to receive primary and secondary education.

In addition to lack of facilities the curricula and teaching methods of the school system are not sufficiently flexible to cater for Aboriginal needs. The lack of homogeneity across Aboriginal groups makes this a difficult issue, but one which must be addressed if basic education is to be provided.

We have recommended the allocation of considerably more resources to the provision of Aboriginal primary and secondary education. This seems to us a fundamental basis upon which to address future Aboriginal employment prospects and Aboriginal capacity to manage the development of their own communities.

Chapter 7 also deals with the current lack of co-ordination in the delivery of career education to Aboriginal students. Over the past few years, general programs for this purpose have expanded rapidly but, we suspect, with little impact on Aboriginal school students. We believe this area requires specific attention, particularly as the high rate of unemployment amongst Aboriginal people reduces the degree to which informal career advice is available.

Chapter 8 deals with post-school education and vocational training for Aboriginal people. At present this includes formal and on-the-job training, apprenticeships which combine both of these, and special training courses for a great variety of activities and purposes.

The Committee discovered that this is one of the major areas in which the government programs are confusing and unco-ordinated. There are numerous examples of:

- . institutions receiving funds for Aboriginal training from the CDE, the DEIR and the DAA;
- . very similar training courses funded by different departments;
- . Aboriginal people on the same course receiving different allowances according to whether they were funded by the CDE or the DEIR.

We also found that the rationale for training support lacked logic, in a number of senses. The degree of support available for different types of training is such that a person placed in a low skilled job in order to gain so-called on-the-job training receives an allowance (wage) greater than a person training at university (indeed, many of the latter trainees receive less than if they remain on unemployment benefit). Little attention has been given to priorities in training, at any level, and government program policies fluctuate from the Abstudy support for any form of training course, to the Training for Aboriginals Program (TAP) requirement that training be related to an employment outcome.

In addition, as regards institutional training, what is offered to Aboriginal people often depends upon either what the institution is prepared to offer, regardless of its relevance to Aboriginal needs, or what the Commonwealth government is prepared to pay for through special Aboriginal funding.

The Committee believes that a clear differentiation is needed between formal training, training on-the-job and wage subsidies to effect recruitment. We believe that much of what is currently being conducted under the TAP in terms of on-the-job training does not contribute to the ability of Aboriginal people to gain employment through the acquisition of skills. This is not to say that the program makes no contribution to Aboriginal employment. On the contrary, it has enabled a significant expansion of the work experience of Aboriginal people providing both individuals with work histories of greater relevance to the current labour market, and a broadening of the Aboriginal view of their position in the labour market by making many aware of new possibilities.

However, the TAP has suffered from trying to be 'all things to all people' in Aboriginal employment and training, and needs to be more precisely attuned to real labour force needs. This cannot be achieved without change in other programs as well. In the training area, the most urgent need is to enhance the Abstudy capacity to handle better, formal post-school education and vocational training at institutions. We have recommended that the CDE take over entire responsibility for formal, institution-based post-secondary education and training. As a consequence, the minor roles of the DAA and the DEIR, in the provision of funds for such training, should cease.

The CDE should be responsible for all income support for Aboriginal students in such formal training. It should also set allowances at higher rates for those undertaking accredited tertiary education courses or other formal courses of one year's duration or more, in order to encourage and enable Aboriginal people to undertake the training. We also believe a special income supplement should be provided by the CDE to permit some already employed Aboriginal people to undertake accredited tertiary training on a full-time basis, without loss of income.

The CDE should expand tertiary orientation and preparation programs to increase access to tertiary training for Aboriginal people. It should also provide for student support such as tutorial assistance, counselling, accommodation etc. The 'enclave' system already established in a number of institutions seems an appropriate way to cater for this.

In the funding of tertiary courses, the CDE and the National Aboriginal Education Committee (NAEC) should broaden the current priority areas particularly to provide for the ability of Aboriginal people to manage the diversification of the economic base which is a major thrust of this Report. In future the decisions on such priorities should stem from consultation with Aboriginal communities, and development and labour market advice from the Aboriginal Development Commission (ADC) and the DEIR.

The Committee believes that trade training is an area of vital concern for Aboriginal people. We recommend efforts to include: more Aboriginal people in general trade-based pre-employment courses; the continuation of TAP on-the-job funding for the duration of Aboriginal apprenticeships including in the public sector; and the extension of recent efforts to provide for more Aboriginal community-based trade training. For remote areas we support the Northern Territory TAFE initiatives in the development of modular trade training to be undertaken within the community. We recommend extension to similar situations in the States.

The Committee questions the value of wage subsidies as a means of providing for Aboriginal job training. A very wide range of jobs require no formal training and the skills for them are learned on-the-job, usually in a fairly short period. We recommend that the TAP wage subsidies be further oriented to recruitment to actual jobs and away from the creation of additional temporary jobs for the purposes of pre-recruitment training. With a few exceptions, which are dealt with in Chapter 9 of our Report, this recommendation virtually removes the current Public Sector Training component of the TAP.

At the same time we believe that young Aboriginal people should participate as a targeted group in the youth traineeships proposed by the Committee of Inquiry into Labour Market Programs (1985), Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Labour Market Programs, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

When the special course arrangements of TAP and Abstudy were examined the Committee was concerned not only at the overlap, but at the lack of relevant priority in the Abstudy effort. Nearly 50 per cent of the Abstudy placements in 1983 were in, largely, TAFE hobby courses. We reject the notion that such courses can be as important as training for employment or for the management and development of Aboriginal communities. We recommend that hobby and recreational courses do not attract an Abstudy benefit.

Special institutional courses of this type should only be arranged to enhance the long-term vocational prospects of Aboriginal people or in response to an Aboriginal community request in conjunction with that community's development plans and actions. This may occur, for example, when artistic or craft skills appear likely to provide a significant source of income. Appropriate Abstudy payment should apply in these circumstances.

Special courses to be conducted on-site within Aboriginal communities should be provided for by the DEIR under the TAP. They should be conducted as the result of requests for training linked to the development needs of the community, as specified by Aboriginal people.

The requirement for the DEIR to be responsible for on-site training in Aboriginal communities should enable greater co-ordination at least of the Commonwealth undertakings. We are concerned still, however, that in some situations confusion will remain as a result of State and Northern Territory governments' policies which sometimes duplicate the DEIR role indicated here, usually through TAFE officers resident in or visiting communities. We believe the States/Territories should provide the actual training by sending trainers to Aboriginal communities only for the purposes and duration of that training.

The Committee's major concern in these recommendations for on-site training is to ensure that in the future such courses are responsive to Aboriginal demands rather than determined by the providers of training.

The Committee recognises that there is a dearth of programs specifically to train Aboriginal people in enterprise management, technical business skills and community self-management. We have recommended the inclusion under the TAP of an Enterprise Management Training Scheme. Its aim will be to provide Aboriginal prospective business operators with both formal and practical experience in an enterprise similar to that which they intend to operate. The scheme should provide training for commercial and community enterprises funded through the ADC or by other means.

As regards community management training the Committee believes this is quite a separate issue from training for employment and the operation of enterprises. We suggest that this has to do with appropriate structures for Aboriginal development and is therefore a responsibility of the DAA. We have recommended that the DAA establish a Community Management Training scheme for this purpose.

In Chapter 9 we deal with employment in the public sector. We have done so quite extensively for a number of reasons:

- much of the current public sector activity under the TAP is superficial and avoids the issue of public sector recruitment;
- the public sector is an important source of employment opportunity for Aboriginal people;
- governments must demonstrate a commitment to Aboriginal employment through their own recruitment practices.

While we accept that the Public Sector Training provisions of the TAP have enabled a number of Aboriginal people to gain employment and have provided a number of others with the opportunity to explore the public sector

as a possible career choice, we do not believe the low rate of recruitment from the program is likely to improve or that it greatly enhances trainees' prospects elsewhere. In any case, we believe the major concentration in the public sector should be on direct recruitment rather than amorphous 'training'.

We have recommended a range of recruitment programs to be adopted by all public sector departments and agencies. The current Australian Public Service Board Aboriginal Services program forms a model which should be expanded upon and adopted by Commonwealth statutory authorities and State/Territory public sectors. This model is appropriate for recruitment at the base level to clerical, clerical support, keyboard and other streams.

In some situations the Committee recognises that there may be a need for a phasing-out period for the present TAP Public Sector Training arrangements in favour of these direct recruitment programs. We recommend that this be allowed for a period of no longer than two years so as to enable the new strategies to be developed.

While these arrangements can cater for base level recruitment in the clerical, clerical support, keyboard etc. areas, we believe new programs are required for technical, professional and managerial careers in the public sector. We recommend the establishment of an Aboriginal Cadetship program, funded by the DEIR, to recruit Aboriginal people to a range of technical, para-professional, professional and managerial positions for which formal qualifications are required.

Apprenticeships should continue to be sponsored by the DEIR through the Public Sector Training component of the TAP. However, we also recommend an Aboriginal target in the apprenticeship recruitment intake of public sector organisations.

The Committee believes the public sector should also have a capacity to recruit Aboriginal people above the base level in certain circumstances. The present Australian Public Service policy of 'identifying' positions (i.e. listing in the qualifications required "an ability to communicate with Aboriginal people and/or a knowledge or understanding of Aboriginal culture") goes only part of the way in achieving this. We recommend the adoption of an Aboriginal Understudy Program in which Aboriginal people would be given specific training to equip them for positions within departments and authorities which are seeking to fill 'identified' jobs or to raise the level and status of Aboriginal staffing.

Career development is another important aspect of public sector Aboriginal employment. We have recommended a range of action including staff rotation, structured management development programs, greater access to formal, internal and external courses and sponsorship of staff to undertake full-time study.

All of the above establish a better structure for dealing with public sector recruitment and training of Aboriginal people. We recommend adoption of this approach in the context of equal employment opportunity planning within the public sector. This should involve the establishing of targets set with a precision well beyond the current crude overall proportion of population approach.

As regards the Commonwealth we believe the government should adopt and promulgate policies for Aboriginal recruitment for its departments and authorities, incorporating the programs outlined in this Report. The Public Service Board should be responsible to see that this action is taken and should work closely with the DEIR as appropriate. The DEIR should negotiate with the States and Territories for adoption and implementation of these recommendations in respect of their departments and authorities.

In Chapter 10 we examine employment and training programs to gain greater access for Aboriginal people to wage and salaried employment in the private sector. The Committee looked carefully at both government and employer responsibilities in this area and we are convinced that action is required on both sides if an improvement is to be made.

The Committee was disappointed to find that not only is Aboriginal employment in the private sector low, but there was largely indifference about the issue amongst employers. We spoke with numerous employers, large and small, and with their representative bodies. While attitudes, understanding and commitment leave much to be desired, we believe there is a basis for significant gains to be made if goodwill can be harnessed and constructive policies adopted. We also found that Aboriginal people do not view private sector employment as a good prospect for them, based on experience to date.

A common remark from employers was that the CES does not refer Aboriginal people to their vacancies, and that its officers do not make employers aware of the incentives and assistance available to them in respect of Aboriginal employment. There was little awareness of or recognition given by employers to the promotional efforts of the National Aboriginal Employment Development Committee (NAEDC).

We have recommended action on three fronts to:

- improve the CES referral and placement of Aboriginal people and assistance to employers and their Aboriginal employees;
- bring about more effective promotion of Aboriginal employment, especially at the local CES office level;
- apply affirmative action policies in the private sector to make provision for Aboriginal employment.

The DEIR needs to improve the responsiveness of its CES to the needs of Aboriginal clients. We have recommended greater integration of the CES service delivery through both the general CES and its specialist Aboriginal Employment and Training Branch (AE&TB). Targets should be set for Aboriginal referral and placement activity apart from wage subsidy programs, and management should carefully monitor performance against such targets.

We believe that competitive wage subsidies as an important recruitment incentive should remain available under the TAP for private sector employment of Aboriginal people. We have also recommended that the small number of such subsidy arrangements carried out by the DAA under its Special Work Projects (SWP) scheme should cease. The DEIR should be entirely responsible for such programs.

The provision of wage subsidies is not sufficient to ensure success and we have also recommended that the CES considerably improve both its pre-placement counselling and its post-placement follow-up. Lack of counselling and advice to both employer and employee is a serious deficiency in the system which must be corrected. The DEIR will need to increase the capacity of its AE&TB to provide such services. It should also explore other mechanisms for providing Aboriginal people placed on wage subsidy programs with support networks.

As regards the promotion of Aboriginal employment the Committee believes the present NAEDC approach is largely ineffective. Despite producing some excellent information/promotional material, and initiating a number of worthwhile activities, the NAEDC has not been able to maximise the influence of its programs. We doubt this is possible with a part-time national committee.

We have recommended that the DEIR itself continue the work of the NAEDC, but that local-level committees be established in areas of substantial Aboriginal population. These local committees, made up of employers, Aboriginal community leaders and CES officers, should develop local strategies to improve Aboriginal employment prospects in their areas.

In the sense of a broader public relations strategy we believe the DAA has the responsibility to improve general community awareness of the Aboriginal situation. It should undertake this role, consulting with the DEIR when particular attention is to be given to employment issues.

The Committee believes employers must be encouraged to take more responsibility for Aboriginal employment, and not be dependent entirely on government action. We were surprised that the government has not included Aboriginal people in the affirmative action program presently being piloted, nor in the legislation currently under consideration. We have recommended that such legislation be extended to include Aboriginal people.

In addition, large companies, particularly those with extensive networks, ought to be encouraged in a more practical way to adopt affirmative action for Aboriginal people as a policy and to establish internal mechanisms for its implementation. We recommend, therefore, that the DEIR offer to fund positions with selected major employers, of Aboriginal Employment Affirmative Action Officers, to assist companies to undertake appropriate action. We suggest that a small advisory committee of mainly senior private sector representatives be established to oversee this program.

Chapter 11 concerns the development of Aboriginal commercial enterprises. The under-representation of Aboriginal people in the self-employed and small business employer section of the labour market needs to be addressed. The body responsible for this, the ADC, devotes insufficient of its restricted resources to such development and lacks the expertise to manage it effectively.

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Development Bank (CDB) be invited to adopt a primary role in funding viable Aboriginal commercial enterprises. To do this it will need to develop an Aboriginal branch and work closely with the ADC. The ADC should remain the first point of contact and work with the Bank in providing information to Aboriginal people and entree to CDB personnel.

We believe Aboriginal enterprise development is a vital area of concern in overcoming Aboriginal unemployment. Access to capital will need to be supported with appropriate management training and support. We have recommended that the DEIR provide for these training requirements from its TAP, and that the ADC establish regional small business support units to provide management support.

The need to redress the loss of economic resources from Aboriginal control is addressed in Chapter 12. We believe the ownership of land as an economic base is fundamental to Aboriginal prospects for providing for their livelihood. We have recommended the re-establishment of an Aboriginal Land Fund to be administered by the ADC to acquire land in terms of the economic, cultural and social needs of Aboriginal people.

In addition, attention must be given to enabling Aboriginal people to generate cash income. Again, we believe the ADC does not adequately provide for this aspect of its responsibilities. Many Aboriginal situations do not hold much prospect for immediate development in commercially viable terms. The Committee believes, nevertheless, that the promotion of income generating activity is essential to the development and economic independence of Aboriginal people. In many cases it represents their only prospects of gaining a livelihood that goes beyond passive receipt of unemployment benefit.

We have thus recommended the establishment of a Community Enterprise Development Fund to be administered by the ADC. The purpose of the scheme will be to enable Aboriginal initiatives to develop their income producing resource base. This scheme should replace the existing short-term employment creation under the Commonwealth Community Employment Program (CCEP). The program should be supported with appropriate training through the DEIR.

Currently Aboriginal people in certain areas are in receipt of mining royalties. In other areas, royalties have been provided for by legislation but no payments have yet been made. These payments can provide significant funds over a period of time and we believe it is important that such funds be directed towards improving the economic status of Aboriginal people, now and in relation to future generations. The Committee supports recommendations currently before the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs that at least part of mining royalties equivalents in the Northern Territory, currently flowing to the Aboriginal Benefits Trust Account (ABTA), be invested. We believe such investment should aim to secure long-term benefits for Aboriginal people and influence any business activity which affects them.

A similar approach should be adopted with royalty equivalent payments to affected people under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. We have recommended a review of such payments to this end.

The Committee suggests the government needs to give much closer attention to Aboriginal involvement in other resource development. One of the major growth areas is in tourism and we recommend that the national strategy for development of tourism should include provision for maximisation of Aboriginal equity in developments in areas of significant Aboriginal population.

Other resource areas which the Committee recommends be examined include fishing, forestry, indigenous plant and animal harvesting and farming, and environmental rehabilitation. We do not suggest that Aboriginal people be required to undertake these industries, but rather they be given the

opportunity to do so, or at least to have equity in them. Consideration should also be given to a share of income from licensing fees and/or royalties from them being allocated to the ABTA and similar organisations.

Throughout the Report we emphasise the need for different approaches in different Aboriginal situations. Chapters 13, 14 and 15 deal with employment and training strategies relating to particular circumstances.

Self-sufficiency in remote communities is the subject of Chapter 13. The Committee believes the government must make this the major thrust of its policy for the future of these communities. This will mean a concentration of effort on improving the capacity of Aboriginal people in these areas to provide for their own livelihood, which means much greater emphasis on income production (including non-cash income) than is currently the case.

There are a number of structural issues to be addressed as part of the process of achieving self-sufficiency. One of these is the institution of effective and appropriate local government structures. Not only would this give Aboriginal people greater control, but it would provide a more regular and appropriate funding base for community council operations which already take in most local government functions. We have recommended the granting of local government status to such communities. We also recommend further study of local government funding in relation to Aboriginal communities.

The manner of government social support is important in the development of remote Aboriginal towns. The CDEP has proved a useful tool in a number of communities for local control and decision making and some examples of outstanding success exist. The Committee believes this is an important step in bringing about self-sufficiency. The CDEP is not, however, a complete program for developing communities and needs to be supplemented with both capital and training support. We have recommended expansion of the CDEP to all remote communities seeking to participate in it.

For those remote communities which choose not to participate in the CDEP, there is a need for other means of assisting them to develop means of provision for livelihood. We have recommended the abolition of the Special Work Projects (SWP) scheme and its replacement by a Remote Communities Grants Scheme. This should be an allocation for particular projects to communities not involved in the CDEP, but relating to their own development strategies. We also recommend continuing access to general programs such as the Community Employment Program (CEP) in such cases.

The Committee believes there is a preoccupation with government-type services in the funding provided to Aboriginal communities. We believe this needs to be supplemented with funds for enterprises. Of course, we recognise the difficulties of viability in these areas and recommend that enterprises be funded from the Community Enterprise Development Fund we have suggested be established by the ADC.

The replacement of non-Aboriginal staff on Aboriginal communities continues to be an issue of importance. We believe its resolution as an issue is as important to Aboriginal self-management as it is to the provision of additional Aboriginal employment opportunities. We recommend the development of local strategies to bring about such replacement.

Homeland centres (or outstations) provide examples of Aboriginal people undertaking much greater control of their life-styles, including provision for livelihood. We present evidence in this Report which indicates a significant revival of the subsistence economy in these communities. We recommend that this be recognised by government and that these communities have access to the CDEP as a form of cash support for traditional productive activities. We also recommend that additional capital support be available for items which will enhance the capacity to produce a livelihood.

The Committee believes that there is scope for the traditional productive activities of Aboriginal people to produce greater income (either cash or non-cash). We have recommended research into this, particularly in relation to the marginal areas of Central Australia.

Aboriginal artefact production is a source of cash income which equally requires support. We have recommended examination of maximisation of the return to the producers, and development of regional marketing outlets.

The Committee was greatly concerned about Aboriginal people living on pastoral properties. We believe the pastoral industry requires specific strategies aimed at greater Aboriginal participation and control. We have recommended continuation of the purchase of pastoral properties and of the provision of working capital to allow them to develop. We also recommend early resolution of the problem which has developed as regards excision of community living areas on non-Aboriginal pastoral properties and the availability of the CDEP to groups in that situation. The resumption of pastoral leases for national park development and other similar purposes should include consideration of Aboriginal participation in management and employment.

Breakdown in co-ordination of government services and programs is particularly apparent in remote Aboriginal communities. We recommend that local communities become the focus for co-ordination and that government agencies consult jointly as regards development planning by the communities.

In Chapter 14 we deal with Aboriginal communities in and around small non-Aboriginal towns in rural areas. The Committee found that these people were the least catered for by current programs. We point out that their chances in the regular labour market are poor and much greater emphasis is needed on the ownership and operation of community properties and enterprises.

As regards the regular labour market in these areas certain action is required to increase employment in particular rural industries. We suggest the ADC and the DEIR also explore prospects for the development of Aboriginal contracting in rural industry activities. The public sector needs to establish Aboriginal employment targets for its offices in rural towns and the DEIR should pursue this with State/ Territory departments and with local governments.

Private sector affirmative action should include large companies with outlets in these rural towns and the CES should assist local managers to achieve the targets set. We also suggest that limited use of negotiated wage subsidies, in the case of anticipated labour demand, might be appropriate in relation to small local employers.

The DEIR needs to develop vocational guidance packages for Aboriginal people in rural towns, which deal with their real prospects in such towns. The

CES Vocational Officers should assist Aboriginal people to gain access to the networks which operate in rural town employment recruitment.

However, the major policy recommended by the Committee in relation to these rural town communities is the establishment of community enterprises in and around the towns. This entails the purchase of properties and businesses via the proposed ADC Community Enterprise Development Fund and the provision of appropriate training through the DEIR. We also recommend greater attention to commercially viable business development.

As regards Aboriginal people in urban areas, in Chapter 15 we suggest their major prospects lie primarily in the regular labour market. We also point out that the CES will be a major avenue whereby such access can be provided. Thus the majority of our recommendations for urban Aboriginal communities deal with developing a more responsive CES service to them. Our recommendations include the setting of targets for referral and placement of Aboriginal clients and a requirement that local CES managers address lack of services and develop plans for performance improvement.

The Committee also sees a need for the Community Enterprise Development Fund to be available in urban areas, especially in areas of concentration of Aboriginal population. This will be especially important in relation to those Aboriginal people less able to be assisted through programs to place them in the regular labour market.

The Committee consulted with a variety of Aboriginal organisations during its examination of programs. In Chapter 16 we deal with the employment aspect of these organisations. Our major recommendations are that their staffing and staff training need to be adequately resourced by the appropriate functional body - the DAA. We believe there is a need for the DAA to review its funding of such organisations on the basis of their functional needs. The DAA should direct funds to these organisations instead of to State government departments for the provision of similar services. Included in their funding should be provision for the organisations to undertake their own staff training. The DEIR should not need to fund additional short-term training positions with the organisations.

In Chapter 17 we recommend an expansion of Aboriginal resource agencies to support a broadening of the Aboriginal community's economic base and general community development. The Committee was acquainted with several Aboriginal resource organisations providing very valuable management and training support for Aboriginal enterprises and communities. We believe that similar organisations could provide such services to support community enterprises and Aboriginal local governments.

Finally, the Committee attempts in Chapter 18 to determine the appropriate roles of the various departments in terms of employment and training policies and programs, and the mechanisms for ensuring co-ordination of the policies and programs. As developed throughout the Report we believe functional departments should be responsible for appropriate services to Aboriginal people.

Consequently we recommend that responsibility for all aspects of formal, institutional-based, post-secondary education and vocational training should be taken by the CDE. It should thus take over the more minor roles played currently in this area by the DAA and the DEIR. The CDE should also

significantly increase resources available for Aboriginal primary and secondary education.

The ADC responsibilities in the area of employment and training should be to administer the Community Enterprise Development Fund and provide for land purchase and capital funding associated with the development of livelihood for Aboriginal people. It should also develop an arrangement with the Commonwealth Development Bank concerning commercial enterprise funding and advice on community enterprises.

The DEIR should undertake responsibility for all other policies and programs designed to improve Aboriginal employment prospects in the regular labour market. These will include the administration of recruitment incentive and short-term job creation programs, and the private sector affirmative action program. The DEIR should also be responsible for all community on-site training and the administration of the Enterprise Management Training Scheme.

The DAA should be responsible for the CDEP and the Remote Communities Grants Scheme. It should also be responsible for the establishment and funding of Aboriginal service organisations and resource agencies and, where applicable, community government structures. It should also administer a Community Management Training Scheme to assist Aboriginal community governments and organisations to improve their ability to manage. The DAA should also bring together government departments and agencies to enable Aboriginal communities to effectively co-ordinate use of programs.

The Committee also recommends considerably greater efforts in staff training for all departments and the ADC and the establishment of a Research Bureau independent of government departments with program responsibilities to conduct ongoing research into Aboriginal populations, workforce and economies.

In addition to inter-departmental monitoring arrangements, we have recommended the appointment of an Aboriginal committee, for a period of three years, to provide independent advice to Ministers concerning the implementation of the strategy we propose.

Overall, then, the extent of policy and functional responsibility changes we are recommending is a formidable one, but we feel it is a reasoned and detailed response to what is a patently unsatisfactory situation. We also stress that our recommendations for change have been very much developed as a cohesive whole. Whilst many of the recommendations could stand alone, the combined effort necessary to make the Report effective would lose force by a piecemeal consideration or implementation.

that achievement of higher levels of employment for Aboriginal people would be inhibited by the existence of these social mechanisms. Indeed they may prove to be attributes in the development of the economic basis for improving the Aboriginal employment situation.

2.2 CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATIONS IN ABORIGINAL SOCIETY

The diversity of circumstances and life-styles among Aboriginal people themselves and of their relationship with the white communities with which they are associated can be broadly classified within four distinct sets of circumstances. Care should be taken, however, in the use of these categories as anything more than general descriptions. Each group of Aboriginal people represents a unique situation according to the local conditions and social adaptations. As such it would be wrong to assume blanket responses and policies on the basis of the categories described hereunder. This is taken up in more detail later in this Report.

In describing these four groups the Committee wants to be certain that the particular types of social and economic scenarios are firmly established in the minds of the policy makers. There can be no reason to expect that programs to address the unemployment problems of Aboriginal people in the western suburbs of Sydney will be relevant in the communities of remote rural Western Australia.

At the same time, however, it would be equally wrong to develop policies and programs on the assumption that communities which might fit into one of the categories described will all travel the same path to achievement of better livelihood for their members. Rather, these descriptions indicate the broad economic and social frameworks within which Aboriginal communities are located, and provide some clue to the options available to them for directions to be taken.

It appears to have been generally accepted that the Aboriginal population is divided into four main categories - outstations, Aboriginal towns, small non-Aboriginal towns and cities. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs uses these categories in a number of documents and they have been taken up by academics writing on the Aboriginal situation as well. A population breakdown according to these four major categories is provided in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Aboriginal Population by Category of Residence(a), 1981

Category	Proportion of the population (per cent)	Approximate number in the population ('000)
Outstations and other small groups(b)	4.9	7.6
Aboriginal towns(c)	19.6	30.3
Small non-Aboriginal towns(d)	34.3	53.1
Cities and large towns(e)	41.3	63.9
Total	100.0	154.9

- (a) Any discrepancies between totals and the sums of components are due to rounding errors.
- (b) This category includes outstations, homeland centres, groups living on pastoral properties and other small groups.
- (c) In this category are Aboriginal towns or settlements on Aboriginal land or reserves.
- (d) This category includes small to medium size non-Aboriginal towns, including town camps or reserves adjoining such towns.
- (e) This category refers to non-Aboriginal cities and towns of 20 000 people or more.

Source: Fisk, E (1985), The Aboriginal Economy in Town and Country, Allen and Unwin, Sydney.

Outstations and Other Small Groups

Outstations are small communities that have developed as the result of Aboriginal decisions to leave government and mission settlements to return to land with which they identify. The movement has grown rapidly over the last decade. This Aboriginal initiative has received encouragement and assistance from government. As such it appears to be one of the more successful policies directed at greater Aboriginal control of government assistance programs for their own affairs.

Socially, the outstation movement has enabled Aboriginal people to live more in accordance with their own culture and traditions than is possible in situations that are less insulated from the wider society; and usually on land with which they are culturally and traditionally associated. It also enables them to provide for much of their own subsistence needs by hunting, fishing and gathering activities.

This homeland centre movement is a special circumstance which the Committee sees as worthy of a quite distinctive approach in terms of employment development and, therefore, employment and training programs. While

this is dealt with in some detail later in this Report (Chapter 13), it is noticeable that the productive activity of many of the people in these smaller communities, based on assessments of the direct contribution of labour to their own food production and community infrastructure, is significantly greater than of those in the related larger centres.

Outstations were originally reoccupied for a complex set of reasons that included a desire by Aboriginal people to reoccupy clan lands, to protect sacred sites, and to demonstrate land ownership. This migration also demonstrated the failure of the assimilationist policies of the previous decades. People moved out because they were dissatisfied with the results of government policies which assumed that Aboriginal people would adopt wider Australian economic and cultural values and work ethics.

Along with the reoccupation of Aboriginal land there has been a distinct revival in the Aboriginal subsistence economy, based primarily on hunting, fishing and gathering activities. Coupled with this, groups have adopted a limited range of 'market foods' and technology and use these out bush. The extent of market dependence has been funded by pensions and unemployment benefits and cash earned from the sale of artefacts. Despite this limited external dependence, the mainstay of outstations' economies continues to be subsistence production, with the workforce actively engaged in that production.

Altman estimated in 1983 that the subsistence sector provides for about 48 per cent of total income, social security cash for 46 per cent, and art and craft cash income for 6 per cent. [Altman, J (1985), Aboriginal Employment: An Outstation Perspective, Paper presented to a seminar on 'Aboriginal Employment and Economic Development', Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Programs, Melbourne.] These figures indicate that in purely cash terms 90 per cent of cash income is derived from social security income thus underlying the importance these payments have made in allowing groups to live on outstations. Altman's studies at a typical outstation in Arnhem Land showed that people were enjoying a diet well in excess of minimum benchmarks for physical well-being by engaging in productive activities with bush food rather than cash return.

The issue in such situations is not so much one of economic development. People in those situations are already fully engaged in productive activities, enjoy a good diet, have adequate time and resources to participate in important cultural pursuits and have cash incomes that are adequate to meet their present limited, material aspirations while they reside out bush. Circumstances differ, of course, and in the more arid areas for example the need to be more mobile for the purposes of engaging in hunting and gathering generates a requirement for transport with a commensurate change in the demand for, and use of, the cash component of their income.

Aboriginal Towns

These include all of the towns and settlements on Aboriginal or reserved land which differ considerably from outstations in economic and social structure and circumstances. They are characterised by their cohesiveness and distinct separateness (social and geographical), their close adherence to Aboriginal traditional law and custom, marginality of their economic prospects, their history of government and/or mission intervention and subsequent powerless

dependence on government funding for the provision of, if not the entire economic base, certainly the major cash requirements of the local economy. The establishment of these communities as missions and government settlements was not carried out on the basis of any economic rationale. Rather, they were seen by the authorities as places where Aboriginal people might be either protected from the wider society, or prepared for entry into such society. Ostensibly, that preparation was to have included training for the workforce.

The population of these Aboriginal towns is often quite large. In addition to a larger population, Aboriginal towns have a range of social and economic amenities not normally found in the outstations. These vary from place to place, but will often include a school, a health clinic, piped water supply, retail stores, and some permanent housing.

Such Aboriginal towns also have local government functions and offer opportunities for a certain amount of wage employment in the provision of services to the town and restricted opportunities in some wage employment in the operation of enterprises.

Generally, employment at such Aboriginal towns and settlements is based on government funding, whether through social welfare payments, through wage employment generated by public capital investment in municipal infrastructure or the provision of government welfare and ancillary services to the Aboriginal population, or government capital and current expenditure.

This dependency on government funding has the advantage that incomes are to some extent insulated from short and medium-term fluctuations in the mainstream Australian economy. As a consequence, the heavy increase in unemployment that has affected other sectors of the Australian economy in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and which has so seriously detracted from earlier Aboriginal progress in this respect in non-Aboriginal towns and cities, has less impact on the employment situation in the Aboriginal towns. Although wage employment has normally been at a very low level in such towns, the 'recession' in the main economy has not made it very much worse. However, these towns have not been entirely immune, for the reduction in government funding to the towns in recent years has led to some increase in Aboriginal unemployment there.

The fact that most of these townships are located in areas generally devoid of recognised natural resources or far removed from the market place, means that past assimilation policies have fostered Aboriginal dependence on welfare transfers rather than the creation of employment opportunities in the formal labour market. Such 'economic' ventures as were tried have been unsuccessful in the main (as explained in Chapters 12 and 13 of this Report) and there is a general feeling of hopelessness on the part of both Aboriginal people and associated non-Aboriginal staff about prospects for them.

In effect the relationship between non-Aboriginal administrators and Aboriginal residents has become one of mutually unwelcome dependence - the prevailing pessimism of government officers and missionaries matched by Aboriginal adaptation to institutional life is reflected in a pre-occupation with meeting immediate needs.

It is important to note that Aboriginal employees in these towns prior to 1969 were not paid cash wages. Payment was primarily in kind - free accommodation and rations with a small supplementary cash allowance. The

Northern Territory experience provides an example of this situation.

In 1969 the Northern Territory Welfare Branch introduced the training allowance. This scheme attempted to introduce the concept of cash wages for employment more in line with the wider society's work ethic and to force responsibility on individuals to manage money and care for their families. Wages paid under the scheme were well under the minimum award. The base wage was \$25 per week in 1969 compared to the award wage minimum of \$40.15. There were margins for skill built into the scheme but even the highest of these was still well below the award minimum. At its peak over 4000 Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory were receiving training allowance. The election of a new Commonwealth government in 1972 led to termination of the scheme and creation of positions based on award wages. Over 1000 award wage positions were created by the Public Service Board for the maintenance of government townships and 500 for missions. With the phasing out of the training allowance by October 1974 and its replacement by a much smaller number of award wage positions, a large number of Aboriginal people became eligible for unemployment benefits. This same trend occurred in other States with Aboriginal people moving off training allowances onto award wages in remote communities - except in Queensland.

The bulk of employment available today to Aboriginal people in these towns is in the service sector and is financed by government usually through incorporated Aboriginal councils, local government bodies or government departments such as Education and Health. Private sector employment is generally limited - in fact there are very few Aboriginal self-supporting communities, for example, Kakadu communities, with income from mining royalties. The main form of commercial activity is the store (usually a monopoly situation), artefact production and marketing and small enterprises generally subsidised by government.

As indicated earlier, attempts at developing enterprises have been piecemeal and usually based on the ideas of servicing departments or local advisers rather than the Aboriginal people themselves.

In an institutional setting people have tended to view such projects as an extension of the welfare system, whilst departments have applied unrealistic economic expectations to the project performance. These enterprises have generally been poorly assessed, lacked local Aboriginal commitment, and been constrained by lack of capital and available skills. In some cases they have created political and social turmoil by not taking into account existing Aboriginal decision-making structures or traditional laws relating to land use and ownership.

In some areas, townships have served as a pool of cheap and available labour for pastoralists. However, this seasonal type of work has declined considerably in recent years. Mining has created limited opportunities in particular areas. However, for the majority of communities, it does not figure as a current or future employer of great potential.

Small Non-Aboriginal Towns

In the case of these communities the Committee does not differentiate between those actually living in the towns and those living in fringe areas now described as 'town campers'. It does acknowledge however that the individual

economic circumstance of such people may be quite diverse.

These groups of people live in significant numbers (sometimes the majority) in small, and often quite isolated, rural towns whose establishment was predicated on some form of rural industry which requires, or has required, a service centre. In many cases the Aboriginal people themselves have become one of the economic bases of such towns, attracting as they do significant amounts of government funds in the form of their welfare entitlements and programs to improve their social situation, which are then channelled into white controlled enterprises of the towns. Despite this, these communities suffer inordinately high unemployment, and usually own almost none of the local resources. Another characteristic of these groups is, perhaps, their position as displaced workers. Often they have formed the backbone of a much needed rural workforce which has lost its position owing to changes in technology, the changing nature of rural industries, and increased competition from the non-Aboriginal workforce.

Another feature of the Aboriginal populations of these towns is their continuing attachment to the local area. These are relatively stable populations who may move on a seasonal basis to engage in available work, or to undertake education and training. They usually return, however, and relocation has generally been resisted by the majority. Indeed they are often more stable and permanent residents than the non-Aboriginal people who come and go from such towns for work, business opportunities, etc.

When Aboriginal people secure wage employment in or from the non-Aboriginal towns, it is more likely to be in providing services to the economy as a whole rather than in the provision of services specifically for Aboriginal people. Most Aboriginal wage employment in non-Aboriginal towns is in unskilled occupations. Moreover, in these towns Aboriginal job seekers are generally in open competition with non-Aboriginal people. As a result, their employment status in the small towns is very much less stable than it is in the Aboriginal towns, and in times of depression and heavy unemployment in the economy as a whole, they tend to lose out to non-Aboriginal people.

Cities and Large Towns (Total Population of 20 000 or More)

These are the people who live in and around cities and major country towns. While they may still make up considerable numbers, they are usually a definite minority, albeit with a degree of recognisable social residential pattern and group solidarity cohesiveness. While living in these areas of fairly significant economic activity, these people are also characterised by their large-scale unemployment, and lack of resource ownership. Such groups are now more likely than others to be serviced by significant Aboriginal organisations, providing health, legal, housing and other welfare services; as well as having access to direct government services, such as the Commonwealth Employment Service, Department of Social Security.

The economic structure of the Aboriginal population in the cities and large towns is less differentiated from that of the remainder of the Australian population than is the case in the other situations discussed earlier. Nevertheless, Aboriginal people living in cities and large towns generally experience higher unemployment, have a higher dependency ratio, fewer marketable skills and less relevant work experience than the majority of the Australian population.

The distribution of Aboriginal incomes in the different categories of location is outlined below in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2. Aboriginal Incomes per Reporting Adult - Variations Between Categories of Location, 1981

Category	Average income per adult (\$)
Cities	5338
Large towns	4929
Small towns	4326
Aboriginal towns	3592
Outstations etc	4738
All Aboriginal people	4532
All Australians	8169

Source: Fisk, E (1985), The Aboriginal Economy in Town and Country, Allen and Unwin, Sydney.

The consistent pattern demonstrates a polarisation of the Aboriginal population in terms of material welfare. Cash incomes are highest in the capital cities and follow a descending pattern through the large non-Aboriginal towns and then to the Aboriginal towns and settlements where the level of incomes is lowest. A significant feature, however, is that real incomes in outstations are almost as high as those in the large towns, when the imputed value of non-cash income is taken into account. Nevertheless, vis-a-vis other Australians, these people are extremely poor.

2.3 EXISTING ECONOMIC DEPENDENCY

All forms of contemporary Aboriginal society have been through all or part of the usual process of colonisation - dispossession, dispersal, destruction of the traditional economic base and its replacement by a tenuous relationship with the wider economy. In the more remote areas that relationship is characterised by a dependence on government services and programs as the basis for the new economy, replacing the previous productive activities of Aboriginal society. In other areas the relationship has moved through a phase of involvement in the rural workforce, to further displacement into dependence on social welfare as the job opportunities have gradually disappeared. Movement to larger population centres has assisted a small number of Aboriginal people to re-establish greater economic security by giving access to a more open labour market and enabling some to establish positions in the primary labour market. However, even in these situations, the results for too large a number are still far short of the job and economic security of the rest of the population.

Further, it is important to understand that along the way there have been developments of new forms of Aboriginal life-style which are still in conflict with the wider society in many ways. Aboriginal unemployment is as much a result of those historical processes and the continuing relationship with white Australian society as it is a function of structural difficulties in the labour market as a whole. It should not be expected therefore that the labour market problems of Aboriginal people will necessarily respond to measures designed to correct or ameliorate those general labour market difficulties.

Since the difficulty of obtaining paid employment has increased and Aboriginal unemployment has risen, Aboriginal people have become increasingly dependent on government transfer payments as a source of income. This also implies that the delivery of social services and income support has been improved, whilst the economic earning power of Aboriginal people has not, as demonstrated by Fisk's estimated break up of national Aboriginal income into its various components in Table 2.3. It should be noted that this information is very much an estimate of the components of total Aboriginal income in 1981, that was calculated, by necessity owing to a lack of more reliable data, using a number of assumptions. These are spelt out in more detail in Fisk, E (1985), The Aboriginal Economy in Town and Country, Allen and Unwin, Sydney.

Table 2.3. Estimated National Aboriginal Income, 1981

Class and item	Income (\$ million)	Proportion of total (per cent)
Non-traded Goods (Imputed Value)		
Subsistence foods	7.5	1.1
Artefacts	1.0	0.2
Sub total	8.5	1.3
Income from Sales, Royalties, Profits and Wages		
Sale of artefacts	1.0	0.2
Royalties, rents etc	6.3	0.9
Profits of grazing etc	3.0	0.4
Wages etc	175.0	26.2
Sub total	185.3	27.7
Government Transfers Primarily Social		
Social security	214.8	32.1
Advancement program	155.7	23.3
Sub total	370.5	55.4

Table 2.3. (continued)

Class and item	Income (\$ million)	Proportion of total (per cent)
Government Economic Assistance		
Advancement program	104.5	15.6
Total all income	668.8	100.0

Source: Fisk, E (1985), *The Aboriginal Economy in Town and Country*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney.

The imputed value of subsistence foods and consumption of artefacts was just over 1 per cent (or \$8.5 million) of total Aboriginal income in 1981. Where there are Aboriginal pastoral properties they provide some wage employment and rations which are consumed by Aboriginal people. This source of income, however, is the major source of cash income, other than social security payments, for the 5 per cent of Aboriginal people living in outstations. The other component of national Aboriginal income that is not from direct government assistance is income from sales, royalties, profits and wages, and accounts for some 28 per cent of total national income. However, a staggering 71 per cent of total national Aboriginal income was derived from government, mainly from income that can be described as transfers for social welfare purposes. This component was some 56 per cent of total national Aboriginal income and even though it is based on the notion of trying to achieve social equity for Aboriginal people, it has obviously failed to produce the degree of improvement in the Aboriginal situation that Aboriginal people and the Australian government had hoped for. Only \$15.6 million (or 16 per cent) was aimed directly as primarily economic assistance. This clearly demonstrates that the current Aboriginal advancement policy is not positively directed towards the long-term economic prospects of Aboriginal people.

In the meantime, with Aboriginal unemployment reaching unacceptably high levels, a reduction of this situation must have a very high priority in government intervention policies. The Committee sees the need for a radical change in the government's approach to assisting Aboriginal people, with the major emphasis being given to the means whereby people earn their livelihood.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1981 Census of Population and Housing.

3.7 INCOME AND ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE ON THE STATE

Access to employment, and more particularly to skilled employment, is the single most important determinant of most people's income over their lifetimes. As we have seen in this chapter, Aboriginal people are severely disadvantaged with respect to gaining access to both employment and well-paying employment in the Australian labour market. As a consequence it is not surprising that, on average, the incomes of Aboriginal people are significantly lower than those of Australians generally.

As can be seen in Table 3.30, both the median individual income and the median family income of Aboriginal people were less than 60 per cent of the

Table 3.30. Median Income, 1981

	Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders	All Australians	The income of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders as a proportion of the income of all Australians
	(dollars)	(dollars)	(per cent)
Median Annual Income			
Individual income ^(a)	3 677	6 509	56.5
Family income	6 626	12 191	54.4
The individual income of persons aged:			
15-19 years	1 701	2 483	68.5
20-24 years	4 032	8 903	45.2
25-34 years	4 875	10 103	48.3
35-44 years	4 892	9 992	49.0
45-54 years	4 051	9 073	44.7
55-59 years	3 688	6 783	57.0
60-64 years	3 422	3 824	89.5
65-69 years	3 363	3 397	99.0
70 years	3 363	3 397	99.0
70 years or more	3 376	3 600	93.8

(a) The income of individuals age 15 years or more.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1981 Census of Population and Housing.

corresponding national median incomes. Median incomes are those most frequently received and are therefore a better indicator of most people's income than are measures of average income. The median income of individual Aboriginal people was only \$3677 per year in 1981 and the median income received by Aboriginal families was \$6626 per year. In contrast, the national median income of individuals was \$6509 per year and that of families was \$12 191 per year.

Even more revealing are the discrepancies between Aboriginal and national median incomes over the life cycle, as shown in Table 3.30. At no stage over a lifetime do Aboriginal median incomes reach the level of national median incomes. Aboriginal median incomes are closer to national median incomes at those times in life when people typically receive low incomes, those times being as teenagers and at older ages. It is only past retirement age, when people are eligible for the age pension, that median Aboriginal incomes approach the level of national median incomes. However, it should be remembered that over the prime working years between the ages of 20 and 55 years that Aboriginal median incomes are less than 50 per cent of the level of national median incomes. Therefore, massive differences between Aboriginal people and Australians generally exist in the opportunities for wealth accumulation over a lifetime.

The above discussion is, in a sense, one about the typical income position of Aboriginal people. It is also necessary to consider the distribution of income to get an indication of the variation in people's incomes. Some information about income distribution is given in Table 3.31. In 1981, just under a half of the Aboriginal population aged 15 years or more had an annual income of less than \$4000 compared with a national proportion of

Table 3.31. The Distribution of Income, 1981

Individual annual income (dollars)	Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders			All Australians		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
	(per cent)	(per cent)	(per cent)	(per cent)	(per cent)	(per cent)
0 - 2 000	17.1	31.7	24.5	7.9	29.7	18.8
2 001 - 4 000	23.7	22.7	23.2	13.0	21.9	17.8
4 001 - 6 000	10.9	15.3	13.1	6.9	10.7	8.8
6 001 - 8 000	14.0	8.4	11.1	7.1	8.1	7.6
8 001 - 10 000	9.0	4.3	6.6	9.5	6.9	8.2
10 001 - 12 000	7.2	2.4	4.8	13.7	6.8	10.2
12 001 - 15 000	4.6	1.2	2.9	14.5	4.9	9.6
15 001 - 18 000	1.8	0.3	1.1	9.4	2.3	5.8
18 001 - 22 000	0.8	0.1	0.5	6.4	1.1	3.7
22 001 or more	0.6	0.1	0.3	7.2	0.8	3.9
Not stated	10.3	13.5	11.9	4.4	6.8	5.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1981 Census of Population and Housing.

just over one-third. In the higher income brackets the discrepancies between Aboriginal people and all Australians were much larger. For instance, there were five times more people in the general population than in the Aboriginal population who had incomes of over \$15 000 per year and some 13 times as many people in the general population as in the Aboriginal population who had incomes of over \$22 000 per year.

In the case of both Aboriginal and all Australian females, incomes were much more concentrated at the lower end of the scale than were male incomes. Both Aboriginal and all females had a similar proportion of their number, around 50 per cent, having incomes of less than \$4000 per year. However, females generally were eight times more likely to have incomes of more than \$15 000 per year than were Aboriginal females.

Just over 40 per cent of Aboriginal males had incomes of less than \$4000 per year, whereas only just over 20 per cent of all males had such low incomes. As was the case with females, Australian males generally were eight times more likely to have incomes of over \$15 000 per year than were Aboriginal males.

Significant differences between Aboriginal and all people were also evident with respect to the income distributions of those who were employed, as shown in Table 3.32. Some 16 per cent of Aboriginal people who were employed in 1981 had incomes of less than \$4000 per year whereas only 9 per cent of all employed people had such low incomes. At the other end of the scale fewer than one per cent of employed Aboriginal people compared with nearly 7 per cent of all employed people had incomes of over \$22 000 per year.

Table 3.32. The Distribution of the Income of Employed People, 1981

Individual annual income (dollars)	Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders			All Australians		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
	(per cent)	(per cent)	(per cent)	(per cent)	(per cent)	(per cent)
0 - 4 000	11.9	23.3	15.9	4.4	17.3	9.2
4 001 - 10 000	48.7	49.6	49.0	24.7	45.3	31.7
10 001 - 15 000	24.0	12.1	19.7	36.8	25.8	32.7
15 001 - 22 000	5.2	1.8	4.2	21.0	7.5	16.0
22 001 or more	1.2	0.3	0.9	9.6	1.6	6.6
Not stated	9.0	12.9	10.3	3.5	4.3	3.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1981 Census of Population and Housing.

Those who have no access to employment usually have little choice but to rely on the State for their income through the various pensions and benefits available under the social security system. Therefore, it is not surprising that Aboriginal dependence on the State is some 50 per cent higher than for the general population, as shown in Table 3.33. Unfortunately, the most recent data available were for 1976. In 1976 the proportions in the Aboriginal and national populations, respectively, who were in receipt of social security benefits or pensions other than the unemployment benefit were almost identical at around 20 per cent. However, large differences were apparent in the proportions who were forced to mainly rely on the unemployment benefit for their livelihood. Over 9 per cent of the Aboriginal working age population were in receipt of the unemployment benefit, whereas the corresponding proportion for the general working age population was under 2 per cent. The fact that Aboriginal people were over five times more likely as people generally to be in receipt of the unemployment benefit, but were no more likely to be collecting other pensions and benefits, reinforces the view that most of the income disadvantage faced by Aboriginal people relates directly to their disadvantage in the labour market and to inequalities in access to employment.

Table 3.33. Dependency on Social Security Benefits and Pensions, 1976

	Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders				All Australians			
	Males (^{'000})	Females (^{'000})	Persons (^{'000})	Persons (per cent)	Males (^{'000})	Females (^{'000})	Persons (^{'000})	Persons (per cent)
Dependent on Social Security Benefits or Pensions(a)								
Unemployment benefits	5.7	2.6	8.3	9.1	103.4	59.4	162.8	1.7
Other social security benefits or pensions	6.5	12.5	19.0	20.8	787.3	1198.3	1185.6	20.1
Sub total	12.2	15.1	27.3	29.9	890.7	1257.7	2148.4	21.8
Not Dependent on Social Security Benefits or Pensions								
Not receiving benefits or pensions	30.5	27.5	58.0	63.5	3788.5	3530.2	7318.7	74.2
Not stated	2.9	3.1	6.0	6.6	205.3	185.7	391.0	4.0
Sub total	33.4	30.6	64.0	70.1	3993.8	3715.9	7709.7	78.2
Total population aged 15 years or more	45.6	45.7	91.3	100.0	4884.5	4973.6	9858.1	100.0

(a) Includes persons receiving more than one type of social security pension or benefit.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1976 Census of Population and Housing.

Given that the numbers of people who are economically dependent on social security benefits and pensions have grown considerably since 1976 with the deterioration in the labour market over the last decade, the numbers of Aboriginal people who are now dependent on benefits and pensions must also have grown considerably from the 27 000 reported in 1976. As shown in Table 3.34, if the proportion of Aboriginal people in the total number receiving benefits and pensions was the same in 1984 as it was in 1976, then there would have been nearly 50 000 Aboriginal people by 1984 in receipt of social security benefits and pensions, and nearly 30 000 of these people would be receiving the unemployment benefit.

Table 3.34. Social Security Benefit and Pension Recipients, 1976 and 1984

Type of benefit	Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders ('000)	All Australians ('000)	Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders as a proportion of the total (per cent)
	1976 actual	1976 actual	1976 actual
Unemployment benefit recipients	8.3	162.8	5.1
Other benefit or pension recipients	19.0	1985.6	1.0
Total benefit or pension recipients	27.3	2148.4	1.3
	1984 estimated	1984 actual	1984 estimated
Unemployment benefit recipients	(a)29.8	584.5	5.1
Other benefit or pension recipients	(b)19.4	2031.0	1.0
Total benefit or pension recipients	49.2	2615.5	1.9

(a) The assumption used to derive this figure was that the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander unemployment benefit recipients as a proportion of the total number of unemployment benefit recipients did not change between 1976 and 1984. That is it remained at 5.1 per cent of total unemployment benefit recipients.

(b) The same methodology as was used with respect to unemployment benefit recipients was used to derive this figure.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1976 Census Population and Housing; and Department of Social Security (1984), Annual Report 1983-84, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

Some more recent data, however, were available with respect to the dependence of Aboriginal people on the unemployment benefit in remote areas, as shown in Table 3.35. Over 20 per cent of Aboriginal people living in Aboriginal townships on Aboriginal land or reserves were dependent on the unemployment benefit in 1983, and one-third of those living in homeland communities or other small groups received the unemployment benefit. In both situations males were much more likely than females to be in receipt of the unemployment benefit.

Table 3.35. Aboriginal People Receiving Unemployment Benefits in Remote Aboriginal Communities, 1983

	Number receiving unemployment benefits ('000)	Unemployment benefit recipients as a proportion of the	
		Non-employed population aged 15 years or more (per cent)	Total population aged 15 years or more (per cent)
Aboriginal Townships on Aboriginal Land or Reserves			
Males	3.8	40.9	29.5
Females	1.6	14.4	12.5
Persons	5.4	23.1	21.0
Homeland Communities and Other Small Groups			
Males	1.4	53.9	43.8
Females	0.7	25.0	22.6
Persons	2.1	38.9	33.3
All Remote Aboriginal Communities			
Males	5.2	43.7	32.3
Females	2.3	16.6	14.5
Persons	7.5	29.1	23.4

Source: Department of Aboriginal Affairs (1984), 1983 Community Profile Statistical Collection, Statistical Section Newsletter No. 13, Canberra.

6. DEVELOPING A NEW APPROACH TO ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

6.1 THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THE CURRENT POLICY APPROACH AND THE NEED FOR A NEW APPROACH

The Shortcomings of the Current Approach

The charter of this Review was to consider the way in which the current array of Aboriginal employment, training and education programs and measures are contributing to the alleviation of the unacceptably high levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander unemployment. The evidence presented in Part II of this Report clearly demonstrates that, despite considerable expenditure by government, the efforts that have been made have not been sufficient to prevent Aboriginal unemployment from worsening. Moreover, on the basis of the submissions received and consultations across Australia, the Committee is firmly convinced that a continuation of the current arrangements will have only a marginal impact on reducing Aboriginal unemployment beyond what has already been achieved.

It is widely recognised that a massive reduction in unemployment generally in Australia, if indeed it can be envisaged at all, will undoubtedly mainly depend on the success of overall macroeconomic management in correcting the existing structural and cyclical imbalances in the economy, and on the strength of the economy to achieve a sustained growth in economic activity. In this context employment, training and education programs have an integral and complementary role to play, but in themselves can never be expected to overcome those economic problems from which unemployment stems. In the case of Aboriginal unemployment, however, it is impossible to envisage a massive reduction in unemployment even if the most favourable of economic scenarios were to be sustained to a point where overall unemployment was significantly reduced. This is because the nature and magnitude of Aboriginal unemployment is quite different from that of the national unemployment problem. Moreover, the role of employment, training and education policy in contributing to an alleviation of Aboriginal unemployment must, correspondingly, also be quite different.

The main differences between the nature of the Aboriginal unemployment problem and the national unemployment problem stem from the very different circumstances in which Aboriginal people live, and the manner and degree in which, historically, they have been absorbed into the workforce of the wider economy. A significant proportion of the Aboriginal population live in isolation from the main centres of economic activity and have life-styles that are very different from those of the rest of the Australian population. Some, also, maintain in that life-style a relationship with the labour market which has never been able to develop beyond a dependence upon the most vulnerable areas of employment. The National Employment Strategy for Aboriginals (NESA) has failed to take account of the different needs of Aboriginal people which stem from the diverse range of situations in which they live, and the consequently available means of livelihood in those situations.

The most important failings of the current arrangements are:

- an almost exclusive concern for participation in the regular labour market as employees;
- a lack of identification of the barriers to employment in certain circumstances and, therefore, the provision of inappropriate responses;
- an attempt to replicate regular employment conditions in situations which have neither the economic base to support them, nor Aboriginal life-styles compatible with those conditions; and
- a failure to properly include significant Aboriginal involvement in the decision making process at all levels, particularly at the local level.

The underlying implication of the NESAs, that Aboriginal people would or should integrate in some manner into the mainstream Australian economy, was never achievable through the components of the strategy. We would go further and suggest it is an inappropriate aim for a significant element of the Aboriginal population.

The thrust of government's response to Aboriginal unemployment has seriously failed to take account of the fact that a significant proportion of the Aboriginal population do not wish to leave those remote and rural areas in which they live. The prospects for regular labour market opportunities, or development to generate them on a scale that could be expected to drastically reduce existing unemployment, are severely limited in such areas. Even more important is that such employment and economic development is very often totally in conflict with local Aboriginal aspirations to establish and develop the economic bases of their communities in a way that is consistent with their particular life-styles. As a consequence, a large number of Aboriginal people have had very little option but to rely on government welfare and income support programs as the basis of their livelihood.

We do not suggest that Aboriginal people ought to be denied access to regular employment or to integral involvement in the mainstream economy. On the contrary, many Aboriginal people wish to gain regular employment and achieve living standards and life-styles that are similar to those of other Australians. The labour market programs of the NESAs that were designed to promote such objectives for Aboriginal people, however, were largely predicated on the notion that their unemployment was a relatively short-term and transient phenomenon, requiring some assistance only until such time as the overall economy improved and job opportunities returned. As a consequence, most of the assistance available to Aboriginal people under the NESAs has been oriented towards short-term subsidised job placements, the creation of limited period employment and to involvement in short-term training courses. It is not surprising that a decade ago employment and training programs should have assumed this form. However, given the historical context of Aboriginal unemployment, together with the substantial changes that have occurred in the Australian labour market and economy since then, it is now quite clear that this approach was incomplete. Those Aboriginal employment, training and education programs, that are designed to promote greater Aboriginal involvement in regular employment, must be directed towards forms of assistance that will enhance individual Aboriginal people's long-term employment prospects. This necessarily requires far greater attention to the acquisition of accredited and recognised educational qualifications, to recruitment to permanent employment, to measures designed to promote

Aboriginal participation in employment in all sectors of the economy, and to participation in the economy as business operators and employers.

Whatever the failings of the NESAs with respect to the misdirection of programs and measures designed to promote Aboriginal access to regular employment, they were relatively minor in comparison to the failings of the Strategy with respect to a realistic recognition of the employment and economic options for Aboriginal people living in smaller communities, particularly in rural and remote areas. The major emphasis was given to limited financial support for employment within the community, usually in relation to the extension of welfare, municipal and other government services within the community. In effect, there has been an attempt to replicate regular employment in these areas within the community, but without the economic bases to sustain employment for more than a fairly small proportion of the working age population in such jobs. We are certainly not arguing here that government financial support for such jobs should be massively increased in order to artificially employ a much greater proportion of the working age population of communities, but rather we are criticising the fact that the NESAs have not ever really catered for anything beyond such an approach.

The remainder of the population in most rural and remote communities has had no other option (except to the extent that they can continue some hunter-gatherer activities) but to mainly rely on social security benefits and pensions for their economic existence. In many places, and particularly in those small country towns with significant Aboriginal populations, this constituted the only option available for all but a few Aboriginal people. Rarely have Aboriginal employment, training and education programs and measures been directed to the real economic options of Aboriginal communities, and rarely have they supported Aboriginal attempts to engage in other forms of legitimate, productive economic activity in more than an ad hoc way. The programs and measures to assist Aboriginal people in communities must be quite different in their form to those designed to promote greater Aboriginal access to the regular labour market.

Consideration of ways to reduce the massive levels of Aboriginal unemployment and joblessness in rural and remote areas necessarily requires consideration of the underlying structural barriers that are inhibiting Aboriginal attempts to establish meaningful and appropriate economic bases in these areas. The most important factor is undoubtedly the lack of control over and access to land and other productive resources. Land is an issue that has received considerable prominence in Aboriginal affairs, but mainly for non-economic reasons. However, in the context of the economic progress of Aboriginal people, the importance of land as an economic resource cannot be overstated. This importance varies from land being a critical resource to sustain the hunter and gatherer economy, which supports a significant number of Aboriginal people, to the importance of land in Aboriginal aspirations to participate, on a much larger scale, in Australia's agricultural, pastoral and other natural resource-based industries. In towns where Aboriginal people make up large proportions of the population, Aboriginal control, ownership and employment in the businesses that they already sustain, by way of being significant consumers, is equally important. Yet government policy relating to the acquisition of land and other economic resources for Aboriginal people has received little prominence as an economic policy issue and there have been few links between Aboriginal employment, training and education programs and measures, and land acquisition and enterprise development programs. That land and enterprise loans and grants have not been included as an integral

component of the NESAs is a considerable shortcoming of the current approach.

Related to the failure to differentiate between the objectives, policies and programs appropriate for the development of community viability and the enhancement of the income generating potential of Aboriginal communities, is the problem of a lack of a clear delineation in the functional responsibilities between different government agencies. The result has been a proliferation of programs and measures that are frequently not distinguishable from one another, and that have as a result obstructed attempts to overcome Aboriginal unemployment, rather than enabled a concerted effort to be made to alleviate that unemployment. The examples are numerous. The Special Work Projects (SWP) scheme and the Training for Aboriginals Program (TAP) both provide wage subsidies to employers to employ Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme (Abstudy) and the TAP both provide student allowances, albeit at different rates, for Aboriginal students undertaking post-secondary studies. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA), the Commonwealth Department of Education (CDE), and the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DEIR) all directly fund tertiary education institutions to run formal courses for Aboriginal people, and each department also funds special training courses on-site in Aboriginal communities. The Commonwealth Employment Program (CEP) and the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) both provide funding for community-based employment projects. The result of all this overlap and duplication has not been to provide a better service to Aboriginal people, but rather has been to confuse them and the staff responsible for the delivery of programs. Moreover, the administrative inefficiency of this duplication is massive. Any policy to promote Aboriginal employment and economic livelihood must be framed in such a way as to clearly delineate the functional responsibilities of each government agency involved.

The question of Aboriginal involvement in the decision making processes that affect them, beyond having Aboriginal employees in government agencies, is one that is given little or no emphasis in the current NESAs policy. However, it is quite clear to this Committee that the proper resolution of problems such as poorly specified programs and a lack of co-ordination in their delivery can only occur with central Aboriginal involvement in decision making at the national and regional levels, and most important of all, at the local level. Aboriginal people must have the key say in how government can facilitate their own attempts to earn a livelihood. It is difficult to envisage a greatly improved success in government policy without such involvement. Moreover, in retrospect, it is obvious that the philosophical basis of the NESAs and of plans to develop work opportunities, particularly in remote areas, have largely ignored Aboriginal views about appropriate courses of action and about the pace and direction of economic change.

The Need for a New Approach

Description of the shortcomings of the current approach to dealing with the problems of Aboriginal employment clearly indicates that a new strategy is required. That strategy cannot be instituted in isolation and must be placed within a more general policy framework which clearly shifts the focus away from merely meeting welfare needs (bound up in the provision of funds) to stimulating development of a kind suited to the demands of the life-styles of various Aboriginal groups (concentrating on use of funds).

This new approach must begin with a recognition of the economic situations of various Aboriginal groups and an assessment of the degree to which it can provide them with an acceptable livelihood compatible with their chosen life-styles. We believe this will involve assistance to Aboriginal people to:

- . obtain and retain jobs in the regular labour market;
- . develop their own enterprises and businesses;
- . carry out the tasks of service provision to their own communities;
- . undertake the management of community enterprises; and
- . increase their own community viability.

6.2 NEW DIRECTIONS IN PROMOTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE REGULAR LABOUR MARKET

The Committee believes that for a very significant proportion of the Aboriginal workforce employment in the regular labour market will be the means of their providing for their livelihood. Their opportunities in that labour market cannot be improved by employment and training programs alone, but by attention to education outcomes, and to resource ownership and development as well. Attempts to improve Aboriginal access to the regular labour market must take account of all of these factors.

As regards Aboriginal education and training a much greater effort is required to change the low school completion rates. The relationship between higher qualifications and employment is clearly demonstrated and the Committee urges a change in emphasis in the education programs to direct greater resources into improving Aboriginal secondary school completion as a matter of utmost priority.

For those in the labour force at present and whose lack of educational qualifications contribute to their inability to get jobs, specific training is required to deal with these deficiencies as well as to develop work skills. If labour market training is to have any effect at all it must provide real training, giving recognised qualifications, and not depend entirely on the provision of work experience. Thus significant changes are required in the way that both Abstudy and the TAP are currently applied. The government can no longer continue to delude Aboriginal people with 'training' programs which do not achieve the aim of real improvement in their ability to gain employment or to engage in productive activity.

The Committee believes rationalisation of the TAP and Abstudy operations is essential. Much greater emphasis is needed under Abstudy on education and training which gives Aboriginal people qualifications, at the expense, if necessary, of hobby and personal development courses. The Committee is aware that there may be some resistance to this approach on educational grounds. However, it is a very necessary approach, particularly while resources are constrained, if the thrust of the government policy to assist Aboriginal people to provide for their own livelihood is to be driven home.

We believe DEIR training assistance is better directed to on-site courses which directly contribute to improving Aboriginal work skills. We see

the need for much greater emphasis on this, through the TAP special course arrangements, within Aboriginal communities and associated with Aboriginal enterprises. We also see the need for a clear differentiation between this training function and the wage subsidy function within the TAP. While the former should involve actual training plans and arrangements to meet those plans, the latter should be directed towards recruitment to continuing jobs.

The private sector of the regular labour market accounts for the employment of three out of every four Australian workers. The Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) ought to provide Aboriginal people with a major avenue to employment in this area. The Committee is not impressed with the performance of the CES as regards Aboriginal employment. We recognise that the CES faces many difficulties in its work in relation to Aboriginal people, some of which are aspects of the market place (e.g. location, employer resistance etc.), and some of which are of its own making (e.g. inappropriate divisions of responsibility between specialist and general staff, reluctance to confront employer attitudes etc.). The evidence from some programs, particularly with respect to the local National Aboriginal Employment Development Committee (NAEDC) promotion campaigns and the CEP, convinces the Committee that the CES can do significantly better, when pushed, to increase Aboriginal referral to and placement in jobs. Greater efforts are required to translate these performances into the every day activities of the CES. To this end the relationship between general CES staff and the specialist Vocational Officer must become more of a partnership than the current division of labour allows. The efforts being made towards service integration should be pursued with considerably more vigour and CES management, at all levels, must become more active in ensuring better service to Aboriginal clients. The over-reliance by the CES on special programs and officers for Aboriginal people has resulted in an ineffective service and considerable disillusionment among Aboriginal people. Such special programs and services should be seen as supplements to, rather than replacement for, direct referral and placement activity by the CES generally.

Activity by the CES should not be confined to referral and placement. A much more active CES role in facilitating community action to overcome Aboriginal unemployment is required. There are several aspects of this including early employment counselling for Aboriginal students at school, effective service follow-up for trainees and employers, and creation of mechanisms for involvement of local employers and community leaders to address the problem. These community level activities are more likely to be fruitful than peripatetic efforts of the NAEDC.

The Committee is certain, however, that placing the entire burden for penetration of the private sector on the CES is not likely to achieve the results required. Private employers, particularly large companies with representation in areas of high Aboriginal population, need to adopt affirmative action strategies for employment of Aboriginal staff. By 'affirmative action' we mean company policies to bring about a representation of Aboriginal people in their workforce, and the adoption of internal means to implement those policies. The Committee believes the adoption of such policies is essential to provide the climate in which the private sector can effectively deal with its social obligations in this area.

There is a need for programs which will increase the numbers of Aboriginal employers in the private sector. Not only would this increase the

overall wealth of Aboriginal people but the role of Aboriginal employers is a further element in increasing Aboriginal access to the regular labour market. Aboriginal employers will be much more likely to employ other Aboriginal people, and Aboriginal businesses and industries are likely to improve the general attitudes in some areas, to acceptance of Aboriginal people as employees. This will also give Aboriginal people greater access to the informal job referral network which occurs with small business, particularly in country towns.

In the public sector, the Committee believes it is time to replace much of the current superficial 'training' activity with programs to improve direct recruitment of Aboriginal staff. Such recruitment should occur at base and above base levels, and make provision for entry into clerical and administrative, technical, professional and managerial positions. The public sector should also establish better mechanisms for career development for Aboriginal staff, including more access to in-house training courses and incentives to undertake formal studies through sponsorship.

The public sector can also contribute significantly to Aboriginal employment development in the private sector through government contracts. The present arrangements in the National Employment Strategy for Aboriginals (NESA) have proved entirely unsatisfactory in this regard. It appears to the Committee that the major obstacle has been inertia within the government departments and a much stronger policy is required. Two aspects of such policy should be, the provision of incentives to contractors to employ Aboriginal people (perhaps by preference to contractors who do so), and the provision of contracts directly to Aboriginal businesses. Indeed the Committee believes there is scope for deliberate effort to create or support certain small Aboriginal businesses on the basis of such contracts. Action to this end ought to be undertaken by the departments letting contracts, in conjunction with, but not entirely dependent on, CES and/or DAA/ADC program intervention.

The details of the regular labour market policies and programs recommended are provided in Part V of the Report. The Committee believes that action on all of the fronts outlined, from education to enterprise development, is needed if further penetration of this labour market is to be achieved. A steady development along this line should ultimately protect Aboriginal people from the disproportionate effects of economic slumps, on their employment situation, which has been their lot to date.

6.3 NEW DIRECTIONS IN ASSISTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

The term 'community development' was bandied about before the Committee throughout its deliberations. What became increasingly obvious was that the term has as many meanings as there were people using it, each one usually associated with the activity of the particular organisation involved.

This Committee believes little is achieved by arguments about who knows best what is 'community development'. We believe that the major focus of community development should now be assistance to Aboriginal people to provide for their own livelihood and if this is done, Aboriginal people will determine for themselves the ultimate definitions. This necessitates consideration of ways Aboriginal people might earn higher income than at present, recognising that income includes the non-cash products of traditional and semi-traditional

activity and other goods and services produced for consumption within the community itself.

The Committee was impressed with evidence it has received showing the increasing economic viability of certain Aboriginal homeland centres. This increased viability has come, not from industrial development, nor from further government payments, but from productive Aboriginal work. In particular hunting and gathering and artefact production have increased the direct contribution to the economy of food for consumption and additional cash. Other cash in such communities is provided in the form of social security benefits. However, if the non-cash income is imputed into a cash equivalent, the social security payments make up only about half of the total for many small communities and this proportion could be further reduced.

One of the major steps which must be taken is to recognise that people in these situations are employed in their own highly productive activities. Encouragement of similar steps for other Aboriginal people, where possible, represents a viable answer to their need to better provide for their livelihood. Obviously, the changes in Aboriginal life-style dictate that for most of these groups some development is necessary to permit the operation of this type of economy. In any case they remain entitled to the usual services provided to other sections of Australian society. Such services themselves can be an important source of income in those communities where they are provided by appropriately trained members of the community.

Fundamental to meeting the needs of those communities, of course, is access to land; for their economies are based on effective use and management of the land. In the consideration of how to support Aboriginal communities choosing this life-style, land is the prime consideration for economic reasons, let alone cultural and social ties.

The Committee considers the manner of support for these communities to be crucial to their future. Forced economic development, in the sense of industry and commerce, is not likely to be supported and will have a higher failure rate. At the same time a response to any demands for additional income which changes the balance of income production in favour of an increased proportion of direct government transfer is likely to stifle initiative and recreate dependency.

The Committee believes the CDEP, when properly understood and implemented, provides a sound approach for communities needing to develop a more diverse economic base. It needs to be considered as much (perhaps more) an income supplement to productive activity being undertaken, as it is a work creation program. Either way, the CDEP cannot stand alone and must be supplemented with funding to develop the infrastructure which will allow the scheme to work as an aid to development. The nature of such development will vary from area to area, but is likely to include much that is usually provided by local government. There is a need to establish local government structures which can undertake this role for communities using the CDEP, and similar communities. In addition there is a training requirement intrinsic to all such developments which must be provided for at the time of development planning. Ad hoc and add-on training programs are likely to result in continued dependence on outside assistance, particularly if not directly aligned to the provision of skills for Aboriginal people for the tasks they choose and need to perform.

The mechanisms for delivery of actual training (as opposed to programs which fund training) is an area of considerable concern. The Committee believes that the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) sector has generally failed throughout Australia in relation to community development training requirements. In Chapter 8 we deal with this in some detail. If the TAFE is to play a role in Aboriginal training for community development it must adopt a much more flexible attitude to the delivery of this training to Aboriginal communities. Some positive measures on modular training are being developed by the TAFE in the Northern Territory and this is to be encouraged.

The Commonwealth funds directed to the TAFE sector for Aboriginal training should be used to ensure a more appropriate TAFE service than is currently available. The Committee is aware also that some very successful Aboriginal controlled organisations have been able to deliver specific training services to Aboriginal communities. Our view is that more specific training resource organisations will be required for particular purposes. These should be established on a regional basis and become the providers of training related to specific aspects of community development needs. The role of these organisations is developed in more detail in Chapter 17.

There should be no further government funding to any organisations on the basis of requirement to assess what are Aboriginal people's needs for training. The Committee's view is that there are already too many Commonwealth, State/Territory and private (usually Commonwealth funded) agencies which see this as their task, and it is mostly carried out in isolation from total community development planning by Aboriginal people. The Committee is aware that in some areas there are up to five or six departments (Commonwealth and State/Territory) and/or instrumentalities making forays into the field of consultation with Aboriginal communities on their employment and training needs. The Committee's view is that this is not effective use of Commonwealth funds, which would be better directed to the Aboriginal communities to enable them to purchase their own training according to their own assessment of needs.

We believe Aboriginal people will be in a position to orchestrate the responses of training authorities where they plan such training as a part of their own community development. They will avoid training for the sake of training, which occurs now, through such planning. To do this, however, they must be aware of what government is prepared to support and, in particular, that it intends Aboriginal people should progressively provide for their livelihood beyond government budget provisions. The impression we have encountered in a number of places, that Aboriginal livelihood is and must remain entirely a function of those government budget provisions, must be corrected. The Committee cannot over-stress the definite view it has formed that where Aboriginal people themselves are in control of their communities, significant development is already occurring. The prime example of this is, of course, the homeland centre movement.

However, there are still a number of places where control clearly rests in the hands of the non-Aboriginal staff of communities, and the Committee sees this as a significant barrier to community development and self-management. Part of this problem stems from the nature of the employment of these non-Aboriginal staff. We seriously question the need for generalist 'community adviser' and 'co-ordinator' positions within Aboriginal communities. These seem in many instances to halt, rather than facilitate, the flow of information between government agencies and Aboriginal people. Their

presence also provides a convenient excuse for government officers to carry out easy 'consultation', and for Aboriginal people to abrogate their responsibility for decision making. If non-Aboriginal people are required in Aboriginal communities, their status should be that of employees and their tenure should be limited and training for their replacement provided.

The Committee acknowledges that the occupants of these positions are usually sincere and dedicated people who make very serious attempts to carry out their duties in a manner responsive to Aboriginal requests. We also acknowledge an expertise gap within many Aboriginal communities which requires the continuation of the availability of expert advice. Nevertheless, we do not see what real contribution is made by the existence of such generalist positions. In Chapters 13 and 17 we recommend an approach to the provision of specific expertise for Aboriginal communities in lieu of these general advisory positions. A more serious attempt should be made by departments and authorities to communicate policy and program information directly to Aboriginal communities. The Committee accepts that this is a difficult task (for reasons of language, distance, etc.), but believes no real development is likely to occur without Aboriginal people themselves having the knowledge on which decisions must be based.

Should, as we recommend, the thrust of government policy be firmly fixed on the expansion of the economic base for communities, employment and training programs must be flexibly and sensibly administered in accordance with agreed local plans. To this end decision making needs to be localised. Indeed government officers need to be delegated to make commitments (within the usual constraints) to such plans and thus respond clearly and directly to Aboriginal needs. The principle behind this in terms of development, is maximum local Aboriginal control of, and responsibility for, the process. Mechanisms to permit this planning and control will need to be established.

The development of these remote Aboriginal communities is a land based process. The position of people living on pastoral properties owned by others is quite critical. The future for such people is bleak in terms of their ability to provide for their livelihood. Their position in the pastoral industry will need to be strengthened beyond control of excisions and occasional work in the industry, although these are important stages in the process. The Committee sees no reason that Aboriginal people should not become, progressively, prime operators of this and other rural industries, particularly in the northern parts of Australia.

The provision for diversification of the economic bases of Aboriginal communities must include those in or around small non-Aboriginal towns. The prospects of the regular labour market for these people are virtually non-existent. The major hope for their future is for those communities to gain a foothold in the economic base of such towns and surrounding areas. This implies not only access to commercial enterprises, but the acquisition of land and other resources as the basis for community enterprises, which while not necessarily viable in the short-term, will create a local focus on income production (as opposed to the delivery of welfare services only) and contribute greatly to community viability. The maintenance of these community enterprises is an integral part of the long-term process of providing for the employment and social needs of these communities.

As a final statement on Aboriginal community development the Committee wants to point out that this approach should not be limited to the remote,

more traditionally oriented groups. Indeed a geographical break-up of the method of government response to Aboriginal provision for livelihood is not possible. Discrete Aboriginal communities exist in urban centres and while prospects of their members in the regular labour market can be improved, and will be the major means by which they can provide for their livelihood, there is scope and a need for the creation of new jobs through community enterprise development.

The Committee believes that there should now be a concentration in government policy and programs on the provision of capital and human resources to permit Aboriginal people to provide for their own livelihood. Employment and training will be key components of this policy and should be accounted for in all other aspects of government provision for Aboriginal communities.

In addition, the government will need to establish the mechanisms whereby Aboriginal people can have a stake in the total development occurring in Australia. Access to royalties from developments on Aboriginal land should be expanded. Particular industries likely to impact upon Aboriginal communities, such as mining, tourism, the pastoral and fishing industries, forestry, national park development and environmental reconstruction must be examined in relation to their contribution to Aboriginal livelihood. The government should also consider reservation of some such industries for development by Aboriginal people.

Conclusion

In both the regular labour market and the Aboriginal community development situations fundamental changes are required in the government employment and training programs and the way they are delivered. Throughout the rest of this Report we recommend the specific changes needed. Broadly they concern:

- Changes in the approach by the DEIR to bring about greater access by Aboriginal people to all of the services provided by that department, not just its special measures for Aboriginal people. Within its programs there must be a move away from funding short-term job creation to more effective influence over discrete recruitment of Aboriginal people by employers and the provision of real training opportunities. The latter should provide for qualifications (e.g. through apprenticeships) which can lead to employment, and specific training to assist Aboriginal workers in community enterprises and activities to increase their job skills, for the purposes of viability of the enterprise or activity. The DEIR programs should deal considerably less with the public sector except as part of recruitment plans by public sector organisations. In the Commonwealth there ought be no need for DEIR financial assistance for Aboriginal people to be recruited. Such assistance should be reduced to supporting training for recruitment in the State/Territory public sectors. The DEIR needs also to give greater attention to:
 - the development of affirmative action strategies by employers;
 - assistance to Aboriginal communities to develop employment opportunities;

- preparation of career and occupational information and its effective delivery to Aboriginal people.
- Provision of resources to significantly improve education for Aboriginal people. The CDE should concentrate its efforts in this area and, in conjunction with the NAEC, take the Commonwealth responsibility for all schooling and formal tertiary training within the educational institutions for Aboriginal people. A major focus should be the improvement of Aboriginal access to and success in secondary education. In addition there needs to be more effort in the professional, technical and management areas of training to provide qualified Aboriginal people for the regular labour market and for development within the Aboriginal community. This will entail the provision of special support arrangements in institutions over a wider range of occupational categories than at present. The CDE officers should devote their time and effort to ensuring the success of Aboriginal students at all levels of education.
- Expansion of the Aboriginal economic base. The ADC should concern itself with this issue as its primary role. Its present pre-occupation with housing is a barrier to the economic development role and much greater resources need to be put into enterprises and the acquisition of land. Economic development is not only dependent on capital but on the preparation and training of the human resources to make use of the capital. Therefore a much closer relationship between capital funds and training programs is required. This will involve close co-operation between the ADC and the DEIR.
- Much greater attention to the structural basis on which Aboriginal development might occur. The DAA should switch its attention away from the operation of programs more appropriate to functional agencies and concentrate on assisting Aboriginal people to be in a position to take advantage of such programs by applying them to their own development plans and activities. In addition it should use its scarce financial resources to ensure that Aboriginal organisations are able to function effectively in their particular roles, and to develop new organisations beyond welfare servicing. Much of the effectiveness of employment and training programs will continue to be lost if they are not co-ordinated at the local level in response to Aboriginal plans. The DAA needs to encourage and support the communities and their organisations to enable them to co-ordinate the work of Commonwealth departments and agencies involved. It must also ensure that Aboriginal people know what the government's policies are, particularly (in this context) as they relate to the provision for livelihood in different circumstances.

These roles are dealt with in more detail in Chapter 18 of the Report, following the Committee's conclusions about the details of the changes required.

are of importance to Aboriginal development, and those that are not: yet the financial incentives are the same in all cases.

There is a further important issue pertaining to the financial incentives for training that is not raised by considering the training allowances shown in Table 8.2. Those who undertake on-the-job training via a short-term subsidised employment placement under the TAP are paid award wages, which are usually higher than the TAP formal training allowances and are certainly much higher than the Abstudy allowances. On-the-job training subsidies generally apply to placements in those low skill and lower paying jobs, that do not require accredited qualifications for entry. Thus, remuneration for training for these jobs is far higher than that for undertaking accredited tertiary training, even though, as was seen in Chapter 3, the long-term employment prospects of tertiary qualified Aboriginal people are much higher.

8.2 THE RATIONALE FOR CHANGE

It is now quite apparent that there has emerged a range of measures designed to improve Aboriginal post-school education and vocational training that no longer properly distinguish between training for those areas of worthwhile employment opportunity in the labour market where the demand for labour is greatest; as opposed to 'training' that is of little or no vocational relevance, 'training' for jobs that do not require training for entry to them or 'training' for jobs where structural changes in the economy have been so great that the demand for labour is diminishing. Moreover, the current post-school education and training measures do not distinguish between training and education that are linked to the long-term development of Aboriginal people and their communities and those educational activities that are largely designed for general recreational purposes.

In fact, the system of financial incentives for training has now become so perverse that the financial incentives for 'training' to become proficient, for instance, in the operation of a photocopying machine or in basic clerical duties, are far greater than for accredited training in the professions where it is quite clear that both the need and demand for higher qualified and skilled Aboriginal people is greatest.

This situation, combined with the fact that Aboriginal people doing the same courses can be paid very different rates under Abstudy and the TAP, has led to a considerable amount of confusion and frustration on the part of Aboriginal people. For decades Aboriginal people have been told that a significant improvement in their overall labour market and income generating prospects depends very heavily on the ability of a much larger number of Aboriginal people to successfully participate in worthwhile vocational training and to obtain tertiary education qualifications, yet the government programs designed to assist this process are disjointed and no longer reflect labour market prospects. Certainly many of the submissions to the Review and representations made to the Committee have alluded to this confusion and frustration.

The Committee places very high importance on the need to improve significantly the overall level of the skill and knowledge base of Aboriginal people. It is an issue that transcends individuals and will be crucial to the way in which development of Aboriginal people, as a whole, proceeds. While

some extremely worthwhile progress has been made, in many instances developments have fallen far short of Aboriginal needs and requirements. Moreover, the performance of Aboriginal people in education and training has often been inhibited by a failure of relevant institutions and government agencies to respond in a way that is sensitive to Aboriginal needs or in a way that has properly involved Aboriginal people in the process.

The Committee believes that a number of principles need to be adopted if significant reforms are to be achieved in the appropriate provision, by government, of post-school education and training to Aboriginal people. These are:

- all post-school education and training courses and arrangements must be specifically related to the individual's long-term employment prospects or be specifically linked to the development needs of Aboriginal communities as specified by the members of such communities;
- all post-school education and training living allowances must be higher than the unemployment benefit if the government is serious about increasing Aboriginal participation in further education and training;
- the structure of allowance levels must properly reflect the type of education and training being undertaken in such a way that those more worthwhile and important options, such as professional training, attract higher rates of allowance than do other forms of education and training, and that education for leisure and recreational purposes ought not to attract student allowances at all;
- special enclave and student support measures are imperative if the government expects significantly greater numbers of Aboriginal students to be able to qualify for entry to courses and to be able to succeed in those courses, bearing in mind the difficulties faced by Aboriginal people in what is, to many, basically a foreign environment;
- significant rationalisation of the roles and functions of the existing proliferation of Commonwealth and State/Territory agencies that are involved must occur so that the existing costly duplication in the education and training provision is eliminated. Each agency should concentrate specifically on properly developing and fulfilling its responsibilities in the provision of Aboriginal post-school education and training.

The Committee considered the complex question of the need for appropriate special measures for Aboriginal people in the education and training area as opposed to provision under the general programs and provisions available to all Australians. The Committee is well aware that this is both a complex and politically sensitive issue. Having considered the arguments for and against both special measures and mainstreaming in general programs and provisions, the Committee is left in no doubt that special measures for Aboriginal education and training will be needed in the foreseeable future. This is not, as is commonly believed, because of a need to provide Aboriginal people with something additional to what is and should be available to all Australians, regardless of race. Rather, certain special measures and provisions in Aboriginal employment and training are absolutely essential if the government is to meet its obligations in providing all Australians with an appropriate level of education and training. All too frequently, the choice for Aboriginal

people is to integrate and assimilate or go without. This is unacceptable and a violation of the government's basic obligations in this area. Special programs and provisions are necessary, not to provide something additional, but to ensure that the provision of education and training is in fact available to all citizens, and that its delivery is proceeded with in a manner that is acceptable to Aboriginal people. Quite simply, because of cultural and geographical differences, the delivery of education and training services to Aboriginal people must also differ accordingly, if the desired outcomes are to be achieved.

The Committee also examined another politically difficult question, that being whether or not a means test ought to apply to the payment of Aboriginal student allowances. The Committee is aware that the fact that a means test on parental income applies to 'non-independent' students in the case of the Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme and the fact that no means test applies to the Abstudy for Aboriginal students have contributed to some resentment towards Aboriginal people from the non-Aboriginal community. In the interests of equity for all, the Committee believes that this anomaly should be removed, but that it must be done in the context of the rationalisation of all youth allowances and income support measures. This is in fact one of the issues being considered in a current review being undertaken by the government in relation to all youth allowances and income support measures.

There are, however, some points we wish to make in the context of the means testing of Aboriginal student allowances. The first is that a means testing of Aboriginal student allowances is not likely to exclude many from eligibility because of the extremely low income position of Aboriginal people, and the administrative costs of its imposition would in all likelihood exceed the savings in outlays. Second is that the income threshold of any means test should be set at a level that does not exclude people on middle and low incomes, and it must be indexed so that this remains the case over time. Third is that we would strongly argue that any means test for recipients aged 18 years or more should only be levied on their own personal income during the study period, rather than on that of their parents, and that this should apply to all, and not just the Aboriginal, allowances. Finally, we believe that any consideration of the introduction of a means test on the income of parents, in relation to the payment of Aboriginal student allowances for students aged less than 18 years, should only be made in the context of a general consideration of all youth allowances and income measures. Moreover, such a consideration ought also take account of the number of children for which the cost of education being met by the parents is expected at any one time, and not just of their income. We are certainly not opposed to the notion that those relatively few Aboriginal parents who can afford to bear the cost of their children's (i.e. under 18 years) education ought to do so.

The Committee believes that a significant rationalisation of post-secondary education and vocational training arrangements is now needed. This rationalisation must be based on a clear specification of the functions and responsibilities of the numerous agencies involved in the provision of Aboriginal education and training, and on a range of sensible financial incentives for different education and training options, that realistically reflect the training requirements in different areas of employment and for the different circumstances in which Aboriginal people live. It is simply not reasonable to expect that Aboriginal employment or development can be significantly improved under a continuation of the current arrangements.

8.3 ACCREDITED TERTIARY EDUCATION

A top priority must be measures designed to increase the number of Aboriginal people with tertiary qualifications. This is because, as shown in Chapter 3, the employment prospects of Aboriginal people who possess tertiary qualifications are similar to those of similarly qualified non-Aboriginal people. Moreover, a much larger number of tertiary qualified Aboriginal people are needed to fill positions at all levels in the so-called 'Aboriginal industry' in order to ensure that institutions improve their service delivery to Aboriginal people, and that developments take place in a way that are consistent with the aspirations of Aboriginal people. The tertiary qualifications we are referring to include degree and diploma courses from universities and colleges for advanced education, trades certificate courses in the TAFE, and non-trade technical and para-professional certificate courses in the TAFE and colleges of advanced education. As the apprenticeship training system for trade training is rather different from other forms of tertiary qualification acquisition, it will be discussed separately in the next section.

The Committee sees no justification whatsoever for a continuation of the dual system of Aboriginal student support for accredited tertiary study, as per the Abstudy benefit and the TAP formal training allowance. Moreover, the current system of Abstudy payments for most recipients being below what they could otherwise receive in unemployment benefits is seen by this Committee as a very poor way to encourage greater educational participation. The Committee broadly supports the findings of Williams, D and Chambers, B (1984), An Evaluation of the Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme, Commonwealth Department of Education and Youth Affairs, Canberra, and the arguments put to us by the National Aboriginal Education Committee (NAEC), that refer to the principle that Aboriginal tertiary student allowances must have competitiveness with other forms of income support such that they equate with the level of the unemployment benefit **plus a training component** [also see Williams, D and Chambers, B (1985), An Evaluation of the Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme: Summary and Review of Recommendations, Commonwealth Department of Education, Canberra]. We are, however, recommending a higher level of training component than that recommended by Williams and Chambers.

The Committee is also very concerned that reforms to Aboriginal student allowances occur in such a way that their real value is protected over time from the adverse effects of inflation. It is for this reason that we suggest that allowances be set according to a level equivalent to the unemployment benefit that the individual would otherwise be eligible to receive, as the level of the unemployment benefit is reviewed regularly; plus a training component that is linked to a percentage of the Male Adult Average Award Wage (depending on the individual's circumstances and the level of study to be undertaken), another money amount that periodically rises with inflation. We would argue that Aboriginal student allowances should never be set at absolute nominal money levels, as past experience has shown that whenever this occurs the real value of allowances is not usually maintained over long periods of time.

A related point is that a living away from home allowance is payable under the TAP, whereas no such allowance exists under Abstudy. The lack of a living away from home allowance under Abstudy cannot be justified given that Abstudy is the major form of living allowance to Aboriginal tertiary students,

given that a significant proportion of the Aboriginal population lives large distances away from the areas where tertiary institutions are located, and given that the general Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme has a living away from home component. The Committee believes that this anomaly should be removed by way of the immediate introduction of a better living away from home provision in Abstudy.

The case for a significant increase in the allowances available to Aboriginal students undertaking accredited tertiary education should be seen in the context of the poor income position of Aboriginal people generally, as was outlined in Chapter 3. Aboriginal students cannot usually fall back on family resources to supplement any shortfalls in living and other allowances in covering all of the expenses incurred in participating in further education. The high incidence of low income amongst the Aboriginal population also means that, unlike many other people, most Aboriginal people simply cannot afford to forego income in the short-term to invest in human capital, in the knowledge that significantly higher lifetime incomes will result from that investment. If unemployment benefits are higher than most educational allowances, as is currently the case, then the considerable number of Aboriginal people living below the poverty line are not really in a position to exercise a choice for participation in further education. It is also widely held that the high Aboriginal attrition rates from tertiary education institutions, the proportionally higher concentration of Aboriginal students in shorter courses, and the proportionally higher concentration of Aboriginal females as opposed to males in tertiary courses, are all factors that are highly linked to the very low levels of existing Abstudy allowances.

Recommendation 3. All income support allowances for Aboriginal students undertaking accredited tertiary education courses or other formal courses of one year's duration or more should be brought under the Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme and administered by the Commonwealth Department of Education. Hence, the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations formal training allowance under the Training for Aboriginals Program should be abolished with respect to Aboriginal students undertaking accredited tertiary education courses or other established formal courses.

Recommendation 4. The Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme benefit level payable to all Aboriginal students undertaking accredited tertiary education courses or other formal courses of one year's duration or more should be set at a level that affords a premium over the allowances available for other forms of post-school education and training. That is, the Abstudy tertiary allowance should be equivalent to the unemployment benefit plus a training component, and that training component should be 30 per cent of the Male Adult Average Award Wage for 18 year olds and over and 20 per cent of the Male Adult Average Award Wage for 16 and 17 year old Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme recipients.

Recommendation 5. The recommendations made by Williams and Chambers, An Evaluation of the Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme, concerning increments in allowances for successive years of continuous full-time tertiary study equal to a further 5 per cent of the Male Adult Average Award Wage each year, and the related changes recommended for Abstudy should be

joint Aboriginal management of proposed national parks and provision for their employment as rangers.

13.2 DEVELOPING STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE SELF-SUFFICIENCY - THE FUNCTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

To this point we have considered from a mainly structural perspective the situation of Aboriginal people living in remote areas. The three major situations of such people are as members of communities in Aboriginal towns, as residents of homeland centres or outstations, or as residents of remote pastoral properties.

It is quite clear from earlier discussion in this chapter that the potential for economic advancement in each of these situations is clearly limited. More importantly, however, it is not desirable to consider the economic development of Aboriginal people in these terms when such development is not compatible with the aspirations of the people, particularly with respect to their clear desire of having significant control over their own destiny.

The majority of Aboriginal people in remote areas have quite clearly elected to continue to live in those areas where their tribal and cultural bonds to the land are strong even though the potential for economic development of the type that would lead to a significant increase in their material standard of living is limited. This is partly dictated by the fact that they are well aware that their economic options in small towns and cities are extremely limited (see Chapter 14).

The Committee believes that the Commonwealth must come to terms with this, so that it can respond to the needs of Aboriginal people in remote areas to build and shape their own future with a minimum of outside pressures. The Commonwealth government and indeed the people of Australia must recognise that Aboriginal people in remote areas indeed have the right to make the choice to live in a manner that they themselves deem to be appropriate.

As was outlined in Chapter 2, the Committee found that there remains amongst government officers and advisers a pervading pessimism as to there being any future for Aboriginal people in these areas until they integrate into predominantly non-Aboriginal communities and totally adopt the dominant economic forms. We do not share that view.

Whilst urging that Aboriginal people should have the right to decide about how and where they live, the Committee also recognises that Aboriginal people cannot be held responsible for their own development as long as the government does not make it clear what it expects of Aboriginal people in terms of providing for their own livelihood in accordance with their chosen location and life-style.

The existing attitudes are reflected in the total lack of planning occurring not just between the relevant agencies and departments but with the communities themselves regarding short and longer term development. Communities need to outline what part government funding will play in the communities' development. Not only are deliberate and soundly based decisions

required regarding the administration of these communities but there is an urgent need to develop community based strategies concerning development priorities that lock departments and agencies into effective planning and resource provision.

When in the early 1970s the government sought to hand over control of Aboriginal towns to community councils, Aboriginal people were faced in many instances with accepting wide management responsibilities for which they had received little or no effective training. In fact, we found that many programs still rarely involve training Aboriginal people in specific skills relevant to their situation and fail to link into a co-ordinated plan providing training appropriate to the contemporary needs of people living in Aboriginal towns.

The Committee does recognise, however, that there are very real problems being faced by staff of servicing departments and agencies at the field level. With the multiplicity of agencies now involved in servicing Aboriginal communities, resources, and experienced and appropriately trained staff, tend to be thinly spread.

Field staff are generally pre-occupied with programming commitments and are simply not consulting adequately with Aboriginal communities. Their usually rushed visits are too often spent exclusively in the company of the community adviser or council chairman. Meanwhile the central and regional offices of these departments seem to be replete with 'policy' operatives who expend most of their time engaged in crisis management.

We are convinced that decisions regarding program funding should be largely based at the local community level, with government departments and agencies on a joint operating basis offering communities real options for development. We are also conscious of the need to ensure attempts are made in new ways to make these departments more directly accountable to their clients.

In arguing that decisions regarding the funding of programs should be made at the local level in accordance with Aboriginal community priorities, the Committee recognises that this can only be done effectively if the Aboriginal organisations concerned at that level are primarily responsible for and accept the responsibility for those decisions. The Committee is aware that only in a few areas have Aboriginal community and service organisations come together in ways which involve effective debate and development of consensus about the priorities involved in those decisions. There are, however, models that do exist such as Central Australian Aboriginal joint organisation meetings which could be supported and developed for this purpose. The Committee considers that it should be the role and responsibility of the DAA to encourage the emergence of such joint forums and to promote their function as co-ordinators of funding programming and allocation (see a more detailed discussion of this in Chapter 18). It should also re-assess its co-ordinating role among Commonwealth and State government program delivery agencies so that these bodies are effectively informed and serviced.

Any effort to provide such co-ordination at the local level will, of course, continue to be ineffective unless departmental field officers have the capacity to respond. It has been obvious to the Committee that there has been an increasing tendency in some departments to centralise decision making over the various programs. Whilst recognising that overall allocations are necessarily fought for and decided upon in Canberra, detailed allocation

should be decided more at the regional and area level in direct consultation with Aboriginal communities/organisations.

There needs to be a change in policy which ensures the right of Aboriginal communities to receive funds at a certain level and for them to decide how these resources are going to be allocated within their communities. Ideally this arrangement should ultimately involve total block funding which ensures local control of all resources currently coming from the various departments. Local Aboriginal organisations would determine how these total resources are to be used with allocations being made on a triennial year basis so that the communities can more effectively plan their development.

This is a significant move which should occur gradually. It will involve a considerable change in the relationship between, and perceptions of, Aboriginal people and the existing government agencies and involve the provision of greater administrative and resource support at the local level.

Nevertheless we are convinced that government must move along these lines if Aboriginal people are ultimately to accept greater responsibility for their own livelihood. As a starting point, we recommend that all Commonwealth departments and agencies should grant responsibility to the individual communities/organisations for determining the final allocation of funding under their respective functional areas on a local area basis. This would be carried out concurrently with other departments so that organisations can integrate the programs together into clearly defined strategies for development.

Negotiations should be undertaken with the various relevant State bodies to be a party to this approach also.

Recommendation 92. Aboriginal communities and organisations at the local level must become the focus for co-ordinating the delivery of funding and government services to their own communities. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs should be responsible for developing the appropriate forum to enable this to occur and have appropriate policy recognition that enables it to ensure that other government departments and agencies both attend and participate in this process. Through this forum Aboriginal communities/organisations will be directly concerned with deciding the final allocations of funds in their respective areas with a view to their development as instruments of longer term planning and co-ordination. This should involve the development of strategies by communities/organisations as to how funds will be spent and what part such funds will play in their development. The provision of funds should be on a bulk allocation basis and the current arrangements that apply under Program Performance Budgeting should be further extended to enable communities greater flexibility in setting their expenditure priorities.

In addition to its co-ordinating responsibilities, the DAA also has the crucial role in ensuring that the structural basis is available to enable Aboriginal people to gain greater economic independence.

In this and the previous chapters we have discussed the issues of local government for Aboriginal townships, excisions from pastoral properties, and the impact and potential of tourism and mining. These issues are fundamental

to the future employment prospects of Aboriginal people in remote areas and the DAA has the primary responsibility to ensure that they are resolved in favour of the interests of Aboriginal people.

The major functional program responsibility which the DAA should retain is the CDEP scheme - however, there are a number of issues regarding its current administration and funding arrangements which need to be addressed.

Through both our consultations and submissions we received, it became clear that the initial establishment stages of the CDEP in a community are crucial to its eventual success as are ongoing consultations with communities about its progress in meeting their originally stated objectives for the scheme. Where appropriate advice, support, training and infrastructure have been applied there have been clear successes. Where this has not been the case, the communities have suffered and still continue in some cases to suffer major difficulties.

The Committee believes that a CDEP support mechanism should be established within the DAA to assist communities with specialist support in the early establishment stages and to co-ordinate the provision of necessary training. The initial years of the CDEP require provision of sufficient staffing and capital to ensure the scheme's success. This will involve a minimum of town management positions which should be paid independently of the CDEP and in early years the loading of the on-cost component to cover capital equipment costs.

The initial establishment costs of the CDEP in each community should therefore also cover any infrastructure costs (both operational and capital), and these should be sought under the DAA existing community management and services program.

The Committee has received a number of complaints that the present 20 per cent component for oncosts is insufficient. Where the CDEP is operating effectively, communities are finding they lack capital equipment to undertake more major works and to bid for government contracts. Communities wishing to acquire costly equipment should also be enabled to get an advance on subsequent years 'on-cost' money, the advance being deducted from the provision in subsequent years. This advance ought to be in the form of a matching of voluntary contributions from the community's own CDEP entitlement. We consider that to this end the DAA should also amend its guidelines in relation to the treatment of CDEP surpluses and communities should have the right to purchase capital items.

One of the problems with the CDEP is that not all communities are sufficiently aware of the flexibility provided for under the scheme. Ongoing advice on options remains essential if existing and potential difficulties are going to be resolved by the people themselves.

These problems do not always relate to the CDEP but stem from within the communities themselves. However, we are convinced that the only people who can resolve these are Aboriginal people - not government using programs as a means to interfere and coerce people into action they believe to be appropriate. In this sense, the control over the CDEP exercised by Aboriginal people has been essential with the role of government officers being to facilitate decisions, rather than to dictate the options available.

In some communities over 50 per cent of the oncost component is being expended on workers compensation insurance leaving limited scope for purchase of materials to support CDEP projects. This amount appears inordinately high and the DAA should assist groups to consider calling a joint tender on a State-wide or Commonwealth basis to gain a lower flat rate.

There have been obvious difficulties in some areas relating to the regular updating of CDEP participant schedules. The DAA and the DSS need to rationalise their methods for dealing with schedules to ensure a quicker turn-around.

The Committee was informed that whilst the Department of Finance unofficially accepts the requirement to automatically reimburse communities in relation to rises in the unemployment benefits during the course of a financial year, the 20 per cent oncost component must still be found from the DAA's global vote which has led in some instances to considerable delays in payments to communities whilst the DAA identifies offset savings. The Committee finds this approach to financial management quite irrational. The government either provides for a scheme or it does not. Whilst it has every right to direct departments to make savings this should be considered on an entire program basis. A scheme for which part of the finance is to be found from savings elsewhere is unworkable. The CDEP is not a no-cost scheme, but it is one which results in considerable social security savings. The government must recognise this and provide the 20 per cent loading automatically as a part of the CDEP funding.

Recommendation 93. The Department of Finance should formally recognise the Community Development Employment Program as a discrete scheme with considerable offset savings to the government from non-payment of unemployment benefits, and provide the 20 per cent oncosts component automatically - not from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs' existing global allocation.

Recommendation 94. The Department of Finance should accept bids, separate from the Community Development Employment Program, for provision of funding under the Department of Aboriginal Affairs' Community Management and Services function to cover infrastructure costs (both capital and operational) in the initial establishment phases of the Community Development Employment Program in new participant communities.

Recommendation 95. Communities who wish to purchase large items of capital equipment that will directly enhance their capacity to produce income should be able to apply to get an advance on their subsequent year's on-cost component under the scheme. The advance should be deducted from that provision in subsequent years and be in the form of a matching of voluntary contributions from the community's own Community Development Employment Program entitlement.

Recommendation 96. Current Community Development Employment Program guidelines should be amended to enable any surpluses (other than those due to a drop in participant numbers) to be used for approved capital

expenditure and/or to be carried over into the proceeding financial year and/or invested.

Recommendation 97. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs should provide greater support to Community Development Employment Program communities through the establishment in relevant Regional Offices of support cells to assist communities in the establishment phase of the Community Development Employment Program, to co-ordinate the provision of necessary training and to provide any necessary ongoing support in conjunction with the local Department of Aboriginal Affairs Area Officer.

Recommendation 98. At least once a year full community consultations should be carried out to ascertain the wishes of the community as to whether a majority of people wish to remain on the Community Development Employment Program.

In Chapter 8 we argued that the DEIR Aboriginal Employment and Training Branch should have the primary role in funding and arranging the provision of training in Aboriginal communities. In the case of remote communities we would envisage that this training would mainly take the form of on-site courses of two main types - one associated with training aimed at providing Aboriginal people with skills to take over those jobs currently held by non-Aboriginal people and the other related to the gaining of skills considered relevant and requested by Aboriginal people themselves that enhance their capacity to provide their own services and that contribute to their own livelihood.

Essentially the DEIR role will relate to funding courses in response to the stated needs of Aboriginal people themselves rather than delivery of programs that are largely pre-determined. Such training will relate to programs being funded by the DAA, the ADC, and some State government departments. This will therefore require effective and meaningful liaison by the DEIR with other departments and agencies involved in service and program provision to these communities both to maintain a consistent approach to meeting such needs and to ensure that they relate to the overall stated development plans of the communities concerned.

Recommendation 99. In accepting the responsibility for the provision of funds for training in remote Aboriginal communities the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations Aboriginal Employment and Training Branch must ensure it develops effective liaison and consultation not only with Aboriginal organisations but with the various other government departments and agencies involved. The Aboriginal Employment and Training Branch must also acknowledge and accept its role in the forums that are developed to enable Aboriginal communities/organisations to have control over the final allocation of funds to their respective local areas.

Recommendation 100. The Department of Employment and Industrial Relations should allocate funds to both regions and local areas under the Special Course Provisions of the Training for Aboriginals Program in the form of a bulk allocation. The administration of such funds should aim to

ensure that departmental officers can respond in a prompt and efficient manner to requests for assistance.

As already stated, the Committee believes that the ADC has not sufficiently developed its capacity to respond under its enterprise and land acquisition functions to the needs of Aboriginal people in remote areas. Decision making is currently centralised with ten Commissioners who approve all projects. Funds are mainly committed to housing and its staff lack expertise in the enterprise area, mainly relying on costly consultants for advice. In real terms the funding under its enterprise function in remote areas has decreased, whereas we believe it should have been increased substantially. We have made significant recommendations elsewhere in the Report relating to the establishment of a Community Enterprise Development Fund and an Aboriginal Land Fund within the Commission which should help provide the necessary focus to ensure that greater emphasis is placed on assisting Aboriginal people to gain greater economic independence.

The Commission itself will have to significantly re-orientate its philosophy and activities to meet the challenge involved in providing such assistance. A much more dynamic approach which looks beyond the provision of housing is crucial if the economic prospects of Aboriginal people in remote areas are to be improved. As already discussed in regard to other agencies, the ADC should also devolve more decision making over the final allocation of funding resources to the local level under Aboriginal control.

We also see the development of specialist resource agencies (see Chapter 17) as being crucial in ensuring that the significant managerial and technical advice necessary is available to assist both the Commission and Aboriginal communities in planning appropriate strategies for development.

Recommendation 101. The Commonwealth government should consider rationalising the present functions of the Aboriginal Development Commission to ensure a much greater emphasis on allocating funds for land acquisition and enterprise development in remote areas. Such assistance should take account of the particular difficulties involving the economic development of Northern Australia, concentrate on projects that involve income generation and enhance the long-term economic viability of communities.

APPENDIX 1: ORGANISATION OF THE REVIEW

1.1 BACKGROUND

Introduction

On 25 October 1984 the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, the Hon. Ralph Willis MP, and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon. Clyde Holding MP, announced the establishment of an independent Committee of Review to examine all Commonwealth employment and training programs specifically for Aboriginal people. The Committee was asked to examine whether these programs are still appropriate to the needs of Aboriginal people and to determine if a more effective labour market strategy can be established to improve their employment situation.

Committee

The members of the Committee were appointed because of their knowledge and experience of Aboriginal employment and general training issues.

Mr Mick Miller, Deputy Chairman of the Aboriginal Development Commission and Chairman of the North Queensland Land Council, was appointed to chair the Committee.

Other members were:

Miss Mary Ann Bin-Sallik, Co-ordinator of the Aboriginal Task Force at the South Australian Institute of Technology and a former member of the National Aboriginal Employment Development Committee.

Dr H C Coombs, a Visiting Fellow at the Australian National University, Chairman of the Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration 1974-76, Chairman of the Australian Council of Aboriginal Affairs 1968-76, Chancellor of the Australian National University 1968-76, Chairman of the Australian Council for the Arts 1968-74, and Governor and Chairman of the Board of the Reserve Bank of Australia 1960-68.

Mr Fred Hall, a former senior executive of IBM Australia and a member of the National Training Council.

Mr Jim Morrison, nominee of the National Aboriginal Conference (NAC), and Administrative Officer with the NAC in Western Australia.

1.2 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE REVIEW OF ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

"Having regard to:

- the Government's objectives to increase the number of Aborigines employed; to raise the level of skills of the Aboriginal community; and, to broaden the range of occupations in which Aborigines are employed;
- the current levels of Aboriginal unemployment and those likely to apply in the foreseeable future;
- the needs and demands of the Aboriginal community;
- the need to provide an integrated and comprehensive set of programs for Aborigines maximising cost-effectiveness and minimising overlap;
- the need for continuing restraint in the growth of public expenditure;
- the desire of the Government and Aboriginal organisations for maximum Aboriginal management of their own affairs;

assess whether the existing Commonwealth funded Aboriginal employment and training programs meet the Government's objectives and make recommendations for changes as and when required.

The Review should in particular:

- examine the objectives, cost-effectiveness, delivery and impact of existing programs specifically directed at providing employment and training for Aborigines [other than the Community Employment Program (CEP) which has only recently been initiated];
- assess the adequacy of the existing balance of employment and training opportunities provided to Aborigines in the private, public and community sectors having regard to the varying needs of different Aboriginal communities, including the needs of Aboriginal women;
- consider the adequacy of existing arrangements for the co-ordination of program activity for Aborigines (including the CEP) and means for better integrating such programs; and
- assess the outcomes of the National Employment Strategy for Aborigines.

The Review should consult with the Review of Labour Market Programs being chaired by Mr Peter Kirby to take into account any findings emerging in that examination as regards the impact of those labour force programs available generally to the community on Aborigines. In particular attention should be given to the links between education systems and employment and training programs. The Review will examine the operations of the National Aboriginal Employment Development Committee only in the context of assessing the effectiveness of the national campaign to promote Aboriginal employment and training.

The Review should take into account in making recommendations the existing provision made by the States in the field of Aboriginal training and employment.

The Review should be completed within six months."

1.3 ADMINISTRATION

Submissions

Three hundred and five written submissions were presented to the Committee of Review in response to extensive press advertisements; letters sent to over 1500 Aboriginal organisations, government agencies, educational institutions, employers and unions inviting submissions; and 80 copies of a short video which was widely distributed to Aboriginal groups. The submissions, which varied in length and content, totalled some 2700 pages. Each submission was summarised by the Secretariat and copies of both the submissions and the summaries were sent to Committee members. At the conclusion of the Review copies of all submissions were deposited with the library of the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations in Melbourne (see Appendix 2 for details of submissions).

Consultations

To ensure that the Committee consulted as widely as possible during the course of the Review, Committee members undertook an extensive program of consultations between December 1984 and May 1985 involving visits to all States and Territories. All capital cities and many major centres were visited, as well as a number of remote Aboriginal communities in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. During these consultations, which often included visits to individual projects to see employment and training programs in action, the Committee had detailed discussions with representatives of:

- Aboriginal organisations, including, for example, local health, welfare and legal aid services, as well as national bodies such as the NAC and the National Aboriginal Education Committee;
- projects funded through Aboriginal employment and training programs, including former and current participants;
- Commonwealth and State government departments and authorities, including area, regional and Central Office staff;
- local government authorities;
- private sector employers, ranging from small businesses with only a few employees to large national companies;
- employer organisations, including the Australian Retailers' Association, the Business Council of Australia, and the Confederation of Australian Industry;
- trade unions, including the Australian Council of Trade Unions and some individual Trades and Labor Councils;
- educational institutions, including teaching staff at schools and technical and vocational colleges, as well as academic staff at universities who have researched aspects of Aboriginal employment.

The consultations thus included a large number and wide range of communities, organisations and individuals (see Appendix 3 for details of places visited by the Committee for consultations).

Kirby Inquiry

As directed in the terms of reference, the Committee examined the findings of the Committee of Inquiry into Labour Market Programs (1985), Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Labour Market Programs, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, and met with the Chairman of the Inquiry, Mr Peter Kirby. Two of the Secretariat members had worked on the staff of the Kirby Inquiry.

Research

Research and discussion papers were commissioned by the Committee to provide additional information and to examine the impact of various training programs (see Appendix 4 for details).

Seminar

The Committee held a one-day seminar in Melbourne on 30 May 1985 on 'Aboriginal People and Economic Development'. The purpose of the seminar was to consider the provision of government support for the establishment and promotion of appropriate economic bases for Aboriginal people in different situations. The Committee invited the following five people, who have each researched aspects of economic development and/or Aboriginal development, to prepare papers and address the seminar:

- Dr J Altman, Australian National University
- Dr D P Chaudhri, Australian National University
- Dr E K Fisk, Australian National University
- Mr R Heron, Principal, International Training Institute
- Dr E Young, University of New South Wales, Royal Military College, Duntroon

Representatives of the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations and the Aboriginal Development Commission also attended the seminar.

1.4 STAFFING

Secretariat

The Secretariat to the Committee of Review was based in Melbourne. Its major tasks were to provide briefing material and issues papers for the Committee, to receive, summarise and analyse submissions, to arrange consultations, to

liaise with the relevant Government departments and other organisations, and to prepare drafts for this Report.

Secretariat positions were mainly filled from applicants who responded to staff vacancies circulars, distributed Australia-wide through the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

Additional staff were sought from various departments to supplement the Secretariat and were seconded in accordance with normal Public Service Board guidelines. Additional word processing assistance was acquired as necessary.

Secretariat Staffing

Mr T Gibson	Secretary
Mr G Lewis	Principal Executive Officer
Mr C Robinson	Principal Executive Officer
Mr N Westbury	Principal Executive Officer
Mr R Weatherall	Senior Executive Officer
Mr D Ah Kee	Senior Research Officer
Ms T Jones	Senior Research Officer
Ms C Waite	Administrative Clerk
Ms J Talbott	Clerical Assistant
Mrs F Cuthbert	Word Processing Operator
Ms E Balazs	Steno-Secretary

Additional Staffing

Ms K Burrows	07.02.85 to 27.06.85
Mrs O Fielding	30.04.85 to 19.07.85
Mr J Foley	06.05.85 to 05.07.85
Mr C Grogan	25.03.85 to 27.03.85
Ms D Milner	19.02.85 to 23.08.85